DOI: 10.9744/kata.17.1.1-8

ISSN 1411-2639 (Print), ISSN 2302-6294 (Online)

OPEN ACCESS

http://kata.petra.ac.id

A Critical Comparative Reading of Nationalism in Pramoedya A. Toer and Ngugi wa Thiong'o

Sunardi, D.
Faculty of Language and Arts, University of Ma Chung
Malang, INDONESIA
Email: dono.sunardi@machung.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This article tries to explore how the conception, birth, and development of novel can become a tool to shed lights to our understanding of the conception, birth, and development of nationalism. The discussion departs from a powerful finding by Edward Said that prominent exiles he happened to know and befriend with had deliberately chosen to be novelists. According to Said, the choice to write novels was fueled by intense feeling of homelessness, which in turn took shape in dream of an imaginary homeland. Novel as a genre is in perpetual search for epic; and since that epic is elusive, what novel can offer is an imagined form. It is in this shared feeling, the same desire to imagine a perfect home, the constant fabrication of narratives of the epic past, the invention of quasi-sacred texts alongside with the heroes and enemies, the dynamics of including and excluding of people that novel and nationalism inform each other. As reader, we turn to postcolonial Kenyan Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* and Indonesian Toer's *This Earth of Mankind.* By commenting on the main characters of these novels we make intellectual exploration into the idea of nationalism. The results are two tentative conclusions regarding the relationship between novel and nationalism, i.e. (1) the pretense of novel to be epic is comparable to the claim of nationalism as the historically overarching set of identity of modern society, and (2) the dynamics of the characters in novel is a metonymy of the dynamics of nationalism *bildungsroman*.

Keywords: Identity; invention; nationalism; novel.

INTRODUCTION

Although at first glance and to eyes of many, there seems to be little relation between novel and nationalism, in fact there have been several studies on the relation between novel as a genre and nationalism. Most, if not many, of them depart or take inspiration from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities.* One of such studies is by Pieter Vermeulen (2012) who wrote about the possibility of using David Grossman's novel, *See Under: Love* (1986), to understand Israel's national imaginary that operates along the lines of the tradition of "secular messiasism."A more recent study was conducted by M.J. Meyer who discussed the interconnection between nationalism and entertainment industry in contemporary Thailand (2014). Meyer argues how a novel, *Thawiphop* (1986), serves "a mirror of efforts by the Thai middle class to appropriate nationalism and reimagining the history of the late nineteenth-century Thailand" (p. 125). Both of the studies discuss how the characters of the novels-in-question could be used to understand the birth of nationalism. This article is an effort to explore how our understanding of the conception, birth and development of a novel can become a useful tool to understand, reformulate, or even deconstruct the conception and the birth of nationalism and how the discourses around novels and nationalism inform and crisscross each other way. Through critical reading of the novels by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Pramoedya Ananta Toer, this article problematizes nationalism as an overarching set of identity. The character developments of the novels in question are used to expose how nationalism is not something that is solid and stable. It is something that is dynamic as metonymied by the characters of the fictions. The uniqueness of this article lies in the use of novel, both in its form and content, to critically see nationalism, particularly postcolonial nationalism.

I start this discussion by drawing our attention to Edward Said (1935-2003). In his *Reflection on Exile* (2000), Edward Said, among many other things, raised two points in his book *Reflection on Exile* (2000) that is worth careful reading for the sake of this article. The first point says, "Much of the exile's life is taken up with compensating for disorienting loss by creating a new world to rule. It is not surprising that

many exiles seem to be *novelists*, chess players, political activists, and intellectuals" (p. 144). This was true of Said, who himself was an intellectual and politic activist. Several of fellow exiles he knew and befriended with were novelists. His second point is: "Indeed, the interplay between nationalism and exile is like Hegel's dialectic of servant and master, opposites informing and constituting each other. All nationalisms in their early stages develop from a condition of *estrangement*" (p. 140, italics added).

Based on those two points, I argue that to Edward Said both novel and nationalism, at least in their early stage, share a common character: the feeling of estrangement, the experience of being (in) exile. Both novel and nationalism depart from a condition of being uprooted of the roots, the perceived "inherited land," and the glorious, epic past. To support this assumption, Said explored into the origin of novels and nationalism and found that both novels and nationalism are products of modern era, which is an era generally characterized by the condition of being spiritual orphaned and alienated. Modern era is the age of anxiety and estrangement. To understand this we need to see the modernism historically. Two of the founding fathers of modernism are Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud. "Nietzsche taught us to feel uncomfortable with tradition, and Freud to regard domestic intimacy as the polite face painted on patricidal and incestuous rage" (Said, 2000, p. 137). Modernism is, therefore, characterized by constant suspicion toward any stable sense of rootedness. This suspicion leads to distrust of any authority, which in negative sense suggests unwillingness to be tied to "the tradition" anymore. But once someone learns to distrust, he is forever lost in the sea of unbelongingness. It is this unbelongingness that in turns makes people want another belongingness, even when this is not possible.

SENSE OF ENSTRANGEMENT IN NOVEL AND NATIONALISM

The sense of estrangement is also a very important notion in Georg Lukacs's discussion of novels. Departing from a different perspective from that of Said's, Lukacs's discussion is somehow also historical. Here, Lukacs puts novel in dialectic with epic. According to him, novel is estrangement of estrangement; it is a representation of the representation of Reality. To make this point, Lukacs firstly proposes the existence of two natures. The first nature is the nature of epic. But of course, we have to keep in mind that by saying this Lukacs realizes that this first nature is not Reality (with capital R) itself, since it is an estrangement anyway. The first nature is, according to Lukacs, "nothing other than the historico-philosophical objectivation of man's alienation from his own constructs" (McKeon, 2000, p. 191). However, there is a sense that to Lukacs the representation in the epic world, i.e. the first nature, is light and more "wholesome." It is a man-made structure where one can somehow feel more or less at home.

On the second nature, Lukacs writes that it is "different from the first nature not in its essence but in the self-consciousness in which it is conceived and which it therefore represents" (McKeon, 2000, p. 179). The Reality with capital "R" that the second nature tries to represent is still the same with Reality of the first nature, but the second nature is a yet another representation of the first representation. The second nature is a second representation of the Reality. This nature happens when the [objectivation or] projection of man's experience of his self-made environment, the first nature, is understood as a prison instead of a parental home. Understood this way, the second nature is the situation of double estrangement from Reality. Lukacs himself, I must assert here, did not propose the term of Reality. It is my own term, following Lacanian concept of "Reality" in the Imaginary Order.

According to Lukacs, what novel, which in contrast to epic (the first nature) is the second nature, tries to do is transcending that experience of double estrangements—from which his famous epitaph of novel as a form of "transcendental homelessness" comes—to the point of pretentious totality. "The novel is the epic of an age in which the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given, in which the immanence of meaning in life has become a problem, yet which still thinks in terms of totality" (McKeon, 2000, p.186). Thus, while novel has to deal with and admit its own finiteness, it pretends that it is capable of talking about totality of experience. There is a lack of "epic" quality in novel, but it always tries to invent, reinvent, and imagine that it (once) owns it.

Interestingly, the concept of nationalism has also a root in the experience of estrangement. Nationalism, as Said suggested, is conceived and born out of the feeling of lack, or the experience of being in exile in its broad sense. Loosely following Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Community*, I argue that nationalism is not something that "naturally" exists as a mode of being and living in community. It is not a natural set of identity. In other words, nationalism needs to be invented and reinvented in the modern society. As such, nationalism—and its most visible manifestation: nation—is an act of collective imagining. And this act of imagining is something ongoing, in need of

constant fabulation, even after the process of inventing is formally over. Citing Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist, Said writes that one of the ways to create the look of "epic" condition of nationalism is by maintaining and emphasizing what he calls as *habitus*: "the coherent amalgam of practices linking habit with inhabitance" (2000, p. 140).

Nationalism, like novel, longs for form. Departing from the experience of lack, but also characterized by desire, or in my own term "pretense," to be an overarching set of self-identification that encompasses all other identifications including religious and tribal ties, nationalism tries to invent a common past and a shared future for everyone it arbitrarily wants to include—while, with the same mode, exclude and condemn others to condition of unbelongingness. Nationalism even invents history, which it selectively strings together in a narration. That is why each and every manifestation of nationalism, i.e. modern nation, has its own founding fathers, its own basic and quasi-religious texts, its own modes of selection of national narration, its own historical and geographical landmarks, and its own perceived enemies and official heroes.

This article is a speculative effort to explore how the discourses of novel and nationalism inform and crisscross each other way. Novel functions as proponent of nationalism as well as its harshest critic. As a part of mass print media and popular literatures, novel is a powerful tool to spread the idea of nationalism among the subjects, to create a shared feeling where it did not exist as one imagined community in Andersonian sense. At the same time, novel can also be a great critic that suspects the exclusiveness and brutality of nation toward its subjects and, particularly, non-subjects. In my discussion, I will look at Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* (first published in 1967) and Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *This Earth of Mankind* (the English edition was published in 1990). I choose these two novels because both narrate nationalism and the process of nation building.

HEROES OF THE NOVELS: MUGO AND MINKE

Mugo and Minke, respectively, are two main protagonists of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* and Pramoedya A. Toer's *This Earth of Mankind*. It is through the eyes of these protagonists that Ngugi (born in 1938) and Toer (1925-2006) voiced their critical narration on nationalism. It is true that Ngugi and Toer come from different cultural background—Kenya in Africa and Indonesia in Asia—but they shared a similar concern, i.e. the postcolonial states that once had been imagined as an organic space for the colonized to liberate themselves from the oppression of Western colonizers turned to be as corrupt and exploitative as the regimes they replaced, if not worse. For these two writers, postcolonial Kenya and Indonesia are far from ideal; they are not less exploitative than European rulers when it comes to natural and human resources of the subjects. Ngugi and Toer saw how modern postcolonial states have been sabotaged to serve the interests of a small group of elite natives.

In *Ngugi's Novels And African History: Narrating the Nation,* James Ogude (1999) writes how Ngugi uses novel to challenge the process of essentialization or the calcification of Kenyan identity and history by postcolonial state:

> "Narrative, particularly the novel, has tended to provide Ngugi with the space to imagine Africa's history which he believes had been repressed by colonialism. Ngugi has insisted, correctly, that his writing is very much part of Kenya's (and by implication Africa's) historiography and the theorizing of its political economy. Ngugi's writing is not just laying a claim to the terrain of culture, but also to radically 'revised visions of the past tending towards a postcolonial future, as urgently reinterpretable and redeployable experiences, in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory reclaimed as part of a general movement of resistance, from the colonist' (Said, 1994, p. 256). Ngugi posits narrative here as an agent of history because it provides the space for challenging our notions of national identities, uses of history, and ways in which they are deployed in power contestation in modern Kenya and Africa in general" (Ogude, 1999, p. 2).

Similar to that, Pramoedya Ananta Toer wrote his novels, particularly those from the period during his exile in Buru Island from 1967-1979, in order to "help correct the accepted colonial version of the history of the rise of Indonesian nationalism" (Toer, 1999, p. 314). One of the masterpieces from this period is popularly known as the "Buru Quartet", being the first in the tetralogy, *This Earth of Mankind.* Written after the onset of the despair at the betrayal of the Indonesian people by the elites who ran the postcolonial state during Suharto's New Order Regime, in *This Earth of Mankind* Toer critically looks back into the history of Indonesia nationalism in order to go forward. Toer, according to Pheng Cheah,

> "wishes to retrieve the forgotten ideals of a revolutionary past that had somehow taken a

> wrong turn in political history—a past summoned up again in images, reincarnated through narrative fiction—and to implant seeds of change in the minds of his readers in the hope of reorienting the nation on its rightful path" (Cheah, 2003, p. 254).

Although most of Toer's writings are political and critical as stated in the memoir of his exile, *The Mute Soliloquy* (1999), that a good writing should have a social aspect to it, and the greater development of the social aspect, the better the writing is—comparing an act of writing that is simply done for writing's or enjoyment sake to masturbation—I would argue that this is not the only reason that makes novel a most powerful tool to see nationalism critically. The power also lies in the form of the novel itself as the freer genre, the genre still in the making. Novel provides more spaces than any other forms of art or writing (I speak of play and poem) which are more rigid in their conventions. A novelist has more rooms to express his or her voice—including more rooms to see the nationalism in a critical way. Both in form and spirit, novel is "revolutionary."

Now, let's take a more detailed look to the protagonists of the novels, the heroes, and how their being heroes, too, are a result of invention. This is particularly true to Mugo from *A Grain of Wheat.* Mugo is an introvert character who lives outside of the village, in a hut separated from other villagers. He does not feel comfortable to live among other villagers. It is in that hut, a shabby place, he lays down his head at night after a whole day of toiling, sweating in the small strip of land he owns—a hut he inherits from his late distant aunt, the only relative he has after both of his parents died when he was still very young—an aunt whom he never loved and who never loved him as he always wished. His hut is his home, "the only safe place" (Ngugi, 1967, p. 197). When his aunt died one day, Mugo somehow "wanted somebody, anybody who would use the claims of kinship to do him ill or good. Either one or the other as long as he was not left alone, an outsider" (p. 11). Mugo's situation is an example of the condition of unbelongness. He is not connected to anyone and anything. We can say that he lives in "exile" both from the past (in the form of his relationship with his late aunt) and from the present (in the form of his fellow villagers).

And yet, all that Mugo wants is a peaceful life—a life that is far from troubles. So, when Kihika, the village's "real" hero runs into his hut to seek for asylum after killing the District Officer (a colonialist's agent), Mugo is scared to death. He does not want to accept Kihika, since this can mean big problem for him:

> "[a]nd they'll hang me. My God, I don't want to die, I am not ready for death, I have not even lived. Mugo was deeply afflicted and confused, because all his life he had avoided conflicts: at home, or at school … if you don't traffic with evil, then evil ought not to touch you; if you leave people alone, then they ought to leave you alone" (p. 221).

However, in the dawn of Uhuru (the independence day of Kenya from British colonialism in 1963), Mugo—this shy, introvert, and "self-centered" man—is made hero. Simply because Mugo helps a Kenyan woman labor from being beaten by the white man, everyone sees him as a messiah, a hero that is capable of saving the whole nation. Mugo's withdrawn personality only adds to his mysteriousness—making him a charismatic figure in the eyes of the crowd. A hero for the new nation is created, in an almost irrational way, and Mugo is that hero:

> "Somewhere, a woman suggested we go and sing to Mugo, the hermit, at his hut. The cry was taken up by the crowd, who, even before the decision was taken, had already started tearing through the drizzle and the dark to Mugo's hut. For more than an hour, Mugo's hut was taken prisoner. His name was on everybody's lips. We wove legends around his name and imagined deeds" (p. 232).

The process of inventing (and reinventing) of what we call national hero is a truly important aspect in the process of nation birth and building. With the (re)invention of a hero, one more reason to bind is created among people. The same act of inventing and reinventing hero, I would argue, also implies and, to some extent, emphasizes the creation of villain, of others who live outside of the Self. (Benedict Anderson [1991] argues that nationalism is a mode of identity with an exclusive nature: in order to confirm its own existence, nationalism needs to exclude others.) The need to always invent and reinvent hero is another evidence that nation is in fact an organic entity. Nationalism is, therefore, dynamic. In addition to hero and villain, nationalism also needs myth, i.e. perceived common past and shared dream or goal. Nationalism is, in short, something hollow in the inside that needs to be filled. It is an aspiration to be realized. That is why, in *A Grain of Wheat* one of the most significant questions people have on the day of Uhuru are: "[W]ould the government now become less stringent on those who could not pay tax? Would there be more jobs? Would there be more land?" (p. 245).

And, just as Lukacs had suggested that novel is a form of "transcendental homelessness," because novel

takes the place of the epic of an age that is not the same as totality of experience but still thinks in terms of totality, so is nationalism that pretends to be the "epic" of identification. Nationalism pretends to over-archany other modes of identification like race, gender, class, religion, etc. In the case of the invention and reinvention of national hero, Lukacs wrote something that resonates with the fact of Mugo's being the hero:

> "The epic individual, the hero of the novel, is the product of estrangement from the outside world. When the world is internally homogeneous, men do not differ qualitatively from one another; there are of course heroes and villains, pious men and criminals, but even the greatest hero is only a head taller than the mass of his fellows, and the wise man's dignified words are heard even by the most foolish" (McKeon, 2000, p. 192).

The hero of nation, like protagonist of novel, is an everyday man. He is neither an omnipotent god nor a knight in shining armor or an all-powerful king of the epic. If that hero is then portrayed as a charismatic person, just like Mugo to villagers, there are two reasons as to why it is. First, it is a fabulation. Mugo, the hero and main protagonist of Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat*, is in reality an ordinary man desiring an ordinary life. But as an important part of narrative of nationalism, this poor and sad man must make himself a hero. When he is not one, "[s]tories about Mugo's power" must be invented or created. It is, therefore, not an important thing whether Mugo, or Gikonyo, or Kihika, or a common villager is the real hero. Hollowness of the national epic must be filled by any means necessary, even with filling of superfluous heroism:

> "Some people said that in detention Mugo had been shot at and no bullet would touch his skin. Through these powers, Mugo had been responsible for many escapes from detention of men who later went to fight in the forest. And who but Mugo could have smuggled letters from the camps to Members of Parliament in England? There those who suggested that he had even been at the battle of Mahee and had fought side by side with Kihika. All these stories were now freely circulating in the meeting. We sang song after song about Kihika and Mugo. A calm holiness united our hearts. Like those who had come from afar to see Mugo do miracles or even speak to God, we all vaguely expected that something extraordinary would happen" (p. 246).

That the hero of a nation must be charismatic—heroic, epic in its general sense—also suggests the irrationality of nationalism. As a product of modern era, nationalism is signified by constant suspicion to tradition and the secure feeling provided by the feeling of connectedness to one's traditional root. As such, nationalism, logically speaking, should base its existence on the reason. If nationalism should base its existence on reason, or on reasonable groundings, why does it need to assign charisma to its hero? Why does not nationalism admit that its hero is an everyday man, a little taller maybe, but in general a man of his people? Ernst Renan (1823-1892), the French philosopher and writer, in *What is a Nation* (1882), defined nation as:

> "a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form. Man, Gentlemen, does not improvise. The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavors, sacrifice, and devotion. Of all cults, that of the ancestors is the most legitimate, for the ancestors have made us what we are. A heroic past, great men, glory (by which I understand genuine glory), this is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea. To have common glories in the past and to have a common will in the present; to have performed great deeds together, to wish to perform still more - these are the essential conditions for being a people" (Renan, 1882).

Renan's definition of nation is a result of his historical exploration into European communities—implying the heavily use of reasoning and abstraction. Nationalism is the peak, the summit, of human experience. What can be more positive than that in modern sense? In reality, however, nation and also state is not fully created and based on rationality. Irrationality, that unreasoning process, heavily tainted the creation and development of nation. The example of Mugo is the *das ist* of nation, while Renan's definition is its *das sein*. Building on this, I would argue, nationalism, particularly those invented by postcolonial regimes—just as novel—will never become epic. At best, it will be speaking with the pretense of totality of epic. Both novel and nationalism tell the story of ordinary, everyday human being; they deal with common people's experience. If they talk about totality of experience, it is just because they think they are capable of transcending their own finiteness, their homelessness.

Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *This Earth of Mankind* is also a novel that offers us light to understand, and

problematize, postcolonial nationalism. As mentioned, Pramoedya wrote this novel during his exile in Buru Island for more than twelve years, without trial. Meanwhile during the long period of 1966 to1998, Indonesia was under Suharto's New Order Regime. It is an oppressive militaristic regime. Ruth McVey as cited by Tony Day and Keith Foulcher in the introduction to *Clearing a Space: Postcolonial Readings of Modern Indonesia* described as "perpetuating much of the symbolic trappings and organizational characters of the East Indies state at the height of Dutch colonial power." (Day and Foulcher, 2002, p.1).

In postcolonial Indonesia, particularly during the New Order era, nationalism underwent what I call as the process of calcification and standardization. Pheng Cheah suggests that there is something right about the course of Indonesia in the past that then was betrayed by Indonesian leaders of the later period (2003). These leaders led Indonesia to a different direction, supposed to be a wrong one, too—and that by writing this novel, Pramoedya Ananta Toer might want to correct this mistake. While Cheah might have a point here, I think first and foremost it is not the course of Indonesian nationalism that had been diverted. This kind of idea implies that Indonesia had a more or less clear conception or understanding of what actually makes it unique or special from the cases of other failed postcolonial states. In my own opinion, the wrong turn happened when Indonesian nationalism experienced the calcification and standardization, while in reality it is a dynamic, on going, and non-finite process.

Pramoedya Ananta Toer, through his novel, wanted to show the narrative story of Indonesia. Through the *persona* of Minke, the hero and main character of the novel, Toer wanted to make his case: that Indonesia was, is, and should be seen, as something dynamic, organic, in the making, just like Minke's character development in his novel. In this way, Minke's character development can be seen as the metonymy of Indonesian's *bildungsroman*. Minke develops from a naïve young man who admires everything about European modernity and all its achievements while, at the same time, despises his old traditional values to a grown-up man who is capable of transcending his hybrid identity (symbolized by his mother calls him 'brown Dutchman').

At the beginning of Toer's narration, Minke describes his admiration of European modernity like his craving for cotton candy and sweetmeat in a night market. Minke, is introduced to the sweet promise of European modernity: "I was still very young, just the age of a corn plant, yet I had already experienced modern learning and science: They bestowed upon me a blessing whose beauty was beyond description" (Toer, 1990, p. 16). Because of this promise and being pushed by hatred of the feudalistic and paternalistic nature of his old Javanese identity, Minke feels that he is so ready to depart from his inherited values:

> "What's the point in studying European science and learning … if in the end one has to cringe any way … Lost was the beauty of the world as promised by science progress. Lost was the enthusiasm of my teachers in greeting the bright future of humanity. … I'm quite able even to leave behind this whole family" (pp. 121-122, 129).

Minke's "final" departure from his old Javanese identity—implying the experience of being uprooted, no matter if he does voluntarily move away from it—does not mean that he is able to arrive in the intended destination. In fact, he never reaches the point of arrival in his journey to embrace the European modernity. What he gets is a sad-but-true realization that he will never arrive there. He must cope with the reality: "[B]ecause you [Minke] wear European clothes, mix with Europeans, and can speak a little Dutch you then become a European? [No.] You're still a monkey?" (p. 47).

At this point, Minke realizes that he cannot go back to his old Javanese identity. It is true not only because he does not want to go back there, which, from our previous discussion, is an obvious fact, but also because he cannot do it. He has been banished forever from that identity by his own mother: "You're indeed no longer Javanese. Educated by the Dutch, you've become Dutch, a brown Dutchman" (p. 130). Thus, Minke must deal with these double experiences of loss: loss of his old identity and loss of his dream. He must be content with being in-between, being hybrid, being non-Javanese and non-European, being a little bit Javanese and a little bit European, being Javanese in all his physical aspects but also being modern in his thought just like most of enlightened Europeans. In short, Minke makes himself content with the new status of being a brown Dutchman.

Minke's hybrid identity entails two aspects. One is neurotic and nervous. This aspect is characterized by deep feeling of loss or lack, of being exile, of being banished—if we are to follow Lacanian perspective that says that the feeling of loss of the perfect blissful union with the mother in the Imaginary Order must be recuperated somehow in the Symbolic Order through the fulfillment of the desire for *objet petit a*—the longing for a reclaimed fixed identity. Minke's reluctance to stop writing in Dutch—and switching

into Malay, the new language and the language in the making—is a clear example of how he still clings on to his perceived perfect union with his dream of modernity.

The second aspect of Minke's hybridity is the creative force that might spring out of it. Let's go back to Edward Said. Said himself is an exile and he suggested how the world of hybridity, of exile, is "logically enough … unnatural and its unreality resembles fiction" (Said, 2000, p. 144). The hybrid world is foreign; it is newness. Living a hybrid identity is like living in fiction world. You must make sense of it. You can also create and recreate things there. It holds unlimited of opportunities for them—hybrid people, exile, and refugee. On this creative aspect of hybridity, Salman Rushdie writes in *Imaginary Homelands* (1992):

> "Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools. But however ambiguous and shifting this ground maybe, it is not infertile territory for a writer to occupy. If literature is in part the business of finding new angles at which to enter reality, then once again our distance, our long geographical perspective, may provide us with such angles" (p. 15).

It is in the act of straddling between two cultures—traditional and modern—in the efforts of making sense of his hybridity, that Minke comes to a realization of the need to create, or rather to formulate, the new identity: Indonesia. Indonesia, or nation-state in general, is therefore a dynamic process of writing and rewriting this newness. It is a "dynamic" result (for lack for better term) of an act of balancing all the tensions of being hybrid. When a postcolonial state calcifies and standardizes its history, its existence, its dynamic nature, its always-renegotiable standing, just like Indonesia during New Order era, there is no better way to criticize it than through a medium that has the capacity of seeking newness as such, always in the moving, always in the making, free from rigid regulations of fixed genres—I am talking here, of course, about novel. This is where novel and nationalism crisscross and inform each other way.

CONCLUSION

Although at a glance they are two separate entities, novel and nationalism can actually inform each other. Our understanding of one can be deepened by the exploration into the other. It can do so in several ways. The first is through the exploration into the main characters or heroes of the novel. The heroes of the novel are different from hero of an epic because they mainly are consisted of common people, but then are made belief to be a "superhero." This is true with national heroes. National hero is the result of process of invention and fabulation. Stories and narrations are created to surround a national hero with charisma. The invention of hero can also become a dividing line to separate the Self from the others, the citizen of the nation and the banished.

The character development of novel, as being shown by Mugo and Minke of *A Grain of Wheat* and *This Earth of Mankind*, is also a metonymy to national *bildungsroman*. Hybridity as experienced by Minke is a nervous situation that leads him to create a new identity: his Indonesianess. From here, what we can see is that as novel and its main protagonist is a dynamic character, so is nationalism. Nationalism is something in the making, something going on and should not be seen and treated otherwise.

Novel as a modern form of art is way freer than those traditional genres in literature. As such, novel can be a tool to see nationalism critically. In form, novel is comparable to nationalism because it is not an epic, where the representation of Reality is still wholesome and "beautiful", but it pretends to become one, just like nationalism, is pretentious when it claims itself as an overarching mode of identity for the society. But as novel, which is lack of epic quality, is very creative, so is nationalism.

REFERENCES

Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London and New York: Verso.

Cheah, P. (2003). *Spectral nationality: Passages of freedom from Kant to postcolonial literatures of liberation*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Foulcher, K. & Day. T. (Eds.). (2002). *Clearing a space: Postcolonial readings of modern Indonesia literature*. Leiden, NL: KITLV Press.

McKeon, M. (Ed.). (2000). *Theory of the novel*: *A Historical approach*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press.

Meyer, M.J. (2012). The *Thawiphop* phenomenon: reimagining nationalism in a contemporary Thai Novel and its stage and screen adaptations. In Liamputtong, P. (Ed.), *Contemporary socio-cultural and political perspectives in Thailand*. (125-139). The Netherlands: Springer Netherlands.

Ngugi, J. (1967). *A grain of wheat*. London, Nairobi, Ibadan: Heinemann.

Ogude, J. (1999). *Ngugi's novel and african history: Narrating the nation*. London and Sterling, VA.

Renan, E. (1882). *What is a nation ?* Retrieved from Cicada of Clark University, MA on May 9, 2011.

Rushdie, S. (1992). *Imaginary homelands: Essays and criticisms 1981-1991*. New York: Penguins Books.

Said, E. (2000). *Reflections on exile and other essays*. Cambridge, MA: Convergences.

Toer, P.A. (1999). *The mute's soliloquy*. New York: Hyperion East.

Toer, P.A. (1990). *This Earth of Mankind*, translated by Max Lane, New York: Penguins Books.

Vermeulen, P. (2014). "The novel and the nation: The case of David Grossman's see under: Love". *Neophilologus*. Vol. 96, Issue 1, 1-15.

DOI: 10.9744/kata.17.1.9-16

ISSN 1411-2639 (Print), ISSN 2302-6294 (Online)

OPEN ACCESS

http://kata.petra.ac.id

An Interdisciplinary Study of Narrative Structure in *Dash Akol* as a Short Story and *Dash Akol* as a Movie

Dashti, Azam[1*] & Hadidi, Yaser[2]
[1]Shahid Behesti University, Tehran, Iran.
[2]The University of Tabriz, Tabriz, IRAN
* Corresponding author; Email: azam_dashti@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This paper undertakes an interdisciplinary study of the short story "Dash Akol" and the movie adapted from it. "Dash Akol" is a short story written by a famous Iranian author Sadeq Hedayat in 1932. Hedayat's "Dash Akol**"** was made into a movie in 1971 by Masoud Kimiai. There are some discrepancies between the short story "Dash Akol" and the movie, triggering a number of significant implications. This article discusses these discrepancies along with Hedayat's and Kimiai's narrative techniques. To this end, it applies Genett's (1988) Narrative Discourse and his three main narrative methods: narrating, characterization, and focalization. Meanwhile, it brings in Rimmon-Kenen's (2002) strategy to study characters, and Stam and Burgoyne and Flitterman-lewis (2005) to show the ways in which the movie has deviated from the story. In terms of characterization, it studies traits such as, action, speech, naming and setting.

Keywords: Adaptation; characterization; Dash Akol; focalization; Hedayat; Kimiai; narrative technique.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between literature and film has been the subject of numerous reflections and analyses. Most critics see art, literature and film in terms of a living mosaic, a dynamic intersection of textual surfaces (Sanders, 2006, p. 3).The very quality can be seen in a quite successful adaptation of the short story of "Dash Akol" into a movie. There are debates around Dash Akol's success as a film and the degree to which it remains faithful to the source text. Apart from all these controversies surrounding the dialectic between the two genres, one obviously based upon the other and borne from it, it goes without saying that the movie has brought the short story into the limelight, successfully targeting and winning over the attention of a wider audience.

"Dash Akol" is one of the ten stories of Sadeq Hedayat's book *Se qatreye khun* (Three Drops of Blood, Tehran, 1932). In the opening lines, the narrator informs the reader that Kaka Rostam is Dash Akol's rival who seeks to defeat and, quite possibly, humiliate, him. The story opens in a teahouse, where Kaka Rostam is challenging and provoking Dash Akolinto anew brawl. All of a sudden, a man enters and informs Dash Akol that Haji Samad, his old friend and an affluent merchant had died and chosen Dash Akol as an executer to his estate. Dash Akol makes his way down to the Haji's house to convey his condolences and talk to the widow. While there, Dash Akol catches sight of Marjan, Haji Samad's daughter Marjan. Having come to see the "town's hero and their protector" (Hedayat, 1995, para.15), Marjan looks at him from behind a curtain. Momentarily, Dash Akol finds his eyes fastened upon hers, eyes that take him by storm. In any event, her stunning eyes had worked their magic and had turned Dash Akol's life upside down. His face flushing crimson, he dropped his head" (Hedayet, 1995, para.15). Believing that he is too old to marry her, he suppresses his love for her. However, when drunk and lonely at home, he would confess his love for Marjan to his parrot: "Marjan, your love is killing me…". After seven years, a suitor "uglier and older than himself" (Hedayat, 1995, para.27) arrives for Marjan. Dash Akol makes arrangements for Marjan's wedding and then with eyes full of tears leaves Haji's house for Mullah Esaac's to drink and get over such searing heap of grief. On his way back, Kaka Rostam comes across him and, through sarcastic and provoking words, poses a challenge. In that wrestling, Kaka Rostam throws a cowardly stab at Dash Akol with Dash Akol's own cutlass, wounding him mortally. Dash Akol dies on the following day. But before his death, he asks Valikhan, Marjan's brother,

to look after his parrot. The same afternoon while Marjan was looking at the parrot,"suddenly the parrot, in a voice that echoed Dash Akol's, said, "Marjan... Marjan... you've killed me. Whom can I tell? Marjan, your love has killed me." (Hedayat, 1995, para. 40). Marjan's tears roll ceaselessly down.

Kimiai, a famous Iranian director, turned the short story into a black and white movie. The movie sounds quite faithful to the source text, yet to meet the needs of the time and cinematic audience, some differences were inevitable. In fact, Kimia reproduces Hedayat's short story of Iran in the 1920s into the Iranian context of the1970s; the short story paints luti and trickster (ayyar) custom while the movie depicts a hybrid tough-guy genre; Kimiai's Dash Akol retains a dual type of Iranian and western tough-guy image; in fact, "the integration of Iran into the global economy and exchange of relations with the American western image added another dimension to the tough-guy acting repertoire. Directors such as Kimiai adapted the western codes"; Dash Akol is at once Robinhood, a cowboy and a dash mashti, the Iranian sort of tough-guy (Naficy, p. 284).

It can be observed that the public is always attracted to Hollywood and western movies replete with erotic and sexual incitements. Kimiai's dependency on private sector support made him liable to public tastes making room for erotic scenes; while in Hedayat's short story the issue is repressed. Iranin the 1920s had a more repressed and conventional discourse regarding the expression of love and cardinal desires while platonic love was a more decent expression of love. In Iranian literature and culture, a luti is chaste until marriage; Sadeq Hedayat's short story which is an expression of luti customs is faithful to this discourse. However, Kimia has a new narration of these customs. His work is a hybrid creature of Iranian and western codes.

METHOD

To trace the narrative strategies employed by Sadegh Hedayat and Masoud Kimiai and draw an analogy between these works, we use Genette's three components of narrative strategy: narrating, characterization, and focalization. First, using Genette' narrative strategy, we explore the temporal relation in the narrative text. Then we deal with the narrative level of story. Perceptibility and reliability of narrative are two other parameters to look at in these two works. Through Rimmon-Kenan's strategy, Hedayat and Kimiai's methods in representing the character's speech and thought are discussed. Character existence is an important issue that requires close attention. To present characters' traits, direct and indirect methods will be applied. In the indirect method, settings, naming, and, above all, characters' speech and actions are discussed. Finally, we revisit Genett's Focalization to discuss the question of "who sees?".

Temporal Position

Among the four types of narrating, from the perspective of temporal positions, namely "subsequent (the classical position of the past-tense narrative […]); prior (predictive narrative, generated in the present […]); simultaneous (narrative in the present contemporaneous with the action); and interpolated (between the moments of the action)" (Genette, 1988), a great deal of Kimiai's narrative is in the simultaneous form, for the movie is presented in free direct narration, while Hedayat mainly uses past tense.

Hedayat's use of the past style tense of narrating causes the readers to sympathize with the characters in the story. According to Henry Allay (1979), "compassion and pastness go hand-in-hand" (Allay, 1979, p. 404). In the short story, the gap of time separating the narrator from the world of Dash Akol facilitates the connections between one event and another and creates a cause and effect relationship between the events. Hence, what adds to the depth of Hedayat's tragic story is the strong relation between the events.

Typology of Narrative Level

Critical factors in analyzing the narrative structure are the narrative level to which the narrator belongs, participation or absence of narrator in the story, the degree and sign of narrator overtones and covertness, and finally reliability or unreliability of narrator. All these factors in analyzing the narrative structure of a text comprise a typology of narrative level (Genett, 1988). Under the phenomenon of the narrator level, there are two basic types of narrators: "intra diegetic" and "extra diegetic" (Genett, 1988). These two can be categorized into hetero diegetic and homo diegetic. The narrator in "Dash Akol" is extra diegetic because it is a narrator who is absent from the story and is a first degree narrator. It is hetero diegetic because it is out of the story, not a character inside the story. In Kimiai's movie, the narrator is extra diegetic-hetero diegetic as well. But it is noteworthy that the cinematic type of narrator manifests itself through a range of cinematic codes such as visual and sonic registers (Stam & Raengo, 2005, p. 96-7). Music is an important sonic register in the hands of the extra diegetic-hetero dietic narrator, interweaving the scene and unfolding of the movie. As Sfandiar Monfaredzadeh

argues, the movie's music composer provides the movie *Dash Akol* with a sort of jazz music which echoes two Iranian rituals; one pahlevani and zoorkhane ritual, the other one, Persian mourning epic and Tazieh. Pahlevani style is the traditional heroic epic sport music, descending from martial arts; Tazieh is a traditional Persian theatrical genre for mourning, in which drama is conveyed through music and singing. Kimiai makes music into a powerful extra diegetic-hetero dietic narrator. The music steers the Iranian mind towards the tragedy of Saiawush, a famous hero in Shahnameh and, more importantly, Karbala and holy Hossein; the music associates Dash Akol with these Persian tragic heroes and thus foreshadows his tragic death.

In terms of narrative perceptibility, it should be considered that the narrator is never absent in the story. Even when the story is based on a dialogue, there is a narrator who quotes the dialogues. Seymour Chatman proposed six signs of the narrator's presence in the text: Description of setting, identification of characters, temporal summary, definition of characters, reports of characters' actions (1980). Even in a narrative structure, in which the narrator is seemingly covert, signs of overtone can be detected. For instance, in Kimiai's movie, the monologue at the beginning of the movie makes the audience cognizant of the narrator's presence: "Everyone in Shiraz knew that Dash Akol and Kaka Rostam were such bitter enemies…." (Hedayat, 19995, para.1). At this point, the camera assumes the narrative role and pans to one of Dash Akol and Kaka Rostam's encounters and alterations. Hedayat's story starts with the same line, but in the absence of the camera, it keeps its overt mode, with the reader constantly feeling the presence of the narrator.

Narrators are categorized as reliable and unreliable on the basis of their ability to establish and verify the facts of the fictional world. A reliable narrator, in Rimmon-Kenan's (2002) words, is one whose rendering of the story and commentary take on an authoritative quality towards the fictional truth in the eyes of the reader (p.101). In Hedayat's stories, this authority is preserved such that the reader hardly doubts the narrator's words and the characters' actions; however, some scenes in the movie threaten the narrator's authority. Hassan Fiad (2003), the film director, critic, and the professor of UCLE University, questions Kimiai's cliché representation of Dash Akol; he criticizes Kimiai sending Dash Akol many times to Mullah Esaac's house to drink, listen to Motrebs and watch the dancer's flirtatious advances, right after the Haji's funeral, all of which, according to the Iranian tradition, seems odd and twisted. Also he believes, in the last scene, that Dash Akol's ability to strangle Kaka Rostam to death after being fatally wounded sounds exaggerated and unreal. In Hedayat's story, Dash Akol, mortally wounded, is carried home; since, naturally, he has little power to continue his battle. One can excuse Kimiai's thoughtless narrating only through the commercial need of that time for action and western movies and culture; however, this imitation created a complicated picture of luti and cowboys. Likewise, Mofied later called Kimiai's characters "phony lutis" – lutis without all the seven traditional articles and not conforming to traditional luti ideology and psychology. This was because 'it was not clear what we were; we were a bunch of cowboys with knives instead of guns" (Naficy, p. 284). By this decision, he reduces Hedayat's otherwise tragic classic movie to an action movie, only to meet the needs of mass media and pander to the whims of the audience.

Character's Thoughts and Feeling

Regarding characters' thoughts and feelings, Hedayat is more successful. Although in representing characters' feelings, Kimiai takes advantages of music and visual codes; he cannot go beyond some simple scenes by way of plot, throwing some insight into corrupt social morality into the mix, perhaps irrelevantly. Obviously, he fails to meet the depth of Dash Akol's character and emotion. For instance, when he wants to show Dash Akol being enchanted by Marjan's love, we see Dash Akol sitting and brooding while some chained prisoners walk before his eyes, which is more of a cliché than the faithful portrayal of Dash Akol's deep and searing pain. The other example is Dash Akol picking up Marjan's black tissue left behind on the day of the funeral; this might have been intended to symbolize the pain-ridden love involved, but in Hedayat's story, Marjan doesn't possess such an item. This is a rather blunt and direct allusion to Shakespeare's Othello brought quickly to the audience's attention; however, this symbolic use of tissue as an emblem of love has little place, if at all, in Iranian culture, and therefore, little if any trigger in the audience's minds (Fiad, 2003). As Thomas Leitch (2010) pinpoints in his article, in a successful adaptation, the director should not only study the source text, but also the context surrounding that story should be brought alive in the film. Kimiai's other mistake is the dancer scene. This scene is an abrupt, naïve ending (Fiad, 2003). To represent Dash Akol's agony and suffering, the scene paints him as being satisfied by a few words articulated by a dancer, a brief scanty scene in which the dancer merely sits near him, looks at his face. Fiad (2003) regards the dancer scene as a defect in Kimiai's work, for cinema provides better

techniques to show characters' thoughts rather than reducing Dash Akol's deep, genuine, and noble feeling to a mere melodrama.

An effective way to represent a character's train of thought is to show a shot of the character's eyes followed by a shot of the object that has caught her or his attention (shot glance followed by shot object) (Herman et al, 2005, p. 601). Kimiai takes advantages of this technique effectively; while Marjan's mom informs Dash Akol of Marjan's imminent marriage, the POV shot moves from his sad, tearful eyes to a miniature picture of a beautiful woman on the wall, and then moves to the other room, in which Marjan is eavesdropping with equally tearful eyes. Thus, the subjective camera invites the viewer to catch Dash Akol's train of thought and feel his deep disappointment.

Kimiai spares Marjan a few chances and scenes of subjectivity and point of view through this technique. One example is when Marjan sets Dash Akol's prayer mat and watches him from the next room, the scene vividly picturing her subjectivity with him, especially where Dash Akol is aware that Marjan has set the prayer mat for him. As Naficy points out, "the scene of Marjan's point of view thus conjoins the subjectivity of Dash Akol with Marjan, creating a powerfully erotic charge between them, which ironically happens in a religious ritual." (Naficy, p. 291). Yet her point of view suggests that she is an observer rather than an active agent of her fate, for "in another powerful scene, Marjan watches from behind the curtain of her room the activities of the servant in the yard preparing for her wedding, emphasizing that she is only the observer of her own fate, not an agent in its transformation" (Naficy, p. 291).

Character Existence

Characters in stories are presented verbally, with readers having to construct them in their mind according to the textual clues. But in movies, viewers confront real people; for instance, in Kimiai's movie, the viewers see Behrooz Vossoughi, Jaleh, Shahrzad, Bahman Mofid and Mery Apik and other actors starring with their photogenic, body movement, acting style, accent and their particular gestures bestowing depth on verbal characters created by Hedayat. The character that we have recreated from Hedayat's story such as Dash Akol may be different from the one we encounter in Kimiai's movie. Kimiai chose Behrooz Vossoughi for the role of Dash Akol, who is a quite handsome actor, while as it goes in the story, Hedayat's Dash Akol is not very handsome. "Dash Akol was a thirty-five-year-old man, robust but rather ugly. Seeing him for the first time, most people would be repulsed.[…]" (Hedayat, 1995, para.19).

Hassan Fiad (2003) believes that among Kimiai's cast, Bahman Mofid, playing Kaka Rostam, is closer to Hedayat's story, but other members of the cast such as Jaleh and Mery are not successful. Behrooz Vossoughi is not compatible with Hedayat's Dash Akol, for Behrooz Vossoughi is a decidedly handsome actor of Iranian cinema, while Hedayat's Dash Akol is depicted as being not very handsome. Kaka Rostam also deviates from Hedayat's story, for "Kaka Rostam has a stutter and this is a known and accepted fact in the story, yet in the movie he does not stutter" (Rewalk, 2008). This fact casts him in a different light. The major difference was the new character of the dancer (Rewalk, 2008). In the movie, Dash Akol has the chance to meet Marjan at the funeral ceremony and some other scenes, but in the story he does not. "The movie concentrated mostly on the feud between Kaka Rostam and Dash Akol rather than Dash Akol's love for Marjan as in the story" which approximates the movie to an action tough-guy one rather than a tragic love story (Rewalk, 2008).

Hedayat's story is a short story and obviously does not have enough spans to characterize all characters. For instance, readers learn about Marjan through Dash Akol's imagination and eyes. Except two scenes, one at the beginning and the other at the end, she is absent from the main stream of story, reminding the reader that the story is happening in a traditional context; the reader never hears a single word from her. She is silent, and one hardly learns about her feeling and keeps wondering whether she loves Dash Akol back at all. At this point, one should also refer to a crucial issue of character existence; not all characters exist in the story world. In Uri Margolin's (2007) words, characters may not exist in the textual-actual world, but merely in the belief, wish, intention, or imagination sphere of other characters. Thus a character is not only in part the construct of the writer and the narrator, but also the outcome of another fictional character's mind (Herman et al, 2005). In this respect, one can say that Marjan is the outcome of Dash Akol's mind rather than the narrator, and this may just be what invests the story with such lasting allure and literary appeal.

However, in Kimiai's movie, Marjan has a more active role; for instance, she is curious to know and learn more about Dash Akol, something decidedly at odds with the tenor of the short story. As it was discussed, Kimiai gives Marjan some chances of subjectivity. She asks her mom about Dash Akol's

character, yet, except a few seconds in the funeral scene; she never meets him in person.

In terms of gender representation, in Kimiai's movie, women are bestowed with a more vivid subjectivity. Down the line, Kimiai's creation of Aqdas, which could also be regarded as a foil character for Marian, is a creation of an agent for voicing Iran's culture of the 1970s and satisfying the audience's desire for a full and graphical picture of a sexual relation. The Iranian cinema in the 1970s experienced an explosion of sexual incitement. Box-office success of movies of that time depended for their success on picturing and fulfilling cardinal desires; Middle–class audience derived pleasure from voyeuristically watching the scenes of male female relations.

Kimiai's aberration is in fact his response to the diasporic atmosphere of Iran which demanded a hybrid creature of western and Iranian type. Aqdas is Marjan's modern and westernized alter ego, one who escapes from the confined private space of home to the public sphere, losing Marjan's dignity and purity but being bestowed with the expression of love and freedom of sexuality. However, in a masculine misogynist context, she is still relegated to a trifling place and not a real object of love. Dash Akol's expression of platonic love is for the respected, dignified Marjan and his cardinal physical love for impure, degraded Aqdas.

Direct and Indirect Characterization

Characters could be presented directly or indirectly. To define a character directly, the narrator utilizes explicit characterization techniques. This style of characterization consists of descriptive statements that identify, categorize, individualize and evaluate a person (John, 2003). In this type of characterization, the traits are named by an adjective, and abstract noun, or part of speech, for example: "he loves only himself" (Rimmon-kenan, 2002, p. 59-60). Hedayat uses this technique artistically. He puts Dash Akol and Kaka Rostam' characteristic descriptions against one another and brings about the formation of the hero and antihero simultaneously; in fact, the encounter of Dash Akol and Kak Rostam not only does describe, but also categorizes and individualizes their traits:

> Everyone in Shiraz loved Dash Akol… In fact, he was kind to people; if anyone dared harass a woman, or tried to bully people, Dash Akol made him pay for it through the nose. He could be counted on to help people in financial distress and sometimes even to carry their heavy parcels.

In indirect characterization, the traits are not mentioned but displayed and exemplified in various ways, leaving to the reader the task of inferring the quality they imply (Rimmon –Kenan, 2002, p. 60). There are a number of ways to display characters indirectly, such as action, speech, external appearance, setting and naming.

Action

In terms of action, a trait may be implied both by "one time action" and "habitual" ones (Rimmon-Kennan, 2002). In the story and the movie, we learn about Dash Akol's integrity and nobility while he fights back his painful love for Marjan because "he felt that if he married the girl who had been his charge, it would be a betrayal of Haji's trust", (Hedayat, 1995, para.23) and from the scenes in which he defeats Kaka Rostam but doesn't kill him. The other scenes are when Dash Akol appears out of the blue to rescue a woman and her child from Kaka Rostam's hands. Also in the last scene, he puts his cutlass as ideas. Kaka Rostam's cutlass fell over and fights him bare handed, but Kaka Rostam picks up the same cutlass and stabs him from the side; in these scenes, we learn about Kaka Rostam's wickedness as well.

In terms of their habitual behavior, they both claim to be the lutis of the city (luti connotes two opposite codes of behavior: one a loose-living and wine-imbibing or a lout, the other one javanmardi and manliness traits), but their habitual characteristics make one a luti and the other a lout. Kaka Rostam smokes opium and makes a living by causing trouble, intimidating and extorting money from people, while Dash Akol is the one who helps the poor and is famous for traits of manliness. As Hamid Nafisi points out in his study the social history of Iranian cinema:

> In Dash Akol, the plot revolves around the personal rivalry between the luti type whose era is fading (Dash Akol) and the lout type who is in ascendance (Kaka Rostam). Kaka Rostam chases Dash Akol's status as the neighborhood's chief luti. Were Kaka Rostam to have survived, however, his antisocial and villainous conduct would have prevented his transformation from a lout to a luti. (Nafisi, 2011, p.276).

Speech

Character's speech, as Rimmon-Kenan (2002) suggests, a character's speech, whether in conversation or as silent activity of the mind, can be indicative of both a trait and traits through form (p.63). Thus, when Dash Akol and Kaka Rostam talk, they not only convey the information they have in their minds, but

also simultaneously reveal their own character traits. For instance, when Dash Akol is promising Haji's wife that he will carry out Haji's will, he reveals his Javanmardi and manliness traits.

Setting

Setting is the environment in which story-internal characters live and move about (Herman et al, 2005, p.552). Rimmon-Kenan (2002) defines environment as a character's physical surroundings (room, house, street, town) as well as his human environment (family, social class), also often used as trait-connecting metonymies (p. 66). The story takes place in a traditional, religious atmosphere of an old, Iranian city, Shiraz. The fact highlights and confirms Dash Akol's traditional character and his ideological beliefs. Dash Akol and Kaka Rostam both are from one town, and a special period of time, but the quality that makes them different is their family and class.

It seems what transforms Dash Akol from a lout into a luti is his rich background. He is from an aristocrat family, and the son of a notable landowner. He is the one who is expected to follow javanmardi traits and resists the love for Marjanonly to keep with manly codes of behavior he has been brought up with. Ironically, the same setting and ideology make him fall in love with Marjan, a girl who is quite a child rather than a grown-up girl capable of love. For as Kimiai portrays her on the funeral day, Marjan, a teenager, is dressed along the lines of her mom and other mature women; she is wearing a chador and a veil which is quite odd to the contemporary Iranian's mind. Thus, Hedayat chooses old Iranian setting and culture in which the possibility of marriage with a girl much younger than the man exists, as seen later in the story, where Marjan's suitor is even older than Dash Akol.

Naming

When it comes to naming, according to Ewen (1998) (cited in Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 68), there can exist semantic connections between names and character traits. Names in Hedayat's story convey a good deal of information about characters' role and reveal their traits; for instance, Dash implies the meaning and connotation of brother, generous, nobleman. On the other hand, Kaka Rostam is the combination of two contradictory names; Kaka implies the meaning of a baby and a child, while Rostam is the name of a Persian hero. This name instantly achieves a contradiction; he could be a hero but he fails to be one. The same goes with the name Marjan which is originally the name of types of coral that assume quite beautiful colors under the sea. This is compatible with Dash Akol's beautiful beloved, but corals can also remind hardship, unavailability and peril. One can only conceive of dipping under the sea and dislodge a coral stone or reef using painstaking means or braving many dangers of the sea. Mullah Esaac's name, the one who serves Vodka (aragh), is quite telling; Esaac, a Jewish name, implies that he is a Jew and not a Muslim; hence he is likely to serve alcoholic drinks, since in the Islamic religion, serving and drinking alcohol are taboo. But Mullah is the name originally denoting an Islamic cleric that later came to be attached to other proper nouns as a prefix denoting traits at least remotely similar to a Mullah. This is still a practice upheld in Pakistan and Afghanistan but not in Iran anymore, at least not in the blatant violation of what the name suggests and what Mullah Esaac does in the story, a purveyor of spirits! These examples point to Hedayat's success in taking advantage of naming techniques informing his characters.

Focalization

Some narrating methods were discussed above. These issues concerned the question of 'who speaks?". Now it is time to pose the question 'who sees? Genette (1988) draws a distinction between focalization and narration by putting forward the question 'who sees?' as opposed to 'who speaks?' (p.186). The story is presented in the text through the mediation of some angle of visions, verbalized by the narrator though not necessarily by characters (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 72). By choosing the focalizer or focalizers in the story, the narrator manages the channels for characterization. In fact, what a focalizer sees or perceives is directly or indirectly connected to his or her character and background. Hedayat uses this technique ingeniously. He gives a very good picture of Kaka Rostam while giving the reader the chance to see Kaka Rostam through Dash Akol's eyes or lens of vision. Hedayat uses Dash Akol as the Focalizer. Through this method, not only does he describe Kaka Rostam's character, but reveals Dash Akol's as well. The reader learns that Kaka Rostam is a person who causes people ample and ceaseless trouble, who drinks, smokes opium, and, meanwhile, is afraid of Dash Akol. By telling these words, Dash Akol simultaneously reveals his own character; the reader learns that he is the people's person, a supporter, a strong man sensitive to people's hardship and rushing to their help, a 'luti'. When he swears to Pouria-ye Vali, we learn about his belief, that he is the one who could defeat Kaka Rostam, using bitter, witty, and sarcastic language all at once. Here are some lines whereby the reader can see Kaka Rostam from Akol's angle of vision:

> Suddenly, out of nowhere, Dash Akol had arrived to ridicule him, "Kaka? Where's the man of the house? Did you smoke an overdose of opium? Man, it has affected you! But let me tell you my friend, put these cowardly, dastardly pranks aside. You're behaving like a lout and you are not even ashamed of it! Is this a new method of begging? Why do you abuse people by stopping them on their way home night in and night out? Try it again and, by Pourya the Valiant, I shall teach you a lesson. I'll slice you in half with this cutlass." Kaka Rostam had put his tail between his legs and had left (Hedayat, 1995).

Narrators usually utilize "characters as center of consciousness" or 'reflectors" that help the reader or spectator see the story world through their eyes (Stam et al, 2005, p.88). Other examples are when Hedayat reasons why Dash Akol can't have Marjan as wife. He presents Dash Akol' reflections, through which we see him as he sees himself:

> Every night he surveyed himself in the mirror… Sadly he would say to himself, "Marjan would never love me. Most likely, she'll find a handsome, virile young man for a husband ... No. This is far from chivalry. She's a mere child of fourteen while I'm forty-years old. What's to be done? This love will be the death of me. Marjan, you're killing me. In whom can I confide? Marjan, your love is killing me." (Hedayat, 2005)

However, in the movies we have ocularization, a term Francois Jost (1984) used in his article "Narration(s): On this Side of and Beyond". He mentions that there exists a problem in identifying a cinematic narrator, because we are not always able to say who is doing the telling using a series of images (cited in Stamet al, 2005, p 91-92). It is because "the sound film can simultaneously show what a character sees and say what a character thinks" (Stam & Raengo, 2005, p. 40). In order to avoid this confusion, Jost introduces the concept of "ocularization." Focalization refers to that which a character knows; ocularization indicates the relation between what the camera shows and what a character *sees*. Internal ocularization would refer to those shots where a camera appears to take the place of the character's eye. External occularization (or zero ocularization) would indicate those shots where the field of vision is located outside the character's own (Stam et al, 2005, p. 93).

The outstanding scenes in Kimiai's movie, where the subjective camera takes the place of a character, are when it sees through Dash Akol's eyes, especially the scene where he looks at a miniature picture of a woman on the wall, Marjan's black tissue or the dancer. As for interior occularization, two outstanding and memorable examples are when the POV shot sees through DashAkol's eyes and catches Marjan's eyes for the first time on Haji's funeral day, and the other one when he catches Marjan's eyes for the last time on her wedding day beyond the window while his eyes are full of tears.

CONCLUSION

This research was an interdisciplinary study of the source text and the movie *Dash Akol*. It compared the underlying narrative structure of Hedayat's original short story and Kimiai's movie based on it. The paper also provided explanations and reasons for the discrepancies between the short story and the movie, and pointed to the factors which made the tragic love story into the tough-guy action movie. To conduct a comparative study of these two works, it drew on Genette's narrative strategy and Rimmon-Kenan's characterization techniques. Meanwhile, it evaluated the perceptibility and reliability of narrative in Hedayat's story and in Kimiai's movie through analyzing discrepancies between the Iranian cultural context of the 1920s and those of the 1970s. It propounded that the movie adds and changes some scenes due to the need of the time for representation of the silent and repressed aspects of the story, reinterpreting it into a hybrid modern tough-guy movie. The characters' speech, thoughts and feelings were also discussed. Direct and indirect characterizations were another dimension in this study as two modes of narrating. We also looked into indirect characterization through four characteristic attributes, namely, speech, action, setting and naming. Gannett's focalization was the last part of this paper.

Dash Akol's story is one that takes place in a deeply traditional and religious atmosphere of old Iran, where religion, tradition and feeling are interwoven in a masterful and succinct portrayal of human emotion, pain and challenge. It could serve as a rich source engaging with which would contribute to follow-up studies and the decoding of ideological facts regarding men, women, and the luti/javanmardi culture as well as the image of strong, reliable, pure-hearted men acting as valiant helpers of the destitute and the oppressed.

REFERENCES

Chatman, S. (1980). Narrative discourse. *The Journal of Aesthetic an Art Criticism.* 39(2), 221-24.

Fiad, Hassan. (2003). Dash akol: Melodrami az yek tragedy dardnak, *Dafter e Honar*. (p. 1382). From *http:// www.research\Dash Akol\My Disc\Dash Akol.mht*

Genette, G. (1988). *Narrative discourse: An essay in method.* New York: Cornell University Press.

Hedayat, S. (1995). *Dash Akol.* In I Bashiri, (Ed) & K. Brown (Trans.). Availabe from http://www. angelfire.com/rnb/bashiri/Stories/Dashakol,html. Hedayat.

Kimiai, M. (1971). *Dash Akol* [Film]. Studio: Pars Film, Tehran.

Hedayet, S. (1998). *Se ghatrehkhoon.* Tehran: Javidan publishing.Tehran.

Herman, D., Jahn, M. & Marie-Laure. eds. (2005). *Routledge encyclopedia of narrative theory.* Oxford Shire.

Leitch, T. (2010). Adaptation studies at a cross-roads. *Oxford Journals.* 2 September.

http://www.Adaptattion Studies at a Crossroads-Adaptation.

Margolin, U. (2007) The Cambridge companion to the narrative: Character, (D, Herman,ed.). Cambridge University press. DOI:http://dx. doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521856965.005

Nafisi, H. *A social history of Iranian cinema, volume 2: The industrializing years. 1941-1978.* Duk University Press. 191.

Prince, G. (2003). *A dictionary of narratology. 2nd ed.* Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

Rewalk, Dash Akol Analysis. *Study Mode.com*. Retrieved 11, 2008, from http://www.study-mode.com/essays/Dash-Akol-Analysis-184218. html

Rimmon-Kenan, S. (2002). *Narrative fiction.* London: Routledge.

Sanders, J. (2006) *Adaptation and appropriation.* London: Routledge.

Stam, R. & Raengo, A. (2005). *Literature and film.* Great Britain: Blackwell Publishing.

Stam, R., & Robert, B., & Flitterman-Lewis, S. (2005) *New vocabularies in film semiotics*, Taylor & Francis e-library.

Welsh, J. M., & Peter Lev, eds. (2007). *The literature/ film reader: Issues of adaptation.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.

DOI: 10.9744/kata.17.1.17-25

ISSN 1411-2639 (Print), ISSN 2302-6294 (Online)

OPEN ACCESS

http://kata.petra.ac.id

Ecocritical Reunion of Man and Nature in *The Ruined Cottage*

Bazregarzadeh, E.
Graduate Student of English Language and Literature, Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, Tabriz, IRAN.
Email: eli.b1988@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

While the previous researches on Romanticism, especially Wordsworth (1770-1850), and Ecocriticism are quite far-ranging, the inherent ecocritical echoes of Wordsworth's oeuvre are yet to be surveyed. This study is an endeavor to examine the ecocritical aspects of William Wordsworth's *The Ruined Cottage* (1797-ca.1799) with the aim of bringing into focus the inner link between Nature and Ecocriticism in the above-mentioned poem. With that issue in mind, the researcher intends to take the viewpoints of the Yale School critics, the New Historicists, and those of the ecologists into consideration to prove the previous critics' inability in rendering a thorough reading of *The Ruined Cottage* and will examine the poem through the lens of Ecocriticism by focusing on the correspondence between the gradual withering of Nature and the gradual demise of Margaret's soul in order to reach a comprehensive examination of the poem in the end.

Keywords: *The Ruined Cottage*; Margaret; Soul; Nature; William Wordsworth.

INTRODUCTION

As a poet of Nature, William Wordsworth (1770-1850) valued physical Nature as a source of innocence, majesty, tranquility, dignity, and power that could relieve human psyche in all walks of life.To him, Nature was the mother and teacher of all mankind; the source of energy and emotions that was part and parcel of every human being's life. To Wordsworth, modernity and Industrial Revolution were synonymous with the destruction of the innocence and simplicity of the rural lifestyle. Previous critics of Wordsworth and his poetry have focused on the dichotomous nature of Wordsworth's poems resulting from their anti-Enlightenment tones and themes. As a result, they have failed to direct their attention to the environmental and ecological concepts embodied within the fabric of his poetry.

Since 19th century, industrialization and scientific revolution have brought much improvement and convenience to the life of the individuals; they have also created a deteriorating atmosphere that is endangering the environment and the welfare of the creatures today. As Worster (1993) puts it, "We are facing a global crisis today, not because of how ecosystems function but rather because of how our ethical systems function" (p. 27). He furthermore declares:

> Getting through the crisis requires understanding our impact on nature as precisely as possible, but even more, it requires understanding those ethical systems and using that understanding to reform them. Historians, along with literary scholars, anthropologists, and philosophers, cannot do the reforming, of course, but they can help with the understanding. (Worster, 1993, p. 27)

Therefore, it's time to improve the existing environmental problems through literature or other possible ways. In fact, the role of literature in environmental studies has gained much significance along with the advent of Ecocriticism. Glotfelty (1996), as the eminent scholar and founder of Ecocriticism in U.S., rejects the framework of the existing critical approaches in the following terms, "If your knowledge of the outside world were limited to what you could infer from the major publications of the literary profession, you would quickly discern that race, class, and gender were the hot topics of the late twentieth century"(p. xvi). In the same manner, when it comes to the examination of other branches such as "history, philosophy, law, sociology, and religion,"Glotfelty (1996) argues that such trends and branches "have been "greening" since the 1970s," while "literary studies have apparently remained untinted by environmental concerns" (p. xvi). Though Ecocriticism emerged in the early 1990s, scholars of literature have been "developing ecologically informed criticism and theory since the seventies" (Glotfelty, 1996, p.xvi). Ultimately, the works of individual critics and

scholars were grouped under one heading, i.e Ecocriticism; as a result, the "field of environmental literary studies was planted" and the "University of Nevada, Reno, created the first academic position in Literature and the Environment" (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xvii).

As a descendent of postmodern critical approaches to literature, Ecocriticism emerged in the 1990s with the aim of uprooting the current ecological emergency. The term Ecocriticism was coined by William Rueckert in his 1978 essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" (as cited in Glotfelty, 1996, p. 105). The related term "ecological" was first used by the prominent US ecocritic Karl Kroeber (1974) whose essay, "Home at Grasmere" introduced explicitly ecological concepts to British Romantic Studies' (as cited in Hutchings, 2007, p. 196). Glotfelty (1996) believes, "ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" which "takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies" (p. xviii) and answers such questions as, "What role does the physical setting play in the plot of this novel?, Are the values expressed in this play consistent with ecological wisdom?, and How can we categorize nature writing as a genre?" (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xix).

METHOD

Through an ecocritical examination of *The Ruined Cottage* (1797-ca.1799), the author aims to examine the way Wordsworth criticizes modernity and industrialization and will show how his poems develop ecocritical thinking as a call to social harmony, human-Nature reciprocity, and equilibrium.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

As was mentioned before, individual critics have talked about different aspects of Ecocriticism long before its coming into fruition as a unified critical approach. Despite theirseeming difference:

> all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it. Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnecttions between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature. As a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land; as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and the nonhuman. (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xix)

As a result, all ecological standpoints share one common belief: "the troubling awareness that we have reached the age of environmental limits, a time when the consequences of human actions are damaging the planet's life support systems" (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xix). The key to environmental problems is increasing our ecological mindsets to reach the recognition that Nature is not only "the stage upon which the human story is acted" but also "an actor in the drama" (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xix).

From the time Ecocriticism was established as a new theoretical approach, Romanticism, especially William Wordsworth, became the hot subjects of ecocritical studies. As a representative of the Romantic poets, Wordsworth composed many poems about plants, animals, and rural people which show his concerns for Nature. His poems were, in one way or another, a call to "eulogize nature" and to "encourage equality and harmony between nature and human beings" (Ting-ting & Bin, 2014, p. 188). Wordsworth's views about Nature and natural elements have brought about many discussions between literary critics. Some tend to criticize him as a "philosophical" poet who "transcends human mind over nature" (Ho, 2002, p. 1). Others reject such views and believe that Wordsworth's glorifying Nature has been an effort to warn the people about "biocentrism" that Campbell (1989) defines as, "the conviction that humans are neither better nor worse than other creatures . . . but simply equal to everything else in the natural world" (as cited in Glotfelty, 1996, p. 128).

There are three groups of critics examining the role of imagination and Nature in Wordsworth's poetry; the first of whom, the Yale School critics, maintain that Wordsworth used Nature to transcend his mind and imagination; the second of whom, the New Historicists, stress that Wordsworth valued poetic imagination to do away with history and society (Bate, 1991, p.8); the final group of critics, the ecocritics, assert that what Wordsworth did was creating a mutual relationship between man and Nature, i.e. symbiosis, in a sense, rejecting any hierarchy. As a Yale School critic, in his influential book *Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814*, Hartman (1987) asserts, it is "nature itself [that leads Wordsworth] beyond nature" (as cited in Ho, 2002, p. 1). He takes "the Simplon Pass" passage of Book six of *The Prelude* into account to reach the fact that "nature's 'end' is to lead to something 'without end,' to teach the travellers to transcend nature" (as cited in Ho, 2002, p. 1). Another Yale School critic, Bloom (1971), in *The Visionary Company*, mentions that the theme of Wordsworth' *Tintern Abbey* is "the nature of poet's imagination and . . . imagination's relation to external Nature" (as cited in Ho, 2002, p. 1); as a result, he identifies Words-

worth as a poet of imagination not of Nature. It is, therefore, this emphasis is on the imaginative mind that the New Historicists set themselves against.

The New Historicists tend to read the Romantic texts under the influence of Marxism; they focus on the Romantic's stress on human imagination and conclude that Romantics transcended human mind and imagination above Nature. According to Bate (1991), the New Historicists turn to "history" and "ideology": "The 1980s witnessed something of a return to history, a move away from ahistorical formalisms, among practitioners of literary criticism" (p.2). In his *Wordsworth: The Sense of History*, Liu (1989) accuses Wordsworth of concealing history. Liu took "The Simplon Pass" in Book six of *The Prelude* into consideration to claim, "[in] a Wordsworthian tour, the arrow of signification from historical ornament toward the background is curiously blunted: historical markers point nowhere and decorate nature for no purpose" (as cited in Ho, 2002, p. 2). In the same manner, he rejects Wordsworth's distorting the political issues of his time and laying emphasis on Nature instead by declaring, "[without] history in the background, a landscape, after all, is not a landscape; it is wilderness" (as cited in Ho, 2002, pp. 2-3). For such critics, Wordsworth's giving priority to his imagination was deemed as "a kind of compensation for his political disillusionment or even apostasy" (Bate, 1991, p. 3).

McGann (1983) criticizes Wordsworth from a socio-historical point of view and asserts that Romantics render their ideas by "extreme forms of displacement and poetic conceptualization" which leads them to describe "idealized localities" (as cited in Ho, 2002, p. 3). He proposes that poetry is the product of social and historical events and should take socio-historical points into account. Also, he believes that Wordsworth created different artistic means to disguise the background of historical conditions. Therefore, he is bored with Wordsworth's "finding consolation in nature" rather than "attending to economic conditions" (Bate, 1991, p.15). In "The Anachronism of George Crabbe," McGann (1981) argues in *The Ruined Cottage* Wordsworth's relation with Nature highlights "compensatory justice", "Romantic Displacement", and "the 'fond illusion' of disastered things" (p. 570). Bate (1991) accuses McGann on the account of his neglecting "the transcendent imagination" in order to bring about the issues connected with "history" and "society". He believes, "The purpose which Jerome McGann wished to make Wordsworth serve in the historical circumstances of the early 1980s was the politicization of Romantic studies in the United States" (Bate, 1991, p. 5). By the same token, he rejects Hartman's criticism of Wordsworth due to his negligence of Wordsworth's strong connection with Nature to take "the transcendent imagination" into consideration (Bate, 1991, p. 8). Thus, Bate questions the tenets of the above-mentioned literary approaches as follows:

> The 1960s gave us an idealist reading of Romanticism which was implicitly bourgeois in its privileging of the individual imagination; the 1980s gave us a post-Althusserian Marxist critique of Romanticism. The first of these readings assumed that the human mind is superior to nature; the second assumed that the economy of human society is more important than the "the economy of nature" (1991, p.9).

In line with that, Bate has reminded us of the fact that it is time for a new reading of Wordsworth, since "the best readings of classic texts are accordingly those which have both historical and contemporary force" (Bate, 1991, p. 9). He sheds light on "a green reading" of Wordsworth as an example, in as much as "it has strong historical force, for if one historicizes the idea of an ecological viewpoint . . . one finds oneself squarely in the Romantic tradition; and it has strong contemporary force in that it brings Romanticism to bear on what are likely to be some of the most pressing political issues of the coming decade" (Bate, 1991, p. 9).

In order to justify his new reading of Wordsworth, Bate casts doubt on the consistency of the previous readings of Wordsworth in the following terms:

> Devout nineteenth-century reviewers used the discourse of religion when writing about Wordsworth; emancipated late twentieth-century critics use the discourse of feminism when writing about Romanticism: both then and now, elements of or absences from the poet's writings are emphasized in order to fulfil the specific polemical desires of specific readers. But in some readings – and I hope to show that my reading of Wordsworth is one of them – the critic's purposes are also the writer's, and when this is the case there can be a communion between living reader which may bring with it a particular enjoyment and a perception about endurance.(1991, p. 5)

Bate proposes that "the way in which William Wordsworth sought to enable his readers to enjoy or to endure life was by teaching them to look at and dwell in the natural world" (1991, p. 4).

Wordsworth's return to Nature has caused many critics to accuse him of neglecting the social and

political issues of his time. By reading a great poem such as *The Ruined Cottage*, one can vividly see how he has masterfully employed the socio-political issues within the fabric of the poem. As Simpson (1987) clearly mentions in *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination*, Wordsworth's poems do certainly "address themselves to fairly precise events and circumstances," (as cited in Roberts, 2009, p. 54) such as war, disease, poverty, and so on and so forth. Furthermore, he believes that "death-dealing economic changes" such as "rural depopulation and the increaseing spread of mechanized labor and factory discipline . . . darkened his imaginative horizon" (Simpson, 2009, p. 1). For Simpson, Wordsworth was a figure who "had a profound poetic understanding of the condition of England around the 1800, specifically of its evolution into a culture governed by industrial time, machine-driven labor and commodity form" (2009, p. 4).

Wordsworth's *The Ruined Cottage* functions to instruct the readers how to "see into the life of things," (Wordsworth, 2006, p.1337, line.49) to perceive the importance of the bond between the rural poor and their ancestral land and to learn how to live in harmony with Nature. The narrative of the poem renders to the readers the facts of Margaret's "tale of silent suffering":

> . . . 'Tis a common tale,
> By moving accidents uncharactered,
> A tale of silent suffering, hardly clothed
> In bodily form, and to the grosser sense
> But ill adapted, scarcely palpable
> To him who does not think. (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1362, lines 231-236)

By focusing on agricultural blight, disease, and the collapse of textile industry, the poem depicts the decline of stability and familial life mirrored in the physical decomposition of the cottage:

> The honeysuckle crowded round the door
> And from the wall hung down in heavier wreathes,
> And knots of worthless stone-crop started out
> Along the window's edge, and grew like weeds
> Against the lower panes. (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1363, lines 308-312)

Economic decline gradually drives Margaret's husband, Robert, crazy and forces him to enlist in the forces then embroiled in the Napoleonic wars, leaving Margaret the enlistment pay in an ineffectual manner to ward off indigence:

> He left his house; two wretched days had passed,
> And on the third by the first break of light,
> Within her casement full in view she saw
> A purse of gold. (Wordsworth, 2006, lines 261-264, p. 1362)

Margaret passes the days in anguish by importuning passers-by for news of his return until she gradually declines and dies. The ruin is the symbol of the radical socioeconomic changes of the 1790s. This period was a time of tumultuous social, political, and economic changes in England. According to Harrison (1994):

> the high cost of war with France, poor harvests, enclosures and commercializations of all sectors of the economy brought spiralling high prices, large scale, agricultural unemployment, intermittent food shortages, social discontent and increasingly tense oppositions between a more highly organized right and left. (as cited in Roberts, 2009, p. 56)

Along with the advent new the modernized methods, those who opposed such trend were, as Williams (1978) notes, "ruthlessly broken down" (p. 61). McKusick (2000) explains the shift in agricultural tendencies in the following terms:

> During the eighteenth century, the traditional methods of subsistence agriculture were gradually being supplanted, and the common areas upon which the local farmers relied for their seasonal grazing and gathering activities were increasingly being withdrawn for exclusive private use by the process of enclosure. (pp. 63-64)

The high cost of agricultural commodities was due to the war and the rise in the population which forced the native farmers to sell their properties to make room for "the private farming enterprises that maximized output and profitability" (Roberts, 2009, p. 57). In opposition to the views of such New Historicist critics as McGann who argues that "In the course of the poem [*The Ruined Cottage*] not a word is said about the French Revolution, or about the impoverished and dislocated country poor, or—least of all—that this event and those conditions might be structurally related to each other" (as cited in Huang, 2001, p. 3), McKusick (2000) asserts that "Wordsworth was truly ahead of his time, and radically innovative in his concern for the preservation of the traditional rural ways of life, the homeless, and all the wild creatures that dwell beyond the pale, outside the conventional boundaries of human civilization" (p. 65). Read critically and thoroughly, one can get to the point that the poem is "as much about the narrating of a tale as the tale itself" (Larkin, 2000, p. 348). Wordsworth's awareness about the hot social, political, and economic issues of his time is the key to his being known as "the apologist for locality and local loyalty . . . praising the rural life of the individuals and decrying the depersonalized life of people in industrialized cities" (Pite, 1996, p. 366). His main

concern at the time of composition of this poem has been the collapse of the textile industry which brought a shift from "hand labour" to "mechanized production" (Roberts, 2009, p. 57). Prior to mechanization, families earned their livings through in-house production of wool and cloth which served as an extra source of income in addition to their drawing their livelihood from small farms and fields. After the collapse of in-house textile industry, families were deprived of this revenue and had to adapt themselves to the controlling conditions, which in some cases removed them from their land (Roberts, 2009, p. 57).

In *The Ruined Cottage*,Wordsworth comments not only on the misfortunes of the poor, but also on the impact of the social, political, and economic changes of the 1790s on the relationship of the individuals with Nature and their subsequent removal from their ancestral land. The decline of one peasant family's bond with Nature is the main focus of the poem. The physical decay of the cottage, the people, and their bodies, are the result of social disasters, especially the collapse of the textile industry on which they depended for livelihood. As the narrator, the Pedlar, tells the Wanderer, in their happier days Margaret and Robert lived in sync with Nature. As a weaver, Robert was:

> . . . an industrious man,
> Sober and steady; I have heard her say
> That was up and busy at his loom
> In summer ere the mower's scythe had swept
> The dewy grass, and in the early spring
> Ere the last star had vanished. (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1359, lines 120-12)

Prior to the social and economic hardships, Robert's labour was attuned to the seasonal changes of Nature. Later, when ". . . shoals of artisans / Were from their daily labour turned away," Robert fell out of harmony with Nature: ". . . with a strange, / Amusing but uneasy novelty / He blended where he might the various tasks / Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1360, lines 154-171).

The disturbance in the pattern of his work is a manifestation of the madness that befalls him as a result of the collapse of the textile industry. In addition to the decline of the textile industry, other dilemmas afflict Robert and his family; "two blighting seasons when the field were left with half a harvest," and the "plague of war" and following these, Robert and Margaret's illnesses (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1360, lines 133-136). These predicaments diminish the couple's resources to the extent that after Robert's recovery from a long illness he finds ". . . the little he had stored to meet / The hour of accident or crippling age / Was all consumed" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1360, lines 151-153). As the breadwinner of the house, Robert, like many other men, relied on his loom to earn money to support his family. As a result of the decline of the industry, the family was deprived of a key source of income. Prior to this event, "numerous self-denials" protected Margaret and her family from "calamitous years" of disease and hardship. But, later, the socio-economic problems led them to rely on "parish charity" for survival. Robert's alienation from Nature is shown in his strange behaviour towards his family. The very "industrious man" who worked "up and busy at his loom," now deprived of a reliable industry sinks down in spirit and begins to "carve uncouth figures on the heads of sticks" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1360, line 165). The same hands that worked in harmony with the diurnal rhythms of Nature, disorder the "various tasks of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1360, lines 170-171). As Harrison (1994) claims, "we could say that Robert has fallen from . . . the self regulating order of nature" (as cited in Roberts, 2009, p. 61). As a result, ". . . poverty brought on a petted mood / And a sore temper: day by day he drooped" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1360, lines 174-175).

The word "droop" is of key importance here, since the narrator uses it to describe Margaret's condition after Robert's enlistment in the army too. In lines 394-396, the narrator explains Margaret's emotional decline as, "Ere on its sunny bank the primrose flower / Had chronicled the earliest days of spring. / I found her sad and drooping". As shown in the poem, the season is spring, the time of rejuvenation and regrowth. Thus, Margaret's drooping is totally out of tune with Nature and the natural order and leads to her separation from Nature. Margaret's alienation from Nature is consistent with the physical decline of the cottage. The Pedlar first perceives its change in the "worthless stonecrop" that "started out along the window's edge like weeds"; "honeysuckle crowded round the door" in "heavier tufts"; the "straggled" appearance of the garden beds (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1363, lines 308-319). Such changes mirror Margaret's emotional deterioration. Like the rose "dragged from its sustaining wall and bent down to the earth" by "unwieldy wreaths" of weeds, she "droops" in despair (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1363, lines 308-319).The "sustaining wall" is a rich image; it can be Robert for whom she sinks down in spirit, or Nature and traditions of rural life, or, more importantly, the cottage itself. As Fosso (1995) notes, Margaret is caught between uncertainties; she is not sure whether her husband is alive or he is dead, hence she cannot make up her mind if she should mourn the death of

her pillar of reliance or not (as cited in Roberts, 2009, p. 62). Hence, she is both "a wife and a widow" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1366, line 448).

The emotional trauma of her uncertainty and abandonment as a result of her "being dragged from" the "sustaining wall" of her husband "bends her down to the earth," in which she must toil to live. Formerly, she is seen "busy with her garden tools," (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1363, line 283) but as poverty increases her cottage and garden are given over to the "sleepy hands of neglect" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1363, line 401). However, her degeneration stems most from the family's being "pulled from" the "sustaining" embrace of Nature. Such disintegration, followed by their detachment from their "sustaining" work, "bends her down to earth" which leads to the decaying appearance of the cottage. Her separation from Nature is seen in the "unwieldy wreaths" of weeds that eat up the "sustaining walls" of her cottage. She has lost her meaningful and conscious connection with the powers and processes of Nature and becomes idle like the garden and the cottage. Nature works on her instead of working in and through her and Margaret becomes the subject of decay. This is seen in the rapid collapse of the hut, which "reft" by "frost, and thaw, and rain" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1363, line 482) is choked with unruly elements. Nevertheless, Margaret remains disassociated, even as "her tattered clothes" are "ruffled by the wind" at "the side of her own fire" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1363, lines 485-486). As Swann (1991) in "Suffering and Sensation in *The Ruined Cottage*" claims, such issues are the symbols of a society "that is afflicted by the economic crisis and the attendant alienated aesthetics that Wordsworth associates with modernity" (p. 92).

As mentioned before, different critics have different opinions about the effects of the economic hardships on the life of Robert and Margaret. According to Harrison (1994), "the loss of their imaginative sympathy with nature ultimately destroys the spiritual integrity and mental health of both Margaret and Robert" (as cited in Roberts, 2009, p. 64). Margaret and Robert's economic and psychological declines bring about their disintegration from Nature. Caught in "poverty and grief", Margaret ceases to tend her garden to the degree that no "ridges" of "clear black mould nor winter greenness" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1365, line 416) is manifested to the Pedlar's eyes. The disappearance of mould, tilled soil, bespeaks the loss of harmony between the cultivator and the land. Like Robert, Margaret's hands are deprived of their coordination with Nature and, thus, become "sleepy" and "negligent". Accordingly, Margaret takes to wandering the fields, often with the hope of not getting back; ". . . I've wandered much of late, / And sometimes, to my shame I speak, have need / Of my best prayers to bring me back again" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1364, lines 341-343). Having lost her contact with the natural rhythms of life, Margaret remarks, "Weeping, and weeping I have waked; my tears / Have flow'd as if my body were not such / As others are, and I could never die" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1364, lines 355-357). Such a statement is the signifier of Margaret's doubt about her mortality; she thinks as if she was a ghost. Her face grows "pale and thin" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1364, line 358). During his last visit, the Pedlar claims, ". . . Her voice was low, / Her body was subdued . . ." and when she sighed ". . . no motion in the breast was seen, / No heaving of the heart. . ." (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1365, lines 379-384). She lingers on till she dies, "Last human tenant of these ruined walls" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1367, line 492).

Besides the above-mentioned points, Margaret's physical death is actually a reunion with the earth. The Pedlar's lament ". . . She is dead, / The worm is on her cheek" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1359, lines 103-104) can be read ironically in that through the process of decomposition, Margaret's body changes into mould which shows her union with the natural rhythms of life. As the narrator argues bodily integration with Nature is good as far as it is the ". . . secret spirit of humanity", which persists ". . . 'mid the calm oblivious tendencies / Of nature" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1367, lines 503-504). This, in fact, echoes Bate's (1991) comment, "humanity only survives in *nature*. Human survival and the survival of nature are therefore co-ordinate with one another" (Bate, 1991, p. 34). Consistent with the final decay of the hut, the narrator notes no monument is left of the people. The house in its present condition is "four naked walls" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1357, line 31) and the only sign of human presence is "The useless fragment of a wooden bowl" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1359, line 91). "And nettles rot and adders sun themselves" on the bench where, in happier times, Margaret nursed her infant baby; and, in the sober time, awaited the arrival of her husband (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1363, lines 109-110). The unpleasant deteriorating condition of the time gives rise to:

> . . . that which each man loved
> And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
> Dies with him or is changed, and very soon
> Even of the good is no memorial left.
> (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1358, lines 69-72)

Margaret's return to the earth can be considered as a kind of "redemption" through reconnection with

Nature. In the opinion of Roberts (2009), *The Ruined Cottage*:

> is not merely the story of the senseless tragedy of a people. Rather, it affords an opportunity for the reader to contemplate a more harmonious connection for themselves with nature. The potential for her story to transform the readers think about their relation to the environment is evident in the change that takes place in the narrator from beginning to the end of the poem. (p. 67)

By analysing the poem, we can understand that the narrator enters the poem in an agitated spirit. He is seen wandering along a barren landscape and he is not able to make his way through the plain as his "languid feet" are "baffled still" by the "slipp'ry ground" (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1357, lines 20-21). He is at first so much out of tune with Nature that he cannot make himself at home with the natural elements. In contrast to this image, the narrator describes the old man, Pedlar, as a "dreaming man" who "Half-conscious" enjoys "that soothing melody," in the embrace of Nature (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1357, lines14-15). The juxtaposition of these two different reactions to Nature echoes Averill's (1976) viewpoint which suggests that "internal psychological factors are largely responsible for his being out of tune with his surroundings and that the weariness is rather a more spiritual than a physical state" (as cited in Roberts, 2009, p. 68). Nature is not, inherently, at odds with the Wanderer, rather this view is the outcome of his mentality towards Nature. Despite the narrator's subjective view at the beginning of the poem, his perspective goes through a major change from disquietude to "harmony" by the end of the poem.As Averill (1976) reveals, it is a change from "paranoid irritability" to a "sense of universal well-being" as a result of hearing and meditating on Margaret's story (as cited in Roberts, 2009, p. 69).

Consequently, Nature plays the role of a healing agent in the poem and soothes the bleak tragedy of the dead through the notion of spiritual redemption. By the end of the poem, it becomes clear that the cottage is the symbol of a decaying life, on the one hand, and the renewing of a harmonious bond with Nature, on the other. In fact, the poem is a manifestation of "exploration of human nature at the fringes of civilization" (Meldahl, 2007, p. 9). It throws light on the possibility of the maintenance of harmony between internal nature and external Nature despite the seeming plights. A careful analysis of the poem counters the critical stances of such critics as Liu and McGann (2001), who accuse Wordsworth of not placing his poems in the historical contexts. McGann considers this point as, "the deepest and most piteous loss" and Liu clarifies this notion as, "No jewel without its setting: without history in the background, after all, a landscape is not a landscape; it is wilderness" (as cited in Huang, 2001, p. 4). In opposition to such views, Bate (1991) holds that "the 'Romantic Ideology' displaces and idealizes, it privileges imagination at the expense of history, it covers up social conditions as it quests for transcendence" (p. 6).In fact, the New Historicists do not oppose the transcendental theory of their predecessors, the Yale School critics; rather they base their points on this premise. What they rise against is that they blame Wordsworth of neglecting history, to which the Yale critics did not pay much attention at the time of analysing Wordsworth critically. So, they not only opposed the idea of individual imagination, but also the Yale School hegemony:

> [The Romantic Ideology] served a purpose, namely to offer a challenge to the hegemony which idealizing, imagination-privileging critics like Geoffrey Hartman and Harold Bloom had held over Romantic studies in the United States for twenty years, in particular through their hugely influential books, *Wordsworth's Poetry* and *The Visionary Company*. (Bate, 1991, p. 6)

Despite their differences, the New-Historicists and the Yale School critics believe that, to Wordsworth, individual transcendence is of primary importance and he uses Nature to transcend his own mind. Kroeber (1974) summarizes their similarities in terms of two points; "first, that romantic poets regarded private consciousness as distinct from and superior to all natural phenomena" and "second, that the poets regularly sought to transcend, if only linguistically, the physical circumstances of their experiences in the natural world" (as cited in Huang, 2001, p. 7).

The researcher holds that Wordsworth does not go beyond Nature; rather he dwells in Nature, communes with it, and learns from it. He has a holistic view towards Nature. According to Dunklin (1948), Wordsworth tends to "see life steadily and to see it whole," and this notion stems from "an outworn mode of regarding man, nature, and society which he had inherited from the eighteenth century that was fascinated by the concept of the great chain of being" (as cited in Huang, 2001, p. 8). Therefore, instead of regarding the relationship between man and Nature as antagonistic, Wordsworth tries to build a close relationship between man and Nature, in his poems, through feelings and emotions. As Kroeber (1974) mentions:

> Cold war critics [New Historicists] under the antagonistic oppositionalism, and conceiving

> relationships exclusively in terms of power struggles, tend to treat all poems as lyricized representation of 'primal scenes,' that is, as schematic dramatizations of universal psychic conflicts. (as cited in Huang, 2001, p. 10)

In line with Kroeber, Bate (1991) believes that "there is not an opposition but a continuity between his [Wordsworth's] 'love of nature' and his revolutionary politics" (p.10). While Liu (1989) asserts that "there is no nature except as it is constituted by acts of political definition made possible by particular forms of government" (p. 15), Bate responds:

> But here one sees the limitation of Liu's argument: not even the most ardent advocate of entrepreneurship and the free market can privatize the air we breathe. Governments may legislate about what we emit into the air, and in the sense that constitution of nature is determined by government and industry, but we cannot parcel out the air as we parcel out the land. And water can only be privatized in a limited sense. The particles of water which form clouds - and we need no reminding of how important clouds were to Wordsworth . . . - cannot be possessed or sold. (1991, p. 19)

CONCLUSION

As explained above, *The Ruined Cottage* can be regarded as a reliable example of Wordsworth's internal bond with Nature. Though the plot of the poem renders a tragic story on the surface, it unveils the hidden themes that may not be easily apparent to all the readers if we read it deeply. By witnessing the continuity of the natural processes in Margaret's garden one may think that Nature does not care about man and is oblivious of his/her suffering. Paradoxically the continuation of natural rhythms brings the notion of survival to our minds. Although the cottage and the garden are fed up with the spear-grass and wilderness, one should also notice the impression that "where wilderness reasserts itself there the spirit of humanity survives" (Bate, 1991, p. 34). As Nayak (1993) maintains, Wordsworth is a poet of "human life" (p. 153). Wordsworth's poetry, from the outset, dealt with "deprivations, sufferings and fortitude" (Nayak, 1993, p. 155). He teaches human beings how to endure sufferings and hardships, since "man's capacity for pain is as inexhaustible as his ability to endure. His vulnerability is co-extensive with the experience to which his is exposed" (Nayak, 1993, p.154). Margaret is deserted by her husband; her family life and natural surroundings sink down: "No ridges there appeared of clear black mould, / No winter greenness. . ." (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1365, lines 416-417); but Margaret hopes for her husband's return, ". . . in the stormy day / Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind / Even at the side of her own fire. /. . .Yet still / She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds / Have parted hence. . . (Wordsworth, 2006, p.1367, lines 484-488). As a result, Wordsworth intends to show the value of the survival of humankind in Nature in the way that Bate (1991) remarks, "the survival of humanity comes with nature's mastery over the edifices of civilization" (p.34). In short, Wordsworth teaches human beings how to "discover the one behind the many, the eternal behind the transitory, [and] the perfect behind the incomplete" (Nayak, 1993, p. 159).

REFERENCES

Averill, J. H. (1976). Suffering and calm in Wordsworth's early poetry. *PMLA* 91(2), 223-234. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/461509.

Bate, J. (1991). *Romantic ecology: Wordsworth and the environmental tradition*. London: Routledge.

Bloom, H. (1971). *The visionary company*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Campbell, S. E. (1989). The land and language of desire. In. C. Glotfelty, & H. Fromm (Eds.), *The ecocriticism reader*: *Landmarks in literary ecology*. (pp. 124-136). Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Dunklin, G. T. (1948). *Wordsworth's theory of education*. Diss. Retrieved from http://www.researchgate.net/publication/35859216_Wordsworth's_theory_of_education

Fosso, K. (1995). Community and mourning in William Wordsworth's the ruined cottage 1797-1798. *Studies in Philology* 92(3), 329-345. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/4174522

Glotfelty, C. (1996). Introduction. In. C. Glotfelty, & H. Fromm (Eds.), *The ecocriticism reader*: *Landmarks in literary ecology* (pp. xvi-xix). Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Harrison, G. (1994). *Wordsworth's vagrant muse: Poetry, poverty, and power*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Hartman, G. H. (1987). *Wordsworth's Poetry: 1787-1814*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Ho, Y. C. (2002). Wordsworth's ecological concepts. (Unpublished master's thesis). Retrieved from http://etd.lib.nsysu.edu.tw/ETD-db/ETD-search/view_etd?URN=etd-0902102183055

Huang, Y. H. (2001). Wordsworth and nineteen-century English educational reform. Retrieved from http://etd.lib.nsysu.edu.tw/ETD-db/ETD-search/view_etd?URN=etd-0822101-145855

Kroeber, K. (1974). Home at Grasmere: Ecological holiness. *PLMA* 89, 132-141. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/461676

Larkin, P. (2000).Relations of scarcity: Ecology and eschatology in *the ruined cottage*. *Studies in Romanticism* 39(3), 341-364. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/25601455

Liu, A. (1989). *Wordsworth: The sense of history*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

McGann, J. J. (1981). The anachronism of George Crabbe. *ELH* 48(3), 557-572. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/2872913

McGann, J. J. (1983). *Romantic ideology: A critical investigation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McKusick, J. C. (2000). *Green writing: Romanticism and ecology*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Meldahl, G. L. (2007). Religion and renunciation in Wordsworth: The progression of natural individualism to Christian stoicism. Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.colby.edu/honorstheses/279/

Nayak, P. M. (1993). *Celestial infancy and other essays on Wordsworth*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications.

Pite, R. (1996). How green were the romantics. *Studies in Romanticism* 35(3), 357-373. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/25601179

Roberts, H. M. (2009). Seeing green: Nature and human relationships with the environment in Wordsworth. Retrieved from http://www.dissertations.wsu.edu/Thesis/Spring2009/h_roberts_050209.pdf

Rueckert, W. (1996). Literature and ecology: an experiment in ecocriticism. *The ecocriticism reader: Landmarks in literary ecology*. In. C. Glotfelty, & H. Fromm (Eds.), *The ecocriticism reader*: *Landmarks in literary ecology* (pp. 105-122). Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Simpson, D. (1987). *Wordsworth's historical imagination: The poetry of displacement*. New York: Methuen.

Simpson, D. (2009). *Wordsworth, commodification, and social concern*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Swann, K. (1991). Suffering and sensation in *the ruined cottage*. *PLMA* 106(1), 83-95. Retrieved fromwww.jstor.org/stable/462825

Ting-ting, Yang, and Xiao, B. (2014).A deep ecological reading of William Wordsworth's poetry. *Sino-US English Teaching 11(3)*, 188-195.

Williams, R. (1978). *The country and the city*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wordsworth, W. (2006).The ruined cottage. In M. H. Abrams, E. T. Donaldson, A. David, H. Smith, B. K. Lewalski, R. M. Adams, … J. Stallworthy (Eds.), *The Norton anthology of English literature, the major authors*. (7th ed., p. 1464-1474). New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Wordsworth, W. (2006). Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey. In M. H. Abrams, E. T. Donaldson, A. David, H. Smith, B. K. Lewalski, R. M. Adams, … J. Stallworthy (Eds.), *The Norton anthology of English literature, the major authors*. (7th ed., p. 1336-1339). New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Worster, Donald. (1977). *Nature's economy: The roots of ecology*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

DOI: 10.9744/kata.17.1.26-32

ISSN 1411-2639 (Print), ISSN 2302-6294 (Online)

OPEN ACCESS

http://kata.petra.ac.id

Gypsies in 19th-Century French Literature: The Paradox in Centering the Periphery

Udasmoro, W.
Faculty of Cultural Sciences, University of Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, INDONESIA.
Email: weningw@yahoo.com

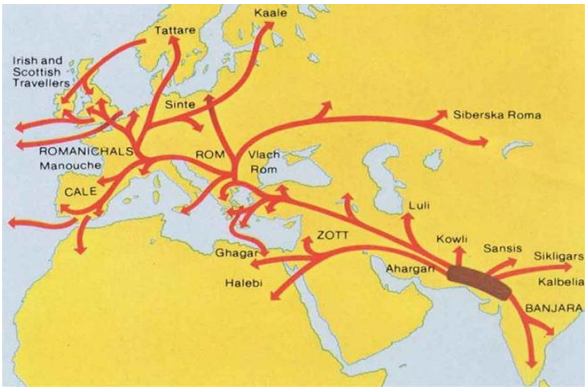
ABSTRACT

The issues of liberty and views of the "Other" were common in 19th-century French literary discourse. In many aspects, the "Other" appeared to hold a position of strength. In literature, Prosper Mérimée and Victor Hugo attempted to centralize gypsy women through their narratives, even though gypsies (as with Jews) had been marginalized (though present) throughout French history. Mérimée's *Carmen* and Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* presented new central perspectives on the peripheral, which in this context should be understood to mean gypsies. This research paper attempts to answer the following questions: What ideology lies behind both stories' centralization of the peripheral gypsy women? How do the authors portray gypsy women? The goal of this article is to explore the operations of power in a gender-relations context, focusing on the construction of gypsy women in two 19th-century French novels.

Keywords: Gypsy; center; periphery; literature; France; 19th century.

INTRODUCTION

Gypsies, who were considered a symbol of absolute liberty and whose women were thought exotic, were commonly discussed in the writings of French literary figures during the 18th and 19th centuries. Numerous works of literature and art presented gypsies, defined as Bohemians (Santa, 2005) but also named by contemporary society as *Tziganes*, *Gitan* and *Manouches*. The name *gitan* reflected a common belief that they were a nomadic tribe originating out of Egypt, though some experts believed that they had come from India. The gypsies lived as nomads, wandering Eastern Europe and even the United States and Canada. Their origin is still a mystery for the European historians. Here is the map of their travel since 1400 years ago.



Courtesy: http://www.abroadintheyard.com

Here, the term *gypsy* is used in reference to the naming choice of the authors of the two novels studied: Prosper Mérimée's *Carmen* and Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris.*

Gypsies' status as a symbol of absolute freedom and female exoticism cannot be separated from the social situation at the time. The issue of liberty (*liberté*) had been subject to popular discussion even before 1789, and the French Revolution became a symbol which legitimized this institutionally and socially structured ideal of liberty. Meanwhile, France was slowly becoming open to persons of other ethnic groups. Trips to "exotic" nations and continents had sparked the French people's imagination regarding non-European ethnic groups. In the 19th century many authors began writing tales of non-European women; for instance, Balzac and Count Ludovic de Beauvoir wrote of Javanese women (Udasmoro, 2009, p. 1). Balzac had never been to the island, but attempted to present imagined Javanese women through his works. This tolerance of other cultures was also reflected in the cultural exchanges popular in Europe at the time. For instance, women from Java were brought to France to dance at a cultural festival (Dorleans, 2002). These issues of liberty and views of the "Other" permeated daily life and literature. The slogans of the French Revolution broke through the barriers which had divided Europeans and non-Europeans for centuries. In many aspects, the "Other" appeared to

hold a position of strength. Jews, for instance, began to be dynamically and tolerantly narrated in 18th- and 19th -century French literature. After the French Revolution, the high degree of tolerance led to a large migration of Jews. Because of this tolerance, mixed marriage between Jews and Europeans became socially acceptable (Delmaire, 2009, p. 34).

One interesting aspect of *Notre Dame de Paris* and *Carmen* is that both works are considered master-pieces despite the thematic importance of gypsies, a trend more prevalent in contemporary works thought to have little literary value. A second point of interest is that both authors—Prosper Mérimée and Victor Hugo—attempted to centralize gypsy women through their narratives, even though gypsies, as with Jews, had been present yet marginalized throughout French history. Furthermore, Esmeralda and Carmen are second class citizens within their own social structure, originating from what Beauvoir terms "the Second Sex". Their position as women of gypsy origin only marginalizes them further.

Given the apparent centralization of the peripheral in these works, there are several questions which must be answered. First, what ideology lies behind both stories' centralization of the peripheral gypsy women? How are gypsy women portrayed by the authors? The goal of this article is to explore the operations of power in a gender relation context in 19th-century French literature, as presented through gypsy characters.

WOMEN AND *SYMBOLIC ANNIHILATION*

Narrations of women were frequently discussed during the second wave of feminism. Betty Friedan explored the apparent powerlessness of women in narration in her book *The Feminine Mystique* (Friedan, 2001, p. 57). In this book, she explained that those with power had silenced women in narration through a constructed social and institutional system, a social structure which only legitimized men's narrations. For centuries, French literature was an assertion of power narrated through authors' works. Meanwhile, women's narratives were hidden and marginalized. As such, feminist movements in both France and the United States, even during the first wave, had to fight for the right of narration and *"the vindication of woman"*. In other words, women had historically been rendered powerless, and their narrations absent from social discourse. Historical narration continuously emphasized the actions of men, such that the word *history* itself can be understood as *hi(s)tory*, emphasizing the lack of women in the narration.

Though she wrote with equal fervor, Gaye Tuchman (1978) did not wholly support Friedan's position. She argued that women had indeed been narrated, but differed in stating that women had been positioned in entirely different spaces than men in these narratives. They were consistently positioned as objects, rather than subjects. They were rendered as mothers, monsters, and machines—particularly reproductive machines (Braidotti, 1997), as powerless princesses (Udasmoro, 2013, p. 68), or as exotic Others (Said, 1993). They were narrated as objects, and this objectification continued through time and space. According to Tuchman (1978), this was an attempt at the symbolic annihilation of women.

The concept of symbolic annihilation was first presented by George Gerbner (1976) in his exploration of the appearance and disappearance of certain groups in the media. Symbolic annihilation, for our purposes, can attempt to explain the absence of women's representation or their disappearance. It is not only limited to women, however; the concept also explains the lack of representation of other social groups based on their ethnic, economic, or social status (Klein &Shiffman, 2009). The goal of symbolic annihilation is the perpetuation of social inequality.

Gaye Tuchman adopted the concept of symbolic annihilation for her book *The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media*, which examines the image of women constructed by dominant men's groups through their narratives. Using Gerbner's concept, Tuchman developed her approach using feminist theory. She argued that symbolic annihilation was an attempt to stereotype and to deny certain identities, thus ensuring that marginalized groups such as women would have unequal relations with dominant groups like men. Tuchman describes three aspects of symbolic annihilation: omission, trivialization and condemnation.

Omission is the removal of marginalized groups. For instance, in nearly all presentations of world history, the role of women is omitted. Gypsies, despite their lengthy history in Europe, were rarely noticed; they only became part of narratives during the 19th century. They were considered unimportant because of the prioritization of narratives of the European nobility. These upper-class nobles dominated the narratives and history of Europe before the 19th century. As with the gypsies, women, who worked within the domestic sphere, were thought to have no influence on the decision-making process, and as such they were not depicted in the constructed history. This has continued until present time; second wave feminists criticized the thousand names engraved on a monument in the

Champs Elysée, questioning why not a single woman was among the thousand French heroes listed. No women were recognized in the French concept of nationhood owing to women's omission from public discourse.

Trivialization is the positioning of certain groups' roles as minimal or insignificant in discourse. Trivialization is plainly evident in literature and film. In literature, particularly classic-era French literature from the 16th- to 19th-centuries, women's active roles were erased. They were presented as individuals only when it served the authors' purposes to do so, such as in correcting the immorality brought on by women's bodies. Women's bodies were used as a basis for their trivialization (Conboy, Medina, and Stanburry, 1997). Meanwhile, condemnation is when a group is presented or narrated, but in a way which objectifies, judges, or marginalizes them. According to Tuchman, such a presentation of women is equivalent to not including them at all, for such depictions present women as unable to meet social standards. Esmeralda and Carmen are examples of this, as we shall show below.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In 19th-century art and literature, gypsies were used to entice contemporary readers and art connoisseurs. In visual art, for instance, numerous works were exhibited in the museums of France, including Eugène Giraud's *La Jeune Bohémienne* in the Mandet Museum and Gustave Doré's *Les Saltimbanques* in the Roger Quillot Art Museum (Cussinet, 2005, p. 315). Meanwhile, 18th- and 19th-century literature is replete with tales of gypsies. These include, among others, Paul Féval's*La Capitaine Fantome* (Santa, 2005, p. 183), George Ohnet's *La Comtesse Sarah*, and numerous works by Ponson du Terrail, such as *Les Bohémiens de Londres, La Reine des Gypsies, La Bohémiens du Grand Monde, Les millions de la Bohèmienne* and *La Justice des Bohémiens* (Radix, 2005). However, the majority of these works focusing on Bohemians and gypsies was only rarely discussed by literary scholars, as they were considered to have little literary value and be incompatible with the refined tastes of French readers, who remained dominated by bourgeois views.

Although many works of literature were written about gypsies in the 19th century, only two works with such themes are considered masterpieces. This is, in part, because of the contemporary respect for their authors. Victor Hugo wrote *Notre Dame de Paris* in 1831, while Prosper Mérimée wrote his novel *Carmen* in 1847. Both novels focus on ethnic Romani (frequently termed *gypsies*) characters, though they are presented differently. Carmen, the title character of *Carmen*, is a Romani gypsy from Spain, whereas Esmeralda is a Romani gypsy in Paris.

Prosper Mérimée and Victor Hugo take different approaches in their narrations of gypsies. In his letter to the Countess of Montijo, Mérimée wrote that *Carmen* was a true story, told by Carmen herself when Mérimée visited Spain in 1845. As with Mérimée's other works, which are based on his own experiences during his journeys *Colomba*, for instance, is based on Mérimée's trip to Corsica (Udasmoro, 2015, p. 2), *Carmen* is based on Mérimée's journey to Andalusia, where he met Carmen, a Romani gypsy. This novel's other central character is another marginalized individual, Don José, who is ethnic Basque.

Meanwhile, Esmeralda is the main character of *Notre Dame de Paris*. This novel tells of Esmeralda, the daughter of a woman named Paquette whom Hugo labels a prostitute. Esmeralda is kidnapped and she lives with the gypsies of Paris. When she is kidnapped, the gypsies exchange her with the hunchbacked Quasimodo, whom Paquette leaves at the church of Notre Dame. Quasimodo shows heroism in defending the gypsy Esmeralda, who is often harassed by upper-class men, including the archdeacon of Notre Dame. A paradox of gypsy women's exoticism and peripheralization is apparent in both novels.

The Paradox of the Exotic Gypsy

In a purely denotative sense, the term *exoticism* does not suggest sensuality, but simply that something is not held by the culture creating the narrative of the exotic. The "Other" in literature is most clearly seen in postcolonial literature, which explores why they become subordinated, powerless, and voiceless. In literature, natives are often considered barbaric and cannibals. Regarding the Other, Emmanuel Levinas writes "I am defined as subjectivity, as singular person, as am I", precisely because I am exposed to the other. It is my inescapable and incontrovertible answerability to the other that take me an individual "I" (Levinas, 1986).

Levinas' position has been criticized by many scholars, including Drabinsky (2011, p. 8) who argues that Levinas' argument shows his Eurocentrism and proposes instead a sense of identity as entanglement. Drabinsky redefines the idea of a Europe bound only to itself, deriding the existence of 'others'as separating from a European identity as an imagined fantasy.

The exotic nature of "Other" women has been presented in a variety of manners, including in 19th-century French literature. Post-colonial literature has shown them to be presented as the Exotic Other and the Inferior Other (Said, 1993). Their exotic nature is not defined by their representation of a culture unlike the dominant culture which defines them. Borrowing the concept of Gaye Tuchmann about Symbolic Annihilation, Carmen and Esmeralda as gypsies are narrated but they are still objects of those narrations. Rather, they are viewed as exotic because they are considered sensual, exploitable both culturally and economically. They are simultaneously presented as the Inferior Other as they are non-White women under the dominance of White men. In this context, authors act as White men attempting to save them from the savage world dominated by non-White men. Esmeralda and Carmen are representative of an exotic and contested "Other". They are symbolically annihilated because, although they are narrated, the narrations only position them as sexual objects. They are centralized, but this centralization simply emphasizes their position as marginalized objects.They are contested by the White men who fantasize over them, over the "Other". In *Notre Dame de Paris*, Esmeralda is the object of White men's contestation. Meanwhile, in *Carmen*, the central woman character is contested by both White and non-White men from a number of ethnic groups.

This exoticization of "Other" women is important for several reasons. First, literary works in the 19th century attempted to abandon the upper class stories which promoted the narratives of the elite. Authors wrote fervently in an attempt to create new, innovative characters. Gustave Flaubert presented a woman of controversial sexuality in his *Madame Bovary*; different women characters drew readers with their own characteristics (Udasmoro, 2011). Second, the public discourse of the time, which focused on the exoticism of such women, led numerous authors to write about gypsy women in a variety of ways. Such women were present in everyday life and the contemporary social context but rarely narrated.

The exoticization of gypsies is ever-present in both *Notre Dame de Paris* and *Carmen*, though it takes a variety of forms. The exoticization of the Gypsies is an important point in an article by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov (2011), who argue that in most anthropological research, gypsies are positioned as exotic because they have never been integrated with the environment in which they live, especially Western European culture. The authors instead show that gypsies have always been part of the Eastern European societies in which they live, becoming exotic only when approached as an isolated community without taking societal context into account (Marushiakova & Popov, 2011, p. 97). Gypsies become exotic because they are narrated using Western ideals.

In both stories, the gypsy women, Esmeralda and Carmen, are narrated in the same way as the above anthropological approach. Both stories exhibit a paradox in the depictions of their exoticism. Esmeralda and Carmen are presented as symbols of unbound liberty. They are gypsies, able to come and go freely, wherever they wish. Carmen, for instance, refuses to join Don José on his journey to the United States for fear that she should lose her freedom.

> "I said to her: 'Be rational, I implore you; listen to me. All the past is forgotten. Yet you know it is you who have been my ruin—it is because of you that I am a robber and a murderer. Carmen, my Carmen, let me save you, and save myself with you.'
>
> "'Jose,' she answered, 'what you ask is impossible. I don't love you any more. You love me still, and that is why you want to kill me. If I liked, I might tell you some other lie, but I don't choose to give myself the trouble. Everything is over between us two. You are my *rom*, and you have the right to kill your *romi*, but Carmen will always be free.

In a contemporary French context, no-one and nothing could have greater liberty than a gypsy. The vagabond lifestyle of gypsies was envied by French artists and authors. After the French Revolution in 1789, the greatest desire was for liberty (*liberté*), a term which retains considerable currency today. However, this liberty becomes a representation of evil when it is sought by a woman. Trivialisation and condemnation are implied in Carmen's liberty. It is trivialisation because liberty becomes a valuable experience for a man, but for a woman it has a different meaning. It is a condemnation because such liberty was not, in the author's mind, supposed to be practiced by women in the 19th century.

On the other hand, Esmeralda was positioned as an object by the male and female characters of the story as well as the author, who considers her a *filledelicieuse* (literally a "delicious maiden", emphasizing her sexuality and beauty). Gypsy women, represented by Esmeralda and Carmen, concurrently fulfill two functions, as both subjects and objects for men. This reflects the authors' equation of gypsy women with their bodies, and is symbolized through their sensual dances. Both Carmen and Esmeralda are gypsy dancers, widely admired by men.

The two novels depict their characters as subjects in different manners. If Esmeralda is presented as a *filledelicieuse*, then Carmen is a strong beautiful female figure. In *Notre Dame de Paris*, Esmeralda becomes a subject because of her beauty and her skill at dancing. In this novel, nearly all of the men want her as the exotic "Other". Esmeralda and Carmen become subjects because men bow before the power of their beauty. However, as explained by Tuchman's symbolic annihilation, their beauty is in fact condemned by the author by positioning them as sexual objects of men. "This word produced a magical effect. Everyone who was left in the hall flew to the windows, climbing the walls in order to see, and repeating, "La Esmeralda! La Esmeralda?"

Owing to the polyvocalization in the text, the author cannot stop himself from objectifying Esmeralda. Esmeralda becomes an objectified subject owing to her status as a gypsy. This is shown in the novel. The character Gringoire, though interested in Esmeralda, ultimately realizes that her ethnic heritage as a gypsy leaves her unequal to him in terms of social class.

> "In truth," said Gringoire to himself, "she is a salamander, she is a nymph, she is a goddess, she is a bacchante of the Menelean Mount!"
> At that moment, one of the salamander's braids of hair became unfastened, and a piece of yellow copper which was attached to it, rolled to the ground.
> "Hé, no!" said he, "she is a gypsy!"
> All illusions had disappeared.

There is a paradox here. Esmeralda, as a much-admired beauty, appears to be depicted as a subject. However, in reality this is but the illusion of those who see her. Once they realize that Esmeralda is a gypsy, she no longer takes the position of the subject. Her status as a gypsy repositions her as an object. Her social class and gypsy heritage mean the author can only make her equal with one other character, her "guardian" Quasimodo, who protects her and is in return welcomed with open arms despite his disability.

Gypsy women, in this situation, are narrated, but their narration is still that of man's fantasy. Hugo even depicts a woman's disdain of Esmeralda with the following lines:

> "Will you take yourself off, you Egyptian grasshopper?" cried a sharp voice, which proceeded from the darkest corner of the Place.
> The young girl turned round in affright. It was no longer the voice of the bald man; it was the voice of a woman, bigoted and malicious.

Esmeralda is central to the story, but this central position is developed by the author without giving her room for self-narration. She is centralized to serve as the victim of the dominant narrative structures which continued to view gypsies as peripheral.

Carmen—as with Esmeralda—is a dancer who draws the eyes of many. What differs significantly in her character is Carmen's attempt to live a free life as a "true" gypsy. Carmen refuses to abandon her "gypsy-ness" and acts as others do out of fear of losing her freedom. Carmen is depicted as a person with power. First, she is a gypsy woman capable of killing a soldier, her boyfriend. Don José, a soldier, is sent to arrest Carmen for the murder, but falls in love with the gypsy and lets her escape from the police pursuit. Second, Carmen leads her husband to be killed by Don José in a fit of jealousy, and then leaves with another man, Lucas, who is subsequently murdered by Don José. Out of guilt, Don José surrenders himself to the police and is sentenced to death.

Below is an example of how Mérimée depicts Carmen as a demon, as explained by Don José—who still loves her;

> "Then, do you love Lucas?" I asked her. "Yes, I loved him as I loved you for a moment, perhaps less than I loved you. Now I no longer love anything and I hate myself for having loved you." I felt at her feel. I took her hands, I moistened them with my tears. I reminded her all of the moments of happiness we had spent together. I offered to remain a brigand to please her. "Anything, senor, anything!" I offered to do anything for her. If only she would love me again! She said "To love you is impossible. I do not want to love you." Fury gripped me. I drew my knife. I would have killed her to show fear and beg for mercy, but that woman was a demon.

The polyvocalization of the author in this instance is manifested in the depiction of the angel and demon within Carmen. In the novel, Carmen is said to show considerable agency by rejecting Don José, a Basque-born French soldiers, because she is unwilling to abandon the liberties she has as a gypsy. Symbolic annihilation, however, arises through the narrated depiction of Carmen as not only a beautiful woman admired by many men, but also an emotionless monster who feels nothing when her husband and lovers are killed by Don José or when she left Don José for another man. She is both an angel and a demon.

In both stories, tragedy results because of one man's jealousy of another. In *Notre Dame de Paris* all of the

male characters show jealousy in their attempts to win Esmeralda, even father (the Archdeacon Claude Frollo, a religious leader), and his adopted son, Quasimodo. This jealousy ends in tragedy as Frollo; Esmeralda and Quasimodo all die at the end of the novel. In *Carmen*, the fighting of male characters—Don José, Carmen's husband, and Lucas—over the titular character likewise leads to tragedy, including the death of Don José. The gypsy women, depicted at the beginning of their novels as angels, bring disaster as the story closes.

Both authors utilized the same space, the space for free expression which emerged in the 19th century after the French Revolution led to social movements promoting liberty and solidarity. However, this space was only used to find a new angle considered hitherto unknown in literature. Furthermore, discourses in other arts, including the visual arts, influenced the creation of narratives about gypsy women in these works of literature. However, the gypsies remained inconsequential characters. Their narratives were not central. Though they served as central characters, they were but objects in their own stories.

CONCLUSION

Victor Hugo and Prosper Mérimée's creation of gypsy women characters, who concurrently and paradoxically served as subjects and objects, as seen above, cannot be separated from the contemporary social reality in which liberty was a prominent issue in literature and everyday discourse. However, it is important to question whose liberty is being promoted through these two stories. Almost all works of literature discuss liberty, be it personal liberty, sexual liberty, or women's liberty. However, such liberty remained unattainable for groups such as gypsy women. Gypsy women were rendered "Others" who, though they invigorate the freedom of the narrative, continued to reproduce the stagnant discourse that gypsy women cannot be subjects in narratives. They were narrated, and when narrated only their failings were brought forth. They were narrated but when narrated they only become male sexual objects.

Gypsy women remained peripheral despite serving as the central characters—or even title characters—of these two novels. They are present, but overwhelmed by the narrative. The symbolic annihilation of these gypsy women occurred because the structure for their narration remained limited to representation, not a personal struggle. They were presented by these two French authors not to fight for their own rights, but to ensure that the literary works appeared innovative, a form of innovation demanded by the 19th century literary scene which had tired of the false niceties of the bourgeoisie. In their contestations with other characters, these gypsy women only served to cause social inequality because of their "sins" of beauty and exoticism. They may appear centralized by the authors, but this appearance is deceiving; they are omitted, trivialized, and condemned, and left defenseless by their authors.

REFERENCES

Bakhtin, M. M. (1994). Morris, P., (Trans). *The Bakhtin reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bakhtin, M.M. (1981). Holquist, M., (Trans). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Braidotti, R. (1997). Mothers, monsters, machines in Katie Conboy, Nadia Median & Sarah Stanburry (Eds), *Writing on the body: Female embodiment*. Columbia: Columbia University Press. (pp 59-69).

Conboy, K., Nadia, M., & Sarah Stanburry (Eds). (1997). *Writing on the body: Female embodiment.* Columbia: Columbia University Press.

Cussinet, M. F. (2005). Bohemiennes et Saltimbanquesdans les musseed'Auverge in Jonchier, P. A., & Loubinaux, G., *La Bohème figure Poétique de l'errance aux XVIIIe et XIX siècles*. Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascale. (pp. 315-322).

Delmaire, D. (2009). Migration et religion chez les juifs, en France, au XIXe siècle" in *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, 78, 33-42.

Dorléans, B. (2002). *Les Français et L'indonésie: du XVIème au XX éme siècles* Paris: Kailash

Drabinsky, John. E. (2011). *Levinas and the post identity colonial: Race, nation, others*. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press.

Friedan, B. (2001). *The Feminine mystique*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc.

Hugo, V. (1832). *Notre Dame de Paris*. Bruxelles: J.P. Meline Librairie-Editeur.

Gerbner, G., & Gross, L. (1976). Living with television: The violence profile. *Journal of Communication*, 26, 172-199.

Klein, H., & Shiffman, K. (2009). Under representation and symbolic annihilation of socially disenfrancised groups ("out groups") in annimated cartoons. *Howard Journal of Communication*.20, 55-72.

Levinas, E., & Kearney. R. (1986). Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas: Face to face with Levinas. in Cohen. R.A., Albany: SUNY Press, (pp.13-33)

Marushiakova, E., & Popov, V. (2011). Between exoticization and marginalization. Current

problems of gypsy studies in *Behemoth A Journal on Civilisation 4(1)*, 86-105.

Mérimée, P. (1989), Jotcham, P. *Carmen and other stories*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

Radix, E. (2005). La Figure de la Bohémiennedansl 'Oeuvre de ponson du terrail, oul' exploitation "Rocambolesque" d'une femme exotique. in Jonchier, P.A., & Loubinaux. G. (eds). *La Bohème Figure Poétique de l'errance aux XVIIIeet XIX siècles*. Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascale. (pp. 199-214).

Said, E. (1993). *Culture and imperialism*. New York: Vintage Book.

Santa, A. 2005. La Figure de la Bohémienne chez Paul Féval. in Jonchier, P.A., & Loubinaux. G. (eds). *La Bohème Figure Poétique de l'errance aux XVIIIeet XIX siècles*. Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascale. (pp. 170-186).

Tuchman, G. (1978). The symbolic annihilation of women by the mass media in Tuchman, G., A.K. Daniels & J. Benet (eds) *Hearth and home: Images of women in the mass media*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Udasmoro, W. 2011. *Transformation of women's identity in 19th century French literature: Balzac and Flaubert in the arena of contestation*. Yogyakarta: Faculty of Cultural Sciences of UGM Publication.

Udasmoro, W. 2009. Jawa di mata Prancis: Analisis terhadap Roman Voyage Autour du Monde Java, Siam & Canton Karya Comte Ludovic de Beauvoir. *Jurnal Masyarakat, Kebudayaan dan Politik*, XXII, 1, January-March. (pp. 36-41).

DOI: 10.9744/kata.17.1.33-40

ISSN 1411-2639 (Print), ISSN 2302-6294 (Online)

OPEN ACCESS

http://kata.petra.ac.id

On the Panoptical Eye of Self-Caring in Nabokov's *The Eye*: A Foucauldian Analysis

Taghizadeh, Ali[1] & Haj'jari, Mohammad-Javad[2]

[1,2] English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Razi University, Kermanshah, IRAN

*Correspondent author; Emails: altaghee@zedat.fu-berlin.de, aminhajjari@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Nabokov's protagonist's sufferings, suicide, and final happiness in *The Eye* (1930) can be analyzed through Foucault's policy of the "care of the self" based on which an individual acts in a *parrhesiastic* relationship with himself to panoptically watch and discover himself. Smurov's first-person I/eye sacrifices his former self to be reborn from the surveying eyes of his separated self. This *Panopticon* metaphor is bifurcated into the *monopticon* and the *synopticon*, the former letting Smurov externally watch over himself and the latter reflecting back to him others' views of him. Thus, Smurov recognizes the true nature of his identity to be the sum of his concept of himself and his reflections in others' minds. He recognizes that he is always being panoptically watched and created. His final happiness, therefore, emphasizes that identity stands in a symbiotic relationship with the surveillance of the self, without which the individual stays in darkness.

Keywords: Care of the self; identity; Panopticon; Smurov; surveillance.

INTRODUCTION

Subjectivity, as Michel Foucault (1997) defines it, is what we make of ourselves when we are carrying out a project of self-care. Subjectivity is not what we are, but it is an activity that we perform, an active becoming. In a project of self-discovery, self-care, or self-expression, our interest is in the self. Thus, the "care of the self" is the meaning of the efforts we make to change ourselves to better persons or to specific individuals in order to answer the question "What should one do with oneself?" (p. 87) Such a project guarantees a freedom from the human primary self, but freedom from the primary self does not mean abandoning ourselves in order to become thoroughly new individuals. We in fact try to know the different aspects of our nature towards a comprehensive recognition of ourselves.

Taking care of one's self is partly suggested by the concept of the "Panopticon" in Foucault's philosophy, which conveys the surveillance and the control of the individuals by a few guardians through constant and evaluative observations for better individual and collaborative performances. Foucault elaborates on Jeremy Bentham's concept of the Panopticon in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1979). As Bentham's typical prison structure, the Panopticon is a system of surveillance in which a few individuals within a central tower constantly watch over a multitude of people, controlling and conducting their activities. As a watching system, the Panopticon establishes in its subjects the awareness that they are being constantly observed, and that they must watch themselves to behave according to certain norms. Likewise, an individual can make himself stand in a position so that he can watch himself and watch over his own behavior from the outside. Stepping outside one's own self to overlook the state of one's life resembles the observing capabilities that the Panopticon allows an observer, including the *monoptic* and the *synoptic* views on one's self. While the monoptic view derives from the individual looking at himself, the synoptic view radiates from others looking at him. The common element is to step outside oneself, which in Foucauldian terms, is a process of conversion for accessing the truth about one's self. It includes a break within the self, a kind of self-sacrifice, a sacrifice of one's old self in the name of truth for the sake of a more comprehensive view of the self. Truth is thus never bestowed upon the subject, for no truth exists without a "conversion" or a "transformation" of the subject. And truth, once accessed, "enlightens the subject" and leaves him in tranquility (Taylor, 2011, pp. 143-146).

This process of self-sacrifice is then completed through *parrhesia*, a practice that individuals should

perform to attain their freedom. Foucault (2001) defines *parrhesia* as a free and courageous speech about the truth of something, and the *parrhesiastes* or the "parrhesiast" as the truth-teller, someone who knows and tells the truth. Knowing one's self is part of the truth. As such, the most important characteristic of the parrhesiast is his "honest counsel" to people or to himself against "self-delusion" and for a better recognition of the self (pp. 141-142). Accordingly, through the panoptic position, the individual tries to watch over himself in order to examine his behavior. In fact, an all-embracing outlook on one's own behavior reveals the truth about oneself and one's being. And this fact is inherent in the practice of *parrhesia.* Thus, the final purpose of *parrhesia* is self-identification.

As a "semi-fantastic psychological novella" (Foster, 1993, p. 73), *The Eye* (1930) – *Sogliadatai* in Russian and meaning a "spy" or a "watcher" (*The Eye*,1990) – highlights some of Nabokov's main thematic and structural concerns. As to the Foucauldian focus of the present study, the nature of identity and the most convenient state of happiness in the course of one's life–represented in the narrator's quest for "the real Smurov" (*The Eye*,1990) –seem to be two of Nabokov's important concerns in the book.

Smurov's identity crisis has been the subject of many interpretations, both thematically and structurally. Investigations into Smurov's state of being all share the fact that he is after his true identity, which he cannot finally achieve because of its dynamicity. Hence, his final adjustment to environmental changes constitutes a dynamic identity. These studies mostly elaborate upon Nabokov's own statement in the forward to the novella that the theme of the book is "the pursuit of an investigation which leads the protagonist through a hell of mirrors and ends in the merging of twin images" (Johnson, 1977, p. 1). Dean Flower (1987) analyzes the story and its references to the "eye/I" in highlighting Nabokov's own life and identity crisis, as he was a writer in self-exile. Accordingly, *The Eye* can be read "as a covert autobiography of the most self-condemning sort," and the entire story may be interpreted "as a howl of despair that he, Nabokov, does not really exist" (p. 167). Thus, Smurov embodies some chief aspects of Nabokov's own identity (p. 169). Boyd (1990) believes that Smurov's final failure highlights a certain point in human condition while he relates it to Nabokov's artistic life. Connolly (1991) investigates into the book's similarities with Dostoyevsky's *The Double*, and later takes Nabokov's narrator as overtly split into two agents, "narrator vs. observer" or "that aspect of the self which displays authorial potential and that aspect of the self which functions as a character" (p. 32). Johnson (1997) discusses "an emotionally detached, coldly observing "Eye/I"" as the narrator and "a new, more dashing" personality as Smurov who is "unaware of his dual identity", as someone who is both an observer and an observed (p. 2). Smurov establishes his existence through the "mirror reflections" radiated from other characters' "surface" (p. 169). In *The Mind's Eye* (2001), Karen Jacob discusses a number of elements in the novella, including narrativity, narcissism, and self-knowledge through the viewpoints of Descartes, Lacan, and Žižek. Regarding self-knowledge, she takes into consideration the hidden mechanisms of power that the "detached posture" of the realist narrator and his "panoptic eye" equip him with (p. 64). Jacob' emphasis is on the authorial narrator's "panoptic power" suggests that the narrator is "obsessively" attempting to have his doppelganger participate in the "fantasy of surveillance" to make sense of "the realist narrator's position" (pp. 52-53). She believes that the narrator's final failure spoils the parallelism between his own panoptic powers and those of the "institutions of discipline, regularization, and supervision" that narrative authority is thought to represent in realism (p. 74). Altogether she tries to know "how the subjectivized forms of viewing represented in *The Eye* inflect its treatment of surveillance as a narrative and possibly a social tool" (p. 71).

The concern of the present study is similar to what is under taken by Straumann, Jacobs, and Grishokova. However, it is basically different from them; the present study has tried to investigate into Smurov's condition through an interdisciplinary approach regarding Foucault's concept of the Panopticon and its relation to self-recognition. The researchers hope that their fascination with some of Foucault's terms– the "care of the self", *parrhesia*, and the Panopticon – will help them delve deeply enough into Smurov's condition to show how he comes to a state of self-recognition through a policy of self-denial.

Smurov's attempt at self-recognition incorporates a net of power relations, with himself and with others, which is always at work to constitute the condition of his own life as well as the life of any other man or woman. For the illumination of Smurov's conditions under Nabokov's panoptical eye, this article proposes a set of questions which it will attempt to answer: What is Smurov's real state of being? How is he experiencing life? At the end of the story, what is the nature of the pleasures which he thinks he is experiencing?

DISCUSSION

Disgraced by Matilda's husband over adultery, Smurov feels utmost shame in front of the boys he tutors. This shame intensifies his former lighthearted thinking about suicide and the absurdity of the world. Thus, he shoots himself in the chest or over his heart, which leaves him lingering in a purgatorial imagination afterwards, if not in death and blankness. He then imagines that he has gained freedom of earthly suffering while he finds himself enclosed in bondages in a ward. He thus wonders saying, "What a mighty thing was human thought, that it could hurtle on beyond death!" He thinks that his thought is still running after his physical death. He still feels the "crater of a hollow tooth" and has no idea of any burial of his dead body. He succumbs to the present illusion by taking part in it actively. He further creates a doctor over his own "case of a light wound caused by an inaccurate bullet passing clean through the *serratus*."His "little old lady" also appears and informs him that a pitcher has also been smashed by the shooting. He thinks, "Oh, how cunningly, in what simple, everyday terms my thought explained the ringing and the gurgling that had accompanied me into nonexistence," which might indicate his subconscious level of recovery after the agony of shooting and anesthesia. In his imagination, he finds himself back to streets after his recovery. He thinks about his routines: fixing his smashed watch, getting cigarettes, money, etc. He then enters Weinstock's bookshop and befriends new people who reflect back different parts of his total identity to him. As Straumann (2008) says, not only does Smurov's "disembodied imagination survive," but in fact he divides himself into "a narrated figure and the eye/I that controls both narration and perception." And he goes on with watching the numerous masks of a personality, which finally turn out to be versions of himself and a world which is mostly the construction of his own imagination (p. 77).

Smurov's "solipsistic quest" (Wyllie, 2010, p. 76), which begins after his suicidal attempt and transformation into an "onlooker" (*The Eye*,1990), is an act of resistance or defense mechanism against his former self which he tries to overcome. In this act of overcoming, Smurov under goes a "spiritual experience", which is a specific surrealist experiment within which people let their bodies speak, as Foucault explains in his debate on the "new novel" and surrealist fiction (Vintges, 2011, p. 100). Characters in such novels go through experiences like "dreams, madness, folly, repetition, the double, the disruption of time, the return" which generate a coherent"constellation"of actions (Foucault,1999, p. 72). Such realms are the creations of "a radical critique of rationality" (Carrette, 2000, p. 56). Therefore, Foucault finds it intriguing to "think beyond the body/soul dualism of Western, Christian and Cartesian traditions" (Vintges, 2011, p. 100). He tries to make sense of a "spiritual corporality" and a "reordering of spiritual concepts into the body" (Carrette, 2000, p. 54). As such, the first-person narrative of the suicidal attempt by "a humiliated loser" generates "a psychologically plausible character of a narrator-as-ghost" who finally finds himself alive, while he is aware of the fact that he has experienced corporeal death (Dolinin, 2005, p.61). In such realms, the individual feels free to act unboundedly and thus develops a new life and outlook towards life. The narrator is then wondering how to answer his ontological questions regarding the "potential split between the subject and the world": "what is my relation to the world? How do I know that I exist? What if I am a ghost, a shade, a spook? What is the status of my imagination?" (Strauman, 2008, p. 77). Accordingly, stepping out of one's own self to overlook the state of one's life resembles the observing capabilities that the Panoptic on allows an observer. The remaining part of this article will attempt to elaborate on this issue.

The Panoptic on Metaphor

According to Foucault (1979), the Panoptic on is a great machine both for subjection and self-subjection. It induces in its subjects the awareness of their own constant visibility and thus enforces them to discipline their behavior according to its power mechanism. As such, the individuals are disciplined into a social range of behaviors which render them either normalized citizens or divergent ones. Smurov's identity crisis follows such problems of surveillance. The title of the novella and Smurov's wonderings highlight the fact that his problem is with the observing eye of himself and of others, which makes him behave in certain manners.

On the story level, the panoptical perspective reveals itself on two grounds: the *monoptic* and the *synoptic*; the former dealing with the narrator's interactions with Smurov, who is in fact himself, and the latter dealing with the narrator-Smurov's counteractions with other people.

The Monopticon

"Monoptic" means "with one eye" (Reber, 1985, p. 468). From this term, there comes "monopticons" which are kinds of security cameras in the form of android eyes. These were used by Monarch, a

character in *Doctor Who* series, to control his subjects, specifically in the episodes entitled *Four to Doomsday* (1982). The monopticons consistently watched over individuals and scanned the munder Monarch's orders. One can suggest that they were the more advanced forms of Big Brother's telescreens in Orwell's *1984* which were constantly watching the citizens for surveillance. In *Dr. Who*, the monopticons acted as "disembodied" heads and "intrusive" presences that were used to "spy on the action" of other characters. As such, the word *monopticon* is a play on the concept of the Panopticon (O'Day's, 2011).The *monopticon* thus refers to the control of an individual by another individual or by him/herself.

Having this concept in mind, one is tempted to consider Smurov's watchful eye over himself as such, a fact that is reflected in Nabokov's techniques of mirroring and doubling. Initially, the individual who watches over Smurov is himself, and we are concerned with his own surveying eye:

> Yet I was always exposed, always wide-eyed; even in sleep I did not cease to watch over myself, understanding nothing of my existence, growing crazy at the thought of not being able to stop being aware of myself. (*The Eye*, 1990, Kindle)

We always find Smurov under his own observation, and he constantly and self-consciously watches over himself. It is as if his super ego is working on the conscious level and is always in charge of him. As such, he is simultaneously split into the subject and the object, one acting while the other recording those actions. This process is continued in the story until the subject and the object finally merge into one. Thus, we are subjected to two viewpoints of Smurov at the same time: a viewpoint of the observing narrator and a viewpoint of the Smurov who is being-observed. The narrator-Smurov has been there for stepping out his body and is able to "make judgments about his own actions" (Mohanu, 2001, p. 80). In such a "fantasy of disembodiment" (Toker, 1999, p. 97), Smurov begins to describe himself in the third person, since he has escaped the prison of his body. He is now concerned with "a centrifugally scattered self" (Jacobs, 2001, p. 76).The split of character that he is experiencing is an attempt at self-recognition, since stepping out of the subjective self is necessary to establish a disinterested image of it. Accordingly, Smurov watches over himself monoptically, as in a mirror-like encountering between himself and his image. Although a mirror reflects one's image without any presuppositions, Smurov discovers a nasty reflection of himself in it due to his concern with identity crisis:" A wretched, shivering, vulgar little man in a bowler hat stood in the center of the room, for some reason rubbing his hands. That is the glimpse I caught of myself in the mirror" (*The Eye*, 1990, Kindle). Changing that view toward the self requires self-disciplinary attitudes. Therefore, beginning "a new life" under the new role of being "an onlooker" intensifies the *panoticon* metaphor of the book. And it is necessary to hold that, as such, the *panoticon* and the *monopticon* become the same, for in this story the observer and the observed are the same.

The Synopticon

The self-observing Smurov also attempts to shape himself into a new form and away from his pathetic past, and as Connolly (1999) observes, to defend himself "against public opinion" as well (p. 145). This fact leads us to another play on the word Panopticon, that is, the *synopticon* which conveys the control of the minority by the majority or even the control of the individual by the many. It was first introduced by Thomas Mathieson (1997), who elaborated upon Foucault's argument about Bentham's Panopticon. Mathieson holds that through "the control of the soul, vis-à-vis the control of the body" a sort of human being is generated who behaves himself "through self-control" (p. 217). The former panoptic view regarding the surveillance of the majority by the few is now turned over on its head and changed into the surveillance of the minority by the majority as well as the individual by the people. And while the "normalizing gaze of panopticism" produces the subjectivity and the self-control which discipline people to fit into the society (p. 218), *synopticism* watches over the officials themselves. *Synopticism*is used to "represent the situation where a large number focuses on something in common which is condensed." It can act as the opposite of *panopticism*, and thus here the many watch the few. So each society becomes "a viewer society" (p. 219), in which *panopticism* and *synopticism* mostly merge into one observing standpoint. Mathieson takes Big Brother's telescreens as the ultimate form representing the fusion of *panopticism* and *synopticism*, as both Big Brother and people watch each other at the same time. Accordingly, the "intersecting gazes of panopticism," in Mathieson's terminology (p. 229), incorporate the simultaneous observing activities of both the involved parties. As such, Smurov's "Gestalts" in others' minds is significant (Grishakova, 2012, p. 170).

The problem with the narrator's panoptical watch over Smurov – as the narrator he invisibly watches over the physical Smurov– is that the ghost-narrator cannot discipline the physical Smurov until they merge into one. He tells Vanya that "actually I wear a

mask—I am always hidden behind a mask" (*The Eye*,1990, Kindle). The hidden personality behind the mask acts as the monoptical, as a derivation of the panoptical, an observer who surveys "Smurovian-masks" (*The Eye*, 1990, Kindle). Here is a manifest-tation of what Mathieson (1997) says regarding the fusion of the *Panopticon* and the *synopticon*, with the *Panopticon* bearing the concept of the *monopticon* too. *Panopticism* and *synopticism* have "developed an intimate interaction, even fusion, with each other." The same systems of surveillance have often been panoptical and synoptical simultaneously, as in the "Roman Catholic Church", "the Inquisition", and "the military", where there are both hidden individual puppeteers behind the scenes and apparent acting agents on the front (p. 223). The "Smurovian masks" are in fact the versions of Smurov that appear in the presence of others' observing eyes. And as they reflect back to Smurov's feedbacks about his identity, these reflections represent his Gestalts. Thus, the narrator says,

> I could already count three versions of Smurov, while the original remained unknown. This occurs in scientific classification. Long ago, Linnaeus described a common species of butterfly, adding the laconic note *"in pratis Westmanniae."*. . . . . Where is the type, the model, the original? (*The Eye*, 1990).

Here Johnson (1973) holds that since the narrator decides to establish "the real Smurov" as the sum of the reflections he evokes in others, he becomes an entomologist who studies the diversities of a specimen of insects to guess the original creature from which they descended. Each descendent might differ from its original form due to their present biological conditions, but they also have similarities with the original form and constitute the different parts of its intricatepuzzle. Accordingly, the narrator finds out that Smurov's images held by others or "collectors" vary in accordance with the "particular" contacts each of them has with him (pp. 2-3), as well as with "the climatic conditions prevailing in various souls" (*The Eye*, 1990, Kindle). It is then obligatory to know the others" in all of their secondary associations to assess their versions of Smurov […] in order to establish [Smurov's] holotype" for his truest image (Johnson, 1997, p. 3). The narrator thus begins to pay attention to Smurov's versions in others' eyes. Vanya considers Smurov as "a good, intelligent person" with "poetic imagination", with a "propensity to exaggerate at times", as a man who is kind towards everyone, and as a guy who is "always absurd and charming." To Mukhin, Smurov is "such a scoundrel". Vanya's uncle's has "the happiest, the shortest-lived image of Smurov"; he thinks Smurov is their future bride-groom. Smurov is a criminal to be punished right away before his two pupils. Bogdanovich's account of Smurov, in his letter to Robrtovich, labels him a member of "sexual lefties" who frequently break the law and "a thief in the ugliest sense of the word," a kleptomaniac. Gretchen (or Hilda) takes Smurov as a silly boyfriend whom she dupes into wearing a stolen tie. Weinstock's description of Smurov is "an adventurer," "a Don Juan, a Casanova," "a double or triple agent," "a very odd character," "a man knit of incomplete intimations, a man with a secret hidden in him". Evgenia considers him as a shy, sensitive, and young man, lacking experience with people. Marianna's Smurov is a "brutal and brilliant officer of the White Army, the kind that went around stringing people up right and left". And finally, Kashmarin develops "yet another image" of Smurov. Each character preserves an exclusive idea of Smurov. These reflections, emitted from "the many-faceted Russian intelligentsia", are parts of the "classification of Smurovian masks" – which are still subject to change in future due to the "branching structure" and the "wavering nature of life" (*The Eye*, 1990, Kindle). Hence, Joann Karges' remarks on the theme of systematics in *The Eye*. The narrator-Smurov hunts for the "specification" of and "identification" with the real Smurov from which only its "paratypes" exist (1985, pp. 65-66). This butterfly metaphor suggests that an original source which once existed is now lost (Rutledge, 2011, p. 97). According to Smurov himself,

> I do not exist: there exist but the thousands of mirrors that reflect me. With every acquaintance I make, the population of phantoms resembling me increases. Somewhere they live, somewhere they multiply. I alone do not exist. Smurov, however, will live on for a long time. […] and so my name and my ghost will appear fleetingly here and there for some time still. Then will come the end. (*The Eye*,1990)

Therefore, there are myriad versions of Smurov which are radiated from others' eyes as they blink him into existence. However, as others close their eyes, their versions of Smurov are still replaced by other ones. In Rylkova's view (2002), Nabokov's story recounts "Smurov's learning to cope with his scattered personality" (p. 48). Nabokov's story at the same time highlights the fact that identity is like a "chameleon" in continual adjustments to environ-mental changes (Mohanu, 2001, p. 81).The synoptical network of power relations between Smurov and others emphasizes the inevitability of such state of living. This does not mean that he is bound to be defined by others for his existence; numerous labels expose him to a realm of definitions the transiency of

which resists absolute definition. Such resistance is the inevitable outcome of relations any man may have with others. In fact, pursuing himself in the third person and through his reflections in others, the "I" of the story hesitates "between megalomania and an inferiority complex" (Grishakova, 2012, p. 172). And thus he finds himself into a new state of living.

The Care of the Self and Parrhesia

In its self-discovering activities, the self can take two forms: one form is a subject who actively seeks something, while the other form is an object that is itself passively sought. This process is the same as the "care of the self" which results in a subjectivity as "the concrete form of activity that defines the relationship of the self to itself" (McGushin, 2011, p. 129). That is because "subjectivity, as a dynamic, active relationship" can take on several different shapes (Foucault, 1996, p. 440). Looking at the self, one may ontologically wonder whether his/her existence is a total "material substance" or "an immaterial" one, and whether it is in a symbiotic relation to the body for worldly perception and action (McGushin, 2011, p. 130). Even if one's true self ever exists, it is still bound to the body until the body lives. The idea of "a true self within" behind the mask of reality conveys a specific relationship of the self to itself. Foucault calls this new subjectivity "hermeneutic" or "confessional", standing respectively for the "activities of self-interpretation and self-expression" (p. 134). In other words, the individual is then to interpret his own self, to explain it to himself, in order to most truly recognize his self and escape identity crisis. These activities do not bespeak an inner truth; rather, they are activities toward becoming a different person with new relations towards the self, a taking "care of the self", an "aesthetics of the self". In Foucault's view (2001),

> For one does not have to take up a position or role towards oneself as that of a judge pronouncing a verdict. One can comport oneself towards oneself in the role of a technician, of a craftsman, of an artist, who from time to time stops working, examines what he is doing, reminds himself of the rules of his art, and compares these rules with what he has achieved thus far. (p. 166)

Afterwards a new discipline is born. In Foucault view, discipline is not surveillance but "the regulation of behavior or attitude" after surveillance (Mathieson, 1997, p. 228). By realizing the monoptical and synoptical relations of power, by having new surveying outlooks towards human relations, the narrator-Smurov finally controls himself. It is manifested in the final merging of the narrator and Smurov and his final statement that he decides not to care for whatever reflection his existence may create in others, since identity will not remain fixed. As Foucault says, in the modern era, the human body enters "a machinery power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it" *ad infinitum* (1979, p. 138). Acting and behaving differently in different conditions require constant self-sacrificing in order to deal with the dynamic state of human affairs. This is what Smurov undertakes by shooting his former being. This act of freedom is a technique of the "care of the self" and the transformation necessary for subjectivity. Foucault considers freedom as "a matter of experimentation"; entering "a space of concrete freedom" is not to recognize who we are as established personalities but to try the different "possible transformations" that life can offer us (1990, p. 36). Freedom is therefore "a praxis", a way of dealing with ourselves, others, and the world (Mendieta, 2011, p. 112).

In more details, freedom as such is achieved through *parrhesia* and the "care of the self." Freedom is a "creative" process, which results not from ultimate submission to external powers but from generating power over oneself, a power which one is able to exercise over others as well (p. 116). In this sense, freedom is not achieved in isolation but only results from the power relations we have with others, something that initially requires us to be true to ourselves. As such, the individual stands in a *parrhesiastic* relationship with himself; that is, in a position to be truthful to himself. Although *parrhesia* typically stands for fearless speech and the parrhesiast is someone who critically and frankly speaks the truth before the truth-mongers (Foucault, 2001, p. 11), a *parrhesiastic* attitude is not exclusive to someone of this type. Being true to oneself and having a critical attitude against the absolute condition of something is *parrhesiastic* enough. "Being courageous enough to disclose the truth about *oneself*' away from self-delusion is *parrhesiastic* (p. 143).As Stone points out, the final stage in the use of *parrhesia* is in "one's private life" and "one's personal relationships." Smurov tries to watch over himself, which is a *parrhesiastic* act of self-caring. We hear Nabokov's narrator saying, "Ever since the shot—that shot which, in my opinion, had been fatal—I had observed myself with curiosity instead of sympathy, and my painful past—before the shot—was now foreign to me " (*The Eye*,1990). Initially punishing himself through suicide because of his past life, Smurov now decides to take care of himself. He decides to be on guard, both monoptically and synoptically, over his actions. The panoptic tower of surveillance is thus watching him, inside and outside.

So, he experiences a transition from "the torture of the body to the transformation of the soul" (Mathieson, 1997, p. 216). His body is no more to suffer while his soul is the object of constant metamorphoses. Reading Nabokov's novella, we are, as Foucault says, "in the panoptical machine, invested by its effects of power, which we bring to ourselves since we are a part of its mechanism" (1979, p. 217).Therefore, due to the socio-historical nature of subjectivity, Foucault emphasizes that it is always possible to experience a being or beings other than what we presently are, the consequence of which is the practice of freedom.

CONCLUSION

Whether in agony before his ultimate physical death in the case of his self-shooting, or even in his pains when he imagines life in a purgatorial condition after his suicidal attempt, Nabokov's protagonist in *The Eye* is reborn into a new state of living in which he experiences himself anew. Initially bound by temporality, Smurov is liberated from his primary self through his subconscious mind. He is reborn into beings which are often unstuck in time. As a Russian émigré, Smurov is under historically given constraints which are intensified by his initial sense of absurdity. His self-discovery, which begins with an act of suicide, leads to the recognition of the fact that his identity is made of an amalgam of images radiating from himself, just to be reflected from and deciphered by others. This fact brings him a state of happiness at the end of the novella and after all his torturing wonderings. By experiencing himself through a third-person perspective, Smurov disciplines himself through self-caring and panopticism, so as to watch over himself for self-recognition. His *parrhesiastic* relation to himself, his doppelganger's monoptic eye, and others' synoptic eyes of surveillance begin and continue to watch him and mirror back to him the portrait he has shown them. And each portrait, as reflected back to Smurov, adds to his developing self. As such, Smurov develops a dynamic relationship with himself which establishes his new and self-conscious state of being. At the end of the novella, when the narrator and Smurov become one, he stoically announces his self-discovery by acknowledging the importance of the never-blinking eye of surveillance in the shaping of his identity and his tolerance over any sarcasm.

Having punished himself as a result of feeling shame before others, Smurov now disciplines himself, as in a Panopticon, and tries to be on guard both monoptically and synoptically over his deeds thereafter. The changes which he experiences reflect both his critical attitude towards his prior state of living, because of which he punishes himself, and a tendency to self-caring attitudes towards life and his identity. He observes that true happiness is relative, and that he shall, for a more sophisticated state of living, fundamentally keep in balance the relations of power between himself and others. Inherent in both monopticism and synopticism is a centrality of power which helps the observer with accounts of his situation. As versions of panopticism, these two are in fact the inevitable participants in the formation of one's identity towards self-discovery. Smurov's attempt at self-discovery is a manifestation of his attempt to be truthful to himself, thus fulfilling the concept of the *parrhesia*. And all these together highlight the power relations embedded in the formation and dynamicity of identity.

REFERENCES

Boyd, B. (1990). *Vladimir Nabokov: the Russian years*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Carrette, J. (2000). *Foucault and religion*. London: Routledge.

Connolly, J. W. (1991). Madness and doubling: from Dostoevsky's *The Double* to Nabokov's *The Eye*. *Russian Literature Triquarterly, 24*, 129-39.

Connolly, J. W. (1999). Nabokov's (re)visions of Dostoevsky. In J. W. Connolly (Ed.), *Nabokov and his fiction: New perspectives* (pp. 141-157). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dolinin, A. (2005). Nabokov as a Russian writer. In J. W. Connolly (Ed.), *Cambridge companion to Nabokov* (pp. 49-64). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Flower, D. N. (1987 Spring). Nabokov's private eye. *The Hudson Review, 40(1)*, 165-171.

Foster Jr., J. B. (1993). *Nabokov's art of memory and European modernism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Foucault, M. (1990). Critical theory/intellectual history. In L. Kritzman (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: politics, philosophy, culture: Interviews and other writings 1977-1984* (pp. 17-46), translated by A. Sheridan & others. London: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*, translated by A. Sheridan. New York: Vintage.

Foucault, M. (1997). *Ethics, Subjectivity and truth*. Paul Robinow (Ed); translated by Robert Hurley & others. New York: The New Press.

Foucault, M. (2001). *Fearless speech*. (J. Pearson, Ed.). Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

Foucault, M. (1996). The ethics of the concern for the self as a practice of freedom. In S. Lotringer (Ed.), *Foucault live: collected interviews 1961-1984* (pp. 432-449). New York: Semiotext(e).

Four to Doomsday. (1982). *Dr. who: Season 19, episodes 5-8*. [DVD]. (Terence Dudley, Writ). (John Black, Dir.). BBC One.

Govedić, N. (2001). When the eye refuse to blind itself: Nabokov's writings on literature. *Slavica Tergestina, 9,* 235-264.

Grishakova, M. (2012). *The models of space, time and vision in V. Nabokov's fiction: Narrative strategies and cultural frames*. Tartu: Tartu University Press.

Jacobs, K. (2001). *The eye's mind: Literary modernism and visual culture*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Johnson, D. B. (1985). The books reflected in Nabokov's *Eye*. *Slavic and East European Journal*, *29.4*, 393-404.

Johnson, D. B. (1997). The butterfly in Nabokov's Eye. *The Eye Nabokov Studies, 4*, 1-14.

Johnson, D. B. (1995). The Eye. In V. E. Alexandrov (Ed.), *The Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov* (pp. 130-135). New York: Garland.

Karges, J. (1985). *Nabokov's lepidoptera: Genres and genera*. Ann Arbor: Ardis.

Mathieson, T. (1997). The viewer society: Michel Foucault's 'panopticon' revisited. *Theoretical Criminology: An International Journal, 1(2)*, 215-232.

McGushin, E. (2011). Foucault's theory and practice of subjectivity. In Diana Taylor (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Key concepts* (pp. 127-142). Durham: Acumen.

Mendieta, E. (2011). The practice of freedom. In Diana Taylor (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Key concepts* (pp. 111-124). Durham: Acumen.

Mohanu, F. (2001). Aspects of identity in Vladimir Nabokov's novels. *Dialogos,3*, 80-82.

Nabokov, V. (1990). *The Eye* (Kindle Edition). New York: Vantage Books.

O'Day, A. (2011, April 8). "I spy, with my little eye": surveillance and space in *Doctor Who*. *The Politics of Television Space' Symposium*. University of Leicester. Retrieved from http://www.hrvt.net/andrewoday/space.htm.

Reber, A. S. (1985). *Dictionary of psychology*. London: Penguin Books.

Rutledge, D. (2011). *Nabokov's permanent mystery: the expression of metaphysics in his work*. London: McFarland & Company Inc. Publishers.

Rylkova, G. (2002). Okrylyonnyy *Soglyadatay*– the winged eavesdropper: Nabokov and Kuzmin. In D. H. J. Larmour (Ed.), *Discourse and ideology in Nabokov's prose* (pp. 43-58). London: Routledge.

Schaeffer, S. F. (1972). The editing blinks of Vladimir Nabokov's *The Eye*. *The University of Windsor Review, 8.1*, 5-30.

Stone, B.E. (2011). Subjectivity and truth. In Dianna Taylor (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Key concepts* (pp. 143-157). Durham: Acumen.

Straumann, B. (2008). *Figurations of exile in Hitchcock and Nabokov*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Taylor, D. (Ed.). (2011). *Michel Foucault: Key concepts*. Durham: Acumen.

Toker, L. (1999). "The dead are good mixers": Nabokov's versions of individualism. In J. W. Connolly (Ed.), *Nabokov and his fiction: New perspectives* (pp. 92-108). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vintges, K. (2011). Freedom and spirituality. In Dianna Taylor (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Key concepts* (pp. 99-110). Dyrham: Acumen.

Wyllie, B. (2010). *Vladimir Nabokov*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd.

DOI: 10.9744/kata.17.1.41-48

ISSN 1411-2639 (Print), ISSN 2302-6294 (Online)

OPEN ACCESS

http://kata.petra.ac.id

Simulated National Identity and Ascendant Hyperreality in Julian Barnes's *England, England*

Hassan Abootalebi, H.[1]* & Niazi, N.[2]

[1,2] Lorestan University, IRAN

*Corresponding author; Emails: abootalebi2010@gmail.com; nozar_2002@yahoo.co.in

ABSTRACT

The paper sets out to analyze Julian Barnes's novel *England, England* (1998) in the light of Jean Baudrillard's concepts of *simulation* and *hyperreality*. According to Baudrillard, what we experience in today's world is a *simulation* of reality superseded by signs and images, and therefore we are living in a hyperreal world. Barnes's book offers a representative sample of hyperreal world in which Martha, the protagonist, finds herself troubled. Although initially she is impressed by the glamour of the theme park named *England, England* later on she loses interest in it when she comes to realization that everything about it is fake. This condition, making her think of her own identity and true self, finally leads her to leave the theme park and settle in the village of Anglia where she hopes to discover her true nature and regain her lost happiness.

Keywords: Barnes; *England;* Baudrillard; *simulation; hyperreality*.

INTRODUCTION

Known as one of the prominent figures in the realm of postmodernism, Jean Baudrillard has over the past few years exerted enormous influence over various fields. His critiques of contemporary societies are well known, but his most seminal book which includes his most polemical theories is *simulacra* and *simulation* (1995) in which he claims that reality is no longer what we used to think of. It, he asserts, has been supplanted by images most of which devoid of reality. What individuals experience in today's societies is more often than not merely a *simulation* of reality. He maintains that in the postmodern age the distinction between real and its representation has been blurred, we no longer are able to differentiate between a real and a copy; we are bombarded by images and signs. Consequently it is utterly impossible to distinguish which is real, and which is not. To begin with, a concise elaboration of the abstract-mentioned notions would be helpful. *Simulation,* broadly defined, is the act of producing something and pretending it to be real when it is not. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a *hyperreal*. Baudrillard (1995*)* identifies three categories of *simulation*: the first is a patent copy of reality which is distinguishable by consummate ease. The second is so good and consummate that it would be almost impossible to differentiate between the real and its copy. The third category of *simulation* but has no affinity to any reality, generating a reality of its own which is at odds with the real world. Baudrillard discusses how *simulation* deals with reality, and proposes that in the process of reproducing reality it makes use of four models or stages:

1. Reflecting a profound reality.
2. Masking and denaturing a profound reality.
3. Masking the absence of a profound reality.
4. Having no relation to any reality whatsoever. (p. 6)

Richard J. Lane (2000) commenting on the four stages of reality reproduction makes this clear:

> With first - and second-order *simulation,* the real still exists, and we measure the success of *simulation* against the real. Baudrillard's worry with third and fourth-order *simulation* is that the model generates what he calls *hyperreality*-that is, a world without a real origin. So with third and fourth order *simulation* we no longer even have the real as part of the equation. Eventually, Baudrillard thinks that *hyperreality* will be the dominant way of experiencing and understanding the world. (pp. 86-7)

Baudrillard considers *Disneyland*, a very large theme park near Los Angeles, as belonging to the third-order *simulation*:

> *Disneyland* is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, whereas all of Los Angeles and the America that surrounds

> it are no longer real, but belong to the *hyperreal* order and to the order of *simulacrum*. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology) but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle. (10)

Baudrillard argues that *Watergate* (the political scandal in the US in 1970s which caused President Nixon to quit his job) like *Disneyland* is another scenario belonging to the third-order *simulation*. It was "a *simulation* of scandal for regenerative ends" (p. 12).The Gulf War too, according to Baudrillard, was only a *simulation*. In the introduction to *the Gulf War Did not Take Place* (1991), a CNN reporter narrates a moment in which he asks other reporters involved in the war what was occurring and interestingly found that they themselves watched CNN to see what was happening. "News is generated by news, or the source of the news is also the news…News is producing the reality of the war, not only for viewers, but for those involved" (Lane, 2000, p. 106).

In *England, England* Barnes concerns himself with the creation on the Isle of Wight, of a colossal theme park by the entrepreneur Sir Jack Pitman that assembles everything that comes to the mind when one hears the words England and Englishness. The novel consists of three main parts: the first part focuses on the protagonist Martha Cochrane and her memories of childhood. The second part focuses on *England, England*, the theme park and the way *hyperreality* comes into being. The last part called Anglia, refers to the name of the village where Martha decides to spend the rest of her life after leaving the theme park.

DISCUSSION

The discussion of the novel within the concerned theoretical framework can be divided into three parts, which are interrelated thematically. The first part deals with the protagonist's childhood memories, the second part concerns itself with the construction of a colossal theme park (simulation of a *hyperreal* world) and the rationale behind it, and the last part portrays the protagonist leaving the theme park and taking refuge in a village.

Tampering With Reality

From the outset of the novel Martha Cochrane, the protagonist, questions the way memory operates, and expresses her mistrust of it. Trying to remember what her first memory was, Martha fails to do so:

> Your first memory wasn't something like your first bra, or your first friend, or your first kiss, or your first fuck, or your first marriage, or your first child, or the death of your first parent, or your first sudden sense of lancing hopelessness of the human condition-it wasn't like any of that. It wasn't a solid, seizable thing… A memory was by definition not a thing, it was…a memory. A memory now of a memory a bit earlier of a memory before that of a memory way back when…it was likes a country remembering his history: the past was never just the past, it was what made the present able to live with itself. The same went within individuals, though the process obviously wasn't straightforward. (pp. 7-9)

The analogy made between the unreliability of an individual's memory and a country's past history is very meaningful and suggests that one could always fabricate stories around them to make them sound more attractive and plausible. Martha's first memory, "an innocently arranged lie" (p. 8) was assembling her counties of English jigsaw puzzle, sometimes with a piece missing. This was not a false memory, but still not unprocessed since she could not recall the details. Once the missing parts are found and the puzzle completes, she would feel happy. "Staffordshire has been found, and her jigsaw, her England, and her heart had been whole again" (p. 9). The word "whole" here takes on an ironic interpretation because when her father abandoned the house ostensibly to find the missing part of the puzzle; Nottinghamshire, and he never returned, neither the jigsaw nor her heart was made whole again, "this all seemed-what?-not untruthful, but irrelevant, not a way of filling the exact, unique, fretsaw-cut hole within her. She asked for Nottinghamshire" (p. 26). This image, as Guignery maintains, "provides a metaphor for the essence of history and memory, whose wholeness is a mere illusion" (The Fiction of Julian Barnes, 2006, p. 106). Thus, the first part of the novel lays the conceptual setting for the creation of the theme park and theoretically justifies the rationale behind such a project.

In the second part of the novel, the reader is introduced to Sir Jack as entrepreneur, innovator, ideas man, arts patron and family man. These words were chiseled on a slate hanging in his quote room in Pitman House. His new enterprising project, which Sir Jack calls a "mighty Project," is building a colossal theme park, simulating Old England. He asks Jeffrey, his Concept Developer to carry out a survey on top characteristics and quintessence of England and Englishness around the world. He also demands Dr. Max, his Official Historian to probe how much domestic people know of their own history, since

"what domestic doesn't know the rest of the world won't be shagged to find out"(p. 58). Pitman seeks to exploit people's rudimentary knowledge of their country's past so as to distort it in a way it would have an appeal for the visitors around the world. He is not concerned about the verisimilitude of information conveyed to individuals, just to be palatable to them. What visitors to this constructed world will come across would be indeed a distorted history. Therefore, reality and *simulation* here will be so adeptly blurred that no visitor would be able to differentiate between the two. Reality and *simulation* of reality will be mingled in a way that visitors would savor what they will be provided with, without questioning their authenticity and veracity. Replica will offer more pleasure than original is supposed to do.

Sir Jack intends to turn the Isle of Wight, the little cutie, the little beauty, pure diamond, little jewel, "a location dying for makeover and upgrade" (p. 75) where the main industry used to be smuggling, into a great theme park (one should take note of the irony here). He aspires to create this as a microcosm of Old England; an exact replica of the original country. The replica will simulate the features associated with it in a manner that would gradually create a world of its own; a copy without an origin. It would include Old England's major tourist attractions, so that people would no longer be willing to visit the real country. Baudrillard contends that *hyperreality* comes to being when a copy precedes its original, when the copy no longer bears any relation to its original, constructing an independent world divorced from reality. The intended project corresponds with this contention in that it supersedes Old England, it creates a world of its own, and it is divorced from the outside world. *England, England* is thus a copy preceding its original in roughly all respects.

A hyperreal world is made possible through tampering with the real. An interview conducted by Dr. Max with a 49-year-old man, being the representative of the target group, indicated how people's understanding of their past history was rudimentary. The kind of response given to a question about the Battle of Hastings and its aftermath made Dr. Max terribly disappointed to discover how little people knew of their past history:

> There had been many others like this, and they were beginning to depress him. Most people remembered history in the same conceited yet evanescent fashion as they recalled their own childhood. It seemed to Dr. Max positively unpatriotic to know so little about the origins and forging of your nation. And yet therein lay the immediate paradox; that patriotism's most eager bedfellow was ignorance, not knowledge. (p. 80).

This condition provided Pitman and his staff with an opportunity to treat history as they pleased, fusing it with fantasy so it would be perfectly acceptable. Thus, the natives' inadequate knowledge of their own history became the stepping stone on which the mighty project, the simulation of national identity, was founded, and thus the forging of a false identity was commenced. Individuals then would face a history combined with fantasy, and therefore more pleasing to be welcomed. The borderline between what actually occurred and what was added would be hardly perceptible.

Having reviewed the list containing the quintessence associated with England, Sir Jack expunged from it such vices as homosexuality, hypocrisy, and whinging as "faulty polling technique" (p. 82) and weighed the rest. He removed them as unnecessary parts of the survey, and instead devoted his attention to the positive characteristics associated with Englishness, especially to historical monuments and places of interest. The negative features were thus deliberately left out.

In the constructed universe of Pitman, Even the qualities related to historical figures are intentionally massaged in order to suit contemporary interests. Concerning Nell Gwyn (the English actress who became the lover of king Charles II), for instance, they changed the story in a way to make her more palatable to the taste of people: "a little massaging, to bring her into line with third millennium family values" (p. 89), making her look older, and losing her social and religious background to fit marrying the king. In this constructed world no historical event is immune to change. No restrictions are placed on Pitman and his associates so that they are free to satisfy their cravings for tampering with reality. A concocted history takes the place of Old England's real history in such a way that it causes English subjects to have no recollection of their true past, to take the invented history for granted, and consequently to create a fallacious national identity. How can then one in such a situation orchestrated by entrepreneurs, seek the truth?

The Glamour of Hyperreality Over the Real

The theme park being the brainchild of Sir Jack is constructed with the purpose of, as he himself puts it, "making visitors feel that they have passed through a mirror, that they have left their own worlds and entered a new one, different yet strangely familiar, where things are not done as in other parts of the inhabited planet, but as if in a rare dream" (p. 112). This world is designed based on the quintessence

gathered through a survey. "Among the quintessence, past glories overshadow such present-day banalities as whinging, it is England in aspic, disabled by its past, backward-rather than forward-looking, assembling a populist past for consumer entertainment" (Groes & Childs, 2006, p. 85). Sir Jack subsumes everything associated with England: stretching from White cliffs of Dover to legendary and literary figures such as Robin Hood, and Dr. Johnson. Even the king and the queen are convinced to relocate to the theme park and make a speech. Sir Jack's negotiating team endeavors to convince the Royal Family by saying, "it is country's top cash crop. There would be a modernized Buckingham Palace, paying no taxes, and no intrusion by journalists since the only newspaper would be The Times of London" (p. 136). The main idea behind this relocation, however, according to Sir Jack's team was to "restore the glamour and pizzazz which had been so insolently wrenched from the Royal Family in past decades'' (p. 136). After great flattery and financial promises, the King and the Queen concurred to fly to the Island for the opening ceremony. Thus, the irony of situation here reaches its peak when the royal family show inclination to become part of the mighty project; the simulated world. In this way, the whole culture was gradually assembled into hyperreality.

Now tourists instead of having to travel around London to visit different historical and monumental places are here given the opportunity to take pleasure by visiting them all in *England, England*. It has a world of its own, "an offshore replica of an England that does not exist, or that exists only in the minds of international focus groups whom sir Jack asks to list the characteristics, virtues or quintessence suggested to them by the word England" (Greaney, 2006, p. 146). While the theme park is populated by numerous tourists from around the world, Old England is by contrast fading into oblivion. We are thus not dealing with the original and real, but a simulated England. The French philosopher who is invited to *England, England* is the one who endorses the project by believing that:

> We are talking of something profoundly modern. It is well established- and indeed it has been incontrovertibly proven by many of those I have earlier cited- that nowadays we prefer the replica to the original- we prefer the reproduction of the work of art to the work of art itself, the perfect sound and solitude of the compact disc to the symphony concert in the company of a thousand victims of throat complaints, the book on tape to the book on the lap…It is important to understand that in the modern world we prefer the replica to the original because it gives us the greater frisson. (p. 53)

The facts about Old England are disappointing as we are told "its diminishing population knew only inefficiency, poverty, and sin; depression and envy were apparently their primary emotions" (p. 189).Therefore in the constructed world everything is intended to look wholly glamorous and satisfactory. Attempts are made to create a strong sense of patriotism, "not one based on tales of conquest and sentimental recitations, but one which, as Sir Jack might have put it, was here, was now, and was magic" (p. 189). Those behind this simulated universe become so excited because this "repositioned patriotism would provoke a proud new insularity" (p. 189). They were proud to have been able to create a new England that could get the better of the Old one. Consequently tourists around the world, after visiting the constructed world, would show no inclination to see the real, the old one.

Even Dr Max, the official historian reinforces the precedence of replica over original, contending that what people always look for is the replica not the original. Martha explains how the famous statue of David by Michelangelo was removed and supplanted by a copy, which proved just as popular with visitors as the original. Surprisingly, a survey showed that ninety percent of those who were asked evinced no interest to visit the original statue. The survey conducted by Pitman House concluded that tourists until now had visited the original places because there was no alternative to these sites, and if tourists were given a choice to choose from an "inconvenient original," or a "convenient replica," most of them would be interested to visit the latter. "Don't you think, as Martha says, "it is empowering and democratic to offer people a wider choice, whether in breakfast food or historic sites? We're merely following the logic of the market" (p. 170). The idea of distorting historical facts for commercial purposes is clearly stated by Martha in the last utterance. Her utterances illustrate the impact of a replica, and how much it can overshadow an original. The constructed world is thus "a kind of parable about the fate of a national identity as Barnes's characters wrestle with doubts about the reliability of memory, the uses of the past, and the possibility of authentic contact with others in a world of *simulation* and *hyperreality*" (Bently, 2005, p. 95).

They learnt how to massage history, how to construct a false national identity, and how to make the project enjoy a lot of success; nonetheless, it bore no relation to the real world. According to Nick Rennison (2005):

> "eventually the fake England with its ersatz versions of Stonehenge and Big Ben, its extras dressed as cheery local bobbies and Robin Hood and his Merry Men, and with its own royal family, overtakes the real England which reverts to an almost pre-industrial state" (p. 26).

One major part of their task was "the repositioning of myths for modern times" (p. 139), a distortion of history in a manner that best suits the purpose of those behind the project. The history of Robin Hood and His Merrie Men, for instance, is altered by establishing a female presence (Maid Marian) from the start, in a way to appeal to the taste of the present by questioning if and why the Men were all men, and by suggesting that even the name of Robin is sexually ambiguous. The word Hood, meaning a piece of clothing that is ambisexual, is in question as well. Dr. Max is thus instructed to delve into the issue and his findings suggest the presence of Marian within the Band as later reported, leading to three possibilities, as Martha deduced from Dr. Max's report: first, Marian was conforming to "chivalric code of the times" (p. 143) Second, it was a "martial play" to escape sex. Third, Marian should have been "biologically male."

Theme Park Providing a False National Identity

After the Royal Family flew to the Island, it gained its independence. Sir Jack was appointed as Island Governor, and the Island threw off the yoke of Westminster and became an enormously popular tourist destination attracting many people from around the world. A vacation here may seem expensive, yet it is "a once-in-a-lifetime experience" (p. 169). Moreover, after visiting *England, England* there would be no need for visitors to see the old one. When asked by the journalist about her impression of the Island, Maisie Brankfordfrom Franklin expressed her complete satisfaction with the project, "we heard that England was kind of dowdy and old-fashioned, and not really up with the cutting edge of the modern world. But we've been mighty surprised. It's a real home away from home" (p. 170). In this way a false national identity begins to evolve.

Whereas the facts about Old England were disappointing as being in a state of "free fall, an economic and moral waste-pit" (p. 189) where penury was most prevalent and the manifold pathetic realities needed attending to, conditions in the Island were absolutely the opposite, "a modern patriotism" began to flourish. A totally disparate replica compared to its original developed: "Here on the island, they had learnt how to deal with history, how to sling it carelessly on your back and stride out across the downland with the breeze in your face. Travel light: it was true for nations as well as for hikers" (p. 190). However, to forge a new national identity through creation of a hyperreal world, here the theme park is not without its problems.

The Theme Park Being Problematized

Though the simulated universe enjoys a lot of success, it comes across some problems. There are complaints against the person who impersonates Dr. Johnson as he fails to present Dr. Johnson the way the theme park authorities expected him to do, believing that "he's depressing the company bydining with the visitors" (p. 194) and showing traits of "moodiness, melancholy, and a lack of civility towards those sharing his table"(p. 194). Martha reminds him of being engaged to play Dr. Johnson, "we want you to be Dr. Johnson, don't you understand? (p. 197). Since the impersonator is dissatisfied with his personal life as it has been "a waste barren of time, with some disorders of body, and disturbances of the mind very close to madness" (p. 198), he has taken refuge in playing Dr. Johnson's role. The present *hyperreal* of playing Dr. Johnson provides him with an opportunity to at least for a brief spell take his mind off the painful realities of his life. He opts for *hyperreality* so as not to recollect his real life being replete with bitter experiences and painful memories.

Another trouble facing the project rises from Robin Hood and his band that are central to the island. The band "a primal myth, repositioned after considerable debate" (p. 207), starts to cause trouble. Mr. Hood claims that the presence of homosexuals among them is "detrimental to good military discipline" (p. 210), and complains of not having had sex for months. These problems along with many others obsess Martha as she cannot come up with a viable solution: "what if they all took into their heads to behave like that? What if the King decided he really wanted to reign…what if robins decided they didn't like the snow?" (p. 211).

The Problem of Personal Identity

Martha Cochrane, despite being part of the Theme Park is the only one among individuals involved in the project who seeks true identity. All other are quite content with their enterprising project. She has been striving for finding a way to know her true nature and identity, but seems to have arrived at no definite conclusion. While at home with Paul, Martha talks to herself:

> And the surrounding problem was, how did you know what your nature was?; that most people located their nature in childhood...here

> was a photo of herself when young, frowning against the sun sticking out her lower lip: was this her nature or only her mother's poor photography?; but what if this nature was no more natural than the nature Sir Jack had satirically delineated after a walk in the country?; because if you were unable to locate your nature, your chance of happiness was surely diminished;… (p. 212).

Martha's mind, as the above quotation suggests, is very much engaged with the concepts of reality, true nature, and personal identity as elemental ingredient for happiness. She discusses her concern with Dr. Max, expressing her disapproval of the project, but Dr. Max like others espouses the rationale behind the project, and Martha finds it hard to go along with him. At home, again Martha ponders over her own life, the cause of her unhappy feelings, and the growing distance between herself and Paul. Dr. Johnson perhaps was right, "they had lost that tenderness of look and that benevolence of mind" (p. 206). Martha finds herself entangled in a predicament. She feels falling in love with Johnson. Paul somehow becomes suspicious of her behavior, trying to find out whether she is having an affair with someone. Martha refutes the claim, and is uncertain whether to discuss the problem with Paul or not. But that she has fallen in love with someone who does not exist anymore, died centuries ago, sounds utterly absurd. The fact that Martha has fallen in love with Dr. Johnson implies that she is filled with a sense of nostalgia for the past that comes in sharp contrast with present. She has gradually lost her trust in the hyperreal world of the Theme Park, representing a new England, losing her contact with it, and therefore no longer happy with the status quo. Despite Dr. Max's historical skepticism, Martha believes in happiness and strives to explore a world in which it would be attainable.

When she said she believed in it, she meant that she thought such a state existed and was worth trying to attain;

- true to your nature;
- that is true to your heart;
- but the main problem, life's central predicament, was, how did you know your heart? (p. 211).

Barnes, to quote Miracky, depicts a world where hyperreality triumphs on the one hand, and "incurporates elements that reach for an authentic human experience of the real" on the other. This situation causes the novel to remain in a position somewhere "between homage and parody of the dominance of the hyperreal." The relation between Martha and Paul can be thought of as a "possible antidote to the hyperreal world of the project as it is described using the language of the real" (qtd. in The Fiction of Julian Barnes, 2006, p. 112). It is evident in the conversation between the two when Paul says: "I just think you're…real. And you make me feel real. Is that good enough for you?" (p. 127).

Martha seems to have lost all hopes in finding happiness in a world where everything seems unnatural, and perhaps it is only in the world of her own heart that she hopes to discover her true nature and get a sense of identity. After a few years of wandering she finally decided to detach herself from the world of the Theme Park and went back to Anglia, a village where she belonged.

The Success of Theme Park and Defeat of Old England

By the time Martha left, Jack was ruling the island and he had managed to successfully deal with the subversive tendencies of such employees as the new Robin Hood and his Merrie men by being brought back to outlawry. Dr. Johnson had been moved to Dieppe hospital and "deep sedation was prescribed to control his self-mutilating tendencies" (p. 230). After a couple of years working as CEO, Paul was removed. Sir jack's "ninth symphony" brought him wealth and market applause. He was acknowledged as both innovator and man of ideas. By that time Old England had utterly lost its contact with the world. "A time of vertiginous decline" (p. 234) was ascendant in the original country. The tourist industry declined sharply, the currency was ruined by speculators, and the relocation of the Royal Family brought about the expatriation to become the vogue among the people of high social class; while "the country's best housing stock was bought as second homes by continental Europeans"(p. 234). Old England was consigned to oblivion. The constructed *England, England* engendered a memory not founded upon truth, but on falsity, a memory that began to flourish so that the world no longer recalled Old England. It was completely overshadowed by *England, England*:

> The world began to forget that England had ever meant anything except England, England, a false memory which the island worked to reinforce; while those who remained in Anglia began to forget the world beyond. Poverty ensued, of course, though the world meant less in the absence of comparisons. If poverty did not entail malnutrition or ill health, then it was not so much poverty as voluntary austerity. Those in search of traditional vanities were still free to migrate. Anglians also discarded much of the communications technology that had once

> seemed indispensible…Coal was dug again, and the kingdoms asserted their differences; new dialects emerged, based on the new separations. (p. 236)

The existing *hyperreal* society, indeed, preceded the real one, making people divert their attention away from Anglia which is in dire need of help and attention. It engendered a bogus memory and identity whose continuing dominance led to seemingly ineluctable implications.

Anglia as an Alternative to the Hyperreal World of Theme Park

The village where Martha had now lived for five years was "neither idyllic nor dystopic" (p. 239). There she made friends, read books, and grew turnips and cabbage in her garden. After residing in Anglia, Martha abandoned her attempts wrestling with the concepts of identity and reality; she entertained herself with the village fete and activities, trying to follow a simple life. She was not completely content with her current situation, but it appeared that she had no alternative. She had returned to Anglia as a "migrant bird" rather than a "zealot" and although she was conscious of the lack of originality, she was incapable of effecting a change and had no intention of concerning herself with such matters. She was not certain about anything, and therefore engaged herself with village activities:

> These questions were not debated in the village: a sign perhaps that the country's fretful, psoriatic self-consciousness had finally come to an end… She herself no longer itched with her own private questions. She no longer debated whether or not life was a triviality, and what the consequences might be if it were. Nor did she know whether the stillness she had attained was proof of maturity or weariness. (p. 241)

It is probably true, as Nick Bently (2005) maintains: "Anglia can be read as prescription for the anxiety over what is 'real' that runs throughout the novel. The unreliability of memory, the dishonoring and disowning of an imperial past, the sense of personal betrayal linked to national letdown-all complicate and thwart the possibility of authentic identity" (pp. 103-4). Or as Greaney suggests, the last part of the novel can be called a "failed *demuseumification*", in which Martha leaves the museum of Englishness with only finding out one thing-that is, England has become a museum (p. 149). To put it simply, she is not capable of doing anything special. Martha quits *England, England* while being aware of its lack of originality, but unable to effect a change. What Barnes has thus implicitly emphasized is that "Englishness is an empty illusion" (Groes & Childs, 2006, p. 93), or as Barnes himself maintains: "the novel is about the idea of England, authenticity, the search for truth, the invention of tradition, and the way in which we forget our own history" (Barnes, 2006, as cited in Guignery, 2006, p. 105).

Thus, the village of Anglia can be taken as a metaphor for Martha's heart where she hoped to find some traces of intact reality, genuine identity, peace and happiness. She came to acknowledge that she was fading, "transformed into an old maid" (p. 242) and thus endeavored to involve herself in matters of little importance, spending her time on trivialities in the hope that she would forget the present *hyperreality* to which she could not attend and was beyond her control. Since she had no power to change the hyperreal world of the Theme Park, simulated England, she tried at least not to be a part of it anymore, like the villagers who were unaware of the tribulations facing Old England. She no longer thought of the issues which concerned her greatly while working in the theme park. In the village she discovered the simple and solid reality of the soil out of which she grew turnip, cabbage and other vegetables. The material reality of the soil was a world apart from the simulated world of the theme park. Here nature emerged forcefully from the heart of the soil claiming its originality. That was perhaps the only solid reality she could rely on.

CONCLUSION

As argued, *England, England* concerns the construction of a simulated world on the Isle of Wight. The constructed 'utopian' world is intended to divert people's attention from the 'dystopian' one, Old England. Anything represented in this new world is a simulation of Old England that is intended to look more glamorous and satisfactory, in a way that almost all visitors after visiting the theme park would not like to see the real England. Since more often than not, reality does not give individuals pleasure, its *simulation* is a potentially acceptable alternative offering them the kind of satisfaction they always seek. However, it is due to visitors' limited and rudimentary knowledge, as Dr.Max's survey suggested, about the history of England and its culture that makes them believe in whatever presented in the simulated world of *England, England* as real. Thus, Barnes in his novel tries to demonstrate how a whole culture could be assembled into a world of *hyperreal*, and how a false national identity might evolve.

Martha, the protagonist of the novel and as a part of the project, initially became overwhelmingly impressed by the glamour of the simulated world, but gradually lost interest in the entire project as she came to the realization that everything presented in the theme park was fake and lacked originality. She found herself in a simulated world in which nothing seemed genuine. This condition depressed her and made her question her own identity as well as true nature. She knew that only by discovering her own true nature she could regain her lost happiness. Barnes's fiction has a powerful resonance in contemporary life. In modern societies, according to Baudrillard's consumerist theory, individuals' lives are enormously influenced by constructions made of signs and images, which refer to no reality or bearing little resemblance to the one we inhabit, a hyperreal world. In order to save herself, Martha leaves the hyperreal world of *England, England* and seeks refuge in the village of Anglia. To place Anglia in sharp contrast to *England, England* is deliberate and very meaningful on the part of the author. His aim is to compare and contrast the simplicity and naturalness of the world presented by the village with the glamour, artificiality, and fakeness, of the theme park, simulated England.

As the study shows, there are close affinities between Baudrillard's concepts of *hyperreality* and *simulation* and contemporary life presented by *England, England*. Having made use of such notions, Barnes very beautifully portrays how awful and sometimes irreversible the damages caused by *hyperreality* might be, how individuals embroiled in it can grow apathetic about the world and its problems, and how traumatic, after abandoning the unreal universe, this experience could be for them. Disillusionment and depression, as experienced by Martha, are thus expected concomitants of it. The whole story implies how and in which ways a *hyperreal* world supersedes a real one and suggests the disastrous effects awaiting modern societies if they walk away from real life and resort to the hyperreal.

REFERENCES

Groes, S. & Childs, P. (Eds). (2011). *Julian Barnes*: *Contemporary critical perspectives*. London: Continuum.

Barnes, J. (1998). *England, England*. New York: Vintage.

Baudrillard, J. (1995). *Simulacrum and simulation*. Trans. Sheila Faria Galser.

Bently, N. (Ed.). (2005). *British fiction of the 1990s*. London: Routledge.

Childs, P. (2006). *Contemporary novelists: British fiction since 1970*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Greaney, M. (2006). *Contemporary fiction and the uses of theory: The Novel from Structuralism to Postmodernism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Guignery, V. (2006). *The fiction of Julian Barnes*. London: Palgrave Macmillan

Hegarty, P. (2004). *Jean Baudrillard: Live theory*. London: Continuum.

Lane, R J. (2000). *Jean Baudrillard*. London: Routledge.

Rennison, N. (2005). *Contemporary British novelists*. London: Routledge.