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CONTENT

CHAPTER ONE

Confessions of a Medieval Pardoner: Chaucer's "The Pardoner's Tale"

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ABSTRACT

Known as "the father of English literature" or "the father of English poetry," Geoffrey Chaucer is the first poet to write in the vernacular of his people. His journey to Italy made impact on his poetry and got him acquainted with the works of such authors as Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. He thus wrote *The Canterbury Tales* upon returning to his country from Italy. He portrayed lifelike characters such as the Pardoner in accurate detail with psychological depth through social criticism instead of creating allegorical characters. The aim of this chapter is to introduce "The Pardoner's Tale" as a social commentary illustrating the social ills during Chaucer's time.

Keywords – Chaucer, Canterbury Tales, The Pardoner, Social Criticism, Middle Ages.

INTRODUCTION

Chaucer, as "the father of English literature", developed the language of the lower-class Saxons by appropriating words from French. He wrote in vernacular rather than in Latin or French which are considered the languages of the elite and the only languages fit for literature. Therefore, the English language that was regarded as the language of lower-class people started to be used as the language of literature. Chaucer was born to a father who was a wine merchant descending from a wealthy family that took up the same job for two generations. He sought a career in court in order to climb the social ladder and to have a title. He worked in a variety of positions, from a page to a bureaucrat. His occupations allowed him to get acquainted with people from various social backgrounds, providing material for his works. His literary career can be divided into three: the French, the Italian and the English. During the period under French influence, Chaucer translated "Roman de la Rose," and wrote "The Book of the Duchess." His journey to Italy made him get acquainted with the works of such authors as Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. He wrote "Troilus and Criseyde," a 8,239-line verse poem which he adapted from Boccaccio's "Il Filostrato" during Italian period. Starting to write *The Canterbury Tales* on his return from Italy, he could not finish his work as he died under mysterious circumstances. This chapter aims to analyze "The Pardoner's Tale" from the perspective of social criticism reflecting the multi-faceted problems of the Middle Ages.

A PARDONER OR A SWINDLER?

The Canterbury Tales is Chaucer's frame story composed of twenty-four short stories. It was written in Middle English during 1387–1400. It was originally intended that thirty pilgrims would tell stories on the way to Canterbury that would make one hundred and twenty stories, and they would each tell two stories on the way back. However, Chaucer was able to complete twenty-two stories and two more stories in fragments (David and Simpson, 2006: 216). His job experiences provided the material for his tales, and he presented people from various social backgrounds such as a knight, a prioress, a monk, a merchant, a man of law, a miller, and a pardoner. He "…had the gift of being able to view both sympathy and humor the behaviour, beliefs, and pretensions of the diverse people who comprised the levels of society" (David and Simpson, 2006: 216). The types of the stories the pilgrims tell also range from courtly romance to fable as well as a combination of them. Chaucer used iambic pentameter, a line composed of ten syllables, five of which are stressed. He uses rhyming couplets that can be regarded as heroic couplet's predecessor. The stories in *The Canterbury Tales* include "The Knight's Tale," "The Miller's Tale," "The Reeve's Tale," "The Cook's Tale," "The Squire's Tale" and "The Pardoner's Tale." This chapter will center on "The Pardoner's Tale."

"The Pardoner's Tale," as the name indicates, is the tale delivered by a Medieval pardoner to his audience in the story. Traditionally, a Medieval Pardoner is someone who could sell papal pardons or indulgences under the authority of the Pope and the Church ("Pardoner"). In other words, as the Pardoner in the tale depicts, a pardoner travels to the countryside giving sermons to raise money, allegedly for charitable institutions such as schools and hospitals, and he grants pardons to the ones who contribute. Chaucer's pardoner is not an honest one. He uses his rhetoric skills, papal official papers, and trinkets which are not actually authentic relics, as he confesses to getting gold coins from people. His false relics are just random rags, sheep's bones and mittens. He even utters something in Latin in order to sound holy and convincing. He gives sermons about avarice (gluttony), gambling, swearing falsely by taking God's name in vain, drinking, and cheating on one's spouse. His preaching always focuses on the same subject, "'Radix malorum est cupiditas" which indicates that the love of money (greed) lies at the root of all evil (Chaucer 285). He himself commits gluttony and admits that he tells a hundred lies and fools the people listening to him: "I preche so as ye han herd bifore, / And telle an hundred false japes more" (286). He does not hide the fact that his relics are fake; furthermore, he declares that he tricks people into giving money even if it is their last by exploiting his office: "In his Prologue, the Pardoner boasts to his fellow pilgrims about his own depravity and ingenuity with which he abuses his office and extracts money from poor and ignorant people" (David and Simpson, 2006). He is so

depraved that his conscience would allow him to trick people into giving their precious possessions or goods such as wool, cheese, or wheat even though they are given by the most poverty-stricken member of a society or a woman whose husband, the bread provider of the house, is dead and whose children are famished: "I wol have moneye, wolle, cheese, and whete, / Al were it yiven of the poorest page, / Or of the pooreste widwe in a village – / Al sholde hir children sterve for famine" (2006: Lines 160-163). He even tries to convince the Host to give money in return for kissing his trinkets that he claims to be fake relics, so that he would pardon his sins even after his disclosures. He feels no shame; on the contrary, he is proud of committing gluttony and fooling people. The Pardoner is after the money he will get. He is not interested in getting rid of people's mortal sins: "For myn entente is nat but for to winne, / And no thing for correccion of sinne" (2006: Lines 115-116). He confesses that he produces a high income in a year. He also attacks people who, according to him, wrongs him or his fellow pardoners with defamations. He points at such people as the target under the disguise of holiness by exploiting his status. The pardoner commits all the sins he preaches against although he is a member of the Church who is expected to be more righteous than the rest of society. He is cunning and heinous. He can be considered the most controversial characters of Chaucer's works. Pardoner stands for the Church and its members. Chaucer criticizes their conduct through a pardoner who sells official papers granting absolution for the purchasers in return for their money and confession.

In "The General Prologue," the physical appearance of the pardoner is described by Chaucer. He has a voice resembling to that of a goat and he was beardless, clean shaven, which connotates womanly or homosexual looks: "A vois hadde he as small as hath a goot; / No beerd hadde he, ne nevere sholde have; / As smoothe it was as it were late yshave" (2006: Lines 690-693). Furthermore, Chaucer likens him to a gelding, a castrated male horse that reinforces the critics' opinion about him being a homosexual: "I trowe he were a gelding or mare" (2006, Lines 690-693). According to Derek Pearsall, Chaucer hints at the Pardoner's impotency or homosexuality by comparing him to a mare as "The association of effeminacy (the mare) with homosexuality is age-old, and several of the physical features attributed to the Pardoner concur in suggesting that he is a homosexual" (1983: 359). According to Walter Clyde Curry, the Pardoner was born a eunuch, a man who has no genitals due to castration, and it naturally leads him to be a devious and improper person, prone to commit all kinds of sins (1960: 70). In other words, his physiology points to his lack of morals.

"The Pardoner's Tale" is used as an exemplum in the Pardoner's sermon (Spearing, 2003: 195-213). An exemplum is a short tale inserted into a Medieval preacher's sermons to serve as an example while giving moral messages or to exemplify religious doctrines ("Exemplum"). After the prologue, the Pardoner begins telling his tale about the same theme his tales

revolve around that is "Avarice is the root of evil" (David and Simpson, 2006: 284). He introduces a company of young men to the reader. These young men commit all the sins the pardoner speaks against in his sermons. They riot and gamble. They are continuous visitors to brothels and taverns. They are also drunkards and false swearers. They contain every kind of wickedness and vile in themselves. The chain of events that take place in the tale stems from the trio's drinking "over hir might" (2006: Line 180). The Pardoner condemns drunkenness and supports his idea by referring to Lot's story from the Bible. According to the story, Lot's daughters get their father drunk and commit incest. Lot is so drunk that he did not recognize the malignancy of the act he and his daughters carry out. Because of his family profession, Chaucer was knowledgeable about the behaviors of drunkards and that is the main reason for his accurate depiction of the behavior of three drunkards:

Chaucer was no stranger to the forms and institutions of alcohol consumption during his day: his family had been in the wine and tavern business for generations; his childhood home was in the Vintry, with the living chambers built above the wholesale premises and storage cellars; and when his father died in 1366, his mother quickly married another vintner. (Bowers, 1990: 757) Gordon Hall Gerould claims that the Pardoner himself suffers the consequences of his drunkenness. He loses his self-control and reveals that he uses fake relics to trick people into giving their money. Moreover, he confesses that he uses his rhetorical skills adding expressions in Latin to impress people and sound more holy for the same purpose. In addition, he forgets his revelations and he, in vain, attempts to convince the Host to kiss his fake relics: "His loss of control, and therefore his whole performance, can be explained only by understanding that he was tipsy, and tipsy to the point of not caring what he said and indeed not being altogether conscious of it" (1990: 70).

In this context, it could be claimed that the original intention of the Pardoner's tale is to warn the listeners about the fact that one sin inescapably gives way to another. Their drunkenness coupled with gluttony signs their death warrant. The three young men who are named as "three roisterers" (revelers) (Chaucer, 2006: Line 373) set out to kill Death, "an unseen thief" who slayed their old friend (2006: Line 378). They are not afraid of either the name, Death, or its deeds even though the innkeeper informs them Death killed men, women and children, people from various backgrounds be it a hind or a page. They encounter an old man on the way who points towards a grove and says that Death dwells there. He looks ancient due to his old age because death refuses to take his life. He, with his cane, knocks on Mother Earth time and again and pleads her to let him in: "And on the ground which is my modres gate/ I knokke with my staff bothe early and late, / And saye, 'Leve moder, leet me in" (2006: Lines 441-443). The Old Man is interpreted as the Death itself undercover according to some critics (Bishop, 1967: 15).

However, some claim that he is just an old man who cannot die because Death refuses to take his life. Marie Padgett Hamilton claims that the aforementioned character cannot only be "a pathetic old man" and "he must stand for Old Age as the Harbinger of Death, clothed as it were in his master's livery, and hence resembling Death" (1939: 572). In the same vein, Nelson Sherwin Bushnell remarks that he resembles to the legendary Wandering Jew who insulted Jesus Christ on the way to cross and was cursed with roaming the Earth until the Second Coming of Christ (Bushnell, 1931: 450). Traditionally, "the figure of the old man" serves as a spiritual guide or stands as a warning about the mortality of body (Nitecki, 1981: 76). As the rioters are young and restless committing all kinds of sin, The Old Man's condition is supposed to set an example in order for them to abandon wickedness. Although the opinions vary, one thing is for certain. The Old Man is the most noteworthy character in the tale in that he is the most mysterious one that is more open to interpretation than the others, as Elizabeth R. Hatcher notes: "… no single interpretation has been accepted as 'definitive" (1975: 246).

When the Three Rioters arrive under the tree the Old Man points at, they find bushels of gold and they abandon their cause of killing Death who killed their old comrade. Chaucer's old man and the young rioters are different and contrasting in more ways than just age. The rioters are arrogant while the Old Man is a humble person who would not mind being wrapped up in rags. The youngsters seek after Death impatiently and unthinkingly; however, the Old Man patiently waits for Death to take his life. They are opposed in a number of other ways: "The encounter between them juxtaposes youth and age, pride and humility, impatience and patience, blasphemy and piety, 'vileinye' and 'curteisye,' folly and wisdom, avarice and contemptus mundi" (Steadman, 1964: 124). The Old Man is surely a much better person than the rioters because he prays for God to save them: "'God save you, that bought again mankinde, / And you amende.' Thus saide this old man." (2006: Lines 478-479). The spiritual shortcomings of the rioters cause them to plot against their friend who they send to fetch food and drink to them because he draws the short straw. Their intention is to divide the gold under the tree to have more gold for each of them. However, their friend also plans their murder for the same purpose. He intends to kill them by putting poison in their drinks to get the money all for himself. In the end, two of the rioters who kill their comrade die after consuming the drinks their friend brings. Their death gives the message that sins such as drunkenness and gluttony lead to death. Eventually, as the tale nears the end, the Pardoner offers to absolve the pilgrims, forgetting the fact that he reveals that he is guilty of all the sins he claims to be opposed, and he is a fraud.

CONCLUSION

Chaucer introduces a character who is heavily involved in the vices he claims to be against in "The Pardoner's Tale." This character, the Pardoner, stands for the Church and her members of the writer's time. He embodies the corruption that envelops the Church and its members who go so far as to say that they absolve the people's sins and save them from suffering the punishment of hell itself let alone purgatory. Furthermore, the Three Rioters the Pardoner talks about in his tale may be regarded as the embodiments of the sins they commit. The Old Man, on the other hand, is a reminder of death and the temporariness of life. Chaucer makes a social commentary through "The Pardoner's Tale" and in other tales of his in a humorous way. He took his material from the people he came across in the contemporary world.

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CHAPTER TWO

Transcendence and Transformation in The Selected Poetry of W. B. Yeats

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the recurring themes of transcendence and transformation in William Butler Yeats' selected poetry. It examines Yeats' development as a poet, tracing his transition from Romantic ideals to Modernist sensibilities while emphasizing his philosophical, mystical, and spiritual inquiries. Yeats' use of symbolism, mythology, and historical cycles to reflect personal and societal transformations is analysed in depth. Central to the analysis is Yeats' belief in cyclical patterns of history and spiritual rebirth, which are illustrated through poems such as "He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven," "Adam's Curse," "The Song of Wandering Aengus," "The Second Coming," "Sailing to Byzantium," and "Leda and the Swan." These works demonstrate Yeats' pursuit of artistic and philosophical clarity, highlighting his interest in mysticism, occult practices, and metaphysical systems. By examining Yeats' major themes, this chapter reveals how Yeats' poetry serves as a vehicle for exploring the human soul's search for meaning, transformation, and transcendence.

Keywords – Transformation, Transcendence, A Vision, W.B. Yeats, Mysticism, Occult, Poetry.

INTRODUCTION

Born in 1865, William Butler Yeats was a modern writer with a long, varied and complex career. His work spans three significant literary periods: the Romantic, the Victorian, and the Modernist eras, reflecting his evolution as both a poet and a political figure. Yeats's poetic career reflects a bridge between Romanticism and Modernism. It captures the emotional intensity of the Romantic era while also reflecting the anxiety, disillusionment, and sense of fragmentation that characterize Modernist literature. According to Greaves (2001), it is widely believed that Yeats's work changed significantly in the period following *In the Seven Woods*, and that in the process he became a modernist poet (3). At first, it was debatable whether Yeats belonged to the Modernist movement. Ezra Pound, Ford Madox Ford and T. S. Eliot, key figures of Modernism, did not consider Yeats as a modernist. However, the definition of Modernism has expanded over time, and its connection to Romanticism has been debated. Greaves, drawing on Carol T. Christ's observation that Yeats was "the most Romantic of the Modernists", argues that Romanticism and Modernism are not entirely opposed. Yeats's Romantic sensibilities do not exclude him from being a modernist. Rather, they characterise his unique approach within the modernist movement (14). This frame of mind helped him have a dialectical mindset, where opposing truths could coexist without invalidating each other. Yeats was deeply

committed to the Irish Literary Revival, which aimed to promote Irish culture and literature, and saw poetry as a means of forging a distinct national identity for Ireland and motivating political change. For instance, Yeats's career was shaped by the interplay of practical Irish nationalism and spiritual occultism, two seemingly contradictory forces that coexisted and complemented each other in his work. Throughout his life, he constantly reinvented himself as a writer, a public figure, and an individual. His life and work revolved around themes of Irish identity, occultism, love, and the transformative power of art to change the world (Howes, 2006: 1).

Yeats's poetic development is often divided into 'early Yeats' and 'later Yeats'. However, this categorization can sometimes be misleading, as Yeats revisited and reworked earlier themes and styles throughout his career. The Pre-Raphaelite, visionary, and symbolic poetry of his early years gradually gave way to a more disciplined and dramatic style, first evident in *In the Seven Woods* (1903). This evolution culminated in works like *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* (1910) and *Responsibilities* (1914), where his expression became clearer, reflecting both personal and artistic growth (Ross, 2009: 554-555). This transition also marks Yeats's movement from emotional engagement with Romantic ideals to a more sceptical and intellectually driven perspective that aligns with Modernism.

Critics such as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound appreciated Yeats's transition to a simpler and more direct writing style, viewing it as a reflection of his growing political and artistic maturity. It is often believed that it was Pound who influenced this change. However, some critics claim that Yeats began moving away from abstraction as early as the 1890s and that Pound only accelerated this process. While this change is generally seen as positive, Harold Bloom challenges this view, claiming that the works of "Early Yeats" were superior compared to the "Middle Yeats" (Ross, 2009: 554-555).

Bloom (1970) argues that Yeats was more poetically accomplished between 1885 and 1899 than during the following fifteen years. He challenges the oft-repeated view that Yeats's 'middle' and 'late' works are superior, asserting that poetry collections like *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899), *Crossways* (1889) and *The Rose* (1893) are more impressive than much of his middle-period poetry. While Yeats's later works, such as *The Tower* (1928) and *The Winding Stair* (1929), reflect his efforts to reach poetic maturity, they are deeply interwoven with his views on Irish culture, politics, and personal growth. Bloom views the Middle Period as an unsatisfactory transition. In fact, it is during this period that Yeats questions his own romantic past and adopts an anti-romantic stance, though, unlike Eliot and Pound, Yeats cannot sustain this stance (162). This marks his transition from the emotional depth of Romanticism to the intellectual pursuit of Modernism, reflected in his engagement with themes like disillusionment and fragmentation.

T. S. Elliot (1948) offered a contrasting perspective, asserting that Yeats's later poems were more beautiful and valuable, reflecting the poet's maturity and transformation. Eliot emphasizes Yeats's evolving pursuit for mysticism and transcendence, noting that this search began with complex symbols and esoteric themes. Yeats gradually moved away from this style and turned to a simpler and more direct narrative form, which, according to Eliot, added depth to his poetry. For Eliot, Yeats's true "transcendence" came from poetic maturation rather than mystical practices (140).

However, Bloom (1970) argues that excessively exalting Yeats prevents us from noticing the limits of our own era's imagination, mainly since he grew up during a time of limited imaginative scope. While some modern critics regard Yeats as the most important lyric poet since the 17th century, this view has been contested by critics like Yvor Winters. Winters described Yeats as a gifted yet baffled Romantic poet who, despite his efforts to break away from that tradition, only became more Romantic (vi).

From *Responsibilities* onwards, Yeats aimed for clarity and accessibility, but his style remained obscure at times. This was partly due to the unique symbols he created inconsistencies in his ideas, and a style that occasionally fell short. During this period, Yeats took a more didactic approach, forcefully articulating his ideas in an effort to influence his readers. Winters (1960) argued that while these ideas were forceful, they were often ineffective in conveying Yeats's complex ideas clearly. He did not completely reject Yeats's poetry but acknowledged the success of a few short poems and notable lines in larger works. However, in a broader assessment, Winters claimed that Yeats was neither an exceptional poet nor the best of his era. He believed that poets like Robert Bridges, Thomas Hardy, Edwin Arlington Robinson, and Wallace Stevens surpassed him, and that some younger poets even outshone Yeats (22-23). Winters attributes Yeats's reputation to several factors and claims that while there are traces of talent in his works, the intellectual climate of the time, which often disregarded the connection between thought and poetry, also contributed to his elevation. In addition, Yeats's epic tone, characteristic of Romantic poetry, left a lasting impression on readers, reinforcing the perception of his greatness. However, while initially effective, this tone gradually became misleading and eventually lost its impact. Yeats's epic style deeply influenced critics and readers of his time, overshadowing poets who were arguably more talented. Furthermore, many who imitated his style created works that were ultimately damaged and irreversibly affected (23).

Winters' criticism makes sense, given his opposition to Romantic poetry, but labelling Yeats as a metaphysical poet is misleading. While Winters rejects Yeats' ideas, critics like Richard Ellmann and Thomas Whitaker offered a different perspective (Bloom, 1970: vi). For instance, Ellmann (1968) argued that Yeats embraced the risks of imagination because he recognized its immense power (223). For Ellmann, the highest form of art

is one that blends reality and imagination, even if it may seem chaotic from a conventional perspective. In his analysis of "The Tower", Ellmann shows how Yeats seamlessly merges reality and imagination, suggesting a transcendent artistic vision (223).

Yeats's poetry and prose frequently explore the central conflict between the soul and the self, symbolizing the tension between worldly desires and a higher spiritual ideal, as well as the dilemmas of the inner human experience. Yeats makes this conflict tangible for his readers through symbols and imagery. The 'self' represents worldly desires and the material realm, while the 'soul' embodies the pursuit of a higher, spiritual meaning. This fundamental human dilemma—the tension between the self and the soul—recurs throughout his poetry. By using opposites as symbols, Yeats highlights the continuous tension between these two forces. However, this tension is not merely oppositional but part of a larger search for balance. Yeats's works reflect his ongoing effort to reconcile these forces and achieve a resolution where individuals can balance both themselves and the soul (Ellmann, 1968: 165).

HIS PHILOSOPHY

1. Mystical Tendencies

William Butler Yeats left a profound mark on the literary world, not just as a poet, but also as a thinker deeply engaged in mystical and spiritual pursuits. His fascination with esoteric subjects like Theosophy, Hermeticism, and the concept of historical cycles, where events seem to follow repeating patterns or cycles of rise, decline, and renewal, shaped the transcendent and transformative themes in his poetry. Yeats believed that through spiritual development, individuals could transcend physical and material limitations and reach a higher state of consciousness. This idea of transcendence and transformation is a recurring theme in his poetry, often intertwined with ideas of cyclical time, rebirth, and the eternal journey of the soul. One of Yeats's central motives, the concept of "gyres", symbolizes the cyclical nature of history and the interplay of conflicting forces (Nally, 2010: 73). This concept was also a metaphor for the political cycles of Ireland and for Yeats's evolving understanding of national identity (Saylan, 2017: 3). Through his exploration of historical cycles and spiritual transformation, Yeats sought not only personal enlightenment but also a broader understanding of the possibilities for social and universal change.

The person who first introduced Yeats to mysticism was George W. Russell. According to Russell, Yeats had already shown an interest in these ideas before their meeting. Together, they turned away from the visible world in search of a more spiritual and visionary reality. This shared vision led them to form a society where they could explore these ideas in greater

depth. Russell described their perception of the world through a vivid metaphor of a "tapestry blown and stirred by winds behind it: if it would but raise for an instant I know I would be in Paradise" (Russell, 1920: 5-6). This image suggests that what we perceive is merely a surface layer, and that a deeper, perhaps more beautiful reality lies just beyond our immediate sight. They would gather to discuss these ideas until late hours, and these conversations laid the foundations of what would become the Hermetic Society. Though Russell was not an official member, he played a significant and influential role in shaping the mystical and spiritual direction of the group (Foster, 1997: 48-49). The Society offered Yeats and other like-minded individuals a unique environment to explore mysticism, not only for personal growth but also as a path toward spiritual development.

Yeats's interest in mysticism was not merely theoretical but it was driven by a deep personal search for spiritual transformation. Disillusioned by the shallowness of his era and unable to fully embrace traditional religions, Yeats turned to mysticism to fill the spiritual void he felt (Jeffares, 1968: 42-45). Through his engagement with mysticism and ancient belief systems, he sought deeper insights into fundamental questions of life, death, and what follows after. In this context, occultism had a profound influence on both his personal and artistic development. He incorporated many metaphors from magic and mysticism into his works, and the Golden Dawn, a prominent society dedicated to the study of occult and mystical practices, offered him a space to escape from the worries of daily life, where his imagination could roam freely. This engagement with mysticism also extended into his personal life, particularly his relationship with Maud Gonne, the love of his life. Gonne's personal misfortunes had made her susceptible to occult promises, and Yeats, recognizing this, used their shared mystical interest to strengthen their bond (Foster, 1997: 106).

Yeats saw occultism not only as a path to personal, spiritual transformation but also as a powerful tool for shaping his political views. He combined his mystical beliefs with his deep commitment to Irish nationalism, believing that spiritual and political renewal were intrinsically linked. He believed that occultism could empower Ireland's fight for independence, igniting a spiritual and national awakening. By merging these two realms, occultism and nationalism, Yeats sought to spark a collective cultural revival in Ireland. In short, he viewed the mystical as a source of power to energize political struggle and inspire love (Foster, 1997: 106-107).

Yeats's passion for spiritualism, the occult, and spiritual transformation significantly shaped both his personal beliefs and artistic output. Moving beyond traditional religious frameworks, he delved into various belief systems, embarking on an intellectual and spiritual journey (Jeffares, 1968: 42-45). His initial interests in mysticism laid the foundation for his later, more concentrated study of Theosophy, which combines elements from both Eastern and Western religions and philosophies.

Although Yeats's works are often described as magical or occult, Ellmann (1968) notes that they are difficult to categorize. Yeats's fascination with occultism and mysticism persisted throughout his life, leading him to embrace Theosophy, magical rituals, and spiritualism. However, this interest made some critics uneasy, with some arguing that he should have pursued more "respectable" intellectual endeavours. Yeats himself acknowledged that he placed occultism, which he referred to as his "mystical life", at the centre of his early works. However, the occultism Yeats embraced was not mere superstition but included the philosophical ideas of Eastern and Western traditions. Yeats believed that science had its limits, and that imagination was a more significant human faculty than reason and logic. For this reason, he preferred to work with symbols, which he considered to be a deeper and more profound form of expression. As Ellmann observes, Yeats's spiritual and intellectual journey was marked by his broader resistance to conventional thought, with his works and worldview often challenging scientific and rational approaches (2-3).

Yeats' interest in mysticism deepened through his encounter with Theosophy. His friend Charles Johnston, who had first encountered Theosophy in London, introduced it to Dublin (Foster, 1997: 45). Yeats was particularly captivated by Madame Blavatsky, a leading figure in Theosophy, and her mysterious personality. However, he was critical of the rigid, dogmatic aspects of the Theosophists. What Yeats was truly looking for was a form of wisdom that comes from a personal connection with the divine or universal forces, independent of any organized doctrines. For him, mysticism offered a way to transcend the ordinary and access deeper truths. During this time, he also became interested in various symbolic and ritual practices as part of his spiritual journey (Jeffares, 1968: 42-45).

These Theosophical activities became a centre of learning for Yeats. He embarked on a long intellectual journey, organizing clubs and engaging in speculative discussions on various spiritual disciplines and occult knowledge. One such group was the Dublin Hermetic Society, founded in 1885. This society, which contributed to Ireland's literary revival, included members such as Charles Johnston, Claude Falls Wright, Charles Weekes, and W. K. Magee, with Yeats as its president (Foster, 1997: 46-47). They focused on studying esoteric knowledge, including Kabbalah and magic, and was influenced by figures like MacGregor Mathers. Yeats viewed symbols and rituals as powerful tools to connect with the spiritual realm, and this belief deeply influenced his poetry. Through his writing, he sought to express and explore deeper spiritual meanings, often using symbols and imagery to convey these hidden truths (Jeffares, 1968: 42-45). This ever-deepening engagement with mystical ideas and practices paved the way for a more direct and personal connection with the spiritual realm, a development that would find expression in the automatic writing experiments Yeats began with his wife, George Hyde Lees.

2. Automatic Writing

At the beginning of *A Vision*, W. B. Yeats recounts his experience with automatic writing, which began shortly after his marriage to George Hyde Lees in 1917. George's engagement in automatic writing soon became a significant source of inspiration for Yeats's artistic and philosophical development. They believed these writings were messages conveyed through symbols and geometric shapes, and Yeats viewed the process as a kind of revelation. Although initially sceptical, he put in the time and effort to understand these mysterious experiences.

> On the afternoon of October 24, 1917, four days after my marriage, my wife surprised me by attempting automatic writing. What came in disjointed sentences, in almost illegible writing, was so exciting, sometimes so profound, that I persuaded her to give an hour or two days after day to the unknown writer, and after some half-dozen such hours offered to spend what remained of life explaining and piecing together those scattered sentences. "No," was the answer, "we have come to give you metaphors for poetry.'' […] A system of symbolism, strange to my wife and to myself, certainly awaited expression, and when I asked how long that would take I was told years. (Yeats, 1962, 8–9)

Yeats's account of his wife's automatic writing reveals a profound impact on his creative process. It sparked a new way of thinking and led him to develop a unique symbolic language that became a key part of his poetry later. These writing experiments, which Yeats and his wife George began shortly after their marriage, turned into a psychological and mystical research process aimed at communicating with spiritual beings. In these experiments, George viewed herself as a kind of intermediary or medium; according to her, the source of information was not her own mind, but spiritual beings called "controls" or "guides." The couple produced more than 3,600 pages in approximately 450 sessions until 1920. These writings, which George mentally guided and referred to as "automatic," were shaped by a process that Yeats initially struggled to believe in. However, over time, Yeats became convinced of the accuracy of the information coming from these "controls" or "guides," integrating their insights into his own philosophical works. During this process, Yeats sometimes removed or corrected misleading information from the text when he encountered it. These writings were an important source for Yeats's work *A Vision*, in which he reflected his mystical and philosophical views. However, much of the material was personal and private, so, only relevant sections were included in the work (Harper, 1987: x).

Yeats and George preferred to conduct these experiments privately, without an observer, which allowed them to develop a unique method. During the sessions, George wrote without entering the trance state typical

of traditional mediums and without the aid of special tools. In the early stages, Yeats asked probing and guiding questions, while George recorded the responses she received. The sessions generally followed a traditional dialogue structure, at times taking on a more playful, intellectual tone, reminiscent of Socratic inquiry or Wilde's playful intellectual dialogue. (Harper, 1987: x–xi).

At one point during the experiments, George and Yeats began to try a new approach involving dream and sleep experiments. This method enabled George to gather information through dreams, alongside the information she received from her writings and guides. All these materials became a crucial source for *A Vision* and played a key role in helping Yeats rediscover his creative potential (Harper, 1987: xi–xii). The symbols and insights that emerged from these automatic writing sessions not only transformed Yeats's creative process but also became the basis for his later philosophical work, culminating in the intricate system he would explore in *A Vision* which he co-wrote with his wife.

3. *A Vision*

A Vision is a complex work, filled with unique terminology and abstract concepts, which demands readers to engage deeply with both its content and structure. At the heart of Yeats's ideas in this text is a 28-phase cycle he calls 'The Great Wheel'. This cycle mirrors the phases of the moon and outlines the spiritual and psychological development of humanity. Each phase represents a distinct stage in human experience, transitioning from objectivity to subjectivity. In other words, it moves from a focus on external realities to a more personal, internal perspective as one navigates the human journey.

In Yeats's system, the full moon symbolizes complete objectivity, while the new moon symbolizes total subjectivity. These phases, as part of 'The Great Wheel' reflect a dynamic shift between external reality and inner experience. Yeats illustrates this interplay through the tension between two opposing forces, represented by the image of two opposing gyres—one symbolizing objectivity (the 'primary' gyre) and the other, subjectivity (the 'antithetical' gyre). While objectivity emphasizes external realities and factual truths, subjectivity focuses on inner desires and imagination (Ross, 2009: 420). To explore how these opposing forces, manifest in human experience, Yeats introduces some basic concepts known as the *Four Faculties* and the *Four Principles*.

3.1. The *Four Faculties* and the *Four Principles*

Yeats explores the interplay between objectivity and subjectivity through four key concepts known as the *Four Faculties*: *Will*, *Mask*, *Creative Mind,* and *Body of Fate*. According to Yeats, *Will* and *Mask* are characterized by their natural and antithetical nature, whereas *Creative Mind*

and *Body of Fate* are defined by their logical and primary qualities. In Yeats's framework, the *Will* represents the person's deeper desires, drives, or inner striving. It is the underlying force behind a person's desires and motivations that drives the actions we take and the choices we make (Mann, 2019b: 20–21). The *Mask*, on the other hand, represents the image or ideal that the person aspires to, the goal or target of that desire. The *Mask* is the manifestation of what the *Will* seeks to attain or embody (11). The *Creative Mind* is where inspiration and imagination come together to form creative expression, which emerges from a deeper, often unconscious source that shapes intention and directs creation. Finally, the *Body of Fate* is the way in which our experiences, perceptions, and physical and mental states are shaped by the external world and the passage of time (3). Together, these ideas show how people navigate both their inner and outer worlds, balancing their desires, sense of self, creativity, and the unpredictable forces of life (Mann, 2019b). These four concepts are visualized as two cones facing each other. The *Will* of one cone corresponds to the *Mask* of the other, and the *Creative Mind* of one aligns with the *Body of Fate* of the other. That is to say, the *Will* and *Mask* are opposing yet complementary, and the *Creative Mind* and *Body of Fate* similarly mirror each other. According to Yeats, this arrangement helps to map human existence (Ross, 2009: 420–421). "Everything that wills can be desired, resisted or accepted, every creative act can be seen as fact, every *Faculty* is alternately shield and sword" (Yeats, 1962: 73–74). This statement captures the essence of the philosophy of the *Faculties* he created. First, he suggests that anything driven by the *Will* can be desired, resisted, or accepted. This shows that the *Will* is a dynamic force, involving both action and reaction. Next, Yeats argues that when a thought from the *Creative Mind* is realized, it becomes concrete, no longer just an idea. This highlights the role of creativity in turning thoughts into reality. Lastly, Yeats emphasizes how flexible the *Faculties* are, like a shield that can also transform into a sword, making them useful for both defence and offence.

Yeats relates the 28 phases of the moon to the intertwined gyres of *primary* and *antithetical* tinctures (or forces), describing the spiritual and psychological journey of humankind. In this system, the dark moon (Phase 1) represents a time of complete objectivity, and the full moon (Phase 15) represents complete subjectivity. Like the moon's phases, thoughts and feelings shift between primary and antithetical forces, either moving from one to the other or vice versa.

The search for personality begins in Phase 8, where an individual starts to develop a sense of self. By Phase 22, however, the process shifts, leading into a phase of spiritual awakening and transcendence, marked by depersonalization. According to Yeats, the *Will* is the driving force behind an individual's or culture's position within the lunar cycle and shapes their psychological and spiritual development. (Ross, 2009: 421). As the *Will*

shapes one's journey through these phases, it determines the shifting balance between objectivity and subjectivity, driving the continuous evolution of the self.

In the chapter "The Completed Symbol", Yeats expands his system in *A Vision* and introduces the *Four Principles—Husk*, *Passionate Body*, *Spirit*, and *Celestial Body*—which complement the *Four Faculties*. Yeats argues that the *Faculties* are learned skills that a person develops consciously, while the *Principles* represent the innate aspects that form the basis of these skills. The *Spirit* and the *Celestial Body* symbolize the mind and its object, while the *Husk* and the *Passionate Body* symbolize the senses and their objects (Ross, 2009: 422).

Yeats organized his system into *Faculties* and *Principles*. The *Faculties* as mentioned are based on the 28 phases of the lunar cycle, and they represent different aspects of human nature. The *Principles*, on the other hand, are linked with the 12 months of the solar year and symbolize the Daimonic[1] side, deeper spiritual side, of humanity. The *Husk* represents the Daimon's desire to open up to other beings; the *Passionate Body* represents the sum of the Daimons; the *Spirit* represents the Daimon's ability to comprehend all other beings as a whole; and the *Celestial Body* represents the ultimate state of achieving this unity (Ross, 2009: 422).

In Yeats's complex system, the *Faculties* are concerned with the dynamic processes of life, whereas the *Principles* encompass both life and the inter-life. With death, consciousness moves from the *Husk* to the *Spirit*, and the *Husk* and the *Passionate Body* fade away. The *Spirit* then merges with the *Celestial Body*, achieving complete wholeness. Yeats emphasizes that the *Faculties* and *Principles* are interconnected and work together, influencing different aspects of human life. For example, emotions are shaped by the *Will* and directed by the interplay between the *Mask* and the *Celestial Body* or the *Passionate Body* (Ross, 2009: 423).

3.2. The Thirteenth Cone

Yeats argues that the metaphysical system he developed concerning the Daimonic plane, reflects humanity's flawed perspective. It serves as a symbol of a concept that cannot be fully expressed. Therefore, he introduces the concept of the *Thirteenth Cone*. He defines it as a sphere that marks the end point of reality, free from phases and contrasts. It represents an eternal moment in which the Daimons reside, and it is difficult to understand when viewed from the world of contrasts (Ross, 2009: 423).

For Yeats, the *Thirteenth Cone* is a unique cycle that can free us from the cycle of space-time continuum. It encompasses all liberated spirits, Daimons and spiritual selves. In a way, this cone serves as a structure that

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[1] For further information see Yeats, W.B. (1918). *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*. McMillan https://www.gutenberg.org/files/33338/33338-h/33338-h.htm

nourishes worldly life. The actions of people while they are alive, or their memories after death, provide a kind of nourishment for the souls that reside in the *Thirteenth Cone,* giving them personality. More broadly, the *Thirteenth Cone* establishes a connection between heavens and the earth, eternity and time. In his 1930 diary, Yeats even suggests that the *Thirteenth Cone* can be seen as an alternative to the creative power of God, claiming it the main force that creates the world we live in. As Ross (2009) points out with this quote from Yeats: "Berkeley in the *Commonplace Book* thought that 'we perceive' and are passive whereas God creates in perceiving. He creates what we perceive. I substitute for God the Thirteenth Cone, the Thirteenth Cone therefore creates our perceptions— all the visible world—as held in common by our wheel" (423).

3.3. Death and Reincarnation

The section "Soul in Judgment" in *A Vision* provides a detailed account of six states a soul undergoes between death and reincarnation. These stages correspond to the six solar months from Aries to Libra and align with the primary phases from phase 22nd to the 28th day of the lunar cycle (Ross, 2009: 423). The six stages are as follows:

The Vision of the Blood Kindred: In this initial state, the individual encounters a vision, much like a flashing before their eyes, of all the beings they are connected to, especially those linked through *Husk* and the *Passionate Body* (Ross, 2009: 424). All the thoughts and images tied to the *Husk* come together in this vision before they are set free. The ghosts or images that appear at the time of death play a crucial role in shaping this vision (Yeats, 1962: 223). The deceased person prepares for the transition by meeting the spirits of their loved ones, and in the following "Meditation" phase, they fully accept death. In this process, the *Spirit* understands that it must let go of the *Husk* and the *Passionate Body* and turns to the *Celestial Body*. The *Husk* and *Passionate Body* are no longer renewed and are destroyed (Mann, 2019a: 244–245).

The Return: This state is divided into three stages.

The Return itself: The *Spirit*, guided by the *Celestial Body*, revisits past events in order and seeks to understand the significance of each. (Ross, 2009: 424).

The Dreaming Back: The *Spirit* repeatedly revisits the events that had the most profound impact on them. With the guidance of the Teaching Spirits, they review these events and find the opportunity to send messages to the living (Ross, 2009: 424) During *Dreaming Back*, the *Spirit* re-experiences past events. It transforms these experiences into knowledge that influences its future incarnations. These events are shaped by the influence of spirits in our subconscious. The quality of the *Dreaming Back* process directly affects the integrity and quality of the *Return*. Here, the *Spirit* uncovers both the causes and consequences of past events (Yeats, 1962: 226–227).

***The Phantasmagoria*:** It is the process of completing physical and moral life and synthesizing its emotional and spiritual lessons with the support of Teaching Spirits (Ross, 2009: 424). As Yeats states: "It is indeed a necessary act of the human soul that has cut off the incarnate and discarnate from one another, plunging the discarnate into our 'unconsciousness'. The *Phantasmagoria* completes not only life but imagination" (Yeats, 1962: 230).

These three stages enable the soul to confront its past life and prepare for a new life (Ross, 2009: 424). Yeats's description of the journey after death is similar to the modern understanding of trauma. The *Spirit's* clinging to the *Passionate Body* and getting stuck in the *Dreaming Back* phase is actually similar to the reliving of traumatic events in the mind. According to Yeats, the *Spirit*, faced with a violent or tragic death, relives painful experiences from the past repeatedly. This situation resembles the involuntary flashbacks, hallucinations, and intrusive memories in trauma theory. Thus, *Dreaming Back*, in which the *Spirit* reprocesses the traumatic events, transforming them into a meaningful narrative and restoring balance, is both a symptom of trauma and its solution. This process has great similarities to the goals of modern therapeutic approaches. In other words, the reincarnation process outlined by Yeats intuitively reveals the nature of the trauma, its symptoms, and the path to healing many years in advance (He, 2021: 346–347).

***The Shiftings*:** In this stage, the *Spirit* undergoes a moral reversal, undoing the attitudes that dominated its previous life. It must confront actions taken without a full understanding of good and evil and learn from them in order to evolve towards greater self-awareness (Ross, 2009: 424): That is what Yeats (1962) call as a "contemplation of good and evil" (232). In this phase the *Spirit* transcends the archetypal duality of good-evil and all distinctions such as subject-object, life-death, *Spirit-Celestial Body*, etc. In this way the *Spirit* reaches "Concord" and distinctions are completely eliminated (Dampier, 2012: 80–81).

***Marriage (Beatitude)*:** Marriage symbolizes the union of opposites—good and evil—into a harmonious whole (Ross, 2009: 424). After a period of struggle, it brings the soul to a state of equilibrium, where these opposing forces blend. This transformative balance represents the union of spirit and celestial body. The soul remains in this state until it returns to the cycle of birth and death, resuming its eternal journey (Yeats, 1962: 232). In this stage, the *Spirit* merges with the *Ghostly Self* and reaches a state of consciousness called "Beatitude", which is completely harmonious and pure, independent of time, space and all dualities. In this short but perfect stage, all past incarnations are forgotten, the *Spirit* connects with the "ultimate reality". Distinctions such as good and evil are erased, and the *Spirit* achieves complete balance. However, if the human cycles are not completed, the *Spirit* usually reincarnates and returns to material existence. Therefore,

Beatitude is a brief experience of ideal harmony on the spiritual journey (Dampier, 2012: 83–84).

Purification: At this stage, the *Spirit* loses all memory of its past, and the *Husk* and *Passionate Body* are recreated. It begins to understand the power of self-shaping and self-acting, focusing on its purpose for the next life (Ross, 2009: 424). Just like the Return phase, this stage can take a long time as it might take millennia for the *Spirit* to investigate the reasons for and effects of its existence, as well as to find the special conditions that lead to specific incarnation (Mann, 2019a: 197). Yeats explains that the Spirit may spend many generations in the Purification state. If it dies in a traditional society, it may become a protector watching over a holy shrine or a sacred spring. Possibly the *Thirteenth Cone* may recruit it to look after the souls of the recently deceased. (Yeats, 1962: 233). During this time, the *Spirit* is in a state of waiting, refining its purpose until the proper conditions for its next incarnation are met. When the upcoming rebirth draw close, *Husk* and *Passionate Body*, which disappeared during Meditation phase, are restored (Mann, 2019a: 248).

Foreknowledge: In the final stage of the inter-life, *Celestial Body* and the *Spirit* attain a new *Husk* and a *Passionate Body*, which are created out of Anima Mundi[2] (Dampier, 2012: 72) and these Principles convince the *Spirit* to consent to circumstances of its next life (87). During this phase, the *Spirit*, forms an ideal blueprint for its upcoming incarnation. However, before it can move on to the next life, it must fully perceive and accept this blueprint (Ross, 2009: 424). To fully embrace this vision and prepare for the challenges ahead, the *Spirit* undergoes a purification process. Deep emotional experiences, such as love and hatred, play a crucial role in this process, allowing the *Spirit* to refine itself. Furthermore, the *Spirit* cannot be reincarnated during the Foreknowledge stage unless it has agreed to its future life. While the *Spirit* perceives its future life, it remains bound by the course of its incarnation, balancing free will with predestination. The *Spirit* cannot alter the life that awaits it without the assistance of the *Thirteenth Cone*, but it can use this metaphysical force to influence its circumstances of its rebirth and enable a unique incarnation. In addition, the *Spirit* agrees to its future life while still in the womb and is confident that it is justified (Yeats, 1962: 234–235).

Yeats, who details the inner preparations the soul makes between lives and the process of reincarnation with these six states, notes that Indian Buddhists stop offering sacrifices on behalf of a dead person after three generations have passed. This belief stems from the understanding that the person finds a new body after this period. Sometimes, rebirth can occur immediately especially if a soul has not completed its obligations in a

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[2] For further information see https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/world-soul-anima-mundi

previous life. Yeats's claims that there are for example stories of people who died as children and were immediately reborn. The more fully one lives and the more complete the purification of past mistakes, the more positive the next life is. The process amidst dying and incarnation is not seen as a compensation or a paradise. The soul's aim is to complete its cycle quickly and gain freedom from it (Yeats, 1962: 235).

A COMMENTARY ON SELECTED POEMS

"The Song of Wandering Aengus"

This poem, written in 1893 and first published in *Sketch* in 1897 under the title "A Mad Song" (Jeffares, 1968: 61), is about the wanderings of the character Aengus. Driven by a deep desire, Aengus enters a forest, where he catches a trout with a hazel branch. However, the fish magically transforms into a beautiful girl, whose hair is adorned with apple blossoms. She calls his name and vanishes, leaving Aengus yearning for her. Even in old age, he continues to wander, hoping to find the girl and spend his remaining days with her. The poem portrays Aengus's lifelong quest and explores the themes of idealized love and the enduring power of desire. In doing so, it captures the essence of human longing and the eternal cycle of transformation in Irish mythology. (Jeffares, 1968: 61).

According to Yeats, the "man with a hazel wand" represents Aengus, the God of Youth, and the hazel tree stands for "the Irish tree of Life or of Knowledge" (Jeffares, 1968: 62). Aengus's situation mirrors Yeats's philosophy of spiritual transformation. And his quest symbolizes the soul's constant striving for deeper truths, seeking a higher understanding that transcends its own essence and moves toward an idealized, eternal truth.

The fish, as Yeats wrote, 'had become a glimmering girl / With apple blossom in her hair' (Yeats, 2000: 47). Apple blossoms hold special significance in Celtic wedding traditions, where brides often wear them in their hair. In this context, the girl Aengus chases throughout his life, while representing a quest for transcendence, also reflects Yeats's personal experiences, particularly his lifelong love for Maud Gonne. Yeats himself remarked on the significance of apple blossoms during his first encounter with Gonne, reinforcing the connection between the symbolic girl and his emotional and spiritual longing (Gearen, 1980: 30).

Jeffares (1968) points to this fact by quoting Yeats's assessment of the time he first saw Gonne. Yeats wrote of that moment: "[Gonne's] complexion was luminous, like that of apple-blossom through which the light falls, and I remember her standing that first day by a great heap of such blossoms in the window" (62-63). The image of the girl with apple blossoms can also be seen as a symbol of transcendence. In Christian mythology, the apple symbolizes knowledge and awakening, themes with which Yeats was

familiar. Therefore, Aengus's love is not merely a physical quest but also a deeply spiritual one, one that echoes Yeats's view of the 'will' as a force striving for transformation and higher knowledge.

The final lines of the poem, "And pluck till time and times are done / The silver apples of the moon, / The golden apples of the sun" (Yeats, 2000: 47), deepen the symbolic layers. The phrase "Till time and times are done" can be interpreted as a reference to Yeats' belief in reincarnation. The speaker expresses that Aengus wants to spend all his days and nights with that girl, whose current life and the next lives are represented by the metaphors of golden and silver apples. This reflects Yeats' philosophy of continuous spiritual evolution, in which the soul's longing for its ideal self is an eternal cycle of rebirth and transformation. The use of gold and silver symbols has a particular significance, as in alchemy, their combination represents perfection (Wilson, 1958: 219). The silver apples of the moon and the golden apples of the sun symbolize the opposing yet interconnected forces of life and death, consciousness and unconsciousness. They represent Aengus' pursuit of the girl, reflecting his quest for spiritual fulfilment, the union of opposites, and ultimately a search for wholeness and transcendence, which Yeats expresses as a yearning for a deeper, transformative awakening of the soul.

The symbolic and metaphysical exploration of transformation and spiritual longing in "The Song of Wandering Aengus" is also present in many of Yeats' other works. One such example is "He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven", a poem that explores the speaker's desire for spiritual transcendence and transformation.

"He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven"
The title of this poem, which first appeared in *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899), is "Aedh Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven" (Jeffares, 1968: 84). Aedh, like the other Yeatsian personas—Owen Aherne, Michael Robartes, and Red Hanrahan—is not merely a fictional individual but a representation of different mental, philosophical, or psychological principles within Yeats' poetic world, where these personas serve as vehicles for exploring profound themes (Jeffares, 1968: 55; Keane, 2021: 4–5).

In this poem, the speaker wishes to spread an imaginary 'cloth of heaven' under the feet of his beloved, thereby elevating his worldly passion to a divine expression. This symbolism also reflects Aedh's deep yearning for spiritual connection, the desire to merge with something greater than himself. Yeats' cyclical concept of time and the process of reincarnation are evident in this poem. The speaker claims to be "poor," but this does not prevent him from having a rich spiritual world. This suggests that material poverty does not necessarily hinder, but may even serve as a catalyst for, spiritual growth. When we look at Yeats' *A Vision*, individuals undergo various stages of transformation throughout their lives and purify themselves

from material and physical desires to reach the highest spiritual state, thus, to approach the divine. The expression "But I, being poor, have only my dreams;" (Yeats, 2000: 59) is connected to a pure state of mind, abstracted from everything worldly. In this way, the path to spiritual elevation becomes possible by breaking away from worldly ties and pursuing the longing for the divine that exists in one's inner world.

In this sense, laying his dreams at the feet of his beloved may seem like a moment of surrender, but it can also be evaluated as a step toward spiritual transformation. The statement "Tread softly because you tread on my dreams." (Yeats, 2000: 59) in the last line emphasizes the respect that should be shown to spiritual and inner values. This reinforces Yeats's thoughts about the necessity of protecting spiritual values. The poem suggests that despite humankind's limited worldly existence, they have an ability to imagine boundlessly, which opens the door to spiritual transformation.

"Adam's Curse"

While "He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven" focuses on the spiritual longing for transcendence and the idealistic yearning for the divine, "Adam's Curse" introduces a more grounded, yet equally transformative, theme, the effort and labour behind beauty, art, and love. Yeats explores the idea that these qualities are not easily attained, for since Adam's expulsion from Paradise, no beautiful thing has been achieved without effort.

In the poem, the speaker, in conversation with two women, reflects on the difficulty of poetic creation. Similarly, one of the women remarks on the considerable effort required to maintain beauty. The speaker then extends this idea to love, saying that it requires even more effort than before. Throughout the poem, beauty, art, and love are presented as demanding and exhausting endeavours.

"Adam's Curse", written to Maud Gonne in 1902, reflects an autobiographical memory. The woman referred to as "beautiful mild woman" (line 2) is Maud Gonne's sister, Mrs. Kathleen Pilcher, and "you and I" (line 3) refers to Gonne and Yeats himself (Jeffares, 1968: 91). Jeffares offers details about the poem's story from Gonne's memoirs. While Gonne is having coffee with her sister Kathleen, Yeats comes to visit them. As she sits in her black dress and veil, Yeats examines her closely. Then he turns to Kathleen and compliments her on her dress. Kathleen's comment that being beautiful is "hard work" inspires Yeats's poem "Adam's Curse" (Jeffares, 1968: 92).

This poem, too, as a reflection of Yeats' philosophy, contains elements of transformation and transcendence themes. There is an emphasis on the laborious but transformative power of love and art. In *The Great Wheel*, human evolution and spiritual development are represented by the 28 phases of the moon, which symbolizes that humankind is always in a state of

inner transformation. In this poem, it is also explained that the creation of beauty and poetry is a difficult and complex process that requires a certain maturation. The writing process, which the speaker describes as "stitching and unstitching" (line 6), represents the spirit's struggle to mature and transcend itself.

Additionally, the speaker complains that society does not understand poetry or beauty:

> For to articulate sweet sounds together
> Is to work harder than all these, and yet
> Be thought an idler by the noisy set
> Of bankers, schoolmasters, and clergymen
> The martyrs call the world.' (Yeats, 2000: 64)

This fragment suggests that to transcend the ordinary and attain a higher state of being, one must often turn away from the material world and focus on spiritual or intellectual pursuits. Even if it makes you look lazy or earns you the label of "idler" in the eyes of others, the speaker believes it is the only way to true fulfilment.

The speaker's description of society as a "noisy set," a phrase that conveys disdain for a world preoccupied with superficial concerns, reflects this desire for transcendence. This critique emphasizes the speaker's desire to transcend societal norms and expectations, presenting a contrasting perspective that champions a life cantered on introspection and spiritual awareness. Ultimately, it portrays a journey toward personal and spiritual evolution, distinguishing the speaker from the crowd and emphasizing the value of inner richness over material wealth.

"The Second Coming"

Written right after World War I, the poem "The Second Coming" (1919) starts with the image of a widening gyre, powerfully symbolizing a world falling apart as traditional values and societal structures break down. The 'centre cannot hold,' and the world is spiralling into chaos and uncertainty. This reflects Yeats's belief that history follows a cyclical process, where each age collapses into chaos before it gives rise to another. This perspective is also central to his understanding of the soul's journey in *A Vision*, where transformation occurs through stages of death, purification, and rebirth (Yeats, 1962: 223–235). Yeats believed that both human nature and history follow recurring patterns of rise, decline, and renewal. The collapse of the present age in the poem foreshadows the emergence of a frightening and uncertain new era, one which Yeats saw as part of this ongoing cycle.

In the middle of chaos, a terrifying creature, part man and part lion, rises from the desert sands, staring directly at the speaker. Similar to the

Antichrist of the Book of Revelation, the creature moves toward Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus (Mann, 2024: 26). Bethlehem, traditionally associated with innocence and maternal love (Jeffares, 1968: 239), and seen as a symbol of hope and peace, is now facing the coming chaos, showing how the hope of the past is being replaced by the fear of what's to come (Lockhart, 2023: 3).

The poem takes its title from the Christian idea of Jesus's 'Second Coming', combining the prophecy in the Gospel of Matthew with the image of the beast in Revelation (Jeffares, 1968: 239). However, Yeats changes this expectation by introducing not a saviour, but a frightening and destructive figure, shifting the focus from hope to despair. This new interpretation sets the stage for a world on the brink of profound transformation. The final lines clearly present the 'Second Coming' not as a moment of salvation, but as a symbol of an unavoidable "nightmare", reflecting Yeats's belief in the cyclical patterns of destruction and renewal that shape history. The following excerpt from *A Vision* will help us understand the poem better.

Each age unwinds the thread another age had wound, and it amuses one to remember that before Phidias, and his westward-moving art, Persia fell, and that when full moon came round again, amid eastward-moving thought, and brought Byzantine glory, Rome fell; and that at the outset of our westward-moving Renaissance Byzantium fell; all things dying each other's life, living each other's death. (Yeats, 1962: 270–271)

Yeats argues that history and human nature have a cyclical structure. He explains the rise and fall of civilizations and societies with the constantly repeating cycles of nature and history. These cycles emphasize the continuity of transformation historically, that is, each age is transformed by the one before it.

The metaphor "Turning and turning in the widening gyre" (Yeats, 2000: 158) at the beginning of the poem reflects Yeats's cyclical understanding of history. The "falcon" in the second line was a "hawk" in the early versions of the poem, but Yeats changed the bird, probably inspired by Geryon, on whose back Dante and Virgil flew to the eighth circle of Hell (Jeffares, 1968: 241). The line "The falcon cannot hear the falconer" (158) refers to a situation in which chaos triumphs over order. This indicates a period in which an old order ends, and a new, unknown order begins to emerge. Yeats here suggests that humanity is in a process of transformation, and that this may be in a terrifying form that we are not familiar with.

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity. (Yeats, 2000: 158)

As indicated by the imagery used in the lines above, it becomes clear that social values, beliefs, and moral structures must be destroyed and rebuilt. Immediately after this implicit call for change, Yeats sees a disturbing figure emerging from the "Spiritus Mundi[3]" in the second stanza. This figure is linked to the concept of the second coming in Christian mythology, but instead of a saviour, a creature, "pitiless as the sun" emerged with a "gaze blank," representing chaos and brutality. It is likely that Yeats was influenced by MacGregor Mathers in his description of the creature as "A shape with a lion body and the head of a man," (line 14) (Jeffares, 1968: 243). Although this creature advancing toward Bethlehem is a symbol of transition and transformation, it is a harbinger of destructive transformation rather than salvation.

"The Second Coming" reflects Yeats's cyclical understanding of history as set forth in *A Vision*. The poem depicts a view from an old order that is collapsing to an ambiguous future. This heralds a spiritual transformation and emphasizes that in this process, the corrupt basic values of societies and individuals must be destroyed, and new and higher ideals must be acquired.

"Leda and the Swan"

Yeats wrote "Leda and the Swan", in the autumn of 1923, after being asked to write a poem for a political magazine. The individualistic and deceptive movements founded by Hobbes and spreading through the French Revolution left no suitable environment for a new movement to emerge in those days. Yeats believed that such a movement could only be possible from a violent, top-down beginning. This idea was initially embodied in the metaphor of "Leda and the Swan" but later evolved as Yeats shifted focus from political themes to a deeper exploration of mythological and spiritual forces (Jeffares, 1968: 295-296). This shift reflects Yeats's growing concern with the metaphysical forces that drive historical change and his belief in the necessity of spiritual transformation during times of societal upheaval. This change also reflects Yeats's changing views on history, which he later explored in *A Vision*, where he described history as cyclical, influenced by spiritual forces, rather than simply a series of political events or a linear progression. The cyclical nature of history, according to Yeats, involves periods of decline followed by renewal, with each cycle bringing about profound changes driven by hidden, spiritual forces.

The poem describes the sudden and inevitable subjugation of young Leda by Zeus in the form of a swan. Leda is the mother of Helen, whose actions initiate the chain of events that ultimately lead to the destruction of

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[3] Quoting Yeats, Jeffares explains this concept as "a general storehouse of images which have ceased to be a property of any personality or spirit" (Jeffares, 1968: 243)

Troy. The depiction of the rape is not simply a physical act but rather a mythological moment that leads to a period of transformation and tragedy. In Yeats's worldview, such moments of transformation are necessary disruptions that signal the breakdown of one era and the potential birth of another. Yeats saw these transformative moments as part of a larger spiritual or cosmic plan. He believed that humanity's progress and changes were guided by invisible forces that operated in cycles. References are made to significant mythological events triggered by this act such as the Trojan War and the death of Agamemnon. These events, according to Yeats, exemplify the collapse of old systems and the birth of new ones, which are driven by spiritual and cosmic rhythms.

Yeats presents Leda's rape by Zeus as a counterpoint to Mary's impregnation by the Holy Spirit. The harsh, sexually violent treatment of Leda symbolizes an antithetical annunciation, while Mary's story is divine and pure. This contrast also reflects Yeats's belief in the necessary violence that sometimes accompanies spiritual transformation (Holdridge, 1997: 111). Emphasizing this violent, antithetical order, Yeats uses bird symbols to represent different religious and cultural periods in his art, reflecting spiritual turning points, the revival of ancient wisdom, and the birth of new cycles (Mann, 2024: 20–22). Yeats had already established cycles for the future and the Christian era in his works before "Leda and the Swan". He needed a third annunciation to initiate his own classical cycle of civilization, and the myth of Leda provided it. For Yeats, the swan, as a symbol of divine force, marks the beginning of a new spiritual era. With this understanding of annunciation combining animal, human, and supernatural elements, it becomes natural for the dove in Christianity to be perceived as equivalent to the swan in Yeats's poem (Melchiori, 1960: 79). Leda and the Virgin Mary, both symbolic of divine motherhood, lead to significant births, as Mary gives birth to Christ and Leda's eggs turn into Helen and Clytemnestra, both of whom play key roles in the destruction of Troy and foundation of Greece (Henn, 2011: 256).

"Leda and the Swan" provides a rich text for examining Yeats' philosophical views, especially the themes of transcendence and transformation. Yeats' poems handle individual and universal transformation processes by drawing on mythology and history. In Yeats's thought, transformation is not only personal but also cosmic, with individuals and entire civilizations being shaped by larger spiritual forces that determine their fate (Keane, 2021: 33, 35, 101). This poem, inspired by Greek mythology, shows how inevitable individual and historical transformations are. According to Yeats, significant events in human life are part of a spiritual or cosmic order operating on a higher plane. In this context, the rape scene depicted in the poem should not be perceived merely as a physical act but as the intervention of a divine power in the world. The following lines are crucial in this sense: "Being so caught up, / So mastered by the brute blood of the air," (Yeats, 2000: 182). Here, Leda is exposed to and overtaken

by a power that she cannot resist. Zeus' attack in the form of a swan illustrates how individuals can be transformed by greater power. Yeats' focus on the brutality and inevitability of this act suggests that these cosmic forces are not always gentle or understandable but are integral to the cycles of destruction and rebirth. As a result of this encounter, Leda becomes a mediator of destruction, an integral part of the cycle of historical transformation. Zeus' physical and divine presence transforms Leda's body and soul, marking her as an agent of change that will affect the future of humanity.

The question of whether Leda attains divine wisdom and power after this attack remains unanswered: "Did she put on his knowledge with his power / Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?" (Yeats, 2000: 182). However, she becomes a mediator of the transformation promised by the gods. Helen, born from this union, sparks the events that lead to the Trojan War, an archetypal process of destruction and rebirth. Yeats conveys this idea in the following lines

A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead. (Yeats, 2000: 182)

The individual event of Zeus's rape of Leda is presented as the catalyst for a series of events that change the course of history. The fall of Troy marks the end of one civilization and the beginning of another, mirroring Yeats' understanding of history as cyclical, marked by periods of great destruction and transformation. Henn (2011) argues that Helen serves as a symbol for Maud Gonne (256). In this case, the Troy whose downfall Helen instigates must represent Yeats himself. Thus, Yeats' rejection by Gonne can be viewed as a key turning point in his personal cycle of death, purification, and rebirth. This rejection represents the initial spark of the destructive fire that ultimately leads him toward reincarnation. Between 1891 and 1916, Yeats repeatedly proposed to Gonne without receiving a favourable response (Bradford, 1962: 452). Viewed in this light, Bloom's (1970) assessment of Yeats's post-1899 poetry as comparatively weaker (162) becomes more comprehensible. After he was rejected by Gonne, Yeats entered a period of regression, marking a significant juncture in his personal spiritual cycle. This period of personal crisis is consistent with Yeats' belief that moments of suffering and loss often precede the renewal of the spirit, a central aspect of his philosophical understanding of transformation (Tao, 2020: 3).

"Sailing to Byzantium"

Most of the information Yeats had about Byzantium was from reference books. Apart from this, he had the opportunity to see the Byzantine ruins in Ravenna in 1907 and in Monreale and Palermo in 1924 (Jeffares,

1968: 251–253). He expresses the deep admiration that he felt for what he saw and read there as follows:

> I think if I could be given a month of Antiquity and leave to spend it where I chose, I would spend it in Byzantium a little before Justinian opened St. Sophia and closed the Academy of Plato. […]
> I think that in early Byzantium, maybe never before or since in recorded history, religious, aesthetic and practical life were one, that architect and artificers -though not, it may be, poets, for language had been the instrument of controversy and must have grown abstract- spoke to the multitude and the few alike. The painter, the mosaic worker, the worker in gold and silver, the illuminator of sacred books, were almost impersonal, almost perhaps without the consciousness of individual design, absorbed in their subject-matter and that the vision of a whole people. (Yeats, 1962: 279–280)

In the first drafts of "Sailing to Byzantium", Yeats considered introducing himself to the reader as a medieval poet. However, over time, the character of the poem changed, and the persona evolved into Yeats himself (Bloom, 1970: 345). Therefore, everything that one would say about the speaker of the poem is true for Yeats himself. In the poem, the speaker explores the immortality of the soul and how art can help on this path. The first stanza emphasizes the helplessness that comes with old age in the face of the transient beauty of youth and nature. The second stanza states that being old does not prevent one from spiritually transcending oneself, and that one must struggle for this. In the third stanza, the speaker addresses the holy sages of Byzantium to purify his soul and lead him to the art of immortality. In the final stanza, the speaker expresses his desire to transcend nature and take an immortal form like a work of art. This poem and its sequel "Byzantium" are Yeats's works that best reflect his search for spiritual salvation through art. The timelessness of art has a central role in his spiritual explorations (Ross, 2009: 214)**.** The speaker's desire for transcendence and spiritual renewal through art is a key theme in Yeats's philosophy. In "Sailing to Byzantium", this longing becomes the main focus, and as the poem unfolds, Yeats examines how the soul can achieve immortality through art.

Stallworthy (1963) analyses the early manuscripts of the poem and claims that "Yeats no longer looks outwards in the direction of Byzantium, but inwards to the struggle of his intellect (or soul) to break free from this aging body" (104). Many critics agree that the "That" used in the opening of the poem refers to Ireland, the poet's homeland, but when the poem is considered as a whole, Ireland is probably a synecdoche and what is actually meant is the whole material world. In the first lines, the speaker complains; while young couples hug each other and birds sing carelessly, they all get carried away by the waves of sensuality and forget about death. While lost in

the world of the senses, everyone ignores the "Monuments of unaging intellect" (Yeats, 2000: 163), the magnificent art pieces impervious to death, deterioration, and time. The world's preoccupation with the tangible leads to negligence of art, even though it is the only activity that can slow down the developments that destroy everything. (Frye, 2005: 15). Yeats' critique of the material world shows his disappointment with the fleeting nature of life and his desire for something beyond the physical world. This criticism highlights how people often chase after short-lived pleasures. In contrast, "Monuments of unaging intellect" represent the enduring value of art. Unlike the temporary pleasures of the material world, these works of art reflect Yeats's desire for permanence and spiritual transcendence, offering a path to immortality.

In the second stanza, the speaker emphasizes the difference between "monuments" of "magnificence" that imply permanence and a physical world devoid of art. Aging becomes a symbol, even a motif, so that the value of the sensory world diminishes. The speaker's goal is to sail towards the "holy city of Byzantium", for art is a monument that has survived for millennia and constantly changes. Here, the speaker emphasizes the importance of artistic permanence and states that art is a resistance against the transience of the physical world. The limitations and transience of the sensory world contrast sharply with the immortality and transcendence of artistic works. In this context, the speaker's journey to the "holy city of Byzantium" symbolizes the longing for transcendence through art. This part of the poem celebrates art as a form of existence beyond the physical world and points to the deep and lasting impact of art on human life (Frye, 2005: 15).

The poem examines themes of transformation and spiritual renewal, as Ross (2009) explains. Especially in the third stanza, the speaker emphasizes the purifying nature of art by evoking the image of sages standing in the sacred fire. This metaphor points not only to the intense and purifying nature of art, but also to a deep connection between earthly existence and divine inspiration. Ross explains Yeats's concept of "gyre" as a symbolic representation of historical and personal cycles. This image, in which the speaker invites sages unite around him, symbolizes a central force that draws different elements into a harmonious whole. It implies a transcendental state in which time itself may cease to be linear. Additionally, Ross examines the moving imagery of the speaker's heart being "fastened to a dying animal". This image reflects the earthly ties of the soul and its transcendental desire (216). Frye's (2005) analysis on the images of the third stanza, where Yeats combines Christian symbolism with artistic creation, tells us that the image of God's sacred fire is perceived as a purifying and transforming force. It prepares the speaker's soul in a way that carries it beyond time and transforms it into timeless art (16). These images, masterfully woven into the

fabric of the poem, emphasize the tension between inner desires and external constraints, offering a deep reflection on the inner state of man.

In the fourth stanza, we see the speaker imagine himself as a golden artifact in the emperor's bedroom or singing to the Byzantine nobles as a bird made of gold. Yeats uses the metaphor of gold as it connotes brilliance, richness, permanence, refinement, and incorruptibility (Stallworthy, 1963: 101). By this means, he is instantly freed from the decaying body and the restrictive effects of time, which will purify him from his troubles (Ross, 2009: 216).

Yeats uses Byzantium as a metaphor for transcending the material world. For the poet, Byzantium is a place of immortal values, where art and spiritual enlightenment are intertwined with transformation and transcendence. This city symbolizes salvation from the pleasures and pains of the mortal world, where an eternal existence is possible. Through this vision, Yeats expresses his belief that true immortality is not found in physical survival, but in creating art that transcends time and lives on forever.

CONCLUSION

William Butler Yeats' poems are works of art in which themes of transformation and transcendence are handled in abundance. In this respect, Yeats has a special place in the history of modern literature. By blending many different elements in his works, the poet points out the continuous process of change and development that the human soul and societies are in. Thanks to Yeats' interest in mystical and occult elements throughout his life, he was able to handle these themes in his poems. In this context, Yeats' philosophy, his perspective on art, and his search for transcendence and transformation are the main factors in his works, where he addresses the spiritual development of individuals and the historical cycles that societies undergo.

Yeats's poetry deeply explores themes of transformation and transcendence, offering unique insights into the human experience and the cycles that shape both individuals and societies. In this respect, his work stands out in modern literature for blending mysticism, spirituality, and philosophical ideas, which help illuminate the continuous process of change that both individuals and societies undergo. Yeats's interest in these spiritual aspects allows him to address themes like destruction and rebirth in his poetry, providing a thought-provoking look at the connections between life, death, and renewal.

While Yeats' early works reflect a romantic and symbolic approach, he adopts a more direct style in his later works. This change reflects his own spiritual journey, showing that both individuals and societies are always

transforming. In his later works, Yeats often explores the search for spiritual elevation, suggesting that people must break free from the material world to reach higher levels of existence. It is possible to find such reflections, especially in "The Second Coming" and "Sailing to Byzantium". While "The Second Coming" addresses the cyclicity of human history, where destruction precedes rebirth, "Sailing to Byzantium" expresses a desire to go beyond the material world through art and reach immortality. Spiritual transformation and the effort to reach a more transcendent existence are at the forefront in these poems.

Much of Yeats' philosophy is shaped by his cyclical view of history, as outlined in *A Vision*. Yeats symbolizes the spiritual and psychological development of individuals with the 28 phases of the moon. This understanding consists of the fact that the periods in a person's life have a hierarchical connection and that each transformation brings the opportunity to improve with it. This cyclical idea is important in many of his poems, where he contrasts the spiritual and material worlds. For instance, "The Second Coming" reflects the struggle between destruction and renewal, showing how history seems to repeat itself in cycles. Yeats also uses mythology in his work to explore the themes of transcendence and transformation. Poems like "The Song of Wandering Aengus" show the search for love and meaning, while "Leda and the Swan" presents a mythological moment that initiates the chain of events that lead to the Trojan War. These poems show how Yeats uses ancient stories to discuss change on both personal and societal levels.

For Yeats, art was a means for spiritual salvation and transcendence. In "Sailing to Byzantium", Byzantium symbolizes not just a place of artistic achievement but a spiritual realm beyond the material world, where immortality is achieved through the enduring power of art. In this sense, Yeats presents art as the only vehicle that can carry the human spirit to eternity. This theme of transcendence is also evident in his portrayal of the tension between the body and the soul, as well as in his depiction of historical cycles of destruction and rebirth. In "Adam's Curse", Yeats examines the idea of the burden of hard work and spiritual effort required for meaningful creation. He reflects on the pain and labour involved in making something beautiful, which adds another layer to his thoughts on transformation.

Ultimately, Yeats's poetry offers a deep reflection on spiritual growth, the cycles of history, and the power of art to transcend time. Through rich symbolism, he explores how the individual soul and society can change, renew, and find meaning. Yeats invites readers to think about the mysteries of existence and how change shapes the world.

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CHAPTER THREE

Conflicted Voices of Modernism from Ireland: James Joyce's *Dubliners*

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ABSTRACT

Noted as the father of modernism, James Joyce is well-known for his traditional, uniquely realistic, national, yet at the same time antinational and universal works after the turn of the century when Victorian values, society, patriotism, politics and piousness still pervaded over Irish daily life, though in transition. With this, *Dubliners* (1914), which is a story collection consisting of fifteen stories, reflects the voices of several Irish characters posing against the extremity of patriotism, rigidity of religion and the dogma of the old narratives from Irish culture and the scornful attitude of elitism and the set system of language from the English culture. Meanwhile, other characters represent the fundamental values and traditions of the Irish culture, including nationalism, religion and language. With its fresh modernist perspective in the narrative form, language and themes through a psychological and introspective approach, *Dubliners* eloquently reflects the daily adventures of the characters. By exposing the realities of the modern city life from a minus point of view, it embraces the Irish national spirit yet signals a transition in which that nationalist mood will be lost. Therefore, this chapter aims to discuss *Dubliners* as a pioneering modernist work picturing the changing values, conflicts, attitudes and the reality of the Irish people on the verge of World War I and how this change is experienced in the daily routines of ordinary people with their different aspirations and hopes for the future.

Keywords – Joyce, Modernism, (Anti)Nationalism, (Anti)Traditionalism, Conflict.

INTRODUCTION

A canonical writer of the twentieth century, James Joyce is an Irish-born British novelist and poet famous for his ground-breaking *The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and *Ulysses* (1922). He interprets traditional techniques such as free indirect discourse, or interior monologue, from a modernist perspective and introduces epiphany both as a term and technique to the literary canon in his *Stephen Hero* (1963: 16). Modernism, which is a combination of individual scepticism within the social and cultural sphere and epistemologically, a clear division between subject and object, in other words, mind and matter, finds its perfect place in Joyce's works. Pioneering this new tradition in literature, which is the cumulative creation of Galileo, Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Newton, Hume and the Enlightenment philosophers (Rabaté, 2001: 58), Joyce introduces works that reflect the tension, conflict, bleakness and uncertainty of the age before and during World War I. He reflects the real-life in his homeland, Ireland. In language, religion, politics and social life, he takes Dublin as his focal point.

However, like his Irish characters, he fits nowhere taking the opposite side of both English high society (Metinoğlu, 2022: 280) and the Irish Catholic aristocracy (Nash, 2006: 99, 107).

As an outcast of his society and the British society, Joyce creates his style as an antinational and antitraditional protest in the narrative form such as the use of obscene and vulgar language, gaps and blanks within narration, emphatic narration or free indirect style, interior monologue, stream of consciousness and chiasmus. Surprisingly, his works, including *Dubliners* still represents Irish national values as the conflicted voice of the writer and Irish people. In other words, "while seemingly following realist/naturalist conventions and using symbolist devices even at that very early stage in his career, Joyce subverted both. Treacherously *Dubliners* simultaneously invites and undermines categorization and sense making" (Bašić, 1991: 351). While using an elitist and modernist style in terms of techniques, *Dubliners* is a realist panoramic picture of the Irish life with real characters and situations embodying highly symbolical meaning open to various interpretation.

MODERNIST TECHNIQUES IN *DUBLINERS*

As an Irish novelist employing modern techniques, Joyce seems to disregard the filters of elitism and reflects the language as it is in Dublin streets. With Joyce, modernism embraces a new language which is national but universal at the same time (Collier, 2006: 36-37). This new use of language represents the Irish daily life in which neither obscenity nor simplicity is censored. A Dubliner himself, Joyce uses Irish dialects and presents the daily language to the reader.

Joyce establishes obscene and vulgar dialogues and situations between his characters in *Dubliners*. In "An Encounter", two boys take a day off the school to see out of Dublin to have some adventure. They are full of excitement in the beginning. However, after they get out of Dublin borders, they encounter an older man who asks them about their sexual life and opens an obscene conversation which leaves the children afraid and embarrassed at the end (25, 26). Similarly, in "Two Gallants", two friends Lenehan and Corley, who are broke, talk about getting money from women in return for sexual affection and they mention a housemaid as a simple "slavey" who is ready to be seduced (55, 56). Similarly, Gallaher from "A Little Cloud", who is well-known as a poet and has seen a lot of countries for business and enjoyment is indulged in a heated conversation with Little Chandler, who is on the other hand quite naive and simple in contrast with him in terms of women, marriage, sexual relationships, Paris and immorality (85-87). Besides, in a highly political story, "Ivy Day in The Committee Room", Henchy, an Irish nationalist politician and follower of the legendary Charles

Parnell, curses and makes insulting comments on other politicians (140). Lastly, Gabriel Conroy from "The Dead" thinks about his wife Gretta and tells how he desires her in an obscene language (246).

Vulgar language is as common as obscenity and displays class consciousness among Dubliners. To illustrate, Mr Doran from the story titled "The Boarding House" thinks Polly, his secret lover, is a vulgar person because she makes grammatical mistakes and says, "I seen" instead of "I've seen" and utters such sentences as "If I had've known". Even if he has a sexual and emotional relationship with Polly, the landlady Mrs Mooney's daughter, in the "Boarding House", he thinks he is superior to her, that his family would not accept her as she is from the lower class, and she speaks awfully (72). Lastly, Farrington from "Counterparts", who is an exhausted, rageful and dissatisfied officer, displays the use of vulgar language when he recites his equally vulgar friends how he insulted his boss in the office in front of other colleagues that day. In response, his friends ridicule him because he is in danger of losing his job due to humiliating his boss in a social environment (104-107). As clearly seen, Joyce successfully describes free everyday conversations of various characters from different ages, genders and social background as representatives of Dublin city life.

From a similar perspective, the practice of gaps, blanks and open ending in narration is a modernist quality of *Dubliners* that surprises and confuses the reader in their interpretation of the work. Joyce conveys the story from the characters' point of view but leaves the actions or the paragraphs, or both, unfinished with three dots […] and frustrates the expectations of the reader. Consequently, the reader is lured into the story to solve the mystery, which is the Dublin city life. However, there are so many gaps and uncertainties that the reader cannot make resolute interpretations (Bulson, 2006: 37).

Dubliners leaves plenty of space for interpretation through uncertainty and unarticulated words, as in real life. For instance, Father James Flynn's death in "The Sisters" is conveyed through a small boy's perspective and comments. As a close friend of the older man despite his young age, the boy and his aunt visit the man's house to pay their consolation to the deceased's two sisters. However, although the man died of paralysis, his sister expresses her superstitious guess about his death as a mystery or a curse. There are gaps between her sentences. She says her brother was addicted to a chalice in the church and when he broke that, his life was turned upside down. This surprises and confuses the boy's mind at the end as there is no proper explanation to the reason for Father Flynn's sickness, nor his death (17). Another story "Araby" narrated by a little boy is about the boy's adoration and one-sided love to his friend Magnan's big sister. One evening, he plans to visit the commercial place named Araby as the girl suggests him to do, and he wants to buy something for her. Still, being late to the place, he wanders inside Araby but leaves there empty-handed, and the reason is

unexplained (36). In "The Boarding House", Mrs Mooney, a lonely woman who earns her life by running a boarding house tries to settle the problem between her daughter Polly and Mr Doran as to that he should marry Polly because he abused her sexually and dishonoured her. She first talks to Polly to understand the situation clearly and then tries to convince Mr Doran for marriage. During these exchanges, there are intervals. When Mooney is speaking to Mr Doran, Polly is upstairs and having a reverie during which only Polly's mind is the focus. Finally, Mooney summons her to give the happy news. However, what happened between Mrs Mooney and Mr Doran during the conversation downstairs is uncertain and therefore is a gap in narration (75).

In addition, Little Chandler has an evening with famous friend Gallaher after which he feels dissatisfied, humiliated and unhappy. He is jealous of Gallaher's life in London and disregards the Irish culture, people and even buildings. His disgust with the children of the poor Irish people, for example, turns into pity a few pages later (Bašić, 1991: 357). At this point, Little Chandler's conflicted thoughts reflect the confusion in the minds of all Dubliners who are impressed with the British culture and go through a social and existential crisis on the verge of World War I. Chandler is married to a humble woman and has a baby. He arrives home late to see his wife is angry with him. She leaves the baby in his care and goes shopping. Meanwhile, he gets tired of the baby and even tries to kill him just because he cries. Then his wife comes in to save the baby the last minute (90). In "Counterparts", Farrington argues with his boss in the office and the incident ends with the boss's threat of firing Farrington if he does not apologise to him. There is a gap afterwards. Later, Farrington is seen in the bar chatting with his friends about the day's actions, which gives a clue that he is not fired yet. Nevertheless, the exact conversation and the rest of the incident are not revealed to the reader. As for the end, Farrington beats his little son, and the story ends with the boy's consistent plea for his father's mercy (101, 109).

Likewise, "Clay" displays open ending in which Maria, the charity person, sings a song and Joe, one of the favourite boys she supported emotionally and financially during his childhood, cries affected by the song. Maria has an unhappy, unimaginative and self-restricting personality. Singing the song, she feels and suffers for herself. Meanwhile, Joe, who is married, tries to hide his tears by some errand matter. As noted, these two people are somehow discontent with themselves, yet the story ends there without giving any other clue about their next action (118). "A Painful Case" tells the story of Mr Duffy, a self-controlling, serious businessman becoming friends with a married woman, Mrs Sinico. Although he likes her, he is unable to admit it and overreacts when Mrs Sinico attempts to touch him. Then, he stops seeing her, not to have any news about her for four years until she dies of a train accident. He then reads the news and feels guilty for her death for it looks like she killed herself. After that, there is a break after

which Mr Duffy turns to his inner conscience. The ending is unclear as he reaches the ultimate truth about himself, which is loneliness. Still, if he shall change his life or not is not conveyed in narration (128).

As for the story "Grace", Mr Kernan is a fallen family man who gets support from his friends to improve his economic, social and religious condition. When his friend Mr Power offers financial and social help and leaves, Mr Kernan's reply to the offer and what happened between them is not conveyed. Later, Kernan's friends convince him to convert back to Protestantism (175, 195). Finally, "The Dead" is about Gabriel, who is raised by his aunts as the man of the house. He loses his self-esteem and confidence in a social party when he meets other men and women who can easily defy him and make him question his authority as a man and husband. Towards the end of the party, he learns that his wife had a lover before him who is long dead now. After this new piece of knowledge, how he reacts is not specified. In the end, he lays on the bed with his wife and thinks about the dead people. It cannot be comprehended whether he feels sorry for his wife's deceased lover Michael Furey or resents or envies him (253). Hence, blanks and open endings carve out the base of *Dubliners*, which heightens the impact and importance of the modernist work reflecting multiple voices and possibilities.

In parallel, as a successful modernist work, Dubliners is full of examples of free indirect discourse (interior monologue) in almost all stories. Free indirect discourse, or free indirect prose as a more appropriate term for *Dubliners*, reveals "the character's own thoughts, rendered in the character's own idiom, and forces us to make our own conclusions based on them" (Dettmar, 1996: 145). It is through the characters' own unarticulated words that the reader gets to understand the characters' aspirations and disillusionment with their lives in the pre-war age of change and transition. In other words;

> While the protagonists in *Dubliners* do not represent carbon copies of Stephen Dedalus [*A Portrait*], even those who appear least in sympathy with his attitudes—Maria, Eveline, Lenehan, Farrington, for example—confront the same types of frustration and feel the same categories of repression against which Stephen rebels. (Gillespie, 1989: 105)

In line with this, "Eveline" is the story vastly accepted as the most explicit instance of free indirect discourse (Chatman, 1978: 204). It is about a nineteen-year-old girl Eveline, who takes care of his father and brothers besides cooking, cleaning the house, shopping, and carrying out her culturally assigned responsibilities as the woman in the house. One day, she meets a man, Frank from overseas, Melbourne, and falls in love with him. They are mutually attracted to each other over time and plan to elope from Ireland to Buenos Ayres. However, as the time approaches, Eveline hesitates to leave her family behind because her father treats the children terribly and

beats them even though they are grown men now. The story is reflected through Eveline's perception and point of view although it seems to be in the third-person narration of Joyce. Eveline's unuttered sentences are embedded within the story as paragraphs as if they are just descriptions. At the end of the story, Eveline decides against going with Frank while the ship drifts away (40-42).

Another example of emphatic narration or free indirect style is in the story titled "After the Race". It is about Jimmy, a young man from a lower-class background because his father is a butcher. Nevertheless, he earns well enough to send Jimmy to a college, even to Cambridge for one term to study law. However, Jimmy is reluctant to study in this field that is why he takes part in music classes and motorcycle races. Later, he meets rich friends Routh, Ségoin, Riviére and Farley in Cambridge, who are also interested in motorcycles. As their friendship progresses, Jimmy realises the differences between him and his friends in terms of social and economic state. The story recounts Jimmy's exciting adventures and his final failure in a card game. They spend a night together sailing in ship, singing, dancing, talking and playing cards. Yet, they are too arrogant to mind the money they are risking whereas Jimmy counts his loss every passing minute. He regrets having participated the game even though it is too late for him, which are reflected in interior monologues. At the end of the game, Jimmy and Farley are the biggest losers, which leaves Jimmy broke and worried afterwards (49-51).

Similarly, the story "Clay" embodies interior monologue that reveals Maria's mind as she plans the day ahead. She is rather excited to meet the boys she raised and thinks about them (111). The story titled "A Mother" is last of the many other free indirect discourse examples in *Dubliners*. The story presents a mother, Mrs Kearney and her efforts to make use of her daughter to atone or compensate for what she could not do in her youth. She equips her daughter with remarkable qualities such as piano playing, singing and education on Irish language and culture so that people would admire and envy her, by which Mrs Kearney can feel satisfied herself. One day, Mr Holohan, a man organising concerts, visits her to offer her daughter Kathleen a concert in the public programme which is to take place soon. It makes Mrs Kearney ecstatic. Then, she takes her daughter to Mr Fitzpatrick, Holohan's boss, to settle the price for the concert. Throughout these moments, her consciousness is thoroughly visited. Therefore, Joyce's *Dubliners* is quite rich in free indirect style by which he conveys the worries, contradictions and hesitations from the inner worlds of his characters in the flow of narration.

It is evident that with epiphany and reverie Joyce similarly introduces a proto version of the stream of consciousness to the modern literary canon (Joyce, 1996: Introduction). To give a definition, the stream of consciousness is the continuous flow of feelings, perceptions, thoughts and memories in the human mind and as a literary method, it represents a

combination of the mental processes of fictional characters in an un-intervened and disjoint manner. In other words, it is the expression of "the irrational and incoherent quality of private unuttered consciousness" (Humphrey, 1962: 62). With this perspective, Joyce transforms his Freudian psychoanalysis knowledge about insightful retrospection into Joycean aspirations in *Dubliners*, and his works generally (Ellman, 2010: 11). As for epiphany and reverie, epiphany is a theological term meaning "the manifestation of God or of spirit in body" (Tigges, 1999: 39) adapted by Joyce into the modernist proto stream of consciousness, and it is the sudden realisation or comprehension of the broader meaning and essence in a specific moment (Bulson, 2006: 58). On the other hand, reverie is the condition of being lost in thought, and it is also known as daydreaming. Hence, for the Joycean epiphany and reverie, two subjects are indispensable: "the character whose thoughts are taken on and the reader who develops and organizes the engaged thought" (Deming, 1997: 594). Joyce uses these modernist techniques in his *Dubliners* and other works to describe the hopeless, monotonous and paralysed lives of the Irish people.

Epiphany is employed in almost all stories as a final realisation of the characters about the inaction in their lives and frustration about the restrictions of the Irish culture. This comprehension finds expression through a cynical or rather a pessimistic perspective. To begin with, the little boy in the "The Sisters" sees Father Flynn's coffin while listening to Flynn's sister. It is when he comes to grips with the fact through Father Flynn's death that religious (Catholic) imposition on people is quite harmful since it seemed to cause paralysis (physical or spiritual) along with mental illness in Father Flynn as a religious man. Therefore, the boy's perception of religion alters irrevocably (16, 17). Similarly, another boy narrator in "An Encounter" realises at the end of his adventure that outside his monotonous school life in Dublin, there is nothing interesting. Indeed, he is afraid of the old man he encounters with his friend because of whom he eventually wants to go back home (27, 28).

In "Araby", the boy narrator who is in love with an older girl, goes to a bazaar called Araby to buy something for her. Yet, he overhears the dialogue between a young woman and a man there, thus realises the impossibility of a relationship between himself and the girl he likes. In the end, he buys nothing for her (35, 36). "Eveline" (41, 42, 43) gives up the idea of eloping with her lover in the last minute because she realises that there is no other life she can pursue but that of her family's (Bloom, 1988: 3). In the same vein, "After the Race" depicts Jimmy's comprehension of his social and economic situation at the end of the adventurous night due to the epiphanic call "Daybreak, gentlemen!" (50, 51). "Two Gallants" utilises epiphany through two broke fellows, Lenehan and Corley. The epiphany comes out when Corley follows the girl he is dating to her house, and he is rewarded in his sexual pursuit (64, 65). It creates an ironical fact in the

narration because it is the girl who gives him money in return for his friendship, not the other way around.

Moreover, "Clay" depicts Maria's perception of the reality of her own life when she spends an evening with Joe's family while Joe has his understanding of a similar life which is full of isolation and self-restriction (119). In "Ivy Day in The Committee Room", through the anthem of Charles Parnell, the Irish nationalists remember Parnell with respect while on the other hand, they seem to have no awareness or self-esteem about Irish national and religious values (131-32). Lastly, "The Dead" reminds Gabriel Conroy of his mortality and vanity. In the party he greets people, dances, carves the goose and gives a speech to show he is the appreciated man of the house. However, he fails in his attempts in several ways when Lily, the caretaker of the house answers him back, his schoolmate, Miss Ivors criticises him for not embracing his Irish ancestry and lastly, his wife, Gretta reveals she had a lover before him. Through all these failures and his discovery of Gretta's deceased ex-lover Michael Furey, Gabriel realises that death is everywhere, life goes on the same way, and everything is temporary. Death covers everywhere in the world just like the snow covering Dublin (254-256). This story is the final epiphany of all stories in *Dubliners* for the pessimistic message it conveys about the bleakness of human life is a sum of all stories in the book and bears similar tenets with T.S. Eliot's *Waste Land* (Norris, 2003: 45).

In terms of reverie, the most explicit example of reverie is in "The Boarding House" through Polly. As she waits in her lover's bedroom for her mother to solve the problem of her affair, she puts her head on the pillow and remembers her moments with Mr Doran in this very bed (75, 76). She daydreams for a while and feels gradually more positive about her future until she is called from downstairs to receive the happy news (Power, 1997: 148). Another reverie is by Little Chandler of "A Little Cloud". Hearing that day about his old friend Ignatius Gallaher's achievements as an author, he walks in the streets dreaming that he is also writing successful volumes of poetry and that his name appears with great valour in literary magazines. This daydream or reverie makes him feel highly confident of himself and improves his mood just for a few minutes. Then, the feeling of inferiority emerges again when he meets Gallaher (80, 92). To continue, "Eveline" is in daydream most of her time until the moment she decides not to leave for Buenos Ayres with her lover Frank. She dreams all day about how she met Frank and their relationship. Apart from these, she remembers her memories with her mother, father and brothers in the old days when they were happy. Thus, one can argue that she does not have a happy life at present; that is why she spends her days dreaming (38-41). As a final example, Mr Duffy from "A Painful Case" undergoes a revelation after he reads about Mrs Sinico's death. He remembers her moment of intimacy with him and feels remorse realising his solitude and isolation (129, 130).

The last formative modernist technique Joyce introduces in *Dubliners* is chiasmus. It is the figure of speech that combines two or more clauses with recurrent structures, images or situations to draw parallelism in narration. It is a functional technique used in parallel with the themes and motives constituting the backbone of the narration through repetitive scenes and images working like the modernist *leitmotif*. It invites "further truths" by way of "reversing, without necessarily denying, the truth of a statement" (Wiseman and Paul, 2014: 38). Joyce draws parallel images and recurrent figures to emphasise the sterility, monotony, hopelessness and metaphorical as well as literal darkness of the city/modern life. He mostly uses the images of darkness, paralysis, reverie and loneliness in *Dubliners*. First, the beginning of "The Sisters" is quite striking: "He had often said to me: *I am not long for this world*, and I had thought his words idle. Now I knew they were true. Every night as I gazed up at the window, I said softly to myself the word *paralysis*" (7, *emphasis original*). The narration of this story is not quick paced, but immobile as a person paralysed. Another instance of chiasmus is observed in "The Dead" by Gabriel's perception of life: "His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead" (256). In this part, Joyce reverses the image of falling after a paragraph full of "falling". Besides, in "Araby", the narration has many descriptions about light and darkness. The boy sees the light in the girl he adores and thinks of her as an innocent angel and the reason he lives for (30, 31). On the other hand, North Richmond Street, where he wanders and walks through to reach Araby (32, 35), is pictured in darkness and shadows as a symbol of the social, political and religious corruption of streets as a reflection of the changing Irish society (Norris, 2003: 45-46). Hence, chiasmus has a significant effect on narration as it contributes to the general flow of the stories and the work itself to support the modernist themes of hopelessness, sterility and corruption.

MODERNIST THEMES IN *DUBLINERS*

As a canonical work of British literature, *Dubliners* introduces not only an innovative form of narration but also the exposition of various themes drawing a picture of the monotonous and mechanised life in the city, the centre of civilisation. Joyce unites his unique stories under a single theme, namely paralysis, city (Dublin) and life cycle (childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life) (Bulson, 2006: 50). It employs themes as sterility and paralysis of city, isolation/loneliness, hypocrisy and corruption through politics, religion and society and the lack of romance in modern life reflective of the multilayered aspects of the early twentieth century's "accelerated modernization through technological and industrial

advancements along with the changed social and cultural structures of societies" (Erdem Ayyıldız, 2022: 23). However, these themes can be studied based on a division into different ages and state of human beings as reflected through the microcosmic lens of *Dubliners*.

Joyce provides the reader with different dimensions of humanity due to his characters from different ages, social groups and states of consciousness. They are vastly from the middle class and the working class as representatives of real-life Dublin at the time (Bulson, 2006: 33). The stories can be divided based on ages as childhood, adolescence, adulthood and public life. "The Sisters", "An Encounter" and "Araby" are the representation of the childhood while "Eveline" and "After the Race" are the reflection of adolescence. "Two Gallants", "The Boarding House", "A Little Cloud", "Counterparts", "Clay" and "A Painful Case" depict the adulthood stage whereas "Ivy Day in The Committee Room", "A Mother", "Grace" and "The Dead" makes an exquisite picture of the public life. Likewise, Joyce signals the division of the stories through his treatment of the narration and the narrating persona:

the first three stories, relating stories of apparently orphaned boyhood, are told in the subjective first person, past tense; this focus is abandoned for an enlarged third-person observation in the subsequent stories, though in "The Dead" [which was later added to the collection] Joyce manages to create the illusion of both a sweeping objective and an intensely subjective comprehension. (Friedrich and Walzl, 1961: 520)

Principally, "The Sisters" is told through a child's perspective. He is close friends with Father Flynn until he dies of paralysis. He likes this older man very much and spends days with Flynn without sensing his impact on his personality, even though his uncle and their friend Mr Cotter criticises the child's behaviours and deep attachment to the man. This impact is seen in his repetition of the word "paralysis". When the man dies, he feels sorry, yet relieved as he has lost both his friend and his burden. Nonetheless, he is disappointed with the man as he learns about his mysterious side due to his sister's revelation, so he is disappointed with Catholicism. As for "An Encounter", the boy narrator escaping from his boring Dublin school life meets a vulgar, immoral man and realises there is no escape from city life and corruption. In the last childhood story "Araby", the boy narrator who is very fond of a girl older than him, watches her from their window and enjoys the playfulness of light and darkness both in and out of his house and the girl herself. He whispers her name like a prayer and almost worships her. Yet, as he visits the bazaar for her and hears a couple's conversation, he loses his excitement and returns home buying nothing. Shortly, these three stories are the repercussions of childhood psychology and the shocking encounters of Irish children with the bitter realities of modern city life.

As for adolescence stories, "Eveline" is a young adolescent's unhappy love story. Eveline surprises the reader when she chooses her young brothers and angry father over Frank, her affectionate lover. As seen, there is no place for romance in her life, which is full of pain, restrictions, monotony and corruption. Another story, "After the Race" reveals the middle-class member, Jimmy's short-lived excitement with his aristocratic friends. At the end of this day, it is Jimmy who has lost all his money to a card name, along with his honour and happiness.

Moreover, stories reflecting the adulthood stage of human life reflect the modern themes of immobility, conflict and complexity. In "Two Gallants", Corley achieves his goal at the end of the story even if it shows his weakness, immorality and lack of honour. What matters is the money he somehow earned. "The Boarding House" is about Mrs Mooney's discovery of the affair between Mr Doran and her daughter Polly and her effective solution to the problem, which is marriage. However, meanwhile marriage is pictured as an empty entity by Mr Doran for restricting freedom, but an obligation nonetheless for he dishonoured Polly. Furthermore, Little Chandler of "A Little Cloud" is an exhausted man who is envious of his friend Gallaher and wants to find a way out of his job, once-happy marriage life, his wife and his son. Yet, he is stuck in this life and remains a discontent man not capable of taking action to change anything in his life. Besides, Farrington from "Counterparts" is like Little Chandler in that he is not happy with his life as well. He hates his office job, ignores his duties, takes alcohol at work, assaults his boss, drinks with his friends in a bar and has a crush on single women although he is married. In the end, he returns home late but the first feeling he shows his family is anger and hatred as seen when he beats his little son, Tom.

In "Clay", Maria spends her days making other people happy while ignoring her feelings and needs. She has shaped her life so perfectly with strict rules that she is now trapped in those borders to a dull, meaningless and monotonous life. She meets a nice guy on the tram, yet she chooses to ignore him at the end of the encounter even though she is affected by him so much to forget the cake package in the tram. This frustrates her later when she realises that she has forgotten the package in the tram, as she has no habit of forgetting things around. It is the revelation of her feelings to her restricting mind. Another sign is her repetition of the same passage of the song. They make her think about her way of life. Nevertheless, if she shall change things in her life or not, it is not revealed in the end. Finally, "A Painful Case" is another case of an ignored life. Mr James Duffy is another man who limits his own life by his own unreasonable rules. He is a dull businessman doing the same things and going to the same places every day. However, his routine changes when he starts seeing Mrs Sinico, an emotional and warm woman compared to him. She gives him a chance of happiness and an escape from his boring life when she attempts for an affair

with him. Yet, he turns her down immediately and stops seeing her. He acts based on his principles and feels regretful when he learns about Mrs Sinico's death four years later. Still, just like Maria from the previous story, he is left in a dilemma in the end.

Furthermore, the public aspect of *Dubliners* stories exposes the conflicted state of mind and transition in Irish society at the beginning of the new century. To begin, "Ivy Day in The Committee Room" is the most political story among other public stories because it reveals the situation of Irish National Party members on Ivy Day, after their leader Charles Parnell's death. Ivy Day symbolises the commemoration of Parnell's death. However, these party members have lost their dignity, national and religious sensitivity and morality. They have loose tongues and gossiping manners. Ironically compared to Parnell himself, they certainly lack esteem and political seriousness. They criticise each other, backbite the candidates and speak evil of other members, unlike Parnell who struggled for the independence of Ireland from England both in politics and religion. The poem attributed to Parnell at the end shows the considerable gap between the present party members and Parnell's group in the past. In the same manner, "A Mother" reflects the social aspect of public life as Mrs Kearney argues with Fitzpatrick and his boss about the sum of money, and they cannot settle the matter. Thus, she humiliates herself and Kathleen in the end by the time she forces her to stop the singing performance and leave the stage in front of everybody.

The story "Grace" describes the social and religious aspect of the public life. Mr Kernan, who is once a successful man has recently gone bankrupt. However, he has a strong character, and his rich, aristocratic friends have not left him alone. One day, he falls drunk to the ground in a bar to be helped by his rich friend, Mr Power. Later, Mr Kernan's struggles for repentance and improvement are reflected. His friends convince him to start a new life again by converting back to Protestantism and to improve his position in society. He takes their advice and hopes for a better future. He believes he shall be embraced by God's grace, even though he hates lighting candles in religious service, which shows his contradictory religious situation as a modern man. He does not carry out his duties entirely although it is religion since deep commitment to religion in the modern age is a rare thing with the chaotic and depressive atmosphere, economic restriction and political tension originating from the *fin de siécle* of the nineteenth century and extending to the pre-war atmosphere (Canani and Sullam, 2014: 70). The last story on adult life is "The Dead". It starts with the annual party of the Conroy women Kate, Julia and their niece, Mary Jane. Every year the same people come to the same party to do the same things. Gabriel Conroy meets the gentlemen, carves the goose and makes the dinner speech while Mary Jane meets ladies and aunts, Kate and Julia try to control everything. On the other hand, guests always act the same. Freddy comes drunk, Mr

Browne talks a lot, and dialogues are always the same. Shortly, it is quite a monotonous annual occasion. Yet, it helps Gabriel realise his lack of humbleness, national consciousness and over-confidence when he is defied and questioned by some people in the party. His wife's secret affects him the most and makes him think on the dead and the meaning of life, which brings about a depressing closure to the book *Dubliners* as a whole.

From a similar perspective, "numerous paralysis images" (Friedrich and Walzl, 1961: 520) are displayed in *Dubliners* as a modernist work. In almost all stories, it reflects the paralysis of city life as characters come to realise their shortcomings and the lacking parts in their lives. Still, they continue to live the same way as they do not dare to act, to do something. They are imprisoned in their unhappy lives like a paralysed person unable to move (Heller, 1995: 41). To commence, "The Sisters" is the most exquisite example of paralysis as Father Flynn himself is the literal symbol of paralysis. He is stuck in his bed because of his illness, however as his sister recites, he is already imprisoned in a life of obsession until the illness takes his life away. Therefore, he is both physically and mentally paralysed and dependent on a life full of dullness. He also symbolises the paralysis and corruption in Catholicism, the dominant religious sect in Dublin. Another instance of paralysis is "Eveline" in which the protagonist Eveline prefers to continue her life as an unhappy woman for which she shall be doomed with paralysis. She is to lead a monotonous, violent and tiring domestic life with his family of three males. As for "The Boarding House", Mrs Mooney imprisons both Mr Doran and her daughter Polly into an impassionate marriage realised out of force. Besides, unable to make his own mind, Mr Doran steps into an inactive paralysed life with Polly, even though he has doubts and hesitations about Polly and the marriage institution. "A Little Cloud" pictures Little Chandler's imprisonment in a life of familial monotony, boredom, self-restriction, hatred and self-pity. However, he cannot make a change in his life like a paralysed person. The city life and his fears doom him to this instability and monotony. Farrington of "The Counterparts" is another character displaying discontentment with his life and inability to change it towards a better one. He ends his monotonous day of failure and resentment by beating his son. Lastly, "Clay" and "A Painful Case" are about the realisation of the two protagonists' displeasure of their lives and their mental attempt to make a change. Yet, they cannot actualise their dreams as they are stuck in the paralysis of city life. Their hesitations, fears and attempts are all the same despite their seemingly difference.

Dubliners similarly displays a lack of sympathy, love and romance in the early twentieth century Dublin as a microcosm of Britain. To exemplify, Father Flynn and the boy are friends in "The Sisters" because they have no-one else to trust. They are both alone, isolated and dependent. After Father Flynn dies, the boy feels lonely and discovers how sad and estranged Father Flynn has been during his illness. In "After the Race", Jimmy feels isolated

from his wealthy friends because he is from a lower class, and he loses at the end of the card game. Although he spends a day with them and feels like them, his dream ends by dawn when he remembers his reality with the rising sun. As for the lack of love and romance, "Araby" recounts a little boy's one-sided love for a girl and his frustration towards romance because of his awareness of the realities of life. His father is strict with him, and there is an age difference between him and the girl. Moreover, Eveline's romantic dreams are blocked by domestic problems in "Eveline". "Two Gallants" describes the pathetic lives of Lenehan and Corley who have no romantic concerns or humanly connection to anybody but who instead seek ways to satisfy themselves financially through sexual intimacy.

As mentioned before, "The Boarding House" is the reflection of a marriage of obligation, not of love between Mr Doran and Polly because Mrs Mooney's insistence and Doran's hesitation of the societal reaction to his romantic affair with her. Therefore, he is afraid of being excluded from the Catholic Irish society that is why he chooses to be a part of the societal mechanism by marrying Polly by disregarding his worries. "A Little Cloud" shows the unromantic marriage between Little Chandler and his wife as he looks down upon her after meeting Gallaher and his aggressive attempt to get rid of his wife and son, only to be regretted a moment later. Similarly, Maria of "Clay" becomes aware of her monotonous and restricted life without romance after a day of encounter with a gentleman she indirectly flirts in the tram. She finishes the day with a song and remembers how much she has ignored her feelings, a starting point to change her lifestyle. James Duffy from "A Painful Case" is one of the best examples of *Dubliners* embodying the lack of romance most openly. He has established such a strict life for himself that there is no room for love, let alone a little bit of flirtation there that is why he immediately turns Mrs Sinico's romantic offer down. Like Maria of "Clay", he seems to take a different path in his future in the end. Likewise, "A Mother" tells Mrs Kearney's lack of romance because she did not marry her husband for love and wants to compensate whatever she could not achieve in her life by interfering with her daughter, Kathleen's life, even if this interference embarrasses both Kathleen and her. Finally, "The Dead" recites Gabriel's selfish attitudes and his great realisation of the things going around himself, like his wife, Gretta's lament for her ex-lover. Only then he understands that he is not in the centre of his wife's life and that their marriage lacks deep love and passion. Picturing similar characters from different backgrounds, Joyce points out the social ills of his society.

Finally, *Dubliners* aptly pictures the changing values, hypocrisy and corruption in Ireland towards the end of the book with more serious stories, "Ivy Day", "Grace" and "The Dead". The most subtle depiction of the change in politics is seen in "Ivy Day in The Committee Room" where nationalists Tierney, O'Connor and many more gather to commemorate the Parnell day and meet the new candidates for the municipal election.

However, they are not committed to Irish nationalism and religion as Parnell did. They just remember him symbolically, because his effect on the party members has already disappeared. In the story, religious corruption is also seen through a clergyman. Father Keon is a father who knocks the politician, Mr Henchy's room but cannot go inside. It is pictured rather symbolically by Joyce because the father, according to Henchy, looks like either a clergyman or an actor (140). To continue, "Grace" tells the hypocrisy of religion and society. Mr Kernan, a fallen man, is ignored by society except for some friends. However, even some of them like Mr Power look down upon him for his condition even though they do not openly express it. Later, these friends suggest Mr Kernan Protestantism for God's grace. However, the religious service is diminished in the book to the carriage and decoration of candles in the church, which Kernan rejects to carry out. As depicted, religion does not give people peace and relief but dictates rules on them like taking part in the candle service. Lastly, "The Dead" reveals different levels of hypocrisy because Conroys' party is held every year as an entertainment occasion. However, it clearly has turned into a kind of forced system in which everybody born in a decent family must make a show of themselves to preserve their respectability. Apart from this, Aunt Julia and Kate make fun of Catholicism while Mr Brown defends it although none of them know anything about religious sects. It has now become just a part of small talk which has empty meaning in conversation. Like politics and nationalism, religion has become a trivial thing.

CONCLUSION

Introducing his style to pen the ills of his time and the minds of the Irish people before many authors, James Joyce is a pioneer of modernism in narrative techniques, themes and motives in *Dubliners*. Exposing the inner psyche of Dubliners through his characters and describing the age as corrupt, he becomes a part of the emerging modern literary canon. Depicting the dilemmas and conflicts of his characters from various age groups, classes and backgrounds, Joyce vocalises the changing Irish society on the brink of World War I. Some characters try to adhere to their national, religious and moral values as much as they can whereas most Dubliners appear too lost in their daily rush of life to care about romance or human touch, much less Irish national values or religion. Hence, *Dubliners* expertly represents a panorama of the modern Dublin city with a myriad of characters talking their own mind representing the general mood of the whole humanity, which makes it a precious universal work.

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CHAPTER FOUR

A Stylistic Analysis of "Tickets Please"

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ABSTRACT

"Tickets Please" is a short story that points out the condition of masculinized British women by assuming the jobs that are known as the jobs of men thanks to the limited human resources during The First World War. With a stylistic analysis of the short story, this study aims to reveal D. H. Lawrence's dissatisfaction with industrial environment and his observation on the fact that employment of women in the jobs that are known as the jobs of men during The First World War is not a social progress, but a social degeneration. The chapter also emphasizes Lawrence's observation on the fact that it is because those women make progress only in business life but not in social life reveals the author's implication that whereas men assert their long-established economic superiority, women still resume their passive attitude in the daily life. This study is an attempt to dispute the accusation of Lawrence for being a sexist in his reflection of the absurdity of women's employment in men's jobs. Through a stylistic analysis of the story, this chapter examines psychological consequences of the change in women's status and the battle between sexes embodied by the characters, Annie and Thomas.

Keywords – British Society, First World War, Women's Studies, Stylistic Analysis, Social Corruption.

INTRODUCTION

"Tickets Please" is one of the short stories in the collection, *England My England* by D.H. Lawrence, published in 1922 during the First World War. *England My England* consists of fourteen short stories written between 1913 and 1921 and reflects Lawrence's deeply felt sadness for the disfigurement of his country. The stories also have the traces of war and several of them are about the relation between men and women. "Tickets Please" is one of these stories through which Lawrence expresses his dissatisfaction with the industrial environment and superficial order of social progress offered to women who are socially promoted by their jobs. The setting is highly important in the story. The action of the story takes place in the First World War, during which healthy young men are fighting away in France. For this reason, the jobs of men are carried out either by weak males such as "cripples", "hunchbacks" or by "women".

It is the story of a young inspector of the tramway system, John Thomas Raynor, who seduces all the conductresses on the Midlands line and Annie Stone, who is one of these conductresses. Annie falls in love with John, but he lets her down by cheating on her with another girl upon which she decides to take revenge. Because all other conductresses also hold a grudge

against John after experiencing the same treatment by him, Annie sets a trap for him together with the girls. They call John into their waiting room at the depot in which they force him to choose one of them as his wife. The girls also manage to give him a hard lesson by roughing him up, which reminds of Euripides' play *Bacchae* in which King Pentheus is torn apart by the women of Thebes, which shows Lawrence's inclination to make use of the traces of Greek Tragedy. Finally, John chooses Annie, which does not make her happy. At the end of the story, John is set free and walks away alone in the night while the girls leave the depot in a silent and dissatisfied manner (Bernard, 2000: 3; Ross, 1977: 1).

THE STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF "TICKETS PLEASE"

"Tickets Please" is a story that gives its messages not only through content, but also through stylistic devices. In this part, the story will be handled in terms of its lexical aspects and foregrounded features such as parallelism, repetition, sound effects and divergence.

Lawrence uses a simple, colloquial and highly descriptive language in the story, which gives the sense that the narrator is telling the story of somebody he knows. With nouns, he draws an industrial scene and the people during First World War; with verbs, he gives clues to the feelings of his characters; with adjectives, he reveals his dissatisfaction with the condition of England and the new social progress with the employment of the women in the tram services during the war period.

In this section, lexical aspects of the story will be handled focusing on the below passage, which is the introductory paragraph of the story:

> There is in the Midlands a single-line tramway system which boldly leaves the county town and plunges off into the black, industrial countryside, uphill and down dale, through the long ugly villages of workmen's houses, over canals and railways, past churches perched high and nobly over the smoke and shadows, through stark, grimy cold little marketplaces, tilting away in a rush past cinemas and shops down to the hollow where the collieries are, then up again, past a little rural church, under the ash trees, on in a rush to the terminus, the last little ugly place of industry, the cold little town that shivers on the edge of the wild, gloomy country beyond. There the green and creamy coloured tramcar seems to pause and purr with curious satisfaction. But in a few minutes—the clock on the turret of the Co-operative Wholesale Society's Shops gives the time-away it starts once more on the adventure. Again there are the reckless swoops downhill, bouncing the loops: again the chilly wait in the hill-top market-place: again the breathless slithering round the precipitous drop under the church: again the patient halts at the

loops, waiting for the outcoming car: so on and on, for two long hours, till at last the city looms beyond the fat gas-works, the narrow factories draw near, we are in the sordid streets of the great town, once more we sidle to a standstill at our terminus, abashed by the great crimson and cream-coloured city cars, but still perky, jaunty, somewhat dare-devil, green as a jaunty sprig of parsley out of a black colliery garden (27).

Lawrence opens the story with a description of an industrial landscape crossed by the tram by using the nouns associated with industry and industrial landscape such as "a single line tramway system", "countryside", "villages of workmen's houses", "canals", "railways", "churches", "market places", "smoke", "cinemas", "shops", "tram car", "the clock", "factories", "streets of the great town", "city cars". Thus, in the passage, by using such concrete nouns associated with industrial setting, Lawrence enables the readers to visualize the industrial scene of the city of his story vividly.

Regarding the verbs, in the passage, most of the verbs such as "leave", "plunge off", "pass", "perch", "tilt away" are dynamic verbs and define the functioning of the tramway from the starting point to destination. The narrator also uses the dynamic verbs to describe the movements of the tramcar such as "pause" and "purr". Stative verbs such as is, pause, halt and wait are also used to narrate a stative action such as being or waiting.

When the story is considered as a whole, it is observed that Lawrence uses both stative and dynamic verbs in accordance with his narration. It is also observed that there are some verbs Lawrence uses to foreground something by using parallelism. For instance, the verb "like" is used to define the feelings of the main characters. Lawrence draws a parallel between the first feelings of Annie and Thomas by using the verb "like": "Annie liked John Thomas a good deal. She felt so rich and warm in herself whenever he was near; And John Thomas really liked Annie, more than usual" (30). By using the verb like rather than love for the feelings of both Annie and Thomas the narrator hints that their flirtation does not imply love; it remains superficial.

Another parallelism is seen with the use of the verb "fear" in the fourth paragraph in which the narrator describes the female conductors as such: "They fear nobody- and everybody fears them". Here, the author implies that there is something wrong with the girls and we should "fear" this new kind of women.

As for adjectives, in the passage, it is clear that adjectives are mostly used to foreground Lawrence's displeasure of industrial life. It is because he

uses negative adjectives such as "black", "ugly", "cold" in describing the industrial town and its components: "into the black industrial countryside" (27), "ugly villages of workmen's houses" (27), "the last little ugly place of industry" (27), "the cold little town that shivers on the edge of the wild, gloomy country beyond" (27), "the narrow factories" (27) "sordid streets of the great town" (27). As seen in these clauses, with the use of negative adjectives, Lawrence draws a gloomy atmosphere of the industrial town. He also draws a parallel between the industrial town he portrays, and the official uniforms worn by the conductor girls with the repetition of adjective "ugly": "In their ugly blue uniform, skirts up to their knees, shapeless old peaked caps on their heads, they have all the sangfroid of an old non-commissioned officer" (28).

As seen, just as he does in describing the industrial town, Lawrence uses negative adjectives such as "ugly", "shapeless", "peaked" in describing the uniform of the conductor girls. The only femininity the conductors retain is "skirts up to their knees". By portraying the girl uniforms negatively, Lawrence shows his dissatisfaction of this sort of new women who lost their femininity. However, the adjectives he prefers cannot be regarded as an assault or mocking as argued by the article entitled "Analysis of 'Tickets Please' from the Perspective of Female Stylistic" in which it is claimed that Lawrence depicts the conductor girls and mocks them "as an ambiguous figure of women as a strange mixture of aggressiveness and passivity, of cruelty and tenderness, of possessiveness and surrender" (Xiaoying-Wei, 2015:210). The author's preference to use the same adjective "ugly" to reflect both his dissatisfaction of industrial town and official uniforms of the conductor girls can dispute this claim. It shows that industry diminished not only the beauty of the city, but also femininity of women. In Ayyıldız's words, "although the modern way of life makes women and men look similar to each other in dressing, occupations and many other aspects of life; they seem separate, but the similar particles of wave in quantum physics" (Ayyıldız, 2023: 60). Therefore, Lawrence's criticism is not on women, but on the conditions of industry in war time that forced women to work in men's job at the cost of losing their femininity.

Like the conductor girls, men driving these tramcars are depicted as not suitable for their profession. At the beginning of the second paragraph, the narrator says, "since we are in war-time, the drivers are men unfit for active service: cripples and hunchbacks" (27). Thus, there is a parallelism between the drivers' loss of manhood and the conductresses' loss of womanhood. With this, Lawrence implies that women's working in men's jobs, which seems as if a social progress gives way to the loss of gender differentiation. It is because the girls assume a new authority, which turns them into "non-commissioned officer" (28) whereas men have physical deficiencies. Thus,

with the negative adjectives in describing both men and women as improper for their jobs, Lawrence reveals the condition of England during the First World War and implies that the war has ruined the gender differentiation in England.

In addition to reflecting his dissatisfaction with industrial life, Lawrence makes use of repetitive adjectives in the story whenever he wants to foreground the significance of an event and an action. For instance, he hints that the night at Statutes Fair will be different for Annie and Thomas. In order to attract attention to the extraordinariness of the night, Lawrence uses repetitive expressions such as "drizzling ugly night" (29) and "black, drizzling darkness" (30). That night is different because Annie is no longer on duty; she changes her uniform, dresses herself up and thus regains her femininity. With this change of environment and appearance of Annie, narrator's intention is to show the real status of women and men in the social arena because at Statues Fair scene, the relationship between Annie and John Thomas gains a new quality. Annie assumes the role of a traditional submissive woman whereas John shows his economic superiority by paying "each time". As seen on the Dragons, Annie does not pay for the round, but her partner, John pays and hands the ticket over. Annie's letting him pay the money for her shows that in the social life as a woman Annie does not have an authority. The so-called social progress she has made by doing men's job has not provided her any advantage in the social life. Her authority works only in her business life, not in social life. Thus, by foregrounding the difference of the night that is spent in a social environment with repetitive adjectives, Lawrence implies that conductor girls benefit from their new status merely in the microcosm of the tram system, but when it comes to direct human relationships, which represents the macrocosm, they are still inferior. With this message, Lawrence points out the artificiality of social progress gained by women by doing men's jobs.

Another repetitive adjective is seen in the central scene at the girls' room. The adjective "wild" is repeated five times in the short sentences used to describe the physical attack on John Thomas such as "wild creatures", "in a wild frenzy of fury", "wild blows", "their hair wild" and "the wild faces of the girls" (34) to stress the change in women's nature which hints the loss of gender difference. As seen, Lawrence uses adjectives in order to point out his dissatisfaction with industrial scene and loss of gender difference in the society in war time. It is seen that by using the same adjectives, he either draws a parallel between the concepts he dislikes or foregrounds the issue he criticizes.

In addition to adjectives and nouns, the author makes use of foregrounded features such as parallelism, repetitions, sound effects and

divergence to convey his messages. For instance, he uses parallel sentence structures to point out the unusualness of the conductor girls: "They pounce on the youths who try to evade their ticket machine. They push off the men at the end of their distance. They are not going to be done in the eye-not they. They fear nobody-and everybody fears them" (28). In his description of how the conductor girls work, the narrator repetitively uses the pronoun "they". When Lawrence's dissatisfaction with the loss of femininity is considered, it is possible to claim that by using of the pronoun "they" repetitively which is associated with otherness, Lawrence aims to foreground how the conductor girls do not fit in the job they are working because "they" are doing men's jobs.

Sound effect is another foregrounded feature of the story. For instance, in the first paragraph to stigmatize the industrial landscape, the narrator makes use of alliteration. He uses alliterative phrases such as "long, ugly villages" (27) and "last little ugly place of industry" (27), and "sordid streets of the great town" (27) pointing out the ugliness of the industrial environment.

Another foregrounding technique Lawrence uses in the first paragraph is repetition. For instance, he repetitively uses of the verb "rush" in the movement of the tramway "tilting away in a rush past cinemas, in a rush to the terminus" (27). The word "rush" is also repeated in the fourth paragraph to describe the drivers of" tram service". The narrator says the tram service is "driven by rash young men". With these repetitions, Lawrence foregrounds the "rush" way of living of the industrial life.

Repetition is also used in the narrator's emphasis on the fact that "everybody employed in this tram-service is young" (28). The narrator foregrounds this by explaining it with more than one sentence: "For some reason, everybody employed in this tram-service is young: there are no grey heads. It would not do. Therefore, the inspectors are of the right age ..." (28). It is obvious that the narrator aims to draw attention to the fact that the staff of the tram service is the young generation. The reason which is left unexplained in the story is the fact that in the old generation, women and "crippled men" were not employed as clearly implied by the statement "it would not do" (28). Thus, here Lawrence draws attention to the change in the society. The new staff of tram service is not approved by the narrator as the adjectives he uses for them indicate. Even the "chief" and "good looking" one, the inspector John Thomas is defined as a man "with a faint impudent smile" and the impudence of the character is foregrounded by using these words for him and his actions many times in the story. For instance, the chat of John and Addie is called "impudent": "Then for a long and impudent chat on the food board" (28). John's appearance with another

girl after her rejection to Annie's interest in him is also defined as an impudent act: "And then, when he came, still impudently …" (30) John's speech at the waiting room is also regarded as an "impudence" for the narrator: "They all looked at him as he uttered this piece of impudence" (32). Moreover, John's portrayal as a man flirting with the girl conductors and walling out with them carelessly also shows that narrator does not approve him and the new generation.

Another repetition is seen with the expression of "wartime", which is repeated three times in the story. In each time, the narrator draws attention to negative aspect of war. The narrator's first use of the phrase is seen in the second paragraph as such: "Since we are at wartime, the drivers are men unfit for active service" (27). Then, at The Statutes Fair, he refers to "artificial wartime substitutes" (29). Finally, he repeats the expression to describe "darkness and lawlessness of wartime" (31). For this reason, with this repetition of the expression, Lawrence foregrounds the negative aspects of war.

Divergence is also used as a technique of foregrounding within the story. This technique becomes apparent with the repetition of the adjectives "*intelligent*" and "*nocturnal*". The narrator uses these adjectives frequently to express Annie's desire to go beyond a superficial affair and reach a complete relationship with Thomas:

> Annie wanted to consider him a person, a man; she wanted to take an intelligent interest in him, and to have an intelligent response. She did not want a mere nocturnal presence: which was what he was so far. … John intended to remain a nocturnal presence; he had no idea of becoming all-round individual to her. When she started to take an intelligent interest in him and in his life and his character, he sheared off. He hated intelligent interest. And he knew that the only way to stop it was to avoid it. The possessive female was aroused in Annie. So, he left her (30).

As seen, the adjective "intelligent" is repeated four times and comes before nouns "interest" and "response" both of which are not generally defined with the adjective "interest". Thus, here, in addition to repetition, the narrator uses deviation. Similarly, the adjective "nocturnal" is repeated twice and comes before the noun "presence", which is not generally defined by the adjective "nocturnal". By using these deviations together with repetition, Lawrence points out that Annie is being a knowing self because her instincts for possession starts to grow. She no longer wants to waste her time by having a not "intelligent" affair with John. Here, another point Lawrence seems to emphasize is that the new kind of women, although they appear to

have social statues, have been the object of interest of men, which is not "intelligent".

CONCLUSION

The stylistic analysis of the story reveals that Lawrence uses proper nouns, verbs and adjectives in accordance with his aim to reveal this dissatisfaction of the industrialization and his criticism on loss of gender difference due to women's working in men's job at war time. The paper also shows that the author makes use of the foregrounding features such as sound effect, repetition, parallelism and deviation to foreground his message that although women seem to have economic superiority by working in men's job on the surface, in the reality they retain their submissive attitude in social life. He emphasizes that instead of providing them social progress, men's job eliminates femininity of women and turns them into somebody who "fear nobody" and of whom "everybody fears" (28). The author's use of the same adjective "ugly" defining two things he dislikes such as industrial town and women's loss of femininity also shows that Lawrence is not a sexist as claimed by some critics; on the contrary he reflects his dissatisfaction of the condition of war time which eliminated the femininity of women.

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CHAPTER FIVE

A Comparison of Realism and Naturalism through the Drama Plays of Ibsen, Chekhov, Strindberg, and O'Neill

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ABSTRACT

Realism is an artistic movement in the nineteenth century that favors depicting contemporary social life in accurate detail without romanticizing them. Naturalism is another movement that emerged in the late nineteenth century rejecting Romanticism and it is considered as a form of Realism. Observation as a scientific technique is important both for Naturalism and Realism because the playwrights of the two movements needed to observe the real world in order to understand it and reflect it accurately in their plays. The distinctive impacts of these two literary movements are apparent in drama as they are in other genres of literature as well as visual arts and it makes it possible to tell them apart. This chapter aims to discuss the differences between Realism and Naturalism as well as similarities by referring to examples from the plays of prominent writers, *A Doll's House* (1978) by Henrik Ibsen, *The Cherry Orchard* (1904) by Anton Chekhov, *Miss Julie* (1888) by August Strindberg and *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1956) by Eugene O'Neill.

Keywords – Realism, Naturalism, Ibsen, Chekhov, Strindberg, O'neill.

INTRODUCTION

Realism represents the deviation from its predecessor, Romanticism, which is rejected by Realism for being too concerned with idealism and for putting too much emphasis on emotions. Realist authors, who believed that the truth is in the tangible world and opposed idealizing it, criticized the Romantics' escapist attitude and individualism. Contrary to Romanticism, Realism is more engaged in social issues in everyday life. Naturalism, on the other hand, is an approach to creating the impression of Realism, yet it is an extreme form of it. However, Naturalism did not last as long as Realism, nor were its products very popular among the audience because it intended to explain situations more scientifically. It aimed to elucidate the effects of science and technology on society and that of genetics on the individual. Realism, on the other hand, prevailed for a longer period as it dealt with life as it is more sympathetically, gaining the audience's or the reader's favor. It is so interlaced with Realism that it is hard to distinguish one from another. Although the two movements aim at the same purpose, to depict life as it is, they do have distinctions. This chapter is going to draw these distinctions exemplifying it through the works of four playwrights: Ibsen, Chekhov, Strindberg and O'Neill.

REALISM AND NATURALISM

Realism started out as an artistic movement in France in the 1840s as a reaction to Romanticism prevailing in the art and literature of France. In other words, it emerged as a reaction against Romanticism. According to the scholars of the time, Romanticism was too detached from what is real as the writers and artists of Romanticism insisted on dealing with polished and embellished historical and mythological settings as well as places, atmospheres and objects. Realism became widespread in all spheres such as art and literature after its predecessor. The authors of this movement reflect life in their works without romanticizing or embellishing it, abstaining from what is romantic and unreal. Their works stay true to life: "Basically, realism in literature came because man was being forced to look at life more realistically- all of life" (Meserve, 1964: 152). They strive to mirror human life, human interaction in society and relationships, everything that belongs to being human, a social being. Naturalism, on the other hand, owes its origin to an idea widespread in the late 19th century. This idea was highly influenced by Realism, and it aimed at explaining the real world in a more scientific way, through determinism, heredity in addition to the effects of social environment on human behaviour. Georg Lukács, the Hungarian Marxist philosopher and literary critic defined Realism as a literary style and compared and contrasted Realism and Naturalism in his works such as *Studies in European Realism* (1948), *Realism in Our Time* (1957), *The Historical Novel* (1937). His books and his essays on Realism helped greatly to the definition of Realism as a literary style. In addition to this, he compared Realism and Naturalism to make a clear distinction between the two as they resemble each other by a considerable amount.

To begin with the analysis of the four drama plays in this context, Ibsen is known as the father of Realism in literature because he introduced Realism in theatre as a theatrical technique. Before Ibsen's introduction of Realism, melodrama, which was full of exaggerated events and characters that aimed at making the audience feel intense emotions, was the dominant style in theatres. Furthermore, the classical style was another form used in theatre. In included larger-than-life characters such as kings and princes. In addition, the classical style made use of spectacle to evoke emotions. Lastly, Romanticism that is dominant in the plays offered a world and characters that are disconnected from reality. All these theatrical styles were unable to capture the real world around as it is, without embellishing or polishing it. Conversely, Ibsen, like all authors, playwrights and artists that are the supporters and practitioners of Realism in their works, chose "realism" over "escapism," "truth" over "illusion" (Halsey, 48: 1970). Ibsen, by introducing Realism into theatre as a theatrical style, made the representation of the real world possible in plays. Thanks to Ibsen, playwrights started to mirror life and people around them. As much as he introduced Realism as a theatrical

technique and applied this technique to his plays, he also took it into consideration as a philosophical standpoint. They are both evident in the conversations, setting and characters he creates in his plays:

> Ibsen, more than any other playwright, established realism as a vital mode in the theatre. The nature of Ibsen's realism, however, warrants careful description. Realism for Ibsen is simultaneously a theatrical technique and a philosophical stance. We find realism at work in Ibsen's dialogue, scenery and characterization, as well as in the plays' relentless critique of bourgeois ideals. Ibsen was not the first realist dramatist, but he remains its most influential practitioner. This legacy is somewhat ironic, given the disturbing sur-reality that leeches through the realist surface of his plays. And yet, the spark of recognition the plays continue to ignite bears witness to realism's effectiveness, as audiences continue to find themselves represented, in all their faults, in his towering dramas. (Miller, 2021: 37)

Although the depictions of Realism and Naturalism seem to be close to each other, there are notable differences. The writers whose works reflect the features of Realism in literature often concentrate on middle-class characters: "The essence of realism is not to reproduce reality photographically, but to reproduce the way social and historical forces shape and determine human life" (Lukács, 1937: 6). Ibsen, who is credited with being the one who introduced Realism into drama and used it at a maximum level, disclosed the lives of middle-class people in his plays. For instance, in *A Doll's House,* Torvald Helmer is the newly appointed bank manager, an occupation that indicates that Torvald belongs to the middle class. Torvald is very much representative of his class and society. Torvald does not regard Nora Helmer, the main character and Torvald's wife, as his equal. He expects her to be subservient and naïve. However, although Nora appears to be fulfilling the expectations of the society she lives in as an obedient, pure, and domestic wife having no opinion of her own rights until the end of the play, with the exceptions of small rebellious acts such as eating macaroons which her husband forbids her to eat.

In the same vein, Anton Chekov's plays mirror contemporary Russian society focusing mainly on middle-class people as well as fading aristocracy. In *The Cherry Orchard* (1904), Chekhov discusses the decline of the aristocracy and the rise of the middle class in Russian society along with serfs with their newly obtained freedom. To illustrate, Yermolay Lopakhin is one of the leading characters though not the main character in the play. He is a businessman representative of the middle class whose bloom brought the decline of aristocracy. As seen above, Ibsen and Chekhov portrayed their society, remaining faithful to their real conditions and relationships. On the other hand, Naturalism revolves around characters of various classes, ranging from the working class to the bourgeoisie, and backgrounds such as characters who received poor education. On the other hand, Naturalism

revolves around characters of various classes, ranging from the working class to the bourgeoisie, and backgrounds such as characters who received poor education. The characters in August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* (1888), a naturalistic play, belong to various social classes. The eponymous character, Miss Julie is the daughter of a count, and she is in love with Jean, a servant of her father's. Moreover, there are servants, particularly Jean, under the spotlight in the play.

While realist writers reflect their characters as they are, naturalists are more interested in explaining the reason underlying the individuals' behavior in a scientific way. In other words, they examine and analyze their characters' behavior and the intrinsic physical and psychological causes behind it by putting them into proper surroundings. Therefore, Darwin's theory of evolution is imprinted in their works by them. They were of the same opinion with Darwin who claimed in his *On the Origin of Species* (1869) that one's behavior is determined by genetic inheritance and the influence of the environment. In addition, they borrow Darwin's idea of the survival of the fittest as it is illustrated in Strindberg's play *Miss Julie*. In the play, Miss Julie proves to be not strong enough to survive the restrictions of the society in which she lives and commits suicide. It is also revealed that Miss Julie inherits her primitive passion and hatred for men from her mother, as put by Jean in the beginning: "She's so stuck-up about some things, and not proud enough about others, just like her Ladyship when she was alive" (Strindberg, 1888: 126), while her behavior with an aristocratic disposition is inherited from his father. In contrast to Miss Julie, Laura, the Captain's wife in *The Father* (1887), wins the fight she is involved in with her husband for dominance by systematically and craftily destroying his psychology.

Finally, *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1956) by Eugene O'Neill exemplifies Herbert Spencer's doctrine of social Darwinism. According to social Darwinism, the strong individuals of society gain wealth and climb the social ladder while the weak ones lose their wealth, power and influence as well as their place in the social arena. In the same vein, James Tyrone in the O'Neill's play cannot fulfil his American dream of being wealthy and affluent even though he gains considerable money out of acting in a popular play. His failure proved that he is not the fittest individual of society. In addition to the aforementioned plays, Ibsen's plays bear the marks of Naturalism although he is known as the father of Realism and his plays are known for their social realist stance. For instance, In *Ghosts* (1881), Oswald Alving, the protagonist Mrs. Helene Alving's son, inherits syphilis from his father. Likewise, Torvald claims in *A Doll's House* that Nora's being a spendthrift is a trait she has inherited from her father. In brief, realist writers strove to reflect society by staying faithful to truth and they do not question why and how individuals behave, whereas naturalist writers take it a step further by making use of Darwin's theories regarding the causes of individual behavior.

CONCLUSION

To sum, in a realistic play, the writers portray real life in a realistic world and characters act in accordance with real life situations. Similarly, naturalist writers portray the real life in the way realist writers do; however, their aim is to portray the dark side of real life as well. Acting like scientific observers and maintaining an objective viewpoint, they hold a mirror to the society and demonstrate the corrupt aspects of life such as filth, poverty, prostitution and disease. Therefore, Naturalism is regarded as a pessimistic extension of Realism by some scholars. Naturalists aim to correct these bad situations while realist writers have no such intention. Naturalist writers utilize scientific techniques in contrast to realist ones who use literary techniques to unfold the characters as objective and impartial. Realist plays appeal to human emotions, and this is the primary reason why Realism lasted longer than Naturalism and the pieces of work written in the light of the realist school of thought became more popular. The setting, the costumes and the dialogues are lifelike in both in realist plays and naturalist ones. As a final remark in the light of the information above, plays written under the influence of Realism and Naturalism movements share many aspects just like the movements themselves. Due to these similarities between the two movements, Naturalism is referred to with a number of names such as extended Realism, artless Realism and Darwinian Realism.

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CHAPTER SIX

Discovering The Traces of Brecht's Alienation Effect in Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest*

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ABSTRACT

Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest* (1990) embodies many Brechtian theatre principles, offering a rich exploration of political themes and encouraging the audience to engage critically with the performance. By challenging traditional narrative forms and employing techniques that foster an awareness of the social and political contexts, Churchill's play resonates with Brecht's vision of theatre as a medium for social change. Caryl Churchill's play *Mad Forest* is a notable example of engagement with the Brechtian theatre techniques. Brechtian theatre, developed by Bertolt Brecht, emphasizes the social and political aspects of theatre, and aims to provoke critical thinking rather than just emotional involvement. Thus, this chapter aims to analyze Churchill's *Mad Forest* from the Brechtian perspective.

Keywords – Caryl Churchill, Bertolt Brecht, Epic Theatre, Alienation Effect.

INTRODUCTION

Bertolt Brecht is one of the most influential dramatists of the twentieth century. He formulated many theories and developed important techniques for the theatre. He began regularly referring to his theory and practice as "epic theatre" in the mid-1920s (Mumford, 2009: 171). By the word "epic," he signified primarily his attempt to emulate on the stage the objectivity of the narration in Homeric epic. His hope was to encourage his audience to criticize and oppose what they see on the stage, rather than passively to accept the social conditions and modes of behavior that the plays represent (Abrams, 1999: 79). He especially used various techniques which produced the "alienation effect" (*Verfremdungseffekt*) in his plays. The aim of alienation effect is to prevent the audience's emotional identification or involvement with the play by breaking the illusion of reality on the stage. In this way, the audience can judge what is happening on the stage from a critical distance and concentrate on the ideas presented in the play. Because of their power to encourage the audience to think critically, Brecht's theories and alienation techniques have been widely used in political drama. His ideas have had important influence on such political playwrights as Edward Bond and Caryl Churchill in England. Caryl Churchill, for example, employs Brecht's theories and alienation techniques for the theatre in her play *Mad Forest*.

The main characteristic of Brecht's epic theatre is its episodic structure. As Martin puts it, Brecht emphasizes an episodic interruption of the continuity of narratives (Abrams, 1999: 234). The episodic structure of the play gives audience the time to judge the play critically without getting involved in the previous scenes. In this way, each loosely connected scene

becomes for itself, leaving no time for the audience's emotional involvement. Episodic structure also creates alienation effect, which is the main aim of Brechtian techniques. Since the link between the episodes is rather weak, the realistic illusion of the theatre is broken. The montage of disparate scenes put one after another creates curves and jumps and asserts discontinuity. What the audience sees is not a continual movement of the scenes, but the abrupt change of scenes breaking the illusion of real life which is supposed to have a linear development.

CHURCHILL'S *MAD FOREST*

Caryl Churchill employs Brechtian episodic structure in her play *Mad Forest*. The play consists of three acts, and apart from Act Two, each act proceeds through concise, loosely connected scenes. The first scene of Act One, for example, introduces the Vladu family and there is no conversation during the scene. The members of the family are busy with different activities such as smoking, laughing and listening to the radio. Then the scene changes abruptly, and Antonescu family is introduced. This time there is a short conversation, but the scene again changes suddenly and the dialogue between Lucia and Florina, two members of The Vladu family are introduced (*Mad Forest* 14-15).[1] The play proceeds just like that, leaving no time for the audience to get emotionally involved in the scenes.

There are also very short scenes involving just movement and gestures of the characters. These scenes stand like the montage of a series of pictures inserted in the play, thus creating alienation effect. The eleventh scene of Act One is just like that: "A Soldier and a Waiter stand smoking in the street. Suddenly one of them shouts 'Rat!' and they chase it. Radu, Ianoş and Gabriel pass and join in. The rat is kicked about like a football. Then Radu, Ianoş and Gabriel, go on their way and the Soldier and the Waiter go back to smoking" (*MF* 25). This is the whole scene between scenes ten and twelve, and it breaks the continuity of the preceding and following scenes. Inserting such a scene just breaks the illusion of reality in the play. In this way, the alienation effect is created, and the emotional involvement of the audience is prevented.

To produce the alienation effect, titles are given to the scenes in Brechtian epic theatre. Brecht's productions featured technical innovations such as placards to disrupt conventional narratives (Martin and Henry, 2005: 2). The titles of the scenes are announced by one of the characters or shown with placards. These titles also underline the episodic structure of the play. Caryl Churchill uses this Brechtian alienation effect in *Mad Forest*. In the play, each scene is given a title both in Romanian and in English. The stage

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[1] *Mad Forest* will be cited as *MF* from this point on.

direction at the beginning of the play tells that "Each scene is announced by one of the companies reading from a phrase book as if an English tourist, first in Romanian then in English, and again in Romanian" (*MF* 13). The announcement of titles during the play's performance creates an alienation effect since it reminds the audience that they are just seeing a play. In this way, it also blocks their emotional participation in the play.

In Brechtian epic theatre, the play is narrated, there is no plot. As Faber indicates "Brecht…wanted a narrative theatre rather than one of illusion" (Martin and Henry, 2005: 67). Since the plays mainly deal with the narration of events, epic theatre breaks away from the Aristotelian tradition which gives importance to the development of plot through the unities of time, place and action. The narrative aspect of epic theatre also produces alienation effect as the audience cannot associate their lives with the events on the stage. They just listen to the narratives and judge critically from a distance. In this way, the so-called catharsis of the Aristotelian drama is also prevented in epic theatre. Against the Aristotelian tradition, Brecht pitted a dialectical epic theatre, which interrupted the drama with narrative commentary and illuminated the world as a construct open to change (Mumford, 2009:167). Caryl Churchill also adopts these principles to her play *Mad Forest*. There is no linear development of events in the play. The scenes jump from one to another, never letting an organic unity within the play. The unities of time, place and action are discarded, and the importance is given to the narration of events rather than their actual happening.

The play deals with the Romanian Revolution of 1989 and the three acts take place before, during and after the revolution. The second act of the play is journalistic, that is, ordinary citizens of Romania tell the events during the revolution. The stage direction at the beginning of Act Two says "Each behaves as if the others are not there, and each is the only one telling what happened" (*MF* 29). In this way, all the attention of the audience is directed towards telling of the events by the ordinary citizens experiencing the revolution. One of the citizens, a bulldozer driver, says: "My name is Ilie Barbu. I can work many machines. I work in all the country to build hospitals and schools. Always build, never pull down. In December I work at the People's Palace, I drive a bulldozer. There are always many Securitate and today they make us scared because they are scared" (*MF* 51).

In the same way, other individuals tell the events that have happened during the revolution from their points of view. This kind of Brechtian interlude in the middle of the play draws attention to the events themselves without demanding participation from the audience. It is, in a way, stopping and thinking time for the audience. The narration of events is on the foreground and the audience learn the events from people who have experienced them. Thus, they can judge the events critically without involving themselves in the plot. In this way, catharsis is also prevented.

After the revolution, one of the patients in hospital asks many questions which are left unanswered:

> Did we have a revolution or a putsch? Who was shooting on the 21st? And who was shooting *on* the 22nd? Was the army shooting on the 21st or did some shoot and some not shoot or were die Securitate disguised in army uniforms? If the army were shooting, why haven't they been brought to justice? And were they still shooting on the 22nd?...(*MF* 50).

The unanswered questions also become a part of the narrative, and they provoke answers in the minds of the audience and demand their critical judgments.

In Brechtian epic theatre, unlike realist drama, minimal scenery is used. "The epic setting is totally without 'atmosphere.' No attempt is made to reproduce an environment" (Martin and Henry, 2005: 33). Details are regarded as superficial and bare stage is preferred in most of the plays. Such a kind of setting disturbs the realistic illusion of the plays and produces alienation effect. In *Mad Forest*, Churchill also uses minimal scenery and does not give importance to the scenery or costume details. In her "Production Note" to the play, she points out that "[They] didn't use a prop rat" and "The Vampire was not dressed as a vampire" (*MF* 10). This kind of defamiliarization of the stage through minimal setting does not let the audience involve themselves in the play. The Vampire says, "I am a vampire," (*MF* 45) but he wears usual clothes, or they kick the air instead of a "rat" in a short scene in the play (*MF* 25). Such discrepancies regarding the scenery details of the play remind the audience of the play's being just a play.

Dancing, music, songs and poems are widely used in Brechtian epic theatre because of their alienation effect. Brecht underlined the importance of songs, music, narrator figures, stage sets, and the direct addressing of the audience in the theatrical process of "Verfremdung" (White, 2004: 126). They also bring gaps into the scenes and break the unity of the play. In *Mad Forest*, Caryl Churchill uses some of these devices to create desired alienation effect. The last scene of Act One ends with music. It is Lucia's wedding and after the ceremony music begins. It takes place just before the journalistic act, thus breaking the unity of the play. On another occasion, during Radu and Florina's wedding party, the stage direction says, "Music in background" (*MF* 73). Most notably, the play ends with dance and music. All the characters dance on the stage and in the background the "lambada" music is heard according to the stage direction (*MF* 84). Such a scene distances the audience from the play as they cannot identify themselves with the characters or the events happening on the stage. During the same wedding party, old peasant aunt shouts ritual chants:

> Little bride, little bride,
> You're laughing, we've cried.

> Now a man's come to choose you
> We're sad because we lose you.
> Makes you proud to be a wife
> But it's not an easy life… (*MF* 76).

The chant contributes to the play thematically and it also creates an alienation on the part of the audience. Since it is Florina's wedding, the old aunt gives her some advice through her chant, and at the same time the audience become aware that they are just watching a play.

In Brechtian epic theatre, grotesque elements are inserted in the play because of their alienation effect. Mumford points out that Brecht himself included grotesque scenes in his plays. The masks in Brecht's production of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* exemplify the resulting collision of imitative and defamiliarizing modes of representation (*MF* 89). Churchill also employs several grotesque scenes and characters in *Mad Forest*. In the eleventh scene of Act One, Flavia talks to his grandmother's ghost:

> Flavia: Everyone feels like that.
> Grandmother: How do you know? Who do you talk to? Your closest friend is your grandmother and I'm dead, Flavia, don't forget that or you really will go mad (*MF* 25).

The inclusion of ghost in the play produces the alienation effect. In the same way, the play includes grotesque characters such as a vampire and a talking dog. They represent the darker sides of humanity. The audience can easily observe and judge what they say since these characters are not from real life:

> Vampire: Don't be frightened of me, I'm not hungry now. And if I was all I'd do is sip a little of your blood, I don't eat. I don't care for dogs' blood.
> Dog: People's blood?
> Vampire: I came here for the revolution, I could smell it a long way off (*MF* 44-5).

Apart from a vampire, a dog, some ghosts (there is also a ghost of a young man speaking to Florina in hospital), Churchill also presents an angel as a character in the play. The angel talks to a priest:

> Priest: […] You've never been political?
> Angel: Very little. The Iron Guard used to be rather charming and called themselves the League of the Archangel Michael and carried my picture about. They had lovely processions. So I dabbled.
> Priest: But they were fascists.
> Angel: They were mystical.
> Priest: The Iron Guard threw Jews out of windows in '37, my father remembers it. He shouted and they beat him up.
> Angel: Politics, you see. Their politics weren't very pleasant I try to keep clear of political side. You should do the same.
> Priest: I don't trust you any more.

Angel: That's a pity. Who else can you trust? (*MF* 45).

All these unnatural characters contribute to alienation effect in the play. Churchill gives very crucial lines to these characters since the audience can easily think of the meaning of their speech without any emotional involvement.

Apart from grotesque characters, some unusual scenes are also included in *Mad Forest* in a Brechtian manner. These scenes also create alienation effect. Rodica's nightmare scene breaks the realistic illusion of the play (*MF* 55-6). Also, in another instance, the characters' comic fight reminds the audience of the silent movies of Charlie Chaplin, in which such scenes are widely used. During Florina and Radu's wedding, Florina and Lucia's father Bogdan and Lucia's lover Ianoş argue and as a result:

> Bogdan *hits* Ianoş.
> Radu *restrains* Bogdan.
> Lucia *attacks* Bogdan.
> Bogdan h*its* Radu.
> Mihai *pushes* Bogdan.
> Bogdan *hits* Mihai.
> Flavia *attacks* Bogdan..
> Ianoş *pushes* Gabriel […] (*MF* 84).

This comic fight enforces the alienation effect since it is unrealistic. On the other hand, the reason of the fight is very realistic. Ianoş is Hungarian and Bogdan is uneasy about his daughter and Ianoş's relationship. In this way, Churchill draws attention to the problem of ethnicity in Romania without demanding the audience's emotional participation.

As Mumford points out Brecht presents historicization as a "crucial technical device" and component of *Verfremdung*. Brecht applied the term to a variety of defamiliarizing processes which aims to both provoke an inquiring attitude towards the present through the past, and to challenge dominant versions of history (2009: 72). Churchill employs the idea of historicization in her play. Before the revolution takes place, Flavia, a teacher, gives a lesson in history to her pupils:

> Today we are going to learn about a life dedicated to the happiness of the people and noble ideas of socialism. […] Comrade Nicolae Ceauşescu and it flows through the open spaces of the important dates and problems of contemporary humanity. […] He started his revolutionary activity in the earliest years of his adolescence in conditions of danger and illegality, therefore his life and struggle cannot be detached from the most burning moments of the people's fight against fascism and war to achieve the ideals of freedom and aspirations of justice and progress (*MF* 16).

Thus, the historicization of Romanian leader's life is given shortly as part of the play. Churchill wants the audience to see how people regarded Ceauşescu before the revolution through historicizing his life. As Mumford

points out historicization can be achieved through showing the differences between past and present in order to highlight change (2009: 173). Flavia's ideas change after the revolution as she expresses in one of her speeches: "Twenty years marching in the wrong direction. I'd as soon stop. Twenty years' experience and I'm a beginner. Yes, stop. There; I feel better. I'm not a teacher" (*MF* 66). Thus, two conflicting views of the same character are given in the play. Such a process provokes the audience's critical thinking. Another technique for historicization in a play is showing the problematic continuities between past and present in order to prompt change (173). Flavia's dead grandmother talks to Flavia about her past: "When I was your age the war was starting. I welcomed the Nazis because I thought they'd protect us from the Russians, and I welcomed the Communists because I thought they'd protect us from the Germans. I had no principles. My husband was killed" (*MF* 26).

The past that the grandmother tells is like the present circumstances of people. The People of Romania do not know whom they can trust before and after the revolution takes place. This kind of narration of the past sheds light on the present and provokes a critical attitude towards the events happening in Romania. Churchill also makes her characters Radu, Florina, Lucia and Ianoş perform a play within the play after the revolution has taken place. (Churchill, 1990: 69). In their mock-play, they perform Ceauşescu and his wife Elena's dying scene. Such a play about an event which has become past creates certain alienation from the play on the part of the audience, and in this way the audience can judge the events from an interpretive point of view.

The Gestus of showing is one of the main Verfremdung devices (or Veffects) Brecht used. Gestus refers to vivid gestural expression (Mumford, 2009: 59). In *Mad Forest*, Churchill uses "the Gestus of showing" on some occasions. In one scene, for example, Radu and Florina see each other in the bus queue. Although they are going to marry in a short time, they ignore each other, and this is given through their gestural expression: "People waiting for a bus, including Radu. Florina joins the queue. She doesn't see him.He sees her. He looks away. She sees him without him noticing, she looks away. He looks at her again, they see each other and greet each other awkwardly. They look away" (*MF* 27).

The scene is not realistic since Radu and Florina are going to marry soon, and they behave like they do not know each other. Florina's sister Lucia is going to marry an American citizen, and this is a problem between Radu's and Florina's families. Florina and Radu's emotional states are reflected through their gestural expressions. Seeing two characters who express their present emotions through gestures is in accordance with Brecht's "Gestus of showing", and such a scene also creates alienation effect and encourages the audience think critically about Lucia's marriage to an American citizen before the revolution.

As Leach indicates, "Twentieth-century epics especially often have open endings, and employ Brechtian alienation techniques, so that spectators are encouraged to consider the issues rationally" (2008: 57). The following lines from *The Good Person of Szechuan* by Bertolt Brecht shows what Brecht meant by 'open ending':

> There's only one solution that we know:
> That you should now consider as you go
> What sort of measures you would recommend
> To help good people to a happy end.
> Ladies and gentlemen, in you we trust:
> There must be happy endings, must, must, must! (Leach, 2008: 31).

Thus, open ending plays do not offer any solutions but encourage the audience to think of the issues presented in the play. In this aspect, Churchill's open ending in *Mad Forest* is also very Brechtian. At the end of the play no solutions are offered. The situation of Romania before, during and after the revolution has been presented. In the final scene, the play puts the actors in confusion. They dance but there is no unity in their dance. They are symbolically disconnected from each other. They also talk while they are dancing but it is in the monologue form. Churchill wants the audience to think about the nature of the revolution by reflecting the characters' isolated and frustrated conditions in the final dance scene. Such an ending makes the play an open-ended play, leaving many questions in the audience's mind and encouraging them to think critically on the issues that have been "told" in the play. Therefore, Erdem Ayyıldız points out in her article "Brechtian theatre […] aims at alienating the audience's emotions from the plot by improving a critical consciousness" (2019: 186).

CONCLUSION

All in all, Brecht's theories and dramatic techniques have influenced many playwrights, actors and directors. As he puts it one of his essays, "The stage began to narrate. The narrator no longer vanished with the fourth wall. […] Nothing permitted the audience any more to lose itself through simple empathy, uncritically (and practically without any consequences) in the experiences of the characters on the stage" (qtd. in Mumford 22). These were radical changes for Brecht's time, and they still have their effects on contemporary playwrights. Political playwrights especially adapted Brechtian theories and techniques because of their provoking impact on the audience. Caryl Churchill, as a political playwright, successfully employs Brechtian techniques and alienation effects in her play *Mad Forest* in order to encourage her audience to think critically on the issues regarding the Romanian Revolution of 1989.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Speculative Ethics and Environmental Justice in Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood*

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ABSTRACT

Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* examines the Anthropocene as an era marked by human-driven environmental crises, including climate change, ecological collapse, and the exploitation of natural and nonhuman resources. Through a speculative dystopian framework, the novel critiques the sociopolitical systems that perpetuate environmental degradation, emphasizing the intersections of capitalism, technological manipulation, and hierarchical power structures. Atwood explores these themes through characters' interactions with nature and technology, revealing the blurred boundaries between the natural and the artificial. By situating Atwood's work within the context of theoretical perspectives from scholars such as Donna Haraway, Jason W. Moore, and Linda Hutcheon, this chapter examines how Atwood challenges anthropocentric paradigms by foregrounding the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman entities. The novel examines anthropocentrism and envisions alternative approaches to addressing ecological crises through collective responsibility and ethical transformation. It emphasizes the urgency of redefining cultural narratives and embracing sustainable practices to confront the challenges of the Anthropocene.

Keywords – Anthropocene, Environmental Crisis, Margaret Atwood, Ecofeminism, Posthumanism, Capitalism.

INTRODUCTION

Crutzen and Stoermer introduced the term Anthropocene to denote the current geological epoch, emphasizing humanity's significant impact on Earth's geology and ecosystems. They emphasize the "central role of mankind in geology and ecology" during the current geological epoch (Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000: 17). This concept redefines human agency, portraying it as both transformative and destructive. Climate change, environmental degradation, and species extinction are often cited as the defining markers of this epoch, highlighting the complexity and interconnectedness of natural and human systems. However, as Jason W. Moore argues, "the Anthropocene is less about geology and more about history; it reflects a planetary crisis driven by capitalism's relentless exploitation of nature" (2016: 6). Moore proposes alternative terms, such as the "Capitalocene," to emphasize the socio-political underpinnings of ecological collapse, challenging the simplistic narrative of humanity's equal culpability. Storytelling in the Anthropocene necessitates a reimagining of human agency and responsibility, intertwining ecological concerns with cultural, social, and political narratives. Timothy Clark highlights that

Anthropocene literature "disrupts conventional narrative structures" to accommodate the "scale and complexity of ecological crisis" (2015: 25). Climate fiction, or "cli-fi," emerges as a literary genre addressing these issues, often blending speculative elements with critical reflections on human-environment interactions. In this context, Margaret Atwood's work stands out for its ability to merge ecological awareness with narrative innovation. As Heidi Slettedahl Macpherson observes, Atwood's fiction "offers a dystopian vision that warns against environmental neglect while also suggesting alternative paths for survival" (Macpherson, 2010: 30).

The Year of the Flood (2009), the second installment in her MaddAddam trilogy, exemplifies the potential of cli-fi to engage with the Anthropocene's complexities. Set in a near-future dystopia, the novel explores the catastrophic consequences of environmental degradation, corporate greed, and biotechnological manipulation. Atwood intertwines the stories of the God's Gardeners, a quasi-religious eco-group advocating for sustainable living, with the broader societal collapse caused by unchecked capitalism and scientific hubris. As Donna Haraway notes, the Anthropocene "requires us to rethink relationships between human and nonhuman worlds, disrupting the binaries that define modernity" (2016: 10). Atwood achieves this by blurring the boundaries between humans, animals, and machines, creating a narrative space where ecological and ethical questions converge. In *The Year of the Flood*, Atwood employs speculative fiction to critique anthropocentric worldviews, positioning the Anthropocene as both a cultural and ecological construct. The novel challenges readers to reconsider humanity's role in environmental degradation. In this perspective, Rosi Braidotti argues that the Anthropocene demands a "radical decentering of the human subject," emphasizing the interconnectedness of all life forms (Braidotti, 2013: 193). This chapter examines how *The Year of the Flood* engages with the Anthropocene's multifaceted challenges, focusing on three critical dimensions: the representation of human and nonhuman relationships, the critique of capitalism and its role in environmental exploitation, and the ethical dilemmas posed by technological advancements. Drawing on theories from Jason W. Moore and Donna Haraway, this study explores how Atwood's novel explores the socio-political structures underpinning ecological crises while envisioning alternative frameworks for coexistence and sustainability. Through its speculative perspective, *The Year of the Flood* offers a narrative that both reflects and resists the Anthropocene's realities, urging readers to confront the cultural and environmental transformations shaping our world.

HUMAN AND NONHUMAN ENCOUNTERS IN *THE YEAR OF THE FLOOD*

In *The Year of the Flood*, Margaret Atwood delves into the Anthropocene's aftermath, portraying a world shaped by ecological collapse and human exploitation of the Earth's natural systems. The novel highlights the destructive relationship between human and nonhuman entities, emphasizing the consequences of humanity's destructive tendencies. Atwood examines how the Anthropocene disrupts traditional boundaries, exploring the coexistence and tension between human innovation and the natural world. This relationship is depicted through the novel's portrayal of the God's Gardeners and their efforts to live harmoniously with nature, contrasting sharply with the exploitative practices of corporate and scientific authorities. Clark argues that the Anthropocene "blurs and even scrambles some crucial categories by which people have made sense of the world and their lives," disrupting traditional distinctions between culture and nature (Clark, 2015: 9).

The God's Gardeners, described as a "nature-loving" community, embody an alternative mode of existence, one that resists the industrialized and commodified systems dominating their world. Their reliance on herbal remedies and spiritual connections to nature contrasts with the corporate exploitation of both natural and human resources. For example, Pilar uses "honey" as "food of immortality" (Atwood, 2009: 179), symbolizing a return to natural healing methods over synthetic solutions. Similarly, she employs "bees and mushrooms" as tools for healing, reflecting a lifestyle that prioritizes ecological balance (184). These practices highlight the potential for sustainable coexistence between humans and nonhumans, a theme central to Atwood's ecological vision. In stark contrast to the Gardeners, the corporate and scientific entities in Atwood's world exploit and commodify the natural world for profit and control. The creation of cyborg animals exemplifies the dangerous intersection of technology and nature. Atwood portrays these hybrid beings as tools of surveillance and authority, blurring the boundaries between the natural and the artificial. Within this perspective, Donna Haraway perceives the cyborg as "a thoroughly political animal" (1991: 146). This highlights the ethical dilemmas of scientific endeavors and mirrors Atwood's concern about the misuse of technological power.

Atwood's depiction of the nonhuman extends to genetically modified organisms, such as the pigoons, which merge human and animal DNA. These creatures symbolize the ethical complexities of scientific experimentation and the unintended consequences of manipulating natural life. Warkentin notes that "mixing human and pig genetic material for

numerous generations has endowed pigoons with a certain amount of human similarity" (2010: 93), a similarity that generates fear and distrust. For Toby, the pigoons' attempts to invade her garden represent a direct threat, forcing her to confront the blurred line between predator and victim. This tension highlights Atwood's exploration of posthumanism, which, as Mosca explains, "aims at relocating humans from their self-assigned position of centrality in the world" (2013: 45). The novel also challenges the commodification of health and well-being by illustrating the consequences of polluted medicines produced by corporations. Toby's mother, despite her careful attention to health, becomes a victim of these tainted products, underscoring the dangers of prioritizing profit over safety (Atwood, 2009: 50). This narrative thread aligns with Linda Hutcheon's argument that postmodernism seeks to "denaturalize" societal constructs, revealing how systems like capitalism exploit and endanger both human and nonhuman life (1988: 2). Atwood juxtaposes the corporate manipulation of health with the Gardeners' holistic practices, suggesting a need to reevaluate humanity's relationship with the natural world.

The Year of the Flood further explores the entangled relationship between capitalism, environmental exploitation, and gender oppression, situating these themes within the Anthropocene. Atwood critiques the commodification of nature through a dystopian narrative that highlights the destructive consequences of industrialization and capitalist greed, while also drawing attention to gendered hierarchies reinforced by these systems. The Anthropocene's roots in industrialization and colonial exploitation align with Moore's assertion that the binaries of "Society" and "Nature" perpetuate systems of violence, inequality, and environmental degradation (2016: 2). In _The Year of the Flood_, Atwood portrays these dynamics through the urban sprawl of the "pleeblands," where socio-economic hierarchies exacerbate environmental collapse. The corrupt CorpSeCorps, a corporate police force, epitomizes capitalist exploitation, prioritizing profits over ecological and human welfare. Atwood writes, "The HelthWyzer labs had developed the splice, the CorpSeCorpsMen were the wholesalers. They ran it the way they ran everything illegal" (2009: 315). This depiction reflects how unchecked capitalism fuels environmental destruction and social corruption, reinforcing Moore's argument that capitalism's ecological impact must be understood historically and politically. The intersection of gender and environmental degradation forms another critical dimension of Atwood's narrative. Atwood demonstrates this parallel through Toby's experiences with Blanco, a predatory character who embodies patriarchal domination. Toby reflects, "He didn't want her to feel pleasure, though: only submission" (2009: 74). Blanco's treatment of Toby exemplifies the gendered violence that mirrors

environmental abuse, reinforcing ecofeminist critiques of patriarchal systems. Atwood's portrayal of Blanco extends to his antagonism toward environmentalism, as seen in his conflict with Adam One over the consumption of animal meat. When challenged to stop eating animals, Blanco reacts violently, "lunging" at Adam One and disrupting the God's Gardeners' gathering (Atwood, 2009: 80). This moment symbolizes the broader cultural resistance to ecological sustainability, underscoring how capitalist ideologies prioritize immediate gratification over long-term environmental responsibility. Carolyn Merchant's seminal work *The Death of Nature* contextualizes these themes by tracing the historical roots of nature's commodification to the Renaissance, where reality was reconceptualized "as a machine rather than a living organism," legitimizing both environmental and gendered oppression (1980: xvii). Atwood reflects this historical trajectory through her depiction of corporate exploitation, where the natural world and marginalized bodies are reduced to tools for profit.

In *The Year of the Flood,* Atwood links religious symbolism with ecological concerns, constructing a narrative that criticizes humanity's neglect of the nonhuman world. Central to this critique is the God's Gardeners, a spiritual eco-community whose values and practices stand in stark opposition to the materialism and exploitation embodied by corporate entities such as HelthWyzer. The Gardeners reinterpret religious narratives, particularly the story of Noah's Ark, as a call to ecological responsibility. Their leader, Adam One, poignantly asks, "The animals went into the Ark, two by two. But now, how many pairs are left?" (Atwood, 2009: 68). This reframing shifts the focus from divine punishment to humanity's role in the extinction of species, using religious allegory to underscore the ethical dimensions of environmental stewardship. The teachings of the God's Gardeners emphasize sustainability and reverence for all life forms, challenging the anthropocentric worldview that reduces nature to a commodity. Through their hymns and sermons, the Gardeners advocate a harmonious relationship with the Earth. Adam One declares, "We must work to heal the Earth, for we are part of its wounds" (Atwood, 2009: 102). This statement encapsulates the group's philosophy of interconnectedness, aligning with ecofeminist perspectives that critique the dualistic separation of humans and nature. As Greta Gaard observes, ecofeminism "challenges the ideology that authorizes the oppression of women and nature," advocating instead for an integrated, relational approach to ecological ethics (1993: 1). Atwood's portrayal of the Gardeners thus aligns with broader ecofeminist critiques of domination and exploitation.

The Gardeners' rituals and practices further illustrate their commitment to ecological ethics. For example, they celebrate "Creation Day," a ritual that reimagines the Biblical act of creation as a reminder of humanity's responsibility toward all living beings (Atwood, 2009: 13). This event serves to reinforce the sanctity of life and the interdependence of all species. The Gardeners' use of hymns and spiritual practices to convey ecological messages highlights the potential of religious narratives as tools for environmental advocacy. As Donna Haraway notes, the Anthropocene necessitates a "rethinking of relationships between human and nonhuman worlds," a process that Atwood enacts through the Gardeners' teachings (2016: 10). By intertwining spiritual renewal with ecological restoration, Atwood challenges readers to reconsider the ethical implications of their relationship with the natural world. Atwood juxtaposes the Gardeners' values with the exploitative practices of corporate entities, using this contrast to critique the commodification of nature. Companies like HelthWyzer treat the environment as a resource to be manipulated for profit, a perspective epitomized by their genetic experiments and pollution of natural systems. This dynamic echoes Jason W. Moore's assertion that capitalism's ecological impact must be understood as a "way of organizing nature," driven by profit rather than sustainability (2016: 6). The Gardeners' opposition to such practices reveals the ecological costs of industrial greed, as Adam One warns, "Greed leads to waste, and waste leads to want" (Atwood, 2009: 134). The symbolic role of the "Waterless Flood" in the novel supports this perspective, transforming the Biblical motif of divine retribution into a human-made catastrophe. The flood, caused by a virulent virus released by corporate greed, reflects the consequences of humanity's failure to honor its ecological responsibilities. Atwood's reimagining of this narrative suggests that humanity, not God, is the architect of its own destruction. This aligns with Maria Manuel Lisboa's observation that apocalyptic literature often transforms "divine punishment into a reflection of human hubris and ecological neglect" (2011: 51). By connecting the flood to corporate exploitation, Atwood highlights the intersection of environmental degradation and social inequality.

The God's Gardeners also serve as a vehicle for exploring the ethical dilemmas of survival in the Anthropocene. Their practices, such as collecting rainwater and using herbal remedies, embody a sustainable way of life that contrasts with the consumerist excesses of the corporate world. This practice resonates with Timothy Morton's concept of "ecological thought," which emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life and the necessity of abandoning anthropocentric perspectives (Morton, 2010: 15). Atwood's portrayal of the Gardeners invites readers to imagine alternative frameworks

for coexistence that prioritize harmony over domination. The Gardeners' role in the novel also reflects a broader trend in contemporary literature that seeks to integrate ecological and spiritual themes. As Linda Hutcheon argues, postmodern narratives often "de-naturalize dominant cultural constructs" to reveal alternative ways of understanding the world (1988: 2). Atwood employs this strategy to challenge the commodification of nature and advocate for a more ethical relationship with the environment. The Gardeners' practices, though seemingly utopian, serve as a reminder of the possibilities for ecological and moral transformation.

BIOTECHNOLOGY AND THE MORAL BOUNDARIES OF SCIENCE

The unregulated advancement of biotechnology is depicted in *The Year of the Flood* to examine its potential to transgress moral and ecological boundaries. Through speculative dystopian elements, the novel depicts a world where scientific experimentation has destabilized the natural order, raising ethical questions about humanity's role in manipulating life. Atwood introduces genetically engineered organisms, such as pigoons and liobams, as emblematic of biotechnological excess. These hybrid creatures, designed to fulfill human needs, often serve unintended and destructive purposes: "The liobams were meant to symbolize peace, but now they are just another predator in the food chain" (Atwood, 2009: 212). This dynamic illustrates the hubris underlying humanity's assumption of dominion over life without fully considering the long-term consequences. Atwood criticizes the commodification of life, where corporations like HelthWyzer exploit genetic material for profit, disregarding ethical considerations. The creation of cyborg animals, such as surveillance bees, underscores this commodification, blending machine and organism to serve corporate interests. These bees, equipped with micro-mechanical systems, function as tools of surveillance, blurring the boundary between the natural and the artificial: "Bee cyborg spies controllable by a CorpSeCorps operator" (Atwood, 2009: 496). The surveillance bees symbolize the exploitation of both nature and individuals, illustrating how biotechnological advancements can serve oppressive ends.

The novel also examines the moral ambiguity of genetic engineering through the depiction of pigoons. These creatures, initially designed to provide organs for transplants, gain an unsettling similarity to humans. Warkentin notes that "mixing human and pig genetic material for numerous generations has endowed pigoons with a certain amount of human

similarity" (2010: 93). This similarity generates unease, as the pigoons begin to exhibit intelligence and predatory behavior, threatening human survival. For Toby, the pigoons' attempts to invade her garden represent a confrontation with the ethical implications of genetic modification. Atwood dramatizes the blurred line between predator and prey, underscoring the unintended consequences of humanity's manipulation of life (Atwood, 2009: 644). These tensions resonate with Rosi Braidotti's assertion that posthumanism requires a "radical decentering of the human subject" to recognize the interconnectedness of all life (Braidotti, 2013: 193). Through its speculative narrative, the novel questions the hubris of scientific practices that prioritize profit over ecological balance. The corporations in the novel, particularly HelthWyzer, epitomize the dangers of an unregulated biotechnological industry. Their experiments, driven by capitalist greed, not only disrupt ecosystems but also exploit human vulnerability. The polluted medicines produced by these corporations exemplify this exploitation, as seen in Toby's mother's reliance on HelthWyzer supplements, which ultimately harm her health: "She couldn't understand it, because she'd always been so careful about her health" (Atwood, 2009: 50). This narrative thread highlights the broader consequences of commodifying health and well-being.

Atwood also explores the philosophical dimensions of scientific experimentation, challenging the reductionist worldview that devalues the intrinsic worth of life. Pilar embodies this philosophy through her use of natural remedies. These practices symbolize a reclamation of ecological agency and ethical accountability, presenting an alternative to the exploitative biotechnological practices depicted in the novel. The ethical dilemmas posed by genetic modification are further complicated by the novel's depiction of cyborg animals. These creatures challenge traditional definitions of life and raise questions about the moral boundaries of science. Haraway's assertion that the cyborg "disrupts boundaries and challenges fixed categories" (1991: 149) resonates with Atwood's portrayal, as the cyborg bees and pigoons defy conventional distinctions between nature and technology. Atwood uses these hybrid beings to critique the dehumanizing effects of biotechnological hubris, urging readers to reconsider the ethical implications of scientific innovation. Atwood's narrative also engages with broader philosophical critiques of modernity and its reliance on technological progress. Timothy Morton's concept of "ecological thought," which emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life, aligns with the novel's critique of humanity's manipulation of nature (Morton, 2010: 15). By depicting the destructive consequences of biotechnological experimentation,

Atwood challenges the Enlightenment ideal of progress, suggesting that unchecked scientific advancement can lead to ecological and moral decline.

The Year of the Flood utilizes apocalyptic symbolism to analyze social and environmental inequalities and highlights the concept of environmental justice in the Anthropocene. The narrative's depiction of the Waterless Flood, a catastrophic event that eradicates much of humanity, serves as a metaphor for the socio-environmental consequences of unchecked greed and systemic inequities. This apocalyptic vision does not emerge as an act of divine punishment, but as a human-made disaster born of corporate malfeasance and environmental exploitation. Atwood reimagines the traditional flood narrative as a critique of human agency, where the apocalypse is not merely a cataclysmic event but an outcome of systemic failure. As Lisboa asserts, Atwood's apocalyptic vision "transforms divine retribution into a reflection of human hubris and ecological neglect" (2011: 51). Atwood's portrayal of the pleeblands, urban slums characterized by environmental degradation and social marginalization, highlights the disproportionate impact of ecological crises on vulnerable populations. The residents of the pleeblands endure toxic living conditions, rampant disease, and corporate exploitation, underscoring the intersection of environmental degradation and social inequality. This resonates with Rob Nixon's concept of "slow violence," which refers to the gradual and often invisible impacts of environmental harm on marginalized communities (2011: 2). Atwood emphasizes this disparity through the lives of characters like Toby and Ren, who navigate these precarious environments while contending with systemic oppression and environmental degradation.

The God's Gardeners provide a counterpoint to the injustices of the pleeblands. They advocate for an equitable and sustainable relationship with nature. Their philosophy emphasizes collective responsibility and environmental stewardship, contrasting sharply with the individualistic and exploitative approaches of corporate entities. Adam One's teachings often frame environmental justice as a moral imperative, asserting that "the Earth's wounds are our wounds, and we must heal both" (Atwood, 2009: 164). This perspective aligns with ecofeminist critiques of capitalism and environmental exploitation, which argue for a holistic approach to justice that encompasses both human and nonhuman entities (Gaard, 1993: 1). The novel reveals the destructive impact of corporate capitalism on the environment. The Waterless Flood, a virus created by HelthWyzer, exposes the risks of prioritizing profit above public well-being. This engineered disaster reflects the failure of systems built on exploitation and greed. Similarly, Moore notes that "capitalism's ecological logic prioritizes short-term gain over long-term sustainability" (2016: 6). Atwood's narrative

encourages readers to examine the deeper causes of ecological and social breakdowns.

The novel also interrogates the role of technology in shaping apocalyptic futures, particularly through the creation of genetically modified organisms like pigoons and liobams. These hybrids become agents of chaos in the post-apocalyptic landscape, reflecting the unintended consequences of scientific hubris. In contrast, the God's Gardeners minimize their reliance on technology and advocate for a return to ecological harmony. This juxtaposition demonstrates the need for a reevaluation of humanity's reliance on technology in addressing ecological crises. Moreover, Atwood's apocalyptic vision extends to the ethical dilemmas of survival in the Anthropocene, particularly the erosion of communal ethics in times of crisis. The God's Gardeners' teachings emphasize the importance of solidarity and mutual aid, yet the realities of the Waterless Flood often undermine these values. Adam One warns his followers against self-sacrifice during disasters, reflecting the tension between altruism and survival: "Be sure you are not that straw, my Friends, for if you are clutched or even touched, you too will drown" (Atwood, 2009: 44). This statement highlights the moral complexities of navigating a world shaped by ecological collapse and systemic injustice. Through its apocalyptic narrative, *The Year of the Flood* critiques the societal structures that perpetuate environmental injustice while envisioning alternative frameworks for coexistence and resilience. By integrating themes of environmental justice, social inequality, and ecological ethics, Atwood challenges readers to consider the interconnectedness of these issues in addressing the Anthropocene's challenges. Her speculative lens offers both a warning and a call to action, emphasizing the urgency of systemic change to ensure a sustainable and equitable future.

CONCLUSION

Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* provides a speculative perspective through which to explore the intertwined challenges of environmental degradation, technological hubris, and socio-political inequities in the Anthropocene. Through its intricate narrative, the novel interrogates humanity's complicity in ecological collapse, urging a rethinking of anthropocentric worldviews and a shift toward collective responsibility. Atwood's depiction of the God's Gardeners as an eco-spiritual counterpoint to corporate greed and environmental exploitation highlights the potential for alternative modes of coexistence that prioritize harmony over domination. Their practices, philosophies, and rituals emphasize

sustainability and ecological stewardship, challenging the commodification and exploitation of natural and human resources. Atwood's challenges the role of capitalism in perpetuating environmental and social injustices. Through the dystopian depiction of the pleeblands and the corporate-controlled world of HelthWyzer, Atwood reveals the systemic roots of ecological crises. The Waterless Flood, a human-made catastrophe engineered by capitalist greed, serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of prioritizing profit over planetary welfare. By linking environmental collapse to social inequality and systemic oppression, the novel further examines the concept of environmental justice. Atwood's exploration of biotechnology and genetic engineering foregrounds the moral and ecological dilemmas posed by humanity's attempts to control life. The creation of hybrid organisms depicts the unintended consequences of scientific experimentation, challenging traditional notions of life and ethics. Drawing on posthumanist perspectives, Atwood questions humanity's self-perceived dominance over nature and advocates for a decentering of the human subject in ecological discourses. The novel's portrayal of the blurred boundaries between the natural and the artificial emphasizes the need for ethical accountability in scientific innovation and technological advancement.

Religious symbolism in *The Year of the Flood* adds depth to the narrative, reshaping Biblical stories to emphasize humanity's duty toward ecological stewardship. The God's Gardeners' reinterpretation of Noah's Ark and their spiritual teachings demonstrate the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman entities. This blending of spiritual and ecological ethics aligns with ecofeminist critiques that link the oppression of nature to patriarchal systems of domination. Through characters like Adam One and Pilar, Atwood envisions a moral framework that integrates ecological stewardship with spiritual renewal. The apocalyptic imagery further depicts the urgency of addressing the Anthropocene's challenges. The Waterless Flood, far from being a divine punishment, emerges as a human-made disaster that reflects systemic failures in governance, ethics, and environmental responsibility. This apocalyptic vision critiques humanity's hubris while emphasizing the interconnectedness of ecological and social systems. The narrative's focus on survival and resilience in the Anthropocene serves as both a cautionary tale and a call to action, urging readers to confront the structural roots of ecological crises and envision alternative futures. By weaving together themes of environmental ethics, social justice, and technological accountability, *The Year of the Flood* critiques the exploitative systems that have driven humanity to the brink of collapse. Atwood's speculative narrative not only reflects the complexities of

the Anthropocene but also inspires a reimagining of humanity's relationship with the planet. The novel emphasizes the need for systemic change, advocating for collective responsibility, sustainable practices, and an ethical realignment that prioritizes the well-being of all life forms. In doing so, Atwood provides a vital framework for understanding and addressing the escalating challenges of the Anthropocene.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Locke and Hume on Identity: Memory Removal and Self in the Novel *Tell Me an Ending* by Jo Harkin

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ABSTRACT

Written by Jo Harkin, *Tell Me an Ending* (2022) explores the depth of memory deletion procedure and its potential severe consequences. Removing traumatic or unwanted memories bring several philosophical questions related to the nature of human mind. In the novel, how identity is formed and maintained is questioned through the experiences of four characters, Finn, Mei, William and Oscar. While delving into identity, John Locke's and David Hume's different views on identity are discussed by the author through the characters who support and oppose it. Nepenthe, the company that operates the memory removal procedure, argues that based on the unreliability of memories which do not remain constant over time is an important factor in this procedure. Nepenthe endorses David Hume's philosophy since according to Hume, identity is not directly related to our memories but rather associated with the constant change in our perceptions and experiences. In the novel, Hume's view on this constant change legitimizes Nepenthe's practices on the grounds that identity is independent of memory in mind. The novel is centred on two contrasting views between John Locke and David Hume. At the end of the novel, it is concluded that every memory serves as an inevitable aspect of one's identity and that depersonalizing humans and practicing memory removal may have unprecedented effects.

Keywords – John Locke, David Hume, Identity, Jo Harkin, Novel.

INTRODUCTION

Tell Me an Ending, written by Jo Harkin in 2022, deals with the memory deletion procedure. At Nepenthe, there are self-informed and self-confidential clients. The self-informed clients know they have undergone a deletion procedure, while the self-confidential are not informed of having their memories erased. Interfering in the human mind and enmeshing them in a tangle of confusion created by the inability to their personal memories depersonalize them. After a notification sent to inform the former clients that they have formerly chosen to have their selected memories wiped, thousands of clients of Nepenthe all around the world are shocked to find out that some of their memories are missing, which puts them in a dilemma whether to reclaim those removed memories or not.

The word Nepenthe comes from the Odyssey. It is "a drug to quiet all pain and strife, and bring forgetfulness of every ill" (Harkin, 2022: 13) . It is referred as a forgetfulness potion. The company's procedure was originally intended to ease soldiers' and terrorism victims' traumas; however, it has later become a common practice for anyone who can afford the procedure.

With this literary reference, Nepenthe initially aims to delete discomforting and traumatic memories; nevertheless, it eventually strays from this objective and prioritizes financial gain over the perseverance of identity.

Noor, the senior psychologist interviewing patients at Nepenthe, follows a strict script while talking to a client and compares herself to a customer service employee for a Wi-Fi provider. In this respect, humans are commodified by a technological company providing forgetfulness. With the opening of the first Nepenthe clinic in 1998 or 1999, there was a big controversy surrounding the ethics of memory removal. The procedure has been around for nearly two decades. While religious groups worried about the holiness of the inseparable nature of the body and the mind, the new practice disconcerted human rights groups due to a possible misuse by dictatorial regimes. The novel is set not in a distant future but in an alternative reality. The author explicitly states that Nepenthe was founded either in 1998 or in 1999, and the company caused an uproar in 2013 when they decided to cut down an old tree. The novel thus sets at the present time and speculates an alternative history with Nepenthe's founding. The majority of people are not interested in arguments made from a humanistic or religious viewpoint, and few protesters are left to protest against the memory removal practice now.

The novel pivotally deals with four characters who underwent the procedure. Finn, a fifty-year-old Irish architect living in Oak Creek Canyon, Arizona, suspects his wife, Mirande of having an affair. Finn's daughter, Ri leaves for Europe on a four-week tour. Mei from Kuala Lumpur is startled by the memory traces when she first recalls places that she does not remember visiting. William, a former police inspector copes with PTSD. He is on the verge of undergoing the procedure. He gets therapy with his wife before removing his memory. Oscar, who barely has memories, travels the world constantly in fear and is currently in Marrakech. These stories are narrated to reflect the possible effects of a memory-removal from different viewpoints, taking philosophical and religious viewpoints into consideration.

LOCKE AND HUME ON IDENTITY IN THE NOVEL *TELL ME AN ENDING*

In the novel, Locke and Hume's views on identity are discussed with Louise, Noor's boss advocating the Humean view. Louise highlights that memories are not the basis of a person's identity, concluding that people are not a collection of irrelevant and unreliable memories and experiences: "The self as a bundle of processes. A collection of associations, learned responses, memories, et cetera. Swirling, contradictory, inchoate. Impermanent perceptions, belonging to nothing" (209). In terms of a child's inchoate awareness, Locke argues that the human mind is a "tabula rasa" at birth and

concludes that sensory experiences begin to form one's identity gradually. Associating child with a state of formlessness (Duschinsky, 2012), the theory has been effective for centuries.

The subjectivity at remembering the past evens and the tendency to distort reality and shape it based on one's needs at the time introduce extensive questions about the role of memories in one's identity. John Locke, who was against the Cartesian theory that associated the soul with the personal identity, refutes the idea that humans are born with some basic knowledge and suggests the theory of empty mind or tabula rasa. According to Locke's suggestion, humans' minds are shaped by experience over time. In his chapter titled "Identity and Diversity" in An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Locke holds that the personal identity is in one's consciousness rather than their soul (2004: 267). Locke asks the question wherein identity consists of and questions whether the consciousness being interrupted due to time changes the personal identity:

> "consciousness being interrupted always by forgetfulness, there being no moment of our lives wherein we have the whole train of all our past actions before our eyes in one view, but even the best memories losing the sight of one part whilst they are viewing another." (2004: 267)

Harkin's novel is pivotally based on this questioning. The question whether faded memories play an important role in altering the personal identity or not arises in the novel. According to Locke, despite the flow of time affecting our capacity to remember, the consciousness stays the time "[f]or, it being the same consciousness that makes a man be himself to himself, personal identity depends on that only" (2004: 268). Thus, the inability to visualize or remember one's entire past at once is irrelevant to the personal identity. In the novel, Mei asks her mother, Louise whether a person's personality is based on their memories or not. Mei's mother talks about "[t]he persistence of Locke" (208). According to Locke, there is a continuity in the consciousness "uniting those distant actions into the same person" (2004: 268). Mei's mother disregards this idea and supports the Humean view. Mei describes Louise as "pro-Hume and anti-Locke" (224). Locke does not base personal identity on physical characteristics but rather on on-going consciousness and psychological continuity.

In the novel, John Locke's and David Hume's contrasting views on personal identity are given. Hume's "bundle theory" or the "no-self theory" is also discussed. According to the bundle theory, an object is formed by its properties and characteristics. Thus, identity is defined as a collection of memories and physical experiences. Hume argues that humans create a sense of self due to the continuity in our consciousness. A constant flow and change in humans' mental states and experiences urges them to see themselves as one singular entity. According to Hume, memory has a key role in shaping identity since when a person remembers a past event, they

relive it and are able to connect themselves with their past experiences, which creates a sense of self (1888). Hume rejects the idea that there is a perfect identity and states: "I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement" (1888: 252). Identity is thus shaped by our perceptions and experiences and is in constant change. In the novel, it is stressed that changing, manipulating and deleting memories do not damage personal identity. The contrast between Locke and Hume is highlighted by the author since Nepenthe represents and supports Hume's ideology and rejects Locke's. While Locke believed that personal identity is based on a continuous self that persists over time, Hume believed that personal identity is in a constantly changing nature based on personal perceptions and experiences. Corliss Gayda Swain (2006: 134) summarizes Hume's views on personal identity and states that Hume rejects the idea of a self with perfect simplicity and identity. This imperfection is the basis of Nepenthe's legal grounds to perform memory removal. Since personal identity does not remain the same throughout a person's lifetime, it seems that there is not an unethical dilemma for Nepenthe. According to Locke's view, however, memory is a vital part of one's identity: "I am, on Locke's view, is my own conscious mental history, as far back as my current memory reaches" (Lowe, 1995: 114). Thus, in the novel, by manipulating or deleting one's memories, that person's identity is taken away. Locke in this regard separates man and person (2004). While every man has natural rights, they must be a person and have reason and personhood to use them.

In the novel, memory removal is explored through Locke's and Hume's views. Noor has a client witnessing a shooting at a pop concert and wishes her memory to be removed. The procedure uses a drug which is activated by an electrical stimulation and targets unwanted memories and leaves other memories intact. When the client's attention focuses on the wrong areas, the electric current is cut off. The procedure is like the one in the romantic science fiction drama movie, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (Gondry, 2004) written by Charlie Kaufman, directed by Michel Gondry and starring Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet. Following a nonlinear narrative, the movie unravels the complexity and arbitrariness of the human mind. Joel Barish played by Jim Carrey finds out that his ex-girlfriend Clementine Kruczynski played by Kate Winslet has had her memories of Joel erased by a company called Lacuna. Joel decides to undergo the same procedure out of spite since he is unable to cope with the stress, guilt, and longing. When the memories of Clementine are erased one by one, Joel realizes that he wants to hold on to happy memories and struggles to cancel the procedure by hiding Clementine in his memories that are unrelated to her. As the plot progresses, it can be put forward that the procedure has erased some of Joel's memories that were not supposed to be targeted.

Lacuna and Nepenthe thus both carry out controversial procedures on human mind. The movie is also mentioned in the novel (176), which reveals more similarities between the novel and the movie.

One of Noor's clients remembers reading a similarity established between life as a symphony and Nepenthe editing and erasing the bad notes and says, "'Or if even if it was just the bad note, if I needed that note to, well, be me'" (5). Deleting unfortunate and even traumatic memories metamorphoses the person into a completely different human stripping them off their basic characteristics. Depending heavily on technology for the development of humankind gives birth to severe consequences, one of which is taking away the essence of their identities. Although removing one's memories was thought to be permanent in the beginning, the scientists at Nepenthe later discovered that deleted memories could be recovered. Due to traces of memories left in people's minds, Nepenthe concedes that their plan to delete memories for good has failed. Noor finds herself in a dilemma questioning the unethical practices of the company. Reinstating memories is offered to the former clients. This is against the first principle of the company, which is to delete unwanted memories irremediably.

Mei's memory traces like other characters' do not give a complete picture of the deleted memory. Those traces make the characters incapacitated and leave them in constant fear and discomfort. Mei delves into her past and cannot overcome her anxieties. Mei later finds out from her friend, Katya that she went to Amsterdam for a week and that she disappeared for five days. Mei studied philosophy in Edinburgh before dropping out. She spent the first six months of her life in an orphanage in China. After the procedure, she imagines being driven to her house and put in her bed "everything that happened that night vanishing behind her, as if someone was following her with a little broom, rubbing out her footsteps (33). The writer hence resembles deleted memories to swept footsteps in one's past. Without the distinctive footsteps, humans lose the sense of self and experience identity crises.

Nepenthe informs Finn's wife, Mirande of her memory removal procedure of a short time which is not longer than a week and of her choice not to be informed of the procedure. The author uses the phantom limb phenomenon to describe the loss of a memory (47). It has been reported that some patients who underwent amputations experienced phantom sensations in their amputated limbs. A physical and chronic pain arises in their lost limbs (Flor, 2002). Mirande struggles to remember, and the situation she finds herself in causes physical pain in her lost memory. The characters who underwent this procedure lose the contact with the reality and may form delusions and anxieties. A foggy past hinders them from forming their future. The use of the latest technology in human mind is worrying since people are unable to overcome the challenges.

When Oscar Levy gets an unexpected call in his hotel in Marrakech, he suddenly has unreasonable beliefs like paranoia. He suspects of people around him: "Staring wildly, darting shiftily, glaring psychopathically (is that a word?). If only he could see what they were doing, maybe he could stop it" (59). Oscar is the most severely affected character by Nepenthe because he had most of his memories removed. The traces he experiences make him vulnerable and insecure. Losing his entire touch with his past forces him to travel the world aimlessly. Feeling in constant fear makes him paralyzed. In the novel, memory is defined to be "translucent" and "venomous" (62). Memory thus can be distorted and transformed into a completely different form, and it can also devastate a person by keeping them in prison and by not allowing them to proceed. Oscar once attempted to write everything he could remember about his life; however, he instantly understood that it was a futile effort because "he could have fitted his autobiography on the back of a receipt" (62). Nepenthe naturally seeks profit; however, as a company, it does not have a set of eternal verities. It does not consider removing a person's greater part of memory risky. Oscar finds himself in different parts of the world unaware of his past and identity. He lists some main information that he remembers about himself, and this emerges as a troubling account since he barely remembers who he really is. For instance, he writes, "Name: Oscar Levy (At least passport says so)" (62). He learns his name and age from his passport. He vaguely remembers his residential address in his late teens. Noor states that Nepenthe generally deletes the memories of the last six months but not further. However, Oscar has a difficulty remembering even his late teens. Interfering with childhood memories is stated to be highly complicated and risky since a person's whole life is interwoven with multiple layered recollections and erasing them even partially is thought to be dangerous for a person's whole identity. Oscar, for example, senses that he has a problem with his brain but cannot identify the underlying reason causing his memory loss. He is constantly on the alert for possible dangers as he feels to be followed. He has a lot of money the source of which is unknown to him. Oscar appears to be the most severely disabled character in the novel. All he has left is a "ninety-two-word life story" (63). He has completely forgotten his life before the age of sixteen. Oscar's memory of his childhood trauma was entangled with other memories, and therefore deleting one specific event caused other memories to be distorted. Oscar suffers from survivor's guilt, a mental condition that develops itself in people who survived a traumatic or tragic event. In Oscar's case, it was a car accident in which his mother died. The DSM-V classifies survivor's guilt under PTSD (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The DSM-IV states: "Individuals with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder may describe painful guilt feelings about surviving when others did not survive or about the things they had to do to survive" (American Psychiatric Association, 1994: 425). Oscar

unable to cope with the guilt became a heroin addict, dropped out of school, and took suicidal risks including playing Russian roulette.

William has sudden intrusive recollections of some specific events which give him anxiety attacks and cause physical reactions. William left the police force and had his memory wiped to deal with PTSD. He describes the recurrent memory traces as shadow (76). William lives with his wife, Annetta and his daughter, Fiona and son, Milo in a small village called Malting, which is a quiet and peaceful location with low perpetration and victimization rates. William has now a sleeping and drinking problem, and that is why he wants to undergo the procedure. The law states that police officers are not allowed to have their memories deleted due to cases under investigation. However, if those memories they want to have removed are not associated with a case, they are allowed to undergo the procedure. Annetta does not approve of her husband's wish to get the procedure owing to possible side effects. She does not trust that a chemical blocker is wholly safe. William ignores the controversial aspect of memory removal as an interference with one's identity and says, "'I don't care about identity. I just want to get on with my life. If one of my fingers was infected and was poisoning my blood, I'd amputate it. It's simple'" (p. 84). This reflects the Humean view that Nepenthe holds. Since a person can have different memories and different experiences in their past and future lives, it is believed than any memories can easily be removed. William holds the idea that a traumatic memory should be deleted irrelevant of any doubts related to identity. A traumatic experience is thus forgotten easily according to him. The death of a girl in one of his cases triggered the PTSD response for him, and due to small and seemingly trivial details, he finds himself unable to pass this case. After the couple's therapy, William goes to Nepenthe for a consultation. He wishes to forget what is shown in that photograph. Since it is related to the case, he will be informed about the procedure. What triggers William is a tragic event that was already deleted from his memory. William killed a boy accidentally whilst he was trying to save him from an oncoming car. After developing PTSD, William had his tragic memory removed. However, due to the traces of this memory, new unsettling thoughts rise to the surface, and at the end of the novel, after restoring his memory, William Hall commits suicide, which shows the author's stance towards Locke's and Hume's views. Noor like William belittles their clients' effort to restore their memories. According to the psychologist, memories affecting a person veritably cannot be separated from a medical condition: "Two hundred and thirty-seven people have replied to say I'd like my memory back. I don't want my tonsils, my appendix, my tumor, my rotten right toe. But I do want this" (193). As can be understood, Noor does not associate memory with identity. Thus, she supports the view that human mind can be altered and adjusted arbitrarily without any adverse effects. Comparing bad memories to medical conditions shows that Noor is of the opinion that Nepenthe helps

people psychologically. Towards the end of the novel, Noor questions the unethical procedures of Nepenthe such as Louise's interference to prevent some restorations due to possible lawsuits and practices involving the deletion of childhood memories, which make people incapable of recognizing their identities. However, objecting to the company's malpractice does not make the protagonist innocent since she had a relationship with one of her clients, Elena about four years ago. Her involvement in an unethical relationship with a client puts her in a moral dilemma to question the illegal activities of Nepenthe.

The counsellor, Marian Dunlop points out the subjectivity of the human mind and the fact that people interpret experiences differently as time passes, which highlights that identity does not consist of memories because they are either forgotten entirely or partially remembered based on that person's life:

> Nobody really remembers events accurately. Even in a wider sense: we tell a story of ourselves, and edit our memories so they fit that narrative. If the story we decide to tell changes, the memories change. We see memory as creating the self, but the self that's created looks back and changes the memory. (85)

The relationship between memory and identity is questioned. The created self has the power to change the reality based on their later experiences. Identity is thus not formed based on memories. This aspect puts forwards that memory may be vaguely associated with the form of identity since memories can later be changed depending on that person's preferences to change the narrative of their life. In the novel, Elizabeth A. Phelps' research is mentioned by Noor (96). According to the survey conducted d by Phelps, the unreliability of memory is pointed out since after the 9/11, people's original accounts of the tragic event were altered, and there were serious inconsistencies in their stories years after their first accounts (Hirst et al., 2009). In this study examining more than 3000 people from seven different cities in the USA report their memories of finding out the 9/11 terrorist attack after one week, 11 months, and/or 35 months. Flashbulb memories are vivid memories of specific surprising and tragic events such as "the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the Challenger explosion, or the attack of September 11, 2001". These are memories that people "claim they will never forget" (Hirst & Phelps, 2016: 1). Flashbulb memory is a term first introduced by Roger Brown and James Kulik (1977). By addressing to this theory, the unreliable aspect of memory is stressed in the novel, and this unreliability even covers flashbulb memories. Thus, one can conclude that if memory is so undependable, it may not affect one's identity as Nepenthe suggests. By stressing how unreliable human mind is, Noor tries to justify Nepenthe and their work ethics and reassure her clients. Nepenthe in this respect replaces all forms of therapy. Noor comments on the Phelps study: "Every time we access a memory we rebuild it. Every time it's rebuilt, things

are added and things are lost. In fact, the more we remember something, the less resemblance that memory bears to the original event" (192). Noor's justification of the procedure depends heavily on the Phelps study. People are believed not to be objective when they remember an experience. This inclination to deduce that memories are unreliable thus may be eliminated is a problematic and inhumane approach. Treating humans like any other technological equipment generates inhumane solutions to psychological problems. When traumatic and supressed memories are removed from one's memory, the idea to keep human mind intact is shattered and leaves the person in constant suspicion and in desperate need to reunite with the old self.

Noor's boss, Louise speculates that the recent protests Nepenthe's practices have so far been registered by certain groups who have lost their faith in Nepenthe as an omniscient entity. Louise says, "The public doesn't hate us because we played God. It's because we weren't God. We got something wrong. They've realized we're humans. They'll never forgive us" (100). The deleted memory is not stored in Nepenthe's database, and the only person who knows what the actual memory was is the psychologist dealing with the client. This makes the psychologists at Nepenthe "living libraries of exiled memories" (113). Remodelling the brain yields power to those exercising over clients. The realization of the fact that Nepenthe has been unsuccessful in removing unwanted memories without any traces has been the core cause of the protests. Nepenthe's failure casts doubt on its foundation and principles. All the clients giving their informed consent object to the unfair treatment and confusion. They ask the question whether their deleted memories were vital for their current lives or not. The suspicion created by the memory traces forces them to restore their memories. The memory removal is, in hindsight, a regrettable experience that is wished to be restored by the clients.

Nepenthe's practices also affect the validity and reliability of other institutions. A rape victim, for example, prefers her memory to be deleted rather than pressing charges against the perpetrator because she does not believe that poetic justice will prevail. It can be asserted that Nepenthe's practices pervert the course of justice with a more swift and precise method. People incapacitated with grief choose the procedure; however, with the newly acquired information, they are once again incapacitated with suspicion. That is the primary reason behind the roaring protests in the UK. The main question in the novel is whether removing one's memory destroys the old self. Noor asks this question multiple times in the novel; however, as in Oscar's case, removing one's disproportionately large part of memory doubtlessly destroys the self and incapacitates them. Another question emerges in terms of memory and love. Noor conflicts with herself and asks these questions: "Can you really undo love? Can you undo heartbreak? Or do you think they'd sort of... do something to you? Leave something with

you?" (176). Seventy-two percent of all the clients arriving at Nepenthe want to remove their memories of past relationships, and "[p]eople come in and say they want what the guy had in Eternal Sunshine" (177). The movie is once again mentioned and associated with love and memory. Noor doubting Nepenthe's practices questions the place of memory in love.

Mei arrives in Amsterdam following her memory traces of a trip with Katya and Sophia, to whom she no longer talks. It should be stated that the timeline in the novel is not simultaneous but non-linear, and the characters' experiences in different but recent time periods are reflected. Nepenthe thus has not offered its clients the opportunity for memory restorations yet. In the section narrating Mei's journey, there is an ongoing legal hearing that might order Nepenthe to make memory restorations. That is why instead of waiting for the outcome of the ruling, Mei takes action to reinstate her memory and face her "treacherous partial self" (122). It is implied in the novel that deleting memories does not remove a person's instincts to know someone. Mei's meeting with Mr Armand instinctively without having any memories of him shows that Nepenthe has been only partially successful in interfering with human mind. Armand with a two-year-old child is separated for the time being. She undergoes the procedure so as to forget Armand, who showed compassion and interest to Mei that no one else ever did before. As a little girl who was left at a train station in China by her drug addict, mother, Mei is surrounded by personal traumas and haunting memories. She even describes her months as phantom pain: "She thought of her own missing leg; her months in the Chinese orphanage in Guangzhou. A phantom limb, still sending out its odd, hard-to-interpret signals. Shyness, anxiety, shots of pain" (209). Phantom pain is a medical enigma, the mechanism of which is yet to be understood (Subedi & Grossberg, 2011). The reason for having sensations in areas where amputation has been performed is still a medical mystery, and up to 80% of patients suffer from it after an amputation (Erlenwein et al., 2021), and there is not a consensus among scientists and clinicians that determine the true nature of this phenomenon (Schone et al., 2022). Mei, by comparing her long-forgotten memories of the orphanage to phantom limb pain, indicates how those memories still cause discomfort and pain. They continue to have a significant impact on Mei's emotional state. Just as phantom limb pain can be a persistent and incapacitating condition, the memories of the orphanage may be a source of constant emotional pain for Mei. The comparison drawn between discomforting memories and phantom limb pain is crucial in the novel since it justifies the memory removal procedure and highlights the potential benefits. Just as amputees may later seek treatment for phantom limb pain to ease their excruciating pains, the characters in the novel choose to have their painful memories removed to improve their mental and emotional well-being and relieve the effects of those unwanted memories. Although Mei justifies the use of memory removal through the comparison to phantom limb pain and suggests

that it is an acceptable method of coping with traumatic memories, she later recognizes the severe repercussions it could exhibit. This realization raises ethical questions about the nature of memory and whether memory should be intact without human intervention and whether erasing memories is an ethical solution to coping with painful experiences.

The novel is written in the form of a detective or a crime fiction. By collecting the clues and reconstructing the characters' memories, the author makes the reader an active participant to solve the cases. It is especially evident in Oscar's part in the novel since having a gun and being at large make it a complicated rather than an axiomatic case. Oscar was stripped of his self-realization and trust in his identity. This makes the case unique because the character is not aware of his capabilities and limits. The questions emerge whether remodelling the human brain has the power to change a person's personality traits and whether removing a memory of an act of crime acquit that person in their own minds. The mystery that needs to be solved in William's case is the main reason for his wish to have his memory of a girl victimized removed. He is obsessive and emotionally invested in a case that he was not officially involved. Until that point, he has seen numerous brutal crimes, but he was undisturbedly able to move on. There is a complication arising in William's case since he is understood to have undergone the procedure before seeing the girl's photo. William thinks that Nepenthe kills the old self by creating a new one. This new self may not be in accordance with the previous one.

CONCLUSION

In the novel *Tell Me an Ending*, the place of memory on identity is through four characters, Finn, Mei, William and Oscar. While exploring identity, John Locke's and David Hume's views on identity are explicitly reflected by the author. According to Nepenthe, the memory removal is justified due to the inherent unreliability of memories that undergo change over time. Conversely, Lock in this regard maintains that consciousness constant in this regard. According to Hume, identity is constructed through our changing experiences and views. In the novel, Hume's view on this constant change is highlighted and used as a tool to legitimize Nepenthe's actions because if identity is not constructed through every single memory in mind, then manipulating and erasing memories is not associated with identity at all. The contrasting views between Locke and Hume are stressed by the author throughout the novel. Since Nepenthe as a company aligns with Hume's ideology and opposes Locke's, they find it appropriate to shape people's minds. Nevertheless, through every character, it becomes evident that memory removal, particularly distant memories, interferes with one's identity.

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