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COMING UP WITH AN IRONIC AND CRITICAL APPROACH TO THE TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT: PETER ACKROYD'S *CHATTERTON* AND A.S. BYATT'S *POSSESSION*

ABSTRACT

This article explores a critical and ironic approach while forming boundlessness in timing and plot constructions in the transitions between past and present in substantial fictional works such as Peter Ackroyd's *Chatterton* and A. S. Byatt's *Possession: A Romance* in the late twentieth century in English literary canon[1]. Through its boundlessness, a fictional work becomes the cause for the revelation of previous unknown realities. Through applying an interdisciplinary study of historical artifacts and a realm of fiction simultaneously, Ackroyd and Byatt choose a double setting of past and present via intending an ironic and critical approach to historical events. Thus, this study will contribute to the analysis of these contemporary representative fictional works in respect to the removal of the distance between past and present through perpetuating a critical outlook.

Keywords: Literary Boundaries, Intertextuality, Peter Ackroyd, A.S. Byatt, *Chatterton*, *Possession*

PETER ACKROYD'UN CHATTERTON VE A.S. BYATT'IN POSSESSION ADLI ROMANLARINDA GEÇMİŞ VE GÜNÜMÜZ ARASINDAKI GEÇİŞLERE ELEŞTİREL VE İRONIK BİR YAKLAŞIM

ÖZET

Bu makale, 20. yüzyıl sonu İngiliz Edebiyatında, Peter Ackroyd'un *Chatterton* ve A.S. Byatt'ın *Possession: A Romance* adlı romanlarında görüldüğü gibi, yazarların geçmiş ve günümüz arasındaki geçişlerde eleştirel ve ironik bir yaklaşım sergileyerek zaman ve konu açısından eserleri sınırsızlaştırdıklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Zaman ve mekan sınırlarının ortadan kalkması aynı zamanda geçmişte gizli kalmış gerçeklerin açığa çıkmasına sebep olmaktadır. Ackroyd ve Byatt'ın eserleri, aynı anda hayal alemine ve tarihsel gerçeklere başvurduğu için geçmiş ve günümüzü konu edinerek ikili zaman ve mekan yoluyla geçmişe ironik ve eleştirel bir bakış açısı getirmektedir. Geçmiş ve günümüz arası geçişlerle gizli kalmış gerçekler açığa çıkarmaktadırlar. Dolayısıyla, bu çalışma, çağdaş dönemi temsil eden bu iki romanın analizine, yeni bir bakış açısı getirmekte olup geçmiş ve gelecek arasındaki mesafenin eleştirel bir yaklaşım takip edilerek ortadan kaldırılabileceğini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Edebi Sınırlar, Metinlerarasılık, Peter Ackroyd, A.S. Byatt, *Chatterton*, *Possession*

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[1] *Possession: A Romance* will hereafter be quoted as *Possession*.

1. INTRODUCTION (GİRİŞ)

The difficulty to assess the boundaries of fiction is inevitable because of writers' tendency to call upon interdiciplinary fields of study while forming settings and plots of fictional works. Applying history, literature, psychology, and many other interdisciplinary scopes of study, writers intend to highlight the informative framework in their literary works. In such a vast optional case, writers apply historical commitments of past, present, and future to signify the existence of a boundless setting while exploring different themes such as reality, illusion, truth, falsity, mortality, immortality, mystery and universality. English novelists such as Peter Ackroyd in *Chatterton* (1987) and A.S. (Antonia Susan) Byatt in *Possession* (1990) exemplify that novel is not bound to any specific setting, timing, and plot construction. Through interdisciplinary studies, these two novelists go beyond the ordinary daily events and explore some issues from past so as to prove that the novel is not bound to any restraints upon liberty of forming a plot. Thus, for both Ackroyd and Byatt, intertextuality turns out to be an inevitable source while creating their well-known novels in which they portray an ironic and critical approach for each text.

Indicating the influence of writers on each other, intertextual novels play the key role for transition between time and space. Such an emphasis draws upon intertexuality, coined by Julia Kristeva in 1966.[2] Intertextuality applies prior texts as exemplified by Ackroyd and Byatt and transcends all the limitations in time, subject matter, and landscape in forming a new plot (Allen, 2000:1). This emphasizes that a literary text is "the mosaic of quotations" which "challeng[ing] literary notion of literary influence, saying that intertextuality denotes a transposition of one or several sign systems into another or others" (Cuddon, 1998:424). Thus, intertextuality helps the emergence of a boundless formation in fictional works and functions as a bridge over the periods of past, present, and future. Benefiting from intertextuality, Ackroyd and Byatt tend to pursue a critical and ironic approach to historical events and texts as a manifestation of postmodern writing. This indicates that various texts shape the new formation of texts in other times and places. As previous texts become the intertext of other literary works, past seems to repeat itself in fictional works as will be observed in Ackroyd and Byatt's novels. This implies the continuity rather than the discontinuity of past in the intertextual literary works. "Taking different guises" past repeats itself in the present and will continue to exist in the future literary works (Orr, 2003:14-17). Hence, intertextual fictional works such as *Chatterton* and *Possession* assure an ongoing place and timing in their intertexts. Yet, although these novels seem to imitate previous texts, the unity of past and present makes them original works. Even though the concepts of "imitation" and "influence" dominate the intertextual novels, the newly created masterpieces assure a new plot construction as well as timing in between past, present and future. Yet, although the effectiveness of intertextuality is a tool for Ackroyd and Byatt, they intend to hold a

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[2] Julia Kristeva has been one of the most original thinkers of the twentieth century, focused on the fields of literary and cultural studies since the 1960s. Providing clear explanations of the more clear aspects of relevant theoretical context, Julia Kristeva has a comprehensive, and interdisciplinary analysis on psychoanalysis, art, ethics, politics, and feminism in the twentieth century critical theory. Kristeva is well-known with her coinage of "intertextuality" which represents an attempt to synthesize Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralist semiotics. For a detailed analysis of Kristeva's literary significance see pages 1-8 and 35-47 of Graham Allen's *Intertextuality*, 2000.

critical and ironic standing in literary perspectives while interpreting historical events.

2. INTERTEXTUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF SETTING AND PLOT CONSTRUCTION: PETER ACKROYD'S *CHATTERTON* AND A.S. BYATT'S *POSSESSION*

There is an abundance and prosperity of resources whuch manifest the differentiation between modernism and postmodernism in literary canon. Hostility of modernity to the past, adopting nostalgia towards past, or irony and critism of previous events happen to be the issues to be entangled when the distinctions between modernism and postmodernism are considered. The historical and social evolution of modernism dates back to the early early twentieth century in which there e was a rise in thrapidly growing industrial society. Accoording to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, modernity is:

> A general term applied retrospectively to the wide range of experimental and avant-garde trends in the literature and other arts of the early twentieth century. Modernist literature is characterized chiefly by a rejection of nineteenth century [realistic conventions] and of their consensus between author and reader. Modernist writers tended to see themselves as an avant-garde disengaged from bourgeois values, and disturbed their readers by adopting complex and difficult new forms and styles (Baldrick, 1990).

Creating order out of chaos, modernist writers focus on rationality and rationalism through applying the usage of new forms ad styles. Modernism cares about the emergence of order in social life and the rejection of disorder. Modernism basically rejects past and accepts new formations in literary canon in order to adopt the modern world. In order to have aesthetically and ideologically and idealized future, modernism rejects past. As a reaction against modernism, on the other hand, postmodernism rejects the modern writers' attitude of mindless rejection of the past. Postmodern writers attain a gesture of ironic rethinking while returning to the past in literature. Writers such as Peter Ackroyd and A.S: Byatt mainly challenge various conventional tendencies in literature and intend to replace them with changes and developments. They contest modernism's rejection of the past as well as its insistence on order. They reflect infinity of timing and plot constructions and use representational intertextual historical data in fictional masterpieces.[3] As Brian Finney states, "on reading the novel it becomes obvious that Ackroyd has specifically chosen [a] Romantic hero in order to demonstrate how the poet disappears into his own texts which survive him. Within the novel, textuality rules." (1992:2). Breaking away traditional rules and tendencies, postmodern masterpieces apply a mosaic of experimental techniques because of applying the transition between different times and plot constructions in literary canon (Cuddon, 1998:689-90). Ackroyd and Byatt, representative contemporary annalist writers, depict historical events

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[3] Through their passages in time, Byatt and Ackroyd's critical outlook towards past imply an end to previous "sureties" as Marry Orr states in *Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts*. Orr indicates that intertextuality is a break or a disconnection with the past:

> Intertextuality as cultural form of Saussarian linguistics, celebrating the arbitrariness and relativity of signifiers to signifieds, and later developed into deconstruction and postmodernism) claims to break with the old sureties, especially about meaning as mystical and metaphyscial or atheistic, agnostic, or antimetaphysical. (2003:15)

to form a plot and disclaim any boundaries in their fictional works such as *Chatterton* and *Possession*[4].

Both Ackroyd and Byatt assess the boundless structure of transactions between past and present in their novels in a postmodern perspective. Past is a significant element to evaluate present events in postmodern writing, i.e., they have a critical outlook towards past in writing. As Linda Hutcheon notes in *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, the concept of the "presence of the past" should be analyzed in different perspectives and the interpretation of the past should be self-reflexive. That is, authors should redefine past in critical versions (Hutcheon, 1988:122-123). Hutcheon assesses a return to past issues as:

> This is not a nostalgic return; it is a critical revisiting, an ironic dialogue with the past of both art and society, a recalling of a critically shared vocabulary of architectural forms. [. . .] it is always a critical reworking, never a nostalgic "return" [but a] "critical reflection (1988:4).

Through a re-analysis of past, postmodern writers bring forth neither a nostalgic nor an aesthetic approach to historical events or texts. What they intend to do is to find out historically the objective truth. As a gesture of ironic rethinkntg, past does not reflect a complete rejection, but a critical and ironic approach. Linda Hutcheon touches upon this critical outstanding by stating postmodern writers' pointing to "inherent paradoxes" through "critical or ironic re-reading of the art of the past" (Hutcheon, 1990:23). Ackroyd and Byatt reflect this critical and ironic outlook. Hence, postmodernist writers such as the two novelists chosen for this article display a gesture of ironic rethinking towards previous events and literary texts, i.e., past is reinterpreted through a critical and ironic discourse (Hutcheon, 1988:39). Moreover, as Amy J. Elias expresses these novelists criticize modernity throughout their ironic and critical approach towards intertextual consideration of previous texts. Postmodern writers, Elias depicts, call upon historical notion through three contemporary angles of vision: "1) a position either radical or nostalgic, that critiques modernity from the positions of a premodernity; 2) a position that attempts to vindicate modernity against its detractors; 3) a position that attempts an internal (postmodern) critique of key features of modernity" (1996:533). Ackroyd and Byatt primarily apply the first and the third angles of Elias's vision because of their choice of using previous texts to respond previous literary masterpieces. Such contemporary issues replace postmodern texts for boundless scopes of research. Being against modernity, these writers perform an innovative method of approach in forming a plot construction[5].

In *Chatterton,* Peter Ackroyd explores historical commitments of past and present to become concerned with the psychological states and mentality of fictional characters. While exploring the themes of reality and illusion, truth and falsity, mortality and immortality, Ackroyd brings forth a sense of mystery and universality throughout his fascinating masterpiece. Ackroyd's choice of a Romantic hero for *Chatterton* demonstrates writer's going beyond the limits finding fictional characters primarily from present, i.e., they apply historical artifacts to inform the readers. To illustrate, Charles

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[4]The usage of such historical wit and wisdom indicates a differentiation between modern and postmodern literature.

[5] Through a relationship between past and present, Ackroyd and Byatt's referential novels allure readers with the transaction of three unities of time, place, and action.

Wychwood is, in *Chatterton*, associated with Thomas Chatterton, a real 18th century poet[6]. In such a manner of interpretation, Ackroyd constructs our versions of the connection between history and fiction, past and present, as well as reality and illusion. Via such a narration, his fictional masterpiece moves away from the limitations of timing and plot construction[7]. Ackroyd's abundant usage of historical devices indicates disclaiming any boundaries in literary works. Although his tenancy of transitions between past and present seems to be paradoxical in some cases in contemporary writing, in fact, what makes the novel mysterious is his usage of history as a referential material. Through an intertextual approach, Ackroyd makes history valid in *Chatterton* and, thereby, emphasizes the significance of previous events and texts:

> The very words had been called forth from me, with as much Ease as if I were writing in the Language of my own Age. Schoolboy tho' I was, it was even at this time that I decided to shore up these ancient Fragments with my own Genius: thus the Living and the Dead were to be reunited. (Ackroyd, 1988:85)

Drawing upon such a mysterious recalling, Ackroyd disclaims the existence of time and setting boundaries in *Chatterton* and highlights the significance of historical references in literary influence by forming a subsequent collection of writing[8]. "The Living and the Dead" signify the previous and the present texts. Through using such historiographic data, Ackroyd would probably intend to remove the distinctions between historical formation and imagination. Transcending between the eighteenth and the twentieth centuries, *Chatterton* exceeds time and place as well as characterization in a specific time. Referring to historical information, Ackroyd depicts that Thomas Chatterton, the famous eighteenth-century faker of medieval texts, did not commit suicide at the age of seventeen, but continued his fraudulent productions via his antique manuscripts in *Chatterton*.[9] Thus, beginning in modern time, *Chatterton* posits the significant theme of the interaction between past and present as well as historical reality and fiction in the course of narration[10]. Ackroyd also demonstrates his critical approach to the reality of Thomas Chatterton's death and, thus, informs readers about the truth behind his death. The irony which underlies in *Chatterton* is that the reality is the accumulation of unrealities in Chatterton's life. Nick Rennison portrays the correlation between past and present in Ackroyd's

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[6] In addition to *Chatterton*, Ackroyd portrays historical characters in his other literary works. He depicts a seventeenth century architect in *Hawksmoor* and a nineteenth century writer in *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde*.

[7] Moreover, Ackroyd's method of approach does not seem to be linear in narrative pattern because of the abundance of transitions between past and present.

[8] The idea of forgery is a significant theme in *Chatterton* and most critics are critical about *Chatterton* because of this formation. Greg Clinghom expresses about this formation:

> Peter Ackroyd's *Chatterton* exemplifies ways in which fiction functions to produce historical knowledge—not just "the postmodern" knowledge of the novel but the "eighteenth century" knowledge of *Chatterton*'s forgeries. [. . .] The novel's forgeries suggest pastiche—a self-conscious manipulation of stylistic features that keep the text within its own terms. (1988: 40)

[9] Brian Finney explains that Thomas Chatterton was born in Bristol, England in 1752. He only lived to the age of eighteen when he ended his life by swallowing arsenic (whether accidentally or on purpose remains an open question) in a London garret (1992:2).

[10] The point of view is a third person. The story is narrated through dialogues and the inner thoughts of the substantial characters in *Chatterton*.

literary work. While exposing this reality, Rennison categorizes Ackroyd's literary tendencies in two spheres: the first one is London as the city landscape and the other is the mystical sense of connection between past and present. By ranging back and forth in time and setting with different narrative voices, Ackroyd clearly fascinates his readers with the sense of time voyage (Rennison, 2005:2).

As a novel with three intertwined stories, *Chatterton* is an exploration of the eighteenth century poet, Thomas Chatterton, who has been regarded as an icon of Romantic Movement after his suicide. The first one is about a medieval monk, Thomas Rowley that most of Chatterton's poems belonged to him. The second is George Meredith, a nineteenth century writer, who playacted Chatterton's role for his friend Henry Wallis's famous painting of the poet who died in his room. Finally, the third one is the poet Charles Wychwood who has been obsessed by a portrait of 1802, showing that Thomas Chatterton did not have his romantic death but continued his life in the following years (Rennison, 2005:3). Ackroyd displays such a historical discovery in *Chatterton*:

> 'The signature at the bottom is T. C.' He noticed a line of blood down the edge of the paper, issuing from his cut, and gingerly he handed the papers over to Philip while he sucked his thumb. And then Philip, leafing through them, read out this: 'Like the blind prophet led by the boy, so was antiquity given over to my care. I sold my verses to the booksellers, also, and though I met with some success in London, for the most part the fame of Thomas Rowley was bruited through Bristol and the trade in my work was very brisk. There was one bookseller who suspected the truth, *viz* that these were verses of my own–'Philip broke off. I can't read that word. It might be despair. Or desire.' (1988:59-60)

Thus, being obsessed with the past, Charles Wychwood is an imitation or an incarnation of the poet Thomas Chatterton. In the intertextual world of the novel, *Chatterton* gives the crisis of the self as the imitation or the replaying of the past (Benyei, 2006:59-60). This indicates that Peter Ackroyd takes readers into three time periods of following the lives of Thomas Chatterton, Henry Wallis and Charles Wynchwood. Hence, ranging back and forth, three chronological literary intellects imply the existence of the boundless timing and plot construction. These three figures impose how the self becomes the means of transition of past artifacts into present.

What Ackroyd achieves is to go beyond the limits of present daily events and to choose different past manuscripts to form a new plot through his critical approach. Brian Finney explains:

> Ackroyd is evidently concerned to show from the start of his book that we all appropriate the past for our own purposes and in our own ways. There is no such thing as an objective past, let alone a recoverable figure of Chatterton. Wordsworth and his fellow Romantics had constructed their legend around the recently dead poet, a legend which is itself subject to a sea change by a subsequent age. Ackroyd is intent on undermining the Romantic image of Wordsworth's "marvellous boy," Coleridge's "spirit blest," Keats's "child of sorrow," de Vigny's *poète maudit*, Oscar Wilde's "pure artist." All that survive from the Romantics' elevation of the alienated gifted artist reliant on his innate imagination are the texts and these are themselves forgeries (1992:2).

Applying intertextuality, Ackroyd reflects his intention of going beyond the limits of time, setting, and plot construction and any other restraints. He achieves this especially through his explanations of "There are no rules," and "Everything is possible" in *Chatterton* (9). Here, the emphasis is on the possibility of maintaining different boundless formations of time and action in fictional works[11].

Similar to Peter Ackroyd, A.S. Byatt also focuses on the interaction between past and present in her timeless and fascinating substantial masterpiece *Possession* and deals with the issues of love and independence between the two lovers. Byatt collects historically significant cultural artifacts through incorporating many different styles and devices as well as poetry and diary[12]. As an exhilarating novel of romance, love story, and mystery, Byatt informs readers about the tale of a pair of young scholars who are in search for the lives of Victorian poets. Byatt explores a historical setting in a contemporary novel through transcending present time and stretching to the Victorian Era in which there were two Victorian fictional poets, Randolph Henry Ash and Christabel LaMotte, revealed by contemporary fictional academics, Ronald Michell and Maud Bailey. Byatt writes about the parallel between the emerging relationship of the two fictional nineteenth century poets and the aforementioned academics. Through partly choosing past as the setting, Byatt informs readers about the truth of Ash and LaMotte's background before other rival colleagues attempt finding out. Thus, Byatt displays a critical standing such as Peter Ackroyd does in *Chatterton*. Byatt's best known novel, *Possession*, builds upon the theme of the Victorian literature, particularly the relationship between two Victorian poets whose love is associated with the present day academics' newly discovered love. In this novel, Byatt textualizes and compares Victorian tradition to contemporary epoch and implies that the truth of the past helps them to understand better the reality of the present:

> There are things that happen and leave no discernable trace,
> are not spoken or written of, though it would be very wrong
> to say that subsequent events go on indifferently, all the
> same, as though such things had never been (1991:552).

This emphasis indicates boundless ways of finding the truth via the application of historical affirmation and, thus, this indicates how Byatt was inspired in her literary achievement[13]. Byatt emphasizes that history repeats itself in the present or future events in different formations. Through making a comparison between nineteenth and late twentieth centuries, the significance of textuality is emphasized and this makes the novel mysterious and enigmatic (Gutleben, 2001:77). Some of Byatt's fictional characters depict how she applies past influences to create an influential novel. To illustrate, Randolph Ash is a cross between Browning and Tennyson as well as Wordsworth, Arnold, Morris, Ruskin, and Carlyle. Another character, Blanche

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[11] Lack of limitations is also portrayed through an emphasis on the word "disappear" in respect to the characters in *Chatterton*. Through this disappearing act, Ackroyd maintains his survival in his works either in the past or in the present (Anderson, 2009: 2). Such a tendency indicates that writer is not limited to constantly being present all the time in the text. Although numerous difficulties seem to emerge in the process of disappearing into the work, sense of anxiety overcomes readers and creates tension in contemporary agenda through the infinity in time, place and action.

[12] *Possession* began literary life with its title by 1974, sixteen years before its publication (Todd, 1997:24).
[13] *Possession*'s literary achievement inspired Byatt's collections of short stories and novellas such as *Angels and Insects* (1992), *The Matisse Stories* (1993), and *The Djina in the Nightingale's Eye* (1994) (Todd, 1997:3).

Glover, is an artist painted in the pre-Raphaelite style. In addition, Reverend Edward Casaubon is a character in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*[14] (Kelly, 1996:81-85). Such references imply that "the young vitality of the past" is cited in *Possession* in respect to the secret relationship between two Victorian poets (Byatt, 1991:136). These previous characters imply the dominance of past influences in present.

The title of the novel is symbolic because of playing the key role in demolishing all the boundaries to reach information through the possession of past in present.[15] In an interview with Nicolas Tredell, Byatt explains that she was inspired to write *Possession* in terms of content:

> It came to me that possession worked in both ways – she thought Coleridge's thoughts and his thoughts were entirely mediated by her. Then much later I got the ideas of the spiritualist mediums, possession in that sense, and sexual possession. (Todd, 1997:24)

Implicitly or explicitly, Byatt deals with the motif of possession in mind to indicate that human psychology dominates past and present simultaneously. In *Possession*, Byatt applies intertextuality to create an enigmatic sense of narration[16]. Byatt cites her inclination for past:

> I myself, with the aid of imagination, have worked a little in that line, have ventriloquesed, have lent my voice to, and mixed my life with, those past voices and lives whose resuscitation in our own lives as warnings, as examples, as the life of the past *persisting in us*, is the bussiness of every thinking man and woman (1991:116).

Byatt's novel interweaves two narratives of the past: one is from the mid-nineteenth century and the other is from the late nineteenth century. Such a narration signifies her disclaiming boundaries in fiction. Byatt enriches *Possession* with the examples of two Victorian writers' poems, stories, and extracts acting as a textual and historical interaction between these two narratives (Bentley, 2008:140). Christien Franken emphasizes the significance of boundless formation in Byatt's *Possession*. Franken notes the rise of a great number of interpretations about *Possession* in respect to Byatt's approach to the past, her skill in dealing with the genres of romance, fairy tale, the detective story and the quest as well as contemporary literary criticism and Victorian poetry[17] (2001:86).

Possession is a postmodern novel in respect to its narrative techniques and intertextuality. Using historical account and intertextuality, Byatt reflects readers' mood and judgment of present time. Kathleen Coyne Kelly exposes the influence of some writers on Byatt and demonstrates how other writers were effective on her plot construction:

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[14] For broad information on the main characters see Kelly's *A.S. Byatt*, pp. 80-87.

[15] *Possession*'s postmodern structure embodies "heterogeneity and multiformity," distinct from the constant and stable narrative structure of Victorian fiction (Gutleben, 2001, 79). Postmodern plurality in this fictional work is depicted through tales, letters and extracts from diaries and passages from autobiography and critical works in the novel (McHale, 1989:166).

[16] In addition to applying different narrations, *Possession* can also be analyzed through several critical perspectives—historical, textual, psychoanalytical, New Critical, structuralist, deconstructive, and new historicism (Kelly, 1996:79).

[17] Another aspect that *Possession* goes beyond boundaries is its genre for being not only a romance but also a gothic because of the use of gothic situations and styles. "The gothic as genre" in *Possession*, "works well with the novel's themes of showing the impact of 'the dead hand' on several of the contemporary characters[17] (Bentley, 2008:144).

Possession: A Romance has elicited a number of admiring comparisons with the novels of such writers as David Lodge, John Fowles, and Umberto Eco, all of whom are recognized as postmodern writers. What the critic Marc Blanchard has to say of postmodernism in general can be specifically applied to Byatt's novel, which "seek[s] constantly to rehistoricize the present by retreading the past, adapting to circumstances, while also recasting one's entire perspective in a new way." (1996:78)

Being under the influence of previous writers indicates the existence of past images in Byatt's writing style. Especially reference to Victorian literature and the contemporary texts signifies the association between past and present. While challenging the continuous and constant ways of narration and plot constructions, the use of textual and historical evidence indicates how the boundaries of Victorian epoch is surmounted by contemporary literary agenda (Tew, 2007:181). Exceeding antecedent boundaries implies intellectual landscape undergoing constant transformation rather than preferring durability and stagnation in fiction[18]. It rejects marginality of time, place, and plot construction because of the passage between past and present. Suzanne Keen hints at the formation of boundless structure in this novel and expresses that *Possession* maintains the infinity of time, place, and action because of the emergence of some occasions. She notes that this novel is formed of romance adventure stories which reveal the truth throughout past incidents. She imposes on the existence of historical settings and locations rising tension among readers (Keen, 2003:35).

Possession attributes a boundless formation of timing and setting because of the accumulation of such various situations.[19] Romance adventure stories cooperate with historical artifacts and special settings and locations. This indicates that the affluence of intertextual texts as well as different historical representations refer to the independence of author while forming plot construction of a literary text. Contrary to the Victorians' restriction of discourse concerning sexuality, Maud and Ronald recognize this in *Possession* in the twentieth century's hyper-theorization (Farrel, 1996:1.) Byatt indicates this contrast by emphasizing her recognition of any boundaries in transitions between past and present:

Do you ever have the sense that our metaphors eat up our world? I mean of course everything connects and connects. . . I mean, all those gloves, a minute ago, we were playing a professional game of hooks and eyes--medieval gloves, giants' gloves, Blanche Glover, Balzac's gloves, the sea-anemone's ovaries--and it all reduced like boiling jam to--human sexuality. Just as Leonora Stern makes the whole earth read as the female body--and language--all language. And all vegetation in public hair." Maud laughed, drily. Roland said, "And then, really, what is it, what is this arcane power we have, when we see that everything is human sexuality? It's really powerlessness. (Byatt, 1991:275-276)

Byatt perpetuates her ironic and critical outlook towards past by referring to previous writers' gloves while implying human sexuality

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[18] Different formations of time and place indicate flexibility in fictional works in respect to plot constructions.
[19] Jessica Leader expresses in her article "A. S. Byatt's Possession-- Postmodern or Post-Postmodern?" that in Byatt's Possession Not only is the past an integral part of the present, but an otherworldly force seems to propel the present-day characters toward uncovering the past. (1996:1).

in this context. She refers to the existence of humor in Victorian sexual discourse restrictions. This implies that Byatt freely has the choice of making transactions between past and present and, thus, informs the readers about the previous events via becoming ironical and critical of past incidents. She also implies that restrictions in sexual discourse is a state of powerlessness, i.e., she is critical of Victorian forbidden values in social life.

3. CONCLUSION (SONUÇ)

Both Peter Ackroyd and A. S. Byatt challenge the traditional meaning of literary influence through stretching over past and present simultaneously. Especially, via going beyond the boundaries of conventional ways of narration and plot construction as well as timing, new horizons have been exceeded and improved through transactions between past and present. Such a formation indicates the implications of immense imagination and creativity. Finding an association between past and present through the affluence of intertextuality, interdisciplinary studies, and various historical representations signify the existence of creativity on Ackroyd and Byatt. Shuttling their readers back and forth from present to past by means of distinct texts, implicitly or explicitly, both Ackroyd and Byatt put forward how history often repeats itself. In order to make a broader explanation, when history repeats itself through some literary texts, then, man will possibly gain from this historical repetition through learning from experiences. As past reveals the truth, then, the repetition of previous historical texts and events illuminate the emergence of truths at present as depicted in the literary works of Peter Ackroyd and A.S. Byatt. Instead of evaluating past in terms of nostalgic representations, these postmodern writers considered it in a critical or ironic outlook for discovering hidden past realities. Their innovatory developments in the literary sphere involve what critics mainly call experimentation. Their postmodern attitude brings forth new experimentation technique of acknowledging any boundaries in timing and plot construction in literary canon. Hence, they display a consistent critical approach to modern values and thinking. They also foreground and probe new styles and formations in contemporary era.

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