

HALO

PACES TEMASI:
FANTASY

PACES KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Ege Üniversitesi'nden
Doç. Dr. Züleyha ÇETİNER ÖKTEM



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Keynote Speaker

Doç. Dr. Züleyha ÇETİNER ÖKTEM

METAFANTASY

When Fantasy Knows It's a Story

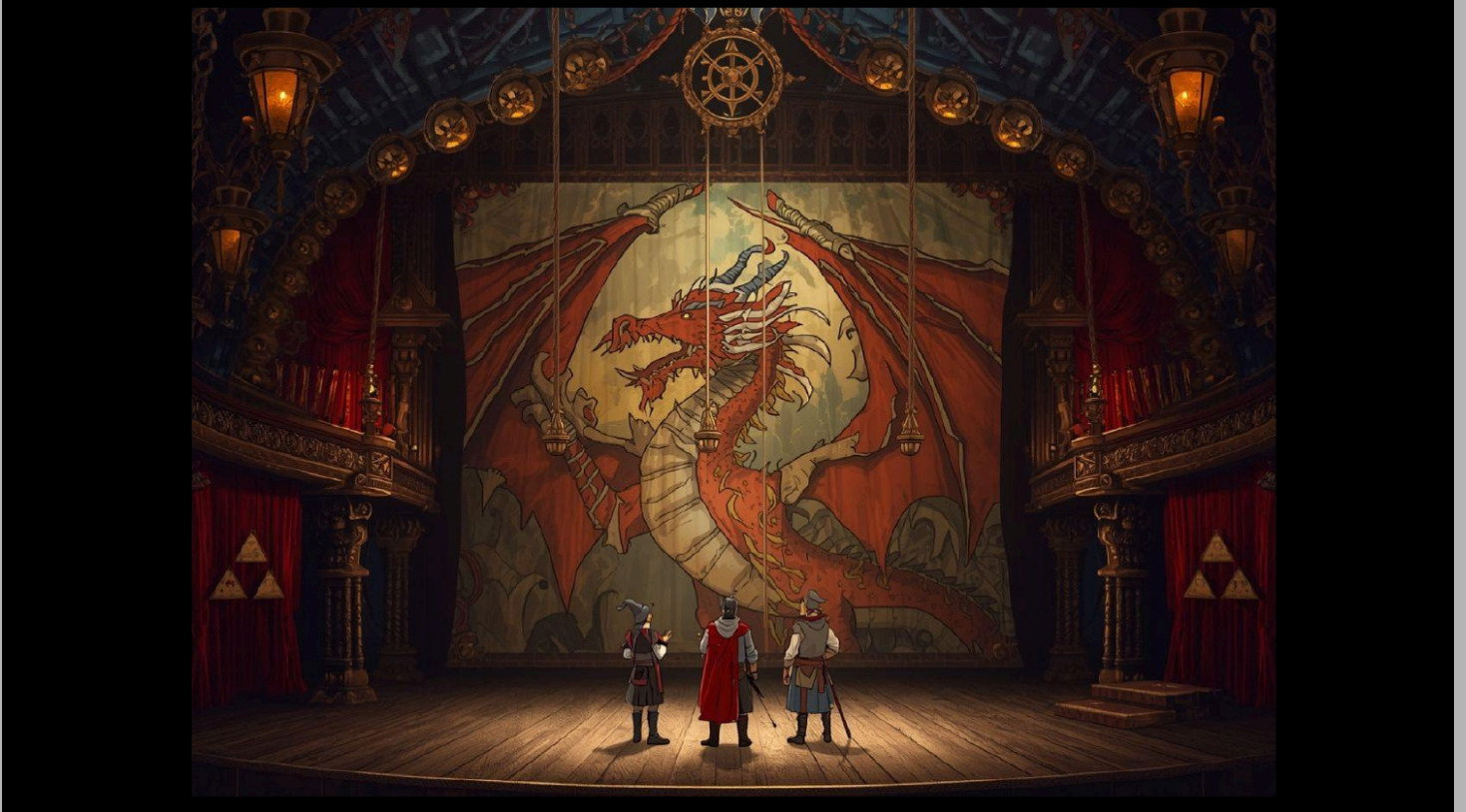
Shrek · Adventure Time · Terry Pratchett, *Witches Abroad*

Züleyha Çetiner-Öktem
Ege University

PACES 11 May 2026
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What is Metafantasy?

- *Metatextuality (broader category)*
- *Metafiction (subset with a more specific focus)*
- *Metafantasy (adds a third layer of specificity)*



Three Moments

01 *Shrek*

A fairy tale book.
A hand tears out a page.
Toilet paper.

02 *Adventure Time*

An old man writes a letter
to a little girl. Writing so
she will remember who he
was.

03 *Witches Abroad*

*"People think stories are
shaped by people. In fact,
it is the other way
around."*

What do these three things have in common?

**They are all stories that know
exactly what stories do.**

And none of them are comfortable with it.

The Argument in Three Acts

I

Shrek

Genre conventions carry ideology.
Fluency before subversion.

II

Adventure Time

Narrative as identity & and as trap.
The story you're in without knowing it.

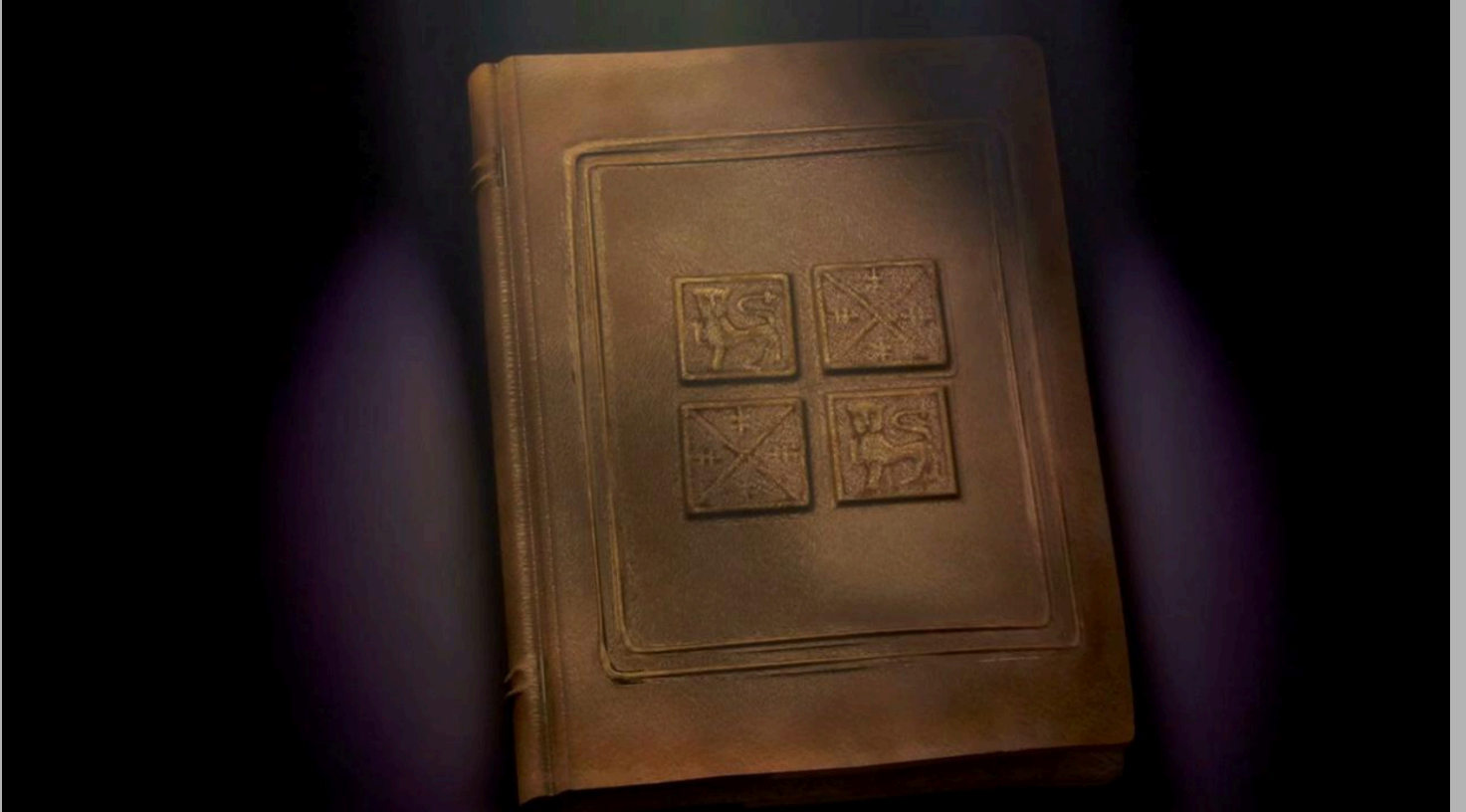
III

Witches Abroad

Narrative as power.
Resistance as reading.

Act I — Shrek

The Fairy Tale That Bites Back



Operating within the Genre

What Shrek KEEPS

- The castle
- The princess
- The dragon
- The quest
- The villain
- The happy ending

What Shrek SHUFFLES

- Who counts as the hero
- Who deserves the happy ending
- What the villain actually is
- Whether you should want the journey at all

Lord Farquaad

Not the monster. But the man who deploys the narrative as power.

- Rounds up fairy tale creatures — expels them from his "perfect kingdom"
- Uses narrative to define who belongs and who is monstrous
- Believes absolutely in the story he is telling about himself
- He is not unusual: he is a recognisable archetype of cultural gatekeeping

Key Concept

Genre conventions carry ideology.

What a story treats as normal — unremarkable, requiring no explanation — reveals what the culture that produced it values, fears, and considers natural.

Metafantasy makes the invisible visible.

Act II — Adventure Time

The Story You're Living Without Knowing It

Simon & Marceline

Simon Petrikov

- Scholar. Gentle man. Found an ancient crown.
- Crown = power + terrible cost.
- Slowly erodes mind, memory, identity.
- Becomes the Ice King — bumbling, pitiable, lost.
- Doesn't know who he used to be.

Marceline

- Vampire. A thousand years old.
- Simon found her as a child after the war.
- Was (as much as anything could be) her family.
- Carries the story of who Simon was.
- Processes identity and loss through music.



"I Remember You"

*Simon writes letters to Marceline as he loses himself to the crown.
He doesn't remember writing them.
He doesn't remember her.*

Narrative self-preservation:

Telling himself to her so the story of who he was will survive somewhere ...
Even if it can't survive in him.

The Ice King doesn't know he's a tragedy.

That's exactly what makes him one.

The story HE thinks he's in

- Bumbling villain in his own fairy tales
- Kidnapping princesses — because that's what the genre requires
- Certain that eventually one will love him
- Himself as the misunderstood hero

The story WE know he's in

- A tragedy: Simon Petrikov, consumed by a crown
- A man who lost authorship of his own story
- A portrait of narrative identity loss
- The audience knows his story better than he does

Key Concept

Narrative as identity. And as trap.

The stories we're placed inside can define us without our consent. Simon didn't choose the crown's story. The crown's story ate him anyway.

How many of the narratives we inhabit did we actually choose?

Act III — Witches Abroad

Narrative as Power, Resistance as Reading

Stories Have Gravity

*"People think that stories are shaped by people.
In fact, it is the other way around."*

— Terry Pratchett, *Witches Abroad*

- On the Disc, narrative causality is a physical property of the universe
- The young man has to slay the dragon. The poor girl has to go to the ball.
- Not chosen, but required. The story bends reality toward itself.
- Fantasy literalises what operates invisibly in our world:
- Cultural narratives create grooves easy to slide into and hard to climb out of.

Lilith de Tempscire

The villain who believes in stories too much.

What Lilith does:

- Takes control of the city of Genua
- Forces fairy tale resolutions on its people
- Servant girls will go to the ball.
- Frogs will become princes.
- Whether the people want it or not.
- Stories as governance. Narrative as power.

The twist:

Lilith thinks she is the heroine.

She genuinely believes she is doing good.

The most dangerous storyteller: the one certain they're telling the right story.

Witches Abroad — Terry Pratchett (1992)

The Mechanism is the Same

When a dominant story is imposed on others as the story:

Colonial narratives

"We brought civilisation."

Gender scripts

"This is what fulfilment looks like."

Class narratives

"Your modest contentment is dignity."

Educational stories

"This is who deserves to be here."

All of these are Lilith's move.

Granny Weatherwax

The model for what a critical reader looks like.

*Granny wins not by telling a better story.
She wins by understanding the mechanism & stepping outside
the story's logic entirely.*

- Doesn't believe stories owe people anything
- Refuses to be recruited by a narrative, including ones she agrees with
- Maintains what you might call narrative critical distance
- Granny vs. Lilith: believes in people, not in stories
- Not coldness but a form of profound respect: others are not characters in her story

Key Concept

The ability to see the story you're in is a form of power.

The inability to see it (or the refusal to question it) is a form of captivity. Metafantasy trains you to see the shape of the story from the outside.

Critical literacy as resistance.

Synthesis

One argument, three ways, increasing depth

Three Texts, One Argument

Text	Metafictional Move	Critical Tool
<i>Shrek</i>	Parodies genre from inside; exposes its assumptions	Exposure: see what's hidden in 'normal'
<i>Adventure Time</i>	Stories as identity and trap; dramatic irony at scale	Empathy: recognise when someone is trapped in a narrative
<i>Witches Abroad</i>	Narrative gravity; imposed stories as political violence	Resistance: refuse the story's terms; author yourself

Not three separate arguments.

One argument. Three ways. Increasing depth.

Shrek

Look at what the genre assumes.

Adventure Time

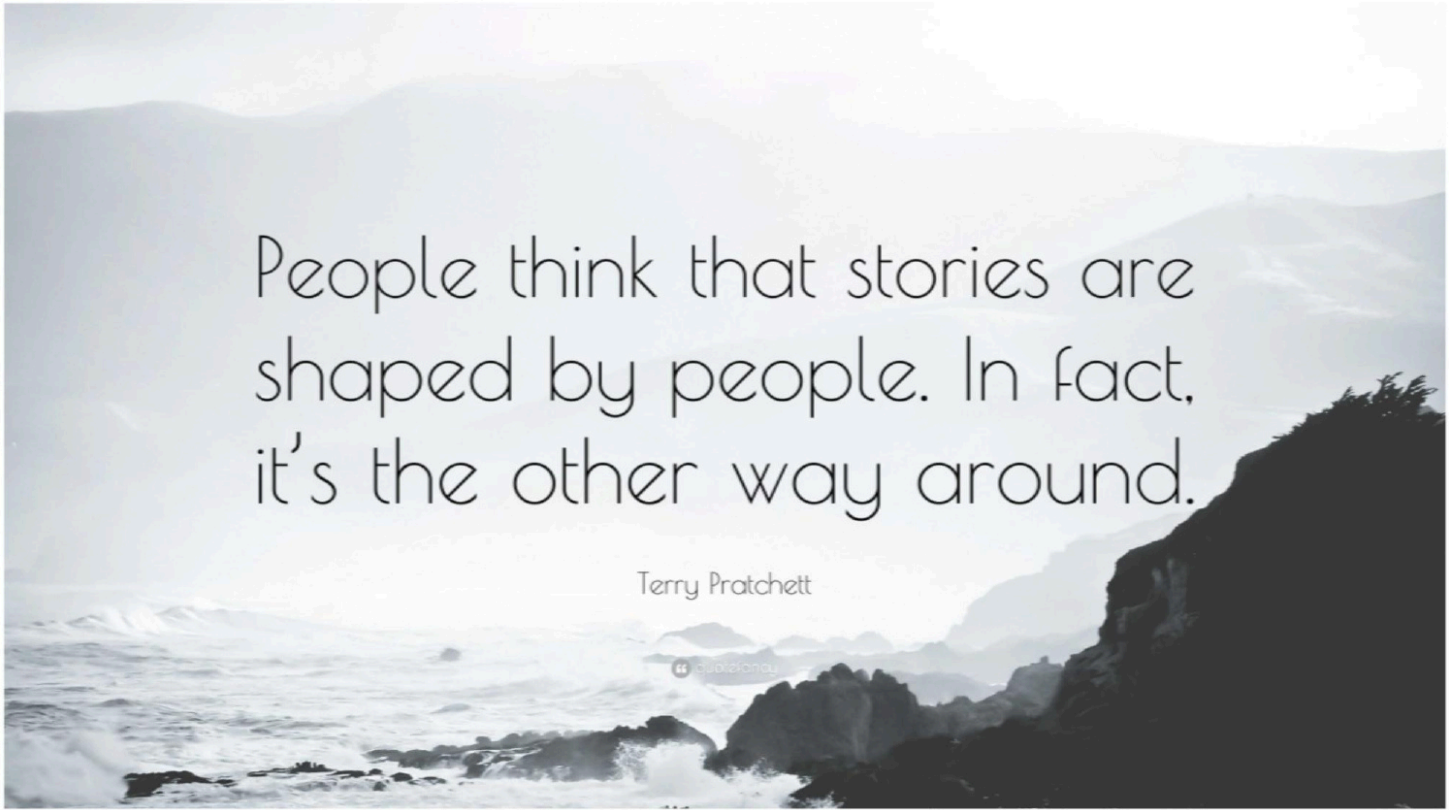
Look at what happens when a story consumes someone.

Witches Abroad

Here's what it takes to resist.

Metafantasy is a training ground.

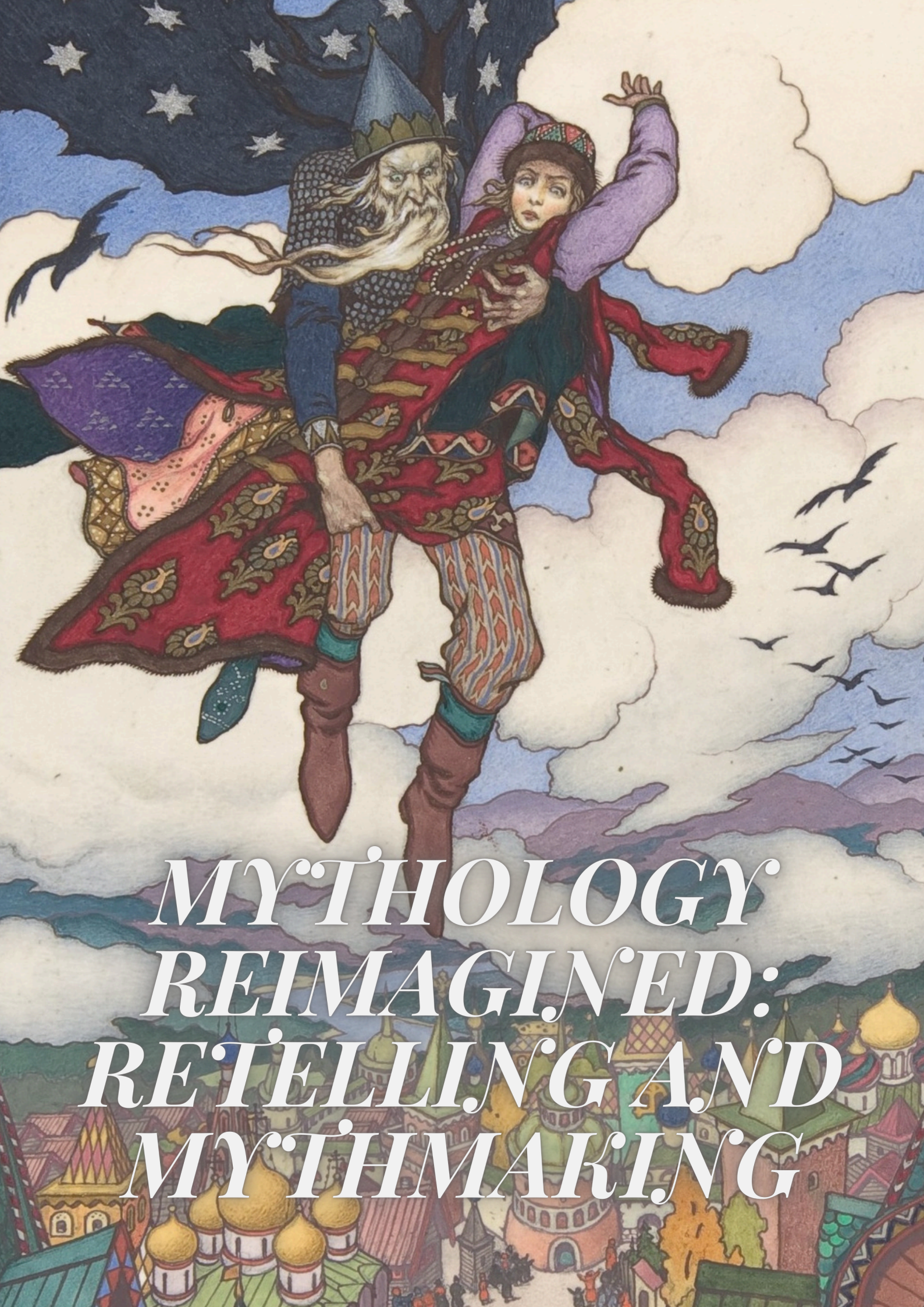
*The ability to see the story.
Name it.
Decide whether to live inside it.*



People think that stories are
shaped by people. In fact,
it's the other way around.

Terry Pratchett

“[quotation](#)”



*MYTHOLOGY
REIMAGINED:
RETELLING AND
MYTHMAKING*

From Complaint to Confession: Mythic Retelling and the Politics of Visibility in C.S. Lewis's *Till We Have Faces*

İlke YALÇIN

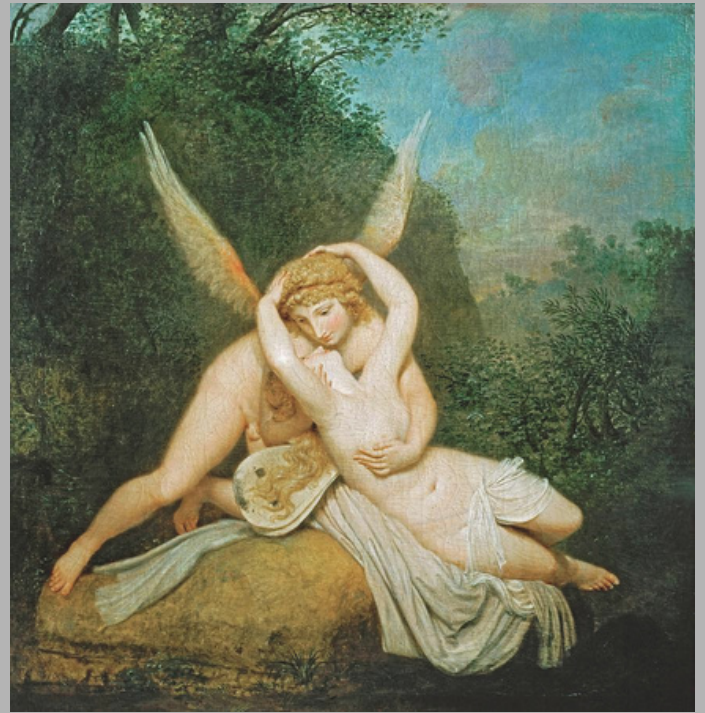
C.S. Lewis's *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* rewrites the Cupid and Psyche chapter from Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* by removing the beautiful sister from the centre of the narrative and handing the entire telling to Orual, the so-called ugly sister that stands at the margins of the story. The retelling functions as a structural argument about what a story demands from the one who tells it rather than being a sympathetic correction of a myth. Orual's written complaint provides a sincerity masked within a system that conceals its author. The testimony she produces is a demand for the recognition of the divine. She writes as if any written document

guarantees visibility. With that instance, the novel's layered structure completely exposes that the complaint works as a self-justifying mechanism, and absolute visibility calls for the deconstruction of the very narrative that made the complaint convincing. Lewis, with his novel, does more than shift the perspective; he rather constructs a story that forces its narrator to become her enemy.

The pseudotranslation frame addresses this problem at the level of language. Orual feels her grief in the realm of her mother tongue, yet she writes her accusation in Greek. The reader of the text, however,

encounters an English version of that Greek text, creating total denial of a connection concerning the original wounded self. This chain of language ensures that Orual's voice is heard from inside a structure of distortion before she is allowed to utter a single sentence. Pseudotranslation in this context goes beyond being just a decorative element concerning the text; rather, it transforms the text into a palimpsest where both the pre-existing myth and pain remain irreparable. The linguistic self-awareness Orual is bound to is also the aspect that creates her understanding of the account she has written, which is already a rewriting, yet the first part of the novel continues as if the force of her suffering could outweigh that fact. This illumination works on the reader as well, with the beginning of the novel inviting its audience to convey a sympathy for a woman who has been wronged by the gods, and that feeling becomes the exact thing the second part must undo.

The transition from Part One to Part Two reshapes the nature of



complaint with the labour of self-accusation. Linda Hutcheon's argument in *Theory of Adaptation* is that every retelling is a rereading and a reinterpretation. And with that, adaptation turns into a violent literalism when Orual rereads her own manuscript. Upon this act she discovers that the story she wrote was nothing but a mask. Her "love" for Psyche, presented as self-sacrificing devotion, unfolds itself as possessiveness so absolute that it would destroy the beloved. The gods she accused of silence were silent because she was not capable of hearing an answer. Orual names this a "labour of sifting and sorting" (256), and this phrase reaches the

Orual's veil stands as the exact epitome that makes the complaint possible, and while her veil shields her from the gaze of others, it also prevents her from seeing the face behind the narrative. The second part of the novel begins when the disguise behind that veil becomes unbearable, and this suffering brings the gap between the self and the story into a collapse. Thus, writing and unveiling function as a necessary structure within the narrative since the revision in the second part also requires a gaze turned inward as a form of unmasking. These instances of masking and unmasking prepare the main dilemma concerning the entire narrative: "How can they meet us face to face till we have faces?" (294). This question also defines the silence of the gods as a mirror of Orual's journey of finding the hidden self. Having a face in this retelling therefore becomes an achievement that has to be earned through suffering.

Lewis's politics of visibility denies the notion that suffering awards moral clarity. Orual's journey from complaint to confession ends with a face that has been exposed through self-recognition accompanied by self-ruin. The labour of sifting leaves the one who sifts exposed with nothing to hide behind and even strips away the beautiful "truth" that has been produced. The novel ends with Orual undone by her own narrative and standing unshielded before gods who were always present. The face she now brings to the encounter is the one that survived the labour, and this face no longer needs the constraints of a veil since now there is nothing left to hide.

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Koschei the Deathless and the Slavic Understanding of Immortality

Zeynep Nazlıhan ÖDER

Koschei the Deathless is one of the most popular figures in Slavic folklore, appearing across hundreds of tales as the immortal antagonist who cannot be killed by ordinary means. Yet despite this popularity, he has received surprisingly little attention in mythological scholarship, and the reason lies partly in how immortality itself is studied. When scholars discuss immortality in mythology, they tend to work within familiar frameworks — transcendence, divine reward, or eternal punishment — lenses shaped by Greek, Norse, and Christian traditions.

But this paper asks a different question: what does immortality mean within a distinctly Slavic mythological framework? And it

argues that the answer, examined through Koschei, is something altogether different.

To examine this, the primary sources are skazka texts — Slavic folktales — because written mythological sources were largely destroyed during Christianization. For this reason, the mythological system is reconstructed through folkloric analysis, a standard methodology established by scholars such as Meletinskij and Rybakov, who argue that folktales preserve mythological content in transformed form.

Before turning to Koschei's role in these narratives, it is worth asking what his name tells us. The most widely accepted root connects it to *kost*, which means bone. This is

most likely related to his appearance as Koschei is consistently described as a skeletal and gaunt figure. The second root, *kashey*, borrowed from Turkic languages, means captive or slave; and this is also no surprise, because in many tales Koschei is first encountered chained in a dungeon. Another interesting point is his epithet. His full name in Russian is *Koschei Bessmertniy*. Here, the prefix *bes* means without, and *smert* means death. So it translates as "Koschei without death". And this means that his immortality is a lack,



an absence of something that should be there.

And the narratives themselves confirm this. Koschei appears across East Slavic tales, most notably in *The Frog Princess* and *Marya Morevna* as the main antagonist. He lives at the edge of the world, in a realm bordering the land of the dead, and the hero's entire journey is structured around reaching him. But even then, Koschei cannot be killed by ordinary means. In *Marya Morevna*, drinking three buckets of water restores his power and he breaks twelve iron chains. Yet the main problem in the narrative is not his physical strength, it's his immortality, as his soul is not in his body. According to tales, on the Island of Buyan, there's an oak tree. Inside that oak tree, there's a chest. Inside the chest, a hare, a duck, an egg... Inside the egg, finally, a needle. And only breaking the needle kills him. This mechanism, classified in folklore studies as ATU 302 (Ogre's Heart in the Egg motif), shows that his immortality is not a biological state.



This is where the concept of nezhit becomes essential. The term derives from nezhiyoy — the non-living — and refers to beings that belong to the otherworld but remain on the border between the two worlds. They are also called nechistaya sila (unclean force). This category includes the upir (vampire), rusalka, kikimora, and unbaptized children too. What they share is that they could not or did not complete the natural passage of death, so they are stuck. Koschei is the most extreme expression of this category. His existence suspends the world. He is interpreted in Slavic cosmology as a figure of eternal winter: as long as he endures, the natural cycle cannot turn, the abducted princess cannot be freed, and the world cannot be reborn. Therefore, his destruction is a cosmic necessity.

Three conclusions follow from this examination. First, immortality in the Slavic tradition is neither reward nor punishment — it is an anomaly and a stasis. Second, death is not an ending but a passage that must be completed. And third, from pagan deity to folktale villain, Koschei changed — but the Slavic understanding of what immortality means did not. The third conclusion matters precisely because Slavic mythology is one of the most difficult systems to study. Unlike Greek or Norse tradition, written sources were destroyed during Christianization, and what survived was already filtered through a Christian worldview. Through figures such as Koschei we can understand and reconstruct something that written sources cannot give us: the cosmological logic, the belief system, and the way people once understood their place in the world.

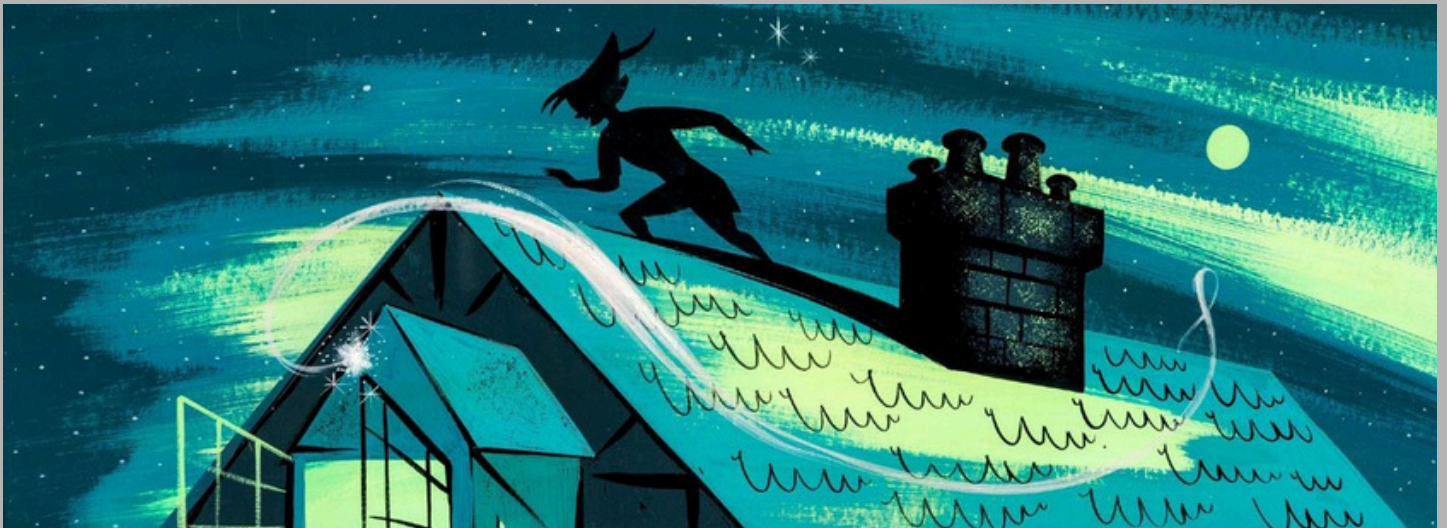
The Puer Aeternus: Myth and Eternal Childhood in J. M. Barrie's Peter Pan

Nermin ATASEVER

J. M. Barrie's Peter Pan may seem like a simple story about childhood and imagination. However, he can be understood as a psychological figure who refuses to grow up. In Carl Jung's theory, this type of character is called the puer aeternus, or the "eternal child," which describes someone who avoids adult responsibility and remains in a state of immaturity.

This essay argues that Peter Pan reflects this archetype and shows the negative side of eternal childhood. Peter's refusal to grow up is not freedom, but a limitation that prevents him from developing as a complete individual. In Jungian theory, this is related to individuation, the process of becoming a whole self (Jacobi 54). Peter refuses to face his Shadow, the parts of himself he does not want to accept (Jung 178), and therefore he cannot complete this process.

The name 'Pan' connects Peter to the Greek god associated with instinct, wildness, and chaos, reinforcing his existence outside social rules and



heartless,” which shows that although he seems joyful, he lacks emotional depth and empathy. This makes it difficult for him to form lasting emotional connections. Because he does not grow or change over time, he cannot develop a stable identity.

For the Darling children, Neverland is a temporary space where they can rehearse the roles of adulthood before returning home. But for Peter, the “escape” has become a permanent prison. He uses Neverland not to understand life better, but to avoid it completely. While fantasy should be a bridge back to reality, Peter has burned the bridge and stayed on the other side.



This idea connects directly to what Marie-Louise von Franz describes as a “provisional life,” where everything feels temporary and real commitment is avoided (von Franz 22). In Neverland, everything is treated like a game, and even basic actions such as eating are sometimes imagined rather than real. Nothing leads to lasting development. While his ability to fly suggests freedom, it also shows that he avoids staying in one place or facing reality.

Peter’s psychological conflict is best understood through his relationship with his Shadow, Captain Hook. In Jung’s theory, the Shadow represents the parts of the self that a person refuses to accept, often including aging,

responsibility, and mortality (Jung 178). Hook represents these qualities. Unlike Peter, he is aware of time, symbolized by the crocodile that has swallowed a clock. Hook's fear reflects a recognition of mortality that Peter avoids. Peter's mockery of this form is therefore not only playful, but also a rejection of the structures that give human life meaning. His statement, "To die will be an awfully big adventure," shows that he cannot fully understand the seriousness of life.



His emotional distance is closely connected to his relationship with Wendy and the maternal role she represents. Peter explains that when he once returned home, "the window was barred, for there was another little boy sleeping in my bed" (Barrie 132). This moment suggests an early experience of rejection that shapes his later behavior. In Neverland, Wendy becomes a "mother" figure rather than an equal partner. When she asks about his feelings, Peter responds, "Those of a devoted son" (Barrie 134), placing her in a fixed and limited role. In Jungian theory, the anima is connected to emotional development and the deeper inner world (Jung 180). Instead of engaging with emotional depth, Peter remains at a surface level.

This limitation becomes most visible in the final image of the novel. Peter stands outside the window while Wendy grows into adulthood. He remains separate from the world she enters. He is no longer simply different;

he is excluded from the structures that define human life. He is trapped in a world where nothing changes, and therefore nothing truly matters.



Peter is not outside time; he is trapped outside meaning. Ultimately, Barrie's work suggests that while the "flight" of imagination offers an escape from reality, it is only through the "gravity" of responsibility and the acceptance of our own mortality that we can truly become whole.



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A painting of a white cloth with a strawberry pattern hanging against a dark green background. The cloth is pinned at the top and has red liquid dripping from the bottom. The text is overlaid on the cloth.

*TRANSLATION,
DISCOURSE, AND
REPRESENTATION
IN LITERATURE*

Understanding Adaptations: Revisiting Free Translation Techniques Through the Comparative Analysis of Özdemir Nutku's and Can Yücel's A Midsummer Night's Dream Translations Into Turkish

Ahmet Emre ASLAN

There is a demand for the translator to become a ghost. The ethical translator, according to the traditional view, neutrally reproduces a text without adding or subtracting meaning. It is demanded that the translator operates as an invisible servant to the source author. Within this prescriptive view, any visible adaptation is a corruption, resonating with the Italian proverb “Traduttore, traditore. (Translator, the traitor.)”

Yet a ghost cannot direct actors on a stage. When Özdemir Nutku and Can Yücel translated William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream into Turkish, they had to be precise with the distinction between drama and theatre translation. Aaltonen (2000) observes that the literary system of drama differs from the practical system of active performance. Nutku treated the play as a book while Yücel treated it as a blueprint for further action.



Nutku prioritized what Nida (1964) defined as formal equivalence, attempting to match grammatical units and word usage directly to Shakespeare's English. In the second act, Shakespeare's Titania commands her fairies to sing her to sleep, warding off "weaving spiders" and "beetles black". Nutku delivers exactly this: "Dokumacı örümcekler" and "karafatmalar". The translation reads beautifully on the page. However, by binding himself to a strict textual hierarchy, Nutku overlooks the concept of the "gestic text." Bassnett (1991) argues this gestural dimension is deeply encoded in written language, waiting to be performed on stage. Nutku includes the linguistic signs but does not include the physical dimension.

Yücel deals with the textual hierarchy through cultural humor. Translating the play as *Bahar Noktası*, he turned the fairy queen Titania into "Müzeyyen" and her attendants into a chorus singing local Turkish lullabies. When he translates the lullaby, he writes: "Çatal dilli yılanlar / Bilcümle solucanlar / Çıyanlarla ozanlar / Uzak durun Hatçe'den!". He adds poets (ozanlar) to the list of pests. It is technically inaccurate, but also the version that functions better in the Turkish theatre. Yücel applied dynamic equivalence, seeking naturalness of expression to produce the same emotional relationship for the Turkish audience that existed for the Elizabethan one. He exercises what Popovič (1970) termed "shifts

of expression". Popovič believes these shifts are not deviations made out of disrespect to the source text. They are the functional mechanisms a translator uses to grasp the work in its totality and reproduce it in the way the recipient culture would understand and accept it.

The Turkish literary environment mostly rejected Yücel's methodology. Many critics labeled him disrespectful to the canonical original. To understand this hostility, we have to look at the macro-level structure of the target literature. Even-Zohar's (1990) polysystem theory dictates that translated literature operates according to its position within the larger literary polysystem. When translation occupies a peripheral position, the system expects translators to adhere to the gist of the original. Toury (1995) confirms this, noting that translators are subject to an "initial norm". The Turkish system demanded an "adequate" translation conforming to source norms, while Yücel provided an "acceptable" translation conforming to target culture norms



This is why it was seen as a violation of the conventions of the Turkish polysystem.

The obvious academic objection is that Yücel's radical naturalization changes the source content entirely. Brisset (1986) observes that adaptations serves as reterritorialization, annexing the text for the new audience. When Yücel replaces Elizabethan fairies with Turkish locals gossiping about poets, he does what Laera (2014) describes as an exercise in self-definition through the seizure of the foreign. This seizure operates through ideological exclusions and power imbalances. If translators constantly mold foreign texts to the tastes of the target culture, they erase the exact borders translation exists to cross. We lose the strangeness of the original world. This is a real cost.

Translating for the stage requires acknowledging that the written word is only one fragment of a vast multisensory flow. Postmodern approaches argue that neutral transfer is impossible because translation inherently transforms the text. Clinging to absolute invisibility masks the translator's subjective role in cultural mediation.

Nutku built a self-contained literary entity meant for solitary reading. Yücel built a targeted product for active spectatorship. He did not betray Shakespeare's work. He recognized that taking a script off the page and molding it to the physical and cultural reality of a new audience is the most efficient way a dramatic text survives.

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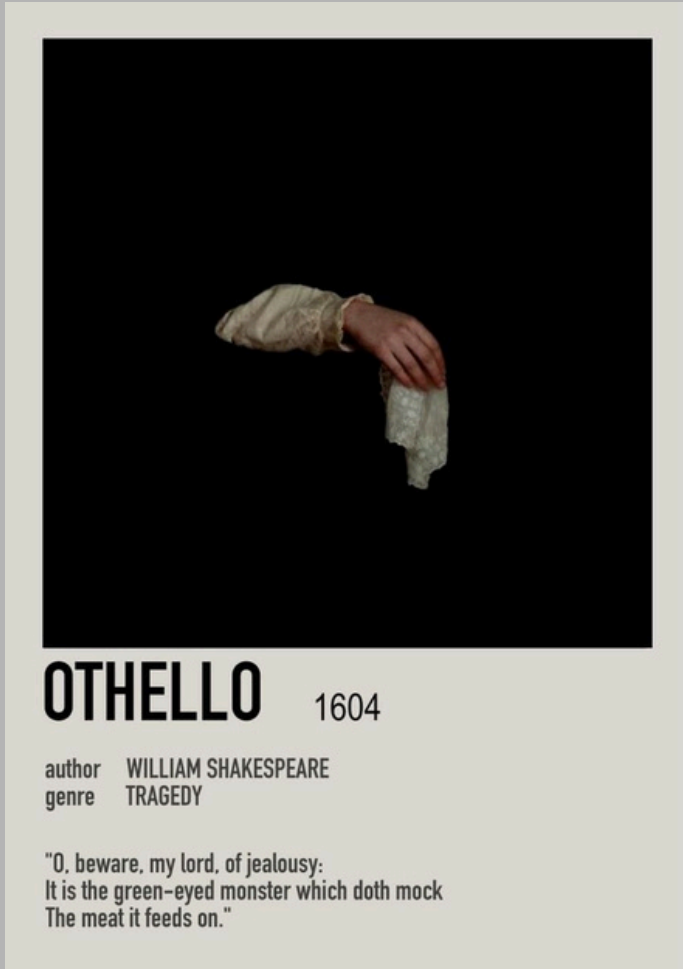
Translation Strategies and the Fantasy of the Other: A Comparative Analysis of Turkish Translations of Shakespeare's Othello

Müge ÖZER – Berre ÇAĞMAN

Introduction

In Othello, European society views the Moorish commander as barbaric, dangerous, and uncontrollable. In this study we call this identity as "Fantasy of the Other." Over time, Othello internalizes this constructed identity, and by the end of the play he kills himself, identifying himself as the Turk he believes he has become. Translation is not a purely linguistic act; every choice a translator makes reshapes the text and its ideological content. What happens to this fantasy when it translated into Turkish?

Othello has been translated into Turkish many times since 1877. While previous scholars such as Gümüş (2012) and Demirkol (2006) have analyzed these translations, none has comparatively examined the underlying approaches within their historical contexts. This study addresses that gap by analyzing Özdemir Nutku's (1985) and Bülent Bozkurt's (1996) translations through the framework of Venuti's domestication and foreignization, asking: how are racist expressions and themes of otherness represented in each translation, and how do the periods of production shape those choices?



Methodology

This study applies the concepts of domestication and foreignization as theorized by Lawrence Venuti in *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995). Domestication makes the translated text familiar to the target reader, prioritizing meaning over foreign structure and rendering the translator invisible. Foreignization resists full cultural adaptation, preserving the strangeness of the source and making the translator's presence felt. Venuti views

domestication as ethically problematic because it erases both the translator's labor and the foreignness of the source.

Nutku himself states that theatre translation requires interpretive language that appeals to a contemporary audience and allows fluent performance on stage (Nutku, 2010, p. 39). Bozkurt, by contrast, aims to preserve the original text, even using expressions that may sound unfamiliar to Turkish readers (Bozkurt, 2012, p. 6). The analysis also considers the historical contexts of each translation. Nutku worked under the restrictive atmosphere following the 1980 military coup, while Bozkurt produced his translation in the comparatively liberal 1990s.

Findings and Discussion

The Concept of the Other in Othello

Throughout the play, Othello is othered through his blackness, his supposed barbarism, and his

supposed barbarism, and his association with Turkishness. As Greenblatt et al. (2012) note, the term "Moor" in the early modern period broadly referred to anyone who was not a white Christian (p. 2073). Meanwhile, Thompson (2016) observes that Turks were frequently depicted as barbaric and dangerous in Elizabethan texts (p. 14) a perception rooted in the genuine threat posed by Ottoman military power. As Vitkus (1997) argues, Othello is transformed into a "generalized Muslim other" (Dinçel, 2012, p. 124). The Elizabethan phrase "turning Turk" symbolized moral and civilizational collapse, and by the play's end Othello kills the Turk he believes himself to have become, completing the tragic arc of an externally imposed fantasy.

Domestication in Nutku's Translation

The clearest example of Nutku's domesticating strategy is his treatment of the word "Turk." Where Shakespeare writes "Are we turn'd Turks" (2.3.164), Nutku

renders this without the word "Türk," replacing it with a paraphrase that points only to the Ottomans as a historical state. Bozkurt, by contrast, translates directly: "Türklere mi döndük ki biz" ("Have we turned into Turks"). Nutku's choice is plausibly linked to the political climate of the early 1980s, when martial law restricted press and publishing and expressions linking Turkishness to barbarism could have been deemed ideologically



dangerous (Ural & Ercilsin, 2018, p. 573). Pointing to the Ottomans, a vanished empire allowed Nutku to sidestep contemporary political risk.

Foreignization in Bozkurt's Translation

Bozkurt consistently preserves source-text cultural references. When Lodovico calls Iago a "Spartan dog" (5.2.366), Bozkurt translates this directly as "Sparta köpeği" and adds a footnote explaining that Spartan dogs were renowned in antiquity for their ferocity. Nutku renders the same phrase as "Ispartalı köpek," bringing it slightly closer to a Turkish ear without the explanatory apparatus. Bozkurt's use of footnotes is itself a marker of foreignization: rather than absorbing cultural difference into the target text, he makes it visible. This approach was made possible in part by the liberalization of Turkish public discourse in the 1990s, which allowed greater freedom of expression (Sandıkçı & Ger, 2007, p. 141).

Conclusion

This study has shown that Nutku's and Bozkurt's translations of Othello differ systematically in their treatment of racial language, cultural markers, and the play's central fantasy of otherness. Nutku's domesticating approach tends to soften or displace expressions that could have carried political risk in 1980s Turkey. Bozkurt's foreignizing approach, produced in a more permissive climate, preserves the source text's provocations and frames unfamiliar references in footnotes. The result is that the "Fantasy of the Other" survives more intact in Bozkurt's translation and is partially neutralized in Nutku's. Translation is never politically neutral: the period in which a translator works shapes the text as surely as the words they choose.



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*THE FANTASTIC IN
COMPARATIVE
STUDIES*

The Child's Escape Into Imaginary Worlds: Psychological and Moral Structures in Fantasy

Fehime Gül SAYDIM

In literary and psychological discourse, "escapism" has frequently been dismissed as a passive retreat, a flight from reality. However, within the realm of children's fantasy, escapism serves a far more vital function. For a child confronted with trauma such as loss of a parent, the displacement of war, or the suffocating social expectations; the act of "escaping" is not an ending, but a beginning. It is the active construction of a compensatory cosmos.

Psychological escape is the process by which the mind, unable to reconcile with a fragmented reality, projects a new space where agency, moral clarity, and emotional stability are restored. Imaginative restructuring allows the child to process the "unbearable" by

reframing it within a narrative structure where justice is attainable and the "self" remains whole. In Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, the home is described as the first universe of the child. When this home is compromised by trauma, the child seeks a "poetic exit." A crucial element of this psychological transition is the concept of borders.

The window in the Darling nursery represents the fragile membrane between domesticity and the infinite. To fly out of the window is to reject the linear time of the household. Entering the wardrobe is a liminal act of retreating into the interiority of the self that symbolizes the child's ability to find a sacred, moral order even when the external world is falling into nihilistic chaos.

J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan; or, The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up* (1911) emerged during the transition from the rigid Victorian era to the uncertain Edwardian period. Children were expected to become "miniature adults." Peter Pan, therefore, is a radical reaction against the social blueprint of the early 20th century.

Neverland is not a random paradise; it is a map of the child's mind rendered as a physical geography. It is unstable yet perfectly arranged to meet the child's psychological needs; pirates for the thrill of conflict, mermaids for beauty, and "Lost Boys" for a sense of tribal belonging.

In the real world, the passage of time is a predator (represented by the ticking clock). In Neverland time has been "consumed," the clock is literally inside a crocodile. By staying in Neverland, Peter maintains ontological control over his own existence, refusing to be subjected to the decay of the adult world. And by defeating Captain Hook they are rejecting the "unjust" authority of an adult world.



While Peter Pan was born from the domestic anxieties of the Edwardian era, C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) is linked to the trauma of World War II. The Pevensie children are victims of Operation Pied Piper, the mass evacuation of children from London to the countryside Blitz. They are displaced persons who are severed from their parents, home, and sense of safety. The children find themselves in a cold country manor that feels like a tomb. Their escape

into Narnia is a psychological necessity to counter the nihilism of a world at war.

The White Witch's spell represents the psychological state of trauma; a world where time is frozen, growth is impossible, and there is no joy. This mirrors the "stagnation" felt by displaced children.

"Always winter but never Christmas"

The children's struggle against the Witch is a way for them to process the "Big War" in a "Small World" where their individual actions

actually matter. In London, they are powerless refugees, but in Narnia they are "Kings and Queens."

When comparing Peter Pan and The Chronicles of Narnia, we see two psychological strategies for dealing with loss and social instability. Escape in Neverland is an attempt to stop time. It is a circular, repetitive world where the goal is to remain forever in the "safe" zone of childhood. However, escape in Narnia is an attempt to "grow through" time. The children spend years in Narnia, growing into adulthood, only to return to the real world as children again. This is a



linear, transformative escape that provides the psychological maturity needed to face the real world.

Both worlds function as "regulatory imaginative fields." In both cases, the children eventually return to reality. However, the return from Neverland is marked by a bittersweet loss of magic, whereas the return from Narnia is marked by a newfound internal strength.

Ultimately, these narratives suggest that fantastical utopias are spatial manifestations of the subject's attempt to restore control and the self in the aftermath of trauma. By conquering the "monsters" of the imaginary world, the child develops the psychological resilience to survive the very real monsters of history, loss, and the inevitable passage of time. Fantasy is not a flight from the truth, but a journey toward a truth that reality is too broken to provide.

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The Power of Intercultural Heroism and Fantasy: A Comparative Study of Beowulf and The Book of Dede Korkut

Zekiye GÖK

Epic tales represent the enduring traces of ancient life preserved within the collective memory of societies. Throughout history, humanity has continuously struggled with fear, courage, and the fundamental instinct to survive in the face of existential challenges. These profound historical experiences were transformed into narrative art through fantastic heroes and monstrous creatures, evolving into some of the most resonant branches of oral tradition. Epics have continued to thrive from antiquity to the modern era, functioning as living repositories that safeguard the spirit of cultural memory.

Although Beowulf and The Book of Dede Korkut emerged in vastly different geographies and belong to distinct cultural traditions, they meet on common thematic ground. Both works are widely considered among the finest examples of epic literature in which heroism is portrayed—sometimes with similar and sometimes with differing cross-cultural purposes—at the structural heart of two distinct civilizations. Ultimately, heroism and fantasy form the core analytical frameworks of both narratives.

In the Anglo-Saxon epic Beowulf, the theme of heroism operates like a torch illuminating the moral fabric of society. Beowulf's legendary battles against Grendel, Grendel's mother, and the dragon are not merely visceral physical

conflicts; they also symbolize a metaphysical resistance against the destructive forces of chaos threatening society. While these monsters embody the primal psychological fears within Beowulf's world, Beowulf himself becomes an enduring symbol of courage, honor, and self-sacrifice. Through his existential struggles, he transforms into a glorious hero who dedicates his entire existence to protecting his people and preserving the established social order.



Similarly, in the Oghuz Turkic epic *The Book of Dede Korkut*, the reader witnesses an entire society being tested through supernatural powers and fantastical elements. The fierce struggles between Basat and the cyclopean monster Tepegöz, as well as the arduous hardships endured by Bamsı Beyrek, point directly to the vital importance of tribal unity and communal solidarity within the historic nomadic community. A profound sense of cultural belonging and the absolute duty to protect society remain central themes shaping the architecture of the work. In the Turkish epic tradition, heroism is not solely defined by combat prowess; it functions as a powerful metaphor for carrying the collective burdens and ethical responsibilities of society.

In both epics, heroism and fantastical elements are not merely decorative features utilized for narrative entertainment. Rather, they function like the solid trunk of a tree that supports and forms the shared cultural heritage of an entire civilization. Additionally, the fantastical elements in both oral traditions—such as giants, monsters, and supernatural beings—symbolize the hidden anxieties and fears embedded within the societal psyche.

By deploying their extraordinary strength to restore cosmic and earthly order, these legendary heroes effectively illuminate the darkness of their respective ages. Consequently, these foundational works continue to transcend geographical borders, inspiring diverse readers across cultures and generations.



Fear Creates Its Own Object: The Fantastic as Collective Delusion in Gürpınar's Cadı

Tuğçe TANLAK

When is the fantastic born, and how does it manifest itself? Generally, it lives on the thin line between reality and inexplicable supernatural events. In *The Fantastic*, Tzvetan Todorov defines this genre through the "hesitation" experienced by the reader and character confronted with a seemingly supernatural event. For Todorov, the fantastic is a state of irresolution: if this hesitation is resolved rationally, the text becomes the "uncanny"; if accepted as genuinely supernatural, it enters the "marvelous". Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar's novel *Cadı* (The Witch) transforms this theory into a tool for social criticism. While there is no actual witch, the fantastic elements are constructed within the collective mind of society. This paper argues that in *Cadı*, the fantastic is not an external supernatural force but a



collectively constructed delusion. Fear creates its own object: through performative evidence—fabricated rumors, forged letters, and whispered testimonies—the "Witch" becomes a social truth that no single rational mind can dissolve.

I. The Construction of the Fantastic

In many fantastic narratives, a concrete event must occur: the appearance of a ghost or the violation of a natural law. And,

usually the reader's hesitation stems from the event itself, Gürpınar establishes a fantastic atmosphere by making it a social reality through language and rumor. Before any concrete event occurs, the rumor that Naşit Efendi's deceased wife, Binnaz, will haunt the house spreads like a virus. Here, the fantastic exists as discourse rather than an event. The social environment creates the fantasy by feeding the idea of Binnaz's jealousy and revenge.

This fear is soon supported by "performative evidence" - the



silhouette of the dead wife, stolen jewelry, and letters from the grave. These proofs do not point to a pre-existing witch; they create her within the social reality. These objects, placed by human, become physical manifestations of the supernatural for minds surrounded by fear. Consequently, the reader is pulled into this "language of fear," becoming an active part of the fantastic construction process.

II. Collective Fantastic: The Map of Contagion

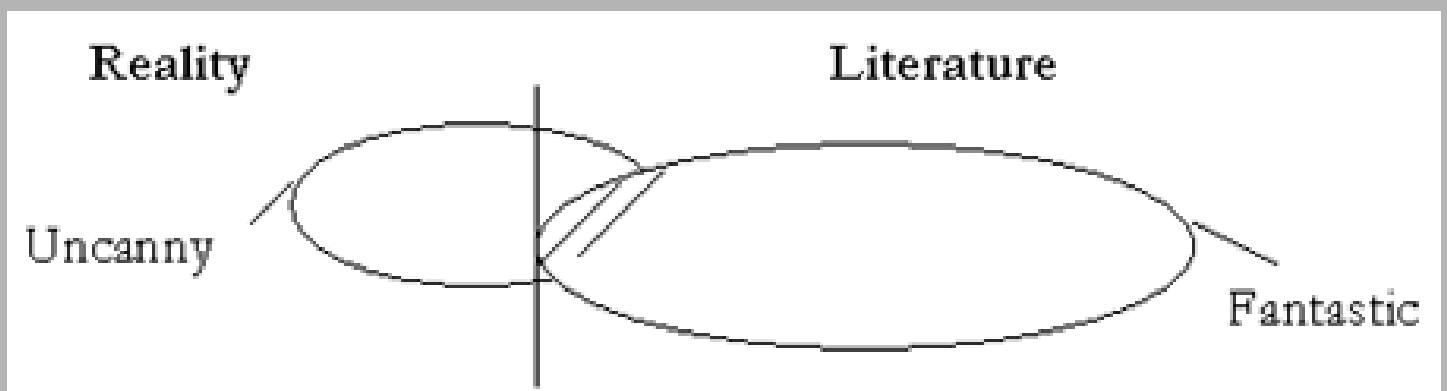
Once prepared by performative evidence, the fantastic evolves from an individual experience into a social reality. Gürpınar maps this contagion through three distinct

distinct figures extending from initial anxiety to second-hand terror and the tragic collapse of rationalism.

Şükriye Hanım's fear determines the mechanics of the novel. Her initial anxiety is vague and personal. What leads her to belief is social reinforcement. The servants embellish stories, and the shared cultural memory of spells provides a framework that makes her fear believable. Fear is no longer individual once it meets a ready-made cultural template.

Fikriye is the most disturbing example of mass hysteria because she never encounters the witch herself. Her fear is entirely second-hand, formed through the narratives of others. This demonstrates Gürpınar's sociological critique: a non-existent terror can produce real, concrete consequences, like Fikriye abandoning her marriage thoughts. It proves that the fantastic does not need to be lived; it only needs to be told persuasively through social story-networks.

Naşit Efendi is the most complex and tragic character. He enters the story as a rationalist who sees the collective delusion and tries to confront the witch as a fabrication. In Todorov's framework, Naşit Efendi should function as the voice of rational explanation, representing the "uncanny" resolution. However, he ultimately collapses under the weight of fabricated evidence. Gürpınar wishes to express that reason is not a sufficient defense against a fear reinforced by social bonds and emotional intensity.



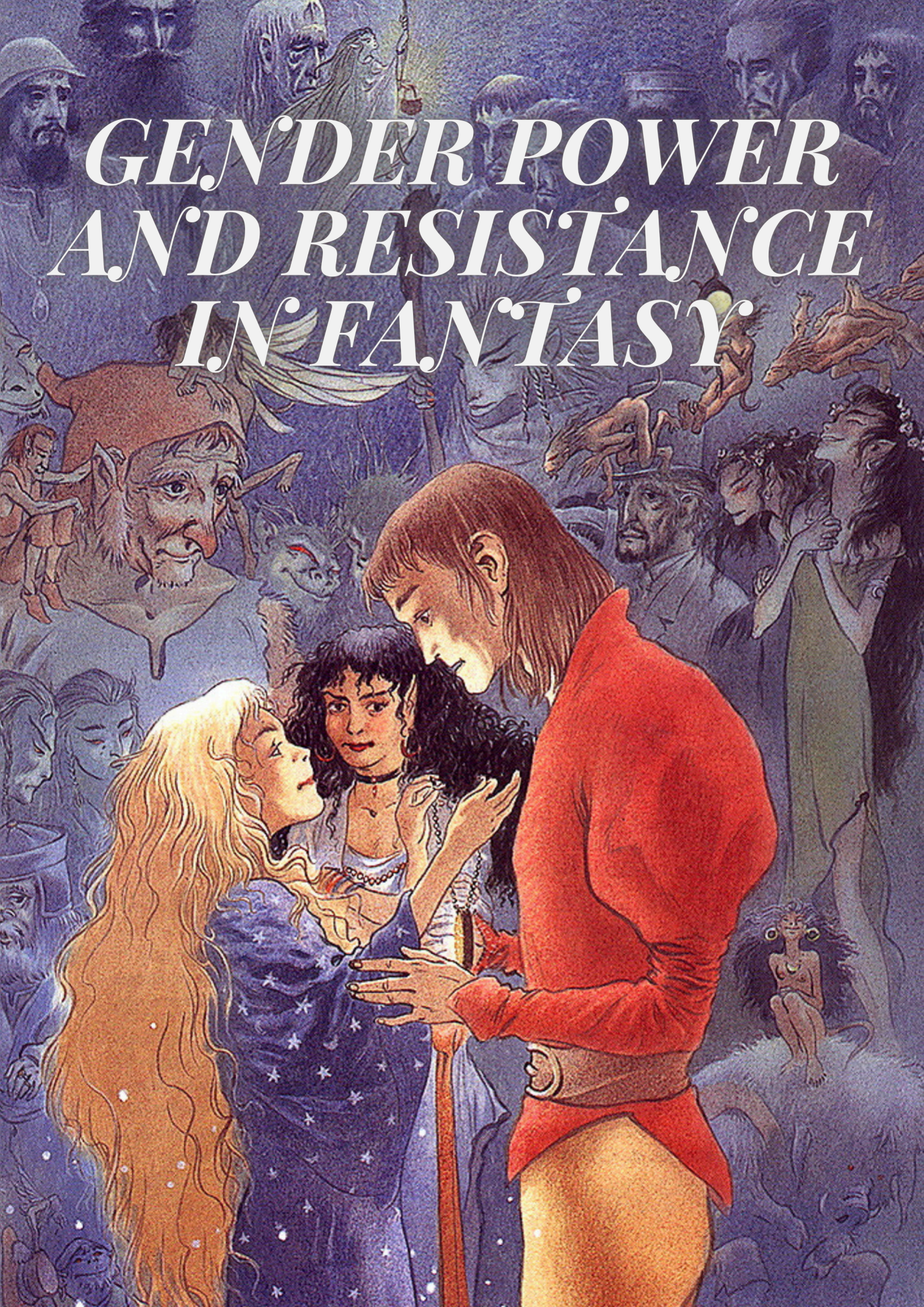


III. The Reader's Complicity: The Double Revelation

Gürpınar's most sophisticated move is ensuring that this process happens identically to the reader. Narrative techniques pull us into the wave of collective belief. We open the drawer with Naşit Efendi, read the letters, and see the shadows with Şükriye. Here, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's concept of the "willing suspension of disbelief" comes into play. The reader consciously postpones questioning the extraordinary elements and surrenders to the narrative, remaining in Todorovian hesitation by being part of the collective delusion.

This tension is resolved with the rational explanation at the end of the novel, producing a "double revelation". Both the character's and the reader's beliefs are simultaneously shaken: the character wakes up from a superstitious belief, and the reader wakes up from the narrative's spell. Gürpınar takes the supernatural out of the text and moves it into the minds of the characters and the reader, presenting a form of the fantastic more unsettling than any supernatural being could produce. Ultimately, Cadı forces us to reimagine reality by making us realize that we are not much different from the most superstitious character in the novel, leaving us with a haunting question: Is what you call reality truly real, or are you also part of a collective hysteria?

GENDER POWER AND RESISTANCE IN FANTASY



Being the “Other”: Women, Racialized Bodies, and Colonial Power in R. F. Kuang’s Babel

Sacide BALTA

Babel is set in an alternative history where power comes from magical silver bars created through translation between languages. These bars help the empire become richer and stronger, so it creates the Royal Institute of Translation to study and control this power. The story follows four students who gradually realize that their academic work supports British colonial rule, and they begin to question whether they can stop the First Opium War.

The novel's author, Rebecca F. Kuang's own life story explains why her critique of colonialism in *Babel* is so realistic. Kuang was born in China and later moved to America, receiving education at Oxford University. She knows both the East



and the academic world of Britain from within. Therefore, she depicts Oxford as the very heart of the colonial system. The feeling of being caught between two worlds that Robin Swift experiences reflects the identity issues Kuang touches upon. Kuang shows us how colonialism was established through language, education, and knowledge from within that system.

1. Empire, Knowledge, and Orientalism

Once you are integrated into an imperial knowledge system, it is nearly impossible to sever your connection to it. According to Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, the West constructs the East as an irrational structure in need of management—a systematic creation of an "Other" to justify colonial rule. In *Babel*, Oxford sees Robin as a tool and a medium. His humanity is secondary to his utility; he is a bridge for the Empire to exploit. People of the East find a place in the system only as instruments serving British interests, where culture gains meaning only when translated within Western categories.

2. Robin's Dilemma and Identity Conflict

Robin's journey is a realization of his own commodification. While Robin benefits from privileges offered by Oxford, he realizes the institution is built upon the exploitation of his people. This creates a psychological



fracture, a "double consciousness" where he sees himself through the eyes of those who despise his origin. He is forced to perform a version of himself acceptable to his masters. Britain analyzes the East to derive profit from it. The party that holds power is the party that represents; to be represented by another is to be silenced.

3. Spivak and the Concept of the "Subaltern"

According to Gayatri Spivak, knowledge is never innocent; it always reflects the interests of its



producer. The West transforms data about the "Other" into a commodity for Western readers. Spivak opposes the West's efforts to speak on behalf of the "Other", because this effort prevents the Other from making their own voice heard. When Professor Lovell speaks for Robin, he erases Robin's right to speak for himself. The subaltern cannot be heard even if they speak, because their past is overwritten by the colonizer's narrative of progress.

4. Ramy and Robin: Standing Against the System

The fundamental difference between Robin and Ramy is the awareness they develop against the system. Ramy, coming from India, feels the disunity acutely. Oxford wants Ramy not for who he is, but for his linguistic skills. He recognizes that academic meritocracy is a lie designed to keep them compliant. This is the tragedy of the translator: to be heard, you must speak the language of the person who oppresses you. To speak purely is to be ignored; to be heard is to be compromised.



5. Gender and Woman as the "Second Sex"

In *Babel*, marginalization does not progress along a single axis; different burdens borne by characters determine their place within the system. We observe this in the hierarchy among Letty, Victoire, and Robin. Letty has the luxury of complaining about the system thanks to the armor of being white and British. Victoire lacks this armor because she is both black and a woman. Victoire is closest to the silenced subaltern group mentioned by Spivak, rendered invisible due to race and gender.

6. Loyalty, Rebellion, and Functions of Fantasy

Ultimately, the novel forces a choice between a comfortable lie and a violent truth. Orientalism constructs the West as masculine and the East as feminine. Although Letty faces obstacles as a woman, she is considered a child of this system, offering her security. Robin's situation is the opposite; he realizes privileges exist thanks to the exploitation of his people. His rebellion is a battle for identity.

In *Babel*, magical silver rods make visible how colonialism operates. The "meaning lost in translation" transforms into energy, demonstrating how language translates into economic and political power. Philology and translation are part of the colonial order. Colonialism is not only waged with weapons but through languages and definitions. Real power lies in deciding who the other person is.

The Subversion of Patriarchal Female Objectification in Traditional Fantasy Fictions through Neil Gaiman's Stardust

Suphiye Deniz ALTUĞ

Fantasy fiction has always been a part of the narrative tradition throughout human history. Thus, myths and folktales have reflected the cultural and moral values of the societies in which they have been produced. To reflect cultural expectations of gender roles, female characters are often portrayed as submissive, obedient, and tamed. However, modern writers began challenging these patriarchal ideas by creating more complex female characters. This paper aims to discuss how Neil Gaiman's *Stardust* brings a new dimension to fantasy literature by transforming the patriarchal portrayal of female characters by removing their



objectification as romantic prizes and giving them voice and psychological depth through the character Yvaine, who is highly cynical and sharp-tongued.

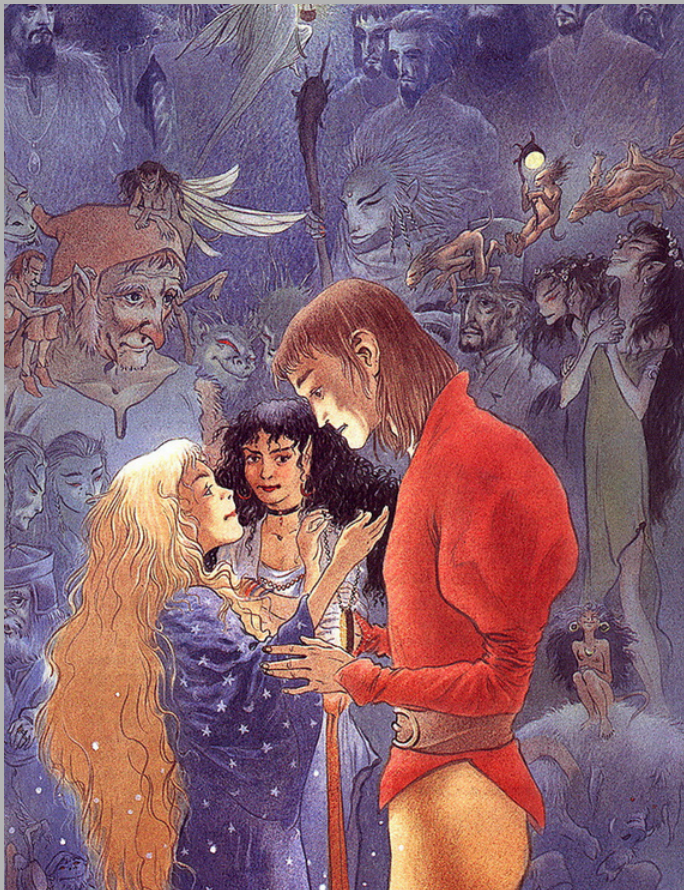


The idea of 'damsel in distress' is one of the most common stereotypes of patriarchal fantasy fiction. Female characters are demonstrated as helpless, passive, and dependent positions on a male savior, so it represents the ideological reduction of women to objects requiring protection and rescue. They just exist to make the hero make look good so that he can prove his courage and win the woman as an award. However, Gaiman begins to dismantle this construction through Yvaine, who is not grateful for her discovery. When Tristan first encounters Yvaine, the fallen star, he thinks she is just a damsel because he promised his beloved that he

would bring this star as proof of his love showing that Yvaine is just seen as a prize which will be delivered to Victoria for Tristan's romantic devotion. This framework reflects the patriarchal idea which women are treated as objects gained by men. Although Yvaine falls from the sky and breaks her leg, Gaiman uses her pain to highlight her resilience. She remains a strong heroine who endures suffering without losing her voice, anger, or identity. This reversal shows that hardship can also create resistance instead of helplessness.

Patriarchal storytelling has often based on silenced female characters. In traditional fairy tales, the "ideal" woman speaks very little, and when she does, it is usually to show gratitude and loyalty. Her feelings, thoughts, and desires are mostly hidden because this ideal silent woman image reinforces patriarchal values. In *Stardust*, Neil Gaiman challenges this pattern through Yvaine whose voice is sharp, sarcastic, and honest. She does not follow the gentle, passive behavior expected of heroines, nor does she

soften her words to please men. When Tristan ignores her, she criticizes him directly; when he makes mistakes, she calls him foolish. She openly expresses her pain, anger, and fear instead of hiding them. Moreover, Gaiman creates a contrast between Victoria and Yvaine. Victoria is shown mainly through Tristan's admiration and described mostly by her beauty, with little insight into her inner life. Subsequently, by placing Yvaine at the center of the story, Gaiman challenges these ideas showing that female characters can be defined by their voice, agency, and depth.



In most fairy tales, narrations revolve around the dangerous adventures of male heroes and their transformation during these journeys. He starts the story as young and foolish. After he goes on an adventure and faces danger, he grows, becomes brave and wise. At the end of his journey, he gets the girl as his reward. Along the way, female characters often appear as helpers or rewards, existing to support the hero's development. However, Neil Gaiman turns these shallow hero and heroine images upside down by Yvaine's spiritual growth. While Tristan's growth is mainly about learning and correcting his earlier mistakes such as seeing Yvaine as a person instead of an object, Yvaine's development is more complex and radical. At first, she is angry, defensive, and unwilling to trust or open herself emotionally. Over time, she sets her emotions free and allows herself to feel something for Tristan. However, her love for Tristan does not weaken her identity. Rather than losing her identity within a love story, she becomes a queen and powerful ruler of Stormhold. With

such an unusual ending, Gaiman tells a woman's story doesn't end when the love story begins.



To sum up, Neil Gaiman's *Stardust* functions as a milestone for its contribution to the British fairy tale tradition by blending it with modern fantasy elements within the scope of the feminist theory. Through the character Yvaine, who is sharp-tongued, psychologically complex, and highly resistant to objectification, Gaiman destroys the most common patriarchal stereotypes of the genre. Through this subversion, Gaiman demonstrates that the traditions of fairy tales are not natural or inevitable, but rather ideological tools, which woman internalize the traditional gender roles, inferior positions, and power inequality through fairy tales since their childhood, to construct cultural expectations about femininity, masculinity, and power relations between males and females so that they can be identified, questioned, and rewritten.

When Reality Becomes Unlivable: Fantasy as Female Survival in The Yellow Wallpaper

Ümmü Damla FİDAN

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* is often read as a story about madness, but that label can feel too limiting. The text is better understood if we shift the focus slightly and look at what is happening underneath the narrator's so-called breakdown: fantasy. In the story, fantasy is not just imagination or escapism. It becomes a way of surviving a life that is slowly stripped of voice, choice, and identity. What is usually described as "madness" emerges, in this sense, from an environment that is already deeply controlling and psychologically suffocating.

The story is closely tied to Gilman's own experience. After giving birth, she struggled with postpartum depression and was treated by Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, who prescribed the "rest cure." This treatment, widely used in the nineteenth century, required women to withdraw completely from intellectual and creative activity. Writing, reading, working, even thinking too much were discouraged or outright forbidden. The goal was silence and rest, but in practice it often meant isolation and loss of self.

In the short story, John embodies this medical and patriarchal authority. As both husband and physician, he decides what the narrator should feel, how serious her condition is, and what counts as real. He dismisses her thoughts as irrational and treats her imagination as a symptom rather than a form of expression. The effect is not healing, but erasure. Over time, she is gradually

excluded from making sense of her own experience. Even her suffering is translated and controlled by someone else.

This is why the domestic space in the story becomes so unsettling. On the surface, the setting is ordinary: a rented country house meant for rest and recovery. But the more time the narrator spends inside it, the more it begins to feel like confinement rather than care. The barred windows, the locked room, and the lack of meaningful activity all turn the house into a kind of psychological enclosure. When she notes that “the windows are barred for little children,” it quietly reveals how she is being treated not as an adult with judgment and autonomy, but as someone whose perception cannot be trusted.

John’s constant dismissal of her thoughts reinforces this dynamic. He repeatedly defines her condition for her, insisting she is not truly sick and simply needs rest. In doing so, he replaces her inner world with his interpretation of it. The result is a slow erosion of her ability to articulate herself. She is still speaking but no longer being heard in any meaningful way.

Within this restricted space, the yellow wallpaper becomes the center of her attention. At first, she finds it irritating and meaningless, even ugly. But over



time, it starts to take on a strange significance. She begins to notice patterns within it, and eventually imagines a woman trapped behind it. This figure becomes a kind of mirror for her own condition. When she says, “There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me,” she is not simply hallucinating she is creating a private system of meaning in a world where her public voice has been taken away.

The wallpaper, then, is not just a symbol of confusion. It reflects the structure of her life: repetitive, enclosed, and impossible to fully escape. Her growing fixation on it can be read as a shift into fantasy, but this fantasy is not separate from reality. It is produced by it. It becomes the only space where she can still act, interpret, and make sense of what surrounds her.

At the end of the story, she tears down the wallpaper in an attempt to free the woman she believes is trapped inside it. When she declares, “I’ve got out at last,” the moment can be read in two ways at once. From an external perspective, she has lost her connection to shared reality. But from within her experience, this is also a refusal. She no longer accepts the structure that has confined her. The scene where John faints and she continues to crawl over him intensifies this reversal: the figure of authority is physically and symbolically displaced by the woman who was previously dismissed as unstable.

The Yellow Wallpaper makes it clear that what is labeled as “madness” is, in fact, the result of sustained patriarchal and psychological oppression. When a woman’s language is systematically taken away, her perceptions are constantly invalidated, and her lived reality is rewritten by male authority, fantasy becomes not a symptom but a survival strategy a last remaining space where the self can still exist outside control. From this perspective, the narrator is not simply disintegrating; she is refusing erasure, and her so-called breakdown becomes a form of resistance against a structure that leaves her no other language through which to resist.

The Reimagining the Female Subject: Fantasy, Femininity and Adaptation from Jane Eyre to the Netflix series Bridgerton

Öykü ÇAYIRLIOĞLU



The representation of women has undergone a significant transformation from the Victorian era to contemporary media. However, this transformation does not signify an absolute break with the patriarchal order. Jane Eyre, one of the most influential Victorian novels by Charlotte Brontë, is notable for its powerful portrayal of female characters from their perspective. While surviving a patriarchal society and its rigid restrictions, Jane Eyre attempts to build her identity and voice. By contrast, the Netflix series Bridgerton is a modern series set during the Regency period. Although it is not a direct adaptation of Jane

Eyre, it also takes place in the Victorian Era while focusing on a more liberated and visible portrayal of female subjectivity. However, the series reproduces existing gender norms through visual spectacle, the male gaze, commodification, and performative femininity.

Part I- Female Subjectivity in Jane Eyre:

The construction of female subjectivity in Jane Eyre reflects the limitations imposed by the patriarchal order, which positions women in restrictive roles that regulate their identities. As stated in Sandra Gilbert & Susan Gubar's *"The Madwoman in the Attic"*, female identity is addressed by this oppressive order through the binary opposition of "angel" and "monster". Bertha Mason represents Jane's repressed "monstrous" foil, embodying excess, hysteria and madness. She is depicted as the "madwoman in the attic".

After a while, Bertha loses her sanity; instead of the idealized Victorian woman, she is portrayed

as wild and rebellious, leading her husband to confine her to the attic and isolate her from society. Besides Bertha, Helen Burns possesses various qualities of the ideal Victorian woman. Her submission is contrasted with Jane's stubbornness, rebellion, and struggle for freedom throughout the novel.

Also, Jane is locked in the red room by her aunt Mrs. Reed. So, Jane, as well as Bertha, is locked in the room and is not accepted by society because she lacks the necessary feminine qualities of the Victorian era; instead, she is aggressive. This moment reveals how early experiences of punishment shaped Jane's awareness of oppressive structures and her position within them. She understands that if she does not play the roles imposed upon her, she risks erasure from society and may never have her own place. Also, as Jane Eyre stated in Chapter 24 of the novel:

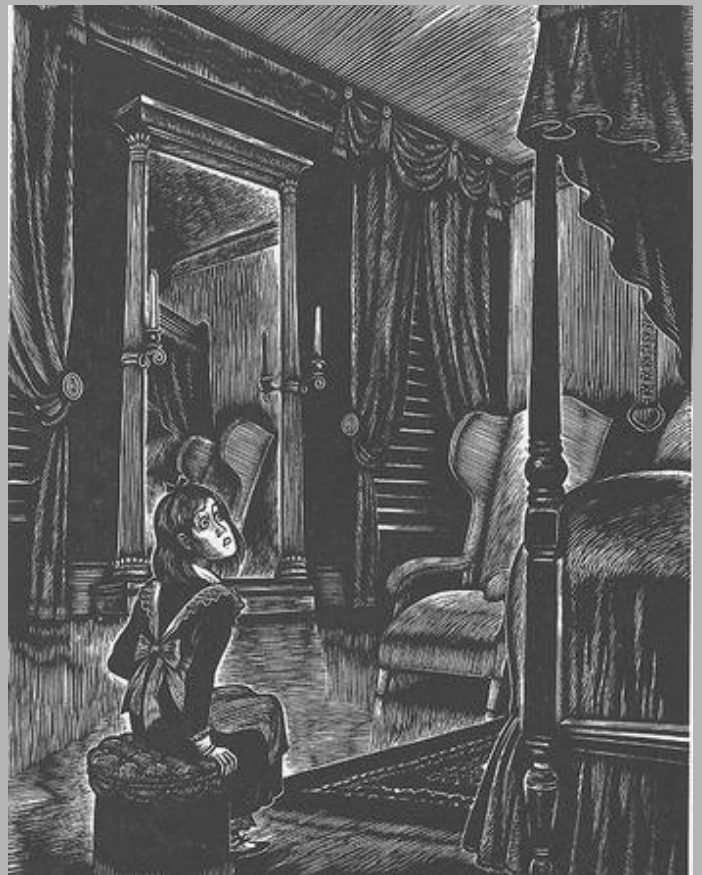
"I am not an angel," I asserted, "and I will not be one till I die: I will be myself." (Brontë, 2006, Chapter 24)

Here, Jane rejects the restrictive ideal of feminine virtue imposed upon her by patriarchal society. She is ironically demonstrating her preference for being anything rather than conforming to societal sexist roles. Butler argues that genders are not an innate reality, but rather that society produces a consistent reflection of identity through a series of repeated actions. The woman subject is not about "being," but about constantly "doing" through socially constructed performances. Jane does not escape the system, but reconstructs it by refusing to fully conform to its predetermined roles.



Part II- Femininity in Bridgerton:

Bridgerton's storyline focuses on the young women of marriageable age in the wealthy families of the Regency era and the competition to marry the rightful husband who will offer them



greater guarantee of power and wealth. This “marriage market” functions as a structured patriarchal system where women are evaluated according to beauty standards, education, and social performance.

This world order can be understood through Rosemary Jackson’s concept of fantasy. Jackson argues that fantasy disrupts dominant social orders by revealing what is repressed or excluded.

In Bridgerton, this subversive potential manifests paradoxically: while the series presents a

progressive and inclusive world, it simultaneously reproduces social hierarchies through marriage, class division, and aesthetic control. Therefore, *Bridgerton* functions not as a faithful historical reproduction, but as a culturally reprocessed adaptation that prioritizes spectacle over historical accuracy. Thus, fantasy here does not completely liberate, but rather reconstructs existing power structures in visually appealing forms.

Part III- From the Attic to the Ballroom:

This shift between *Jane Eyre* and *Bridgerton* demonstrates how female subjectivity moves from repression to visibility, yet remains structured by ideological frameworks of representation. In *Bridgerton*, the Regency world is reconstructed not as historical reality but as a “possible world” shaped by contemporary cultural expectations, aesthetic pleasure, and global media consumption. The female body is not only seen but also stylized, framed, and consumed through what can be described as an ornamental fantasy, where femininity becomes a visual spectacle designed for audience pleasure. Thus, even when female characters appear empowered, their liberation is mediated through visual consumption. For example, Daphne’s introduction as the “diamond of the season” illustrates how femininity is transformed into a structured performance of desirability. This reflects Mulvey’s argument that visual culture continues to construct women as “*to-be-looked-at*” subjects, even when narrative focus appears to shift toward female experience.

Conclusion: Ultimately, both *Jane Eyre* and *Bridgerton* reveal that female subjectivity is never fully liberated but continuously reshaped across different cultural forms. While Brontë’s novel situates women within Gothic structures of confinement and repression, *Bridgerton* relocates them into a world of visual excess and consumerist fantasy. In both cases, however, the female subject remains positioned within ideological systems that define how she is seen, desired, and represented.



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A Romantic-style landscape painting. The scene is a dense forest with tall, slender trees and a thick canopy of green and yellow leaves. In the middle ground, a group of figures in long, dark robes are gathered, possibly in a clearing or near a body of water. The lighting is soft and atmospheric, with a warm glow emanating from the background, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

ONLINE SESSION

Between Worlds and Beyond Images: Balkan Folklore and the Fantastic

Popa David CRISTIAN

There is a moment in Romanian folklore — it appears under different forms, in different tales, but it is always the same moment — when the young hero stands before something so much larger than himself that the story seems to pause. A river has dried up. A village lives under a curse it cannot name. And somewhere ahead, guarding whatever needs to be guarded, is the Balaur. What happens next is not simply adventure. Something more serious is being worked out in these stories, something that has more to do with identity and endurance than with monsters.

The relationship between Balkan folklore and the fantastic as a literary category is a complicated one, and it is worth acknowledging that from the start. Tzvetan Todorov, whose *The Fantastic*

remains a foundational text in the field, defines the mode through a specific kind of hesitation — the uncertainty about whether what one is witnessing belongs to the natural or the supernatural order of things. It is a useful definition for a certain kind of European literary tradition. But Balkan folk narrative does not produce that hesitation. The Balaur is not a figure whose existence is in question. The Zmeu, that shape-shifting abductor who inhabits some territory between man and monster, is not someone whose nature the hero doubts. The supernatural in these stories is accepted as a feature of the world, not as an interruption of it — and this acceptance requires a different theoretical vocabulary.

Mircea Eliade offers one. His work on the sacred, initiation, and the structures of mythological time

suggests a way of reading encounters with the supernatural that does not rely on doubt. When a hero faces the Balaor in Petre Ispirescu's collected tales, Eliade would see something like what he calls a hierophany — a moment when the sacred irrupts into ordinary time and demands a response. The question is not whether the Balaor is real. The question is whether the person standing before it is ready. That shift — from epistemology to ontology, from knowing to being — is what makes Balkan folklore legible as a bildungsroman tradition rather than simply a body of supernatural tales. The hero does not return home having gained information; he returns having become someone different. Or he does not return at all.

Ion Creanga's *Harap Alb* (1877) makes this process unusually explicit. The prince who becomes Harap Alb loses his name, his rank, and his freedom within the first pages of the story; the man he will need to become is built out of everything that follows. The supernatural helpers he accumulates along the way — the bee queen, the

ant queen, the companions with their improbable gifts — do not help him because he is a prince. They help him because he has shown, through small moments the story barely lingers on, that he knows how to pay attention, how to show gratitude, how to recognize value in things a less careful person would walk past. Creanga is describing a moral epistemology. Worthiness comes before kingship, not after it.

The political dimension of this tradition is one that scholarship has been slow to address seriously, possibly because it requires acknowledging that Balkan cultural production has been systematically underestimated. Maria Todorova's argument about Balkanism as a form of epistemic othering — a Western discursive construction that frames the region as perpetually almost-civilized, always gesturing toward Europe without quite arriving there — applies to folklore scholarship as much as it does to historiography. Balkan supernatural tradition has been treated as raw material: colorful, primitive, available for classification. The possibility that it constitutes a coherent intellectual

system with its own internal logic has been less entertained than it ought to have been.

What that system encodes, in the figure of the Zmeu especially, is a story about the desire of external powers to absorb what they cannot quite possess. The Zmeu does not kill the women he takes; he keeps them, which is a different kind of violence. The hero who recovers them is not simply restoring individuals to their families. He is making an argument about what can and cannot be taken by force. Across centuries of Ottoman administrative pressure and, later, Western cultural condescension, these stories kept circulating because they said something communities needed to hear: that illegitimate power, however overwhelming it appears, is not permanent.

Folklore survives not by accident. It survives because it does work that nothing else does quite as well — work that is simultaneously cosmological, psychological, and political. The Balaur blocking the river is a figure for everything that has ever needed to be confronted before the world could continue. That is not a small thing to encode in a story, and it is not a small thing to have kept telling it.

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*FANTASY AND
POETRY*

Not A Curse But A Condition: The Artist And Her Art, Isolation, And Ideology In The Lady Of Shalott

Helin Eylül POLAT

This study offers an interpretation of the poem *The Lady of Shalott* by Tennyson, aiming to question the nature of the “curse” which confines the Lady to an artistic but social isolation, yet analyzing it through as an ideological oppression condition, rather than a curse, which underlines the regulation over feminine subjectivity, labour, and invisibility, rather than a supernatural punishment. It is written with its way of blurring the relationship between art and life, suggesting that the work of art that only relies on the viewer’s approval, is doomed to fail. It also debates the idea of being a female artist and their places in society.

In the poem we get introduced with the Lady of Shalott, but just as the people in Camelot, we don’t know much about her. She is cursed, forbidden from looking outside to Camelot, separated from the outside world, weaving her tapestry “by night and day” and watching people from her magical mirror. The magical mirror shows the outside world, not her own reflection; therefore all she sees is the “shadows of the world” through the mirror rather than herself, suggesting a meaning that she can only exist through the world she is watching, which she is separated from. She has no independent existence, which is a characterization of woman figures in

the Victorian period, in which they were described as the “angel in the house” Virginia Woolf describes the term Angel in the house as: “*She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. If there was chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draught she sat in it - in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others*” (Woolf 3)

Furthermore, in the poem, The Lady’s reality is formed with the “shadows of the world”, which brings into mind Plato’s allegory of the cave. Just as the people in the allegory, who watch not the actual world itself but the shadows of it, The Lady trapped in the tower, watching the reflections. Her art, on the other hand, forms her existence, and if she abandons it, she will die. This suggests that Lady cannot be in both places: either exist in the society or to be an artist; as Plasa wrote, “*art and life... indeed seem*

to be fatally opposed to one another”. (Plasa, Carl. 247-263)

But the poem gives us insight of another perspective: art and life are indeed intertwined, as her act of forming her art, her weaving, forms her existence.

Nevertheless, she enjoys her tapestry, but it can be seen that she is half sick of shadows when she sees a newly married couple, which can be interpreted as she longs for a lover. And when Lancelot passes by, she can’t help but to look outside of the window. She unleashes the curse, for her love for Lancelot, even though she was aware of the curse, she brings it upon herself with her actions. And when she figures out that she’s doomed, she goes downstairs to see Camelot and the love she always longed for; thus calls to mind a parallel between Ovid’s Medea in *Metamorphoses*, “*I see what is better, and I approve of it; I pursue what is worse.*” (Ovid, 18-21)

Then she gets on a boat, writes her name on it and sings her last song as

she lies dying, going with the flow. A journey towards her death, in which she's dressed as a bride, singing as she dies. With doing so, not only she turns her own self into an object of art, but also objectifying her femininity, her art, her all being; but doing it with a sense of dependency to the public, "towered Camelot", but never to be recognised as her life lingers into art itself and she dies, but only to be seen as "a lovely face" and a "gleaming shape".

To conclude, it can be seen that the poem "The Lady of Shalott" has characteristics of the Victorian period, with the way women were restricted, and were not allowed to have desires. It explores the themes of art and life, through the lens of womanhood, and how they should not be mixed together. And in the end, the artist became the art, but without people knowing she gave her life for it; the poem suggests that the artwork that exists only with the approval of the people, is doomed to be misunderstood, lose its meaning.

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"I was obedient, but numb": The Backward Glance as Psychic Necessity in Atwood's "Orpheus (1)" Through a Freudian Lens

Eylül Deniz KAYA

Abstract

This paper examines Margaret Atwood's poem "Orpheus (1)" through the framework of Sigmund Freud's theory in *Beyond Pleasure Principle* (1920), particularly the concepts of the death drive and repetition compulsion, which revolve around poetic exploration of trauma and self-destruction. While the traditional myth of Orpheus and Eurydice has been classified as a timeless and tragic story of a selfless hero's failure, Atwood's approach posits a reconfiguration circling around Eurydice's voice and autonomy. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Orpheus's fatal backward glance functions as an unconscious return to the scene of loss, and in striving toward reunion, Orpheus reenacts separation, suggesting that desire may be structured around absence rather than fulfilment. Atwood's revision shifts the focus from tragic romance to narrative control, exposing how Orpheus's artistic gaze immobilizes Eurydice and reduces her to a memory, a muse, and an object to be saved. This study reads Eurydice as a liminal figure suspended between Eros and Thanatos, arguing that in Atwood's "Orpheus (1)" her retreat to the Underworld presents an embedded desire for peace and

stillness, offering an embodiment of Freud's death drive and a resistant withdrawal from patriarchal narrative control that works as a defence against her voicelessness. Through close reinterpretation of Ovid's story and Atwood's poem, this analysis establishes the myth as a psychological and ideological act shaped by Freud's theory in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) rather than a romanticized tragic devotion.

Keywords: death drive, repetition compulsion, Eurydice, Freud, Orpheus (1), *Metamorphoses*.

The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is known to be frequently interpreted and immortalized as a selfless act of looking back in hope and despair. Many writers and artists over the 2000 years have classified the myth by questioning



the moral, ethical, and philosophical aspects in their variations, by diverting the focal notion of the story to their contemporary concerns (Dawson, 2025, p.10-11). However, from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to modern versions, the central plot has stayed within the same framework; the grieving Orpheus descends to the Underworld in the hopes of saving his beloved wife, Eurydice. He gets the permission by Hades to bring her back to the living world, but with the condition of not looking back; but eventually Orpheus looks back in a tragic moment of uncertainty. Orpheus, in this sense, is regarded as a figure of promise and devotion, whose loss is tragic and inevitable, for his unbearable loss always overcomes his longing in every version of the story.

In early versions, Eurydice was given very little individuality. However, starting from the early 20th century, women writers started to give Eurydice's perspective of the story. In some of these modern feminist adaptations, and also in Margaret Atwood's poem *Orpheus* (1) that has Eurydice as a narrator, Orpheus's entitlement of rescuing Eurydice may raise the questions of whether Eurydice really wanted to be rescued or not, and what prompted Orpheus to violate the order of death, her acceptance of death, and her choice in it. Eurydice lacks agency and voice in a story that is centred around her life. She is only a muse and a lover to be saved, whose identity is only defined by loss. The myth gives Eurydice no physical description, no voice, and no emotion of her own (Locke, 2000). With eliminating her individual senses, Orpheus's actions carry embedded self-centred researches in his psyche. This study will explore the characters in regard of Sigmund Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), arguing how the characters in the Ovidian version and Atwood's adaptation have prevailing tendencies to their respected senses of pleasures.

Firstly, the story that is shaped by trauma, and it creates a profound rupture in Orpheus's psyche; the insurmountable grief makes him become fixated on reversing it. His descent into the Underworld can be seen as an attempt to undo trauma, to return to a previous state of wholeness. In Freudian terms, this resembles the compulsion to repeat: the desire to relive or re-stage a painful event in the hope of mastering it. Orpheus cannot move forward, so he must go back to the scene of loss. The Underworld not only represents death but also indicates the blurry line between life and death, presence and absence being at stake. The failure of looking back, from a Freudian perspective, can be understood as the manifestation of a repetition compulsion that seeks loss rather than pleasure. However, motivated by the pleasure principle, he wants Eurydice back as gratification, inspiration, and completion, transforming love into a tragic annihilation. However, the classical myth suggests that Eros (the life instinct) cannot function without Thanatos (the death instinct), as desire is structured by the possibility of loss.

Eurydice, being a passive, obedient muse in the Ovidian story, is absent in Atwood's poem. Instead, Atwood's Eurydice speaks with clarity that she has been following behind, being numb. She implies that his love is intertwined with artistic ambition and hope. To Eurydice, Orpheus's desire is not merely pleasure, but it is unpleasantness and pain. She stands on the threshold between Eros and Thanatos, being desired as a living lover, yet fixed in the stillness of death. She finds calmness, neutrality, and anonymity in the Underworld, and the threshold crossing brings insipidity. Her desire for stillness acts as a form of self-defence against patriarchal storytelling. In the end, she embodies Freud's death drive, finding a voice, peace, and autonomy in the stillness of the Underworld that once lacked in his presence.



The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice has certainly transformed through time. For instance, to the ancient world, this story meant three things: the eternal struggle of elemental forces, the legendary power of a civilizer, and a tragic love story (Lee, 1961). However, newer, modern interpretations consider the story to have more depth. In arguing about Eurydice's voice and choice being violated, this study argues that the unconscious of the characters should be evaluated accordingly. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and in Atwood's *Orpheus* (1), the narrative lies in between life and death; both characters aim toward their pleasures without realizing the inevitable clash in it, further proving that life and death instincts cannot function without another in the search of peace.

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A detailed illustration of Alice in Wonderland. Alice, with long blonde hair and blue eyes, is seated on a large, gnarled tree branch. She wears a blue dress with a white apron and a black bow at the waist. She holds a golden key in her right hand and gestures with her left. The background is filled with lush green foliage and a large red mushroom. In the lower left, a striped cat (the Cheshire Cat) is visible, and in the lower right, a white rabbit (the White Rabbit) is partially seen. The title text is overlaid in the center.

*EVOLVING
FANTASY:
ESCAPISM AND
NARRATIVE
CHANGE*

Fantasy, Escapism and Identity in Peter Pan by J. M. Barrie

Eylül BAKIR

Since its publication, Peter Pan has been considered a complex exploration of childhood, escapism, identity, and the fear of adulthood. Written during the Edwardian period, the novel reflects changing ideas about childhood and imagination in early twentieth-century British society. Through the magical world of Neverland, Barrie creates a symbolic space where children can temporarily escape social expectations, time, and responsibility. However, the novel also shows that refusing to grow up may cause emotional and psychological problems. Therefore, fantasy, escapism, and identity are strongly connected throughout the story. This presentation examines how Barrie uses fantasy and escapism to question identity through memory, gender roles, performance, and the rejection of adulthood.



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may cause emotional and psychological problems. Therefore, fantasy, escapism, and identity are strongly connected throughout the story. This presentation examines how Barrie uses fantasy and escapism to question identity through memory, gender roles, performance, and the rejection of adulthood.

Fantasy in Neverland

In the novel, Neverland is presented as a place where children escape adulthood, responsibility, and ordinary life. Wendy and her brothers leave London and enter a magical world filled with adventure, pirates, mermaids, and endless play. Barrie presents Neverland not only as a setting but also as a psychological space reflecting the children's emotions and imagination. Forests, lagoons, caves, and pirate ships influence how the characters think and behave, making the island itself active in the narrative.

The novel also suggests that Neverland is shaped by children's fantasies. However, these fantasies

are influenced by Edwardian British culture and imperial ideas. The island includes pirates, "savages," and exotic locations that reproduce colonial attitudes and divisions between the civilized self and the "Other." As a result, Neverland becomes both a fantasy playground and a miniature version of the British Empire.



Fantasy is also connected to escape from time. Neverland exists outside normal chronology, allowing children to remain young forever. Peter Pan represents eternal childhood most clearly because he refuses to grow up. Yet Barrie ultimately presents fantasy as temporary and unstable. Wendy eventually returns home and accepts

adulthood, showing that fantasy cannot permanently replace reality. The novel therefore creates a paradox: it celebrates imagination and freedom while also insisting that growing up is unavoidable.



Escapism

The characters escape social expectations and adulthood, although this escape remains temporary. Peter escapes adulthood, the Lost Boys escape traditional family structures, and Wendy escapes domestic expectations. Barrie presents both positive and negative sides of childhood. While the novel celebrates adventure and freedom, it also demonstrates the necessity of growing up and returning home.

The nursery, with its warm light and

bedtime stories, represents safety and family values. Wendy begins to fear losing her childhood, and when Peter invites her to Neverland, she chooses adventure over domestic life. When the children arrive on the island, they recognize parts of it from their imagination and stories, making the unfamiliar seem familiar. However, this confidence quickly disappears once they realize that Neverland is dangerous.



As fear increases, the children move closer to Peter Pan, who becomes their guide and protector. Wendy takes on a caring role to create a sense of home, while Michael becomes frightened in the unfamiliar environment. John shifts between bravery and fear depending on the situation. Peter, however, treats everything like a game and moves through the island freely. In this

way, Neverland shapes the characters' emotions and behaviour while also being shaped by their imagination and fears.

Identity

Identity in the novel is closely connected to time, development, and social expectations. Wendy's identity develops when she realizes she must grow up. This awareness connects her to responsibility, care, and adult expectations. In contrast, Peter Pan rejects development completely and remains in a fixed state of eternal childhood. His identity challenges traditional ideas of development, which assume that children naturally progress toward adulthood.

The story can also be read through gender and power relations. Peter Pan and the Lost Boys represent a male-centred world, while Wendy is mainly defined through her relationship to them. She is associated with care and domesticity, whereas the boys remain free within the world of

adventure. From this perspective, the novel reflects how childhood is shaped by gender inequality and social expectations. Repeated gender performances make these roles appear natural and unquestionable.



As a result, identity in the story is not stable or universal but socially constructed. Wendy accepts development and adulthood, while Peter resists them, creating two opposing forms of identity within the same narrative.

The Concept of Childhood in the Edwardian Period

Unlike the Victorian period, which associated children with innocence and purity, the Edwardian period idealized children as adventurous and freedom-loving. Childhood was presented almost as an escape from adulthood rather than preparation for it. Peter's statement, "I don't want ever to be a man," reflects this rejection of adult responsibilities such as work, family, and social order.

However, this idealized childhood is unstable and temporary. Wendy is pushed into a motherly role, the Lost Boys eventually grow up, and only Peter remains outside time. In conclusion, Barrie uses fantasy and escapism to explore deeper questions about identity, childhood, memory, and adulthood. Neverland allows characters to escape responsibility and social expectations, but this escape cannot permanently replace reality. Although Neverland appears to offer freedom and eternal happiness, Barrie suggests that refusing reality may ultimately lead to emotional isolation and loss of identity rather than true liberation.

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Fantasy and the Threshold of the Self

Emir ELBİR

Many of us think fantasy is an escape from reality itself. In an age of digital distraction, social exhaustion, and spiritual uncertainty, this accusation appears almost reasonable. We live among screens, fragmented attention, anxious institutions, and lives increasingly measured by productivity rather than inward depth. In such a world, fantasy may seem like a retreat into invented kingdoms, magical objects, monsters, and impossible journeys.

Yet history suggests something different. Human beings have always turned to myth, ritual, and imaginative story not merely to flee the world, but to understand the hidden structures of experience. What appears to be escape may prove to be a symbolic return. Rather than thinking fantasy abandons reality, we should think of it as it translates reality into images large enough to contain it.

At the centre of this translation stands the threshold.

Every human life contains moments when the old order collapses. A person loses a loved one, leaves home, enters adulthood, migrates, graduates, falls ill, falls in love, or becomes estranged from the identity that once seemed secure. The world remains visible, yet it is no longer familiar. The self continues, yet something within it has ended. This is not ordinary sadness or confusion. It is a border condition; the soul standing between what it has been and what it may become.

Anthropology gives this experience a name: liminality. Arnold van Gennep first described rites of passage as movements through separation, transition, and incorporation. Victor Turner later deepened this idea, describing the liminal person as “neither here nor there,” suspended

between two social or symbolic states. In liminality, ordinary structures weaken. Roles are disturbed. Identity becomes unstable. Yet precisely because the old form has loosened, transformation becomes possible.

This is why myth and fantasy so often begin with departure. Perseus is born under prophecy, cast into uncertainty, and later sent toward Medusa, a figure who is herself a threshold: human and monstrous, beautiful and terrifying, alive yet surrounded by death. Frodo begins in the Shire, a world of gardens, meals, repetition, and peace; but the Ring calls him beyond comfort into wilderness, burden, temptation, and darkness. In both cases, the hero cannot remain unchanged inside the familiar world. He must cross.



Joseph Campbell's theory of the hero's journey gives narrative shape to this pattern. The hero leaves the ordinary world, enters a realm of trials, encounters danger, and returns—or fails to return—with altered knowledge. Yet what matters most is not the journey as physical movement. It is the crossing itself. The road, the sea, the cave, the forest, the portal, the mountain: these are not only settings. They are symbolic borders where the self is tested, stripped, and remade.

This is also why fantasy feels psychologically powerful. Carl Jung would say that myths and fantasies speak through archetypes: the hero, the shadow, the

monster, the wise guide, the descent, the death and rebirth. Medusa is not only a creature to be killed; she is fear, paralysis, and the terrible gaze of what cannot be faced. The Ring is not only an object of power; it is corruption, desire, domination, and the shadow of the self. Fantasy externalises inward struggle. It gives form to invisible conflict.

In this sense, fantasy is not merely entertainment. It is a modern continuation of myth-making. Ancient cultures used myth to give symbolic order to death, violence, desire, fertility, exile, kingship, and divine mystery. Modern fantasy performs a similar work under different conditions. Middle-earth, Narnia, Earthsea, Hogwarts, Westeros, and the worlds of contemporary games are not only invented places. They are imaginative laboratories of transformation. They allow us to see the soul under pressure.

The modern person in the city, Perseus before Medusa, and Frodo on the road to Mordor all reveal the same pattern. Each stands at a threshold. Each experiences the collapse of familiar identity. Each enters a dangerous middle space where the future has not yet arrived, but the past can no longer fully hold them.

Fantasy matters because human beings are threshold creatures. We are always leaving one world before we understand the next. We are always losing forms before receiving new ones. The border frightens us because it dissolves certainty; yet it also awakens possibility. The cave is dark, the road is long, and the monster is real. But transformation has rarely begun in comfort.

Fantasy does not simply ask us to imagine other worlds. It asks us to recognise the symbolic meaning of our own crossings. It teaches that the threshold is not only a line between places, but the difficult ground where the self is broken open, remade, and finally understood.

Alice in Wonderland And Escapism

Nilay Naz AÇIKGÖZ

Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* serves as the definitive blueprint for the "Portal Fantasy." While the genre often depicts a flight toward a more harmonious magical realm, Alice's journey is a "literalized metaphor" for the liminal space between childhood and the rigid expectations of the Victorian era. This essay argues that Alice's journey into the subconscious—the "Rabbit Hole"—is not merely a flight from boredom, but a psychological and linguistic revolt against a society that prioritized rote memorization and moral lessons over the innate curiosity of the child.

The transition from the "gray, hopeless world" of Victorian reality to the chaotic dreamscape of Wonderland represents a descent into the subconscious. In this realm, Alice quickly realizes that her formal education is a useless currency. When Alice attempts to rely on her

"memorized drills" to find order, the words fail her. This failure highlights the central tension of the Victorian child: the struggle to maintain an identity built on adult rules in a world that is inherently irrational. As the Cheshire Cat suggests, direction matters little if one lacks a destination; in Wonderland, the only way to find one's "true self" is to first get lost in the absurdity.

Unlike the standard hero's journey, Alice's path is nonlinear and existential. Her conversation with the Caterpillar serves as the crux of her identity crisis. When she admits, "I can't explain myself... because I'm not myself, you see," she highlights the anxiety of growth. Alice's question—"How can I be the wrong Alice if this is my dream?"—signals her realization that while she may not be in control of the dreamscape, she is the primary architect of her own internal reality.

Carroll uses nonsense as a weapon to escape the "prison of language." By utilizing puns and the linguistic chaos of poems like the Jabberwocky, he effectively subverts the strict communicative rules of his time. This rebellion extends to the concept of time itself. The Mad Tea Party represents a permanent escape from the "tyranny of the clock." In a society obsessed with productivity and punctuality, staying at the tea table indefinitely is the ultimate act of defiance.



The climax of Alice's journey occurs during the Trial of the Knave. It is here that the "Portal Fantasy" reaches its psychological resolution. By recognizing that the terrifying authorities of Wonderland are merely a "pack of cards," Alice strips the Victorian social hierarchy of its power. Her return to the waking world is not a defeat, but an act of empowerment. She has looked behind the curtain of "adult logic" and found it wanting.

Ultimately, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland warns the reader to "be careful what you wish for." The world below is not a gentle escape; it is chaotic, stressful, and uncanny much like the process of growing up. However, by engaging with the "Portal" trope, Carroll demonstrates that fantasy is more than a fairytale. It is a mirror for the complexity of the human imagination and a necessary rebellion against any era that seeks to stifle the pure, irrational curiosity of childhood.

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From Castles to Control Systems: Shifting Representations of Power in Modern Fantasy

Kahraman Halil BİRGİ

Fantasy has not abandoned power. It has relocated it. In many traditional fantasy narratives, authority is represented through visible figures and symbols: kings, heroes, castles, swords, magic, bloodlines, and prophecy. These images make power recognizable. A king sits on a throne, a castle rises above the land, a hero carries a sword, and a wizard commands magic. In this older model, power usually has a center. It can be seen, named, challenged, and sometimes defeated.

This does not make traditional fantasy simple. These stories can still be complex, but the location of power is often direct. Authority belongs to someone because of who

they are: royal blood, chosen status, magical ability, or divine prophecy. Conflict follows the same logic. If the king is defeated, the kingdom changes. If the hero wins, the evil force is pushed back. If the magical object is destroyed, the central problem may be resolved.

Modern fantasy and speculative fiction increasingly move away from this model. Power becomes less about who a character is, and more about what they control. Instead of being concentrated in one ruler, hero, or magical object, authority begins to operate through systems: infrastructure, institutions, transportation, energy, communication networks, surveillance, military organization,

and information control. Individual characters still matter, but they operate inside structures that are often larger than themselves.

This change reflects a modern understanding of power. In contemporary life, authority is not always experienced through one obvious ruler. It often appears through institutions and infrastructures that organize daily existence. Transportation systems shape how cities function. Energy systems determine what is possible. Communication networks control how information moves. Surveillance systems decide who is visible and who is monitored. Power becomes harder to see because it may appear as convenience, access, dependence, or organization.

This is why the sentence, "Kings demanded loyalty. Systems create dependence," is useful. A king may demand obedience openly. A system may not need to demand anything. It becomes necessary because people rely on it.



The real world already offers examples of this multi-domain power. Conglomerates such as Koç Holding, Unilever, or similar large institutions do not influence only one sector. They may be connected to production, consumer goods, energy, transportation, finance, technology, logistics, or or everyday products. These organizations are not fantasy systems, but they help reveal the pattern: modern power often does not look like a throne. It looks like an integrated structure.

This idea becomes especially useful in modern world-building. My own constructed speculative framework, CMDS, functions as a case study for this shift. CMDS is an original techno-fantasy setting that imagines power not as the possession of a single ruler, but as the integrated control of military, infrastructural, technological, and civilian systems. It includes military force, but also transportation, energy, communication, civilian projects, consumer production, and large-

scale construction.

CMDS is not relevant simply because it contains advanced technology. If it were only about futuristic weapons, it would remain a generic science fiction project. Its importance lies in how it organizes authority across domains. A railgun or satellite may look dramatic, but symbolically, a dam, an airport, or a transport network may be just as important. These structures organize movement, access, dependence, and daily life.

In this sense, CMDS replaces the castle with the system. The castle once represented protection, authority, territory, and hierarchy. In a modern speculative framework, the system can take over that symbolic role. It protects, controls, connects, watches, supplies, and defines the limits of action.

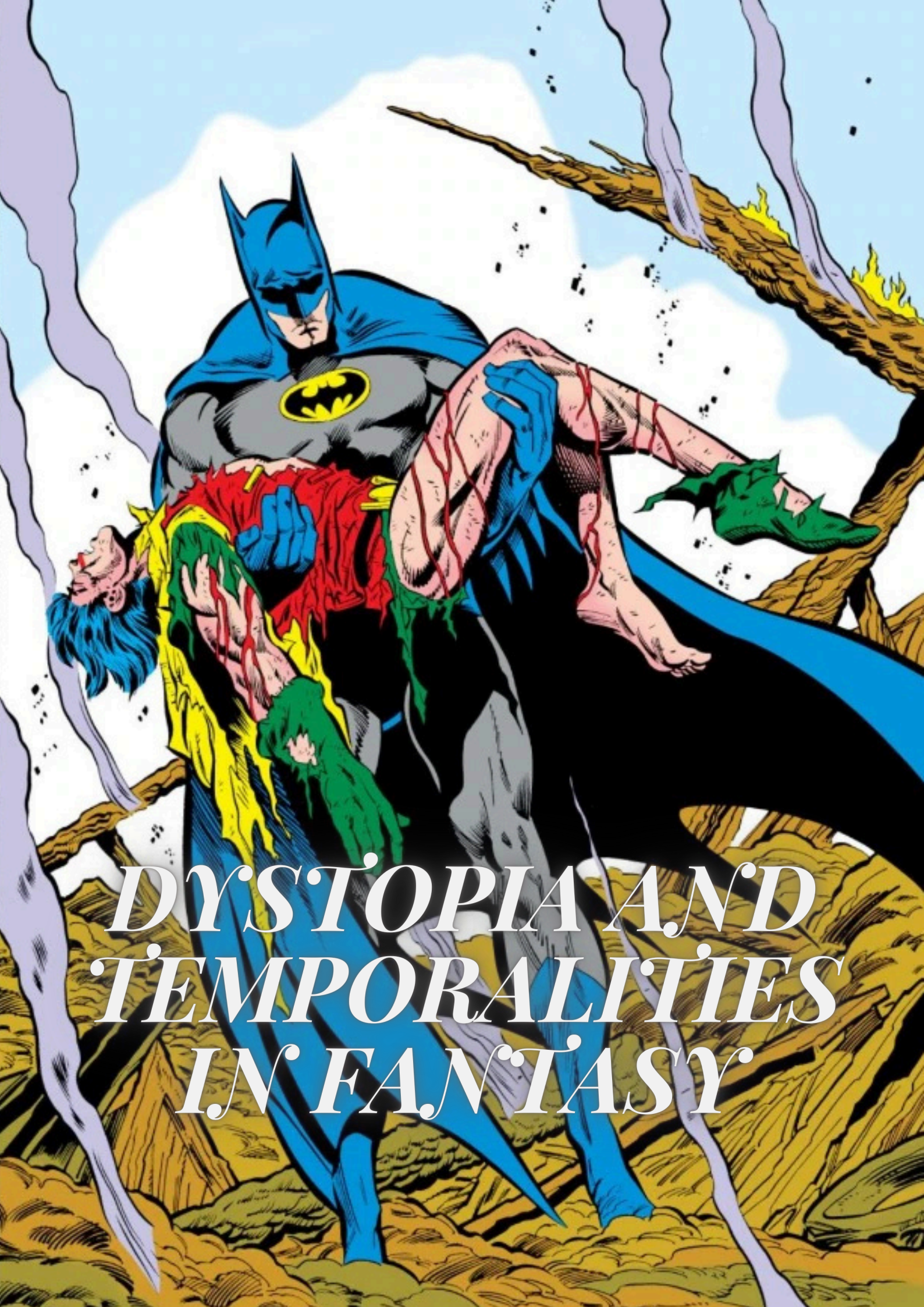
The symbolic vocabulary of fantasy changes with this shift. The castle becomes the network. The crown

becomes the institution. The sword becomes infrastructure. Prophecy becomes surveillance. The kingdom becomes an integrated system. The hero becomes a strategist, engineer, operator, or architect of systems. This does not remove heroism; it changes its form.

Fantasy often reflects the anxieties of the society that produces it. Earlier fantasy might represent fear through dragons, curses, tyrants, or dark lords. Modern speculative fantasy often represents fear through

systems too large to fully understand: surveillance, technological dependence, infrastructure failure, information control, and networks that shape life invisibly.

Fantasy remains mythic, but its myths adapt to the technological world. We no longer only mythologize kings. We mythologize infrastructure. From castles to control systems, fantasy continues to ask the same question: where does power live?



DYSTOPIA AND TEMPORALITIES IN FANTASY

The Lazarus Transmutation: Death as a Catalyst and Functional Necessity in DC Comics' Jason Todd

Zeynep Ceylin YÜKSEK

Jason Todd was first introduced to comic readers as the second Robin. He substituted for Dick Grayson who was the first Robin. Their characteristics were different, fans did not expect an emotion-driven and impulsive second Robin after Dick. Because of the dislike towards Jason, DC conducted a fan vote in

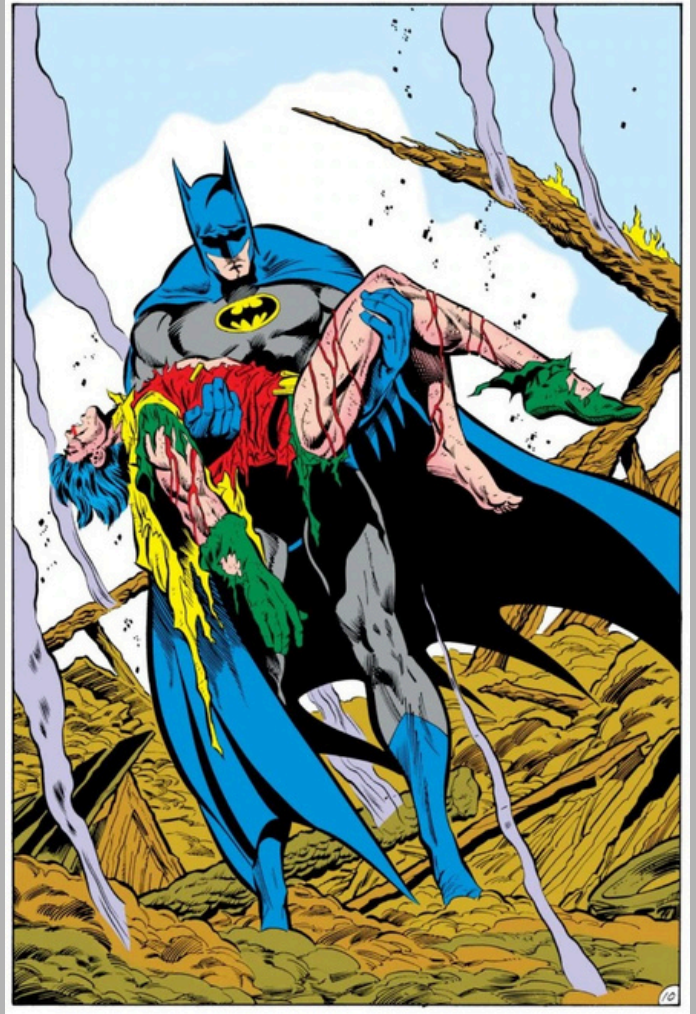
1988, which resulted in the majority of fans wanting him dead. He was later on killed by the Joker in “A Death in the Family”. However his death created a shift in superhero narratives by deconstructing the traditional sidekick archetype and his comeback as Red Hood altered the justice dynamics, making him a living critique of Batman. Jason Todd’s narrative power came from the transformation he experienced not from his life beside Batman as the Boy Wonder.

The original Robin image, introduced by Dick Grayson, was an example of the traditional sidekick archetype; a cheerful helper to Batman, always together and safe



thanks to him, fighting the crime until the end. However Jason's brutal demise defied these boundaries and subverted the "safe and sound" sidekick image. Moreover, Batman's failure to save Jason from the Joker changed him from "The Invincible Hero" to a "Grieving Father". Batman's failure to protect his child marked Jason's death as a significant improvement in the emotional depth of the storyline.

The Lazarus Pit in the story was significant because of it functioned as a fountain of youth which enabled Jason to transform from a deceased sidekick to an active anti-hero. The Pit offered physical restoration while stripping away his humanity, damaging his psychology. It did not bring back Jason as he was; instead, it intensified his rage, resentment and the feeling of abandonment. The green waters of the pit erased his remaining ties to his former identity and created a narrative reset in the storyline. It also provided a justification for his actions after becoming a revenge-seeker and undergoing a shift in morality.



Having been raised and trained by Batman, Jason always shared the same desire as his mentor: to save Gotham from criminals. However, he used the opposite punishment system. By killing the criminals, Red Hood found a definitive solution that Batman never could with his "no-kill rule". He challenged Batman's argument about solving crime by being the very person who got hurt because of that ideology. He confronted Batman about his rule being the actual reason for his son's death and that his devotion to this



rule resulted in the slaughter of innocents, due to his choice to keep the Joker alive. Consequently, Jason proved himself to be the living critique and the perfected antithesis of Batman by making him question his ways of protecting his loved ones and the city in general, while Jason himself, despite being raised in the same system, chose a more effective solution to end crime.

Throughout the story, Jason proved that a character must transform and shed their old identity to reach their true potential. Without his death the sidekick image would have remained the same and monotonous, no one would have criticized Batman and his moral choices that cause more death and the narrative reset with the Lazarus Pit would not have occurred. From this perspective, his return as Red Hood enabled a deeper understanding of the anti-hero concept.

Additionally, the “war” between him and Batman proved that comic books are capable of showing emotional depth just like myths. In conclusion, by stepping outside of traditions, Jason Todd’s narrative demonstrated that a character’s death can function as a tool for structural transformation rather than a basic plot device.





*FANTASTIC
WORLDS IN
CONTEMPORARY
MEDIA*

Here Be Dragons Amongst Us: How How to Train Your Dragon Franchise Defends Coexistence of Humans and Nature

Talia Gkioulmpin Gialou DOUMALAR

Children animated movies influence children a lot with their ideas written in their plot. These movies teach children different important ideals such as ecocritical views. In How to Train Your Dragon series this is taught with the usage of characters such as the Vikings of Berk and the dragons.

The How to Train Your Dragon franchise is an American animated fantasy film series based on the books written by Cressida Cowell. The first movie shares its name with the first novel, and it was released in 2010 directed by Chris Sanders and Dean DeBlois. By the year 2026

there are three major movies, several series, and short movies in the franchise.

The main characters of the series are Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III the Viking, and Toothless the Night Fury. They are the key characters as representations of the ideas this series offers, and the dragons are direct representations of nature. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen has written in “Monster Culture (Seven Theses)” that “the monster stands at the threshold of becoming.” (20) They exist for the audience to understand our view towards what the monster represents in reality.



Hiccup trusting Toothless changes everything.

Toothless is a Night Fury, “the unholy offspring of lightning and death itself.” (24:52) But the audience also learns that this species has never been seen, therefore the real fear towards it the fear the unknown creates. Similar to the real-life situation of being afraid of nature and animals for lacking knowledge regarding to them. As Hiccup learns more about Toothless though the fear becomes curiosity. From the moment that Toothless chooses to not attack Hiccup despite knowing a Viking hurting him the story changes. Hiccup wonders why the deadly dragon didn’t kill him and starts learning about the dragon, discovering dragons aren’t mindless beasts but rather animals with their own society. They even have an intelligence that makes it possible for them to understand human behaviour and react accordingly. This is a parallel of how in real life nature is seen as vicious but in reality, it has its own system. Toothless’ behaviour is similar to majority of the animals. Even if the real-life animals do not show human like behaviour, it is still known that many animals recognize pattern, communicate, and have their own society.



The way the dragons are threatened are like can be compared to how humans view wild species. For example, a cheetah can be seen as a murderous wild cat at first sight. Knowing it is the fastest predator alive may

scare people, causing them to believe these animals would hunt down humans given the chance. In reality cheetahs have no diet of humans and do not attack unprovoked. They even approach wildlife photographers in a very calm manner or show such high anxiety when captivated that they require companion dogs for support. Obviously, it also must be kept in mind that humans must not approach any wild animal unless they are professionals in that field.

The bond that Vikings of Berk and dragons show is an example of “Companion Species” Donna Haraway explains. Since not only dragons change their



mind and stop attacking the humans, but the humans change their mind once realizing the possibility of peaceful community between them. This is seen not only with Hiccup but the chief of Berk, Stoick the Vast too. Similar to how dragons follow their alpha, Vikings follow Stoick’s lead. This makes it possible for a peaceful place to exist as Berk becomes an island where both

species coexist in harmony. They are free to live however they want, and this includes Toothless too. For when given the choice to fly on his own he refuses it, choosing to have the first tail model that requires Hiccup's assistance.



In the second movie the audience is introduced to Valka. She might be seen as a Viking kidnapped by a dragon, but in reality, she is a woman taken away to be protected. She then has chosen to stay for coexisting with dragons is where she belongs, once again showing the audience that the choice of coexisting with dragons is possible. Understanding and accepting the nature as it is, is enough to be part of it. Drago Bludvist is also introduced, he represents the humans that want to control and use nature. The pain he causes, and his downfall tells the audience of the inevitable harm it causes to everyone. As written in *The Ecocriticism Reader*: "What we do about ecology depends on our ideas of the man-nature relationship." (12)



Valka and Cloudjumper see each other as family.

In the end with these movies tell the audience to care for the nature, understand it and to coexist with it. To love, protect it one must recognize these, as it is in the human nature itself.

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Fantastic Parody and the Post-Heroic Turn in Prince

Şevval Nur DEMİRCİ

Fantasy literature is generally built on stable worlds, heroic figures, and meaningful progression. In many classical examples, the hero enters a fictional universe, faces trials, and eventually transforms. J.R.R. Tolkien's idea of a "secondary world" depends on coherence and internal logic, while Joseph Campbell's model of the hero's journey focuses on growth through challenges. The series *Prince* initially seems to belong to this tradition. It includes a kingdom, a royal family, and political tensions, suggesting a typical fantasy narrative. However, this expectation is quickly broken. The series does not maintain a stable fantasy world. Instead, it constantly disrupts its own structure through irony, exaggeration, and absurd situations.

The main character is one of the clearest examples of this disruption. He is not given a personal name and is only called "Prens". This removes his individuality and immediately weakens the idea of a traditional hero. In



classical fantasy, the hero is usually defined by destiny or special recognition. Here, the prince is not chosen or prepared for leadership. Instead, he is positioned as someone who avoids responsibility from the very beginning.

His behavior reinforces this post-heroic position. When problems appear, he rarely takes action and often reacts with confusion or indifference. For instance, in the scene where he is forced to clean pig waste, a conventional fantasy narrative would treat this as a turning point toward maturity. In *Prince*, however, it leads to no development. Instead of growth, there is repetition of failure and absurdity. Instead of growth, there is only a repetition of failure.

The world of Bongomia also refuses the logic of classical fantasy geography. Instead of a structured and believable map, countries are represented by fruits placed on a table. France becomes a plum, Hungary a dried apricot, and Ottoman lands an apple. This removes any sense of historical depth



or political seriousness. Geography becomes something temporary and playful rather than meaningful or stable.

This instability becomes even clearer in the Constantinople scene. The prince encounters a detailed world map created under Suleiman the Magnificent's authority. For the first time, he sees a global structure that is larger than his own understanding. However, he cannot locate Bongomia on the map. His reaction is confusion rather than curiosity or growth, emphasizing the limits of his world.

Space in the series is also highly restricted. Unlike traditional fantasy narratives where movement across

landscapes creates transformation, Prince is limited to repeated locations such as the palace, corridors, and dining areas. Because of this repetition, the world feels closed. There is no sense of expansion. Instead, everything circulates within the same small environment, creating a feeling similar to a theater stage rather than a fully developed world.

The artificiality of the world is also visible through language and visual details. Modern expressions like "Ben şok" (I'm shocked) and "Okeyiz" (We're good) appear in a medieval setting. These expressions break historical consistency and create temporal confusion. A Starbucks cup appearing in the background does the same thing visually. It introduces modern consumer culture into a fictional historical space. Character names also lack epic tradition and resemble everyday or popular culture references. Even the use of visible green-screen effects reminds the viewer that the world is constructed rather than real. Baudrillard's idea of simulation is relevant here, since Bongomia often feels more artificial than real.

Political authority in the series is equally unstable. Decisions inside the palace are not based on institutional logic but on personal fears or random interruptions. A key example appears in the Machiavelli scene. After introducing himself as "Prens," the prince asks Machiavelli not to mention his name too much in the book because he thinks some of his statements sound too harsh. The irony of the scene comes from the fact that the book is titled *The Prince*. Instead of engaging with political philosophy, the prince focuses only on his personal image and reputation.

Language further undermines authority. Instead of the formal and elevated speech expected from royalty, characters use casual, fragmented expressions. This removes the distance between the ruler and ordinary speech. According to Linda Hutcheon's idea of parody, repetition with difference creates irony. The series repeats fantasy structures but weakens them through modern, informal language. As a result, authority becomes something performed rather than naturally given.

Female characters function in a different way. In many fantasy stories, women are often placed in symbolic roles such as the helpless princess or the threatening witch. In *Prince*, however, female characters are more practical and emotionally stable than male characters. They often try to manage chaos and bring order to situations where the prince fails. Their role is not symbolic but functional, which makes them closer to realism within the fictional world. Meaning itself is also destabilized throughout the series. Violence is presented as a spectacle rather than an emotional conflict. Death does not create lasting emotional consequences. Characters quickly return to daily concerns such as eating or resting. Even prophecies lose importance when interrupted by ordinary needs. Because of this, events do not build emotional continuity.

Overall, *Prince* works as a fantasy parody that repeatedly breaks its own structure. Heroism is replaced by avoidance, space becomes limited and repetitive, and authority loses its seriousness. The series does not offer a stable fantasy escape. Instead, it exposes how fantasy itself is constructed. Through disruption, irony, and failure, it reshapes what fantasy can mean in a contemporary context.



Digital Prejudice and Social Performance in Black Mirror: Nosedive

Sıla CEYLAN

This study summarizes the Black Mirror episode “Nosedive,” created by Charlie Brooker. The episode explores digital identity, social pressure, and modern forms of prejudice through the story of Lacie Pound, who lives in a society where people rate each other from one to five stars after every interaction. These ratings determine employment, housing opportunities, and social status. Although this world appears futuristic, it actually reflects contemporary culture and functions as a metaphor for the present.

Lacie becomes obsessed with improving her rating and constructing a perfect online image. After several negative events, her score drops and society gradually rejects her. At one point, a truck driver tells her that ratings are

meaningless and that real life matters more, highlighting the contrast between artificial digital happiness and authentic human experience. In the wedding scene, Lacie finally loses control and expresses her genuine emotions, marking the collapse of her digital identity. As she begins to act authentically, she loses her remaining ratings and is imprisoned. There, she and another inmate share





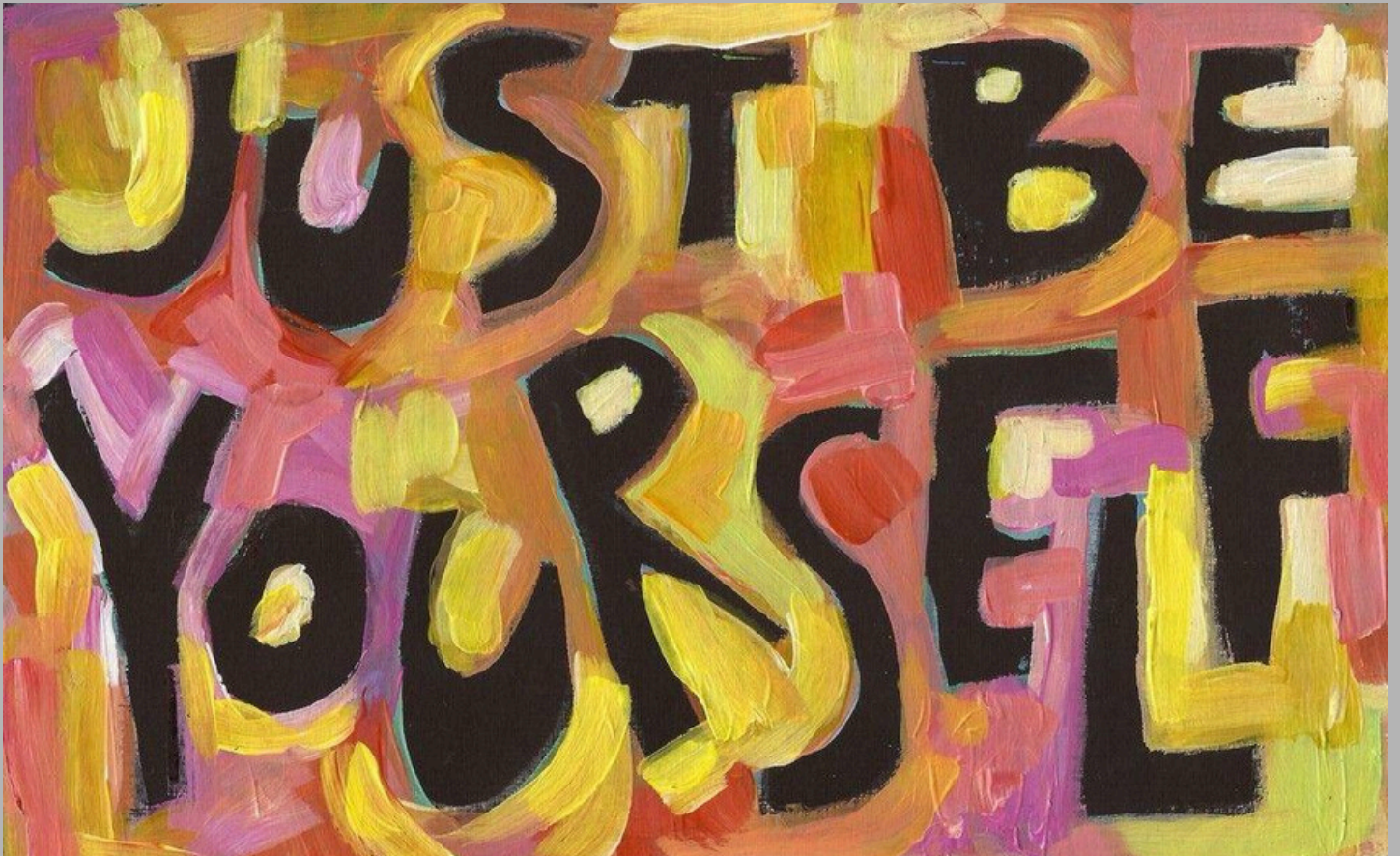
their thoughts openly, free from a society where ratings determine social value. The episode demonstrates how society creates digital prejudice by judging individuals through numbers rather than personality.

Today, social interactions are increasingly shaped by numerical indicators such as likes, followers, and ratings. Although these metrics appear neutral, they strongly influence self-perception and social perception. Digital systems do not eliminate prejudice; instead, they transform it into a subtle and systematic form. Digital evaluation systems create a type of prejudice that appears objective but is shaped by social norms and subjective judgments. At the same time, these systems encourage individuals to perform socially desirable identities rather than express their authentic selves.

According to Erving Goffman, social life can be understood as performance. In digital environments, individuals carefully construct identities based on how they expect others to judge them, leading to performative rather than authentic identities. Digital prejudice refers to judging individuals through numerical values instead of human qualities. Although numbers appear fair, they are influenced by cultural expectations, personal biases, and social norms, meaning the system is not truly objective.

Tzvetan Todorov defines the “fantastic” as a space between reality and imagination. “Nosedive” is not pure fantasy but an exaggerated version of contemporary reality, which makes it both realistic and disturbing. Digital platforms also rely on algorithmic systems. As Tarleton Gillespie explains, algorithms do not simply reflect behavior; they shape it by determining what becomes visible, popular, and valuable.

Constant evaluation also has psychological consequences. As Sherry Turkle suggests, individuals begin to define self-worth through external validation, which can lead to anxiety, pressure, and identity loss. In “Nosedive,” every interaction is rated, creating a numerical hierarchy where people are valued as scores rather than individuals.



Lacie constantly performs through artificial politeness, controlled behavior, and exaggerated positivity to gain approval. Her behavior becomes strategic rather than natural. Appearance also plays a crucial role, as beauty, clothing, tone of voice, and body language influence ratings. This shows that digital systems regulate both behavior and self-presentation.



As Lacie's rating declines, she experiences anxiety, instability, and desperation. Her identity collapses because her sense of self depends entirely on her rating. Interestingly, she becomes authentic only after losing everything. Meanwhile, the system creates a clear hierarchy in which highly rated individuals enjoy privileges while low-rated individuals are excluded, reflecting digital inequality.

In the final scene, Lacie freely expresses her emotions, suggesting that authenticity becomes possible only outside constant evaluation. This raises a broader issue: individuals are shaped by unique

experiences, making it problematic to reduce them to fixed labels. Prejudice has always existed, but digital platforms have made it more visible and intensified its effects.

People are often judged by simplified labels or numbers rather than identity. Personal preferences do not define character, and generalizations ignore individual complexity. Character is shaped by personal experiences and development, not by race, culture, labels, or appearance. At this point, traditional and digital prejudice overlap, as both reduce complex individuals to simplified categories. Therefore, empathy and respectful communication are essential both online and in real life.



People often make quick judgments and harsh criticisms without fully understanding others' experiences. Responding kindly and considering different perspectives may help reduce both digital and traditional prejudice. This approach may contribute to a healthier, fairer, and more peaceful social interaction.

In conclusion, digital systems do not eliminate prejudice but transform it into numerical form. They encourage performance over authenticity, create hierarchies, and affect identity and mental health. “Nosedive” functions as a warning: if human value continues to be measured through numbers, authenticity, individuality, and genuine human connection may be lost. Individuals can remain authentic without limiting the freedom of others.

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A painting of a woman with long, dark, flowing hair holding a sleeping child against a dramatic, cloudy sky. The woman's face is partially obscured by her hair, and she has a serene expression. The child is nestled in her arms, with their head resting on her chest. The background is a mix of warm, golden-yellow and cool, blue-grey tones, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is tender and contemplative.

*POWER, TRAUMA,
AND THE
UNCONSCIOUS IN
FANTASY*

Mist, Messiahs And Mortal Gods: Religious Trauma And Self- Actualization in Brandon Sanderson's The Hero of Ages (2008)

Asya YILMAZ

Brandon Sanderson is one of the most prolific and popular writers of the contemporary epic fantasy genre, and a creative writing professor at the Brigham Young University. He is known for his vast and diverse fictional universe, "The Cosmere," which hosts over seventy books, interconnected through series and standalone novels. His world-building skills and motives are shaped not only by innovative and creative magic systems and narratives, but also by profound theological (multi)layers, and the theological background in his books encompasses the teachings, rituals, and history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or commonly known as The Mormon Church.

The belief I am primarily interested in, and will examine in this paper, is that humans can reach a state of divinity through spiritual development. According to Mormonism, humans choose suffering and tragedy in Earth life as a result of their free-willed creation. The main belief is that before human beings are born, they are in a perfect but inexperienced state alongside God. Then, using their free will, they choose to live the earthly life – and the pain,

Then, using their free will, they choose to live the earthly life – and the pain, tragedy and suffering that comes with earthly life. In this way, by truly living life, they hope to rereturn to God's presence, this time with meaning, understanding and experience. This concept, called "Eternal Progression," argues that a mortal, imperfect being, a human, can become God by becoming privy to the secrets of the universe – for God himself progresses in his eternality, human beings should always try to get to this perfect state by experiencing life.

In accordance with this belief, my focus will be on one of the key characters of the trilogy: Sazed. He is a Terrisman, a “Keeper”, dedicated to learning and preserving history, tradition and knowledge of the world before Lord Ruler’s rule. His duty is to study and store all the ancient religions, cultures, and knowledge destroyed by the Lord Ruler in his "metal minds" using his Feruchemical abilities, and to preserve and safeguard them for humankind. In the first book, Sazed has a unique faith regarding all the religions he has the knowledge of – he doesn't believe in any particular religion. He believes that every religion contains a fragment of truth, and they are all sacred; and he respects them. However, throughout the narrative, Sazed's character development will be tested by severe religious traumas and ontological crises.

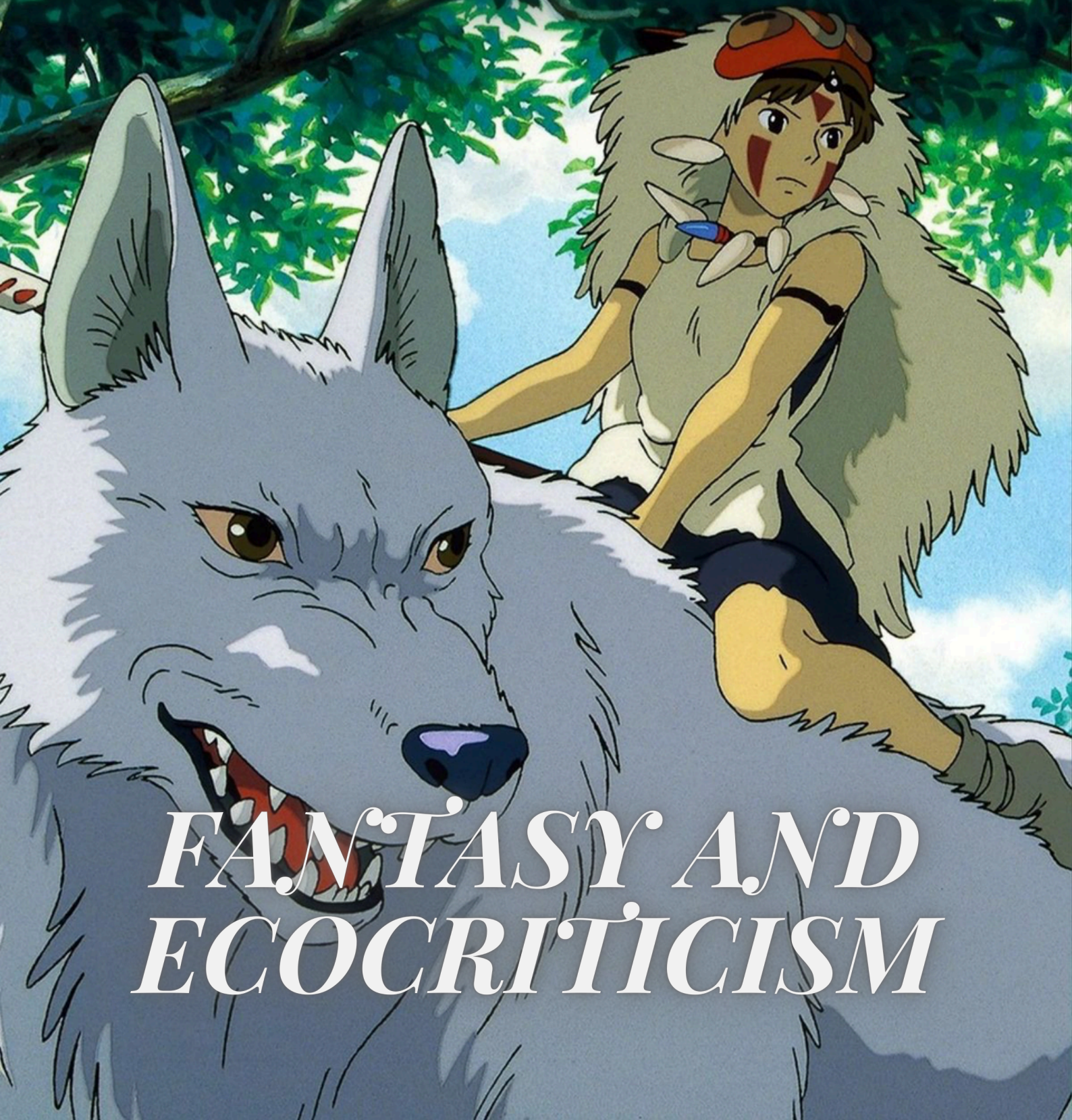
In the second book, Sazed also falls into a deep abyss of meaninglessness and emptiness after losing the woman he loves, and this becomes the trigger for his main (religious) trauma. He begins to question the existence of the afterlife, with a goal to find a perfect answer that can satisfy his hunger for justice. For this reason, he begins to examine hundreds of religions in his archive one by one; however, he cannot find the perfection he seeks because, in his opinion, all spiritual knowledge on earth has been corrupted by the Lord Ruler, and pure truth, or reality, has been erased from the face of the earth.

This state of questioning that Sazed is in takes him further and further away from the perfection he seeks, knowledge no longer satisfies him, on the contrary, it makes him even more angry and drives him to despair. In the finale of the trilogy, he transforms through his traumas and begins an act of "self-realization." He examines the religions and visits every sacred land to see what truths they contain to enlighten the questions he has. This very journey will make him realize that all of the ancient religious knowledge he had previously dismissed as "flawed" is in fact, essential to the physical and spiritual restoration of the world. As he reaches the final level of the Eternal Progression, he accordingly, becomes the god, naming himself "Harmony". Based on all his accumulated knowledge, he restores the order of the world as he learned through pain and suffering. In a sense, Sazed completes the lack of his own faith by becoming the faith himself, answers his questions about life and meaning, and embraces all answers as he embraces himself. This ascension and deification is not a rejection of religion and tradition, but rather a reconstruction and a rejoicing of them through an individual point of view, which is the most fundamental teaching of the Mormon faith.



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*FANTASY AND
ECOCRITICISM*

The Distance of Fear: Ecological Terror And Anxiety in Samanta Schweblin's Fever Dream

Yağız Eren SİZGEN

Samanta Schweblin's 2017 novel *Fever Dream* (*Distancia de Rescate*) is a novel that tackles ecological fears of humanity through an unsettling atmosphere. This atmosphere alludes to the ecogothic - and also presents an example for an ecocritical perspective. To add on, this novel uses the possibilities of the fantastic in literature to express these new fears. The use of fantastic elements and their purpose will be the focus of this study.

Firstly, fantastic literature is normally not seen as a medium that can be used to express real world fears, like dystopic or ecological fears. However, fantastic settings can actually be a great way to try to understand newly shaping anxieties in contemporary society. These anxieties, partly because they're just emerging, are sometimes hard to understand and locate. The fantastic on the other hand can help us locate these anxieties in magical lands - actually meaning that the need to rationally categorize these fears is lessened in fantastic literature. As a result, we might get to know these fears better because we've let go of the need to categorize them before understanding them. A writer who was a defender of fantastic literature, Ursula K. Le Guin had termed fantasy as "fiction that fully exploits fictionality" (qtd. in Ulstein 8) meaning fantasy gains its power from embracing its fictionality. This self-aware world of the fantastic is inherently a deconstructive mode of narrative by some critics such as Lance Olsen (39).

Ecocriticism can be broadly defined as “the study of the relationship between literature and physical environment” (Glotfelty and Fromm 18). It is a response to the human-centered way of thinking of the West in literary studies. By being a response to anthropocentrism, ecocriticism embraces an ecocentrist perspective - meaning viewing nature in the center and breaking the traditional hierarchy of beings. *Fever Dream* takes place in a rural Argentinian town and this town is portrayed as being significantly influenced by chemical pesticides and toxic waste. The town is unsettling and anomalies are common especially in children. These anomalies actually have been normalized so the main character who is an outsider to the town who just came for a vacation with her daughter can't make sense of what's happening there. As the reader we follow Amanda through her journey to recall and rationalize this toxic and ambiguous setting.

The most important motif in the novel is “worms”. Amanda and David are trying to pinpoint the time when these worms took control over Amanda and her daughter. These worms generally allude to the ecological terror present in the town. It's never explicitly stated, to help the eerie atmosphere, but these worms are linked with the toxicity of the setting. Before Amanda's story, the reader learns Carla and David's story through Amanda's recalling. We learn that Carla and her family had a barn with horses who got sick sometime but the cause of the sickness is unknown. After the horses got sick, we see that David also gets sick and the novel gives the feeling that these are connected. David's sickness, like the horses', is untraceable. The nurses don't recognize this sickness fully so Carla tries a rather traditional approach: a psychic woman in a house known as “the green house” in the neighborhood. Desperate, Carla takes her son to this psychic woman and thus comes the main fantastic part of the novel: the woman proposes a soul migration. She explains that David's sickness is so strong that he can't survive on his own

and to split the sickness in half, David will go to another body spiritually. No physical body can exist without a soul so in David's body, a foreign soul will come. Carla is advised to not inquire where David's soul goes in this process. Without much of a choice, Carla accepts and the operation takes place in the green house. As the reader we never witness the operation and we just wait with Carla. After the operation, David comes and from that moment on David remains as an unsettling and eerie person for Carla. We see a mother's acceptance of the fantastic where the rational was helpless.

The ecological terror in the novel is pervasive, lingering and gradual. Through the use of fantastic elements, the author offers another perspective to this ecological terror. When humans cannot fully make sense of their fears, they may turn to fantastic phenomena and explanations. As the novel doesn't answer what actually happened, what was toxic and why and how all the characters got sick, through this ambiguous atmosphere and setting the reader recognizes the ambiguity and presence of these emerging anxieties about nature. The setting and the subject are closely connected. As Schweblin herself states: “..On the other hand it became clear how a society that isn't well-informed is capable of seeing ghosts everywhere” (Schweblin).

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The Spirit of Nature: Fantasy, Myth, and Ecology in Miyazaki's Films

Makbule DOĞAN

Animation is frequently relegated to the margins of mainstream academic critique and dismissed as a medium for children or escapist entertainment. However, within the framework of literary and cultural studies, the cinematic output of Hayao Miyazaki—co-founder of Studio Ghibli—demands a much more rigorous evaluation. Beyond the aesthetic richness of his narratives, Miyazaki functions as a visionary architect of complex environmental ethics. In her foundational study *The Animé Art of Hayao Miyazaki*, cultural critic Dani Cavallaro offers a compelling theoretical lens to assess these works, arguing that Miyazaki constructs what she terms "Secondary Worlds." Rather than offering a passive escape from



reality, these spaces operate as distorted mirrors that reflect contemporary ecological anxieties. By destabilizing conventional human logic, Miyazaki shifts nature from a silent backdrop into a sentient, authoritative protagonist with its own distinct agency.

To appreciate how these spaces challenge human perception, one must examine two central concepts in Cavallaro's framework: "liminality" and "metamorphosis." A liminal space represents a threshold where industrial efficiency, human exceptionalism, and patriarchal structures are temporarily suspended. These environments function as transformative laboratories that trigger a profound fluidity of identity, forcing characters to navigate a spiritual rebirth.



The quintessential representation of this liminal laboratory is the Bathhouse in *Spirited Away* (2001). When the young protagonist, Chihiro, crosses into this spirit realm, her identity as a spoiled consumer begins to dissolve. This dislocation becomes absolute when she signs a contract with the witch Yubaba. Critically, Yubaba is a modern cinematic reinterpretation of the Yama-uba (the Mountain Witch) from traditional Japanese folklore—a mythical figure permanently stationed at the boundaries of the human and spirit

worlds. By losing her name to this folkloric entity and becoming "Sen," Chihiro undergoes a severe identity crisis.

This liminal vulnerability sets the stage for the film's most explicit ecological commentary: the cleansing of the "Stink Spirit." When a mud-covered, repulsive monster enters the bathhouse, it is met with universal disgust. Yet, through Chihiro's empathetic labor and care, the layers of industrial filth are stripped away to reveal a magnificent River Spirit. As Cavallaro suggests, this physical metamorphosis serves a pedagogical purpose. The river did not choose to be polluted; human carelessness transformed it into an

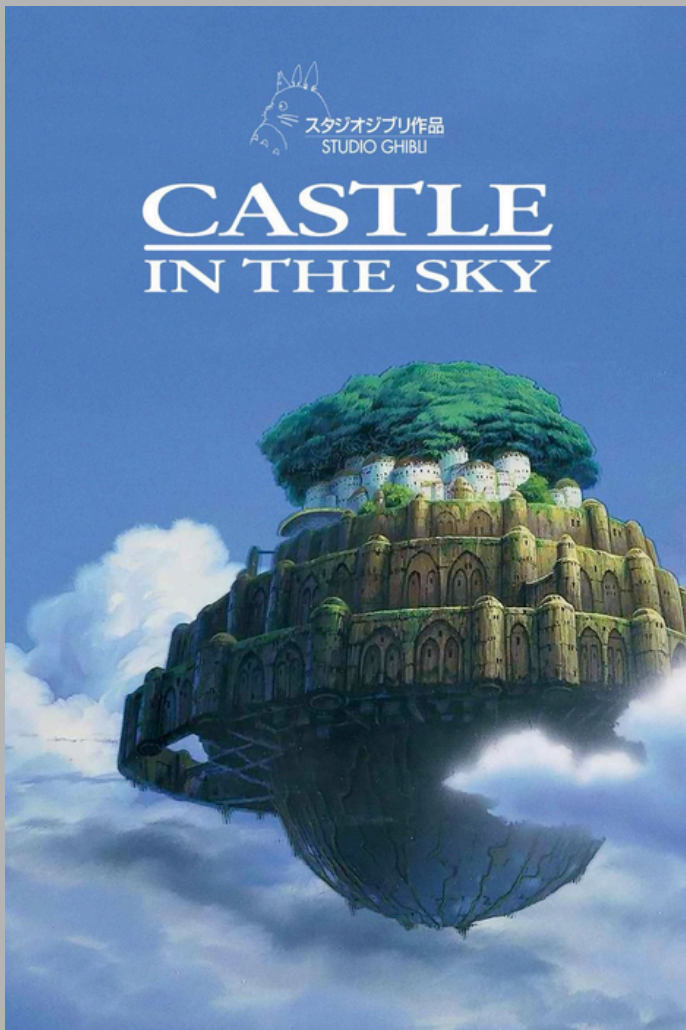
unrecognizable monster. The narrative demonstrates that ecological restoration is achievable, but only if humanity undergoes an internal, personal transformation to cleanse its relationship with the environment.

While “Spirited Away” explores the fluid arithmetic of individual identity, “Princess Mononoke” (1997) offers a darker, collective confrontation on the ecological frontier. Here, Miyazaki directly deconstructs the anthropocentric worldview—the arrogant belief that humans are the center of the universe and that nature is merely a commodity to be conquered. The environment is



defended by the Forest Spirit (Shishigami), an autonomous force operating completely outside human morality. The “Shishigami “embodies life and death simultaneously, and the terrifying physical curses that afflict the characters represent the literal manifestation of the forest’s anger. By portraying nature as an authoritative character that forcefully pushes back against the industrial greed of Iron Town, Miyazaki warns that boundaries must be respected rather than violated.

However, Miyazaki's ecological vision does not end in pure conflict; it also envisions a "Utopian Balance." In *Castle in the Sky* (1986), the floating fortress of Laputa showcases a paradoxical synthesis between advanced technology and ecological sanctity. When the protagonists finally reach this legendary fortress, they do not find a cold, metallic weapon of destruction, but a thriving garden. The most iconic image of the film—an ancient war



robot peacefully tending to flowers and protecting a bird's nest—proves that Miyazaki does not harbor a simplistic hatred for technology. Instead, he critiques how humanity misuses technology to dominate the Earth.

Miyazaki's cinema ultimately serves as a sophisticated pedagogical tool urging us to bridge ancestral wisdom with future survival. Through the analytical lenses of liminality and metamorphosis, his films provide a vital space for ethical reflection. In an era deeply marked by environmental crises, his work invites us to step past industrial blindness, move beyond seeing nature as an inanimate object, and reclaim a lost sense of wonder. By listening to nature as a breathing, sentient story, we can choose a path of coexistence defined by empathy, harmony, and mutual respect.



Nature Unbound: Ecological Anxiety and the Fantastic in Daphne du Maurier's *The Birds*

Berivan ÇERÇİNLİ

Daphne du Maurier's 1952 short story, *The Birds*, is often remembered through the lens of horror or its famous cinematic adaptation. However, when viewed through an ecocritical lens, the narrative reveals a much deeper exploration of ecological anxiety and the collapse of human dominance. Written in the immediate wake of World War II, the story serves as a profound critique of anthropocentrism—the belief that humans are the center of the universe—and explores how the natural world can transform from a passive backdrop into a terrifying, invading force. By analyzing the text's historical context, its use of the "fantastic," and its portrayal of a "mechanical civilization" in defeat, we can see how Du Maurier created a timeless warning about humanity's

fragile relationship with the environment.

The origins of *The Birds* are rooted in Du Maurier's personal observations of the Cornwall landscape. According to her memoirs, she was inspired by the sight of screaming seagulls following a tractor as it plowed a field. While this might seem like a mundane rural observation, for Du Maurier, it reflected the growing anxieties of a post-war world defined by mechanization and industrialization.

Published in 1952, the story emerged during a period of rapid technological growth where humans believed they could finally dominate nature through science. However, the imagery in the story subverts this



confidence. The birds do not behave like animals in a peaceful pastoral setting; instead, they move with military precision, resembling the air raids and invading armies of World War II. The human home, once a place of safety, is transformed into a defensive bunker, reflecting the deep-seated fears of destruction and instability that lingered after the war.

A central theme in *The Birds* is the complete collapse of anthropocentrism. In the story, the traditional hierarchy of nature is reversed: humans are no longer the dominant predators but have become vulnerable prey within their own ecosystem. This shift exposes the inherent fragility of human systems. Du Maurier emphasizes this by showing the total failure of technology against the avian onslaught.

Guns, airplanes, and modern infrastructure—the very symbols of "civilized" dominance—become useless. When airplanes crash and military technology fails to stop the birds, the narrative illustrates what critics have called the “defeat of mechanical civilization”. This suggests that human reliance on machines has created a false sense of security, blinding us to the raw power of the natural world that remains beyond our control.



Unlike traditional fantasy, which often relies on magic or supernatural creatures, *The Birds* creates a sense of the fantastic through the destabilization of reality itself. There is no magic in the story; the horror arises because the natural world suddenly stops following human logic. This process is tied to the concept of defamiliarization and Freud’s idea of the uncanny.



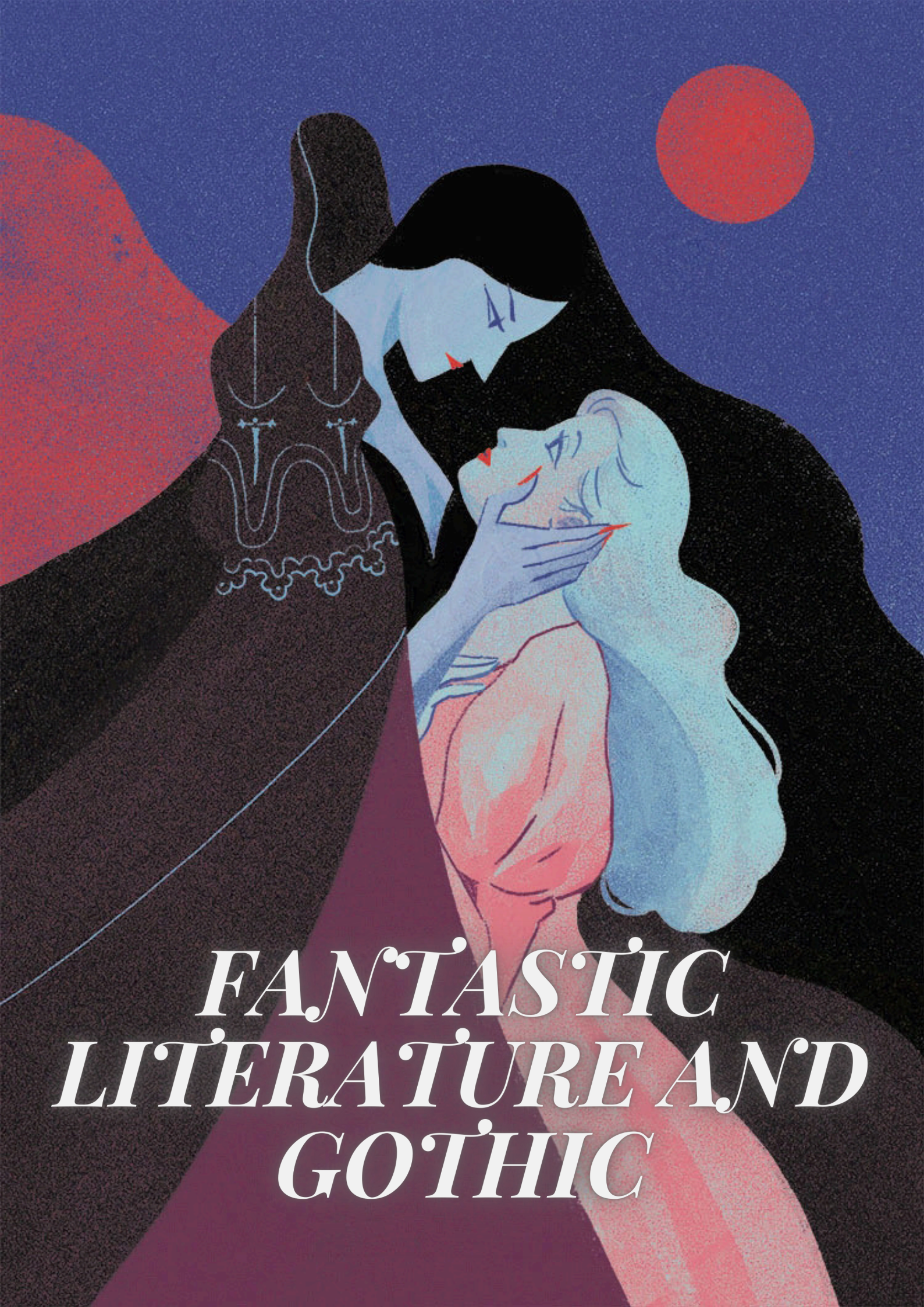
Birds, which are ordinary and common creatures seen every day, are transformed into something deeply unfamiliar and threatening. As the birds' behavior becomes increasingly unpredictable, the characters' daily routines—once governed by human schedules and technology—begin to dissolve. Survival becomes dictated by the tides and weather, forcing humanity to return to a primitive state where they must answer to the rhythms of nature rather than the clock.

One of the most potent metaphors in the story is the birds' targeted attacks on human eyes. Symbolically, this represents humanity's blindness toward the consequences of environmental destruction. This theme aligns with Rob Nixon's concept of "slow violence," which describes how ecological disasters often unfold gradually and invisibly, making them easy to ignore until it is too late. In the narrative, many characters exhibit environmental complacency, ignoring the early warnings of the birds' strange behavior because it does not yet directly threaten their comfort. For example, when the protagonist, Nat, tries to report the unusual activity, the telephone operator remains indifferent, representing a society that continues its ordinary routines while a catastrophe approaches. This reflects a modern reality where climate change and habitat destruction are often ignored until they reach a point of uncontrollable crisis.

Though written over seventy years ago, *The Birds* remains strikingly relevant as an environmental warning for the twenty-first century. Du Maurier's fiction parallels the concerns of scientific works like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, using symbolism to express the anxiety of an environment out of balance. The birds in the story are not merely animals; they are symbols of ecological revenge and the loss of human control.

Ultimately, *The Birds* suggests that the most frightening form of fantasy is not one that escapes reality, but one where reality itself becomes unfamiliar. By forcing readers to confront their vulnerability, Du Maurier reminds us that humans are not separate from nature. The story serves as a haunting reminder that the environment only becomes an "invading army" when we have spent too long ignoring our impact upon it.





*FANTASTIC
LITERATURE AND
GOTHIC*

Haunted by Difference: The Gothic, the Foreign, and the Queer in Carmilla

Aleyna KÖYLÜ & Sudem MERSİN

1. Introduction

Gothic fiction often engages with themes of transgression, foreignness, and the destabilization of social and cultural boundaries. Within this tradition, *Carmilla* presents its central figure as both attractive and threatening, blurring the line between familiarity and otherness through gendered and cultural ambiguity. Although the novella does not explicitly situate *Carmilla* within the Orient, it employs patterns of exoticization, making her a figure through which anxieties surrounding difference, desire, and identity are articulated. By applying Teun A. van Dijk's Ideological Square, this study explores how language functions as a socio-cognitive tool used by power structures to achieve discrimination towards marginalized groups, towards *Carmilla*.

1.1 Gothic Fiction

Towards the end of the 19th century, the declining power of English imperialism and colonial unrest caused widespread cultural anxieties in Victorian society. These tensions shaped Gothic fiction, which converted fears of social change, corruption, and «the unknown» into monstrous figures and terror.

Victorian Gothic literature displayed these anxieties through the construction of the «Other,» turning differences into a source of horror.

1.2 The Concept of the Other

The «Other» is not a fixed identity but a constructed term shaped through ideological and cultural discourse. As Roland Barthes

argues, dominant groups convert historical and social meaning into naturalized «truths, » making difference depoliticized and presented as fixed and timeless. Therefore, this operation reinforces hierarchies between Self and Other, which is central to Gothic representations of monstrosity and foreignness.



2. Theoretical and Methodological Framework

2.1 Ideological Square

Developed by sociolinguist Teun A. van Dijk, the Ideological Square is a foundational socio-cognitive framework within Critical Discourse Analysis that examines how dominant ideologies are structurally maintained through discourse. The framework operates on a macro-strategy of polarization, dividing

social actors into a privileged In-group ("Us") and a marginalized Out-group ("Them"). This is executed through four distinct semantic quadrants: emphasizing the positive attributes and de-emphasizing the negative traits of the In-group, while de-emphasizing the positive qualities and amplifying the flaws or perceived threats of the Out-group. Ultimately, van Dijk's framework exposes language as an active tool to naturalize social hierarchies and systematically construct the "Other" as an inherent danger to the dominant collective.

3. Data Analysis

3.1 CDA

3.1.1 The Other as Queer



Within J. Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, non-normative desire functions as a disruptive force that threatens the stability of Victorian heteronormativity. Utilizing Van Dijk's Ideological Square, the narrative codes *Carmilla*'s homoerotic attraction through feverish, predatory biological markers such as "burning eyes" and "tumultuous respiration". Rather than representing social interaction, her declarations—such as "I live in you; and you would die for me"—subvert the nurturing role expected of female companions. This presentation frames queer desire as

possession and consumption, establishing a threat to the "Self" that ultimately validates the moral repulsion and boundary-setting mechanisms of the dominant "Us" group.

3.1.2 The Other as Gender

The text actively engages with late 19th-century patriarchal anxieties by converting female gender transgression into Gothic horror. While Victorian gender norms dictated that a woman's hand remain soft and yielding, the narrative violently subverts this expectation by describing *Mircalla*'s grip as "like a vice of steel". This linguistic contrast deconstructs the illusion of the frail female body, revealing an aggressive, hidden nature that usurps masculine physical strength. By demonstrating that her contact leaves behind numbness, the discourse positions the gendered "Other" as an existential threat to patriarchal hierarchies, thereby justifying the community's defensive violence and her ultimate eradication.

3.1.3 The Other as Foreign

Carmilla's alterity is further constructed through overlapping discourses of genealogical and geographic foreignness. Although the novella does not explicitly situate her within an Orientalist geography, the narrative employs patterns of exoticization that function as a form of othering. Through the authoritative patriarchal voice of the General, the history of the Karnstein family is framed via "blood-stained annals," establishing their corruption as an inherent, hereditary trait rather than an individual deviance. Furthermore, the spatial positioning of the Karnstein chapel as "down there" structurally reinforces a rigid hierarchy, positioning the foreign "Other" as a perpetual, supernatural plague threatening the purity of a unified "human race".



3.2 Close Reading: Ambiguity and Unstable Identity

Gothic fiction often relies on uncertainty rather than revelation. Dreams and half-conscious states in the novella destabilize perception, blurring the boundary between reality and illusion. Carmilla is never fully explained, but perceived differently through emotional and psychological responses. Characters define her differently —sometimes beautiful, sometimes monstrous, seductive or threatening— preventing her from being a transparent figure. Thus, identity appears unstable and dependent on perception rather than objective truth.

The boundary between dream and reality is blurred in Carmilla's uncanny introduction. Laura's description of «a solemn, but very pretty face looking at me from the side of the bed. » (Le Fanu, 1871/2018, p. 7) showcases Carmilla as uncanny rather than fully real or illusory, shaped by psychological uncertainty and subjective interpretation.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of J. Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* demonstrates that Gothic fiction functions as a socio-cognitive tool for articulating Victorian anxieties regarding the destabilization of social and cultural boundaries. By utilizing Van Dijk's Ideological Square, the narrative constructs the vampire as a multifaceted "Other" through discourses of queer desire, gender transgression, and foreign corruption. Carmilla's non-normative passion is framed as a predatory, life-threatening force that justifies the "Self's" moral repulsion, while her "masculine" physical strength is depicted as a subversion of patriarchal norms that requires eradication to protect the gendered hierarchy. Furthermore, her identity is tied to a "bad family" and "blood-stained annals," situating her otherness as a hereditary plague against a unified "human race". Ultimately, while the text attempts to fix Carmilla's identity as a monster, her ambiguity and the blurred lines between dream and reality suggest that the "Other" remains a shifting psychological construct, mediated by the fears and perceptions of those who observe her.

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Fantasy And Proto-Gothic Foundation of Shakespeare's Drama

Rojbin EROĞUZ

People usually think that Gothic literature started in the eighteenth century. They consider Horace Walpole the father of this genre because of his book *The Castle of Otranto*. However, this idea ignores an important development in early English drama. William Shakespeare (1564-1616) created a strong proto-Gothic foundation long before the 18th century. As Spooner (2010: 10) and Ankaralıgil (2018: 47) point out, Shakespeare used uncanny themes in his plays very early. He did not use ghosts, witches, or magical spaces just to scare the audience or make a visual show. Instead, these fantastic elements change the characters deeply and drive the whole story. This essay will look at *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest*. Shakespeare uses liminal spaces and supernatural forces as a main tool in these plays. He



intentionally blurs the line between reality and imagination, and this technique forms the real grandfather of the Gothic mind.

Firstly, liminal spaces and psychological destabilization of Shakespeare builds "liminal spaces" to mess with the characters' minds. Victor Turner (1969: 94) says that

these spaces are dangerous zones of transformation. For example, the foggy castle walls of Elsinore create a perfect Gothic threshold in *Hamlet*. Here, the living world meets the unresolved trauma of the dead. The Ghost of the father is not just a cheap horror figure. Marjorie Garber (1987: 12) explains that ghosts represent past conflicts in Shakespeare's world. This scary meeting pushes Hamlet into deep psychological suffering and moral doubt (Zamir, 2008: 92). We see a similar psychological breakdown in *Macbeth*. The Weird Sisters meet Macbeth on a dark, lonely heath. Their famous chant, "hover through the fog and filthy air," physically and morally blurs the whole atmosphere. These three witches directly connect to ancient Greek mythology. In Greek myths, people believe in the Moirai, the three sisters of fate. One sister spins the thread of life, the second measures it, and the third cuts it. In *Macbeth*, the sisters play the exact same role. They do not just predict the future. They literally spin Macbeth's tragic destiny. Their prophecies act like a slow poison in his mind (Moiz & Ali, 2021: 158). Macbeth loses his morals because of his big ambition. At the end, Lady



Macbeth walks in her sleep and tries to wash imaginary blood from her hands. The characters can not understand what is real because of their deep guilt and trauma. In both Shakespeare's plays, the real horror happens inside the human mind.

Secondly, Shakespeare uses weird transformations and magical illusions in comedies and romances. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the enchanted forest acts as a crazy liminal space. The natural rules of the city do not work there. Puck uses

amagic potion and causes extreme emotional chaos among the lovers. Then, he turns Nick Bottom's head into a donkey's head. This moment blends comedy with a strange, grotesque body mutation. It shows how fragile human identity really is. We see this questioning of reality again on the isolated island in *The Tempest*. Prospero uses his magic to control everyone and show his absolute authority. Stephen Greenblatt (2002: 165) argues that Shakespeare uses these moments to wake up deep social memories. When Prospero ends his magic show, he says that our life is "made on dreams". This line proves that human power and perception are just temporary illusions. We can compare Prospero's magical control to modern sci-fi simulations like *The Matrix*. In both worlds, an authority figure creates a fake reality, and the characters must break free from the illusion. This fear of losing control opened a big door for later Gothic writers. Ann Radcliffe took the emotional fear from the enchanted forest, and Matthew Lewis used the moral darkness of *Macbeth*. Mary



Shelley's *Frankenstein* asked the same questions about creation and power like Prospero. Also, Edgar Allan Poe focused on internal mental suffering just like Hamlet's depression.

In conclusion, we cannot understand Gothic literature without looking at Shakespeare. He used the supernatural as a main engine to show the darkest parts of human nature in all his works. His ghosts, witches, and magical forests check the limits of human knowledge. They make us question our social order

and justice system just like modern psychological horror films do today. Therefore, Horace Walpole is the father of the Gothic novel, but William Shakespeare is definitely the grandfather of the Gothic imagination. He made imagination itself Gothic. His plays still affect how we look at reality and human guilt today.

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Fantasy as Cultural Reflection: Anxiety, Other, and the Gothic Imagination in Dracula

Edanur ÇOŞKUN

Victorian England is often remembered as an age of progress, order, and imperial strength. Yet beneath this image of stability existed deep anxieties. Rapid industrialization, scientific discoveries, and increasing migration created uncertainty about identity, morality, and social order. Many Victorians feared that traditional values were weakening, while ideas such as Darwinism challenged religious certainty. At the same time, immigration from Eastern Europe increased fears about national and cultural purity. One important concept during this period was “degeneration,” the belief that modern society was becoming morally and physically weaker. Within this atmosphere, Gothic literature became a space where

hidden fears could take shape. Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* reflects these anxieties by presenting fear not only of monsters, but also of invasion, foreignness, and loss of identity.

A central idea in the novel is the construction of the “Other.” The “Other” refers to people seen as outside the dominant culture—different, unfamiliar, and therefore threatening. Xenophobia, from the Greek words *xénos* (stranger) and *phóbos* (fear), describes distrust or fear of foreigners. In the novel, Count Dracula becomes the embodiment of this fear. He is associated with Eastern Europe, which is represented as mysterious and dangerous. However, what makes Dracula truly disturbing is his ability to enter English society and exist within it.



This fear appears early in the novel when Jonathan Harker states:

“The impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East.”

This line creates more than a geographical distinction; it builds a symbolic division between civilization and danger. The West is linked with reason and safety, while the East becomes associated with

chaos and fear. Dracula therefore represents not only a vampire, but also the anxiety that Western society may lose control over its own boundaries.

The contrast between East and West shapes the structure of the novel. Transylvania is described as dark, isolated, and unfamiliar. Harker’s journey through forests and silent landscapes creates an atmosphere of uncertainty and superstition. Dracula’s castle appears frozen in time, disconnected from modern progress and rationality. In this way, the East is presented as irrational and backward.

England, by contrast, symbolizes Victorian modernity. London is filled with trains, doctors, scientific methods, and systems of communication. Characters such as Van Helsing and Dr. Seward rely on logic and medicine to solve problems. The novel initially creates a hierarchy in which the West appears superior to the East. However, this sense of security collapses once Dracula enters England. The foreign threat is no longer distant; it exists

inside London itself. Lucy becomes ill, Mina is threatened, and the rational English world loses control. The novel suggests that the boundaries separating civilization from danger are fragile.

Dracula's journey to England is central to the novel's xenophobic structure. He openly expresses his desire to move within English society:

"I long to go through the crowded streets of your mighty London."

This statement reveals Dracula's wish not only to observe England,



but also to participate in and influence it. His invasion is subtle rather than violent. He transports boxes of earth from Transylvania to England, physically bringing part of his homeland into British space. He also uses modern systems and technologies, which makes him even more threatening. Rather than attacking openly, Dracula moves silently through private spaces and gradually spreads his influence.

Van Helsing emphasizes the danger of Dracula's intelligence when he warns:

"He is of cunning more than mortal."

Dracula cannot easily be understood or controlled through ordinary logic. He adapts to English society while secretly corrupting it from within. This reflects a deeper Victorian fear: that danger may hide beneath familiar systems and institutions.

Another major theme in the novel is contamination. Dracula does not simply kill his victims; he transforms them. Blood in Victorian culture symbolized identity, purity, and

family lineage. Therefore, Dracula's attacks threaten not only the body but also the self.

Lucy Westenra's transformation demonstrates this fear clearly. Van Helsing remarks:

"She is not the same Lucy... she is a different being."

The horror here lies not in death itself, but in the loss of identity. Lucy's transformation also challenges Victorian ideas of femininity and morality. She becomes both attractive and frightening, existing between innocence and corruption. The line:

"The blood is the life."

captures the essence of Dracula's power. Through blood, he controls identity, morality, and social order itself.

In conclusion, Dracula is far more than a Gothic horror story. It reflects Victorian fears about immigration, cultural instability, and the collapse of boundaries between self and other. Dracula symbolizes invasion, contamination, and the fear that foreign influence may disrupt English society from within. Yet the novel also reveals something deeper: fear of the "Other" often says more about society itself than about the outsider it fears. This is why Dracula remains powerful today. The novel continues to question how societies construct foreignness as danger and how xenophobia shapes human perception.



MONSTROSITY
—
MONSTERS

Monsterization And The Non-Human: How Fantasy Reveals Social Exclusion

Şevval YEĞEN

Fantasy literature and cinema serve as more than an escapism; rather, they are the areas where the boundaries of humanity are destabilized and reimagined. By examining the mechanisms of "monsterization," we reveal how society marginalizes the "other" to protect its own definitions of normalcy. To understand this process, we must look at Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* through the lens of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's "Monster Culture" and Julia Kristeva's "Powers of Horror."

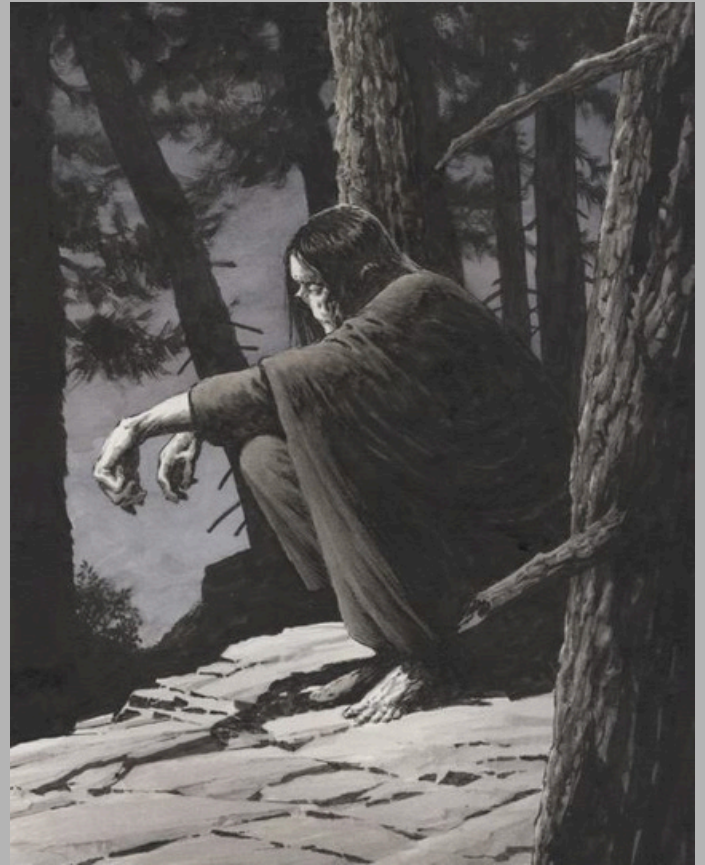
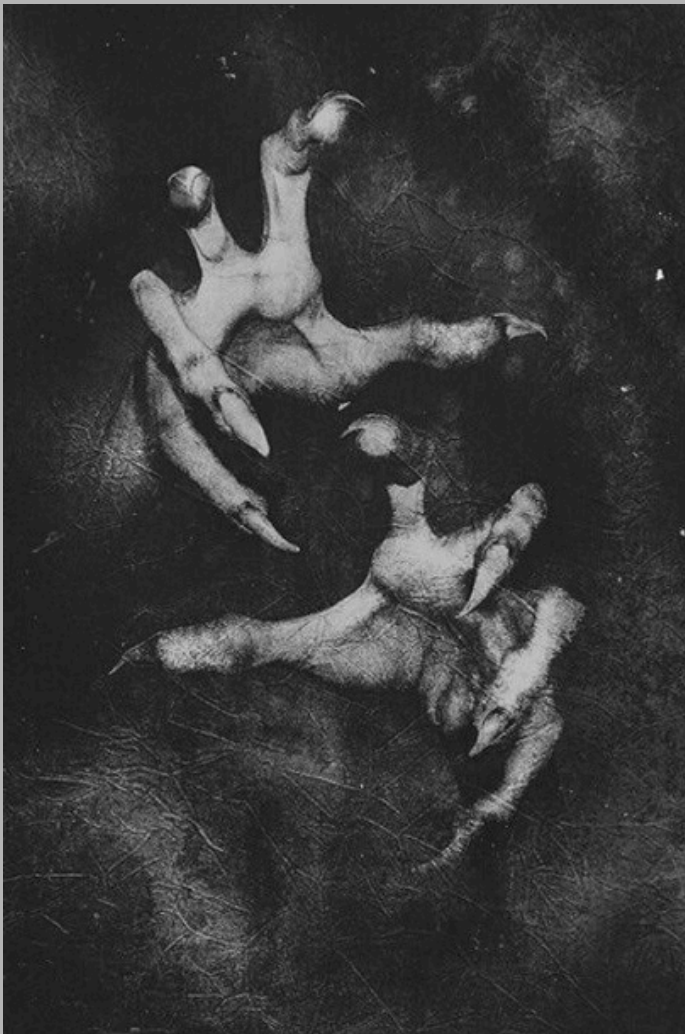
Cohen's foundational premise is that "the monstrous body is pure culture." He argues that a monster is never a mere biological entity; it is a glyph—a living symbol upon which society inscribes its specific taboos, anxieties, and fears. The monster is

a "cultural body," a metaphorical crossroads where the tensions of a particular moment in history meet. When we "read" the Creature in *Frankenstein*, what we are seeing is not a freak of nature, but a projection of the observer's mind.

Furthermore, Cohen posits that the monster is the "Harbinger of Category Crisis." As humans, we derive a sense of security from rigid binaries: male/female, human/animal, and—most crucially—life/death. The Creature is a "Linnean nightmare" because he refuses these easy categorizations. He is a disturbing hybrid, composed of dead tissue yet animated by life. Because he breaks the systematic structuration of biology, he cannot be defined, and what cannot be

defined, and what cannot be defined cannot be controlled. We label him a "monster" to justify our fear of the unknown.

This refusal to fit into "neat boxes" links directly to Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject. The abject is "the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite"—a fragment that "enables the formation of all kinds of identities." We only understand what it means to be "human" by pointing at the non-human and declaring, "*I am not that.*"



Ultimately, the monster patrols the "official geography" of our social borders. By designating the Creature as "other," society defines the safe spaces where "normal" people belong. Through this act of monsterization, society instills a fear of stepping outside prescribed boundaries, effectively using the non-human to police the behavior of the human.

The theoretical "monster" becomes a tragic reality the moment Victor Frankenstein's "ardour" curdles into "breathless horror." This is a visceral reaction to a biological category crisis. As the Creature's yellow skin

stretches thin over the "work of muscles and arteries beneath," we see Kristeva's "abject" in the flesh. It is the internal anatomy forced to the surface—a sight so shocking that Victor's dream vanishes instantly. By fleeing the room, Victor begins the process of social exclusion that ruins the Creature's life.

The tragedy deepens when the Creature finally sees his own reflection in a pool of water. After months of secretly watching the "perfect forms" of the De Lacey family, he finally has a standard for "humanity"—and he realizes he doesn't meet it. He starts to "read" his own body as a Cohenesque glyph, a symbol of everything people fear. He internalizes the idea that he is "in reality the monster" that everyone says he is, but he doesn't give up hope just yet. He still tries to reach out, believing his amiable nature might overcome his appearance.

However, the De Laceys represent the "official geography" of where humans are allowed to belong. When they eventually see him and

and react with pure terror, the border wall is slammed shut for good. This is the breaking point for him. He realizes that he cannot be loved as he is, and so, he chooses to be feared. Forced to the frozen fringes of the map, he declares himself an "outcast for ever." His later path of destruction isn't a biological defect—it's the fallout of a society that defines its own humanity by making him the villain. He wasn't born a monster; he was pushed into the role until he finally decided to embrace it.



But the Creature isn't the only monster in history. In fact, he is merely one in a sea of abjected figures created by societies to create their own borders. History is full of groups who have been read as monstrous – whether through the lens of race, class or ideology- simply to justify their exclusion from the official geography of humanity. As we leave the world of Mary Shelley, we must realize that the real horror is not the disturbing hybrid we see on the screen or in the pages of a book. The real horror is the ease with which we monsterize the living to protect our own sense of order. Ultimately, the monster doesn't ask us who he is, it asks us who we are.

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Scarlet Witch: Reality Manipulation And The Monstrous Feminine

Aybüke KINACI

INTRODUCTION

Fantasy, a theme frequently encountered in literature and cinema, is often associated with escapism and wish fulfillment. However, fantasy is not merely a space of escape; it also questions the nature of reality itself. In this context, the boundaries between reality and imagination become blurred, destabilizing what is accepted as “real.” Superhero narratives deepen this ambiguity through fictional universes that present alternative realities. The Marvel Studios universe is one example of this. Within it, Scarlet Witch stands out as a character capable of rewriting reality itself. Her power is not only a fantastical ability but also a narrative device that questions patriarchal structures, reveals the instability of



of reality, and redefines the limits of the monstrous feminine through trauma. This study analyzes how Scarlet Witch’s uncontrolled power reshapes the perception of reality through selected scenes from WandaVision and Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness.

FANTASY and REALITY

Postmodern thought argues that meaning is plural and fluid rather than fixed. Accordingly, reality is no longer understood as objective but as something constructed through perspectives and experiences. In WandaVision, reality is continuously reconstructed through Wanda's conscious and unconscious interventions. The "Hex" she creates in Westview demonstrates that reality is not an external given but a subjective production. Truth therefore loses its stability and becomes a fragile structure open to intervention. Through Wanda's power, reality is shown as something shaped by personal desire and trauma rather than an unchangeable fact.

MONSTROUS FEMININE

Wanda's ability to reshape reality not only creates an epistemological rupture but also positions her as a threat to social order. According to Barbara Creed's concept of the "monstrous feminine," female power



is often represented as a source of fear. In both WandaVision and Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness, Wanda transforms from a grieving woman into a figure who controls reality and imprisons others. This reflects Creed's argument that women become frightening not when they suffer but when they exercise power.

One of the most important scenes in WandaVision occurs when the townspeople confront Wanda after briefly regaining consciousness. The residents reveal that they are trapped within Wanda's Hex and forced to live under her control. At this moment, Wanda shifts from victim to perpetrator, becoming both a suffering subject and a threatening figure. The scene also reveals her inability to accept reality, as she regains control when the townspeople attempt to escape.

Creed's idea of the "monstrous mother" is also central to Wanda's character. Wanda's desire to regain her lost children motivates her to reshape reality itself. Motherhood therefore becomes obsessive and destructive rather than pure and sacred. In *Multiverse of Madness*, Wanda commits violence in order to reach her children in alternate universes, presenting maternal love as terrifying. Her monstrosity emerges not from inherent evil but from trauma, maternal desire, and uncontrollable power.

TRAUMA and MULTIVERSE

Wanda's manipulation of reality is deeply connected to trauma and loss. The deaths of her family, her brother Pietro, and especially Vision create profound emotional ruptures. Unable to cope with grief, Wanda reconstructs reality as a defense mechanism and creates the artificial world of Westview. Reality manipulation therefore becomes not only a display of power but also a coping strategy for traumatic grief. Wanda does not simply escape



reality; she rewrites it in order to survive.

In *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*, this reconstruction reaches a more radical level. Wanda becomes an active figure who uses her powers to travel across multiverses in pursuit of her children. The multiverse structure eliminates the idea of a single stable reality and instead presents fragmented alternative selves. Wanda's encounter with another version of herself demonstrates that identity is not fixed but multiple and contextual, reflecting postmodern ideas of fragmented subjectivity.

However, this plural reality also blurs ethical boundaries. Wanda's attempt to sacrifice America Chavez in order to obtain her multiverse-traveling power reveals her transformation from a tragic figure into an active threat. Wanda recognizes the immorality of her actions yet justifies them through maternal desire and trauma. In this sense, the film demonstrates how love and grief can transform into violence, making stable moral judgments increasingly uncertain.

CONCLUSION

Fantasy disrupts reality by revealing that what is perceived as "real" is neither fixed nor objective but

constructed and open to manipulation. Through *Scarlet Witch*, fantasy blurs the boundary between reality and imagination, showing that reality can be rewritten according to subjective desire, trauma, and power. Consequently, fantasy exposes the fragility of identity, morality, and social structures. *Scarlet Witch* ultimately demonstrates that reality is not stable but a fragile construct shaped by trauma, desire, and power, raising a central ethical question: can harm inflicted on others ever be justified through personal trauma?

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From Born Monsters to Made Monsters: Othering in Grendel and Frankenstein's Creature

Sevde Ayça ÇELİK

In fantasy, monsters often function as figures that define the boundaries between the human and the non-human and the known and the unknown. These figures are not just sources of fear but also reflections of the societies that create them. What makes a monster? Is monstrosity an inherent quality, or is it produced through fear, exclusion, and social perception? This study explores these questions through a comparative analysis of Grendel in Beowulf and the creature in Frankenstein.

To better understand how monstrosity is constructed in these texts, it is important to consider Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's Monster Theory, Cohen argues that the monsters body is a cultural body shaped by fears and anxieties of the society that produces it. From this point of view, monsters reflect cultural concerns rather than functioning simply as supernatural beings who are feared. Cohen also suggests that monsters live at the edges of difference, representing unstable positions between categories such as human and non-human. Therefore, monstrosity emerges not only from physical appearance but also from society's understanding and respond to the difference.

In Beowulf, Grendel is presented as an inherently monstrous figure positioned in direct opposition to human civilization. His monstrosity reflects the medieval fear of the unknown and the supernatural, he represents the dark and unknown world beyond Heorot rather than just representing an individual evil. His connection to the cursed lineage of Cain defines him as

sinful and excluded from the outset, without questioning, strengthens the idea of innate monstrosity. His isolated condition as an exile also adds another perspective to his monstrosity, labeling him as a being excluded from social belonging. His sense of otherness is increased by the narrative's refusal to give him individuality or agency. His mother is not even given a personal name, reducing them to symbolic figures of monstrosity rather than fully beings. Because they don't conform to what's considered normal, they're labeled as horrible and monstrous; and because they don't live in the usual conditions that Heorot's folk accustomed, they're considered ignorant. Moreover, Grendel's lack of a narrative voice prevents any access to his inner world, making it difficult for the reader to develop any kind of empathy. Critics suggested, monsters often remain incomprehensible, and this lack of understanding supports the fear they embody. As a result, Grendel remains an unknowable and threatening outsider, explicit entirely through the fears and

understandings of the human community.

In contrast to Grendel, Mary Shelley's Creature presents a form of monstrosity that is not entirely inherent, except for his looks, but constructed through social experience. Rather than being born evil Frankenstein's creature begins as an innocent being who seeks understanding, companionship, acceptance and most significantly the parental love. Through his observations of the De Lacey family, he learns language, develops emotional awareness, and shows empathy. However, despite all of these human qualities he developed he is still repeatedly rejected because of his appearance. These rejections transform him, and his violence emerges not as an innate trait but as a response to isolation and exclusion. He also shows the anxieties of the society that created him embodying the fears surrounding scientific ambition and unnatural creation. Besides, the novel reflects anxieties concerning disordered familial and social structures, particularly

through Victor Frankenstein's attempt to create life outside natural reproduction and maternal presence. Thus, the creature becomes not only a physically monstrous figure but also a symbol of the disorder produced when traditional human boundaries are violated. Additionally, unlike Grendel, the creature is given a narrative voice, allowing him to express his suffering and making it possible for the reader to empathize with him. Because the creature appears less like an inherently monstrous being and more as a product of social rejection this narrative point of view makes the idea of monstrosity more complicated. So, Mary Shelley suggests that monstrosity can emerge through the destructive effects of exclusion and alienation.

Although they are separated by historical period and literary tradition, both Beowulf and Frankenstein use monstrous figures to explore fears surrounding difference, exclusion, and of humanity's hostile response to difference. Grendel represents a

form of monstrosity treated as innate and irreparable, while creature reveals how social rejection can transform an initially innocent being into a monster. The two texts challenge the assumption that monsters exist entirely outside humanity, by presenting monstrosity both inherited and socially formed. Instead, they suggest that societies themselves contribute to creating the monsters they fear.

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*FANTASY AND
VIDEO GAME*

"Both Window and Mirror": The Inversion of Escapism in ClairObscur: Expedition33

Muhammed Serdar YARUK

Since its inception, one of the most persistent critiques of fantasy literature has targeted its escapist roots. Merriam-Webster defines escapism as "habitual diversion of the mind to purely imaginative activity or entertainment as an escape from reality or routine," propagating the idea of fantasy as mere diversion (Merriam-Webster). Historically, writers of fantasy literature such as Tolkien and Le Guin have argued against these critiques. In this conversation between fantasy and escapism, video games occupy a power position as their interactive and immersive nature enables series such as The Elder Scrolls to perpetuate the escapist power fantasy. The game sees players take control of protagonists who wield divine

power, prophesied to stop cataclysmic events. Developed by Sandfall Interactive in 2025, Clair Obscur: Expedition 33 (hereafter Expedition 33) stands apart among its peers: it weaponizes the very architecture of fantasy to invert escapism, building a window into another world only to eventually reveal the mirror hiding underneath that reflects our very reality.

Expedition 33 opens with the fictional city of Lumiere, a part of the now-shattered Continent where a godlike figure known as the Paintress ascends her Monolith each year to paint a number, condemning everyone of that age and above to erasure in an event called the Gommage. Grief, loss and death are the main governing principles of

society within Lumiere due to ever-present, looming nature of these elements. Initially, the game appears to adopt the familiar architecture of the heroic quest, a pattern Irina Jauhiainen identifies as a common trope in fantasy across its many iterations (Jauhiainen). Yet it resists handing the player a powerful champion. Gustave, the initial protagonist, is an ordinary engineer whose aim to stop the Paintress from ever painting death stems from civic duty and love of family, not fate. His adopted sister Maelle, who is only sixteen, joins him which grounds the stakes in intimate human relation rather than a grand scale. This stands in deliberate contrast to protagonists of other fantasy video games. Gustave is mortal, afraid, and driven by love. Alongside this, the game's world-building — inspired by the Belle-Époque aesthetic as analyzed by Julien Djoubri (2025) — constructs expedition journals, scarred landscapes, and fantastical creatures that draw the player fully into the window of secondary creation. The game ensures that players forget they are, in essence, looking at a mirror.



The structural inversion of fantasy & escapism arrives at the end of Act II. After the Paintress is defeated and the characters return to Lumiere where

they are welcomed festively, a revelation shatters the narrative: the Continent and all its inhabitants exist within a Canvas. The world the players were invested in never was a world, it was a work of art. On the other side of the Canvas, artists in the "real world" have the power to breathe life into their work. The Canvas belongs to Verso Dessendre, who died in a fire trying to save his sister. His mother, Aline (who is also the Paintress) unable to bear the grief of losing her son, entered the painting to live with a version of her family. Her husband Renoir followed to bring her back, and their conflict ignites the entire game. Lucia Novanská Škripcová's 2025 analysis confirms that Expedition 33 uses both its ludic and narrative elements to deliver a realistic portrayal of grief and the ways it manifests differently in people (Škripcová, 2025: 11).



This revelation redirects the player's meditations towards the game. Nothing in the game is purely fantastical: the world of Lumiere is a refraction of the human condition, rooted in the same loss, love, and grief that permeate our reality. Aline's literal escape into the painting serves as the game's meta-commentary on the allure of fantasy itself, intensified by the detail that time

spent in the Canvas erodes the real bodies of those within it. The players are not escaping from reality into fantasy, they are being drawn through fantasy back toward it; toward an encounter with mortality and love that realistic fiction might have made easier to hold at arm's length. The immersiveness of the game, combined with the fantasy genre's architecture, denies the player that distance entirely.

As Renoir, a character, argues within the game, "Art can be a Window, and art can be a Mirror. And great art... Great art is both." Expedition 33 does not refute the dictionary definition of escapism so much as it refuses to be contained by it. Expedition 33 suggests that sometimes the escape itself is an arrival. The medium traps the player inside the mirror before they can realize it is one. It is this quality that elevates the work beyond clever plot construction into a genuine contribution to the ongoing discourse on what fantasy is capable of when combined with the strength of the interactive medium.

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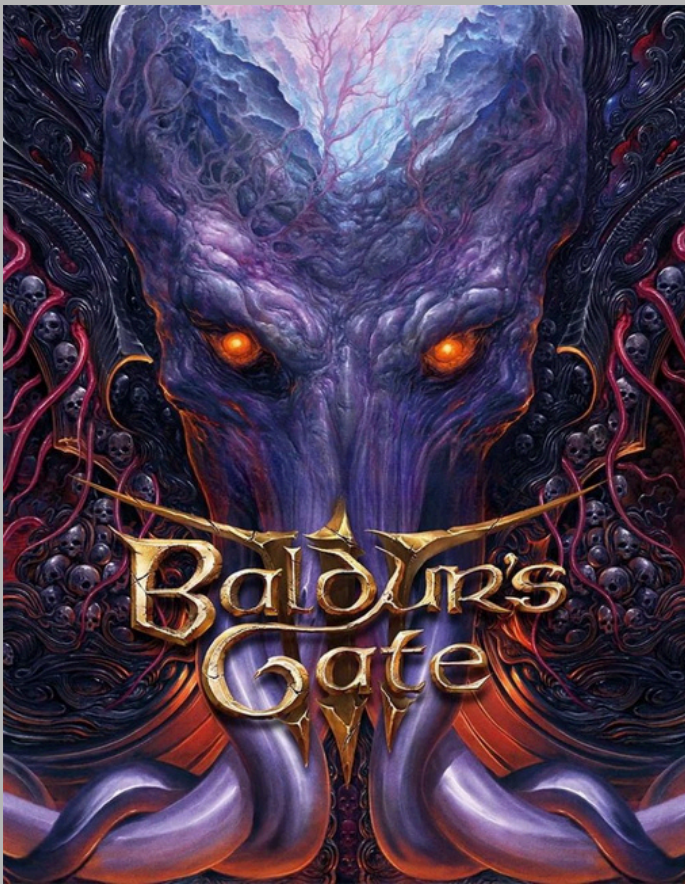
Living the Hero's Journey: Reimagining the Monomyth, the Shadow and Mentor Archetypes through Baldur's Gate 3

Destina Zülal SÜT

Video games have become complex narrative platforms capable of conveying mythic storytelling. Within this context, Baldur's Gate 3 by Larian Studios stands as a perfect example of the continuity of archetypal patterns and mythic structures by offering a richly detailed world in which players are faced with moral ambiguity. At the core of the game's narrative lies a framework that mirrors Joseph Campbell's Monomyth, which Campbell categorizes as The Call to Adventure, The Road of Trials, and eventual Transformation. Complementing this structure are archetypal manifestations put forth by Carl Jung, including the Shadow and the Mentor archetypes, whose presence shape both the story and the player character's development, acting as key notions in the personally shaped narration of Baldur's Gate 3. By combining these timeless psychological and narrative patterns into a video game that focuses on interactive narration, Baldur's Gate 3 illustrates a unique understanding of how contemporary media contributes to the intertemporal transposition and adaptation of mythic elements.

Baldur's Gate 3 presents a convincing illustration of the Monomyth, adapting the Hero's Journey into a participatory, personally shaped narrative. The game is divided into three acts that push the player to face various challenges and moral dilemmas and shape the game's storyline according to the player's

moral choices with variable consequences to each desired action. Game's three acts mirror the stages of departure, initiation, and return, all the while reimagining how this timeless frameworks could be shaped in accordance with player agency and interactive storytelling.



The first act of Baldur's Gate 3 directly exemplifies the Monomyth's Departure stage, as this act is the start of a long heroic or villainous journey. The adventure starts as the player's chosen protagonist is abducted and infected with an illithid tadpole aboard a mind flayer nautiloid. The Call to Adventure

manifests immediately as the player is thrown into dangers unfamiliar and is forced to confront an existential problem with the possible threat of bodily and moral transformation, because the illithid infection's aim is to turn the infected person into a mind flayer that lacks personal will, resulting in the loss of autonomy. Baldur's Gate 3's second act illustrates the Initiation stage of The Hero's Journey, focusing on the journey's main trials, transformation, and ultimate confrontation with the Shadow. As Act I serves as the departure from the ordinary world, Act II is both literal and psychological descent into the underworld where the hero must go through tests that threaten identity and challenge predetermined fate. The Shadow-Cursed Lands as the primary setting of this act visually and thematically support the descent as it is a place of perpetual darkness. The game's third act stands as a mirror to the Return stage of Campbell's Hero's Journey, in which the hero must bring back their newfound wisdom to the world of living after having gone through trials and moral

transformations. Act III of Baldur's Gate 3 serves as the game's climax, where the player reemerges from the Shadow-Cursed Lands and arrives to the Baldur's Gate City, the heart of civilization, yet finds it corrupted by the evil forces they mean to defeat. In a mythic manner, this return is not a peaceful homecoming but a conflict between the transformed self and the still world of the living, a means to test if the hero truly internalized the journey's lessons. Throughout the journey, both mentor and shadow archetypes show manifestations through various characters. One example to the Mentor Archetype is The Emperor. According to Jung, the figure of Mentor represents the guiding presence that aids the hero's transformation through wisdom or supernatural help. Within this context, The Emperor stands as an unconventional portrayal of the Mentor Archetype. As a Mind Flayer, the Emperor appears as a multi-dimensional character: a mentor in the shape of a monster. His motives blur the line between helpful guidance manipulation. Thus, the Emperor forces the players to question what justifies his aid: is mentorship still valid when it primarily serves the mentor's self-interests? The most apparent manifestation of the shadow archetype is The Dark Urge. According to Jung, the Shadow Archetype symbolizes the suppressed tendencies of human psyche. Following this, the shadow of the Dark Urge is a personal, hereditary compulsion to murder. The Dark Urge storyline doesn't present the Shadow as an enemy but a part of the character, an urge that whispers to murder and is hungry for blood.



In Conclusion, The game reinterprets The Monomyth into an experiential process in which the players actively participate in the making of the hero's myth. Baldur's Gate 3 serves as a mixture of ancient myth and

modern interactive storytelling, revealing that the hero's journey and the archetypes that accompany it remain critical in understanding the narratives created by mankind.

War Never Changes, Except for When It Does: The Aesthetics of Fallout, From Science Fiction to Contemporary Fantasy

Umut BÜRME

In its twenty-nine year lifetime the Fallout franchise has been subject to many changes. From its aesthetics to mediums, game-play mechanics and even canon events this nearly three decade journey follows along one of a very contentious debate in the contemporary. That of the themes of war and how the masses react to it. By following Fallout's aesthetic journey from the initial games to the most recent entries, a very intricate detail could be unearthed. To do this one must make use of Theodore W. Adorno's theory of aesthetics specifically, this framework of negative dialectics allows the franchise to be placed into both the discourses of popular culture and how that popular culture reflects the anxieties of their times. Aesthetically speaking, the original Fallout games that were made under Studio Black Isles could very well be seen as post-cold war pieces of media. Their use of mainly gray, dark, and brown colors coupled with the heavy art-deco architecture in the backdrop of an irradiated desert wasteland of what once was America's east coast makes that apparent. Returning to Adorno, one must also consider that the USSR had collapsed in the 90s and The Cold War had come to an end taking the nuclear threat with it. The original games were conceptualized within the, aptly, fallout of these events. And from this atmosphere came the motto of the game, war never changes. But what has changed in Fallout, and what does that say about its thematically identifying statement that war does

not change? There are three major aesthetic changes to how the franchise has evolved that is key for this study. That of the mutants and monsters, that of the architecture and color palette, and that of the weaponry.

Mutants in the original *Fallout*'s were a take on alienation and outsiders; they were grotesque with falling skin, exposed bones, disproportionate body parts, and on occasion mental disabilities. They evoked both a sense of fear in the audience for the radiation of the environment and provided both enemies and allies in instances for the game player, commenting on the silver lining of race issues in America and how discrimination villainizes otherwise reasonable individuals. In the more recent entries these very mutants have been updated to look more conventional, super mutants look like orcs of conventional fantasy, ghouls have lost their grotesque appearance and instead became rather cuddly creatures with black beady eyes rather than rotting corpses. The original game's use of overbearing architecture too has been dismantled for a more "modern" look of retro-futurism. Instead of gargantuan concrete monuments and tightly packed cities, the contemporary games opted for a retro-futuristic look drawing inspiration from 50s America. With this decision the buildings and environments themselves lost their original gray and black tint and gave way to a myriad of colors that dotted the landscape. Even the desert nature of the original games have been mostly replaced with more bizarre landscapes of swamps and forests. The direction taken in retro-futurism also affected the weapons in the players disposal. Wherein the original *Fallout* had real weapons in their games with a few exceptions for its science fiction roots, the contemporary games have a wide range of fantastical weapons such as cryolators.

This distance from both real weaponry, and the ugly parts of war coming along with the 21st century is of course not a coincidence. While the 90s had a very real threat of superpowers at each others throats for about half a century the new century has mostly seen wars fought overseas where casualties and destruction had been turned to statistics to be gathered on the newspapers or television. This statistical and disconnected nature of recent wars that stain our recent history allows for what could be called a “gamefied” understanding of war. And would it not be apt, both thematically to this study and in Adorno’s understanding, to apply this gamefication to a real instance of a game? This study by contrasting the aesthetics of the Fallout franchise and their socio-historical totalities reveals one thing about the franchise and its place in popular culture. That war in its epistemology might not change, but how it is perceived and interacted with on a dialectical level does. As for academia it allows for a fresh perspective in both cultural and video-game studies where-in close readings of new mediums could reveal much about how the rapidly changing rhetoric of our contemporary.



The background is a composite image. In the foreground, a man with a long dark beard and hair, wearing a gold crown and a dark robe with a red and gold patterned collar, looks off to the side. In the background, a man with dark hair and a serious expression is visible, surrounded by two large, glowing, golden-orange magical spheres with intricate patterns. The scene is filled with a dark, atmospheric lighting and some floating particles.

*CONTEMPORARY
FANTASY AND
CULTURAL
REPRESENTATION*

The Cinematic Language of The Fantastic: Visual Storytelling and Believable Impossible Worlds

Selin BULUT

Fantasy doesn't simply present imaginary elements; it creates impossible worlds with unfamiliar rules and new realities. This raises a central question: how can such impossible worlds become believable?

According to Todorov, the essence of the fantastic lies in uncertainty experienced by both characters and audiences. In cinema, however, this uncertainty must be sustained visually. While narrative and dialogue contribute to this process, fantasy films rely heavily on visual storytelling to make audiences believe the unbelievable.

Visual storytelling creates meaning



primarily through images rather than words. It reflects emotion through color, and light. While visual grammar establishes how fantasy cinema sustains belief, its function becomes clearer through close analysis of fantastic films.

Frankenstein demonstrates how fantasy cinema can transform monstrosity from physical condition into a moral experience through visual storytelling.

One of the film's most important techniques is contrasting framing. The camera frequently remains close to the creature's body, emphasizing vulnerability and creating empathy rather than fear. In contrast, Victor is often shown in shadow, reinforcing his moral isolation. Through this contrast, the film creates a clear reversal: as the creature becomes more human, Victor becomes more monstrous.

Fire and flame imagery also create a contradiction, especially related to angelic imagery, in which purity exists alongside destruction, reinforcing the film's critique of unchecked ambition and its destructive consequences.

Mirrors also contribute to the film's exploration of identity and responsibility. Reflective surfaces fracture Victor's sense of self, suggesting that he is both creator and destroyer at once, making him the protagonist and antagonist of his own story.

Ultimately, *Frankenstein* redefines monstrosity through its visual



grammar. The true horror of the film is not the creature's existence, but loneliness. The film serves as a reminder of what happens when we abandon what we create, what we love, or even parts of ourselves we're scared to face.

While *Frankenstein* reflects Gothic fantasy cinema, *Doctor Strange* demonstrates how visual grammar operates within digital spectacle.

From the beginning, cinematography establishes Strange's identity through symmetrical framing, and cool color palettes that emphasize perfection and order. As Strange enters the world of mystic arts, these tones gradually shift toward warmer colors, reflecting the change in his worldview from scientific rationality to spiritual understanding.



Framing also reflects this transformation. Early in the film, Strange is consistently centered within the frame, reinforcing his desire to control. After his injury, this dominance begins to weaken. During his scene with the Ancient One, when she tells him, “It’s not about you” the camera repositions Strange within the frame, visually, marking his loss of superiority.

Hand imagery functions as a direct reflection of Strange’s psychology. At first, Strange’s hands are framed as precise instruments that symbolize his mastery and identity. After the accident, the damage to his hands is shown with close-up shots, emphasizing his loss. This injury isn’t portrayed as some miraculous accident that gives him superpowers, but as the collapse of identity itself. Without his hands, Strange loses not

only his profession, but also his life purpose.

The Time Stone transforms time into something repetitive rather than linear through looping sequences. This becomes most visible during Strange’s final confrontation with Dormammu, where victory comes not through strength but through endless self-sacrifice, showing Strange’s first true step away from ego.

While *Doctor Strange* visualizes instability through spectacle and movement, *Dune* creates belief through environmental coherence. Color functions as a central part of the film’s visual logic.



On Caladan, cool blue tones, and soft lighting create stability, while enclosed interiors reinforce the idea of inherited identity. In contrast, Arrakis is dominated by orange

tones, and vast open spaces, visually transforming Paul from protected heir into an exposed destiny figure.

The bull imagery, associated with the House of Atreides, represents inherited pride, but also the danger of unchecked audacity. The bull can be seen throughout in the Atreides household, but especially above the doorway leading to Paul's Gom Jabbar test. The bull becomes a symbol of the conflict between instinct and discipline. The test itself asks Paul to resist pain without surrendering to impulse, turning the scene into a confrontation with animality itself.



As the film states, "Dreams are messages from the deep." a line that frames prophecy not as random



images but as meaningful transmissions emerging from a deeper consciousness. His prophetic visions are fragmented and tinted in gold, visually separating prophecy from ordinary reality. Editing overlaps future and present, destabilizing the certainty.

Although *Frankenstein*, *Doctor Strange*, and *Dune* differ in style, each constructs belief through a distinct visual grammar. Fantasy doesn't feel real because it imitates reality, but because it creates coherent visual systems in which image and meaning consistently align. Ultimately, fantasy cinema endures not because it imitates reality, but because it creates its own visually persuasive worlds that audiences learn to believe in.

Ottoman Representation in Modern Fantasy: A Case Study of Positive Representation Through the Character Nandor the Relentless in *What We Do in the Shadows*

Zeynep Sude ÖNCÜ

Turkish and Middle Eastern identities have always been cast for antagonist roles in vampire media, mainly because of real historical events. This stems from the fact that Vlad the Impaler, who had a historical conflict with Mehmed II, was the main inspiration for Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.¹ Thus, many movies, TV shows, and books that depict vampires include some Turkish/Middle Eastern elements in a villainized way, or directly cast the antagonist as Mehmed II.² However, the TV show *What We Do in the Shadows* shifts this perspective by placing a vampire character with a Middle Eastern background at the centre of the narrative. By establishing a protagonist with a distinct Ottoman background, the show alters the viewer's perception of Turkish identity in fantasy. The show also displays a variety of references about art, history, literature, and costuming. Furthermore, the show achieves a notable level of accuracy in casting, by giving the role of Nandor to Kayvan Novak, a man who indeed comes from Iranian roots.³

What We Do in the Shadows is an American horror comedy mockumentary that depicts four ancient vampires residing together in Staten Island, with



Nandor as one of the protagonists of the show. In the pilot episode of the show, Nandor introduces himself as “a very ferocious soldier in the Ottoman Empire”, revealing his Ottoman background in his initial impression on the audience.⁴ His backstory slowly unravels through the show as he states he was born in Al Qolnidar, a fictional country situated in Southern Iran. He mentions his accession to the throne of Al Qolnidar, and his exile after his transformation to a bloodthirsty vampire.⁵ While in exile, Nandor subsequently evolves into a ferocious

soldier in the Ottoman Empire and fights in many wars. With Nandor’s background, the show efficiently constructs a character who embodies a unique intersection of Middle Eastern identities. Authors, by constructing this past life for Nandor, grant him a variety of culture and tradition, which influences him and acts as a base for his character.

The show references a number of historical events, and one of the most prominent is the reference to the Siege of Vienna. The Siege of Vienna is a battle fought by the Ottoman Empire against the Holy Roman Empire in 1529. It was led by Suleiman the Magnificent, and the Ottoman Empire was defeated. In the sixth episode of the first season,





an ancient vampire wants to taste pizza, and according to the show's fictional construction, vampires cannot eat human food. Nandor states that it is a poor decision, comparing it to their defeat in the Siege of Vienna. His exact quote is "Sire, this is an even worse idea than when we tried to invade Vienna", making it clear that he participated in this battle.⁶

In the fourth season of the show, a reference is made to point out Nandor's cultural heritage. In the second episode of the season, he reveals that he brought his ancestral treasure from Al Qolnidar. A

valuable piece from this treasure is a Djinn Lamp, a direct reference to the legend of Aladdin's Lamp from One Thousand and One Nights. When the lamp is rubbed, a Djinn appears and grants Nandor 52 wishes.⁷ A recurring event that happens throughout the season is the linguistic friction between the characters. Nandor persistently corrects the term "Genie" in favour of "Djinn", which highlights a cultural distinction in the household. Nandor, having resided in Iran and Anatolia for centuries, is perfectly accustomed to Islamic traditions, knowing the historically accurate term, unlike his Western flatmates.

The costumes are also widely accurate. In the second episode of



the third season, Nandor goes to a modern day gym, and he is seen wearing a kispet, a traditional piece of Pahlevani clothing.⁸ The ones used in the show were custom-made by a kispet maker in Iran.⁹ Another traditional item used in the show is the mirror armour, worn by Nandor in the fifth episode of the sixth season.¹⁰ It was used in Persia, the Ottoman Empire, and Asia. It directly translates to four-mirrors. Mirror armour was usually worn over chainmail, and its mirror parts were considered as protection from not only arrows and swords, but also supernatural influence. It was believed that mirrors could reflect the evil eye, so they were polished and worn over other armour.¹¹

What We Do in the Shadows, from its references to its costuming, displays a number of accurate elements. The show shifts the “antagonized Middle East” perception to a sympathetic protagonist in vampire media. This show breaks down previous stereotypes and reshapes the way the

Ottoman Empire is perceived through the character of Nandor the Relentless, and effectively changes the way Turkish identities are perceived in fantasy and vampire media.

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FANTASY AND THE SELF

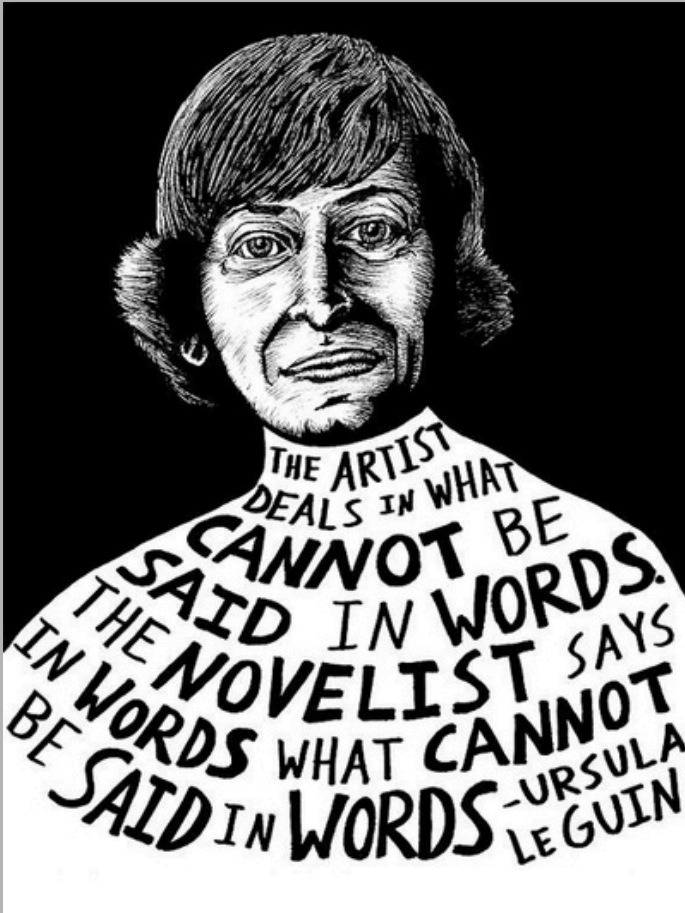
Unstable Bodies, Unstable Genders: Postmodern Legibility in The Left Hand of Darkness

Zeynep Hale ASLAN

Stripping away the magical conventions often associated with traditional fantasy, Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* builds its speculative universe on a revolutionary premise of a world where gender is not permanently fixed. The inhabitants of the planet Gethen undergo a periodic sexual phase called kemmer. Because they do not identify exclusively as either male or female, the human body itself becomes a fluid concept, creating alternative conditions for embodiment. This fluidity invites a postmodern reading through Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, which reveals gender not as a fixed truth, but as an ongoing performance. Moreover, subverting rigid Western dualism, the Gethenian world operates according to a Taoist logic where oppositions are understood as interconnected rather than hierarchical. However, patriarchal norms do not simply disappear. This conflict becomes visible through the Earthling protagonist, Genly Ai, who constantly attempts to interpret Gethenian bodies according to his preconceived binary ideas of masculinity and femininity. Ultimately, this paper argues that by using fantasy as a critical space of deconstruction, Le Guin demonstrates how speculative fiction can challenge stable models of identity and present fluidity as a liberating possibility.

Keywords: *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Gender Performativity, Postmodern Embodiment, Taoist Logic, Fantasy

“There is no division of humanity into strong and weak halves, protective/protected, dominant/submissive, owner/chattel, active/passive. In fact the whole tendency to dualism that pervades human thinking may be found to be lessened, or changed, on Winter.”
— Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*



For centuries, human society has been governed by the rigid structures of patriarchy and the gender binary. The enduring power of Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* lies in how it forces readers to contemplate the basic foundations of the human condition. In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, she strips away traditional fantastic elements and creates a radical thought experiment. The planet Gethen,

where human biology is fundamentally androgynous, is the center of this experiment. The inhabitants remain fluid for most of their cycle, only adopting physical sexuality during the brief period known as kemmer. Le Guin uses this fluid biology not simply to critique gender binaries, but to expose how human identity depends on systems of legibility and fixed categories. The novel invites a postmodern analysis through Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity and Taoist principles of interdependence. Ultimately, it demonstrates how science fiction can deconstruct stable models of identity and present fluidity as a liberating possibility.

The Left Hand of Darkness exposes gender as an illusion constructed through the continuous performance of societal expectations rather than an ontological reality. The novel takes Judith Butler's theory of

gender performativity out of the realm of sociology and writes it directly into human biology. On Gethen, this continuous performance is structurally impossible because the inhabitants exist in an androgynous state called *somer* for four-fifths of their lunar cycle, and thus have no stable gender role. When their sexual drive is activated during the brief phase of *kemmer*, their physical sex manifests temporarily. Because their biological sex is temporary and unpredictable, gender cannot be an identity etched into their flesh. As Butler famously asserts in her book, "gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original; in fact, it is a kind of imitation" (*Gender Trouble* 58). Thus, the Gethenian life cycle severs the traditional link between anatomy and destiny. Le Guin uses this biological fluidity to illustrate that without the constant, forced repetition of masculinity or femininity, embodiment becomes a liberating, unstable condition.

The radical fluidity of Gethen triggers a deeper epistemological collapse for the Terran envoy Genly Ai. His understanding of identity



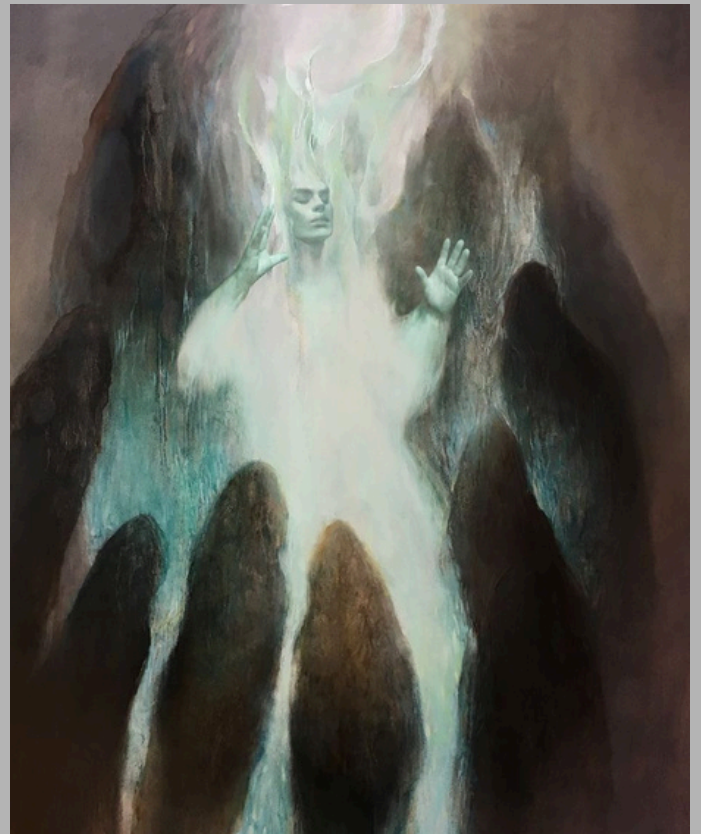
relies entirely on binary recognition, and Genly lacks the framework for cultural intelligibility on a genderless planet. This anxiety peaks in his relationship with Estraven. Instead of accepting Estraven's fluid existence, Genly tries to split him into male and female fractions. Genly forces a patriarchal template onto a genderless being and regards him as a "I thought of him as a man I must say, having said that he was a woman, but it was a clumsy, forced assumption" (*Left Hand* 204). This is a deliberate act of forced legibility and is fundamentally epistemological. Because he cannot tolerate an illegible existence, he alienates Gethenians. In this sense, Le Guin reveals that the

construction of Otherness functions as a defense mechanism against the fear of the collapse of fixed categories.



The threshold of Genly's epistemological crisis may only be crossed by shedding Western dualism and submerging into the holistic nature of Gethenian life. In a world in which patriarchy depends on a strict binary to maintain masculine supremacy, Le Guin overturns this inequality by weaving a Taoist logic of interconnectedness that resonates with the complementary nature of Yin and Yang. This philosophy intimately resembles the Taoist principle that "When people see some things as beautiful, other things become ugly.

When people see some things as good, other things become bad. Being and non-being create each other" (Laozi 12). Oppositions exist in balance with each other, like male and female, instead of clashing with each other. Le Guin highlights this interdependence through both the title and the metaphor that "Light is the left hand of darkness, and darkness the right hand of light" (Left Hand 233). Herein, Genly finally perceives that the Gethenian social structure cannot produce an "Other" marginalized on the basis of sex. Le Guin eclipses the fractured and patriarchal model with a holistic system grounded in Taoist harmony.



To conclude, Le Guin's thought experiment on Gethen transcends a mere critique of gender roles to offer a luminous unmasking of the fabrication of reality. By eliminating patriarchal legibility, she shows that human identity is not a fixed entity, but a fluid state. Through the lens of Butlerian performativity and Taoist interconnectedness, the novel demonstrates that "Otherness" is not a natural fact, but a cognitive defense mechanism, and also identity appears stable only within systems of classification. With Genly Ai's final realization, the novel reveals that our dread of the unknown stems from the illusion of fixed categories. He finally recognizes that the deconstruction of gender shatters the barrier between the self and the "Other." In doing so, Le Guin presents fluidity not as a source of chaos, but as a deeply liberating framework for human unity.



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Fantasizing Reality: Fantasy And Fiction in Winterson's Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit

Melisa ÖZDEMİR



As one of the most substantial figures in literature, the writer Jeanette Winterson was born on 1959 in Manchester, United Kingdom (Winterson, 1985). She was adopted by a family who belongs to the Pentecostal church, so her parents were harshly religious. Jeanette Winterson defines this situation as: “As evangelical Pentecostals they believed that my

“If you are the story, you can change the story. So Oranges uses myself as a fictional character. It’s me and it’s not me.”

Jeanette Winterson

destiny was to be a missionary. They were right, as it turned out, but in an unexpected way” (retrieved in December 16, 2025). As mentioned above, one of the most popular themes in her novels is religion and being pressured by religion. Winterson has always had a connection with literature because her family has only the Bible and some religious books in their home (retrieved in December 16, 2025). She expresses that the Bible was reading by Mrs. W to her, and she thought that she took an English lesson twice a day from a household

without books (retrieved in December 16, 2025). She is one of the most popular novelists nowadays as Makinen (2020) defined her both a lesbian and a postmodernist writer today. She generally writes her novels about gender, identity, parody, and fluidity of sexuality. Winterson is famous for her novels such as *Written On Body*, *Boating For Beginners*, *Sexing The Cherry*, and her debut novel *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*.



Among her famous novels, *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit* questions the fixed identities in society and the classic forms of literature. *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is known as a semi- autobiographical novel and Winterson de- constructs the identity, genre, and the form of metafiction. While *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* mis- categorized for years, -under the name of autobiography- Winterson insists

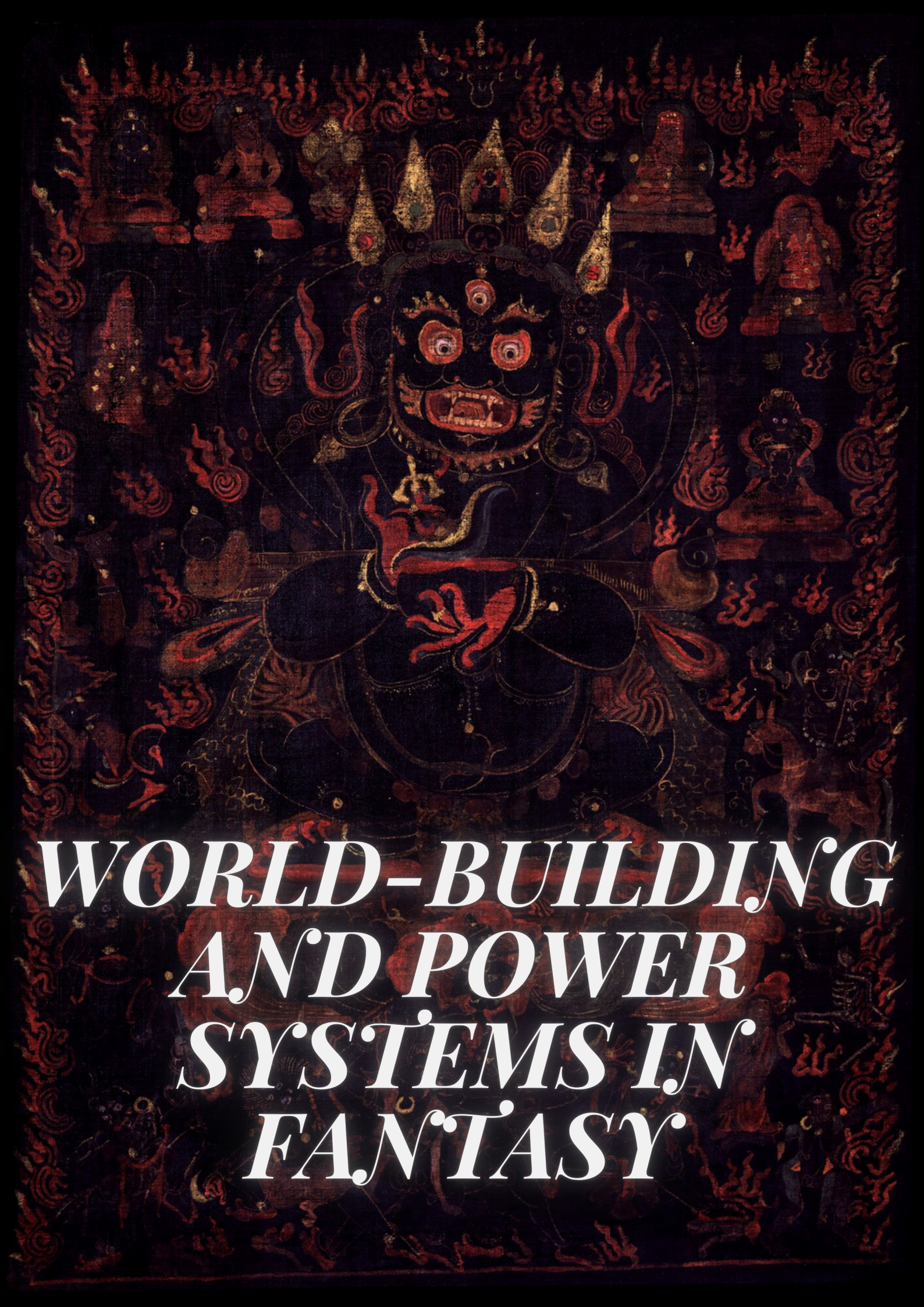
that “her writings *Oranges* included is experimental” (Preda, 2019). Winterson adds some fictional stories- like “King Arthur” or “Beauty and The Beast”- consciously to be made fluid the narration. Sometimes she identifies herself with these fictional characters and this situation causes to non- linearity in the novel and also breaks the narrative. While Winterson’s own life presents a base for the novel; the digressions, the allegories, the biblical structure, the myths, and the fantastic stories happens to fictionalizing. She likes and advises to readers to write the reality with fictionalizing (Winterson, 2014). In Winterson’s world, fictionalizing means to feel metafiction, to make novel non- linear and find her identity in the lines. She wants to feel the readers that they are reading the fiction not reality. Because of the novel is an autobiography, there are a lot of similarities between the life of Jeanette Winterson and the protagonist Jenette. Fantasy plays the role of blurring the balance of reality and fiction in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. So, *Oranges Are*

Not the only Fruit is a story not history. In addition, Winterson benefits from fantasy to show the fragmented identities and alternative endings. In the process of queer identity, Winterson uses fantasy. The fictional fairy- tale “Beauty and the Beast” is the beginning point of where Jenette’s ideas are changed and started to question about relationships, marriage, men, and monsters (Wang& Yin, 2016). So, fantasy is the way of how Jenette’s queer identity established.

In conclusion, Winterson’s *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is a contemporary coming- of- age novel which challenges the period. While it is rare to speak about the queer identities in that time, Winterson had a courage to publish a book under the name of autobiography. Even though it takes so much times to understand Winterson’s radiant language, the novel placed in one of the literary classics today. Winterson’s words, language, and her mastermind to breaking narration proves that why it is murder weapon today. Fantasy plays the role of handle with her traumas, to show the multiplicity, and to re- create the identity. Briefly, she re- writes the events by using fantasy elements in the novel in order to challenge reality and re-define identities from a different perspective.

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*WORLD-BUILDING
AND POWER
SYSTEMS IN
FANTASY*

World Building in William Shakespeare's The Tempest

Faik Kaan KUNDURACI

The world-building mentioned in the title is not a physical world, but rather a world formed in one's mind through imagination and perception when reading or watching a play. William Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, while initially understood as merely a political triumph, offers a critique of England's colonial past through theme of fantasy.

The protagonist of the play, Prospero, represents England. He was once the Duke of Milan until he was betrayed by his brother. He was in search of magic power. One of the reasons for his brother's betrayal was that Prospero spent most of his time in the library, neglecting his dukedom, as a result, he was exiled with his daughter Miranda and their journey ended on an island.

Caliban, a native of the island, is described as a physically deformed savage. Furthermore, the similarity between Caliban and cannibalism is evident in this play, where Caliban is in a colonized position; after attempting to violate Miranda, Prospero punishes him by making him a slave in his own home on the island.

- *"Possess his books; for without them / He's but a sot, as I am, nor hath not / One spirit to command"*

— (Shakespeare 3.2.101-103).

This quote is from the moment Caliban plans to kill Prospero, and it explains that knowledge and books are the difference between Caliban and Prospero; without books, Prospero is as powerless as Caliban, because Prospero's magical power comes from books and knowledge.

Prospero wants to marry his daughter Miranda to Ferdinand, Duke of Naples, because after becoming duke, he wants strong political ties with other nations. But Miranda is morally independent since Prospero's magical power cannot change people's essence and emotions. Subsequently, towards the end of the game, Miranda proposes marriage to Ferdinand.

Ariel is a genderless air spirit. It was imprisoned inside the trunk of a pine tree for 12 years by Sycorax (mother of Caliban). Eventually, Ariel is rescued by Prospero. After rescuing it, Prospero expects Ariel to serve himself, which shows that Prospero only acts for his own self-interest. Ariel is the one who hid the ship and created the storm. Prospero uses Ariel as a tool and a way to manipulate reality.

NATURE AND CULTURE

- *"...The Tempest reflects England's early colonial experience and, more generally, shows the rise of Western imperialism"*
— (Stanco 138).

This play was written between 1610 and 1611, at a time when England had a Virginia colony. In the play, the characters arrive on an island, enslave the native inhabitants, and claim the island as their own. This can be seen as a critique of English colonization.

Prospero and Miranda taught Caliban their language under the name of civilization. It is specifically under the name of civilisation because they come to Caliban's island, they consider him uncivilized and impose their own language on him, and they call this civilization. This is not civilization; this is imperialism.

- *"You taught me language; and my profit on't Is,
I know how to curse "*
— (Shakespeare 1.2.437-38).

Teaching a language is culture, and how you use that language is your nature, and Caliban uses this language to curse Prospero. Prospero's magic cannot change that because it is related to his essence.

For Prospero, the island is like paradise because he can do almost anything there; for him, it is like a kingdom because he is authoritarian like a king; for him, it is a utopia because he possesses magical powers and can manipulate reality.

Magic as a technology and technology as a weapon; Prospero's magical power comes from books; in the real world, people access technology through books. Prospero uses this magical power to gain hegemony over Ariel and Caliban, in reality, England used its technological superiority to colonize other nations.

PROSPERO AND SHAKESPEARE

Prospero cannot change the essence of the characters, just as Shakespeare cannot change the perception of his reader or audience. *The Tempest* is generally considered to be Shakespeare's last play written entirely on his own. Towards the end of the play, Prospero breaks his staff and buries it, then drowns his books. This can easily be seen as a symbol of Shakespeare's retirement.

FANTASY THEME

As a conclusion *The Tempest* contains many fantasy elements. It is filled with mythical characters such as Ariel, Iris, Ceres, Juno, and the Nymphs. The storm created by Ariel was a kind of illusion; it manipulated reality. Furthermore, Ariel made it appear as if the ship had sunk, but in reality, Ariel was hiding it along with its crew.

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Deconstruction of Infernal Traditions And Reconstruction of Hell IN R.F. Kuang's Katabasis

Hatice Hande KOÇER



From the Hades of ancient Greek mythology to the Diyu of Chinese mythology(1999), the concept of hell has remained one of the most persistent and widely reimagined narratives. R. F. Kuang narrates her

own hell in her book *Katabasis* (2025). She engages extensively with canonical representations of hell, drawing on figures such as Dante, John Milton and Aristotle. However, rather than remaining within these inherited frameworks, Kuang moves beyond them to construct an original infernal system. Through an intertextual dialogue, the novel simultaneously builds its own narrative while deconstructing earlier models of hell from multiple perspectives. She occasionally uses phrases like, “Dante said this, but I went down to hell and this is actually it,” which supports her claim that her hell is the real hell. What makes this reconstruction striking is that Kuang’s hell closely resembles the academic world.

At first, the protagonist Alice encounters the Asphodel Meadows just like in Greek mythology(2023). But Asphodel is not a shadowy region of the underworld where ordinary souls wander after death, but a waiting area where souls stand in lines before entering Hell. Academically, this resembles the waiting process where people are suspended between evaluation and admission.

Then Alice goes to the first layer, Pride. In Dante's *Inferno*(2012), pride is associated with moral arrogance and the soul's rebellion against proper divine order. However, in *Katabasis*, the layer of Pride is depicted as a library where souls conduct endless research. Academically, this layer symbolises intellectual arrogance and criticises the belief that knowledge and research can master everything.

The next layer, Desire, is depicted as a student center where souls enjoy comfort, rest, and pleasure so much that they cannot leave, not as a layer connected with bodily temptation,



lust, and sinful pleasure as in many traditional depictions of Hell. This represents the distractions of student life and the temptation to escape pressure through comfort.

After Desire, Alice goes to the layer of Greed. In Dante's *Inferno*, greed is depicted through souls who push heavy weights against each other, symbolising their obsessive attachment to material possession. However, in *Kuang's Katabasis*, Greed becomes the layer of selfish academics who steal ideas, care only about their own advancement. This depiction turns greed into intellectual theft, plagiarism, rivalry, and the desire to succeed at the expense of others.

In the layer of Greed, there is a Bridge of Sighs. This bridge does not

exist in canonical Hell narratives. Kuang borrows the name from a well-known bridge of imprisonment and transforms it into an infernal academic passage. Academically, this bridge represents burnout and criticises the emotional exhaustion caused by endless competition, pressure, envy, and intellectual rivalry.

Kuang does not give a detailed depiction of the layers of Violence, Cruelty, and Bullying. Instead, she represents these three layers as a desert. Academically, these desert-like layers can be read as different forms of harm produced within academic life. Violence represents the psychological and humiliation, exclusion, pressure, and domination of academia. Cruelty reflects the cold and merciless side of academic culture, where people may exploit weakness, sacrifice others for success. The layer of Bullying points to power abuse that can occur within hierarchical academic relationships. In this sense, these layers suggest an academic world where empathy, collaboration, and intellectual growth have been replaced by hostility, exhaustion, and emotional sterility.



In the eighth layer, there is a city named Dis. Kuang uses the idea of the city Dis from the books *Inferno*(2012) and *Aeneis*(2019). In both books, Dis is described as a misty, dark, silent, and terrifying place where souls suffer, surrounded by rivers of fire. Yet Kuang reconstructs Dis as an exotic, beautiful city where souls are writing their final thesis for reincarnation. A rebellious group in Dis want to create a paradise within Hell, and Kuang compares this

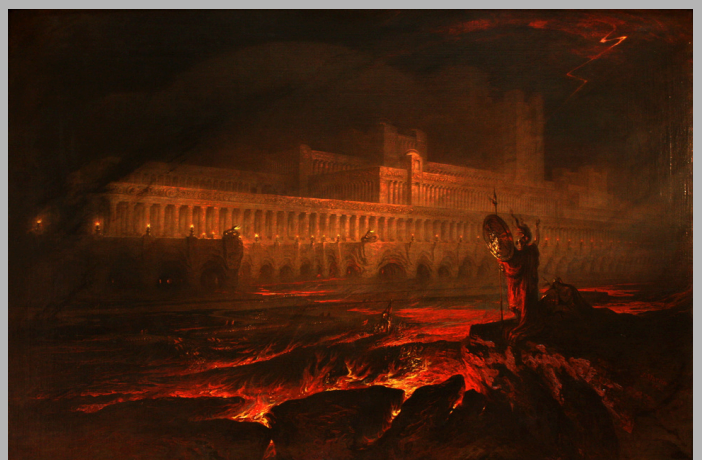
rebellious group to John Milton's Satan(2012), a figure who seeks to establish an alternative order to God's heavenly order.

In the city of Dis, apart from the rebellious group, most souls are trapped in the process of dissertation writing. They write in the hope of presenting their work to King Yama, the ruler of Hell, and receiving reincarnation. This system closely mirrors the thesis defense process of graduate education. King Yama becomes the final examiner, and reincarnation functions like academic approval. Those who successfully defend their dissertations are permitted to reincarnate, or in other words, to begin a new life.

In Katabasis, hell is reimagined as a reflection of the academic world, where traditional moral structures are reshaped through intellectual and epistemic concerns. Canonical infernal models are not reproduced as authoritative but are instead subjected to critique, reinterpretation, and displacement. Katabasis challenges earlier katabatic traditions by transforming them into objects of analysis. Kuang deconstructs canonical infernal narratives and reconstructs her own contemporary model, and criticises academic life.

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*FANTASY AND
VIDEO GAME (2)*

The Rise of The Anti-Wonderland: A Gothic And Cognitive Deconstruction of Trauma in Alice: Madness Returns

Eren AYCAN

When Lewis Carroll published *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in the 19th century, he created a timeless piece of "nonsense literature." On the surface, the story is a simple child's dream filled with absurd creatures. However, Carroll's text serves as a sharp criticism of Victorian society. Through clever symbolism, he critiques the strict rules and oppressive logic of his era. For example, the Queen of Hearts represents Victorian tyranny, while the Mad Hatter reflects the dangerous realities of the Industrial Revolution. More than a century later, American McGee reimagined this classic tale in *Alice: Madness Returns*, a psychological horror video game. This adaptation completely changes the original's tone. The difference between the two characters is striking. Carroll's Alice is an innocent girl experiencing a harmless fantasy. In contrast, McGee's Alice is a severely traumatized survivor. After losing her family in a house fire, she is locked inside an asylum, suffering under the cruel conditions of a 19th-century mental institution. She is no longer a curious child, but a patient fighting to recover her lost identity.

Because of this tragic background, the game's narrative becomes a dark "Gothic deconstruction." The magical Wonderland transforms into a

terrifying "Anti-Wonderland." In this interactive experience, the setting is not a simple dreamscape; everything represents a frightening clinical case. The monsters, ruined landscapes, and corrupted characters are physical reflections of Alice's survivor's guilt, grief, and dissociation. As her psychological state declines in the asylum, her imaginary world burns and bleeds. This corrupted Wonderland is not just a dark fantasy, but a reflection of the protagonist's damaged mind. It serves as a cognitive defense mechanism, helping Alice process her trauma and survive reality. In McGee's narrative, Alice is not simply "insane"; she suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and survivor's guilt. The fire that killed her family is a reality too painful to face directly. A vital part of this framework is clinical dissociation—a mental process where a person disconnects from their identity to avoid extreme stress. For Alice, the asylum is a place of torture. Dissociation acts as her "survival tool." When real-world pain becomes unbearable, she retreats inward. However, because her mind is damaged, this retreat is not peaceful. It is a Gothic deconstruction of her memories, where Wonderland is "polluted" by symbols of trauma, like smoke, fire, and blood.

Furthermore, this internal struggle gives Alice something she lacks in the real world: power. In the asylum, she is a passive victim of 19th-century psychiatry. Inside the Anti-Wonderland, however, she becomes an active





warrior. This transformation proves her "madness" is actually a complex cognitive defense mechanism. By fighting through the corrupted layers of Wonderland, she actively processes her trauma. Each chapter takes a famous element from Carroll's world and transforms it into a specific trauma or Victorian social issue. Victorian social norms are directly challenged through semiotic transformation. In the 19th century, the ideal woman was the "Angel in the House," a concept suggesting a woman's role was to be submissive, quiet, and domestic. Alice destroys this image. Instead of being an





"Angel in the Kitchen," she uses domestic tools as deadly weapons. Her primary weapon, the Vorpall Blade, is a simple kitchen knife, and her long-range weapon is a Pepper Grinder. The most significant transformation is "Hysteria Mode." When Alice is about to die, she enters a state of temporary immortality and extreme power. The world turns black and white, and Alice becomes an unstoppable force. This references the 19th-century medical diagnosis of "Hysteria." Historically, doctors used this term to control women who defied social rules. Independent women were labeled "hysterical" and locked away. However, McGee turns this oppressive diagnosis into a survival mechanism. Hysteria is not a weakness; it is Alice's ultimate power. This creates a powerful irony: the label used to suppress Victorian women is transformed into the very power Alice uses to find freedom and build her identity.

In conclusion, *Alice: Madness Returns* is much more than a horror game; it is a profound journey proving interactive storytelling's unique strength. While Carroll's text relies on imagination, McGee makes Alice's trauma visceral. The masterful world-building constantly foreshadows her mental state. Interactive media allows players to experience her psychological struggles firsthand. By fighting through the ruins of her mind, Alice demonstrates that healing is an active, violent battle against the past. She moves from being a victim to becoming the architect of her own truth. Ultimately, the rabbit hole is no longer a passage to wonder; it is a fall into the broken pieces of a shattered mind.

From Individuals to a Nation's Future: Effects of Psychology on Politics in Arcane

Gökçe ERASLAN

Arcane, the fantasy animation series based on League of Legends created by Riot Games, offers a unique perspective on the interaction of damaged psychology and politics. Arcane boldly externalizes political conflicts through the tension between the two cities. The series shows that while political systems affect individual psychology, the reverse is also possible. Arcane manages to mirror reality by presenting political-psychological conflicts through the Fantasy genre.



Since humans constantly interact with their environment, the political atmosphere cannot be excluded from the factors that affect their psychology. Based on Pilecki and Hammack's perspective on political psychology as they mentioned "Erikson's analysis ... political circumstances collide with individual experience to produce major social change.", it is reasonable to state that psychology is in a bidirectional relationship with politics. But how do they manage to reflect realistic

themes in fantasy without weakening the quality?

Thomas Pavel argues that fantasy worlds should be analyzed as systems within their own logic through “affect” and experience. To Friedrichsen, fantasy transforms real conflicts into fictive but recognizable forms via feeling rather than direct verbalization. Through aesthetic worldbuilding and atmosphere, fantasy engages audiences with realistic themes. Furthermore, the relation between fantasy and reality becomes visible in *Arcane* via atmospheric contrast between Piltover and Zaun where psychological-political struggles take form.



In *Arcane*, political worldbuilding is based on the conflict between Piltover and Zaun that is rooted in Piltover’s policies. The bridge connects cities over a canal that benefits Piltover’s economy while Zaun becomes increasingly corrupted. However, the policies of Piltover not only oppress Zaun by the “enforcer” violence, but also by banning Zaunites from crossing the bridge. Foucault's perspective of power becomes visible in *Arcane* as the council, the academy, restrictions, and class hierarchy. As Perdhana explains through the “social capital” concept, Piltover possesses greater access to power. Symbolic violence becomes undeniable as Piltoverans label Zaunites. Even Jayce saying “They are dangerous.” to his Zaunite collaborator proves this. The oppression of Zaun creates a problematic environment. In a striking atmosphere created by these elements which are represented through songs, cinematography, and plot, *Arcane* reconstructs political-psychological tensions that shape experiences.



The greatest example of an atmosphere-shaped individual is Powder. The plot begins with a scene where Powder and Vi are orphaned by Piltover's violence in front of the bridge. Powder faces violence at an early age and is judged for "jinxing". When Vander is kidnapped, Vi rejects her participation to save him, causing Powder to feel inadequacy. When she attempts to help by using gemstones that cause the explosion in Piltover, she goes after her family. Yet, the accident kills her brothers, and she believes she is responsible for Vander's death. Right after these incidents, Violet leaves Powder after calling her "jinx", turning her trauma into guilt, loss and abandonment. Under such conditions, Powder turns to Silco, who becomes her father figure and only source of validation. As Kyoshi explains, Powder's trauma haunts her constantly. Her experience is represented with distorted imagery, fragmented editing, and sounds. Her flashbacks occur when triggered, disrupting her perception of reality. The inability to separate memory from reality causes instability. They represent her remorse, fear of abandonment, and trauma. Audiences experience her psychology visually. As the atmosphere shapes her, she changes it too. Her room reflects her instability. The name "Jinx" proves that she is shaped by her atmosphere. Later, her trauma causes misinterpretations. She meets Vi, who she thought was dead, further confusing her perception of death as reflected in her line, "Nothing ever stays dead." However, Silco's influence on Jinx's ideology leads her to transform her trauma into power, evolving her into a

a revolutionary symbol after attacking the council. Episode ‘Paint the Town Blue’ references the slogan inspired by her blue hair. Zaun’s growing punk culture appreciates her act by dyeing their hair blue as a symbol of anarchy for freedom. Her access to Hextech frames Zaun as equivalent to Piltover.

As Friedrichsen explains successful worldbuilding, Arcane creates this through perception of multiple characters on a psychological and political basis. They frame the same structure of experience forming ideologies that shape the actions which produce major consequences. Featuring atmosphere, the series transforms psychological and political tensions into affective fantasy. The danger rises out of these conflicts in communities rather than arcane, which is wielded by individuals shaped by the conditions. On this basis, Arcane portrays the inextricable interactions of psychology, politics, and atmosphere.

To conclude, psychology and politics, interlinked systems influencing each other as it is demonstrated through the traumas and ideologies with worldbuilding, symbolism, characters, and more, Arcane magnificently expresses realistic struggles and consequences in an experiential world. It manages to prove that psychology shaped by experience influences ideologies, politic actions and most importantly, the destiny of a nation.



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*FANTASY IN
ENGLISH
ROMANTIC
POETRY*



The Sublime Imagination and Fantastic Dualities in the Landscape of Kubla Khan

Livanur ERGİN

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* is often read as a dream poem, yet its significance goes beyond its mysterious origin. The poem presents Xanadu not as a mere physical place but as an imaginative landscape where opposite forces constantly engage. Through vivid imagery and symbolic contrasts, Coleridge creates a world in which order and chaos, beauty and terror, reality and imagination exist side by side. These "fantastic dualities" shape the poem's meaning and establish a distinctly fantasy-like mode of perception, where boundaries between real and unreal remain fluid and uncertain.

One of the most noticeable contrasts in the poem is the relationship between the pleasure-dome and the



savage chasm. The dome appears peaceful, bright, and carefully designed. It reflects a Baconian desire for order, development, and rational control over nature. However, the surrounding wilderness reveals the limits of this ambition. The chasm, on the other hand, is wild, unpredictable, and

powerful. Described as both “savage” and “holy,” it expresses Miltonic Chaos as a primal force beyond order, integrated into the same landscape rather than opposed to it. Accordingly, Xanadu becomes a fantastic place where order and disorder coexist rather than neutralize each other.

Their coexistence suggests that creation depends on the balance of opposing forces. Order never fully contains chaos; instead, it is continually surrounded and destabilized by the tension which forms the core of the poem’s imaginative structure.



This idea is closely connected to Coleridge’s understanding of imagination. In his critical writings, he distinguishes between the Primary and Secondary Imagination. The Secondary Imagination does not simply copy reality; it revises and revives it. In *Kubla Khan*, the landscape emerges through this creative process. Rivers, caves, mountains, and gardens are transformed into something dreamlike and phenomenal. The poem therefore operates within a fantastic groundwork, where reality is constantly restructured by imaginative perception rather than passively represented.

The atmosphere of the poem contributes strongly to its sense of

the sublime. The sublime, in Romantic literature, is associated with experiences that inspire both wonder and fear. The violent eruption of the fountain, the measureless caverns, and the mysterious depths beneath the landscape create feelings of awe. At the same time, the beauty of the gardens and the brightness of the dome provide harmony and delight. Coleridge combines these responses so that readers experience fascination and suspense simultaneously. This emotional instability reinforces the poem's fantasy-like quality, where perception constantly shifts between beauty and terror.

Another important aspect is the dreamlike structure of the poem. Whether or not it was inspired by a reverie stemming from opium, it clearly blurs the line between reality and imagination. Visions appear suddenly and shift rapidly from one scene to another. This fragmented movement reflects the logic of dreaming, where association replaces rational order. Instead of a linear narrative, the poem invites readers into a fantastic space dominated by imaginative transformation.

The figure of the Abyssinian maid further develops artistic creation. Her song represents a source of inspiration the speaker longs to recover. He imagines that if he could bring her music back to life, he would recreate the vision. This desire reflects the poet's struggle to capture imaginative experience in.





language. Inspiration appears powerful but temporary, offering only brief access to a higher creative state.

The final lines suggest transformation through imaginative vision:

*“For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.”*

These images imply contact with something sacred and extraordinary. The poet becomes both admired and isolated due to his connection to imaginative power.

Therefore, Kubla Khan demonstrates how imagination harmonizes opposites into a single artistic vision. Through the interaction of beauty and terror, the poem creates a landscape that is both mysterious and coherent in its own dream logic. Coleridge shows that imagination is not an escape from reality but a force capable of reshaping it. The permanent appeal of the poem lies in this ability to transform contradiction into creative possibility and to invite readers into an imaginative world where wonder remains alive through the logic of fantasy.

FANTASY, EVIL AND THE OTHER



Blood, Choice and the "Other": The Socio-Literary Construction of Identity in "Harry Potter"

Damla CANKURTARAN

1) The Supremacy: Magic

J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series functions as a modern manifesto against social unfairness, leveraging folklore and magical tropes to parody real-world inequalities linked to lineage and blood. The phrase "Magic is Might" serves as a central axis shaping social formation within the wizarding world. This structure is deeply intertwined with the ideology of Nazism and the socio-historical structures of Great Britain.

The historical tension between magical and non-magical populations is embedded in the very foundations of the wizarding society. Hogwarts was established in the 10th century as an independent sanctuary for young witches and wizards fleeing persecution from Muggles. However, its creation also marked the genesis of an internal ideological quarrel regarding blood purity. This division is reflected in the foundational values of the four school houses:

Gryffindor: Values bravery, daring, nerve, and chivalry.

Ravenclaw: Promotes creativity, wit, and learning.

Hufflepuff: Characterized by justice, loyalty, and ethical stability.

Slytherin: Rooted in cunning, ambition, and moral ambiguity.

Salazar Slytherin's insistence on pure-blood supremacy initiated a systemic practice of "othering" that relegated non-magical individuals to a secondary societal position.



2) The Fabrication of Lineage and Hierarchies

Applying Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, Rowling explores "The Big Other"—the systemic expectations, laws, and societal norms into which an individual is born. Lord Voldemort, as the heir of Slytherin, embraces this elitist framework by attempting to completely exclude Muggles and muggle-borns from the magical sphere. Over time, this universe

developed three rigid, intersecting hierarchies:

Blood Status

Pure-Bloods: Possess no Muggle blood in their lineage. Families listed in the "Sacred Twenty-Eight" (e.g., Malfoy, Black) occupy the highest social rank, cultivating an entitled sense of supremacy.

Half-Bloods: Have at least one parent or grandparent with magical qualities (e.g., Harry Potter, Severus Snape, Voldemort).

Muggle-Borns: Come from non-magical families. Lacking prior knowledge of the wizarding world, they face systemic discrimination and are targeted with the offensive slur "Mudblood".

Socio-Economic Classes

Social standing is heavily dictated by wealth, mirroring the class obsession of the Victorian and Stuart eras in England. The aristocratic Upper-Class (e.g., the Malfoys) leverages inherited fortune and landed gentry status to exert political influence over the Ministry of Magic. The

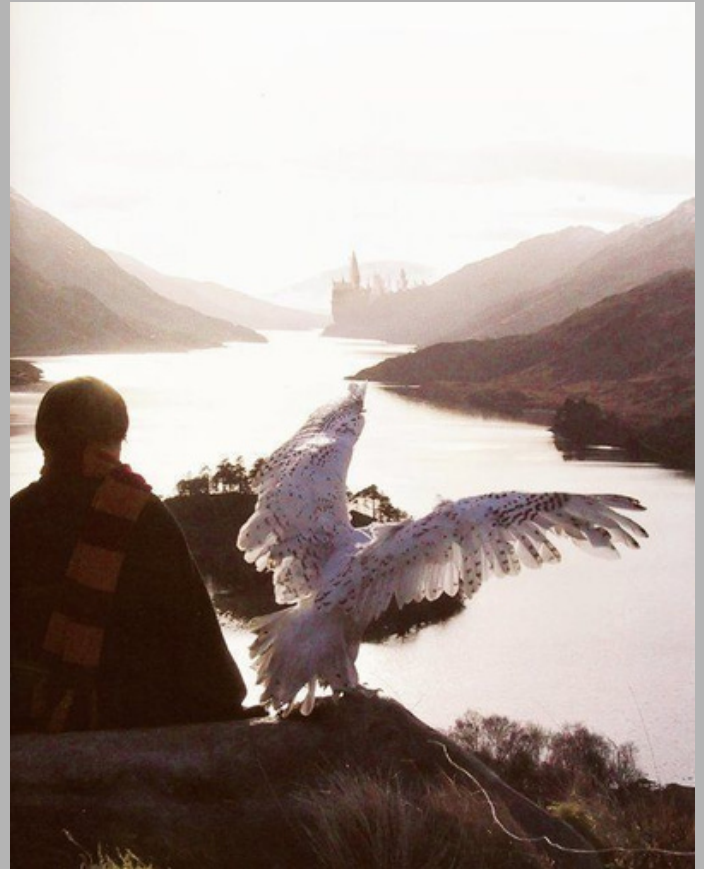
of Magic. The Middle-Class comprises working professionals like Ministry officials and Hogwarts professors. Conversely, the Weasley family is branded as "blood traitors" due to their financial struggles and interest in Muggle affairs. The Lower-Class or Outcasts (e.g., a young, working-class Snape, or Hagrid due to his giant heritage) remain marginalized on the fringes of society.

Non-Human Entities

A strict racial hierarchy governs non-human beings. Goblins and Centaurs are intellectual equals to wizards but are legally denied rights such as carrying wands. Werewolves and Giants experience institutional discrimination, while House-elves occupy the lowest legal tier, bound to hereditary servitude.

Rowling explicitly parallels Voldemort's regime with Nazi Socialism. The Ministry's "Magic is Might" slogan mirrors the *Herrenvolk* (Superior Race) ideology, while the legal categorization of blood status reflects

1935 Nazi Nuremberg laws that determined identity strictly by lineage rather than belief.



3) Social Fear, "Others" and Narcissism

Societal order is maintained through folklore and collective psychological fear. This politics of "otherization" is frequently enforced by individuals who are themselves marginalized. Voldemort's tyrannical pursuit of power stems from an inferiority complex rooted in his childhood as a nameless, loveless orphan. He views human emotions as vulnerabilities to mask his own historical trauma.

4) Institutional Power and Gender Archetypes

Power in the wizarding world is distributed across institutions like the Ministry of Magic, the Wizengamot, Hogwarts, and the Daily Prophet. During the Second Wizarding War, these structures were subverted into propaganda tools for Voldemort's regime.

The creation of "The Muggle-Born Registration Commission" in *The Deathly Hallows* represents the ultimate bureaucratic vehicle for systemic racism. Mirroring Nazi legal persecution, it weaponized judicial terror:



Propaganda: Falsely claimed magic was "stolen" from pure-bloods.

Enforcement: Deployed "Snatchers" (bounty hunters) to capture escapees.

Judicial Terror: Positioned Dementors in courtrooms to incapacitate defense efforts.

Concurrently, Rowling subverts traditional gender roles by using folklore archetypes to depict female power:

Molly Weasley: Represents the nurturing mother, offering protection and warmth.

Minerva McGonagall: Embodying the ancient mythic archetype of the wise mentor.

Bellatrix Lestrange: The dangerous witch archetype, displaying a loss of identity through blind, amoral devotion to Voldemort.

Hermione Granger: Blends four archetypes—sage, loyal companion, heroine, and rebel—by continuously challenging authority and standing against systemic injustice.

Conclusion

Ultimately, identity in Harry Potter is constructed through individual agency rather than fate. Though critics note that Harry possessed the shared abilities and background to become another Voldemort, his choices explicitly separate him from tyrants like Voldemort, Snape, and Bellatrix. Harry retains control over his ego, refusing to judge others by their blood status or economic class. As Albus Dumbledore encapsulates: "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."

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IDENTITY IN FANTASTIC LITERATURE



Quest Narrative and Identity in Diana Wynne Jones's *Howl's Moving Castle*

Esmanur KARABABA

The concept of the quest narrative traditionally refers to a story structure in which hero embarks on a journey, faces a series of trials, and eventually achieves transformation or fulfillment. This model, most notably theorized by Joseph Campbell, emphasizes external challenges, heroic action, and the attainment of a clear goal. In modern fantasy literature, the quest narrative is often reconfigured to foreground internal transformation rather than outward conquest.

Within this context, *Howl's Moving Castle* by Diana Wynne Jones presents a distinctive reworking of the quest narrative through its focus on identity. The novel follows Sophie, a young woman who initially defines herself through internalized social expectations and limiting self images. Her unexpected transformation into an old woman initiates a journey that destabilizes her fixed sense of self and opens up the possibility for change.

This paper argues that *Howl's Moving Castle* redefines the quest narrative as a process of identity reconstruction. By employing fantasy as a narrative space, the novel allows Sophie to confront and rewrite the story she has internalized about herself. In doing so, it subverts the traditional heroic model by shifting the focus from external achievement to internal transformation and narrative self construction.



In fantasy literature , the concept of identity is frequently explored through transformative journeys that challenge the boundaries between the self and the roles imposed by society. As a genre fantasy provides a narrative space in which characters can confront, question, and reconstruct their sense of self. In this respect, *Howl's Moving Castle* by Diana Wynne Jones presents a compelling example of how identity can be shaped and reshaped through narrative experience. The structure of Sophie's journey can initially be aligned with the traditional quest narrative as described by Joseph Campbell, who defines the hero's journey as a movement from the ordinary world into a realm of transformation. So, the significance of this journey lies not only in external events but also in the reconstruction of identity. As Jerome Bruner argues, "We become the autobiographical narratives by which we 'tell about' our lives," suggesting that identity is shaped through narrative. In this sense, Sophie's transformation can be read as a process of rewriting the self. Furthermore, as Farah Mendlesohn states, "Fantasy is a literature of transformation," reinforcing the idea that the genre itself enables such shifts in identity and self-perception.

At the beginning of *Howl's Moving Castle*, Sophie's identity is shaped by internalized social expectations and self chosen limitations. As the eldest

daughter, she believes that this is her fate to fail as a first born daughter, accepting a passive role within both her family and society. Even though she doesn't want to work as a hatter she accept what is chosen for her. This reflects what Jerome Bruner describes as the narrative construction of identity, in which individuals come to define themselves through the stories they internalize. As Bruner argues, “We become the autobiographical narratives by which we ‘tell about’ our lives,” suggesting that identity is not fixed but narratively produced. In Sophie’s case, her self image is structured around a story of insignificance and inevitability, which limits her agency and reinforces her passivity. Therefore, even before her physical transformation, Sophie is already confined within a restrictive narrative of the self.



Sophie’s transformation into an old woman marks a crucial crack in her narrative identity. While the curse appears to restrict her physically, it ironically liberates her from the expectations that previously defined her sense of self. Removed from the social limitations attached to youth and femininity, Sophie begins to act with greater confidence and independence. This shift illustrates how identity, rather than being stable, can be reconfigured through changes in narrative context. In this sense, the curse functions not merely as a magical event but as a catalyst for self redefinition. As Farah Mendlesohn notes, “Fantasy is a literature of transformation,” and

Sophie's experience exemplifies how transformation within fantasy enables a reimagining of the self. No longer bound by her earlier narrative of failure, Sophie begins to construct a new identity grounded in action rather than expectation.

Sophie's arrival at Howl's castle represents the beginning of her active reconstruction of identity. Unlike her earlier life in the hat shop, where she passively accepted the role assigned to her, the castle becomes a liminal space in which fixed social expectations no longer fully apply. "The concept of liminality is directed towards the between, the blurred margins of cultural borders, in which the other and one's own unity, towards the initiation of a space of the border and a space between borders where nothing is decided yet and everything is possible." (Rüdiger Görner, 2001,113.) Within this constantly moving and unstable environment, Sophie gradually develops agency through her interactions with Howl, Calcifer, and Michael. Rather than remaining an observer in her own story, she begins to take control of both her actions and the relationships around her. Her decision to clean and reorganize the castle symbolically reflects her attempt to reorganize her own fragmented sense of self.

This transformation also marks a significant departure from the traditional quest narrative described by Joseph Campbell. In conventional heroic quests, the protagonist's development is often achieved through physical confrontation and external victory. Sophie's journey, however, is centered on emotional growth, self-recognition, and interpersonal connection. The castle therefore functions not only as a magical setting but also as a narrative space that enables identity reconstruction. As Sophie becomes more confident and ambitious, the passive narrative she once internalized begins to collapse. By actively influencing the lives of others and confronting her own fears, she gradually rewrites the story she once believed about herself.

The relationship between Sophie and Howl plays a central role in the novel's exploration of identity, as both characters influence and reshape each other's understanding of themselves. At the beginning of the narrative, Howl constructs his identity through performance, illusion, and avoidance. He presents himself as a powerful and dramatic wizard, yet beneath this persona he remains emotionally immature and fearful of responsibility. Similarly, Sophie initially defines herself through invisibility and self denial, believing that she is destined to remain ordinary and unimportant. Their relationship therefore brings together two individuals whose

identities are shaped by self protective narratives.

As the story progresses, both characters begin to challenge these narratives through mutual recognition and emotional vulnerability. Sophie gradually learns to assert herself and express her desires, while Howl becomes increasingly capable of emotional honesty and commitment. Their relationship is significant not because it "completes" either character in a traditional romantic sense, but because it creates a space in which both characters are able to confront the identities they have constructed for themselves. In this



respect, the relationship functions as part of the novel's broader redefinition of the quest narrative. Rather than centering heroic conquest or individual triumph, the novel presents identity formation as a collaborative and relational process.

Furthermore, Sophie's ability to see beyond Howl's theatrical persona reflects her own growing self awareness. As she becomes more confident in her identity, she also gains the ability to perceive the emotional insecurities hidden beneath Howl's performance. Their emotional connection therefore mirrors the novel's larger concern with the tension between outward appearance and inner identity. Through fantasy and transformation, the novel ultimately suggests that identity is neither fixed nor isolated, but continuously shaped through narrative, change, and human connection.

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"I saw my life branching out before me like the green fig tree in the story"

-Sylvia Plath,
The Bell Jar

THE FIGTREE REIMAGINED

Fantasy, Choice , and Existential Choice in The Worst Person in The World

"We are our choices"
-Jean Paul Sartre

"Excessive possibilities create paralysis rather than freedom."

01 Introduction

*Fantasy is often associated with supernatural elements; yet it also exists as an internal space of imagination and desire.
*This study explores how fantasy shapes modern identity through the experience of Julie from The Worst Person in The World (2021), directed by Joachim Trier.
*Julie's "what if" mindset mirrors Sylvia Plath's Fig Tree metaphor where unlimited possibilities can lead to paralysis and loss of all choices.

02 The Film



The Worst Person in The World (2021)
Directed by Joachim Trier
follows Julie a woman in her late twenties , as she navigates love, career, and self discovery. The film captures a generation facing endless possibilities but struggling to choose.

03 Sylvia Plath : The Fig Tree Metaphor



In The Bell Jar , Plath describes her life as a fig tree filled with ripening figs - each representing a possible life . The inability to choose leads to the loss all possibilities.

04 Jean Paul Sartre : Existential Freedom



Sartre argues that humans are condemned to be free . With freedom comes responsibility, anxiety and the burden of choice. An excess of possibilities can result in bad faith , paralysis and the failure to create authentic identity.

POSTER PRESENTATIONS



FANTAZI OR FANTASY? A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SHAHMARAN LEGEND AND ITS NETFLIX ADAPTATION WITHIN LINDA HUTCHEON ADAPTATION THEORY



INTRODUCTION

Fantasy serves as a bridge between cultural memory and modern consumption. This study explores the Shahmaran legend, a cornerstone of Middle Eastern folklore, and its transition into the digital age. By analyzing the Netflix series Şahmeran (2023), the research investigates how ancient myths are reshaped to fit contemporary urban settings and digital storytelling demands.



METHODOLOGY

Using Linda Hutcheon's Adaptation Theory, this study analyzes the "afterlife" of the myth through four lenses:
Transposition: Generic shift to Urban Fantasy.
Remediation: Transition from oral "telling" to digital "showing."
Re-contextualization: Relocating the myth in 21st-century Turkey.
Palimpsestuous Reading: Observing the original legend's traces beneath the modern narrative.



THE FIG TREE REIMGINED

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"Excessive possibilities create paralysis rather than freedom."

01 Introduction

"Fantasy is often associated with supernatural elements; yet it also exists as an internal space of imagination and desire.

"This study explores how fantasy shapes modern identity through the experience of Julie from The Worst Person in The World (2021), directed by Joachim Trier.

"Julie's "what if" mindset mirrors Sylvia Plath's Fig Tree metaphor where unlimited possibilities can lead to paralysis and loss of all choices.

02 The Film



The Worst Person in the World (2021) Directed by Joachim Trier follows Julie a woman in her late twenties , as she navigates love, career, and self discovery. The film captures a generation facing endless possibilities but struggling to choose.

03

Sylvia Plath :
The Fig Tree Metaphor

In The Bell Jar , Plath describes her life as a fig tree filled with ripening figs - each representing a possible life . The inability to choose leads to the loss all possibilities.

04

Jean Paul Sartre :
Existential Freedom



Sartre argues that humans are condemned to be free . With freedom comes responsibility, anxiety and the burden of choice. An excess of possibilities can result in bad faith , paralysis and the failure to create authentic identity.

Psychologist

Doctor

"So many lives.
Which one is mine?"

Marriage

Motherhood

Travel the world

Freedom& Independence

Writer



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"Don't
let
your
fig
die."



FANTAZI OR FANTASY? A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SHAHMARAN LEGEND AND ITS NETFLIX ADAPTATION WITHIN LINDA HUTCHEON ADAPTATION THEORY



INTRODUCTION

Fantasy serves as a bridge between cultural memory and modern consumption. This study explores the Shahmaran legend, a cornerstone of Middle Eastern folklore, and its transition into the digital age. By analyzing the Netflix series Şahmeran (2023), the research investigates how ancient myths are reshaped to fit contemporary urban settings and digital storytelling demands.



METHODOLOGY

Using Linda Hutcheon's Adaptation Theory, this study analyzes the "afterlife" of the myth through four lenses:

Transposition: Generic shift to Urban Fantasy.

Remediation: Transition from oral "telling" to digital "showing."

Re-contextualization: Relocating the myth in 21st-century Turkey.

Palimpsestuous Reading: Observing the original legend's traces beneath the modern narrative.



Remediating the Supernatural: Abstract folkloric elements are translated into concrete digital spectacles. Through CGI and somatic performances, the serpent-hybridity is transformed from a symbolic warning against greed into a biological and psychological "awakening" of the protagonist, Şahsu.



Spatial and temporal transformation: The myth's timeless, underground cave is re-contextualized into the psychogeography of modern Adana. The supernatural is no longer isolated; it is integrated into the "urban uncanny," where ancient prophecies drive a linear, suspenseful digital plot.

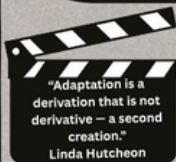


Identity and Agency: The traditional Shahmaran, often a passive victim, is reimagined through hybridity. The series reflects 21st-century societal desires regarding feminine power and self-discovery. As a palimpsest, the series allows the audience to experience the "haunting" presence of the original myth while consuming a modern romantic-fantasy product



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HALO

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Paces Özel



