

Dual Narratives and Multiple Points of View in Ali Smith's *How To Be Both*

Ali Smith'in *How To Be Both* Romanında İkili Anlatı ve Çoğul Bakış Açıları

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Abstract

Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* (2014) provides the reader with a unique reading experience through two interconnected narratives. The novel has two separate editions with the same words and the same cover; the only difference between these editions is the order of the sections it contains. Hence, the text challenges the reader's comprehension and perception. Fluidity and simultaneity, which are indicated in the title of the novel is the focal point of this study. Throughout the novel, fiction and non-fiction, past and present, art and life, living human beings and ghosts, creation and destruction, eyes and camera intertwine. The aim of this article is to examine the narrative devices employed in this novel, whilst displaying the presentation of the characters in these interwoven stories. While discussing the structure of the novel as well as the relationship between the main characters (one of which is a Renaissance painter, whereas the other is a modern adolescent girl), theories on seeing, gaze, visibility and perception - with reference to Michel Foucault, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and John Berger - are employed. This study examines the relationship between seeing and the mind, the communication between perception and prejudice, and the reflection of concepts such as point of view and perspective in visual arts and literature. The analysis of certain incidents, characters and notions via close reading of the text makes it possible to consider concepts such as seeing, comprehension and point of view in light of both Renaissance and contemporary theories.

Keywords: Ali Smith, *How to Be Both*, contemporary novel, seeing, perception, point of view

Öz

Ali Smith'in 2014 tarihli *How to Be Both* adlı romanı iç içe geçmiş iki anlatı aracılığı ile okura benzersiz bir okuma deneyimi sunmakta. Aynı sözcükler ve aynı kapak tasarımıyla yayınlanan ancak bölümlerin sırasının farklı sunulduğu iki ayrı baskısı bulunan roman, bu yönüyle okurun algısıyla oynamakta. Roman boyunca kurmaca ile gerçek, geçmiş ile şimdi, sanat ile yaşam, yaşayan insanlar ile hayaletler, yaratma ile yıkım, gözler ile kameralar iç içe geçmekte. Romanın adında da görülen ve tüm metne egemen olan akışkanlık ve eş zamanlılık, bu çalışmanın odak noktasını oluşturmaktadır. Bu makalenin amacı, birbirinin içine geçmiş bu anlatılardaki karakterlerin resmediliş biçimlerini incelerken, bu deneysel romanda kullanılan anlatı yöntemlerini de tartışmaktır. Biri Rönesans dönemi ressamı, diğeri günümüzde yaşayan genç bir kız olan iki ana karakterin birbirleriyle ilişkilerinin irdelenmesiyle beraber romanın yapısının incelenmesi sürecinde Michel Foucault, Maurice Merleau-Ponty ve John Berger gibi kuramcılara gönderme yapılarak görme, bakış, görünürlük ve algılama kuramlarına başvurulmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma görmenin beden ve zihinle ilişkisini, algının ön yargıyla iletişimini ve bakış açısı ile perspektif gibi kavramların resim ve edebiyattaki yansımalarını Smith'in romanından örnekler aracılığı ile tartışmaktadır. Romanda yer alan kimi olay, karakter ve olgunun yakın okuma tekniğiyle çözümlenmesi, metnin yapısına ve içeriğine hakim olan görme, algılama ve bakış açısı gibi kavramların hem Rönesans hem günümüz kuramları ışığında düşünülmesini mümkün kılmaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Ali Smith, *How to Be Both*, *İkisi Birden*, çağdaş roman, görme, algılama, bakış açısı

Introduction

Ali Smith's awarded novel *How to Be Both* (2014) introduces both a challenging and a rewarding reading experience. The novel not only presents two stories with two main characters portrayed within two intertwined stories but also there are two different editions of the book: Both versions have the same cover, consisting of the same words but the order of the sections it contains are interchanged. Which edition a reader encounters at a bookshop or a library is utterly coincidental. Due to this experimental publishing strategy, the reader's perception of the text and the characters is entirely dependent on the version he or she reads. Since the novel is divided into two sections and both are entitled "one," Ali Smith manages to prevent one section to prevail over the other by affirming an apparent statement on relativity.

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In this respect, the relationship between the two parts becomes even more complicated.¹ As a consequence of the interwoven nature of the novel, points of view play a crucial role both in terms of the readers' attitude towards the novel and the connection between the characters. The dual narrative within the text provokes a comprehensive discussion on the function of art as well as the meaning of life and death. The story of George (whose real name is Georgia but who prefers to be called George) is a third person narrative, through which the reader observes a teenager trying to come to terms with her grief over the sudden death of her mother. The narrative is full of recollections, where the reader gets to know George's mother Carol through George's memories. Apart from her emotional role throughout the novel, Carol is significant in uniting both narratives and characters with her interest in the works of the Renaissance painter Francesco del Cossa. The other section of the novel is a first person narrative, told by Franchesco's ghost, who not only follows George after her visit to the National Museum in London but also communicates with the reader about her own life and art through numerous flashbacks. Since Franchesco is based on a real Renaissance painter with the same name, Smith adds the letter "h" to the name Francesco (turning Francesco into Franchesco) in order to emphasize that this particular character is fictitious.²

As the title and the construction of the text suggest, this is a novel about simultaneity. The idea of "being both" can be traced in the totality of the book because fluidity becomes the nucleus of Smith's text: The novel is both first and third person narrative; the text is presented in both orders; Franchesco is both male and female; the novel concerns with both history and fiction; George is both George and Georgie – a similar case to Franchesco's gender on a symbolic level; being a ghost, Franchesco is both present and absent; George focuses on both details and the broad view; George's mother Carol is both an intellectual with degrees in art history and women's studies and a feminist Internet guerrilla³; the story takes place both in the past and the present (and even the future at the end of George's section); both remembering and forgetting play a crucial role in the lives of the two main characters; last but not least, Helena's multinational familial background affirms the presence of both nationalities at the same time. Furthermore, "both" is one of the most frequently used pronouns in the novel, especially in George's section. Throughout these overlapping narratives, both main characters are presented as the subjects in their own sections and they become objects in the other's narrative. Consequently, the structure of the novel is often likened to a DNA spiral, where two different lines intertwine with one another.

In this context, one of the predominant themes that emphasize fluidity in Smith's novel is gender: Firstly, apart from very few instances, Georgia is called George in the totality of the text. When Franchesco's spirit first sees her from the back, she thinks that George is a boy. Moreover, it is significant that, all through the novel, the recognition of Franchesco and Georgia's gender (and even that of Helena to a certain extent since she is mostly referred to as H) seems to be postponed as long as possible⁴. Secondly, in Smith's writing, Franchesco del

¹ This article is written in accordance with my personal reading experience of the novel. In both of my readings, George's story came first, and then I met Franchesco. Hence, the article explores Franchesco's narrative (and her life) with pre-knowledge gathered from George's section. Since it is not possible to un-read and un-learn, the order of the sections determines the reading experience as well as our perception of each character.

² Throughout this article, the real, historical male artist is referred to as del Cossa and "he", whereas his fictitious female counterpart is referred to as Franchesco and "she".

³ It is no coincidence that Carol's surname, Martineau, is reminiscent of the nineteenth century female activist Harriet Martineau.

⁴ In addition to Smith's deliberate intention, in languages which lack gendered personal pronouns (such as Turkish), it is almost impossible to assume that George is actually a girl. This additional ambiguity such translations provide is substantial in challenging the prejudices concerning gender roles.

Cossa reveals that he is actually a woman, who, accepting her father's offer, decides to cross-dress in order to be freely educated, and, hence manages to become an artist. When the vagueness of the sexual identities of the main characters is taken into consideration, eyes, seeing, perception and prejudice become foregrounded, suggesting that not only the physical act of seeing but also comprehension and perception are essential concepts within the totality of the novel.

In *How to Be Both*, Franchesco – like the historical figure, del Cossa – is known for her frescoes. In one of her very few interviews, Smith admits that a picture of one of del Cossa's frescoes in an art magazine triggers the main idea of this novel:

A fresco is a work built in a wall – so much so that if you take it off the wall you have taken a part of the wall of.

When the famous frescoes in Florence were damaged by flooding in the 1960s, the restorers found underneath the originals designs that were sometimes different.

It struck me as extraordinary that we can be looking at a surface and think we can see everything but actually there's something below it – and we can't see it. (Masters, 2015)

Therefore, with an emphasis on the nature of frescoes, seeing, perception and comprehension challenge concepts such as point of view, truth and reality. This idea is further deliberated in a flashback dialogue between George and her mother Carol about the frescoes that are discovered underneath some damaged frescoes:

But which came first? her mother says [...] The picture underneath or the picture on the surface?

The picture below came first, George says. Because it was done first.

But the first thing we see, her mother said, and most times the only thing we see, is the one on the surface. So does that mean it comes first after all? And does that mean the other picture, if we don't know about it, may as well not exist? (Smith, 2015, p.103)

This dialogue summarizes the idea behind the structure of the novel. Historically and chronologically speaking the Renaissance artist Franchesco's story comes first, but the particular edition this article is based upon presents George's story prior to Franchesco's. In other words, in this relevant edition, Franchesco's narrative becomes the fresco underneath the fresco. However, it is also noteworthy that, as far as the general framework of the novel is concerned, Franchesco's narrative takes place after George's (although she recalls her childhood and earlier life through numerous flashbacks), since her spirit first sees and decides to follow George after the events that take place by the end of George's section. Hence, when the total framework of the novel is taken into consideration, Franchesco's story comes both before and after that of George. From this point of view, the two halves of the novel "create the effect of two detailed portraits drawn on sheets of translucent paper laid one atop the other [...] As a result, one portrait or the other functions as an under-drawing for the second" (Daigle, 2016). It can also be argued that the construction of the novel is in accordance with Smith's statement that "we [appear to] live our lives in sequence, but we don't really" (Masters, 2015). In this respect, Lewis' argument on Smith's writing reflects the relativity of time:

Smith's spectrality can also challenge our conceptions of time and history, since she understands "the present as history in the making, happening now" (Warner ix), and this temporal dynamic converges with her interest in the spectral. (Lewis, 2019, p. 136)

Reading Franchesco's account after George's story makes it probable to suggest that what appears as Franchesco's first person narrative is in fact the result of George and Hele-

na's – who is often referred to as H⁵ - creative writing. In George's section, the reader learns that George and H think about their school project on del Cossa's life. While discussing how a Renaissance man would speak, George asks "Wouldn't it be better if we just imagine him talking the way *we* do?" (Smith, 2015, p. 138) This question is often highlighted by various reviewers of the book because Franchesco's narrative is decorated with examples of contemporary lingo and colloquial language such as 'cause' instead of 'because'. From this point of view, it is possible to claim that George (alongside H) is the substantial creator of Franchesco's narrative. A similar example is the first word used by Franchesco in her narrative, "Ho", which is offered by H, while she and George are discussing how del Cossa would speak:

He'd speak like from another time, H says. He'd say things like ho, or gadzooks, or egad.

I don't think they knew about the word ho, I mean about what it means in rap songs, in Italy in the whenever it was, George says.

[...]

Ho h oho, H says. Lots of ho's in Shakespeare. Heigh-ho, green holly. Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly. (Smith, 2015, pp. 137-8)

George and H's above quoted conversation about language and the aforementioned details in Franchesco's speech are indicative of the assumption that Franchesco's narrative is the end product of George and H's imagination. This argument can be supported with Carol's words as well: "Imagine it. You're an artist" (Smith, 2015, p. 3). Accordingly, this novel, both through its depiction of the subject matter and the characters' relation to reality, recognizes the indisputable relationship between history and fiction or imagination⁶. This relationship is one of the reasons why,

H has decided that they could do the empathy/sympathy exercise about this painter precisely because there's so little known about him. This means they can make a great deal of it up and not be marked wrong because nobody will know either way. (Smith, 2015, p. 137)

Although it can be regarded as a form of cheating for the school project, what George and H do is creating fiction instead of an objective, historical biography, which is utterly similar to Smith's approach in creating Franchesco. The only character within the novel, who narrates her own story – in other words, who is given a voice of her own – is Franchesco. No matter if she is created by George and H or not, this fifteenth century artist is the only character who can directly address the reader. It is worth mentioning that, apart from her life story, the essential distinguishable characteristic of Franchesco's narrative is her frequent use of colons. When Franchesco talks about her present experiences in George's world, she separates her ideas with the colon, which became utterly popular in the 1600s (a century after del Cossa's death). The colon had a substantial function in Gregorian chants as *punctus elevatas* (which means "the elevated point" in Latin), which suggests change of tone⁷. When it was first used as a punctuation mark, its grammatical function was closely related to making syntactic pauses. Ben Jonson, in his influential *The English Grammar*, argues that "a period is the distinction of a sentence, though perfect in itself, yet joined to another, being marked with two pricks. (:)" (Jonson, 1756, p. 288). However, the use of the colon in the modern world is mostly limited to introducing quotations, explanations, rules, titles or lists. Hence, a colon is

⁵ If this argument is accepted, then it would not be farfetched to suggest that the additional letter "h" in Franchesco's name is a reference to Helena.

⁶ At this point, one must acknowledge the organic similarity and connection between story and history, which is even present in the term *history* itself.

⁷ The colon's function as an indicator of change of tone is undoubtedly consonant with the narrative structure of *How to Be Both*, which contains various tones of voice simultaneously.

not one of the most frequently used punctuation marks one would find in a contemporary narrative.

Franchesco's extensive use of colons as well as her massive practice of stream of consciousness is the fundamental difference between the two parts of the novel. According to Claire Daigne,

speaking in first person, Franchesco voices a stream of consciousness that's more like a river [...] It requires an active reader, grappling with bouts of disorientation. [...] In contrast, George's third person narrative is straightforward. It is "readerly," more conventionally told and with far less display of formal finesse" (Daigle, 2016).

This difference can be considered to be a consequence of the norms and conventions related to language and communication of the eras these two characters belong to. Moreover, the narrator Franchesco is no longer alive, suggesting that, being a disembodied spirit, she is free from boundaries such as time, location, grammar and so on. Freedom is entirely reflected in the way she communicates her thoughts, observations and memories to the reader. Furthermore, Franchesco's first person narrative limits and directs the perception of the readers, while allowing them to experience the story alongside the narrator and to associate themselves with the main character. Although George's third person narrative is "readerly" as Daigle argues, the third person narrative distances the readers from the characters by positioning them merely as observers (a role attributed to Franchesco's ghost within the text).

Language and narrative techniques are not the only tools Smith uses in emphasizing the significance of different perceptions and points of view. In a similar way, eyes and, hence, seeing is thoroughly important in terms of the storyline and the structure of the novel. First of all, the text presents a fictitious biography of a Renaissance painter, who is defined through the way she sees and portrays the world by the nature of her occupation. Secondly, both parts, that are entitled "one," are represented with images related to seeing: the image associated with George's story is a surveillance camera, whereas Franchesco's narrative is symbolized with the eye – which is a detail from one of del Cossa's paintings entitled "Saint Lucy." In this painting, del Cossa depicts Saint Lucy, whose name means light, and who is the patron saint of the blind. She is generally pictured holding a pair of eyes, which is often understood to be her own eyes. In del Cossa's painting, however, she is holding a plucked sprig, and the two buds of this sprig are portrayed as brown eyes. Franchesco, in her narrative, explains why she painted Saint Lucy in this particular way:

she had eyes on a sprig in her hand, eyes opening at the end of the sprig like flowers will, cause the great Alberti writes that *the eye is like a bud*, which made me think of eyes opening like plantwork, cause St Lucia is the saint of eyes and light and is usually seen blind or eyeless and many painters give her eyes but not in her face, instead they put them on a platter or set them in the palm of her hand – but I let her keep all her eyes, I did not want to deprive her of any. (Smith, 2015, p. 346)

On the one hand, this statement indicates the importance Franchesco attaches to eyes and seeing. On the other hand, by saying "I let her keep all her eyes," she acknowledges the omnipotence of the artist. The power that is attributed to the artist allows her to reshape and reconstruct everything according to her intentions and point of view. Besides, the function of del Cosa's (and Franchesco's in Smith's fictitious universe) portrayal of Saint Lucy's eyes as the symbol of Franchesco's section is significant in drawing a correlation between the artist's disembodied spirit and the act of seeing⁸. Furthermore, the phonetic resemblance between the words "eye" and "I" is utterly in accordance with Smith's attitude towards her fictitious characters. Within the general framework of the text, Smith lets her characters keep all their "I's"

⁸ It is also significant that not only the picture of Saint Lucy, but also numerous religious tales concerning seeing, blindness and eyes are mentioned throughout Franchesco's narrative.

with a solid emphasis on simultaneity and fluidity. George and Georgie, Francesco and Franchesco, male and female, dead and alive are allowed to coexist in the novel, which is reminiscent of Franchesco's attitude towards Saint Lucy's eyes.

In Smith's novel, Franchesco's works around the world appear as artistic objects of desire, through which not only the subject matters of her paintings but also the Renaissance world is presented to the onlookers. Both the real and the fictitious artist's fortitude is derived from the ability to see and to recreate what he or she sees on the canvas or on the walls using imagination and creativity. In Maurice Merleau-Ponty's words⁹,

The painter, any painter, *while he is painting*, practices a magical theory of vision. He is obliged to admit that objects before him pass into him or else that, according to Malebranche's sarcastic dilemma, the mind goes out through the eyes to wonder among objects; for he never ceases adjusting his clairvoyance to them. (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 166)

The role of the mind in seeing is one of the predominant themes in Merleau-Ponty's theory of vision. While referring to Merleau-Ponty's *La Phénoménologie de la perception* in his discussions on the eye and the gaze, Lacan points out that

the regulation of form, which is governed, not only by the subject's eye, but by his expectations, his movement, his grip, his muscular and visceral emotion – in short, his constitutive presence, directed in what is called his total intentionality. (Lacan, 1998, p. 71)

In this context, each character's relation to the eye, the gaze and the power of the vision becomes highly significant in Smith's novel. In her own narrative, Franchesco becomes the eye observing what she calls the Purgatory – aka the twenty-first century London¹⁰. The way she is portrayed in the novel as a soul without a body is thoroughly in accordance with the fact that there is almost no information about the life of the real del Cossa. The exact year of his birth or the time and reason of his death are all open to speculation (which, of course, makes it easier for Smith to reimagine him as a woman and to decorate her life with specific fictitious details). Hence, not only Smith but also the fictitious characters within the book have the opportunity to objectify the actual Renaissance artist, who was once able to objectify everything and everyone around himself. This duality can also be regarded as a reflection of the relativity of the gaze. The traditional, patriarchal binary opposition, which locates the female as the gazed and the male as the gazer, is challenged by the suggestion that Franchesco is a cross-dressed woman. The power the gaze attributes to the male is shifted, when Franchesco is cross-dressed as a man, and recreates her own identity.

Similar to the change in Franchesco's relation to the gaze, the nature of the seeing apparatuses evolve in time. Del Cossa's observing eye as the fundamental tool of his art is succeeded by the surveillance camera symbolizing George's section¹¹. George's mother, who believes that she has been monitored by the government, because of her online activities, thinks that her mysterious friend Lisa is in fact a spy. Being monitored with surveillance cameras or individual eyes (such as that of Lisa's) can be discussed through Foucault's view on panopticism. Derived from the term "panopticon," a specific type of prison architecture designed by Jeremy Bentham in the eighteenth century, "Panoptic power is the effect achieved

⁹ It is, however, worth mentioning that Merleau-Ponty, who is known to be one of the pioneers arguing against Cartesianism, "rejects the term 'perception' because of its connotation of consciousness, and he replaces the term with the terms 'the visible' and 'the invisible'" (Crossley, 1993, p. 401).

¹⁰ Trying to make sense of the things she sees in the twenty-first century London, Franchesco thinks that the smart phones and tablets people hold in their hands are some kind of holy icons they pray. Hence, she thinks perhaps she has been "placed in a specific painters' purgatorium" (Smith, 2015, p. 230).

¹¹ It is also worth mentioning that, observing that people capture images using different tools (i.e. cameras, smart phones, tablets etc.), Franchesco thinks that perhaps "all the people of this place are painters going about their world with the painting tools of their time" (Smith, 2015, p. 230).

through the realization that one is subjected to the gaze” (Crossley, 1993, p. 403). Bentham’s design, which has never been fully realized, presents a circular structure, where the guards are positioned in the middle so that the prisoners could be under constant surveillance in their surrounding cells. Through his theory panopticism, Foucault suggests that in the modern era, “power functions, in part, by making people visible,” (Crossley, 1993, p. 401) and this is predominantly maintained with surveillance cameras and similar observing or recording systems. Hence, the reference to Carol’s assumption that her friend Lisa is spying on her, videos of the abused young girl George insists on watching (simply to come to terms with her own pain by witnessing the young girl’s pain as George explains to her father¹²), as well as the presence of surveillance cameras around the world, suggest that people are visible at all times – even stronger than what Bentham intended to achieve with the panopticon.

Surveillance is presented as an intricate concept in the totality of the text. At the end of George’s section, while she is looking at one of del Cossa’s paintings at the National Gallery, London, George sees her mother’s mysterious friend Lisa and decides to follow her. Simultaneously, Franchesco feels attached to George and decides to pursue her. From that moment on, the act of seeing and being seen are intermingled, which is another reference to the relativity of the gaze. George spies on Lisa by following her to where she lives and draws eyes on the wall opposite to her house. That exact moment in the novel, which also becomes the end of George’s section and the beginning of Franchesco’s first person narrative in the edition that this article analyses, is significant in emphasizing the binary nature of the act of seeing: Once an object, one can easily become the subject of this act.

Apart from these physical references to eyes and seeing, points of view and perception are thoroughly substantial throughout the novel, since “the novel’s primary theme [involves] many modes of vision and the pleasures and pains of seeing and being seen” (Daigle, 2016). Moreover, it is noteworthy that

cultural and historical situation, precedents and preconceptions, and concepts like “art” shape how we look at the world. These factors mean that looking is never a simple, uncompromised act; rather the look operates within a complex matrix of visual and verbal relations. (Weaver, 2018, p. 530)

This argument is predominantly based on John Berger’s theory on seeing, which is utterly important in the relationship between the narrative structure of the novel and the function of seeing in the storyline. According to Berger, images contain deeper meanings beyond what they represent on the surface and these multi-layered meanings reflect differences in perception and ideologies. First of all, publishing *How to Be Both* in two different editions invites different points of view. Each reader’s perception of the text and the characters is shaped according to the version he/she reads. Moreover, by presenting the same incidents and notions through the perspective of utterly different characters, namely a Renaissance artist and a modern adolescent girl, Smith underscores plurality against uniformity. Smith’s emphasis on plurality is significant since the Renaissance promotes one-point perspective, which eliminates multiple points of view by presenting a single vanishing point in order to create the illusion of depth to a painting. Furthermore, “in the Renaissance an isolated eye did not refer to the sensory organ as such; it was an emblem that ‘detached’ the gaze from a body that was doing the gazing. The eye represents a person gazing and indicates this activity” (Belting, 2011, p. 211). The Renaissance understanding of the eye is symbolically exemplified through

¹² When her father learns George’s daily routine, and argues that she can do nothing to help the girl by watching the video, George simply says “I’ve got eyes” (Smith, 2015, p. 39). Her insistence on watching these videos and her emphasis on the fact that she has eyes and she can see, are signs of the importance the novel attaches to the relationship between seeing and comprehending.

the ghost of Franchesco, who does not have a physical body but only appears as a gaze throughout her narrative. Similarly, in George's world, the gaze without the body is emphasized through surveillance cameras and videos.

As Lewis emphasizes,

seeing can [...] seem synonymous with *knowing*, knowing deeply and intimately, in an act of recognition dependent on both sight and insight. This way of conceptualizing sight is rooted in the epistemology of vision in the Italian Renaissance. (Lewis, 2019, p. 135)

In a novel, which celebrates fluidity and simultaneity, knowing one's self and others through seeing, becomes a challenge on its own. As Weaver suggests, "Smith's stress on the culturally emplaced and multi-referential nature of appearance argues for a relationship between identity and image that is far from stable" (Weaver, 2018, p. 541). Consequently, Smith's *How to Be Both* deconstructs concepts such as identity, gender, seeing and narrative both structurally and contextually. Franchesco and George's perception of one another as well as the world in general (i.e. what Franchesco thinks of technological devices in the modern world...etc.) can be explained with Berger's argument that "the way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe" (Berger, 1972, p. 8). Berger's argument is not only applicable to the storyline and the characters' positions in their fictitious worlds but also to the reading experience Smith's novel presents. The readers' pre-knowledge about George or Franchesco (depending on the edition they read) alters the way they see and comprehend the characters and the novel as a whole. Moreover, Franchesco's occupation and George's never-ending attempts in making sense of everything around herself, locate seeing and, hence point of view in the centre. By presenting dual narratives suggesting multiple points of view, Smith's novel challenges linearity, uniformity and one-point perspective.

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