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"The Lady of Shalott" as a Metaphor for Class Relations under Capitalism

Çağan Fırtına

Abstract: "The Lady of Shalott", written by Lord Tennyson, tells the story of a lady cursed to work in her tower, leaving which would, and eventually does, cause her death. However, characterisations and imageries present in the poem also evoke more social implications, implications which would be contemporary of Tennyson despite the poem's setting. Accordingly, this article argues that Lord Tennyson, in his "The Lady of Shalott", provides a metaphor for the class relations that exist under capitalism. By drawing from the Marxian understanding of society and societal relations, the study explicates how this poem can also be understood as a "mirror" of the Victorian society. In this sense, the Lady comes to metaphorise the working class, Shalott the socio-material conditions of the working class, Lancelot the bourgeoisie and Camelot the socio-material conditions of the bourgeoisie. It is also important to note that this study does not argue that Lord Tennyson was even aware of any Marxist idea, rather, his understanding of societal relations coincided with that of Marxism.

Keywords: The Lady of Shalott, Marxism, Class Relations, Victorian Society, Dialectics

We live in capitalism, its power seems inescapable – but then, so did the divine right of kings. Any human power can be resisted and changed by human beings. Resistance and change often begin in art. Very often in our art, the art of words.
Ursula K. Le Guin

Art works, whether implicitly or explicitly, carry traces of what is social in them: Even the most surrealist or seemingly personal pieces of art, as extensions of individuals, are still political–hence the famous argument of the political movements from the 60s and 70s: "the personal is political". In this sense, although metaphorised, it is possible to find the residues of the dominant mode of production in Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott" (1832/1842)[1], precisely because, as Marx in his *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*[2] (1859) states, "[t]he mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness" (ii). From such a standpoint, this study argues that "The Lady of Shalott", even though it is a romance and has a feudal setting, also coincides with the Marxian understanding of classes, namely the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, under capitalism by examining the characterisations and imageries presented in the poem. Accordingly, this article first explores the Lady and her social position, then Lancelot and his social position, then the spaces given in the poem, Shalott and Camelot, and their implications as socio-economic spheres, and lastly the dialectical relations established in the oppositions between the Lady and Lancelot, and Shalott and Camelot.

Studies on "The Lady of Shalott" show that the poem has been analysed through several perspectives. In their "A Blessing and a Curse: The Poetics of Privacy in Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott'", Joseph Chadwick

[1] The poem has two versions: the first one, published in 1832, and the later one, published in 1842. While differences are minimal, especially in terms of the story told in the poem, as the canonical version is the 1842 one, this study discusses the version published in 1842.
[2] This work will be referred to as *Critique* throughout this study.

explores how "[t]hrough [the Lady's] femininity, the poem calls into question the relations between the 'aesthetic spirit' and 'ordinary living,' that is, between art and the social world" (16) by explicating the relation between the same isolation imposed on the "feminine" and the artistic by the society as presented in the poem while Carl Plasa, in "'Cracked from Side to Side'": Sexual Politics in 'The Lady of Shalott'", argues that the poem takes an ambivalent position as it "appears to validate patriarchal structures by mapping the gaze/object relation in terms of an opposition between 'masculine' and 'feminine,' it also subversively exposes the ideologically constructed nature of the 'feminine,' thereby circumscribing the claims for mastery – both erotic and epistemological – which men make over women" (256). Edgar F. Shannon Jr., on the other hand, argues that the poem "discloses no ambivalence" because it "explores parabolically the quality of poetry derived from two opposing postulates and advocates expression rather than imitation as the essential impetus for art" as it offers a synthesis of life and art, and "Platonic-Christian intimations of immortality and the unity of the world of spirit afford the way out of the seemingly ironic trap" in the poem (223). Different from such analyses, this article employs a Marxian perspective to suggest that the poem, through metaphors, showcases the socio-economic relationship between the workers and the bourgeoisie. However, this does not mean or imply that Tennyson was even aware of Marx or any kind of Marxist or socialistic views in his understanding of the societal relations but only that the relationships constructed in the poem coincide with such views.

The first mentioning of the eponymous character, the Lady of Shalott, is in the second part of the poem, where she is characterised as a person who has to work in a tower that she cannot leave because she is cursed (Tennyson 37-40). Her situation parallels that of a worker described by Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* (1932): "For as soon as the division of labour comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood" (53). The metaphoric curse that the Lady suffers, thus, creates a similarity between, or even a metaphor for, the working class: Neither can "escape", the Lady from the tower and the worker from the exclusive sphere of activity forced upon them, otherwise they are cursed to die, or they risk losing their livelihoods which is equal to dying under capitalism. Additionally, that she has "no loyal knight" (Tennyson 62) reinforces her situation as a worker, for, despite being a "lady", she is "propertyless", or has no knights that serve her in this context, just as how the worker has no property: "On the basis of political economy itself, in its own words, we have shown that […] the whole of society must fall apart into the two classes the property-*owners* and the propertyless *workers*" (Marx 1988, 69)(emphasis original). Furthermore, at no point of the poem is the Lady given a name, which shows that she is, just like the workers, nothing but a property, a machine, a commodity: "[T]he worker sinks to the level of a commodity and becomes indeed the most wretched of commodities; that the wretchedness of the worker is in inverse proportion to the power and magnitude of his production" (69).

Throughout the poem, she is defined by either her position in the society, that is, her being a "lady", and where she belongs, that is, the island of Shalott or the work she does, that is, weaving, and therefore, she exists "first, as a *worker*; and, second, as a *physical subject*. The extremity of this bondage is that it is only as a *worker* that he continues to maintain himself as a *physical subject*, and that it is only as a *physical subject* that he is a *worker*" (Marx 1988, 73)(emphasis original). She is never named or "defined" in any way, except at the very end of the poem where she is described as having a lovely face (Tennyson 169). The only sign of her existence is her song heard by "the reaper weary" (33). The fact that she is almost never seen physically by others and that she is always identified with and defined by the place, Shalott, where she works, thus, support the idea that she is first a worker and second a physical subject, as seen in the following lines:

> By the margin, willow-veiled,
> Slide the heavy barges trailed
> By slow horses; and unhailed
> The shallop flitteth silken-sailed
> Skimming down to Camelot;

> But who hath seen her wave her hand?
> Or at the casement seen her stand?
> Or is she known in all the land,
> The Lady of Shalott? (Tennyson 19-27)

An aspect of the work of the Lady that coincides with the working conditions of the proletariat is the reason as to why she works. Unlike Robinson Crusoe, who "still has needs to satisfy, and must therefore perform useful labours of various kinds" and for whom "[n]ecessity itself compels him to divide his time with precision between his different functions" of labour (Marx 1992, 169-70), the necessity that compels the Lady to work is not of natural kind but a curse whose origin the Lady "knows not" (Tennyson 42). The tower – in its similarity to a factory, on which the study will expand later – and the curse, rather than the physical needs, that necessitates her work differentiate her conditions from that of the lone labourer Robinson Crusoe, whose reasons for labouring come from his physical needs. In this sense, unlike most readings where "[t]his poem […] has often been read as yet another allegory of artistic autonomy" (Chadwick 15), this article takes the Lady as both an artist and a labourer. As such, the study does not differentiate between the artist and the labourer - for both are still subjected to the same economic conditions where they have to, in one way or the other, sell their labour-power - as Marx also does not:

> The great mass of so-called "higher grade" workers – such as state officials, military people, *artists*, doctors, priests, judges, lawyers, etc. – some of whom are not only not productive but in essence destructive, but who know how to appropriate to themselves a very great part of the "material" wealth partly through the sale of their "immaterial" commodities and partly by forcibly imposing the latter on other people—found it not at all pleasant to be relegated *economically* [emphasis original] to the same class as clowns and menial servants and to appear merely as people partaking in the consumption, parasites on the actual producers (or rather agents of production). This was a peculiar profanation precisely of those functions which had hitherto been surrounded with a halo and had enjoyed superstitious veneration. (1969, 174-5)(emphasis mine)

Another similarity between the conditions of the Lady and of the proletariat is the mirror in the poem, whose workings is alike to the concept of ideology in a Marxist sense. The mirror serves two purposes in the poem: That it allows the Lady to weave, which corresponds to the use of mirrors by weavers, and that the Lady can see the outside, real world only through the mirror (Tennyson 46-50). Just as how the Lady can continue to weave only through the mirror, only through ideology the base – people's relation to the means of production – is maintained, which subsequently means that ideology is an apparatus that helps ensure the existing class structure, in which the proletariat, the Lady in the context of the poem, has to work while the bourgeoisie exploits. In this sense, the Lady cannot continue to weave without the mirror, both literally and metaphorically, since such a mirrorless-ness would prevent her weaving and result in the collapse of the capitalist relations of production. Moreover, she can perceive the world only through the mirror, or through ideology, which distorts what she sees, à la a *camera obscura*. The Lady only sees "shadows of the world" (Tennyson 49), as if she is in a *camera obscura* and as if the mirror is the small hole through which the distorted, or inverted and reversed, scene or image projected:

> Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc., and precisely men conditioned by the mode of production of their material life, by their material intercourse and its further development in the social and political structure. Consciousness [*das Bewusstsein*] can never be anything else than conscious being [*das bewusste Sein*], and the being of men is their actual life-process. [...] in all ideology men and their relations appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura* [...]. (Marx and Engels 1998, 42)(emphasis original)

It is also important to consider the cracking of the mirror. The curse is that when she stops working "[t]o look down to Camelot" (Tennyson 41), she dies, and this is indicated by the cracking of the mirror:

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott. (Tennyson 109-117)

As we have taken the mirror as the ideology in its Marxian sense, which obscures the nature of the class-relations, looking at Camelot means seeing the exploitative nature of the class-relations and thus gaining class consciousness, which, in turn, means the crackling of the mirror, or ideology, as its affect of false consciousness is lifted.

The reason as to why the Lady stops working, however, is as intriguing. Just before leaving her work, the Lady "is half sick of shadows" (Tennyson 71) and sees, through the mirror, Lancelot "[a]s he rode down to Camelot" (Tennyson 104). We may be inclined to think for two reasons that the Lady leaves her tower because of her romantic feelings: before she expresses that she is "half sick of shadows", she sees "two young lovers lately wed" (70), which signifies that she is indeed sick of shadows and wants to have a similar relationship; and right before she leaves her tower, Lancelot appears in her mirror, which would signify that she has fallen in love with Lancelot. However, there are no other indications regarding the Lady's feeling—Lancelot is introduced and described in the poem for thirty-one lines, and almost all of his description in these lines leans heavily on his wealth with his "mighty silver bugle" and "[t]hick-jewell'd […] saddle-leather" (Tennyson 88, 92). Because Lancelot takes the centre stage solely with his wealth, it is not love but the wealth gap that becomes the breaking point for the Lady. Bearing in mind the scene where she sees the young couple that causes her to realise that she is sick of shadows, the curse (which can be taken as capitalism in this perspective), and the mirror (as ideology) with it, prevents her even from experiencing love whereas Lancelot, constantly described as a wealthy knight, is free to roam the land as he wishes. Together with first looking down to Camelot and then seeing Lancelot comes the realisation of her own class-position. As such, her "social existence" – which is, in this case, comprised of her differences in her economic status from those of Camelot and Lancelot – is what "determines [her] consciousness" (Marx 1992, ii).

The death of the Lady at the end of the poem has also two significant points, alike to the mirror: That she dies because she stops working; that she works until she literally dies. Her "wretchedness" is indeed "in inverse proportion to the power and magnitude of [her] production" (Marx 1988, 69), for despite her work, whose magnitude we presume to encompass her life as there are no other indications or details regarding her life that do not involve her work, the curse is never lifted, and she is never allowed to leave her tower and eventually dies for doing so. Under capitalism, not working means death for the worker, as their only means of sustaining their own lives, or of surviving, is to sell their labour-power – the Lady too, as a worker, similarly has to work because of the "curse" - to the bourgeoisie who, unlike the worker, does not have the necessity to work in order to survive. As such, the Lady's leaving the tower is a poeticization, or dramatization, of her becoming unemployed since it causes her to die:

> But the putting of labour-power into action, i.e., the work, is the active expression of the labourer's own life. And this life activity he sells to another person in order to secure the necessary means of life. His life-activity, therefore, is but a means of securing his own existence. He works that he may keep alive. He does not count the labour itself as a pact of his life; it is rather a sacrifice of his life. It is a commodity that he has auctioned off to another. (Marx 2006, 19)

The other point about her death, that is, that she works until she dies, becomes more meaningful when one considers where she dies:

> Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
> Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
> Till her blood was frozen slowly,
> And her eyes were darkened wholly,
> Turned to towered Camelot.
> For ere she reached upon the tide
> The first house by the waterside,
> Singing in her song she died,
> The Lady of Shalott. (Tennyson 145-153)

Here, we see that she dies when she reaches "the first house", which, in the context of class relations, signifies that despite working until the moment she dies, she still cannot reach Camelot, which is where Lancelot, the metaphor for the bourgeoisie, resides, thus making Camelot the metaphor for the "realm" or conditions of the bourgeoisie[3]. In other words, the Lady, or the worker, cannot become a bourgeois regardless of how much they work.

Lancelot, on the other hand, is characterised as the almost exact opposite of the Lady: He is given a name, described richly as a rich person, and, as a man, his characterisation raises questions regarding the power-relations between genders and shows his position in society, which is of a higher position compared to the Lady:

> The gemmy bridle glittered free,
> Like to some branch of stars we see
> Hung in the golden Galaxy.
> The bridle bells rang merrily
> As he rode down to Camelot;
> And from his blazoned baldric slung
> A mighty silver bugle hung,
> And as he rode his armour rung,
> Beside remote Shalott.
> All in the blue unclouded weather
> Thick-jewelled shone the saddle leather,
> The helmet and the helmet-feather
> Burned like one burning flame together,
> As he rode down to Camelot; (Tennyson 82-95)

Not only are there no such long descriptions of the Lady, the supposed focal point of the poem, but Lancelot is also heard singing (107-8), unlike the Lady whose songs are only relayed to the reader through other people. Physically as well there is no description of the Lady, while Lancelot, aside from his armour and ornaments, is described to have "coal-black curls" (103). However, at the very end, Lancelot defines and describes the Lady as having a lovely face (169), which coincides with the idea how he belongs to "[t]he class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it" (Marx and Engels 1998, 67). Accordingly, Lancelot, as a metaphor for the bourgeoisie, controls the mental images, so to speak, of the people—in this case, the mental images of people regarding the Lady, who has never been seen but only heard "Like a Poet hidden / In the light of thought / Singing hymns unbidden" (Shelley 36-8). Therefore, Lancelot, not

[3] How Camelot, as the metaphor for the living conditions of the bourgeoisie, is juxtaposed with Shalott is explained later in this study.

only as a mere inhabitant of Camelot but also as a person who describes the Lady, displays his socio-economic position's superiority over that of the Lady.

When it comes to the spaces in the poem, namely Camelot and Shalott, the juxtaposition between them is the very first imagery painted in the poem. That Shalott is an island already signifies an estrangement which is constantly supported by how the action, or the movement, is towards Camelot, only passing by Shalott:

> And through the field the road runs by
> *To* many-towered Camelot;
> […]
> Through the wave that runs forever
> By the island in the river
> *Flowing down to* Camelot
> […]
> And the *silent* isle imbowers
> The Lady of Shalott.
> […]
> A funeral, with plumes and lights
> And music, *went to* Camelot (Tennyson 4-68)(emphasis mine)

This flow towards Camelot also resembles the flow of surplus-value, which is the value that the worker creates in the process of production, towards the bourgeoisie when the product is sold, as Marx explains in the first volume of *Capital*: "The rate of surplus-value is therefore an exact expression for the degree of exploitation of labour-power by capital, or of the worker by the capitalist" (326). In addition to the surplus-value, the movement passing by Shalott and towards Camelot also displays the estrangement of the Lady, which is already suggested with the imagery of an island. The movement, from this perspective, shows how "the more the worker expends himself in work the more powerful becomes the world of objects which he creates in face of himself, the poorer he becomes in his inner life, and the less he belongs to himself" (Marx 1982, 13) because the Lady, as the worker who has expended her whole life in work, becomes powerless in the face of her work imposed on her by the curse; her work, as the (only) defining quality of her life, defines and determines her so much so that she is not able to survive, she ceases to exist quite literally when she stops working or becomes unemployed. As a result, she does not belong to herself so much that she is defined, described by another person, Lancelot.

Another contrasting point between Shalott and Camelot is the tower(s). While Shalott has only one tower in which the Lady is cursed to work, Camelot is constantly described as "towered" or "many-towered" (Tennyson 5, 32, 59). Towers, in this case, represent what Marx calls the means of production, and in the Victorian context, it is possible to interpret them as factories or factory chimneys, which is also intertwined with the Lady's position as a worker and constant working. Moreover, residents of Camelot are people of high position, and Camelot is a city of luxury with its "high houses" and "garden walls", which makes it a metaphor for the space in which the bourgeoisie, with all their luxury, lives:

> Under tower and balcony,
> By garden wall and gallery,
> A gleaming shape she floated by,
> Dead-pale between the houses high,
> […]
> Out upon the wharfs they came,
> Knight and burgher, lord and dame (Tennyson 154-160)

An additional aspect of the poem that furthers this analysis is the dialectical fashion in which the Lady and Lancelot, and Shalott and Camelot are given, that is, they are not only contrasted but also interwoven in this romance world which, in the poem, comes into being only by the co-existence of these contradictory spaces. For

instance, there are no individual stanzas dedicated to either Shalott or Camelot, to either the Lady or Lancelot. Instead, all the stanzas have nine lines; the fifth lines of almost all the stanzas end with "Camelot" whereas the ninth lines with "Shalott", which creates an interwovenness, interconnectedness, and inseparableness between them. As explained until this point in the study, Camelot and Shalott, and the Lady and Lancelot are always in opposition, contradiction, yet the society, or the poem itself in this case, cannot exist without both and thus is comprised of both. This is again in line with the Marxian understanding of societies:

> The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. *Free man and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another,* carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending classes. (Marx and Engels 1988, 209)(emphasis mine)

From this perspective, Lancelot, as a concept (of bourgeoisie), is dependent on the Lady, as a concept (of proletariat), because their individual social positions, or rather, the individual classes for which they are metaphors would not exist ontologically without each other. At the end of the poem too Lancelot, as an individual bourgeois, defines the Lady, and his position and existence as the "definer" would not exist without the Lady—thus, the Lady's existence becomes a part of Lancelot and defines him. Similarly, the Lady would not leave her work without seeing Lancelot, which means that the Lady as the worker who stops working and is thus cursed, is only the Lady as such because of Lancelot's existence. They are, as aforementioned, opposing, contradictory people, yet they need each other to exist, they constitute each other as they are in the poem.

Shalott and Camelot too are always constituted by and in relation to each other. Even the action or description that seems to be specific to Shalott or Camelot is still given in such a way that it is connected to the other one. Even this stanza, for instance, begins with people going to Camelot, yet, almost suddenly, some of them appear in the mirror, who, in turn, remind the Lady of how she has no loyal knights:

> Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
> An abbot on an ambling pad,
> Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
> Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
> Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
> And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
> The knights come riding two and two:
> She hath no loyal knight and true,
> The Lady of Shalott. (Tennyson 55-63)

The almost stream-of-consciousness-like transition from people going to Camelot to people appearing in the mirror connects Shallot and Camelot in an unusual way: Shalott and Camelot are connected ontologically with this transition as Shalott, here metonymically referred to with the Lady and the mirror, comes into being in this stanza in relation to Camelot. In a previous stanza, Camelot as well comes into being, or exists, in relation to Shalott, this time "[t]hrough the wave that runs for ever":

> Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
> Little breezes dusk and shiver
> Thro' the wave that runs for ever
> By the island in the river
> Flowing down to Camelot.
> Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
> Overlook a space of flowers,
> And the silent isle imbowers

The Lady of Shalott. (Tennyson 10-8)

In conclusion, this study examines Lord Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott" by looking at how it represents the capitalist society metaphorically. The Lady represents the worker as she is confined to her workplace, that is, the tower, and can only survive if she keeps working. The worker too does not have the luxury of not working, as their survival depends on it. The work that the Lady does, weaving, is also important when the era in which the poem was written is taken into consideration, as the textile industry was thriving at that time. Lancelot, on the other hand, with his description and position, represents the bourgeoisie who resides in Camelot. In this sense, Camelot, as painted richer, more lively, more towered than the island, represents the material conditions of the bourgeoisie whereas the island represents, with its estrangement from Camelot, the material conditions of the proletariat. Additionally, both the Lady and Lancelot, and Shalott and Camelot are always characterised in relation to each other so much so that each item of the pair constitute the other item in the same pair, which is alike to how the proletariat and the bourgeoisie not only constitute each other but each exists because the other one exists. However, it is once again important to state that this study does not claim or argue that Lord Tennyson had read or was even aware of Marx or any kind of Marxist idea. Rather, the point is that Lord Tennyson, as an artist, represented the society of his times, which coincides with Marx's analyses of class-relations in capitalism.

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Elusive Idea of Nationhood and Bifurcated Identity in Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*

Khandakar Ashraful Islam

Abstract: The question of nation has always been a problematic one. For the people of the postcolonial countries, the notion of nationhood is more intricate because the colonized mass had continuously been persuaded by the manipulative colonial discourses and colonial hegemony to accept the supremacy of the colonial masters and to abnegate their indigenous culture. This colonial interference has not only troubled the notion of nationhood but also jeopardized the identity formation of the colonized subjects. In *The Glass Palace* (2000), Amitav Ghosh taking the backdrop of the third Anglo-Burmese war and India's freedom struggle sheds light on the problematization of the formation of nationhood of Indian soldiers and portrays the psychological dilemma and struggle those Indian soldiers and officers went through in response to the call of duty to rescue their own nation from the grip of the colonizers. Focusing on the major characters of *The Glass Palace* this article is an attempt to enquire into the causes how for the colonized mass the concept of nationalism since its inception —being marred by the conflicting ideologies—has turned into an elusive idea and how the identity formation of the postcolonial subjects is always entangled and bifurcated due to the influences of the legacy of colonization.

Keywords: Nation, Elusiveness of Nationhood, Colonial Discourse, Mimicry, Bifurcated Identity, Amitav Ghosh

The spirit of nationalism dominated Europe throughout the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. However, for the colonies, the twentieth century is the focal point for the rise of the nationalist spirit when "the native elites fought to overthrow foreign imperial and colonial administrations" (Smith 1). In the context of India, the idea of nationalism was used as a reactive tool to fight against colonial oppression. In India since the beginning, the ideas of nation and nationalism acquired a sort of double meaning because "[s]ome members of that nation have a narrow, intolerant view of their country by insisting that it should have only one religion, Hinduism; while others think that there should be freedom of religion such that Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians are rightly members of the nation" (Grosby 5). In *Imagined Communities* (1983) Benedict Anderson emphasized that "nationalism has to be understood by aligning it not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which —as well as against which—it came into being" (12). From this perspective, nationalism's use of pre-existing inherited cultures or cultural wealth is evident. Nonetheless, to create specific political ideology, most often nationalist discourses use the historically inherited cultures selectively and transform them radically. In *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) Ernest Gellner expresses his concern on nationalism saying, "[n]ationalism is not what it seems [...]. The cultures it claims to defend and revive are often its own inventions, or are modified out of all recognition" (56). Therefore, the ideological signs of nationalism are always elusive, ambivalent, and multi-accentual. Amitav Ghosh, a renowned novelist and activist, in *The Glass Palace* (2000) through the characters of Arjun, Hardy, Rajkumar, and Beni Prasad problematizes the idea of nation, and aptly depicts the problems of identity formation of the colonized as well as the postcolonial subjects. Moreover, against the backdrop of colonial entanglement, *The Glass Palace* reflects "the unmaking and remaking of individual and collective identities and examines the self-fashioning and self-alienation" (Mondal 113)—which as a by-product of colonial experience has not only troubled the notion of nationhood but also jeopardized the identity formation of the colonized subjects. This article is an attempt to

shed light on the causes how the concept of nationalism since its inception—being marred by the conflicting ideologies—has turned into an elusive idea and how the identity formation of the postcolonial subjects is always entangled and bifurcated due to the influences of the legacy of colonization.

The *Glass Palace* exposes how the training of the Indian officers of the British Indian army manipulated their notion of nation and obliged them to stay obedient to the commands of the colonial master. Arjun's selection as an officer in the British Indian Army brings to light the colonial mechanism of exploitation lurking behind the manipulative discourses of colonialism. Arjun, Hardy, and their fellow mates are the first group of Indians to be recruited as officers in the British Indian Army. Since the inception of military training, in a manipulative way, a wrong notion of nation is inscribed in their psyche. The inscription at the Military Academy in Dehra Dun, which mentions "[t]*he safety, honor and welfare of your country come first, always and every time. The honor, welfare, and comfort of the men you command come next*" (*GP* 330)(emphasis original) puts Arjun in a perplexing situation when Hardy asks Arjun to answer "whose country whose safety, honor and welfare are to come first, always and every time—what is it? Where is this country?" (330). Practically India is a colony, and thus Arjun and Hardy have no country—so it is the Empire's safety, honour and welfare that always and every time come first. Moreover, their oath is directive not to protect their country "but to the King-Emperor—to defend the Empire" (*GP* 330). The inscription was a source of inspiration for Arjun. He never thought in the way that this inscription does not include him or the other Indian officers. On the other hand, as the officers of the British Indian Army were seen as a "source of pride and prestige", like Arjun and Hardy many Indians getting the opportunity to be the part of the glorious empire without a second thought "[g]iving up Indian food, villages, and families [...] moves up [to attain] the false ranks of superiority" (Gandhi 112).

Pankaj Mishra remarks, "[t]here is much melancholy truth in the confession. The English-speaking Indian elite Arjun belongs to was a carefully thought-out creation of the British, and was well protected from ideas of personal and political freedom" (n.p.). Their ideas are controlled by the British manipulative discourses, which authenticate the inevitability of colonial intervention for the socio-political progress of the colonized mass. Thus, like Arjun, all other recruited officers of Indian origin always thought highly of the British Empire. They were fascinated by the colonial discourse that "the British stand for freedom and equality" (*GP* 284). Being enthralled by the charm and promise of those delusive discourses, they remained loyal to the British at any cost to ensure the same for the people they represented. However, the colonial discourse of equality is a mirage per se. In fact, under the British tutelage, the Indian army officers—who are trained to be "*almost the same but not quite*" and in effect expected to act "[a]*lmost the same but not white*" (Bhabha 89)(emphasis originial). Ghosh, in this novel, depicts how the first recruited Indian officers in the British Indian army naively believed that being exposed to Western thoughts and getting training from the British masters, they have ascended themselves to the same statute of the British and thus could evade the stigma of their colonial inferiority. However, it is evident that their sense of superiority is a delusion.

Being part of the British Empire, while the Indian soldiers believe themselves to be a "part of the privileged, the elite" group, their experience of racial discrimination in Singapore reveals that they "were impoverished by the circumstances of their country" (*GP* 302). The status of an officer does not exempt them from any humiliation. In Singapore, the Indian soldiers experience how the Europeans carefully maintain a distance from the Asians in every place. With the sight of the Asians, the Europeans immediately vacate the places to avoid any confrontation with the Asians. Moreover, many places of public gathering like pools and bars also restrict the entry of the Asians. In Singapore, Hardy and Arjun come across the contradiction of European values that the Europeans want their colonies to be guarded and defended by the non-European soldiers but refuse to accept them beyond the boundary of the racial identity. Amitav Ghosh, in "India's Untold war of Independence", remarks that neither the call of the struggle for independence nor any core nationalist feeling motivated the soldiers of the British Indian army to join the "forgotten" Indian National Army, rather it is their personal experience of racial discrimination, that brought to light the contradiction of British army, and made them rethink of their support to the Empire. The discovery of this "internalized racism toward the Indian soldier

creates a dynamic where the meaning of colonial life destroys the soldier's character" (Gandhi 112). Hardy begins to see his job of working as a soldier in British Indian Army as internally conflicting and psychologically suicidal. He could realize that the delusion of the army soldiers is making the Empire solidify its strength to assert its political and administrative control over the colonies, and due to such intensive colonial interference, the colonies became economically and politically devastated.

Like Arjun and Hardy, the first generation Indian soldiers serving in the British army were also in delusion. Amreek Singh's—a veteran soldier of the Indian army—accusation affirms that how technically the Indian soldiers were kept unaware of the fact that they were being used by the British army to conquer other people for the sake of colonial interest of expansion and economic exploitation. The Indian soldiers were used directly to colonize the people of independent countries. As Saya John describes, in his brief stay in Singapore, when he worked as a hospital orderly, he had a direct experience to observe the dilapidated condition of the Indian Sepoys battling for the Empire. In the hospitals, he was surprised to find that the majority of the patients there were Indian Sepoys "back from fighting wars for their English masters" (*GP* 29). Working for those soldiers, he got paranoid at "the smell of gangrenous bandages on amputated limbs; the night-time screams of twenty-year-old boys, sitting upright in their beds" (*GP* 66). Thus, the Indian soldiers sacrificed their youth, vigour, and life for the British Empire, however, the Empire does not acknowledge their sacrifice in any way. The soldiers were having a false belief that by serving the British Empire, they might be able to redeem their plights and poverty. However, in reality, they could earn only a small amount for their survival. They were paid only "annas a day, not much more than a dockyard coolie" (*GP* 87). Practically they have no connection to the British Empire. The Empire, too, had no liability for them.

As depicted by Ghosh, in the British invading army, "the great majority—about two-thirds—were Indian sepoys" (*GP* 98). Under British command, these sepoys fought mercilessly, and the Burmese defenders got little chance to stand against these sepoys. As a consequence, Burma was easily conquered with the service of the Indian soldiers, and it was subsequently annexed to the British Empire. During the colonial period, thus, in the British army, Indian soldiers were used either for the expansion of the territory of the Empire or for retaining control over a turbulent colony. Ironically, these Indian soldiers, under British command, were motivated by the discourses that they were freeing those people "from their bad kings or their evil customs or such thing" (*GP* 87). In *The Glass Palace,* Arjun is also depicted as deluded as the first generation Indian sepoys. As a soldier in the British Indian Army, Arjun consideres himself "the first modern Indians; the first Indians to be truly free" (*GP* 231). Practically, he is not free. Arjun and his colleagues were bound to follow the orders from the British officers blindly. These Indian officers are not endowed with the power of decision-making. They are only obliged to execute orders from their British officers. Thus, these Indian soldiers are treated as nothing rather than a "mercenary —a *buddhu*, whose hands are not in his control" (*GP* 347)(emphasis original). Sitting in the trenches, Hardy expresses his eerie feelings saying, "[i]t was strange to be sitting on one side of a battle line, knowing [...] that you're risking everything to defend a way of life that pushes you to the sidelines. It's almost as if you're fighting against yourself" (*GP* 406).

Hardy's conversation with Arjun brings to light the ideological dilemma of the Indian soldiers in the British army. While Arjun was claiming himself to be the first generation of modern Indians, Hardy digs out the truth that their condition is nothing better than the dogs or sheep who have to follow the direction and command of their masters. Hardy taunts Arjun saying, "Yaar Arjun, think of where we've fallen when we start talking of good masters and bad masters. What are we? Dogs? Sheep?" (*GP* 438); "a manufactured thing, a weapon in someone else's hands"; "a mercenary", "a *buddhu*?" always to be commanded by British masters. Arjun, too, realizes that he "wasn't really a human being – just a tool, an instrument" (*GP* 407). The revelation of such reversal of identity is self-abnegatory because "it contradicts that other side of colonial ideology through which the colonial subject comes to see him- or herself as a modern 'individual'" (Mondal 122).

For the ease of their administration imparting colonial education, although the colonizers created a group of Anglophiles to be their accomplice, in practice, the colonizers did not want them to be their alter ego; instead,

their psyche was formulated to be a subversion of the colonial master. The execution of this policy of maintaining hierarchy "generated a great deal of ambivalence and anxiety on the part of the coloniser as well as the colonised for it needed to be constantly contained by strategies that would maintain the distance of the Other" (Mondal 120). The reversal of relation makes Hegel's master-slave dialectic profound because the master is shown not as an independent but entirely dependent upon the slave not merely for work and the satisfaction of his desires, but for recognition as well (Hegel 109-10).

Although Arjun and Hardy were recruited as officers in the British army, the Indian soldiers who accepted the master role of the colonizers were reluctant to follow the command of the Indian officers. They were despondent to accept the people of their same origin as their commanding officers, even though these soldiers were in a delusion that their relationship with their British officers was the source of their pride and prestige. For them to serve under Indian officers was a dilution of that privilege. This attitude of the soldiers reflects the self-abnegation of their own identity, where they cannot accept the people of their origin in the commanding position. In this connection, Sigmund Freud's comment is pertinent to understand the perception of the Indian soldiers about the Indian officers. Freud argues "[w]e may compare them [the Indian officers] with the individual of mixed race, who [...] all round, resemble white men, but who betray their Colored descent [ordinary Indian people] by some striking feature or other, and on that account are excluded" (191) and denigrated by the common people of India. Here lies the success of the colonial discourse, which could instil a sense of inferiority in the psyche of the colonized mass. Thus, these new generation officers, although they could ascend to the role of a master, their position was not recognized by their fellow soldiers who happened to be their country people. This reluctance brings forward the fissure of the hybrid identity of the Indian officers pointing out the vital question:

> Where does 'Englishness' reside? In 'blood and colour' or in 'tastes, in morals, and in intellect'? In acquiring English 'culture', have these Indian mimics become English? If so, what has happened to their Indianness? And what gives the English their identity if *anyone* can become English? (Mondal 116)(emphasis original)

The concept of "Mimic men", in this context, thus, brings to light the problematics of hybrid identity, emphasizing that "[t]he colonial 'mimic men' occupy a hybrid cultural space that is indefinable in static or essentialised terms because they are neither one thing nor the other but something else besides, an excess that cannot be contained within the terms 'English' or 'Indian'" (Mondal 116).

Shashi Tharoor in *An Era of Darkness* (2016) exerts that "the British had a particular talent for creating and exaggerating particularist identities and drawing ethnically-based administrative lines in all their colonies" (121). With the application of the race theory, the British could easily divide the Indian polity into antagonistic groups. In the British Indian army, only the people of the Martial race are recruited, and technically "they're completely shut off from politics and the wider society" (*GP* 236). Indeed, this practice of exclusion, subversion, and manipulation "was apparent in British attitudes from the start" (*GP* 121). In fact, propagating the idea of the Martial race, the British adopted the policy to give priority to people of certain races or caste and thus institutionalizing division to "promote a culture of sycophancy" (*GP* 433). Therefore, in India, due to the colonial intervention, there is a pervasive loss of self-respect among the Indians. In order to win British approbation those who tried to model their lives in "conformity with incomprehensible rules" (*GP* 433), intentionally or unintentionally indulged in the mimicry of colonial culture and servitude to colonial hegemony.

In response to the call of the Indian National Army, when most of the Indian officers and soldiers were persuaded to fight against the Empire, Arjun—whose ethical dilemmas "as a soldier echo his mythical namesake from *The Mahabharata,* who pauses in battle to question the purpose of war and the kingdom he is fighting for" (Budhos n.p.), "hesitates, and with good reasons" (Mishra n.p.) not to fight against the British. He clarifies his standing accentuating that, "with the intention of the joining British Indian army, the aspirant Indian officers "didn't have India on our minds" (*GP* 321). Being fascinated with the glorious history of the Empire, they wanted to be associated with its glory and live a life of honour that the history of Empire entails. Literally, all

these aspirant officers wanted to be like the English Sahibs, and eventually, after the army training in manners and ideology, they resembled the English officers. In a point of his argumentation with Hardy, Arjun makes Hardy acknowledge the visible transformation they went through the training of academy saying:

> Just look at us, Hardy—just look at us. What are we? We've learnt to dance the tango, and we know how to eat roast beef with a knife and fork. The truth is that except for the color of our skin, most people in India wouldn't even recognize us as Indians. (*GP* 439)

Apart from their appearance, it is hard to recognize that they are Indians. In mentality, they also transformed themselves like the British. Therefore, according to Arjun, the changing of sides—to fight against the British in favour of the Japanese is not going to help them in any way because "[d]ecolonization is not easy, perhaps it is not even possible" (Tiwari 106). Arjun authenticates his doubts saying if we rebel "against an Empire that has shaped everything in our lives; colored everything in the world as we know it [...]. We cannot destroy it without destroying ourselves" (*GP* 518).

For many soldiers like Arjun, the faith in the colonial discourse was so strong that even being victims of humiliation and deprivation, these soldiers did not lose their faith from the Western institutions. In "India's Untold war of Independence" Ghosh remarks that the disillusionment of their position "did not make them hostile to Western institutions" (n.p.). Arjun assisted Colonel Buckland to find a way out of his captivity and handed over food to him for his safe return to the British camp. In letting Colonel Buckland escape, Arjun reveals his bifurcated identity that is torn between loyalty and consciousness. Arjun could realize the bifurcation of his identity that is plagued with the contradictions of colonial discourses. Focusing on the contradictions of colonial ideology Ghosh, in this novel, thus exposes the effects of colonial hegemony on colonized subjects and illustrates how being beleaguered by colonial ideology Arjun's "sense of the world, its structure, its ways of operating, and his place within it have been shown to be nothing more than an illusion" (Mondal 122).

The analysis of the characters of Arjun Singh and Hardy discloses the moral contradictions and psychological conflict of the Indian soldiers in the British Indian Army. From his ardent faith in the colonial regime, Arjun doubted that the decision to fight on the Japanese side might not assure India's independence. Arjun claims that pushing the British colonizers out the Japanese troops want to use the Indian soldiers. He accentuates that the Japanese domination would not be less violent than the British Empire because:

> The Japanese are already aspiring to an Empire, like the Nazis and Fascists…Last year, in Nanking, they murdered hundreds of thousands of innocent people…[...] Lined up against walls and shot…Men, women, children…[...][no one can ensure that] if the Japanese army reached India they wouldn't do the same thing here. [...] They're imperialists and racialists of the worst order…If they succeed, it'll be the worst catastrophe in all of human history. (*GP* 293)

Hardy had no such strong logic to defy Arjun's claim. Still, it was also true that the call for standing against the British made the Indians strong enough to execute their own decisions instead of being slaves under British officers. Contrary to the blind execution of the orders of the British officers, on this occasion, for the first time, the Indian soldiers could assert and implement the ideas according to their conscience. This opportunity gives them a notion of nationality that the Indian soldiers lacked and a sense of freedom that they had been denied under the dominion of the British Empire.

While Arjun's concept of nationhood oscillates between the indeterminacy of who to fight for or fight against, the plantation soldiers were seen determinant in their ambition to fight against the British to end the brutal phase of colonization, which might open the gateway for them to go to their dream country India. In Malaya, the newly recruited plantation soldiers proved loyal to the cause of the nation (India) that they have no idea about. These people were treated as slaves in the plantation. Having their mind taken away, they were "being made into a machine" (*GP* 348). To escape the torture of the plantation work, they joined Indian National

Army to fight against British exploitation. From Ranjan, a plantation worker, Arjun came to know that having been born in Malaya, "his knowledge of India came solely from stories told by his parents. The same was true of all the plantation recruits" (*GP* 521). From this perspective, it is evident that they were fighting for an "imaginary homeland"—a country they had never seen. The dedication and patriotism of these plantation workers made Arjun inquire "what was India to them? This land whose freedom they were fighting for, this land they'd never seen but for which they were willing to die?" (*GP* 522). India, in their imagination, is an abode free from all the evils they endure in Malaya: "A shining mountain beyond the horizon, a sacrament of redemption—a metaphor for freedom" (*GP* 522). However, these people are not aware of "the poverty, of the hunger their parents and grandparents had left behind" (*GP* 522). They do not know about "the customs that would prevent them from drinking at high-caste wells" (*GP* 522). That poverty-stricken and caste-ridden India is beyond their imagination. Thus, their imaginary homeland is an illusion per se.

The Glass Palace depicts no formation of any democratic nationalism in Burma. For the Burmese, the King and his kingdom symbolized the nation. Ghosh depicts that before the colonial invasion, the Burmese people had been living in peace and amity under the crown. The British were on the wrong side to wage war on the trivial issue of evading the customs levied on the British merchants. On a trivial matter, the British timber company made the invasion of Burma inevitable. The Royal proclamation issued under the King's signature to alert the inhabitants of Burma depicts the strong thread of religion, national tradition, and custom, which have kept the people of Burma united under the leadership of the King. The royal proclamation entails:

> [T]he barbarian English kalaas having most harshly made demands calculated to bring about the impairment and destruction of our religion, the violation of our national traditions and customs, and the degradation of our race, are making a show and preparation as if about to wage war with our state. [...] His Majesty, who is watchful that the interest of our religion and our state shall not suffer, will himself march forth with his generals, captains and lieutenants with large forces of infantry, artillery, elephanterie and cavalry, by land and by water, and with the might of his army will efface these heretics [...].To uphold the religion, to uphold the national honor, to uphold the countries interests. (*GP* 16)

The rule of the king might not have any direct resemblance to the theoretical definition of a nation. Still, it is evident that the Burmese people were united under the king, and there was economic prosperity and political stability. The cosmopolitan and vibrant environment of pre-colonial Burma is depicted by the number of foreigners living in the cities of Burma. In Mandalay, "there were envoys and missionaries from Europe; traders and merchants of Greek, Armenian, Chinese and Indian origin; laborers and boatmen from Bengal, Malaya and the Coromandel coast; white-clothed astrologers from Manipur; businessmen from Gujarat" (*GP* 16). The struggle for the throne was always there. It was indeed a bloody one. The hands of King Thebaw and Queen Supayalat were stained with the blood of their kith and kin, who were eliminated to keep the reign of King Thebaw unchallenged. To justify the colonizers' mission of rescuing the oppressed people from their despotic king is, in fact, a fallacy. Beneath the discourses of benevolence and "white men's burden" lie the evil intentions of the capitalist and bourgeoisie interest.

In Burma, there were countless different tribes and peoples. Among them, only the king was the common thread to unite them. Even though there was no sense of nationalism for the Burmese people, they were united under the leadership of the King. Hence, after dethroning the King, the British strategically and forcefully destroyed all the possible scope of the formation of any sense of national identity or sense of nationhood among the Burmese polity. Consequently, to avoid any political trouble in Burma, which used to be the wealthiest colony of the British Empire, the British adopted the strategy of making people forget their king because they assumed that "[t]he King is the one person who could bring the country together against them" (*GP* 136). Therefore, the British carefully handled the public sentiment to ensure that "the King is forgotten" (*GP* 136) and the thread of connection that works as pseudo nationalism be shattered.

After the death of the King, when the Queen Supayalat returned to Burma, violent anti-colonial resistance started. Dolly got surprised to know from a stranger that a prince had been found from King Thebaw's royal lineage, and soon through formal coronation, he would be crowned as the new king of Burma. It was also on-air that this king had already formed his army to avenge the last king and to drive the British away from Burma. In a few days, Burma became politically unstable. The uprising started in Tharawaddy district. In the Saya San rebellion, to revolt against the colonial force, the Burmese people ignited their nationalist feelings by their local legends and myth. The Burmese rebels brutally killed a forest official and two village headmen to spread terror. Soon the rebellion spread everywhere. They fought vigorously and ruthlessly. They appeared like "shadows from the forest, with magical designs painted on their bodies. They fought like men possessed" (*GP* 296). During the insurgency, thousands of villagers declared allegiance with their cause of the new King, Saya San, whom they assumed as the inheritor of King Thebaw.

Once again, Indian troops were deployed to hunt down the insurgency and the Indian soldiers followed the order to be ruthless in defeating the rebels. As a consequence, "hundreds of Burmese were killed and thousands wounded" (*GP* 247). The ruthlessness of the Indian soldiers infuriated the local Burmese people against the Indians, but the British people remained immaculate. Thus, technically, the animosity and wrath of the Burmese was driven against the Indians. Under the machination of the British chicanery, thus, the colonized people fought with each other and their lives were lost, while the Empire exploited each of them to the utmost. Uma got furious to observe that "once again, Indian soldiers were being used to fortify the Empire. [...] Indians being made to kill for the Empire, fighting people who should be their friends" (*GP* 247). The lack of the sense of nationalism provided the scope to the British to use the people of one colony against the other to secure the colonial interest of loot.

Commenting on *The Glass Palace* Rajalakshmi remarks, "[t]he ideology of the British Raj seeping through the lives of the colonized people takes life at varying points in the novel" (116). In this novel, through the character of Beni Prasad, Ghosh has revealed the contradictions of colonial identity that troubles one's psyche both on a personal and political level. In 1905, the nineteenth year of the King's exile, Beni Prasad was appointed as the new District Collector of Ratnagiri. He was officially "responsible for dealing with the Burmese Royal family" (*GP* 104). His interaction with the King and the Queen reveals the ideology he champions. Beni Prasad as a representative of the colonial masters assumes himself as part of the vast Empire, and their so-called civilizing mission and the bifurcation of his identity gets exposed at the very moment when he engages in a conversation with the deposed King.

It was a time of turmoil when Collector Beni Prasad and his wife came to Ratnagiri. In the first half of the twentieth-century, people in India became much reactive to colonial exploitation. The Japanese invasion in Burma and Malaya and the subsequent victory of the Japanese army against the British force "resulted in widespread rejoicing among nationalists in India and no doubt in Burma too" (*GP* 107). When the King enquired Beni Prasad regarding "what people thought of it" (*GP* 105), being a self-righteous servant of the British Empire, Beni Prasad disregards the threat of the Japanese army and takes pride in conveying it to the King Thebaw that "[t]he Empire is today stronger than it has ever been [...] its influence will persist for centuries to come. The Empire's power is such as to be proof against all challenges and will remain so into the foreseeable future" (*GP* 107). The collector's insistence on a quick glance at the world map is sufficient to understand the dominion of Britain over the rest of the world.

Regarding the Empire, Prasad's claims are authentic, but it is also undeniably true that to gain undefeatable strength and power, the British have severely exploited the resources of the colonies and brutally dehumanized the colonized masses. To the dethroned King Thebaw, Beni Prasad verbally defends the strength and power of the British Empire and tries to associate himself with the glory of the Empire but remains oblivious of the fact that his motherland, India, was enslaved by the colonial power and was losing all its assets to enrich Britain and its economy. As Sashi Tharoor in *An Era of Darkness* (2016) argues, "Britain's rise for two hundred years was financed by its depredations in India" (4). The draining of valuable sources was the cornerstone of

British policy in India. The British economic historian Angus Maddison asserts that at the beginning of the eighteenth century, "India's share of the world economy was 23 per cent, as large as all of Europe put together" (in Tharoor 4). However, when the British departed India, it had dropped down to only three percent. The reason was simple: India was governed for the economic benefit of Britain. Tharoor denotes,

> Britain's Industrial Revolution was built on the destruction of India's thriving manufacturing industries. Textiles were an emblematic case in point: the British systematically set about destroying India's textile manufacturing and exports, substituting Indian textiles by British ones manufactured in England. Ironically, the British used Indian raw material and exported the finished products back to India and the rest of the world [...]. [Thus] from the great manufacturing nation described by Sunderland, India became a mere exporter of raw materials and foodstuffs, raw cotton, as well as jute, silk, coal, opium, rice, spices and tea. With the collapse of its manufacturing and the elimination of manufactured goods from its export rosters, India's share of world manufacturing exports fell from 27 per cent to 2 per cent under British rule. (7)

Such plundering of Indian resources affected every sociopolitical structure of Indian society. In the light of the mass colonial exploitation, undoubtedly, it can be argued that the present-day economic backwardness and depredation of India resulted from the colonial exploitation and loot which made the colonizers rich and the colonized poor forever.

Queen Supayalat debunked the hypocrisy of the Empire instantaneously. She asserts her anguish saying

> [t]hey took our kingdom, promising roads and railways and ports, but mark my words, this is how it will end. In a few decades the wealth will be gone—all the gems, the timber and the oil—and then they too will leave. In our golden Burma, where no one ever went hungry and no one was too poor to write and read, all that will remain is destitution and ignorance, famine and despair. (*GP* 88)

The Collector is oblivious of the fact that the resources from his own country is being plundered in the same way Queen Supayalat is claiming. His ignorance or indifference to this issue raises question about the identity and nationality of the Collector. Practically Queen Supayalat's premonition became the hard reality for Burma. Soon after being occupied, Burma was "converted into a province of British India" (*GP* 66). Moreover, its resources were gradually transported to England and the rich land of resources was transformed into a land of poverty.

It is evident that the colonial education had not only made Beni Prasad acquire colonial "knowledge but also had made him acquire an ideology, the ideology of the ruler [that] made him treat the British as the superior and the Indian as the inferior" (Rajalakshmi 117). The creation of such a comprador class turned extremely beneficial for the colonial masters to continue their hold on the people of the colony with assistance of their enslaved people. Beni Prasad is a genuine example of Macaulay's interpreter: "[A] class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (Macaulay 729). Beni Prasad, an educated Indian—learned in colonial education—could not see how the Indian economy was becoming destitute and fragile; all her assets were being transported to England. His sense of nationhood was dedicated to the interest of the Empire. His notion of nation was troubled with bifurcation; hence, he failed to decide who to serve and who to fight against. Thus, Prasad's bifurcated identity makes him an alien in his land and people. Queen Supayalat disclosing the contradictory position and the "illusions" of Beni Prasad makes him confront the real face of his colonial master who has crippled his personality and way of thinking. The Queen's remark, "Collector-Sahib, Sawant is less a servant than you. At least he has no delusions about his place in the world" (*GP* 150), robs of his individuality and situates him only as a slave of the Raj.

As an educated person, he was not moved by the emerging ideas of Indian nationalism and its demands for political independence. He was content to remain a slave to the Empire. Beni Prasad is self-centered and power-hungry. For people like Beni Prasad, their personal gratification is more important than any interest in the world. He holds a parochial view of the nationalist movement in progress at that time. By serving the colonial

masters, he wanted to secure a quiet life. He also wanted to "prove himself an exceptional Indian who is more close to the British than Indian ways of life" (Rajalakshmi 117). In his paradigmatic scheme of servitude, the collector failed to meet the expectation of his Masters. The miscegenation, the Princess's marriage with the couch driver, stands as a stark failure of the Collector to preserve the familial pride of the King. Thus, he fails to fulfil the expectation of the British government. The Collector's suicide is a result of his sense of failure to serve his colonial master properly. He was in a false hope to assume himself a part of the Empire. Hence failing to satiate his master, he commits suicide. Thus, the practical and the psychological conflict of Beni Prasad reflect the chasm of his bifurcated identity which is fragile and always tenuous.

In the *Glass Palace*, the analysis of the characters of Arjun Singh, Hardy and Beni Prasad discloses how the machination of the colonial discourses and blind acceptance to the colonial supremacy problematize the notion of the nationhood of the privileged and educated Indians who being enthralled by the desire of the attainment of the same superior statute of the colonial master suffer from moral contradictions and psychological conflict. Arjun's oscillation between his Indian and the colonial identity creates bifurcation in his identity that is similar to the psychological breakdown resulting from indeterminacy and ambivalence that culminates into "constellation of delirium, frequently bordering on the region of the pathological" (Fanon 60). Beni Prasad's wrong notion of nationhood makes him dedicate himself to the servitude and the interest of the Empire. His sense of nationhood is troubled with bifurcation; hence, he fails to decide who to serve and who to fight against. His state of oblivion about the plundering of Indian resources by the colonizing power not only exhibits the elusiveness of nationhood but also exposes the bifurcation of his identity which made him a prisoner "trapped within himself as much as by the circumstances of colonial dependency" (Mondal 119).

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The Instrumental Presence of Women in *Le Morte Darthur* as the Motifs of the Damsel in Distress, the Enchantress and the Seductress

Yağmur Su Kolsal

Abstract: In popular understanding, Arthurian literature is often remembered for its remarkable pairs (Lancelot and Guenevere, Tristan and Isolde, Arthur and Guenevere etc.) which have been the main subject of various romances within this literary tradition. However, both sides of such romantic pairings do not possess equal agency within these romances where the role of the ladies become relegated to being tools for or against (male) heroes' quest for self-realization in the chivalric social order that dominates the narratives. This article inquires into this instrumentalization of female characters for the advancement of the narrative progress of male characters in Sir Thomas Malory's fifteenth century compilation prose narrative of Arthurian romances *Le Morte Darthur* (1483). This article claims that this process of utilizing female characters is achieved through the portrayal of female characters through varying combinations of tropes it lists as the damsel in distress, the enchantress and the seductress in a way that determines the degree of adversity they pose to the chivalric order and the individual agency they possess. In order to illustrate this, various characters who embody these roles and among whom well-known characters such as Morgan le Fay, Guenevere, Isolde, Elaine of Astolat and other minor characters can be found are analyzed in light of this claim.

Keywords: *Le Morte Darthur*, Arthurian Legend, Sir Thomas Malory, Courtly Romance, Chivalry, Gender Roles

Chivalric code of honour plays an important role in driving the narrative in Sir Thomas Malory's late fifteenth century compendium of Arthurian romances *Le Morte Darthur* (1485) with its idealized notions of knighthood, quests, and battles. While, like most of the medieval romance genre, such an engagement with the notions of knighthood and chivalry implies a narrative dominated by the actions of male characters, women function as the motivating force behind these chivalric acts. While they remain fewer in number when compared with the number of knights around the acts of which the narrative is centred, women are present in various ways that bolster these acts. The importance of women in Arthurian romances, a genre with a wide female readership that contains a focus on female beauty and the role they play in the chivalric tradition, has already been pointed out in existing research (Lacy et al. 524-6). Thelma Fenster associates the instrumental nature of women in Arthurian romances with what is termed the "chivalry topos", in which the knight's physical prowess and moral qualities are based on his pursuit of a noble lady (xx). This article argues that, both as a continuation of the larger Arthurian romance tradition, and as one such that draws its source material from existing romances, *Le Morte Darthur* employs female characters as instrumental tropes that play a role in the fulfilment of chivalric ideals. The portrayal and characterization of individual female characters depend on the nature of their relation to chivalric acts as facilitators, objects, or hindrances and can be categorized under the following tropes: The damsel in distress, who highlights the heroic deeds of the male characters; the enchantress, whose ambiguous nature can be helpful for or detrimental to the knight's quest, and the seductress whose trespasses of the conventions of the chivalric society act as a source of conflict.

This article argues that alongside unnamed damsels who are introduced in the quests, more influential women such as Guenevere, Morgan Le Fay, Morgause and Isolde are all subject to characterization through the

employment of the tropes of the damsel in distress, the enchantress and the seductress. In addition, it further argues that while some characters have a leaning toward one interpretation, most women embody more than one of these tropes at different points of the narrative. In order to highlight this, first, existing literature on the role women embody in medieval Arthurian romance with a focus on Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* will be summarized. Then, the overall influence of the female characters as instigators of events that foreground the ideals of knighthood and chivalry will be analyzed in its historical context. Furthermore, how certain characters embody these motifs will be analyzed.

The roles of women in medieval courtly romances, of which Arthurian romances constitute an important part, have been receiving belated attention since the second half of the twentieth century. This lack of prior attention to the role of female characters in the case of Arthurian literature can be attributed to the fact that women commenced writing about Arthurian literature no earlier than the nineteenth century (Wynne-Davies 2). The production of Arthurian works of fiction in print (a point that requires emphasis, for oral traditions function independently of the written) was achieved even later, in the second half of the twentieth century (Wynne-Davies 2). In the 1980s, the association of the historical period Arthurian works were assumed to have taken place with a pre-patriarchal, pre-Christian society of a pagan faith centred around the Mother Goddess took hold among academic and creative circles (Hutton 2006, 53). Despite the lack of archaeological or historical proof for such practices and a focus on female deities in Celtic or Britannic religions (Hutton 1998, 254), this led to an increased focus on female characters of Arthurian subject material from a feminist lens (2006, 53). In this article, the view put forward by Joan M. Ferrante that medieval literature engenders a double-sided view of the woman as the symbolic and the real will be adopted. According to Ferrante, on one hand, the female is exalted through feminine personifications of abstract concepts such as liberty, inspiration, and mercy, on the other, the feminine is viewed as the opposite of the masculine, its other half that can be united through marriage (2). However, the former praise contrasts this disembodied femininity with the worldly, carnal manifestation of it; like virtues, most vices are also female personifications. As for the latter dichotomy, it encompasses the Aristotelian claim that the female is an inferior form of the male form (Ferrante 2-3). In courtly romances, the female operates as a means for masculine realization by creating the conflict between love, which is embodied by, and directed toward the lady, and chivalry, the rules of conduct set and followed by men (Ferrante 65). One notable observation regarding the role and the voice of women in other works of Arthurian canon can be found in Maureen Fries' analysis of women in Arthurian literature as heroes, heroines and antiheroes, categories which are defined by the positioning of the characters in relation to the aims of male characters and the degree of their active participation in "Female Heroes, Heroines and Counter-Heroes: Images of Women in Arthurian Tradition". Mary Etta Scott analyzes the portrayal of Arthurian women in *Le Morte Darthur* by similarly grouping them under three categories in "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: A Study of Malory's Women". E. Jane Burns' observes that in Chretien de Troyes' *Erec et Enide* (Erec and Enide), and in the medieval romance genre in general, the woman, with her body and presence, is utilized as a site on which the chivalric acts at the centre of courtly romance are performed (38). Krueger defines this role the female characters occupy in Arthurian romances as an object of exchange, or an "object of desire" as opposed to the role of the narrator whose focal point is used, or the protagonist whose actions move the narrative forward (142). Similarly, both Sheila Fisher in "Leaving Morgan Aside: Women, History and Revisionism in 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight'" and Geraldine Heng in "Feminine Knots and the Other Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" emphasize that, as its title suggests, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* focuses on the test of chivalry Gawain undergoes while women, as antagonists and instigators, remain essential to and yet situated in the margins of the narrative.

Thus, Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* appears to be the successor of a tradition that foregrounds the chivalric ideal with its masculine hero at the centre. This centring left women with a paradoxical existence which meant that they remained in the centre of the chivalric ethos, yet their agency and the importance of the direct acts they perform were, nevertheless, relegated to the periphery. Malory's focus on the notion of a chivalric order of knights and its interactions with the closely allied notion of courtly love through a lens of nostalgia and possible

cynicism was, in part, a result of the text's background. While the exact identity of who Thomas Malory was is a subject of scholarly debate, the fact that he wrote *Le Morte Darthur* during a period of civil war, which was to be later called the Wars of the Roses, in a period of overall political and social instability, is widely accepted. Armstrong notes that during this period, a significant rise in the number of texts that dealt with chivalry is observable (75). It is safe to say that when Malory wrote about King Arthur's Round Table and their chivalric deeds, the ideals of chivalry and courtly love were already becoming a sort of antiquated nostalgia. In texts dealing with chivalry written during this period, the occupation with chivalry foregrounded a particular type of masculinity that is a culmination of regularly performed actions that are perceived as befitting a knight. Yet, these knighthood acts that establish a masculine identity do not render the presence of women unnecessary. On the contrary, like in the earlier texts of courtly romance, this nostalgia for an idealized order of knighthood meant that knighthood and combat are given a romanticized meaning which is at odds with the period of political instability. For this process of romanticization, the female characters are extensively utilized. Armstrong claims that knightly combat is given meaning through the text's interpretation and construction of female characters (2). In *Le Morte d'Arthur*, the chivalry of the Round Table is impossible to represent "without the presence of the feminine, and indeed, *only* possible when the feminine is present in a subjugated position" (Armstrong 36)(emphasis original). Geraldine Heng also points out, "the feminine materialises in order to be inducted into providing the enabling conditions of the chivalric enterprise" (1991a, 250). In another article, Heng analyzes the ancillary role female characters in *Le Morte Darthur* play through their possessions, their role in chivalry ethos and the mastery of magic. The first of these makes use of female characters through what they give away; the possessions the ladies bestow upon men either aids or hinders them, such as swords, charms of magical protection, and Morgan's cloak and shield (Heng 2015, 97-9).

It can be said that the presence of women as guides, or antagonists in pivotal events with far-reaching consequences is a consistent occurrence throughout the text, starting from Arthur's conception and leading up to Guenevere's affair with Lancelot being a reason for the dissolution of the Round Table and the death of King Arthur. Through the instrumentalization of women as crucial tools in the important events and the overarching narrative, the focus shifts from the intentions and individual acts of women to the role their actions fulfil in propelling the knights' stories forward. For example, while for modern audiences, the dubious consent of Igraine when Uther appears to her in the guise of her now late husband to beget Arthur might present itself as one of the focal points of the story, what Malory focuses on is not the violation of this "fair lady" (*Le Morte Darthur* I:1-3), but how this event affects the legitimacy of Arthur, who would otherwise be considered illegitimate. Sarah J. Hill points out that while Igraine is narrated to have "made grete joye whan she knewe who was the fader of her child" (I:4-6), a possible explanation for her feelings in relation of the fact that her current husband killed her late husband in pursuit of her despite her repeated refusals is not provided (269). Similarly, the formation of the Knights of the Round Table also becomes possible through his marriage to Guenevere, since it is through his marriage that he receives the table as a dowry. Likewise, while Morgan's reasons for suddenly turning into Arthur's enemy and wanting to rule Camelot remain unknown, her presence as an opposing force to both Arthur and his court remains important. The text is filled with such examples that it is not possible to enumerate them all; however, another important example that can be given is Elaine of Corbin's enchanting of Lancelot to have his child without his consent and the importance it has in the Grail Quest for the child is no other than Galahad. What the text deals with is not the experiences of female characters and what active role they play in the narrative, but instead, how they interact with the knights and, by association, ensure the continued application of the chivalric code.

While the figures mentioned above are considered among those that the readers can recall more easily due to the place they dominate in popular culture, they are outnumbered by women whose instrumentality in creating occasions for men to prove themselves is the only apparent trait they possess. The unnamed damsels seek help for themselves in numerous instances. Their actual purpose in the narrative is to aid the knights in performing a series of acts and deeds associated with the chivalric conduct of knighthood. In fact, the guiding principle for the

knights in such instances and for their interactions with women in general, is set from the start in Book III of the Caxton Manuscript, which originally constitutes a part of the first book.

> The kyng stablysshed all the knyghtes and gaff them rychssee and londys; and charged them never to do outerage nothir mourthir, and allwayes to fle treason, and to gyff mercy unto hym that askith mercy, uppon payne of forfiture [of their worship] and lordship of kynge Arthure for evirmore , and *allwayes to do ladyes, damesels, and jantilwomen and widowes [socour:] strengthe hem in hir ryghtes, and never to enforce them*, uppon payne of dethe./ Also that no man take noo batayles in a wrongefull quarell for no love ne for no worldlis goodis. So unto thys were all the knyghtis sworne of the Table Rounde, both olde and younge, and every yere so were the[y] sworne at the hyghe feste of Pentecoste. (*Le Morte Darthur* III: 15-75) (emphasis mine)

The group of women who are the easiest to define in their direct and subservient participation in the ideals of the chivalric society are thus those who are in need of succour. As it acknowledges their rights, the oath also highlights the fact that women lead an existence that makes them socially and "sexually vulnerable" (Batt 85).

This seminal compilation of Arthurian legend is filled with women directing men toward what might be considered their destinies. This occurs in the overarching narrative, through the role women play in the escalation of events. In specific instances, women also help the knights establish a reputation as a good knight by asking for their service as vulnerable subjects in need of help. Important examples to this are Lancelot's arrival to save Guenevere from Meliagaunt (*Le Morte Darthur* XIX: 4), Isolde's rescue by Tristan after Palomides kidnaps her (VIII: 31) and from the leper colony she is exiled by her husband, Tristan's uncle, King Mark (VIII: 35). Yet, other less significant examples of women who only appear as catalysts with no prominent role in the story can be easily found starting from the earliest sections of the text, in particular Book III, where Pentecostal Oath is sworn, and most knights set out in quests. Two examples that illustrate the far-reaching consequences of these women's instrumentality are the episode in which Gawain accidentally beheads a young lady because she "felle over [her lover]" (III:7-66) in an attempt to protect him, and another in which he and his brother, Gaheris, get rescued by four ladies in a reversal of chivalric roles (III: 8). These events function as a catalyst for Gawain's personal journey in which he dedicates himself to fighting for ladies' sake. In the last book of the *Morte*, it is this oath the ladies caused him to make that allows Gawain's ghost to warn Arthur before the final battle.

In numerous examples such as the above, women who do not participate in fighting and whose ownership of a sword "bisemeth [...] naught" (II:1-37) in Arthur's words are always at the heart of events that result in swordfight and bloodshed, which in turn help men prove or discredit their worth as a knight and more importantly, as an honourable one. However, if we go back to the prior question of their characterization, these women are defined by their need for help. Even the ones who are ready to insult the knights like Damsel Maledisant in *The Tale of La Cote Mal Taile* or the Damsel Lynet in *The Tale of Sir Gareth* come to Arthur's court to ask for help. These women need someone to step forward for them for they have no power in the world of courtly romance where their safety is constantly in danger despite being members of the nobility. This constant threat to women is one of the reasons why the Round Table has come into existence in the first place.

However, just as not all knights can always follow the chivalric code, not all women that seem to be damsels in distress actually are; the text is interspersed with women capable of pretending to be damsels in distress for personal gain. The woman Sir Lancelot wants to help turns out to be Hellawes, the Sorceress who wants to kill him in order to preserve his corpse as an object of her affections. As we move away from women whose helplessness is instrumentalized to women who instrumentalize helplessness, Hellawes deserves special attention. First meeting Sir Lancelot in her true form as the wife of Sir Gilbert the Bastard, and telling him a knight has slain her husband and he is also wounded, she changes forms and meets Lancelot deeper in the woods as the sister of the wounded knight. This sister sends Lancelot back to her true form as Hellawes for her brother to recover a knight needs to go into Chapel Perilious and recover the sword and a piece of the bloody cloth which belonged to the now dead knight (VI:14). When Lancelot manages this quest successfully and is asked by

Hellawes to kiss her, Lancelot refuses, and this simple refusal acts as an unravelling of the sorceress's plots. In love with Lancelot for the last seven years and jealous of his love for Guenevere, Hellawes has conspired to get Lancelot killed by her kiss and preserve his embalmed corpse by her side so that "dayly [she] sholde have clypped the and kyssed the, despyte of queene Gwenyvre" (VI:15-168). The concealment of such a calculating plan of obsessive love under the guise of innocent women who are caught in the affairs of knights is indicative that powerlessness can become instrumentalized back by female characters.

However, the moment a character is feigning to be powerless, the judgment she receives for possessing any type of power through sorcery, help of another knight or seduction is the condemnation that is repeatedly expressed with the accusations of falseness. The damsel to appear at Arthur's court with the sword is the first one to be called "the falsist damesell that lyveth" (II:4 42) after Arthur's mother Igraine, who is not a damsel, is also charged with falseness (I:21). Furthermore, it is remarkable that this damsel chooses to exact revenge for herself with the help of an enchantress rather than ask a knight. The wife of Sir Phelot is likewise blamed for her husband's subsequent death for "with falshede [she] wolde have had [...] slayne [Launcelot] with treson" (VI:16-170).

In *Morte*, even women who are previously beloved and respected as ideal representatives of female conduct are at the risk of declaration of falseness as evildoers. Interestingly, the more prominent of a role a woman has in the *Morte*, the more likely she is to be perceived as a character of ambiguous role and virtue. Even Guenevere, who, for the most part, embodies the ideal of "the Queen" (Fenster xxiv; Kennedy 37) and acts as a female representative who "confirm[s] and uphold[s] the same values and standards as the Round Table knights" (Holichek 114) can find herself charged with treason following a false accusation that she poisoned a knight with no knight to defend her except Sir Bors and Lancelot. Since this event takes place prior to her affair with Lancelot becoming public, as an individual instance, it contains contradictions regarding the position even ladies like the Queen hold in a chivalric system. While her innocence is soon proven like Igraine's, the accusation of falseness in regard to being in need of help appears to be a condemning crime; both women, despite being the king's wife and mother, almost get burned at the stake. Unlike the falsely accused, most of the women who feign being in distress possess qualities that would warrant the punishment of being burned according to medieval laws, as they are revealed to possess qualities can make them classified as a figure of the enchantress or the witch.

As a result of equating the role women are traditionally expected to perform to the tools that implement the chivalric ideal of knighthood, the perception of an enchantress is rooted in the notion of power. In defining the perception of the witch when Malory was writing *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Briggs claims that "witchcraft was a theory of power; it attributed secret and unnatural power to those who were formally powerless" (285). Enchantresses are different from witches to some extent and are often portrayed as sexually attractive women who use magic for personal gain. In *King Arthur's Enchantresses*, where she looks closely at the enchantress as a figure in Arthurian texts, Larrington argues that "alluring, intelligent and independent", these women sometimes choose to "support the aims of Arthurian chivalry, at other times they can be hostile and petty-minded" (2). The most well-known figure of the enchantress is Morgan Le Fay, however, if we look at an example that fits this definition of ambiguity the best, the figure who is helpful most of the time yet capable of being dangerous through the employment of magic is Nimue. Repeatedly helping Arthur's court in many instances by utilizing her magic, she does not seem to have a problem with the chivalric ideal Arthur's court stands to represent. In return, the chivalric society the margins of which she inhabits does not show a tendency to seek out and punish her. Her help is invaluable to the Round Table and Arthur's court, just like her predecessor Lady of the Lake. The previous Lady of the Lake grants Arthur Excalibur and its scabbard which renders him invulnerable, in addition, she also raises the knight who is considered to be the flower of all knighthood, Lancelot. However, both Lady of the Lake figures are dangerous challenges to the knightly authority when they utilize their powers against the wellbeing of the chivalric order. The first Lady of the Lake's request that Arthur grant her a wish in exchange for Excalibur seems harmless, yet she requests the head of a knight. Similarly,

while it is true that Nimue's magic proves helpful to King Arthur's court and knights, she is also the one who traps Merlin under a stone, thus depriving them of Merlin's help and prophecies. As a good example of the nature of the motif of the enchantress, Nimue's ambiguous role in the text highlights that an enchantress is not instrumentalized against the chivalric order solely on the grounds of the practice of magic. Nevertheless, throughout the *Morte*, enchantresses and even a magician like Merlin remain unreliable figures. This lack of trust stems from the idea that they possess the kind of power that exists independently from the traditional manifestations of power that relies on one's gender, class, and battle skills, on which the notions of kingship, knighthood and chivalry are founded.

On the other hand, the most prominent antagonist and enchantress figure, Morgan, shifts from one extreme to another. She commits various acts that endanger the unity of the Round Table, such as encouraging regicide and sowing discord among them by making Arthur and his court question Guenevere's fidelity by sending them items as Heng points out. Among items she sends under the guise of presents are a horn from which only the wives who have been true to their husbands can drink, a shield that depicts Arthur, Guenevere, and Lancelot as "a kynge and a quene [...] and a knyght stondynge aboven them with hys one foote standynge uppon the kynges hede and the other uppon the quemys hede" (*Le Morte Darthur* IX: 41-340) to represent "kynge Arthure and que[ne] Gwenyver, and a knyght that holdith them bothe in bondage and in servage" (IX: 41-340). Yet at the same time, by the time the court and the Round Table are destroyed, she is the one who takes her mortally wounded brother to Avalon and mourns his demise and her inability to help him with the words "[a], my dere brother! Why [ha]ve ye taryed so longe frome me? Alas thys wounde on youre hede hath caught ouermoche coulde!" (XXI: 5-716), implying were it in her power, Morgan would put her magic to use to save him.

Similar to the other enchantress figures, Morgan is not hated for her magical powers from the start. Described by Arthur as "honoured" and "worshipped" "more than alle [his] kyn" and "more [...] trusted [...] than [his] wif and alle [his] kyn aftir" (IV: 11 88), Morgan starts her existence in *Morte* as fair a lady as any might be, and she is a friend to her brother's court until she commits inexplicable acts of treason in succession. By giving Excalibur and its sheath, which Arthur entrusted to her, to her paramour Sir Accolon, she aims to use another knight to kill Arthur and usurp the throne in a scheme that involves killing her husband as well. This act of treason is defined by her status as an enchantress right from the start, for it does not merely involve regicide and fratricide. Unlike guiding her lover to do the deed for him by solely relying on seduction, she does not devise to slay Arthur through the brute power of Sir Accolon. Refusing complete reliance on a knight-errant, she plans to achieve it "by hir false crauftis" (IV: 11-88). As for what these crafts entail, our only clue is the passing mention that she was sent to a school at a nunnery where she learned "so moche that she was a grete clerke of nygromancye" (I: 2-5). By putting her husband, Uriens, in a vulnerable position to kill him, and Arthur and her paramour in a situation where they fall asleep under enchantment, she crafts the whole plot in a way that ensures the clash of Arthur and Accolon. By dispatching a maid in disguise to Arthur and a dwarf to Accolon, she sends the real Excalibur to Accolon. Yet strangely, expecting she would feel secure with the immunity Excalibur would give to Accolon, she nevertheless feigns love and fidelity to Arthur by sending him "a swerde lyke unto Excaliber and the scawberde" (IV: 8-85) with the message "She sendis here youre swerde for grete love" (IV: 8-85), which only strengthens her status as a traitor through magic and deceit. Here, the descriptor used to depict her is once again *false* and she is associated with the second sword which was "counterfete and brutyll and false" (IV: 8-85). Considering its previous usage to repeatedly refer to dishonourable people, this repetition of false looks down upon Morgan's deception is harsh.

This event begs the question of whether magic and enchantments are viewed as equally evil in possession of everyone because the difference between the Lady of the Lake giving the sword to Arthur and Morgan giving it to Accolon is that Morgan does not utilize her magic to strengthen the claims of men who have a more socially legitimate claim to power. After all, Arthur's possession of Excalibur and the scabbard in the first place is through a magical encounter, and the immunity Accolon steals from Arthur in this instance, which leads to his

win until Arthur gets Excalibur back, is what Arthur possesses as an advantage in all of his battles. Morgan also plans to "sle hir hosbande kynge Uryence lyghtely" (IV: 11-88), and this instance highlights the distrust women can garner quite easily. The attempt is thwarted by her son Uwain, who does not hesitate to say: "A fende, what wolt thou do? And thou were nat my modir with this swerde I sholde smyte of thyne hede / A [...] men seyde that Merlyon was begotyn of a fende / but I may sey an erthely fende bare me." (IV:13 90). While it is possible this might not be the first instance Morgan acted with animosity toward her husband, her son Uwain's treatment of her, which associates her with evil before considering anything else, is very similar to the treatment of Guenevere based on the assumption that she poisoned a knight or Igraine, whose ignorance is thought to be falseness.

Cynthia Scott remarks on the complexity of Morgan's paradoxical portrayal as a woman belonging to the same gender as the unnamed damsels who need rescuing but exhibits an active presence similar or challenging of even the most masculine characters (2-3). A metaphorical presence in the male domain is what she exercises following her failure to kill Arthur. Failing to steal Excalibur, a symbol of masculinity, through both its association as a phallic symbol in psychoanalytic theories and its actual use in warfare, she takes the scabbard, which shapes the rest of the events, including the final battle Arthur has with his son, Mordred, by stripping him of his invulnerability. After such a trespass with lasting ramifications, she turns herself to stone in order to hide from Arthur's men, a passive, unmoving object that might be likened to the more traditional role she is expected to fulfil. Yet her guise of passivity is only temporary. Unlike the majority of women in the text, she continues to trespass into the masculine territory as an antagonistic agent by residing over the castle Arthur has given her at one point, where she plans her attacks with men performing her deeds as if she were a feudal lord.

From that point onwards, she continuously tries to sow seeds of discord in everyone's lives if they are important to Arthur, and the only exception to that, Sir Lancelot, receives his share of enmity when the lines between Morgan the Enchantress and Morgan the Seductress blur. In her interaction with knights, she displays traits that would qualify her under the trope of the seductress. Beforehand, it is implied that Morgan's relationship with Accolon is founded on her bewitchment of the knight. In another instance, she and three other queens see Lancelot sleeping "alle armed undir an appil-tre" (*Le Morte Darthur* VI: 3-151) and "began to stryve for that knyght, and every of hem seyde they wolde have hym to hir love" (VI: 3-151). Morgan provides a magical solution to this dispute which consists of enchanting Lancelot in order to kidnap him to her castle, and afterwards, forcing him into choosing one of them. This does not go according to plan, and Lancelot chooses death over any of these four women, on the basis of their characters "for [they] be false enchaunters" (VI: 3-152). Yet, even this transgressive act on the part of Morgan and the other three queens cannot stand on its own; instead, it functions as a catalyst for future events. It is during this incidence that we first witness that people around the court are aware of Lancelot's feelings for Guenevere through the explicit acknowledgement of it by the women. Similarly, Lancelot compares their falseness with Guenevere, who "is the treweste lady unto her lorde lyvynge" (VI: 3-152) in an attempt to cast away doubts that are clearly already in place regarding Guenevere and his relationship. From that point onwards, instead of gaining Lancelot's love, she declares him an enemy that she sends thirty of her men to ambush and kill Sir Lancelot. In other instances, she kidnaps and attempts to harm him multiple times.

Another figure who combines the enchantress and the seductress in her person yet dies from unrequited love or lust like other women who are portrayed as honest maidens is Hellawess the Sorceress, whose encounter with Lancelot has been described above when detailing her instrumentalization of helplessness. Luring Lancelot into Chapel Perilous, where he would have died if he had not refused to kiss her, this witch aims to gain his love through the preservation of his embalmed corpse beside her as a lover since she is aware of his feelings for Guenevere. This is a direct yet inverted parallel to other figures who are spurned and die from it. Yet, in contrast to Hellawes, the infatuation of these women with knights is not a direct extension of lust, and their untimely deaths, while upsetting, serve to highlight the knights' loyalty to their lovers or, the inverse, their devotion to knighthood. King Faramon of France's daughter dies "for sorrou" because Tristan does not return her feelings,

although her letters were "peteous" (VIII: 5-234). Similarly, Elaine of Astolat (before her death, called Elaine le Blank), dies for Lancelot's love after telling him she must die for it unless he becomes her husband or paramour. Having nurtured Lancelot back to health, a role that is the exact opposite of Hellawes's, Elaine gives him a token from her to wear while fighting. Since she takes Lancelot' acceptance to wear only her colours as a sign of love, she dies of disillusionment when he explains to her that he cannot be her lover in any way. While this event in itself appears to be centred on Elaine's feelings for Lancelot, her feelings and the subsequent confusion that arises as a result of Lancelot wearing the token she has given him, and his refusal of her love, function as plot points that emphasize Lancelot's love for Guenevere and his own qualities. In failing to be the seductress, Elaine falls into the category of a damsel in distress who is fondly remembered. For her to not be an antagonist to the symbol of chivalry in the figure of Lancelot, her love is required to be thwarted, thus leading to her early death.

Known less than the other Elaine (of Astolat) in the present day, Elaine of Corbin, employs a more dominant role in various stories as the mother of Galahad and the bearer of the Grail. She walks a fine line between all three tropes of characterization as a woman spurned yet capable of seducing Lancelot through the employment of magic. Elizabeth Sklar claims that Elaine of Corbin's more sexually charged, and magically deceptive portrayal made her a less conventional and inadvertently less desirable character than Elaine of Astolat (59). Yet, she still conventionally furthers Lancelot's and other knights' narrative by leading to Lancelot's falling out with Guenevere and consequent madness, in addition to the role she plays in the Grail Quest by giving birth to Galahad. Regardless, the fact that she makes her maid use magic to get Lancelot into her bed twice, and that this magic functions as a deception spell remains. The solution Malory utilizes in order to portray Elaine as a woman of ambiguous morality rather than purely malicious is the inclusion of the prophecy of Elaine's father that foretells Galahad's birth from their union while for a contemporary readership, her actions in themselves are worthy of analysis and criticism.

This intermingling of roles in Elaine is not an exception; Wyatt argues that despite the additional attributes that might make her appear enigmatic and unconventional, Elaine of Corbin's function is similar to most female characters in the *Morte* in that it creates opportunities for the participation of women in chivalric society (115). In addition, for most female characters, their moral and social ambiguity lies in the added power they achieve through the role of an enchantress or seductress over the knight. In Elaine's case, she reflects that ambiguity when she causes Lancelot to kiss her, right after he threatens her with his sword, once he learns she is pregnant.

Furthermore, like in the character of Elaine, participation in adultery or seduction and the use of magic are often in direct correlation. Of the other two women who engage in adulterous affairs while being held in high regard as ideals of womanhood, Isolde's adultery is closely linked to magic. Although she and Tristan express affection for each other, their relationship takes an adulterous turn after they drink the love potion Dame Brusen prepared for her and King Mark. While Isolde is adulterous, the inclusion of magic puts her on equal footing with Lancelot or Igraine, and to some extent, renders her incapable of changing her status as the seductress. Also, King Mark's cruelty and her overall desirable qualities as a lady who continually needs rescuing by Tristan protect some of her conventional standing as a damsel in distress.

The second and most pivotal pair to the narrative that Isolde counts among the four lovers within this land is doubtless Queen Guenevere and Sir Lancelot. Until her partial departure from that role through her relationship with Lancelot, Guenevere is the culmination of the courtly feminine ideal of a queen as the damsel "moste valyaunte" (*Le Morte Darthur* III: 1-59). As the lady "fayryst on lyve" (III: 1-59), she governs over the justice in Arthur's court as a force that regulates knights' adherence to the principles of fairness to the ladies and the weak. For the most part of Malory's text, the nature of the relationship between these two remains unclear, and Lancelot always attempts to portray their attachment as that of a queen and her knight so much that he deliberately fights for the causes of other women to dissipate suspicion. Yet, the implications that start by the acknowledgment of their bond by Morgan and the other three queens when they kidnap him reach full clarity in the story of the birth of Galahad, which at the same time reveals that Guenevere and Lancelot's relationship has

a sexual dimension to it. The love he feels for Guenevere is the reason behind his refusal to marry any other lady, not even Elaine of Astolat, who displays a pure but consuming love for him; or Elaine of Corbin, who, while deceptive, is acknowledged as the mother of Lancelot's son. This refusal and the difficulty they experience hiding their affair lead Lancelot's rivals, Mordred and Agravain, to want to unearth their affair if they want to ruin Lancelot. His relationship with Guenevere, Elaine of Astolat, Elaine of Corbin, and Morgan's efforts are instrumental in this discovery, but it is the direct action of male characters that proves capable of bringing about a change.

Guenevere's instrumentality is emphasized in the central yet passive role she plays in the events that unfold. While after the Battle of Camlann and the death of Arthur, she takes the veil as a nun who takes "grete penaunce" (XXI: 7-717) and remains viewed as "noble a quene" (XX: 8-683) who does not deserve "a shameful ende" (XX: 8-683), it is the punishment she is sentenced to for adultery that causes the collapse of the chivalric order of the Round Table, described as "the fayrest felyshyp of noble knyghtes that ever hylde Crystyn kynge togydirs" (XX: 9-685). This collapse of the notion of chivalry as the knights' war with each other is the main source of the unrest that allows Mordred to seize the throne. The revelation of their tryst is lamented by the narrator as the event by which "the floure of chyvalry of [alle] the worlde was destroyed and slayne" (XX: 1-673), highlighting the impact adultery and seduction can have on communities based on patriarchal ideals of chivalry. Within the narrative, Arthur similarly blames Agravain and Mordred for the evil they harbour. In the case of Guenevere and Lancelot, while the narrative does not condemn them, once again, what proves disastrous to the chivalric establishment that is embodied by the Round Table is not the acts of the female character but their far-reaching consequences. In addition, the reason why the narrative is sympathetic to the plight of Guenevere is because she is viewed capable of performing an important function in the fast-dissolving society of Arthur's court and kingdom. Through her act of penance in a reversal of the role she has played in both the Grail Quest as an obstacle that stopped Lancelot from achieving it, and in the war that ensued, she restores some of the values the Round Table sought to protect and to propagate. Kennedy explains the role Guenevere plays in the end of *Le Morte* as serving as an example in repentance, thus helping Lancelot achieve what he could not during the Grail Quest (42-3). No longer a lady in distress who needs to be rescued by Lancelot or his lover, Guenevere still plays an instrumental role in the fate of one of the central protagonists of the narrative.

Morgause, who gives birth to Mordred after an incestuous affair of which she was unaware with her brother Arthur, is yet another figure of the seductress or "the Adulterous Queen" in Wyatt's terms (139), yet she does not receive any of the rather positive treatment both Guenevere and Isolde receive. While the revelation of Guenevere's affair is disastrous, the enabler of its revelation is someone born of Morgause's adultery. Her position as the mother of Mordred, who not only unearths that Guenevere and Lancelot are not faithful, but usurps the throne, portrays her in a more negative light. Since both Arthur and Morgause are unaware they are siblings at the point of their affair, yet they know such an affair would still be adulterous because Morgause is married, "her willing participation in the conception of Mordred" establishes a background for Mordred's wickedness (Wyatt 140). The figure of the seductress who willingly participates in sexual intercourse is further at odds with the chivalric notions of morality than other figures whom the text represents with extenuating circumstances. Igraine, who lies with someone out of wedlock out of ignorance and trickery, Elaine of Corbin, whose seduction, and in contemporary terms rape, of someone is first prophesized by a knight and no less her father, or even Guenevere whose loyalty to her husband after his demise and the function she plays in Lancelot's reformation act as a redemptive force, are portrayed as women who lack, yet not solely through their own fault.

To conclude, this article has set out to explore the role women play in *Le Morte Darthur* by reading numerous examples of women whose existence serves to establish the chivalric ideal of knighthood through which male characters define themselves. The means used for this was a close reading of the reoccurring female characters according to the tropes of the conventional damsel in distress, the seductress, and the enchantress. Furthermore, this article proposed that instead of the representation of a trope through a single character, Malory offers a varied portrayal of women who employ these traits with different levels of moral ambiguity or shaping

force in the text. While the trope of the damsel in distress constitutes the majority of female portrayals from unnamed ones to its contribution to the overall portrayal of important characters such as Guenevere and Isolde, the enchantress' existence as someone who possesses power that is distinct from the traditional manifestation of it makes her unconventional and a potential threat. Furthermore, women who embody the motif of the seductress function as catalysts to disastrous events or big changes, and the fact that in most cases, the magic of the enchantress is what enables the seductress to operate connects the two in their position as threats to the chivalric community with established power structures from which women are barred.

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Hey, Hey, Hey, It's Fat Albert: Bill Cosby's Junk-yard Paradise

David Livingstone

Abstract: The children's television programme *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids* was, along with *Sesame Street*, a pioneer project blending entertainment with edifying educational content. Launched in the early 1970s, this animated show, mixed with live scenes involving Bill Cosby's commentary, opened up a whole new world to child viewers. Set in inner city Philadelphia, with many of the scenes in a junk yard, the programme not only acquainted the child viewers with African-American culture, music and language, but also provided useful lessons on a range of still very much relevant topics: racism, sexism, bullying, teasing, etc. This article article primarily focus on the first set of series which ran in the first half of the 1970s, which corresponds to the author's own exposure to the show.

Keywords: *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*, Children's Television, Bill Cosby, African-American Representation

Introduction

The animated television series for children from the 1970s and 1980s, *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*, was the brainchild and project of the American comedian, actor and, up until recently, imprisoned sex offender Bill Cosby. Bill Cosby, once known as America's Dad, is now a social pariah, after being accused and convicted of multiple rapes and assaults. There seems no reason to question Cosby's guilt, although some supporters refuse to acknowledge the obvious facts. I will not, however, delve into the question of his moral character. I believe we can separate the art from the man, as we have time and again throughout history. I will also not discuss here Cosby's most well-known television creation *The Cosby Show* which was broadcast from 1984 to 1992 and which was the most popular programme in America for five years running. I would like to instead focus on an animated (for the most part) Saturday morning cartoon which I watched religiously as a child, *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids* which ran from 1972 to 1976. The show continued under a slightly different name, becoming more overtly outspoken in terms of the politics and educational message, as *The New Fat Albert Show* from 1979 to 1981 and as *The Adventures of Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids* from 1984 to 1985. Although the premise and format is more or less the same for all 8 series, I would like to focus on the first several series from the early 1970s as they correspond with my own initial viewing and childhood. *Fat Albert* was loosely based on Cosby's own childhood in Philadelphia in the 1940s. The stories revolve around a group of prepubescent African-American boys, spending most of their time in a junk-yard. Each episode is framed by a live action sequence with Cosby introducing the topic and bringing the sequence to a close. Each episode also concluded with a song, supposedly played by the children, connected once again with the theme of the show.

As a middle-class white child living in a small Midwestern town, when the show was broadcast, the cartoon was truly revolutionary. *Fat Albert* opened up a fascinating imaginative world, the urban landscape of which, inhabited by an eccentric cast of characters, captivated both myself and millions of my peers. I will argue that Cosby's project was of great importance, not only for teaching the particular moral lessons of each episode, but also for allowing the viewers to make friends and identify with this foreign world full of grotesque, but nevertheless lovable, characters. *Fat Albert* both normalized and familiarized African-American youth culture for several generations of children and even adults.

Prior to this programme, Cosby had achieved fame as a stand-up comedian, which is where the first reference to the character of Fat Albert actually comes from in a skit included on his record *Revenge* from 1967.

In the piece, Cosby describes a childhood game (later depicted a number of times in the cartoon) called "buck buck", involving boys jumping on one another to see who can bear the most weight. Albert is described as "the baddest buck buck breaker in the world [...] [He] weighed 2,000 pounds, and he'd kick the door to his house open and you could hear him say 'Hey, hey, hey!' We built a little ramp for him to walk down so he could build up speed because he couldn't hardly run" (Cosby, "Revenge"). The line "hey, hey, hey!", voiced by Cosby for Fat Albert, soon became one of the most recognizable phrases in America.

Cosby also makes reference to other members of Fat Albert's Junkyard Gang in his stand-up routines and on his records including Weird Harold, his brother Russell and of course he himself, Bill. The gang is colourful to say the least. Fat Albert, despite being greatly overweight, is athletic, intelligent and a natural leader, as well as being the moral conscience of the group. Cosby himself described his main hero as follows: "[He] was invented by me because in those days, the '60s, a fat person was stereotyped to be someone always giggling, laughing, and lacking in any kind of strength enough to take charge" (Hamblin, n.p.). Bill is of course based on Cosby himself and is arguably the least striking member. Russell, based on Cosby's actual little brother, is short and chubby, but very much able to stand up for himself, being able to put the older boys, especially Rudy, in their place with his sharp wit. Mushmouth has a pronounced speaking impediment, speaking a variation of so-called Ubbi Dubbi (Hey-buh Man-be). Cosby also commented on this distinct character and his manner of speech: "[W]e also had a fellow [Mushmouth], and we showed how having a speech impediment, too, a kid with a problem—within their own fellows who could understand them, they all felt good with and around each other" (Hamblin, n.p.). We never get to see Dumb Donald's actual face as it is always covered by a hat, with holes provided for his eyes. Weird Harold is the tallest of the bunch, while Bucky has a pronounced overbite. Finally, there is Rudy the trouble-maker of the gang and the snappiest dresser. All of the members of the so-called Junkyard Gang play a home-made instrument in the band, whose topical song always brings each episode to a close.

The opening sequence was the same for each episode with the theme song and Bill Cosby's appearance as the moderator and master of ceremonies:

> Hey, hey, hey! Here's Fat Albert And I'm gonna sing a song for you
> And Bill's gonna tell you a thing or two You'll have some fun now
> With me and all the gang Learning from each other
> While we do our thing
>
> Na, na, na, gonna have a good time
> Hey, hey, hey!
> Na, na, na, gonna have a good time
> Hey, hey, hey! (Cosby, "Opening Sequence")

As the introductory song fades out, we see Cosby usually fiddling around with something at the junk-yard. He launches the particular show with the following lines: "This is Bill Cosby coming at you with music and fun. If you're not careful, you may learn something before it's done! Hey, hey, hey!" (Cosby, "Opening Sequence").

The first year of the show in 1972 covered a wide range of topical concerns including teasing a short, extremely small boy, Peewee in the episode *The Runt*. The episode opens up with the boys in the gang calling sides for a game of basketball, a ritual which is inevitably painful for the less athletic kids in the group. Peewee, who no one even notices at first due to his diminutive stature, asks if he can play, only to be turned down by Albert and ridiculed by Rudy (the least tactful of the boys): "[B]ut if we need somebody two feet three, we'll call you, ha, ha, ha" (Cosby, "The Runt"). The other boys join in the laughter and Peewee walks off in obvious humiliation. He is finally allowed to play after an injury to Rudy, only to lead his team to ignominious defeat. The following day, Albert invites him to practice baseball in order to find out what he's good at, only for everything to go wrong once again. Peewee is the hero in the end when the boys are challenged by another

neighbourhood gang to an American football match. The ball rolls into a hole in a tenement wall and the boys' pet duck, who has gone to fetch it, gets stuck. Peewee is the only one who can fit in the hole and ends up rescuing both the duck and the ball, to the great relief of the leader of the rival gang who was afraid he would get punished for losing his bigger brother's football. He thanks Peewee as follows: "Peewee you are really cool man. I ain't ever gonna make fun of you little dudes again, short is beautiful man" (Cosby, "The Runt"). This is of course a variant on the "black is beautiful" slogan from the 1960s which was aimed at developing pride amongst African Americans about their skin colour and culture. The refrain from the final song aptly brings the message home.

> Don't look down on a small guy.
> Don't look down on a small fry.
> You just might be surprised, yeah.
> There's a pretty big man inside. (Cosby, "The Runt")

Another episode, *The Stranger*, revolves around a new girl in the neighbourhood and school, Donald's cousin Betty. She is from the American south and is initially made fun of for her accent and associated with certain 'hayseed' stereotypes. Upon hearing about her from Donald, the gang begins making faces and bring up various caricatures about both girls and southerners.

> Bill: Them dudes in the south, man, are really dumb, they don't know nothing about talking good English right or anything.
> Rudy: And you know what else? Them cats from the south always have a stupid grin on their face. (Cosby, "The Stranger")

As he says this the camera pans on Mushmouth with a silly expression on his face and the irony of the boys criticising someone else for incorrect English is certainly not lost on the viewer. The boys once again literally learn their lesson (in this case about King Arthur) with Betty's help and end up becoming friends, with the exception of stubborn Rudy. The song has a delightful mixture of lyrics and visuals.

> When you meet someone new, they might seem strange to you, cause they're different.
> But that's something you can't condemn, cause you're just as strange to them, just as different.
> Think of all your friends, they were strangers too when you first met them. (Cosby, "The Stranger")

During the last line quoted above, the distinct, extremely different, faces of the boys are shown, underlining the point of the song. As the following lines are sung, the viewer sees the gang shuffling along with their distinct strut only to have their hands transformed into completely identical brown balloon heads.

> Wouldn't it be really strange if all were the same and not different.
> What if we all had the same face, the same name, the same taste and not different.
> How said it would be, not to have your own identity. (Cosby, "The Stranger")

The episode gently but firmly teaches not only tolerance, but celebrates eccentricity and diversity.

Another interesting episode touching on some similar issues is entitled *Four Eyes* and concerns a boy Heywood who is too embarrassed to wear glasses. Due to his short-sightedness, he is ridiculed for being clumsy. When he finally overcomes his fear and gets glasses, he turns out to be extremely good at sports, amongst other things. "Heywood had the last laugh. And what made it even better was that he found out that glasses opened his eyes in a lot of ways. And his glasses opened the gang's eyes too so the kids have worked up a song that tells

you more about it" (Cosby, "Four Eyes"). The concluding song for the episode is not only witty with its amusing word play, but also encapsulates the theme of the episode succinctly:

> He was a clumsy Humpty Dumpty, sitting on a wall.
> Even when he stood still, he tripped, stumbled and fall.
> A walking disaster, he bumped into everything, but since he got his glasses, look what's happening.
> Four eyes, four eyes, you're the coolest kid in school.
> Four eyes, four eyes, we wanna be just like you. (Cosby, "Four Eyes")

The episode, *The Tom Boy,* is particularly progressive for the day, questioning traditional gender stereotypes. The episode introduces Penny, a new girl in the neighbourhood, who beats the boys in various sports, only for Fat Albert to defeat her in turn in the traditionally female realm of the kitchen in a baking contest. The episode kicks off with Cosby darning a sock:

> I supposed you're wondering what a grown man is doing knitting a sock. Well it's my thang and I enjoy it. The only part that's really wrong with it is that I don't know how to finish this thing. The main thing is whatever you like to do, you should do it. If you dig it, do it. It's not a sissy for a man to knit or cook. It's not wrong for a girl to like tough sports like baseball or even football. So why is everyone getting so uptight because Fat Albert loves to cook. (Cosby, "The Tom Boy")

The boys are won over in the end and celebrate Penny's accomplishments in their song:

> In baseball she can really hit. When she's pitching well that's it.
> In football she runs like the wind. And I tell you it's embarrassing.
> How she learn to do that? She's a girl.
> She's a tomboy and she can't be caught.
> She's a tomboy gives it all she's got.
> She's a tomboy believe it or not.
> She's a tomboy, she's a champ. (Cosby, "The Tom Boy")

Season two gets even more topical dealing with increasingly controversial topics including drug dealing and divorce, amongst other things. *Mom or Pop* revolves around Flora, a new girl at the school, who becomes immediately suspicious as she keeps to herself. The boys find out her parents are separated and she is struggling to come to terms with it. In order to cheer her up, they literally give her the royal treatment, naming her Miss Junk-yard USA and providing her with various attempts at entertainment. Although they succeed in cheering her up, they end up overhearing another argument between her parents and Flora ends up running away on her birthday. While her parents and even the police are out searching for her, the boys find her back at the junk-yard clubhouse. Her parents are relieved and begin to think about the consequences of their behaviour. The final song seems to be aimed, for a change, at grown-ups instead of children.

> All that fussing and fighting, it won't solve a thing.
> Hurt and pain is all it will bring.
> Don't you ever think about the ones who really love you and how it hurts when you cause a scene. You can be together and still be miles apart. You can be so here and still be so far. (Cosby, "Mom or Pop")

The episode *How the West was Lost* tackles prejudice directed at another minority. Yet another new child in town, Johnny, is a Hopi Native American who does not fit the stereotypes from the movies with the "savage Indians" and "good guys" the boys have seen. Although he shows the Junk-yard Gang he can climb and swim,

Rudy (the Doubting Thomas of the group) is still sceptical about Johnny being a real Indian as he does not fit the stereotyped images. Rudy initially teases him incessantly:

> Rudy: Yeah I got a test for you and what I want to know is are you an Indian or are you a chicken?
> Johnny: Ok Rudy what's with you?
> Rudy: If you're a real Indian like you say, do a rain dance and make it rain.
> Johnny: Ah Rudy, the rain dance is just a ceremony, dancing won't make it rain.
> Rudy: See.
> Johnny: But my Dad says he can make it rain.
> Rudy: oh yeah, how?
> Johnny: By washing a car. (Cosby, "How Was the West Lost")

Johnny not only puts Rudy in his place, but also reminds the viewers that Native Americans also spend time doing mundane 'ordinary' tasks associated with city life, such as washing one's car, with no horse in sight. Cosby brings the message home with his commentary:

> Can you believe this? Rudy actually has the gang doubting that Johnny is a real Indian. You can't blame kids too much for being confused. We've all been fed a lot of baloney about our Native Americans so when we're finally given the straight story, we find it hard to accept and that's the trouble with having a fixed mind, too many of them are fixed wrong. (Cosby, "How Was the West Lost")

The kids finally realize they have been misled by all the stereotypes about Native Americans and go to the library to read some books which are more objective, and this is years before the publication of 'corrective' texts such as Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. They also make friends again with Johnny before he moves away. Cosby and his team of writers were quite ahead of their times and progressive in drawing attention to the manner in which Native Americans have been and still are stereotyped, caricatured and pigeon-holed. The programme, as a whole, was obviously combating equally pernicious views concerning African Americans.

Although originally part of the second version of the show *The New Fat Albert Show* from 1979 and later versions, mention should also be made of the revolutionary Brown Hornet character. Much has been made of late about how the recent critically acclaimed film *Black Panther* has finally depicted black superheroes and provided African American children (and others of course) with a role model, someone to admire and look up to, someone who actually looks like them. This was anticipated, however, over forty years ago with the cartoon within the Fat Albert show involving the African-American superhero the Brown Hornet, a variation of the Green Hornet television show and hero.[1] A comic book treatment of this hero is mentioned back in the earlier series and Cosby also made use of the Green Hornet, in a different form, in an earlier radio show. The full-blown cartoon segment of the show, beginning with "it's not a bird, it's not a bee, it's the brown hornet", ended up replacing the closing songs by the Junkyard band and served a similar function, mirroring the dilemma dealt with in the main sequence involving the Junkyard gang. Although the Brown Hornet cartoon is not particularly impressive in terms of animation and story-line, it makes a very powerful impact as we witness the Junkyard gang glued to the television in their clubhouse, proud and inspired to have a hero to watch and emulate who shares their skin colour. This positive role-model was all the more powerful when one recalls the long history of derogatory portrayals of African-Americans in popular culture, most famously/infamously in the Blackface Minstrelsy tradition.

[1] Green Hornet was a masked superhero who was the subject of a radio programme starting in 1936, a television series in the 1960s with the legendary martial artist Bruce Lee in the cast and several more recent films.

Conclusion

Although obviously very much didactic in style, *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids* does not come across as something "educational" and merely instructive. The urban cool prevented the message from coming across as too preachy. This fairy-tale junkyard world made children around the country feel less isolated and weird, no matter their colour, body type or gender. The show preached tolerance for difference and dealt with a range of problematic topics which children and adolescents were and still are very much concerned with: obesity, speech impediments, shortness, ugliness, gender stereotypes, racism, alcohol abuse, drugs, divorce, bullying, etc. The television programme also made African American inner city culture attractive, even in a junkyard. Bill Cosby actually chose the show as the subject of his doctoral dissertation and wrote: "No other show previously on television has concerned itself so much with identifying with black children. For the first time black children have the opportunity to see themselves through the animated characters of Fat Albert" (Cosby 1976, 67). It also served to reverse and/or correct established stereotypes associated with black people: crime, violence, drug use, absent father, unemployment, lack of interest in education. Cosby further argued in his dissertation that the show served to "establish in the minds of millions of television viewers and educators that black children are not by nature stupid or lazy; they are not hoodlums, they are not junkies. They are you. They are me. The fact that the 'Kids' are black is neither minimized nor exploited. They are people. Their problems are universal" (Cosby 1976, 67). This message certainly sunk in with the children I grew up with, but L. Wayne Hicks points out interestingly that, "[i]ronically, Cosby's messages sank in more with middle class and lower-income white children than they did with lower-income black children, according to a study CBS conducted in 1974" (n.p.). This is puzzling to say the least, but it might be right, perhaps because African American children looked elsewhere for their entertainment, enjoying shows which were not so close to home. David Kamp also points out the possible mixed feelings the show evoked with African-American child viewers: "The program's goofiness belied the fact that it was about poor black kids whose real-life analogs weren't so carefree" (169). This could very well be the case, but the show definitely pioneered the exploration of previously "taboo" themes, which were very much an issue among the African-American community.

Personally, the closing sequence was always my favourite with the gang jamming on the home-made/ready-made instruments they found at hand. It seemed to be saying that anyone can be a musician, even if you could not afford the fanciest, newest brand and type. You could improvise and make up songs based on your own life experiences. The show also instilled a love of language, with many of the lines still sticking with me up until the present: "[H]ey, hey it's Fat Albert", the Ubbi Dubbi "language" of Mushmouth, the amusing and witty insults and put-downs and the poetic nicknames given to the characters. The show was one of the first to popularize African American slang and culture among the mainstream white culture and arguably paved the path for a range of sitcoms with primarily African-American casts which debuted in the 1970s (*The Jeffersons*, *Good Times*) and of course the hugely popular *The Cosby Show* and *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* in the 1980s and 1990s. Bill Cosby may have become a well-deserved social pariah, but Fat Albert lives on, at least in the present author's imagination, "Hey, Hey, Hey".

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Colonial Remnants and the Commoditization of Desire in Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*

Can Özgü

Abstract: Colonial remnants refer to the remains of structures, institutions, landscaping projects, socio-cultural establishments, and various other formations utilized in consolidating colonial hegemony over a colonized nation. The term, however, calls to question whether they remain as mere reminders of colonial rule, stripped of their essence, or still carry with them the underlying forces that shifted modes of existence in the spaces they occupied upon the achievement of independence and the formation of a nation-state. The role of these remnants consequently calls into question if the parameters of a true "post-colonialism" have been achieved in a world of neocolonial exploitation. Both Shyam Selvadura's *Funny Boy* and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* are layered works that contain encounters with colonial remnants where an interplay of desire and class engages with the power of these institutions, as well as the complexities arising from these engagements. This article will attempt to provide an analysis of the engagements thereof, whether they are made in moments of defiant resistance, undermining irony, or in the dangerous unawareness of class consciousness.

Key words: Postcolonialism, Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Postcolonial Literature, Shyam Selvadurai, Bapsi Sidhwa, *Funny Boy*, *Cracking India*, Novel, Sri Lanka, India

Within Western colonial history, imperial and colonial forces (specifically focusing on England), have created structures or institutions that carry their presence constituted by not only their military strength, but socio-economic sensibilities. These structures can be in the form of sculptures or names that are placed in central positions that oversee populated areas with the aesthetic sensibilities of the colonizing force. Schools modelled upon an English education system and churches meant to veer a nation's youth and posterity towards internalizing colonial ideologies are even more active in their role in establishing colonial hegemony. We can question whether colonial institutions and structures still maintain their literal and symbolic presence or become mere fossils of a history of empires and dominion. In "Signs Taken for Wonders" Homi Bhabha writes that "the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference" (150), and while his main example is the English book, his argument can indeed apply to every institutionalizing colonial effort from schools to gardens. It is within that line of questioning that I turn to examples of postcolonial literature with the purpose of analyzing the presence of these colonial remnants.

Colonial forces, whether they express their intent through militant conquest, or through the guise of protection and free trade, interact with the nations they colonize in ways that shift modes of existence as they effectively disseminate their socio-economic values along with their cultural practices. While I am not referring to the possibility of a "state of nature" before contact with a colonial power, I am acknowledging a certain shift in the way colonial values affect the nations and peoples they colonize, which we can see from the fact that foreign embassies, military encampments, and schools serve as microcosms of the foreign, in this case colonizing, nation. I would like to present a reading of Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* that focuses on the after-effects of colonial capitalism and how moments of sexual desire and intimacy provides for attempts at resistance through a reading of the microcosms of colonial nation-states, or the

remnants of those microcosms from past colonial experiences. There are interesting parallels between the two novels, as they both utilize the "naive perspective" to expose the reader to a history of colonization and the rise of ethnic tensions. The two novels create a point of comparison through which we can see the interconnection between capitalism and desire in the postcolonial state, whether it is after the state is formed (*Funny Boy*) or in the process of formation (*Cracking India*). We can claim that they present features that are coded in the traditional sense of a *bildungsroman* yet subvert that tradition in the ways Lisa Lowe discusses in the fifth chapter of her work *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*. A reading of the two texts with a focus on the capitalist undertones related to the microcosms of the colonizing forces can enlighten us to those parallels as well as differences, and resistance is manifest not only as a move against a colonizing military power, but as an indirect opposition to, or awareness of neocolonial capitalism.

Funny Boy and Desire as a Form of Resistance

One would expect to approach an analysis of Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* as a coming-of-age novel or *bildungsroman* to carry on chronologically; step-by-step in a manner that is characteristic of said genres, tracing the development of an individual. Several of the analyses included here from Andrew Lesk to Tariq Jazeel and Gayatri Gopinath, begin at Arjie's home with the "Pigs Can't Fly" chapter, and end at the "The Best School of All" as Arjie tries to negotiate his sexual, ethnic, and national identity within each space. In contrast, beginning the argument from "The Best School of All" chapter informs us as to how the Queen Victoria Academy, operates in a specific kind of subject formation which consequently informs on the mechanisms of domesticity and the household. Through an Althusserian analysis of Ideological State Apparatuses, we can see how the Queen Victoria Academy becomes implicated in a certain cyclical ideological entity that includes Arjie's home as well as the family hotel. Althusser claims that:

> Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly *by ideology*, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if ultimately, but only ultimately, this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic. (There is no such thing as a purely ideological apparatus.) Thus Schools and Churches use suitable methods of punishment, expulsion, selection, etc., to 'discipline' not only their shepherds, but also their flocks. The same is true of the Family....The same is true of the cultural IS Apparatus (censorship, among other things), etc. (145)

What we can see within this analysis is the potential web of relations between colonialism represented by the remnant of the Queen Victoria Academy, neocolonial exploitation represented by the Paradise Beach Hotel, and a patriarchal heteronormativity that is forced upon Arjie throughout the spaces of the home and the academy. The home and academy as Ideological State Apparatuses present their repressive potential as Arjie's is initially expelled from his mother's room as well as the space of the girl's game of Bride-Bride, and later physically punished by the Academy's principle, Black Tie. Even though the Queen Victoria Academy is a later episode of Arjie's life in Sri Lanka, we can note how its existence forged generations of men that perpetuated a version of Western masculinity that would result in Arjie's father sending him there.

In his essay "Ambivalence at the Site of Authority: Desire and Difference in *Funny Boy*", Andrew Lesk claims that "new nations, especially those either adapting to or throwing off the vestiges of colonialism, often reference conservative ideas about male prerogatives (closely wedded to masculinity) and heterosexuality that might result in a strong and procreative country, not only in racial strength but in the social strata" (31-2). Strength and procreativity in this sense, is not just limited to reproductive values, but to economic growth as well, which creates a bond between said "conservative ideas about male prerogatives" and financial gain. The role of the colonial remnant correlates well with Lisa Lowe's claim on the *bildungsroman* "as the primary form for narrating the development of the individual from youthful innocence to civilized maturity, the telos of which is the reconciliation of the individual with the social order" (98), a genre that would have been included in the Academy's curriculum. The "civilized maturity" and "social order" are strongly related to the values of the

nation-state and serve to reproduce the ideological means of production, if we assume that economic gain is possibly the most significant driving force of empire. I begin my argument by an analysis of the Academy due to the impression Arjie's father has of its values, as he is the initial position through which Arjie is placed into an abject position.

"The Academy will force you to become a man" (*Funny Boy* 115), claims Arjie's father to justify his decision to send Arjie there. Contrary to his expectations, however, Arjie will not only break the taboos set upon the student body by falling in love with a classmate, but also shake the colonial foundations of the Academy represented by the principal. The father's notions of a capitalist masculinity in the sense of "new nations and procreativity" that Lesk mentions, can also be related to his reasons behind placing Arjie in a Sinhalese class. In a pragmatic gesture attributed to capital worth and cultural hegemony, Arjie's father believes that "there was no use in putting [him] in a Tamil class when Sinhalese was 'the real language of the future'" (*Funny Boy* 39). While a knowledge of Sinhalese becomes a life-or-death matter as the violence between the ethnic divide intensifies, the father's claim is made in a time of relative peace and seems to refer to his position as a business owner, which gains significance as we are made aware of the fact that the workers in his hotel are Sinhalese. The father's goal is to continue the cyclical infrastructure of working-class subjugation presumably initiated by the "favoured" position of Indian Tamils brought over by the British colonizers in the 1870s.[1]

Before digressing into my discussion of the hotel, I would like to state how the "decolonizing" act, in Lisa Lowe's terms, becomes manifest in an active resistance against, and effective destruction of the school's position as a colonial remnant, indirectly defusing one of the sources of cyclical neocolonial exploitation. While on one hand, Arjie crosses the line that is set upon the homosocial relations endorsed by the Academy with Shehan, thus disrupting the ideological purposes of its formation, on the other, he effectively causes Black Tie's replacement and the consequent fall of the Academy as it becomes a school meant for Sinhalese students under the vice-principal. Tariq Jazeel claims that "Black Tie is struggling to see the school's colonial legacies of multiracial secularism survive, even though he is a fierce disciplinarian" (242), yet Black Tie seems to be in complete ignorance of the internal politics and power struggles of the school. The failure of the school's "colonial legacies of multiracial secularism" is revealed, as we encounter Tamil students being beaten and bullied without any punitive oversight granted by the Sinhalese Vice Principal. Arjie witnesses a brief encounter between Cheliah, the leader of the ninth grade Tamil class and Salgado, his Sinhalese rival, as Salgado kicks "open a cubicle and the boys crowded inside, dragging Cheliah with them" (*Funny Boy* 120). Arjie's classmate later reveals the undercurrent of ethnic conflict within the school, with the Sinhalese Vice Principle Lokubandra who "wanted to make the Victoria Academy a Buddhist school" (*Funny Boy* 120), consolidating a Sinhala-only rule. Opposing Arjie's father's demands, as well as the demands of Lesk's "new states", the school does not become a space which produces subjects into a national and social order and procreative modes of production, but subjects that are constantly in conflict.

A microcosm of postcolonial conflict through the Academy (a microcosm of the colonial force) is manifest in Arjie's recollection of the "spend-the-day" at his grandparent's home. Jazeel and Gopinath both have excellent analyses of how the home operates within the first chapter as a private sphere that is closely linked to the public sphere and the enforcement of hetero-normative values, and while they provide wonderful readings of the human actions that take place within the space, they do not seem to focus on it as a physical construct. Describing the house at the very beginning of the first chapter, Selvadurai writes:

> The first thing that met our eyes on entering our grandparents' house, after we carefully wiped our feet on the doormat, would be the dark corridor running the length of it, on one side of which were the bedrooms and on the other the drawing and dining rooms. This corridor, with its old photographs on both walls and its ceiling so high that our footsteps echoed, scared me a little. (*Funny Boy* 9)

[1] See "Chronology for Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka." *Refworld*, 2004, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/469f38df24.html>.

The description of the interior seems to be emblematic of the grander themes in the work. The split between the bedrooms and the drawing and dining rooms can be seen as the split between the private and public spheres, yet the presence of the "darkness" in the corridor obfuscates the split, creating a line that seems transparent and calling for the inevitable permeability of the two spheres. The "old photographs on both walls" are coded by the seeming omnipresence of traditional values and modes of existence, which includes within its schema the values propagated by the colonizers. Arjie's fear of this corridor, and the darkness, or the inevitability of the interference from events belonging to the grander political landscape into the household, precipitates his other fears throughout the text, from the older boys on the beach to the imposing presence of Black Tie on the balcony. Arjie's individual fears seem to be appropriately placed, as those fears immediately mark the locations of individual repression from the family, the school, and his peers, which are consequently formed into moments of resistance.

Returning to the first chapter of the novel in this light, one can see the forces of a newly formed procreative state operating within the home space, in the girls' game of Bride-Bride, the game they played during the days they spend at his grandparents. We are introduced to a space which is territorially divided between the boys in the field and the girls in the house, with the exception of Arjie who preferred to play with the girls. Arjie claims that "the primary attraction of the girls' territory was the potential for the free play of fantasy" (*Funny Boy* 10). He is selected as the girls' leader to the force of his imagination (and plays the role of the Bride), yet his role is disrupted by a visiting cousin from the USA derogatorily called "her Fatness". Marked by terms of neocolonial capitalism, "her Fatness" attempts to win the girls' friendship with dolls purchased abroad and causes Arjie to be ejected from the girls' territory through the force of her parents. The readers are introduced to a chain of subjugation and exploitation, as her Fatness' mother, Kanthi Aunty was "forced to work as a servant in whitey's house to make ends meet" (*Funny Boy* 12). Arjie eventually returns to the game and is allowed to assume the most insignificant role of the groom by her Fatness. As Arjie attempts to help with the playful cooking for the wedding, "her Fatness" claims that grooms "go to office" (*Funny Boy* 24). Arjie is forced to not only take up the position of the heteronormative masculinity as the groom, but as the subject of the "procreative" masculine worker. As a resistance to this representative neocolonial influence, he takes up the position, yet in gender-bending acts, starts acting the role of the owner of the means of production, calling one of the girls "boy" and telling her to meet a manager, and another girl "miss" and demands her to take diction. Selvadurai presents the diverse maneuvering capability of Arjie's individual identity, as he is able to perform not only the role of the bride, but the groom as well, in order to resist the demands of "her Fatness". Arjie's constant centrality can be critiqued for its male-centric power politics, yet if we consider it in terms of his intimacy with the girls he plays with, it becomes a moment of resistance against an outside, invasive force. The game, after all, is ruled by the one with the strongest force of imagination, and it is Arjie's desire to act upon his imagination that allows him to maneuver through traditional gender roles and resist external elements.

The culmination of the moral tensions created by neocolonial exploitation arguably becomes clearest in the "Small Choices" chapter, as we are enlightened to the nature of some of the business practices of Arjie's father's hotel. Named in an extremely generic fashion, "Paradise Beach Resort" is the hotel that is under the co-ownership of Arjie's father and Sinhalese Sena Uncle. The hotel is a space birthed from opportunities in free-market expansion and the sectioning off of land that is repurposed in a way to make it palatable for foreigners. Selvadurai dismisses the notion that a partnership within a growing market can soothe ethnic tensions as they are deeply rooted in a colonial past and consequently, class. Arjie observes that the town near his father's hotel is in a destitute state and its residents live on selling trinkets to tourists or working at one of the many hotels in the region. The father's previous claim that "Sinhalese is the real language of the future" obtains the jaded meaning that implies more efficient control of the working classes by knowledge of their language. Selvadurai underlines the sinister nature of the hotel business when Arjie's father is questioned about the foreigners speaking to young boys on the beach and he answers "[i]t's not just our luscious beaches that keep the tourist industry going, you know. We have other natural resources as well" (*Funny Boy* 95). The scope of the issue is further enhanced as he

elaborates that if he "tried to stop it, they'd simply go to another hotel on the front" (*Funny Boy* 95). Not only are we enlightened to the commodification of the bodies of young boys, but to the fact that this is a common practice among other hotel owners and that there are many other alternatives for foreigners to play out their fantasies. Selvadurai presents an environment of free market competition within which the bodies of young boys are reduced to a resource and the ones with the means to acquire the resources are not held accountable for, or held to the standard of the rules, norms, and taboos they engendered for decades. Desire in this chapter does not connote a direct act of resistance. It is, on the contrary, a showcase within which the bodies of a nation's people are subjected to foreigners' free play of fantasy, yet the revelation of the hypocrisy can serve as its own form of textual resistance.

Desire is at times manipulated for a pragmatic aspiration for power or capital gain, and at times becomes a force of resistance against colonial presence and ideology. These moments of resistance are positioned within the "decolonizing" framework of "the multifaceted, ongoing project of resistance struggles that can persist for decades in the midst of simultaneous neocolonial exploitation" (107) in Lisa Lowe's terms. Towards the end of the novel however, we notice how almost everything from the colonial remnants to varying intimacies and desires seem to collapse in the face of a violent conflict that seems to be as rooted in ethnicity as it is in class. Inter-ethnic violence in turn, is represented as a form of chaos that destroys everything, and the novel can only accept in futility the forces that assumed control thereafter. This type of destruction seems to be paralleled in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*, presenting an equally complex interconnectedness of capital gain and desires.

Cracking India **and the Garden of Desire**

Cracking India occupies an interesting position within a postcolonial context, while it was written and published decades after India's independence, the novel itself is set in the transitionary period from colonialism to post-colonialism. The temporally transitionary position of the novel obfuscates the position of the colonial structures, positing whether these colonial edifices can be considered remnants or not. For the purposes of this analysis on the specific edifice of the Queen Victoria Garden, and the complexity of the connections between class, desire, and capital, the central location through which these complexities are delivered, will be considered a remnant due to the fact that its namesake had passed on 46 years before the eve of Imperial England's departure from India.[2] It is important to mention that resistance can occur on multiple fronts, both within the textual narrative, as well as outside of it. In his essay "Trauma and Maturation in Women's War Narratives: *The Eye of the Mirror* and *Cracking India*," Kamran Rastegar claims that these works erase the distinction between literary work and critical social history, producing in "the larger question of what history is and can be" (26). While we establish the increased significance of the role of "fictional" representation in current discourses, we should not forget the operative forces at work within the text itself. Looking at *Cracking India*, specifically the Queen Victoria Garden, through a lens that combines desires and capital interest, we can see how while the novel can contribute to a resistance against narratives of war, it could also contribute to potentially harmful perspectives that reinforces the ideologies it wishes to resist.

The Ayah is the focal point of desire for the community in *Cracking India*'s Lahore, and is the figure through which discourses on desire are initiated, coinciding with Lenny's initiation into an awareness of womanhood. Sidhwa makes this abundantly clear early in the novel as she writes:

> The covetous glances Ayah draws educate me. Up and down, they look at her. Stub-handed twisted beggars and dusty old beggars on crutches drop their poses and stare at her with hard, alert eyes. Holy men, masked in piety, shove aside their pretenses to ogle her with lust. Hawkers, cart-drivers, cooks, coolies and cyclists turn their heads as she passes, pushing my pram with the unconcern of the Hindu goddess she worships. (*Cracking India* 12)

[2] See "The death of Queen Victoria – Archive, 1901." *The Guardian*, 23 Jan. 1901, https://www.theguardian.com/uk/1901/jan/23/monarchy.fromthearchive.

We notice within Lenny's early sexual education the disorientation of the *bildungsroman*, as a certain sexual awareness is acquired that is not attached to either class or moral/religious sensibilities. It is in a following passage in which the desirous looks Ayah draws due to her sexuality becomes connected to her clothes, as Sidhwa writes that she "has a rolling bouncy walk that agitates the globules of her buttocks under her cheap colorful saris and the half-spheres beneath her short sari-blouses" (*Cracking India* 13). The saris and the sari-blouses that complement Ayah's physique thus become connected to her position at the centre of communal desire. It is not the "cheapness" of her colourful saris that connects this communal desire to capital interests, however, but her salary as an Ayah. When questioned by Ice-candy-man as to why Ayah doesn't wear a *shalwar-kamize* as characteristic of her Punjabi identity that is structured by Ice-candy-man's desire to categorize people according to ethnicity/faith, Sidhwa writes:

> "Arrey *baba*," says Ayah spreading her hands in a fetching gesture, "do you know what salary ayahs who wear Punjabi clothes get? Half the salary of the Goan ayahs who wear saris! I'm not so simple!" (*Cracking India* 38)

Rastegar also includes this moment in his analysis as a rationale that is "one of economy" (27), and presents the economic perspective as a means of evading and detaching from the traditionally patriarchal and nationalistic categorization Ice-candy-man attempts to place Ayah in. Here we are moved to focus on the Ayah's rejection of implied "simplicity" through multiple layers. Is it a "simplicity" that implies an underlying rejection of arbitrary restrictive values attributed to religious connections, or a "simplicity" that undermines the people who are closely attached to their spiritual, or ethnic values. While Ayah's capital interests as a member of the working class and evasion of Ice-candy-man's questioning can be seen as an attempt to break the conventional assumptions that are associated with ethnicity and faith, what I would like to focus on is how her capital interests, that seem to be represented by her saris are as attached to her body as the desiring stares of the men in the community. The connections between desire, intimacy, and capital self-interest become even clearer as we move on to Queen Victoria Garden and the connections between Lenny, Ayah, Ice-candy-man, as well as the other admirers. Ambreen Hai, in her article "Border Work, Border Trouble: Postcolonial Feminism and the Ayah in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*" recognizes Lenny's education and attributes it to her privileged, neutral position within the ethnic tensions in the nation. Hai argues that Ayah "acts as both an idealized self and other—beautiful, desired (before Independence) by men of all religious and class backgrounds—an adolescent body through whose adventures the narrator vicariously acquires dangerous knowledge from a safe distance" (390-1). Hai's critique is one that seems to reveal the novel's arguable practices of conveying certain judgments and moral positions that seem to highlight the role of the socio-economically privileged at the expense of the lower classes (primarily Ayah). The "dangerous" nature of this knowledge can work on multiple fronts as we consider the interests that revolve around the many individuals involved with Ayah. Partially, there is the complex nature of the intimacy between the narrator from a position of privilege and Ayah the caretaker, a connection that is "stronger than the bond of motherhood. More satisfying than the ties between men and women" (*Cracking India* 13). The secondary "dangerous" implication of Lenny's sexual education is beyond the breaking of conventional morals that are associated with the relationship between a girl and her nanny, be it in terms of the boundaries of gender or class. The secondary implication of said sexual education is enlightened as Lenny gains awareness of the possibility to commoditize desire in the Queen Victoria Garden.

Setting the stage for the circulation of desire is a quick description of the statue of Queen Victoria that is "cast in gunmetal, is majestic, overpowering, ugly. Her statue imposes the English Raj in the park. I lie sprawled on the grass, my head in Ayah's lap" (28). The structure, while not exactly a remnant since colonial presence is still quite active, serves as an aesthetic reminder of that presence along with its values. While there is a hint of irony that Sidhwa writes into the park as several sexual interactions take place in front of Queen Victoria's gaze, the danger lies within the manner in which Lenny seems to mediate and pragmatically make use of Ayah's

sexuality and the desires of her admirers for her self-interest. Within the same paragraph that describes the statue, the narrative voice claims:

> Ice-candy-man is selling his popsicles to the other groups lounging on the grass. My mouth waters. I have confidence in Ayah's chocolate chemistry … lank and loping the Ice-candy-man cometh…
> I take advantage of Ayah's admirers. (*Cracking India* 28)

It is during that moment of childish self-interest that we see the potential for tensions that exist not purely on a nationalistic level that focuses on specific ideologies of faith and ethnicity, but one that is deeply rooted in class and class exploitation. Sidhwa presents us with a complicated web of relations between desires and class exploitation, and Ayah that seems to be a "desired other" by Lenny in Hai's terms becomes a victim of class exploitation through the manipulation of desires. This manipulation and exploitation is mirrored towards the end, as we find out that Ice-candy-man has forced Ayah into prostitution after her initial capture and rape, and Ice-candy-man becomes the one who profits off of the commoditization of desire. It is unfortunate that these class-based tensions seem to be overshadowed by the eventual implications that are made through Lenny's family's (specifically Godmother) provision of shelter and protection to the people, as well as Ayah's rescue. Hai's critique points out the failure of Sidhwa's novel as a work of postcolonial feminism, as she writes:

> Sidhwa's postcolonial feminism cannot reconfigure this queen's garden beyond a trimming of its edges. Indeed, it remains surprisingly uncritical of the inequalities and tensions already present in this hypothetically harmonious "garden." Hence this feminism actually remains quite Victorian (and colonial) in its understanding of gendered spheres, its essentialization of male violence, and its reassertion of class divisions. It sees lower-class men as an uncontainable, unanalyzable problem [...]. It remains oblivious to the socio-economic circumstances and inequities that may in fact produce those tensions. (410)

In her analysis, Hai draws our attention as to how Sidhwa's work seems to reify colonial sensibilities with regards to class by creating a setting that posits the privileged as neutral and protected, as well as elevating them to moral standards expected of colonial tradition. Partially disagreeing with Hai's analysis, we could see that the potential for those class tensions is touched upon when we consider the economic complexity of the desires that revolve around Ayah, as well as Lenny's exploitation of her in childish self-interest. Both Rastegar and Hai seem to place the lower-class individuals as either victims or subjects under the protection of Lenny's family, including Ayah and Ice-candy-man at the end of the novel. The issue, however, is the fact that the aggressive nature of Ice-candy-man's desires is constantly hinted at, and within the schema of class differences, the dangerous nature of his desire becomes evident as the movement of his toes are coded by language that implies assault (as well as the very physical threat to Adi to convince Ayah). Sidhwa's presentation is not necessarily as one-sided as Hai seems to state, as she further complicates the issues surrounding the ethnic formation of a nation, desire, and self-interest. From the language that surrounds interactions with Ice-candy-man we are shown a darker, and jaded version of desire which manipulates a nationalist and patriarchal cause (building of a nation after Partition) to obtain his object of desire, Ayah, who is then shared communally for his capital gain. Ultimately though, Sidhwa does seem to reify and justify positions of class as the lower classes become subjects to either act upon or act for towards the end of the novel, which in turn, overshadows the moments where a self-aware narrator notices her position of privilege and power and attempts a critique through that self-awareness.

Funny Boy and *Cracking India* are illuminations of situations in which rampant violence erupts from the removal of a central force that resides over a tenuous veil of harmony. The novels, whether strategically or not, utilize remnants of colonial institutions or edifices to highlight the grander shifts happening on the geopolitical landscape. While they entertain the notion that the operative forces at work in these shifts is not one of revolutionary change, whether it is the continuation of foreign exploitation through the expansion of free market trade in *Funny Boy* or Lenny's self-awareness in *Cracking India*, they do not actively acknowledge the sheer

privilege of individualism afforded to them through their class, considering class is the definitive social marker that remains as the world shifts from imperial colonialism to neo-liberal/colonial capitalism and colonial institutions and edifices become mere remnants.

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Recuperating Father(s) and Retracing "I" in Maxine Hong Kingston's *China Men*

Shirin Akter Popy

Abstract*:* Maxine Hong Kingston, one of the most critiqued Chinese American writers, publishes her *China Men* in 1980 as a history and genealogy of her Chinese American men. Through the stories of her father and forefathers she not only unmasks the erasure and distortions of Chinese-American history but also talks back to the hegemonic white discourse. While the book is popularly highlighted as a historical fiction where Kingston writes about her Chinese ancestors from men's point of view, an autobiographical search for "self" pervades everywhere in the narrative. In her constant struggle for recovering the father(s) from a state of silence and historical amnesia, she constructs a dialogical self in relation to history, culture, myth, and her people. Focusing on these aspects, the present article argues that in *China Men*, Kingston recuperates the father(s) from a historical loss and constructs a dialogical "I" in relation to her people especially by constructing an intersubjectivity with her father.

Keywords: Chinese-American History, Forefathers, Dialogical Self, *China Man*, Maxine Hong Kingston

"I wrote about men, China men. My concerns were to write about the other gender and a larger history".
Maxine Hong Kingston

"I wrote it for myself".
Maxine Hong Kingston

Maxine Hong Kingston's *China Men* (1980) is a collection of short stories about her father and forefathers who went to the Gold Mountain, the name given to America by the Chinese Americans. Kingston rewrites Chinese American history in a fictional way breaking the age-old silence regarding the contribution of the Chinese men in building America. Although the stories are all about the hardships and achievements of the Chinese American men, including her father, grandfathers, uncles and brother, Kingston associates her "I" with them in search of her identity. Instead of separating her voice from the men, her writing is a kind of autobiographical search for self by creating an intersubjectivity with her father and forefathers. Connecting her being as a writer with her poet father, and selecting the history of her forefathers as her subject matter Kingston constructs a dialogical self that reverberates everywhere in the community. Focusing on these aspects, present analysis claims that by writing *China Men* Kingston not only recuperates the history of the father(s) from silence - the silence caused by migration and the historical silence of the white America - but also retraces her "I" as a Chinese American author.

Kingston writes *China Men* as a sequel to her magnum opus *The Woman Warrior* (1976). Although critics read *The Woman Warrior* as an autobiographical work that searches for the identity they focus on *China Men* as a history book. Since its publication, Kingston's use of vignettes in the book has attracted a lot of critical attention. In many instances, the scholarship focuses on her exploitation of Chinese myths. While the critics like Frank Chin accuse Kingston of distorting Chinese myths and stereotyping Asian American reality (134), Yuan Yuan, for example, states that myths in *China Men* "function as a semiotic empowerment in the process of identity formation" (301). Regarding her depiction of men while Cheung claims that Kingston appreciates other

gender, quite the contrary, Ailiesei argues that she writes from a feminist perspective by "taking revenge on men" (9). However, reading *China Men* as a fictional history many critics like David Li and Jutta Gsoels-Lorensen focus on Kingston's use of law and popular literature. However, in all these instances, Kingston's autobiographical search for self is overlooked in one way or another. The present study argues that Kingston mixes myths with history as an autobiographical strategy to construct her "self" in relation to her people, especially her father. The analysis claims that in the process of recuperating history from an all pervading void she recuperates the father(s) from an all pervading silence and retraces her "I" thereby.

China Men retraces the identity of Kingston in relation to her biological father, grandfathers, and mythical forefathers. Kingston validates her search for self, in the book, in one of her recent interviews with Hua Hsu as she says "I give the narrative to all these men, but there's still this voice that's me" (in Hsu 1). In fact, this search is an ongoing process of placing the individual into the community and claiming its collective memory and history. Kingston explains to Rabinowitz that she is "always very interested in how one can be an individual and part of a collective people and a collective memory" (74). Therefore, in *China Men*, Kingston's quest for constructing a dialogical self is "populated by the voices of other people, [...] decentralized with highly open boundaries, and [...] historically and culturally contextualized" **(**Hermans 2003, 90**)**. By writing the father(s)' histories/stories, Kingston relocates her position historically and culturally.

In *A Journey of Working Through: Trauma and Gender in Maxine Hong Kingston's Diaspora Trilogy,* Nan Zhang asserts that "by imagining those family men, Maxine connects with the loving father that she does not have" (46). However, this connection and reconciliation with the father are not that easy and immediate. The text begins with a deep sense of frustration and failure, since communication between the father and the daughter narrator is problematized either with silence or with the obscenities of the father's male shouts: "Dog vomit. Your mother's cunt. Your mother's smelly cunt" (*CM* 12). The gap of understanding has been exemplified in the opening chapter of *China Men*. For example, "On Fathers", while the children, taking another man as father, "surrounded him, took his hands, pressed [their] noses against his coat to sniff his tobacco smell, reached into his pockets for the Rainbo notepads and the gold coins that were really chocolates" (*CM* 6), the real father came from "the other direction [...] the one finger touching his hat to salute us" (*CM* 7). From such a state of misunderstanding, miscommunication, mental distance, and unknowability, Kingston seeks to recuperate the father in *China Men.*

In "China Men: Maxine Hong Kingston and the American Canon", David Leiwei Li appraises the story titled "On Discovery" as "a creative adaptation of one of the most famous episodes of the eighteenth-century Chinese classic, *Mirror Flower Affair*" (486). In the text, the "daughter-scholar", Tang Xiao San, was found to be in search of her father Tang Ao, a Tang Dynasty (618-907) scholar who was in a global wandering (486). According to Leiwei Li, "Tang Ao and Xiao San have become the modern incarnation of Kingston and her father, scholars like their literary predecessors. The daughter-narrator's unfolding of multiple stories in *China Men* recaptures the original theme of the quest for father", although the father is "lost in" history/silence for Kingston (486).

The narrator finds her father disinterested in making any meaningful conversation. She observes that the father listens to "the Time Lady because she is a recording you don't have to talk to. Also she distinctly names the present moment never slipping into the past or sliding into the future" (*CM* 15). Although she knows that the father lives "in the present", she wants to "hear the stories about the rest of [his] life, the Chinese stories" (*CM* 15) to find the gateway to reconnect herself with the father. Finding the father's obvious and absolute silence, she attempts to reconfigure him in her own telling.

According to Edouard Glissant, the past that has been lost into secrecy and silence cannot be retrieved in its pristine form but can be written with a vision to march forward. Believing in a similar vein Kingston feels the necessity of relating "the complicated web of events" to know her father's past (63). Her endeavour is similar to Glissant's "*prophetic vision of the past*" (64) (emphasis original). As Glissant suggests,

> The past, to which we were subjected, which has not yet emerged as history for us, is, however, obsessively present. The duty of the writer is to explore this obsession, to show its relevance in a continuous fashion to the immediate present. This exploration is therefore related neither to a schematic chronology nor to a nostalgic lament. It leads to the identification of a painful notion of time and its full projection forward into the future. (63-4)

The narrator believes that there is speech and thought even in her father's withdrawal from talking. She knows it for sure that there must be some causes behind his non-communication. To discover the causes of her father's silence, she invites the father to talk at least in the process of mending her mistakes, as she says, "I'll tell you what I suppose from your silences and few words, and you can tell me that I'm mistaken. You'll just have to speak up with the real stories if I've got you wrong" (*CM* 15). However, nothing instigates the father to tell his stories about his life in America as an immigrant.

Therefore, to bridge the gap between the father and herself, she invents the father's story in *China Men*. Kingston illustrates that the male shouts and misogynist utterances that separated BaBa (father) from his kids are the outbursts of his victimization both as an immigrant and racial other. The narrator denotes that for BaBa, language incompetence was a barrier to his success. He was hoaxed twice by gypsies. The gypsies accused him of tearing their new clothes. Before BaBa could defend him that the clothes were already rags, the gypsies brought a policeman and "concocted a big story in English" (*CM* 13) against him. The narrator says, "you couldn't speak English well enough to counteract it. Fell for it twice. You fell for it twice" (*CM* 13). Although BaBa knew that he just fell prey to the gypsies' trick, he could not put up any resistance out of the fear of deportation.

Kingston correlates the suffering of the narrator as the child of an immigrant father with the suffering of her Chinese American father. She explains,

> When the gypsy baggage and the police pig left, we were careful not to be bad or noisy so that you would not turn on us. We knew that it was to feed us you had to endure demons and physical labor. You screamed wordless male screams that jolted the house upright and staring in the middle of the night. (*CM* 13)

Even as a daughter, she despises the father's screams; she views it as an offshoot of his frustration and exasperation in a white society. It was a means of expressing their anger that they could not show outside as Cheung asserts that "Men of color who have been abused in a white society are likely to attempt to restore their sense of masculinity by venting their anger at those who are even more powerless—the women and children in their families" (241).

Underneath the silence lies the historical experience of Chinese American men that Kingston unearths in *China Men*. According to the narrator, "worse than the swearing and the nightly screams were your silences when you punished us by not talking. You rendered us invisible, gone" (*CM* 14). In the opening section, "On Discovery", Kingston sets Tang Ao's pathetic story. In his search for Gold Mountain, when he reached "the Land of Women", the women bound his feet, pierced his ears, plucked his eyebrows, and obliged him to wear women's clothes. Although they sarcastically threatened to sew his lips, by feminizing him they metaphorically sewed his "lips together" (*CM* 4). In the face of such abuse, Tang Ao "wept with pain" (*CM* 4), but he had nothing to do but endure.

Opening with this victimized state of the Chinese American man, Kingston, in *China Men*, pinpoints the overall condition of the father and the forefathers who had been silenced and victimized in the course of their lived experience as immigrants. Upon his arrival at the sugarcane plantation, the great grandfather, Bak Goong, had to take a "vow of silence" (*CM* 100). For the "talk addict" (110), Bak Goong, the silence was so disturbing that he used to cough in response to the oppression of the plantation overseers. He still hacked at the cane while coughing, "take—that—white—demon. Take—that. Fall—to—the—ground—demon. Cut—you—into—pieces. Chop—off—your—legs. Die—snake. Chop—you—down—stinky—demon" (*CM*114). Although such coughing

would bring some momentary solace to Bak Goong, he encountered the imposed silence as devilishly disturbing. Therefore, once, he suggested that his fellow workers dig a big hole inside the earth where they all would shout together to bury their pain and anger into it.

The imposed silence that the immigrants had to endure was dehumanizing and more tortuous than death itself. Bak Goong's and his fellow mates' shouting to the earth in the big hole exemplified how repressed people might feel if they are forcefully silenced or denied the right of articulation. This truth has been mythically validated in the two brief sections following "The Great Grandfather" chapter. In these stories, Kingston defines speech as the essence of human nature. In "On Mortality", the gods were testing Tu Tzu-chun's ability to maintain silence before bestowing him with immortality. On the first test, the Taoist monk, while preparing an elixir, asked Tu Tzu-chun to keep silent on whatever he sees in his hallucinatory state. Even seeing that he and his wife were tortured, Tu Tzu-chun succeeded in observing the rule.

In the second test, he was reincarnated as a "deaf-mute female" (*CM* 121) who was married to Lu. Although initially, Lu had no complaint against Tu's silence, gradually he got terribly disturbed. Lu threatened to dash the head of their child if she did not talk. Seeing the wound of the son, Tu broke the rule of silence. This break of the rule, bound him with mortality. "On Mortality Again", Maui the Trickster attempted to steal "immortality for men and women" (*CM* 122). While taking an underwater journey, he "instructed the people, the beasts, the birds, and elements to be silent" (*CM* 122). All maintained silence when Maui entered the body of sleeping Hina through her vagina and "took her heart in his arms" (*CM* 122). His almost successful adventure was destroyed suddenly "when a bird, at the sight of his legs wiggling out of her vagina, laughed" (*CM* 122). The moment the silence was broken, Hina woke up, "shut herself, and Maui died" (*CM* 122). With the death of Maui, human beings' desire for immortality has forever remained impossible. With these stories, Kingston claims that if mortality defines a human being, this mortality they embraced denying silence or breaking silence. From the depiction of the plights of the Chinese American forefathers, it is discernible how inhumane it was to deny the Chinese immigrants the right to articulate the feelings of love, hatred, anger, and pain. Exposure to such dehumanizing and torturous ambiance made these Chinese forefathers silent even in their personal and familial life, especially to their wives and children.

While the labourers in the plantations have been literally silenced, the Chinese men's contributions to America's infrastructural development have been silenced historically. In "The Grandfather of the Sierra Nevada Mountains", with the story of the grandfather, Ah Goong, Kingston retraces that history and reclaims her forefathers as the founding fathers of America. For years after years, Ah Goong as a railroad worker, blew up the tree stumps with gun powder. He had been "lowered to the bottom of a ravine, which had to be cleared for the base of a trestle" (*CM* 132). He risked his life setting dynamite charges into cliff faces and tunnelling through the mountains. When the railroad was done, the Americans boasted "only Americans could have done it" and celebrated it as "The Greatest Feat of the Nineteenth Century" (*CM* 145). "While the demons posed for photographs, the China Men dispersed" (*CM* 145). Their contribution is buried in the historical silence. Once the railroad is done, the Chinese men were ousted. Moreover, in different plantations, the plantation overseers "tied pigtails to horses and dragged chinamen" (*CM* 146). Writing the silencing histories of her forefathers Kingston recuperates them from the "history monopolized by the dominant American culture" (Zhang and Wang 1032).

BaBa (the father) is the third generation of Chinese American men whose condition is no better than his forefathers. Although "BaBa was lured to America by the stories of the Gold Mountain, which were retold and relished in his family" (Zhang and Wang 1030), the miscegenation law was still in effect, and the lonely China man's search for fortune continued through a life of hard struggle. While his immigrant forefathers buried their words of anger into the earth, BaBa adopted non-communication and found consolation in angry "shouts". For money, BaBa "rolled cigarettes and cigars ('Mexican cigarettes') and worked in the sugarcane fields" (*CM* 48). BaBa's hands, "splintery with calluses 'caused by physical labor'" (*CM* 240), symbolize the overall condition of the Chinese American men who went to Gold Mountain in search of fortune. Among the hurdles and discriminations, BaBa created a small space in Stockton Chinatown, opening a laundry for him. Indeed, laundry

business was the mere means of survival for many Chinese immigrants in America. In *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*, historian Ronald Takaki notes, "The Chinese were located in a different sector of the labor market from whites. By 1920, 58 percent of the Chinese were in services, most of them in restaurant and laundry work, compared to only 5 percent for native whites and 10 percent for foreign whites" (240). BaBa's "Four Valuable Things: ink, inkslab, paper, and brush" (*CM* 16) that the grandmother thought would determine his fortune as a lucky scholar were not of any use in a racist and capitalist America. BaBa's scholarship, his mind of a poet, could not bring him any recognition in the changed socio-cultural status quo. The laundry workers' inhumane condition has been documented in Paul C.P. Siu's *The Chinese Laundryman: A Study of Social Isolation*. Siu observes that the laundry workers used to work no less than six and a half-day a week. From his careful observation of the Sam Moy Laundry in Chicago, he documents that the business would start at eight in the morning and close, not before half-past eleven at night. So the workers had to work fourteen to fifteen hours a day (in Siu 130). Their only happiness was the supper, "a heavy meal, a big bowl of soup and large dishes of meat and vegetables" (in Siu 74). They could not sleep before one o'clock since they needed to cool the heated body off in the yard before they went to bed (74). BaBa's frustration and anger resulting from the unending struggle made him silent and mysterious to the American-born children.

In reality, BaBa represents the generation of Chinese Americans who travelled to the unknown world to support their families left in China. BaBa's sacrifice is similar to the sacrifice of the rabbit in the "White Tigers" where the rabbit jumped into the fire to feed Fa Mu Lan in *The Woman Warrior*. Kingston notes, "[M]y father was born in a year of the Rabbit [...]. In one of his incarnations, one of the Buddhas was a rabbit; he jumped alive into a fire to feed the hungry" (*CM* 15). Since "one of the Buddhas was a rabbit", BaBa is even similar to the self-sacrificing and abnegating Buddha. The daughter's view of her father as a sacrificing provider comes forth as she says, "we know that it was to feed us you had to endure demons and physical labour" (*CM* 13). Being haunted by the incidents of his friends ganged upon him, the seizure of the gambling house, he "screamed in his sleep", dreaming "ax murders" (*CM* 251) of his relatives in China. The inner struggle of his suspected inability to send money for them is expressed in his "Night sweats" and "Fear sweats" (*CM* 251). In "Writing the Other: A Conversation with Maxine Hong Kingston", Kingston remarked to Marilyn Chin that, "it's a generation that did everything for their children. They pretty much sacrificed their lives so their children could have an education, so that the children could go on" (Chin 98). BaBa sacrificed not only for his children but also for his people in China.

BaBa symbolizes this generation of the Chinese Americans who went to Gold Mountain and adjusted there in the face of all adversities. Bak Goong's and Ah Goong's labour in the plantations and in the railroads, respectively, and BaBa's labour in the laundry are all the same history of abject physical labour. They all are like the man in the swamp who did not want to return to China even in his worst difficulties since he had a wife and children for whom he had to earn. Although America in no way was comfortable to the immigrants, they somehow adjusted the way uncle Sham Bak "stuffed the toes" (*CM* 17) in the pair of leather shoes brought back from the Gold Mountain.

Kingston's purpose in *China Men* is evident as she asserts, "I want to talk to Cantonese, who have always been revolutionaries, nonconformists, people with fabulous imaginations, people who invented the Gold Mountain" (*CM* 87). Nonetheless, the father's all-pervading silence deprives her of memory and history. She seeks to reconstruct him in her imagination by mythologizing the father. In the daughter's imagination, BaBa takes birth in 1891 or 1903, or 1911 in China. Therefore, the father's age cannot be precisely determined. In "Chinese Ghost Story", Frederic Wakeman Jr. suggests, if the father from China took part in the "qualifying test for the last Imperial Examination ever given" (*CM* 24), held in 1905, the probability of his birth in the year, 1903 can easily be erased since he "would have been far too young to have sat for" (Wakeman n.p.). On the other hand, if he were born in 1891, he would have been older than the girl narrator's grandfather. Therefore, Wakeman aptly asserts, instead of "Kingston's real father [...] her mythical father takes them" (n.p.).

Her father's silence in the face of his age, his life in China, or his arrival in America has paradoxically created ample space for the narrator to imagine and create multiple versions of her father's story. In a version, she imagined that her father was born in San Francisco, "where [her] grandmother had come disguised as a man" (*CM* 231). Thus, BaBa turns into an American citizen. In fact, with "the gift of various fabulous versions of his-story", Kingston discovers her collective history (Goellnicht 206). Kingston reverberates with Herman's hypothesis that to construct and reconstruct "their own history, they had to study their own mind in relation to its products in order to comprehend the particular cultural situation in which they lived" (Hermans 2001, 271). In the process of claiming America, therefore, Kingston reconstructs the father's history as her own. She suggests many impossible possibilities of his historical age and provides many possible ways of his entrance into America. Kingston explains to Timothy Pfaff that, in the course of the book, "I have him coming into this country in five different ways. I'm very proud of that" (17). The contradicting and intersecting immigration stories, indeed, are not reflections of Kingston's doubt and uncertainty; rather, these are probable imaginations which solidify her connection with her ancestry. In her essay "Maxine Hong Kingston", Susan Currier observes, "the underlying assumption is that imaginative repetitions and transformations will approach a more significant truth than will the mere compilation of fact" (237).

Currier's observation can be substantiated with Kingston's emphasis on her family values of dream life and story-telling, as she notes:

> We would wake up in the morning for breakfast, and everybody tells what each other's dreams are. This was confirmed for me when I go to Asia [...]. One of my aunts in Hong Kong came to pick me up. The first thing she asks is "How is your mother and what is she dreaming?" (in Sabine 6)

To Bonetti, Kingston expresses her "faith in the imaginary world" and "in talk-story" (Bonetti in Sabine 47). Her confidence in their power to build "a bridge toward reality" (Fishkin in Sabine 47) helps her "create truth" (Sabine 47) in multiple stories of her father's birth and entry into America. Kingston depicts the father as a representative of Chinese men, through whose life other Chinese American men's lives are readily available. Providing different interpretations to BaBa's story, Kingston sets him in others' stories since she views every Chinese man as a father figure. For example, critiquing the way the Chinese men were treated at the Immigration Station on Angel Island, she says, "this was not the way a father ought to have been greeted" (*CM* 53). Although Kingston claims that BaBa "made a legal trip" (*CM* 48), he was depicted undergoing the perennial horrors which all the illegal immigrants share; as Kingston says, "various futures raced through his mind: walking the plank, drowning, growing old in jail, being thrown overboard in chains, flogged to tell where others were hiding, hung by the neck, returned to China—all things that happened to caught chinamen" (*CM* 49).

As an author, the intertextuality that she created between the Chinese oral tradition and her writing directly came down to her from the intersubjectivity that she and her father shared. Kingston discovered that her father in China was a poet and scholar. Being disappointed at his student's apathy in poetry, he decided to look for fortune in America. Even at the time of migrating to America, BaBa took the four valuable things of writing poetry: ink, ink slab, paper, and brush to the new land. Kingston identifies the father with "Yüeh Fei, the patriot" whose mother "carved on his back" (*CM* 56). BaBa lent his power in his poetry since he "wrote about wanting freedom" (*CM* 56). Poetry is so important to her father that he carried with him the poems of Li Po, "the best poet, the Heavenly Poet, the Great White light, Venus" (*CM* 57) of China. Upon his arrival in Gold Mountain, he wrote a poem on the wall, but he did not sign his name below his poem. Although the father is alienated from his creativity and imagination in the face of the cruelty of migration, Kingston brings that creativity back by writing *China Men*.

To Skenazy, Kingston said that her father inserted "responses, corrections [and] additions" (155) as marginalia to a pirated, Cantonese version of *China Men*. For Kingston, these annotations bear grave significance not because the father praised the daughter's artistic integrity but because those are the marks of his lost dignity as a writer. Optimistically Kingston asserts, "what makes me feel really good is that this is

communication between me and my father, and may be this is the best and only way that we will ever communicate; maybe it serves us right because we're both writers" (in Skenazy 155).

In the text, the "father places" the narrator secretly explored as a child are very important for her to reconnect herself with the father and reclaim her collective identity through him. Since discovering those places is like her discovery that she "belonged to him" (in Sabine 157). "One of his places is the dirt cellar", which was always kept locked since there is a bottomless "well down there" (*CM* 238). Once, finding the cellar door open, the daughter followed her father secretly. Discovering him lifting the lid that covered the well she came out of the hiding and "saw it —a hole full of shining, bulging, black water, alive, alive, like an eye, deep and alive"(*CM* 238). Standing on the "brink of a well, the end and edge of the ground," wrote Kingston, it was "the opening to the inside of the world" which "must lead to the other side of the world" (*CM* 238-9). She fantasized that if she fell in she would "come out in China" (*CM* 238). Thus, the girl considers the well a connector between her ancestral homeland and her birthplace, respectively, China and America. If the mother stands for China, the father links her to both of her heritage through a middle passage indicated with the "middle of the world" (*CM* 239).

The well of the cellar connects the narrator with her father and gives her the creative surge. Kingston imagined that the father and the daughter dialogically conversed in the "wobble of black jello" (*CM* 240) that the well looked like to the daughter. The daughter says, "I find silver in it. It sparked" (*CM* 240). The black jello can be compared to the ink that the father carried with him as one of the four valuable things, which his mother gave him during his first birthday. Though the father could not make use of that as a writer, the daughter found "silver in it"—the power of words— and wrote down her father's history. Therefore, it can be considered as the beginning of her creative spark that the father failed to explore in the face of harsh realities. The dusty dirt cellar symbolizes both the pigsty and the sand where the no name aunt and Ts'ai Yen gave birth in *The Woman Warrior*. When the aunt gave birth in the pigsty, she gazed up to "the black well of sky and stars" (*WW* 16). The daughter narrator's discovery of the silver stars in the black well is the moment of her metaphorical birth as a writer who searches for the father in *China Men* and recuperates the histories buried in silence.

Apart from the cellar, Kingston discerns the attic of their new home, the gambling house, and the laundry as the places where the "father belongs" (*CM* 238). While the cellar was dirty and abandoned, the "attic air was hot, too thick, smelling like pigeons" (*CM* 239). The gambling house was also abandoned and "smelled like cat piss" (*CM* 240), which the father cleaned and decorated to start anew. The laundry was also hot that sucked his energy to the last. Kingston writes, "there was a trap door on the floor inside the laundry, and BaBa looked like a trap-door spider when he pulled it over his head or lifted it, emerging" (*CM* 254). The image of the father as crawling like an insect is, in fact, a vivid portrait of his condition in the foreign land. All of the father places that the narrator explores in "The American Father" depict the real image of the fathers' struggle.

Depicting all the father places as sites of hide and seek, Kingston identifies her own place with them. While hiding from the hated Great uncle who undermines the girls as "maggots", she metaphorically digs out her origin and her place of belonging. Kingston writes:

> I liked hiding in the dark, which could be anywhere. The cellar door sloped overhead, a room within the storeroom within the basement [...]. I was safely tucked away among the bags of old clothes and shoes, the trunks and crates the grown-ups had brought with them from China, the seabags with the addresses in English and Chinese, the tools, the bags and bottles of seeds, the branches of seeds and leaves and pods hanging upside down, and the drying loofahs. Outside the cellar door, the pigeons purred, the chickens squawked, and a turkey and a dog, a rooster, a train made their noises. In the middle of the basement, the swing my father had hung from a beam bounced and squeaked when Kau Goong walked over it; at night ghosts played on that swing. I thought over useless things like wishes, wands, hibernation. I talked to the people whom I knew were not really there. I became different, complete, an orphan; my partners were beautiful cowgirls, and also men, cowboys who could talk to me in conversations; I named this activity Talking Men. (*CM* 180-1)

This "room within a room, within a room", is named as a "nonplace of writerly productivity" by Rabine (481). However, Rabine suggests that these are the places where daughters stay "hidden from the fathers, unseen and unrecognized by them" (481). However, for Kingston, it is the place where "intersubjectivity [...] first arises" (Sabine 158) since, in the absence of parents, a recognition with them takes place with fantasy and reality. With the seabags, tools, bags, and bottles of seeds, with the addresses in English and Chinese, this transitional space helped her contact the generations of Chinese immigrants who came to America with bags full of seeds and lived in a space between two cultures.

Moreover, with her imaginary talk with the "cowgirls" and "cowboys", Kingston enlivens the imagination that was the only means of survival in the face of all obstacles for the generation of men like Ah Goong. Kingston deployed her creative genius to depict the "talking man". With the metaphor of "Talking Men", she invents the necessity of telling that symbolizes action and route to the embodiment of the racial and gendered subject. It is the "spatialization of dialogical relationships [which] allows for the treatment of a particular idea in the context of both interior and exterior dialogues, creating ever changing perspectives" (Hermans 2003, 94).

Thus, the father places connect struggle, birth, creativity and imagination in such a manner that the father and Kingston identify with one another. These are all places from where the fathers' history of "sadness and anger" (*WW* 248) comes out. They fight, endure and write poetry. Although the father himself is a poet and scholar, instead of articulating, he muffled his anger in silence, to what Kingston gives voice. She revitalizes Chinese oral tradition in American written form. In their quests for identities while the father fought physically, Kingston fights with pen. In the form of Chinese talk-story, she articulates the history of the struggle of the Chinese American people and digs out her paternal ancestry in the eighteen sections of *China Men*. Breaking the silence of Chinese American history she retrieves the story of her father(s) from a state of historical loss and conjoins her being with them. By writing about "the other gender and a larger history" (Lim 159), she constructs her "self" and retraces her "I" by positing herself as a part of a larger community.

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Intercultural Marriage: Contemporary Expressions of Displacement/Emplacement in British Fiction[1]

Şebnem Toplu

Abstract: Fascination with Italy has been going on for centuries and is still prevailing in the literary perspectives of the British writers. While the writing styles show symptoms of change in the course of the selected last half of the twentieth century, the writers also vary in their observations with overarching discourses shifting the vast network of signs. Thereby, apart from portraying the various beauties of the Italian sun, landscape, religion, politics, art and music during the twentieth century, British writers have also started to reflect on another aspect of their cultural contact with Italians, marriage which becomes more complicated in the relational network of intercultural marriages – a Briton marrying an Italian or vice versa. This article particularly focuses on intercultural marriages in Eric Linklater's *Private Angelo* (1946), Jonathan Keates' *The Strangers' Gallery* (1987) and Tim Parks' *Cara Massimina* (1995), *Europa* (1997) and *Destiny* (1999), with the aim of discussing the kind of confrontation marriage with an Italian creates from the British male writers' perspective.

Keywords: Intercultural Marriage, Italian Wife, Emplacement in Italy, Eric Linklater *Private Angelo*, Jonathan Keates *The Strangers' Gallery*, Tim Parks, *Cara Massimina*, *Europa*, *Destiny*

While the twenty-first century is typified by globalization, Italy, it seems, retains its centuries-old fascination for specific nationalities – especially the British. Apart from portraying the various beauties of the Italian sun, landscape, religion, politics, art and music during the twentieth century[2], British writers have also started to reflect on another aspect of their cultural contact with Italians – marriage; the adventure of crossing cultures. As Peter M. Blau asserts "[t]here is a strain towards imbalance as well as toward reciprocity in social associations … A person who is attracted to another will seek to prove himself attractive to the other" (26). The imbalance in the so-called social associations – ie, marriage – becomes more complicated in the relational network of intercultural marriages–in this particular case, a Briton marrying an Italian or vice versa.

For the purpose of this article, I am going to focus on intercultural marriages in Eric Linklater's *Private Angelo* (1946), Jonathan Keates' *The Strangers' Gallery* (1987) and Tim Parks' *Cara Massimina* (1995), *Europa* (1997) and *Destiny* (1999), with the aim of discussing the kind of confrontation marriage with an Italian creates from the British male writers' perspective. British women writers are not included in this argument since generally, in the second half of the twentieth century, their characters' falling in love with a member of the counter culture functions as an end of the narrative between the respective couples such as in Sarah

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[2] See Toplu, Sebnem. *Diverse Aspects of Italy and Italians in Contemporary British Literature*. Modena: Il Fiorino, 2001.

Woodhouse's *Meeting Lily* (1994), Anita Brookner's *Family and Friends* (1995) and Iris Murdoch's *The Italian Girl* (1964). Furthermore, Muriel Spark's novels do not cover intercultural marriages either, except for the rich American Maggie's marriage to an Italian aristocrat in *The Takeover* (1976). Despite the fact that their marriage does not fit into this discussion as of taking place between and American and Italian, I should note that the only implication about Berto as an Italian husband is his jealousy.

Primarily, in Eric Linklater's *Private Angelo*, written in 1946, Countess Pontefiore is an English woman who is married to an Italian Count. As with most British characters in novels, such as E. M. Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), "a holiday-fortnight that should have been devoted to the art of Renaissance" ends in marrying an Italian (*Private Angelo* 21). While waiting for a train to Pisa in Florence, the English girl wins immediately "the [Italian] Count's [Piccologrando] most passionate interest, and though their early friendship had been troubled […] she now, after twenty years of marriage enjoyed profound respect and the assurance, generally from a distance, of his enduring affection" (21). The ironic "enduring affection […] from a distance" signifies that the Italian husband lives in Rome and has an Italian mistress, the Marchesa Dolce, instead of living in Pontefiore with his English wife the Countess of Pontefiore.

The contrast between the Italian and British women is highly explicit in *Private Angelo* and is revealed on two axes; one on physical and the other on psychological qualities. That is, the usually plump Italian women have beautiful black eyes and black hair, whereas the British Countess is described as partly beautiful:"[H]er hair was faded but her eyes were bright" (21). The Italian women are portrayed as very affectionate and passionate, but when Angelo asks the British major Telfer if English women are very passionate, Telfer poignantly replies, "between their tennis-playing in girlhood and their later addiction to the card-table, there is a season during which they are not indifferent to love" (56). Conversely, though British women are criticized for not being passionate, they are left with a positive quality – their admirable strength in controlling situations and not falling apart after a catastrophe, displaced or emplaced. When the British Countess Pontefiore believes that her Italian husband, Count Piccologrando is killed during the German withdrawal, she continues "to go about her business of looking after Pontefiore with an apparent composure and real strength of mind that the villagers and peasants thought most unnatural" (44).

By the end of the Second World War, the Count goes back to Pontefiore to rejoin his English wife after more than twenty years. By this time, as a result of all the hardship Countess Pontefiore goes through on her own during the war, including the occupation of her house by German soldiers and the destruction of all her valuables, she starts drinking and becomes a more relaxed person. It is this particular personality that finally gains Count Piccologrando's admiration. Hence, the portrayal of the earliest marriage in this sequence is of an Italian man and an English woman who meet on vacation and marry to live apart for twenty years, only to rejoin to enjoy a relaxed quiet life when they are older and when the lady becomes almost an alcoholic. Thereby, it is possible to conclude that, ironically, the intercultural marriage continues on better terms when one of the parties involved, in this case the Countess, loses her characteristic of strong willpower and adapts to Italian mannerisms.

In contrast to Linklater's humorous way of handling the issue, Jonathan Keates' historical novel *The Strangers' Gallery* (1987) is a love story between an Englishman, Edward, and an Italian girl, Cristina Bentivoglio, within a nineteenth-century context. Yet, it is an impossible love since Cristina is destined for an arranged marriage with a rich Italian man. However, the intercultural marriage is a sub-plot since it is underpinned in Edward's English aunt Augusta's marriage to an Italian aristocrat, Count Castelvetro. Though we do not have clear textual evidence of his deceiving her, the Count stays away from his wife most of the time. Although not exactly similar to Count Pontefiore's twenty years' absence in *Private Angelo*, the coldness between the Count and Countess Castelvetro is implied by their physical and emotional distance. Count Castelvetro is a formidable man with whom even Augusta's nephew Edward feels uncomfortable.

On the other hand, Keates' comparison between the Italian and British women on two levels is parallel to Linklater's. Cristina's beauty is typified by dark bright eyes and she is metaphorically sculptural: "There was a brightness in her [Cristina's] glance and in the falls of her hair [...]. Thus tranquil and motionless, in her plain

walking dress, she seemed fixed here in the church like an effigy" (*The Strangers' Gallery* 104). Likewise, Cristina's cousin Mariclò also has the typical "thick black hair" (104). Edward's aunt, Countess Augusta, contrary to expectations is described by her Italian steward Basevi as follows: "We'd heard of Englishwomen before, even if none of us had met any; they aren't much known to this region. Therefore, I'd expected someone marble and aloof, an effigy of pride and self-possession anything rather than your aunt. I looked at her, a thin, anemic, girlish creature with weak eyes and big hands, the Countess Castelvetro, my new master's wife, and I felt pity for her at once" (94). In the end, during an attempted assassination plotted against the Duke of Modena by Count Castelvetro himself, his English wife is tragically killed while trying to stop the incident. Thus, contrary to Italian prejudices, she acts courageously, justifying the stereotyped Englishwoman displaced in Italy, likewise formerly portrayed by Linklater.

Tim Parks' novels, on the other hand, handle the issue of intercultural marriages in detail and from a more complex stance. Parks reverses the situation exposed by Linklater and Keates, that is of beautiful Italian girls and supposedly stereotyped English women who prove to be courageous, instead Parks projects Englishmen who marry Italian girls. There are two particular points to make here: The first one is that, interestingly enough, Parks is also the only writer who is married to an Italian woman in his personal life. Secondly, his fiction covers a more recent period, the end of the twentieth century: *Cara Massimina* written in 1990, *Europa* in 1997 and *Destiny* in 1999.

In *Cara Massimina*, the English tutor Morris Duckworth partly intends to marry his student Massimina, kidnaps her for a handsome ransom of eight hundred million lire from her rich mother Signora Trevisan, while Massimina thinks they are eloping. Finally, when Massimina sees herself on the TV screen in Sardinia, Morris pretends that he did not know the police and her family would think she was kidnapped instead they would assume she had eloped. Therefore, Massimina tries to call her parents to explain and is killed by Morris in an unplanned act. Since Morris is so trusted by the police and Massimina's family his crime is not discovered in that he ironically ends up marrying Massimina's sister Paola. Thereby, rather than the usual comparisons between the characteristics of Italian and British women, Parks goes one step further than his fellow writers and makes his displaced Englishman a murderer[3] of an Italian girl before he actually marries one!

Morris' relationship with Massimina, despite the fact that it is not bound by marriage, is depicted in detail. The issue of displacement, taken from a different angle compared to the previous novels, is distinctive. At seventeen and a half, Massimina is not a striking girl but shares with the other Italian girls the characteristic feature of a "generous" (*CM* 8) figure, "full dark eyes" (20) and a "curious mixture of long black hair, light freckles on a camilla textured skin and clear big generous dark brown eyes. Her nose and facial structure had a fine sharpness about them" (21). Correspondingly, "[o]nce you got to know it, her face certainly had its character; oval and freckled with wide, liquid deep brown eyes and an expression that generally settled into a little practical frown [...] and when she smiled she was definitely attractive, though in a kindly rather than sexy way" (21). Massimina gradually gets more beautiful during the course of narration. Morris advises her to buy brilliant colours for make-up with the intention of making her look common and different for the sake of her disguise for their elopement/kidnapping. Instead, she applies them so carefully and well that she highlights her prettiness and ends up looking like "an angel with those neon reds and blues attracting all the wrong kind of affection" (110). Thus, Massimina's portrayal reveals a beautiful Italian girl, attractive and intelligent, carrying all the stereotypical Italian woman's characteristics. Furthermore, Morris also emphasizes his admiration for the femininity of the Italian girls expressed in their adoration of babies and children, and by their walking arm in arm – "not afraid of expressing an innocent affection for each other" (114). However, whether the British women are displaced or not, they are still critically compared to the Italian women since the displaced Englishman Morris still seems to carry negative feelings: "Morris was really beginning to like the girl [Massimina]. She wasn't at all like those tweed-skirted, toffee nosed types one had felt obliged to court in one's student days,

[3] Discussing Morris' motive for kidnapping is out of the focus of this article and thereby not included.

always ready to air some opinionated opinion on any and every subject, the spirit of contradiction prompts and bristling under their powdered Oxbridge skins should you try to do the same" (9).

In this intercultural relationship, which seems very close to actual marriage, the only comment on the Englishmen by Massimina is made on the beach: "They are stretched out on the beach at Rimini. Morris under a sunshade, Massimina a foot or two away in the full sun. Morris felt rather embarrassed by his dead white English skin" (97) and Massimina remarks to her friend Sandra how English he was "staying hidden and white under the sunshade like a mole, while everybody else basked" (110)[4].

In *Europa* (1997), Parks similarly handles the issue of intercultural marriage between an Englishman and an Italian woman, yet this time concerning a couple divorced after nineteen years of married life. Since it is a first person narrator, the English professor Jerry Marlow asserts that the reason they divorced was because the relationship had become unbearable. Although Parks still depicts the Italian girls as beautiful with "long attractive legs" (*Europa* 13) and "the blackest, raven, almost blue hair" (169), his wife's beauty is never described and ironically her name is never mentioned. According to the text, she was as beautiful as Jerry's students when young, but the reason why Jerry finds a French mistress and divorces his wife is because of the defect Jerry hates in his Italian wife's character. In fact, it is her very feminine act of cleanliness in pursuit of an impeccable home that becomes a metaphor by Jerry's obsessive hatred:

> I often feel that one of the reasons our marriage reached the sorry state it did was my wife's obsessive use of the vacuum-cleaner, and not only of the vacuum-cleaner but of every cleaning implement, product and aid available to modern man, or rather invented by modern man for modern woman. Simply, the vacuum-cleaner was always on, nudging around my feet when I was trying to read on the sofa or to play draughts with Suzanne, clattering against the bedroom door when perhaps I was trying to sleep late on a Saturday. And this was nothing other, I believe, than one of my wife's many ways of expressing her suffocating desire to ripristinare, as the Italians say, to be constantly returning thing to their pristine state, or more particularly in my wife's case, her desire to have everything remain exactly as it was the day we were married and moved into the new flat which I had made the terrible mistake (in this case absolutely formative, one of the grand structural mistakes of my life), the terrible mistake of letting her parents buy for us and of living in ever since, or at least until about eighteen months ago, which means it was nineteen years, nineteen years, and every year the shutters had to be re-varnished and the walls re-whitewashed and the window-frames re-sealed, and in our relationship, too it was likewise understood that everything had to be kept in a perfectly mint emotional state. (*Europa* 58)

Thereby, the basic conventions of Italian life: the parents' buying a house for their child, maintaining close family ties and endeavouring to keep things new, form a metaphor in Jerry's relation with his Italian wife; to keep things in a pristine state becomes the constant mocking of renewing a relationship that is dead. Yet, the ironical situation is that failing in this intercultural marriage, Jerry finds a French mistress and when the mistress betrays him he decides to leave Italy, the country which finally delineates itself metaphorically as a trap. To justify deserting his Italian wife, on the bus trip to Strasbourg, Jerry relates the issue to his expatriate colleagues: "I asked jokingly, if others present are aware what the divorce rate is in marriages between people from different European countries, and when of course they don't know, as why on earth should they, of what use are statistics to any of us? I tell them fifty per cent higher than an average of the average in each of the countries concerned. Fifty per cent" (*Europa* 49).

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[4] The discrepancy is revealed in Parks' *An Italian Education* (1996) a non-fiction where he honestly talks about every aspect of his experience in Italy with his Italian wife Rita and their three children. When they are on the beach at Pescara, Parks remarks that "where I was brought up, if you got down to the sea at 8.30 in the morning, you would freeze to death" (3) and "if you set up a sunshade on the beach at Blackpool, where I lived as a child, the chances are it would be blown away. Even with a huge cement base" (3-4).

By the end of the novel, Jerry decides against going back to Italy at all. Yet, ironically, he insists on being displaced, as he decides to stay in Strasbourg and work at the European Parliament with the implication of starting a new relationship. Consequently, he completes the loop with a girl from Yorkshire, but Parks does not depict the English girl at all, thus he terminates the contrast between the Italian and British women.

Tim Parks' *Destiny* (1999) similarly reflects the cultural incompatibility in intercultural marriages between the British and the Italians. Three months after returning to England writer Christopher Burton receives a phone call at the reception desk of a hotel in Knightsbridge informing him of his son Marco's suicide. On receiving this devastating news, Burton immediately decides he must leave his Italian wife, Mara, of thirty years' standing, while he finds it so difficult to focus on his for his son: "[T]here is no reason, I told myself…no reason at all for you and your wife to go on living together now that your son is dead" (*Destiny* 1). Within the course of a couple of days during which they fly from London to Rome for their son's funeral, Chris keeps re-evaluating his marital relationship: "But other things are equally bad for your health – as for example the uncertainty generated by your wife's constant changes of mind, her inexplicable rancor, her obsessive attachment to your unhappy son Marco, things that undeniably lie at the root of your various disorders – do not concern her in the least" (3).

Burton's cultural identity comes to the fore in trying to justify his feelings against his wife and in his "hysteria"[5] (Modleski 137-40). Italy recurs as a metaphor of a marital trap just as in Parks' previous fiction *Europa*: "I did the right thing, I suddenly thought, returning to England. After all, I am English myself. Even after all these years away, the decades, I am still English. If you had remained in England you would surely have divorced your wife ages ago, I told myself complacently in the Hotel Rembrant breakfast room" (*Destiny* 6).

Planning to write a book on national character (which is the Italian character in this case), the samples Chris chooses are ironic because he keeps comparing his wife's and former Italian politician Andreotti's[6] characteristics – in an attempt to construct an Italian national character. However, what he achieves is to strengthen his argument by stereotyping his wife:

> the predictability, given a proper understanding of race, character, sex and circumstances, of all human behavior [...] national destiny [...]. Andreotti would say exactly what was expected of him. Exactly what I had said he would say [...] Or indeed my wife – most of all my wife – if only one could put one's wife in a monumental book. People are who they are, I thought. I have always thought. Most particularly your wife. So every study in prediction, in political calculation, and all failure to predict is a failure to understand character [...]. Who is at once more himself and more exquisitely, as the Italians put it, Italian, than Andreotti? (*Destiny* 10-11).

In his evaluation, Chris Burton goes through all aspects of the Italian characteristics. He falls in love with his wife "for her vivacity, her vehemence [...] her energy" (*Destiny* 27). He remarks, "[i]t is rare for my wife not to attend to her make-up. Like many Italians, she is a person intensely aware of her physical appearance, her physical attractions. I love her for that" (74). Yet, he adds, "look what happened to my adventurous marriage [...] that sudden meeting of two nations. Two cultures. Hounslow lower-middle and Roman aristocracy (so-called). Oh, if you knew, I laughed! From an Acton terrace to the house of ghosts! So– called" (55). Chris' mention of the Roman aristocracy is a criticism of the abundance of titles in Italy (Keates 1991, 48). On the other hand, his wife's aristocratic background and close family ties lead him to refer to his house as "the houses of ghosts".

[5] Male hysteria linked to traumatic shock.

[6] Giulio Andreotti**,** (January 14, 1919, Rome,— May 6, 2013, Rome), Italian politician who was one of the country's most skillful and powerful politicians in the era after World War II. Over a 20-year period, he was a leading figure in the Christian Democratic Party (DC) and served as prime minister of Italy several times (1972–73, 1976–79, and 1989–92) (*Britannica online*).

Furthermore, his abhorrence of "the house of ghosts" also parallels the metaphor of Italy or Italian homes as a trap, as in Parks' previous fiction *Europa*.

The complex working of Burton's mind even refers to tax evasion as a cultural influence of his wife:

> To the extent, I reflect, that after all those years castigating corruption, I had myself started evading tax. In Rome as the Romans [...] You know your wife, I thought [...] so ultimately you become like her. You eat into the apple, only to find it has eaten you. You're not so English as you imagine, I thought. You have become Italian. You have become like your wife [...] so that if Italy, like your wife, remains obscure to you, that can only be because you yourself are obscure. (*Destiny* 123-4)

Always accusing Italy, he concludes, "I myself would have behaved entirely differently, I felt – no, I was sure – in London or Los Angeles, or with an English wife in Rome" (*Destiny* 129). Moreover, "[i]t was your wife who gave you your monuments" (193). As the narrative is the first person, we learn about Chris' wife Mara through him and her assumed point of view is mediated in this way. Nonetheless, what we gather is that, compared to Chris, Mara behaves in a controlled and natural fashion in the expression of her grief for the death of their son. Although Chris insults her over their son' grave, when Chris goes back to "the house of ghosts" Mara accepts him: "Tomorrow it seems we will move out of the house of ghosts. Tomorrow we can begin to mourn our son" (249). Finally Chris indicates a metaphorical shift from Italy as a "trap" to solely "the house of ghosts" as the final trap, and in the end, he is resolute that moving out of the house itself will constitute a change. Instead of reacting naturally to his son's suicide, Christopher Burton's initial fear of going from England back to Italy, his almost paranoiac discussion of his difference from his Italian wife throughout the novel, can be explained by Bauman who argues that fear of deviation is a closely condensed kind of anxiety, "[i]t is relatively easy to discern a common content behind the variety of forms; Horkheimer and Adorno could unerringly pinpoint the 'fear of void', experienced as the fear of being different and thus lonely, as the hard core of modern anxieties" (115). Thereby for Bauman, instead of "chasing a postmodern 'mother of all fears', it is prudent to settle for an inventory of postmodern anxieties" (115).

Analyzed as a whole, this portrayal of an intercultural marriage by an Englishman in Tim Parks' *Destiny* disregards any of the positive aspects of Italian womanhood or Italy itself. At the instigation of the void caused by his son's death, Chris Burton immediately starts to question his wife's typical Italian qualities, including her close family ties, predictability, and her obsession with appearance – *La Bella Figura*[7] (Richards 19) (emphasis original). Displaced and anxious Chris argues about his wife's role throughout the novel only to end up by her side in the end, emplaced in Italy.

In the absence of women writers to tackle these issues, it is Linklater, Keates and Parks who address the question of intercultural marriages, displaced in Italy themselves as writers. However, these male writers' handling of the dispute of intercultural marriage is usually insufficient in the complexity of its argument (with the exception, perhaps, of Tim Parks' *Destiny*). While Linklater and Keates focus on infidelity and/or distant manners of Italian husbands married to displaced British women, Parks develops the relationship the other way around, focusing on what an Englishman goes through as the husband of an Italian woman, displaced and emplaced in Italy. Moreover, in general what these male writers present is a pointedly negative portrayal of intercultural marriages, despite the beauty of Italian women. Regarding Elaine Showalter's analysis metaphorically, it is possible to conclude that "the woman becomes the case study as well as the case, an object to be incisively opened, analysed, and reassembled by the male writer" (128).

Consequently, it is possible to argue that these male writers constantly employ prejudiced and distorted female images to overcome their sense of alienation caused by dislocation. Furthermore, the writers gradually become emplaced in Italy, since they are transformed in their writing process. As Foucault asserts, "[f]or me

[7] Richards maintains that Italians are the "world's best-dressed people" (xv) in that *La bella figura* means always looking one's best even in order to "conceal indigence, or unhappiness" (19) (emphasis original).

intellectual work is related to what you would call aestheticism, meaning transforming yourself [...]. This transformation of oneself by one's own knowledge is, I think rather close to the aesthetic experience. Why should a painter work if he is not transformed by his own painting?" (14). Covering the period between 1946-1999 then, I suggest for Linklater, Keates and Parks the adventure of crossing cultures provides the opportunity for personal growth; transforming alienation into a sense of belonging.

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Affective Boundaries and Replication in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*

İpek Kotan Yiğit

Abtract: Although in the popular imagination *Wuthering Heights* firmly and instantly evokes an aura of a Gothic romance, in critical literature a confusion regarding boundaries and categorization pertains to *Wuthering Heights* on a formal, as well as a narrative and thematic level. In terms of genre, *Wuthering Heights* seems to occupy an ambiguous, liminal space; having generated a considerable amount of scholarly debate on whether it is a work of romance, or literary realism. Genre is important, as in settling this question, we also decide the manner in which we read the novel: Which of its aspects to highlight and foreground, and which to assign a lesser degree of importance. Conventional literary criticism has mostly adopted an either/or approach to the question and then, often, argued for a conciliatory midpoint between the two alternatives, which are eventually discovered to be not so diametrically opposed, after all. I propose that instead of attempting to stabilize *Wuthering Heights* in order to subject it to this standard, supposedly dialectical hermeneutics, we acknowledge its movement and fluidity, and provide a coherent reading beginning from this grounding. I further argue that affect theory is a particularly useful instrument in reading *Wuthering Heights*, as it prioritizes movement and continuity rather than distinctions and categorizations, and I draw from scholars such as Sara Ahmed, Teresa Brennan, and Brian Massumi in order to demonstrate how affect theory might be brought to bear on a reading of the novel. I argue that highlighting the aspect of affect theory which gives precedence to movement can resolve the problem of "meta-interpretation", or settling the mode of reading the novel, the background to which I introduce directly below.

Keywords: nineteenth-century literature; Victorian studies; novel; genre theory; gothic; *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë

Literature Review

The problem of boundaries and distinctions greets the readers of *Wuthering Heights* from a distance, even before they have had the chance to engage with the text on a narrative level. That it is a novel is universally agreed on, but what kind of a novel is it, and what genre does it belong to? The main competitors in the debate are literary realism and romanticism, or romance; as well as a range of sub-genres that are thought to be in these respective domains, such as the gothic novel, or domestic fiction. According to this formulation, however, the postulation of one genre being operative in the novel does not necessarily exclude the others. To this end, Nancy Armstrong claims, "if [...] a drably spiritless form of realism displaces the 'pre-industrial imaginative creativity' in Brontë's fiction, it is also true that 'the real world' is eclipsed by an earlier Romantic form of the imagination" (89). In Armstrong's view, such arguments for strict categorization in which romance and realism are constructed as mutually exclusive have not managed to "pin down the genre of *Wuthering Heights*" (89). Similarly, Lyn Pykett sees *Wuthering Heights* as "straddl[ing] literary traditions and genres": "[I]t combines elements of the Romantic tale of evil-possession, and Romantic developments of the eighteenth-century Gothic novel, with the developing Victorian tradition of Domestic fiction in a realist mode" (73). In addition to a tendency in critical literature to see the novel as more closely aligned with one genre or the other, then, there is

also this mediatory approach which reads it as partaking in both. The significance of this intermediate approach as a bridge between conventional literary criticism and affect theory becomes more evident below.

This "either/both" strain of argument regarding the genre of the novel is significant in that it reflects, or perhaps replicates, a similar problem of interpretation that attends the readings of the novel on a structural and narrative level. As J. Hillis Miller argues in *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels* (1982), even though a large body of criticism on the novel exists, all promoting itself as "the right way to read the novel as a whole", it is at the same time the case that "the many essays on the novel do not exist on a common axis of judgment" (49). He then proceeds to catalogue some of the preeminent examples, including Thomas Moser's Freudian interpretation and Terry Eagleton's Marxist reading among others.[1] Miller's argument is not that these interpretations are inaccurate, but that they account for the novel only partially: "[T]he error lies in the assumption that the meaning is going to be single, unified, and logically coherent", he claims (51). This statement makes clearer the parallel between the discussions of the novel's genre, and the debate on the correct way to interpret it: In both cases, some adopt a more specific, clearly defined, and delimited viewpoint, and others argue that a given approach is "correct" to the extent that it is comprehensive, and succeeds in accounting for the novel's polysemous nature. At the same time, however, it is important to keep in mind that the critics who read the text through a psychoanalytic, feminist, or Marxist lens, just to note a few examples, probably do not do so with the intention to engage in a partisan and partial interpretation. Rather, they think that this particular method of reading the novel is the one with the potential to say the most about it, in the most comprehensive way. The point is that there is a subjective margin even in determining the parameters, so even if we agree with Miller's argument, that "the best readings will be the ones which best account for the heterogeneity of the text" (51), it does not necessarily follow that there will be consensus on the best way to account for that heterogeneity. To elaborate, Miller also includes in his list Frank Kermode's reading of *Wuthering Heights*, and says that Kermode interprets the text "as an overdetermined semiotic structure which is irreducibly ambiguous by reason of its excess of signs" (50)[2]. From Miller's standpoint, Kermode's explanation, among others, is not wrong but "insufficient" in that it holds there is a "single secret truth" in the novel that "would be something formulable as a univocal principle of explanation which would account for everything in the novel" (51). In point of fact, however, in Miller's summary of Kermode's argument there is both the evidence of a comprehensive scope, as when he speaks of a "semiotic structure", and also of the resistance to reduce that structure to a "univocal principle"—Kermode cannot be positing a single secret truth and arguing for ambiguity and excess in the signs at the same time.

Other prominent critics of the novel, such as Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) offer a more brief but similar review of criticism, and argue that even though there is much "critical disputation" on the novel, specifically "about the novel's genre and style", at the same time, "strangely there is truth in all these apparently conflicting notions" (258). For Gilbert and Gubar, *Wuthering Heights* is to be understood in terms of its literariness, "because Brontë approached reality chiefly through the mediating agency of literature", and the "conflicting notions" about the text can be seen as existing on a spectrum of unliterariness and literariness. They further claim that this is a spectrum that bends on itself: "As one of her better-known poems declares, she follows 'where [her] own nature would be leading,' and that nature leads her to an oddly literal—and also, therefore, unliterary—use of extraordinarily various literary works, ideas and genres, all of which she refers back to herself, since 'it vexes [her] to choose another guide'" (258). Instead of the centrality Kermode gives to the excess and ambiguity of the sign, Gilbert and Gubar center on the literariness of the signs and offer a feminist reading whereas Kermode's interpretation tends more toward structuralism.

[1] See Moser, Thomas. "What is the Matter with Emily Jane? Conflicting Impulses in *Wuthering Heights*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 17.1 (1962): 1-19; Eagleton, Terry. "*Wuthering Heights*." *Myths of Power*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 97-121.

[2] See Kermode, Frank. *The Classic: Literary Images of Permanence and Change*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983.

However, neither of these interpretations is necessarily "insufficient" merely because it looks at the text through the lens of a specific school of interpretation, such as feminist or structuralist criticism.

The idea that there exists the possibility of an unmediated encounter with the text is not what Miller is defending, but his criticism of various strands of interpretation directing their own specific questions regarding the novel, and positing the answers they arrive at as the "single secret truth", certainly implies that Miller believes there is a better way. A bad-faith interpretation of Miller's reading, incidentally, might be subjected to just the same kind of criticism; for instance, he writes that the text "produces its effect on its reader through the way it is made up of repetitions of the same in the other which permanently resist rational reduction to some satisfying principle of explanation", so perhaps the secret truth of the novel might be that it is resistant to unified, rational explanations (52). Clearly that is not his point, but this is an illustration of the futile nature of trying to arrive at a definitive conclusion down his particular avenue.

The Alternative of Affect

The problem does not lie with trying to make sense of *Wuthering Heights* as a coherent system, as Miller implies, but rather, with the way we formulate what a coherent system is, and the inevitable incongruencies which arise when the text does not comply with such standards. In "An Inventory of Shimmers", critics Seigworth and Gregg argue that "because affect emerges out of muddy, unmediated relatedness and not in some dialectical reconciliation of cleanly oppositional elements or primary units, it makes easy compartmentalisms give way to thresholds and tensions, blends and blurs" (4). This description of affect theory, which highlights in particular the way in which it is different from more conventional "critical-cultural-philosophical inquiry and theory" (4), hint at how we might be formulating what a coherent system is in the wrong way: We do so by insisting on the clear-cut divisions between signs prior to acknowledging their interplay, or by giving priority to "position [under]taken" rather than the "process always underway", as Seigworth and Gregg cite Brian Massumi (4).

I argue that highlighting the aspect of affect theory which prioritizes movement in the context of *Wuthering Heights* can resolve the problem of "meta-interpretation", or settling the mode of reading the novel, as introduced above. Rather than trying to stabilize the genre, the necessary mode of interpretation or the signifying structures of the novel in order to be able to comment on it, it is possible to acknowledge the movement and fluidity of the text as its *a priori* fact on all these levels, and to give a coherent reading proceeding from this recognition.

In proposing to analyze the text primarily through the lens of affect theory, I have not completely let go of the conceptions of the linguistic turn in literary criticism, as my continued dependence on structures and signs in my approach to the text demonstrate. Arguably, in an unadulterated practice of affect theory, such concepts would not hold a position of authority or even validity, and Seigworth and Gregg argue that concepts such as "subject/object, representation and meaning, rationality, consciousness, time and space, inside/outside, human/nonhuman, identity, structure, background/foreground, and so forth [have] become decidedly less sure and more nonsequential" (4). However, I maintain that the "infinitely multiple iterations of affect and theories of affect" (4) the two critics posit instead of the existence of a "single, generalizable theory of affect" (3) also make it possible for affect theory to be combined with a more traditional semiotic approach, and to supplement, rather than negate it. Further arguing from Seigworth and Gregg's postulation, one might go so far as to say that the possibility of such a hybrid reading is inscribed in the affective approach. Accordingly, I will engage with the problem of boundaries and repetitions in *Wuthering Heights* from such a hybrid position, utilizing the ideas of affect theorists Sara Ahmed, Teresa Brennan and Brian Massumi on the movement of affect while at the same time maintaining a dialogue with the critical interpretations summarized above, which possess a more conventional theoretical approach. The affective approach has the advantage of not presupposing the existence of dichotomies or opposing categories, to resolve or reconcile which more conventional theory expends a lot of effort, and as such, it is free to explore the narrative on relatively fresh terms.

The Problem of Boundaries in the Narrative

As discussed above, boundaries present themselves as a problematic category in *Wuthering Heights* from the first moment, beginning with the question of genre. This problem is then repeatedly reproduced in the text, but to start with the most extensive, let us consider the narrative mode of the novel, which is in effect from the first page to the last: *Wuthering Heights* is a framed narrative in which the immediate story we are reading is not that of Heathcliff and Cathy's love, but the experiences of a gentleman named Lockwood, who inhabited Thrushcross Grange at the time of narration. And further embedded in Lockwood's narration is the narrative of Nelly Dean, who tells Lockwood the story of the romance between Heathcliff and Cathy, as well as the more mundane parts of their history. As such, even though romance is at the heart of the narrative, it is also the case that through the framing technique, it is doubly separated and distanced from the readers: First through Nelly's, and then Lockwood's narration. Critic Dorothy van Ghent claims that through this framing, "we see the drama through the eyes of Lockwood and Nelly Dean, who belong firmly to the world of practical reality", so that "the drama is oriented in the context of the psychologically familiar" (17). According to this view, their narration is set up as a "technical bulwark" which stands between the sense of raw, unmediated experience evoked by the narrative, and the readers' reception of this experience. Even though the function of the narrators is to filter and relay this experience, the use of "bulwark" also implies that at the same time, they designate a boundary between the reader and the immediacy of Cathy and Heathcliff's story, "this nakedness from the web of familiar morality and manners" (17). The seemingly paradoxical position these two narrators, Lockwood and Nelly, occupy is that they both replicate the narrative in passing it along, and also separate it from the reader, in standing between them and the "original" events; although all narration requires at least one narrator, these two draw attention to their own presence as being particularly obtrusive. The double bind of boundaries and replication is at work in this process, and there is an awareness of the interconnection of these two concepts on a textual level, too; as when Lockwood finally decides to hear the story from Nelly, he says, "I, who had determined to hold myself independent of all social intercourse, and thanked my stars that, at length, I had lighted on a spot where it was next to impracticable [...] I desired Mrs. Dean, when she brought in supper, to sit down while I ate it, hoping sincerely she would provide a regular gossip" (42). The movement through which the desire to be kept separate from "social intercourse" transforms into a gesture of becoming part of it arrives; in this instance ostensibly because of Lockwood's "low spirits and solitude", and the reasoning might be questionable, but the fact that the movement does arrive is evident. Elsewhere, Lockwood also begins with a declared wish or intent to keep himself separate, and ends up being entangled in the story, replicating and relaying it in the process, as in the passage where he meets Catherine's ghost. In this instance, infuriated with his ill-treatment by the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights, but unable to go back to Thrushcross Grange because of the dark, the adverse weather conditions and his unfamiliarity with the surroundings, Lockwood has to make do with sleeping under Heathcliff's roof for the night. As the servant guides him to his room, Lockwood thinks that he is "too stupefied to be curious", and "fasten[s his] door" as soon as he is there (31). Inside the room, he notices Catherine's writings of the several variants of her name on the window ledge, and even though he says he wants to "dispel the obtrusive name", he ends up diving into her story through her marginalia (32). Catherine's story reenacts itself in Lockwood's portentous dream, Lockwood narrates both the story and his dream, Heathcliff learns of it and so do the readers: Again, the gesture of separation is turned on its head, resulting in a proliferation of that from which Lockwood meant to keep apart.

To understand the logic of the recurrence of this dyadic transformation in the novel wherein the two concepts are continuously transformed into one another, therefore, becomes crucial. The transformation works both ways, not only from separation to participation and replication but also in the opposite direction. Early in the novel, Lockwood's attempts to engage with the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights are constantly foiled through their indifference or hostility, and also through his own misunderstandings. A popular way of

interpreting Lockwood's position in the novel is to see him as a stand-in for the reader in which his misreading and misinterpretation of the events surrounding him represent the reader's difficulties with interpreting the text; similarly, the magnetic pull Nelly's narration has on him can be read as a parallel—or prefiguration—of the relation between the novel and the reader.[3] This interpretation is not demonstrably wrong, but it is not very useful, either: In observing meta-commentary in the way Lockwood is constructed, it does not answer the question, but merely reconstructs it at one remove. The posited parallel between Lockwood and the readers delays, rather than answer the question why Lockwood is so at a loss, and why his intentions are thwarted. In trying to understand the transformation in terms of intentionality and agency, we are trapped in this circular reasoning, and the way out of this loop lies in considering that there might be other forces than intentionality, be it of the author, the characters, or the reader, at work in the narrative.

Affective Economy and Movement in the Text

That some other force than intentionality is at work in the narrative is the idea that the narrative operates not through agents, but through its own system and structure. The difference between the two, in this case, is defined in terms of subjectivity and intentionality, or their lack thereof. An affective theorist who explores the possibility of this lack of intentionality in her work is Sara Ahmed. In her discussion of affective economies, which she develops by combining psychoanalytic and Marxist theories, Sara Ahmed says that "psychoanalysis [...] offers a theory of emotion as economy, *as involving relationships of difference and displacement without positive value.* That is, emotions work as a form of capital: affect does not reside positively in the sign or commodity, but is produced as an effect of its circulation" (45) (emphasis original). Ahmed does not bring it up explicitly, but a Saussurean interpretation of signs undergirds this account; as according to Saussure, meaning is not inherent to the signs in themselves, but rather, it is produced by the differences among the signs. Ahmed acknowledges the role of difference, but her emphasis is more on the circulative aspect: She argues that value resides not in signs or objects but that "the movement between signs and objects converts into" it (45). She is not always very clear on the distinction between emotion and affect as some other affect theorists are and she tends to use the terms interchangeably, but judging by the general consensus that affect denotes a more presocial and pre-/non-subjective concept than emotion does, it is safe to say that Ahmed is talking about the circulation and movement of affect, not of emotion.

The importance of this distinction is that when we talk about the movement of affect instead of emotion, the subjectivity (and, to some extent, intentionality) associated with emotions fades into insignificance—it might be there, but it does not signify in this context. This is the way out of Lockwood's dilemma between the desire to separate and the desire to participate/replicate, and by extension, the mechanism in the narrative by which the framing both separates the reader from the original events, and also replicates them. It is not up to Lockwood as an individual character to determine which action he's going to undertake; it is up to the narrative structure, and that structure takes the form of what Ahmed calls an affective economy: In the act of narration objects and signs circulate in it, between Catherine's diary and Lockwood, between him and Nelly, between Lockwood and the readers, and they, in turn, become "commodities" of this circulation as well, as it is perfectly embodied in the instance where Catherine is represented to Lockwood through a book. The signs or commodities do not have any agency or intentionality of their own; it is the movement of affect that drives the narrative forward in its dual impulse of separation and repetition.

Lockwood is a latecomer to the milieu of Wuthering Heights, however, and it may be argued that the ineffectuality of his intentions and decisions are the result of his unfamiliarity with his social and physical

[3] Among the critics who endorse or analyze this view of Lockwood as a stand-in for the reader are Carl R. Woodring, "The Narrators of *Wuthering Heights*," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* II (1957): 298-305; Clifford Collins, "Theme and Conventions in *Wuthering Heights*," *The Critic* I (Autumn 1947): 43-50; Michael S. Macovski, "*Wuthering Heights* and the Rhetoric of Interpretation," *ELH* 54/2 (1987): 363-383.

surroundings rather than being a demonstration of the affective movement through the framed narration. He remains an outsider for the duration of the narrative, and this removal operates in both directions: Even with Nelly, presumably the person he has the most interaction with in either household, he does not share anything that might be thought of as personal. He is an outsider both in the sense that his social milieu is inscrutable to him, and also that he keeps himself apart from the members of the household. One of the very few facts we are made aware regarding his life before he came to Thrushcross Grange is the story of an aborted romance that is very similar in its structure to his "transformed" intentions or desires discussed above. Lockwood offers a brief summary of his experience as follows:

> While enjoying a month of fine weather at the sea-coast, I was thrown into the company of a most fascinating creature: a real goddess in my eyes, as long as she took no notice of me. I "never told my love" vocally; still, if looks have language, the merest idiot might have guessed I was over head and ears: she understood me at last, and looked a return—the sweetest of all imaginable looks. And what did I do? I confess it with shame—shrank icily into myself, like a snail; at every glance retired colder and farther; till finally the poor innocent was led to doubt her senses, and, overwhelmed with confusion at her supposed mistake, persuaded her mamma to decamp. (21)

Gilbert and Gubar read this scene as a demonstration of the power dynamics at work between men and women: "Since even the most cultivated women are powerless", they argue, "women are evidently at the mercy of all men, Lockwoods and Heathcliffs alike. [...] if literary Lockwood makes a woman into a goddess, he can unmake her at whim without suffering himself" (289). However, from the text it does not appear as if Lockwood is attempting a power play as such; his avoidant behavior comes as a surprise to him as it does to the woman, and his shame and self-reproach imply that he is not proud of his actions. Interpreted from this perspective, Lockwood's interactions with the woman at the sea resort anticipate the many instances in the text, discussed above, where he intends to do one thing and ends up doing something quite else. In this instance, too, he sets out with an intention to connect to another individual, only to end up being quite separated from her, for some self-defeating reason unknown to him. What appears to him as his subjective intention is thwarted once it is reciprocated—but perhaps the key here in understanding this scene is to notice that what initially moves Lockwood is not his subjective intention, or emotion per se: He stresses that his advances, such as they were, never occurred "vocally"; they were strictly nonlinguistic. And once they threaten to become intrapersonal—or social—through the woman's reciprocation, they disappear. These two qualities of being non- (or pre-) linguistic and non-social are also attributes of affect as well, especially in the context of its contradistinction to emotion. What moves Lockwood, and moves through him in this instance, as in the previously discussed ones, is affect rather than male privilege or a taste for power play, if we are to go by the evidence offered to us by the text. And the importance of this encounter with the movement of affect, within the confines of the narrative but outside of Lockwood's experience at the Heights, is that it shows that his unfamiliarity with his surroundings and his outsider status do not entirely account for the ineffectuality—and irrelevancy, even—of his intentions and wishes. There is always a surplus, such as the failed romance, that cannot be accounted for by anything other than the totality of the narrative structure, and that structure is constructed through the movement of affect.

Nelly Dean, the other narrator of the novel, is a useful counterpoint to Lockwood in discussing the effect of affect on the novelistic structure in terms of the framed narration, because unlike Lockwood, she is also an integral member of the household at the time of Catherine and Heathcliff's youth in addition to her function as a narrator. As such, her position is the opposite of Lockwood's in that whereas he is too little involved with the events, she is perhaps too caught up in them as an "actor" in her own right to be able to also serve as a narrator—in other words, there is for her a conflict of interest at stake where there is none for Lockwood. And indeed, that Nelly is, or might be, an unreliable narrator is a recurrent topic in analyses of the novel's form; that whatever she is telling Lockwood (and the reader), which amounts to the majority of the text, is filtered through her own subjective point of view. What, then, is exactly at stake when Nelly's reliability as a narrator is questioned? Is it

the possibility that she might be fabricating events wholesale, or else intentionally omitting crucial ones from her narrative? Or is it that she is sticking to a version of events as they actually happened, but interpreting them as she sees fit, ascribing motivations to people, providing explanations and so forth? Because if it is the first alternative, and her credibility as to reporting the events that happened (Heathcliff running away, or Isabella eloping, for instance) is questionable, then there is no reason that the same doubt should not be extended to Lockwood, and to the novel as a whole: It might be two people making things up as they go, to pass the time or for some other reason. If it is the second alternative, however, and her unreliability is argued through her wilful or unintended misinterpretations of events, again, there is not much to distinguish her from the other narrator; for as we have discussed, Lockwood is subject to enacting similar misinterpretations through a narrative force quite out of his own hands. In either case, Nelly's function as a narrator, and her potential unreliability in this role cannot be held separate from the totality of the narrative structure.

Nelly, just like Lockwood, is caught between the inextricable movements of separation and replication, and her attempts to establish boundaries are continuously thwarted, yielding the opposite of the results for which she aims. Her role in the budding romance between Catherine II and Linton Heathcliff is an example of this: when she becomes aware of their connection, through the discovery of the love letters Linton sent to her, she is adamant that they stop it. After threatening to inform her father, she burns all the letters in the fireplace and appears to convince Catherine II to stop corresponding with Linton (195). However, after some time elapses, they encounter Heathcliff during a walk in the moors; he convinces Catherine II that Linton is dying of his love for her, and Nelly ultimately ends up taking Catherine to him herself. "What use were anger and protestations against her silly credulity?" she asks, and adds: "[W]e parted that night—hostile, but the next day beheld me on the road to Wuthering Heights, by the side of my wilful young mistress's pony" (200). In some ways this subplot is a repetition of one that took place years earlier in which Heathcliff persuades Isabella to elope with him, despite Nelly's warnings that "he's a bird of bad omen: no mate for [Isabella]" (98). Even though Nelly occupies a position of more influence than Lockwood does in terms of her familiarity with the family, she cannot exert her wishes—it is because, as Ahmed says, her influence or intention, which is a "positive value", has no place in this affective circulation; only this back-and-forth movement does (45).

The division of the novel into two distinct timelines, one concerned with the older and the other with the younger generation, is another structural feature of the novel, just as the frame narrative, that is shaped by the movement of affect. Dorothy van Ghent's summary of this structure is interesting in that in addition to showing how the divided timelines work in conjunction with the framed narration, it also gives further insight into why the genre discussions are important. She writes:

> The first of [the novel's] actions is centered in what we shall call a "mythological romance"—for the astonishingly ravenous and possessive, perfectly amoral love of Catherine and Heathcliff belongs to that realm of the imagination where myths are created. The second action, centered in the protracted effects of Heathcliff's revenge, involves two sets of young lives and two small "romances": the childish romance of Cathy and Linton, which Heathcliff manages to pervert utterly; and the successful assertion of a healthy, culturally viable kind of love between Cathy and Hareton, asserted as Heathcliff's cruel energies flag and decay [...] Binding them also is the framing narrational convention or "point of view": the voices of Nelly Dean and Lockwood are always in our ears. (17-8)

Van Ghent's choice to call the first set of actions a "mythological romance", as well as her description of the love between Catherine II and Hareton as the "healthy" and "culturally viable" kind, is indicative of the basis on which discussions of the novel's genre revolve. To the extent that the values connoted by the "mythological romance" in the first plot are dominant in the overall narrative, the novel can be seen as a product of Romanticism. However, if the "healthy" and "culturally viable" love of Catherine II and Hareton is definitive of the novel's value system, it follows that the text is aligned more closely with literary realism, and at the same time, some of its subgenres such as domestic fiction. It is evident that these two sets of values, or perhaps

worldviews, exist simultaneously in the text. However, the question remains–which is the dominant one? In setting out to answer this question, one of the first things that we notice both in van Ghent's summary and in the novel itself is that Heathcliff himself is present in both halves. He is, in fact, a constant presence from the beginning to the end. Characters from the older generation are dead in the second half, most of the younger generation is not yet born during the first, but Heathcliff is there from the first page to the last. Nancy Armstrong, also noticing this crucial position occupied by Heathcliff, observes that "any attempt to classify the novel, even if this entails making it a kind unto itself, rests upon Heathcliff and how one describes his character" (90). Yet at the same time, Armstrong is resistant to the idea of aligning Heathcliff with one set of values over the other:

> Heathcliff actually problematizes the literary categories that depend upon these oppositions, namely, the distinction between romance and realism. [...] Rather than understand Heathcliff as a "both/and" device for symbolically closing the gap between cultural codes, it is more accurate to consider him as an impossible third term, an empty category by which Brontë rejected the conventional alternatives for resolving a work of domestic fiction even while she could not imagine anything beyond these alternatives. (90)

Armstrong then proceeds to analyze the "impossible third term" represented by Heathcliff in terms of Hegel's concept of the Absolute Spirit, describing Brontë's "dilemma" as an "order of relationship between text and context [that] can occur whenever history fails to provide the adequate materials for imaginative representation" (90). However, the distinction between the two timelines as well as the genres they imply might also be read in terms of affect.

At this point, a germane question is that if affect is a presocial and prelinguistic entity as we have maintained so far, then how can it be brought to shed light on a categorization that is primarily based on historical differences? Is not affect, by its definition, an ahistorical concept? In *The Transmission of Affect*, Teresa Brennan answers this question by offering a brief summary of the ways in which our perception of affective states has changed throughout history. Stating that the earliest "vocabulary" we have had for affective states has been one of "demons of doubt and guilt and despair", she traces the transformation of our perceptions and their attendant vocabulary thus:

> Insofar as we understand these demons and sins as affective states operating according to their lazy laws, rather than as maliciously independent entities, their burden on the psyche is less onerous. But that light burden cannot be perceived for what it is when the world is viewed in terms of subjects and objects, perceived in ways that sever and objectify the means for perceiving affects (the feelings) and assigns the affects themselves to a purely endogenous place. Yet, prior to the eighteenth century, affects generally were not perceived this way. When they were not styled as demons they were regarded as passing passions that gripped the soul but were not equivalent to the soul. Demons, passions, and affects were entities that visited the psyche, rather than entities that originated within it. (97)

According to Brennan, then, it is not affect itself that changes in the course of history, but people's perception of it, and their way of formulating what it is. The shift in vocabulary, from the terms of demons and sins to those of psychoanalysis, is the most readily observable change, but it represents a deeper transformation, from an understanding where affects were seen as external to the psyche to one in which they originate in it. In this passage and elsewhere, Brennan points to the eighteenth century, or the Enlightenment, as the time in which this change came about. Speaking broadly, the internalization of affect is a product of modernity whereas its previous perception is more closely aligned with premodern times. At this point, the description of the relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine as a "mythological romance" takes on a new significance. For both terms of this description are connotative of a decidedly premodern genre; mythology and romance are not products of modernity. And even though Romanticism is, in a historical sense, the product of modernity and the Enlightenment, it is also important to remember in which sense it is so: As a reaction, or as a challenge to both,

rather than through uncritical acceptance of their values such as reason and progress. And the fault lines along which the two halves of *Wuthering Heights* are separated are constructed on these distinct perceptions of affective states, rather than on a merely chronological difference of the older and the later generations.

Catherine and Heathcliff are not particularly vocal about their love, seeing it as a given thing that does not require linguistic bulwarks; yet there are instances in the narrative, especially at critical junctions, where they attempt to describe the way they feel for each other. Through these passages, it is possible to observe their perceptions of their own affective states. One such musing occurs on Catherine's part when she is discussing her feelings for Heathcliff (and also for Linton) with Nelly, and she says that she loves Heathcliff, "because he's more [Catherine] than [she is]" (80). She goes on to say, "whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same" and further on, she claims: "[M]y love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath [the foliage]: [A] source of little visible delight, but necessary" (80-1). The noteworthy common element of these attempts at definition is that in both instances, Catherine is describing her affective states (her soul, her love and so on) in terms of something external to her: The stuff that their souls are made of, or the "eternal rocks". This love is not something she can have any kind of control on, because it does not originate in her; in Brennan's terminology, it is something that "visits" her. Very shortly before her death, during his last visit to her, Heathcliff levels an interesting accusation at Catherine. He says, "misery and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or Satan could inflict would have parted us, *you*, of your own will, did it. I have not broken your heart—*you* have broken it—and in breaking it, you have broken mine" (144) (emphasis original). In talking about the failure, or collapse of their love, Heathcliff also signals the passage from that affective realm in which things are "inflicted" or visited on persons to the one in which they act out of an internalized affect—the sealing or closure of that first realm through Catherine's betrayal also dooms their love, a love which cannot survive in that other affective realm which the betrayal ushers in.

Although Heathcliff survives in the brave new world which is defined in terms of internalized affect, he is not able to successfully bring his own affective world view to it. The attempt on his part to do so is perhaps most clearly encapsulated in the case where he plots for the marriage of Catherine II and Linton. Heathcliff intends this relationship to be a parodical replication of the love between Heathcliff and Catherine, that original romance. To Catherine II, he says: "[Linton] was in earnest: in love, really. As true as I live, he's dying for you; breaking his heart at your fickleness: not figuratively, but actually" (199). The tenor of intensity he attributes to Linton's love, as the unfolding events display, has nothing to do with Linton's insipid feelings towards Catherine II, which are for the large part manipulated by Heathcliff. But they do recall the original Catherine's feelings on the days leading up to her death; she dies of childbirth, it is true, but she also more or less dies with a broken heart over her love for Heathcliff. Heathcliff's attempt to farcically replicate that love, and to see it carried through the end is cut short by Linton's death, and then the stage is cleared to make way for that "culturally viable" relationship between Hareton and Catherine II. Just like any other character in the narrative, Heathcliff is ultimately ineffectual in the face of the movement of affect: Even though he survives Catherine into the second part of the novel in a sort of after-life, he cannot replicate the affective realm of the first half.

Affect defines the relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff not just in terms of its transmission and movement, but also through its autonomy, a state in which it is at the same time embodied and disembodied as Brian Massumi describes it. Massumi says,

> Affects are *virtual synesthetic perspectives* anchored in (functionally limited by) the actually existing, particular things that embody them. The autonomy of affect is its participation in the virtual. *Its autonomy is its openness*. Affect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is. Formed, qualified, situated perceptions and cognitions fulfilling functions of actual connection or blockage are the capture and closure of affect. [...] Something remains unactualized, inseparable from but unassimilable to any *particular*, functionally anchored perspective. (35) (emphasis original)

Even though defining the autonomy of affect through its embodiment and disembodiment at the same time sounds paradoxical at first, Massumi's explanation goes some way towards explaining how it is possible. He argues that while affect needs to be "anchored in the actually existing" things, it is able to perform only insofar as it "escapes" from them. While embodiment—whether in the subject or object, a distinction that Massumi does not pay heed to much—is the prerequisite of its existence, a degree of disembodiment is also required for its movement and transmission. It is a bit like a guard dog on a leash: The leash both ensures that the dog stays where it is supposed to stay, but it also gives it a freedom of movement in a given space.

The speech Catherine gives to Nelly, which culminates in the famous "Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff" utterance, bears witness to this dual movement of affect that necessitates both embodiment and disembodiment (81) (emphasis original). Graeme Tytler claims that this utterance has been interpreted as "a manifestation of perfect love" by "many a literary scholar", and goes on to say that at the same time, other scholars "have used it as a basis for re-assessing, not to say impugning, a relationship that has all too often been considered almost sacrosanct" (167-8). As Tytler also draws attention to the fact, it is important to keep in mind the context in which this exclamation is voiced: It arrives at the end of a discussion in which Catherine is weighing the merits of getting married to Edgar Linton against being together with Heathcliff. Two currents run through her entire reasoning, one in which she is arguing for her absolute identification with Heathcliff regardless of how separated by mundane physical reality they might be, and the other in which she argues for her essential separation or difference from Edgar even in the case of their marriage and physical union. The point Massumi makes about the autonomy of affect in terms of its virtuality strikes a relevant chord here: The affect embodied in Catherine toward Heathcliff (to the extent that affect can be said to be oriented toward any particular object) is able to survive and perform without Heathcliff actually being there. It may even be the case that it does so even more freely as long as Heathcliff is not physically there: The entire speech (and its attendant reasoning) takes place in a period of time during which Heathcliff has been absent from the Heights. His virtual presence in Catherine's mind is enough for affect to feed on. And conversely, as Catherine reasons—and later, in her marriage, experiences—Linton's physical proximity to her proves the same point from the opposite direction: Affect is not necessarily a result of embodiment.

In the same speech, Catherine also makes a cryptic statement which is in fact not any less important than the famous declaration, "I *am* Heathcliff". To Nelly, in trying to justify her marriage to Edgar, she says: "This is for the sake of one who comprehends in his person my feelings to Edgar and to myself" (81). As she has been arguing that her marrying Edgar will actually be of benefit to Heathcliff up to that point, it is reasonable to assume that the person in question is Heathcliff. How exactly does Heathcliff "comprehend in his person" Catherine's feelings not just to herself, but to Edgar as well, though? Thanks to the dual meaning connoted by "comprehension", it might mean that Heathcliff will understand whatever Catherine is feeling, or it can mean that those feelings are embodied in him. But then perhaps the two meanings are not so different from each other, and for Heathcliff to understand Catherine's affective state is to embody it. And either or both cases, for Catherine, mean that she does not have to be with Heathcliff for this affect to survive: Quite contrarily, she has to be apart from him, and together with Edgar, for the sake of their love. Their love is autonomous from their physical bodies or actual union.

As these interpretations of a variety of narrative structures in *Wuthering Heights* in the light of the ideas of several prominent affect theorists show, in affect theory, the decentered but coherent system of the novel finds a corresponding analytic approach. Even though it is not possible to conflate the ideas of Ahmed, Brennan and Massumi into one monolithic theory of affect, in their divergent analyses there is an element in common, and that it is the emphasis they place on the movement of affect. In Ahmed, it manifests itself in her idea of circulation, for Brennan it is the idea of transmission whereas Massumi analyzes it in terms of embodiment and disembodiment—none of their interpretations can be reduced to one another. Yet, they are able to complement and fortify one another all the same, and at the same time, to bring a clarity to the text of *Wuthering Heights* in a comprehensive way that the structuralist and post-structuralist accounts we discussed have not been able to. As

Seigworth and Gregg argue, this is enabled through the way in which they formulate what a system might be: A structure made up of movable and moving parts, that is itself in movement, and not something in stasis. Circulation, transmission and embodiment, in an affective reading, become key concepts through which otherwise baffling or out-of-joint features of the narrative are accorded a fresh and persuasive place in its overall structure. The posited unreliability of Lockwood and Nelly's frame narratives, since their statements and actions never actually line up, is difficult to resolve in either direction. However, Ahmed's theory of circulation, in which subjectivity and intentionality is divorced from the functioning of the signs in the text, renders the issue of reliability null. Brennan's concept of transmission, in contrasting the transmitted affect with the internalized affect, both sheds light on the nature of Heathcliff and Catherine's relationship, and illuminates the relationship between the two seemingly disparate halves of the novel in which different genres appear to prevail. And finally, Massumi's theory of embodiment/disembodiment further illustrates how the seemingly incomprehensible dynamics of the passionate yet avoidant relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine actually do make sense, and that their Gothic romance remains a constant even where it appeared to fail. Considering the intimidatingly extensive body of *Wuthering Heights* scholarship, no observation regarding a particular aspect of the novel can be wholly new; however, in adopting a relatively unexhausted framework such as affect theory, a new sense might be thus made of these disparate elements, where the overall affective emphasis on movement shows the old under new lights.

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Love and Longing for the Reed-bed: A Comparative Study of Sufi Themes in *The Forty Rules of Love* and the *Mathnawi*

Maha Zaouil

Abstract: This article explores the recurrence of Sufi themes in Elif Shafak**'**s novel, *The Forty Rules of Love* and draws comparisons to similar selections from Jalaluddin Rumi**'**s *Mathnawi*. This article examines the claims that Shafak employs concepts more connected to New Age Spirituality than Sufism in her novel and has oversimplified Islamic Sufi concepts to appeal to an international readership. Through the comparative study of Shafak's fictional narrative with Rumi's poetry, I examine whether or not Shafak**'**s characters in *The Forty Rules of Love* undergo a spiritual journey, or are Sufi seekers towards the Ultimate Truth. By using the *Mathnawi* as a form of reference for the Sufi journey, I conduct a thematic comparative analysis of selected passages from the *Mathnawi* and Shafak**'**s narrative to investigate the Sufi dimension of this book. Through comparing close readings of selections from the novel with the *Mathnawi*, Sufi themes such as that of restlessness, searching for enlightenment *fanā'*[1], and the infinite power of Divine Love are presented. This article argues, through the thematic comparisons, that Sufi themes are predominant in the historical narrative of the novel, while the contemporary narrative lacks the Islamic basis of the Sufi path.

Keywords: *Mathnawi*, Elif Shafak, Jalaluddin Rumi, Sufism, New Age Spirituality

Introduction

Sufis in the thirteenth century, at the time of Jalaluddin Rumi, were hardly unanimous in their viewpoints, and with time, various orders appeared with different perspectives on the right path towards the Truth. Scholars, Islamic sheikhs, and Sufis throughout the centuries have attempted to explain Sufism, but as a spiritual path, it does not have one incontestable meaning. Sufism can be defined as a path that begins with the teachings of a Sufi *sheikh*, continues towards spiritual enlightenment, the annihilation of the self, and ultimately subsistence in the Ultimate Truth, God.

One of the most renowned scholars in Islamic Studies, Seyyed Hossein Nasr explains that the "Sufi tradition contains a vast metaphysical and cosmological set of doctrines elaborated over a long period by Sufi teachers and masters of gnosis" which has been maintained over centuries dating back to the Prophet (xv). The Sufi path, its discipline and beliefs, are connected to the levels of spirituality concerning **"**action, love, and knowledge" with the ultimate goal of reaching a "state of sanctity" (xv). The spiritual path of Sufism grants the seeker, by becoming One with Divine Love, access to the "inner levels of existence" and the reason for being (Nasr 140-1). Nasr presents here the necessary tenets known to any Sufi: The presence of Sufi teachers and the development of their doctrines, the basis of Sufism in spirituality and Islam, and most importantly, the aim of becoming One with God to comprehend the purpose of existence.

In comparison, Ron Geaves defines Universal Sufism as an interpretation of Sufism that focuses on the mystical elements without abiding by the guidelines of Islam (81). Universal Sufism is a testament to the essentialist theories of mysticism where all higher religious experiences are considered more similar than

[1] Spiritual death.

different. This is similar to New Age Spirituality that differs across various cultures, but its main principle is to challenge any rigid moral code or religion. New Age Spirituality is a **"**descriptive category in religious studies" that is concerned with the spirituality of **"**1960s and 1970s, especially in the USA or Britain" which focuses on the **"**sacredness of nature and of the cosmic encounter of the individual with his essence" (Amaral 1117). Since Universal Sufism does not follow the principles of Islam and only concentrates on the spiritual aspects of Sufism, it can be grouped under the overarching concept of New Age Spirituality.

The principles of Sufism, especially those reiterated in Rumi**'**s poetry, will be studied with respect to Elif Shafak**'**s novel in comparison to New Age Spirituality.

Jalaluddin Rumi

Today, Rumi is considered to be the bestselling poet in the United States and millions worldwide are reading his poetry (Kafka n.p.). His works, in spite of the centuries since their creation, continue to be appealing to contemporary audiences from all over the world.

Jalaluddin Rumi, an esteemed Islamic scholar and preacher, was born on 30 September 1207, most probably in Balkh, a part of modern-day Afghanistan to Bahā al-Dīn Walad. He is widely known as "Mawlānā, Our Master", while the name Rumi, mostly common in the West, refers to the fact that he resided in the "province of Rūm (Anatolia)" or what is now known as Turkey (Safavai and Weightman 1). Rumi followed the path of his ancestors and studied Islamic theology and scripture to become a preacher and a scholar.

According to Annemarie Schimmel, Rumi**'**s legacy is his unsurmountable influence on various writers and poets of the following centuries (1982, 5). Unlike many mystical poets of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, his historical background is well known due to the literary nature of his father and his prestige in the Islamic community. Rumi was following his father's path with his position as a Muslim sheikh, preacher, and Islamic leader. Meeting Shams of Tabriz shifted the axis of Rumi's life, and he began to seek the spiritual knowledge of the Sufis. Shams was elemental in Rumi's transformation into a Sufi by first forbidding him from scholarly pursuits, such as reading Islamic texts, since scholarly knowledge is not the aim of the Sufi mystic, but spiritual wisdom (Safavi and Weightman 18). In time, Rumi was able to "shift the center of gravity" from mental and intellectual pursuits to spiritual knowledge that emanated from a person's center, the heart (Safavi & Weightman 18). This prioritization of spiritual knowledge over intellectual knowledge is repeatedly referenced in Rumi**'**s poetry.

***Mathnawi*[2]**

The *Mathnawi* is a work of about 27, 000 couplets and belongs to a didactic tradition of teaching through parables and poetry (Schimmel 1980, 47). It is divided into six volumes and was written over a period of about fifteen years. Numerous writers and researchers have interpreted Rumi's verses and deduced teachings and meanings that are incalculable. Safavi and Weightman believe that Rumi deliberately wrote the *Mathnawi* to guide his readers towards the inner path to the Truth that he had undertaken successfully. They also suggest that Rumi follows a heuristic method in the *Mathnawi*, guiding seekers on the spiritual path that takes them from the everyday reality to the spiritual world and ending with enlightenment (Safavi and Weightman 4-5). Others have reflected on Rumi's ontology expressed in this work where he ruminates on the components of creation, the concept of Being, and "the whole universe as a manifestation of God's existence" (Zamani and Asadi 5).

For contemporary readers, even those not seeking the Sufi path, Rumi's poems offer comfort and meaning to those suffering from restlessness and inner turmoil. This search for belonging is a recurrent theme of Rumi's poetry and is similarly dominant in Elif Shafak's novel, *The Forty Rules of Love.*

[2] Though often written with the Persian spelling *Masnavi (*مثنوی), I have chosen to adopt the transliteration, *Mathnawi*, throughout this article.

Shafak's Cosmopolitanism and Criticism

Elif Shafak is a writer and an academic who has published seventeen books, and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 2019. She focused her academic career on Gender Studies and Political Science and taught in universities in Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

Shafak is very vocal about her political opinions that are expressed in her speeches, interviews, and newspaper articles. The major political theories and ideologies that Shafak strongly advocates are cosmopolitanism,[3] pluralism, and multiculturalism. Shafak believes that it is possible to belong to more than one country or place and to intertwine the national culture with the international by finding similarities in people's identity and sense of belonging, and she argues that cosmopolitanism is the best way to end racism, prejudice, and hatred (2014, 21).

One of her earlier novels, *The Forty Rules of Love* has sold over seven hundred fifty thousand copies, becoming an all-time best-seller in Turkey. This novel has been lauded for its postmodern intertextuality and representations of spirituality (Saeed and Zain 29). However, Shafak has been criticized for dissociating Sufism from its Islamic principles to target audiences across barriers of East and West and portray a more spiritual narrative that can be cosmopolitan in its outreach (Cihan-Artun 175; Furlanetto 204; Kökcü 138). According to Kökcü, "she writes a cosmopolitan fiction beyond times and spaces on the transnational convergence of the story of the medieval Persian poet, Rumi and a contemporary American protagonist, Ella" (143). Kökcü argues that by adopting a cosmopolitan approach to Sufism, Shafak presents only the spiritual aspect of Sufism without the Islamic component (145-7).

Elena Furlanetto claims that in *The Forty Rules of Love,* Shafak "domesticates" (204) and Orientalizes the story of Rumi for American readers, and this contributes to the "decontexualization of Rumi's work" (201). Furlanetto continues to state that Shafak's Americanized depiction of one of the most prominent figures of Sufi Islam, results in a case of "self-Orientalisation" where the focus is relating the spirituality of the novel to a Western audience, instead of engaging and presenting a more complete portrayal of the complexities of Sufi Islam (204).

Fatma Cihan-Artun, in her dissertation entitled "The Politics of Rumi's Appropriation in the West", discusses how the novel greatly utilizes "the discourse of New Age spirituality" (173). Cihan-Artun defines "New Age religiosity" as "'spiritual seekers' who disparage institutionalized religions but appreciate the universal essentials that religions, spiritual traditions, and ethical teachings supposedly share" (175). She continues to explain that Shafak represents Sufism in two different ways in the novel, through the contemporary narrative of Aziz and Ella, and at the same time, the historical narrative of Rumi and Shams. These versions of Sufism are not compatible as Aziz views Sufism as a type of "universal spirituality" that is not adherent to Islam or other religions (174). Cihan-Artun also agrees with Furlanetto in that Shafak "domestic[ated]" and "de-contexualized" Sufism in the historical narrative of thirteenth century Rumi to make it more relatable to the modern reader represented by the character of Ella, who was not a firm believer in any religion (177). Furlanetto elucidates this point when she criticizes how the novel does not focus on *fanā',* but only on modern spiritual concepts of finding contentment and becoming more self-aware.

Cihan-Artun, Furlanetto, and Kökcü demonstrate how Shafak decontextualizes Sufism and Rumi for an American audience and fails to represent the Islamic tenets of Sufism. In this article, I will examine their claims of Sufi misrepresentation by conducting close readings of selected passages from the novel with poems from the *Mathnawi* that reveal Sufi teachings.

Methodology

The focus of this article is analyzing the Sufi themes in Elif Shafak's novels and the selected poems from Rumi's *Mathnawi* are used as a means to evaluate these motifs. Through the comparative thematic analysis

[3] Thomas Pogge defines a cosmopolitan, as a "citizen of the world" who respects and values other cultures (312).

between selected passages from the novel and the *Mathnawi*, I will examine whether Shafak utilizes a more New Age approach or integrates Sufi concepts in her novel. These conclusions will be drawn through the thematic comparative analysis between selections from the novel and specific poems from the *Mathnawi* that resonate with Sufi themes such as inner dissatisfaction and restlessness, search for enlightenment, *fanā'*, and Divine Love.

Inner Dissatisfaction and Restlessness

The first theme to be compared between the *Mathnawi* and *The Forty Rules of Love* is the common feeling of dissatisfaction and restlessness of the characters struggling to find inner peace. Ella is dissatisfied with being a housewife and begins a new job to attempt to fill the void, Rumi is inexplicably discontent even though he is a very prominent religious scholar of his community, and even Shams feels incomplete since he desires a companion to share his knowledge with.

In the beginning of the narrative, the reader is introduced to the character Ella Rubinstein, whose life "consisted of still waters–a predictable sequence of habits, needs, and preferences" (*TFROL* 1). She lives her life for her husband and children and survived by "letting the days go by, the routine take over, and time run its course of inevitable torpor" (11). From her conversations with her daughter and her husband, it is clear that Ella has never been truly in love, and she continuously argues that this is a normal state of affairs since "love is only a sweet feeling bound to come and quickly go away" (16). She has accepted her life and the "continuing sadness that had, without her knowledge, become a part of who she was" (11). Even though she has taken on a new job to fill the emptiness she feels since her children do not need her as much anymore, she does not exhibit any initial enthusiasm when she complains to the literary assistant, Michelle that she cannot relate to a novel written about a Sufi in the thirteenth century. Michelle scolds the older woman, and contends that, "[i]sn't connecting people to distant lands and cultures one of the strengths of good literature?" (13). This sentence by Michelle is similar to Elif Shafak's cosmopolitan approach to writing as a way to cross barriers of religion and country to bring people closer to one another. In fact, Aziz Z. Zahara's novel does just that, as it is able to connect to a distant woman through a universal message of love. After Ella starts reading Zahara's novel, she becomes fascinated with Rumi's story and curious to know more about the writer. She researches him online, and finds that Zahara has a blog with poetry, postcards from around the world, and the following quote that resonates strongly with Ella: "No matter who we are or where we live, deep inside we all feel incomplete. It's like we have lost something and need to get it back. Just what that something is, most of us never find out. And of those who do, even fewer manage to go out and look for it" (*TFROL* 43). This quote from Zahara's blog shows Ella that her dissatisfaction is universal, that "all" people feel unfulfilled no matter where they are and what they are doing. Most people become accustomed to this feeling of restlessness, and do nothing about it by letting their routine and unhappiness dominate their lives, as is the case with Ella. The second part of this quote is what draws Ella's attention and what brings her to contact the writer through his email address listed on the website.

The more she reads and communicates with the writer, the more Ella's character changes that even her husband notices. She realizes that there is a stirring beneath the surface Ella who is either "too intrusive" or "too passive" (131). This stirring is a hidden part of her personality, "a strangled self, harboring a fast freshet of anger and rebellion" that was "waiting for her time to come" (131). Here it is clear that Ella is preparing for a major shift from her routine as she wanted to rebel against the constant structure of her daily life, and even prays for love to "absorb her whole being" (131). Her dissatisfaction eases once she understands that she needs love to be fulfilled, and she seeks this love where it has appeared in her life, in the form of Aziz Zahara.

The second character who suffers from incompleteness and restlessness is Shams. The reader is introduced to Shams through the thirteenth century historical novel Ella is reading for her job as a literary assistant. In the beginning of Zahara's story, Shams is seeking a companion to share his religious knowledge with before his death: "It wasn't death that worried me, for I didn't see it as an end, but dying without leaving a legacy behind. There were many words piled up inside my chest, stories waiting to be told. I wanted to hand all

this knowledge to one other person, neither a master nor a disciple. I sought an equal—a companion" (*TFROL* 40).

Shams's character is very different from other characters in the narrative because from the beginning he knows exactly what needs to be done to ease his worries, and sets himself on a quest to find the companion. His acceptance of death is understandable as a Sufi who has reached enlightenment since he believes that with death he will finally be reunited with God. His inevitable death does not trouble him, but the possibility of the valuable knowledge he has acquired over the years to be forgotten. At this stage in his life, his utmost desire is to share this knowledge with the right person who will make it into an unforgettable legacy.

Simultaneously in Konya, Rumi has achieved all his exoteric ambitions. He is a father, a husband, a respected scholar and *sheikh* in his community, and to all appearances, is a "happy, satisfied man" in his public and personal life (99). However, this happiness is only on the surface because he admits to feeling a "void inside [him], growing deeper and wider with each passing day[.] It gnaws at [his] soul like a disease and accompanies [him] wherever [he] go[es], as quiet as a mouse and just as ravenous" (*TFROL* 99). Rumi does not comprehend why he has this inexplicable dissatisfaction with his life even when he is successful in every way in his community. On some level, he realizes that his life was meant for more than this, and that he needs to achieve an unknown understanding before finding inner peace. It is fortunate then that Shams knows what Rumi needs because his malady is "common" among all "ordinary people" even "the beggar, the prostitute, and the drunk" (152). This suffering is a result of "separation from the One" (152). The "One" here refers to God, and Shams, unlike many of the other characters in the novel, realizes the Sufi truth that restlessness abates when one is on the path to God.

Firoozeh Papan-Matin also draws attention to the theme of longing in the *Mathnawi*'s "Reed Flute's Song" when she explains that it is an "account of the separation of the lover, personified as the reed, from the Fatherland, the reed-bed, where it had belonged in the presence of God, the beloved" (246). This longing for the reunion with God is strikingly expressed in the lines 0-4 from the poem **"**Exordium: the song of the reed" from the first volume of the *Mathnawi*:

> Now listen to this reed-flute's deep lament
> About the heartache being apart has meant:
> 'Since from the reed-bed they uprooted me
> My song's expressed each human's agony,
> A breast which separation's split in two
> Is what I seek, to share this pain with you:
> When kept from their true origin, all yearn
> For union on the day they can return. (Rumi, *Book One* 4-5)

This part of the poem echoes what Aziz and Shams have said in the novel, that every person longs to be reunited with the source or the "reed-bed". The reed here represents the people who feel like something is missing from their lives; an inexplicable emptiness. Rumi, by narrating the story of the reed, explains that this emptiness is a natural longing to reunite with the Beloved. This is explained further in the poem in lines 15-18 in the same volume,

> The day is wasted if it's spent in grief,
> Consumed by burning aches without relief—
> Good times have long passed, but we couldn't care
> When you're with us, our friend beyond compare!
> While ordinary men on drops can thrive
> A fish needs oceans daily to survive:
> The way the ripe must feel the raw can't tell,
> My speech must be concise, and so farewell! (Rumi, *Book One* 5)

In this part of the poem, Rumi explains that it is this longing or suffering to reach God that is the essence of prayer and worship. He advises the reader to dwell in this emptiness since it is a symbol of clarity that will be attained when a person reaches enlightenment. Rumi adds that unlike ordinary people who survive on "drops", the basic requirements of a religion, a mystic needs "oceans daily to survive". The more spiritual knowledge they gain, the more they realize that only True Union will ease their longing. A person, who is "raw", or unfamiliar with the spiritual path, cannot understand what a person who is "ripe" with spiritual knowledge is feeling. In this poem, Rumi is explaining that it is neither easy nor straightforward to understand God's hidden messages unless a person is truly listening. It is not within human capabilities to comprehend the complexities of the soul. What seekers must do, instead, is to empty themselves in order to sing the music given to all people. Mystics never stop trying to reach grace and oneness with God even if to the ordinary person's "raw" eye, they are already there.

Shams, Rumi, and Ella all suffer from an emptiness and longing that is similarly portrayed in Sufi literature such as the chosen selection from the *Mathnawi*. By comparing the messages of this poem to the dissatisfaction of the characters in the novel, it appears that Ella and Rumi have started to awaken to the emptiness inside them, and Shams, as a mystic, fully realizes the direction he needs to swim towards before reaching the absolute state of nothingness replete in God's love.

A Search for Enlightenment

A theme that follows discontentedness is the continuous search for enlightenment. Individuals are repeatedly searching for something to fulfill their desires or to reach happiness, but it is only a few who realize the answer to all these pursuits is finding God within themselves. This is a consistent theme in the narrative and can be seen in the below conversation from *The Forty Rules of Love* between Shams of Tabriz and Master Baba Zaman, the master of a dervish lodge in Baghdad*:*

> When asked his name, he introduced himself as Shams of Tabriz and said he was a wandering dervish searching for God high and low.
>
> "And were you able to find him?" [Master Baba Zaman] inquired.
>
> A shadow crossed his face as the dervish nodded and said, "Indeed, He was with me all along."
>
> The judge interjected with a smirk he didn't bother to hide, "I never understand why you dervishes make life so complicated. If God was with you all along, why did you rummage around this whole time in search of Him?"
>
> Shams of Tabriz bowed his head pensively and remained silent for a moment. When he looked up again, his face was calm, his voice measured. "Because although it is a fact that He cannot be found by seeking, only those who seek can find Him." (*TFROL* 48)

According to Shams, seeking God should be a quest and an intention. Sometimes travel brings truths to mind that one might know before and illuminates thoughts a person is unaware of by encountering new countries and new people; thus bringing a person closer to finding God. For others, true awakening can be found without a quest, but by inner exploration. Master Baba Zaman here seems to understand the journey of the dervish, and respects the struggles Shams must have encountered in order to search everywhere, "high and low" for God. He does not ask further questions about his search, whereas the judge, who has a more religiously orthodox mindset, finds much to mock in Shams's answer. He does not comprehend the purpose of a journey to reach enlightenment and finding God. Shams clearly addresses the judge in the second part of the conversation as a person who assumes comprehensive knowledge of religion, when he says that only those who truly search for God will find him closer than they think.

Shams believes that the only search worthwhile is the search for God and inner peace, and any other needs and desires are pointless because they are endless. It is only the true search for the Divine that brings any

real peace to individuals. This theme is also seen in a conversation between Ella and Aziz. Aziz explains to Ella his journey to his current destination in the following excerpt:

> Life is odd, Ella. In the end I never made it to Mecca or Medina. Not then, not later. Not even after I converted to Islam. Destiny took me on a different route altogether, one of unexpected twists and turns, each of which changed me so profoundly and irrevocably that after a while the original destination lost its significance. Though motivated by purely materialistic reasons at the outset, when the journey came to an end, I was a transformed man.
> As for the Sufis, who could have known that what I had initially seen as a means to an end would very soon become an end in itself? (*TFROL* 228)

Aziz, in the beginning of his journey, seeks to gain his wealth and fame by entering Mecca and Medina to take photographs no one else has taken before. He travels to Morocco to learn more about Islam and later infiltrate the city only Muslims could enter. This is Aziz's original goal that is later diverted the more he understands Islam, and in specific, Sufism. He is at a loss, continuously searching and travelling, without real purpose. He intends to take advantage of the knowledge he gains from the Sufis, but instead this knowledge changes him completely. With the spiritual knowledge he attains, the small matters like money and fame no longer had any meaning. He comprehends that he "didn't need to go anywhere" any longer since he "was already where [he] wanted to be. All [he] needed was to stay and look within" (234). What can be noticed in this passage is that Aziz refers to "destiny" as the changing factor in his plans, not his faith in God. This distinction is an example of Shafak reframing the Sufi themes to accommodate modern audiences previously commented on (Cihan-Artun; Furlanetto; Kökcü). Also, this passage is a very clear parallel to Shams' earlier statement at the beginning of the novel. The location of a person does not matter. Once the search begins, the answers will be found closer than expected, within oneself. This concept is further reiterated by Rumi in volume 4 of the *Mathnawi*, lines 3030-4:

> Thy true substance is concealed in falsehood, like the taste of butter in the taste of buttermilk.
> Thy falsehood is this perishable body; thy truth is that lordly spirit.
> (During many) years this buttermilk, (which is) the body, is visible and manifest, (while) the butter, (which is) the spirit, is perishing and naughted within it,
> Till God send a messenger (prophet), a (chosen) servant, a shaker of the buttermilk in the churn,
> That he may shake (it) with method and skill, to the end that I may know that (my true) ego was hidden. (Rumi, *Volume 4* 271)

Rumi, in this poem, compares the human body to "buttermilk" and in order to find a person's true worth, it must be "churned", in other words, rattled and shook, for the "butter" to come to the surface. This poem emphasizes the necessity of inner journeys, suffering, and false appearances. The purpose of all creation is to represent the Divine Truths hidden within them, and as both Shams and Aziz conclude after their journeys, the best and only place to find true knowledge and happiness is within oneself.

This is a point of contrast in Ella's story; however, since at the end of the novel, she distances herself from her family and duties to find herself in Amsterdam. She decides to move there, not "make plans" and "try living one day at a time" to "see what [her] heart says" (*TFROL* 349). After losing Aziz, she decides to find love outside of herself. She adapts to the idea of living in the present, which is elemental in Sufi doctrine in finding true happiness, but continues to search for love and happiness in different locations outside her own being. This is contrary to what Aziz and Shams have expressed throughout the story, and contrary to Rumi's poetry. Another key difference between the contemporary narrative and the *Mathnawi* is the representation of the stage of *fanā'* of the spiritual seeker.

True Freedom and *Fanā'*

An elemental part of Sufism is the concept of death before death, when all material possessions and the physical body are disintegrated and a person reaches a higher level of being, a state of non-existence and true freedom. Sepideh Hozhabrossadat, in an article discussing the theme of *fanā* in the *Mathnawi*, explains that "the annihilation of the ego" is the main aim of a Sufi and this path involves "two main stages that are the annihilation of ego (human attributes) and existence through the [B]eloved [*baqā'*]" (13). Kausar Khan also argues that Rumi wrote the *Mathnawi* to guide the Sufi novice towards the path of annihilation and subsistence following the example of a spiritual guide (9). A Sufi cannot reach True Union with God unless his/her self is completely obliterated, and this emphasizes the importance of *fanā'* as a Sufi concept. This concept is illustrated in the below lines (2615-22) from the *Mathnawi,* volume 4:

> When the hú that passes away has surrendered itself to Him, it becomes everlasting and never dies.
> ('Tis) like a drop of water (which is) afraid of wind (air) and earth; for by means of these twain it is made to pass away (and perish).
> When it has leaped (thrown itself) into the sea, which was its source, it is delivered from the heat of the sun and from wind and earth.
> Its outward form has disappeared in the sea, but its essence is inviolate and permanent and goodly.
> Hark, O (thou who art like a) drop, give thyself up without repenting, that in recompense for the drop thou mayst gain the Ocean.
> Hark, O drop, bestow on thyself this honour, and in the hand of the Sea become safe from destruction.
> Whom indeed should fortune like this befall? A Sea has become the suitor for a drop.
> In God's name, in God's name, sell and buy at once! Give a drop, and take (in return) the Sea which is full of pearls. (Rumi, *Volume 4* 257)

In this poem, Rumi compares human life to a droplet of water that returns to the "ocean where it came from". The ocean here can be considered the infinity of life or the endless waves of creation and rebirth. The shape of the droplet or the body changes irreversibly when joining the Ocean or God, but the essence remains the same. Only the true essence and being remains while outer appearance and physical needs become superfluous. Self-perception is surrendered, eliminating all what distinguishes a person from others to become a part of the infinite source of life. Surrendering a person's true self is not a failure, but a difficult challenge that ends in the greatest victory of joining life in its entirety. It is considered, according to Rumi, a great honor to become knowingly and willingly part of this greater whole. This is because there is no higher achievement in life than to be closer to God by dissolving the self completely.

In the novel, Kimya, Rumi's adopted daughter, reaches this stage of *fanā'*, death before death. She loves Shams, her husband, with her entire being, and when he does not share the same feelings with her, it is as if the spark of life within her fades. Shams's denial of her physical love releases Kimya from all earthly desires and brings her closer to death before death:

> There was so much kindness and compassion in God and an explanation for everything. A perfect system of love behind it all. Ten days after I visited Shams's room clad in silk and perfumed tulles, ten days after I fell ill, I plunged into a river of pure nonexistence. There I swam to my heart's content, finally sensing that this must be what the deepest reading of the Qur'an feels like – a drop in infinity.
> And it was flowing waters that carried me from life to death. (*TFROL* 321)

In this quote, Shafak draws attention to Kimya's earlier obsessive physical desires for Shams. Her "perfumed" body wrapped in "silk" represents her desperate physical need for Shams who renounced all physical and sexual demands. Once Kimya abandons the physical plane, she becomes a part of the "river of pure nonexistence". This quote utilizes the same metaphor present in Rumi's poetry: a person's being is considered a

drop of water that is submerged in "flowing waters" of infinity. Shafak also compares this feeling of the annihilation of the self as the "deepest reading of the Qur'an" suggesting that *fanā'* is the deepest level of faith a person can reach.

In the following selection (lines 1375-81) from the *Mathnawi* volume 4, Rumi cautions his readers against fearing "death" which he considers to be a form of true freedom after experiencing a lifetime of transitory attachments:

> O (dear) soul, if you are not inwardly congenial to non-existence, why are you waiting in ambush for non-existence?
> You have torn your heart away from all that you own, you have cast the net of your heart into the sea of non-existence.
> Wherefore, then, (this) flight from this sea of (heart's) desire that has put hundreds of thousands of prey into your net?
> Wherefore have you given the name "death" to (what is really) provision (for the spirit)? Observe the sorcery that has caused the provision to seem to you death.
> The magic of His (God's) doing has bound both your eyes, so that desire for the (worldly) pit has come over your soul
> Through the contrivance of the Creator, in its (your soul's) fancy all the expanse above the pit is (full of) poison and snakes;
> Consequently it has made the pit a refuge (for itself), so that (fear of) death has cast it into the pit. (Rumi, *Volume 4* 202)

Rumi makes several key points about the fruitless desires of the human condition. He first questions people's search into their inner consciousness and the constant desire to understand the inner workings of the human mind and being. He claims that nothing can be found if the "vast nothing", the core of a person's self, is not befriended. The second point he makes is linking the idea of "death" to God. God has provided a person's living conditions such as food and work, and protected and supported one throughout life. Rumi wonders why human beings who are finally able to return to this infinite state of power and oneness, call this process such a negative term such as "death". Rumi considers this point the epitome of human life, returning to the whole. He continues to note the irony between the human perception of life and death. Life, a "pit", a place of terrors and constant danger, is where people want to stay as long as possible. However, true bliss is in death, which people actually fear. Rumi emphasizes the contradiction in the human desire for finite happiness, and the fear of infinite bliss.

This contradiction can be seen in the case of Aziz, who during his journey to the final stage of *fanā,* ' encounters Ella, and is dragged back to his physical and material needs. Before meeting Ella, he assumes that he has elevated from physical concerns to become his true self and spirit. This idea is depicted in the below quote from the novel:

> In Sufism you learn how to die before death. I have gone through each of those stages, step by step. Then, just when I start to think I've got it all neatly sorted, here comes this woman out of nowhere. [...]And I realize I want to get to know this person. I need more time with her. Suddenly my life is not enough anymore. I realized I am scared of death, and one part of me is ready to rebel against the God I have revered and submitted to. (*TFROL* 325)

This quote shows that the man who writes about Shams and Rumi in *Sweet Blasphemy*, the novel within the novel, fails to reach the final stage of the Sufi journey, *fanā'*. He begins along the path, and elevates his spirit from one stage to the other, only to halt before the end to delve into a romance with Ella, instead of reaching the true state of nothingness before death. His submission to God is not with his whole being, otherwise he would have been able to distance himself from Ella, as Shams does with Kimya. This questions the idea that Aziz is a

representation of Shams, which Ella brings to attention previously.[4] Similar to Ella, it is clear that Aziz cannot be considered a Sufi in the ideology of Rumi. Ella leaves her family for the love of Aziz, and Aziz leaves his path of true knowledge and *fanā'* to be with Ella.

In contrast, in the historical narrative, both Shams and Rumi reach *fanā'* as can be understood from the following passage: "Rumi is turning into a poet himself, becoming the voice of pure emptiness, though he might not have realized this fully yet. As for me, I, too, have changed and am changing. I am moving from being into nothingness" (*TFROL* 278). Shams notices, at the end of the novel that both he and Rumi have changed into "pure emptiness and nothingness". This shows that their companionship benefits them both as they have reached the final stage of the Sufi path. Shams consciously chooses to learn from Rumi's presence to achieve annihilation of the self, while Rumi is unaware of the change that has come upon him especially since Shams is there to support him as his Sufi guide. It is only when Shams dies that Rumi's inner poet is unleashed with the wisdom of infinite bliss.

It is clear that although Aziz is on a spiritual path and Ella has embarked on hers, their path are journeys towards self-fulfillment and love of one another, not love of God and the true destination of any Sufi, *fanā'* of the self and *baqā'* in God. Even Aziz admits to Ella that "[he] cannot be Shams [...] he was way beyond and above [Aziz]", but hopes Ella can "be Rumi" if she follows the path of love (*TFROL* 328). However, in the historical narrative set in Konya, the characters of Shams, Rumi, and Kimya are described as reaching this final stage of a Sufi's journey as they accept their death before death. So unlike Cihan-Artun's claim, Shafak does in fact elucidate the Sufi concept of *fanā',* but the characters only succeed in annihilation in the historical narrative. Therefore, Shafak in the contemporary narrative describes a journey that ends in self-love or romantic love, while in the tale of Rumi, the characters who encounter romantic love suffer (such as Kimya), and the ones who find true peace are those who lose themselves in the love of God.

The Infinite Power of Love

The most important theme in the novel, the one underlying all the other themes mentioned, is the theme of love. The theme of love, according to Lindsey Palmer, is a "dominant theme in all of Rumi's work" since it is the most genuine divine experience a person can have (18). Furthermore, the significance of this theme for Shafak can be seen in the title of the book, *The Forty Rules of Love.* Sufism aims to emphasize the importance of love as a way to guide seekers towards Divine Love and Amira El-Zein emphasizes the limitations of "human love" and the importance of distinguishing it from the infinite "love of the Divine" (76). Even though Sufism does emphasize how love affects and connects all things in order to reach the Divine Love, I question whether or not Ella does in fact search for Divine Love, or simply love; love of herself, and love of Aziz.

Although Shams's rules involve different teachings in the Sufi path, they can all be encompassed in the overwhelming power of love. Without this love, knowledge, annihilation, and inner peace cannot be reached. Seyyed Hossein Nasr highlights the essential aspect of love in the Sufi tradition. Nasr explains that the journey towards the "Truth" expands a person's knowledge of the "Truth" and that a person cannot have this knowledge without "loving" and "embrac[ing]" God (60). Love in itself frees the Sufi from all material and social bonds, as Nasr elucidates, "[w]hen the Sufis speak of love, or *ishq*, they are thinking of its liberating and not confining aspect. To love God fully is to possess complete freedom from every other bond, and since God is absolute and infinite, it is to experience absolute and infinite freedom" (68).

When a person is fully immersed in the love for God, all other attachments become unnecessary, weak, and superfluous. This love will lead to true *fanā',* an escape from repetitive longings and momentary attachments. This concept of love can be seen in both Rumi's poetry and Elif Shafak's novel. In Shams's rules,

[4] Ella speculates in the following passage: "Shams of Tabriz bore than a passing resemblance to Aziz Z. Zahara. He looked exactly the way Shams was described in the manuscript [...] she suspected that Shams of Tabriz and Aziz Z. Zahara could be connected in a way that went beyond a simply literary gimmick" (185).

his emphasis on love is inescapable. His focus on this topic seems to be the foundation for all the other rules in the book: "The quest for Love changes us. There is no seeker among those who search for Love who has not matured on the way. The moment you start looking for Love, you start to change within and without" (*TFROL* 87) (emphasis original). In this quote, Shams does not distinguish between Divine Love and seems to refer to love in general, although the word "Love" is capitalized perhaps to indicate a divine status. Love, according to Shams, is the key to change and a person's development, and is the quest a person must seek to find any kind of satisfaction in life. Shams's emphasis on love is not only the love of others, but can also be considered a journey inwards towards self-love: "If you want to change the way others treat you, you should first change the way you treat yourself. Unless you learn to love yourself, fully and sincerely, there is no way you can be loved. Once you achieve that stage, however, be thankful for every thorn that others might throw at you. It is a sign that you will soon be showered in roses" (*TFROL* 135).

The first step to seeking love, either love of others or Divine Love, is to love oneself completely. If individuals cannot appreciate their own faults and value, then others will not be able to either. However, self-love will soon be attacked by others in society and this should only be considered a test for this type of love. Once this test is overcome, then comes the possibility of satisfaction and true happiness. This quote can be seen in light of Ella's character, who at the beginning of the narrative longs for acceptance and love from her family, but fails to appreciate herself first.

Furthermore, Shams distinguishes between love and intellect, emphasizing the supremacy of love over intellect, as expressed in the previous section about two kinds of knowledge: "'*Intellect and love are made of different materials,*' he said. [...] *Intellect is always cautious and advises,* '*Beware too much ecstasy,* '*whereas love says,* '*Oh never mind! Take the plunge!* '*Intellect does not easily break down, whereas love can effortlessly reduce itself to rubble. But treasures are hidden among ruins. A broken heart hides treasures*" (*TFROL* 66) (emphasis original). To find true knowledge and wisdom is not through the intellect. The intellect is limited and careful, whereas the heart can get to the extremes needed to find true love of God. To achieve True Union with God, the self needs to be utterly annihilated which is symbolized in this quote as the "rubble" or "ruins" (66). Only when a person's self is completely destroyed can the "treasure" of True Union occur. Another representation of the intellectual barrier to enlightenment is that of words and language. Shams explains that words and language are obstacles to true understanding and knowledge because of "*linguistic mistakes and simple misunderstandings*" (66) (emphasis original). When a person is fully immersed in love, then language and words become "obsolete" and what truly matters, knowledge of God, can be comprehended only in "silence" (66). Shams explains here that true knowledge does not come from learning new words, inner knowledge is about inner reflection that exists without words.

Furthermore, Rumi emphasizes the importance of love instead of intellectual knowledge in the following selection from volume 2 of the *Mathnawi*, lines 1533-9:

> Through love the bitter turns sweet, as we've told;
> Through love all copper too becomes pure gold;
> Through love the goblet's dregs turn clear and pure;
> Through love the pain we feel becomes our cure;
> Through love some even can revive the dead;
> Through love the king becomes a slave instead.
> This love results from knowledge—so how can
> The throne be taken by a stupid man?
> To love, deficient knowledge can't give birth,
> But only to what's lifeless and lacks worth;
> By what looks pretty it is easily stirred,
> As though the true beloved's voice is heard—
> Deficient knowledge can't discriminate:
> The lightning with the sun it would equate. (Rumi, *Book Two* 90)

In this poem, Rumi contends that it is only love that creates the strongest connection with God, and can transform a person from nothing to everything, or from material wealth to true belonging to God. Knowledge from books is deficient unlike the knowledge gained from pursuing what a person truly is passionate about and loves. By presenting creation through opposites, Rumi shows that their presence and their absence are the same because nothing truly matters except God. Here Rumi clearly distinguishes between the distractions of corporal love and love of God, and this separation is not emphasized in Shafak's narrative through the character of Shams. Shams advocates seeking love, either of the self or other, to bring about change and development in one's character. Based on the analysis presented, Rumi's poetry focuses specifically on Divine Love.

Love is the underlying theme of both the novel and the *Mathnawi* since it is, as explained by Afzal Iqbal, "the motive force of all creation" (246). He explains that love is "the very essence of life for it has bestowed upon [Rumi] the consciousness of a world which is hidden from the capricious eyes of those that look only at the exterior [...] and have not learnt to, penetrate the inner meaning of words" (246). The love of Shams and the love of God transform Rumi into a poet instead of merely a scholar, and Ella's love of Aziz and love of herself regains her confidence and hope in the world. It is difficult to see the parallels of Rumi's journey towards spiritual enlightenment with the struggles of Ella's self-acceptance, as they are on different spiritual planes. Rumi has shed his consciousness and released an outpour of poetry from the power of Divine Love that has overwhelmed him, while Ella moves to Amsterdam and adapts the adage of "living one day at a time" (*TFROL* 349). In the contemporary narrative, Shafak appears to be adapting the Sufi journey of love to suit a modern audience by repeating concepts reiterated by New Age Spirituality such as loving oneself and enjoying the moment.

Conclusion

In this article, I have examined the novel *The Forty Rules of Love* with selected poems from the *Mathnawi* noting various differences and similarities between the passages. This comparison has shown how Shafak simplifies the complex ideology of Sufism in the contemporary narrative, yet maintains the key concepts of Sufism in the historical narrative like longing, searching for enlightenment, the supremacy of love over knowledge, and more importantly, the true aim of Sufi mystics, *fanā'*. The contemporary narrative; however, seems to illustrate as argued by Cihan-Artun, Furlanetto and Kökcü, a more New Age Spirituality. However, my comparative thematic analysis indicates that the historical narrative includes stronger elements of Sufi thought, which can offer an alternative reading to the novel than that argued by Cihan-Artun, Furlanetto and Kökcü.

Kökcü claims that "Shafak identifies Sufism with a 'whitened' philosophy in the novel by ignoring its structural tenets" (147) while Furlanetto states that Shafak "present[s] a domesticated version of Islam" to appeal to an American and international readership (206). As can be seen in the thematic comparative analysis presented, Shafak includes significant Sufi concepts that are evident in Rumi's *Mathnawi* throughout the novel, especially in the historical narrative. By maintaining these key Sufi themes in the novel, Shafak is maintaining a strong connection to Rumi's poetry and Islamic philosophy. One way that Shafak digresses from Rumi in her novel is her representation of love. Even though both texts represent the supremacy of love over knowledge, the novel seems to refer to love in general, not Divine Love. Rumi aims through his poetry to guide the readers to be fully embraced and annihilated in the love of God, as is the goal of the Sufi path, but Shafak speaks of "rules of love" that could be applied to romantic or familial love. This suggests Shafak employs the theme of "love" throughout the novel for a cosmopolitan purpose, a way to connect to a global audience seeking love in its variety of forms.

Furthermore, Cihan-Artun argues that Shafak "barely includes any references to Islam or Islamic culture whatsoever, at least in the English version" (190). In fact, there are numerous Islamic references throughout the novel: Al-Fatiha is referenced in the prologue of the novel *Sweet Blasphemy* (*TFROL* 18), Shams recites the "ninety-nine names of God for guidance" (71), characters are noted reading verses of the Qur'an and referring to

the Qur'an in conversation (50), Shams and Kimya discuss the verse of Al-Nisa (196), Sultan Walad references the verses of Al-Kahf and the story of Moses and Khidr (209), Shams mentions how the "hafiz chant[s] [...] the verse of Joseph and Zuleikha in the Holy Qur'an" (277) and the Qur'an itself is referenced forty-one times in the novel. Consequently, despite Cihan-Artun's claims, Shafak frequently refers to the Qur'an in the novel, especially in the historical narrative, to emphasize that the characters, Rumi and Shams especially, are deeply entrenched in Sufi thought and practice, and not merely mystics attempting other forms of New Age spiritual enlightenment. It is clear throughout the novel that Sham's guide to his rules, teachings, and practice is the Qur'an, and no other text. Sufis consider the Qur'an the only true guide to reach true Union with God or *fanā'*. Carmody and Tully state that the Sufis "see through, or feel through, the [Qu]ranic text" to continuously attempt the strongest connection with "divinity" (246). Sufi mysticism is directly connected to the Qur'an, and all mystical experiences return to delving deeper and deeper in the Holy Book since "it is the divine word, the central revelation, the incarnation, and the sacrament of God" (Carmody and Tully 227). As the sole book to guide Sufis on their spiritual journey, the Qur'an is the true focus of their prayers and knowledge. This sacred devotion to the wisdom of the Qur'an, represented by Shams in the novel, is undoubtedly Islamic.

By choosing to represent the life story of Jalaluddin Rumi juxtaposed with the life of a modern American housewife, Shafak is able to bring together past events and current ones to help the reader understand and relate to historical events that may seem incomprehensible in modern contexts. Since her novel belongs to the genre of historical fiction, Shafak is able to combine "history and imagination [...] to render a representation of the past while at the same time acting as an instructional and inspirational literature tool" (Bortolotti 112). Consequently, historical events act as a starting point or a cue for the writer's imagination, and the motivation behind this fiction is to "reimagine the past so that it more closely mirrors the present" (112). Rumi's history and poetry act as the starting point for Shafak's fictional narrative, and Sufi teachings become the way to connect the past historical context to the present reader. While she misrepresents the concept of Divine Love, Shafak is still able represent Sufism in her novel as an Islamic spiritual path to enlightenment and *fanā'* that Rumi and Shams attain in the historical narrative. Other works by Shafak that represent Sufi themes such as *Honour, The Architect's Apprentice, Three Daughter's of Eve* require further analysis and investigation.

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Antonio Sanna

Ridley Scott's 2012 *Prometheus* can be considered as a milestone in contemporary science fiction as it perfectly exemplifies the major characteristics of the genre, particularly regarding the use of special effects, the creation of alternative, new worlds and creatures and the depiction of the human will to explore beyond the confines of the known space (and the possibly lethal consequences of such a leap towards the unknown). Typical of such a genre is also its representation of villains and evil as "*dei ex machina*, external elements that enter to disturb the equilibrium, external elements that unlock doomsday" (Sardar 5) (emphasis original). The narrative is set in 2093 when a spatial expedition attempts to ascertain whether there is alien life connected to humans in a distant star system. According to archaeologists Elizabeth Shaw (Noomi Rapace) and Charlie Holloway (Logan Marshall-Green), several ancient artefacts and digs belonging to different cultures portray such a star system as an invitation to reach a race of gigantic beings. The mission, made of several scientists and experts, is commanded by authoritarian and glacial Meredith Vickers (Charlize Theron), daughter of the elder CEO of Weyland Company (Guy Pearce). Once they reach their destination and land on a barren, mountainous moon, the members of the expedition find a massive, labyrinthine structure and a space ship where the gigantic beings (named "Engineers" by Dr. Shaw and Dr. Holloway) have been exterminated by a black liquid substance that they apparently harvested in order to return to Earth to extinguish the human race. Some of the characters are killed by coming into contact with the substance, after being painfully transformed into malevolent subhumans. The encounter with the only survivor of the alien species leads to further deaths and the destruction of the "Prometheus" spaceship in the attempt to stop the alien ship from reaching Earth. The film therefore definitely exemplifies an anti-Star Trek sentiment characterizing the exploration of space as a disastrous failure.

Matters are further complicated by the betrayal of David (Michael Fassbender), an android constructed by Peter Weyland, who has a hidden agenda of his own and does not value human life. Contrary to the benevolent Data in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987-94), C3-PO and R2-D2 in the *Star Wars* saga (1977-2019) and David in Steven Spielberg's *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (2001), *Prometheus*' David is inimical to human beings and does not follow Asimov's manifesto for the programming of robots and androids. He rather exemplifies the cases of hostile artificial life forms such as the T-800 in *The Terminator* saga (1984-2019), the replicants in *Blade Runner* (1982) and Ultron in *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015) therefore, which do not prevent but even cause harm to human beings (and, in the latter two cases, their own creators). By concealing his intentions (and, apparently, his emotions or feelings), David is even more devious and treacherous than his predecessors.

Prometheus, as many films in Scott's long and eclectic career (including *Legend* [1985] and *1492: Conquest of Paradise* [1992]), is distinguished for what Paul M. Sammon defines as the director's "ornate, sophisticated and state-of-the-art style" (5), the meticulous attention to details (especially in the interior of the alien spaceship), the use of unusual camera angles, a gorgeous photography (revealed especially in LV-223's landscape), the use of frontlight/backlight techniques (especially inside the alien structure) and the effective realism (in the sequence depicting the violent storm, for example). As in the original *Alien* (1979) as much as in *Hannibal* (2001), the director is a master in conveying horror and suspense through the atmosphere of danger lurking on the alien moon, the depiction of the violent deaths of many characters and the focus on the graphic, abject details epitomizing the permeability of the human body. In particular, Scott conveys horror as "the perception of the precariousness of human identity, […] the perception that it may be lost or invaded, that we may be, or may become something other than we are, or take ourselves for" (Cavell in Mulhall 17). As is the

case of Robert Louis Stevenson's Gothic novella *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), evil is depicted as lying inside the human being and emerging after the assumption of a scientifically-developed substance that separates goodness from evil.

Though it was thought to be a prequel film by many fans of the saga, *Prometheus* does not have any immediate narrative link with the story of *Alien*, but precedes it by about three decades, nor does it reveal much about the race of the Engineers and their motivations. The film, as Scott declared in 2012, contains the DNA of *Alien* (Germain n.p.), a cryptic affirmation that is actually a literal definition of the narrative. It is indeed the black fluid that contains the DNA and the means of both life and death. In the opening sequence of the film, the assumption of such a liquid causes the death of an Engineer left on the Earth of an ancestral past, leading to the creation of all life as we know it. On the moon LV-223 the black liquid has instead the ability to modify the DNA to produce death, by means of alteration of the human physical structure (as much as behavioural traits) and the subsequent production (in the form of a horrific childbirth) of evil creatures that are similar to the much feared, mass-murdering aliens introduced in the original saga. In this sense, *Prometheus* both partly subverts and confirms some of the thematic concerns of *Alien* identified by Chad Hermann when affirming that "*Alien* is indeed about gestation and birth: *male* gestation and birth. Here the patriarchal imagination is not afraid of the mother; it is afraid of *becoming* mother" (38) (emphasis original). In the 2012 film gestation assumes the metaphorical sense of infection by the black fluid of the male members of the expedition and impregnation of the Engineer, but it is also literal in the form of Dr. Shaw being impregnated by an infected Charlie. On the other hand, however, whilst the alien being in the original saga "appears not so much to follow nature's imperatives as to incarnate them" (Mulhall 17), the black fluid is rather an incarnation of death as it destroys or corrupts everything alive it comes into contact with or causes a creature's transformation into an aggressive, destructive being. In comparison with the simpler cycle of contamination and birth of the alien creature in the precursor films, the evolution of the DNA represented in *Prometheus* is unfortunately rather confounding and unclear, especially when we consider that no explanation and no resolution is offered either to the characters and the viewers.

Prometheus can be subject to many symbolic interpretations by the critics, as was the case with the original saga, which abounded with psychoanalytical and sexual readings (Gallardo and Smith, Taubin) and religious readings (Billy, Murphy, Schemanske). The 2012 film is particularly susceptible to the latter as Dr. Shaw, the sole survivor, is the only character who has religious faith, wears a crucifix and proudly affirms: "It's what I chose to believe" when her theories are opposed by the other characters. When confronted with the fact that the Engineers' DNA pre-dates that of humans and they are therefore our creators, Shaw does not cease to be a Christian but merely moves the issue back to the creation of the Engineers. Such statements are all the more meaningful as they represent one among many different theories about the story/myth of human creation, Shaw having chosen one among many sentimental, religious or scientific theories attempting to explain the creation of the world and of life. Furthermore, Shaw is sterile, but, after being impregnated, she experiences a horrible pregnancy (in religious terms, it could be interpreted as a blasphemous pregnancy) and gives birth to a monstrous, tentacled being. The latter then "impregnates" the Engineer, who then gives birth to a phallic creature, the further embodiment of evil, the anti-Christ of space. Inescapable is also the fact that the story is set during Christmas time, a festivity that is not marked by any seasonal changes in space, and that the explorers manage to establish that the Engineers' expedition which should have destroyed all life on Earth would have left the alien moon around 2000 years ago, that is, approximately around the time of the death of Christ. This seems to imply that such beings are actually related to the Christian God and wanted to punish humanity for the crucifixion of Christ.

In terms of gender and feminist readings of the film, Shaw can be interpreted as very similar to Ripley in *Alien*, especially when we consider Cynthia A. Freeland's interpretation of the latter character, because her humanity is more relevant than her femininity and she "is a superior representative of humanity. She shows both fear and courage" (66). Shaw's emotional vulnerability makes her a believable and authentic character, but it

also sets her against the more egoistical, cold and commercial interests of the representatives of the Weytland company, as was the case with Ripley in the 1979 film and in James Cameron's *Aliens* (1986). Moreover, and in line with the fact that science fiction often uses fantastic scenarios to represent present social and ethical concerns (as much as the horror genre does), Elizabeth's unwanted pregnancy and the rest of the crew's attempt to sedate her in order for her to carry it on are an apt metaphor of the contemporary discourses on forced pregnancies and abortion.

Noteworthy is Mark Streitenfeld's soundtrack, whose suggestiveness and potency certainly contribute to the atmosphere of the film. This is the case of melodic and enchanting tracks such as "A Planet" and "Life". The former begins softly by means of the use of a tremolo of strings over the solos of wind instruments. The subsequent deep-breath melodies are accompanied by the simultaneous use of percussion instruments in the background, which make the atmosphere darker and gloomier, an effect that is strengthened by the minor keys used to guide the harmony, whereas a larger and more triumphal dimension is conveyed at the same time through the depth given by the substantial use of brass instruments and dark strings (violas, cellos and basses). On the other hand, obscure, disturbing, cacophonous and even ominous tracks such as "Going In", "Hammerpede" and "Engineers" evoke the doubts, fears and panic experienced by the characters and are an excellent basis for the fast-paced sequences. "Hammerpede", for example, has a spectral setting created by the absence of a distinct melodic line and harmonic reference: Everything is based on indeterminate sounds that produce tension while the tremolo of violins and some "lightning" of high notes create a nervous auditory setting. In the second part of the track, the climax of turmoil and musical tension is given by the strong contrasts and dissonances made by the wind instruments. Such a tension is supported by a pressing and dynamically-wild use of the brass instruments, assisted by the tremolo of the strings or their production of fixed and raw sounds.[1]

Ten years after its release Ridley Scott's *Prometheus* has lost none of its attractiveness, suspense and charm. As was the case with the original saga, the film is a powerful source of critical reflections and arguments, especially after the release of its sequel *Alien: Covenant* (directed by Scott) in 2017. (Re-)watching the film is a necessary experience for all fans of contemporary science fiction as well as for the fans of Scott's work, but it certainly is also an equally pleasurable experience for those viewers who are not familiar with either, as the film is enthralling and engaging in all of its visual and thematic aspects and a worthy narrative precursor of the much-celebrated saga.

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[1] I would like to thank Gioele Lumbau for the illuminating suggestions on the film's soundtrack.

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Selin Turan

The Mass Media developed as an industry with the rise of modernity in the American social system. Its primary effects have been to reinforce certain dogmatic truths derived from its multicultural heritage, which emerged out of its former status as a colonized territory. American society is culturally a mosaic, in which mass communication media such as books, TV, radio, magazines are tools that allow a profit to be made. Thus, mass media is crucial to the development of the modern structure of American society. The media uses cultural elements that can be sold to "followers", denominated as the "audience", "readers", or even "fans". Mass culture refers to everything in the culture that is generated and disseminated via mass media. *Mass Media/Mass Culture* aims to explore the media and cultural issues that are historically associated with the American social system. The authors assert that the mass media is astonishingly successful in telling us what we should think. The Wilsons' particular focus is on the effects of this dissemination by using a conceptual outlook grounded in the association and dissociation analysis of media and culture.

Mass Media/Mass Culture consists of four parts, focusing on the diverse relationships of culture and media in the establishment of a mass perspective. Part I, "Culture and Communication", highlights the role of communication in attaining cultural hegemony. Commercialized culture is presented to individuals and groups in society as communication gifts wrapped as candies, and disguised in denim brands and logos. Moreover, the media is shown to have an immense effect on the legal system. Indeed, its fundamental purpose is the promotion of ideology and legislation. Governmental policies are targeted by many media institutions; these institutions are represented, supported and also approved by powerful agents. Media groups are informally assigned by the government to serve as its "watchdogs", creating a conflict with constitutional rights, as explicitly stated in the First Amendment right of a free press and the Sixth Amendment guarantee of a fair trial.

After explaining the relationship between the media and culture from a philosophical sense, Part II, entitled "Development of Print Media", deals with the publishing industry and its great impact on the establishment of social consciousness. This chapter vividly expresses the great significance of books, magazines and newspapers in the construction of a nation, revealing that American identity has been shaped in accordance with the views of increasingly powerful publishing houses. The appointment of editors in the publication industry is, either partly or wholly, made on the basis of political affiliation. Censorship in the book-publishing industry reached a peak in the late 1940s and 1950s. This political interference in the publishing industry is very thoroughly examined. Its deliberate effect on education is also explained; as a result of compulsory public education, there was an enormous growth in the influence of popular culture. In schools, only state-approved schoolbooks were allowed, and topics such as sex, race, religion and drugs were banned. This censorship policy reappears at several intervals in American history. *Macbeth* was not recommended because of references to witchcraft, and Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* was branded as a racist novel due to its use of the "nigger" word. In addition to the book-publishing industry, magazines and newspapers, designed to satisfy public taste in order to maximize sales and profits, also support the development of popular culture in society.

The media further developed through the new broadcasting technology of radio and television. In Part III, "Development of Electronic Media", the motion-picture industry, radio networks, and television are discussed, and the stages of their historical development are explained. All these media are extremely important in the rise

of popular culture in the American modern and post-modern era. However, television, as the most successful medium, has had the longest lasting impact. In fact, television became a symbol of modernity, and the Wilsons focus on its effects on the new generations it influenced via quiz shows, westerns, soap operas, series, and cartoons. This type of entertainment has remained immensely popular. The motion-picture industry has also enriched American culture. Hollywood films became increasingly widespread and a sense of an "American character" was formed, in line with popular culture concepts. In addition to changes in social and cultural structures, economic changes are also explained in *Mass Media/MassCulture*. Hollywood movie-making companies continue to be highly effective in spreading their cultural heritage to foreign countries while, at the same time, making vast profits.

The media also sells messages through cultural attractions, and the role of media communication in shaping these cultural concepts is the subject of Part IV, "Media Shapers and Cultural Effects". Advertising is a primary way of shaping many cultural characteristics; all advertisements carry messages which are contained in, and hidden in, products. At some level of consciousness, people perceive these messages, which are reproduced in their wider society. The Wilsons elaborate on numerous strategic tactics that are used to sell American politics through advertisements, with an emphasis on political ads and how the media impact politics. Home cable television provided expanded TV programming countrywide via satellite dishes, and this was followed by further innovations such as high-definition televisions, double satellite systems, and DVDs. With the development of each new media communication technology product, culture has been redefined.

In brief, nearly everyone lives like a fish in a fishbowl, open to public gaze and influence, and it is almost impossible to realize the full extent of the media's impact on people's social and cultural development. Because of the effects of popular culture, an illusion has been created in the minds of individuals of how life is, and it is very difficult to avoid the influence of the means of communication of mass culture. The Wilsons reveal the narcotizing effects of media on cultural developments in society, especially in America. *Mass Media/Mass Culture s*pecifically focuses on the interactions between culture and media, which allows a re-evaluation of popular culture and mass media, both historically and philosophically. The Wilsons' critically insightful work is a valuable contribution to the understanding of the historical development of media and culture as far as the late twentieth century, and provides a clear guidance for those researching media issues and cultural changes.

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