Overtones Ege Journal of English Studies

Scope & Publication Ethics

Overtones Ege Journal of English Studies welcomes research articles and reviews related to all subjects in the field of English Language and Literature. The journal is an international, double-blind peer reviewed journal which offers open access to all. The scope of the journal covers theoretical, critical and thematic contexts regarding English Studies, including English linguistics, translation studies, cultural studies and all other related subjects. Authors are to submit complete, original and full-length articles (4000-8000 words) and reviews (1000-2000 words) which have not been published or under evaluation elsewhere. All articles will be scanned for plagiarism via *Ithenticate*. If any instances of plagiarism are found during any of the stages of publication (reviewer evaluation, editorial reading and typesetting) the article will be rejected and the author will be notified immediately. Citation manipulated articles, or in other words, articles that are submitted to increase the citation number of a specific author will be rejected directly.

The views expressed in the journal are those of the authors, and do not necessarily coincide with those of the Editors or the Advisory Board. The PDF of the journal will be available to download for all. The names and e-mail addresses in the journal are to be used for academic purposes exclusively and will not be shared with any other party. All articles published by the journal are licensed under the *Creative Commons License**. This license gives public permission to copy and use any material in the journal only if the original manuscript and the source are cited appropriately.

Overtones Ege Journal of English Studies is currently indexed in MLA.

*Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0)

Article Submission & Evaluation Procedure

Articles and reviews should follow MLA parenthetical citation format and the journal's paper submission template. All articles are assigned manuscript numbers within 48 hours of submission once they are approved by the editor who checks if the articles follow the journal's guidelines. All articles are listed after the annual deadline (September 15) and sent to double blind evaluation within two weeks (October 1). The evaluation process of the reviewers is six weeks (November 15). Accepted articles are sent back to the authors for necessary corrections. The authors then have two weeks to work on their manuscripts according to reviewers' suggestions (December 1) and submit their revised articles along with a short bio (max. 100 words) an abstract (max. 150 words) and 8 keywords. If one of the reviewers rejects the article, the author is advised to work on the article and send it once again to be evaluated for the next issue during the forthcoming year. Articles accepted by both reviewers are to be published in the current volume of the journal.

The chief editors are responsible for overseeing and supervising the editorial work.

The editor initially checks the manuscript to see if it meets the journal's scope and standards. The role of the editor is to make decisions related to publication and accountability, along with ensuring the confidentiality of all parties including the editorial office, reviewers and authors. Furthermore, the editor works on improving journal quality by submitting the journal to international academic indexes. The editor and the editorial office are never to disclose any information regarding a submitted manuscript to anyone else but the corresponding author and potential reviewers. The reviewers' and the authors' personal information will remain anonymous throughout the evaluation process. The editor and the editorial office will monitor the publication ethics of the journal in each stage of publication and further read and evaluate the journal for plagiarism.

The advisory board includes international scholars from all fields of English Studies. The role of the reviewers is to ensure the quality of the journal by providing objective, scholarly, detailed and prompt evaluations of the submitted articles according to the "Reviewer's Guide". All manuscripts are to be evaluated in confidentiality and never shared with others during evaluation.

The authors are responsible of providing original content without any plagiarism which meets the standards of international academic research. All sources used in the manuscripts should be cited properly. All those who have contributed to the manuscript should be listed as co-authors. All authors are to state any conflicts of interest. It is the author's responsibility to notify the editorial office if the author discovers any significant mistake in their published work in order to correct or retract the manuscript. In order to ensure blind evaluation, the authors should not include personal information in their manuscripts. The authors are to revise their manuscripts according to reviewers' evaluations. The authors are to send the revised version of their manuscript to the editorial office by stating all the changes they have done. The authors cannot submit the same article published in another language.

CONTENTS

Corresponding Author: Müge Kesiktaş Gençoğlan, Undergraduate English Program, Izmir University of Economics, Türkiye.
ORCID: 0000-0002-6314-8446

Words of Worlds in Atwood's *MaddAddam* Trilogy

Müge Kesiktaş Gençoğlan

Abstract: This article examines Margaret Atwood's trilogy, comprising *Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood*, and *MaddAddam*, through the lens of ecologically oriented postmodern thought and aims to reveal that the trilogy encompasses both textualist and realist orientations. The primary focus is to underline Atwood's unconventional choice of placing language and its related concepts at the heart of her speculative fiction and demonstrate that she uses its dual role as a tool for both postmodern manipulation and ecocritical awareness regarding our perception of realities. The trilogy navigates scientific, environmental, and literary themes and shifts the focus from facts to narratives emphasising the centrality of language and ultimately underscoring the significance of stories in discovering and shaping our worldview. Embracing an ecocritical postmodern stance, Atwood's trilogy underlines the need for a re-evaluation of nature/culture and human/nonhuman dichotomies and a reconstructive approach to adopt in the intricate process of meaning making.

Keywords: Postmodernism, ecocriticism, speculative fiction, Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood*, *Maddaddam*, narratives

Postmodern ecocriticism is a theoretical approach that combines the elements of postmodernism and ecocriticism to analyse nature, culture, and literature. It is "the deep questioning of all hierarchical systems […] shifting attention from the position of authority to the idea of relationality" (Oppermann 116). Ecologically oriented postmodern thought has both textualist and realist orientations, promoting a reconstructive rather than a deconstructive literary criticism. Within this direction, the objective of this article is to argue that Margaret Atwood (1939-) adopts an ecocritical postmodern stance in her trilogy, comprising *Oryx and Crake*[1] (2004), *The Year of the Flood*[2] (2010) and *MaddAddam*[3] (2014), contrary to the common criticism that views them either from a stark postmodernist or a sheer eco-centric perspective. In this respect, it is aimed to study why Atwood places language at the heart of her speculative fiction and to explore how she reveals it as a tool for both postmodern manipulation and ecocritical awareness of our perception of realities. By this way, Atwood

---

[1] Henceforth *OC*.

[2] Henceforth *YF*.

[3] Henceforth *MA*.

encourages a reconsideration of nature/culture and human/nonhuman dichotomies in the process of meaning making.

The trilogy presents a dystopian world grappling with bioengineering and societal collapse. In *Oryx and Crake,* the story follows Snowman, once known as Jimmy, reflecting on his past and the catastrophic events orchestrated by his brilliant but morally ambiguous friend Crake. The narrative explores themes of corporate power, scientific hubris, and the consequences of unchecked technological advancement. Snowman struggles to survive in a world where he may be the only one left on Earth after a devastating epidemic decimates mankind. He mourns the loss of his beloved friend, Crake, and the beautiful Oryx whom they both loved. In his quest for answers, Snowman begins a journey – accompanied by the green-eyed Children of Crake, the bioengineered quasi-human beings – navigating the vibrant wilderness that had once been a bustling metropolis until ambitious corporations led humanity into a chaotic genetic engineering venture. *The Year of the Flood* runs parallel to *Oryx and Crake*, introducing us to Toby and Ren, from the few fortunate survivors of a biological apocalypse. The novel illuminates life inside the God's Gardeners, an eco-religious group critical of corporate greed and genetic engineering. Toby and Ren navigate this shattered world, offering insights into resilience, faith, and the indomitable human spirit. In the wake of the long-feared catastrophic waterless flood, Earth undergoes a transformative upheaval, resulting in the devastation of human civilization. In a world shadowed by corrupt governing forces and the emergence of genetically engineered life, Ren and Toby cope with crucial decisions for their survival, realising that remaining in seclusion is not a sustainable option. *MaddAddam* continues intertwining the perspectives of various characters as they grapple with their post-apocalyptic reality. In the aftermath of the devastating waterless flood pandemic, Ren and Toby find themselves among other survivors including Jimmy. As the remnants of humanity, they establish a camp to rebuild the civilization with the Crakers, facing the complexities of coexistence and reconciliation. As Toby narrates the origins of their existence to the curious Crakers, expected to inherit the transformed Earth, her storytelling weaves into a brilliant oral history, chronicling humanity's past and offering glimpses into its potential future. Atwood's trilogy examines the inherent fragility of humanity and the clash between technology, nature, and the essence of being human, fostering critical reflections on our own societal trajectory.

The trilogy uncovers man-made catastrophic outcomes encompassing extinction, overpopulation, depopulation, drought, famine, and bioterrorism. Atwood elucidates the prevailing Western paradigm where culture is prioritised over nature, illustrating how the rapid trajectory of technological and scientific advancement may cause mass destruction and widespread environmental loss. By this way, she attempts to dismantle the dominant anthropocentric mindset and disrupt human exceptionalism. On the one hand, there are high-class elites and scientists who live in total isolation within an extreme capitalist society like Prometheans who believe that human innovation can overcome any problem. Embracing a technocratic ideology, they place unwavering faith in scientific prowess and position themselves as the saviour and destroyer of everything, wielding power over all facets of existence ostensibly for the benefit of humanity. Engaging in primitive acts such as mass-burning, slaughter, and even cannibalism, they derive profit, pursuing a twisted quest for so-called immortality and an ideal beauty. Their actions extend to the ruthless exploitation and manipulation of animals, reducing them to domestic "human-puppets", either to eradicate natural wildness or merely for recreational pursuits, an endeavour described as "an after-hours hobby [making them] feel like God" (*OC* 51). Consequently, laboratories and corporate entities represent the modern artificial domains where scientists and proprietors become the new dominators over both the consumed and the consumer, in a very imperial and new-colonial way. On the other hand, in contrast to this anthropocentric picture, biocentric Gardeners pursue a sustainable living with their own religious doctrines, ethical system and mutually respected beings. Like radical environmentalists, they believe in the miracle and spirituality of nature, adopting Heideggerian "let beings be" philosophy, and behave not like the lord but like the shepherd of beings (Garrard 47). They perceive other organisms in nature as companions, as fellows in their own unique way like social ecologists. As a result, Atwood's text becomes home for scientific explorations and ecological ramifications, creating metadiscourses such as Science and Nature, Technology and Ecology each of which has their own validity and dominance in shaping our understanding of the world. These totalized forms of knowledge produce their own discursive constructs and make the novels in the trilogy become an organic environment that allows for the alliance of those manufactured Realities. Different dominant discourses are expressed by the vernacular (Gardeners in *OC* 189), eschatological (Adam One in *YF* 113), secular (corps in *OC* 27) and official (homo sapiens in *OC* 99) narratives, just like a collection of complex views

on the complex web of nature (Howarth 73). In addition, they mirror the historical development of the multiplicity of discourses through the references to Darwinian evolution (the primates in *OC* 182), to Linnean taxonomy (Latin names of animals in the video game in *OC* 80) and to Mendelian genetics (giant pigoon in *MA* 3), by making ecology become a lingua franca and create a multistoried world. While engaging with scientific and technological pursuits, acquiring power in such domains, possessing the capability even to create a new race, Atwood's people paradoxically found themselves overwhelmed beneath the weight of these "Grand Narratives" (Lyotard 60). Crake and other biotech experts, called new cultural superheroes, offer disease protection but intend to eradicate humanity through a hidden virus to form a futuristic and complex society. They start to modify various aspects of life, from cosmetics and medications to organisms, plants, insects, and animals and design the world through hybridization, mutation, gene-manipulation, and transplantation thus becoming, in Haraway's words, cyborg-like political animals, making living in a chaotic city no different than living in a jungle (149). Atwood blurs the distinction between human and nonhuman, emphasising the ambition and wildness of mankind. Amidst the chaos, all that remains is the primal instinct for survival, leaving ethical and moral considerations behind and losing their human qualities, and consequently going back to their basic needs under harsh moments in contrast to the ease of maintaining civility in favourable conditions. As Hammill maintains: "Even Jimmy, lonely survivor of Crake's biological warfare, used to live in a luxurious hi-tech compound and now living in a semi-animal state, unwashed, dressed in a sheet, and scavenging for food, feels that he has become his friend's creature" (531).

> He unwraps the warm fish from its leaves, trying to keep his hands from trembling. [...] The people [Crakers] keep their distance and avert their eyes while he crams handfuls of fishiness into his mouth and sucks out the eyes and cheeks, groaning with pleasure. Perhaps it's like hearing a lion gorge itself, at the zoo, [...] – a rending and crunching, a horrible gobbling and gulping – and, like those long-gone zoo visitors, the Crakers can't help peeking. The spectacle of depravity is of interest even to them, it seems [...] When Snowman [Jimmy] has finished he licks his fingers and wipes them on his sheet, and places the bones back in their leaf wrappings, ready to be returned to the sea. (*OC* 101)

This scene in *Orxy* reminds Berger's idea about the imperial eye on animals at zoos (19). Jimmy, eating fish savagely, is exhibited under the superior gaze of the Crakers who feel both disgust and interest while watching him. He is as if confined and put on display for observation which reduces him to an object of spectacle. With this scene, Atwood clearly depicts the objectification of a human being by his human-crafted replicas. Once dominant with unique intelligence, behaviours, and abilities, he is now objectified by these creations. Thus, Atwood unbounds the nature/culture binaries here and destabilises the positions of the seen and the seer in nature, prompting us to question whether there is a hidden primitivity within civilization.

     As a new kind of human, free from the flaws and vices of the old humanity, Crakers are designed by Crake to be a perfect, peaceful, and environmentally friendly form of life. Toby teaches literacy to Blackbeard (one of the Crakers), but it is known that the Crakers are coded with the ability to express only a limited number of feelings through a limited number of words. Despite being in "the prisonhouse of language", the Crakers still sense an inherent void and cannot suppress their inquiries, reflecting the innate nature of human(like) beings which is thinking (Waugh 53). Their epistemological questions about their origins, or about the meaning of their existence demonstrate that fundamentally, humans are beings driven by a thirst for truth and a compelling urge to seek knowledge (Sheehan 25). We understand this most from the Crakers' desire to know what lies behind the scenes despite their limited vocabulary, restricted imagination, and few emotions. Although lacking concepts that can trigger their thinking and questioning abilities, they aspire to learn everything and find themselves, in a way, subject to self-imposed conditions. They create their own stories, or as Butler puts it, "myths", and build knowledge and truth as objective and universal realities (32): "A story is what they want [...] they're demanding dogma" (*OC* 102-4). Therefore, they start to be defined in and through language and all reality turns into a linguistic construct. In time, Jimmy, Toby and then Blackbeard become the storytellers who transfer the task to the next generations to keep the tradition among the Crakers alive, as a way to connect their past and present to future, because, as Eco profoundly asserts, "[m]an is a storytelling animal by nature" (13):

"That's consistent with what you've been telling them. It's Gospel as far as they're concerned."
"I know […] They wanted to know the basic stuff, like where they came from and what all those decaying dead people were. I had to tell them something."
"So you made up a nice story […] that's the story we've got," says Toby. "So we have to work with it […]"
"Whatever," says Jimmy. "It's over to you. Just keep doing what you're doing. (*MA* 321-2)

The act of telling in the trilogy is constantly passed from one character to another, becoming both a form of storytelling and a narrative style. The stories undergo a continuous shift in perspective, but the task persists, a constant waiting to be fulfilled. Life transforms into narratives, and to live is to engage not only in storytelling but, more importantly, in storycrafting. When Blackbeard realises that "[t]elling the story is hard, and writing the story must be more hard", he starts to learn the basics of writing from Toby because she has been a regular writer of all times, even after the chaos when there is no one around (*MA* 456). She continues writing without knowing if there will be anyone to read what she has written: "What kind of story – what kind of history will be of any use at all, to people she can't know will exist, in the future she can't foresee?" and she affirms, "I am writing the story […] The story of you, and me, and the Pigoons, and everyone" (*MA* 249-456*)*. The theme of writing and the continuity of the written word are woven into the fabric of the narrative, reflecting the idea that storytelling and preserving knowledge are fundamental to (post)human existence. At some point, Blackbeard takes on the task of writing from Toby, ensuring that the story continues incessantly:

> And Toby gave warnings about this Book that we wrote. She said that the paper must not get wet, or the Words would melt away and would be heard no longer, […] And that another Book should be made, with the same writing as the first one. And each time a person came into the knowledge of the writing, and the paper, and the pen, and the ink, and the reading, that one also was to make the same Book, with the same writing in it. So it would be always there for us to read. And that at the end of the Book we should put some other pages, and attach them to the Book, and write down the things that might happen after Toby was gone, so that we might know all of the Words about Crake, and Oryx, and our Defender, Zeb, and his brother, Adam, and Toby, and Pilar, and the three Beloved Oryx Mothers. And about ourselves also, and about the Egg, where we came from in the beginning. (*MA* 469)

and adds that he "will go one day, then Jimadam and Pilaren and Medulla and Oblongata will teach these things to the younger ones" (*MA* 469). In this way, the recording of Culture "(with a capital C and in the singular) has become cultures (uncapitalised and plural)" with its beings and things as becomings, with the realities of life hidden in the continuity of the storytelling and making (Hutcheon 12). Here, with a postmodern attitude, Atwood demonstrates the construction of the Crakers' world within language and highlights how they interpret this world based on their own perception. She reveals that it would not be sufficient to code what is wrong and what is right to people, and in some way, truth is constructed either spontaneously or intentionally, in a designed or a given society. This idea takes us to Luntley's discussions in his *Reason, Truth, and Self*. Embracing a postmodern philosophical perspective, Luntley states that the world is not dominated by the "Big Ideas" like truth, rationality, and self, and thus it does not have a single, universal, and self-contained narrative (8). Instead, there are intertwined but distinct stories in contrast to "the world's own story" and "[t]here is no such thing as the whole truth. The only stories to be told about the world are local stories" (12). Then, it can be argued that the stories in the world may be similar or the same, but their heroes and heroines will always be different. That is precisely why stories hold a central position in Atwood's trilogy. Regardless of their nature, be it human or posthuman, individuals adhere to words, to stories. There is always a narrator, always a narrative.

In Atwood's trilogy, it is implied that whether humanity ceases to exist and posthumanity emerges, the only thing that endures is, and always will be, language, continuously shaping new worlds and realities. This is evident from the very first book of the trilogy. Crake, as one of the "number people" and Jimmy, as one of the "word people", do not quite share the same worldview. While Crake aims for scientific breakthroughs and financial success, his friend Jimmy chooses to attend an art school and attaches his life to the words, especially to "[t]he odds words, the old words, the rare ones" (*OC* 68). One day, in an argument with Crake, Jimmy tries to prove how language determines meaning to him: "'When any civilization is dust and ashes,' he said, 'art is all that's left over. Images, words, music. Imaginative structures. Meaning – human meaning, that is – is defined by them. You have to admit that'" (*OC* 167). In the aftermath of the destruction, Jimmy's connection with words is

disrupted just as humanity's bond with nature is: "From nowhere, a word appears: *Mesozoic*. He can see the word, he can hear the word, but he can't reach the word. He can't attach anything to it. This is happening too much lately, this dissolution of meaning, the entries on his cherished wordlists drifting off into space" (*OC* 39) (emphasis original). Still, Jimmy realises over time that even in challenging times, there is an opportunity to reconnect with words and a potential for art, not merely through verbal definitions, but through meaningful relationships. Aware of this fact and unable to entirely suppress the construction of the narratives in life, Crake, and his friends, at the very least, choose to suppress the questioning of these narratives by avoiding the presence of any artistic inclination. They design the internal framework of the human-like Crakers intricately and present their external environment like a user manual or a prescription, deliberately guiding them to a fundamental state devoid of curiosity in art, thereby limiting their capacity for creativity and critical thinking: "*Watch out for art*, Crake used to say. *As soon as they start doing art, we're in trouble*. Symbolic thinking of any kind would signal downfall, in Crake's view" (*OC* 361) (emphasis original). That may be why the trilogy brings together language and literature, theory and practice in order to reflect the place and power of art in our lives. The trilogy sometimes becomes metafiction by incorporating statements like "this is the Book, there are the Pages, and here is the Writing", or "this is my voice […] you're hearing in your head and that's called *reading*"; or historiographic metafiction by fictionalising prominent figures in science, politics, nature and literature like calling the Crakers Simone de Beauvoir, Madame Curie, Eleanor Roosevelt, and by having the names attributed to the saints like "Saint Jan Swammerdam [...] Saint C. R. Ribbands"; it also becomes intertextual by referring to biblical verses such as "Genesis 8:21" and including Bunyan and Blake style poems, quotations from the masters of literature such as Shakespeare and Woolf in addition to songs and hymn lyrics (*MA* 467, 460; *OC* 160-1; *MA* 187; *YF* 109, 111) (emphasis original). By this way, Atwood captures a sense of unifying and inclusive language that evolves, as opposed to a language that constructs and separates Culture from Nature. She presents the nature/culture composition arena as a space where Grand Narratives are questioned in an ecocritical postmodern manner, and literature makes the language bridge the human and the nonhuman, science, and technology.

> "Homer", says Snowman, […] "*The Divine Comedy*. Greek statuary. Aqueducts. *Paradise Lost*. Mozart's music. Shakespeare, complete works. The Brontës. Tolstoy. The Pearl Mosque. Chartres Cathedral. Bach. Rembrandt. Verdi. Joyce. Penicillin. Keats. Turner. Heart transplants. Polio vaccine. Berlioz. Baudelaire. Bartok. Yeats. Woolf". (*OC* 79) (emphasis original)

Across the trilogy, Atwood underscores that amidst an impending chaotic world, despite the prevalence of advanced science and technology, literature stands as the enduring constant—the words, stories, and narratives persist unchanged, affirming their timeless resilience. As Eco states, "books always speak of other books, and every story tells a story that has already been told" (20). Atwood uses this integrated way of expression by adding an ecological and postmodern touch to her works, reminding that "we know nature through images and words" (Howarth 77). By this way, she presents language both as a part of the issues within a dystopian environment and as a place that plays a role in finding solutions for these issues. The hymn lyrics in the Gardeners' oral hymnbook, for example, raises an awareness on having a sense of gathering while at the same time nourishes and fuels readers within a poetic cycle, as Whitman asserts, creating a "poetic atmosphere" (in Rueckert 118):

> With Creatures all, in harmony
> I'll pass my mortal days,
> While each in its appointed voice
> Sings the Creator's praise. (*YF* 111)

In an ecocentric postmodern way, Atwood combines nature, which is generally silent as a linguistic construct, with language which is, for Lewis Thomas, "the core of life, mechanical and organic way to transfer the energy" (in Howarth 80). It seems like there is energy stored in the poems and hymns released from Atwood that flows towards us then to a larger community in an endless circulation, like the process of becoming in the biosphere because for Rueckert, what sun means to nature, so does literature to humans as such a source of energy (109). As John Cooley states, texts are like the biospheric environment; with their diverse features like intertextual or metafictional qualities, they mirror the richness of biodiversity, becoming "organic communities of interrelated

entities" (in Oppermann 121). In this sense, Atwood foregrounds the power of words more than the power of anything else and adopts the belief that "we live by the word and by the power of the word" (Rueckert 115). Therefore, Atwood's text can be considered as an environmentally aware postmodern work of art in which nonhumans take their place with their own value, at least as much as humans:

> God must have caused the Animals to assemble by speaking to them directly, but what language did He use? It was not Hebrew, my Friends. It was not Latin or Greek, or English, or French, or Spanish, or Arabic, or Chinese. No: He called the Animals in their own languages. To the Reindeer He spoke Reindeer, to the Spider, Spider; to the Elephant He spoke Elephant, to the Flea He spoke Flea, to the Centipede He spoke Centipede, and to the Ant, Ant. So must it have been. (*YF* 15)

Without reducing all reality to language construct, Atwood establishes a connection with the essence of (non)humans through language which is not divisive but binding. In this way, the trilogy becomes highly dialogical in a Bakhtinian way where "the number of interactions between entities is infinite, which enables a 'polyphony' of interacting voices within any given text" (in McDowell 375). Jimmy's words as an obsession, Toby's diary as a form of talking to her old self, Pilar's bees as her messengers, and the Crakers' stories as essential to their existence may all imply the active participation in life and experiencing this through words is described by Bakhtin as a state achieved "mentally, spiritually and physically by interaction with other beings and things" (in McDowell 375). Atwood lets multiple voices speak in her texts with "no language centre" and no "monopoly on truth", referring to the coexistence of multiple perspectives, languages, and discourses within a single text or within society in a carnivalesque manner (in McDowell 380, 376). It is observed that Atwood's text is like a rich and pluralistic representation of biodiversity including bees, dandelions, caterpillars, and rivers in it. As if in alignment with McDowell who advocates that "all entities [...] deserve [...] a voice", Atwood emerges as one of the "ego[less]" writers he mentions in his work (372).

In *Oryx*, it is first explained that what is left outside the language to those who cannot perceive is that life actually speaks:

> […] the Children of Oryx hatched out of an egg, a giant egg laid by Oryx herself. Actually she laid two eggs: one full of animals and birds and fish, and the other one full of words. But the egg full of words hatched first, and the Children of Crake had already been created by then, and they'd eaten up all the words because they were hungry, and so there were no words left over when the second egg hatched out. And that is why the animals can't talk. (96)

Then comes the reason why some words are unseen and unheard by humans in *Maddaddam*:

> Crake thought that you had eaten all the words, so there were none left over for the animals, and that was why they could not speak. But he was wrong about that […] Because when he was not looking, some of the words fell out of the egg onto the ground, and some fell into the water, and some blew away in the air. And none of the people saw them. But the animals and the birds and the fish did see them, and ate them up. They were a different kind of word, so it was sometimes hard for people to understand the animals. They had chewed the words up too small. (352-3)

Atwood underlines the importance of a consciousness about the reality behind the representations within the (non)human world. She uses her literary platform to promote a deeper understanding of life in all aspects. Throughout her trilogy, she incorporates language skilfully integrating it within scientific, ecological, and literary domains seamlessly. Atwood crafts a thought-provoking narrative that blurs the lines between nature and culture. The motivation behind connecting these widely apart areas of life could be the purpose to emphasise the significance of understanding how to communicate with nature against (un)intentional difficulties, threats, and disasters. Underlining that "we [should] learn to translate the messages of nature with fidelity", Toby, in *Maddaddam*, thinks that "we're too stupid that we cannot understand their language so there has to be a translator" (Howarth 77; *MA* 328). She believes that they, as the human survivors in the post-pandemic world, (the Maddaddamites) need to be in cooperation with the genetically modified neohumans (The Crakers) and animals and plants (Pigoons or Happicuppa coffee bush) "to make a good and safe place for us to live" (*MA* 436). By this way, Atwood underlines the significance of interconnectedness among beings and things and

believes that it is possible to establish a shared understanding through mutual respect and empathy, which can only happen by literature, like an intellectual, up-to-date sort of belief system, offering a unity between nature/culture and science/technology: "Thank thee, Oh God […] for the knots of DNA and RNA that tie us to our other fellow creatures" (*YF* 64). Interlinking the fundamental dynamics of life, Atwood calls for an urgent necessity of a consensus among these seemingly opposite poles.

Works Cited

Atwood, Margaret. *Oryx and Crake*. New York: Anchor Books, 2004.
———. *The Year of the Flood*. London: Virago Press, 2010.
———. *MaddAddam*. London: Virago Press, 2014.
Berger, John. "Why Look at Animals?" in *About Looking*. New York: Pantheon, 1980. 1-28.
Butler, Christopher. *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.
Eco, Umberto. *Postscript to The Name of the Rose*. Trans. William Weaver. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984. <https://archive.org/details/postscripttoname0000ecou/page/n1/mode/2up>.
Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004.
Hammill, Faye. "Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*." in *A Companion to Science Fiction*. Ed. David Seed. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. 521-33.
Haraway, J. Donna. "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991. 149-181.
Howarth, William. "Some Principles of Ecocriticism." in *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996. 69-91.
Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New York: Routledge, (1988) 2003.
Luntley, Michael. *Reason, Truth and Self: The Postmodern Reconditioned*. Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2003.
Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984.
McDowell, Michael J. "The Bakhtinian Road to Ecological Insight." in *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996. 371-91.
Oppermann, Serpil. "Theorizing Ecocriticism: Toward a Postmodern Ecocritical Practice." *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 13.2 (2006): 103-28.
Rueckert, William. "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism." in *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996. 105-23.
Sheehan, Paul. "Postmodernism and Philosophy." in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism*. Ed. Steven Connor. New York: Cambridge UP, 2004. 20-42.
Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis e-Library, (1984) 2001.

This page intentionally left blank.

All of This Has Happened Before:
Eternal Return in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"[1]

Ramazan Saral

Abstract: The myth of eternal return has been a recurring theme in various mythologies of various cultures throughout the world. It has been a way, for the archaic people, to construe the world they live in. The significance of the eternal time that replenishes itself and renews the universe has been a ray of hope for the people who sought after a meaning for their lives and deaths. Instead of a linear, chronological timeline where everything happens once and for all, eternal return calls for the re-enactment and re-actualization of the deeds of gods or mythical beings to incur their spirits to bless, or guide people. Nietzsche's take on the concept is quite different as he deems this recurrent existence nihilistic and tries to find a way out of this labyrinth. His solution for as well as his predicament in becoming the Superman is this rhetorical cyclical existence. Coleridge's tour de force "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" embodies the concept of eternal return and the eternal recurrence of the same perfectly. The ancient mariner's long life and superhuman powers are testaments to his superhuman existence. His repetitive reiteration of his story therefore, is his re-enactment of the same event over and over in an attempt to transcend it in a Zarathustran fashion. The aim of this essay, therefore, is to analyse "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" in terms of Eliadean and Nietzschean versions of eternal return and to show how by rising above this recurrent and cyclical existence the ancient mariner rises as a Superman.

Keywords: Eternal return, eternal recurrence, Romanticism, Nietzsche, Mircea Eliade, S. T. Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

The "incalculable magic[al]" power of "The Rime" is largely based upon the symbolic language which is wrought with the elements of eternal return (Untermeyer 219). The language, which draws the reader into the magical reality of the Ancient Mariner in a state of trance, engraves itself into memory through vivid images. As

---

[1] This article is produced from Ramazan Saral's Master's Thesis entitled "A Romantic Odyssey: Eternal Return in the Works of S. T. Coleridge" completed in 2016 at Ege University.

Coleridge claims in the advertisement of 1798 edition of Lyrical Ballads, "'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere' was professedly written in imitation of the style, as well as of the spirit of the elder poets; but with a few exceptions, the Author believes that the language adopted in it has been equally intelligible for these three last centuries" (2004, 8). The style mentioned here is that of the old ballad form, albeit with a few changes, as it was the wont of Romantics. As the ballad form makes use of symbolic language as a source of musicality, it fits the ends Coleridge tried to achieve in "The Rime" perfectly.

The recurrent nature of the poem, ensured by the implication that the mariner constantly recounts it in uncertain intervals, is best described in the anecdote Coleridge shared in *Biographia Literaria*. Coleridge writes that in a meeting an amateur performer in verse claimed to have written an epigram on "The Rime" which turned out to be what he had written in the *Morning Post* himself. The words of the epigram clearly reveal the cyclical properties of the poem through one of Coleridge's favourite symbols: the ouroboros:

> Your poem must eternal be,
> Dear sir! It cannot fail,
> For 'tis incomprehensible
> And without head or tail. (Coleridge, *Biographia* 15)

Coleridge's return to the ancients can be regarded as an attempt to free the mariner from the shackles of the "whole millennia of labyrinth" enforced by the moral compass of Christianity (Nietzsche 2005, 34). His need to step away from the labyrinth, despite his pious nature, can be seen as an effort to achieve through the mariner what he could not himself. Morality here, having lost its viability, "has no sanction any more and hence ends in nihilism" (Löwith 51). This struggle can be best seen in his notes regarding the "Ancient Mariner" in his *Table Talk*. According to Coleridge "the fault of the Ancient Mariner consists in making the moral sentiment too apparent and bringing it in too much as a principle or cause in a work of such pure Imagination" (Coleridge 2004, 98). As obvious in the quotation above, Coleridge considers morality to be a hindrance in the way of imagination. With its rules and dogmas, morality encumbers the free play of imagination, thus obstructing the meaning and magic the poem is trying to convey. In the second note in the same entry of the *Table Talk* Coleridge further illustrates the issue of morality in respect to the comments of Anna Laetitia Barbauld:

> Mrs Barbauld told me that the only faults she found with the Ancient Mariner were — that it was improbable and had no moral. As for the probability — to be sure that might admit some question — but I told her that in my judgment the poem had moral, and that too openly obtruded on the reader. It ought to have no more moral than the story of the merchant sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well and throwing the shells aside, and the Genii starting up and saying he must kill the merchant, because a date shell had put out the eye of the Genii's son. (2004, 98)

The second criticism Coleridge had to defend the mariner against that came from Wordsworth further establishes the improbable and incomprehensible magic the mariner had upon people. In the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth added a note to "The Ancient Mariner" in which he finds four cardinal faults in the poem:

> The Poem of my Friend has indeed great defects; first, that the principal person has no distinct character, either in his profession of Mariner, or as a human being who having been long under the controul of supernatural impressions might be supposed himself to partake of something supernatural: secondly, that *he does not act, but is continually acted upon*: thirdly, that the events having no necessary connection do not produce each other; and lastly, that the imagery is somewhat too laboriously accumulated. (276) (emphasis mine)

The defects found here directly relate to the character of the mariner, who having been under the effects of the supernatural events, became something supernatural himself, in other words, Wordsworth expects someone distinctive in order for him to become supernatural. However, the point of the mariner is precisely that he does not stand above the rest, and what Wordsworth misses in this respect is that the events happen to an ordinary man, and they have the power to change even the seemingly most ordinary person into what the mariner

is. True, the mariner is not distinctive in his personality; he is no different from the "four times fifty living men" (line 216) that die at the behest of death, but this, instead of diminishing, increases the dramatic effect that such an Everyman should become supernatural. The second objection that "he does not act, but is constantly acted upon" actually shows the powerlessness and helplessness of man against the supernatural powers found in nature (276). However, this inaction is precisely significant, as the mariner, feeling stifled by the constant passivity acts on his own will when he kills the Albatross. Thus, this single act of taking the control is the definitive moment of his transformation. The third objection is directly related to Wordsworth's acceptance of causality. Since the events of "The Ancient Mariner" are not constructed upon the traditional understanding of cause and effect / crime and punishment, for people who accept the causal correlation it becomes unacceptable and seems like a fault. The last objection loses its validity when it is seen in the light of the relation between the poem and the circumstances leading to the imagery. As Coleridge bantered in a later note, it was reported that "the greater part of the Lyrical Ballads had been sold to seafaring men, who having heard of the Ancient Mariner, concluded that it was a naval song-book, or, at all events that it had some relation to nautical matters" (275). As Professor Lowes' research of the origins of "The Ancient Mariner" and "Kubla Khan" in *The Road to Xanadu* clearly shows, Coleridge's use of imagery is not laborious; on the contrary it flows smoothly and feels natural that a mariner uses that kind of imagery (54).

Karl Kroeber places the "Mariner's essential humanity" at the centre of a "natural world [that is] animated by superhuman spiritual creatures" (180). In his article, he suggests that the "verbal witchery and 'archetypal' significance" of the poem owe much to its epic qualities (179). By introducing the poem through a narrator, which shadows Coleridge's voice, and leaving the stage to the ancient mariner until the very end, Coleridge managed to distance himself from the poem, leaving the reader face to face with the mariner, just as the wedding guest. It is almost impossible to shrug off the engrossing effect of the poem because just as the mariner holds the wedding guest "with his glittering eye," he holds the reader with his "verbal witchery." Since Coleridge's voice can be heard very little, the spell is unbroken. By giving voice to the narrator only at the beginning, the last stanza and a couple of more lines in the story, Coleridge makes the reader subject to the mariner's will as well. The voice is no longer the narrator's or Coleridge's, but the mariner's.

The mariner's disgusting appearance is highlighted when he holds the wedding guest physically. The wedding guest can easily shrug him off, showing the mariner's physical weakness. The choice of words is significant here; he is not old, he is ancient. His claim to have been "the first that ever burst / Into that silent sea" (lines 105–106) must mean that "his trip predates Magellan's circumnavigation of the globe in 1519-22" (Coleridge 2004, 66). This antiquity is significant when Coleridge's interest in The Wandering Jew and Cain is taken into consideration as Professor Lowes clearly outlines in his study. The mariner, just like the Wandering Jew and Cain, is charged with wandering the earth recounting his tale to people and "by his own example" teaching "love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth" (Coleridge 2000, 67). His age renders him physically weak, which according to Wordsworth, makes him undistinguished in his features, but it also gives him psychic powers, which places him above normal humans, on a supernatural plane. At the very beginning of the poem, making the wedding guest refuse his physical attempts to make him listen to the story is a very subtle way of distinguishing him from regular humans, which proves Wordsworth's claim wrong. What makes the mariner's tale mythic, in the sense that it is "experienced by the whole man", is that it is different from the "'private mythologies'" of the modern man, which "never rise[s] to the ontological status of myths because it "transforms a particular situation into a situation that is paradigmatic" (Eliade 1959, 211).

As far as causality is concerned, the ancient mariner believes shooting the Albatross to be the cause of his curse, and the torments he went through. However, if it were so, this would mean there is a break in the causal cycle as at the beginning of the journey since the mariner and the other crew did nothing wrong to be driven to the South Pole. This shows that Coleridge did not believe in a causal chain of events, which would make the shooting of the albatross an event significant on its own without a causal link to past events. The moment he shoots the Albatross is the "gateway moment" Nietzsche's Zarathustra experiences. It is both the time of the "high noon" and "great distress" for the mariner (Nietzsche 2003, 126). It is when he decides to accept life as it is and everything in life to be free of causality or to be stuck in the clutches of a nihilistic questioning of the event as the cause of his curse. He relives the events of his life over and over again every time he recounts the tale and he goes through the same nihilistic existential problem every time. Since he cannot get out of the

clutches of the past, he cannot revere the moment for its own sake and this, as Nietzsche explaines, creates the Spirit of punishment. Every time the mariner feels the same anxiety towards the future, he returns to the critical moment, which is when the mariner shoots the albatross. This repetition of the recounting of the tale makes it real as "out of what by nature comes again and again develops something that is supposed to be decisive once and forever" (Löwith 103). Only through such an act of "constantly going back to the beginning and by starting over eternally," can "the primeval nature [make] itself into a substance" (147-8). Thus when "…at an uncertain hour, / That agony returns," the mariner takes to wandering about trying to tell his tale once more, because he cannot handle the pressure of the centre in which his will stands paralyzed (lines 582-583).

Like Nietzsche - Zarathustra, Coleridge's mariner becomes the teacher of eternal recurrence. Zarathustra asks the sun "You great star! What would your happiness be if you had not those for whom you shine?" (Nietzsche 2003, 264). This question foreshadows Zarathustra's mission as the great teacher of the eternal recurrence. Just like the sun, Zarathustra learns that he has to teach the eternal recurrence to the others, otherwise his existence would lose its meaning. The ancient mariner, having experienced the deepest nihilism, has to teach his experience to others. However, not everyone can be qualified to learn about this phenomenon. Thus the ancient mariner, through his "strange power of speech", knows "the man that must hear [him]: / To him [his] tale" he teaches (lines 589-590). There is no explanation as to why the mariner chooses the wedding guest and not the other two. With this explanation, he gives the election process magical properties.

The ontological importance of shooting the albatross reveals itself in accordance with a Nietzschean reading. God is the biggest objection to man's will to power according to Nietzsche. He believes that "the God who saw everything, saw man, too: this God had to die! Man cannot bear that such a witness should live" (2006, 387). Thus when the crew "hailed" the Albatross in "God's name", (line 66) they give it divine properties and turn it into a hallowed being. Since the albatross saves them from the imminent death offered by the cold Antarctic, it takes the place of the Saviour. In the presence of such a divine being, all the crew loses their will to power and become enthralled to its will. The mariner, albeit unconsciously, cannot stand this submission of his will to the bird of "good omen". In order to free himself from this submission and become "abandoned to his own responsibility and command", he shoots the bird (Löwith 37). The mariner, when subjected to the albatross' will, is not a distinguished character; he has no say on the events and the conditions. However, when he shoots the albatross, which is a part of his divination process because "it is through violence that the victor obtains superhuman, almost divine condition of eternal youth, invincibility, and unlimited power", he is freed from the clutches of the "thus it was" and from this moment on he recounts the events as happening because of him (Eliade 1959, 150). Up until the shooting of the albatross, there is no human will to speak of; the ship is driven by the winds, the ship is stuck in the South Pole, the albatross saves them, but shooting the albatross is a manifestation of the human will that takes the central stage for the first time in the chronological order of the events. The mariner, by regaining his own will, now has the ability to control others' will as well. That is why he is able to have the wedding guest's will.

The demise of the divine being, the Albatross in this case, in turn, is the harbinger of a greater distress. As a means of setting the human will free, the death of the divine being creates a gap. The mariner, who had thus far only been directed by the divine will, just like "The Eolian Harp" which could only "pour" its "sweet upbraiding" when exposed to the caress of the "desultory breeze" (line 15), does not know how to act on his own volition. Hence his despair and distress reflected in the form of becalming are expressed in the best words possible:

> Day after day, day after day,
> We stuck, ne breath ne motion,
> As idle as a painted Ship
> Upon a painted ocean. (lines 115-8)

"The gateway moment" which is manifested in the shooting of the albatross, becomes the moment when the mariner's past, present and future converge. This is the moment his will is set free of the control of the divine will, and the moment the mariner lost all meaning of existence. Without the divine will, the ancient mariner is resurrected as "the man who is abandoned to his own responsibility and command, the man who finally has his

most extreme freedom in 'freedom toward death'" (Löwith 37). Because of the existential crisis he goes through, the mariner looks for a fault which may have caused this punishment in the causal understanding of life.

As Mircea Eliade asserted, "man's reactions to nature are often conditioned by his culture and finally, by history" and this is true on the mariner's part as well (1959, 16). That is why the extreme nihilism he experiences is reflected in the "thousand thousand slimy things" that crawled upon the sea (line 238). These slimy water snakes represent "chaos, the formless and nonmanifested" as Eliade asserts (*Myth and Reality* 19). His chaotic existence is symbolized by these water snakes which at first seem and make everything look ugly and awfully evil as seen in the lines:

> About, about, in reel and rout
> The death-fires danced at night;
> The water, like a witch's oils,
> Burnt green, and blue and white. (lines 127-130)

Because of the snakes the sea looks ominous and chaotic. These snakes, as their symbolic value is not grasped by the mariner, seem portentous, evil and ominous. He resents their slimy bodies and colours because he believes them to be inferior to humankind. That is why he cannot bear to look upon them. As Coleridge wrote in the marginal gloss, "he despiseth the creatures of the calm, / And envieth that they should live and so many lie dead" (Coleridge 2004, 75). He thinks that the snakes and himself are worthless compared to the two hundred men that lie dead on the deck.

When he overcomes himself, as he understands that the water snakes are just as important as human beings are, the mariner is freed from the yoke of nihilism and accepts his place in the eternal recurrence of the same. The selfsame moment he blesses the water snakes "unawares" which symbolizes his transcendence. He transcends mere human and becomes "superman" when he partakes in the cosmic indifference. Just like the animals who "are natural and periodic things", the mariner becomes one with the entirety of the universe by accepting the equal significance of all living things in a unanimous complacency (Löwith 73). The new understanding he attains, that that nature and man are one, lets him appreciate the beauty of the water snakes that looked ugly and ominous previously. From then on, all the colours of the snakes turn into an "elfish light" that "fell off in hoary flakes" (line 276). The rich colours of the snakes that looked like a "witch's oils" turns into a "rich attire" and the portentous "green, and blue and white" colours that they had turn into "Blue, glossy green, and velvet black" (line 279). This transformation is significant because, just as Jung claims in his *Contributions to Analytical Psychology*, "before a 'renewal of life' can come about […] there must be an acceptance of the possibilities that lie in the unconscious contents 'activated through regression […] and disfigured by the slime of the deep'" (in Bodkin 51).

The transformation the mariner goes through changes the "black snake[s] of strangling nihilism" into "the snake of the eternal recurrence"; and everything around the mariner is transformed through this, turning the "black sea of deadly melancholy […] into the sea of forces that flow into themselves and of the 'twofold voluptuous delights' of the eternal recurrence" (Löwith 129). All these transformations, "that the beauty of life is revealed amid the slime, that the glory of life is renewed after stagnation, that through the power of speech the values achieved by life", are indicators of the change he goes through, both physical and mental (Bodkin 78). The snake here is a significant metaphor for the transformation he goes through; like the snake that sheds its skin to become something new while retaining its old self, the mariner changes into his new life yet he remains the same simultaneously. The moral lesson he comes up with at the end is:

> He prayeth well, who loveth well
> Both man and bird and beast.
>
> He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us
> He made and loveth all. (lines 612-617)

This conviction shows his conviction that he is in command of his own will, that this consciousness makes him responsible for all living things. This conviction can only be embraced by he who has overcome himself and come closer with the animal to become a new type of human, the Superman. As such, the Superman mariner accepts his place in the holistic existence of all things with and in him.

The death of "four times fifty living men" is significant in that their demise symbolises their inability to free themselves from a controlling will (line 216). They are first under the control of the bird of good omen, and when the bird is dead and "the fog [is] cleared off, they justify" the mariner's action, by which they become subject to the mariner's will (Coleridge 2004, 67). They do not have any will of their own, and thus cannot undergo the same process the mariner does. Their death is a must as the freed will of the mariner cannot be fully realized until he is alone. Once all the crew members are dead, the mariner is left alone. Just as Zarathustra experiences eternal return in his "loneliest of loneliness", the mariner can find his exit from the nihilistic chaos in his loneliness (Nietzsche 2006, 194). His loneliness that lasts "seven days, seven nights" is a reflection of the biblical creation that lasts seven days (line 261). For Nietzsche, too, this loneliness is reminiscent of Zarathustra's loneliness after his seven day sojourn in the cave, which anticipates a creation out of the chaos they are in. Thus, this process resembles a creation through which the mariner is reborn.

This rebirth is not like a Christian rebirth "to a new […] and better life, but to the equal and self-same life 'in the greatest and also in the smallest'—for the 'small' man, too, returns eternally" (Löwith 73). That is why he has to remember every single detail in his story every time he recounts it. This is the reason why he needs to remember the water snakes, and that they are as significant as the men that die. The symbol for this rebirth is the universal symbol of rebirth and revitalization: Water. Water is always the conduit that brings life. Even when it is the cause of destruction, life springs after its work is done. In the destruction myths of deluges and floods, there is always new life. That is why water is holy; that is why it is used in religious ceremonies like baptism or ablution. The significance of rebirth is that "when brought to birth, man is not yet completed; he must be born a second time, spiritually; he becomes complete man by passing from imperfect, embryonic state to a perfect, adult state" (Eliade 1959, 181). This incomplete state of man is visible in the mariner's earlier stages. Before the curse begins, the mariner is just like the other mariners, with "no distinct character, either in his profession of Mariner, or as a human being" (*Lyrical Ballads* 276). What brings about his mature state is through immersion in waters. This voyage, in a sense, then, is his initiation into maturity. From this he returns as a man complete, with eyes that pierce into the beholder's very soul. Immersion as an initiation is crucial because, as Eliade puts it, "one does not become a complete man until one has passed beyond, and in some sense abolished 'natural humanity'" and "initiation rites, entailing ordeals and symbolic death and resurrection, were instituted by gods, culture heroes, or mythical ancestors, hence these rites have a superhuman origin, and by performing them the novice imitates a superhuman, divine action" (1959, 187). Thus, the novice mariner, by going through his ordeal, becomes the ancient mariner whose maturity is reflected in his bright eyes. This ordeal makes one "a sadder and a wiser man" (line 624) because "he who has experienced the mysteries, is he who knows" (Eliade 1959, 189).

The reason Coleridge used a sea voyage as a means of transforming the ancient mariner is that "contact with water always brings a regeneration – on the one hand because dissolution is followed by a new birth"; and this is evident in the symbolism of water snakes; "on the other because immersion fertilizes and multiplies the potential of life" (130). The mariner's voyage is a journey to the unconscious, which destroys the man he was and reforms him in the form of the ancient mariner. As Maud Bodkin states, these unconscious messages surge in the form of familiar forms to show the "kind of memory-complex in the mind of Coleridge […] who at this time had never been to sea" (39). The reason they do so is that "the waters symbolize the universal sum of virtualities; they are fons et origo, 'spring and origin,' the reservoir of all the possibilities of existence; they precede every form and support every creation" that is why even one like Coleridge with no naval experience prior to the composition of the poem could conjure such a vivid and "real" adventure (Eliade 1959, 130). The ship's painting-like becalming in the Pacific Ocean is symbolically a suspension of reality and dissolution of forms represented in the "rotting decks" and "rotting seas" (lines 242, 240) which imply a process of death, dissolution and rebirth. The ominous sea and sea snakes that represent the formless and therefore, the nonmanifest, call forth a "regression to the preformal, reincorporation into the undifferentiated mode of pre–existence" through immersion in water (Eliade 1959, 130). The death and destruction implied by this immersion is "equivalent not to a final extinction but to a temporary reincorporation into the indistinct followed by a new

creation, a new life, or a 'new man'" (130). By disintegration and dissolving the forms of the fabric of reality, the waters wash away sins, and purify and regenerate the mariner as a new man. Immersion in waters, for the mariner, is the death of his old self and the birth of a new, reborn and regenerated being who is now able to discern the "unanimous agreement of everything in one highest type of Being", thus allowing him to celebrate and "bless" the sea snakes which previously repelled him (Löwith 97).

As a new and regenerated man, the mariner becomes the Superman who can "translate man back into the 'language of nature,' man's 'eternal basic text'" (Löwith 118). In his previous state, the cosmos was silent, meaningless, inert and opaque for him; he could not communicate with the universe, and thus did not know his place within the cosmic drama. Because of his loneliness he is able to discern the language of heaven since "the world of heaven says neither Yes or No. It speaks to [him] in the language of silence" (Löwith 99). This language of silence is represented in nature in the language of symbols and only a few "privileged individuals" manage to discern these symbols through "ecstatic experiences" (Eliade 1963, 97). The most significant symbolism used in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is the symbolism of the Sun and the Moon. As George Herbert Clarke states, "there are eleven references to the Sun and fourteen to the Moon", which makes them the chief recurrent symbols (27). The interplay of these two celestial orbs marks the dramatic changes in the poem. This interplay of "'day and night", as Clement of Rome suggests, "show[s] us the resurrection; night sets, day rises; day departs, night comes'" (in Eliade 1959, 137). The sun, as it is "always in motion [...] remains unchangeable; its form is always the same"; thus, it symbolizes order and stability (157). However, the moon, with its ever changing nature and phases, represents chaos, instability, mutability. Man sees in the phases of "the night from which the Sun is born every morning [...] primordial chaos, and the rising of the sun is a counterpart to the cosmogony" (Eliade 1963, 82). As the moon symbolises eternal return and mutability, every significant change in the poem happens when the moon is up. The morning brings stability and stagnancy. The parallel stanzas describing the movement of the sun which mark the direction of the ship clearly depict the stagnancy the sun implies.

> The Sun came up upon the left.
> Out of the Sea came he!
> And he shone bright, and on the right
> Went down into the Sea. (lines 25-8)

And then right after he shoots the Albatross and before the curse begins:

> The Sun now rose upon the right:
> Out of the Sea came he,
> Still hid in mist, and on the left
> Went down into the Sea. (lines 83-6)

The sun here is as a watchful god, who watches over the mariner and his crew. Nonetheless, after this stanza the image of the sun becomes one of a vengeful and fearsome deity who serves as a spirit of vengeance as depicted in the lines "[n]or dim nor red, like God's own head, / The glorious Sun uprist" (lines 97-8). The watchful eye of heaven turns into a red orb and from now on is the harbinger of ominous events. Karl Kroeber claims that "the Mariner's disasters occur under the 'aegis of the sun'" (181). As the terrible curse of drought begins, "bloody sun at noon" stands "no bigger than the moon" (line 114). All these troubles that are associated with the sun are stagnant and unchanging, which is related with the constancy of the sun. The first appearance of the phantom ship is when the sun is up in the sky and the ship suddenly drives between the mariner and the sun as if trying to sever the ties of the mariner and the watchful God.

The moon, on the other hand, is ever-changing. As it moves, it changes its shape according to its phases. Man sees in these phases the "'birth' of a humanity, its growth, decrepitude ('wear'), and disappearance" (Eliade 2005, 87). It is a symbol of hope since "just as the disappearance of the moon is never final, since it is necessarily followed by a new moon, the disappearance of man is not final either" (87). That is why all the "beneficent experiences" of the mariner happen "under the 'aegis of the moon'" (Kroeber 181). When the Albatross makes its first appearance, "through fog-smoke white", glimmers "the white moon-shine" (line 77).

The moment Life-in-Death wins the mariner, the moment of his utter loneliness, is depicted in the sudden shift from the morning to the night. As if obeying the Life-in-Death, when she says "I've won, I've won" and "whistles thrice" the sun suddenly disappears and "the stars rush out" and slowly "the horned Moon, with one bright star / Within the nether tip" starts climbing up the heavens (lines 210-1). Although it does not look beneficent because it is time the crew members die, this is the moment the mariner is left to his own will and his ablution begins. Thus when "one after one, by the star-dogged Moon" the crew members die, the mariner's rebirth process slowly begins (line 212). It is "by the light of the Moon", which the mariner "yearneth towards" that he is able to bless the water snakes and break free of the shackles of the curse (Coleridge 2004, 77). After the spell is broken, the corpses of the crew members rise under the effect of the moon; and when the dawn breaks, the angelic spirits leave the bodies cluttering around the mast only to return at night.

As the tour de force of Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" has often been debated over in the two hundred years since its composition. No matter how much it has been disregarded as a work of incredulity, its magical spell on the readers is an undeniable fact. Much of the magical power of the poem comes from the symbolic and psychological effects it wreaks upon the reader's psyche. Although the poem seems improbable, "incomprehensible and without head or tail" (Coleridge 1975, 15), the reader, along with the wedding guest, is compelled to listen to the tale. The use of supernatural and Romantic imagery and symbols ascertain Coleridge's famous formula of the "willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith" (Coleridge 1975, 169). The familiarity of these fears, hopes and awe is due to the unconscious archetypes hidden within humankind's psyche. When the mariner's tale is done, one knows that it is not the last time he has recounted his tale, that the mariner will find new wedding guests when "this heart within [him] burns" (line 585). The superhuman the mariner has turned into has to wander and "teach, by his own example, [to] love and revere [...] all things that God made and loveth" (Coleridge 2004, 99). Every time the mariner recounts his tale, he goes through the same event, and the eternal recurrence of these events become tangible realities that draw the wedding guest, and the reader into that reality. Coming back to the critical moment of his transformation into the superman, the mariner shows that becoming superman and overcoming the recurrent existence is not a one-time event, but is an ongoing process that needs to be reenacted time and again in order to cast away the mundane existence. Therefore, the eternal repetition and recounting of these events, in other words exposing himself to the transformative energies of the transformation, pulls him out of the nihilistic existence into a higher state of perception through which the mariner accepts and acknowledges his place within the universe.

Works Cited

Bodkin, Maud. *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry; Psychological Studies of Imagination*. London: Oxford UP, 1963.
Clarke, George Herbert. "The Symbolism of Sun and Moon in the Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner." *Queen's Quarterly* (1933): 27-45.
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Biographia Literaria*. Ed. George Watson. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1975.
———. *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose*. Eds. Nicholas Halmi, Paul Magnuson, and Raimonda Modiano. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004.
———. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Major Works*. Ed. J. Jackson. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.
———. *The Portable Coleridge*. Ed. I. A. Richards. New York: Viking, 1950.
Eliade, Mircea. *Myth and Reality*. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.
———. *The Myth of the Eternal Return*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005.
———. *The Sacred and the Profane*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959.
Kroeber, Karl. "'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' as a Stylized Epic." *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters* XLVI (1957): 179-87.
Lowes, John Livingston. *The Road to Xanadu; a Study in the Ways of the Imagination*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927.
Löwith, Karl. *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*. Trans. J. Harvey Lomax. Berkeley: U of California P, 1997.
Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*. Eds. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005.

———. *The Gay Science*. New York: Dover Publications, (1882) 2006.

———. *The Will to Power*. Ed. Anthony M. Ludovici. New York: Dover Publications, (1901) 2019.

———. *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. Trans. Thomas Common. New York: Algora Pub., (1883) 2003.

Untermeyer, Louis. "The Spirit of Revolution and Romance." in *A Concise Treasury of Great Poems, English and American*. New York.: Permabooks, 1953. 202-332.

Wordsworth, William, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *Lyrical Ballads 2nd Edition*. Eds. R. L. Brett and A. R. Jones. London: Routledge, (1798) 1991.

This page intentionally left blank.

"Springs the Stress Felt": Rhythm as a Priority Indicator of Subject and Object in Gerard Manley Hopkins' Poetry

Elif Derya Şenduran

Abstract: This article aims to explicate the terms subjective and objectification while tracing the priority of subject or object in terms of stress patterns, specifically sprung rhythm in Gerard Manley Hopkins' poetry. The theories of Duns Scotus, Walter Pater, and Romanticism influences Hopkins and the influence can be sensed in his rhythm and stress as a method to demonstrate the position of the poetic persona and object in Hopkins' poetry. Hopkins' two notions of inscape and instress are also hidden in speech of subject's perception and conceiving of the object. The inscape (design) is in the object and instress is the intensified form of the stress with will. Thus, these two notions also include the combination of the concepts of poetic persona and his/her perception of the object. In other words, this article claims that Hopkins' philosophy regarding subjectivity and objectification has a gap to be explored with his use of sprung rhythm in poetry. The priority of subject and object illustrates how these two are foregrounded with rhythmic patterns in Hopkins' poetry. Hopkins' own explanations provide a backbone for this article, and these have been clarified by subsequent scholarship that reveals the Romanticist influence in his poetry. Hopkins explains the meaning of inscape as "design and pattern" and his main aim in poetry. Ultimately, his two notions, inscape and instress, that emerge with sprung rhythm intersect to form the objectification on the eye of the beholder, or rather the subject or sometimes the poetic persona in his poetry.

Keywords: subject, object, Romanticism, Gerard Manley Hopkins' poetry, sprung rhythm

Introduction

Gerard Manley Hopkins had a Victorian well-to-do family (Philips 2002, xv). His father was a "marine adjuster" who wrote manuals about shipping, songs, novels, and poems. His mother knew Italian and German. Gerard Manley Hopkins was influenced from his father in writing *The Wreck of Deutschland* and *The Loss of the Eurydice*. He was educated in Latin and Greek (xvi). At Oxford, he was influenced by the Oxford Movement so he joined Catholic Church in 1866 (xxxvii). He has poems, letters, and sermons and devotional writings.

Hopkins had never written poetry until rector Fr. Jones commissioned him to write a poem for the shipwreck of Deutschland. Therefore, he wrote *The Wreck of the Deutschland* but the *Month* refused the poem due to odd "scansion marks" (Roberts 6). Bridges and Patmore also criticized their friend for the poem as being "unreadable" (Phillips 2002, xxv). The poem was experimental for its sprung rhythm and each stanza was read as a unit (2002, xxv).

G. M. Hopkins' experiments with poetry are tripartite with his notions of inscape, instress, and sprung rhythm: Inscape is Hopkins' word for "the uniqueness of an observed object"[1], instress is "the force or energy which sustains an inscape"[2], and sprung rhythm is "a poetic metre approximating to the rhythm of speech"[3]. The rhythmic effect, especially sprung rhythm[4] is significant for the analysis of Hopkins' poetry. The argument at hand claims sprung rhythm or the stress patterns as a tool to analyse the concepts of subject and object in Hopkins' poetry. Thus, the article proposes to reach the conclusion that the priority of either object over subject or subject over object can be achieved in linguistic terms, in this respect, through sprung rhythm or stress patterns.

Hopkins' use of accentuated stress, or stress patterns in his poetry, specifically sprung rhythm is used to analyse the priority of subject and object in his poetry. As far as linguistic terminology is concerned, there may be overlaps of various terms used differently by Hopkins and other critics. Hopkins' works do not describe technical terms. He describes in general terms which are not known to all. The introduction to rhythm and metre therefore includes a section on terminology in which I aim to provide and explain the currently accepted terms in place of the vague, changeable and impressionistic terms that were used in the past and that are still used by some commentators.

Hopkins uses stress patterns to foreground subject and object agency as he depicts nature and beauty with passion and energy. The entropy between subject and object is felt in his poetry with sprung rhythm that he experiments with other than iambic pentameter in his poems. In this respect, the study proposes theme, theory, and stylistics as inseparable means for the studies of poetry, so each area of study is consulted to provide a sound construct for the argument without experimental reasoning, and statistical data. These rhythmic patterns may establish "objective rules that might stand as a corrective to the subjective basis of much literary analysis" (Head 1077).

In order to highlight rhythmic competence in poetry, my argument proposes the deviance in stress patterns to reconcile the subject and object positions in Gerard Manley Hopkins' poetry. Similarly, Reuven Tsur puts forward the aesthetics and poetic rhythm and reasserts Coleridge's statement "the balance and reconcilement of opposite or discordant qualities" to mark the deviance in rhythm, or "discordance" for the settlement of meaning (19). That is to say, lack of harmony or inconsistency in meaning may be settled with poetic rhythm but the question of how can it be related to subject and object position in poetry remains. Hopkins elucidates the significance of rhythm in his *Letter to Bridges* that he wrote in St Beuno's, St. Asaph. on 21 August 1877 as follows: "My verse is less to be read than heard, as I have told you before; it is oratorical, that is the rhythm is so" (in Philips 229). My argument claims that the position of poetic persona and object in Hopkins' poetry cannot be analysed only in terms of semantics or theoretical background because rhythm is an inseparable means to poetry as Hopkins proposes for "verse" to be heard. Hopkins creates sound patterns and it may be claimed that these sound patterns are objects (in language) created by the poet (subject, in the cases of poetic persona "I") to reconcile the dialectical relationship between the two. What is more, it may also be stated that the deviation of the verse sound foregrounds certain words during utterance so subject and object relationship in poetry can be modified with rhythmic effect. This deviation might also provide a prosodic method for the prioritization of subject or object in Hopkins' poetry.

Although Hopkins' poem was refused to be published due to the oddity of its stress patterns, studies of his poetry elucidate the importance of his sprung rhythm and his notion of instress and inscape: Michael Hurley, in his article "Wrestling with Gerard Manley Hopkins", suggests that plotting "a single stylistic habit, [Hopkins']

---

[1] For further information see: <https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=inscape>.
[2] For further information see: <https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=instress>.
[3] For further information see: <https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=sprung%20rhythm>.
[4] "A poetic rhythm designed to imitate the rhythm of natural speech constructed from feet in which the first syllable is stressed and may be followed by a variable number of unstressed syllables" (Feeney n.p.).

'wrestling'; that is," comes from "his agonistic impulse, arising from his instinctive independence of mind, his intellectual and religious formation, and from the themes of his poems" (922). Thus, as Hurley argues Hopkins' formation of his notions of inscape and instress is directly related to his free will, intellect, and his belief. Bernadette Waterman Ward, on the other hand, foregrounds that Hopkins lived "to break the narrowness of his will; rather than impose his insights on others by the 'force' of his poems" (9). As both writers elucidate, Hopkins is a distinctive poet whose struggle is with the hardships of life, and his poems reflect this in stress patterns through his notions of inscape and instress. In so doing, he objectifies the things in nature and manifests the multicoloured individuation of things in nature with a specific energy. Existing research recognises the critical role played by Hopkins' sprung rhythm but there still seems to be a gap in literature regarding objectification of things in nature and in his environment, their individuation through the eyes of the beholder. Thus, this essay claims to find that trajectory by analysing his poetry through his notions of sprung rhythm, inscape and instress.

As far as Gerard Manley Hopkins' poetry is concerned, the first line of *Pied Beauty* "Glory be to God for dappled things" may suggest how Hopkins perceives objects in nature. This may be considered as another aspect of objectification of Hopkins: The way he sees things in nature, (the first one was his objectification of language in stress patterns[5]) or how the subjective consciousness (the poetic "I" or the lyric speaker in the case of this poem) defines that object in nature, and how the poet uses stress patterns to indicate deviations that foreground the tension or the chaos between the subject and the object.

Gerard Manley Hopkins' explanation of his notion of inscape can be seen in his letter to Coventary Patmore in 7th November 1868 while commenting on William Butler Yeats' verse that leaves out inscape which he refers to as species or individuality, distinctive beauty or style:

> I thought how sadly beauty of inscape was unknown and buried away from simple people and yet how near at hand it was if they had eyes to see it and it could be called out everywhere again […]. After the examinations we went for our holiday out to Douglas in the Isle of Man. Aug.3 – At this time I had first begun to get hold of the copy of Scotus on the Sentences in the Baddely library and was flush with a new stroke of enthusiasm. It may come to nothing or it may be a mercy from God. But just then when I took in any inscape of the sky or sea I thought of Scotus […]. About all turns of the scaping from the break and flooding of wave to its run out again I have not yet satisfied myself. (Hopkins 2002, 55-6)

Apart from these explanations by Hopkins, Scotus' ontological aspect of nature as essence (object as *per se being* in relation to individuation, and its reflections in Hopkins' inscape and instress), divine nature and God's presence in nature foregrounds his theoretical stance. Wimsatt associates the uniqueness of every object in nature (selfhood) with respect to Hopkins' sprung rhythm, and this aspect of Hopkins' "inscape of spoken sound" can be combined with Duns Scotus' concept of thisness (554).

The objects are prior to the context in this respect as Scotus states. However, they may lead to a kind of apprehension or instress. Scotus points out that "[a] *first subject* is a primary subject of a disposition directed towards its object" (Vos 268) (emphasis original).

Duns Scotus and Hopkins' Objectification

Duns Scotus defends freedom, love, and the will against Aristotelian knowledge and intellect. He is acknowledged as a philosopher of realism. His attempt to construct validity of the existence of God is prevalent in his theory. Hopkins was influenced by Scotus regarding his ideas on *haecceitas* meaning "the individuating differences in a thing, as opposed to those features it shares in common with other individuals" (Head 333). *Haecceitas* also paved the way for Hopkins to found his own ideas about individuation (333). Then, individuation may also be modified to my argument with two claims: The first one is about how Hopkins perceives and designs things (objects) in nature and their unique individuating qualities, and how he designs his

---

[5] Donald McChesney in his essay "The Meaning of Inscape" (1968) claims inscape has two meanings: The first is about "the world of nature as perceived by the mind" and the second is about language in which he considers sprung rhythm as a means of "inscaping" (patterning) language (202-3, 206-7).

patterns of rhythm, such as sprung rhythm (for language, the object created by Hopkins). These two claims may maintain the subject and object relationship in Hopkins' poetry.

Duns Scotus' notion of object can be examined in relation to different concepts that he takes into account such as logic and concept, individual and essence in reality or in materiality, intellect, perception and mind, insightful understanding, truth and falsity, subject and predicate structure, subject of theology, subject of ontology, intuitive knowledge of senses, recollections of objects, scientia and epistemic object, *subiectum* and *obiectum, passiones* and *ens,* human will and opposite objects, the problem of universals, species and genera, material substance and *haecceity.* His demonstration of the notion of object can be presented with respect to these concepts.

Duns Scotus' conception of logic is based on "the subject-predicate structure of a proposition" (Vos 156). He states that a "knowable likeness" such "as the senses are the subject of the *species sensibilis*" (Vos 157) (emphasis original). Scotus also suggests that the opposite predicate leads to the destruction of the subject (Vos 186). Both the idea of objective and subject can be integrated to Hopkins' objects. The winding eyes and the winding object, or in other words, focus is dependent on the object. The object may not have the faculty of knowing as Hopkins states but it still is the focus: Objective may have the object for reference of contents like the sweetness of honey, the greatness of the sea, the terror of thunder. The destruction of subject may appeal to the perception of the object as the predicate has relation with it.

Then, a question may be raised about why this article chooses rhythm as a priority indicator of subject and object of Hopkins' poetry if it is already stated as a pattern of language created by the subject. The argument presents rhythm as a part of language and also proposes rhythmic quality of language as a construct for the things in nature. It also presents the notion that subject's perception of the individuating objects may also be indicated by the stress patterns in the poem.

To further illustrate on the point, Duns Scotus' approach to sciences may be taken into consideration. For Scotus, there are three theoretical sciences: "[M]etaphysics, mathematics, and physics" (King 15). They are either related to things or concept of things (how people think about things) (King 15). In this respect, it may be asserted that Scotus' things represent objects and concept of things represents "sense perception" or subjectivity. Thus, he clearly distinguishes materials, things, composite of matter from concepts, logic, ethics, and sense perception as a part of subjectivity (King 15). Scotus' distinction of things (in this respect objects) and how subject perceives them (subjectivity) bring out the dialectical relationship between subject and object. Then, it may be claimed that this dialectical relationship proposes a theoretical background for Gerard Manley Hopkins' poetry as he was deeply influenced by Scotus.

However, Scotus explicates "the subject of metaphysics as being *qua* being" because metaphysics is not only about God and substance for Scotus but there is also "the notion of a primary object" requiring "the notion of a *per se*[6] object" (King 16). The *per se* object can be exemplified by the blackness of a sheep's wool (King 17). It may also be interpreted as the individuating quality inherent in that object, regarding thisness, or *haecceitas.* The primary object should be general and "nonrelational" (King 17). The object becomes *per se* as it stands by itself, being general and nonrelational. The second stanza of Hopkins' poem *Pied Beauty* may demonstrate how he handles Scotus's notion of primary object for the objectification of things:

<div align="center">

/ [7]

All things counter, original, spáre, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckléd (who knows how?)
　　/　 /　　　 /　 /　　 /
With swift, slow, sweet, sour, adazzle, dim;
　　　　　　　　 /
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
　　　　　　　　 /　　/
Praise him. ("Pied Beauty" 7-11)

</div>

---

[6] Object standing by itself (King 16)
[7] The ictuses are marked in Catherine Phillips' *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Major Works.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986. (133).

Hopkins explicates "all things" as "spáre". The ictus on "spáre" may foreground a strong stress for the word. This strong stress foregrounds the individuating difference of "all things" as "spáre" meaning "undecorated"[8] (Phillips 353). The contextualization of the primary object "all things" may be called thisness. "All things" stand for themselves (object *per se*) for being undecorated [9] (Phillips 353). A Scottist approach may also consider "all things" as general due to the word "all" regarding the primary object. There is another deviation in the last syllable of "freckléd" meaning "variegated, here slightly eccentric"[10] (Phillips 353). The deviation caused by the stress of "-éd" suffix may foreground Scottist notion of God, substance and the primary object. The stressed suffix "-éd" is an evidence that may indicate God's existence as a creator but the ambiguity of the process is heightened in parenthesis with the question "who knows how?". The obscurity of the creation process of object: "[A]ll things" may be interpreted as "nonrelational" aspects regarding the primary object of Scottist philosophy because the creation process cannot be related to anything else. However, the undecorated ("spáre") things may also substantiate the notion that the primary object is general. These evidences may strengthen the argument that the stressed patterns in Hopkins' poetry foreground both the theoretical aspect and the meaning of the primary object of Scotus.

The Scottist definition of nature is put forth to point out the significance of nature in his philosophy. He defines nature as not singular of itself because intellect apprehends nature as universal not singular, and the nature even in stone has its own unity, its unity is "proper to itself"(Noone 107). Scotus also believed the nature did not exist apart from concrete things (Noone 109). This may mean that Duns Scotus, who was highly influential on Hopkins' poetics, claimed that objects and the nature existed together. Timothy B. Noone explicates that for Scotus "there is [...] a natural priority enjoyed by the nature with respect to either manifestation of nature, within the mind or without" (109). This priority of nature in the mind of the beholder, or as an outside world may manifest a kind of common ground on which the subject and the object could merge for Scotus.

Individuation was explained in terms of "accidents" (Noone 115) (experiences, event) encountered by a subject for Scotus. It is the number of experiences that the subject had, the matter that constructs the subject, the existence (*esse*) of the subject, the relation between the subject and its creator, God (Noone 115). Individuation may also create a basis for the investigation of Hopkins' poetics as a process of positioning the subject or the object because as Christopher Devlin suggests Scotus and Hopkins believed in the difference between "the Nature in a thing and its Individuality" (114) and they assumed nature "as the nature of the world, elemental, vegetative, sensitive, human" (114). The individuality in Hopkins does not include eternity since man has all "natural activities, animal, rational…" (114) and this individuality leads him to God. Then, the individuation may be claimed as a significant feature to analyse subject and object in Hopkins' poetry as well.

Ultimately, it may be stated that Duns Scotus' ideas provide a theoretical basis for the dialectical relationship between subject and object, the analysis of the primary object, subject, and individuation, or thisness including the stress patterns with respect to Hopkins' poetry.

Walter Pater's Musical Aspiration and Hopkins' Keenness on Rhythm

Walter Pater is another philosopher that was influential for Hopkins mainly because he tutored him at Oxford in 1866 (Bergonzi 18). Pater had thoughts against Christianity but Hopkins entered the Jesuit order (18). Despite their opposite beliefs, both supported "the individual moment, the sudden insight and illumination" (18-9) regarding subjectivity. However, Pater was sceptical about certain beliefs and values whereas Hopkins believed in "the singularity and substantiality of things" (19).

Walter Pater had ideas that were a turning point in art. He marked the condition of music as an aspiration but he had doubts about symbolism (Grisewood 97). He supported music and rhythm in poetry and this affected Hopkins' poetry. Hopkins reveals Pater's influence in his essay, "On the Origin of Beauty: a Platonic Dialogue"

---

[8] All the references to Catherine Phillips' *Notes* are from *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Major Works.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986.
[9] Notes of Catherine Phillips.
[10] Notes of Catherine Phillips.

(Bergonzi 19) which will be quoted in the fifth part regarding its relation to rhythm. Pater's aesthetic aspiration to music and rhythm can be observed in Hopkins' keenness on patterns of stress and sprung rhythm as well.

Pater's sceptical thoughts led him to base his ideas on terms "absolute spirit" and "relative spirit" (Pater 66). Absolute spirit believes in hierarchical categories whereas relative spirit thinks there may be expansion of things or obliteration of dividing lines. For Pater, reality is closer when observation takes place with multiple experiences of nature (Pater 66):

> Modern thought is distinguished from ancient by its cultivation of the "relative spirit" in place of the "absolute." Ancient philosophy sought to arrest every object in an eternal outline to fix thought in a necessary formula, and the varieties of life in a classification by "kinds" or *genera.* To the modern spirit nothing is, or can be rightly known, except relatively and under conditions. The philosophical conception of the relative has been developed in modern times through the influence of the sciences of observation. […] The faculty for truth is recognised as a power of distinguishing and fixing delicate and figurative detail. The moral world is ever in contact with the physical, and the relative spirit has invaded moral philosophy from the ground of the inductive sciences. There it has started a new analysis of the relation of the body and mind, good and evil, freedom and necessity. (Pater 66-7)

As the above quotation indicates, Pater points out that observation, truth, morality, body and mind, good and evil, freedom and necessity are all ideas that cannot be fixed according to the relative spirit. As Pater asserts, every object is not fixed on infinite lines rather they are in a flux. There is no way for fixed truth so there is instability for the object. Hopkins' implementation of sprung rhythm may also be regarded as volatile if language is seen as the object created by Hopkins.

This volatile feature of object, (things man perceives in nature) may also lead to misery and desperation of individual due to endless scepticism. Gerard Manley Hopkins also went through suffering and inward struggle in his life, the effects of which can be observed in his *Terrible Sonnets* (1885-86). The effect of Pater's relative spirit can be observed in one of his *Terrible Sonnets*, "To Seem the Stranger". Hopkins was a professor in Dublin at that moment and he felt depressed by the poverty of slums, by being separated from England, and his family, by being culturally isolated, so he felt alienated with the struggle for Home Rule which Hopkins supported as the alternatives were not favourable (Easson 108):

> I am in Ireland now; now I am at a th**i**[11]rd
> Remove. Not but in all removes I can
> Kind love both give and get. Only what word (9-11)

The repetition of "I", also in "I"reland may indicate the subjectivity of the poem. The poetic persona is Gerard Manley Hopkins himself. "I"reland, the stressed first syllable may be interpreted as a significant location, a turning point for Hopkins. In this respect, Hopkins' thoughts may be instable in Ireland since that he is "at a third". The stress on letter "i" again may present the third desperate turning point in his life as a Catholic. Catherine Phillips backs up this argument in her notes as: "*[T]hird remove.* Perhaps the first remove was the partial estrangement with his family brought about by their holding different religious beliefs (ll.2-4). The second remove may have been from the English people who were mostly Anglican but whom Hopkins longed to see converted to Catholicism (ll.5-7). In Ireland, although Hopkins found himself among Catholics, they were disloyal to England" (Phillips 373). Phillips' arguments about the explication of "third" and its stress, and the stress on "I" all strengthen Pater's influence on Hopkins. First, Pater's keenness on musical aspiration may have affected Hopkins with respect to his emphasis on rhythm. Second, Pater was sceptical about hierarchy, and fixed norms which may also be traced in Hopkins' *Terrible Sonnets* with his touch on his desperate situation in Ireland. Nevertheless, Hopkins may seem to have searched for a sound ground for his alienation. Nonetheless, nobody can deny the slippery ground for the subject or poetic persona's position in search for a more reliable atmosphere in the poem, "To Seem the Stranger".

---

[11] The ictus is marked in Catherine Phillips' notes.

It may be stated that the priority indicator or the stress on "í" in "thírd remove" somewhat slips to relative spirit evoking scepticism regarding the alienated position of the subject, as Hopkins himself, in his *Terrible Sonnet*, "To Seem Stranger".

Pater also argues that subjectivity transforms objects into impressions, so the object disappears behind metaphors and the subject comes out. He favours "new modes of awareness" (Iser 59) in which there would be new constructions. These ideas propose that Walter Pater supports relative spirit rather than absolute spirit. The divine spirit can be found in these "new modes of awareness" (59). Similarly, Hopkins' subjectivity transforms the object (cloth) to his idle being that he wéars in the following lines of his *Terrible Sonnet*, "To Seem Stranger":

> England, whose honour O all my heart woos, wife
> To my creating thought, would neither hear
> Me, were I pleading, plead nor do I: I wé[12]ar-
> Y of idle a being but by where wars are rife.(5-8)

The stress on "wéar" may indicate "idle a being" as a cloth to be worn by the poet to depict his present situation in Ireland when the lines are read aloud. The capital letter "Y" in the beginning of the following line pronounced as "Why" may raise a question about the reason for being dressed in an idle cloth. This is an impression created both by the stress and the object (idle cloth being worn). This idle cloth may also hide Hopkins' real feelings as he wishes to be seen as idle when he wears it. This cloth disappears as a metaphor, with "-" at the end of "I wéar- / Y". Then, the meaning changes to his subjective state, as being weary of idleness at times of abundant wars. This is similar to what Pater calls "new modes of awareness". This evidence strengthens the argument, founded around the argument that Pater's thoughts on relative spirit and his aspirations for rhythmic effect can also be analysed in Hopkins' poetry. Pater's relativity principle may be significant in terms of subjectivity and the instability of both subject and object. The influence of Pater on Hopkins' poetry can be seen in above lines, in terms of subject and object regarding the rhythmic effect.

Romanticism and Hopkins' Subject Object Agency

The dialectic of subject and object and its synthesis is also inherent in Romanticism and Hopkins' poetry (Day 105-6). Human beings consider that they are separate beings so they place object as an antithesis to the subject (107). However, Romanticism tries to "overcome the split between subject and object, and the celebration of Romantic poetry" (Day 112). That is, the subject and object dichotomy is a part of Romanticist imagery in which the dialectic between the self and nature is temporal in the terms that nature's movements endure and change, leaving "the core intact" (Day 116). For Coleridge, the coincidence of an object with a subject or the thought with a thing is a synthesis. In this synthesis, the separate identities of the elements are lost because the subject and object merge into each other. This is an artistic creation with a creative perception. The reconciliation of the dialectical elements, such as subject with object, is obtained in this way (Bloom 219-20). Romantic meditations demonstrate the transaction between subject and object. Thought, or imagination, makes the implicit in nature explicit and in nature the distinction between subject and object fades away (223).

For instance, the sprung rhythm is a device that frees Hopkins from "fixed syllables" so that he can add extra stress to some of the words to form an intersubjectivity between the object he mentions and his subjective reaction to it in tone by using the stress patterns (McChesney 213-4). The individuality in his poems bu eğer dönemse büyük harf olmalıcomes forth as plurality within his notions of inscape and instress in Hopkins' poetry. His use of Christian symbols goes hand in hand with the notions of sacrifice and salvation and then comes his Romanticist love of nature, and his affinity with Wordsworth.

Paul de Man uses the words "affinity" and "sympathy" to draw attention to the idea that Romanticism is not a matter of the merging of two opposites rather it is the reference to the relationships between subject and

---

[12] The ictus is marked in Catherine Phillips' *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Major Works, Including all the Poems and Selected Prose*.

nature in terms of an inter-subjective, interpersonal relationship. Therefore, the priority of the outside world passes to the priority of subject (de Man 195-6).

Hopkins associates "Tractarian aesthetics" as "an outgrowth of Romanticism" when he classifies the Tractarians Newman and Keble within the school of the Lake poets and hands "a theological aesthetics" (Ward 54-5). Hopkins was attracted to the theological aspect in their poetry and the Romantic side according to Ward. What is more, Hopkins denigrates the emotionalism of Romanticism although he takes sides with the intellectual deep ideas of the movement because Hopkins never trusts the imagination as an agent of truth. Thus, about subject object agency, his detailed depictions of nature and the objects outstand "the power of truth coming into revelation" (Wordsworth 206-7). Hopkins is committed to the Catholic doctrine so within his notion of inscape the poetic persona interacts with objects to "exercise living power" (Ward 114-5).

Catherine Belsey in her essay "Constructing the Subject: Deconstructing the Text" suggests that Romanticism involves subjectivity as its main theme. The poet is conscious of himself and develops with his fight against the strains of "outer reality" (360). The "I" of Romantic poetry is generally a "super-subject" who experiences life at a higher depth than ordinary man. He is absorbed in himself and the external world which is contrasted either leads to confinement or sustenance. The transcendence of the subject is manifested as problematic. The "I" addresses an individual reader and invites him to respond to this call (Belsey 360). The confinement or sustenance effect of an object on the "super-subject" may create tension in Romantic poetry. Regarding these ideas, this article examines the similarities between Hopkins' poetry and Romanticism concerning subject object agency. The sprung rhythm as the stress pattern foregrounds how the poetic persona constructs intersubjectivity with the object forming an entropy between the subject and the object: "What you look hard at seems to look hard at you, hence the true and the false instress of nature" (Hopkins 2002, 204).

Can Sprung Rhythm Prioritize the Position of the Subject and Object in Hopkins' Poetry?

This article hypothesizes rhythm as an element to examine the variations of perception to group events in sequence of sound. Paul de Man, in his article "The Resistance to Theory", states that aesthetics is related to "the effect of meaning rather than with content *per se*" (98). Later*,* he explains it as "a phenomenalism of a process of meaning and understanding" (98). Furthermore, he claims that the fusion of sound and meaning is "a mere effect which language can perfectly achieve" (99). This fusion is not related to anything else for de Man. De Man argues on the conventionality of sound as follows: "The phenomenality of the signifier, as sound, is unquestionably involved in the correspondence between the name and the thing named, but the link, the relationship between the word and thing, is not phenomenal but conventional" (99). This aspect of language provides freedom from being simply referential for de Man as for all structuralists and poststructuralists. In this respect, even Hopkins' poetry, with its fusion of sound and meaning, cannot be regarded as merely referential. The fusion of sprung rhythm and meaning would therefore create a basis for the prioritization of subject and object with respect to stress patterns of sound.

Gerard Manley Hopkins in "On the Origin of Beauty: a Platonic Dialogue" defines rhythm as an aesthetic form that can create beauty, as discussed in the following lines:

> "We must be dialectical again then," said the Professor. "You think these things beautiful, do you not, rhythm, metre, and rhyme?"
> "Of course I do; everybody does. Swoop away," said Hanbury.
> "And what is rhythm? Is it not the repetition of a regular sequence of syllables either in accent or quantity?"
> "The repetition of a regular sequence of syllables. If I understand, yes."
> […] The repetition of them makes language rhythmical.
> […] "You remember we agreed that regularity was the consistency of agreement or likeness either of a thing to itself or of several things to each other. Rhythm therefore is an instance of regularity, is it not?"
> […] Rhythm therefore is likeness tempered with difference." (15-6)

Hopkins' Platonic dialogue is more than a definition of what rhythm is because it may also be interpreted as a means to adapt rhythm to dialectics which leads to the statement that "it is likeness tempered with difference". That difference is "the accentual sequence" (16) or as in a trochee, or an iamb, or any other repeated

foot that includes both stressed and unstressed sounds. The same sequence of accentuation may be manifested in different syllables (16). The strong stress may cause the deviation so that difference may make it appear as beautiful. In addition to this, the following poem, "Pied Beauty", challenges the idea that different accentuation of rhythm may both mark the priority of subject or object and the coalescence of them in a higher being, which is also similar to Romanticism presented in the previous part of the chapter:

/ X / X /   X / X   / [13]

"Glory |be to God | for dappled | things" ("Pied Beauty" 1). The poem is written in sprung paeonic rhythm (Phillips 353). As Abrams states Hopkins' metric decisions in complex examples may seem to be arbitrary in sprung rhythm (199). However, when the strong stresses of the words "glory", "be", "God", "dappled", "things" are concerned the subject's glorification of "dappled things" or the objects are emphasized with the stress patterns. This arbitrariness of the sprung rhythm may be interpreted as Hopkins' full authority and absolute control over the rhythm of the poem. This feature of sprung rhythm may further indicate the absolute rhythmic effect created by the poet to give priority to the subject or the object. That is to say, phonologically the subject and object relationship and their coalescence in God, which resemble the Romantic ideology of Coleridge are put forth in "Glory be to God for dappled things". This method of prosodic approach may be employed to Hopkins' other poems to highlight the agency of subject and object as well.

Furthermore, Mick Short suggests that the grouping of events in sequence of sound ends up with regularity and that leads to boredom. Variations in regularity create an interesting rhythmic effect (125). The variations in regularity may validate Hopkins' sprung rhythm as attractive for the audience in this respect. Also, Short claims that stress patterns make the meaning clear in context (142). Attractive variations and making the meaning clear may provide a way for sprung rhythm to point out the priority given to subject or object in poetry. Sprung rhythm is a tool chosen by Hopkins to contextualize the subject and object relationship in his poetry because the audience's attention could be directed by the variations of stresses. The priority of the subject, like it is in the Romantic ideology, may be sought regarding the rhythmic effect of poetry. Thus, how Hopkins creates variations in his poetry with rhythmic effect foregrounds the priority of the position of subject and object.

Julia Kristeva in her *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974) suggests that sound patterns could disrupt the linear thought and with the repetition of sound patterns object in poetry would be created not from the world of things but from language (in Belsey 17-8). Then language and rhythm are both at work during the objectification process. This is another evidence for this claim that rhythmic effect is significant to analyse subject and object in poetry. The disruption of the linear thought may be considered as a deviation in terms of linguistics. The foregrounded rhythmical effect of language may produce object as a metalanguage. The construction of object through rhythmic patterns of language can also be analysed in Hopkins' poetry.

Similarly, Hopkins explains the meaning of inscape as "design and pattern" and his main aim in poetry. For Hopkins, the world is abundant with inscape. He has two definitions for inscape: the first one is it is about the world of nature, perceived by the mind, and the second one is about language (McChesney 202), the patterns he created in language such as the stress patterns or sprung rhythm.

In conclusion, this article examines subject and object as defined by Duns Scotus, Walter Pater, and Romanticism in terms of stress patterns, which were also essential for poetry for Pater, and claims that the stress patterns or at times sprung rhythm for Hopkins are significant in the analysis of Gerard Manley Hopkins' poetry. There may be various other approaches for investigation such as gender and theology. Nonetheless, the approach of this article provides a background that offers theme, theory, and linguistics as inseparable means to analyse the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Overall, this article strengthens the idea that either object or subject is foregrounded in Hopkins' poems through stress patterns or sprung rhythm. These findings also have significant implications for the understanding of how the intensified form of the will or instress takes place in speech in Hopkins' poetry. Although this article focuses on rhythmic patterns and stresses in Hopkins' poetry, the findings may well have a bearing on his notions of inscape and instress regarding the energy created by the stress patterns. By providing a conceptual model, this work offers a novel understanding of considering the

---

[13] Markings of ictus and remis mine. Mick Short's *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays and Prose* is used as a reference.

relationship between poetic persona and object in most of the case natural objects in poetry. A greater focus on sprung rhythm could produce interesting findings that account more for various notions such as the asymmetrical relation between animals and people, plants, natural environment and people or even the society and people in Hopkins' poems. My argument claims that the position of subject and object in Hopkins' poetry cannot be analysed only in terms of semantics or theoretical background because rhythm is an inseparable means to poetry as Hopkins proposes. Hopkins creates sound patterns and it may be claimed that these sound patterns are objects (in language) created by the poet (subject, in the cases of poetic persona "I") to reconcile the dialectical relationship between the two.

Works Cited

Abrams, M. H. A. *Glossary of Literary Terms, Ninth Edition*. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009.

Belsey, Catherine. "Constructing the Subject: Deconstructing the Text." in *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies, Third Edition*. Eds. Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer. London: Longman, 1994. 355-70.

———, Ed. *Postructuralism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.

Bergonzi, Bernard. *Gerard Manley Hopkins*. London: Macmillan, 1977.

Bloom, Harold, Ed. *Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays in Criticism*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1970.

Day, Aidan. *Romanticism*. London: Routlege, 1996.

De Man, Paul. "The Resistance to Theory." in *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies Third Edition*. Eds. Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer. London: Longman, 1994. 94-108.

Devlin, Christopher. "Hopkins and Duns Scotus." in *Gerard Manley Hopkins Poems: A Casebook*. Ed. Margaret Bottrall. London: Macmillan, 1975. 113-6.

Easson, Angus. *Gerard Manley Hopkins*. London: Routledge, 2011.

Feeney, Joseph J. *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Magician of Words, Sounds, Images, and Insights*. 15-25 Minutes. Audiobook: A Now You Know Media Study Guide, 2013.

Grisewood, Harman. "The Impact of G. M. Hopkins." in *Gerard Manley Hopkins Poems: A Casebook*. Ed. Margaret Botrall. London: Macmillan, 1975. 92-108.

Head, Dominic, Ed. *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English,* Third Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006.

Hopkins, Gerard Manley. *The Major Works*. Ed. Catherine Phillips. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.

———. *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

Hurley, Michael. "Wrestling with Gerard Manley Hopkins." *Textual Practice* 35.6 (2021): 921-940. DOI: 10.1080/0950236X.2021.1936774.

Iser, Wolfgang. *Walter Pater: The Aesthetic Moment*. Trans. David Henry Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.

King, Peter. "Scotus on Metaphysics." in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*. Ed. Thomas Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. 16-68.

McChesney, Donald. "The Meaning of Inscape." in *Gerard Manley Hopkins Poems: A Casebook*. Ed. Margaret Bottrall. London: Macmillan, 1975. 202-7.

Noone, Timothy B. "Universals and Individuation." in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*. Ed. Thomas Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. 100-28.

Pater, Walter. *Appreciations with an Essay on Style*. London: Macmillan, 1920. E-book. <https://archive.org/stream/cu31924105726180#page/n9/mode/2up>.

Phillips, Catherine. *The Oxford Authors: Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986.

———. Introduction. Hopkins, Gerard Manley. *The Major Works*. Ed. Catherine Phillips Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.

Roberts, Gerald. *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Literary Life*. London: Macmillan, 1994.

Short, Mick. *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays and Prose*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Tsur, Reuven. *Poetic Rhythm: Structure and Performance: An Empirical Study in Cognitive Poetics*. Eastburne: Sussex Academic Press, 2012.

Vos, Antonie, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2006.

Ward, Bernadette Waterman. *World as Word: Philosophical Theology in Gerard Manley Hopkins.* Washington DC: The Catholic U of America P, 2002.

Williams, Thomas, Ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003.

Wimsatt, James I., *Hopkins's Poetics of Speech Sound: Sprung Rhythm, Lettering, Inscape.* Toronto: Toronto UP, 2006.

Wordsworth, William. "The Prelude." in *Wordsworth: Selected Poetry.* Ed. Van Doren. London: The Modern Library Classics, 2002.

This page intentionally left blank.

The Unruliness of *Fleabag*: A Tightrope of Intimacy and Distance

Eleni Ermioni Tasioula

Abstract: Phoebe Waller-Bridge's dramatic monologue, *Fleabag*, examines the unnamed female protagonist's immersion into an experience of loss, grief, familial troubles and emotional depravity. The protagonist primarily appears to be an emotionally volatile, quite cynical and quite sexually active young woman. Her tight grasp of the audience's attention constitutes a vital device around which the whole narrative is constructed. Waller-Bridge's protagonist craves to establish an authentic emotional connection by attempting to remedy the unresolved trauma that resides in her recent past. The construction of the narrative of a seemingly "bad feminist" builds on moments of shame, desire and endless humor. This article explores theatrical approaches to the alienation effect by examining the writer's attempt to forge a complex relation of intimacy and distance with the audience by exploiting audience attention. The protagonist draws pleasure from experiences of "abjection"— including various discomforting experiences edging on pain and shame—in an attempt to attain a state of "ecstasy". In truth, this pertains to her endeavors to expel what makes her emotionally volatile by drawing pleasure from painful and self-damaging modes of behaviour.

Keywords: contemporary drama, abjection, monologue, alienation, affect, *Fleabag*, Phoebe Waller-Bridge

A Cynical Protagonist: Immersing into Vulnerability

"I am not obsessed with sex, I just can't stop thinking about it" (*Fleabag* 7). *Fleabag* is a female monologue written by the critically acclaimed British writer, actress and producer Phoebe Waller-Bridge. It constitutes Waller-Bridge's debut play, a one-woman performance, and was first performed at Underbelly as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. In view of its success, it was later adapted into a popular and critically acclaimed TV series. Fleabag is the play's unnamed female protagonist and sole narrator, a girl on the verge of entering the stage of womanhood grappling with consecutive losses, grief, family troubles and near-bankruptcy. Fleabag primarily appears to be an emotionally volatile, quite cynical and quite sexually active young woman. To clear the air, she is not a sex addict, she only longs for emotional stability. The protagonist craves to establish an authentic and profound emotional connection by attempting to remedy the heartache caused by the untimely death of her mother from breast cancer and the recent, tragic loss of her best friend, Boo, from a self-inflicted accident. A process of (re)claiming this wayward connection commences as she begins her monologue, forging

the narrative of an ostensibly "bad feminist", building on moments of shame, desire and endless humor. Fleabag's monologue is constructed in such a way by Waller-Bridge that it approximates a deeply confessional experience, infused with flashbacks of intimate moments with her best friend, Boo. What is noteworthy is that this series of devastating losses has Fleabag resort to her sex drive as a means to restore the emotional connection that has been severed by having multiple sexual encounters and attempting to draw pleasure from experiences of "abjection"—including some discomforting experiences edging on pain and shame. This paper attempts to highlight the fact that the protagonist's narrative is in an open dialogue with the philosopher and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva's discussion of "abjection" and "jouissance", with the "abject" being "what one spits out, rejects, almost violently from oneself" (McAfee 46) and with "jouissance" signifying a kind of ecstasy related to impulse, desire and the "continually dissolved [and] displaced subject" (Fountain 194). On a similar note, the protagonist endeavors to expel what makes her emotionally volatile by drawing pleasure from painful and self-damaging modes of behaviour.

The narrative power of Fleabag's monologue immediately has the audience on a tightrope, balancing between intimacy and alienation. In the first section of this paper, I argue that the narrator's storytelling proves to be compelling for the spectator right from the start, as she frequently turns to the audience and directly recounts her moments of "abjection", whilst purposefully obscuring aspects of her narrative only to reveal them at the end of the play. In the second section, the current article illuminates that Fleabag's intimate confessions place her audience in the center of the experience, by manipulating spectators' attention and drawing them disturbingly close while at the same time blatantly distancing them. The narrator manages to build affective intensity and create a compelling monologue which involves shameful experiences, shocking revelations, unruliness and disturbing details, thus intensifying the play's shock value. The audience is unwillingly exposed to distressing facts and unsure of what to do with them. An affective pull is, therefore, devised which profoundly unsettles the spectators and forms an unhomely space for the audience—having the latter take a deep dive into Fleabag's traumatic experience and irrecoverable loss, all the while maintaining a veil of humour and disguising moments of tragedy with elements of comedy.

A Bad Feminist, an Unruly Woman or Both?

What does it mean to be a "bad feminist"? In the case of Fleabag, it can be argued that one of the narrator's attention-seeking techniques is portraying herself as a "bad feminist" both by engaging in multiple, meaningless sexual encounters and conjuring up ways to mock the concept of feminism altogether. The protagonist is a woman who remains unnamed throughout the play and goes by the name Fleabag in the script. She appears to be struggling with grief, financial issues, family conflicts and her own emotional instability. The amalgamation of humour and loss in the storyline surfaces as the narration progresses. As Fleabag commences her confessions to the audience, she states that her father's way of coping with her mother's loss is to send her and her sister tickets to attend feminist lectures. What follows is an instance which exemplifies how "bad feminism" is comically depicted in the play to evoke an affective response from the audience:

> LECTURER. Before I begin, I want to ask you a question [...] I pose the same question to the women in this room today: please raise your hands if you would trade five years of your life for the so-called "perfect body"?
> FLEABAG throws her hand in the air.
> FLEABAG. Both of us.
> Four hundred women stare at us, horrified.
> We are *bad* feminists. (*Fleabag* 16) (emphasis original)

After their mother's loss the two sisters have been distanced from each other and only meet up in these feminist lectures. Despite the fact that the simultaneous hand-raising reaction might be considered as a specimen of "bad" feminist behaviour, it builds a humorous bridge which operates on a double basis: It brings the two sisters together and mitigates their alienated relationship while also producing a humorous image and hence reinforcing a sense of closeness with the audience.

Fleabag constitutes a character who progressively unfolds as a bad feminist trying to cope with her reality. She aspires to establish a connection with the audience by creating a tight grasp of their attention. As her

confessions to the spectators unravel, she gradually exploits their point of focus by illuminating her "bad feminist" attitude and simultaneously obscuring her inner distress. According to Rebecca Wanzo, a "bad feminist" often makes an appearance in "precarious-girl comedies", with the latter being a term which is grounded on the relationship between precarity and the comedy genre, making "endless alienation a source of humor" (Wanzo 29). In the "precarious-girl comedy", the protagonist embraces "abjection", inhabits an alienated space and the possibility of her forming any meaningful connections is practically disavowed. On the same wavelength, Fleabag inhabits a much similar space and recoils from emotional attachments whilst being portrayed as a sexually-obsessed woman, by all appearances. As she turns to the audience she confesses, "I'm not obsessed with sex. I just can't stop thinking about it. The performance of it. The awkwardness of it. The moment you realise someone wants your body… not so much the feeling of it" (*Fleabag* 7). This intimate statement introduces a paradox and infuses sexual activity with an ironic tone and an element of comic relief. What follows right after in the play, however, shatters Fleabag's carefully-structured facade of a "bad feminist" who makes hasty, sexually-driven choices and sheds some light on the insofar obscured aspect of the protagonist's inner state—her emotional struggle with grief and loss. She informs the audience that she opened her café business with her friend, Boo, who accidentally killed herself by walking into a busy street. As Fleabag states, "it wasn't her intention, but it wasn't a total accident" (*Fleabag* 7). Boo simply wanted to draw attention and punish her boyfriend for having cheated on her with another woman "but it turns out bikes can go fast and flip you into the road. Three people died. She was such a dick" (7). This memory of Boo allows for a more nuanced understanding of Fleabag's facade—one that does not merely suggest a seemingly "bad feminist" with a loose moral grounding who is emotionally unstable. Instead, it depicts a woman seeking for a meaningful way to remedy the painful experience of losing her friend by employing transgression and humor as a means to downplay an emotionally traumatic event.

The narrator's monologue moves the audience back and forth through multiple flashbacks. As a result, the spectator is thrust deeper into the protagonist's struggles; this allows for the nexus of the "abject'" and the "unruly" woman to rise to the surface. As Wanzo emphasizes, "precarious-girl comedies" are closely related to the "abject" and "embrace the otherness found in 'abjection' as a desired end" (29). According to Julia Kristeva, "abjection" is "a process of jettisoning what seems to be part of oneself" (5). It refers to something excluded and rejected - like sour milk or excrement - but never ultimately banished which continues to beseech and pulverize the subject (McAfee 46). Interestingly, the subject finds the "abject" both "repellent and seductive" therefore the borders of the self are, paradoxically, threatened and maintained at the same time (McAfee 50).

The unruliness of Fleabag, which progressively surfaces during the course of the narration, is highly enticing and has the audience in a tight affective pull with a combination of Kathleen Rowe Karlyn's "unruly woman" and Julia Kristeva's "abjection". As the speaker's storytelling evolves the spectator becomes even more engrossed and unsettled at the same time. What makes Fleabag's proneness to "abjection" evident is the following example in which the narrator recounts a sexual misadventure saying, "I stood staring at a handprint on my wall from when I had a threesome on my period… I wish I could tell you my threesome story was sticky and awkward and everyone went home a little bit sad and empty, but… it was lovely. Sorry" (*Fleabag* 6). The image presented consists of both disturbing and sexually related details and thus urges the audience into a whirlwind of affective responses. Some might find this statement distasteful or "repellent"; others might find it "seductive". Fleabag, however, seems unapologetic and leans towards Karlyn's "unruly woman" who is defined by a sexual "looseness" and "a cluster of attributes that challenge patriarchal power by defying norms of femininity intended to keep a woman in her place" (10). This particular nexus of "abjection" and "unruliness" aims at both riveting and alienating the audience. The spectators are unsure of how to react to the current experience. Should they laugh? Should they pity the narrator? Should they be hopeful for her? What this results in is a sense of unsettlement which pertains to an amalgamation of closeness and distance.

Despite the fact that the experiences in discussion reiterate Fleabag's facade of a "bad feminist" who is sexually active but has no moral backdrop, I will proceed to argue that the protagonist purposefully recounts these experiences, which relate to Kristeva's "jouissance", to contour her character's proclivity to draw pleasure out of painful experiences in order to expel the trauma of her friend's loss. Boo's memory constantly reappears throughout the play in fragments and, interestingly, coincides with Fleabag's sexual misadventures. All of the protagonist's sexually-related activities, be it her random encounter with a man who she names Rodent, her threesome experience or her disturbing masturbation scenes, border on pleasure and distress. Fleabag's way of

compensating, therefore, relates to Kristeva's "jouissance" which signifies a "total joy or ecstasy" and implicates an "impulse incapable of final satisfaction since desire is always displaced and displacing" (in Fountain 194). The narrator's sexual experience in the following instance merges desire and enjoyment with distress and the fear of failing to financially sustain her café, which serves as the only connective thread to her late friend:

> FLEABAG. Lying in my office, the café numbers start to jump out at me like little ninjas [...] Lay there.
> Numbers, numbers, Obama, numbers, Zac, Obama, numbers, Zac –
> Suddenly I was on YouPorn having a horrible wank.
> Found just the right sort of gangbang.
> Now that really knocked me out, so I put my computer away, leaned
> over, kissed my boyfriend Harry goodnight and went to sleep. (*Fleabag* 5)

By extension, the audience is engulfed in the narrator's disturbing yet humorous experience. The spectator is drawn closer to the character, like looking through a peephole, as this intimate experience is narrated and is, nevertheless, rather astonished towards the end when it is revealed that the protagonist's boyfriend is sleeping next to her as she is trying to sexually please herself. The audience is, thus, once more exposed to information they did not expect.

Monologue, Narrativity and Direct Address

"Fleabag turns to the audience. I send my ex a picture of my vagina. I send Harry a picture of my vagina. I text Lily. Still nothing from my sister" (*Fleabag* 30). Fleabag will share everything with you and then push you away when you least expect it. Drawing on Deborah R. Geis' discussion on monologue and narrativity, I will argue in this part of the essay that Waller-Bridge utilizes the ability of the monologue to affect the narrative of the play, to manipulate the spectator's imaginations and redirect their attention (13), thus placing them in the center of the experience. The memory of Boo's death constantly pierces through Fleabag's narration of her sexual misadventures and highlights the "narrative power" of her monologue. As Geis illustrates, the monologue has a capacity for manipulating, compressing and transforming time within the drama that unfolds before the spectators (10). Susanne Langer reminds us that theater exists within a "perpetual present", nevertheless, the monologue allows the playwright to "dislocate, fragment and otherwise transform this perpetual present into other temporal modes" (Geis 11). Thus, the monologue permits the speaker in our discussion to foreground the loss of her best friend through a fragmented memory which often intercepts the plot in the form of voicemail messages or flashbacks. What this eventually results in is moments loaded with affective intensity. The spectator undergoes a transformation into a figurative tightrope walker, balancing between closeness and distance. The spectators become uncertain of how they should feel or react to the protagonist's narrative since they are being pulled closer to her intimate experiences and then pushed away into a space of alienation, dominated by the trauma of Boo's death. Followingly, to some extent they become defamiliarized with the play at hand. This becomes evident as Fleabag's recollections of Boo constantly intersect the storyline and reoccur even more frequently towards the end of the play.

As she continues to struggle with the troubles of adulthood, such as avoiding bankruptcy and striving to maintain her café, Fleabag exploits the audience by transporting it from the "here" and "now" to a dislocated time in which Boo's memories exist, thus departing from moments of comedy and taking a plunge into the traumatic effects of loss. Fleabag's narrative is characterized by fragmentation and non-linearity, two elements of postmodernism which are highlighted in the following example. The protagonist firstly focuses on a random male figure described as "one guy in the corner drinking tap water and using the plug, quite attractive actually, but he doesn't look at me, even when I purposefully drop a cucumber so I have something to bend over for" and then unexpectedly shifts to a vivid memory of her late friend, "Boo always used to play music, read out horoscopes and shrivel crisp packets in the microwave [...] [a]nd she was beautiful. Tricky though. Jealous. Sensitive. But beautiful and… my best friend" (*Fleabag* 9). The narration overtly and suddenly transcends from a moment loaded with sexual innuendo to a more heartfelt snapshot of Boo, thus compressing time and diverting the audience's focus whilst betraying Fleabag's emotional volatility and vulnerability.

The protagonist craves her audience's attention which she deftly manipulates in order to have the spectators on their feet. What she, therefore, manages is to build moments loaded with emotional intensity in

which the audience is unsure how to react and ends up engulfed in a sense of unhomeliness. What is therefore forged is a vexed relationship between the audience's visceral reaction and emotive response to Fleabag's storytelling. As mentioned before, the speaker many a time turns to the audience and narrates in a way that resembles sharing her secrets to her confidants. As the play evolves, however, Fleabag's narration becomes even more fragmented and betrays her distraught position. Her reminiscing about Boo escalates as Boo's voicemail recordings intersect the monologue even more often, resembling a negative recollection she cannot shake off. Her sexual encounters continuously fail to ameliorate the trauma of her friend's loss, reaching a point where it is suggested that she cries after a sexual experience (*Fleabag* 28). Her relationship with her sister remains tumultuous and unresolved. Up to the middle of the play, the narrator manages to keep her audience on a tightrope, balancing between intimacy and alienation, comic relief and traumatic events. Nevertheless, as the end of the play approaches this balance is jeopardized and the audience's attention is redirected from Fleabag's humorous encounters to what she has so far kept a secret; Fleabag is exposed:

> FLEABAG. Why is [Martin] still here?
> SISTER. He didn't touch you.
> FLEABAG. He tried.
> SISTER. He said it was more like the other way round.
> FLEABAG. That's not true.
> SISTER. Why would I believe you?
> FLEABAG. What? Because I'm your –
> SISTER. After what you did to Boo.
> FLEABAG (to audience). That wasn't my fault. He wanted me… he…
> wanted me so… (34)

After Fleabag alleges that her sister's husband, Martin, attempted to sexually harass her, her sister's disbelief culminates in the revelation of Fleabag's big secret. The above excerpt implies that Fleabag is responsible for Boo's self-inflicted accident which led to her death since the latter tried to injure herself after learning that her boyfriend had been unfaithful to her. The audience now finds out that the protagonist was the cause of this predicament. At this point, the narrator turns to the audience members to reconcile and draw them closer again after having radically distanced them with the aforementioned revelation. Following Deborah R. Geis's train of thought, the speaker's directness reasserts the audience's very powerlessness (14). The spectators are defamiliarized and helpless after having forfeited their "pseudopriviledged status as the character's confidants" (Geis 14). The spectator is not simply let in on a secret, he/she is being misled. Eventually, the speaker gains agency through the narrative power of her monologue and unloads what has been burdening her. Nevertheless, the audience loses its trust and winds up having been tricked and unsettled.

Conclusion

Fleabag's monologue inspires an intricate relationship with the audience by forging an intimate connection with the spectator only to, finally, tear it apart. By utilizing direct address, dissolving the fourth wall and embellishing her confessions with a humorous note, Fleabag weaves an intimate story in which comedy is fused with discomfort, loss and guilt. On the surface, her storytelling follows the facade of a "bad feminist" who is excessive, acts upon her desires, borders on transgression and is, all in all, an "unruly" woman that departs from patriarchal stereotypes and cannot be easily confined. The audience is often directly addressed and is given access to the protagonist's sexual activity, which is displayed with a humorous and cynical tone, as if being let in on intimate aspects of her life. Notwithstanding, on a deeper level this overt access into the protagonist's experiences does not merely offer a discomforting pleasure or a sense of closeness, but rather aims to divert the audience's attention from Fleabag's shortcomings.

The carefully-constructed tightrope of intimacy and distance fulfills a double purpose: It serves to conceal Fleabag's secret and guilt which are exposed in a culmination of confessions near the end of the play. It also manages to create an intense and affective experience for the spectator, who is placed in a "pseudopriviledged position" as the narrator's confidant. The series of confessions and revelations aim at manipulating the point of focus. This shift occurs from the portrayal of random sexual encounters and moments of pleasure, to emotional instability, lack of a meaningful connection, loss, painful reminiscing and finally to the full disclosure of

moments of guilt and shame. Waller-Bridge employs flashbacks and a deep dive into an intercepted mental journey with an aim to unearth the main character's unresolved trauma. Additionally, this method suggests an attempt to revisit traumatic events and achieve recuperation by plunging into the sites of memory, be it Fleabag and Boo's intimate discussions or recollections of Boo's sayings.

As Fleabag is exposed, the audience is distanced and alienated too by being exposed to her obscured guilt. The narrator is (to some extent) responsible for her friend's death by being sexually involved with Boo's boyfriend at the time. Remorse, shame and guilt take center stage and replace the thrill and humour of random romantic adventures, as portrayed in the beginning of the play. The numerous instances of comic relief are supplanted with a feeling of alienation. Due to the protagonist's final revelations the audience comes to realise that the previously constructed sense of intimacy with the main character is a fabricated one. Hence, intimacy gives way to a sense of unfamiliarity towards the protagonist. The "narrative power" of the speaker's monologue is prominent throughout the whole play and results in unsettling the audience by creating an unhomelike space. The spectator's imaginative capacity and attention is directed by the monologue's narrator, as Geis highlights, something which builds up to a captivating performance charged with an intense physicality (15). Finally, the spectators are indeed placed in the center of the experience and that is exactly where they are being tricked and defamiliarized.

Works Cited

Fountain, J. Stephen. "Ashes to Ashes: Kristeva's 'Jouissance', Altizer's *Apocalypse*, Byatt's *Possession* and 'The Dream Of The Rood.'" *Literature and Theology* 8.2 (1994): 193–208. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23926718>.

Geis, Deborah R. *Postmodern Theatric(k)s: Monologue in Contemporary American Drama*. Michigan: U of Michigan P, 1996.

Karlyn, Kathleen Rowe. *Unruly Girls, Unrepentant Mothers: Redefining Feminism on Screen*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2011.

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay of Abjection*. Columbia: Columbia UP, 1982.

McAfee, Noëlle. *Julia Kristeva*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Waller-Bridge, Phoebe. *Fleabag*. London Nick Hern Books, 2013.

Wanzo, Rebecca. "Precarious-Girl Comedy: Issa Rae, Lena Dunham, and Abjection Aesthetics." *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies* 31.2 (2016): 27-59. DOI:10.1215/02705346-3592565.

Does it Ever Rain in Italy?
Metaphors of Landscape and Weather of Italy in British Fiction (1946-2001)

Şebnem Toplu

Abstract: Arising from the poetic aspirations of Dante, Petrarch or Bocaccio, the Italian art, the ancient Roman grandeur, consecutively, the beauty of the landscape and the attractive people, the contemporary perspectives on Italy are the outcome of a tradition which reached its climax with D.H. Lawrence and this is where this essay proceeds to explore the metaphor of Italian landscape and the sun during the second half of the twentieth century British fiction. I argue that temporal acuity also transforms British writers' perception of this "idyllic" country where the sun seems to shine continuously with the implication that it never rains. I contend such unrealistic paradisical image of the postwar period gradually lends to the introduction of rain in harmony with the characters' mood and transformation of Italy. This essay covers the fiction of Linklater, Waugh, Murdoch, Golding, Brookner, Parks, Dibdin, Spark and Woodhouse.

Key words: Italy in British Literature, the Italian sun, rain, Tim Parks, Michael Dibdin, Muriel Spark, Anita Brookner, Sarah Woodhouse

> "A man to leave Italy and not to write a book about it!
> Was ever such a thing heard of?"
> (Landor 50)

Introduction

Italy has always been captivating for people from all around the world by the beauty of its landscape fascinating cities which hold monuments centuries-old for beholders to meditate and the enigmatic people who have been dwelling on this land since before Christ. It has similarly attracted several canonical British writers among which the earliest was Geoffrey Chaucer (c.1340-1400) who visited and wrote about Italy and since then Italy has been prevailing with its diverse aspects in the literary perspectives of the British writers as well, enticing numerous studies by scholars. Therefore, since it is an enormous topic, I have narrowed down the genre to novel and focused on the British writers of a specific period. Since the writers of the earlier eras have been

discussed widely by scholars, this essay covers the time span starting from the fiction of the Post World War II period by Eric Linklater's (1899-1974) *Private Angelo* (1946) and ending by Tim Parks' *Destiny* (1999). Some British writers mention Italy or Italians partly and only in one of their works, yet for some authors like Tim Parks[1] (1954-) and Michael Dibdin[2] (1947- 2007), Italy is the sole location in almost all their fiction, so I have not covered all their work. The writers in between with the chronological order of their particular works are Evelyn Waugh, Iris Murdoch, Muriel Spark, William Golding, Anita Brookner, Jonathan Keates, Sarah Woodhouse, Barry Unsworth, and Michael Dibdin. On the other hand, Annie Hawes' *Extra Virgin* (2001) is a memoir, yet it is included only to denote the bias of perception at the turn of millennium.

In modern literature, more concrete tropes relating to perceived idyllic and cheerful states of mind representing Italy are common, especially through the depiction of the sun/sunny weather, as an allegory for the presumed cheerfulness and possible naivety of Italian people or for the idyllic landscape. However, subsequently in timeline some writers also write about rain in Italy, hence, I scrutinize all works on the basis of time to detect the changes in the portrayal of Italy. In *Literary into Cultural Studies*, Easthope maintains that Cultural Studies considers every form of "signifying practice" in literary works (6). Based on the principle of cultural studies this essay focuses on how each author uses landscape and weather as signifiers to reflect the characters' state of mind. I argue that temporal change in general worldview by the end of second half of the twentieth century also transforms British writers' perception of this "idyllic" country where the sun seems to shine continuously with the implication that it never rains. I contend such unrealistic paradisical image of the post-war period gradually lends itself to the introduction of rain in harmony with the characters` mood and transformation of Italy[3]. Smith states that the twentieth century has "ushered in the discovery of deep space or at least its social construction", and yet it is only as the twentieth century draws to a close that this "fundamental discovery is becoming apparent […]. Deep space is quintessentially social space; its physical extent infused with social intent" (160-78). Thus, transformation of social space for both British and Italian cultures are also reflected in literary works. Gregory likewise argues that spatial implications are essential to "transcend the partitions between the metaphorical space and the material space" (5). Since it is "almost impossible to escape from travel as metaphor" in the British novels that are discussed in this essay, I suggest the physical extent of the place, in this case the Italian landscape, the dazzling sun or rain creates a metaphorical space transcending the material place (Jokinen 25).

Sunny Skies, Gorgeous Landscape

Eric Linklater's *Private Angelo* (1946)

Beginning with the post-war fiction, the earliest example of landscape depiction is of Eric Linklater's (1899-1974) *Private Angelo*. Private Angelo is a comic figure; a naïve universal soldier who lacks courage and tries to survive by the closing of the Second World War. Linklater portrays the conventional image of Tuscany along with the small village of Pontefiore, expanding the image:

> A narrow ravine divided the southern slope of the hill, and this, in one noble arch, was spanned by an ancient bridge whose abutments, at the proper season of the year, were overhung by blossoming trees. Even in Tuscany, where a handsome view is the merest commonplace, Pontefiore was notable for its dignified yet gentle beauty, and there was little wonder that Angelo [shed] delighted tears to see again its yellow roofs, the cobbled streets, and the castle tower rising among cypresses against a clear blue sky. (20-1)

Northrop Frye asserts that the idyllic preserves the theme of escape from society to the extent of idealizing a simplified life in the country. It is created by the close association with animal and vegetable nature which recurs in the sheep and pleasant pastures of the idyllic; such imagery is also often used in the Bible for the theme of salvation (43). As such, the beauty of the landscape and nature signifies bliss and salvation. From Angelo's

---

[1] Born and grew up in England, he moved to Italy in 1981 where he has been living since then.
[2] British crime author wrote a series of 11 crime novels with the main character named Aurelio Zen and all set in Italy.
[3] See, Toplu, Şebnem. *Diverse Aspects of Italy and Italians in Contemporary British Literature*. Modena: Il Fiorino, 2001.

Italian point of view there is not much difference between his love of his land from that of a foreigner. However, it should be kept in mind that the Italian characters are created by the British writers.

> I […] adore this land of mine, this Tuscany of the green candles and the terraced hills that are crowned with men's houses, adore because it is complete. As the little grapes in the valley are sweet already and coloured with their ripeness, so Tuscany wears its bloom and is plump as a young grape with its sweetness […] The land is very ancient, yet summer comes to it with the colour of a new invention. When Rome was but an angry thought, we were civilized and had our arts, and when the world was in dark despair we woke it with our painting and our poetry and quarrelling. And still our olive trees are silver and green, and the olives grow fat. All the countries have come to us, either to conquer or to learn, in love or envy, and we are still Tuscany, and the grapes are ripening again. (241)

Evelyn Waugh's *Helena* (1950)

Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966), on the other hand, sets his novel *Helena*, in the year 273 AD. Nonetheless, the yearning for Rome, the city of river, "or the city of the Ruma, an old Etruscan family" in this historical novel reveals an ancient intensity for the British authors (Pauli 3). It is reflected in the main character princess Helena, youngest daughter of Coel, "Paramount chief of the Trinovantes". She marries a stranger, Constantius, chosen by herself since he promises to take her to "The City". The conventional image is then broken with a negative view of pagan Roman Empire, ironically to be yet restored with the mythological personification of beauty:

> It was spring and everywhere fountains were playing among the falling smuts. But Rome was not beautiful. Compared with Trèves it seemed gross and haphazard. Beauty would come later. For centuries the spoils of the world had flowed into the City, piled up and lost themselves there. For centuries to come they would be dispersed and disfigured […] Then beauty would come […] Beauty would come in her own time, capricious, adorable wanderer, and briefly make her home on the seven hills. (92)

The novel has got more religious overtones on Christianity than Italians since after deciding on Christianity as her chosen faith, Helena sets out in her quest to find the true cross and finds it. Hence, Waugh's Italy signifies Christianity, and is devoid of Italians.

Iris Murdoch's *The Italian Girl* (1964)

Iris Murdoch's (1919-1999) sunny Italian weather, on the other hand, is an explicit metaphor of change and salvation in *The Italian Girl*. Murdoch's narrative is claimed to tend towards the affirmation of good. Hence for Rondald Carter they are novels of the human condition seen in terms of weakness and strength, portrayed in thought rather than action, with a high regard for spiritual values (525). Although the context is Britain, Murdoch's *The Italian Girl* embodies a legendary accumulation of Italian characteristics. The affirmation of good is set by "the Italian girl" Maria Magistretti, wise and beautiful, who leads Edmund out of depression caused by his solitary life. Edmund comes back home for his mother Lydia's funeral where he reunites with his brother Otto, his wife Isabel and their daughter Flora who is going through an emotional turmoil. The only stable character is represented by Maria, who holds on to the values in her role as the housekeeper. Although the story is located in England, the housekeepers Lydia had chosen have always been a succession of Italian girls for curious reasons. After the settling down of chaotic relations by the help of Maria, Edmund confesses his love for Maria, the so far nameless Italian girl, and decides to move with her to the "South", to Italy. The relation between the enthusiastic change of mood and what Italian weather signifies is explicit in Edmunds following words "I said, 'I'll go and pack. Then we can think about times and places. Why, it's Italian weather already'" (171). Moreover, for this division of North and South, North in the sense of England and South in Italy, Shields holds that the British debate over the regional divisions presents a tendency to attribute "casual power to space itself, again demonstrating the process of fetishisation and hypostatisation central to the common-sense vision of the spatial common across Western social spatialisations" (259).

Muriel Spark's *The Public Image* **(1968),** *The Takeover* **(1976) and** *The Only Problem* **(1984)**

A starlet in England, Annabel Christopher achieves fame and beauty in Italy and succeeds in building a public image by the help of her Italian film director and his secretary in Muriel Spark's (1918-2006) *The Public Image*. It is located in Rome and the sun shines: "It was the middle of Friday morning. The sun shone gold-brown on the expanse of parquet floor, in room after room" (5) and "[…] the sunlight on the floor, was at the back of the building, removed from the more boisterous traffic of Rome" (6). Despite the signification of the weather *The Public Image* mostly focuses on Italian society's sense of solidarity.

Besides the humorous way Spark narrates Maggie's endeavours to get Hubert out of her villa in *The Takeover*, Italy signifies beauty with sunshine despite its inevitable outcome heat: "Hubert Mallindaine's terrace had a view of the lake and the Alban hills folding beyond" (6) and "[t]here was a heatwave so fierce you would have thought someone had turned it on somewhere by means of a tap, and had turned it on too high, and then gone away for the summer" (7). Yet the beauty of Lake Nemi is influential:

> The very panorama of Nemi, the lake, the most lush vegetation on earth, the scene which had stirred the imagination of Sir James Frazer at the beginning of his massive testament to comparative religion, *The Golden Bough*, all this magical influence and scene which had never before failed in their effects, all the years he had known the place and in the months he had lived there, suddenly [the house] was too expensive [to afford]. (8)

Hubert of course is not the only one who enjoys the view, he is supported by the American Jesuit, Father Cuthbert Plaice "What marvellous weather! That's the thing about Italy. You can sit outside in March" (11). The heat of the summer is mentioned very specifically: "It was an exceptionally hot August. He [Hubert] didn't like Rome in the heat" (59-60), "We [Maggie] are leaving Sardinia next week- out of this frightful heat!" (57); "It was mid-September and still the heat of summer hovered far into the nights of Rome and its surroundings. Tonight, at Nemi there was a faint hill breeze, hardly enough to flicker the candles through the open doors of the dining-room balcony" (73); and, "It was a hazy hot afternoon towards the end of June. Beyond the ranges of the Alban hills you had to imagine the sea, for indeed it was there, far away, merging invisibly into the heat-blurred sky-line" (152). Thus, Spark mentions the heat of each month specifically along with the panorama.

On the other hand, in *The Only Problem*, Spark repeats the denotation of the Italian weather, though the novel is not set in Italy. In the eighties, the Italian autostrada (highway) and the trip to Florence cause Harvey and his wife Effie's separation since the latter steals chocolate from the supermarket and justifies her act by stating that it is against the rich. Thus, the autostrada forms the context for the couples' separating point and the weather conversely is not the oppressive heat, but cool in Spring. Later on, Effie gets caught in Rome and when released from the prison she becomes a Communist terrorist. Interestingly, Spark's Italy signifies a context for drastic change, Italians are not included and the image is contrary to the beauty and happiness it inspired in the sixties.

William Golding's *The Paper Men* **(1984)**

William Golding (1911-1993) in *The Paper Men* also alludes to the "autostrada" along with the Tuscan region which has the Apennine Mountains as its backbone. For Wilfred Barclay, an English author who runs away from his wife and the American professor of English Literature Rick Tucker who wants to write his biography, Apennines are a source of inspiration: "There, hanging in the fringes of the Apennines […] I wrote *The Birds of Prey* in next to no time, with no more than five per cent of myself" (25). The Italian atmosphere has the effect of emitting peace after spiritual turmoil: "Three hours after I was in a plane bound for Florence and another hire car. By early evening I was driving through the Apennines on my national home, an autostrada. I was calm, watching the motionless landscape stream past […] and I was my own master" (95) and "I remember sitting and, as they used to say, discussing a very tolerable bottle of wine and watching the sun set in the general direction of Rome, and deciding that I was at peace" (100). The mention of the sun and heat is inevitable though: "The sunglasses! That was why the morning sun was now trying my eyes!" (97). However, the heat is yet oppressive: "[B]ut no matter how long I waited I could feel the heat inside me and the heat outside me for the

day was sweltering. It wasn't ordinary daylight, it was incandescent daylight, not sunlight at all but an atmosphere with a luminescence in it […] Even the circle of sea round the island had an odd, brassy look about it" (120).

Anita Brookner *Family and Friends* (1985)

Although penned in mid-eighties, Anita Brookner's (1928-2016) *Family and Friends* emits nostalgic overtones about Italy and Italians since the context is the Second World War similar to *Private Angelo*. The novel is partly set in Italy; The Cariani family runs a music school in London and one of the owners Sofka's two sons, Frederick, marries Evie whose "real" home is on the Italian Riviera, where her father owns several hotels on that "blistering strip of coast" between Nice and La Spezia (76). Evie's father hopes in time "to bring them into line with his more prestigious establishments in San Remo and La Spezia" so, Frederick is "overjoyed. He loves the sun; he loves hotels; he loves company. He is tired of the factory" (81-2). Frederick and Evie settle down in Bordighera a small seaside resort:

> the weeping skies of London, a city which now appears to him small, huddled, grey, and unheroic […] Frederick, acute always to the implications of colour, outline, the elegance of silhouette, the charm of appearance, far prefers this little town, where, under skies as blue and as cloudless as the inside of a painted cup, he can stroll down the Corso Italia and see nothing less harmonious than the jagged leaves of an overgrown palm tree […] Frederick will see oranges and lemons growing on trees; he will see and smell the café with its gusts of vanilla and its squawking coffee machines […] the golden light that illuminates Frederick's early morning excursion will have effectively blotted out the sparse colour and harsh winds of London, where he feels he would no longer be at home. (141-2)

The beauty of Italian ambiance thus becomes the metaphor of ease, idleness, happiness and eventually home for Frederick, a source of salvation from London. The sensuality of his experience is reinforced by immediate repetition in the narrative:

> In the scented night Evie and Frederick take their late walk, arm in arm, sometimes hand in hand. The sky is now an impenetrable indigo, yet along the horizon there is still a faint smudge of salmon-coloured brilliance. The wind rustles the leathery palm leaves and the oranges and lemons glow on the trees as if lit from within […] calm in the conviction of another beautiful day tomorrow, under the same unalterable sky. No wonder Frederick never seriously considers going home again. (150)

Accordingly, Frederick "appears to have dematerialised into the Riviera sun" (183).

Jonathan Keates' *The Strangers' Gallery* (1987)

Set in a historical period similar to Waugh's *Helena*, Jonathan Keates' (1946-) context is the Spring of 1847. Like *The Public Image*, the Italian landscape is depicted at the inception. The British protagonist, Edward Rivers is nineteen, lonely and bored until a chance encounter with the beautiful Italian girl Cristina Bentivoglio changes everything. Despite the historical context of the novel, the representation of the land is timeless, the beauty remains the same:

> Imagine a broad, flat plain, its western distances bounded by the bluish-grey bar of the Apennines, and everywhere else towards Ferrara, Bologna or Mantua stretching away in a limitless regularity, a mirror of the infinite world. Put upon this blank a grid of ditches and channels, each with its level bank, striping the yellow and green fields. Add to this the ranks of lacy poplars, the grizzled brick bell towers of the churches, and the absolute roads laid point to point across the landscape like pieces of tape, with a rationality born less of benevolence than of despair. Here and there, gently intrusive to the design, stand the farms and country houses, in parks of beech, chestnut and elm, with big colonnaded barns, discreet chapels and mounded ice-houses in the grounds […]. Summer makes the towns and villages of the unshaded plain turn colour in the heat […]. In this workaday country, without pose or suavity, the traveller reckons with the sublime commonplace, a directness in lights, shapes and colours which lingers naggingly in the mind's eye. (1)

Just as in Golding and Brookner this beautiful landscape becomes a spatial metaphor of epiphany for the main character: "He [Edward] had learned, without the least encouragement or direction beyond the promptings of his own heart, to love this landscape because of the way in which it and he had both found one another out" (189).

Tim Parks' *Cara Massimina* (1990) and *An Italian Education* (1996)

Tim Parks (1954-) also alludes to sunshine after rain in the introduction of the novel:

> The twilight had a curious liquidity about it that had to do with the freshness after an afternoon's rain and the way first streetlamps stared into the dying light. It wasn't a moment to hurry, Morris thought. It was a moment to loll outside a bar sipping a glass of white wine and feeling the space between things, their weight, their presence. It was a moment to watch the shadows sharpening slowly and coolly as daylight bled away and the lamplight strengthened- to watch the colours die on stuccoed walls when the bright neon stabbed out beneath. A magic moment. (1)

However, the cliché for the Italian sunshine becomes ironic in Parks' portrayal of Italy. While everything goes wrong for the English teacher Morris Duckworth in Verona, when he writes home to his father it is delineated as "'[e]verything's fine here. Never rains. Splendid sunshine'" (14). Nevertheless, the heat prevails along with the sense of idleness as in all the previous novels so far: "The prospect of this summer, looming as an interminable scorching hot lazy blank, nothing to do" (40); "They [Gregorio and Morris] sat sipping wine under a torch of a sun"(49); and, "[t]he sun was boiling, the air unpleasantly still [at Vicenza]" (61). Morris kidnaps his student Massimina for a handsome ransom from her rich mother, while she thinks they are eloping. They arrive in Rimini, a fashionable seaside resort on the Adriatic coast and the sun and heat accord with an excuse for the unthinkable crimes Morris commits acting on impulse: "The weather was too hot. Far too hot to think straight" (103). Ironically, even after having murdered an Italian man and his English girlfriend to stop them from talking about his kidnapping Massimina, the Italian landscape has a soothing effect:

> The train pulled out of Termini [Rome] towards two thirty and for the rest of the journey Morris hypnotized himself into a state of calm, gazing out of the window at brilliant yellow June corn broken by row after row of vines. If you didn't move your eyes to focus on any particular spot the effect of the shining green of the vine leaves against the golden carpet of grain became quite soporific and by the time the train pulled into Rome, shortly after four, his mind was completely empty, drained; and perfectly operational. (145)

Furthermore, Parks is the only writer who criticises the way of life and climate in Britain comparing it with Italy sarcastically,

> [t]he boat plied a sea the blue of brochures. Not a ripple, not a cloud on the horizon. Certainly none of those awful northern buffets which made the Anglo-Saxons feel so gratuitously heroic. His father, for example, insisting they hold firm on the beach despite a near gale that lifted the sand and threw it in angry handfuls against the rented windbreak. You'd have thought they were the rearguard at Dunkirk for God's sake [...] And then when Morris had started whimpering because he was cold and still damp from the sea (yes, you had to *swim* for Christ's sake), then it was the moment for dad to explode with his 'pansy' and 'cry-baby' [...] and Mother would pour oxtail soup from one of a battery of thermos flasks, putting another towel round Morris's shoulders (183) (emphasis original)

Another comparison between Italian and British weather is repeated 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 two children. When they are at the beach at Pescara, Parks comments "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). On the contrary in Pescara the sea "scarcely moves at all on summer days. Or it is as if a broad dishful of water were tipped ever so gently this way and that" (4). Whereas, when you went swimming at

Blackpool "you pulled off your clothes in a hurry and were shivering before you'd got your costume on. To fight the cold you ran fast across the beach through shallow water, or on a hard, ribbed sand that hurt your soles" (5) but, the sun is "scorchingly hot" in the "[m]iles and miles of white beach [of Sardinia]" (200) in *Cara Massimina*.

Sarah Woodhouse's *Meeting Lily* (1994)

Though written within the last decade of the twentieth century, Woodhouse's (1950-) fiction also covers the time of the post-war Italy. It is the story of an English woman's survival in Italy after her husband's death, trying to run a small hotel in the popular British setting, the Tuscany region. "For two years since Nan had been widowed strangers had come and gone admiring the views, Pisa, Assisi, Perugia" (3). However, symbolically "[t]he Italian sun did not penetrate beneath her wide-brimmed hats" (4) so, Nan was always pale. Only during the course of the novel does the Italian sun starts to transform her character. As a result of her life in Italy after her husband's death, her character develops into her own particular individuality and strength.

Nan adds British touch to the ambiance of beauty in her own way:

> The house was silent now. Heat enveloped it but did not penetrate. The tall old rooms were cool. On the terrace the Hazelwells dozed, surrounded by discarded guidebooks, maps and postcards. 'Idyllic place, marvellous scenery, Assisi round the corner' began one message home. In the hall Nan's vases of flowers were ghostly in the dimness, great white peonies and roses in romantic profusion […]. The drive, between myrtles and cypresses, was dusty and deserted. (6)

Moreover, another outcome of Nan's improved inner strength due to her love of Italy is her financial survival:

> She had begun it only because Robin died […] 'What can I do?' she had asked Umberto Degnare the lawyer, fuddled with grief and chaos. There was no money coming in from anywhere […] Degnare, consoling but businesslike, had said encouragingly, 'There is always the villa, signora.' The villa was large and comfortable, was undoubtedly charming. And did not English people love Italy, love charming shabby elegant old houses where they could feel at home instead of loud new defective hotels with rapacious staff?' (6)

Hence, Nan starts to run the villa as a hotel; Villa Giulia. It is not the main character only who adores the sun; the hotel guest, old Mrs. Baghot, who eventually becomes a permanent resident at the villa also falls in love with Italy, taking walks very frequently and enjoying life. For the Italian housekeeper Maria, "[t]hat woman's strange in the head […] But, no, no, she's an old lady feeling the Italian sun. Let her walk in the garden. Four, five o'clock in the morning" (9). Villa Giulia becomes the metaphor of liberation and the sun the means of happiness together with the beauty of the land for Mrs Baghot who suffered because of her husband, "[t]he narrow road to Cittavigile wound first between cypresses. Here Molly Baghot might have lingered to look out across fold upon fold of hills, chequered all shades of green" (9). Consequently, the metaphor of the constant sunshine and beautiful land alludes to paradise and idyllic life as a form of salvation for the two English women after the long struggle with affliction:

> Nan and Robin had come to the villa in '47. Though there were still ruins elsewhere the war had apparently passed by Cittavigile clinging to the flank of its remote hill. For two years after this life had been a perpetual summer holiday, even when the rain fell or the mist closed in from the mountains. After the years of looking after her mother, after the queues, worry, boredom, dread of war, Nan let herself sink into idleness as into a blessed and restoring bath after hard labour. (18)

Italy is also the signifier of a new life and rebirth in Woodhouse's narrative. It becomes the symbol of a carefree life under a perpetual sun which has added powers: "'We can have another child,' Robin said, and for his own sake and for hers he rushed her away to Italy and the green hill and the Villa Giulia 'and sun', said Aunt Dot, who believed implicitly in its healing powers" (174).

Michael Dibdin's *Così Fan Tutti* (1996)

Dibdin (1947-2007) names his detective novel in accordance with the gay mood and the harmonious title to the opera *Così Fan Tutte*[4]. Naples form the context and moreover, the plot is similar to the main flow of the opera. The two daughters of the rich lady Valeria Squillace fall in love with the men who are not considered as proper, hence, their love is tested. The love story is parallel to the detective novel genre adding mystery, Mafia and murder. Dibdin's main character detective Aurelio Zen is not British but Italian. Dibdin is the only British writer in the second half of the twentieth century who has no British characters in his Aurelio Zen series of Italian detective novels. Despite this fact, nevertheless, he carries on with the same basic topics that the other British writers allude to in their novels with British characters. So, Aurelio Zen leads Lady Valeria Squillace's daughters Orestina and Filomena "out into the bright wash of sunlight overlaying the town [Naples] and beyond" (12). When the daughters are sent to London, the contrast is sharp "'So how are they finding London?' he [Zen to Valeria] asked. "'They say it's just as dirty as Naples, the traffic's even worse, there are more beggars and it's cold and raining'" (120). In Dibdin's Naples, the view of the landscape is enriched with the presence of the sun and the city: "It was a large, comfortable silence, as unconstrained and embracing as the hazy sunlight which coated every surface around them, or the blowsy air which shifted caressingly to and fro. In the extreme distance, the ghostly outline of the peninsula of Sorrento could just be made out, like an old print bleached out by the sun" (29).

Barry Unsworth's *After Hannibal* (1996)

Unsworth's (1930-2012) conventional Italian sun and the beauty of the landscape signify more complex means in this novel. Initially, for the British couple the Chapmans, Umbria, which is the region next to Tuscany represents the conventional metaphor of beautiful landscape and fine weather even in April:

> From their landing window, broad and deep-silled, the Chapmans had a view which included a piece of the road, a narrow, yellowish ribbon rising and curving between terraced olives and a field of young maize. They had stopped on the way downstairs to look out. 'Oh, to be in England now that the spring is there,' Harold Chapman declaimed […] 'It was nine degrees centigrade in London when we left, and outlook variable. Seventeen here.' […] 'Not a cloud in it.' He glanced at his wife, Cecilia […] The view from their holiday villa in Umbria, recently acquired, […] there was the curve of the road, the ancient olives, the stiff green shoots of the half-grown maize. Above this the land rose in terraces of vines, bare still between their tall posts. Then the beautiful dipping line of the hills, half-melted in the pale-blue haze of morning, with the walls and towers of little towns nestling here and there among them, places whose names Harold did not know yet, but he knew that some of them had been old already when the Romans came. (2-3)

Nevertheless, the foreshadowing of Cecilia's liberation from her husband Harold is parallel to the theme of self-acknowledgement just as it had been for Edward in *The Strangers' Gallery* and Molly Baghot and Nan in *Meeting Lily*. Besides the spatial beauty, Umbria helps Cecilia Chapman to analyse her true feelings and her relationship with her husband Harold. The beginning of conflict is foreshadowed by their discussion on the colours of nature:

> Immediately below them there was a peach tree in first flower, the buds a deep rose colour […] 'My God, the peace of it,' he said. 'Heavenly, isn't it?' Cecilia turned to him […] 'Darling, look at that patch the man turned over for us. It has dried from the deep brown it was at first. It is a reddish ochre now, the true Umbria colour.' She suddenly felt the moment to be a prophetic one. 'It is like us,' she said. 'We will settle into our true colours here.' 'Well, we are not likely to dry out,' he said. 'Not with all this wine around. I should have thought that the true colour of Umbria was umber.' 'Umber is a pigment, not an earth colour. It was just brown really'. (3-4)

---

[4] "Women are like that" (tutte is plural for feminine but Dibdin changes it to tutti plural for "all")

By the end of the novel, Cecilia is able to recognise her true feelings and realises that she has nothing in common with her husband. Harold is vulgar and thus she decides simply to leave him and go away. Nevertheless, she does not intend to go back to England but decides to go somewhere else in Italy:

> The sun was high overhead. She was aware of the heat on her face and the blaze of the flowering bloom all around her and the strong, sweet scent of it. A sense of fierceness of this place came to her, dispelling her tears. The day was cloudless and the air very clear; she could see the roof of their house below her and the road and the broad valley with its fields of sunflowers and maze. Beyond this, the gentle wooded hills and the blue shapes of mountains behind them.
>
> She had loved the landscape of Umbria ever since first seeing it as a young girl. It was she who wanted to have their house here. Warm in colour, at once fertile and spare, old in its connection with man, it had always seemed to her a place where she could be happy. (201-2)

Tim Parks' *Europa* (1997)

The oppressive heat has an explicitly negative force on the moods of characters different than Spark's *The Takeover* and Italy signifies a trap for Jerry Marlow while the novels' chronological sequence near the end of the century. When Jerry and his French mistress Christin argue Jerry says "I was shrieking at her on a hot afternoon in her Verona flat" (88). Vikram Griffiths, Jerry's Welsh-Indian colleague claims his "psychopathic ex-wife, always plunged into the most extreme of depressions by the hot August weather" (229) and the night when Vikram comes to dinner at Jerry's and tells about his sad and pervert life story "[b]ut then it was Ferragosto[5] in Milan, and the weather suffocating" (231).

Annie Hawes' *Extra Virgin* (2001)

Though a memoir, I include it for Hawes' (1953-) book denotes that the metaphoric idyllic life of Italy is still attractive for the British writers in the new millennium:

> Enough lurking in the London gloom, skidding home exhausted through greasy city dark and drizzle. What did I care about a career? Or real estate, for that matter? Freelance horticulture would do very nicely. So here I am, middle of February, in Italy and ready to graft. San Pietro may correspond hardly at all to any idea I have previously formed of the Italian Riviera, but it is undeniably a great improvement on London. No more miserly damp horizons stopping twenty feet away at the nearest office block. Here they stretch up into the misty foothills of the Maritime Alps on the one hand, down into the intense blue vastness of the Mediterranean on the other. The sun shines warmly even at this unlikely time of year; the sky is blue; and I am seeing plenty of both. (4-5)

Clouds and Rain

Apart from the beauty of the dazzling Italian sun and the fascinating landscape, what rain in Italy might signify for the British authors becomes another interesting theme to explore. Going back in the timeline order of the novels to detect rainy weather, it is revealed that the cypresses always rise against a clear blue sky in Linklater's *Private Angelo,* Waugh's *Helena*, Murdoch's *The Italian Girl,* Spark's *The Public Image* and *The Takeover*, that is between 1946-1984. However, Spark's final book *The Only Problem* (1984) contains an episode on a cloudy day in Italy, though the novel is set in France:

> Harvey had written Effie off that time on the Italian *autostrada* about a year ago, when they were driving from Bologna to Florence- Ruth, Edward, Effie, Harvey and Nathan, a young student-friend of Ruth's. They stopped for a refill of petrol; Effie and Ruth went off to the ladies', then they came back to the car where it was still waiting in line. It was a cool, late afternoon in April, rather cloudy, not one of those hot Italian days where you feel you must have a cold drink or an ice every time you stop. (14)

---

[5] 15th of August

The clouds foreshadow the conflict that arises between Effie and her husband Harvey as Effie steals some chocolate from the supermarket where they stop. Although Effie justifies her act as against capitalism, this does not convince Harvey and he leaves the group at the next gas station: "They lost the truck at some point along the road, after they reached Florence. Harvey's disappearance ruined Effie's holiday. She was furious […] they were travelling along the Tuscan coast stopping here and there. It would have been a glorious trip but for Effie's fury and unhappiness" (16).

In *The Strangers' Gallery*, "[t]he rain outside fell more heavily now" (23); "[t]hey [Edward and Basevi] could hear the rain tumbling onto the young leaves of the sycamores in the garden outside" (25). Nevertheless, this storm is transitory and does not cast a foreshadowing on the narrative in general: "The storm on the day of his fateful embassy to Guido had offered a single niggardly concession. Otherwise the hot weather trust itself upon them with a renewed fierceness" (184). Similarly in Parks' *Cara Massimina* "[t]he twilight had a curious liquidity about it that had to do with the freshness after an afternoon's rain and the way first streetlamps stared into the dying light" (1), the rain refreshes the beauty of the city and has a positive metaphor of renewal "[a] magic moment" (1). Later on, when it is "[a] surprisingly dull morning with a spot of rain, but bright for Morris" it has no negative connotations (115). Finally, non-premeditated, but still an act of terrible crime, Morris' murder of Massimina is foreshadowed by rain, which is not refreshing any more "Roberto drove them home early after a sudden thunderstorm had washed out the idea of drinking late on the beach. The rain was heavy and persistent" (204).

In Woodhouse's *Meeting Lily* rain is used more explicitly as a adverse signifier: "The morning was misty. 'Is it going to rain?' asked Mrs Holland who did not expect rain to fall while she was on holiday" (60). "The heat was oppressive. There was a sudden roll of thunder and a few drops of rain […] Large raindrops spattered the windscreen, stopped, and drummed down again furiously. Alan Prescott craned to see the road. 'Some holiday!' he said" (68). Here the rain signifies their negative mood, as Nan is jealous of Fortuno's little affair with Mrs. Prescott and of course likewise, Alan Prescott of his young wife's. Contrary to the other writers included in this essay, Woodhouse mentions rain realistically: "The weather was capricious for a few days […] The Greenways, [Americans] who were not enjoying themselves, asked Nan mournfully, 'Should it be like this?' for they had imagined Italy eternally scalded by the blessed sun" the narrator comments ironically. So, Nan points out "'Well, there are mountains" (153).

For Dibdin's *Dead Lagoon* (1994) rain is the most suitable metaphor for Venice, since the convention goes back to Shakespeare's enigmatic Venice. As the title connotes, the lagoon is formed by the Adriatic that surrounds Venice. It is another mysterious detective novel featuring Aurelia Zen and this time rain and the ghosts that La Contessa Ada Zulian claims to see in her home create the perfect atmosphere for rain, mist and crime. Dibdin's setting is poignant at the beginning of the book: "Over towards Marghera, a bloated sun subsided into a dense bank of smog, dwarfing the striped stacks of the refineries. Giacomo noted the rippled layers of cloud spreading across the sky like wash from a motorboat. The weather was changing. Tomorrow would be squally and cold, a bitter north-easterly *bora* raising choppy seas on the lagoon" (1) (emphasis original). The rain image elsewhere in the novel is also used with negative adjectives: "The pale rain is still falling limply, covering the pavements in a greasy sheen and raising a rash of pockmarks on the surface of the water" (6). The sunlight is always diffused, "[t]he sun, barely veiled by haze, set up blocks of shadow seemingly more solid than the surfaces from which all substance had been leached by its slanting, diffuse light" (18) and "[o]utside, a warm wash of diffuse sunlight flattened every perspective, obliterating details and distinctions, calling everything into question" (49). Dibdin uses rain along with fog which is highly factual for Northern Italy: "By morning, a dense fog settled on the city. When a combination of high tides and strong onshore winds flooded the streets with the dreaded *acqua alta*[6], the council posted maps showing the zones affected and the routes on higher ground which remained open, but the fog respected no limits" (101) (emphasis original). Actually, Charles Richards claims that "[t]he statistics may show that more rain falls on Rome than on London" and that "rain is never merely rain. It is always precipitation. Milan's airports are closed more often by winter fog than is Heathrow" ("Introduction" xx).

---

[6] "High water" i.e. when the rains cause flooding in Venice

Nevertheless, the Italian fog affects the mind as the narrator maintains "Zen got up from his desk and walked to the window. Now the fog seemed to have penetrated not just the building but also his mind, woozy from the wine" (114). The cold and snow also accompany the fog in Venice:

> At first it looked as though the clouds which had hidden the sun for most of the week had fallen to earth like a collapsed parachute, covering every surface with a billowy white mantle. The next moment, shivering at the bedroom window as he clipped back the internal shutters, Zen thought vaguely of the *acqua alta*. It was only when he became aware of the intense cold streaming in through the gap between window and frame that he realized that it was snow. A sprinkling of fat flakes was still tumbling down from the thick grey sky. Every aspect of roofs and gardens, pavements and bridges, had been rethought. Only the water, immune by its very nature to this form of inundation, remained untouched. (245) (emphasis original)

Despite the rain though, the beauty of the landscape persists: "Although the sky was overcast, the air was clear enough to reveal the snow-clad Dolomites over a hundred kilometres away to the north" (248). When the snow clears away the effect of weather on the psychology of the characters is explicit:

> The house did not feel quite as cold as the day before, and when he threw open the window it was clear that a thaw had set in. All but the largest heaps of snow were already gone, leaving only a faint sheen of water which made the worn paving stones gleam like a fishmonger's slab. Diffuse sunlight lent a vernal suppleness to the bright, clean air. It was a day for assignations and excursions, a day to tear up your plans and arrangements and make things up as you went along, preferably in the company of a friend or lover. (276-7)

To set the tone, Dibdin uses the condition of weather at the beginning of each chapter, such as: "The day might earlier seemed an augury of spring, but by mid-afternoon the realities of February had asserted themselves. Once past their peak, both the warmth and the light faded fast. Darkness massed in the chilly evening air, silvering the window of Zen's office to form a mirror which perfectly reflected the decline of his hopes for the Durridge case" (305).

It never rains in Unsworth's *After Hannibal* (1996) but conversely in Tim Parks' *Europa* (1997) rain signifies Jerry's sad trip to Strasbourg- where while they try to present the problems of the expatriate university teachers' case in the European Parliament, -their colleague Vikram Griffiths commits suicide "[s]o that even as we pull out of Piazza dell'Università into the morning traffic on Corso Vercelli in this strange city I have lived in for so long of stone and trams and noble façades and Moroccans selling boxes of contraband cigarettes laid out on the pavements under propped-up umbrellas- because it's raining, as it will in Milan in May" (1).

Dibdin's *A Long Finish* (1998) takes place in the northern part of Italy, in Piedmont. Just like in Venice the rain is in harmony with his moods and signifies the detective Aurelio Zen's feeling of loneliness and the ongoing murders: "The sudden appearance of cold winds and relentless rain after so many weeks of glorious late summer weather was trying enough in itself" (42). Zen is in a small town in Piedmont: "There had been nothing sparkling about Asti at nine o'clock the previous night, however, with a blustering and buffeting wind and sheets of rain which spattered on the platform like liquid hail" (42). Zen is so troubled about his mistress' having an abortion to lose their baby that he starts walking in his sleep and the dark mood of the town accompanies him throughout: "When he (Zen) emerged from his hotel the next morning, the sky had settled back into a grey, overcast mode which brought it down to a point where it seemed to graze the rooftops" (183). The bad weather in Piedmont region is alluded to Venice: "Outside the window, the landscape had started to ripple and break into waves, curling lazily over like the slow, spent wash of Adriatic storms fetching up on a mudbank in Zen's native lagoons. But the sky looked threatening" (191). The diffused sunlight that Dibdin also chooses to use in his earlier novels is repeated, but the metaphor of the "baby's ear" signifies his sadness at the loss of the baby by abortion, who he believes to be a boy and even names him as Marco: "Zen got back to his hotel late that afternoon [...] Above the wavering outline of the darkening hills, the sky was a molten glory, ranging from a creamy peach to a delicate glowing pink like sunlight filtered through a baby's ear" (209). When it shines the allusion to children keeps up the baby metaphor, "[l]ike some children, the following day was born with a mild, sunny disposition which time merely focused and intensified. The air was still and bright, with just a hint of winter to add some welcome edge, the sky as flawless, bleached blue whose diffident haziness made it seem infinitely distant and desirable" (332).

In Parks' *Destiny* (1999) rain in Genoa signifies Christopher Burton's grief for his son's suicide; "bundled into our son-in-law's car […]. In normal weather, Giorgio said, a couple of hours […]. We sat at the traffic light with the rain drumming torrentially on the roof […]. The rain was loud" (54).

Consequently, rain signifies a negative representation for the characters and events in the aforementioned books in general and moreover, of the oncoming events, rain or fog foreshadows trouble in human relations. It rains in Italy mostly in Parks' and Dibdin's novels; for Parks, I would suggest that his quite realistic perspective is the outcome of his living in Italy for a long time and the postmodern turn in his narrative; as for Dibdin, enigmatic cities accompanied with rain and fog are perfect signifiers for his crime fiction. Furthermore, besides the beauty of idealised Rome, enigmatic Venice and the most favourite Tuscany area, there are industrialised cities like Milan gradually included in the British perspective. However, as we have seen bad weather is not a commonly used signifier for Italy when compared to the abundance of sunshine and blue skies. The weather is also mostly intertwined with the depiction of beautiful Italian cities. On the other hand, the topic-wise readings of the narratives also reflect the transformation that Italy and Italians themselves went through, proceeding from the post war idyllic rural Italy of the forties to the miraculous development of technology and urbanisation of the seventies and finally to becoming one of the strongest economic forces of the European Union. Thereby, the British writers transform their perceptions along with Italy when the novels are explored in a linear order. To conclude, in terms of the beauty of the landscape during the second half of the twentieth century, the Italian sun of "then" keeps on shining "now", but it is also pointed out that it rains in Italy, even during the beautiful summer days in the beloved Tuscany.

Works Cited

Brookner, Anita. *Family and Friends.* London: Penguin, 1985.

Carter, Ronald, John McRae. *The Routledge History of Literature in English*. London: Routledge, 1997.

Dibdin, Michael. *Dead Lagoon.* London: Faber and Faber, 1994.

———. *Così Fan Tutti.* London: Faber and Faber, 1996.

———. *A Long Finish.* London: Faber and Faber, 1998.

Easthope, Anthony. *Literary into Cultural Studies*. London and New York: Routledge, (1991) 2005.

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. London: Penguin, (1957) 1990.

Golding, William. *The Paper Men*. London: Faber and Faber, 1984.

Gregory, Derek. *Geographical Imaginations*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.

Hawes, Annie. *Extra Virgin Amongst the Olive Groves of Liguria*. London: Penguin, 2001.

Jokinen, Eava and Soile Veijola. "The Disoriented Tourist: The Figuration of the Tourist in Contemporary Cultural Critique" in *Touring Cultures. Transformations of Travel and Theory*. Eds. Chris Rojek and John Urry. London: Routledge, 1997. 23-52.

Keates, Jonathan. *The Strangers' Gallery*. London: Vintage, 1987.

Landor, Walter Savage. T. E. Whelby and S. Wheeler, Eds. *The Complete Works of. Walter Savage Landor*. in *Italy and English Literature 1764-1930*. Ed. Kenneth Churchill. London: Macmillan, 1980.

Linklater, Eric. *Private Angelo*. Edinburgh: Canongate Press, (1946) 1992.

Murdoch, Iris. *The Italian Girl*. London: Vintage, 1964.

Parks, Tim. *Cara Massimina*. London: Vintage, (1990) 1995.

——— *An Italian Education*. London: Minerva, 1996.

——— *Europa*. London: Vintage, 1997.

Pauli, Erika. *Rome and the Vatican*. Florence: Casa Editrice Bonechi, 1995.

Richards, Charles. *The New Italians.* London: Penguin, 1995.

Shields, Rob. *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity*. London: Routledge, 1991.

Smith, Neil. *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1990.

Spark, Muriel. *The Public Image.* London: Penguin, 1968.

——— *The Takeover.* London: Penguin, 1976.

——— *The Only Problem.* London: Penguin, 1984.

Toplu, Şebnem. *Diverse Aspects of Italy and Italians in Contemporary British Literature*. Modena: Il Fiorino, 2001.

Unsworth, Barry. *After Hannibal.* London: Penguin, 1996.
Waugh, Evelyn. *Helena.* London: Penguin, 1950.
Woodhouse, Sarah. *Meeting Lily.* London: Penguin, 1994.

This page intentionally left blank.

Book Review

Corresponding Author: Meri Tek Demir, Department of Western Languages and Literatures, Faculty of Science and Letters, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Türkiye.
ORCID: 0000-0002-2085-3057

O'Farrell, Maggie. *The Marriage Portrait*. London: Tinder Press, 2022.

Meri Tek Demir ⓘD

Female authorship has long succeeded in reinterpreting various forms of narratives and Maggie O'Farrell's 2022 novel *The Marriage Portrait* appears as a notable example in contemporary women's writing. *The Marriage Portrait* offers readers an alternative perspective on Renaissance Italy, drawing inspiration from art history with a focus on Lucrezia di Cosimo de' Medici, who became known as the Duchess of Ferrara through her marriage to Alfonso II d'Este, Duke of Ferrara in 1560. A brief historical context of Lucrezia and Alfonso's matrimony and her mysterious death is introduced in the "Historical Note" at the beginning of the book. It is followed by two literary epigraphs; one from Robert Browning's poem "My Last Duchess" and the second from Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Decameron.* Whilst the short extract from *Decameron* addresses to the women's life in the Florence court in general, Browning's "My Last Duchess" deserves particular attention since as O'Farrell remarks in the "Author's Note", "Alfonso II d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, is widely considered to have been the inspiration for Robert Browning's poem 'My Last Duchess'; Lucrezia di Cosimo de Medici d'Este, Duchess of Ferrara, is the inspiration for this novel"(*The Marriage Portrait* 433). Unlike Robert Browning, who objectifies Lucrezia's portrayed figure through the eyes of Alfonso d'Este; O'Farrell's narrative portrays Lucrezia as an active and vibrant character, liberating her from the confines of the painting, taking opposition to the classical approach of art history which typically reduces female figures to passive objects in the art works. Lucrezia, the protagonist, is depicted as a strong-willed character from birth. Nevertheless, her strength contrasts with her vulnerability and fear of death, which she attributes to her husband Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara. The story unfolds in a non-linear sequence, starting with the final hours of Lucrezia in 1561 and the chapters stretch between 1550s to Lucrezia's birth to her death. Considering the novel's beginning, the reader is likely to think that the whole story will be based on Lucrezia's murder plotted by Alfonso, and this may not be an inaccurate contemplation. However, as the story flows, it reveals the process of personal growth in the Renaissance context, which also turns into a battle for survival. Besides being fictional, the novel still provides rich elements to explore cultural perspectives and distinctions between Florentine and Ferrarese courts, which is a remarkable detail for the contemporary reader to understand more about Italian culture.

The novel commences in 1561 at a "Wild and Lonely Place" as is referred in the chapter heading. There it is, the reader's first meeting with a 16-years-old Lucrezia and her husband Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara at their dining table after a long travel from Ferrara to this uncanny place, where Lucrezia is quite sure that she will be murdered. The opening chapter masterfully builds suspense and indicates a potential murder plot. Yet, O'Farrell alters this notion playfully throughout the novel. While rare, there are instances in which Alfonso is portrayed as

a caring, protective husband or at least Lucrezia intends to believe so, in order to carry her life by fulfilling the role of the duchess. Being a noble by birth, raised in the Florentine *Palazzo* as one of the children of beautiful and powerful Eleonora and Cosimo, Grand Duke of Tuscany, Lucrezia has all the features and priorities of growing into a noble lady. Nevertheless, her personality surpasses the expectations of the both Florentine fashion she is used to and the new Ferrarese court she becomes a part of after marriage. Along with the fear of murder, her wild nature is indicated from the early chapters which take the reader back to 1544. The chapter named "The Unfortunate Circumstances of Lucrezia's Conception" introduces Eleanora, a strong and beautiful woman who skilfully balances her marriage to the powerful Cosimo, Grand Duke. She knows that, "[h]er body is strong and fruitful. The people of Tuscany, she knows, refer to her as 'La Fecundissima', and it is entirely apt" (*The Marriage Portrait* 9). So, she knows to use those features for the sake of her own freedom that not many women in her position enjoy. Her fascination with duty and freedom, however, finds a different way in Lucrezia's characterisation. Ever since she was born, Lucrezia's nature differs very much from her siblings and Eleanora cannot find any other reason for this fierce nature than the circumstances in her conception as the title refers. Whether a superstitious belief or not, Lucrezia seems exultant throughout the chapters. She is captivated by the idea of wilderness; she does not fear wild animals, which is very well projected through the flashback of her experience with a tiger in the Palazzo when she was just an infant. Also, she displays a keen interest in arts and painting. After all, as a little girl growing in a court that has Giorgo Vasari as the court artist is a great opportunity for such a character to develop her artistic skills. Besides, Cosimo is referred to as a father who cares about educating his children, especially in Classics, which he is extremely fond of and how Lucrezia feels privileged of having a good education as a woman is given in different instances of the storyline.

However, can all these features prevent Lucrezia's death, or can she break free from her constraints? It is also worth considering whether she can truly escape the boundaries of her new title as the Duchess of Ferrara, while in her father's court she was simply little Lucré. As the story unfolds, Lucrezia's fear and the ominous implications about her potential murder leave little space for alternative possibilities of Lucrezia's future. Lucrezia already carries the burden of replacing her deceased sister in becoming wife to Alfonso. Even though she enjoys her early times in the villa, before going to Ferrara, life totally changes for her after her official entrance to the court. While there are various incidents that reflect these changes, my particular focus is on the process and outcome of Lucrezia's portrait, referred to as the "Marriage Portrait". As O'Farrell mentions in the "Author's Note", Europe houses only one remaining portrait of Lucrezia, a small painting by Agnolo Bronzino, which was created before she departed Florence and a few reproductions in different collections (*The Marriage Portrait* 434-5). However, the reader can trace the allusions of Lucrezia's Florentine portrait in both marriage portraits. The novel highlights Alfonso's impatience and excitement about the portrait. Lucrezia also seems fond of the idea, expressing dissatisfaction with her Florentine portrait's dark background and awkward expression, elements symbolising her only true portrait in real life. Interestingly, the painting process is controlled by the Duke rather than the painter himself. Alfonso gives all the instructions and the elements to the painter. He even chooses the dress Lucrezia is supposed to wear, a Ferrarese costume, a stark departure from her usual Florentine fashion. For Alfonso, the portrait must convey her noble lineage and marriage for which the jewelleries are good instruments to visualise. In all these details, we witness Lucrezia's objectification in the eyes of Alfonso and the painter. When the painting is completed and unveiled, nobody dares to speak until the Duke expresses his thoughts. It will be his judgement, whether the painting represents the expected Duchess of Ferrara or not. At this moment, Lucrezia observes everyone in the room and she feels as though they are all frozen, becoming a part of the painting. In a way, it can be said that O'Farrell creates a moment of painting within a painting through Lucrezia's lense and the reader witnesses an ekphrastic experience. Looking at the painting, Lucrezia no longer sees the Florentine Lucrezia de Medici but the Duchess of Ferrara. There she experiences a sense of displacement, "The Duchess is present, in the painting. There she stands, Lucrezia is unnecessary, she can go now. Her place is filled, the portrait will take up her role in life" (*The Marriage Portrait* 435). This is what Alfonso created. It is not the painter's, but Alfonso's control to transform Lucrezia into the duchess. Echoing Robert Browning's poem, Alfonso wants to control anything related to the Duchess in the painting and wants the spectator to see the painting through his interpretation. However, there lies another significant detail that catches Lucrezia's attention. Even though the figure represents the duchess that Alfonso idealizes, the facial expression of the figure mirrors Lucrezia's complex emotions, which is neither the work of Alfonzo nor the master painter Il Bastianino from Michelangelo's studio, but Jacopo, one of the two young apprentices of Il Bastianino, whom

Lucrezia meets earlier by coincidence and saves his life. Now, we see that Jacopo intends to save Lucrezia's life and for my own interpretation, the display of the portrait, not only becomes the objectification of the Duchess, which eventually brings her expected duties on display, the one and most important duty to give an heir to Alfonso, it also becomes her acknowledgment of the brutal realities about the Ferrara court, especially through her interactions with Alfonso's sisters. Yet, another sad fact about Lucrezia is, the more she yearns for her family in Florence, and Sofia who raised and even helped her to postpone the marriage to Alfonso as much as she could, she becomes more pushed to adopt her Ferrarese role, especially by her dutiful mother Eleonora, who thinks what Lucrezia fears is the results of her wider imagination, which she has ever since she was a child. The only shelter she feels about Florence becomes her maid Emilia that came with her to Ferrara.

Overall, *The Marriage Portrait* offers more than a mere fictional retelling of a Renaissance story. O'Farrell's focus on the transformation of Lucrezia di Cosimo de Medici into the Duchess of Ferrara, particularly through the lens of the famous and sole portrait of Lucrezia as inspiration, dedicates her a voice to her and delves into the depths of her inner world through O'Farrell's imagination. O'Farrell's reinterpretation provides the reader with multidimensional perspectives about the obscure story of Lucrezia. Beyond the generally known details of Lucrezia's eventual fate, whether a murder or illness as history suggests, O'Farrell explores the process of Lucrezia's becoming the Duchess, which sheds light on the female position in Renaissance Italy. The portrayal of her journey to becoming the Duchess is symbolised by the process of the painting, which appears as the strongest symbolisation since women are mostly the mute and passive objects of the paintings and Lucrezia becomes one through Alfonso's control of the painting process. Interestingly, however, O'Farrell lets Lucrezia interact with the painting, which overshadows Alfonso's control and interaction which is echoed in Browning's "My Last Duchess". In this regard, the book also deserves appraisal within the context of art history through the female perspective. As a final note, O'Farrell's generosity in sharing the sources and her experience in the preparation process in the endnote and acknowledgements are highly remarkable, for it provides great opportunity for readers interested in art and literature disciplines.

Work-Cited

O'Farrell, Maggie. *The Marriage Portrait.* London:Tinder Press, 2022.

This page intentionally left blank.

CONTRIBUTORS

Meri Tek Demir holds a B.A. in English Language and Literature from Istanbul Kültür University with full scholarship, where she also completed a minor degree in Arts Management. She completed her M.A. in English Language and Literature Department of Istanbul University with a dissertation entitled "Representation of the Victorian Era in Postmodern English Novels: The French Lieutenant's Woman and Ever After". Currently, she is working as a research assistant in the Western Languages and Literatures Department of Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University and she continues working on her Ph.D. dissertation titled "Ekphrasis in Contemporary British Women's Writing" in the English Language and Literature Department of Ege University. Her research interests include Postmodern and Contemporary novel, art and literature studies, women's writing, comparative studies and world literature.
ORCID: 0000-0002-2085-3057 / **E-mail**: meritek90@gmail.com - meri.tek@msgsu.edu.tr

Müge Kesiktaş Gençoğlan holds a B.A. and M.A. in English Language and Literature from Selcuk University. She is writing her doctoral dissertation at Ege University in English Language and Literature and is currently working as a lecturer at Izmir University of Economics. Her research interests include postmodernism and ecocritical studies.
ORCID: 0000-0002-6314-8446 / **E-mail**: mugegencoglan@gmail.com

Ramazan Saral is currently working as a research assistant at the Department of English Language and Literature, Ege University. He received his Ph.D. entitled "Mythopeia as a Means of Reevaluating Human History in the Works of William Blake" at the same institution in December 2023. His academic interests are poetry, English Romanticism, mythopoeia, William Blake and drama.
ORCID: 0000-0001-6368-0830 / **E-mail**: ramosaral@gmail.com

Elif Derya Şenduran holds a B.A. in English Language and Literature from Ankara University. She received her M.A. in English Language and Literature from Hacettepe University. She completed her Ph.D. in English Literature at Middle East Technical University in December 2020 with her dissertation entitled "The Intersection between Two Others, the East and the West in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*".
ORCID: 0000-0002-4840-5053 / **E-mail**: elifderyasenduran@outlook.com

Eleni Ermioni Tasioula is a graduate student of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She holds a B.A. in English Language and Literature and a M.A. in English and American Studies. Her M.A. focuses on American immigrant literature as well as issues of identity, belonging, contemporary crisis, feminist care ethics, spatial theory in literature, and individual/communal reconstruction. Her research interests encompass contemporary transcultural Anglophone literature, cultural theory, identity construction, multiculturalism in American literature and narrative ethics. Her recent research includes works of Latin American female writers and focuses on identity negotiation, belonging and spatial theory in literature.
ORCID: 0009-0006-0040-8649 / **E-mail:** elinatas6@gmail.com

Şebnem Toplu is Professor of English Literature at Ege University, Izmir, Türkiye. She holds a B.A. in English Linguistics and Literature from Boğaziçi University and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Ege University. Apart from numerous articles and book chapters on various literary works and theories, her books include *Cultural Materialism: Text and Context Relation in Jane Austen's Works* (Modena: Il Fiorino,2001), *Diverse Aspects of Italy and Italians in Contemporary British Literature* (Modena: Il Fiorino, 2001), *Fiction Unbound: Bernardine Evaristo* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011) *Gale Researcher Guide for: Transnationalism and Diasporic Linkings: The Case of Andrea Levy*. (Michigan: Gale, 2018) and *Life and Literature in Eighteenth Century England* (İzmir: Ege University Press 2014, expanded ed. 2019). She acted as the editor of the journal *Interactions* between 2002 and 2020.
ORCID: 0000-0002-1552-7564 / **E-mail:** sebnemtoplu@hotmail.com