People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of Tlemcen

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English

Deconstructing the Traditional Apocalyptic Narrative in Etel Adnan's Literary Texts

Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctorate in Literature.

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Academic Year: 2023-2024

Dedications

This thesis is dedicated to the souls whom we lost in the COVID-19.

It is a gift to my loved ones and close companions. My heartfelt appreciation goes to H'mida and Leila NOUIOUA, my doting parents, whose constant support and encouragement inspired me to work hard and persevere. My brothers, Soufiane, Mohammed and Madani have always been there for me.

A special gratitude to my husband Farouk, whose everlasting support and guidance are testified.

Statement of Originality

I hereby attest that the work presented is exclusively the product of my own intellectual endeavors, devoid of any content previously disseminated or authored by another individual. It does not incorporate any material that has been sanctioned for the fulfillment of alternative academic qualifications from a university or any other esteemed institution. Additionally, I affirm with certainty that this scholarly contribution is untainted by plagiarism and stands as the culmination of my independent investigative efforts, unless explicitly indicated otherwise.

WAFA NOUIOUA

Signature

Date: 11/11/2023

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, my resounding praise and thanks to the Almighty God for enlightening my academic path and for his enormous guidance

My sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Mohammed KHELADI for his encouragement, advice and professionalism. I am indebted to his insightful feedback, patience and dedication to helping me navigate the challenges of this research.

I sincerely thank the members of my examiners' committee, Professor Ghouti HADJOUI, Professor Ilhem SERIR, Professor Mohammed DIB and Doctor Samir ARAB for dedicating their time and patience to assess and review this research.

A special thanks and gratitude to my MA professors at Yarmouk University in Jordan, whose genuine efforts made accomplishing my thesis possible.

Abstract

The classical apocalyptic narrative has perennially kindled optimism within devout communities, yet the conventions of this narrative does fail to accommodate the intricacies of the postmodern epoch. Within this framework, the present thesis undertakes an examination of Etel Adnan's works: *The Arab Apocalypse*, *There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and of the Other*, *Master of the Eclipse and Other Stories*, from a postmodern perspective. It delves into postmodern apocalypticism vis-à-vis existential crises and historiographic metafiction. Central to this research are postmodern apocalyptic themes, including global terrorism, existential dread, societal breakdown, authoritarian hegemony, and the subjugation of humanity. Moreover, this analysis showcases the implementation of postmodern narrative strategies, such as an open ending, nonlinear narratives and intertextuality, destabilizing the apocalyptic genre's conventional paradigms. The thesis employs a qualitative approach and critical and analytical methods to achieve these objectives. Subsequently, the research findings demonstrate that, in Etel Adnan's case study, the themes and techniques of postmodernism dismantle the established apocalyptic narrative by challenging its presuppositions assumptions of order, linearity, harmony, and utopia. Besides, the results underscore the imperative role of artistic expression and historiographic metafiction as potent rejoinders to the disquieting backdrop of the postmodern era.

Keywords: Etel Adnan, postmodern apocalypse, existential crisis, historiographic metafiction.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Throughout history, the apocalyptic narrative has been regarded as an enduring tale that captivated the curiosity and imagination of early civilizations, such as the Egyptians, Mesopotamians, and Greeks. This perspective, envisioning the ultimate resolution of global crises, provides solace to exhausted religious communities longing for an end to perpetual worldwide upheaval. In this framework, apocalyptic literature unveils predictions conveyed by otherworldly messengers like angels or celestial beings to a human prophet. By interpreting societal upheaval in a divine framework, this literature imparts the understanding that the current chaotic state of affairs is transitory, and ultimately, there will be a resolution. Essentially, God steps in initially to establish order, followed by a judgment of human actions. Consequently, salvation awaits the faithful, while those who commit sins and neglect to rectify their shortcomings face retribution.

However, in the postmodern era, the established norms of the classic apocalyptic tale have been disrupted. The once optimistic apocalyptic portrayal involving God's intervention for deliverance transforms into a gloomier perspective, detached from its theological roots, suggesting human demise and punishment. Thus, within this framework, postmodern authors dismantle the traditional apocalyptic narrative, arguing against the validity of God's salvation and emphasizing the certainty of a gloomy end scenario.

One of the authors intrigued by postmodern apocalyptic themes is Etel Adnan, a writer of American and Lebanese cultural roots born in 1925 in Beirut to a mother of Greek descent and a father from Syria. Adnan pursued studies at the Sorbonne University in Paris, earning a degree in philosophy before embarking on a career as a poet, essayist, and visual artist. Her novel *Master of the Eclipse* (2010) gained widespread acclaim, receiving

the Arab American Book Awards. Another notable achievement for Adnan was the publication of *Sitt Marie Rose* (1977), which earned the France-Pays Arabs award.

In *The Arab Apocalypse* (1989) translated by Etel Adnan from French into English, she employs semiotics and visual poetry to craft a unique masterpiece that lays bare the distressing realities of the Middle East. She vividly depicts the wounds endured by the Arab World, with a particular focus on Lebanon during the Civil War. Furthermore, Adnan delves into themes of terror, specifically within the context of the Gulf War and the Lebanese conflict, in her poetic collection *Master of the Eclipse and Other Stories* (2009). Another of Adnan's works, *There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and the Other* (1997), vehemently opposes ongoing international violence and champions global human resistance.

This thesis aims to analyze the works of Etel Adnan, specifically *The Arab Apocalypse*, *Master of the Eclipse and Other Stories*, and *There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and of the Other*, through a postmodern lens. Using the views of postmodern critics, namely, Jean François Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard and Linda Hutcheon, this examination emphasizes postmodern apocalyptic themes in Etel's chosen narratives, encompassing persistent violence, global terrorism, environmental crises, societal decline, political dominance, and the vulnerability of humanity in times of global turmoil. This research highlights a thematic analysis of Etel's selected texts. It delves into the underlying narrative strategies, comprehensively analyzing both the content and techniques used in portraying the postmodern apocalyptic experience. It demonstrates how Etel challenges the conventional apocalyptic narrative by employing postmodern techniques, such as an open ending, nonlinear narratives, apocalyptic symbolism, and the diversity of perspectives. In addition, this thesis analyzes how these themes and narrative strategies deconstruct the

established apocalyptic narrative that upholds notions of order, linear progression, harmony, and aspirations for a utopian outcome. It aims to discern the underlying purpose behind Etel's approach to deconstructing the traditional apocalyptic narrative in her work.

Given our current reality, marked by events like the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant need arises to delve into apocalyptic narratives within the context of the postmodern era. This exploration serves a dual purpose: to understand the turbulent circumstances and to counteract them through narratives. Therefore, the choice of *The Arab Apocalypse*, *Master of the Eclipse and Other Stories*, and *There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and of the Other* as the primary texts for analysis is deliberate and stems from their relevance to the thesis topic. These literary works delve into the catastrophes of the end times and their impact on the individual. Analyzing these texts contributes to a deeper understanding of the postmodern apocalyptic experience in literature. The thesis, through its comprehensive examination of these works, aims to fill the existing gap in scholarly understanding by providing nuanced insights into how postmodern apocalyptic narratives can offer both a reflection of contemporary crises and a potential means of navigating and interpreting them through the medium of storytelling.

Given the context provided in the study's background, this research raises specific questions:

-How do Etel Adnan's selected works, including *The Arab Apocalypse*, *Master of the Eclipse and Other Stories*, and *There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and of the Other*, reflect postmodern apocalypticism?

-In what way, do Etel Adnan's selected works deconstruct the traditional apocalyptic narrative to address the anxieties of the postmodern era?

-How does the utilization of historiographic metafiction contribute to the deconstruction of the traditional apocalyptic narrative in the context of postmodernism in Etel Adnan's selected works?

Hypothetically, Etel Adnan's works, including *The Arab Apocalypse*, *Master of the Eclipse and Other Stories*, and *There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and of the Other*, reflect postmodern apocalypticism by subverting traditional apocalyptic narratives. They adapt these narratives to engage with the intricacies of the postmodern era, thereby presenting new perspectives on apocalyptic themes. Etel Adnan's selected works provide a unique platform for deconstructing the established apocalyptic narrative. Adnan challenges and redefines the conventional apocalyptic framework by using postmodern themes and narrative techniques, highlighting its limitations in addressing contemporary concerns. The utilization of historiographic metafiction in Etel Adnan's works contributes significantly to deconstructing the established apocalyptic narrative within the context of postmodernism. This narrative technique allows Adnan to blur the boundaries between history, fiction, and apocalypse, ultimately reshaping new perspectives in understanding apocalyptic concerns.

While a substantial body of literature exists on the postmodern apocalypse from a western perspective, there needs to be more research on the postmodern apocalypse from an eastern viewpoint. To my knowledge, few studies have thoroughly explored the postmodern apocalypse in Etel's literary creations. The latter underscores the need for further research in this particular domain. Researching the apocalyptic narrative, its origins, and its evolution in literature presents a fertile area for academic investigation. This study draws on various sources to build on the argument introduced in the introduction. While these studies may not directly address the selected novels for this thesis, they significantly contribute to the discussion.

Lois Parkinson Zamora's *Writing the Apocalypse: Historical Vision in Contemporary U.S. and Latin American Fiction* is another crucial work that illuminates the historical evolution of the apocalyptic concept, drawing on references from sources such as the Bible, medieval interpretations, and contemporary perspectives. Notably, Zamora argues that postmodern writers adopt the symbolic aspect embodied in the traditional apocalyptic myth. This analysis is pertinent in the case of Etel Adnan's works, as she engages with the apocalyptic tale within a postmodern framework.

Patricia Waugh's "Postmodernism: a Reader" provides a comprehensive understanding of postmodernism theory. Waugh draws on articles and essays by key figures in postmodern theory, including Lyotard, Habermas, Jameson, Baudrillard, Eco, and Rorty.

Lesley Virginia Herring's master's thesis, "The Existential and Postmodern Individual," delves into the philosophical underpinnings of existentialism and postmodernism about individuality. The research likely scrutinizes how these philosophical frameworks mold and impact perceptions of self, being, and human encounters in today's society.

In the article "Apocalypse and Poethical Daring in Etel Adnan's *There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and the Other* by Villa-Ignacio, Teresa analyzes the poems through the lens of Jacques Derrida in his book "The Politics of Friendship". It argues that the form of the poems follows a concept termed "Teleiopoesis", which is a "discursive instantiation of the future in the present" (306). This material aids the understanding of the amalgamation of the apocalypse and post-apocalypse simultaneously in Etel Adnan's text.

The approach that would support the research in fulfilling its objectives is the qualitative approach. It is an adequate approach for the selected topic to have a closer look

and description of the character's experiences within the postmodern atmosphere. Besides, the methods used in conducting this research is analytical and critical methods to transpose and analyze themes and notions in the case study, such as postmodern apocalypse, existential terror, and historiographic metafiction.

This thesis examines Etel Adnan's distinctive contributions to the postmodern literary landscape, focusing on her works delving into apocalypticism, existential crises, and historiographic metafiction.

In chapter one, titled "Approaching Postmodernism and Contextualizing Etel Adnan in Arab-American Literature", the chapter embarks on a comprehensive exploration of various interconnected concepts, including historicity, power/knowledge, historiographic metafiction and existential crisis within the realm of postmodernism. The discussion extends to apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic literature, providing a comprehensive overview of these genres and their evolving significance. The chapter delves into the existential underpinnings of postmodern thought, emphasizing the common ground it shares with existentialism. Finally, the chapter culminates in an overview of Arab-American literature, highlighting Etel Adnan's role in Arab-American writing.

Chapter two entitled "Contemplating the Postmodern Apocalypticism in Etel Adnan's *The Arab Apocalypse*", shifts the focus to Adnan's *The Arab Apocalypse*, offering a comprehensive exploration of postmodern apocalypticism as it manifests in her writing. The study sheds light on the intricate layers of her narrative and their intersection with the postmodern ethos. This chapter demonstrates that Etel Adnan addresses themes such as constant violence and international terror, environmental disasters, the decline of communities, political hegemony, and human subjection to world crises. She also employs narrative strategies, including recycling, open-endedness, and intertextuality. These themes

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and narrative techniques deconstruct the traditional apocalyptic narrative that advocates for order, linearity, harmony, and utopia.

Chapter three, "Postmodern Apocalypticism in Etel Adnan's *There: In the Light and Darkness of the Self and the Other*: An Ongoing Terror and Existential Crisis", scrutinizes the postmodern apocalyptic themes in Adnan's work. This analysis uncovers how Adnan portrays an unrelenting existential crisis amidst apocalyptic circumstances.

Chapter four, entitled "Unveiling Historiographic Metafiction: Exploring Etel Adnan's *Master of the Eclipse*", further enriches the discourse by probing into historiographic metafiction in Adnan's *Master of the Eclipse*, presenting it as a counter-narrative that challenges and transcends the postmodern turmoil. This chapter ultimately unravels the intricate tapestry of Adnan's storytelling, emphasizing the overarching themes of crisis and apocalypse while showcasing her innovative narrative strategies that provide fresh perspectives within the postmodern literary tradition.

The conclusion presents the main findings of the research. Significantly, it demonstrates how *The Arab Apocalypse*, *There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and the Other*, and *Master of the Eclipse and Other Stories*, as postmodern literary texts contribute to the deconstruction of the traditional apocalyptic framework, highlighting its significance. Moreover, the conclusion illuminates the contribution of the study, its limitations, as well as, the perspectives recommended for future research.

Chapter One: Approaching Postmodernism and Contextualizing Etel Adnan in Arab-American Literature

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1.1. Introduction

Various narratives, whether rooted in religion, culture, or science, often explore apocalyptic scenarios. In Christian theology, the concept of the apocalypse is linked to the New Testament's Book of Revelation, detailing the end times, the second coming of Christ, and the final judgment. Interpretations of the symbolic language in Revelation vary. Islamic eschatology encompasses beliefs concerning the end times and the Day of Judgment. Some perceive the potential repercussions of climate change, such as extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and ecological collapse, as a form of apocalyptic scenario. Although not an immediate occurrence, the prolonged effects of unmitigated climate change could profoundly impact life on Earth. Global pandemics, exemplified by the COVID-19 virus, have prompted concerns about human societies' susceptibility to infectious diseases. While not adhering to the traditional notion of apocalypse, pandemics can exert enduring and significant effects on societies.

This chapter attempts basically to bridge the gap between postmodernism and the apocalypse. It is divided into two sections: a theoretical framework of postmodernism and a contextualization of apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction. The first part approaches postmodernism according to many theoreticians among them, Frederic Jameson and Linda Hutcheon. Therefore, critical concepts such as 'power', 'history', and 'knowledge' are explored.

The second part of this chapter explores two notable genres which are related to this study: the apocalyptic and the post-apocalyptic genres. It also illustrates the transition of writers from apocalyptic fiction to post-apocalyptic fiction. Then, it discusses the apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic narrative (prose, poetry) in particular, their significance, their characteristics, as well as their development throughout history.

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The theoretical chapter deals also with an in-depth overview of existentialist philosophy, its foundational principles and the profound impact it has had on contemporary thought. From there, it navigates the intriguing convergence between postmodernism and existentialism, uncovering the shared ground where these philosophical currents intersect. Finally, it delves into the concept of the postmodern apocalypse and its profound implications for the existential crisis that characterizes our modern era. Through this exploration, it aims to illuminate the profound insights and enduring relevance that these philosophical movements offer in our ongoing quest to understand the human condition.

The last part of this chapter aims to position Etel Adnan's writings in postmodern Arab-American women's literature.

1.2. Towards Defining Postmodernism: Totality Upside Down

One of the most contentious concepts in literary theory and criticism is postmodernism. It is a particularly controversial concept due to its relationship to many fields. Postmodernism is an intricate cultural movement that affects many areas of contemporary life (including, but not limited to literature, visual art, philosophy, history, linguistics, economics, architecture, and fiction). According to McDowell, Hostetler and Bellis: "Trying to define and truly understand postmodernism can be a lot like standing in an appliance store trying to watch three or four television shows at once. It defies definition because it is extremely complex, often contradictory, and constantly changing" (12). In effect, the postmodern movement fosters a strong reaction against the ideologies of modernism. Certain critics argue that postmodernism represents a significant break from modernism, which dates back to the end of the 1950s or the early 1960s. This movement was, at first, fundamentally coined as a reference to the development that reacted against the modern architectural movement.

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The development was more widespread within the 1960s, particularly among American social and cultural critics like Susan Sontag and Leslie Fiedler, who considered postmodernism "a new sensibility" (Nicol 1) that either refuted modernism along with its trends and techniques or embraced and extended them (Ibid). This divergence in the utilization of the term made it overloaded with meaning after it was utilized to depict the characteristics of the social and political spheres, in addition to cultural production. Hence, postmodernism demonstrates either acceptance or resistance to modernism and herein lies its controversy. Everything thought to be long-lasting, universal, and, therefore, timeless comes to be investigated and contested in the postmodern period. Thus, postmodern thought "challenges many of the fundamental ideas and presumptions that provide the framework for how we make sense of the world. As a result of questioning the previously held truths, life becomes insecure, unorganized, and disintegrated" (Hutcheon 59).

Hence, many theorists have given a set of definitions to postmodernism, among them Frederic Jameson, who explains the concept as follows:

> Postmodernism is explained as a periodizing concept whose function is to correlate the emergence of new formal features in culture with the emergence of a new type of social life and new economic order what is often called … postindustrial or consumer society, the society, the society of the media, or the spectacle … this new moment of capitalism can be dated from the post-war boom in the late of 1960s and early 1950s. (Foster 113)

Further, the Marxist critic Frederic Jameson also describes postmodernism as schizophrenic. He examines postmodernism with reference to neurotic conditions and relates it to not only "Schizophrenia", but also to "hysteria, nostalgia, paranoia and a waning of affect" (Nicol 09). According to Jameson, works in postmodernism have lost

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their genuineness as they manifest some aesthetic techniques, such as 'pastiche', which result in the loss of the historical context of several works:

> Late capitalism has created a 'perpetual present' where time is dominated by the free-floating rhythms of the new electronic media. The result is that our apprehension of the past and future is seriously weakened. Cultural production and consumption in postmodernity reveal that we are unable to place ourselves in a properly historical context. (10)

According to Jameson, postmodernity started when late capitalism led to several changes in modern culture. On the other hand, Jean Baudrillard argues in, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, that there is a rupture between modernism and Postmodernism.

> The end of labour. The end of production. The end of political economy. The end of the signifier/signified dialectic which facilitates the accumulation of knowledge and meaning. … The end of the linear dimension of the commodity. The end of the classical era of the sign. The end of the era of production. (30)

The precedent economic system, characterized as a mode of production, alters drastically because there is no longer a relationship between the mode of production of owners and laborers. That is to say, in the modern period, private owners used to monopolize the means of production to make financial profits, exploiting the bodies of the workers under what is called the capitalist system. Nevertheless, in the postmodern age, 'the simulacrum' which is "the generation by models of a real without origin or reality" (Baudrillard 1) predominates. Through technology and media, a constructed version of reality influences a new social order where images come before actuality. Baudrillard suggests a significant shift in history where the modern era concludes, giving way to a postmodern era centered on simulating reality, mainly driven by technology and media

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Linda Hutcheon contends that "Postmodernism's relation to modernism is, therefore, typically contradictory... It marks neither a simple and radical break from it nor a straightforward continuity with it: it is both and neither. And this would be the case in aesthetic, philosophical, or ideological terms" (259). She adds in her "Incredulity Toward Metanarrative", that postmodernism "is characterized by no grand totalizing master narrative but by smaller and multiple narratives which do not seek (or obtain) any universalizing stabilization or legitima-tion" (186). Postmodernism does not call for a great, totalizing perspective but rather a variety of perspectives. An instance of contradiction and inconsistency in metanarratives is the misrepresentation of language in relation to reality. As mentioned above, language is represented in structuralism as a binary of signifier and signified, while in postmodernism, it is seen as an endless chain of signifiers without a signified. Indeed, postmodernism "rejects metanarratives in favor of mininarratives that are pro-visional, contingent, and relational and makes no claim to totality, objectivity, universality, and absolute truth" (Ghasemi1).

Ashley Woodward states that "postmodernism as a mode of thought is often accused of being nihilistic, and postmodernity is often seen as a nihilistic state of society" (51). "Postmodernism deconstructs the core beliefs and established frameworks that were previously accepted as the guiding stories elucidating the world for humanity, including spheres like politics, religion, and history. In this context, Jean-François Lyotard describes postmodernism as "incredulity toward metanarratives", and goes on to ask "where, after the metanarratives, can legitimacy reside?" (XXV). Indeed, some critics discard postmodernism because it connotes the dissolution of western values and morals. Anthony Harrigan comments in "Postmodern Nihilism in America" that: "The essence of postmodernism is nihilistic-the denial of any meaning or purpose in existence-or, more exactly, the triumph of nihilism in societies of the western world" (qtd. In Slocombe). The

victory of nihilism in western society is the core of postmodernism. Because it rejects a transcendent ethical system, this phenomenon is synonymous with atheism. Nihilism signals a break from "the moral teachings that have come down to us from Moses and brought to their highest level in Christianity. Nihilism is worse than barbarians of antiquity, at least based their lives on tribal rules (Ibid). Even with ongoing human quests for significance, a growing pessimism towards existence emerges, marking the onset of the postmodern era.

1.3. History, Histories and Historicity

History, histories, and historicity are interconnected aspects of engaging with the past. History involves the organized study and interpretation of past events, providing a comprehensive account of the development of human societies. These accounts, known as histories, can vary between cultures, offering diverse perspectives on shared historical experiences. However, the accuracy and authenticity of these narratives are subject to examination, leading to the concept of historicity. Historicity assesses historical accuracy, especially in areas of contention like ancient texts or religious stories. It requires critically evaluating evidence and sources to distinguish fact from myth. Postmodernism's rejection of overarching narratives and its insistence on challenging any assertions of universal, singular, and eternal truths leads to the understanding that history is a key metanarrative that is both utilized and disputed by postmodernism:

> As academic discipline, history has traditionally claimed the right to account for the past, to impose order on past events and neatly change them into unquestionable and all explaining historical "facts". These "fossilizing" tendencies are, however, exactly what the postmodern philosophy and art challenge, and the reasons why history has become a rather problematic issue. (Valentová 6)

Together, these concepts shape our comprehension of the past, allowing us to construct a more accurate and insightful portrayal of human history.

1.3.1. History vs. Historicity

History is what happened in the past and how it relates to one individual or issue. It is "the narration of the events which have happened among mankind, including an account of the rise and fall of nations, as well as of other great changes which have affected the political and social condition of the human race" (Anderson 3). Indeed, history can refer to a wide range of subjects, from the evolution of society to the steps taken to establish a specific location, type of organization or civilization. History also tells us why something exists, how it has changed over time, and what factors contributed to its final form. On the other hand, historicity refers to the historical reality, credibility, and accuracy of information claims about historic events. As a distinct field of study, "Historicity has emerged within anthropology to refer to cultural perceptions of the past … The concept is in essential tension with the term's meaning as 'factuality' within the discipline of history and in wider society" (Charles 1). Thus, historicity is fundamentally at odds with its sense as an attribute of being real or fact-based. Because the study of historicity in anthropology has a distinct goal: to learn how non-westerners, as well as those living in the west, interpret and portray history, it permits voiceless records to move from the periphery to the centre. Thus, it is noticeable that "Anthropologists also sometimes compose histories within this western paradigm, but historicity in anthropology orientates a different objective, namely to discover the ways (beyond Western historicism) in which people, whether within or outside the west, construe and represent the past" (Ibid).

1.4. History, Fiction and Postmodernism

The technique of researching the past has been revolutionized by the advent of the internet and digital information. No longer is it necessary to meticulously search dusty archives for long-lost documents that may shed light on previously unknown facets of a community's past. Google, for instance, has expanded scholars' availability to a wide range of references. As Hayden White reflects on the difficulties historians and researchers confront when trying to make sense of the massive amounts of material available to them in his "Historical Fiction, Fictional History, and Historical Reality":

> It is no longer a matter of searching in obscure archives for the one new document that will authorize the admission of at least one hitherto unknown "fact" to the normative narrative account of a community's history. Anyone opening up any topic on "Google" will find an intimidatingly long list of sources, secondary and primary, that could take a lifetime to examine, much less analyse or interpret. (151)

History is dynamic and ever-evolving, taking on different forms and meanings depending on the period and perspective from which it is observed. Postmodernists contend that the world and society can never remain static. History, therefore, is not static; it evolves and varies according to the period and context in which it is studied and interpreted. That is to say, in "metanarrative terms, postmodernism presents not with one ultimate History, but with plural, varying and sometimes even contradictory histories" (Valentová 7-8). Subsequently, history is challenged by postmodern fiction, which questions the connection between the past and the present, as well as between the world and language.

Thus, the past is recast as the result of imaginative thought. History, it is said, does not exist apart from texts, and scholars have begun to examine the textuality of history: History is not made obsolete: it is, however, being rethought—as a human construct. And in

arguing that history does not exist except as text, it does not stupidly and "gleefully" deny that the past existed, but only that its accessibility to us now is entirely conditioned by textuality (Hutcheon 1992). Hence, history's textuality refers to the method by which each historian interprets historical events through the lens of his unique perspective. Textuality became part of the study of history as "We cannot know the past except through its texts: its documents, its evidence, even its eye-witness accounts are texts. Even the institutions of the past, its social structures and practices, could be seen, in one sense, as social texts" (Hutcheon 16).

In addition, the importance of fiction in narrating past events and spreading cultural norms cannot be overstated. The degree to which novelists comprehend and make use of historical context can play an equally important part in the way the novel is structured. Thus, there is a notable link between history and fiction as "they have always been notoriously porous genres, of course. At various times both have included in their elastic boundaries such forms as the travel tale and various versions of what we now call sociology" (qtd. in Hutcheon 106).

1.4.1. Historiographic Metafiction: the Narration of the Past

Literature and history all share a common goal which is to explain reality to educate and develop the mind. At the very least at the turn of the nineteenth century, literature and history were viewed as interconnected facets of knowledge, akin to branches stemming from a common tree of learning that aimed to "interpret experience, for the purpose of guiding and elevating man" (Nye 123).

The origins of both the realist novel and narrative history can be dated to the 1800s. These categories share a mutual aspiration to carefully choose, build, and depict a self-contained and self-sustaining narrative realm that aims to reflect reality, yet distinct from

the evolving human experience and historical progression (Halloway 63). The classic

historical novel had to evolve along with our shifting understanding of metanarratives and

history in particular. The classic historical fiction genre had to evolve naturally so that new

ways of thinking and new concerns could be addressed. There is a reliable new resource

for classifying works of postmodern history fiction that use postmodern themes and

techniques. The rules of plausibility and probability did not seem to apply in writing

history. However, numerous historians have used fictional depiction techniques since then

to give contrasting interpretations of the past (Holloway 64).

The urge to challenge the credibility of history is contemporary in both history and

fiction. The external world has no bearing on the veracity of art. Art fabricates its own

world, one where honesty and aesthetic perfection coexist. A different past became a

reality. It is a quest for the best, most comprehensive, and most profound external truths in

the strongest possible correspondence with the absolute reality of previous occurrences.

Subsequently, a division emerged that led to the formation of separate fields of literary

and historical studies as they exist today. This occurred despite the parallelism between

realist novels and Rankean historicism, both of which held comparable convictions

regarding the potential to accurately depict factual aspects of observable reality through

writing (White 25). Nevertheless, the distinct segregation of literature and history is

presently facing scrutiny within postmodern theory and art. Contemporary analyses of both

history and fiction have shifted their attention towards highlighting the commonalities

between these two modes of writing, rather than solely emphasizing their disparities.

Both have often been recognized for drawing their impact primarily from plausibility

rather than objective reality. They are both characterized as linguistic creations,

extensively formalized in their narrative structures, and not openly transparent in terms of

language or composition. Similarly, they exhibit comparable intertextual attributes, incorporating past texts into their intricate textual fabric. These attributes also align with the underlying principles of historiographic metafiction. Like contemporary theories encompassing history and fiction, this genre of novel prompts us to remember that history and fiction are themselves historical terms and that their definitions and interrelations are historically determined and vary with time (Seamon 212–16).

In historiographic metafiction works, the absence of harmony undermines the very potential of historical understanding. These narratives establish a distinct boundary between their self-representation in terms of structure and their contextual historical backdrop, casting doubt on the feasibility of historical knowledge. In so doing, historiographic metafiction "problematizes the very possibility of historical knowledge, because there is no reconciliation, no dialectic here—just unresolved contradiction" (106).

The complexities of the postmodern paradoxes presented in this context are noteworthy: "The interaction of the historiographic and the metafictional foregrounds the rejection of the claims of both "authentic" representation and "inauthentic" copy alike, and the very meaning of artistic originality is as forcefully challenged as is the transparency of historical referentiality" (77).

Rewriting or re-presenting the past in literature and history, according to postmodern fiction, is to make it accessible to the present. That is to say, "postmodern fiction suggests that to re-write or to re-present the past in fiction and in history is, in both cases, to open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological" (Hutcheon 209). The term 'historiographic metafiction' was initially coined by Linda Hutcheon in her 1987 essay titled "Beginning to Theorize the Postmodern". This expression was introduced to serve as a means of defining... "those widely read novels that paradoxically also lay claim

to historical events and persons through their own introspective and reflective narratives"(qtd.in Dinkler 3) .

Hutcheon argues that literary creations falling within the realm of historiographic metafiction, as seen in novels like E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* (1975) or William Kennedy's *Legs* (1975), showcase "a theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (historiographic metafiction) [that] is made the grounds for [a] rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past" (*A Poetics of Postmodernism* 1988).

Historiographic metafiction, akin to the genre of non-fictional novels, also incorporates intertextual references to both historical and literary sources. Barth uses the poem Ebenezer Cooke's *The Sot-Weed Factor* and the raw historical information from the archives of Maryland to both deconstruct and rewrite the history of Maryland (*A Poetics of Postmodernism* 132). In his work, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* Michel Foucault challenges the conventional historian's inclination to interpret historical records as linear tales of development:

> For many years now historians have preferred to turn their attention to long periods, as if, beneath the shifts and changes of political events, they were trying to reveal the stable, almost indestructible system of checks and balances, the irreversible processes, the constant readjustments, the underlying tendencies that gather force, and are then suddenly reversed after centuries of continuity, the movements of accumulation and slow saturation, the great silent, motionless bases that traditional history has covered with a thick layer of events. (3)

Foucault contends that, rather than focusing on broad "periods" or "centuries", scholars should instead reconstruct "phenomena of rupture, of discontinuity" (4). According to his argument, the issue at hand is that "is no longer one of tradition, of tracing a line, but one

of division, of limits" (5). Foucault asserts that we should show how each historical era exposes its unique characteristics instead of presenting a unified picture of that era:

> several pasts, several forms of connexion, several hierarchies of importance, several networks of determination, several teleologies, for one and the same science, as its present undergoes change: thus historical descriptions are necessarily ordered by the present state of knowledge, they increase with every transformation and never cease, in turn, to break with themselves" (Ibid).

1.4.2. History and Narratives

According to Frederic Jameson, the portrayal of history is always a matter of narrative and the efficiency with which history is represented. In *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, he states that:

> The problem of representation, and most particularly of the representation of history: as has already been suggested, this is essentially a narrative problem, a question of the adequacy of any storytelling framework in which history might be represented. (49)

Conversely, Hayden White acknowledges history's presence, but urges us to reassess and reinterpret it, aiming to "deconstruct" rather than outright "destroy" it. As White comments in "Literary Theory and Historical Writing,": "The comprehension of history is only possible once it has been documented in writing" (2).

Alun Munslow, in "Narrative Works in History", argues that "history is thus not a discovery—much less a revelation in the archive- of the story of the past, but is the historian's narrative about the past" (109). Munslow's endeavour lies in clarifying that history unfolds through narratives, specifically the narratives crafted by historians

concerning the past. Munslow identifies that both 'histories' and 'philosophies of history' are not solely amalgamations of data and theoretical constructs aiming to explain the past's significance and character, but indeed represent a narrative (symbolic) portrayal of past "series of events". Consequently, historians employ narratives to recount history and present events as established facts, culminating in history's narration via narratives. Nonetheless, narratives play a crucial role in recounting past occurrences, thus, a well-crafted historical narrative possesses the potential to authentically convey the past as reality, a portrayal that is generally accepted by people.

Similarly, White observes that "the events that took place in a previous era are without doubt, supported by abundant factual evidence that verifies their occurrence" (148). In contrast to metaphysical historians, White makes it clear here that he does not aim to deny the actuality of historical events. However, he is hesitant to share the position of professional historians who see history as a whole, genuine, purpose-driven, uncontested, absolute, and single thing (Ghasmi 6).

What White fears achieving and confirms in "The Burden of History" is the restoration of respect for historical studies, based on a basis that links them with the wider purposes and intents of the intellectual community. In essence, his plan is to reorganize the study of history so that historians might take an active role in releasing the present from the bonds of the past. From what we can gather from this line, White's goal is not to eradicate history but to place it in a new perspective. The process of presenting a new interpretation of historical events, or "re-contextualization", may help readers gain new insights into the past and alter their understanding of familiar events. Therefore, postmodernism does neither deny history's existence nor dilute its significance (Ghasmi 7).

History is not just narrated; it is also woven into stories. Interpretation in the human and social sciences differs from simple representation or explanation in other disciplines, as Hayden White's "Rhetoric of Interpretation" demonstrates. Moreover, it is possible to argue that the stories we tell about the past are the creations of influential people whose power and influence allowed them to shape how events were understood and presented to the public.

1.5. Exploring Knowledge /Power Nexus

'Power as knowledge' is a central idea in Michel Foucault's work. Typically, we divide the two ideas of power and knowledge: "one political and one epistemological or perhaps pedagogical having to do with teaching and education" (Fruhling). Foucault, however, argues that it is useless to talk about knowledge or power in isolation from one another. Therefore, he merges the two concepts into one and calls it 'Knowledge/Power'.

Foucault argues that knowledge can only be attained and flourish in a system of power dynamics that enables and promotes learning. Certain requirements must be satisfied for claims to be considered true within a particular context and for knowledge generation to take place. Funded academic institutions, for-profit businesses, and governments all contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge, but they also have their own unique power dynamics, economic structures, and social hierarchies. (Ibid)

Power produces knowledge, or at least the apparatuses of knowledge, and knowledge becomes power; the two are bound (Clark 104). The expansion of knowledge is intricately tied to the presence of authority. Knowledge and authority are inherently interconnected. The impact of individuals in positions of influence can be observed across all aspects of a community. Nevertheless, it is crucial to highlight that Foucault contends that authority is consistently met with opposition.

A relationship between power and knowledge can be observed. Power dynamics are present throughout different tiers of society, even within individuals and the relationships they form. Knowledge and power are intertwined, and it is unrealistic to imagine a future where knowledge can be dissociated from power (Foucault 52). Foucault claims that the west's hegemony in the scientific community is the product of an oppressive group's attempts to supplant all others. The arsenal of power includes the ability to raise certain discourse to the level of knowledge, which in turn lends credibility to that discourse.

1.5.1. The Role of Knowledge /Power in Shaping History

As previously explained, Michel Foucault recognizes the pivotal influence of power in both the formation of knowledge and the molding of societal convictions. The power-knowledge dynamic also extends to the realm of history. The composition of history is steered by individuals wielding authority and influence. History serves as a significant domain exploited by those in power (Foucault 41). Given that history is conveyed through narratives and the powerful hold the key to knowledge, historical accounts tend to be presented from their standpoint. The intention behind the authoritative narrative of history is to sustain dominion over people's perceptions and understanding.

Foucault contends that power lacks centralization and is not wielded solely through isolated acts of control or suppression. Instead, it permeates and spreads extensively. From his viewpoint, power is omnipresent and originates from diverse sources. This perspective suggests that power does not conform to the traits of an organized entity or a fixed framework. (Foucault 63). Rather, it takes the form of a meta-power or overarching system of truth that permeates society and is continually subject to negotiation. When Foucault discusses the interplay of power and knowledge, he refers to the establishment of control through the propagation of widely accepted facts and theories.

Truth represents a tangible actuality, requiring diverse limitations for its construction. This process leads to the ongoing influences of power. The types of conversations endorsed and operationalized as truth within a particular community formulate its "general politics of truth," or its prevailing truth framework. These include the methods and occasions facilitating the distinction between accurate and erroneous statements, the mechanisms for validation; the acquisition and establishment of truth, and the authority vested in those responsible for these judgments (Foucault 91).

Foucault believes that discourses are not ultimately lowered to the level of power or exalted above it ... We need to account for the nuanced and fluid process by which a language can function as a tool and an effect of power while also serving as a barrier, a stumbling block, and a springboard for an opposing approach:

> Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it … We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby a discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart. (Foucault 100-1)

1.6. Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Fiction

Differentiating between 'the apocalypse' and 'the post-apocalypse' is essential for laying the theoretical groundwork for this inquiry. According to Hyong –Jun Moon's "The Post-Apocalyptic Turn: A Study of Contemporary Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Narrative": apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fictions are subgenres of science fiction that deal with themes like the breakdown of societies, economic collapse, environmental

disasters, and the end of civilizations. Therefore, the apocalypse is often understood to be the destruction and end of human civilization (1).

1.6.1. Conceptualizing the Apocalypse (Definition and Characteristics)

Throughout ancient history, the narrative of an apocalypse has been regarded as an enduring legend, capturing the interest and sparking the imagination of civilizations like the Egyptians, Mesopotamians, and Greeks. The reason behind this attraction is that "the apocalyptic temper is an attempt by a culture that is genuinely puzzled and deeply disturbed to understand itself and its own time … an order that points humanity toward nothing less than the finale of its history" (Dewey 10). Therefore, the apocalyptic worldview, hypothesizing the terminus of the world's crisis, comforts the exhausted humanity that wishes nothing, but to put an end to the constant global turmoil. In "Interpreting the Apocalyptic Literature," Richard Taylor shows that during the initial half of the nineteenth century, the broader realm of apocalyptic literature gained prominence, particularly due to the research of the German scholar Frederick Luck, who focused on the book of Revelation. Initially, it denoted God's revelation to St. John of Patmos, depicting the ongoing conflict between good and evil forces, ultimately leading to God's ultimate judgment on humanity. (3).

The concept of the apocalypse, in effect, has also been incarnated in the field of literature. In his book *Interpreting the Apocalyptic Literature*, Richard Taylor demonstrates that in the first half of the nineteenth century, the broader field of apocalyptic literature came to the foreground in the light of the book of Revelation thanks to the investigation of the German scholar Frederick Luck. Thus, this term was not only manifested in theology, but also in literature, where it referred to:

a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is

mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent

reality that is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and

spatial, insofar as it evolves another, supernatural world. An apocalypse is intended

to interpret present, earthly circumstances in the light of the supernatural world and

of the future and to influence both the understanding and the behavior of the

audience by means of divine authority. (33)

In other words, apocalyptic literature reveals prophecies disclosed by supernatural

messengers, such as angels or heavenly creatures, to a human prophet. Through

interpreting social turmoil within the divine context, apocalyptic literature makes its

audience aware

1.6.2. Characteristics of Apocalyptic Literature

Every apocalyptic text presents itself as the revelation of hitherto unknown or secret

information. The prophetic model is often used in apocalyptic literature to foretell future

events. Such writing is characterized by its use of coded and metaphorical language.

The theological perspective presented in apocalyptic literature leans towards a strong

sense of determinism, moderately influenced by Calvinistic beliefs that emphasize the

unchallengeable sovereignty of God. This viewpoint stands far apart from extreme

Armenians, which hold that human choices and willpower determine the future. Despite

the apparent prevalence of evil, the literature underscores the notion that God remains in

ultimate control (Choi 82).

Given the current state of affairs, apocalyptic literature tends to foretell the end of the

world. It does not say the universe will blow up, but it does say that evil and suffering will

be eliminated and God's dominion over Earth will become manifest. It is possible that the

material universe (which includes both Earth and the heavens) will be refined without its destruction in the first place, or that it will be subjected to a process of change and rebirth (Britannica). The goal, regardless of the approach, is the same: purification and revitalization.

In apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction, the global socio-economic structures are portrayed as undergoing gradual deterioration or complete collapse. These fictional narratives depict apocalyptic events that can be triggered by various factors, which are not limited to: shifts in climate like uncontrollable climate change, celestial incidents, such as space borne impacts, catastrophic occurrences like nuclear devastation or resource depletion, medical emergencies, including pandemics caused by either natural factors or human actions, and scenarios related to the world's end, like the William Butler's *The Second Coming*.

These stories might center on attempts to prevent an apocalypse, address the aftermath and consequences of the event, or unfold in the aftermath itself. The timeline can immediately follow the catastrophe, exploring the psychological state of survivors, strategies to preserve human unity, or a far later era where the pre-catastrophe civilization has become legendary. Narratives set in a post-apocalyptic context often occur in a future lacking advanced technology, with remnants of society and technology being scarce or fragmented (Britannica).

One instance of ancient apocalyptic literature and mythology is the Epic of Gilgamesh, composed between 2000 and 1500 B.C.E., which dealt with the end of the world and human society. While there were earlier examples, Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826) is recognized as an initial modern representation of the apocalyptic fiction genre. However,

the genre gained substantial popularity after World War II, when the threat of nuclear annihilation became a prominent concern in public consciousness.

1.6.3. Themes in Apocalyptic Literature

The concept of an apocalypse can encompass a range of elements: environmental factors, such as uncontrollable shifts in climate; natural occurrences, like a substantial impact event; human-caused incidents, such as a nuclear catastrophe; health-related aspects, involving plagues or viruses, whether emerging naturally or as a consequence of human activities; or even imaginative scenarios, as evident in situations like a zombie epidemic or an extra-terrestrial invasion (Singal). The storyline may revolve around attempts to prevent an impending apocalypse, tackle the aftermath and consequences of the event itself, or take place within a post-apocalyptic backdrop, unfolding after the occurrence of the event.

This temporal arrangement might cover the immediate aftermath of the calamity, delving into the difficulties and emotional hurdles confronted by those who survive, tactics to protect humanity and maintain harmony, or stretch into the distant future, frequently probing the idea that the civilization existing before the catastrophe has vanished from recollection or acquired mythic proportions (Ibid). Narratives set against a post-apocalyptic backdrop often unfold in a realm lacking sophisticated technology or one where fragments of society and technological progress are dispersed and diminished.

Given the current state of affairs, many works of apocalyptic fiction foretell the end of the world. There will be no universal destruction, but evil and suffering will end, and God's dominion over Earth will become manifest (Ibid). The physical universe (including Earth and the cosmos) may be subject to refining without initial obliteration or progressive

alteration and rebirth. The goal of purification and revitalization is the same regardless of the method used.

1.6.4. From Apocalyptic Fiction towards Post-Apocalyptic Fiction

Following the conclusion of World War II, the genre of post-apocalyptic novels experienced a surge in popularity and growth. This trend was particularly accentuated after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The shock and enormity of these events prompted individuals to contemplate the aftermath of such catastrophic occurrences. As a result, there was a significant shift in focus from envisioning the apocalypse itself to exploring the world that emerged after it. Authors began to imagine the trajectory of humanity following an apocalypse, leading to a transition from apocalyptic to post-apocalyptic fiction. The development of the atomic bomb introduced the unsettling notion that everything could vanish instantly (Buell 10).

Readers of post-apocalyptic fiction became captivated by the prospects of existence beyond the cataclysmic event, intrigued by what lies after the conclusion as the apocalypse transformed into a recurrent theme.

In his book *After the End: Representations of Post-Apocalypse*, James Berger contends that post-apocalyptic fiction embodies a paradoxical nature in which the end both occurs and does not occur simultaneously (XII). Across much post-apocalyptic fiction, the setting portrays the remnants of a previous world shattered by a sudden catastrophe, wherein individuals, groups, or societies struggle to survive. From a logical standpoint, since the world has been devastated, the immediate goal primarily revolves around fulfilling necessities like food, water, and air. Additionally, it involves surviving within a hostile environment, persisting against ongoing threats, and confronting the eerie and unfamiliar.

Consequently, post-apocalyptic fiction grapples not only with physical challenges but also psychological ones.

Tales set in the aftermath of an apocalypse have been present since the apocalypse concept emerged. Throughout history, when human fears of world-ending events have coexisted with hopes for a potential rebirth from ruins, narratives have arisen that distinctly revolve around humanity. This prompts several questions concerning human qualities that distinguish them from other creatures; specific attributes establish human dominance on Earth, interactions would evolve when humans engage with beings possessing equal or greater intelligence, and the question of justifying human survival after a catastrophe emerges; these stories and novels delve into the core of human existence, exploring the definition of humanity itself and investigating the aspects worth preserving.

The earliest instances of apocalyptic literature trace back to religious texts, where the idea prevails that the world was brought into being by a supreme entity and could potentially face destruction at the hands of the same higher authority, driven by diverse motivations. An illustrative example is the tale of Noah and his ark, famously recounted in the Judeo-Christian Bible, which frequently explores the apocalypse theme. In their exploration of apocalypse within the context of America Magazine, Nantais and Simone underscore the distinctive approach of the Book of Revelation in addressing this concept.

Although initially revered within the early church as a work attributed to the Apostle John, the Book of Revelation stands out from other texts within Christian Scriptures in various ways. While the imagery within the text shares certain similarities with pre-Christian apocalyptic literature, its usage in revelation often takes on innovative forms. This biblical component portrays the apocalypse using terms that align with contemporary conceptions of such an event, including the depiction of the four horsemen and the division

between those ascending to heaven and those witnessing Earth's destruction. When the anticipated moment arrives, faithful adherents will find salvation, while the condemned will not.

According to James Lovegrove's essay "The World of the End of the World," apocalyptic prophecies transcend cultural and religious boundaries, defying limitations. Each major religion possesses its tradition of apocalypse. In Judeo-Christianity, there are prophesied "end times," a severe tribulation culminating in a final conflict between good and evil, known as Armageddon. Islam features Yawm al-Qiyamah, detailed in the Qur'an, as a last judgment where both Muslims and non-Muslims will be held accountable before God for their actions. Hindu scripture speaks of the Kali Yuga, an "age of vice," believed to be the final stage of a recurring cycle of decay and renewal. The Norse tradition includes Ragnarök, the "final destiny of the gods," where three years of Fimbulwinter lead to the Earth's destruction and subsequent rebirth. Beyond this, the Babylonians had their flood myth, a precursor to Noah's flood in the Bible, where rising waters were viewed as divine punishment, resulting in the downfall of a corrupt civilization.

1.6.5. The Significance of Post-Apocalyptic Fiction

Most post-apocalyptic authors strive to critique the "grim state of current political affairs" (Hunter 10). As a result, a significant portion of post-apocalyptic literature takes on a dystopian nature, serving as a platform for writers to voice their disagreement with the prevailing political system. In fact, many writers within this genre employ it as a means to not only express their dissent but also to convey a profound sense of despair regarding the current state of affairs and its oppressive influence on societies. For certain scholars, post-apocalyptic fiction is seen as a medium primarily focused on revealing the implications of

the apocalyptic event itself rather than solely exploring the aftermath that ensues (Mishina 8).

Post-apocalyptic fiction seeks to deliberate on and present potential scenarios that humanity could encounter should the world transform and necessitate survival efforts. This subgenre thereby encourages individuals to reflect on the ramifications of their actions and consider strategies for enduring adverse circumstances. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that human actions hold the potential to engender such a world, particularly through the misuse of technology and scientific advancements, which could lead to the planet's ruin. The transformative destruction that humans could bring upon their environment extends beyond ecological repercussions to encompass social, political, and economic upheavals. This subgenre anticipates the outcomes of human avarice and irrationality, exemplified by instances where science was harnessed for the development of weapons capable of mass destruction. In essence, post-apocalyptic fiction functions as a cautionary platform, alerting humans to the potential consequences that may follow the destruction of their world.

1.7. Exploring The Post-Apocalyptic Novel

In contrast to apocalyptic fiction, post-apocalyptic literature has experienced a recent surge in popularity. The post-apocalyptic novel encompasses the defining traits of this genre. Typically, these novels commence by detailing the circumstances that led to the downfall of the characters' world, occasionally delving into how they managed to survive. As Softing aptly notes, the demise of nature results in the decline of language, societal structure, and ethics (Ibid), a theme frequently explored within post-apocalyptic novels.

These novels spotlight the aftermath of human concerns, such as the strategies for survival and the establishment of a new world and societal order in the wake of utter

devastation. Within the narrative of post-apocalyptic fiction, the focus revolves around how individuals navigate the transformation of their identities within the new reality. This is epitomized by the notion that "the ethical dilemma of preserving one's humanity or doing what is necessary to survive is a key narrative element within the genre as it serves to engage the audience" (Dehaene 11).

The pioneering work in post-apocalyptic literature is Mary Shelley's 1826 creation, "The Last Man". It weaves a tale of European nobility entwined in a love story, abruptly disrupted by the onslaught of a plague. Gradually, the contagion engulfs individuals, driving them to madness. Consequently, some flee the afflicted village, while others exploit the chaos to seize power. Yet, the protagonist of the novel clings to a steadfast belief in the potential of humanity.

Another notable post-apocalyptic novel is Richard Jefferies's 1885 publication, "After London". This work illuminates the relentless struggle between nature and humanity. "After London" recounts England's plight in the aftermath of enigmatic catastrophes that brought about the collapse of global civilization, culture, and technology.

1.7.1. Evolution of the Post-Apocalyptic Novel

The origins of the post-apocalyptic genre stretch back thousands of years to religious texts, notably including "clay tablets, ancient literature featuring diluvia myths, early Roman works, and the Bible's Book of Revelation" (Foroozeshina 3). The term "apocalypse" references a return to the Bible's Book of Revelation, signifying a cataclysmic event where a deity causes devastation, with the virtuous individuals surviving to continue their lives in the subsequent 'post-apocalyptic' world.

Following the advent of the Industrial Revolution in 1760, post-apocalyptic writers exhibited an increased fascination with machines and technology. Their works

incorporated scientific elements and their impact on human fate. Many of their writings prophesied the destruction of the existing human order, paving the way for a more prosperous life in a new world. Science became a more integral part of the post-apocalyptic novel, viewed as a positive or negative force for human survival. This genre was subsumed under the broader category of science fiction, marked by scientific and technological elements interwoven within it.

During the Victorian Age, the genre faced limitations due to the era's unsuitability for scientific and technological fiction. Nevertheless, this did not hinder Richard Jefferies from producing a noteworthy scientific post-apocalyptic novel titled "After London" in 1885. Through this work, Jefferies conveyed his political and social viewpoints. Although Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* is often considered the "grandparent" of British disaster stories, it can be more directly linked to Jeffery's "After London" (Stableford cited in Foroozeshina 59). This narrative portrays the depopulation of England after an unspecified catastrophe transforms the land into "a wild nature", as depicted in the initial part of the novel referred to as "The Relapse into Barbarism". In this phase, London transforms into a toxic swamp, southern England becomes a vast lake, and roads are overgrown with vegetation. The novel revolves around England's collapse due to natural forces, depicting the survivors' lives descending to a less advanced level than the medieval era. This novel played a pivotal role in establishing a mode of writing that later evolved into survival-focused post-apocalyptic narratives, which influenced authors like J.G. Ballard, whose work "The Drowned World" was published in 1962.

Although writers like Shelley, Lord Byron, and a few others in the 19th century explored themes of the world's end, it was only after World War II, and particularly the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima in 1945, that people realized humans

themselves could bring about the world's destruction. As a result, the post-apocalyptic novel underwent a significant transformation after World War II, with 20th-century authors focusing more on the destruction of civilization caused by humans and the subsequent challenges of survival in a post-apocalyptic world.

In the 21st century, the novel of this genre encompassed a broad range of themes from its inception, incorporating elements of religion, society, politics, and technology. The setting typically involves the aftermath of an event, with the inhabitants of the newly-formed world encompassing both humans and sometimes a mixture of different species. Writers within this genre consistently aim to offer plausible speculations about the future, whether near or distant and explore the challenges that humanity might confront.

1.7.2. Characteristics of the Post-Apocalyptic Novel

The post-apocalyptic novel is characterized by several significant elements, with fear being a central component and a primary driving force for the existence of this genre (Foroozeshina 65). Within post-apocalyptic novels, it is evident that characters often live in a state of fear—fear of authority, fear of scarcity, fear of a renewed world destruction. This fear originates from both the writers themselves and the readers, both apprehensive about the repercussions of an apocalypse. The writer's trepidations are reflected in their narratives, particularly through the protagonists who might hesitate to challenge ruling powers, driven by concerns about societal critique, economic downturns, and any factors that could compromise their moral integrity.

As the term suggests, the post-apocalyptic novel unfolds in a world that has already experienced a catastrophic collapse. "The typical post-apocalyptic story takes place in a world or civilization after some kind of apocalyptic disaster has happened" (Dehaene 8). Thus, post-apocalyptic fiction generally situates its story in the immediate aftermath of the

disaster, although some writers focus on the newly established world instead. The narrative's setting is a defining feature of the post-apocalyptic genre, distinguishing it from other literary forms.

Furthermore, characters within these novels are confronted with the challenge of surviving without modern technology or with limited access to it (Broderick 16). The post-apocalyptic novel paints a picture of life after the catastrophe—a life often characterized by underdevelopment and the need for individuals to adapt. These characters navigate obstacles such as poverty, hunger, oppression, and resource scarcity. Certain narratives portray dehumanizing systems that strip people of their humanity and subject them to ruthless control.

1.7.3. Postmodernism, Nihilism and Post-Apocalyptic Vision

During the Second World War, the use of the atomic bomb, ironically the zenith of human genius, resulted in the murder of millions of lives, shaping a world of terror, apprehension and devastation. Hence, this horrific immoral event gave humanity a solid ground to doubt the authenticity of the divine powers supposed to protect humankind. It also invited them to question the universal values assumed to grant significance to their existence.

Paul Roubiczek explains, in his book *Existentialism For and Against* that the philosophical stream expresses a similar anxiety towards the future of human beings in the aftermath of the hematic annihilation of the wars. Mainly, theorists like Nietzsche, Sartre, and Kierkegaard assume that the assumption about God is no longer valid in modern European society. Roubiczek refers to Nietzsche, who claims that "Christianity had concentrated attention so entirely on God-man that God is dead" (31). As for Sartre, he affirms that God does not exist; therefore "man is his own master" (121-122). Similarly,

Kierkegaard believes that "faith is not an easy consolation but "fear and trembling" (56). In short, all these views concur that western society eventually becomes 'nihilistic', as it is generally termed by the existential philosophers. Friedrich Nietzsche comments in the preface to his book *The Will to Power*, which was first published in 1901:

> What I relate is the history of the next two centuries. I describe what is coming, what can no longer come differently: the advent of nihilism . . . For some time now, our whole European culture has been moving as toward a catastrophe, with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade: restlessly, violently, headlong, like a river that wants to reach the end, that no longer reflects, that is afraid to reflect.

Although Nietzsche's futuristic prophecy captures skillfully the retrogradation of western society, it remains debatable. These days, many individuals celebrates nihilism assuming that having no pillars that establish order grants the freedom of the human being and not its decadence.

Despite the continuous human endeavors to search for meaning, the attitude towards existence shifts to become more pessimistic signaling the beginning of the postmodern age. Woodward states in "Nihihlism and the Postmodern in Vattimo's Nietzsche" that "postmodernism as a mode of thought is often accused of being nihilistic, and postmodernity is often seen as a nihilistic state of society" (51). Actually, postmodernism dismantles the fundamental conceptions that once have been taken for granted as the narratives that explain the world to human beings such as politics, religion and history. In this context, Jean-François Lyotard describes postmodernism as "incredulity toward metanarratives", and goes on to ask "Where, after the metanarratives, can legitimacy reside?" (*The Postmodern* XXV).

Indeed, some critics discard postmodernism because it connotes the dissolution of the western values and morals. Anthony Harrigan comments in "Post-Modern Nihilism in America" that "the essence of post-modernism is nihilism-the denial of any meaning or purpose in existence-or, more exactly, the triumph of nihilism in societies of the Western world. It is a phenomenon identical with atheism as it denies the existence of any permanent ethical order" (qtd. In Slocombe 88). Marxists also contend that the postmodern capitalist society continues to decline because "it violates all defensible conceptions of a rational moral order" (Macintyre 4). In addition, Feminists also lament postmodernism because "it is simply another crisis in masculine being a knowing, a clash of the Titans" (Brodribb 136). All of these critics agree that postmodernism destroys the pillars that grant order to the western society.

Chaotic status in post - World War II led shakes credence in metanarratives and cultural as well as religious beliefs of many. This unprecedented movement called postmodernism fosters a strong reaction against the ideologies of modernism.

Nonetheless, in the postmodern epoch, the conventions of the traditional apocalyptic narrative have been shaken. In this context, Josef Broeck advances the claim, in his review "The Apocalyptic Imagination in America; Recent Criticism", that "the apocalyptic genre in the 1980's emancipated itself from its historical and biblical roots, so, there is no common agreement on the form, content, or function of apocalyptic thinking or writing'' (94). In effect, the hopeful apocalyptic version, entailing God's salvation, shifts to become pessimistic and distant from its theological context, assuming human extinction and punishment. In this sense, Frank Kermode in his book *the Sense of an Ending* states that " For the time being, the apocalyptic, certainly in Western literature, and the Gospel is not being written … popular fundamentalist apocalypticism thrives, but the educated … have

given it up. Deconstructors write no gospels" (102-3). Therefore, from this platform, the postmodern writers deconstruct the traditional apocalyptic narrative claiming the fallacy of God's salvation and asserting the inevitability of a gloomy end scenario.

The meaning of the term apocalypse shifts drastically from the denoting of a divine narrative about punishment and reward to a term referring to conclusive terror or devastation. John May argues in, *Toward a New Earth*, that the loss of hope in God under the pressure of the increasing worldly terror, such as the atomic bomb, the Gulf war, and the collapse of America's twin towers led to the emergence of a new apocalyptic paradigm that demolishes the earliest optimistic traditional apocalyptic framework and mirrors the current global violence and its effect on human beings (215).

In particular embodiments, the post-apocalyptic genre portrays tragically the world annihilation's aftermaths that engage artistically both readers and participants to visualize the future ending. Not similar to the apocalyptic genre in literary narratives and film which traditionally entails an ending followed with a fresh outset, the post-apocalyptic genre questions and debates the metanarrative of after the end and prophecies in different versions what happen after the end.

An example of an artist responding positively to existential nihilism is the American novelist and writer Paul Auster. Within his writing, Auster addresses the concept of nihilism within the postmodern perspective. Jeremy Green points out that: The fiction of late postmodernism embraces ²with a measure of anxiety, with a modicum of hope² cultural and social change, and makes of altered conditions new kinds of fiction, writing in such a way as to grasp the contradictions and involutions of the new media environment (13). Vattimo categorizes nihilism into active and passive. It is worth pointing out that this

categorization was first made by Nietzsche, yet Vattimo pushes it a step forward in order for it to fit the postmodern condition.

Passive nihilism refers to a complete acceptance of an old set of values where the world is perceived as devoid of meaning or divinity. A passive nihilist does not attempt to rationalize this lack of meaning; instead, they seek to evade it by affirming an attitude of agreement, aiming to cover the emptiness at the core of existence. The collapse of these ideological facades is inevitable because they're both necessary and destined to fail – every way of life requires a foundation, a set of principles for survival and progress that extend into an unknown future.

Furthermore, it is important to note Vattimo's view on art as a means of embracing a positive existence within a world of active nihilism. He proposes that the potential for an active nihilism lies in the artist's ability to transcend self-preservation instincts and attain a state of value creation. This perspective finds agreement from critics like Shane Weller, who also acknowledges the extreme nature of active nihilism and sees value in responding to it.

1.7.4. Historicity in Post-Apocalyptic Fiction

In his dissertation "Visions of After the End, a History and Theory of the Post-Apocalyptic Genre in Literature and Film" (2017), Brett Samuel Stifflemire notes that within the context of postmodernity, there is a prevalent "post-apocalyptic sensibility" instead of an optimistic outlook towards an impending apocalyptic future. This concept resembles an inverse millenarianism, where the belief is that the world's end has already happened (Stifflemire). Both postmodernism and the post-apocalyptic genre share a common origin influenced by the aftermath of World War II, leading to a shared decline in faith. However, the dominance of postmodernism as a cultural framework significantly

shapes post-apocalyptic narratives, affecting both external aspects like setting, clothing, visuals, and tools, as well as internal elements, including how the audience engages with the content.

The central idea emphasizes the clear disconnection between objects and their meanings within the post-apocalyptic realm. This highlights the genre's primary focus on envisioning a reality that retains familiar symbols while cutting their symbolic ties. The post-apocalyptic world is filled with remnants of the past, yet these artifacts have largely lost their original significance. As a result, the core essence of the post-apocalyptic genre lies in depicting a world that might not necessarily maintain a connection to its history. Moreover, the genre places characters in a context where meaning is decentralized, as the cataclysmic apocalypse has severed their links to their former lives. This rupture from the past leads to the loss of both memory and historical importance.

In Jeremy R. Grossman's work "Keeping the Lights On: Post-Apocalyptic Narrative, Social Critique, and the Cultural Politics of Emotion", he observes that a significant portion of post-apocalyptic fiction mourns the absence of the 'archive'—the accumulated reservoir of cultural knowledge and art—especially when the apocalypse happened recently enough for people to remember life before it. Characters in post-apocalyptic stories inhabit a world disconnected from its history, and even the records that once connected them to that history have vanished. This new world exists devoid of a historical context, necessitating the creation of a new history.

Diatmer Kamper states that history is a process of catastrophes but makes a difference between the apocalyptic visions of the old times and the apocalyptic vision seen in the late twentieth century, and defines the later as a "cropped" one: History continues to be determined by catastrophe. History is constantly being broken off. The relation between

continuity and discontinuity is shifting in favor of breaks and leaps. Ultimately, every moment is an end, an accident, a wedge, perhaps the beginning of another life. What is profound is the vanishing of this other side. Evidently, only a "cropped" apocalypse still exists, the sense of a new world era being truncated and foreshortened… The new beginning of an eon that no longer bears the terrible traits of ancient times as promised in the ancient apocalypses does not pertain today (97-98).

1.8. Postmodern Apocalypse and Existentialism

Richard Dellamora observes that the pairing of postmodern apocalypse seems fitting, but he questions if the sentence actually holds logical coherence (*Preface*). To elucidate this, he provides an example of the concept of 'modern' in aesthetics. To go beyond the 'modern', or what is known as "beyond the modern", entails transcending the breakdowns in temporal and spatial order that are characteristic of the apocalypse genre. The term 'modern' refers to pioneering principles that demand constant innovation.

In a similar vein, Patricia Waugh, in her work Practicing Postmodernism: Reading Modernism, argues that postmodernism is marked by a sense of crisis akin to that of apocalyptic scenarios. This apocalyptic sense is intertwined with the postmodern:

> The prefix "post" signifies a subsequent phase, though without indicating its nature... Postmodernism carries apocalyptic connotations. Not necessarily in the comprehensive Christian millenarian sense of a final reckoning leading to a new ideal state, but rather apocalyptic in the sense of a heightened crisis (9).

Kevin Pask contends that theories affiliated with postmodernism, which celebrate the dissolution of notions of an ultimate endpoint in history, assert that it's currently implausible, undesirable, or both, to envision a global system other than the one defined by

transnational capitalism (Dellamora xii). Adorno advises reconsidering the somber and authoritative undertones sometimes associated with universal history. Given past calamities and impending catastrophes, it would be pessimistic to declare that a blueprint for an improved world is readily evident and capable of harmonizing the course of history:

> Yet, not to be dismissed is the interconnectedness that binds the disjointed, tumultuously fragmented moments and phases of history – the unity encompassing dominion over nature, evolution to dominance over humankind, and ultimately, mastery over the inner essence of humanity. Universal history doesn't follow a trajectory from barbarism to humaneness; instead, it traces a path from simple tools to devastating weaponry (Adorno 320).

The postmodern significations of apocalypse suggest a life shaped by crises that lead to the dramatic end of the world. In other words, the postmodern apocalypse has something to do with the collapse of a universal order that fails to keep up due to dystopian defects in its nature. The thematic concerns, nonetheless, are not so much with the transformation itself as with the present problems causing it. Apocalyptic literature, accordingly, functions as "a conceptual tool that projects an imaginative catastrophic event onto a reality, through which questions of political, economic, social, and cultural problems of the present era can be raised, thought, and answered." It raises fears about the collapse of civilization so that "history can be reexamined and human nature re-interrogated" (Moon 4). Kim Stanley Robinson, the author of the alternate-history novel *The Years of Rice and Salt* (2002), traces the paradoxical relationship between science fiction and reality, "Maybe we can say that we need to see the real situation more imaginatively, while imagining what we want more realistically" (Robinson 255). The apocalyptic imagination, according to Joseph Dewey (1990) the American literary critic, represents an attempt by a puzzled culture to set

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its "present crisis within a larger context," to judge that it is "part of an order as wide as the cosmos itself" which points "humanity toward nothing less than the finale of its history" (Dewey 10).

Both 'postmodern apocalypse' and 'existentialism' are fascinating philosophical notions that attempt to make sense of the difficulties associated with being human, finding one's place in the world, and meeting the challenges of the modern day. What is the connection between these two ideas?

Many scholars consider postmodernism to be an extension of existentialism due to the fact that both ideologies reject traditional interpretations of the world and place an emphasis on individual experience, as well as, the significance of making one's own meaning.

At first glance, existentialism and postmodernism appear as disparate concepts. Existentialism primarily concerns the philosophy of individuals, while postmodernism emphasizes societal aspects over individual existence. The existential individual embodies self-awareness, freedom, and autonomy, acknowledging this liberty which can evoke feelings of both independence and isolation. This individual confronts the inherent absurdity of existence, embracing it as an integral part of their own being. Consequently, the comprehension of personal freedom and life's absurdity leads this individual towards a state of both surrendering to and affirming their own existence (Virginia 2).

1) Deconstruction and Meaning: existentialism's investigation of the lack of intrinsic meaning resonates with postmodernism's emphasis on dismantling existing meanings and narratives. Both ideas force people to question long-held assumptions and search for deeper purpose in their lives. Like existentialism's recognition of the possibility of

existential voids, the Postmodern Apocalypse might be seen as a breakdown of meaning systems (Virginia 7).

2) Anxiety and Uncertainty: existentialism generally deals with the worry that comes from realizing one has complete control over one's own life and that there is no greater plan for one's existence. By dismantling social conventions and upending established sources of truth, the postmodern apocalypse heightens existential dread. The proximity of these ideas illustrates the significant anxiety that may result from facing the unknowns of life in a world where long-held beliefs are constantly shifting (Virginia 13).

Third, postmodernism and existentialism share a common interest in questioning what it means to be an individual and what it means to be true to oneself. During a postmodern apocalypse, existential crises may arise due to the disintegration of cultural, societal, and individual identities. Both ideas force people to examine the sincerity of their decisions and the stability of their identities in the face of an ever-changing world (Virginia 17).

3) Freedom and Responsibility: existentialism stresses the need of taking personal responsibility for the development of one's own sense of meaning and values as a result of exercising one's freedom. The postmodern apocalypse, with its dissolution of stable meanings, might amplify this duty by forcing people to find their way in a world where they must create their own meaning. Freedom, responsibility, and the search for meaning are all shown to be at play in this dynamic (Virginia 30).

Existentialism often addresses the contradictions and absurdities that are part of living a human existence. By tearing down traditional narratives and revealing the arbitrary nature of certain frameworks, the postmodern apocalypse might deepen these existential crises. This synthesis prompts us to ponder the ludicrousness of living in a world devoid of conventional landmarks.

Existentialism advocates the autonomy of the individual and the rejection of society norms (6). This agency may materialize in the wake of the postmodern apocalypse, when long-held order begins to crumble. Both ideas highlight the autonomy of the individual by encouraging them to examine and challenge established conventions.

4) Resilience and the Creation of Meaning: existentialism often discusses the possibility of resiliency in the face of existential crises. Individuals might use the postmodern apocalypse as a jumping off point to rebuild narratives that are true to their experiences and in which they can find meaning. This method is consistent with existentialism's focus on the never-ending quest for meaning (Virginia 63).

Finally, the tension between postmodern apocalypse and existentialism sheds light on the existential difficulties brought on by the breakdown of long-held assumptions and frameworks. In a world that might seem chaotic and unpredictable, this confluence inspires a deeper investigation of freedom, responsibility, identity, and the quest for meaning. It offers a structure for contemplating life's significance and an individual's influence on the world.

Additionally, apocalyptic literature has led to the emergence of post-apocalyptic narratives, envisioning life after a catastrophic event like natural disasters, pandemics, human-made weapons, or extraterrestrial invasions. By exploring the potential end of humanity, these novels delve into crucial themes, conveying messages that resonate within contemporary politics and societies.

In this sense, the apocalyptic literature is defined in terms of its function as "intended to interpret present, earthly circumstances in light of the supernatural world of the future, and to influence both the understanding and the behavior of the audience by means of divine authority" (Collins 2014: 5-6). This is, however, a parable-bound reading inclined to

theologize the discourse of representation and emphasize the final judgment of God as well.

1.8.1. An Overview of the Existentialist Philosophy

Existentialism involves the exploration of fundamental truths concerning human nature and the world. Its origins trace back through the annals of western thought and philosophy. During the Hellenistic period, this philosophical concept thrived among Stoic and Epicurean philosophers, who concentrated on ethical queries and discerning the proper path of living (Flynn 1).

Soren Kierkegaard, a Danish theologian and philosopher, is credited with coining the term 'Existentialism'. He defined it as "a rejection of all purely abstract thinking, of a purely logical or scientific philosophy; in short, a rejection of the absoluteness of reason" (Roubiczek 10).

In the realm of existentialism, the central notion is 'Existence', which is specifically related to human existence. A prevalent notion asserts that only concrete entities can truly exist. Existentialists share this view, portraying humanity as individual, tangible entities capable of existing (More 13).

Emerging in mid 20th century France, existentialism is often viewed as a phenomenon intertwined with its historical context. It arose during the backdrop of World War II, the presence of Nazi concentration camps, and the devastating atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These events collectively set the stage for what is termed "The existentialist moment", wherein a generation confronted the fragility of human existence and the stark realities of life, death, and the void of being (Baert 2015).

Foremost proponents of this philosophy included French thinkers like Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Gabriel Marcel, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. However, the groundwork was laid much earlier, in the 19th century, by figures like Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche, and later by German philosophers, such as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Karl Jaspers in the 20th century.

These ideas also found expression in significant literary works. Alongside the contributions of French thinkers like Sartre, Beauvoir, and Camus, writers from various regions like Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Henrik Ibsen, Knut Hamsun, Franz Kafka, and others, played a role in spreading this movement internationally (Cotkin 185).

Existentialism extends beyond academia and literature, leaving its imprint on art, film, politics, theology, and psychotherapy. The themes appeared in films by directors like Ingmar Bergman, Michelangelo Antonioni, and Jean-Luc Godard, while artists such as Edward Munch and Marcel Duchamp captured its essence. The ideology influenced political figures like Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, and theological discussions on faith and freedom.

Despite its diversity and lack of a unified philosophy, a common thread unites existentialism's exploration of human existence, freedom, self-realization, and the complexities of human relationships.

1.8.2. Principles of the Existentialist Philosophy

Vijay More lists in his article, "Existentialism: A philosophic Stand Point to Existence over Essence", the major principles of the existentialist philosophy. These principles are "existence comes before essence, subjectivity, disbelief in God, choice as the ultimate evaluator, anguish (Anxiety), nothingness, absurd, death, existence in transcendence and emphasis on primacy of individual existence" (15-19).

1)-Existence Comes before Essence

The phrase "existence precedes essence", coined by the French existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, has become an accepted, expression of the philosophy's core ideas. That is to say, "Western philosophical thought posits that the 'essence' or 'nature' of a thing is more fundamental and eternal than its mere 'existence' (Cline). The human being identifies himself after becoming, discovering who he is, and striking out into the world. No boundaries imposing on our ability to make or change our decisions. Only we have the power to imbue our lives with the meaning we give them.

2)-Freedom

Existentialists concur that what sets apart our existence from other beings is our self-awareness and the fact that we exist for ourselves. This implies our freedom and accountability for our actions and identity. This does not mean we are wholly undetermined but, rather, that we are always beyond or more than ourselves because of our capacity to interpret and give meaning to whatever limits or determines us.

3)-Subjectivity

One of the distinguishing features of the human predicament is its inherent subjectivity. Objectivity is often contrasted with subjectivity. To perceive and respond to the world and events from one's own unique viewpoint is to be subjective "as a species, humans are worthless, and they will remain so until they develop into something worthwhile. This is existentialism's first tenet, also known as its subjectivity" (Rosaheb 15). In reflecting on subjectivity, Kierkegaard mentioned in his journal:

> What I really want is to be clear in my mind what I am to do, not what I am to
> know, except in so far as a certain knowledge must precede every action. The thing

is to understand myself, to see what God really wishes me to do: the thing is to find

a truth which is true for me, to find the idea for which I can live and die.

According to Sartre, every human experience is relative since each individual is a moral subject. The projection of self, or image of oneself, as well as the deliberate behaviors and concerns that shape one's identity, are all part of a person's subjectivity.

4)-Disbelief in God

In *Existentialism and Humanism*, Jean-Paul Sartre states that there are "two kinds of existentialists," the atheistic, in which he includes himself, and the Christian, among whom he includes his fellow countryman Gabriel Marce (Anderson 1). In 1945, Sartre proclaimed that "existentialism was a humanism—a vision of a brave, new, godless world" (Kirkpatrick). According to him, it is not adequate to just reject God, he said; one must also reject any ideas that are based on or built off of the notion of God:

> Sartre draws two important conclusions from this. First, he argues that there is no given human nature common to everyone because there is no God to give it in the first place. Human beings exist, that much is clear, but it is only after they exist that some "essence" that can be called "human" may develop. Human beings must develop, define, and decide what their "nature" will be through an engagement with themselves, their society, and the natural world around them. (Cline)

5)-Choice as the Ultimate Evaluator

Making decisions is the most crucial part of being human, as it is through our decisions that we shape our lives and develop our identities. When a person is living an authentic life, they are not hiding behind rationalizations or looking to others or external sources for

validation or significance. When institutions, abstractions, or organizations are prioritized over the individual's character and desires, inauthenticity ensues:

> Man's freedom comes in two seemingly contradictory varieties: the ability to make a decision and the freedom to make that choice. Therefore, if man is free, he must be free to choose, but he can choose rightly, which truly frees him, or wrongly, which imprisons him once more. (Rosaheb 16).

6)-Anguish (Anxiety)

As a central tenet of existentialist thought, existential agony refers to the state of being an autonomous individual in a relativistic universe. "A feeling of dread or distress that comes in when a person makes a decision and then learns that his or her decision has legislative ramifications for all humans. Distress is a natural by-product of being a human being, and it arises in response to the acceptance of a weighty duty" (Ibid 16).

Fear or fear that comes from realizing one's own mortality is known as existential anxiety. Existential anxiety can be triggered by contemplating one's own mortality, life's pointlessness, or one's own relative insignificance. As a result, they may feel helpless, hopeless, and completely overrun.

7)-Nothingness

According to Heidegger's philosophy: "the experience of nothingness does not mean understanding or some type of essential connection, but directly revealing inside one's mind" (Smirnova1 2). Nothingness is the situation in which nothing of significance or value to life is existent. In addition, "anxiety can lead to the development of a worldview known as emptiness. Therefore, being human looks like not being anything at all, like a denial of any and all truth" (17). Each of us has death looming over us. Knowledge of it

can set us free or cause us untold suffering. "Nothingness is our inherent lack of self. We are in constant pursuit of a self. Nothingness is the creative well-spring from which all human possibilities can be realized." (Sartre 51).

8)-Absurd

According to absurdism, when individuals search for the meaning of life, it only leads to conflict and disorder because the universe is bleak and meaningless. All of existence is insensitive, as it serves no higher function: "Anxiety can lead to the development of a worldview known as emptiness. Therefore, being human looks like not being anything at all, like a denial of any and all truth" (17). It is only natural for humans to seek out meaning in life. However, conflict occurs "when we go to do so and find the universe is really cold, chaotic, and utterly devoid of any meaning at all. It is this contradiction between our mind's search for meaning and the reality of nature that absurdism's founder Albert Camus calls 'The Absurd' " (Ben).

9)-Death

Sometimes, man chooses to flee the anonymity of his everyday life, which masks the emptiness of existence and the unreality of its options. Realizing his own futility, he settles on mortality as the one unavoidable option available to him. Before the rise of existentialism, death held little personal meaning. In 'existentialism', death allows the person self-awareness and makes him alone responsible for his acts. Prior to existential thought death did not have essentially individual significance; its significance was cosmic" (Harris 227).

In existentialism, death grants the individual self-knowledge and places all responsibility for his actions squarely on his shoulders. In this case, the quotation seems to imply that death is a significant factor in the existentialism that leads to introspection. The

concept is that realizing one's own death makes people think more deeply about their lives and the decisions they make. The knowledge that one's time on Earth is limited and that one's deeds have lasting consequences is the source of this heightened awareness of oneself. Before existential thought, the significance of death was not primarily individual; it was cosmic. This quotation draws attention to a key difference between existentialist and conventional approaches to death. Prior to the advent of existentialism, death was often seen in a cosmic rather than an individual perspective. Because of its ability to inspire self-reflection and a feeling of personal accountability, death is given new meaning in existentialism.

Existentialism's focus on personal accountability for one's actions is a major tenet of the philosophy. This feeling of duty is bolstered by the knowledge that each person has a finite amount of time on Earth, and that their actions have both immediate and long-term repercussions. The existentialist philosophy stresses the need of directly facing one's own death. It is possible to feel both uneasy and free after such an encounter. It forces people to examine their values, priorities, and the meaning they want to receive from living.

Awareness of one's own mortality and the importance placed on being one's own self are both central to existentialist ideology. Realizing one's own mortality forces people to take stock of their life and ask themselves whether they are really living in line with their ideals and goals.

The realization of one's own mortality is another source of existential distress. The realization that death is always lurking around the corner may be unsettling and leave one questioning their purpose in life. Death may have had transcendent cosmic significance in ancient worldviews, when it was often seen as a natural part of a cosmic cycle or a larger

order. By reorienting the emphasis to the individual, existentialists encourage people to go beyond the cosmic for purpose in their own lives.

10)- Existence in Transcendence

Transcendence meaning to go transcend or to cross over. This phrase sums up Kierkegaard's central argument, which is that the knowledge of one's own mortality leads one to confront the stark contrast between one's own mortality and the endless duration of time. Because of this insight, individuals are more likely to ponder spiritual, philosophical, and metaphysical concerns; in other words, they are more likely to think about the 'transcendental' parts of life. The concept here is that when people are forced to face their own mortality, it forces them to go beyond the superficial and into the meaning of life: "Kierkegaard believes that death can also be a challenge, as the knowledge of its inevitability confronts one constantly with eternity and infinity thereby goading the individual into focusing on the transcendental" (18)

11)- Emphasis on the Primacy of Individual Existence

Existentialism, which places a premium on the individual experience, stresses the value of uniqueness, autonomy, and responsibility. It recognizes the difficulties of human existence while fostering genuine and meaningful engagement with the unknown.

> The Dutch humanist, Erasmus goes on to define existentialism as a twentieth century approach that emphasizes the primacy of individual existence over any presumed natural essence for human beings. He says that the existentialists generally suppose that the fact of a man's existence entails both his unqualified freedom to make of himself whatever he wishes and the awesome responsibility of employing that freedom appropriately without being driven by anxiety towards

escaping into in authenticity, even though the entire project may turn out to be absurd. (19)

1.8.3. A Common Ground between Postmodernism and Existentialism

In his article, "Existentialism and postmodernism. Continuities, breaks, and some consequences for medical theory", Dirk Richter, using "the subject, truth, and ethics" (254) as touchstones from the theory of modernity, dissects the similarities and differences between existentialist and postmodernism.

Both postmodernism and existentialism reject grand narratives that attempt to give ultimate truths or meaning for all people. Postmodernism opposes the authority of metanarratives, whereas existentialism celebrates the variety of viewpoints and the plethora of facts. Anxiety about freedom and the possibility of meaninglessness is a common theme in existentialist writing, and this uncertainty is shared by postmodernism. In a similar spirit, postmodernism may make people uneasy since it deconstructs meaning and separates ideas.

Both theories put a heavy focus on the importance of one's own unique subjective experience. Postmodernism emphasizes how people create their realities based on their viewpoints and experiences whereas existentialism emphasizes the uniqueness of each individual's life and choices.

> But from the postmodern point of view, existentialism fails in not accepting the loss of unity. On the contrary, existentialism strives to provide a new foundation for it by means of politics as in Sartre's case or by means of metaphysics as with Heidegger. Postmodernism reflects the failure of the grand narratives of modernity not only in terms of the contents, but also and above all methodically. The

existentialist critique of the contents of modern "-isms" cannot - from a postmodern point of view- compensate for their methodical shortcomings. (Richter 264)

1.8.3.1. Postmodern Apocalypse and the Existential Crisis

Both 'the postmodern apocalypse' and 'the existential crisis' destabilize traditional systems of thought and value. The dissolution of secure narratives and meanings characteristic of postmodernism might heighten a person's sense of existential dread. The postmodern apocalypse's feelings of loss, ambiguity, and disillusionment may intensify existential concerns about meaning and self-identity. As these worlds collide, people may find it challenging to develop their own sense of purpose in a world where meaning is constantly shifting. When these two strands meet, it might spark a postmodern take on skepticism, and the search for meaning. Both ideas point to how societal developments and personal experience interact to shape people's strategies for negotiating the difficulties of modern life.

1.9. Etel Adnan and Arab-American Literature

Etel Adnan's impact on Arab-American literature is deep-seated. Her writing not only addresses the realities of Arab-American life, but also connects with a wider readership, promoting comprehension and compassion regardless of cultural distinctions. Her creations stand as evidence of literature's ability to unite people and illuminate the universal humanity that underpins our individual journeys. In this context, Jens Asthoff states:

an unusually cosmopolitan spirit informs Adnan's work as an artist, writer, poet, and philosopher, and it is probably just this interconnection of different forms of artistic expression—between words and images, philosophically trained thought

and raw expression, a broad range of cultural references and a politically alert critical consciousness—that lends her work its depth and complexity.

1.9.1. An Overview of Arab-American Literature

Arab American literature, a prominent field of study, addresses several issues intrinsically linked to the present state of affairs in the Arab world and the Arab American diaspora. There are several themes including "Homesickness, nationalism, Terrorism, Islamism, exile, and diaspora. Writers like Amine Rihani, Khalil Gibran Sam Hamoud, Naomi Shihab Nye, Mohja Kahf, Laila Lalami, and Randa Djarrar … have determinedly endeavored to present a realistic representation of their place of origin, namely the East" (Hairech 71).

As a result of September 11th and the accompanying war on terrorism, Arab writers' works have changed attention to themes of resistance and survival. Their main goal, motivated by ideology and politics, is to divorce Arab Americans from the stigma of being associated with terrorism. Therefore, in the majority of their writings, "writers, like Laila Lalami, Laila Halaby, Rabih Alameddine, Alia Yunis, among others, play the role of literary militants, having in charge to defend and restore the Arab image that has long been dirtied by first the orientalists and later by the extremists"(Hairech 80).

1.9.2. Common Thoughts in Arab-American Writing

Arab American writers have developed a wide range of styles throughout time to capture the many ways in which their readers' lives intersect with Arab and American customs. In Arab-American literature, you will often find these themes and ideas:

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Arab-American authors often explore the challenges of bridging two cultures in their works. One recurring subject is the struggle between being true to one's Arab roots and fully accepting American culture: "Within the genre of the memoir, Arab-American and Middle Eastern writers have utilized two key themes to discuss the process towards self-actualization: the journey and the creation of a concept that I term "the spiritual home" (Shehabat 18) in addition to authenticity may arise as a result of this conflict.

Many Arab-Americans struggle with a pervasive sense of otherness, which manifests itself in feelings of alienation from both the Arab and American communities. Common themes in their writing revolve on the author's psychological struggles to reconcile feelings of alienation and homesickness.

The importance of language and its role in Arab-American writing cannot be overstated. Writers often worry that the language they have selected will fail to do justice to the complexity of their feelings and experiences. As a result, people may start looking at different languages as a form of communication. Arab-Americans often use literature to combat prejudice and misunderstandings about Arabs and Arab culture. They provide nuanced and empathetic depictions by doing so (Shehabat 33).

Given the current state of affairs in the Middle East and the American engagement in it, it is not surprising that Arab-American literature often addresses issues of politics, war, and social justice. The way a person sees himself and the way others see them may be profoundly affected by these problems. The importance of family and adherence to cultural norms are recurring themes in Arab-American literature. Conflicts between generations, marriages between people of different cultures, and the fight to preserve or modify cultural norms in the face of change are all explored by the authors.

Many Arab Americans attribute much of their success in life to the influence of their Islamic faith. The spiritual and cultural components of Islam are regularly celebrated in Arab-American writing, yet the difficulties of living out one's religion in a diverse and often unfriendly society are also explored.

Arab-American writers often write about missing their homeland. After leaving their native nations, these authors reflect on the changes that have taken place there (Shehabat 54). Arab American writers explore the intersections of their Arab background with other aspects of their identities, including gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic class. This multifaceted approach lends depth to their stories. Arab-American literature often depicts a sense of empowerment and perseverance in the face of hardship. To better themselves and their communities, many writers opt to pen works centered on their family histories.

The literary works written by Arab Americans showcase a rich variety of perspectives and opinions. It provides a forum for people from all areas of life to have meaningful conversations on topics including cultural understanding, unique perspectives, and universal human experiences. Contributing to the literary canon, these writers examine the dynamic relationship between individual development, cross-cultural experiences, and the intersection of the self.

1.9.3. Women Arab-American Literature

Arab-American literature was largely unrecognized by American academics prior to the Gulf Wars and the September 11th Attacks. Although Arab Americans have lived in the United States for over a century, Arab-American writing has only lately been recognized as an important component of the American literary scene, as Lisa Majaj points out (n.pag.). Carol Fadda-Conrey, in a similar vein, expresses concern over the lack of Arab-American

literary studies in the ethnic canon, implying that discussions about Arab-American literature have been rendered almost invisible, a state she terms "discourse invisibility" and which she recognizes as an ethnic indicator. Feminist scholar Joanna Kadi, cited by Fadda-Conrey (1), calls Arab-American writers "...the most invisible of the invisibles".

Politics, according to some academics, is to blame for the paucity of Arab-American writing in the American literary canon. According to Mervat Hatem, Arab-American literature has always been influenced by the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its successive battles. Arab Americans have been more united over the last 60 years due to "strong U.S. support of the Israeli military effort against Arabs" (Hatem, n.pag.). This pro-Israel bias may have dampened academic interest in Arab-American writing in the United States. Another possibility is that American critics and scholars are more interested in works that deal with issues directly related to the United States' long-standing and extensive engagement with other ethnic minorities, such as African-Americans, whose literature has become an integral facet of American literature, and thus may not find Arab-American literature compelling.

Arab-American women writers have risen to prominence in the realm of Arab-American literature, owing much of their success to Arab-American feminism. This movement has not only empowered them but also provided a platform for them to express their concerns through their literary works. It is worth noting that in recent decades, there has been a significant surge in the production of English literary works authored by Arab female writers, surpassing the output of their male counterparts:

> Their writings try to discuss thorny issues, sensitive and important topics such as identity crisis, the homeland, diaspora, expand their exploration of the conjunctions of race, hybridity, ethnicity, sexuality, class, gender and politics, sites of violence

and oppression. They further attempt to open new channels for communication to present new alternatives that help move the community forward. (Noman 494)

1.9.4. Positioning Etel Adnan's Writings in Arab-American Literature

While Arab-American literature has existed in the United States for more than a century, it has only recently gained recognition as an integral part of the country's diverse literary landscape. Over the past two decades, there has been a noticeable surge in the publication of works by Arab-American writers. This literary growth is influenced, in part, by the changing historical, social, and political contexts that have propelled Arab-Americans into the forefront. These shifts have not only created new spaces for their voices and heightened the urgency of expression but have also contributed to the flourishing creativity of these writers.

The origin of Arab American literature can be traced back to the late 1800s when significant numbers of Arab immigrants, primarily from the Syrian province of the Ottoman Empire (now present-day Lebanon), began arriving in North America. Initially, these migrants, largely of Christian background, considered themselves temporary sojourners rather than permanent immigrants. They settled in colonies in cities like New York and Boston, with the intention of returning home one day. Their literature primarily reflected a diasporic consciousness, evident in their sectarian, political newspapers focused on events in the Middle East.

The scope of thoughts in Arab-American writing is extensive, including several writers, works, and themes. Over time, the writing produced by Arab Americans has come to reflect the diversity of experiences of individuals who straddle Arab and American cultures. Here are some thoughts on recurrent themes and issues in Arab-American literature:

> The difficulties of straddling two cultures are a common theme in works by Arab-American writers. In particular, maintaining a sense of pride in one's Arab heritage while assimilating into American society is a common theme. This seeming inconsistency may give rise to worries about one's identity, sense of belonging, and genuineness (Majaj 14).

Many Arab-Americans deal with feelings of alienation from both the Arab and American communities. A recurring subject in literature is the protagonist's struggle with their own identity as a result of feeling like an alien in both cultures and longing for a permanent home.

Arab-American literature often focuses on linguistic exchange and communication. It is a common fear of writers that their words won't do justice to the depth of their emotions and experiences. When this occurs, individuals may seek out new means of communication by learning a new language. The best way to debunk stereotypes and misconceptions about Arabs and Arab Americans is to hear from Arab Americans themselves. We can fight these stereotypes and provide more nuanced and empathetic portrayals of Arabs and Arab culture via literature (Majaj 58).

Due to the present state of events in the Middle East and the American presence there, Arab-American writers often write on politics, war, and social justice. These issues may have a significant impact on how they see themselves and how others perceive them. Arab-American literature often focuses on familial and cultural ties. Conflicts between generations, intercultural marriage, and the challenge of keeping or adapting one's cultural practices in a new environment are all themes that have been examined by writers.

Islam is practiced by a sizable minority of Arab-Americans and plays a significant role in their everyday lives. Arab-American literature may both praise Islam's spiritual and

cultural aspects and discuss the challenges of being a practicing Muslim in a diverse and often Islamophobic society.

Arab-American writers often write about their longing for home and the memories they have of it. Changes that have occurred in the authors' native nation since they departed are discussed. In addition to considering how their Arab background relates to other aspects of their identities, such as their gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status, American writers of Arab origin may also consider how these factors interact with one another. The similarities between them allow for deeper understanding. Strength and Courage Perseverance in the face of hardship is a common theme in Arab-American literature. Many writers choose to write about their family histories in an effort to improve themselves and their communities. In sum, Arab-American writing is a complex tapestry that encompasses a wide range of perspectives. It is a fantastic approach to get people of all backgrounds thinking and discussing about serious issues. Arab-American writers contribute to the literary canon by delving into universal topics like cultural exchange, personal growth, and community.

Arab American writers have developed a wide range of styles throughout time to capture the many ways in which their readers' lives intersect with Arab and American customs. In Arab-American literature, you will often find these themes and ideas:

Arab-American authors often explore the challenges of bridging two cultures in their works. One recurring subject is the struggle between being true to one's Arab roots and fully accepting American culture. Questions of identity, belonging, and authenticity may arise as a result of this conflict. Many Arab-Americans struggle with a pervasive sense of otherness, which manifests itself in feelings of alienation from both the Arab and American

communities (Majaj 87). Common themes in their writing revolve on the author's psychological struggles to reconcile feelings of alienation and homesickness.

The importance of language and its role in Arab-American writing cannot be overstated. Writers often worry that the language they have selected will fail to do justice to the complexity of their feelings and experiences. As a result, people may start looking at different languages as a form of communication. Arab-Americans often use literature to combat prejudice and misunderstandings about Arabs and Arab culture. They provide nuanced and empathetic depictions by doing so. Given the current state of affairs in the Middle East and the American engagement in it, it is not surprising that Arab-American literature often addresses issues of politics, war, and social justice. The way a person sees himself and the way others see them may be profoundly affected by these problems.

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sense of empowerment and perseverance in the face of hardship. To better themselves and their communities, many writers opt to pen works centered on their family histories.

The literary works written by Arab Americans showcase a rich variety of perspectives and opinions. It provides a forum for people from all areas of life to have meaningful conversations on topics including cultural understanding, unique perspectives, and universal human experiences. Contributing to the literary canon, these writers examine the dynamic relationship between individual development, cross-cultural experiences, and the intersection of the self.

Adnan's work is emblematic of the cultural fusion that characterizes most Arab-American literature. Her Lebanese-American perspective brings together her Arab heritage and her American upbringing in her writing. The diversity of Arab-American writers and their works may largely be attributed to this cultural melting pot.

Adnan, like other Arab-American writers, writes on the struggle to define oneself. As she tries to reconcile her two cultures, she faces challenges related to heritage, assimilation, authenticity, and belonging (Majaj 101). Adnan's ability to switch between English, French, and Arabic in her work is evidence of her linguistic diversity. This linguistic versatility is indicative of her privileged background and is consistent with the wide range of languages used in Arab-American literature.

Adnan's work is heavily influenced by the culture and history of her home Lebanon, but she also addresses universal themes that have a wider resonance. Her writings appeal to a wide range of readers because of their focus on universal topics like love, nature, war, and spirituality.

Adnan's experiences as a survivor of the civil war in Lebanon have had a significant influence on her writing. Her writings frequently mirror broader concerns in Arab-

American literature, such as topics of violence, trauma, and perseverance. Adnan's work is better for her involvement with several fields, such as art and philosophy. Her enthusiasm for these topics is in keeping with the multifaceted nature of Arab-American literature.

Adnan's feminism adds a lot to the canon of Arab-American literature. Her insights about gender roles, autonomy, and identity enrich the ongoing dialogue of Arab-American women. The economy and brevity of Adnan's prose set him apart from other Arab-American authors. Her innovative approach to storytelling expands the richness of the genre's wealth of story structures.

Adnan is a true citizen of the world, having lived in and traveled to a wide variety of nations. Many Arab-Americans have migration, diaspora, and transnational identity stories that are consistent with this global worldview. Adnan's influence has expanded beyond the literary world and into the visual arts and other disciplines. Her legacy as a trailblazing Arab-American writer and artist has served as an inspiration to generations of creators.

When seeking to position Etel Adnan's works into the canon of Arab-American literature, it is essential to acknowledge her distinctive voice, her contributions to intercultural discussion, and her ability to bridge the gap between cultures through her different creative manifestations. Her work is a welcome addition to the multifaceted Arab-American literary debate.

One of the best examples of the cultural mix that defines Arab-American literature is Adnan's work. "Etel Adnan is arguably the most celebrated and accomplished Arab American author writing today … in addition to occupying a central role in Arab American writing, a branch of American ethnic literature which has yet to receive its full share of attention in the present multicultural environment" (Tanyss). Her artwork, born out of her experiences as a Lebanese-American, bridges her Arab background with her American

upbringing. Arab-American writers and their works span a wide range because of this synthesis of cultures.

Adnan's works explore the idea of self-definition, much like those of her Arab-American literary contemporaries. She struggles with questions of origin, assimilation, authenticity, and identity as she negotiates the nuances of her own mixed cultural background. Adnan's writing displays her multilingual prowess, since she has done excellent work in three languages (English, French, and Arabic (Demay). This demonstrates the richness of her background and is consistent with the multilingualism of Arab-American literature.

Adnan's artwork has strong Lebanese roots but also explores universal themes that resound with listeners throughout the world. Her works are accessible to a wide audience since they deal with universal issues like love, nature, conflict, and spirituality (Demay). Adnan's compositions generally convey common themes in Arab-American writing, such as violence, pain, and perseverance; these themes are informed by her experiences as a survivor of the civil war in Lebanon.

Adnan's work is substantially enhanced by her multidisciplinary approach, which includes art and philosophy. Similar tendencies may be seen in Arab-American writing, which often incorporates elements from a variety of aesthetic traditions (Demay). Her feminism adds a lot to the Arab-American canon, especially to debates of Arab-American women's identities and the roles they play in society.

Adnan's storytelling style distinguishes her from other Arab-American authors because of its focus on conciseness and brevity. This fresh method of storytelling expands the genre's already rich palette of narrative devices. Adnan is a true global citizen, having lived in and traveled to a number of different nations (Demay). This worldwide perspective is

reflective of migration, diaspora, and transnational identity stories that many Arab-Americans can relate to. Adnan's impact goes well beyond the literary world and into the visual arts and beyond. Her legacy as a ground-breaking Arab-American writer and artist continues to influence modern artists of all stripes.

In order to properly place Etel Adnan's works into the canon of Arab-American literature, it is necessary to acknowledge her unique voice, her contributions to cross-cultural discussions, and her capacity to transcend cultural boundaries via a variety of creative manifestations. Her works enrich the rich fabric of Arab-American literary conversation by presenting a variety of viewpoints.

1.9.5. Etel Adnan's Writings: an Incarnation of An Authentic Multicultural Self-Experience

Adnan's existence is, in many respects, a case study in alienation and re-routing. Adnan was brought up in a Beirut society marked by segregation and division among ethnic and religious factions. Born in 1925 to a Christian Greek mother and a Muslim Syrian father, she grew up in a community where speaking Greek and Turkish were customary, despite Arabic being the prevailing language among Muslims.

Her fluency in French stemmed from her time spent at a French Catholic school, a relic of the country's colonial past. She left for Paris in 1949, where she attended the Sorbonne and earned a degree in philosophy (Demay). Paris, the epicenter of French colonialism, was a watershed moment for Adnan because it solidified her affection for French culture while simultaneously heightening her feelings of ambivalence and mistrust toward the nation that colonized her motherland and separated her from her Arab heritage.

1.10. Conclusion

In conclusion, this theoretical chapter has served as a theoretical foundation to bridge the gap between postmodernism and the concept of the apocalypse. It provides a comprehensive exploration of postmodernism within the framework of theories put forth by scholars such as Frederic Jameson and Linda Hutcheon, with a focus on critical concepts like 'power', 'history', and 'knowledge' according to Foucault. This chapter found that power and knowledge are interconnected and mutually constitutive. Knowledge is not neutral or objective, but is always tied to power relations. Certain forms of knowledge legitimize and enable the exercise of power. Discourses produced by those in power define what is considered normal, deviant, healthy, or pathological. Those who control knowledge can influence and control societal perceptions and behaviors. The second section has delved into the apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic genres, elucidating their evolution and the transition of writers from apocalyptic to post-apocalyptic fiction. This section has also examined the narrative forms within these genres, encompassing prose and poetry, to discern their significance, characteristics, and historical development.

Moreover, this chapter has offered an in-depth analysis of existentialist philosophy, unveiling its foundational principles and its far-reaching influence on contemporary thought. These principles are existence comes before essence, subjectivity, disbelief in God, choice as the ultimate evaluator, anguish (Anxiety), nothingness, absurd, death, existence in transcendence and emphasis on primacy of individual existence. It has explored the intersection between postmodernism and existentialism, shedding light on their shared ideological terrain. Furthermore, it has delved into the concept of the postmodern apocalypse and the profound existential crisis it signifies in our modern era. In postmodern thought, there is a tendency to deconstruct grand narratives, challenge

traditional modes of thinking, and question established structures of meaning and reality. The concept of the apocalypse in a postmodern context often reflects these themes and contributes to a profound existential crisis. The postmodern apocalypse is intricately tied to a profound existential crisis by challenging traditional narratives, fragmenting reality, undermining established meanings, and confronting individuals with the uncertainties of a world characterized by fluidity, hyperreality, and irony. The resulting existential crisis reflects the disorienting and unsettling nature of a postmodern perspective on the end times. Through this exploration, it has endeavored to bring to the forefront the enduring insights and relevance that these philosophical movements provide in our ongoing quest to comprehend the complexities of the human condition.

Finally, this chapter has positioned Etel Adnan's contributions within the context of postmodern Arab-American women's literature, underscoring her significant role in this literary landscape. She has made an invaluable contribution by challenging traditional narratives, exploring hybrid identities, and providing nuanced perspectives on the intersections of culture, gender, and diaspora. As we move forward in this dissertation, we will build upon the groundwork laid here, delving deeper into selected works of Adnan to gain a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies of postmodernism, the apocalypse, and their intersection with existentialist philosophy in literature.

Chapter Two:

Contemplating the Postmodern Apocalypticism in Etel Adnan's *The Arab Apocalypse*

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2.1 Introduction

The Arab Apocalypse is a poetic work by Etel Adnan originally published in 1980. The book is known for exploring the Lebanese Civil War and the impact of violence and conflict on the region. It is a deeply reflective collection of poems that engages with a range of themes, including the postmodern apocalypse, exile and disintegration, identity crisis, and survival.

In the unfolding pages of this chapter, we embark on a comprehensive journey into the heart of postmodern literature, delving deeply into the enigmatic realms of *The Arab Apocalypse*. The exploration is meticulously structured to navigate the intricate interplay of themes that shape the narrative, revealing the text's profound engagement with postmodern sensibilities. The chapter commences with an examination of the subversion of traditional narratives, exposing how *The Arab Apocalypse* challenges historical certainties and reshapes our understanding of the Arab world's intricate histories. From this foundation, we traverse the linguistic landscape, exploring the cultural hybridity woven through the tapestry of English, French, and Arabic languages, each contributing to the complex mosaic of identity within the text. Venturing further, the exploration extends to the deeply personal and emotional dimensions embedded in the narrative, creating an intimate connection between readers and characters within the broader historical context. The chapter also scrutinizes the intersection of art and aesthetics, unraveling the significance of in-text graphs and symbols as essential components in conveying layered meanings.

A critical focus is placed on the fluidity of identity, where eastern and western ethnicities converge, creating a dynamic shifting landscape enriched by mythical and historical layers. As we traverse the linguistic landscape, language play and semiotic instability come to the fore, illustrating the text's deliberate destabilization of traditional linguistic structures. Finally,

the exploration culminates in an analysis of symbolism and apocalypticism, unraveling the intricate layers that contribute to the text's evocative narrative. By meticulously exploring these themes, the chapter establishes the foundation for a deep comprehension of *The Arab Apocalypse* within the framework of postmodernism. This paves the way for upcoming sections that examine historiographic metafiction, postmodern apocalyptic motifs, narrative strategies, and the intricate interplay of hope and despair found in the narrative's uncertain conclusions.

2.2. Positioning *The Arab Apocalypse* in the Postmodern Context

Typically, historians refer to the era of postmodernism as one of transition. This era is characterized by a diminished efficacy or relevance of specific ideologies and concerns associated with modernism. Modernism is a comprehensive cultural, artistic, and intellectual phenomenon that arose throughout the latter part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century. It is distinguished by its emphasis on rationality, advancement, and the quest for universally truths. Its discourse centers on the themes of rationality, development, and the quest for universal truths. In this context, Gilbert Adair advances the claim that:

> Postmodernism is, almost by definition, a transitional cusp of social, cultural, economic and ideological history when modernism's high-minded principles and preoccupations have ceased to function, but before they have been replaced with a totally new system of values. It represents a moment of suspension before the batteries are recharged for the new millennium, an acknowledgment that preceding the future is a strange and hybrid interregnum that might be called the last gasp of the past. (XX)

The impact of postmodernism on literature has been substantial, resulting in a divergence from the established norms of modernist writing and the emergence of novel literary structures and techniques. Etel Adnan's *The Arab Apocalypse* is an important work that may

be evaluated from a postmodern perspective. Postmodern analysis involves looking at how the author subverts established narratives, plays with language, and destroys rigid cultural and historical structures. *The Arab Apocalypse* attacks the authority, coherence, and universality of metanarratives via the use of a wide range of literary techniques and themes to dismantle them: deconstruction of traditional narratives, subversion of historical narratives, multilingualism and cultural hybridity, fragmentation and non-linearity, personal and emotional perspective, engagement with art and aesthetics, intertextuality and metafiction, fluid Identity and hybridity, language play and semiotic instability, historiographic metafiction, end of history and utopian ideals, irony and parody.

Jean-Francois Lyotard, in his work *The Postmodern Condition*, elucidates that narratives, encompassing popular stories, myths, legends, or tales, derive their legitimacy solely from the act of narration. They not only render themselves plausible but also serve to legitimize the societal context in which they unfold. Unlike scientific discourse, the narrator does not engage in argumentation or proof; rather, their authority stems from the firsthand experience of hearing the story. The audience, in turn, acquires a similar authority solely through the act of listening. It is often asserted that these stories have endured throughout time. Postmodernism's objective, according to Lyotard, involves unveiling the meta-narratives that subconsciously guide our understanding. Characterized by intense subjectivity, theoretical assertiveness, skepticism toward established concepts, value judgments, norms, traditional aesthetic paradigms, and grand narratives, postmodernism aims to critically examine the structures within which we navigate.

2.2.1. Deconstruction of Traditional Narratives

Deconstruction of overarching explanations or ideologies that explain the master narratives is a common theme in postmodern apocalypse. Instead, it rejects the notion of a universal

truth in favor of multiple viewpoints. Therefore, "postmodernism's prime directive, according to some influential accounts, is "Do not totalize; do not commit a master narrative" (Lyotard 17). Grand ideologies, whether religious, political, or philosophical, are often linked to such master narratives. Postmodernism critiques these metanarratives by drawing attention to their shortcomings, contradictions, and potential for manipulation and control.

In *The Arab Apocalypse*, Etel Adnan embarks on the task of dismantling tales about the Arab world from several angles. She presents a more nuanced and complex picture of the area and its history via a combination of fragmented tales, language variety, personal opinions, and aesthetic aspects, encouraging readers to reevaluate their assumptions and interact with the book on numerous levels.

2.2.1.1. Subversion of Historical Narratives: Histories of the Arab World

Adnan's writing questions accepted histories of the Arab world, particularly those that center on war and upheaval. Instead, she provides a lyrical, subjective viewpoint that draws on her own life and feelings. In doing so, she dismantles the standard historical narrative that paints the area exclusively in terms of violence:

> I am the prophet of a useless nation STOP the base of my brain hurts
>
> Smohalla Tecummtha Smohalla Tecumtha Smohalla
>
> I am a sniper with glued hair on my temples STOP
>
> the sun is a frozen lemon as big as Presidents' noses
>
> Each wounded is a dead man Beirut is a corpse presented on a silver platter (41).

The speaker identifies himself as a prophet, indicating that he is offering a different point of view. A rejection of traditional values or a criticism of his civilization is implied by the word

"useless" when referring to his country. The reference to a headache may represent the emotional or mental toll of maintaining this outlook.

"Smohalla Tecummtha Smohalla Tecuma Smohalla": these names are likely to be those of significant people in history or culture. Native American religious leader and creator of the Dreamer faith, Smohalla advocated for the preservation of indigenous culture and fought against colonization. Shawnee chieftain Tecumseh (or Tecumtha) fought against American colonization in the early 19th century. "I am a sniper with glued hair on my temples, stop": this phrase adds a more militaristic tone, indicating a propensity for confrontation or defiance. It is possible that the "glued hair" represents a dogged resolve.

The sun is usually associated with warmth and light, yet this metaphor offers a quite different picture. Conventional understandings of power and authority (the sun) are challenged by the comparison of this to a "frozen lemon" and the size of a president's nose.

"Every man wounded is a man killed. A dead body served out on a silver platter: that's what Beirut is. This one statement perfectly captures the ugliness and destruction of war. The remark "Each wounded is a dead man" conveys a gloomy outlook on the results of violence. The metaphor of the body on a silver platter emphasizes the image of a sad offering, while the allusion to Beirut, a city with a troubled past, adds weight to the idea of a place scarred by violence.

In general, this passage challenges and undermines commonly held beliefs about national identity, authoritative power, and the preservation of collective memory. It offers a bleak and uncompromising portrayal of the aftermath of battle while also challenging traditional understandings of power. The authors use striking visuals to challenge the reader's assumptions about the nature of power and the course of history.

Similarly, Teresa Heffernan examines the tensions within postcolonial discourses in her analysis of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Specifically, she focuses on the conflict between universal and nationalist ideals, which is highlighted through instances of apocalyptic violence. This conflict revolves around the dual identity of individuals as citizens of a civil state and as Indians within their nation. The dismantling of colonial political frameworks seems to give rise to fresh instances of ethnic conflict, so impacting the country (Berger 391).

2.2.2. Multilingualism and Cultural Hybridity: English, French, and Arabic Languages

Adnan challenges the monolingual metanarrative of linguistic and cultural purity with her employment of three languages in her writing: English, French, and Arabic. Her writing is an embodiment of the concept that people's identities and cultural backgrounds are more likely to be hybrid and varied than to cleanly fit into classifications.

> Car with no driver. Achrafieh- rHamra words under lock (12)
>
> Prayer in the mosque. Black procession tinier than ants. Allahu Akbar (Ibid).
>
> "Baudelaire mercenary sun alphabet originated in Ugarit King of Babylon"
>
> "Baudelaire mercenary Gerard de Nerval's assassin STOP" (43)
>
> "sun Avicenna the hangman of Al Hallaj who was thrown to the gutters of
>
> Andalusia"(Ibid)
>
> "Vehicle without operator. (12) The words of Achrafieh- rHamra are sealed"

Possible culturally significant place names or phrases "Achrafieh" and "rHamra" may be connected to the concept of multilingualism and cultural fusion. Going to the mosque to pray. Smaller than ant parade of black people. (Ibid.) "Allahu Akbar" is meant to represent a juxtaposition between the seriousness of mosque prayer and the depiction of a mournful,

potentially funeral-like procession. A common Arabic exclamation used in Islamic religious situations, "Allahu Akbar" translates to 'God is great' in English.

King of Babylon at Ugarit is where Charles Baudelaire's mercenary solar alphabet had its start. This seems to be a very symbolic phrase. It alludes to the French poet Baudelaire, whose work is recognized for its vivid imagery and lyricism. The "mercenary sun alphabet" is likely a metaphor for the power of language to convey ideas and thoughts. The use of historical terms like "Ugarit" and "King of Babylon" may allude to long-lost beginnings or impacts on modern languages and cultures.

The narrator unveils a nuanced interplay of English, French, and Arabic languages, reflecting the complex mosaic of linguistic and cultural influences in this sentence: "sun Avicenna, the hangman of Al Hallaj, who was thrown to the gutters of Andalusia" (Ibid). Several important historical and literary figures are mentioned in this sentence. The Persian polymath Avicenna (Ibn Sina) made important contributions to several disciplines, including philosophy and medicine. Mansur Al-Hallaj was a Persian mystic and philosopher to whom the title "Al Hallaj" alludes. It is possible that "hangman" is a metaphor for the judgment or persecution that Al Hallaj had to endure. That part of Spain known as "Andalusia" has quite the cultural pedigree.

2.2.3. Personal and Emotional Perspective

A more distant and objective tone is often associated with historical and political metanarratives, but Adnan's work combines his own personal experiences and feelings using the personal pronoun "I". This strategy adds a personal touch to the story and helps the reader empathize with the people of the Arab East.

A yellow sun on the face cancer on the Palestinian cruelty of the plam tree

I led a ship under the sea to the living, and the dead   yes yes yes

a black sun 45 black corpses for a single coffin black eye listening

I saw a hawk eat a child's brain in the dumps of Dekouaneh (19).

Adnan used a first-person narrator to effectively depict the extent of disorder and confusion prevalent in this conflict. The speaker's identity, which varies between divine and human, and between male and female, stays uncertain and fluid. However, this ambiguity serves to establish a connection between many personalities throughout history and mythology, ensuring a sense of continuity. Occasionally, the narrator assumes the dual identity of a celestial earth goddess and a mortal victim, as she makes her way to the subterranean bunker under the Hill of Thyme (Time), known as Tel-al-Zaatar, where she shares the experience of impending death with her Palestinian friends. In this context, she expresses her profound attachment to a lifeless body, stating: "I am in love with a corpse" (72). The individual in question adorns herself with a solar crown, referred to as a "crown of sorrow" (38), which bears resemblance to the imagery associated with the goddess Isis. However, she may also be seen as the opposite of the goddess, since she is deeply connected to the soil. In her own words, she states, "Great Isis is absent. I, on the other hand, am firmly rooted, symbolizing the weight of her tomb upon me".

The first-person perspective is metaphorically equated with the sun, as expressed by the phrase "the sun's atoms are incarnating in my flesh" (35). This metaphorical sun further expands into multiple entities, referred to as suns or sons, and encompasses both genders. Additionally, there is a symbolic union between the first-person perspective and the mother figure, as denoted by the statement "I married a river to eat its fish cannibal! cannibal!" (62).

Furthermore, the metaphorical sun is depicted as consuming its offspring, as exemplified by the phrase "The sun's throat is a tunnel which swallows our ARMIES" (Simonton 6).

2.2.4. Engagement with Art and Aesthetics: in- Text Graphs and Symbols

Adnan's work often incorporates discussions of aesthetics and the visual arts because of her experience as an artist. This highlights the significance of art and creativity in comprehending the Arab experience, and it challenges metanarratives that depend primarily on textual or historical interpretations. It is presented in the cover pages of different editions (2020), and (2010) the use of in- text graphs.

Adnan's approach to depicting this specific conflict is the complete elimination of its presence inside both the mythological and historical realms. Within the poem, Adnan incorporates several visual representations that symbolize both political and theological ideas, many of which are characteristic elements of the apocalyptic genre. However, she subsequently transcends these conventional boundaries. In the conventional apocalyptic genre, there is a prevalent inclination to anticipate the culmination of history as a means to rectify any temporal injustices inflicted against the author's preferred belief group.

However, this desire for retribution, validation, and the ultimate victory of territorial deities is explicitly repudiated. *The Arab Apocalypse* posits the notion that the ultimate culmination of time will not be achieved via the annihilation of "evil", nor will it be attained by one faction emerging victorious over the other in a comprehensive manner. The fundamental flaws of the system are evident in the following lines: "In the halls of the sun, we engaged in the production of highly contagious religions. We resorted to the burning of stillborn infants. Within the atomic structure of the sun, we brought forth highly contagious ethnic groups." The presence of Muslim saints may be seen inside the atoms of the sun (Ignacio 332).

Fig 1: Cover pages of *The Arab Apocalypse (2010;2020)*
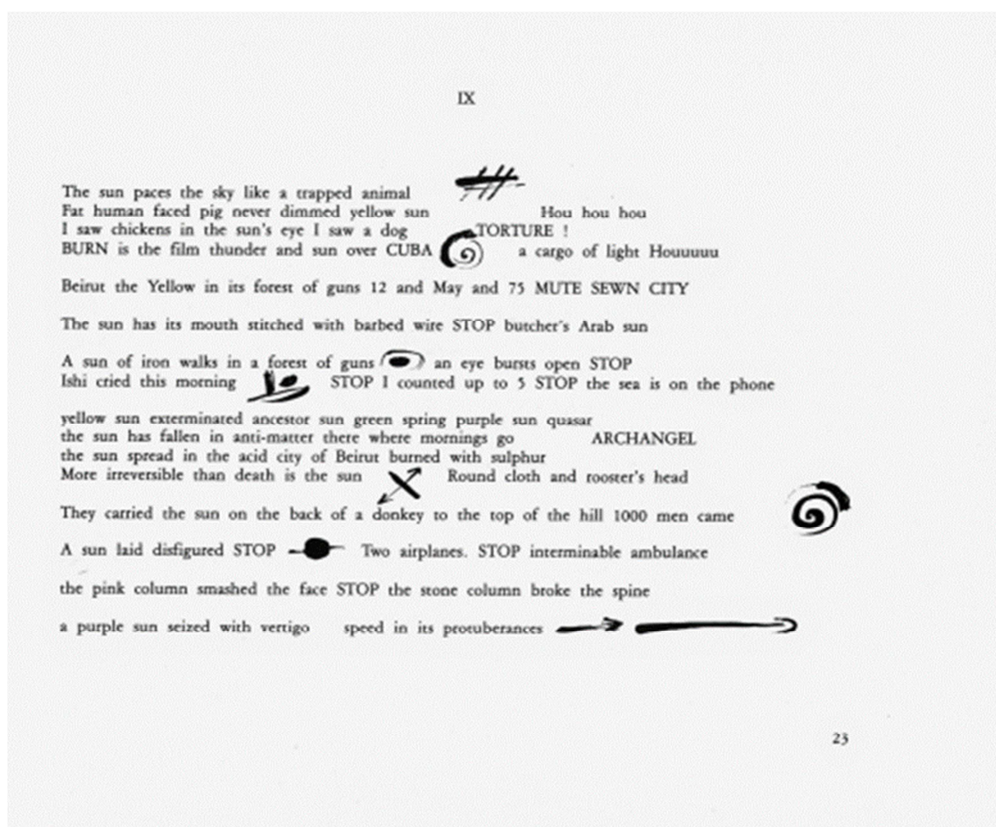
Fig 2: The Use Of In- Text Graphs in *The Arab Apocalypse*

2.2.5. Fluid Identity and Hybridity: Eastern and Western Ethnicities

Postmodernism questions the stability of identities and emphasizes the fluidity of people's identities and different ethnicities. Adnan's exploration of her own identity as a Lebanese-American artist adds a dimension of hybridity to the poem. Besides, it refers to several identities in the text: Indian, a Hopi, an Egyptian, an Arab Black woman non-Egyptian, a Syrian king (I). Among the principles of postmodernism is that "the human being is not a unity, not autonomous, but a process, perpetually in construction, perpetually contradictory, perpetually open to change" (Belsey 119).

2.2.5.1. Identity as a Shifting Landscape

One interpretation of *The Arab Apocalypse* is that it depicts the mutability of identity in the face of war and social turmoil. Conflict and dislocation may shatter people's sense of who they are, prompting them to look for something new to define themselves by.

> O moon non solar O woman non Egyptian O royal and solar council of kings!
>
> Great Inca O ant-like sun and blue ant in front of a red cat!
>
> Giant Hopi hopping on a dinosaur blue green sun bitter misfortune (9)

This quote embodies a vivid and imaginative portrayal of identity as a fluid and ever-changing construct. It incorporates a mix of cultural, celestial, and natural imagery to evoke a sense of dynamic transformation and diversity.

"O moon non solar O woman non Egyptian O royal and solar council of kings!": this line begins with a series of exclamations that challenge conventional identities. The mention of the "moon non solar" suggests a celestial identity distinct from the typical solar associations. "Woman non Egyptian" suggests a woman whose identity transcends geographical boundaries and cultural affiliations. The reference to a "royal and solar council of kings" could imply a gathering of powerful and luminous figures, possibly from various cultures and backgrounds.

"Great Inca O ant-like sun and blue ant in front of a red cat!".

This line introduces a range of vivid and symbolic imagery. The "Great Inca" may refer to a revered figure from South American history. The contrast between the "ant-like sun" and the "blue ant in front of a red cat" serves to blur the boundaries between natural elements and cultural symbols, suggesting a complex interplay of identities.

"Giant Hopi hopping on a dinosaur blue green sun bitter misfortune": this line further incorporates cultural and natural references. The "Giant Hopi" could allude to the Native American Hopi people, known for their rich cultural traditions. The image of the Hopi "hopping on a dinosaur" and the mention of the "blue green sun" evoke a sense of surrealism and playfulness, emphasizing the malleability and imaginative nature of identity.

Overall, this quote paints a vibrant picture of identity as a dynamic, shifting landscape. It challenges fixed and conventional notions of identity by incorporating a diverse range of cultural, natural, and celestial elements. The juxtaposition of these disparate images serves to blur boundaries and invite the reader to consider identity as a complex and evolving construct. The playful and imaginative language encourages the exploration of identity beyond established categories and definitions.

Postmodernists may help us deepen our appreciation for human relations and, more importantly, they may make it easier to resist the reductionism which apocalypse encourages by shedding light on the complexity and power of human language and symbols and exposing (and challenging) the systems which that language creates and within which we move. All too often, the fatal implications of oversimplifying human motivation and conduct are overlooked, yet these artists prod us into active engagement with the intricacies of human language and relationships.

The novel *I Am Legend* is a hypothetical portrayal of what occurs when fundamental human needs are denied. Matheson vividly depicts a man's plight when he is isolated from all human contact and forced to endure a dangerous environment. Matheson uses this intuitive knowledge of human nature to create a compelling and credible narrative. These end-of-the-world tales may serve as both metaphor and narrative. In the same way, it is a framework for making sense of the world and a source of optimism for a troubled humanity.

2.2.5.2. Mythical and Historical Layers

Historical and mythical themes and figures are interwoven throughout the poem, giving the impression that an individual's sense of self is not static, but rather a multifaceted conglomeration of stories and experiences. Adnan's use of historical and contemporary allusions shows how identity is fluid and changes through time (Palestine, Inca, Che Guevara):

Plainclothed army. Silent hearse. Silenced music. Palestinians with no Palestine.

The night of the Great Inca did not happen. Engineless planes. Extinguished sun.

Guns with faded flowers Che Guevara reduced to ashes No shade.

2.2.6. Language Play and Semiotic Instability

Postmodern works frequently play games with language, blurring traditionally understood boundaries between sign and signified, leading to semiotic instability. Adnan's vocabulary in *The Arab Apocalypse* has poetic and metaphorical qualities that can be examined. The text's daring investigation of language reflects postmodern concerns about language's vagueness and lack of nuance.

The relativists assert that by adopting a perspective that acknowledges the nature of our conceptual systems, we can recognize that the world, its social systems, and even human identity are not inherent or assured by a language that accurately reflects reality. Instead, they are products of our linguistic constructions, which cannot be validated by the argument that they align with an objective reality (Butler 21).

Adnan uses collage and other visual aspects in her work since she is an artist. The border between verbal and visual expression is further blurred by drawings, calligraphy, and other visual components that engage with the text.

Poetic lines and symbols compete for visual supremacy on this first page. The glyphs supplement, emphasize, punctuate, and even erase words and lines. Like the sound of gunshots and the subsequent stillness, they serve as dramatic exclamation points among lines of incomplete ideas. Adnan makes glyphs that seem like Mayan astrological glyphs, Egyptian hieroglyphs, Kabbalah tree of life symbols, and medicine wheels from North America's indigenous cultures. The text's historical and mythological qualities get reified and equated due to the connections to ancient symbols. The reader is left with the impression that the universe and human history dance an immoral, everlasting waltz toward radically divergent goals, punctuated by bursts of powerful visual and aural imagery and silence. Adnan uses this technique to push against the limitations of words alone to depict the horrors of war, and he does it with a flawless astral indifference (Simonton 3).

The medium itself, a chaotic collision of text and symbol, instantly strikes the reader. To exhibit concurrent planes of discourse, poets frequently use internal space to break up long lines of poetry rather than punctuation or regular capitalization. Simple, heavy characters, rendered with shaky calligraphic strokes, further disrupt these shattered lines.
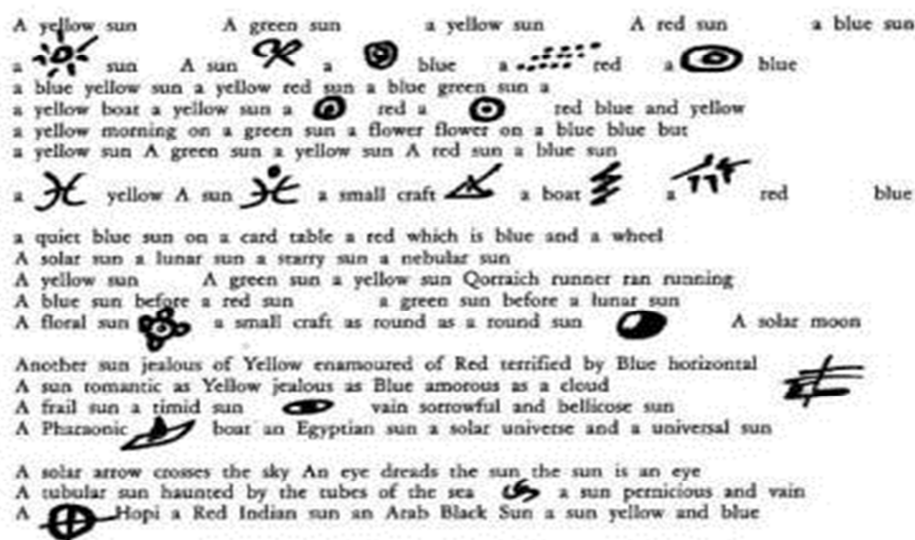
Fig 3: Calligraphic Strokes in *The Arab Apoclaypse*

The book references works of literature, art, philosophy, and politics, among other areas. Adnan's skill in fusing concepts from several fields enhances the text's intellectual depth and semiotic complexity.

Adnan's poetry is polyglot since he regularly translates between Arabic, French, and English. This fuzziness of language provides a feeling of linguistic instability and poses a challenge to established linguistic norms. She may mix scripts, such as writing French or English words using Arabic letters.

2.2.7. Symbolism and Apocalypticism in *the Arab Apocalypse*

The Arab Apocalypse could symbolize the cataclysmic events of the Lebanese Civil War and the broader turmoil in the Arab world. It embodies the destruction and upheaval brought about by war, which reshape societies and challenge conventional narratives. Etel Adnan's *The Arab Apocalypse* is a poetic work that utilizes symbolism to convey its themes and messages. While the book is intricate and open to interpretation, here are some symbolic elements that appear in the text:

a) City and Landscape

The city and landscape serve as powerful symbols throughout the book. They represent not only physical spaces, but also the psychological and emotional states of the people who inhabit them. The destruction of cities mirrors the devastation of war and violence: ""To see Beirut through its flying shoes, and its flames, smoke, soot, and screams" (45).

b) Blood and Violence

Blood is a recurring symbol that represents the violence and suffering inflicted upon the region. The color red, often associated with blood, might symbolize the pain, loss, and

sacrifice experienced during times of conflict: "A white landscape is only paint mixed with spit and blood" (53).

c) Language and Silence

Language and silence are symbolic of communication and its breakdown. Adnan's poems often play with language, and instances of silence (the word STOP) can represent the difficulty of expressing the magnitude of experiences during times of crisis:

"Baudelaire mercenary Gerard de Nerval's assassin STOP" (43)

Non-alphabetical signs can be used to emphasize certain words or phrases or to create moments of silence within the text. These pauses and emphasis points can be seen as symbolic of the weight of unspoken emotions, the gravity of the subject matter, and the need for reflection amidst chaos.

d) Journey and Exile

The concept of journey or exile is a metaphor for displacement, both physical and emotional. The poems often navigate landscapes and spaces that are unfamiliar, reflecting the broader experience of diaspora and loss of home: "I counted the ants and suns blinded me Palestine with no Palestine" (22).

e) Light and Darkness

Light and darkness symbolize hope and despair, life and death, and the contrasts inherent in human experiences. Adnan employs these symbols to convey the juxtaposition of beauty and destruction: "The little lights are not lit. No child has died. No rain" (11).

f) Religious and Spiritual Imagery

References to religious and spiritual concepts can be found in the poems. These symbols highlight the search for meaning, the struggle for transcendence in the face of adversity, and the role of faith during difficult times smohalla (a native religious leader).

"Smohalla Tecummtha Smohalla Tecuma Smohalla":

g) Fragmentation and Non-Linearity

The fragmented nature of the text's language and structure might symbolize the fragmentation of society, identity, and reality in the midst of conflict. Conversely, moments of unity and coherence in the poems can symbolize the potential for connection and understanding. It is important to note that symbolism can be deeply personal and subjective, and interpretations can vary. In *The Arab Apocalypse*, Etel Adnan uses symbols to create a multi-layered and richly textured exploration of war, identity, and human experience in the Arab world.

The Arab Apocalypse is known for its fragmented and non-linear structure. This form challenges the conventional narrative structure that follows a linear progression of events. Instead, Adnan's work offers a fragmented and kaleidoscopic view of the Arab world, suggesting that there are multiple perspectives and interpretations of its history.

My yellow insanity green mud in my veins calcified sun a radar went insane.

Yellow green red purple   cosmic radar   a solar naked and insane man

A sun blue in a black sky a sun young in a black root   YES

A woman solar a woman lunar a female sun snow put into digits

"My yellow insanity green mud in my veins calcified sun a radar went insane": this line seems to juxtapose colors and elements of nature (yellow, green, sun, and mud), suggesting a merging or interplay between the speaker's emotions (insanity), the natural world, and a sense of disarray or chaos ("a radar went insane"). The mention of "calcified sun" might symbolize a sense of rigid or hardened emotional state.

"Yellow green red purple cosmic radar a solar naked and insane man": this line continues with the colorful imagery and introduces the idea of a "cosmic radar," which could be interpreted as a metaphor for heightened awareness or perception. The mention of a "solar naked and insane man" is highly symbolic, possibly representing a figure at the center of this cosmic turmoil.

"A sun blue in a black sky a sun young in a black root YES": this line presents contrasting images of a blue sun against a black sky, suggesting an inversion of natural order. The notion of a "sun young in a black root" is metaphorical and may symbolize the potential for growth and renewal in unexpected or challenging circumstances, emphasized by the affirmative "YES". "A woman solar a woman lunar a female sun snow put into digits": This section introduces feminine imagery associated with celestial bodies (solar, lunar), blurring the lines between traditional gender roles and celestial elements. The phrase "snow put into digits" could be a metaphor for the transformation or quantification of something inherently ephemeral and natural.

h) Desolation and Ruin

The book vividly describes the devastation of cities and landscapes caused by war. The aftermath of conflict is depicted as a form of post-apocalyptic environment, where the structures that once defined these spaces are reduced to rubble and ruins. Conflict trauma changes how individuals see the world. This new viewpoint, like the paradigm shift seen in

many post-apocalyptic fiction, forces readers to question long-held beliefs and encourages them to reevaluate the world as they know it. Although *The Arab Apocalypse* does not follow the typical post-apocalyptic patterns of speculative fiction, its examination of the aftermath of battle is consistent with common post-apocalyptic themes such as change, upheaval, and adaptability. The effects of conflict on the Arab world are examined in a fresh and deeply felt way via the lyrical language and images of Adnan's writing.

i) Gilgamesh

Gilgamesh is an ancient Sumerian king and a legendary figure in Mesopotamian mythology. In Adnan's poems, references to Gilgamesh might symbolize the enduring nature of historical narratives and the connection between past and present. Gilgamesh's quest for immortality could reflect the broader search for meaning in a world scarred by conflict.

g) Scheherazade

Scheherazade is a storyteller from *One Thousand and One Nights*, a collection of Middle Eastern and South Asian folk tales. She saves her own life by telling stories to a king. In *The Arab Apocalypse*, Scheherazade could represent the power of storytelling to preserve memory, cope with trauma, and offer a sense of continuity amidst chaos.

k) Warriors and Soldiers

Figures of warriors and soldiers throughout the poems represent the individuals caught up in conflict. These figures symbolize the human cost of war, depicting the struggle, suffering, and sacrifice of those directly involved in violence.

l) Citizens and Civilians

References to citizens and civilians underscore the impact of war on ordinary people. These figures embody the vulnerability of individuals in the face of larger geopolitical forces.

m) Lovers

The presence of lovers in the poems can symbolize the search for connection and meaning in a world marred by violence. Love might be seen as a counterpoint to the destruction, offering a glimpse of humanity's potential for tenderness amidst turmoil.

n) Children

Children are often symbols of innocence and the future. In the context of the poems, references to children could evoke a sense of vulnerability and the harsh realities that affect the next generation.

2.3. Rethinking the Past: Historiographic Metafiction in *The Arab Apocalypse*

Deconstructing and subverting established narratives is a common tactic in postmodern writing. How *The Arab Apocalypse* undermines and confuses more straightforward historical narratives and modes of storytelling could be the subject of analysis. Adnan's prose produces a messy, meandering story that defies direct labeling.

When it comes to postmodern literature, the integrity of the past is often questioned, opening the door for works of historiographic metafiction. Adnan's work, which features extensive manipulation and rewriting of historical accounts, has been labeled as historiographic metafiction. By painting a picture of history as fragmented and subjective, Adnan casts doubt on the concept that there is a single, objective truth about the past. The past is not a closed system.

Historiographic metafiction, like other postmodern art forms, often juxtaposes the world of the past and the world of the present and closes the gap between these two. Postmodern fiction implies that rewriting and presenting the past in fiction and history means opening it

up to the present. In other words, postmodern fiction opens itself up to account, which prevents it from being conclusive (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 110, 124).

Critics of postmodernism, such as Fredric Jameson, a Marxist scholar, argue that rejecting Enlightenment, rationality, Kantian human agency, and any notion of objective truth within the postmodern framework has resulted in a distinct absence of historical consciousness in society. This absence is characterized by a pervasive lack of depth and a perpetual focus on the present, where the collective memory of tradition has been eroded (Butler 110).

2.3.1. Historical Memory

Many poems examine Arab history, mythology, and the region's shared cultural memory. Adnan makes inferences from the past to the present, emphasizing the impact of the past on the current situation. Adnan makes numerous allusions to famous people from history and mythology, including Gilgamesh and Scheherazade. These statues represent the timeless value of traditions and the bonds that unite generations. They also symbolize the ability of stories to hold onto important information and details throughout time:

A yellow sun a black sun a red sun a white sun

The sun moves in our eyes   the sun is an Arab corpse

Sun of Babylon sun of Galgamesh sun of Mohammed (32)

2.3.3. Global Perspective and Local Narratives

Postmodernism generally rejects universal stories in favor of more specific ones. Analyzing Adnan's *The Arab Apocalypse* through the lens of his resistance to western-centric narratives and his emphasis on the value of several cultural perspectives allows us to better understand his treatment of the Arab world.

> I counted one sun after another and my legs got covered with ants
>
> I counted the ants and suns blinded me Palestine with no Palestine
>
> A blue acetylene sun died of frost in the presence of a palm tree (22).
>
> My legs were coated in ants as I counted the suns.

This statement alludes to a meditative practice of watching the sun go across the sky. When the speaker feels ants crawling up his or her legs, it is more immediate, palpable, and sometimes unpleasant local sensation.

"Palestine with no Palestine: I counted the ants and the suns blinded me." This sentence adds a new, profound dimension to the piece. Counting ants and then saying, "Suns blinded me," both have symbolic meaning. It might be interpreted to imply that dwelling on specifics can result in a dazzling or overpowering insight into the bigger picture, such as the predicament in Palestine. "Palestine with no Palestine" may be an apt metaphor for the region's geopolitical ambiguity and strife.

According to the verse, "a blue acetylene sun died of frost in the presence of a palm tree": There is a wealth of metaphor and meaning in just one statement. An intriguing picture, the "blue acetylene sun" suggests a bright, artificial light source. Given that frost is normally associated with cold, and acetylene flames are very hot, the thought that it would die of frost poses a contradiction. This may indicate an opposition between opposing forces, such as the struggle between technology and nature. The picture is made more personal and culturally significant by including a palm tree, a regional icon.

Overall, this remark shows a worldview by contrasting universal (suns) and particular (ants, palm tree) phenomena. It struggles with the ambiguities and tensions that arise when thinking about the big picture (the world at large) and the little concept (the author's own life). The

tension and reflection on global concerns, especially in Palestine, are intended effects of the used images and metaphors.

2.4. The Postmodern Apocalypse: Themes and Variations in *The Arab Apocalypse*

In the context of the title, "The Postmodern Apocalypse: Themes and Variations", 'variations' means various literary treatments of the postmodern apocalypse's fundamental ideas. It hints that, although defining features of the postmodern apocalypse exist, each literary work has its manner of exploring and depicting these features.

Postmodernism seeks to shed light on the underlying meta-narratives that guide our everyday lives. Apocalypse is both a metaphor and a tale, providing a framework for making sense of the world and offering a glimmer of hope to struggling people. Many postmodernists argue that the concept of the apocalypse depends on the ideology of the group in power at the time. Artists are naturally curious about the apocalyptic myth in all its manifestations, whether it is a metaphor, a tale, a system for making sense of the world, or a source of hope (Rutters 16).

Different works might have similar overarching ideas while having vastly different presentational features, viewpoints, styles, and situations, which is what is meant by 'variations' here. There might be a rich tapestry of creative inquiry within the overall topic since each literary work has its complex perspective on the postmodern apocalypse, adopting and interpreting the main principles uniquely.

The concept of a postmodern apocalypse reflects the idea of a cataclysmic event that not only physically disrupts the world, but also challenges the very foundations of reality, meaning, and understanding in a way that aligns with postmodern thought. It is a creative and thought-provoking exploration of how philosophical and cultural ideas can intersect with dramatic storytelling:

Post" implies after but with no indication of whither next … Postmodernism is Apocalyptic. Or, if not in the full Christian millenarian sense of a Last Judgement, ushering in a new Jerusalem, then Apocalyptic in its sense of crisis. (Waugh 9)

Lee Quinby provides a useful framework for analyzing postmodern apocalypse when he writes that the end of the world is "a narrative that seeks to be non-narrative, to get beyond the strictures of time and space" (Cristofaro 72). Postmodernists undoubtedly want to break free from the constraints of space and time. In doing so, they want to reveal the metaphoric structures underlying our worldview and the narratives used by the current quo to preserve its power and remove the fictions that rule our lives.

A further example of what Slavoj zizek calls the "globalization of domestic politics" in the west is seen in the poetry of Adnan "a normalization of the unthinkable", (Simonton 1) a state of brinksmanship, stalemate, and a crisis mentality unable to focus on the brutality of fact required to find solutions, which instead denies and exacerbates the situation through a "direct will to ignorance" which in turn increases the popularity of end-times belief (Ibid).

2.4.1. *The Arab Apocalypse* between the Apocalyptic Imagination and the Post-Apocalyptic Imagination

As was said up above, the end of one planet, year, or century is followed by the beginning of another in traditional apocalyptic legends. In contrast, the post-apocalypse describes the time after such a revival has failed to take place. Post-apocalyptic literature often focuses on the world after the catastrophe, when there is no longer a prospect of reestablishing order. The post-apocalyptic world exists in a time of transition between the pre- and post-apocalyptic eras, when order may be restored in the far future. As this environment is (re)constructed from various historical artifacts, it might be thought of as a postmodern bricolage stagnant tide.

In his introduction to his novel *Father Elijah: An Apocalypse*, Michael O'Brien uses a similar definition for a literary apocalypse:

An apocalypse is a work of literature dealing with the end of human history. For millennia apocalypses of various sorts have arisen throughout the world in the cultural life of many peoples and religions. They are generated by philosophical speculation, by visions of the future, or by inarticulate longings and apprehensions, and not infrequently by the abiding human passion for what J. R. R. Tolkien called "sub-creation". These poems, epics, fantasies, myths, and prophetic works bear a common witness to man's transient state upon the earth. Man is a stranger and sojourner. His existence is inexpressibly beautiful—and dangerous. It is fraught with mysteries that beg to be deciphered.

The Greek word 'apokalypsis' means an uncovering, or revealing. Through such revelations man gazes into the panorama of human history in search of the key to his identity, in search of permanence and completion. (53). There is a confusion between apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic exists in studies of religion as well as in studies of popular culture, literature, cinema, and television:

To date, relatively few studies have specifically examined post-apocalyptic fiction as a genre apart from the science fiction genre. Further, the post-apocalyptic has most often been studied as a component of apocalyptic fiction and/or futuristic (science) fiction. This general lack of a distinct conception of the post-apocalyptic genre is, in part, caused by (or, at least, evidenced in) the lack of consensus regarding the distinctness of post-apocalyptic definitions and boundaries (Stifflemire 1).

Post-apocalyptic ideas are intermingled with violence, devastation, and the aftermath of battle in the Arab world in *The Arab Apocalypse*. The book does not show a typical post-apocalyptic situation, but it does deal with the aftermath of violence and revolution, which

might be seen as a 'post-apocalypse' in the context of the war-torn environments and cultures that Adnan discusses.

Elizabeth Rosen, in *Apocalyptic Transformation*, discusses the postmodern quest for just such an alternative. She assumes that what makes an artwork postmodern, as well as, undermines the distinctive features of the apocalyptic narrative. Challenging the dominant power regime imposed by the apocalyptic metanarrative allows authors to move beyond the Book of Revelation's absolute truth and moral dualism and seek out other, perhaps less oppressive, certainly less binary rigid, moral systems. Therefore, her work addresses the issue of what occurs when a writer dismantles the master narrative of the apocalypse.

The recognition and comprehension of Harry Potter as a work of postmodern apocalyptic fiction carries significant implications for the pedagogical instruction of readers in matters of morality, in a manner that transcends dualistic thinking. This approach fosters a proactive involvement with the intricate nature of human language and relationships, while discouraging the perilous outcomes that arise from oversimplifying human motivations and behaviors (Rosen 178).

2.4.2. Forecasting the Future in *The Arab Apocalypse*: A Prophetic Overview

In this sense, the speaker acting as a prophet reveals the sun's role. Thus, getting out the burden of knowledge, changing and reality is the prophet's task. It is a spiritual process that made rebirth possible. The speaker clarifies "I am the prophet of a useless nation" "I am a sniper with glued hair on my temples" "I am the terrorist hidden in the hold of a cargo from Argentina" "I am the judge sitting in every computer shouting FREEDOM IS FOR WHEN?" "Amidst a smell of corpses forgotten by the garbage collector" (41).

> A green sun   a yellow sun   A red sun
>
> a blue sun
>
> a sun A   sun a blue a red   a   blue
>
> a blue yellow sun a yellow red sun a blue green sun a
>
> a yellow boat a yellow sun a red a red blue and yellow
>
> a yellow morning on a green sun a flower flower on a blue blue but
>
> a yellow sun A green sun a yellow sun A red sun a blue sun. (7)

It is noteworthy to mention that the rhythmic arrangement of signifiers/nouns or phrases evokes a sense of order, similar to militant order. *The Arab Apocalypse* adopts a postmodern style starting with smashing the role of the sun as a constructor: it swallows everything. The vertical mentioning of the letter "a", furthermore, denotes screaming or rising human voice.

The night of the non-event. War in the vacant sky. The Phantom's absence. Funerals. Coffin not covered with roses. Unarmed population. Long. The yellow sun's procession from the mosque to the mosque to the vacant Place. Mute taxis.

> Plainclothed army. Silent hearse. Silenced music. Palestinians with no Palestine
>
> The night of the great Inca did not happen. Engineless planes. Extinguished sun.
>
> Fishermen with no fleet fish with no sea fleet with no fish sea without fishermen
>
> Guns with faded flowers Che Guevara reduced to ashes. (11)

Don Delillo's essay, "In the Ruins of the Future", was written shortly after the 9/11. There, he frames the incident directly in terms of the war between terrorists and the United States, stating, "Apocalypse has no logic … This is paradise and hell, a notion of armed martyrdom

as the climax of the human experience" (34). A violent drama of apocalyptic conflict, a war of narratives in which one side has momentarily won a catastrophic edge, has forced the collapse of previous logics and narratives.

In *Falling Man*, the revelation of these new realities to the protagonist is what makes the situation so devastating. The biblical roots of the term warn that at the end of the world, many things, such as the secret operations of agents and, like the removal of the face of an analog clock, the workings of the power systems from which "new" forces emanate, will be "uncovered". Marco Abel argues that "In the Ruins of the Future" responds to 9/11 "by mobilizing seeing as a narrative mode that functions from within the image event without depending on the exterior signifiers of plot or character" (195). By forcefully calling our attention to the violence done by our own processes of constructing meaning and establishing common recognition through the event of September 11th and its aftermath, one might say that *Falling Man*, as a fiction, enacts its own type of apocalyptic terror. Much of Dewey's study is dedicated to the literary manifestations of the apocalyptic temper in the face of the nuclear threat:

> The task of the genuine prophet was not to predict but to confront man with the alternatives of decision … The prophetic faith involves the faith in the factual character of human existence, as existence that factually meets transcendence. Prophecy has in its way declared that the unique being, man, is created to be a center of surprise in creation. (138)

2.4.3. Deconstructing the Role of the Sun as a Constructor

The Arab Apocalypse's speaker echoes the poem's universality by referring to cosmic entities, such as the sun, the sea, and the night. Seymour-Jorn, in her article titled "A Critique of Colonialism and Imperialism", interprets *The Arab Apocalypse* as depicting a cosmic fight

between the sun and the sea, which she likens to a colonial connection between the sun and the sea. She perceives the sun as a colonizer of the sea, embodying Edward Said's beliefs on colonial relationships, where the dominating power is at once drawn to, repelled by, and determined to rule its subject (42).

The sun, a term repeated frequently throughout *The Arab Apocalypse*, may, at first glance, appear to be the poem's principal character. Furthermore, various continually changing characteristics distinguish the sun. It is mentioned in multi-colored forms—a yellow, a green, a red, and a blue sun—as well as in conjunction with several entities, such as galaxies, stars, and the moon. It is also possible that the sun presented as multicolored planet symbolizes different entities which are awakened. In this regard, Hillary Plum states:

The noun, the sun, may seem a stable unit of language, but the poem's syntax will keep it in swift enough motion that we cannot envision that which it represents finally or familiarly. The invocation of this series of colors emphasizes both the potential of human agency in portraying the sun—we may represent the sun however we wish, as a color it is not: green, blue, red; we may accuse it of human qualities such as frailty or jealousy—and the absolute limits to our perception of it. (9)

In Near Eastern myth, the sun is itself one of many offspring of sky and earth. The story most relevant to Adnan's text is familiar to western audiences in the form of the Greek succession myth, which details, in many variants, Zeus's origin—a third-generation product of incest, cannibalism, treachery, castration, and usurpation of power. It is a torturously physical story of pregnancy and obstruction of birth (first Gaia then Chronos swallowing children imprisoned in their bellies), of mothers' pain leading to sons wresting control from the father, of the agony of bringing forth life that signals one's own death, and of repeated generations' inability to transcend the pattern.

The sun is the ultimate authority in the Fertile Crescent, and "the Rider of clouds" plants his generative seed inside the goddess herself. In *The Arab Apocalypse*, the moon, fertility, and the sea—the feminine principle—are personified by Helios, Baal, Marduk, and Bel, along with their plethora of consorts (Anat, Ishtar, and Isis). Isis and Ishtar go to the underworld to rescue their brother/lover Osiris, while Anat cannibalizes the sun and moon to recapture them, following in the footsteps of Gaia and Chronos. These story variations circulate around the area, taking on new identities as they shift form and gender.

However, the Middle East as a whole, the cradle of war and sun worship, vengeance and martyrdom, can never achieve peace via force. Only the first and greatest deity, the Sun, can put an end to the agony of human battle, which the gods of myth have been using as a template for eons. Adnan claims the astronomical clock is the only thing keeping us from an ecological cataclysm (58:9-12, 77).

After the sun has devoured the children of the solar system, only then will the atoms of matter find love and serenity in the pitch darkness of space. Her outlook is bleak, but her poetry is a witness to the violence of both the physical cosmos (as seen by nova explosions and the death of bloated red giants) and the violence of humankind (as demonstrated by the murderous succession myth).

2.4.4. Fragmentation, Emptiness and Futility

This passage captures the disorienting and fragmented nature of a postmodern apocalypse. It explores themes of loss, emptiness, futility, and disconnection, often associated with the postmodern worldview. Using symbolic language and disjointed imagery invites readers to interpret and contemplate the meaning within the context of a world in crisis.

The wind neither rose nor subsided. The Jews are absent. Flat tires .

The little lights are not lit. No child has died. No rain.

I did not say that spring was breathing. The dead did not return."

"The mosque has launched its unheeded prayer. Lost in the waves.

The street lost its stones. Brilliant asphalt. Useless roads. Dead Army.

Snuffed is the street. To shut off the gaz. Refugees with no refuge no candle.

The procession hasn't been scared. Time went by. Silent Phantom. (11)

Fragmented and disconnected statements characterize the passage. This mirrors the postmodern tendency to break down traditional narratives and question the coherence of reality. The lack of clear connections between sentences and ideas may suggest a fractured world or a sense of disorientation. The mention of absence and emptiness, such as the absence of Jews, unlit lights, no rain, and a dead army, can be seen as a commentary on the loss of meaning and purpose in a postmodern, apocalyptic world. It reflects a sense of abandonment or desolation. References to the mosque's prayer going unheeded and the street losing its stones suggest a breakdown in cultural and historical traditions. This could symbolize a loss of identity or a disconnection from cultural heritage in the postmodern context.

The mention of "useless roads" and the need to "shut off the gaz" (gas) implies a sense of futility and pointlessness in the actions or systems of this world. Postmodernism often explores the idea of meaninglessness and the absurdity of human existence. The reference to "refugees with no refuge" highlights the theme of displacement and the plight of people who are uprooted from their homes. This is a common theme in postmodern literature, reflecting the instability and dislocation of the modern world. The mention of the procession not being scared and time passing silently might suggest a sense of inevitability and the relentless march

of time, even in the face of the apocalypse. It could also hint at the idea that life goes on despite the chaos and destruction.

The phrase "Silent Phantom" at the end of the passage could represent an enigmatic and elusive presence or force in this apocalyptic world. It may symbolize the unknown and the mysterious aspects of existence that remain beyond human comprehension.

Weightless blackness. Motionless cold around a non-existent fire.

Car with no driver Achrafieh-Hamra words under lock. Fear with no substance.

Windowless walled City. A dead man forced to go home on foot. A bullet in the belly.

(12)

2.4.5. Destruction and Deicide, Nature in Crisis and Existential Angst

This passage uses intense and disjointed imagery to convey a sense of disorientation, violence, and existential distress in the context of a postmodern apocalypse. It touches on themes related to nature's degradation, cultural blending, the collapse of belief systems, and the breakdown of language and communication. It invites readers to grapple with the chaotic and uncertain nature of existence in a postmodern world that has experienced a kind of apocalyptic transformation:

"A yellow sun   in the gully   red wine blood zebra stripes in the solar sky!!!

"A green sun streaked with Indians   O massacre in splendor!!!!

A Nilotic sluice stopping the sun the moon terrified   O crushed legend???!

O fear   O pain   spinal cord plundered by the conquest

Solar palm tree immense cancer on a milky way the Constellations of Sorrow

A Nubian nubile spring rape of almond trees in no-flowers. Diaphanous flowers.

An Arab tortured mutilated vomits the sun hangs his feet. Meticulously"(13).

The imagery of the sun and its various transformations (yellow, green, glacial, tearful) can be seen as a representation of nature in crisis. Postmodern literature often explores environmental concerns, and here, the sun's erratic behavior may symbolize the ecological upheaval and degradation that can accompany an apocalyptic scenario. The fragmented and surreal descriptions of the sun, including its changing colors and behaviors, reflect the disorientation and fragmentation often associated with postmodernism.

The repetition of "O fear" and "O pain" underscores individuals' emotional and psychological turmoil in a chaotic world. The references to Yemen, Sierra, and Nubian nubile spring suggest a blend of cultural and geographical elements. In a postmodern context, this mixing of cultural references can highlight the interconnectedness and hybridity of cultures in a globalized world, even in the midst of chaos. The description of the sun settling in the speaker's head and eyes of toys can be interpreted as an expression of existential angst. It reflects a sense of powerlessness or a loss of control over one's own thoughts and perceptions in a world that has become surreal and nightmarish. The idea of the sun eating its own words and a "dialectical and Yemenite" sun knocking at the door may suggest a breakdown in language and communication, which is another theme often explored in postmodern literature. The inability to communicate effectively in a world in crisis can contribute to feelings of alienation and isolation.

This passage, like the previous one, employs vivid and disjointed imagery to convey a sense of disorientation, violence, and existential distress within the context of a postmodern apocalypse. It continues to explore themes related to the degradation of nature, cultural blending, loss of communication, and the search for meaning in a fragmented and chaotic world. The use of abstract and symbolic language invites readers to grapple with the

complexities and uncertainties of existence in a postmodern age marked by a kind of apocalyptic transformation.

O moaning HOU HOU HOU like wind in the belly HOU HOU HOU HOU HOU

MORE THAN WIDOWED

Sun-telephone. Sun thick tomb's silence telephone silence. SPIDER.

A sun weary of rolling a sun tossed away a sick sun shining through its agony" (16)

"O disaster STOP O sun STOP O bliss STOP STOP a broken engine

Voyage to the hollow of a valley in the center   of my memory   sulfuric burns

I tell the sun's story it answers I decode it sends new messages I decode. (17)

2.4.5.1. Landscape, Memory, Survivorship, and Community

Commonly, the post-apocalyptic is associated with a wasteland setting, a devastated landscape. While this is often the case (such as in *The Road Warrior* and *The Road* 2006), there are other important defining characteristics of the post-apocalyptic world. As mentioned above, the meaningful hierarchies and beliefs that established order in the pre-apocalyptic world are absent in the post-apocalyptic world. Although post-apocalyptic loss may be conveyed by a setting of a barren landscape, it is neither the only nor the most important means of doing so. The post-apocalyptic nature of *The Road Warrior* is established not only by its bleak setting but also by the social structure of the world depicted in the narrative. This distinction can be further examined by comparing the first two films in the Mad Max series. While *The Road* Warrior is a post-apocalyptic narrative set in a post-apocalyptic world with a devastated setting, the first Mad Max film (1979) is not set in a post-apocalyptic world although it is set against a bleak landscape. Max Rockatansky works for a governmental agency as a policeman and ultimately embarks on a revenge quest.

The narrative and the world in which it transpires do not support Mad Max being an ideal post-apocalyptic text. If a barren or desolate setting were the only requirement to be post-apocalyptic, then any film shot in the Australian outback and any Italian neorealist "rubble" film would be post-apocalyptic. Although a wasteland may certainly be an element of a post-apocalyptic world, the genre is defined by more than its setting. In the post-apocalyptic genre, the landscape of memory is as important as the landscape of the setting. While the post-apocalyptic world is often visually represented by a barren wasteland, post-apocalyptic memory is also a wasteland. A devastated setting reveals the absent presence of the physical world that once was, yet the landscape of memory itself is also an absent presence in the genre, as survivors in a time after the end must face the loss of the people, the places, and the time to which their memories refer.

As post-apocalyptic is not simply a time after the apocalypse (in the popular sense), but is also a time existing after faith and hope in meaningful existence, memories have also lost their meaning—what once allowed for nostalgic mental and emotional connections now haunt those who continue to survive after all that was once meaningful has become severed from the referents. Although its setting is not the wasteland that has popularly become characteristic of post-apocalyptic films, Alain Resnais' 'Last Year' at Marienbad (1961) is centrally concerned with a post-apocalyptic landscape of memory. The narrative of the film comprises memories that may or may not be accurate reflections of events, relationships, or even time. In this sense, the wasteland is not a barren physical location but rather a jumble of memories, the meaning of which is left ambiguous. Instead of being conveyed through a devastated locale, the post-apocalyptic nature of the film is expressed through its absence of meaningful narrative structure and lack of reliable narration. Although it is unclear whether or not Last Year at Marienbad is set after the apocalypse in the popular sense, the world of the film certainly exists after the loss of faith in traditional apocalyptic myths. An end has come, and

there is no power (divine or otherwise) to reveal a renewal of order. As with the physical setting, the landscape of memory is not the only criterion defining the post-apocalyptic genre, but it is a significant aspect that defines the genre more narrowly than many popular conceptions of post-apocalyptic fiction.

In addition to and often associated with memory, the post-apocalyptic genre is also significantly concerned with notions of survivorship. A recurring narrative throughout the post-apocalyptic genre is the story of survival—an individual or a small group that has survived an acute, catastrophic event must struggle to continue to survive in the inhospitable post-apocalyptic world. For example, the protagonists in *The Road* and *The Walking Dead* must continually scavenge for resources and fight others who threaten their survival. However, the theme of survivorship is not simply about surviving conflicts with nature and other survivors. Those who survive must also confront the hopelessness and meaninglessness of post-apocalyptic life. As depicted in the novel *I Am Legend* and the film Zombie land (2009), winning one fight for survival simply means that you are still around to fight another. The difficulties of surviving in the post-apocalyptic world are typically meaningless, even in the end, when there are no answers to the question of what it means to be a survivor in a world bereft of hope and haunted by the absence of the world and the individuals that are gone.

Related to survivorship, the post-apocalyptic genre also explores ideas of community. In the post-apocalyptic world, communities often form to facilitate survival. However, these communities take a different structure than those that existed before the apocalypse. Traditional hierarchies are replaced by communities of convenience and communities of necessity with power structures based on survival abilities rather than political or monetary ascendency. Additionally, these communities are vulnerable to breakdown not only from physical threats, but also from the lack of cohesiveness among their members. In the post-

apocalyptic world, individuals have been dislocated from communities which had met social needs beyond merely basic survival by offering shared rituals, practices, and symbols. As these individuals from disparate backgrounds come together simply for survival, these groups are often unstable and unable to provide shared social and emotional connections. Also, large imagined communities are not viable, for the immediacy of the post-apocalyptic world does not allow for simultaneous engagement in shared practices and symbols across space. In the post-apocalyptic world, connections are lost when old communities are disrupted, and constant threats challenge the possibility of forming new, stable social connections

The Arab Apocalypse contains vivid and evocative imagery that can be interpreted as signs or symbols related to the apocalypse. Here are some excerpts that allude to apocalyptic themes and offer glimpses into the author's portrayal of the tumultuous state of the Arab world during the Lebanese Civil War:

"To have broken the horizon into a thousand shards that let nothing through." (49): this line suggests a shattered world, where the horizon itself is fragmented. The imagery of shattered shards can be seen as a sign of the apocalypse, representing the brokenness and chaos resulting from conflict.

"Nothing can be looked at without bursting into tears." (Ibid): This line conveys a sense of overwhelming sadness and despair, which aligns with the emotional turmoil often associated with apocalyptic scenarios. It hints at a devastating world that even observing it prompts uncontrollable emotions.

"A white landscape is only paint mixed with spit and blood" (Ibid): here, the contrast between the purity of white and the mix of paint, spit, and blood creates a vivid image of corruption and decay. This mixture symbolizes the contamination and violence that have affected the landscape.

The narrator states: "In every direction there is slaughter, in every corner there is a gasp" (Ibid). This excerpt speaks to the widespread violence and suffering. The pervasive nature of slaughter and gasping reflects an environment overwhelmed by destruction and death, contributing to an apocalyptic atmosphere.

Then, the narrator describes: "To see Beirut through its flying shoes, and its flames, smoke, soot, and screams" (Ibid). The image of a city seen through chaos, including flying shoes, flames, smoke, and screams, suggests a city in turmoil. These elements symbolize destruction and turmoil often linked to apocalyptic scenarios. "The cities burn in the corners of the world.": This line conjures an image of cities engulfed in flames, signaling a state of crisis and destruction. The burning cities evoke images of a world undergoing catastrophic change.

"A cave, a womb, a monster, a letter in a foreign alphabet": this collection of disparate images can be seen as symbolic of transformation and uncertainty. The references to a cave, womb, and monster evoke notions of rebirth, chaos, and the unknown, which can be associated with apocalyptic themes.

"Here at the crossroads of the night, we face each other, humans and beasts, and speak the words of despair": the image of humans and beasts facing each other in the night, sharing words of despair, suggests a convergence of different forces in a moment of crisis. This moment of confrontation and dialogue reflects the upheaval that often accompanies apocalyptic narratives.

2.4.6. End of Certainties

War's turmoil dismantles settled narratives and dismantles certainties. After the collapse of society, survivors in post-apocalyptic settings often feel lost and question long-held beliefs

and customs. The End of Certainties in postmodernism refers to the rejection of dogmatic adherence to any one version of reality in favor of an appreciation for its inherent fluidity and complexity. There will be significant changes to our worldview as a result of this transformation.

2.4.7. Loss of Meaning and Identity

Poems typically lament the loss of loved ones, properties, and traditions as a consequence of the conflict. Mourning and sadness follow such losses, and the resulting void and desolation are evocative of a post-apocalyptic landscape.

Search for Meaning: The poems reflect a search for meaning in the midst of chaos. Adnan grapples with philosophical questions about existence, fate, and the purpose of life. *The Arab Apocalypse* is a complex and emotionally charged work that delves into the depths of human experience during times of crisis. Adnan's poetic language and imagery create a powerful narrative that engages with historical, cultural, and existential dimensions of the Arab world.

2.5. Narrative Strategies in Postmodern Apocalyptic Literature

Authors of postmodern apocalyptic fiction use these techniques to provide a novel and, at times, provocative take on the end of the world. These methods both represent the layered and confusing character of apocalyptic situations and explore deeper philosophical and cultural questions.

2.5.1. Nonlinear and Disruptive Narratives

Postmodern apocalypse stories may experiment with narrative form, using non-linear timelines, unreliable narrators, and fragmented storytelling to convey the disorientation that

readers could feel in the face of the catastrophe. One way to understand Adnan's discordant and fragmentary prose is to examine her tactics inside *The Arab Apocalypse*. By comparison, it is also a method to feel the battle it depicts more acutely. The reader's experience of trying to follow her thought trains is like to rebuilding a structure or a body after a destructive event: it is laborious at best and never complete. Unreliable narrators and various points of view are commonplace in postmodern writing, where they are used to question the veracity of the tale being told. Here is an explanation of how these elements are utilized in postmodernism. Experiment with shifts in narrative perspective throughout the text. Adnan's work already contains different voices and perspectives, but you can expand on this by adding more distinct voices or by giving certain characters or viewpoints more prominence in the narrative. Incorporate flashbacks that reveal the unreliability of memory. Characters can recall events in ways that are inconsistent with one another, highlighting the subjective nature of recollection.

Encourage readers to actively engage with the text by inviting them to question the reliability of narrators and draw their own conclusions. You can achieve this through open-ended narratives, ambiguous endings, or discussion prompts.

Incorporating unreliable narrators and multiple perspectives in your exploration of *The Arab Apocalypse* can enhance the complexity of the narrative and help readers grapple with the uncertainties and subjectivity inherent in the aftermath of apocalyptic events, aligning with the themes and style of Adnan's work.

2.6. Hope and Despair: Ambiguity in Postmodern Apocalyptic Endings

Postmodern literature often delves into the interplay between hope and despair in stories about the end of the world, creating uncertain conclusions that defy typical ideas of wrapping things up neatly. Within these narratives, hope and despair mingle, blurring the boundary between salvation and ruin. Books like Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and Margaret Atwood's "MaddAddam" trilogy epitomize these themes. In *The Road*, a father and son traverse a barren, post-apocalyptic world where their survival remains uncertain. The book's ending is open-ended, leaving readers to contemplate the characters' destiny and the potential for hope amidst devastation.

Likewise, Atwood's "MaddAddam" trilogy portrays a society wrecked by environmental catastrophes and societal breakdowns. Despite the grim backdrop, instances of hope surface through human connections and resilience. However, the uncertain ending encourages readers to contemplate the elusive nature of hope in the face of despair.

These narratives challenge readers to grapple with the intricate relationship between hope and despair, opting for ambiguity over clear-cut conclusions—a defining trait of postmodern apocalyptic stories.

2.6.1. Resilience and Hope

Despite the dark themes, the poems have moments of resilience and hope. Adnan suggests that even in the face of immense challenges, there is room for strength and the possibility of rebuilding. While *The Arab Apocalypse* deals with the horrors of war, it also celebrates the triumph of the human spirit in the face of adversity. The notion of survivors picking up the pieces and moving on with their lives is reflected here.

When the sun will run its ultimate road

Fire will devour beasts plants and stones

fire will devour the fire and its perfect circle

when the perfect circle will catch fire no angel will manifest itself STOP

the sun will extinguish the gods the angels and men

and it will extinguish itself in the midst of its daughters

Matter-Spirit will become the NIGHT

In the night in the night we shall find knowledge love and peace. (78)

Even if postmodern artists have been called "good critical deconstructs and tribe constructors" (Rosen 44), one may argue that by deconstructing, apocalypse, they are really building something. In other words, the postmodernists under examination show their own optimism for a better world by pointing out the flaws in the mythical New Jerusalem. These postmodern artists, by reimagining the traditional myth with its promise of a new heaven on earth, not only expose the dangerous consequences of an overzealous commitment to the conventional apocalyptic narrative, but also imply that we might seek less combustible creeds in which to place our hopes, perhaps suggesting that rather than investing our hope in the afterlife, we might by peaceful means actively seek to improve our lives in the here and now.

The first of these end-of-the-world stories occurs in wartime London at the start of Gravity's Rainbow. Pynchon equates the catastrophe he envisions in this passage with an existential apocalypse and the end of the individual. The collapse of great Western narratives like religion and progress and the disintegration of ontological underpinnings like time and space are central to this phenomenon. Pynchon's novel, set in the specter of the bomb, describes the arrival of the postmodern and (post-apocalyptic in the same way that Friedrich Nietzsche announced the "advent of nihilism" and Michel Foucault suggested that the human being of modernity was "de-historicised"(Foucault 368-9).

Gravity's Rainbow challenges and subverts the apocalyptic meta-narrative, notably that of Revelation, but it also highlights the crises inside the emerging age we have come to call postmodernity, on both the communal and individual levels.

2.6.2. Spiritual Reflection

Adnan's pursuit of spirituality and transcendence in the middle of the turmoil represents a yearning for purpose and connection in a world that has been devastated by war and nuclear annihilation. Like many post-apocalyptic stories, the poems ponder the connection between the physical and the ethereal.

2.6.3. Open Endings and Interpretation

The Arab Apocalypse touches on war, identity, displacement, and the human condition. These themes are explored in a way that doesn't provide definitive answers or conclusions. Readers are invited to contemplate these themes and apply them to their own understanding of the text. In *The Arab Apocalypse* by Etel Adnan, open endings and interpretation play a significant role in engaging readers and inviting them to participate in the creation of meaning actively. Adnan's writing style, which is often abstract and poetic, lends itself well to open-ended narratives and multiple interpretations.

According to Frank Kermode, the apocalypse is a powerful mode because its connotations are open to interpretation and it gives individuals a sense of purpose and direction in life. Kermode calls the enduring interest in apocalyptic literature a "perpetual crisis" (28) and observes that although fewer people may now believe in an "imminent" end of the world, they do have a growing awareness of its pervasive presence:

Our end-determined fictions … are placed at what Dante calls the point where all times are present, il punto a cui tutti li tempi son presenti; or within the shadow of it. It gives each

moment its fullness. And although for us the End has perhaps lost its naïve imminence, its shadow still lies on the crises of our fictions; we may speak of it as immanent (6).

2.6.3.1. Subversion of Redemption Narratives

The Arab Apocalypse by Etel Adnan subverts redemption narratives by presenting a fragmented, unresolved, and complex portrayal of the aftermath of war and conflict. It challenges the reader's expectations of finding redemption or closure in the face of violence, loss, and cultural dislocation, reflecting the complexities and uncertainties of post-war experiences.

Many apocalyptic myths involve destruction followed by reconstruction (39) (e.g. in the biblical myth of Noah) with the reborn world rising a new out of the flood, better than its preceding version and populated only by the worthy. Most apocalyptic myths are indeed optimistic (40), presumably because those who conceived them were most likely looking for a comeback. The examples are numerous, ranging from religious texts up to modern political rhetoric. The 18th century Jansenists, who interpreted their own persecution as a clear sign of the incoming apocalypse (81), are just one of several Christian groups that translated their severe distress into end-of the-world prophecies – as much as the most celebrated biblical prophets' revelations "echo the imagery of angry exiles" (30-31).

According to Dewey, all these writers confront the mushroom cloud like biblical prophets, yet, unlike prophets, they mock, caricature, dismiss, and undercut their depicted doomsayers, who can dream only of worlds following paths to death (Kaufman 116). These characters who do not love life are defeated at the end. Each novel, however, offers a minor character who asserts with conviction a way out of the darkness, a way to live, and a way to see in a dark time.

Chapter Two: Contemplating the Postmodern Apocalypticism in Etel Adnan's *The Arab Apocalypse*

Dewey claims that apocalyptic literature has three main categories: the catastrophic imagination, the millennialist spirit, and the apocalyptic temper. The millennialist spirit looks to the better worlds that will arise from the ashes, as opposed to the catastrophic imagination, which is the purview of speculative fiction and hence end-oriented (Ibid). In between these two extremes, the apocalyptic mood offers a method for communities to deal with the current crisis without denying the dynamic and contradictory nature of history. That "the end serves only to create the urgency and the context for meaningful action in a suspenseful present" is the central thesis of these works (15).

The Arab Apocalypse lacks a clear resolution or redemption arc. Unlike traditional narratives where characters undergo transformation and find redemption, Adnan's work often presents a fragmented and unresolved portrayal of the post-war experience. This absence of closure challenges the expectation of redemption.

I addition, the book portrays a cycle of violence and conflict that seems endless. Instead of offering hope for redemption or reconciliation, it suggests that violence begets more violence. This cyclical nature of violence subverts the idea of a redemptive end. Throughout the narrative, characters grapple with displacement, loss, and a sense of estrangement. These experiences of uprootedness and dislocation contrast with the idea of finding redemption or a return to a stable, pre-war existence. Adnan explores the fragmentation of identity in the wake of war and conflict. The characters often struggle with their sense of self, cultural identity, and belonging. This fragmentation challenges the idea that redemption can be achieved by restoring a coherent self. Many themes and stories in *The Arab Apocalypse* lack closure. The book's fragmented structure and non-linear narrative style create a sense of open-endedness and ambiguity. This subverts the traditional narrative structure that often provides closure and resolution. The text delves into the psychological and emotional trauma experienced by individuals affected by war. Instead of neatly resolving trauma or offering a path to healing, it

presents the ongoing struggles and complexities of trauma, subverting the idea of redemption as a straightforward process. Adnan's work presents a complex and multifaceted portrayal of historical events, including the Lebanese Civil War. It challenges the idea that historical events can be neatly redeemed or understood through simple narratives.

The Arab Apocalypse blurs the lines between myth and reality, making it challenging to discern what is symbolic or literal. This ambiguity subverts conventional redemption narratives that rely on clear distinctions between reality and metaphor.

2.7. Moral Ambiguity and Ethical Dilemma

Postmodern apocalypse narratives can delve into the ambiguity of morality and ethics. The collapse of traditional norms could lead to new moral landscapes where conventional distinctions between right and wrong are blurred. Frank Kermode offers A contrary view in his book *The Sense of an Ending* (1967). He uses Erich Auerbach to argue that literature's many forms must have some relation to one another "we try to give some order and design to the past, the present and the future. One of these ways is crisis" (93). Additionally, he asserts that "ours is the great age of crisis - technological, military and cultural", and that crisis, "however facile the conception, is inescapably a central element in our endeavors towards making sense of our world" (93).

Throughout history, there has been a widespread expectation that the world will soon come to an end. The catastrophic message, as Paul Boyer argues in his review paper titled "The Resilience of Apocalyptic Belief", has tremendous influence. The terrifying prospect of the future inherent in the apocalyptic worldview is shown. Fear is an essential part of this belief system, but so are a feeling of purpose and the possibility of salvation. This, along with the notion of the universe' destruction and subsequent rebuilding, is a common religious motif

that appears in a broad variety of texts. When taken as a whole, they indicate that the forces of good have triumphed over those of evil.

The book's central theme is the Lebanese Civil War and the broader violence that has afflicted the Arab world. Adnan vividly captures the brutality, destruction, and loss of life that result from conflict. The poem's imagery conveys a sense of desolation and devastation. Adnan uses stark and haunting language to depict the impact of war on landscapes and communities.

The poems are deeply empathetic and convey the human suffering experienced by individuals caught in the crossfire of conflict. Adnan emphasizes the shared humanity of those affected by war.

Berger explains that works of apocalyptic or post-apocalyptic fiction are often critical of the current social order because they are written in reaction to a perceived societal decline and the worries of the media. This decaying world leaves us with no other option except to put a stop to it and make space for a fresh start (7). However, the continuous disintegration of civilization, or what remains of it, tends to overwhelm the enlightenment provided by the apocalypse in modern times. To survive, one must put morals aside.

Even when appearing linear, many apocalyptic beliefs often conceal a cyclical nature. For example, the Stoics believed in "ekpyrosis," where the world would be consumed by flames at its cycle's end. However, this destruction would lead to "apokatastasis,"(Ramelli) a restoration of the world, initiating a new cycle. So, while the apocalypse is often seen as "The End" or something similar, it paradoxically seldom marks a true finality. Even within Christian apocalyptic narratives, such as the New Testament Revelation, the end is followed by a new beginning. The idea of the world's end has existed throughout history, extending beyond biblical texts and Judeo-Christian prophecies. Nature's cyclical patterns, like daily

and seasonal changes, harvests, and life cycles, inspire a cyclical view of time, where everything ends and starts anew. This inherent connection between beginnings and endings means that the concept of the apocalypse is present in any genesis.

World War II has been widely regarded as a moment of rupture that challenges and devalues the principles of Euro-American tradition. It marks the end of the grand narratives that have guided Western civilization for centuries. This recognition poses a political challenge, as it requires rethinking the future not as a discredited universal endpoint but as the starting point for a multitude of diverse outcomes.

In a different context, a speaker, acting as a surrogate for Adnan, expresses the importance of condemning cruelty. The hunters, who perpetrated torture, are rejected even by the animals in the neighborhood. Though the hunters may seem triumphant, her tenderness and condemnation carry immense power, symbolized by the vastness of oceans and continents.

Apocalyptic narratives often lack well-defined individuals, as they tend to depict humanity as masses facing imminent destruction. This impersonal approach reflects a fundamental deficiency in apocalyptic writing, stemming from a reluctance to engage with the complexities and challenges of history. This reluctance is described by Buber as a "failure of nerve"(Ibid) and a desire to escape from the demanding historical reality. While apocalyptic writings may appear strong in their indictments, they are ultimately characterized by a weakness that stems from avoiding the complexities of human history, as D.H. Lawrence intuited.

2.8. The Carnivalesque and *The Arab Apocalypse*

Chapter Two: Contemplating the Postmodern Apocalypticism in Etel Adnan's *The Arab Apocalypse*

As mentioned above, in traditional apocalyptic myths, endings are met by a reordering revelation—the passing away of one world, year, or century gives rise to a new one. In contrast, the post-apocalypse results from the lack of such a renewal. The post-apocalyptic genre primarily concerns the world without the hope of renewed order in the apocalyptic tradition. Even if there may be a future reinstitution of charge, the post-apocalyptic world exists in the interim gap between ordered states. While this world is a kind of postmodern bricolage by (re)constructing itself from fragments of the past world, it is also a Bakhtinian carnivalesque world. Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque is a theory which posits that those in authority maintain their power by periodically allowing subservient groups to revel in a break from rules and order (Rabelais 66). The carnivalesque has its roots in various festivals of carnival in which the fool reigns as king for a day as social hierarchies are inverted and riotous debauchery goes unpunished as rules of decorum are suspended. By allowing such periodic revelry, the king could keep lower classes willfully in subjection the rest of the time. For Bakhtin, the status quo is maintained in modern societies by allowing outlets, such as parodic media, for carnivalesque expression. Although the post-apocalyptic genre may not employ the carnivalesque for the same ideological purposes that Bakhtin proposes, the post-apocalyptic world does reflect the carnival square. The interim, post-apocalyptic dilation is a carnivalesque period in which vertical social hierarchies have been made horizontal, cultural norms have been abandoned, and the order of the day is disorder.

During carnival, the masses created a "second world" in which the ritual spectacles reversed or suspended hierarchies, played with language conventions, and focused mainly on grotesque realism. Each aspect of carnival was concerned with social transgression. During carnival, all that was high, sacred, and noble was brought down to earth and mingled with the base and profane (Ibid). Ritual spectacles were an essential component of carnival, but these spectacles were modified to mocked sacred rituals, such as the crowning of the fool as "king." In

addition, language was an essential element of carnival, in particular, the language of the common masses—language inappropriate in acceptable society—including curses, threats, and profanity. Grotesque realism was fascinated with the ways the body transgresses itself. The areas of transgression are those parts of the body that interact with the world—the open mouth, the excretory organs, the genitals, etc. Thus, the activities of interest are those moments of the body extending beyond itself in acts such as copulation, pregnancy, birth, defecation, eating, drinking, and so on. The carnivalesque brings such grotesqueries into the public square not only to revel in them but also as a way to suspend hierarchical order.

While vertical social hierarchies rank certain classes higher than others, the carnivalesque seeks to place everyone on the same level, to create a horizontal social hierarchy, by emphasizing the commonalities between classes, particularly the profane commonalities exemplified by these bodily transgressions. As with other carnivalesque practices, post-apocalyptic texts are concerned with and fascinated by these transgressions. For example, defecation is often depicted as a part of the carnivalesque, post-apocalyptic world, and it has been used in the post-apocalyptic genre both dramatically (the reality of trying to quarantine large numbers of people in Saramago's Blindness [1995]) and comedically (the humor of seeing Phil Miller (played by Will Forte) use a swimming pool as a toilet in *The Last Man* on Earth [2015-present]). Additionally, S&M attire, associated with private sexual relations, would be inappropriate to wear in public in our society, but it is perfectly acceptable in *The Road Warrior* (1981). The post-apocalyptic world is a kind of carnivalesque, "second world" version of our own, which allows these transgressions to be acceptable because it is no longer bound by traditional societal norms.

Bakhtin considers the greatest utility of the carnivalesque to be in facilitating dialogic discourse between higher, authoritative classes and lower, subservient masses. This dialectical ideal provides an avenue of emancipation for the powerless, yet it is contingent upon a

limited, controllable carnival. However, rather than seeking progressive social goals, the use of the carnivalesque in the post-apocalyptic genre seems to be more of a postmodern borrowing in order to imagine the baseness and depravity that would result in a world of unlimited, uncontrolled carnival. Although some post-apocalyptic texts could be read as warnings against the abuse of power, such themes are not universal in the genre. Further, as opposed to disaster pictures, post-apocalyptic narratives seem less interested in the cause of destruction and more interested in depicting the carnivalesque world free of specific intended meanings, which is perhaps itself a result of postmodern futility of ordering chaos and post-apocalyptic hopelessness in shared myths.

As previously mentioned, in traditional apocalyptic myths, conclusions are marked by a transformative revelation—a passing away of one world, year, or century leading to the emergence of a new one. In contrast, the post-apocalypse is a state arising from the absence of such a rejuvenation. The post-apocalyptic genre primarily focuses on a world existing without the prospect of renewed order as per apocalyptic tradition (*Problems* 22). Even if there might be a future reestablishment of order, the post-apocalyptic world occupies the in-between space, suspended between ordered states. While this world is a form of postmodern collage, reconstructing itself from remnants of the past world, it also embodies a Bakhtinian carnivalesque world.

Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque suggests that those in power maintain their authority by occasionally permitting subordinate groups to revel in a break from rules and order (Ibid). The carnivalesque originates from various carnival festivals where the fool temporarily assumes the role of king, social hierarchies are inverted, and riotous behavior goes unpunished as conventional norms are set aside. By allowing such periodic revelry, the ruler could keep lower classes compliant the rest of the time. For Bakhtin, modern societies sustain the status quo by providing outlets, like parodic media, for carnivalesque expression.

Although the post-apocalyptic genre may not utilize the carnivalesque for the same ideological purposes as Bakhtin suggests, the post-apocalyptic world mirrors the carnival square. The interim, post-apocalyptic period is a carnivalesque phase during which vertical social hierarchies are flattened, cultural norms are discarded, and disorder becomes the norm.

During carnival, the masses established a "second world" characterized by ritual displays that reversed or suspended hierarchies, played with linguistic conventions, and predominantly embraced grotesque realism. Each aspect of carnival was preoccupied with societal transgressions. Everything that was esteemed, sacred, and lofty in this setting was brought down to earth and mingled with the vulgar and profane. Ritual displays were a crucial component of carnival, but they were modified to mock sacred ceremonies, such as the crowning of the fool as "king." Furthermore, language played a vital role in carnival, particularly the language of the common masses—language deemed inappropriate in polite society, including curses, threats, and obscenities. Grotesque realism fixated on the ways the body transcends its own boundaries.

The zones of transgression are those parts of the body that interact with the world—the open mouth, the excretory organs, the genitals, and so forth. Thus, the activities of interest involve moments when the body extends beyond itself, such as copulation, pregnancy, birth, defecation, eating, drinking, and so forth. The carnivalesque introduces such grotesqueries into the public arena not only to revel in them but also as a means to suspend hierarchical order. While vertical social hierarchies rank certain classes above others, the carnivalesque strives to place everyone on an equal footing, to create a horizontal social hierarchy, by emphasizing the shared experiences between classes, especially the profane commonalities exemplified by these bodily transgressions. Like other carnivalesque practices, post-apocalyptic texts are intrigued by these transgressions. For instance, defecation is often portrayed as a part of the carnivalesque, post-apocalyptic world, and it has been employed in

the post-apocalyptic genre both in a serious manner (illustrating the practical challenges of isolating large groups of people in Saramago's "Blindness" and humorously (as seen in the antics of Phil Miller, played by Will Forte, using a swimming pool as a toilet in "The Last Man on Earth". Additionally, attire associated with S&M, typically reserved for private intimate encounters, would be deemed inappropriate in public in our society, yet it is perfectly acceptable in "The Road Warrior" (1981). The post-apocalyptic world is a sort of carnivalesque, alternative version of our own, where these transgressions are deemed acceptable because it is no longer bound by conventional societal norms.

Bakhtin views the primary benefit of the carnivalesque as fostering dialogic discourse between higher, authoritative classes and lower, subservient masses. This dialectical ideal offers a path of emancipation for the powerless, but it relies on a limited, controllable carnival. However, instead of striving for progressive social aims, the use of the carnivalesque in the post-apocalyptic genre is more of a postmodern borrowing aimed at envisioning the baseness and depravity that would arise in a world of unrestrained, uncontrolled carnival. While some post-apocalyptic texts could be interpreted as cautionary tales against the abuse of power, such themes are not universal in the genre. Furthermore, unlike disaster narratives, post-apocalyptic narratives appear less concerned with the cause of destruction and more interested in portraying the carnivalesque world devoid of specific intended meanings, which may itself be a reflection of the postmodern sense of futility in organizing chaos and the post-apocalyptic sense of hopelessness in shared myths.

2.9. Conclusion

Chapter Two: Contemplating the Postmodern Apocalypticism in Etel Adnan's *The Arab Apocalypse*

   Conventional understandings of reality, truth, and the human condition are all put to the test in Etel Adnan's *The Arab Apocalypse*, a novel that combines postmodernism with apocalyptic themes. Adnan's disjointed storytelling, asymmetrical chronology, and unreliable narrator all reflect the postmodern tendency to reexamine long-held assumptions and assumptions about reality. Adnan encourages readers to consider the intricacies and ambiguities of a world in crisis using this storytelling method.

   Adnan's depiction of the end of the world goes deeper beyond the obviously catastrophic into the psychological and spiritual dimensions. Instead of being something that happens once, the apocalypse becomes a continuous process of breakdown and metamorphosis, reflecting the postmodern attitude toward flux and unpredictability. The postmodern concept of the "end of certainties" is shown by the blurring of boundaries between reality and representation and the inclusion of multiple views.

   In addition, *The Arab Apocalypse* delves deeply into complex themes such as identity, memory, and exile by using a wide variety of languages and cultural allusions. Adnan uses a polyphonic story to show the type within the Arab world and challenge the idea that one experience is universal. This method is consistent with postmodernism's rejection of overarching narratives and valuing of several perspectives.

   In conclusion, *The Arab Apocalypse* by Etel Adnan exemplifies the far-reaching effects of postmodernism on modern literature, especially in its handling of apocalyptic themes. Adnan's work provides a fascinating creative experience and critical reflection on the intricacies of the human condition in a postmodern, apocalyptic era via its unorthodox storytelling tactics and investigation of identity, memory, and the meaning of reality.

Chapter Three: Postmodern Apocalypticism in Etel Adnan's *There: In the Light and Darkness of the Self and the Other*: An Ongoing Terror and Existential Crisis

3.1. Introduction

This chapter sheds light on the existential crisis manifested in Etel Adnan's *There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and of the Other*. It examines a series of existential questions revolves around: space, being, nature, feelings and death using Kierkegaard' subjectivity of truth, Nietzsche's evaluation of values, Heidegger's Being-for-itself, and Sartre's bad faith, good faith and freedom of choice. The discussion of existential crisis, in this chapter is preceded by a critical exploration of the poem. It tends to provide a short synopsis of the poem and to examine crucial dichotomies including I/You, Self/Other, Here/There and concluding with the significance of the title referring to light versus darkness. Moreover, the chapter demonstrates the strong relationship between postmodern apocalypticism and existential crisis and how does it deconstruct the traditional apocalyptic tale.

3.2. A Critical Glance at Etel Adnan's *There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and the Other*

There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and of the Other (1997) discloses a long critical consideration of several binary divisions, basically: the metropolis and the periphery. First, it is explicitly stated in the title, "The Self and the Other", and implicitly beneath the lines of the narrative through personal pronouns I and you. *There* is a reflection on power dynamics, an examination of 'the center' that fuels conflict in the Middle East, a recurring theme in Arab-American writings. For the sake of a good understanding of Adnan's dichotomies, including I/you, self/other, here/there, and light/darkness, it is necessary to examine them from the perspective of literary criticism.

3.2.1 Examining Dichotomies in *There*: I/You, Self/Other and Here/There

Starting with the title, binary divisions are a significant aspect of the poem *There*. (Light/darkness, self/other, here/there, and I/you) are all essential dualities that contribute to the creation of contrasted critical images. Firstly, the twofold light and darkness mentioned in the title, allude to an expressionistic understanding of the bond between the self and the other, in which they are seen to cross each other despite their seeming incongruity at first glance. Separately, they imply nothing at all. The pronouns I and you affect each other in the poem in the sense that the pronoun you dominates I.

Nonetheless, the poem, paradoxically, elaborates on the ineluctable, but contradictory, sharing of the sense of singularity via the common inhabitation of personal pronouns I and you. Furthermore, through the division of self/other, the speaker lyrically criticizes the media's clichéd portrayal of Arabs, and tackles the West/East binary, contextualizing the poem in the aftermath of September 11. Furthermore, the here/there geopolitical duality denotes a fundamental difference between 'us', living peacefully here, and 'them', experiencing conflict there. In other words, there is no conflict in the United States, which is safe for everyone inhabiting it. To the speaker, this could be an illusion, perpetuated subtly, but persistently by the stereotypical opposition of here and there.

3.2.1.1. The Semantic Borders between "I" and "You"

In *There,* Etel Adnan provides a remarkable ontological mediation. The speaker strongly believes that the birth of civilizations is a discourse between two individuals, which he clearly reflects through the recurrent usage of personal pronouns "I" and "you" in the poem. Therefore, it is significant to consider how "I" and "you" are referenced, semantically speaking, and how they impact each other in the narrative. Teresa Villa-Ignacio notices that:

At the beginning of the poem, the speaker voices ambivalence, hesitation, and doubt regarding the relations between the I and the you. These levels of uncertainty allow the poem to ask such existential questions as, Are the you and the I there at all? If so, what might be the consequences of their being-there, their singular existences being-with each other? (331).

Indeed, the speaker of *There* queries about the nature of "I" and "you", as he plainly assumes that one's sense of self and that of the other are seen as autonomous entities: "Who are you when you're not me, and who am I?" (Adnan 2). The aforementioned interrogations render the existence of "I", "you" and their natures suspected, as well as reflect on how "I" impact "you" or contemplate on self-other relationships.

Moreover, *There* establishes the "you" as a dominant —one who dominates the "I" in a metaphorical sense, by occupying her territory and leaving other imprints in its place: "You filled my space for so long, snake yourself in my waters, and I'm left with signs, and traces of you, exclusively" (51). Thus, abandoning "you" is like abandoning a piece of "I", since "I" and "you" influence each other.

Furthermore, the poem highlights to the boundaries between "I" and "you". For instance, it voices the uncertainty that "I" transcends or crosses the boundaries of "you": "Could I dig into your mind like archeologists do, can I figure out its limits, are those recognizable to an alien spirit, are we going to dance, and what if you were beautiful, would we meet anonymously, with mistaken identities?" (52-53). In many cases, the action of 'I' is contingent on the transient and mutable status of 'you'. If 'I' can access the mind of 'you' can he recognize its boundaries or even dance with him?

Then, the speaker of *There* marks "A conversation, between I and you", she says, "is the beginning of civilization" (18) and adds "Who is we, is it you plus me, or something else

expandable, explosive, the salt and pepper of our thoughts, the something that may outlast our divinities?" (2). The latter thought fosters the axiomatic belief that "I" and "you" are interconnected; likewise, it foregrounds the importance of language and communication between individuals. It lends credence to the hypothesis that (I + you = civilization), which expands before finally vanishing:

> From the primeval waters we arose- you and I, from the beginning we went on a search and when the gardens grew we looked together for a shade, didn't we? Then we were visited by a creature not named by any of the gods and we called it Death, and it took power over us, and autumn on its first day started to shed yellowish leaves on our beds; then the trees stared at their own bareness and we didn't come to their aid, did we? (70).

Throughout the poem, the speaker, repeatedly, focuses on the paradoxical, yet inevitable sensation of shared singularity through the habitation of identitary pronouns. In this vein, the speaker states: "The 'you' is always the 'I', thus we inhabit each other in our irremediable singleness" (27). That is to say, any solitary entity that takes up residence in the first- or second-person singular pronoun is doing so at the expense of the other. However, everyone remains in irreparable singleness: there is no union of two or more people, only the shared experience of loneliness in singularity. That singleness is irreversible implies that distinct individuals envision and seek a lost collaboration with one another and that no solution to this situation is required. Hence, beings co-construct their moral relatedness by inhabiting each other in permanent isolation.

3.2.1.2. Self/Other Binarism: An Overlap or Divergence?

One of the most fundamental theories of human cognition and identity is the self/other dichotomy, which states, in brief, that the presence of another, a not-self, allows for the

existence, or perception of, a self. In this context, Sami Schalk mentions, "I see you. I do not control your body or hear your thoughts. You are separate. You are not me. Therefore, I am me. The self/other binary seems to be an accepted division of how the modern individual comprehends who s/he is not" (197). Subsequently, the essential self/other binary stands to reason because once an individual observes another individual and realizes they are physically and mentally distinct from themselves, they realize that the other is not the self, but rather another that is distinct from him and, therefore, cannot be controlled or comprehended physically and mentally to the same extent as the self.

Related to the above-mentioned, the speaker attacks the dichotomy of West versus East, known as self-versus other and sheds light on the text's position in the wake of September 11 as a lyrical criticism of the media's stereotypical depiction of Arabs. In this context, Ignacio states that love and hatred between two individuals, represented through the pronouns I and you in the poem possibly shared between groups: "Mindful that the love and enmity that two singular beings may share may also be shared at the level of two groups, two nations, or two transnational identitary groups (such as Palestine and Israel, or the West and the Arab world)" (Ignacio 329).

The following quotation intensifies this attitude as the speaker challenges the western philosophical notion that prioritizes the self over the other and denounces the involvement of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. In this sense, the speaker mentions: "They're eating dry bread, over there, under Ra's auspices, and over here they're starving amidst opulence, and when you stand there, staring at them, they refuse to see that you're burning in a fire fed by stones. A dry riverbed, evil, not a bush, not a thorn … here, and there, do meet in this river, this valley of the dead" (Adnan 21). It should be noted that this policy is launched under the pretext of protecting America's national security, supporting international stability and safety, cooperating with like-minded nations to address global issues, defending human rights and

democratic principles, and boosting international cooperation in trade and global involvement in trade organizations.

U.S foreign policy extends to a long-term period of imperialism and colonialism. It all started with the invasion of the new world: "Oh yes! Columbus landed somewhere, where bringing stench, disease and mortal wounds, logs to crucify Indians on, and when was it and why? So you're my twin enemy-brother, my twin shadow, and did we go to the Americas, who sent us there?" (5). Ironically, the United States claims that it has historically been a critical player in maintaining international peace and safety by advocating for economic and political freedom while standing against tyranny and other forms of oppression. Terrorism concerns have been exploited by the Bush administration to justify enforcing a number of regulations that were already planned before 9/11 (Gibbs 293).

Besides, the speaker expresses the dependence of the other on the self: "should I follow your destiny instead of mine" (2) … you filled my space for so long, snaked yourself in my waters, and I'm left with signs, and traces of you, exclusively" (51). In addition, the narrative demonstrates how the familiarity that develops between bitter antagonists may lead to love: "I hated you for so long in the inner territory that we inhabited together that you're now the negative print of my identity (no, not a shadow), the unwanted companion who becomes, o tragedy! love's very substance" (54). It is a long-term, complex relationship, similar to that of colonizer and colonized. Besides, the light and darkness of the self and the other, which appear to be irreconcilable opposites at first, can eventually be understood to co-constitute each other in a chiaroscuro relationship. Both depend on the other for their sense of identity.

3.2.1.3. Exploring the Metropolis and the Periphery: Over Here/Over There

Geopolitically, most US military memory is connected to the dichotomy of here and there. This includes significant conflicts, such as World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War,

the invasion of Afghanistan, and the occupation of Iraq, as well as multiple revolts, civil wars, and revolutionary movements around the globe in which the United States has played a notable role, either explicitly or implicitly.

According to the American point of view, the United States is believed to be a peaceful and secure place to live, in stark contrast to the war-torn countries that 'they' refer to. The famous declaration "We won't return until everything is finished/over there" (Ignacio 310) indicates the distant control (which is both geographical and ideological). The American claim of 'not coming back home until it is over' endures, notwithstanding the ambiguity surrounding the word 'over'. In this prospect, Ignacio explains that:

> This facile opposition of here and there may subtly but tenaciously perpetuate two illusions: first, that there is a fundamental difference between an 'us', living peacefully here, and a 'them', experiencing conflict over there, and second, that there isn't any conflict here, that the U.S. is safe for everyone inhabiting it (Ibid).

Adnan's *There* is an interesting allusion to the imperialist chant "Over There". Written in the first-person perspective, "out there" might refer to Adnan's native Lebanon, a war zone like Bosnia in the 1990s when the novel was written, or even the troubled United States, where Adnan has spent most of her life. The narrator of Adnan's poem, in contrast to the warrior singing "Over There", is concerned with what happens when one person's or nation's "here" becomes another's "over there", when the location is made exotic, leading to the eroticization of its people (ibid):

> I read Adnan's *There* as a shattering echo of the American expansionist refrain "Over There". Its voice is that of one who comes from over there, for whom there may signify Adnan's country of origin, Lebanon, or a site of conflict during the 1990s

when the book was written, such as Bosnia, or even the conflict-ridden United States itself, where Adnan has lived much of her life (Ibid).

Thus, the poem's use of the signifier "there" refers to an all-encompassing, relational encounter between self and other. In *There*, the signifier "there" never designates one half of the mutually exclusive pair of "here and there"; instead, "there" articulates an inclusive, relational encounter between self and other that is perceptible between pairs of individuals—lovers, friends, enemies—and between national and transnational collectives (Ibid). The speaker acknowledges that inclusive mechanisms like war, American imperialism, and teleological interpretations of history have undermined the most fundamental and essential aspects of modern life, such as close interpersonal connections and environmental stability.

The speaker of *There* also alludes to the hypocrisy of the self: "Are we calling the wind on the imagination's vast expanse, are you keeping my door closed or are you coming at night with the key, the food, the smile, the hatred and the love? Are you there in the dark?" (5). This is because the self evaluates those who are different from himself, labeling them as 'others'. Because 'the other' does not fulfill the defining qualities of the group, members of the group look down on and disregard him or her. It is a tradition that "in any country occupied by the imperialistic powers, the natives are portrayed as the others. The normal consequence for such behaviors is obliging the person to be alienated, feeling strange from his surroundings and trying to escape such unhealthy situations of life"(Habash 98).

The US's double standard has a major effect on how well international human rights treaties are enforced. The United States appears to believe itself to be an example for the rest of the world and boasts about the liberties enjoyed by its inhabitants. While the United States has been quick to denounce human rights abuses in other countries, its own breaches of civil liberties have given nations like China and Russia ammunition to undercut American attempts

to condemn such abuses. The United States' previous transgressions make it unlikely that it will be able to effectively intervene to promote human rights in other nations. In this vein, the speaker comments: "And you speak to me of peace, over coffee, like in the old days, I mean between military campaigns, and nobody knows how the music was written, by whom, on whose table, and was it with ink or blood?" (6). Hence, there is an inconsistency between America's political rhetoric and its actual actions. There is a great deal of discussion in the academic community about how the United States (U.S.) disregards international law in its pursuit of foreign policy goals, despite the fact that the U.S. plays a pivotal role in the United Nations (UN) Security Council and is in a leadership of power to uphold and produce international law. Therefore, "as the shining city upon a hill, America has spread light but also, too often, cast a dark shadow over others. The mythology of American exceptionalism gave many Americans a messianic faith in their ability to spread democracy while blinding them to the risk that they might face the same authoritarian threats they had observed—or supported—elsewhere" (Danforth).

3.2.1.4. The Significance of the Title "There :In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and of the Other"

There contains thirty-nine brief prose parts, each between one and three pages long. Three poems in this series, are named "There", with the exception of a second piece, which is headed "Here". The heading of the poem places the word "there", that signifies a place, "in the light and the darkness of the self and of the other", a perception that depicts the relationship between the self and the other as an expressionistic relationship, where the light and the darkness, which at first seem like contradictory juxtapositions, are ultimately comprehended to cross each other. Neither is meaningful apart from the other.

Furthermore, *There* suggests that here and there can be interpreted as both abstract and concrete entities. First, it asks: "What is here? : A place or an idea, a circle focused in God's

eye, a cosmic wave's frozen frame, transient, doomed?" Then, it answers: "Here, where the heat mollifies, when the body surrenders before solicitations could reach it, and there, where the temperature boils the mind and makes it explode into sudden action; here is the point of no return . . . (39).

Moreover, it is crucial to highlight the significance of light and darkness in the poem. Light is a universal emblem of the pursuit of pleasure, success, and hope. Light, which represents the cycle of life, may also represent eternity. On the other side, the darkness represents death and the unknown realms below. While the reader may see this duality as either/or proposition, it is vital to keep in mind that the two poles are not mutually incompatible. Darkness ensures light's eternal rebirth on a cosmic, social, and personal level.

The duality of good versus evil is a fundamental natural phenomenon with rich symbolic and figurative implications. Even in the earliest Middle Eastern ideas, light and dark are seen as interdependent because they alternate in a cyclically. In this view, darkness serves as the enigmatic, unknowable foundation upon which light shines, and the medium through which it is created. It represents and bestows on its recipients the essentials for survival: physical comfort, sensual pleasure, and mental and spiritual enlightenment.

3.3. The Projection of Existential Crisis in *There:* Questioning Existence, Being, Nature and Death

When a person struggles with philosophical questions such as "what is the sense of this world?" they may be experiencing what is called an existential crisis. That is to say, an individual may doubt his very existence in the face of a meaningless universe. Negative feelings, feelings of solitude, or extreme stress, like sadness or anxiety, can be the outcome of an existential crisis. In *There*, the speaker deliberately investigates his existence, being, death and nature, which designates that he is undergoing an existential crisis and may attempt to make sense of significant or challenging concerns, such as whether their life has any value.

3.3.1. Existence under Inquiry

Human beings instinctively pose philosophical questions concerning their existence, freedom of choice and responsibility. These existential questions are discovered through individual contemplation of reality and meaning. Asking such questions has the potential to alter one's understanding of the world and its significance. Hence, a person's own free will and the decisions he or she makes in relation to that are central to existential concerns. According to Jean-Paul Sartre, existing means understanding your subjective nature; because, "human freedom precedes the essence of man and makes it possible; the essence of the human being is suspended in his freedom. What we call freedom is impossible to distinguish from human reality (*Being* 60). In other words, human beings are born without a fixed character and it is through their actions that their purpose and the value of their life are determined. As a result, the former undermines the previously held philosophical claim that the essence is substantially more fundamental and constant than the existence.

Plus, authenticity is the pursuit of authentic and responsible decisions. Sartre defines this concept as "accepting the human existence and the subsequent responsibilities and discusses that recognizing the absolute freedom and responsibility conduct the human being toward authenticity" (Hamrah 2660). Humans search for a genuine life, are capable of making interpersonal interactions, and are aware of their past, present, and future. The human experience may include a range of emotions, from pleasure to melancholy. Thus, numerous existential questions are presented on the meaning of life which may influence how we connect with others, how we see the world, how we perceive our position in the universe and what we hold to be true.

"Da-sein" refers to the state of being active in the world as opposed to merely existing as a detached observer of it. It is a German word that literally means, 'being there'. Hoagland

explains Dasein as: "Dasein is neither people nor their being, but rather a way of life shared by the members of some community. It is ways of life, in this sense, that have the basic structure of being-in-the-world. (People certainly do not have that structure—they are intra-worldly" (160). This has less to do with where we are physically than with how we are interconnected with everything else in the world, including other individuals and cultural signifiers. Each of us originates and develops in relation to the language he speaks and the meanings he attributes to our environment. Heidegger explains that "the primary concept by means of which he aims to understand Dasein (us humans) is the concept to he gives the name 'existence'. But what is existence?" (97). If this question could be answered correctly, it would help humans better grasp their place in the universe. Therefore, in Heidegger's view, such people do not really exist. When answering a question, however, a genuine individual will not settle for anything less than an explanation that comes from within himself and no one else. That is, the genuine person actively seeks out all the opportunities his life presents, and makes the decisions that allow him to establish his unique "Dasein" and, therefore, "existence is, roughly that feature of Dasein that its self-understanding is constitutive of its being what or who it is" (Ibid).

All people answer this question, but most of them fail to provide the right answer because they think that being in the world means accepting life as it is without looking for alternatives. Consequently, according to Heidegger, the existence of such people is inauthentic. However, the authentic person, when answering the question, looks for a genuine answer that comes from him and not from others. That is, the authentic person looks for all the choices that his existence provides, and selects the ones that help him confirm his identity, and therefore gets to have his own "Dasein".

The speaker of *There* begins with a philosophical contemplation about our position in the universe in the pursuit of an 'authentic existence', at the very beginning of the poem: "Where

are we? Where? There is a *where*, because we are, stubbornly, and have been, and who are we, if not you and me?" (Adnan1). One of the most distinguishing characteristics of human beings is their awareness of their interaction with existence. Founded on the premise that the human being has agency over the decisions that shape his life; that he has the power to shape his own destiny, ergo he reflects on his values, morals and adjusts his purpose of life.

In this context, Frank Viktor highlights, in his book *Man's Search for Meaning* (1946), the importance of struggling for a certain value or an ideal in life. His innovation is to insist that striving to obtain meaning is not an extinctive or defensive reaction, rather it is an action of supreme significance that conditions the individual's personal consciousness and willingness to perform it. In this vein, Frank Viktor highlights that:

> Man's search for meaning is a primary motivation in his life and not a "secondary rationalization" of instinctual drives. This meaning is unique and specific in that it must and can be fulfilled by him alone; only then does it achieve a significance that will satisfy his own will to meaning. There are some authors who contend that meanings and values are "nothing but defense mechanisms, reaction formations and sublimations. But as for myself, would I be ready to die merely for the sake of my "reaction formations". Man, however, is able to live and even to die and even to die for the sake of his ideals and values. (155)

On the other hand, an individual experiences an existential crisis when he regularly questions constantly the meaning or purpose of his existence. A person may also doubt his existence and personal decisions in a seemingly pointless environment. In *There*, the speaker wonders constantly about terror, love and the purpose of his life: "Where is where, where the terror, the love, the pain? Where the hatred? Where your life, and mine … and where are we when you are, and where are you when I wait for you to be, be the people I see" (Adnan 1). In addition

to the loss of the church there are other worries as well. One of which is the inability of man to recognize the world around him because everything changes quickly. In other words, the familiar world in which man lives no longer has the fixed sense it once had. As a result, man always feels lost in this indistinct world. As a result, man always feels lost in this indistinct world. Another issue is that traditional values and absolutes have been broken. This means that what was once considered a general truth became invalid.

In *The Myth of Sisyphus,* Albert Camus, describes an existential crisis as a response to complicated conditions of living:

> Living, naturally, is never easy. You continue making the gestures commanded by existence for many reasons, the first of which is habit. Dying voluntarily implies that you have recognized, even instinctively, the ridiculous character of that habit, the absence of any profound reason for living, the insane character of that daily agitation and the uselessness of suffering". (3)

According to existentialists, 'the existential angst' or also called 'the existentialist attitude' is a feeling of fear, uncertainty, or anxiety resulted from seemingly pointless or ludicrous and absurd reality. With a tone of depression, the speaker of *There* describes his enchainment and hopelessness: "To go, be going, straight ahead, the world being round, to be coming back, to where, to what, to be a bouncing ball, where, on what, to be defeated by gravity" (Adnan 2).

Furthermore, Robert Solomon argues that the existential attitude is an outlook that acknowledges the seemingly intractable ambiguity of the human experience and describes the status of a bewildered person encountering a confused environment he cannot accept. Solomon defines the existential attitude as follows:

> [Existentialism] is an attitude that recognizes the unresolvable confusion of the human world, yet resists the all-too-human temptation to resolve the confusion by grasping

toward whatever appears or can be made to appear firm or familiar … the existential attitude begins with a disoriented individual facing a confused world that he cannot accept. (Solomon 283)

Because of the detachment and meaninglessness often experienced in the postmodern world, individuals may feel as if they have no power or control over their lives. It seems as if they have no choice, but to go with the flow of the stream. In his book *Irrational Man* (1958), William Barrett, an American philosophy professor , maintains that "The central fact of modern history in the West—by which we mean the long period from the end of the Middle Ages to the present—is unquestionably the decline of religion"(24). That is, as science took place religion failed to provide man with answers concerning the universe and his inner-self. Consequently, man took another road to look for answers in an attempt to understand everything within and around him. Most often, this kind of crisis appears when they reach a decision-making impasse and are unable to choose the best course of action. The speaker describes his anxiety and lack of orientation, as a tendency toward an existential crisis: "Going, into a train and stopping nowhere, because it is nowhere, with people pouring in, like ripped bags of wheat, birds helplessly flying overhead"(3).

As a manifestation of the existential crisis, the speaker enquires about the existence of the universe and whether it is mandatory for the existence of the rest of things: "Go deep into the world's throat, there's no way out of this universe, but then is there a universe, and why and where from, and is its existence necessary for anything to be, and if there's not a somewhere what then, with no faith, no hope, there's maybe love, somewhere?"(5).

3.3.2.1 "I" and "You" through a Sartrean Lens: The Other and the Look

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre discusses the notion of 'the look', stating that: "When I am alone, I can not realize my "being-seated;" at most it can be said that I simultaneously

both am it and am not it. But in order for me to be what I am, it suffices merely that the other look at me" (Being 351). In other words, the other makes the looker realize that he or she is not the center of the world, but rather an object of the other's gaze, thus "all consciousness is consciousness of something; that is, consciousness is intentional and directive, pointing to a transcendent object other than itself" (Being xii). Such self-reflection is crucial because it compels one to recognize whatever good qualities or flaws he or she possesses. In accepting responsibility beyond oneself, a person must understand that others will see how he or she behaves in the environment that they all inhabit. In *There*, the speaker notices that there are reciprocal and common feelings between him and the other, thus, the other becomes the subject of the gaze. The notion of 'the look' is widely illustrated in *There* through the usage of the pronouns "I" and "you" : "There, in this room, where there's pain, yes there is, I'm living pain and so are you, even if I didn't love you" (19) … Where are you when I wait for you to be, be the people I see" (1). The aforementioned quotation illustrates Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of "the Look". What it means, in essence, is what happens when awareness is compelled to cease perceiving itself as the center of its own universe.

Sartre contends that one experiences oneself as seen through the eyes of another precisely in the same way that one experiences the other as seen through his eyes, as subjectivity. However, according to the existentialist perspective, this experience also acts as a kind of limitation of freedom, since it constitutes the world as objective and oneself as objectively existing subjectivity. For instance, in *There*, the speaker accuses the other character referred to as you of influencing him: "You inhabited me for a long time; you wriggled around in my waters; now all I have are reminders of you." (33).

3.3.2. Investigating Space

Another crucial point to notice in the poem is the questioning of space through the frequent usage of the subordinate conjunction 'where' or to allude directly to different places. It is a natural reaction to consider your position in the universe and to pounder profound existential questions. These issues will provoke serious reflections, whether on the nature of reality or the position of humans in the cosmos. The speaker states: "Where are we? In a desert, on a glacier, within a mother's womb or in a woman's eyes, in a man's yearning, or are we into each other, each other's future, as we have been in the past? Are we dead or alive?" (Adnan 3). In *There*, the reader notices constant interrogations in the text starting with "where is" or "what is here?" (39). Amie. L. Thomasson explains the latter: "We had an increasing variety of surprising answers to the question "what is there", ranging from those who would deny that there are any composite material objects. And then there are those who draw the line in surprising places-accepting animals but not artifacts, apple trees but not apples" (64). All disagreement about presumed explanations for such existence questions summarizes the bewilderment of the human being at midlife challenges:

> What is here? : a place or an idea, a circle focused in God's eye, a cosmic wave's frozen frame, transient, doomed?" (39). The circle is pre-Christian and its original symbolic meaning has been adopted by Christianity. It is universally known as the symbol of eternity and never-ending existence. It represents the notions of totality, wholeness, original perfection, the self, the infinite, eternity, timelessness, all cyclic movement, God ('God is a circle whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere'. (Hermes Trismegistus).

3.3.3. Questioning the Being: an Existential Crisis

In addition to investigating one's position in this world, the narrator in *There*, as well, questions about the nature of human beings; besides, the speaker's sense of self and identity is wasted, culminating in an existential crisis: "Who are we, a race, a tribe, a herd, a passing phenomenon, or a traveler still travelling in order to find out who we are, and who we shall be"? (1). The emphasis of existentialist philosophy is on human life; Sartre held that our very being is a fluke of fate. The only thing that gives our lives any significance is our freedom, therefore, we have to learn to be self-sufficient. According to Sartre, the nature of existence is revealed via autonomous will, apprehension, and the ability to choose one's actions.

In this vein, Sartre mentions in *Existentialism is a Humanism* that "We mean that man first exists: he materializes in the world, encounters himself, and only afterward defines himself. If man as existentialists conceive of him cannot be defined, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will he what he makes of himself" (22). To rephrase, man exists before he views, thinks about, and acts as a person in the world. Only because he exists can he think and do these things; existence is the initial premise from which all else follows. To become the person he is and what he will become, man must first define his nature by his experiences and actions. As a result, man is like an empty piece of paper. He is never fully formed or characterized at birth, but rather develops during the course of his life.

Questioning one's being is frequently depicted as a symptom of an existential crisis in existentialist literature. In Victoria Schwab's *Our Dark Duet*, Kate's battle with her internal demons is well portrayed. An emotionally fragile, yet very devoted August lover emerges. August has gone through many transformations in *Our Dark Duet*, but to Kate, he has always remained true to himself. She struggles for him to accept himself as he really is,

rather than the person he has been trying to convince himself he should be for the last six months. Kate states:

> I don't know who I am, and who I'm not, I don't know who I'm supposed to be, and I miss who I was; I miss it every day, Kate, but there's no place for that August anymore. No place for the version of me who wanted to go to school, and have a life, and feel human, because this world doesn't need that August. It needs someone else. (101)

Existential thinking's main contribution is the idea that a person's identity is not shaped by their genes or their upbringing. The processes of developing a subjective identity and discovering the purpose of life appear to be inextricably intertwined. Similarly, the speaker in *There* interrogates: "Who is we, is it you plus me, or something else, expandable, explosive, the salt and pepper f our thoughts, the something that may outlast our divinities" (2). On the other hand, inauthenticity, according to Jean-Paul Sartre, is the epitome of bad faith. He considers bad faith as an attempt to avoid the responsibility of recognizing and realizing one's real self. According to Sartre, poor faith is an attempt to evade freedom, which is a fundamental part of our lives. In this passage, Sartre explores the patterns of bad faith, he states:

> The basic concept which is thus engendered, utilizes the double property of the human being, who is at once a facticity and a transcendence, these two aspects of human reality are and ought to be capable of a valid coordination. But bad faith does not wish either to coordinate them or to surmount them in a synthesis. (*Being* 56)

Therefore, knowing these two aspects of the human mind (facticity and transcendence) is crucial for comprehending bad faith. Facticity means "all the actual facts of a person's life. Some examples of such factual information include a person's past deeds, their early years,

their physical attributes, and their educational background" (Pydi). A person's past might be thought of in a more general sense as the sum of all the specific events that have occurred in his life up to this point. Transcendence denotes "The ability to rise beyond or above one's current circumstances is what we mean when we talk about transcendence (that represents facticity). So transcendence can be abstractly interpreted to represent the future" (Ibid).

If one's ideas of factuality and transcendence are harmonized in a valid way, then one can avoid poor faith. Therefore, a genuine person will recognize the necessity of maintaining harmony between these two aspects. This is why it is a sign of bad faith when someone fails to see the importance of both states of mind. Thus, one of these two aspects is misrepresented in one's own mind, paving the way for dishonesty.

3.3.3.1. Are we Men or Women?: An Existentialist Standpoint

The poem addresses gender issues by asking, "Who are we, a woman or a man, and is that seasonal, is it eternal, and is it true that there are men and women and it must be true, because you are and I am" (2) … Anyway, who are you? Born under a female sign, a warrior, woman or man, and does it matter when desire rises before we know it, telling things unknown?" (Adnan 10). The speaker problematizes the distinction between men and women similarly to the existentialist Simone de Beauvoir as she clarifies: "No biological, physical or economic destiny defines the figure that the human female takes on in society; it is civilization as a whole that elaborates this intermediary product between the male and the eunuch that is called feminine" (293). This marks the beginning of the sex-gender divide (where sex denotes the biological identity of the person and gender the cultural attribution of properties to the sexed body). All aspects that we have learned to think of as 'feminine' is a social creation, not biological givens; there is nothing that dictates the 'believed' femininity of the woman. In other words, the physical difference between the sexes are obvious. Woman may be

interpreted in two ways: either as an abstract idea where one experiences being a woman, or as a social category, despite the fact that the two are connected. Simone de Beauvoir had already created a clear distinction between the biological gender and the social or emotional gender.

3.3.4. Rethinking Nature, Death and Western Values

It is undeniable that Adnan shares with Nietzsche an existential questioning of the beliefs that societies instill. Nietzsche questioned the values that Christianity set, since the church was the most powerful group in the 1800s. The speaker questioned the freedom and peace celebrated by the U.S. Furthermore, similar to Nietzsche, Adnan discusses the wrong set of values ingrained in the human mind and how they hypnotize it completely, leading individuals to decadence. In *There*, the sky rained blood and hunger on the east, which was fighting international wars, while the west lived happily ever after. The speaker, therefore, questions the morals of western societies, referring to them as the society that eats dry bread while the rest are starving to death (Adnan 21). In addition, as already discussed, the west perpetuates the basic difference between them living peacefully and the east living in conflict over there. Similarly, the speaker condemns the Western values and their hypocrisy, evident in their endorsement of human rights while simultaneously engaging in warfare in various regions across the globe (Adnan 5). Nietzsche writes in *Twilight of the Idols*:

> Excess of strength is the sole proof of strength- a revaluation of values … A different convalescence, possibly even more desirable to me, is to sound out idols … There are more idols than realities in the world: that is my 'evil eye' for this world; it is also my 'evil ear'. (3)

Nietzsche emphasizes the abolition of old morals and the revaluation of all values. Furthermore, he insists on the need to question all values, for they guide people's lives.

Nonetheless, Adnan, in *There*, closes the poem with a pessimistic tone that indicates any possibility of restoration:

> On my American screen I saw the Vietnamese peasant who was running and on whose skin napalm on fire was closer than his wife: war, which liberates and kills those it liberated, joined us forever… From the primeval waters we arose … From the desire to live we arose and built nations, didn't we? Then we were visited by a creature not named by any of the gods and we called it Death. (Adnan 69)

Furthermore, the essence of nature is rethought from an existentialist perspective in *There*. How can we define nature? Is it "Some mud, some glue, a meteor, can it belong to itself?" (2). Numerous existentialists have argued that nature itself is aimless or unplanned. In contrast to a created universe, for instance, we cannot expect the scientifically defined universe to tackle our issues regarding value and significance. In this regard, the speaker states: "Is a mountain meant not to move and is the sky to be wide open when we're dead and are we here to stay? "(5), and wonders again, "Would Nature put up with our agitation?" (17).

   Industrialization and technological progress in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries separated and alienated humans from nature. In addition, existentialist scholars claim. In addition, existentialist scholar make this claim:

> Physical science and metaphysics seem capable of explaining the natural world, it may be more accurate to refer to this as description rather than comprehension or understanding. Consequently, the accomplishments of the natural sciences deprive nature of value and significance. (Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Death is a concerning subject matter for existentialists as it is considered a central part of existence. It is said that death is "the possibility of the impossibility of any existence at all" (307). It is, hence, the knowledge which is present with every person that whatever subsists in

this life, is going to eventually disappear one day. It is believed that "Living in full acknowledgement of our finitude is the key to being authentic or rather the key to authentic being" (O'Gorman 10). According to Gorman, the notion of death is as absurd as the existence of human beings. Every person exists in the face of his end, knowing that his existence is indeterminate and may disappear, at any time, into nothingness.

The concept of death is essential for existentialists because it determines the meaning of our existence, and before death actually happens, the individual has the choice and option to change his fate and existence. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger writes about death. He declares: "Once a person is born, he is old enough to die immediately" (136). In other words, Heidegger accentuates the idea that death could happen at any moment in our life and not necessarily in the far future, thus, it should be a concern of thought for us. For existentialists, "death is inevitable: death could be a beginning, a revolution's starting point: in the stillness surrounded by the highest trees, then the mountains, and beyond, the left-overs of History" (37).

In *The Political Meaning of Death: An Existential Overview*, Kenneth A. Harris states: "Death and meaning are central concepts in the existential tradition. The salience of the meaning of death in existential thought has effected, in this century, a fundamental reexamination of "meaning" itself (abstract). Death awakens the person's self-awareness to and makes him solely responsible for his actions. In speaking about death, the speaker comments: "but war is around us, visible at different degrees of sharpness. We always die in a specific location. The body goes" (Adnan 7).

Finding the secret of immortality and avoiding death has been the topic of numerous myths and ancient legends ever since death became a serious concern for humans. Similarly, the final destination of a human being attracted the imagination of the speaker: "Do questions

ever cease? Do the dead-some, at least-still wonder if the battle will be won, in spite of our contemplation of disappeared cities?" (Adnan 32).

After the Enlightenment, the idea that the cosmos is governed by natural laws rather than a higher power became widely accepted. Governments no longer needed to be founded on the concept of divine right because philosophy had shown that wide and coherent moral theories could exist without reference to God. This is a truly remarkable event. Europeans reasoned that they did not need God because they already had philosophy and science to provide them with a sense of right and wrong, value, and cosmic order. The growth of rationalist philosophy in the west led philosophers to conclude that God had died and that the scientific revolution and the quest for knowledge were to blame. In the meantime, there is a shift in God's existence:

> And you see we may go the way dinosaurs did, but we're here, aren't we, and God has preceded us into divine disappearance, aren't we reduced, suffering from too much visibility, multiplying in order not to be here, one day, a day like the first days, the stones being, being there, on the soil, the stones being, the stones are not the end, the end of what, of whom, of you and me, and maybe only you and then only me, when it wouldn't matter anymore, the stones are the beginning. (6)

Upon hearing the news that "God is dead", Nietzsche feared that if this system were abolished, most people would be driven to suicide or a life without purpose. Where would be the point if there is no God? Even if there was, the Western world was learning about the beginnings from which humans had emerged, disproving the idea that we were the center of the universe. It was then that we were exposed to the real world. Humans are not the only ones who can survive in this universe. Nietzsche worried that such a view of the world would breed pessimism, "a will to nothingness", which ran counter to his philosophy of life

affirmation. There also expresses a tone of pessimism as a result of neglecting the existence of God: "No one ever comes back from the dead … no one ever enters the world without weeping; no one is ever asked when he wishes to enter life, no one is ever asked when he wishes to leave" (261).

3.4. The Intersection between Postmodern Apocalypticism and Existential Crisis in *There*

Postmodernism and existentialism share several concerns, including the demise of metanarratives including history, an end to totalitarian ideologies, and a quest for meaning in an increasingly unintelligible reality. Postmodern and existentialist philosophers have seen the universe as disordered and unknown, and man's role in that universe as more uncertain, due to societal challenges, such as political turmoil, the expansion of big cities, conflict, and advancements in scientific knowledge. Nonetheless, other critical voices claim that the postmodern worldview breaks the foundations of existentialism, such as, Dirk Richter:

> Since existentialism lost its influence in philosophy in the 1960s, postmodern theory has taken over criticizing basic concepts of western thought. From a postmodern point of view, the main shortcomings of existentialism is that it criticizes traditional Unitarian concepts, while re-inventing new unitarian models. Against these unitarian approache postmodemism holds that the world can only be described in terms of difference. (Richter 253)

Apocalyptic worldviews give humanity an existential target in the face of impending doom. Frank Kermode suggests that "our sense of endings has its origins in existential anxiety" (Kermode 254). Furthermore, apocalyptic views moderate the distress caused by contemplation of end times. Apocalyptic worldviews, both religious and secular, stress end-of-the-world precautions. For instance, redemption for sins and acceptance of religious

beliefs, is emphasized in religious worldviews and demands a spiritual accomplishment. In contrast, secular apocalyptic worldviews involve actions such as Doomsday prepping, or preparation for the end of the world by doing things like constructing a bunker and stockpiling food, water, and weapons, is characteristic of secular apocalyptic worldviews (Wojcik 97).

In *There*, the absurdity of existence causes an individual to have an existential crisis because of how painful and pointless everyday life has become in the apocalyptic world. Having come to terms with the futility and despair of life is manifested through the characters I and you.

3.4.1. Contemplating the Postmodern Apocalypse: 'I' vs. 'You'

In this context, Patricia Waugh, in *Practicing Postmodernism: Reading Modernism*, contends that postmodernism is distinguished by an apocalyptic sense of crisis, and this apocalyptic sense is related to the postmodern:

> "Post" implies after but with no indication of whither next … Postmodernism is Apocalyptic. Or, if not in the full Christian millenarian sense of a Last Judgment, ushering in a New Jerusalem, then Apocalyptic in its sense of crisis. (9)

Apocalypse means "to reveal", and so revelation illuminates the historical process as a teleological one which describes both the world end and its replacement with another: Christopher Rowland suggests that "the apocalypse offers a basis for hope in a world where God's way seemed difficult to discern" (Rowland 46-7).

The speaker paints a grim picture of the apocalyptic climate that pervaded the broken war. He narrates:

> "This morning? It's too early for the beach, too soon for starting a fight, so we linger on some light beam and go through windows, unnoticed, while the Police is waiting

with sticks, gloves, gases, orders to shoot or not to shoot beyond one's brain, … a World War II celestial machine which has already left for outer space? We're weak, sitting, facing each other, antlers locked in battle (9). They're shooting on the frontline, shaking the kids out of their sleep, as it happened already, over there, when nobody watches (Adnan 11) … "In an apocalyptic universe speech is doomed. Look at me while your eyes can see; they too will be no more" (55) … "Where were you when war broke up, the one and the many, turning populations into long lines of sheep?" (14). A post-apocalyptic description is as well presented: "Street corners, garbage, police and flies feeding on corpses, heat, narrowness? (27) …. Dust. Powder, women wearing the rose colored make-up of death" (31).

Leigh further lists characteristics of apocalyptic literature that are often used today. It encompasses "imminent end-time, a cosmic catastrophe, a movement from old to a new age, a struggle between forces of good and evil, a desire for the ultimate paradise, a transitional help of a god or messiah or a final judgment and manifestation of the ultimate."(5)

In *There*, there is the character "I" accusing "you" of being evil, a struggle between two forces:

There, in front of me, the music, Nono, Luigi Nono, who believed in the oneness of all, Chiantis … Ayacucho, his nomadic sounds proliferating thunder on Africa's night, where's the hope that he placed in the simplicity of meanings while he staged the trumpets of an ongoing Apocalypse with-in the simultaneity of collective being? (59). "When water and the sky meet space starts rolling back, coming to terms with its origin, waiting to be reduced to duration, and later, following in that direction, to flesh, blood, skin and nails… where in my body is there any room for all this? (26).

Postmodern Apocalypse is also considered "as a strategy a writer employs to depict the dreadfulness of nuclear disaster. It is a rich way of transmitting ideas of catastrophe and fear into a more meaningful fiction about a teleological end" (Abstract). Thus, postmodern apocalyptic literature is a portrayal of societies which are morally ruined and this corruption is often depicted in the form of a literal end caused by an atomic bomb or another nuclear event. Rosen calls apocalyptic literature the "grandest sense-making structure" which asserts human's need for shape and meaning (Ibid).

Adnan resurrects that world as it was, bottling the mortal dread, high anxiety and mass confusion that seem so distant now. *There* as a postmodern novel questions and foregrounds the way we make sense of the world. It presents the modern world's self-alienation and sense of loss, he undercuts the truth to show the provisional certainty in a world where uncertainty is the more common experience:

> The genre of the apocalypse includes a concept of repetition that permits the writing of new stories about the end … they are likewise at once in thinking that permits the writing of new stories about the end. ..belief in apocalypse is liable to continual critique … they are likewise at one in thinking that the uncircumscribed field of narrative at the fin de millennium continues to be structured, if only negatively in relation to apocalypse (xii).

The narrator seems to reflect how one's mind processes spatial and geographical information, with folded maps standing in for the way nations might be obscured or distorted in one's view: "One remembers that folded maps push countries aside, and next to this space valleys run to the sea, the colored one, and I'm in fear of an ambush while you think that pebbles are explosives; explosions are being heard from the river's other bank. The waters are running scared" (41). The phrase "valleys running to the sea" may evoke images of tranquility and

peace, but it is instead paired with apprehension and the assumption that even innocuous stones could be used as bombs. It is unsettling to hear explosions off in the distance and worry about being ambushed by enemies on the opposite side of the river. The expression "waters are running scared" may be used to imply that the speaker's emotions mirror the restless condition of their environment.

"This heat is keeping the pressure on us, something will break loose in this speed, this terror" (28). One can interpret the above mentioned quote as a warning of imminent danger or disaster. A heated discussion, tense situation, or pressing matter may all be represented by the metaphor of heat. An event of great significance may finally be about to unfold, since the concept of something "breaking loose" denotes a moment of conclusion or release. The rapidity of the events building up to this climactic moment suggests that "speed" is a metaphor for the situation's extreme gravity.

If we analyze this phrase in light of the apocalypse, it may represent the expectation of a catastrophic catastrophe or a transformational moment that may radically alter the course of history. Upheaval, confusion, and anxiety are commonplace in works with an apocalyptic tone. The quote's use of the word "terror" may be meant to evoke the feelings of unease and panic that follow predictions of a catastrophic future.

This quote explores themes of isolation, loss, displacement, and the transience of existence. It suggests a contrast between two individuals' coping mechanisms in the aftermath of a significant event, possibly an apocalypse. The narrator highlights a difference in how two people have reacted to their circumstances: "You barricaded yourself with memories of death while I listened to the doomed". One person has chosen to shield themselves from the present by immersing in memories associated with death, possibly as a way of processing grief or distancing themselves from the new reality.

The other person, referred to as "I", has taken a more attentive approach by actively listening to those who are "doomed". This implies a sense of empathy or connection with the suffering and struggles of others. The selected text *There* expresses a sense of bewilderment and loss in the wake of some significant change: "And why all this, where have they all gone, boats, people, where?". The disappearance of familiar elements like boats and people suggests a profound transformation of the world they once knew, leaving the speaker questioning where everything has gone. Again the text underscores a feeling of nostalgia and longing for a past that can never be revisited: "Always to a place we have already left". It implies that the boats, people, and whatever once made up their world are now moving toward a destination that is already been abandoned. This could evoke a sense of longing for stability and a desire to return to a time before the upheaval.

The narrator paints a picture of a tranquil natural scene, perhaps contrasting with the current state of turmoil: "Cool springs meander through the cliffs of someone's country, never yours or mine". The description of "someone's country" rather than "yours or mine" implies a detachment from a sense of ownership or belonging, contributing to the feeling of displacement and separation from a sense of home. In essence, this quote delves into the emotional aftermath of a significant event, like an apocalypse, and how individuals cope with its impact. It speaks to the different ways people navigate loss, dislocation, and the yearning for a world that once was. The imagery and contrasts in the quote evoke a deep sense of introspection, longing, and the realization that the past can never be reclaimed.

In a poignant reflection on the intertwining forces of good and evil, the speaker contemplates the inherent connection between pain, environmental decay, and the unsettling arrival of an ominous presence, casting a shadow over the once pristine landscape:

It was all meant to be: this pain, you mean, the mercury in the fish, poison coming to shore in our bones. My blood has cooled, it was beautiful here before you landed, you took notice; we had trees, which trees I'll tell you later, but they were all over the field of my vision, and you blurred that vision, why for…"(23)

The narrator highlights the tension between the human need to measure time and the desire for a sense of timelessness: "He who counts the hours loses timelessness and we count our dead. It's always too late, too late for the conversation we want to carry one late afternoon at Caffè Bugatti's, somewhere on the West Coast, away from the front line, but war is around us, visible at different degrees of sharpness. We always die on some well-defined spot. The body goes" (7). In the context of an apocalypse, where the familiar structures of society and routine have broken down, the act of counting hours might symbolize a futile attempt to hold onto a sense of normal timekeeping. Counting the dead, on the other hand, points to the grim reality of the ongoing catastrophe and the overwhelming loss that is being experienced.

Again the narrator conveys a sense of longing for moments of normalcy and connection that have been disrupted by the apocalypse: "It's always too late, too late for the conversation we want to carry one late afternoon at Caffè Bugatti's, somewhere on the West Coast, away from the front line, but war is around us, visible at different degrees of sharpness". The desire to engage in a conversation at a cafe on the West Coast signifies a yearning for a peaceful and carefree time that has been lost. The presence of war in the surroundings, even if at varying levels of intensity, serves as a constant reminder of the upheaval that has occurred. "We always die on some well-defined spot. The body goes." This quote underscores the idea of mortality within the context of an apocalypse. The concept of dying on a "well-defined spot" could represent the stark and definitive nature of death in a world where chaos reigns. The phrase "the body goes" suggests the inevitability of physical mortality and the impermanence of human existence, even amidst the turmoil of the apocalypse.

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The narrator reflects a contemplation on the inevitability of death and the transient nature of time: "Dead, deadly, is death. Time is counted. Let us not measure love's weightlessness. Is there light ahead, any sky which lifts itself in its youthful fierceness?"(8). The reference to measuring "love's weightlessness" suggests an exploration of the intangible aspects of human experience amid the harshness of an apocalyptic world. The query about light and a youthful sky implies a search for hope or meaning in the face of darkness.

"Should I explain what humiliation is about, have I not escorted you to the dead's domain, haven't we had conversations with ghosts, some we knew and some we didn't…." (14). This quote delves into themes of humiliation, death, and encounters with the supernatural. The reference to the "dead's domain" suggests a confrontation with mortality, and the conversations with ghosts hint at a haunted existence. This may symbolize the lingering impact of the past and the weight of collective memory in a postmodern apocalyptic setting.

"Days are in military gear, Prometheus stole the fire, for whom, for what, for war? Whose wars are we fighting? I'm gasping for air, not gas, would these malignant clouds pass away, and the horizon burst open!"(16). Here, the quote draws on apocalyptic imagery, connecting days to military gear and questioning the purpose of Prometheus stealing fire. The mention of gasping for air and malignant clouds suggests an atmosphere of suffocation and environmental decay. The desire for the horizon to burst open conveys a longing for change and liberation from the oppressive conditions.

"In the heart's subways appetite could turn into poison, livid anger can mean blindness for the children, there, on death's playground, you could find my hand before it burns and disappears, while time is standing still" (16). This quote paints a grim picture of the apocalyptic reality, where the metaphorical "heart's subways" imply hidden and dangerous depths. The transformation of appetite into poison and the consequences of livid anger speak

to the toxic nature of the postmodern world. The mention of death's playground underscores the pervasive danger, while the plea to find a hand before it burns suggests a yearning for connection amid the stasis of time.

The imagery of "tender foliage" covering a wound suggests a sense of healing or protection, symbolizing the natural processes that can mitigate pain or suffering. The mention of hearing "arteries beat" implies a connection to another person's life force, invoking empathy and the shared experience of being alive. This connection is further emphasized by the phrase "highways in your bloodstream," which conveys a sense of shared pathways and interconnectedness.

The phrase "we can't divert Time's flow" reflects the universal constraint of time and the inability to halt its progression. This can be seen as a reminder of the impermanence of all things, both good and evil, and how time continues regardless of human desires or intentions. The reference to "carnage" reinforces the idea that suffering and destruction are inherent aspects of existence.

In the context of good and evil, this quote presents a more nuanced perspective. The "tender foliage" and the connection through shared blood pathways can symbolize moments of compassion, kindness, and understanding, which are often associated with the concept of good. The acknowledgment of the inability to divert Time's flow and the presence of "carnage" speaks to the inevitable hardships and suffering that are part of the human experience, reflecting the concept of evil.

Overall, the quote seems to suggest that both suffering and empathy coexist in the world. The recognition of the limitations imposed by time and the presence of suffering challenges a simplistic view of good and evil. It underscores the complexity of life's experiences and how these concepts are intertwined. The quote encourages a deeper understanding of the shades of

gray between these concepts, where acts of kindness and moments of suffering are interconnected parts of the human condition.

The narrator explores the surreal and fragmented nature of existence, where bodily transplants and distant separations are juxtaposed with malevolent wishes and a complex interplay of good and evil: "and here, they can transplant my eye on your head or sew your hand on my arm, while we're light years away from each other because, somewhere, evil is wished on you, and you good /evil wished us to die, (16).

Against the backdrop of a post-apocalyptic world, this quote paints a vivid yet ominous image of a sea adorned with blue meadows, where the trembling line of fire hints at the pervasive threat and instability that envelops everything, casting a shadow over the serene beauty of the natural landscape: "in front of the sea which is covered with blue meadows a line is trembling with fire, all over you" (17).

This line juxtaposes the tranquil image of a sea covered with "blue meadows" against the intensity of conflict ("trembling with fire"). The mention of a "line" suggests a demarcation or boundary, possibly symbolizing a divide between opposing sides. The phrase "all over you" could signify that the conflict or tension is closely intertwined with the individual being addressed.

The narrator vividly captures the paradoxical beauty and impending danger that characterize the environment. The tranquil imagery of a sea adorned with blue meadows is disrupted by the ominous trembling line of fire, symbolizing the fragile coexistence of serenity and destruction in a world on the brink of collapse.

The narrator encapsulates the relentless cycle of conflict and violence, portraying a confrontation that transcends historical epochs: "and you're facing me with guns, as you did with slings and stones". The reference to both contemporary weaponry ("guns") and ancient,

primitive tools of war ("slings and stones") suggests a perpetual human inclination towards aggression, underscoring the enduring nature of societal strife even in the face of apocalyptic upheaval

Here, the speaker describes the confrontational stance of the other person, using the imagery of "guns" and recalling a historical context with "slings and stones." This could allude to a history of conflict or struggle, suggesting that the person being addressed has confronted the speaker using different levels of force over time.

The mention of "grey metal over my head" could symbolize a sense of impending danger or oppression. The color "grey" often conveys a lack of clarity or ambiguity, suggesting uncertainty about the nature of the threat. The phrase "turning toward darkness" could symbolize a shift toward negativity, obscurity, or malevolence. This turn toward darkness might be a response to the confrontation and the looming presence of conflict.

Overall, the quote seems to depict a tense situation where conflict and power dynamics are at play. The contrasting imagery of peaceful sea and fiery tension reflects the complex coexistence of different emotions and states. The symbolism of weapons, historical parallels, and the reference to darkness contributes to a sense of unease and the potential for violence. The use of vivid imagery and contrasting elements helps convey the emotional intensity and complexity of the situation described in the quote: "and why this grey metal over my head, and you turning toward darkness?". The mention of "grey metal over my head" could symbolize a sense of impending danger or oppression. The color "grey" often conveys a lack of clarity or ambiguity, suggesting uncertainty about the nature of the threat. The phrase "turning toward darkness" could symbolize a shift toward negativity, obscurity, or malevolence. This turn toward darkness might be a response to the confrontation and the looming presence of conflict.

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This imagery sets a scene of juxtaposition. The "white marble climbing toward heaven" suggests a sense of purity, elevation, or aspiration, possibly symbolizing human endeavors or ambitions. On the other hand, the "sky darkened with airplanes" could represent modernity, technology, or even conflict. This contrast between the heavenly and the earthly, the elevated and the mechanized, creates a sense of complexity.

"Listen, there's noise, the gates to nothingness are open while you struggle, and stutter". The call to "listen" implies an attempt to attune to a certain experience or realization. The "noise" could signify the chaotic distractions of the world, possibly obscuring deeper meanings. The phrase "gates to nothingness are open" might suggest a feeling of emptiness, meaninglessness, or perhaps the presence of existential questioning. Amidst this backdrop, the act of "struggle" and "stutter" indicates a sense of difficulty and uncertainty.

The final phrase "and I speak with no voice" encapsulates a profound sense of isolation and powerlessness, symbolizing an inability to be heard or a feeling of being silenced amidst overwhelming circumstances. This quote paints a vivid picture of dissonance between the sublime and the mundane, depicting a world brimming with noise, distractions, and existential uncertainties.

In the exploration of ambiguity and existential uncertainty within the post-apocalyptic context, the quote questioning whether the other is "transparent water" or the "Beast of the

Apocalypse" signifies a profound existential inquiry. The juxtaposition of seemingly contradictory elements reflects the intricacies and contradictions inherent in the human experience, especially in the aftermath of cataclysmic events.

Within the post-apocalyptic landscape, the quote "You barricaded yourself with memories of death while I listened to the doomed..." sheds light on emotional and geographical dislocation. The act of barricading with memories serves as a coping mechanism, and the mention of "listening to the doomed" suggests a connection and empathy amidst the prevailing hardship. The questions about the whereabouts of boats and people convey the disorientation and loss typical of a post-apocalyptic scenario.

The phrase "I become a voracious animal, searching for self-affirmation on corpses..." portrays an intense and desperate quest for self-affirmation. The metaphor of becoming a "voracious animal" underscores the fervor of this search, while the mention of metaphorical "corpses" and "decomposed traces" suggests a process of letting go and adapting to new circumstances. This quote paints a complex emotional landscape, navigating the tension between personal growth and the haunting effects of what has been left behind.

The line "We do worship the waves, don't we?" signifies a deep reverence for natural forces, particularly symbolized by the waves. The use of "worship" implies a profound respect or spiritual connection to these potent elements. The subsequent mention of the "strange" being chased away by the tribe introduces a dynamic of exclusion and collective decision-making within the context of nature worship.

The quote "While battles rage, when long memory lines wait to be revived, the slaughter of shepherds goes on..." juxtaposes ongoing conflict with the desire to resurrect historical memories. The reference to "long memory lines" denotes past experiences waiting to be

remembered, yet the continuing violence ("slaughter of shepherds") suggests that history is not always a shield against ongoing hardships.

The imagery of "...and death becomes a moving shadow on a screen" likens death to a fleeting and intangible presence. Describing death as a "moving shadow on a screen" conveys its transitory nature, emphasizing its constant and ever-present companionship in the post-apocalyptic world.

Overall, the quote reflects a complex interplay between reverence for nature, historical memory, conflict, and mortality. The act of worshiping waves highlights humanity's connection to the natural world. The mention of chasing away "strange" elements suggests a desire for a cohesive and familiar community in times of turmoil. The contrast between historical memory and ongoing violence hints at the challenges of preserving traditions amid adversity. Lastly, the description of death as a "moving shadow" underscores the impermanence of life.

This quote captures the multi-faceted nature of human experience, where reverence and violence, memory and conflict, and life and death intersect, creating a tapestry of emotions and circumstances.

The acts of humans are shown as the catalyst for the collapse of the biological order in the story. When viewed critically, Atwood's comments on the separation between humans and the natural world are crystal clear. Metaphors are the greatest way to sum up this idea: "Man is a wolf to man especially since there are no real wolves anymore" (Zero Time 233). However, the notion of man as a predator extends much farther, implying that man has exhausted all other resources. Nor is there any 'nature', only genetically improved species . . . Scientists and the general public argue for the greater common good and accept their estrangement from 'nature' for the sake of a nature culture that is similarly 'red in claw'. . . The human race has

evolved, and it has left behind humanism. (*Zero Time* 233) Atwood's apocalypse is driven by man as an animal that has preyed upon the earth in an irreversible way. In claiming "estrangement from 'nature'" the critic is actually asserting that mankind has removed itself from the cycle and in doing so has attempted to flee their guilt in its destruction. Ultimately, even with distance from nature and complacency with environmental destruction mankind cannot escape this process unscathed. To say that the human race has evolved beyond humanism evokes two ideas.

Most current academics of the topic intend to focus on the role of the postmodern existence and the crises it has brought about in the production of postmodern apocalyptic literature, however certain critics are more inclined to continue with the themes of hope and rebirth in their studies of the genre. Jacques Derrida's "No Apocalypse, Not Now" is an outstanding argument against the widespread accumulation and commercialization of nuclear weapons and other scary powers of devastation (8). The sensation of continual crisis coexists with the thought that the apocalyptic disaster has already occurred, and the apocalyptic literature is only a recollection of some perplexing tragedy, as James Berger sensibly concentrates on in After the End: Representations of Post-Apocalypse (1999). (9). As he does in the previous presentation, "The Modern Apocalypse" from The Sense of an Ending argues that the apocalyptic myth has given us a chance to make sense of the reality we are living in. He maintains that history, the present, and the future all need some type of order or design that literature can provide (10).

3.4.2. Religious, Semi-Religious or Secular Narrative?

It is important to note that not all apocalyptic stories are religious or even spiritual in nature. Daniel Wojcik, when analyzing the end-of-the-world story, suggests:

That until recently, the end of the world has been interpreted as a meaningful, transformative, and supernatural event, involving the annihilation and renewal of the earth by deities or divine forces. During the last half of the twentieth century, however, widespread beliefs about a meaningless apocalypse have emerged and now compete with traditional religious apocalyptic worldviews. (Wojcik 1-2)

Indeed, if it has lost its traditional theological and metaphysical associations, the apocalyptic narrative persists in a more secularized sense. *There* is a secularist narrative as the speaker contemplates the devastation caused by overcrowding by drawing parallels to the extinction of the dinosaurs and the absence of God in the earth. In this regard, he states: "and you see we may go the way dinosaurs did, but we're here, aren't we, and God has preceded us into divine disappearance, aren't we reduced, suffering from too much visibility, multiplying in order not to be here, one day" (Adnan 6). In addition, he claims that I can hear their shouts for help, but I also know that God gave in to His own God. There is no denying the climbs or the return journey and "the desert is blooming with the dew, the lesser divinities are giving party. We're left with voices" (62).

3.4.3. Synchronism of Apocalypse and Post-Apocalypse

Etel Adnan's 1997 book-length poem *There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and of the Other*. It seamlessly blended pre- and post-apocalyptic narratives:

Neither catapults the reader into an apocalyptic millennial future nor promises her a sparkling post-apocalyptic utopia. Rather, it insistently instantiates a post-apocalyptic future in the text's apocalyptic present. Responding to the rhetoric of global apocalypse permeating the political and environmental discourses of the 1990s, There envisions and discursively practices ethical encounter as the making-present of a virtual, post-apocalyptic, planetarily-conscious community of the future (305).

3.4.3.1. Apocalyptists: I and you

Interest in apocalyptic terrorism, as Justin Meggitt writes in "the Problem of Apocalyptic Terrorism," appeared somewhat late in the history of both terrorism studies, which itself only became formally established in the late 1970s, and also the study of religion and terrorism, a sub-field within terrorism studies that began in the mid 1980s, largely as a consequence of the influential work of David Rapport.

There are a number of ways in which the situation depicted in *Falling Man* can be read as ominous. For one, the spectacle has devastating effects on the city's emotional state because it profoundly and suddenly changes the city's material state of affairs. DeLillo's own words in "In the Ruins of the Future," his article written shortly after the attacks, seem to hint at this apocalyptic valence. There he casts the event explicitly in terms of the conflict between the terrorists and the United States, stating that there is no logic in apocalypse. Heaven and hell, the ultimate theater of human life played out in the form of armed martyrdom (34). Previous logics and narratives have been forced to submit to a violent drama of eschatological conflict, a war of stories in which one side has briefly earned a cataclysmic upper hand, and so in the seemingly inexplicably new situation, habitual logics fall away. My claim, however, and this may go against what DeLillo himself suggests in the previous essay, is that the scenario in *Falling Man* is apocalyptic in that it is revelatory. This is consistent with the biblical origin of the word apocalypse, which means "uncovering,"

in this case not only of agents who had been secretly preparing, but also, like pulling away the face of an analog clock to see its gears in action, of the power mechanisms that have already been at play and out of which these new forces emerge.

For Marco Abel, "In the Ruins of the Future" is a response to 9/11 "by mobilizing seeing as a narrative method that operates from within the image event without imposing itself on it"

(195). One could argue that *Falling Man*, as a narrative, enacts its brand of apocalyptic terror by drawing our attention to the violence performed by our processes of creating meaning and establishing common recognition through the events of September 11 and their aftermath. Artists' critical responses are motivated by the need to make meaning of the catastrophic world in which we live on a psychological level. The sense of continuous crisis coexists with the notion that the apocalyptic catastrophe has already occurred, and the apocalyptic writing is merely a reminder of some confusing disaster, as James Berger wisely fixes on in *After the End: Representations of Post-Apocalypse***.**

Apocalyptists, in Rosen's view, are foreboding figures who proclaim impending doom long before it ever occurs. She mentions that "apocalyptists can exist in the face of the impending apocalypse and the sheer number of them is due to the pervasive sense of imminent ending which is the result of living under the shadow of the nuclear bomb" (1). The narrator is wondering: "Now you're coming, tell me, talk, is something falling, are we at war, is the land's thirst calling for blood, are clouds moving in pair today? The mountain is spread and close to my nature, in its dryness, its age its imperviousness to evil's armies. Are we both abandoned…?" (25)

3.4.3.2. Absence of Social Renewal

The lack of renewal is a condition often substantiated by the appearance of New Jerusalem in apocalyptic stories. This world is not one in which total devastation can serve as a purifying agent, suggesting that the corrupted state of things is hopeless ever to be rectified. In other words, according to Rosen, "New Jerusalem and the hope it symbolizes only live outside reality," existing only in the protagonist's imagination (80). The apocalyptic paradigm through which the characters make meaning of a chaotic world is revealed, it seems, by the

absence of a purifying end. Without the threat of the end, it is difficult to distinguish between good and evil.

The paradox of traditional apocalyptic literature is that it believes that only an absolute, "purifying cataclysm" can make the corrupted world new and perfect, and that no societal reform can cure it. The authors of postmodern apocalyptic fiction need not adhere to any particular apocalyptic paradigm; rather, it is the authors' ability to subvert that paradigm in order to make insightful observations about the world as it currently stands that is of paramount importance. Therefore, the goal is to employ the paradigm shift as a tool for social criticism, rather than simply as a means of improvement (Rosen 1).

Specifically, "Krishnan Kumar notes that apocalyptic ideas have become commonplace in postmodern discourse. Postmodernism's grand storyline claims the end of reason and progress, but provides nothing to replace them. According to Kumar, "not even American doctrine can inspire faith in a teleologically attainable utopia" (Villa 304).

The terrifying imagery in the prose poetry. There is an apocalyptic feel to it because it reveals the underlying violence in any political society, including liberal democracies that seem to put violence in a separate category from politics. Terrorism, like the end of the world, appears as a catastrophic disruption of the normal or normative order of structures, but it actually reveals the latent forces that have always been there, the violence that has always been ingrained in the political system.

Through the characters represented by the pronouns I and you, the speaker depicts the futile quest of modern communities to solve the mystery of life and the inability to make sense of a meaningless world full of continuous horror. To demonstrate the personal self-alienation and loss that characterize modernity, and to undermine the truth in order to highlight the temporary surety that exists in a world where uncertainty is the norm. As was previously

stated, *There* poses the unyielding questions without attempting to solve the mysteries of the universe, thereby establishing a significant new voice in transient fiction. The speaker emphasizes the unavoidable terror and societal malaise, saying, "The fear is here, never relenting, the breeze blowing, the sun orbiting. If it wasn't here, then where? (15) he continues, "Terror, you're engaged with terror..." (22-23).

One can find a wide variety of terrifying scenarios in international politics, all of which have the potential to throw daily life into chaos and bring about awful consequences. Total war, nuclear firestorms, worldwide pandemics, and climatic devastation are just a few examples. "Terrorism invents nothing and inaugurates nothing," Baudrillard says. As a result, things are taken to an absurd level of intensity. This situation, this logic of brutality and uncertainty, is made worse (34). In *There*, the speaker portrays apocalyptic scenes using the voice of self/other. First, in the voice of the center, he claims: "War is our dialogue. It brings explosions at home, debris of human limbs, booby-trapped love letters. We're sorrow's old veterans, having written lamentations on too many bones. Always the writing, that recorded silent voice which jumps generations to claim eternity for blood" (58). And then he answers in the voice of the periphery: "The system is cracking, it's an implosion, the debris are human limbs, who cares? (11).

The narrator indicates the absence of social renewal, it underscores themes of obstacles, confusion, resistance, and a lack of urgency or collective will to bring about positive change:

> Terror. Again. The magic of words is working. There, on the other side, which side, we shall soon discover, a reef is probably rising, a boat entering the harbor, the captain has landed, I'll have a chance to trust him in spite of the canon's roar, and some food has been served, and let's eat, while we're still hungry" (22).

The mention of "Terror" in the quote could be interpreted as a negative or disruptive force that impedes progress and change. In the context of the absence of social renewal, this could represent persistent challenges, stagnation, or societal issues that hinder positive transformation.

The phrase "the magic of words is working" might take on a different connotation in this context. It could imply the manipulation of language for deceptive or divisive purposes, hindering genuine communication and obstructing the potential for constructive dialogue needed for social renewal.

The imagery of a boat entering the harbor and the captain landing, followed by the hesitation expressed with "which side, we shall soon discover," could signify a lack of clear direction or leadership. In the absence of social renewal, there may be confusion or ambiguity about the path forward, preventing a collective effort toward positive change. The reference to the canon's roar suggests ongoing conflict or resistance to change. In a society lacking renewal, entrenched interests, resistance to innovation, or the perpetuation of harmful practices may persist, hindering progress.

The notion of eating "while we're still hungry" could be interpreted differently in the absence of social renewal. Instead of a sense of urgency to address issues promptly, it might suggest a complacency or resignation, where individuals or society at large settle for the status quo despite unmet needs and challenges.

3.4.4. *There*: a Narrative that Assesses the American Reality

In his essay "Writing American Fiction", he claims: "The American writer in the middle of the twentieth century," he proclaims, "has his hands full in trying to understand, describe, and then make credible much of American reality." Three years before the Kennedy assassination became "the seven seconds that broke the back of the American century," in

Don Delillo's words, Roth surveyed the American scene and could only confess that "it stupefies, it sickens, it infuriates, and finally it is even a kind of embarrassment" to the American writer's "meager imagination" (27).

Similarly, The poem as well reveals the collective anxiety and apprehension of the American society: "60.000 children are missing in the United States alone, who's missing them, the government, the people, you and me, united in that private war waged within our boundaries, which boundaries, you may ask, those of the heart, this particular object with the red color of blood" (Adnan 13).

Harrowing events, like the Holocaust and the Vietnam War have left permanent scars on the minds of humans everywhere. There is still a lingering dread that another catastrophic event may befall the modern world due to the ubiquitous availability of nuclear weapons and their horrible destructive potential. Since the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, nuclear weapons have figured prominently in predictions of the end of the world. This demonstrates how, throughout the 1980s, people were still scared of a similar threat after living through the misery of two world wars.

3.4.5. *There*: A Counter-Narrative to *the Arab Apocalypse*

There is an apocalyptic narrative because it includes ideas about the end of history, the spectre of nuclear annihilation, genocide, millennialism, and terrorism as well as utopian visions of temporal renewal and spiritual transcendence. There is a close relationship between the apocalyptic and the postmodern through society's concern over the direction of history, the validity of meta-narratives, and other cultural phenomenon, such as war, the development of nuclear weaponry, and terrorism. There is "a reaction to Adnan's *The Arab Apocalypse* and post-1948 Arab literature" (Villa 307). It is a meditation on:

Frequent recourse to the relationship between the you and the I, that is, any unique relationship between two singular beings which may influence and be influenced by self-other relations between collectivities … it is a critiques of West/rest binarism and illuminates the text's status as a harbinger of post–September 11 poetic critiques of unethical portrayals of Arabs in the Western media. (Ibid)

3.4.6. Existential Terror During and After the Apocalypse

Atwood implies that whoever comes to exist after man will have questions about all the things that our species has left and destroyed. They will ask, "How did this happen? Their descendants will ask, stumbling upon the evidence, the ruins. The ruinous evidence. Who made these things? Who lived in them? Who destroyed them?" (222). Atwood is shaping a generation of curious and self-aware individuals via the use of the implicit mystery of the questions 'who' and 'how'. As a noun, the word "ruinous" conjures up images of decay and antiquity.

People learn to grasp the meaning of their lives by seeing their lives as a tale with a beginning, middle, and conclusion: "The way, the truth, and the life. He lays down three degrees, as if he had said, that he is the beginning, and the middle, and the end; and hence it follows that we ought to begin with him, to continue in him, and to end in him"(Marko 17) . We certainly ought not to seek for higher wisdom than that which leads us to eternal life, and he testifies that this life is to be found in him. Now the method of obtaining life is, to become new creatures. He declares, that we ought not to seek it anywhere else, and, at the same time, reminds us, that he is the way, by which alone we can arrive at it. That he may not fail us in any respect, he stretches out the hand to those who are going astray, and stoops so low as to guide sucking infants. Presenting himself as a leader, he does not leave his people in the

middle of the course, but makes them partakers of the truth. At length he makes them enjoy the fruit of it, which is the most excellent and delightful thing that can be imagined.

Many apocalyptic narratives consider the apocalypse as the end of life on Earth or the end of civilization, but not the end of existence. For example, many religious apocalyptic narratives tell of the apocalypse ushering in a more ideal spiritual existence (Gross & Giles, 2012), whereas secular apocalyptic narratives tell of a post-apocalyptic existence either on earth where social structure has collapsed or on some other planet (Wojcik, 1997). In *There*, the speaker questions whether human beings existence continues: "Where is my love for you, hiding, watching over your sleep, combing your body with questions, getting ready for a wedding? Is it perchance sending announcements for a disaster? Is the human species persisting in its becoming? (15).

It is common in existentialist literature to depict a doubting person, searching for meaning and truth in a bleak and tumultuous universe. Fear and Trembling by Kierkegaard asserts that "the individual's primary reality is that of the lone, enthusiastically questing individual who, in order to save himself from total despair, must make a great leap of faith—by gambling in fear and terror, and with his whole being—that on the other side of that leap he will find God".

Existential terror, at its core, is the conscious and unconscious fear of nonexistence. As we will see, this fear involves a host of cognitive and emotional components that make it a nuanced phenomenon. *There* reveals the complexity of existential terror: it is not only a fear of death, but also a feeling of estrangement from others and a search for meaning for our lives. Additionally, it is a feeling of angst that defies concise articulation; an anxiety lurking beyond the surface that never fully abates; a numbness that seeks conformity with the masses; and an urge for freedom that presses for individuation.

3.4.6.1. Anxiety, Alienation and Disorientation: Dimensions of Existential Crisis

Existential fiction often investigates the issue of alienation. According to the article "Alienation and Existentialism in Relation to Literature and Youth" written by Henry Winthrop, alienation is a term that encompasses the following:

It refers to any psychological feeling of separation from persons, groups, institutions, ideas and ideals, places and things. It is characterized by an inability to experience a feeling of organic relatedness to any of these entities" He also adds: "the novels of existential writers like Sartre and Camus are powerful testimonials to the sufferings of men and women as a result of alienation in their lives (Winthrop, 1967).

Albert Camus's *The Stranger* is one of the novels that projected the idea of alienation the most. As its title suggests, the protagonist is outside the social order, alienated and isolated even from the closest people to him. In his work Alienation and Freedom, Richard Schmitt provides a thorough analysis of the existential idea of alienation, stating that:

An alienated relationship develops when once-trusting friends and family members begin to harbor suspicion and cut off communication. People stop being themselves and start acting more formal and distant in their conversations. One starts to put their faith in other people and may even start to speak ill of someone they had formerly protected passionately. When people talk of alienation, they may be referring to a gradual but steady erosion of their emotional ties to one another and their ability to trust one another. (Qtd.In Triki)

Persistent isolation is a symptom of being dissatisfied with oneself because of who one is not. For as long as there is literature, there will be alienation. A man's quest for ultimate purpose and existence begins when he recognizes that he is an outsider in his own community. The existentialist feels this alienation because he withdraws from society since he perceives its members to be indifferent. Despite his best efforts, he is unable to constitute genuine

relationships with other people and always feels alone. People experience an existential sense of solitude as they search for their life' purpose and meaning. The term "bad faith," which refers to deceiving oneself, is often used in Existentialism. Since existentialist is so intrinsically linked to the idea of personal autonomy, this concept is often cited as the most fundamental tenet of the philosophy.

The author, Austin Cline, writes, "Exploring Sartre's Existentialist Themes on Bad Faith and Fallenness" (2019):

Bad faith in an attempt to avoid the angst which accompanies the realization that our existence has no coherence except for what we ourselves create. Thus, bad faith comes from within us and is itself a choice, a way that a person uses their freedom to avoid dealing with the consequences of that freedom because of the radial responsibility that those consequences entail."(para.3).

Consequently, in the absence of God, the individual experiences feelings of abandonment and misery toward the cosmos. Negative emotions like this encourage shady behavior. Several existentialists have focused on anxiety as a mental condition. When a person begins to grasp the absurdity of his situation, he experiences anxiety. Ethical decision-making is blamed for causing man's worry. His moral karma should follow from the decisions he makes. It has an impact on him and on society as a whole. Anxiety over doing the right thing is a common human response to the weight of moral decision making.

Existentialists with a religious bent believe that the desire for salvation stoked by anxiety might lead a person to embrace a religious lifestyle. However, for atheistic existentialists, worry only leads to hopelessness and unhappiness if the person realizes the full extent of his own limitless autonomy. Having nothing but our own freedom to prevent us from engaging in harmful or dishonorable behavior makes us nervous.

The narrator encapsulates elements of existential anxiety and alienation: "A street is territory borrowed from the past into which we engulf ourselves in search of transfiguration. In fact, we're engaged in the destruction of things we love because impatience is part of passion" (8).The concept of a street being "territory borrowed from the past" suggests a connection to history, but the pursuit of "transfiguration" implies a desire for change and renewal. The destructive aspect of engaging in the destruction of things one loves signifies the paradoxical nature of existential passion. The impatience as part of passion introduces an anxious dimension, where the urgency for transformation contributes to a sense of disorientation and alienation from the familiar.

The narrator reflects a profound sense of disorientation and weakness in the face of monumental events: "A World War II celestial machine which has already left for outer space? We're weak, sitting facing each other, antlers locked in battle (9).The reference to a "World War II celestial machine" implies a historical and celestial scale of disruption, contributing to existential anxiety. The imagery of being "weak" and "antlers locked in battle" suggests a struggle and conflict, adding to the overall disorientation. The departure for outer space introduces an element of alienation, emphasizing a detachment from earthly concerns and a sense of displacement. Together, these elements create a narrative of existential crisis marked by anxiety, alienation, and disorientation.

In his book "Basic Writings," Heidegger writes on the experience of anguish (1993) as: "a particular mood that would disclose something essential about man's existence as a whole" (90) He also adds: "…anxiety, a malaise at once less identifiable and more oppressive" (p 90). And yet, freedom, in Soren Kierkegaard's view, causes people to live in perpetual terror of their own failure to live up to their duties in life, especially their tangible obligations to the Supreme Being.

Many stories have dealt with existential guilt since that's how existentialist authors usually portray their protagonists: as unfortunate victims. Most notably, in Dirty Hands (1948), a drama by Sartre, the protagonist admits to murdering a clearly dangerous enemy during conflict. In general, guilt is the feeling one has when he or she is aware that they have broken some kind of moral law. Therefore, the offender must carry and attempt to swallow the heavy responsibility for violating a value or norm.

"I threw my memories out the window and they came back, alien, beggars and witches, leaving me standing like a sword. Is that why the sun is so bleak when it looks at us, and why is there so much love under the heat and the truth?"(4). The narrator suggests a fragmentation of memory and a sense of alienation from the past. The return of memories as "alien, beggars, and witches" reflects a disorienting and possibly dystopian quality. The bleakness of the sun and the juxtaposition of love under the heat and truth evoke a postmodern apocalyptic atmosphere where the conventional understanding of elements like love and sunlight undergoes a transformation, questioning the stability of reality.

"Where are we to go when the lights will go out and we'll look similar? We demand a reprieve from the drought, but we're so afraid of water that the rain stops when it comes and we return to the sun" (6). The narrator captures a sense of uncertainty and fear associated with an impending apocalyptic event. The fear of looking similar when the lights go out suggests a loss of individuality or identity. The paradox of demanding relief from drought while fearing water and preferring the return to the sun indicates a complex relationship with survival and the unknown, characteristic of postmodern apocalyptic narratives.

"The movement of the body, the heat, the fire, were fine, and where have the afternoons gone, why so many wars, why did Guevara unearth Columbus' bones?"(6). Here, the mention of the movement of the body, heat, and fire contrasts with the query about the disappearance

of afternoons and the prevalence of wars. This duality signifies the coexistence of pleasure and destruction, a common theme in postmodern apocalypticism. The reference to Guevara unearthing Columbus' bones introduces historical and revolutionary elements, emphasizing the layers of upheaval and questioning of established narratives.

"You may claim the privilege to such an experience. How to assess your mind's clarity, its innocence? It's clear there, over there, as I see it from my window, my brain getting sharper than a radio satellite..."(8). The exploration of mental clarity and innocence in this quote touches upon the subjective nature of reality. The description of the mind getting "sharper than a radio satellite" implies a heightened perception, perhaps in response to a transformed or apocalyptic environment. The mention of the disappeared streets of the hometown reinforces the theme of loss and dislocation, common in postmodern apocalyptic scenarios.

"And I sat on the floor, O Scheherazade, with no king to do the listening, no beggar, and are you there, behind the curtains, beyond our mountains?!"(9). The narrator evokes a sense of isolation and a longing for connection. The absence of a king and beggar to listen suggests a breakdown in traditional structures and communication. The reference to Scheherazade, a storyteller from "One Thousand and One Nights," adds a layer of narrative complexity, questioning the role of storytelling and its continuity in an apocalyptic world.

"Always, on the pleated horizon, there's fear, and some instability runs like a god of earlier days, or the first thought –wave, and I'm in a hurry, aren't you too, you whom I can't call woman or man?"(11). The narrator conveys a pervasive atmosphere of fear and instability on the horizon, reminiscent of apocalyptic landscapes. The reference to a god of earlier days and the urgency expressed by the speaker contribute to a sense of impending catastrophe. The gender ambiguity in the closing question further reflects the disorientation and blurred boundaries often associated with postmodern apocalyptic narratives.

"Go deep into the world's throat, there's no way out of this universe, but then is there a universe, and why, and where from, and is its existence necessary for anything to be, and if there's not a somewhere what then, with no faith, no hope, there's maybe love, somewhere?" (5). The narrator delves into existential questioning and a search for meaning within the context of a potentially apocalyptic universe. The exploration of the universe's throat and the absence of a clear understanding of its existence reflect themes of cosmic uncertainty. The proposition that, without faith and hope, there may still be love introduces an emotional dimension amidst the existential crisis, echoing the complexity often found in postmodern apocalypticism.

3.5. Postmodern Apocalypticism and Historical Crisis

Best suggests that "the deconstruction of history follows the same movement as the dismantling of subject, author and text" (Best 23). *White Noise* has been called an apocalyptic novel by several critics who all agree about its depiction of a potential annihilation and the eternal fear of death. Dana Philips, for instance, refers to the end of history in analyzing one of the novel's scenes. She states how there is an absence of the sense of renewal and regaining the lost things, and how the "apocalyptic products" mark the end of nature and henceforward the end of our culture (11).

The apocalypse as historical transformation is the main focus of John Hall's *Apocalypse: From Antiquity to the Empire of Modernity* (2009). Apocalypse, in Hall's view, is the force that ushers in the replacement of one power structure with another. "Birds flutter in splendor. The sun is setting over History. We have a war" (33) … "In this my place time is shut off, death could be a beginning, a revolution's starting point: in the stillness surrounded by the highest trees, then the mountains, and beyond, the left-overs of History" (37).

Apocalypse as disclosure may unveil aspects of the human condition or present historical moment that pierce the protective screen. [...] Previously taken-for-granted understandings of "how things are" break down. Historically new possibilities are revealed, so awesome as to foster collective belief that "life as we know it" has been transgressed, never to be the same again. Events or prophecies mark a collective crisis so striking that it undermines normal perceptions of reality for those involved, thereby leading people to act in unprecedented ways, outside their everyday routines. (3)

There are many similarities between Hall and Kermode's views on the end of the world; for example, both see history as somewhat cyclical, with dramatic representations of changes in order coded as anticipated calamity, and the wonders of civilized life and on the other by the tremendous abyss of presumably final devastation.

Hall undermines the optimistic tone one would anticipate due to its emphasis on future possibilities as derived from actual historical experience. Quite the opposite of Cohn, whose research of mythology culminates with the exclamation "what a narrative it has become!" (233). Instead, Hall zeroes in on the changes that seem most evident in the present day, particularly in regards to climate change: "apocalyptic reactions to collective experience of crisis stand every likelihood of being exacerbated by ecological conditions - in part induced by the technical advances and inexorable spread of modernity" (226).

In Hall's recent works, the notion of catastrophe as history has received more and more focus, reflecting a broader call to action in the face of many, interconnected dangers to the global status quo. Like Kermode's, these predictions of doom are metaphorical as well as literal. In each of these interpretations of the word "apocalypse," the current moment is always just out of reach, apparently beyond a future we have yet to witness. With this understanding of how historical order could change, the apocalyptic takes on new significance.

Therefore, maybe a further analysis of Jameson is warranted. In spite of the fact that Jameson rightly points out that Koolhaas' "Junkspace" essay is a rhetorical manifestation of the very form it describes, for Jameson the concept of junkspace leads more specifically to a reflection on History and the markers left upon the world by massive structures of obsolescence:

> But I think it would be better to characterize all this in terms of History, a History that we cannot imagine except as ending, and whose future seems to be nothing but a monotonous repetition of what is already here. The problem is then how to locate radical difference; how to jumpstart the sense of history so that it begins again to transmit feeble signals of time, of otherness, of change, of Utopia. The problem to be solved is that of breaking out of a windless present of the postmodern back into real historical time, and a history made by human beings. ("Future City" 5)

This line of thinking is not new for Jameson, who has long maintained that postmodernism serves as the cultural wing of the political and economic regimes that control our lives in the contemporary, globalized world.

 [T]he new political art (if it is possible at all) will have to hold to the truth of postmodernism, that is to say, to its fundamental object – the world space of multinational capital – at the same time at which it achieves a breakthrough to some a yet unimaginable new mode of representing this last, in which we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralized by our spatial as well as our social confusion. (Postmodernism 54)

What's at risk here is the postmodern subject's incapacity to conceive along the wider, longer timelines that link historical events and processes to the present. It is precisely the junkspace of the past, and of History itself, that reorders the postmodern experience toward a sense of closure of possibility: we see around us the remnants of past civilizations and past senses of

order that have been consumed by the late capitalist model and repackaged to emphasize the immediacy of the present. Modern capitalism grabs whatever it can get its hands on and uses it to create empty effects for the benefit of the global economic elite, to the detriment of less developed areas and even individual nations.

3.5.1. Skepticizing History with a Capital 'H'

A fundamental issue that postmodernists ask is, "How do we know the past today and what can we know of it?" since "the nature of the past as an object of knowledge for us in the present" became an issue in postmodernism (Hutcheon 92). Postmodernism rejects metanarratives' claims of eternal truth and fixed history, arguing that history is always altered by the ongoing changes in the world and society. As a result of its fluidity and openness to new perspectives throughout the course of time and in different circumstances. History, in contrast, is dynamic and ever-changing. To put it another way, postmodernism believes in multiple, changing, and sometimes contradictory histories. Therefore, a postmodern view of history:

> Typically see no progress or directional tendencies in history, deny the authority of science and validity of facts and causal and objective analysis, reject foundationalism and universal values, decenter the subject to determining social or linguistic forces, link rationalism to domination, reject global, utopian or systematic forms of theorizing and politics, and abandon normative language and epistemology. (Best 26)

It is quite evident the employment of history with a capitalized 'H' in *There*. In "Nothing Happened Here: History vs. History", Dr. Andrew Joseph Pegoda differentiates between history and History:

> [h]istory with a little "h" is anything and everything everywhere that has ever happened. Most of history (or the past) is not recorded. History with a big "H" is the study of the past, the writing of the past. It's the history that we know and have access

to. It's the events and peoples we study in this class. It's a socially constructed narrative based on available evidence, mores, hopes, fears, and changes as all of these factors adjust.

Using a postmodern tone, the speaker disputes the legitimacy of history: "Where are we? Out of History, of his or her story, and back into it, out in space and back to Earth, out of the womb, and then into dust, who are we?"(1). The fact that history is a textual topic rife with grand historical tales or teleological historical texts explains why it rose to the forefront and faced the harshest onslaught in the face of postmodernist critique. The postmodernists argue that "The great trajectories that historiography has built around nation, class, and religion are grand narratives that confer an illusory sense of direction on people who think they know about the past" (Tosh, 2004).

Old essentialist beliefs about objectivity, truth, industrial expansion, growing economic aspirations, and conventional middle-class values have been challenged, according to the central tenet of postmodernism. As an instance in *There*: "Who are we, us the children of History, whose, which period, which side of History, the wars or the poems, the queens or the strangers, on which side of whose History are we going to be? Are we going to be?" (3). History is used to empower nations over other as Patricia Waugh says, "history' like 'fiction' is provisional, continually reconstructed and open-ended" (Waugh 125).

The Holocaust and the Vietnam War, both of which were horrific experiences, are seared into the collective memory of humankind. Due to the widespread availability of nuclear weapons and their horrific powers of devastation, the persistent fear that another cataclysmic catastrophe would occur in the modern world has not yet abated. After Hiroshima, much of the writings about the end of the world has focused on the nuclear explosion as the new cause of

death. This shows how the nightmare of the two world wars made people afraid of another threat of the same kind throughout the 1980s.

3.5.2. Terror and Historical Discontinuity

In the years leading up to and following the Y2K threat, theo-rists observed that rhetorics of apocalypse hardly ever serve as ends in themselves but rather as complex means toward a variety of ends: to forward political goals, to shock, to critique the belief in progress (often through a demonstration of the banality of apocalypse or the perpetuity of global crisis), and/or to motivate individuals toward positive social change (304).

The scenario that emerges in *Falling Man* can be understood as apocalyptic for a few reasons. For one, the spectacle has cataclysmic effects on the affective condition of the city, whose material state of affairs are so fundamentally and "suddenly" altered.1 It would seem that this valence of the apocalyptic emerges from DeLillo's own remarks in "In the Ruins of the Future," his essay written soon after the event of the attacks. There he casts the event explicitly in terms of the conflict between the terrorists and the United States, saying that "there is no logic in apocalypse. […] This is heaven and hell, a sense of armed martyrdom as the surpassing drama of human experience" (34). In the apparently unaccountably "new" situation, habitual logics fall away, as previous logics and narratives have been made to submit to a violent drama of eschatological conflict – a war of stories in which one side has momentarily earned a cataclysmic upper hand. However, I argue – perhaps against DeLillo's own suggestions in the earlier essay – that the scenario in *Falling Man* is apocalyptic in that it is revelatory. This follows the biblical etymology of the term, that apocalypse is literally an "uncovering," in this case not only of agents who had been preparing in secret but also, like pulling away the face of an analog clock to see its gears in action, an uncovering of the power mechanisms that have already been at play and out of which these "new" forces emerge.

Marco Abel argues, regarding "In the Ruins of the Future," that the essay responds to the event of 9/11 "by mobilizing seeing as a narrative mode that works from within the image event without imposing itself on it" (195). We could, then, argue that Falling Man performs its own sort of apocalyptic terror, as a narrative, not by imposing a meaning on the events of 9/11 and their aftermath but by violently directing our attention to the violence enacted by our own processes of making meaning and establishing common recognition through the event.   The psychological need to make sense of the catastrophic world in which we live arouses a critical response on the part of artists. Furthermore, in After the End: Representations of Post-Apocalypse (1999), James Berger wisely fixes on the idea of crisis when he writes that the sense of continuous crisis coexists with the notion that the apocalyptic catastrophe has already happened and the apocalyptic writing is only a reminder of some confusing catastrophe (9).**3.6.**

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter delves deeply into the existential crisis that permeates Etel Adnan's work, *There :In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and of the Other*. Through the lens of philosophical thought, including Kierkegaard's subjectivity of truth, Nietzsche's assessment of values, Heidegger's Being-for-itself, and Sartre's concepts of bad faith, good faith, and freedom of choice, the chapter examines a range of existential inquiries relating to space, existence, nature, emotions, and mortality. This exploration of existential crisis follows a comprehensive analysis of the poem itself, encompassing a concise overview and a scrutiny of pivotal dichotomies such as I/You, Self/Other, and Here/There. The chapter culminates by delving into the symbolism embedded in the title, which juxtaposes light against darkness and underscores its significance. Furthermore, the chapter illuminates the intricate link between postmodern apocalypticism and existential crisis, revealing how this connection deconstructs traditional apocalyptic narratives. By intertwining philosophical examination and literary analysis, the chapter unravels the intricate layers of Adnan's work, illustrating the profound interplay between existential thought and the complexities of her poetic narrative.

Chapter Four: Historiographic Metafiction in Etel Adnan's *Master of the Eclipse*: a Counternnartive to the Postmodern Apocalyptic Turmoil

4.1. Introduction

Among the many subgenres of postmodern literature, historiographic metafiction is the most thought-provoking. This chapter explores how the past functions as more than just a backdrop in fictional works; it is an integral narrative element. As a form of postmodern literature, historiographic metafiction subverts common understandings of historical narrative and blurs the lines between fact and fiction. Authors engage in compelling dialogue with history by manipulating historical events, characters, and narrative techniques, inviting readers to explore the complex relationship between reality and imagination while pushing the boundaries of storytelling to new, thought-provoking heights. This section will explore historiographic metafiction within the novel *Master of The Eclipse.* Adnan productively confronts the past, employing historiographic metafiction to avoid the emotional and creative hazards connected with silence, melancholy, and despair in the continuing historical epoch of instability and disaster in the Arab world

4.2. Postmodern Apocalypse at the Microcosmic Level

The impact of the cataclysmic events entangles individuals on a microcosmic level. The media also presents individuals' daily horrors and dreadful experiences with a bias. For instance, this passage speaks to reinterpreting and representing real-life events through narrative and film. It underscores how narratives, whether in literature or cinema, can serve as a lens through which we explore and understand complex and significant historical events. In the realm of deconstruction, it implies that narratives have the capacity to both build and dismantle meaning, illustrating the multitude of interpretations that can emerge from a particular event or story:

> What was the subject matter of Schlondorff's movie? … It was an adaptation of a novel about a German journalist who had indeed died in Beirut during the bloody events which feed daily the world's news … a German journalist had died. For him all the images ceased to exist. Another German, a movie director, followed him, through an actor, among the places that saw him disappear. The American produced Apocalypse Now about Vietnam … Schlondorff would create his version of the tragic opera that armies stage by their actions amid ruined landscapes. (81)

The passage begins by mentioning Schlondorff's movie, which is an adaptation of a novel about a German journalist who died in Beirut during violent events that regularly make global headlines. The death of the journalist is highlighted as a pivotal event, as it is suggested that after his death, all the images in the world ceased to have meaning for him. This could be interpreted as a commentary on how a traumatic event can profoundly affect an individual's world perception.

The quote mentions another German, a movie director (presumably Schlondorff himself), who, through an actor, retraces the steps of the deceased journalist in the places where he vanished. This implies a meta-narrative, where the director reconstructs the journalist's experiences through a performance. The reference to "Apocalypse Now", an American film about the Vietnam War, provides a contrast. "Apocalypse Now" is mentioned in the context of its production, which is attributed to an American. This serves as a point of comparison to Schlondorff's project. The mention of "Apocalypse Now" also ties into the idea of a tragic opera played out by armies amidst devastated landscapes, suggesting a broader commentary on the recurring themes of war, destruction, and the impact on individuals. Through the deconstruction of small-scale narratives, we unravel the intricate threads of individual stories, revealing the rich tapestry of collective human experience. That is to say, deconstruction of

small-scale narratives indicates the practice of breaking down larger narrative frameworks into more manageable chunks. The postmodern tendency to question canonical structures and conventions is relevant even at the micro level.

Derrida argues that deconstruction transcends traditional subjective critique. He asserts that deconstruction does not involve taking apart a text's structure, but rather revealing that the structure has already undone itself. This challenges conventional interpretations, suggesting that what appears stable is, in reality, fragile and precarious: "Deconstruction never had any interest in pure critique, in subjective critique, in the simple subjective determination of a will, a consciousness, and an evaluation. Deconstruction is not a dismantling of the structure of a text, but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself. Its solid ground is no rock, but thin air" (Derrida 41-42).

4.2.1. Exploration of Individual Experiences within a Global Crisis: The Tunisian Poet and Iraqi War

The term apocalypse often refers to a large-scale catastrophe or societal breakdown. The microcosmic level might imply zooming in on individual characters or small communities within this enormous catastrophe, exploring their personal experiences and struggles. The Tunisian poet described is not detached or indifferent to the global crisis, but is deeply affected by it. The heat and his emotions compound the intensity of the moment, further emphasizing the weight of the situation: "he was standing, slightly trembling because of the heat, because of his emotions, knowing that while he was getting the audience's attention, houses in Iraq were crumbling … the dust they were making over there was rising like a curtain between him and the audience" (9). He is conscious of the broader context. While on stage, trying to engage the audience, he is also aware of the concurrent events in Iraq. This awareness highlights the interconnectedness of individual experiences with more significant

global issues. It shows that personal emotions and actions are not isolated from the broader world.

The narrator encapsulates a sense of impending doom and irreversible change, reflecting the apocalyptic themes often associated with postmodern thought. It suggests that the experience of destruction and annihilation is not limited to large-scale events, but can also be felt at the individual, microcosmic level, underscoring the interconnectedness of personal and global experiences in the postmodern world. The narrator states: "We are in the summer of 91. Bombs are falling mercilessly on Iraq; the country is being destroyed; from the start, the process looked irreversible and the outcome bound to be annihilation" (Adnan 3). The mention of bombs falling on Iraq and the destruction of the country adds a layer of fragmentation. It introduces a broader context of disintegration and chaos, which can be seen as a 'macrocosmic' reflection of 'the microcosmic' fragmentation experienced by the narrator. The quote also raises questions about the certainty of outcomes and challenges assumptions about stability and security. This aligns with postmodernism tendency to question and deconstruct established norms and ideologies.

4.2.2. The Overwhelming Impact of Death: Wassef's Emotional Turmoil

The fear of death and the apocalypse are both concepts that have been explored in literature and philosophy. In some contexts, they can intersect and influence each other, particularly within the framework of postmodern thought. On the one hand, the fear of death is a fundamental existential concern that has preoccupied thinkers throughout history. On the other hand, postmodernism, which emerged as a reaction to the uncertainties of the 20th century, often engages with existential questions.

The fear of death can be intensified in a postmodern context, where traditional beliefs and frameworks have been called into question. Consequently, "the fear of death becomes another symptom of the postmodern condition, while the material experience of death itself remains a distant, but distinct possibility for the establishment of a metaphysical concept" (Brown 21).

In the part entitled "The Power of Death" from *Master of The Eclipse*, Adnan contends that death has consistently exerted a profound and widespread influence on the human experience through the story of Wassef and past lover Erica: "His voice over the phone was hard to bear, his sorrow was too cruel; in fact, it seemed that cruelty itself was hurrying in through the windows until I felt I would suffocate" (51). The quote conveys a powerful emotional experience, where Wassef is overwhelmed by the intensity of Erica's death. The imagery used, such as "the suffocating feeling", suggests a profound and almost oppressive sense of grief. In the context of death, this quote can be related to the idea of the immense powerful impact that death can have on those left behind, as it can bring about an emotional intensity that is difficult to comprehend or endure. The mention of the voice being "hard to bear" and the sense of implies that the weight of grief can be so overwhelming that it becomes almost tangible. Furthermore, "cruelty" suggests that death can feel merciless and unrelenting. It can be a force that intrudes upon our lives, leaving us feeling helpless and struggling to cope.

The philosophical perspective on death, held by figures like Socrates and Spinoza, may contribute to a certain outlook on mortality. For those who adhere to these views, the fear of death may be influenced by the belief that it represents a negative and meaningless transition:

> The most notable among these is the binary opposition between life and death. Thus, one should mark the famous observations of Socrates and Spinoza, among others, who consider death distinctively on the negative spectrum of the being-void opposition. Not only that, but they see death as meaningless, just an insignificant cessation of the

body, as opposed to which we have the mind as a positive member of the opposition. (Stamenković 310)

Wassef vividly captures another time the profound disorientation and emotional turmoil that can accompany the experience of losing someone close, especially when there is uncertainty about their fate: "never in my life have I left that I could lose control of my reason but I do now because her life and her death are mingling and I don't know where she really is, if she's hiding somewhere on this earth or if she's really dead; then where is she and would I ever find her if I die too" (52).

The fear of one's own mortality is also present here. The speaker wonders if they will ever be able to find the departed person if they, too, pass away. This reflects a fear of being separated forever and a longing for some form of connection even after death.

The speaker seems to be suggesting that the idea of being resurrected, or experiencing a kind of rebirth or renewal, is intimately tied to the notion of death: "I thought that a dream of resurrection could only be fulfilled by death, the death that had already happened" (67). This can be seen as a metaphor for transformation or a fresh start after a significant loss or change. The statement also implies a certain acceptance of death. It acknowledges that for a new beginning or transformation to occur, there must be an acknowledgment of and reckoning with the reality of death. This could be seen as a way of addressing the fear of death by embracing it as a natural part of life's cycle. The mention of "the death that had already happened" may signify a recognition of the irreversible nature of certain losses. It suggests that there are events or changes in life that we must come to terms with, even if they are painful or difficult. The concept of resurrection often carries connotations of renewal and growth.

Then Wassef mentions: "But it's true, that she loved me desperately, totally, as a cloud loves another cloud and merges into it, why must I keep playing a game, now, when I'm under her death's absolute power, having lost the very notion of my own self? (67). The description of the love as "desperate" and "total" indicates an intense and all-encompassing emotional connection. This suggests that the speaker's bond with the departed person was incredibly deep and meaningful. In the face of such a loss, the fear of death may be heightened because it means a separation from this profound connection. The metaphor of clouds merging into one another is used to describe the depth of their love. This imagery evokes a sense of unity and oneness implying that their connection was so profound that it was almost like a natural force. The fear of death, in this context, could be rooted in the idea of being separated from this powerful and irreplaceable connection. The speaker mentions feeling like they have lost the very notion of their own self. This suggests that the death has had a profound impact on the speaker's sense of identity and selfhood. This loss of self-identity can be deeply disorienting and contribute to the fear of death, as it brings into question one's own existence and purpose.

The phrase "under her death's absolute power" conveys a sense of helplessness and vulnerability. The speaker is acknowledging that death has a dominating influence over them, and they are subject to its inevitability. This powerlessness can be a source of fear, as it highlights the ultimate and uncontrollable nature of death.

Another time, Wassef states: "I am not Orpheus but I will follow her, somewhere, and she won't be there, I know, I' am sure, but I'll keep searching" (71). The speaker starts by stating, "I am not Orpheus," which alludes to the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Orpheus, after losing his beloved Eurydice, went to the underworld to try to bring her back, but he ultimately failed. The speaker acknowledges that they are not Orpheus and cannot perform

such a miraculous feat. This indicates an awareness of the inevitability and finality of death, which can be a source of fear and sorrow.

The fear of death is profusely discussed in postmodern literature. In Don Delillo's *White Noise*, the characters confront deep-seated fears and concerns about life's impermanence within a society heavily influenced by media and consumerism. The main character, Jack Gladney, holds a position as a professor specializing in the study of Hitler at a small liberal arts college. The book explores his preoccupation with mortality, the apprehension of facing one's own death, and the quest for purpose in a world inundated with information and technology. A significant recurring theme in the novel is the airborne toxic event, a disastrous chemical leak, which symbolizes the unpredictable and uncontrollable aspects of mortality. The characters' responses to this event reveal their diverse ways of coping and their anxieties related to the inevitable nature of death.

Despite this awareness, the character Wassef in *Master of the Eclipse* expresses a strong resolve to follow the departed person, even though they know she will not be there. This reflects a deep emotional attachment and a reluctance to completely let go. The fear of death, in this context, could stem from the idea of facing a world without the person they love. The phrase "but I'll keep searching" embodies the idea of longing and the desire for some form of connection, even after death. This relentless search suggests a fear of being alone or disconnected from the departed loved one. It speaks to the human instinct to seek solace and continuity in the face of mortality. This quote encapsulates the complex emotions that often accompany the fear of death. There is both a resignation to the finality of the loss and a persistent hope, a refusal to completely give up on the possibility of reconnection.

4.2.3. Exploring Postmodern Dimensions: Mundane Realities, Existential Inquiries, and Microcosmic Narratives in *Master of The Eclipse*

This could involve examining the mundane or seemingly insignificant aspects of life within a postmodern framework. It might involve questioning the meanings and values attributed to ordinary activities or objects. The passage provides a vivid description suggests that the narrator's everyday experiences are profoundly influenced by their past. It serves as a meta-commentary on how our memories and past experiences shape our perception of the present: "we are not only haunted by such ghostly figures but practically hunted, stalked by memories that we do not manage to shake off because something in us knows that their death will be our death. that is, if they ever could die: they may acquired a life of their own, and there we will never go" (91).

The mention of being "haunted by ghostly figures" and "stalked by memories" suggests that the everyday experiences of the narrator are deeply influenced by the past. This reflects a meta-commentary on how our memories and past experiences shape our perception of the present. The idea that memories are so ingrained in us that their death would be our death implies an inseparable connection between one's personal history and their current existence. This highlights the meta-commentary on the inescapable influence of our past on our present selves.

Philosophical considerations of existence and reality: *Master of the Eclipse* often engages with questions of reality, existence, and perception. This phrase might imply a focus on these themes at a very small, individual level. Interplay of hyperreality and simulacra: building on the ideas of French theorist Jean Baudrillard, this could involve exploring how simulations, copies, and representations shape our understanding of reality, but at an intimate, personal level. "Would Charles be crowned king of England? When it comes to actual power, isn't it

Mrs. Thatcher who has it? That means that Charles is now nothing more than an image on the page. His actions have no bearing on the course of history. Charles becomes a symbol or simulacra" (78). The term simulacra, which refers to a condition in which reality is muddled or even replaced by representations, fits this scenario. Charles, in his role as head of state, assumes the status of a simulacra, a representation with greater symbolic or cultural weight than actual political power. In this passage, we see how a symbolic depiction of power can obscure the reality of its actual use.

Indeed, the hallmark of postmodern literature is its eclectic use of many forms of expression and media. The term microcosmic level can suggest a focus on the tiniest of connections between the myriad ways in which different types of media influence viewers' perspectives. It suggests at a deeper, more micro-level exploration of postmodern ideas related to the end of the world. Postmodern literature frequently delves into metafiction and self-reflection. At the level of the individual, the story, or the metafiction, a postmodern apocalypse could involve narratives that disrupt conventional storytelling and blur the distinctions between truth and fiction.

Within the realm of imagination, dwell characters like the enigmatic narrator and the elusive Buland, who turn introspective gazes upon their own fabricated existence. They engage in ethereal dialogues, pondering the essence of their being in the narrative tapestry. Questions of existential import swirl around them, as they contemplate the significance of their actions: "I think that poets are a mystery, but we nevertheless read them. Everything is a mystery, so why should we worry?" (41).

4.2.4. Urban Decay and Fragmentation at Microcosmic level

In a postmodern context, the apocalypse may be portrayed as the disintegration of urban surroundings. This level may focus on the experiences of individuals inside such settings as they deal with the collapse of society and infrastructure. The narrator in *Master of the Eclipse* used vivid expressions that depict urban decay in literature, capturing the essence of the deteriorating urban landscape. The setting unfolds with decaying facades bearing the scars of neglect, silent alleys echoing with the absence of life, and abandoned streets lined with crumbling buildings, reminiscent of the poignant imagery described in the haunting narrative: "houses in Iraq were crumbling" (9). Decaying facades bearing the scars of neglect, silent alleys echoing with the absence of life, abandoned streets lined with crumbling buildings, and "houses in Iraq were crumbling"(9). Microcosmic dystopian realms within a more comprehensive postmodern tale are one possible implementation of this theory. Although these miniature worlds may symbolize failing society, they do not shift the emphasis away from the people and groups within them.

4.2.5. Postmodern Apocalypse and Color Usage

A Further interesting remark is that Etel's ominous vision is reaffirmed in her depiction of the painting hall's canvas. There are layers of diluted ochre acrylics on the canvas, which she describes as:

> Canvases earth colored … are covered with layers of diluted ochre acrylics … dispersed marks means to signify airports outposts … they could also mean tracks left by the American armored vehicles that are equipped with low-level radioactive weapons … Iraq with its battlegrounds-is being transferred … by an Italian painter who's declaring his horror through maps. (*Master* 6)

Even the usage of colors like "earth colored" and "ochre" generates a visceral image to the reader, communicating the sorrow and sadness of postmodern times. Playing with colors is not an unprecedented style to Etel as she paints also *The Arab Apocalypse* with "colour as noticed … reinforces the influence of Baudelaire's aesthetic, particularly his view of colour as a compositional element in painting and poetry" (Scott 39). According to her, colour is a substantial means of communication that conveys meaning. Colors often carry symbolic meanings in literature. For example, red can represent passion or danger, while blue might symbolize calm or sadness. Adnan may use colors to evoke specific emotions or convey deeper layers of meaning in her works. Depending on the cultural context of a work, certain colors can hold particular significance. Adnan's background in Lebanon and her exposure to different cultures might influence how she employs color in her writings.

Colors can be used to evoke sensory experiences, enhancing the reader's immersion in the narrative. Vivid descriptions of colors can create a rich and vibrant setting for the story. The choice of colors can help establish the mood or atmosphere of a scene or work as a whole. Warm, earthy tones might create a different emotional tone than cool, muted shades. Adnan might use color contrasts to draw attention to certain elements or to emphasize themes within her works. For example, the juxtaposition of dark and light colors can highlight the interplay between opposing forces or ideas in her narrative *There in the Light and the Darkness of the Self and the Oher.*

4.3. Postmodern Stylistics in *Master of the Eclipse*

Postmodern stylistics refer to the linguistic and literary techniques associated with the postmodern literary movement. This movement emerged in the mid-to-late 20th century as a reaction against the perceived rigidity and conventions of modernism. Postmodern works are often self-aware and self-referential. They may draw attention to their own status as fiction,

blur the lines between reality and fiction, or comment on the act of writing itself. Intertextuality: Postmodern authors frequently engage with other texts, either directly referencing them or reworking familiar themes and motifs. This can create layers of meaning and invite readers to make connections between different works.

Apocalyptic themes are also conveyed through the novel's usage of intertextuality, a postmodern artistic technique. In describing the actress brought from Naples, the narrator mentions "Her long hair was catching fire", reflecting the light of the long candles that were the guardian angels of the ritual. Then the chandeliers ... in day-time provided such a contrast with the austere stone walls, were darkened" in *The Master of the Eclipse* (7-8). The aforementioned depiction echoes Suzanne Collins's dystopian apocalyptic fiction, named *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*. In postmodern literature, writers "In postmodernism, the intertextual nature of language takes center stage, highlighting that every text is a product of numerous other texts, constantly in conversation with them, borrowing, reinterpreting, and sometimes even subverting their meanings" (15). The phrase "her long hair was catching fire" draws on metaphor and imagery, evoking a powerful visual of the woman's hair illuminated by the candlelight. This metaphorical language brings a sense of intensity and almost supernatural beauty to the moment.

The mention of the candles as "guardian angels of the ritual" adds a religious or spiritual dimension to the scene, suggesting that this moment holds special significance or meaning within a larger cultural or ceremonial context. The contrast between the chandeliers and the austere stone walls during daytime provides a visual juxtaposition, emphasizing the opulence and grandeur of the setting. This contrast may symbolize the duality or complexity of the situation or event being described. Overall, intertextuality in this quote enriches the sensory

and symbolic elements of the scene, allowing readers to engage with the text on a deeper level and appreciate the complexity of the setting and its significance within the narrative.

Another remarkable intertextuality is employed to describe Prince Charles' gaze: "Charles of England is sitting next to his brother, wearing a navy officer's uniform. Suddenly he looks at the sky, like Prince Andrei in *War and Peace*. He, also has, a moment, the gaze of *Lawrence of Arabia*, as well as the latter's slightly pink lips" (77). First, the mention of Charles of England invokes a historical figure, likely referring to a member of the British royal family. This brings in a real-world context. The reference to Prince Andrei from Leo Tolstoy's novel "War and Peace" introduces a fictional character from classic literature. This adds a layer of depth to Charles' character by comparing his actions or demeanor to a well-known literary figure. The mention of Lawrence of Arabia, a historical figure known for his military exploits and role in the Arab Revolt during World War I, further enriches the narrative. The description of Lawrence's "slightly pink lips" adds a vivid, sensory detail that contrasts with the historical and fictional elements.

In the instances above, intertextuality in postmodern literature is a powerful tool that allows authors to engage with tradition, challenge established norms, and create complex, multi-layered narratives that invite active reader participation. It encourages a more nuanced understanding of the creative process and the cultural context in which texts are produced. In her work *A Poetics of Postmodernism,* Linda Hutcheon thoroughly outlines and places in context the concept of postmodernist intertextuality:

> Postmodern intertextuality represents a structured expression of both the reader's yearning to bridge the gap between the past and the present, and the aspiration to reframe historical narratives in a fresh context. This approach directly engages with the literary past, as well as with historiography, as it too stems from existing texts

(documents). It incorporates and manipulates these intertextual references, incorporating their influential allusions and then subverting their authority through the use of irony" (Hutcheon 118)

Intertextuality in *Master of the Eclipse* offers a range of significant benefits. It challenges traditional notions of authorship, enabling a deeper exploration of cultural contexts. It also allows for creative experimentation, leading to fresh narrative forms. By engaging with literary traditions, it situates works within a broader lineage. Intertextuality actively involves readers, providing a more complex and rewarding reading experience. It adds depth and complexity to texts, fostering critical thinking. Moreover, it challenges binary distinctions, prompting a reevaluation of conventional categorizations. In essence, intertextuality in postmodern literature is a dynamic tool that enriches narratives and encourages a nuanced understanding of creativity and cultural context.

4.4. Exploring Postmodern Themes in *Master of the Eclipse*

Within the pages of *'Master of the Eclipse*, a captivating exploration into the realm of postmodern literature unfolds, revealing a narrative landscape shaped by many thought-provoking themes. As we embark on this literary journey, we encounter a narrative structure characterized by fragmentation and discontinuity, challenging traditional storytelling norms. The text seamlessly blends genres, embraces linguistic play and experimentation, and weaves a tapestry of diverse perspectives, voices, and cultural layers, showcasing the postmodern aesthetic of hybridity. Temporal and spatial deconstructions defy conventional boundaries, inviting readers into a dynamic, ever-shifting narrative space. Cultural references and nods to pop culture intertwine with a critical examination of totalizing narratives, contributing to a rich tapestry that mirrors the complexities of contemporary society. As the exploration extends, the text engages with the intersection of media, technology, and nihilism of

transparency, presenting a critical lens that adds depth to our understanding. Beyond literary elements, the narrative delves into themes of activism, social change, and the amplification of marginalized voices, underscoring the text's commitment to exploring diverse facets of postmodern discourse. This introductory analysis aims to unravel the layers of *Master of the Eclipse*, providing a gateway into the intricate world of postmodern thought and expression.

4.4.1. Fragmentation and Discontinuity

Postmodern texts often break away from linear narratives and instead present fragmented, non-linear structures. This can involve the use of disjointed scenes, multiple narrators, and disrupted chronology because "time has become a perpetual present and thus spatial. Our relationship to the past is now a spatial one" (Stephenson 32). The narrator portrays a sense of dislocation, both in physical and psychological terms. His reflections, set against the backdrop of a world in turmoil, emphasize the disjointed nature of their experiences and the world around them, illustrating the theme of fragmentation and discontinuity:

> Sitting in this bus I am, as in any vehicle, be it plane, train, truck, or boat, myself an object in a magic container whose inner sides are at this moment in a state of suspension. Memories are projected on them like shadows running back and forth in a space both existing and unreal. What have I left behind? What kind of messages are trying to reach me as I ride from one point in the north of Sicily to the other? We are in summer of 91. Bombs are falling mercilessly on Iraq; he country is being destroyed; from the start the process looked irreversible and the outcome bound to be annihilation. (3)

The reference to the bus as a "magic container" suggests a sense of containment and isolation from the external world. This containment can be seen as a metaphor for the

compartmentalization or fragmentation of experiences. The suspension of the inner sides of the container further emphasizes a state of limbo or in-betweenness, which can be interpreted as a metaphor for the uncertainty and instability often associated with fragmented experiences.

The projection of memories onto the inner sides of the container implies a sense of retrospection and introspection. These memories, described as "shadows," suggest fleeting and ephemeral glimpses into the past. This evokes a sense of discontinuity, as memories are not continuous, but rather transient and fragmented.

The narrator's contemplation about what they have left behind and the messages trying to reach them while in transit further highlights the theme of fragmentation. This suggests a sense of disconnection or discontinuity between the present moment and the past, as well as a sense of anticipation or expectation of messages that may not form a coherent narrative.

4.4.2. Hybridity and Genre Mixing

Postmodern works may blur the boundaries between different genres, mixing elements of, for example, science fiction with historical fiction or incorporating elements of poetry within prose. Adnan incorporates poetry, philosophy, and prose elements, creating a hybrid form that challenges traditional genre distinctions. The work's poetic language and philosophical reflections intermingle with narrative elements, resulting in a unique and multifaceted reading experience. Adnan's approach exemplifies the postmodern tendency to embrace hybridity and genre mixing to explore complex themes and perspectives.

Adnan combines elements of poetry, philosophy, and storytelling in her writing. Her style is frequently expressive and reflective, with poetic language and imagery saturating the narrative. This incorporation of poetic elements enhances the prose, resulting in a layered and

emotionally resonant reading encounter. *Master of the Eclipse* by Etel Adnan is known for its vivid and evocative imagery, one of the poetry elements.

Adnan employs detailed depictions of nature to craft scenes that are rich in sensory experiences. This includes vivid portrayals of landscapes, plant life, and celestial occurrences, allowing readers to imagine the settings vividly. With the title *Master of the Eclipse*, the novel prominently features celestial imagery: "There are buckets planted with flowers and the heat is rising. The air is dry, austere, as in the days of imperial Rome, the way I like it" (5). Adnan frequently utilizes images of stars, eclipses, and cosmic entities to evoke a feeling of vastness and enigma in the cosmos: "that will is imparted to the men who run the world: total eclipse" (40). She also uses figurative language to communicate abstract ideas or emotions, often by drawing parallels between different elements to evoke specific feelings or concepts.

Throughout the narrative, the senses are actively engaged, with vivid descriptions of what is seen, heard, smelled, tasted, and touched, immersing the reader in the story. Adnan also incorporates objects and elements that hold symbolic meaning, using them to convey more profound messages and themes: Stars, the moon, and eclipses can symbolize various themes such as transcendence, enlightenment, mystery, or the passage of time. Elements of nature like trees, flowers, or bodies of water can symbolize concepts like life, growth, renewal, or the cyclical nature of existence. Light often represents knowledge, enlightenment, or hope, while darkness may symbolize ignorance, mystery, or the unknown. Mirrors can symbolize self-reflection, introspection, or the search for identity. Birds are a common symbol of freedom, transcendence, or spiritual elevation. Different colors can hold symbolic meanings. For example, red may represent passion or danger, while blue might symbolize calmness or spirituality. Water can symbolize purity, rebirth, or the subconscious mind. The eclipse can serve as a powerful symbol of transformation, renewal, or a moment of profound change.

Time plays a significant role in the novel's themes, and Adnan frequently employs imagery related to time to probe ideas of memory, existence, and transformation. Her writing style can be dreamlike, introducing surreal and fantastical elements that challenge conventional reality: "I am in Paris, bedridden .My eyes, as tired as my soul, try to follow one cloud after another, when there are any. Paris's sky is particularly sealed, in imitation of the iron safes of its banks or the iron curtains which in little Arab town, fall over the front of the stores on Fridays and Sundays. Is this a dreamlike quality?"(73).

The narrator exhibits a dreamlike quality. His description of being bedridden in Paris, with tired eyes attempting to track the movement of clouds, creates a sense of languor and detachment from reality. The comparison of Paris's sky to sealed iron safes and curtains evokes a surreal and somewhat surrealistic atmosphere. This imaginative and almost hypnotic portrayal of the sky and surroundings contributes to the dreamlike quality of the writing.

Additionally, Adnan incorporates philosophical reflections and meditations on existence, time, and perception. These philosophical passages contribute to the novel's intellectual depth and challenge readers to engage with complex ideas. "A line out of Walter Benjamin's Theses on the Philosophy of History shot through my mind: even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins" (40). The narrator delves into profound metaphysical and philosophical questions about the nature of time, its relationship to consciousness, and the role of human thought in understanding it. It challenges conventional notions of time as an objective, external reality and proposes a more subjective, mind-dependent interpretation.

Adnan asserts that time is not a conscious being that came into existence. It didn't create itself like a living creature might: "Time did not create itself; it's not a creature. Time produces spirit. Spirit oozes from it as acidity comes from a lemon. Time is pure thought. Though is not Time; it's a product, an artifact of the mind. Whose mind? (38). This is a

metaphysical statement about the nature of time. Here, Adnan is suggesting a relationship between time and spirit. She metaphorically compares the emergence of spirit from time to how acidity comes from a lemon. This implies that spirit is a natural byproduct or emanation of time.

The narrator characterizes time as a concept, a thought, and a construct of the mind. This philosophical idea suggests time is not an inherent feature of the universe, but rather a mental framework that humans use to understand and organize their experiences. The narrator makes a distinction between thought and time, stating that: "Thought is not Time; it's a product, an artifact of the mind". While time is a fundamental concept, thought arises from the human mind. It is a creation or artifact of the mind, a tool used to engage with the concept of time. This narrator introduces an element of philosophical inquiry asking "Whose mind?". Adnan is prompting the reader to consider whose mind is responsible for conceptualizing and perceiving time. This invites contemplation on the nature of consciousness and the origin of our understanding of abstract concepts like time.

4.4.3. Language Play and Experimentation

Postmodern authors may experiment with language, using puns, wordplay, neologisms, and unconventional syntax. This can challenge conventional linguistic norms and create new ways of expression. Irony is a common stylistic device in postmodern literature. It can be used to highlight contradictions, challenge assumptions, or critique societal norms. Satire is also employed to mock or criticize aspects of society or culture. In this context, the narrator sates:

> None of them reach the bottom of the truth and that truth is simple: the pleasure to kill is the greatest of pleasures. We made of history the justification of that pleasure. We

ask little girls to kiss bombs that will be sent to smash other people's skulls. We love

conquest and make it loveable". (35)

The statement "we made of history the justification of that pleasure" is ironic. It suggests that people have taken something as severe and often tragic as history and turned it into a source of pleasure or entertainment. This is likely to highlight the absurdity of such a perspective. The statement "we made it glamorous" is satirical. It criticizes glorifying or romanticizing historical events or actions, implying that this glamorization is misplaced and potentially dangerous. The statement "we ask little girls to kiss bombs that will be sent smash other people's skulls" is also satirical. It criticizes the idea of promoting violence or aggression, especially to young and impressionable individuals, by framing it shockingly and absurdly.

4.4.4. Multivocality in *Master of the Eclipse*: Exploring Diverse Perspectives, Voices, and Cultural Layers

Postmodern texts often feature multiple narrative voices, perspectives, or points of view. This can create a sense of plurality and highlight the subjectivity of truth and reality. Multimodality in *Master of the Eclipse* enriches the narrative by presenting a chorus of voices, each offering unique insights and contributing to a more nuanced exploration of the novel's themes. It represents twelve diverse short stories reflecting experiences of diverse characters including philosophers, artists, Taxi drivers, movie directors, and poets .This technique allows for a deeper engagement with the complexity of human experiences and perspectives.

Conversations between characters often reveal distinct voices, reflecting their unique personalities, beliefs, and experiences. This dialogue-driven approach amplifies the diversity of voices within the narrative:

Do you know of any other Arab poet as involved with angels?

I can't think of any.

To tell you the truth, I can't figure out what he really means by 'angels'. Such things don't make sense to me.

Haven't you read the scriptures? Haven't you studied Islamic thought?

I read, I read everything! But where the hell did he get his ideas about these fluttering creatures (42)

The novel may delve into the characters' inner thoughts and reflections, giving readers access to their private perspectives and emotions. This adds depth to the portrayal of individual consciousness. "At this point the professor/ agent went to the window and took a deep breath. He stood there silently. Then I think I heard him mumble to himself and say: History, History! What a junkyard for the human race's stupid deeds!"(37).

The use of letters or written correspondence can introduce additional voices into the narrative, providing insights from characters who may not be physically present in the story. "Dear dearest, I'm here, and you're my only my only friend, you know it, you've known me for so long, you remember the days when Damascus will had a river …"(64).

Adnan's work often combines multiple cultures and languages, incorporating different linguistic nuances and cultural references. This contributes to the multivocal nature of the narrative: Etel Adnan's upbringing in Beirut, Lebanon, deeply influences her writing. She often incorporates Arabic language, names, phrases, and cultural elements, demonstrating her strong connection to Arab culture (*Hassan, Amal Hayati, Djebel El Druze*).

Having spent much of her life in France, Adnan's works are infused with French language and cultural references. This might include the use of French phrases, reflections on her experiences in France, and nods to French culture (*Voltaire, Diderot*). Adnan's descriptions of landscapes and settings frequently evoke the Mediterranean region. She employs imagery associated with countries like Greece or Italy to establish a vivid sense of place. Adnan's writing is enriched by philosophical and spiritual influences from a range of cultures. She draws upon traditions such as Eastern philosophies and Sufism, weaving them into her work. References to ancient cultures, myths, and historical events are prevalent in Adnan's writing. She taps into a diverse array of civilizations, contributing layers of complexity and depth to her narratives. Adnan's personal background as a person of mixed Lebanese and Greek heritage often shapes her contemplations on cultural identity and a sense of belonging (*Angelus Novus*). These themes are recurrent in her works.

4.4.5. Temporal and Spatial Deconstructions: Challenging Conventional Boundaries in Postmodern Perspectives

Postmodern works may play with concepts of time and space, blurring the boundaries between past, present, and future, or exploring non-traditional conceptions of space and location reflects a postmodern perspective that challenges conventional understandings of time, space, and geographical boundaries. The emphasis on simultaneity, omnipresence, and global connectivity aligns with postmodern themes of deconstructing traditional narratives and embracing a more complex, interconnected worldview.

> You must know, he went on, pleased with himself, that what his likes and the rest of the world refuse to admit is that my country has defeated Time. We have conquered it. Annihilated it. We replaced Time with simultaneity, with omnipresence. We made of

the present our empire. At this very moment our services are gathering information from all over the world; I mean we cover the world in its entirety. (39)

The speaker asserts that their country has transcended the constraints of traditional time. Instead of adhering to a linear progression of past, present, and future, they claim to have replaced it with a sense of simultaneity and omnipresence. This implies that they have moved beyond conventional notions of time and space, suggesting a postmodern perspective.

   The speaker declares that their culture has elevated the present moment to a position of supreme importance. This idea challenges the traditional prioritization of historical narratives or future projections, indicating a shift towards valuing the immediacy of the present. The assertion that their services are collecting information from all corners of the globe underscores the idea of a borderless, interconnected world. This concept resonates with postmodern notions of a globalized society where information and experiences are easily accessible across geographical boundaries. This statement implies a universal reach and influence, further emphasizing the idea of overcoming spatial limitations. It suggests a dissolution of geographical borders and expanding the influence beyond traditional boundaries.

4.4.6. Cultural References and Pop Culture

   Postmodernism, as a cultural and literary movement, frequently draws inspiration from the vast tapestry of popular culture, seamlessly weaving references to movies, music, advertisements, and other elements of mass media into its narrative fabric. This incorporation serves as a reflection of the profound impact that mass culture exerts on contemporary society. In postmodern literature, integrating popular culture elements is a deliberate choice,

blurring the lines between high and low culture and challenging traditional notions of artistic and literary elitism.

Within this context, references to specific cultural artifacts become crucial markers of the postmodern aesthetic. In *Master of the Eclipse*, we encounter allusions that further underscore the symbiotic relationship between literature and popular culture. The reference *to the Hunger Games* and Schlondorff's movie are poignant examples of how these narratives draw upon, reinterpret, and recontextualize elements from the broader cultural landscape.

The mention of *the Hunger Games* taps into the zeitgeist of contemporary popular culture, invoking a dystopian narrative that has resonated widely across various media. This allusion adds layers of meaning to the text and engages readers with a cultural reference that carries its own set of connotations, themes, and social commentary. It's a testament to how postmodern literature actively participates in the ongoing dialogue with the cultural products of its time.

Similarly, the reference to Schlondorff's movie introduces an intertextual dimension, acknowledging the intersection between literature and cinema. This expands the narrative palette and highlights the interconnectedness of various artistic forms within the postmodern landscape. Schlondorff's work, adapted from a novel and referenced in another literary work, exemplifies the fluidity and interplay of artistic mediums that define postmodern storytelling.

In essence, these allusions contribute to the overarching postmodern project of deconstruction and reconstruction, where familiar cultural elements are repurposed, subverted, and woven into a narrative that challenges fixed meanings and encourages a more dynamic engagement with the evolving cultural milieu. The incorporation of references from popular culture in *Master of the Eclipse* underscores the text's dialogic relationship with the

broader cultural discourse, inviting readers to navigate the intricate interplay between literature and the multifaceted realms of mass media.

4.4.7. Critical Examination of Totalizing Narratives

Postmodernism questions the validity of overarching, all-encompassing narratives that claim to explain history, society, or human existence. Instead, it recognizes a plurality of perspectives and experiences. The professor conveys a sense of cynicism and disillusionment towards the historical record: "Then I think I heard him mumble to himself and say history, History! What a junkyard for the human race's stupid deeds!" (37). It implies that history, as traditionally recorded, is a repository of humanity's foolish and regrettable actions. It reflects a skeptical attitude towards a grand narrative in history. It suggests that the conventional understanding of history as a record of human achievements and progress might be oversimplified or misleading. Instead, it implies that history is filled with stupid deeds, which could be a critique of the simplified, idealized versions of history often presented in mainstream narratives.

> For many years now … historians have preferred to turn their attention to long periods, as if, beneath the shifts and changes of political events, they were trying to reveal the stable, almost indestructible system of checks and balances, the irreversible processes, the constant readjustments, the underlying tendencies that gather force, and are then suddenly reversed after centuries of continuity, the movements of accumulation and slow saturation, the great silent, motionless bases that traditional history has covered with a thick layer of events. (Foucault 3)

Foucault emphasizes a shift in historical methodology towards focusing on long-term trends and underlying structures, rather than just chronicling individual events. It suggests an interest

in uncovering the fundamental forces and processes that shape history over extended periods. Deconstruction in history involves challenging traditional narratives and seeking out marginalized or silenced voices. The quote implies a desire to dig beneath the surface layer of events, suggesting a parallel with the deconstructionist aim of revealing alternative perspectives and narratives that dominant historical accounts have overshadowed.

Foucault analyzes power structures and their influence on historical accounts. The reference to a "system of checks and balances" and "underlying tendencies" may be an acknowledgment of the complex power dynamics that shape historical events. This resonates with the deconstructionist emphasis on understanding the power dynamics that influence the creation and dissemination of historical narratives. It often challenges the notion of objective, neutral historiography. The mention of "the great silent, motionless bases that traditional history has covered with a thick layer of events" can be interpreted as an acknowledgment of the subjective nature of historical interpretation and the need to examine the layers of interpretation that accumulate over time critically. Postmodernism often challenges the notion of objective, neutral historiography:

> As academic discipline, history has traditionally claimed the right to account for the past, to impose order on past events and neatly change them into unquestionable and all explaining historical "facts". However, these "fossilizing" tendencies are exactly what the postmodern philosophy and art challenge, and the reasons why history has become a rather problematic issue (Valentová 6).

The mention of "the great silent, motionless bases that traditional history has covered with a thick layer of events" can be interpreted as an acknowledgment of the subjective nature of historical interpretation and the need to critically examine the layers of understanding that accumulate over time.

4.4.8. Cultural Mosaic and Multifaceted Perspectives: Postmodern Celebration of Diversity

Postmodernism acknowledges and values the diversity of human experiences, identities, and perspectives. It resists homogenizing or essentializing categories. It contributes to this diversity by offering viewpoints that challenge dominant ideologies, power structures, or historical accounts. They acknowledge the existence of different truths and realities. Postmodernism questions the authority of institutions, ideologies, and historical accounts. Counternarratives disrupt the power of dominant narratives by presenting alternative accounts that may challenge or contradict established versions of history or social norms.

Adnan's writing draws upon her multicultural heritage, incorporating her experiences from Lebanon, France, and the United States. "We are in the summer of 91. Bombs are falling mercilessly on Iraq" (3)/ The place was overflowing with people: they had come from Gibelina was buzzing with expectation" (7)/I miss California. I came to this country to get rid of counterfeit dollars (135)/The dreadful sun of Damascus hammers its nails into my head" (135).

Given Adnan's multicultural background and her time spent in France, she likely frequented various restaurants and eateries in Paris. This passage could evoke a sense of familiarity and comfort for her, mainly if she had her favorite spots for lunch in the city:

> At the corner of Rue du Parc Royal and Rue de Turenne there's fine restaurant where I go whenever I happen to be in that arrondissement around lunch hour … we entered the Cafè des Muses … when at last she arrived with the menus , we ordered a soup de cresson, a pumpkin soup, beef and fish". (117)

The mention of ordering dishes like "soup de cresson" (watercress soup) and "pumpkin soup," along with options of beef and fish, reflects the culinary diversity and sophistication of French cuisine. This might resonate with Adnan's own experiences of enjoying and appreciating the rich gastronomic offerings in France.

This rich blend of cultural influences permeates her work, enabling her to present distinctive viewpoints on globally relevant subjects. She celebrates the diverse tapestry of human existence, welcoming variations in language, culture, and identity as wellsprings of strength and creativity. Adnan's writing deeply immerses itself in pressing political and social matters, especially those about the Middle East. She directs attention to the region's intricate and varied cultural and historical landscapes, challenging oversimplified or stereotypical portrayals.

4.4.8. Interdisciplinary Approaches: Art and Philosophy

Postmodernism encourages the integration of different disciplines and forms of knowledge, recognizing that no single perspective can provide a complete understanding of complex phenomena. Adnan's works frequently incorporate philosophical themes and ideas. She engages with existential questions and philosophical inquiries in her writing, demonstrating an interdisciplinary engagement with both literature and philosophy:

> A line out of Walter Benjamin's Theses on the Philosophy of History shot through my mind: …even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. Indeed, the constellation that we name evil has the will to destroy the human race and its habitat. That will is imparted to the men who run the world: total eclipse". (40)

Benjamin's quote raises a critical ethical dilemma - the potential for malevolence to triumph, causing widespread harm to humanity. This prompts moral contemplation on how individuals

and societies should react to such looming threats. It also sparks inquiries into the essence of malevolence and the duties of those in positions of authority.

The mention of "those who hold sway over the world" underscores a political aspect. This can be associated with discussions about power dynamics, governance, and the obligations of political leaders. It encourages examination of how political systems can either safeguard or endanger the welfare of humanity and the natural world.

Benjamin's apprehension for human habitat degradation resonates with environmental philosophy. It stresses the mutual reliance between humanity and the environment, highlighting the imperative for ethical considerations in our treatment of the natural world. Walter Benjamin was affiliated with the Frankfurt School, a cohort of critical thinkers. His statement relates to critical perspectives on society, culture, and history. It prompts an evaluation of how those can influence prevailing cultural and social narratives in authoritative positions, and how these narratives can shape the trajectory of history.

Benjamin's oeuvre challenges established approaches to history. It proposes that historical accounts can be manipulated and that interpreting events is not impartial. This pertains to how various disciplines, encompassing history, sociology, and philosophy, approach the study and interpretation of the past. Benjamin's apprehensions can also be tied to discussions about the repercussions of technology on society and the environment. It encourages contemplation of the ethical ramifications of technological progress and its potential for malevolent applications.

The narrator describes the artist's fascination with angels, particularly during a period of crisis, prompts an investigation into the artistic choices and the deeper symbolic meanings embedded within the artworks. From a philosophical standpoint, this can spark discussions

about the significance of symbolism in art and how visual representations have the potential to convey profound existential or metaphysical ideas:

> The advent of World War II threw him into a panic. He returned to his preoccupation with angels. While he was disintegrating in his body, literally drying up, he had a series of visions of angels that he recorded, made visible, in drawings and paintings. Their ominous presence constituted an avalanche: Archangel, Angelus Militans, Vigilant Angel, Angel Overflowing, Angel from a Star …They kept coming. (43)

The artist's encounter with these visions offers a rich field for phenomenological examination. This could entail analyzing how the artist's perception and embodied experience of the world, including his physical deterioration, influenced how he portrayed these angels. This also raises inquiries about the essence of perception and its connection to the act of artistic creation.

The artist's reaction to the war and his fixation on angels might indicate existential concerns. The juxtaposition of human suffering (represented by the artist's physical decline) with the otherworldly imagery of angels invites philosophical contemplation on the human condition, mortality, and the quest for meaning in the face of adversity.

The inclusion of angels in the artist's visions prompts a contemplation of religious and metaphysical themes. This could lead to discussions about the nature of divinity, the earthly and divine relationship, and the artist's endeavor to grapple with spiritual inquiries amidst a world at war. The artist's response to the war and his deep involvement with angels can be scrutinized through a psychoanalytic perspective. This might involve delving into the subconscious motivations and psychological processes that underlie his artistic expressions, particularly during a crisis.

The professor reflects a multidimensional perspective on time and its interplay with various aspects of existence. It can be related to interdisciplinary approaches and philosophy in the following ways:

> Time is mind, although no one's mind. It is oversees forests, hides in rivers: becomes the Nile, the Rhine, the Mississippi … it beats the measure for music, meanders in the slum's corridors. It is steam, it precedes destruction, it's the atom bomb, it goes beyond it, it's the DNA of the universe" (38).

The quote explores the essence of time, presenting it as a concept intricately linked with both the human mind and the broader universe. This prompts philosophical investigation into the nature of time, its connection to consciousness, and whether it is an objective reality or a subjective construct. The passage suggests a metaphysical perspective, proposing that time is not just a linear progression but a pervasive influence that saturates the natural world, from forests to rivers. This raises philosophical queries about the fundamental nature of reality and the ontology of time.

The idea that time "meanders in the slum's corridors" highlights an existential aspect. It implies that time is intimately associated with human experience, including the harsh realities of life in impoverished urban areas. This could lead to discussions about the existential significance of time and its impact on individual existence. The reference to time as "the DNA of the universe" can be connected to the philosophy of science. It alludes to the foundational role of time in the fabric of the cosmos, which can provoke philosophical reflections on the relationship between time, physical laws, and the universe's evolution.

The mention of time preceding destruction and its association with the atom bomb introduces ethical considerations. This can lead to discussions about human responsibility in

the face of potentially destructive technologies and the moral implications of manipulating time-related phenomena. This quote exemplifies how the concept of time surpasses disciplinary boundaries. It encompasses elements of physics, biology (DNA), social dynamics (slum's corridors), and even geopolitical events (atom bomb). This underscores the interconnectedness of various fields and the need for interdisciplinary perspectives when addressing complex philosophical questions.

4.5. The Critical Lens on Media and Technology

Postmodern resistance may involve critically examining the influence of mass media, consumer culture, and technology on society and individual identity. The narrator critically examines media, particularly television, and its impact on information dissemination and public perception. The analysis touches on several critical aspects of media and technology critique:

> Everything makes "news" nowadays. Newspapers, television, and radio follow events, like a hunting dog following the game and bringing back a dying bird in its muzzle. And people have never been as little informed as they are now. Camel caravans were much more reliable lines of communication than the stupid reporting that allows three minutes for an earthquake, a few seconds for the landing of a Saudi king, and a minute and a half for the bombing that in real time took twenty seconds. The entertainment goes on. On nights when on Channel 4 or 5 nobody dies in Somalia or Elsalvador, children refuse to eat their soup, parents get upset and the family meal is spoiled. Television transforms events into dreams, and journalists' dreams become reality. (74)

The quote highlights the tendency of modern media to sensationalize events, offering brief and often superficial coverage. This aligns with critiques of contemporary news media for

prioritizing sensational stories over in-depth analysis and comprehensive reporting. The comparison to a hunting dog chasing game and returning with a dying bird emphasizes the rapid pace at which news is consumed in the digital age. This can be related to concerns about the speed at which information is disseminated through digital platforms and the potential for timely reporting.

The statement that people have "never been as little informed as they are now" raises issues of information overload and the lack of substantive content in modern media. This aligns with critiques of the internet era, where a surplus of information can lead to shallower understanding. The comparison to camel caravans as more reliable lines of communication implies a skepticism towards the trustworthiness of modern news sources. This relates to concerns about misinformation, fake news, and the need to evaluate media content critically.

The quote suggests that television has the power to transform real-world events into a form of entertainment. This aligns with critiques of the media's role in shaping public perception and potentially desensitizing audiences to the gravity of particular circumstances. The reference to children refusing to eat their soup and upset parents due to news coverage highlights the potential emotional impact of media on individuals and families. This relates to concerns about the psychological and emotional effects of constant exposure to distressing news. The statement that "journalists' dreams become reality" suggests a blurring of the line between actual events and how they are presented in the media. This touches on concerns about the manipulation of public perception through media narrative.

4.5.1. Media and Nihilism of Transparency

In the postmodern era, a question arises about how reality's significance is perceived, especially when considering the blurred lines between fiction and reality in individuals'

consciousness. According to Baudrillard, the nihilistic sense of 'transparency' stems from the hyperreal environment characteristic of postmodernism. For instance, in his article "On Nihilism", Baudrillard discusses:

> Nihilism no longer wears the dark, Wagnerian, Spenglerian, fuliginous colors of the end of the century. It no longer comes from a Weltanschauung of decadence nor from a metaphysical radicalism born of the death of God and of all the consequences that must be taken from this death. Today's nihilism is one of transparency. (159)

In simpler terms, the earlier pre-modern beliefs that rejected the existence of God no longer hold, as a radical form of nihilism called "the nihilism of transparency" has emerged in the postmodern age. This period blurs the boundaries between what's real and what's imagined, possibly causing a preference for the imagined over reality. Consequently, "epistemological nihilism" conveys the loss of a clear sense of reality.

The narrator underscores the notion that Beirut, in the context described, serves as a unique and potent setting for examining the impact and potential distortions of media representation: "Beirut isn't only a privileged laboratory for urban Guerrillas but also a darn good movie lab. Hollywood, Italy, Tokyo cannot compete for realism with the picture taken of Arab body, still wearing its underwear that a taxicab filled with passengers was carrying on its roof on its way to the morgue" (77). It offers a critique of sensationalism, exemplified by the description of a taxi carrying a deceased person, still in their underwear, on its roof to the morgue. This vividly illustrates sensationalist tendencies in media, which prioritize attention-grabbing, graphic images over nuanced and accurate portrayals of events.

The mention of a deceased person being transported in such a manner brings attention to the potential exploitation of tragedy for sensationalist ends in media. This prompts ethical

considerations regarding the display of distressing images for entertainment or shock value. The quote suggests that media often grapples with capturing the unfiltered, authentic essence of events, particularly in conflict-ridden areas like Beirut. It challenges the notion that films or media productions can genuinely replicate or surpass real-life occurrences' raw intensity and seriousness. The quote encourages contemplation on how media representations mold public perception by juxtaposing Beirut's reality with the depiction of events in other media hubs. It underscores the responsibility of media in accurately and ethically presenting events.

Baudrillard argues that the proliferation of knowledge in modern culture risks diluting people's grasp of the world's most pressing issues: "We live in a world where there is more and more information and less and less meaning" (Baudrillard 79). With an ever-growing abundance of information, it becomes imperative for the media to sift through this wealth of data and deliver it in a manner that is truthful, reliable, and pertinent to provide a substantive comprehension of events.

Beyond accuracy, the media must also consider the moral implications of presenting information. This encompasses avoiding sensationalism, respecting individuals' privacy, and ensuring that their reporting does not contribute to misinformation or the distortion of facts. Referring to Beirut as a "privileged laboratory for urban Guerrillas," the quote hints at the city's role as a setting for high-stakes and often violent urban conflicts. This context, combined with media influence, can profoundly influence how events are portrayed and comprehended globally.

4. 6. Activism and Social Change

Postmodern resistance can lead to activism to challenge oppressive systems, advocate for social justice, and promote inclusivity and equality. The primary purpose of subversion is to

challenge authoritative arguments. This implies questioning the accepted wisdom of a culture or civilization by taking issue with its dominant stories, ideas, and values. Subversion is an attempt to show how weak and vulnerable these supposedly solid systems are:

> The central theme that I emphasize is subversion, the commitment to undermine dominant discourse. The subversion theme-variously described as destruction, radical indeterminacy, anti-essentialism or anti-foundationalism-whether in art, architecture, literature, or philosophy-seeks to demonstrate the inherent instability of seemingly hegemonic structures, that power is diffused through society. (Handler 679).

The character Ahmed reflects a sentiment of frustration and disillusionment with the status quo, particularly in relation to the military and its role in the speaker's community:

> For twenty years now, the army has done nothing but feed its belly at our expense, we gave it our money, our work, our prayers, and all we have seen until now id dead Arabs; the enemy kills Arabs and the Arabs kill only other Arabs. Ahmad, I am tired. I want to die amid the sent of flowers, not of sewers. (Adnan 149)

The speaker expresses frustration with ongoing military actions and a desire for peace. This aligns with efforts to promote non-violence and prevent conflict. The speaker criticizes the army's resource consumption at the expense of the community. This relates to advocacy for fair resource distribution and holding institutions accountable for their spending. The speaker feels let down by authorities and seeks transparency and responsiveness. This is akin to activism demanding accountability from those in power. The speaker yearns for a better living environment. This connects with activism focused on enhancing living conditions and well-being. The speaker addresses concerns about loss of life and human rights violations. This relates to activism aiming to protect individuals' rights and lives. The speaker values a

pleasant, natural environment and cultural heritage. This aligns with activism for environmental preservation and cultural conservation. The speaker's weariness suggests a call for collective community action. This may involve mobilizing communities to address their challenges.

Counternarratives frequently focus on the experiences and identities of marginalized or underrepresented groups. These narratives may provide a platform for voices that have historically been excluded, silenced, or marginalized in mainstream discourse. Counternarratives may utilize these techniques to highlight the constructed nature of narratives and the subjective nature of truth. Stephen Slemon argues that postmodernism paradoxically silences cultural others by stripping them of their voice and, more specifically, their theoretical authority:

> The global appropriation of time-and-space by the Euro-American Western hegemony, which labels some civilizations as "backward" and "marginal" while appropriating some of their "raw" materials for its own use. Then postmodernism is projected onto the edges as the standard, as a neo-universalism that 'marginal' cultures might aspire to, and from which some of the more progressive products of those cultures can be hijacked and 'approved'...

While postmodernism can be a valuable tool for examining and deconstructing dominant narratives, it can also, at times, unintentionally overshadow or sideline the voices and perspectives of those who have been historically marginalized or colonized. It suggests that the adoption of postmodernism in post-colonial contexts does not always lead to a genuine dismantling of established power structures:

Thus, postmodernism functions as a means of silencing the once colonized, notably by limiting the theoretical authority of post-colonial writings that it does not appropriate. Thus, postmodernism as a style is transferred from Europe to the once colonized, where the local 'character' it develops often duplicates and reflects present cultural hegemony. (viii)

4.7. Counternarratives and the Postmodern Resistance

Counternarratives in literature refer to stories or narratives that challenge or subvert established or dominant cultural, social, or historical records. They offer alternative perspectives, voices, or interpretations that may have been marginalized, ignored, or suppressed by mainstream postmodern discourse; counternarratives play a significant role in reflecting the broader theme of questioning and deconstructing established norms and narratives.

A counternarrative is a narrative or story that provides an alternative perspective to a dominant or mainstream narrative. It challenges widely accepted beliefs, norms, or ideologies by presenting a different interpretation of events, experiences, or social phenomena. Counternarratives often emerge from marginalized or oppressed groups who seek to voice their experiences and perspectives. They can be found in various forms, including literature, art, film, oral traditions, and academic discourse. For example, in history, a counternarrative might challenge the conventional narrative about a particular event or era by emphasizing the experiences and contributions of marginalized groups that were previously overlooked.

4.7.1. Understanding the Postmodern Resistance

Postmodern resistance refers to the rejection or critique of traditional, linear, and hierarchical ways of thinking and organizing society. It is a response to the complex,

fragmented, and rapidly changing nature of contemporary life. Postmodernism questions the idea of a single, objective truth and emphasizes the subjective nature of reality. It challenges established norms, ideologies, and power structures.

4.7.2. The Function of Counternarratives in the Postmodern Era

Postmodernism is characterized by a skepticism towards grand, overarching narratives that claim to explain or define reality. Counternarratives, in this context, deconstruct these grand narratives and offer alternative viewpoints, emphasizing the diversity of experiences and interpretations. In this context, Brian Crews advances the claim: "the novel appears to react to other, particularly literary forms of narrative, and, since then, has always been open to the assimilation of a great variety of modes of discourse. The novel is, therefore, a hybrid, open genre which can take advantage of already existing forms of representation, and, at times, does so critically and questioningly"(Crews 20).Thus, novels as a kind of narrative have a tendency to respond to and engage with other narrative forms, such as oral storytelling, poetry, drama, or even non-fictional modes. This interplay can lead to a rich diversity of storytelling techniques within the novel.

4.7.3. Adnan' *Master of the Eclipse* as a Counternarrative

The idea of art as a remedy in turbulent postmodern times is a compelling subject that explores art's therapeutic and transformative potential in response to the complexities and challenges of the postmodern era. In Sitt Marie-Rose, "Adnan, explores recurrent themes in her poetry: the political and individual perceptions of violence, in response to the Vietnam and Lebanese Civil War, and her experience of separation from familiar cultures, landscapes and languages" (Girelli).

Art allows individuals to freely express themselves and regain control in a rapidly changing postmodern world. Artistic creations can critique and comment on the intricate issues and contradictions in postmodern society, addressing topics like consumerism, technology, and identity. Engaging in the creative process allows individuals to release emotions, reflect, and find solace in the face of the challenges posed by postmodernity. Art is a tool for reconstructing meaning, using storytelling, symbolism, and metaphor to make sense of experiences in a world characterized by shifting realities.

Artistic endeavors unite people, encouraging them to share experiences and engage in conversation, building connections in a diverse and tumultuous world. Promoting art prompts viewers to critically engage with the complexities of postmodern society, encouraging introspection and considering alternative perspectives. Asserting Authenticity and Identity: Art helps individuals maintain their unique identities in a world marked by artificiality and commodification, resisting conformity and challenging prevailing norms.

Through art, individuals can delve into concepts of time, memory, and continuity, finding a sense of stability and continuity amidst the rapid changes of postmodernity. Moments of Transcendence and Inspiration: Engaging with art offers moments of transcendence, providing solace and inspiration beyond the immediate circumstances of individuals.

Art has the potential to galvanize social change and activism, with artists using their work to advocate for justice, equality, and positive societal shifts. These ideas underscore how art serves as a potent remedy for individuals navigating the complexities and uncertainties of the postmodern era. Individuals find healing, meaning, and a sense of agency through creative expression in turbulent times. Eventually, Etel "presents art, including poetry, as a solution to coping with and thus overcoming the burden of the destitute postmodern era. It is true that poetry targets the emotions and feelings of its audience and delves into the world's mysteries.

For Etel, the poet deals with the invisible, granting his or her readers a deeper level of understanding".

Etel argues persuasively with the professor, drawing a parallel between poets and angels. She contends that poets hold access to realms inaccessible to others, much like celestial beings. For instance, when Klee crafted his angel, he imbued it with his metaphysical perspective. This angel embodies historical significance and anticipates a future fraught with even more tremendous cataclysms than those of the past (Etel 45).

Art, Etel asserts, lays bare the concerns and difficulties of societies while offering solace and potential remedies to bear the weight of life. Metanarratives can be fashioned through artistic expression, ushering in novel values that inspire hope and purpose. Moreover, poets take a responsibility in society: their voice, often likened to the potency of the sword, holds the power to sway minds. She contends that poets can draw their audience into a realm where they perceive the world through more profound perspectives akin to angels. Etel regards Klee as a quintessential example of poets, poet-philosophers, and artists who will grapple with these trying times. She sees poets as vital forces, actively participating in the enduring physical and spiritual struggles shaping humanity's destiny (Etel 46).

4.8. Navigating Power and Knowledge: Etel Adnan's *Master of the Eclipse*

Foucault's concept of power/knowledge highlights the inseparable relationship between systems of power and the production of knowledge. It underscores how knowledge is a key tool in shaping social reality and maintaining existing power structures. Additionally, it invites critical reflection on the ways in which knowledge is used to control and regulate individuals and societies: "You see, we identify power with the one who posses it. People willingly become the prey of an abstraction personified" (24). Foucault argues that power and

knowledge are not separate entities, but rather, they are deeply intertwined and mutually constitutive. In other words, systems of power produce knowledge, and knowledge reinforces and sustains systems of power. Foucault conceptualizes power as a productive force rather than a purely repressive one. It doesn't just constrain or suppress; it also generates new forms of knowledge, discourses, and social norms. Additionally, power is not held by individuals or institutions alone, but is dispersed throughout society in complex, relational networks.

Foucault introduced the notion of "epistemes," which are overarching systems of knowledge that shape the way we understand and interpret the world during specific historical periods. These epistemes define what counts as valid knowledge and establish the boundaries of acceptable discourse. They are linked to broader systems of power. Foucault argues that each episteme establishes its own "regimes of truth" - the accepted and authoritative knowledge claims within a particular historical context. These regimes of truth are shaped by those in positions of power and serve to legitimize and reinforce existing social structures.

Foucault contends that knowledge is not neutral or objective; it is imbued with power dynamics. Those who possess knowledge have the capacity to influence and regulate behavior, categorize individuals, and shape social norms. This makes knowledge a form of social control. Foucault introduced the concept of "disciplinary power" to describe the way institutions like prisons, schools, hospitals, and even everyday practices like surveillance and examinations, exert power by regulating and normalizing individual behavior. These mechanisms contribute to the production and dissemination of knowledge.

While Foucault emphasizes the power of knowledge in maintaining social order, he also acknowledges the potential for resistance. He argues that individuals and groups can generate alternative forms of knowledge and challenge dominant discourses, leading to shifts in power dynamics.

The quote emphasizes that people tend to associate power with those who hold it. This aligns with Foucault's concept that power is often viewed as something possessed by individuals or institutions. In reality, power operates more diffusely and is not limited to specific entities.

The quote suggests that individuals willingly submit to a personified abstraction, meaning they submit to an abstract concept or idea that is personified in a figure of authority. This relates to Foucault's notion of power being exercised through social structures and systems of knowledge. People often accept and conform to these systems, allowing them to be governed by abstract ideas or ideologies. Foucault argues that power operates through various social mechanisms and structures, including knowledge, institutions, and discourses. This quote implies that individuals may not always question or resist these power structures, but instead may accept them as natural or inevitable. The quote suggests that people's perception of power is influenced by their understanding of who possesses it. This aligns with Foucault's idea that knowledge plays a crucial role in defining and legitimizing power relations. Knowledge shapes our understanding of authority and the structures that govern society.

"What's his power? It's awesome, we know, but what is it? (55). The description of power as the ability to "crush bones from a distance" conveys a sense of overwhelming force and control. This aligns with Foucault's understanding of power as a means of regulating and disciplining individuals and society:

> Power is also exerted over the body, not so much as physical punishment, but as ideological orders … Power is not an institution and not a structure... it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society …Truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it (Foucault 170).

The emphasis on distance as being of "essential importance" is significant. In terms of power dynamics, this can be related to how institutional and systemic forms of power often operate at a remove from direct visibility. This can make it harder for individuals to pinpoint and challenge the sources of authority. The quote suggests that this form of power operates in a way that conceals the responsibility for actions, making it difficult to attribute blame or seek retaliation. This aligns with Foucault's notion that power can often be diffuse and difficult to trace back to specific individuals or institutions.

The idea that this power can "enter every conscience" underscores the role of knowledge in shaping and controlling individual perceptions and beliefs. This relates to Foucault's argument that knowledge is a key instrument of power, influencing how individuals understand and navigate their world. The quote describes how this power can paralyze curiosity, suppress doubt, and quash any rebellious impulses. This aligns with Foucault's concept of disciplinary power, which operates through mechanisms that regulate behavior and thought, often leading to self-censorship and compliance.

The notion that minds can be turned "into moral silence" speaks to the idea that power can influence not only behavior but also the inner thoughts and moral judgments of individuals. This resonates with Foucault's argument that power is not just about coercion, but also about shaping norms and values.

4.8.1. Language as a Vehicle of Power

Language is a fundamental aspect of identity, and it can be a powerful tool for expressing one's cultural background, beliefs, and experiences. In Adnan's work, language may be used to explore themes related to identity, particularly in the context of her Lebanese heritage and American citizenship.

Adnan, being fluent in multiple languages, may incorporate different linguistic elements into her work. This can result in a rich tapestry of languages and dialects, reflecting the complexities of communication and cultural exchange. Postmodern literature, which Adnan is associated with, often engages in linguistic experimentation and deconstruction. This might involve playing with syntax, word choice, and narrative structure to challenge conventional modes of expression.

Language allows for the creation of metaphorical and symbolic meanings. Adnan may use language to convey deeper layers of meaning, employing metaphors and symbols to evoke emotions or explore abstract concepts. can be a tool for Adnan to convey her personal experiences, emotions, and reflections. Through her use of language, she can articulate her thoughts on topics such as war, identity, and the human condition.

The choice of language and style can shape the narrative voice and perspective in a work. Adnan may use language to establish a particular narrative voice, which can influence the reader's connection to the story and characters. If Adnan's work deals with cross-cultural experiences or encounters, language may serve as a means of mediating between different cultures and worldviews. It can be a bridge for understanding or a barrier to communication, depending on how it's utilized. Language can be a tool for resistance and empowerment, especially for marginalized voices. Adnan may use language to challenge dominant discourses, assert her perspective, and advocate for social or political change. Adnan may pay attention to the aesthetic qualities of language, such as rhythm, cadence, and imagery. These elements can contribute to the overall sensory experience of reading her work.

4.9. Tracing Historiographic Metafiction in Etel Adnan's *Master of the Eclipse*

Linda Hutcheon's *Poetics of Postmodernism* classifies postmodern historical novels as historiographic metafiction because they blur the lines between reality and fiction. Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction allows multiple ways of presenting historical context and analyzing its ideological import. The complexity of representing history in fiction is explored critically in Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction. Concerns about how stories are told, the connections between different texts, and the blurring of reality and fiction all fall into this category. The line between history and fiction is blurry, as Linda Hutcheon points out:

> What the postmodern writing of history and literature has taught us is that both history and fiction are discourses that constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past ("exertions of the shaping, ordering imagination"). In other words, the meaning and shape are not in the events but in the systems that make those past events into historical facts. (Hutcheon 89)

In *Master of the Eclipse*, Etel Adnan skillfully employs historiographic metafiction, a genre characterized by its reinterpretation of historical events, to critically examine and reconsider pivotal moments: "*Master of the Eclipse* is a literary piece that belongs to historiographic metafiction. A reconsideration of Saddam Hussein policy and the Iraq war, Prince of Wales marriage, Mrs. Thatcher's ascension to power in the text justifies the latter" (Nouioua 282).

4.9.1. The Interplay of Fiction and History

This passage is viewed as a microcosm of historiographic metafiction, as it combines personal experience, emotional response, and factual details to create a narrative that engages with the complex figure of Saddam Hussein within a historical context.

In page 154 from *Master of the Eclipse*, the narrator reveals that he had a close acquaintance with Saddam Hussein at one point in time, describing him as someone who associated with poets, painters, and had a strong passion for reading. The narrator initially admired Saddam but later regretted it, feeling overwhelmed by shame.

Saddam financially supported poetry festivals held amidst the ruins of Babylon, attended by numerous poets who praised his generosity. The narrator initially found these gatherings exhilarating, but eventually grew uneasy and disillusioned. Saddam appeared vibrant and energetic at these events, though the narrator noted that his thinking was simplistic. They believed that to maintain youthfulness, one should trust in inner strength and engage in mentally stimulating activities.

Saddam was described as a skilled storyteller and a master manipulator. He believed that any harm directed towards him would have catastrophic consequences for Iraq. Many in his vicinity were drawn to his authoritative and tribal perspective, viewing dissent as treason. Despite what people said about him, the narrator regarded him as on par with other dictators in terms of manipulation. Saddam projected confidence and generosity, but harbored deep suspicion and uncertainty that influenced potentially detrimental decisions regarding war and peace. The narrator perceived something missing in Saddam from their initial impression, an impression that persisted. They compared him to a creature desperate to break free from confinement, driven by an insatiable, formless need.

The passage is written from a first-person perspective, reflecting the author's personal experiences and emotions. In historiographic metafiction, this subjective viewpoint adds a layer of individual interpretation to the historical narrative, emphasizing the role of personal perspective in shaping how history is understood.

The passage combines factual details about Saddam Hussein with the author's emotional reactions and reflections. This blurring of fact and interpretation mirrors the characteristic of historiographic metafiction, where the line between historical reality and fictional elements is intentionally blurred to provoke critical reflection. The passage employs narrative techniques, such as character portrayal, dialogue, and descriptive language, to convey the author's impressions of Saddam Hussein. This narrative approach is a hallmark of historiographic metafiction, as it utilizes fictional storytelling methods to engage with historical events and figures. The passage delves into the author's perception of Saddam Hussein's exercise of power, his influence on others, and the consequences of his actions. This exploration of power dynamics aligns with the central theme of historiographic metafiction, which often involves a critical examination of how power is wielded and how historical narratives are constructed.

Waugh observed the competition and self-consciousness of various linguistic forms in fiction find a parallel in the dynamic interplay between history and fiction, especially within the context of historiographic metafiction:

> There is no one privileged 'language of fiction'. There are languages of memoirs, journals, diaries, histories, conversational register, legal records, Journalism, documentary. These languages compete for privilege. They question and relativist each other to such an extent that the 'language of Fiction' is always, if often covertly, self-conscious. (Waugh 6)

4.9.2. Historical Facts and Figures in a Fictional Landscape

The narrator of *Master of the Eclipse* weaves real historical elements into the story, fostering a unique dialogue between the fictional realm and historical reality, in particular his meeting with Saddam Hussein.

"Saddam Hussein was someone I knew well. There was a time when I saw him rather often … He hangs around with poets and painters, and he is also a voracious reader, displaying the feverishness of a rural kid in front of books. I adored Saddam and afterwards wept bitter tears because of it. Shame was suffocating under its own weight. Prior to my departure, I anxiously awaited the terrifying stories of peril that my companions in the group would relay around the party… He will proceed from crime to crime to cover up or rationalize his actions if he believes demons are crawling all around him. If someone feels he's surrounded by demons, he'll commit crime after crime to try to hide or justify his acts. My intuition told me that Saddam Hussein had a high temperature, was having trouble sleeping, and was generally agitated. I spoke to him a lot, but never about politics or how he was fixated on destroying his opponents. quest of greatness has several dimensions to it. He provided financial support for poetry festivals conducted among the ruins of Babylon, attended by literally thousands of poets. Most of whom were there to praise his benevolence.

I attended some of these gatherings and lost myself in the sea of words pronounced in so many languages. I was exalted spelbound and yet gradually I became apprehensive and disgusted. The majority of those there were come to express their gratitude for his generosity. I went to several of these parties and was lost in a sea of words uttered in so many languages that I was elated spelbound, but then I grew afraid and dissatisfied. At these occasions, he seemed robust and young. He was dazzling because of his jittery state of mind. He was clever, but his thinking was rudimentary.

To remain youthful, one must trust in the strength that comes with it. It helps keep the mind sharp by bouncing around thoughts and creating optical illusions. When I was younger, the amount of energy he put into millions of projects gave the idea that the nation was remaking

itself, which it wasn't. He's a natural storyteller with a knack for creating myths. He's also got a lot of guts. Iraq faces danger because of Saddam Hussein's sincerely held belief that he is the nation's supreme leader and that any damage done to him would have catastrophic consequences for the whole country. Many people in his area find appeal in his basic and tribal view of authority, which gives him influence. In his mind, people are either on his side or they're against him. Any kind of dissent is only trason in the eyes of that power structure. He's a master manipulator, and despite what people say about him, he's on par with the world's other dictators in that regard.

He was a wildcat at the time, both physically and psychologically. While outwardly displaying self-confidence and imperial generosity, he had deep suspicion and uncertainty that caused him to make terrible judgments in matters of war and peace that may have had dire consequences for Iraq. The only way he could stop the panic from taking over his mind and body was to instill fear in others. His magnetic pull is mostly due to his self-absorption, which transforms him from a normal person into a monster creature that is fast to act, unpredictable, and unable to control his emotions. My first impression of him was that he was missing something, and that impression has stuck with me. As he desperately pushes himself against the iron bars of the shrinking cage, he is propelled by an insatiable need that has no form".

Another example within *Master of the Eclipse* delves into the life of Iraqi poet Buland al-Haydari and his fascination with angels. In the narrative, Adnan places this fascination in connection with the well-known allegory of the angel of history from the theses "On the Concept of History" (1940) by the Marxist German dialectician Walter Benjamin.

4.9.3. Playful and Subversive Engagement with History

Adnan explores historical narratives, and observes her playful and subversive techniques. She employs parody, pastiche, and various narrative tools like flashbacks and stuck characters to challenge conventional historical storytelling:

> The speaker in *Master of the Elipse* recalls the memories of Iraq war in 1991 when she was in the bus heading towards Sicily. In this sense, she interjects flashbacks into the main story to provide readers a glimpse into a character's background. The Usage of this literary strategy is meant to enhance the understanding of the story's current events or the character's backstory. Then, she suggested a "need for a forward to her story" (ibid). Just after, she narrates her adventure in Gibelina's festival. This techniques is called flashforwards. They are a great technique to build suspense, boost reader interest, and build anticipation for the story's ending. It creatively enriches a narrative from both a writer and a reader point of view. Hence, the use of flashbacks and flashforwards echoes the postmodern nihilistic temper recognized as chaotic and unstable (Nouioua 283).

Furthermore, within the context of postmodern literary traits, pastiche is evident. This term denotes the integration of multiple genres to construct a distinctive narrative. It is a concept linked to postmodern intertextuality, signifying the process of combining or 'pasting' together various elements (Nordquist).

> This might be a tribute to or a parody of previous styles in postmodernist literature. In order to produce ironic effects, a very remarkable aspect in postmodern literature, many events might occur at the same time, merging or recurring as part of what is known as 'temporal distortion'. The implementation of temporal fragmentation results,

maximalism when the piece has a large canvas and a disjointed narrative; in other words, it seems chaotic and overflowing with frivolous vocabulary (Nouioua 280).

4.9.4. Deconstruction of Linear Time

Historiographic metafiction often challenges traditional linear timelines found in historical narratives by employing a fluid approach to time. Deconstruction of Linear Time:

Historiographic metafiction frequently eschews the conventional, linear progression of time found in historical accounts. Instead, it embraces a more fluid and non-linear representation of temporal events. This deconstruction of time allows the narrative to move seamlessly between different historical periods, blurring the boundaries between past, present, and future.

The fluidity of time is often manifested through temporal distortion, where historical events are presented in a fragmented or non-chronological manner. This distortion serves as a narrative device, challenging readers to actively engage with the text and question the traditional, linear understanding of historical progression. In historiographic metafiction, the past and present coexist, emphasizing their interconnectedness. This simultaneity reinforces the idea that historical events are not isolated occurrences, but are continually influencing and shaping the present. The fluidity of time allows for a more dynamic exploration of the interplay between different historical moments.

The fluid approach to time in historiographic metafiction often reflects the subjective nature of historical interpretation and memory. In *Master of the Eclipse*, Characters or narrators may recall events in a non-linear fashion, emphasizing the impact of personal perspectives on the construction of historical narratives:

The narrative anarchy is widely known in postmodern writings. It is common for writers to interrupt a chronological narrative with thoughts about people or future

events. *Master of the Eclipse* keeps the reader continually engrossed in the possibility of what can happen to the characters in the story reminiscences and poetic diversions are also prevalent. The usage of the present and past tenses shows the significance of two temporal tenses (Nouioua 280-281).

4.9.5. Interrogation of Historical Truth and Representation

Master of the Eclipse interrogates the nature of historical truth and representation. There are moments where the novel challenges conventional historiography, encouraging readers to question established narratives: "his ascent to prominence was credited to his involvement in the killing of Abdel-Karim Kassam, according to legend. According to folklore, his rise to fame was fueled by his role in the assassination of Abdel-Karim Kassam" (154-155). The narrator underscores the challenges of presenting historical truth, showcasing the coexistence of official accounts, legends, and folklore. It suggests that historical narratives can be shaped by various perspectives, motivations, and cultural contexts, making it crucial for readers and historians to critically examine different sources and consider the nuances within the historical presentation of events and figures:

> Past events can be altered, history gets rewritten well we've just found that this applies to real world too… may be the real history of the world is changing constantly? Why? Because history is a fiction, it is a dream in the mind of humanity, forever striving … towards what? Towards perfection. (Htcheon174)

The narrator in *Master of the Eclipse* raises questions about the nature of historical truth and representation, particularly concerning the roles of individuals in positions of power. The statement suggests a discrepancy between symbolic or ceremonial power and the tangible influence over historical events: "Would Charles be crowned king of England? When it

comes to actual power, isn't it Mrs. Thatcher who has it? That means that Charles is now nothing more than an image on the page. His actions have no bearing on the course of history. Charles becomes a symbol or simulacra" (78).

The inquiry about Charles being crowned king of England highlights the ceremonial aspect of monarchy, which involves traditional rituals and symbols. However, the subsequent question challenges the conventional understanding of power dynamics. The assertion that Mrs. Thatcher holds actual power introduces the notion that real influence may lie beyond the symbolic acts of crowning and royal ceremonies.

The characterization of Charles as "nothing more than an image on the page" emphasizes the idea that his actions are divorced from substantial historical impact. This notion aligns with the concept of simulacra, wherein Charles is reduced to a symbolic representation rather than an active agent shaping historical events.

Buland challenges the accepted narratives and historical justifications for violent actions. It suggests that historical truths are elusive and that the simplicity lies in the dark reality that the pleasure of killing is at the core. By questioning the narratives that history often presents, it prompts an interrogation of the motives and justifications behind historical events: "none of them reach the bottom of truth and that truth is simple: the pleasure to kill is the greatest of pleasures. We made of history the justification of that pleasure… We ask little girls to kiss bombs that will be sent to smash other people's skulls" (Etel Adnan)

He asserts that the pleasure of killing is the greatest pleasure unveils an uncomfortable truth that may be concealed or downplayed in traditional historical representations. It questions the motives behind historical actions and challenges the sanitized versions of events that often pervade official historical narratives.

Buland delves into the power dynamics inherent in historical narratives. By suggesting that the pleasure of killing is justified through history, it implies that those in power manipulate historical accounts to rationalize their actions. This aligns with the broader theme of historiographic metafiction, which often seeks to expose and question power structures within historical storytelling. The mention of asking little girls to kiss bombs highlights a critique of social conditioning and the ways in which societies may normalize or justify violence through historical narratives. This contributes to the interrogation of historical truth by unveiling the impact of such narratives on societal attitudes and behaviors.

4.9.6. Critiques, Ethics, and Moral Implications

Master of the Eclipse comments on the ethical and moral implications of reimagining historical events and figures within:

> For the same reasons, it is unwise for someone who has murdered someone personally to rise to positions of responsibility; having previously felt fearless and above the law, he would want that sensation and stop at nothing to have it. When demons will crawl all around paranoia will take hold of him making him go from crime to new crime in order to cover up or justify his acts. (154-155)

The narrator believes that individuals who have committed personal acts of violence should not ascend to positions of power, as they may become driven by a desire for authority and act ruthlessly to maintain it. The narrator sensed that Saddam was agitated, possibly due to a fever, sleep troubles, and overall restlessness. They conversed with him, avoiding political topics or his fixation on destroying opponents.

4.9.7. The Significance of Historiographic Metafiction in *Master of the Eclipse*

In his critique of *Master of the Eclipse* (2010), Benjamin Hollander (2009) describes the prose as possessing an unsettling, refined, and questioning quality. He notes that the narrative expresses what stifles us into silence, elucidating the connections between innocence and power, and the resulting isolation evident in our personal lives, homes, and within the broader context of our nations. The characteristics highlighted, such as the uncanny, skepticism, and the depiction of isolation on both individual and societal scales, affirm the distinctly postmodern nature of *Master of the Eclipse*.

Historiographic metafiction serves as a counternarrative to the dread and skepticism prevalent in postmodernism by offering a distinctive approach to historical storytelling. In the realm of postmodern literature, skepticism often prevails regarding the reliability of grand historical narratives, and a sense of dread may stem from the perceived fragmentation and uncertainty surrounding historical truths. Historiographic metafiction, however, disrupts this narrative by engaging with history in a way that is both critical and creative.

Historiographic metafiction confronts the skepticism associated with power structures by critically examining historical events and figures. It challenges dominant historical narratives and explores the ways in which power dynamics shape the recording and interpretation of history. This critical engagement serves as a counternarrative to the prevailing sense of dread regarding the manipulation of historical truths.

In "Historicizing the Arab apocalypse with Walter Benjamin: Etel Adnan‟s "*Master of the eclipse*" and Rabih Alameddine‟s The Angel of History" (2018), Vanessa Bond elaborates that Adnan and Alameddine are creatively addressing memories from history (using historiographic metafiction) in order to resist the emotional and artistic hazards of quiet,

sadness, and dread in the Arabic nations and the continuous historical periods of devastation. Therefore, this source assists the understanding of the function of poetics and literature in healing the calamities of postmodern community.

Rather than succumbing to dread, historiographic metafiction engages in a dynamic dialogue with the past. It allows for a multifaceted exploration of historical events, characters, and contexts, fostering a deeper understanding of the complexities inherent in historical narratives. This dialogue offers a counterbalance to the skepticism that questions the very foundations of historical representation.

4.10. Conclusion

In the realm of postmodern literature, historiographic metafiction emerges as a particularly intriguing subgenre. Explored throughout this chapter has been the profound role of the past within fictional narratives, transcending its conventional status as a mere backdrop. Functioning as a pivotal narrative element, the past takes on a dynamic and integral role. Historiographic metafiction, as a distinctive form within postmodern literature, disrupts conventional notions of historical storytelling, skillfully blurring the once-distinct boundaries separating fact from fiction. Authors, engaging in a captivating discourse with history, adeptly manipulate historical events, characters, and narrative techniques. In doing so, they beckon readers into an exploration of the intricate interplay between reality and imagination, pushing the boundaries of storytelling to unprecedented and intellectually stimulating heights. This chapter has specifically delved into the manifestation of historiographic metafiction within the pages of the novel *Master of The Eclipse*. In this literary work, Adnan masterfully confronts the complexities of the past, employing historiographic metafiction as a strategic tool to navigate the emotional and creative challenges intertwined with silence, melancholy, and despair. Adapting to the ongoing historical epoch of instability and disaster in the Arab world, Adnan's utilization of historiographic metafiction emerges as a productive means of engaging with and transcending the tumultuous historical landscape.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The following thesis contributes to the field of literary studies by providing a critical examination of the apocalyptic narrative, particularly within the context of Etel Adnan's literary works. By deconstructing traditional representations of apocalyptic themes, this study offers new insights into the complexities of this narrative structure.

Furthermore, it contributes to postcolonial studies by analyzing how Adnan's texts subvert or challenge dominant western narratives of apocalypse, offering alternative perspectives that are informed by Adnan's cultural background and experiences as a Lebanese-American writer. By integrating literary analysis with concepts from fields such as postcolonial theory, feminist theory, or cultural studies, this thesis contributes to interdisciplinary scholarship, fostering dialogue across diverse academic disciplines and enriching our understanding of apocalyptic narratives in literature.

In addition, this research contributes to the scholarship on Etel Adnan, offering a nuanced examination of her literary contributions beyond conventional interpretations of her work. By focusing on the deconstruction of the apocalyptic narrative, you shed light on previously overlooked aspects of Adnan's writing style, themes, and influences. This thesis has broader implications for understanding contemporary socio-political contexts, particularly in relation to how literature engages with themes of crisis, survival, and resilience. By deconstructing traditional apocalyptic narratives, you offer insights into how literature can challenge dominant discourses and inspire alternative visions of the future.

This thesis examined Etel Adnan's selected works, focusing on the complex relationship between postmodern concepts and apocalyptic imagery. Thorough the examination of Adnan's prose and poetry reveals that her creative output negotiates the thorny terrain of postmodern philosophy, tackling questions of fragmentation, uncertainty, and the collapse of

grand narratives. Adnan also uses apocalyptic imagery well to address the environmental and social changes that have occurred in the modern world.

Analysis of Adnan's writings demonstrates a deep awareness of the fragility of life in the face of imminent disaster. Her narratives provide an eloquent commentary on the era's unsettling realities, providing a nuanced view of the junction of individual and societal issues. Adnan's literary talent resides in her ability to go beyond typical dystopian gloom and instead provide a vision that bravely faces the anarchy with a strong belief in renewal and hope. The thesis has also shown how Adnan's postmodern apocalyptic rhetoric may be understood by readers from all over the world, despite differences in language and culture. Her body of work demonstrates the permanency of art as a means by which we can address the existential issues of our time.

This work provided a comprehensive exploration of the existential crisis embedded in Etel Adnan's *There:In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and of the Other*. Through a philosophical lens and a critical examination of the poem, the discussion navigates through fundamental dichotomies, including I/You, Self/Other, and Here/There and sheds light on the intricate relationship between postmodern apocalypticism and existential crisis, ultimately contributing to the deconstruction of traditional apocalyptic narratives.

Etel Adnan's novel, *The Arab Apocalypse*, serves as a challenging exploration of conventional notions surrounding reality, truth, and the human condition. This work seamlessly blends postmodernism with apocalyptic themes, employing disjointed storytelling, asymmetrical chronology, and an unreliable narrator—characteristic elements of postmodernism—to question deeply ingrained assumptions about reality. Through this narrative approach, Adnan prompts readers to contemplate the intricacies and uncertainties of a world in crisis.

Adnan's portrayal of the apocalypse transcends the overtly catastrophic, delving into psychological and spiritual dimensions. Rather than a singular event, the apocalypse becomes an ongoing process marked by breakdown and metamorphosis, aligning with the postmodern inclination toward flux and unpredictability. Moreover, *The Arab Apocalypse* engages profoundly with intricate themes such as identity, memory, and exile, employing a diverse array of languages and cultural references. Adnan employs a polyphonic narrative to illustrate the diversity within the Arab world, challenging the notion of a universal experience. This narrative strategy aligns with postmodernism's rejection of grand narratives in favor of valuing multiple perspectives, contributing to a nuanced exploration of complex themes within the novel.

The complex understanding of Adnan's connection with postmodern apocalyptic themes is crucial as we continue our investigation of her oeuvre. Adnan's works are an essential commentary on the difficulties of our modern world, and the ensuing chapters will continue to unpack the nuances of her artistic perspective. This research focuses on the application of historiographic metafiction in the novel. Adnan skillfully employs this genre to critically examine and reconsider pivotal moments, such as Saddam Hussein's policies, the Iraq War, the Prince of Wales' marriage, and Mrs. Thatcher's ascension to power. It delves into the interplay of fiction and history, showing how *The Master of Eclipse* combines personal experience, emotional response, and factual details to present a narrative about Saddam Hussein within a historical context. The analysis explores the narrator's changing perceptions of Saddam, his influence, and the consequences of his actions. This blending of fact and interpretation mirrors the characteristic of historiographic metafiction.

Furthermore, the thesis discussed the incorporation of real historical elements into the fictional landscape, citing examples of the narrator's close acquaintance with Saddam Hussein and Iraqi poet Buland al-Haydari's fascination with angels. Adnan's playful and subversive

engagement with history is highlighted, including the use of parody, pastiche, flashbacks, and flashforwards. The deconstruction of linear time is examined, emphasizing how historiographic metafiction challenges traditional timelines by employing a fluid approach to time. It is deduced that the fluidity allows for a dynamic exploration of the interplay between different historical moments and reflects the subjective nature of historical interpretation and memory.

The analysis also touches upon the interrogation of historical truth and representation in *Master of the Eclipse*, emphasizing the coexistence of official accounts, legends, folklore, and the challenges of presenting historical truth. The narrative raises questions about the nature of power, symbolism, and the ethical and moral implications of reimagining historical events.

In conclusion, it is deduced that historiographic metafiction serves as a counternarrative to the skepticism and dread prevalent in postmodernism. It engages dynamically with the past, offering a multifaceted exploration of historical events and characters while challenging established narratives and power structures within historical storytelling.

Explored extensively is the profound role of the past within fictional narratives, surpassing its conventional function as a mere backdrop. Operating as a crucial narrative element, the past assumes a dynamic and integral role. Historiographic metafiction, as a unique form within postmodern literature, challenges traditional concepts of historical storytelling by skillfully erasing the once-clear distinctions between fact and fiction. Authors, engaging in an enthralling dialogue with history, adeptly manipulate historical events, characters, and narrative techniques. In doing so, they invite readers to explore the intricate interplay between reality and imagination, pushing the boundaries of storytelling to unprecedented and intellectually stimulating levels. This section specifically investigates the manifestation of historiographic metafiction within the pages of the novel *Master of The Eclipse*. In this work, Adnan skillfully grapples with the complexities of the past, employing historiographic

metafiction as a strategic tool to navigate the emotional and creative challenges intertwined with silence, melancholy, and despair. Adapting to the ongoing historical epoch of instability and disaster in the Arab world, Adnan's use of historiographic metafiction emerges as a productive means of engaging with and transcending the tumultuous historical landscape.

One limitation of this study is the constraint of time, which prevented a comprehensive examination of all the literary texts authored by Etel Adnan. While efforts were made to include as many relevant texts as possible, the extensive nature of the writer's oeuvre necessitated a selection process. As a result, some texts may not have been thoroughly analyzed within the scope of this research.

For future research, I recommend:

First, analyzing *The Arab Apocalypse* from a semiotic perspective. Consider how symbols such as landscapes, cultural artifacts, or historical events are encoded with meaning and decoded by readers. Investigate how the text employs signifiers and signifieds to represent complex ideas, emotions, or cultural phenomena. Explore how the narrative structure and linguistic elements contribute to the semiotic interpretation of the text.

Second, examining Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic imagination in There. Explore how the characters engage with each other's viewpoints, challenge dominant ideologies, and negotiate meaning through dialogue.

Third, conducting a comparative study between *Master of the Eclipse* and *There*, focusing on the portrayal of the apocalypse. Compare the narrative structures and genres of both works. *Master of the Eclipse* and There may employ different narrative techniques, such as realism, surrealism, or metafiction, which can influence their portrayal of the apocalypse.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Biography of Etel Adnan:

Etel Adnan, renowned as a multifaceted artist encompassing poetry, short stories, essays, and visual art, was born in Beirut in 1925. Etel Adnan, a poet, short story writer, essayist, and artist, was born in Beirut in 1925 to a Syrian Muslim father and a Greek Christian mother. Her early years were spent amidst the diverse landscapes of Lebanon and Syria before she embarked on a journey that took her to France and, eventually, the United States.

She received her education at a Catholic convent by French nuns in Beirut. In 1950, Adnan made her way to Paris to delve into the study of philosophy at the Sorbonne. Her intellectual pursuit led her to the United States in January 1955, where she pursued post-graduate studies in philosophy at UC Berkeley and Harvard. From 1958 to 1972, she shared her knowledge by teaching philosophy at the Dominican University of California in San Rafael, California. Coincidentally, her venture into the world of painting commenced in 1958, aligning with her relocation to San Francisco during the height of the poetic renaissance led by Allen Ginsberg.

In 1972, Etel Adnan returned to her hometown of Beirut and assumed the position of cultural editor for two daily newspapers, Al Safa and L'Orient Le Jour. Her literary masterpiece, "Sitt

Marie-Rose," was published in Paris in 1977 and gained recognition by receiving the France-Pays Arabes award. This novel's influence transcended borders, as it was translated into more than ten languages and secured its place as a classic in the realm of War Literature.

From her initial poetry collection, "Moonshots," in the 1960s, Adnan embarked on a prolific journey of writing that spanned multiple languages, including English and French. Beyond her literary endeavors, she ventured into the realm of documentary, co-authoring texts for two films directed by Jocelyne Saab that explored the complexities of the Lebanese civil war. These films were broadcast on French television and screened in Europe and Japan. Her creative breadth extended to the theater world with the authorship of two plays, "Like a Christmas Tree" and "The Actress." Additionally, she collaborated on a film project centered around Calamity Jane alongside Delphine Seyring. Notably, her poetry was set to music and featured in the staging and production of Gavin Bryars' "Love Poems."

Etel Adnan's artistic legacy is enshrined in numerous private collections and esteemed museums worldwide. Her works grace institutions such as the Royal Jordanian Museum, Tunis Museum of Modern Art, Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Sweden, Sursock Museum in Beirut, Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, the British Museum in London, the World Bank Collection, and the National Museum for Women in the Arts in Washington DC. She also participated in prestigious international exhibitions, including the "Memory Marathon" at the Serpentine Gallery in London in 2010 and dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel in 2012. In 2014, her works were prominently featured at the Whitney Biennial in New York. The same year, we witnessed the Mathaf in Doha, dedicating a retrospective exhibition curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist to her. In 2016, the Serpentine Sackler Gallery in London hosted her first solo exhibition in the UK. In 2018, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern showcased solo exhibitions dedicated to her. In 2019, her works were celebrated in solo exhibitions at the Institute of Modern Art in Nuremberg, MUDAM Luxembourg, and

the Aspen Art Museum in Colorado. With a profound love for the natural world and its inherent connection to our lives, Adnan creates artworks that exclusively depict landscapes devoid of human presence. Her primary aim is to capture the sheer physical splendor of the cosmos and her deep connection to it. Adnan approaches her paintings with assured, deliberate brushwork, crafting a striking balance of bold yet subtly nuanced colors, which imbue the canvas with a lasting sense of permanence. Regrettably, the artist passed away on November 14, 2021.

1-*There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and of the Other*

Etel Adnan's literary works represent a paramount piece that belongs to Arab-American writing and multicultural literature. One of her most remarkable pieces is her passionate prose poem *There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and of the Other* (1997). It reveals an extensive philosophical examination of the dynamics of Eastern and western world relationships and seeks to address multilayered cosmic ambiguities within engaging social and political contexts. Furthermore, the speaker in Adnan's narrative wonders exhaustively about the complexities of being, consciousness, divine forces, temporal and spatial mechanisms. Using the personal pronouns I and you (the sole characters mentioned in the text), he examines the east /the West power relationships and investigates the process that sustains its maintenance. Hence, her philosophical text extends to interrogate the legitimacy of the west's political and cultural monopoly over the eastern world.

The prose poem initiates with a series of thought-provoking philosophical questions that address the reader's speculation about our nature as beings —a race, a herd, or travelers, and our location in the universe, whether in a desert or on a glacier. Interestingly, the speaker constantly inquires about his identity, as well as the essence of another character referred to as "you," asking in what part of this world they exist. Subsequently, he questions the credibility of history and to whose side of history we belong. He then criticizes European discoveries, including Columbus' transatlantic maritime expeditions to the New World, for causing bloody wars with indigenous Indians. In a brief scene, the speaker describes the being's impending death and terror, beginning with missing children in the United States and progressing to international conflicts erupting in the Middle East. Hence, the poem paints a frustrating apocalyptic scene: human limbs coming out of an implosion, the sky raining blood on holy cities, and terror spreading everywhere.

The subsequent lines recollect memories of death and transport the reader to a dark room where the speaker describes his pain and accuses the character called "you" of turning guns, ropes, and stones toward him. Then, the speaker drifts again to juxtapose here/there, claiming that "here" are starving to death and burning in a fire fed by stones while "there" are eating dry bread. The narrator, therefore, revisits the cultural contrast between the East/West hemispheres, stressing the ultimate dominance of the former over the latter. He recounts the initial concerns of westerners, when they first get acquainted with easterners, which develop into a dramatic increase in the global interdependence of the east over the west, and significant shifts in the political dynamics between the West and the East. Thus, later on, the East/West dichotomy altered drastically in the political and military spheres, involving conflict between the West and the East, between powerful and powerless countries.

In the end, *There* epitomizes the tale of human beings' onset, starting from ancient waters to a dead body, and portrays the falling of yellowish tree leaves after the coming of autumn.

2-*The Arab Apocalypse:*

The Arab Apocalypse, authored by Etel Adnan, a Lebanese-American poet, essayist, and visual artist, was published in 1980 as a response to the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. This work comprises a series of prose poems that contemplate the violence and upheaval of the war, interwoven with Adnan's reflections on topics such as identity, displacement, and the human condition. It employs evocative imagery alongside philosophical musings, showcasing a distinctive style and evoking powerful emotions. Additionally, it grapples with themes of memory, identity, displacement, and the quest for meaning in a world fractured by conflict. It not only serves as a poetic reckoning

with the Lebanese Civil War but also as a reflection on the broader human condition during times of crisis.

Recognized as a significant work in contemporary Arabic literature, The Arab Apocalypse has been translated into multiple languages. It is a profoundly intimate and politically engaged examination of the intricacies and wounds of conflict in the Middle East. Etel Adnan celebrated for her dual roles as a poet and visual artist, is renowned for her capacity to encapsulate the intricacy of human emotions and experiences in her creations. Furthermore, Etel Adnan demonstrates her skill in conveying her message through themes alone, without the need for characters. The Arab Apocalypse represents a noteworthy contribution to modern literature and acts as a poignant exploration of the repercussions of war on the Arab world and beyond.

3-*Master of the Eclipse*:

This collection comprises twelve diverse short stories reflecting experiences in different global locations like Beirut, Paris, Sicily, California, Iraq, and New York. These stories touch on themes of displacement, love, loss, poetry, and war. They also include a prolonged reflection on history, war, power, and poetry leading to the final tale. Throughout, there is a prevailing sense that the world is a tragic place, and this burden is likely to increase rather than diminish. One character, an exile yearning for a Beirut that no longer exists, imparts hard-earned insights about the world's workings. The main characters in the stories are often writers or intellectuals, frequently grappling with a sense of displacement.

Etel Adnan's *Master of the Eclipse* (2010) is a compilation of twelve short stories that explore various topics, including history, power dynamics, media conspiracies, cross-cultural debates, international conflicts, and the passage of time. Adnan's unique storytelling approach and the complex interplay between her literary and artistic styles (such as the use of colors

and aesthetic language) distinguish her as a contemporary writer. In each short story, the author employs different main characters, including poets, philosophers, and filmmakers, to share her experiences and travels.

Our specific interest in this study centers on the initial short story, which surprisingly shares the same title as the entire novel, Master of the Eclipse. This piece recounts a stimulating debate between the author and Mr. Buland, a Tunisian poet, during a summer festival in Italy. The engaging conversation between these two characters delves into the unpredictable nature of postmodern times, addressing themes like apocalyptic atmosphere, historical context, and the passage of time. The encounter concludes with a suggestion that poets could act as vigilant angels, tending to the wounds of postmodern communities.

Abstract

The classical apocalyptic narrative has perennially kindled optimism within devout communities, yet the conventions of this narrative fail to accommodate the intricacies of the postmodern epoch. Within this framework, the present thesis undertakes an examination of Etel Adnan's works: *The Arab Apocalypse*, *Master of the Eclipse and Other Stories*, and *There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and of the Other*, from a postmodern perspective. It delves into postmodern apocalypticism vis-à-vis existential crises and historiographic metafiction. Central to this research are postmodern apocalyptic themes, including global terrorism, existential dread, societal breakdown, authoritarian hegemony, and the subjugation of humanity. Moreover, this analysis showcases the implementation of postmodern narrative strategies, such as an open ending, nonlinear narratives and intertextuality, destabilizing the apocalyptic genre's conventional paradigms. This research employs a qualitative approach and analytical and critical methods to achieve these objectives. Subsequently, the study results demonstrate that, in Etel Adnan's case study, the themes and techniques of postmodernism dismantle the established apocalyptic narrative by challenging its presuppositions assumptions of order, linearity, harmony, and utopia. Besides, the results underscore the imperative role of artistic expression and historiographic metafiction as potent rejoinders to the disquieting backdrop of the postmodern era.

Keywords: Etel Adnan, postmodern apocalypse, existential crisis, historiographic metafiction.

Résumé

Le récit apocalyptique classique a toujours suscité l'optimisme au sein des communautés pieuses, mais les conventions de ce récit ne parviennent pas à s'adapter aux subtilités de l'époque postmoderne. Dans ce cadre, la présente thèse entreprend un examen des œuvres d'Etel Adnan : L'Apocalypse arabe, Maître de l'éclipse et autres histoires, et Là : dans la lumière et les ténèbres du soi et de l'autre, dans une perspective postmoderne. Il plonge dans l'apocalyptisme postmoderne face aux crises existentielles et à la métafiction historiographique. Au cœur de cette recherche se trouvent les thèmes apocalyptiques postmodernes, notamment le terrorisme mondial, la peur existentielle, l'effondrement de la société, l'hégémonie autoritaire et l'assujettissement de l'humanité. De plus, cette analyse met en valeur le déploiement de stratégies narratives postmodernes, telles que la fin ouverte, les récits non linéaires, et l'intertextualité, déstabilisant les paradigmes conventionnels du genre apocalyptique. La thèse utilise une approche qualitative et des méthode critique et analytique pour atteindre ces objectifs. Les résultats de la recherche démontrent que, dans l'étude de cas d'Etel Adnan, les thèmes et les techniques du postmodernisme démantèlent le récit apocalyptique établi en remettant en question ses présupposés d'ordre, de linéarité, d'harmonie et d'utopie. En outre, les résultats soulignent le rôle impératif de l'expression artistique et de la métafiction historiographique en tant que répliques puissantes au contexte inquiétant de l'ère postmoderne.

Mots-clés : Etel Adnan, apocalypse postmoderne, crise existentielle, métafiction historiographique.

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ملخص

لقد أثار السرد المروع الكلاسيكي التفاؤل بشكل دائم داخل المجتمعات الدينية، ومع ذلك فإن تقاليد هذا السرد تفشل في استيعاب تعقيدات عصر ما بعد الحداثة. وفي هذا الإطار، تتناول هذه الأطروحة دراسة أعمال إيتيل عدنان: نهاية العالم العربية، سيد الكسوف وقصص أخرى، وهناك: في نور وظلمة الذات والآخر، من منظور ما بعد الحداثة. إنه يتعمق في نهاية العالم ما بعد الحداثة في مواجهة الأزمات الوجودية وما وراء القص التاريخي. من الأمور المركزية في هذا البحث موضوعات ما بعد الحداثة المروعة، بما في ذلك الإرهاب العالمي، والفزع الوجودي، والانهيار المجتمعي، والهيمنة الاستبدادية، واستعباد الإنسانية. علاوة على ذلك، يعرض هذا التحليل نشر استراتيجيات السرد ما بعد الحداثة، مثل النهاية المفتوحة، والسرد غير الخطي، التناص مما يزعزع استقرار النماذج التقليدية لهذا النوع من السرد المروع. تستخدم الأطروحة منهجًا نوعيًا ومنهجًا وصفيًا تحليليًا لتحقيق هذه الأهداف. تظهر نتائج البحث أن موضوعات وتقنيات ما بعد الحداثة، في دراسة حالة إيتيل عدنان، تفكك السرد المروع الراسخ من خلال تحدي افتراضاتها المسبقة للنظام، والخطية، والانسجام، واليوتوبيا. علاوة على ذلك، تؤكد النتائج على الدور الحتمي للتعبير الفني والقص التاريخي الماورائي كردود فعل قوية على الخلفية المقلقة لعصر ما بعد الحداثة

الكلمات المفتاحية: إيتيل عدنان، نهاية العالم ما بعد الحداثة، الأزمة الوجودية، ما وراء القص التاريخي

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