T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

GLOBALISATION, LANDSCAPE AND WOMEN'S AGENCY IN MANTEL'S *BEYOND BLACK* AND WINTERSON'S *LIGHTHOUSEKEEPING*

MASTER'S THESIS

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THESIS EXAM REPORT

Istanbul Aydın University Institute of Graduate Studies Board of Directors 01.07.2024 date and 2024/11 The thesis of "Globalisation, Landscape and Women's Agency in Mantel's *Beyond Black* and Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping*", whose thesis defense exam was held on 12.07.2024 before the jury members formed at the meeting no. unanimously* and approved** decision was made.

JURY

1st Member (Thesis Advisor)	: Assist. Prof. Dr. Arya Aryan
2nd Member	: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sercan Hamza Bağlama
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APPROVAL

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(*) Unanimity/Majority vote will be written in writing.

(**) Acceptance decision will be written in writing.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare with respect that the study “Globalisation, Landscape and Women’s Agency in Mantel’s *Beyond Black* and Winterson’s *Lighthousekeeping*”, which I submitted as a Master’s thesis, is written without any assistance in violation of scientific ethics and traditions in all the processes from the Project phase to the conclusion of the thesis and that the works I have benefited are from those shown in the References. (12/07/2024)

Derya KOMAR

FOREWORD

The path to completing this thesis has been one of both challenges and triumphs, made possible by the support and guidance of many. It is with sincere gratitude that I acknowledge and thank those who have contributed to the realization of this work.

Firstly, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my thesis advisor, Assist. Prof. Dr. Arya Aryan, who has enlightened me with patience throughout my thesis study. His guidance has supported me during challenging times.

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I would also wish to express my deep appreciation to my parents, Aysel Komar and Cemil Komar, for their continuous support since the beginning of my education life. Their encouragement has made it possible to complete this study.

July, 2024 Derya KOMAR

GLOBALISATION, LANDSCAPE AND WOMEN'S AGENCY IN MANTEL'S *BEYOND BLACK* AND WINTERSON'S *LIGHTHOUSEKEEPING*

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the themes of globalisation, landscape, and women's agency in Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black* (2005) and Jeanette Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping* (2004). Through comparative literary analysis, it examines how these novels depict the profound impacts of globalisation on individual identities and communal structures, particularly through the lenses of female protagonists. Employing a multidisciplinary approach that integrates insights from cultural studies, feminist theory, and globalisation studies, this study investigates the transformation of personal and geographic landscapes in contemporary society. It reveals that Mantel and Winterson use the landscape not merely as a backdrop but as a crucial element that interacts with the characters' journeys toward agency and self-definition. By highlighting the fragmentation experienced by the protagonists, the novels reflect broader societal shifts toward fluidity and uncertainty brought about by global forces. This thesis argues that *Beyond Black* and *Lighthousekeeping* provide valuable insights into how global changes influence individual lives and local cultures. It suggests that personal narratives and local histories play a pivotal role in mediating the experiences of globalisation. This work reveals how storytelling and empathy are the means to reclaim agency and redefine the identity by bringing together the pieces of fragmentation. Furthermore, the stories of the protagonists underscore the potential of storytelling, woven with empathetic approach, as a therapeutic and empowering practice which helps both the self and the others. This creative and empathetic new role of the writer also signal a change in the role of the contemporary, as a "healer" for the fragmented world.

Keywords: Globalisation, Fragmentation, Women's Agency, Storytelling, Empathy, Contemporary Literature, Mantel, Winterson, Beyond Black, Lighthousekeeping

MANTEL'İN *BEYOND BLACK* VE WINTERSON'IN *LIGHHOUSEKEEPING* ESERLERİNDE KÜRESELLEŞME, TABİAT VE KADIN ÖZNELLİĞİ

ÖZET

Bu tez, Hilary Mantel'in *Beyond Black* (2005) ve Jeanette Winterson'ın *Lighthousekeeping* (2004) eserlerinde küreselleşme, çevre ve kadınların öznelik temalarını inceler. Karşılaştırmalı edebi analiz yoluyla, bu romanların küreselleşmenin bireysel kimlikler ve toplumsal yapılar üzerindeki derin etkilerini, özellikle kadın kahramanlar aracılığıyla nasıl tasvir ettiğini araştırır. Kültürel çalışmalar, feminist teori ve küreselleşme çalışmaları gibi disiplinlerarası yaklaşımları birleştirerek, bu çalışma çağdaş toplumda kişisel ve coğrafi çevrenin dönüşümünü incelemektedir. Mantel ve Winterson'ın çevreyi sadece bir arka plan olarak değil, karakterlerin öznelik ve kendini tanımlama yolculuklarıyla etkileşimde bulunan önemli bir unsur olarak kullandıklarını ortaya koyar. Kahramanların yaşadığı parçalanmayı vurgulayarak, romanlar küresel güçlerin getirdiği akışkanlık ve belirsizlik gibi geniş toplumsal değişimleri yansıtır. Bu tez, *Beyond Black* ve *Lighthousekeeping* eserlerinin, küresel değişimlerin bireysel yaşamları ve yerel kültürleri nasıl etkilediğine dair değerli içgörüler sunduğunu savunur. Kişisel anlatıların ve yerel tarihin, küreselleşme deneyimlerinin aracılığında önemli bir rol oynadığını öne sürer. Bu çalışma, parçalanmışlık parçalarını bir araya getirerek özneliği yeniden kazanmanın ve kimliği yeniden tanımlamanın yolları olarak hikaye anlatımını ve empatiyi ortaya koyar. Ayrıca, kahramanların hikayeleri, empatik bir yaklaşımla harmanlanmış hikaye anlatımının, hem benliğe hem de başkalarına yardımcı olan terapatik ve güçlendirici bir uygulama olarak potansiyelini vurgular. Yazarın bu yaratıcı ve empatik yeni rolü, çağdaş yazarın parçalanmış dünya için "şifacı" olarak rolündeki bir değişikliği de işaret eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Küreselleşme, Parçalanma, Kadınların Öznelliği, Anlatı, Empati, Çağdaş Edebiyat, Mantel, Winterson, Beyond Black, Lighthousekeeping

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since modernity, the world has undergone a profound transformation characterised by advancements in technology, economic and political structures, and socio-cultural diversification. It is these very developments that have brought some of the most formidable challenges of the time, such as rising inequality, sustainability concerns, and complex governance issues. In the face of these events, the contemporary world has become a crucible for change and new paradigms, especially under the impact of globalisation. Defining globalisation as a phenomenon which "is led from the west, bears the strong imprint of American political and economic power, and is highly uneven in its consequences" (2002: 23), Anthony Giddens emphasizes its extensive reach and states that "[it] is political, technological and cultural, as well as economic" (2002: 27). Emerging first as a force affecting economic structure on a global level with international trade expanding over borders, globalisation has reached beyond the scope of economics and has become a prominent force influencing various aspects of the contemporary era. In terms of nature, the impact of globalisation has emerged mostly as excessive resource consumption, climate change and biodiversity loss, until it reached the point of uniting people for ecological awareness. Regarding societies, globalisation has altered structures and led to cultural diversity with the exchange of cultures, ideas and lifestyles brought by the increased access to knowledge and the focus on human rights. However, it has also brought many issues such as migration, and the rise of digital surveillance and privacy concerns. Shaping the contemporary world both in constructive and challenging ways, globalisation has not only accelerated but also deepened the ongoing transformation initiated by modernisation.

In terms of adverse effects, modernisation and globalisation have had a considerable detrimental impact on the contemporary world. The dominant force of the age, globalisation, has stigmatised the world and its individuals with a state of insecurity and precariousness due to its inherent uncertainty. Consequently, these impacts have deepened the longstanding and distressed condition of individuals'

psyche, which has been characterized by fragmentation as the legacy of mid-20th century. Both the division of the world resulting from World War II and the deconstruction of language and concepts, by poststructuralism and postmodernism, have already left individuals' psyches fragmented with a sense of a sense of disconnection and existential angst. Trying to survive in a world of fractures, individuals have found themselves grappling with feelings of alienation and rootlessness that violate their sense of identity and belonging, leading to a state of anxious questioning. On the other hand, as the world has become more connected through the developments of economy, media and the internet, it has led to a growing yearning for connection and cohesion among its individuals. They have begun seeking ways to bridge the gaps in their identities and find their place in this evolving global world. This has prompted a notable shift in contemporary literature, leading to the rise of new perspectives on certain fictional preoccupations. The transformation in contemporary literature reflects not only evolving narrative styles but also a heightened awareness of the global issues that shape our interconnected world.

The shift in contemporary literature is apparent, as prominent authors and scholars have acknowledged a profound change that sets apart the 21st century from the postmodernism of previous decades. Referring to the end of postmodernism, Liam Connell states that "there does seem value in distinguishing between globalisation specifically and post-modernism in general" (2004: 84). Emphasizing the impact of economic change, Jeffrey Nealon states that "among the tasks of periodizing the present, a collective molecular project that we might call *post-postmodernism*, is to construct a vocabulary to talk about the 'new economies' ... and their complex relations to cultural production in the present moment" (2015: 120). In light of these redefinitions of literary and cultural movements linked to the transformative effects of globalisation, contemporary literature needs a new perspective in order to be analysed comprehensively. Now it serves both as a mirror to the changing world itself and a window into the complex human experiences in an increasingly interconnected world. In this regard, this thesis argues that the literary works of Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black* (2005) and Jeanette Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping* (2004) reveal the profound impact of globalisation on nature and women through the violation of their integrity. Yet, these novels also assert that under the interconnected nature of globalisation, contemporary woman writers take

on a responsible and active role as the healers of the globalised age, bringing together the fragmented self, integrity and psyche.

In the context of Mantel's *Beyond Black* and Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping*, the purpose of this thesis is to investigate and analyse the transformative forces of the late 20th and early 21st century from a fresh point of view, considering the immense effect of globalisation on various aspects of the contemporary life. Specifically, it aims to investigate the condition of women and the landscape during this period, concentrating on a collective experience of suffering: the violation of integrity. In this regard, this research explores the fragmentation of psyche, as well as the ecological degradation, to reach a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by today's interconnected world. Furthermore, it investigates the significance of storytelling as a remedy to the problem of the fragmented psyche and self. Focusing on the role of contemporary women writers, such as both the heroines and the authors of the novels, this work examines how these women employ storytelling to regain agency and recreate their identities, and how this paves the way for a solution on a more global level. Moreover, with this rise in the importance of storytelling, it indicates a change in the role of contemporary literature writers, which is now more responsible and active, as opposed to postmodern ideologies. Linking the causes of fragmentation to World War II and postmodernism, and its intensification by globalism, this thesis draws a framework that lays the foundation for a comprehensive examination of globalisation's impact on women's subjectivity, the environment, and contemporary literature.

A. Defining Globalisation and Its Effects on Modern Society

The contemporary world's challenges have intensified at the end of the 20th century and reached their peak in the following century with significant events like the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the global financial crisis of 2008, refugee problems arising from conflicts in regions such as the Middle East, and ecological incidents, like the nuclear disasters of Chernobyl (1986) and Fukushima Daiichi (2011), as well as the oil spills of Exxon Valdez (1989) and Deep Horizon (2010) and the global warming. These incidents have not only disrupted the equilibrium of nations and institutions but also penetrated individual lives, marking their psyche with negative consequences and a heightened sense of risk and uncertainty. As the new global age

being characterised with risk and uncertainty, it became a pivotal topic to be examined by many scholars and theorists. Emphasizing the ubiquity of risk in the late 20th century world of modernization, the prominent sociologist Ulrich Beck highlights the changing understanding of the concept, which has evolved from personal concerns to global-scale challenges. As Beck notes "[t]he risks and hazards of today … differ in an essential way from the superficially similar ones in the Middle Ages through the global nature of their threat (people, animals and plants) and through their modern causes. They are risks of modernization. They are a wholesale product of industrialization, and are systematically intensified as it becomes global" (1992: 21). Therefore, framing the contemporary society as "risk society," Beck establishes a crucial connection between this heightened risk element and the process of globalisation, and sheds light on its far-reaching impact on various facets of the modern world. He also underscores the core reason of the risk, uncertainty, emerging from scientific advancements and states that "as the uncertainties of scientific judgments grow, so does the gray area of unrecognized suspected risks … It is this very crisis of scientific authority which can favor a general *obfuscation of risks*" (Beck, 1992: 71-72). Similarly, a fellow sociologist Anthony Giddens touches upon risk and uncertainty as pervasive features of the contemporary globalized world by stating that "[w]e face risk situations that no one in previous history has had to confront … Many of the new risks and uncertainties affect us no matter where we live, and regardless of how privileged or deprived we are. They are bound up with globalisation" (2002: 23). With their observations on risk, uncertainty, and globalisation, both Beck and Giddens signal the core reasons of individuals' and nature's violation of integrity.

Defining the societies of the contemporary globalised world as risk societies, Beck further investigates the condition of humans' psychological well-being due to the uncertain characteristic of the age. Beck states that "[r]isks experienced presume a *normative horizon* of lost security and broken trust. Hence, even where they approach us silently … risks remain fundamentally *localized*, mathematical condensations of wounded images of a life worth living" (1992: 28). With the implication that globalisation and the prevalence of risks in modern society can erode the sense of security and trust that individuals once had, potentially leading to increased anxiety and insecurity, he furthermore emphasises the disconnection

between scientific and social rationality, contributing to public anxiety. He puts the reason as "what becomes clear in risk discussions are the fissures and gaps between *scientific* and *social* rationality in dealing with the hazardous potential of civilization. The two sides talk past each other" (Beck, 1992: 30). Similarly, Giddens delves into the individual aspect of globalisation's impact by stating that "[i]t is wrong to think of globalisation as just concerning the big systems, like the world financial order. Globalisation isn't only about what is 'out there', remote and far away from the individual. It is an 'in here' phenomenon too, influencing intimate and personal aspects of our lives" (2002: 27). Emphasizing the shift in challenges both nations and institutions face, based on today's risks and dangers, Giddens describes the contemporary societies' condition as "emerging in an anarchic, haphazard, fashion, carried along by a mixture of influences. It is not settled or secure, but fraught with anxieties, as well as scarred by deep divisions. Many of us feel in the grip of forces over which we have no power" (2002: 31).

Another aspect that characterizes the psychological state of individuals in the globalized contemporary world is trauma due to the blurring of boundaries between personal and collective experiences. Roger Luckhurst examines the concept of trauma in the contemporary post-modern world and links the evolving concept's root to the psychiatric illness Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Emphasizing the American Psychiatric Association's initial definition of PTSD as the diagnosis of individuals who have experienced traumatic events, such as wars, disasters, or accidents, he argues that "[t]he arrival of PTSD helped consolidate a trauma paradigm that has come to pervade the understanding of subjectivity and experience in the advanced industrial world" (Luckhurst, 2008: 1) and places trauma to the centre of the contemporary psyche. Furthermore, Luckhurst highlights the expansion of its scope by noting that "[a]t first PTSD was only attributable to those directly involved, but 'secondary' victim status now includes witnesses, bystanders, rescue workers, relatives caught up in the immediate aftermath" (2008: 1). This evolving nature of trauma highlights the pervasive impact of distressing events on individuals, extending beyond direct victims to include those indirectly affected, such as witnesses and bystanders. Moreover, the blurring of boundaries between personal and collective experiences in the globalized world has led to an increased recognition of trauma's complex manifestations, including conditions like schizophrenia, which

often emerge as responses to severe trauma and stressors. As Peter Leese states, "[v]iolations of personhood and the traumatized memories that result are, by definition, filled with gaps and disruptions. In one interpretation of this process, personal narratives characteristically split off and slip out of speakability to become spectral and incomplete presences" (2022: 14). Thus, understanding the interconnectedness between trauma and mental health conditions like schizophrenia, in which the psyche is split and fragmented, becomes imperative in comprehending the contemporary psychological landscape.

In the case of *Beyond Black* and *Lighthousekeeping*, the heroines' utilization of Victorian spiritualism and storytelling as therapeutic acts reflects their quest for integrity in the face of personal and historical challenges. Victorian spiritualism, which emerged in the mid-19th century, sought to communicate with the spirits of the dead through mediums and sessions. This practice gained popularity as people sought comfort and answers in the face of the rapid societal changes and uncertainties brought about by the Industrial Revolution. Spiritualism offered a sense of connection to the afterlife and provided a means to cope with grief and loss. In these novels, the heroines draw upon this historical practice to navigate their own fragmented psyches and histories, using the act of storytelling as a modern parallel to spiritualism's quest for understanding and healing. As Aryan argues, "[t]he Victorian preoccupation with spiritualism, or invocation of the dead voices, becomes a figure for the contemporary woman writer's concrete externalisation of inner dialogic conflict through the creation of character" (2020: 207). On a personal scale, the heroines of the novels are wounded figures who resort to a sort of Victorian spiritualism and utilise storytelling as a therapeutic act to keep integrity while facing their own histories and the history of their locale. Derived from the Latin adjective *integer* and defined as "the wholeness, intactness or purity of a thing" by *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2021), integrity has been a concept studied in many academic disciplines, even in relation to storytelling. In the normative view though, the term integrity reaches another dimension with its relation to morality and ethics. As Christine M. Korsgaard states "the ongoing struggle for integrity, the struggle for psychic unity, the struggle to be, in the face of psychic complexity, a single unified agent, [n]ormative standards … are the principles by which we achieve the psychic unity that makes agency possible"

(2009: 7). In other words, to attain complete unity, individuals must adhere to moral values and act as responsible agents. Moreover, Korsgaard highlights the significance of narrative identity in relation to morals and agency by referring to Aristotle and Plato's ideas of authorship and identity. She adds to the discussion by stating "[i]t is as the possessor of personal or practical identity that you are the author of your actions, and responsible for them. And yet at the same time it is in choosing your actions that you create that identity" (Korsgaard, 2009: 20). In this regard, the choices and actions of individuals are not arbitrary but are reflective of the identity and values. They do not only express the existing identity but also shape and define it, just like an author crafting a narrative that contributes to the ongoing story of the identity. Therefore, with the focus on storytelling in these novels, it necessitates an inquiry on the contemporary literature and the role of its writers, which evidently provide a healing on a global level by employing storytelling as the means to achieve integrity.

In this context, storytelling emerges as a vital component, intertwined with empathy, that contributes to the preservation of integrity and narrative identity within the context of the globalized contemporary world. In the interconnected and fragmented landscape of modernity, where boundaries between personal and collective experiences blur, empathy emerges as a potent force for healing and reconciliation. Through empathetic engagement, individuals can bridge the gaps in their fragmented identities and connect with others on a deeper level, fostering a sense of unity and understanding amidst diversity. Moreover, storytelling emerges as a powerful tool for navigating the complexities of human experience, offering a means of expression and interpretation that transcends linguistic and cultural barriers. By sharing personal narratives and embracing the narratives of others, individuals can cultivate empathy, fostering a sense of solidarity and interconnectedness. In this way, storytelling becomes not only a means of preserving integrity but also a catalyst for collective healing and transformation. Through the act of storytelling, fragmented experiences are woven together into a cohesive narrative tapestry, allowing individuals to make sense of their past, reconcile their present, and envision a shared future. Furthermore, storytelling serves as a vehicle for reclaiming agency and authorship over one's own narrative, empowering individuals to shape their identities and chart their own paths forward. As such, the intersection of empathy and

storytelling represents a powerful force for healing and renewal in an increasingly fragmented and interconnected world. In the subsequent analysis of *Beyond Black* and *Lighthousekeeping*, this thesis will delve deeper into the ways in which empathy and storytelling function as transformative tools, shaping the lives of the characters and offering insights into the complexities of contemporary existence.

Building upon the exploration of storytelling's transformative power storytelling accompanied with empathy in the novels *Beyond Black* and *Lighthousekeeping*, it is evident that contemporary literature has undergone significant changes reflecting the complexities of our times. Steven Connor explains the change in contemporary literature and the decline of postmodernism by analysing the shift from postmodernism's academic prominence. He states that "where postmodernism had expanded its reach in academic discussion, it had shrunk down into a casual term of abuse in more popular discourse. Postmodernism had become autonomous from its objects" (Connor, 2015: 70). In addition to postmodernism's becoming a philosophical disposition detached from what it originally sought to analyse, Connor further suggests a change in the attitude of writers, commencing in the 1990s. He states that "a number of writers in different areas began to ask whether the ethical questions which postmodernist thought had been so very good at setting aside dissolving or transcending might not still have a claim" (Connor, 2015: 80-81). This questioning signifies a process of decentring within the deconstructive tendencies of postmodernism itself, marking a turning point in the postmodern thought. On the other hand, Nicholas Stavris interrogates the change in contemporary literature, attributing it to prevalent "fears and anxieties" of the age, and defines the new characteristic as "authenticity". He states that "faced with a contemporary culture of anxiety, artists attempt to overcome the uncertainties of the human condition in the twenty-first century by reaching out for a renewed period of sincerity. Authenticity is the new focus for the present day artist" (Stavris, 2015: 407). This shift towards authenticity reflects a response to the anxieties of our time and highlights a growing desire among artists to reconnect with genuine human experiences and emotions, aiming to address the complexities of the age in a more sincere and direct manner.

In an era marked by the decline of postmodernism's dominance and shaped by powerful global forces, the contemporary authors reveal a new role for

themselves. Responding to these changing dynamics of contemporary fiction, it especially emerged with the new attitude of contemporary woman writers. Examining the late 20th and 21st centuries' literary works, Arya Aryan reveals the authors' new role as "an ethical responsibility to bring about positive change, opposing what is perceived as a prevailing apathy and cynicism in postmodern ironic life and fiction" (2020: 180). With this new and transformative attitude, contemporary woman writers rise as the empowered voices of change who are now more active and feel responsible. Moreover, Aryan emphasizes the healing effect of these writers by stating that "[t]his new author is both healer and wounded figure, committed to pushing the boundaries of the novel (towards the infinite) and to exploring the power of fiction in connecting to the globalised world, facilitating our understanding of the suffering of others on a more global scale" (2020: 225). In the context of navigating a world of uncertainties and risk with the fractured narratives of personal identity, these authors put together coherent stories of empowerment, healing, and global connection. Through their storytelling, they engage with the fragmented narratives of our times, seeking to reconstruct a shared global narrative that leads to connection. Therefore, while storytelling becomes a therapeutic act for the self, it also fosters empathy and sympathy that transcend individual experiences and connect people to the shared global narrative. In line with the evolving role of contemporary woman authors and the healing potential of storytelling, this study delves deeper into the narratives of both the heroines and the authors of *Beyond Black* and *Lighthousekeeping* to shed light on the ways in which these authors engage with and respond to the challenges and opportunities of the contemporary age, particularly within the context of globalized risks and uncertainties.

As prominent examples of contemporary fiction, *Beyond Black* and *Lighthousekeeping* are not only celebrated for their literary prowess but also for their profound exploration of the landscape and human experience in the late 20th and early 21st century. *Beyond Black* explores themes of the supernatural, trauma, agency and psychological struggle. It centres around Alison, who is a psychic medium earning her livelihood by communicating to dead people during the turn of the century in England. Trying to adapt to the changing social, economic and cultural conditions brought along by globalisation and struggling with her repressed traumas of the past, Alison represents the contemporary women who is seeking meaning and

a sense of agency in a rapidly changing world. *Lighthousekeeping*, on the other hand, is a work of psychological fiction that focuses on the coming-of-age journey of an orphan girl, Silver, and the history of a lighthouse on the Scottish coast. The lighthouse and the stories related to it not only play a pivotal role in the construction of Silver's birth-place, Salt's history, but also the formation of her own identity. With a strong focus on the power of storytelling to shape our understanding of the world and ourselves, the novel explores Silver's journey of making sense of life's complexities and find meaning in a chaotic world. As an individual ignored by the system and the society, she becomes the voice for those who are adrift. Both these novels, alongside the presentation of the heroines' journey of seeking meaning and agency in the contemporary age, also reveal the impact of globalisation on the landscape through their settings. The setting of *Beyond Black*, with its neglected and violated depiction of suburban England, and *Lighthousekeeping* with the portrayal of the rugged Scottish coast and the struggle between nature and human, both highlight the condition of landscape under the impact of globalisation. Furthermore, these settings mirror the fragmented and disconnected state of the contemporary women, inviting readers to explore the impact of globalization on both the physical landscape and the human psyche.

In the subsequent chapters of this thesis, the focus will shift towards a detailed analysis of the themes, characters, and narrative techniques employed in *Beyond Black* and *Lighthousekeeping*. Chapter 2 will lay the theoretical groundwork for the subsequent analysis, exploring key concepts such as trauma, agency, and psychological struggle within the context of contemporary literature. This chapter will delve into the theoretical frameworks that inform the study, examining how these concepts are understood and applied in literary analysis. Moving on to Chapter 3, the focus will shift to *Beyond Black*, where the exploration of trauma, agency, and psychological struggle will be examined through the lens of Alison's journey. This chapter will analyze how her experiences reflect broader themes of contemporary womanhood and the quest for meaning and agency in a complex world. Chapter 4 will turn its attention to *Lighthousekeeping*, delving into Silver's coming-of-age journey and her search for identity and meaning amidst the rugged landscape of the Scottish coast. The role of storytelling in shaping Silver's understanding of herself and her environment will be explored, along with the broader themes of nature

versus human intervention. In Chapter 5, the threads of analysis from the previous chapters will be drawn together to offer a comprehensive discussion on the overarching themes of trauma, agency, identity, and globalisation in *Beyond Black* and *Lighthousekeeping*. This concluding chapter will provide insights into the ways in which contemporary literature engages with the challenges and opportunities of the globalized world, aiming to offer an understanding of the complexities of human experience depicted in these novels.

II. CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE AND GLOBALISATION

A. The Fragmentation of the World

World War II, which lasted from 1939 to 1945, affected the world severely and altered the course of history irreversibly. After the catastrophic destruction and the loss of millions of lives, the remaining inhabitants were left with a fractured world, broken systems and shattered civilisation. The change of the world geography and international relationships led to a shift in the power structures of nations, resulting in the division of global dynamics. Major historical incidents that occurred as the aftermath of the war, like the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, intensified long-lasting effects of the war and acted as aftershocks to this era. While nations losing the war like Germany and Japan were under attack and reconstruction, nations like England and France dealt with economic problems even though they left with victory. Therefore, the far-reaching consequences of the war extended well beyond the mere reconfiguration of national borders, influencing various aspects of life. The period following the war, the second half of the 20th century, became marked by significant geopolitical shifts, the resurgence of nations seeking self-determination through decolonisation, economic restructuring and influential social and cultural movements. All these transformations resulted in a struggle with fractured reality within a complex post-war environment, marking the onset of world fragmentation. Furthermore, the fragmentation that began on a global scale with World War II planted the seeds not only in physical landscapes and political systems but also in language and psyche. As a result, the second half of the 20th century witnessed a complex post-war environment characterized by fractured realities, disrupted social structures, and evolving power dynamics. The enduring impact of the war shaped generations to come, influencing the contemporary challenges faced in the 21st century.

The aftermath of World War II resulted in a significant geopolitical transformation as new nations emerged and national borders were redrawn. The ideological differences and the distrust between the Soviet Union and Western allies

became prominent and led to a rivalry that reached its peak with the Cold War. The reflection of this new war emerged with the split of Germany into two as East and West in 1949. This division even became more intense with the military alliances following the establishment of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in the same year. West Germany aligning itself with Western powers and becoming a member of NATO, and East Germany joining the Warsaw Pact, a military alliance led by the Soviet Union, the stage was set for broader geopolitical rivalries and strategic issues. While East Germany was governed by communism under the Soviet influence, West Germany was under the Western bloc with a democratic and capitalist structure. During this time, the United States of America was grappling with concerns over the global spread of communism. George F. Kennan, an American diplomat, wrote the article "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" in 1947 that fired up and shaped the sense of communist threat by introducing the concept of containment of the Soviet spread. Examining the American literature and culture in the age of the Cold War, Steven Belletto and Daniel Grausam state that "George Kennan's influential formulation of containment led to an American foreign policy concerned with preventing the spread of Soviet-sponsored Communism abroad and with maintaining a U.S. sphere of influence" (Belletto et al., 2012: 4). This strategic stance on containment not only influenced U.S. foreign policy but also had tangible repercussions in Europe, heightening tensions and solidifying the ideological divide between East and West. In addition to this geopolitical tension, the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 separated families and communities, reminding the deep divisions between East and West. Moreover, during the Cold War, regional conflicts between the countries that were under the rule of the USA and the Soviet Union increased the tension around the world. Notable events of this period include the Korean War (1950-1953), the Vietnam War (1955-1975), and the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan (1979-1989). These incidents further contributed to the polarisation of the world into competing blocs and incurred significant human and material costs. In addition to defining the second half of the 20th century geopolitically, the Cold War influenced military strategies, international relations, and ideological conflicts for decades, leaving a profound legacy that lasted long after the Soviet Union finally fell apart in 1991.

While the world was undergoing profound geopolitical changes, a parallel decolonization movement was emerging as a pivotal force reshaping the world. The aftermath of World War II led to independence movements in colonial territories as an indirect result of the war on colonial powers. With the weakening of colonial powers and their control on territories, a resistance among indigenous populations arose. As observed by F. Van Langenhove, "[t]he twentieth-century freedom movement in Africa and Asia … results from the reaction of coloured peoples against a white authority with a different and far higher culture" (1961: 402). The mostly non-violent struggle that was led by Mahatma Gandhi gave India sovereignty against British colonialism in 1947, although not without some local conflicts or violence intertwined with civil resistance in achieving self-determination. Meanwhile, independence movements in Africa led by leaders like Kwame Nkrumah and Nelson Mandela emerged and liberated numerous nations from colonial rule. Fighting for the rights and sovereignty of their people, they not only led to a geopolitical shift but also the dissemination of diverse traditions and identities across the continent. In addition to Asia and Africa, the decolonisation showed itself in the Middle East. Miriam Haron puts it as "[i]t is well known that the British government opposed creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, and that after establishment of Israel in May 1948 refused to extend de facto recognition … [due to] Britain's extensive interests in the Moslem world" (1983: 217). The geopolitical landscape shifted with the establishment of Israel and marked the beginning of the modern phase of the Arab-Israeli conflict (1948), and emphasised the complex interplay of political, cultural, and religious factors in the region. The process of decolonisation also gained momentum in the Caribbean and the Pacific. Numerous islands and regions gained independence, varying according to their political and cultural context. Going beyond politics, decolonisation was a far-reaching process that changed civilisations on a social and cultural level. With the emergence of numerous independent nations seeking their place on the international scene, reshaping alliances, and adding to the complexity of the Cold War and the larger global political landscape, these significant changes in the global landscape highlighted the multifaceted nature of world fragmentation.

The post-World War II era also witnessed an economic transformation due to some political, ideological and economic factors. Defeated for the second time,

Germany entered the post-war period with losses in its workforce, transportation and services while Britain came out of the war relatively intact. Tony Judt explains the shift by stating "[y]et by the early 1960s, the Federal Republic [of Germany] was the booming, prosperous powerhouse of Europe, while Great Britain was an underperforming laggard, its growth rate far behind that of the rest of Western Europe" (2007: 354). While the West Germany went through an economic growth with the capitalist system and become a significant power in Europe, East Germany went through economic difficulties under the socialist rule. During this period, the Marshall Plan, implemented from 1948 to 1952, aimed to provide economic help to West Europe by using the power of the USA. However, it also contributed to the economic fragmentation by deepening the divide between the capitalist bloc and the socialist economies. Tony Judt and Timothy Snyder explains the Marshall Plan's effect on West European compromises as "[i]f you took the Marshall Plan out of the picture, some European countries, including Britain, would have had real trouble achieving certain public policy objectives without sparking huge political protest" (2013: 350). In addition, the Asian Economic Crisis of 1997 revealed the vulnerabilities of the global economy. Originating in Thailand and spreading to other Asian countries, this crisis influenced the world economy by currency devaluations and financial management problems. Furthermore, globalisation became a significant element effecting the world economy in the second half of the 20th century with its both positive and negative aspects. It created an interconnected world with the flow of goods, capital and information. On the other hand, it led to disparities with unequal distribution of wealth and widened the gap between developed and developing nations. Beyond these incidents, the economic fragmentation of the post-World War II era had an impact on local economies, international commerce, and financial institutions. It brought forth a complicated environment that was crucial in forming the late 20th century global reality and left an indelible mark on the world economy.

Apart from economic shifts, the post-World War II era saw notable social and cultural revolutions that reshaped societies worldwide. As people began to speak up in favour of women's rights, civil rights, and other social justice issues, the challenged existing conventions created an environment of ambiguity and heightened societal divisions. Under the direction of Martin Luther King Jr., the American civil

rights movement aimed to end racial discrimination and segregation. Michael J. Klarman links the root of the movement to World War II by focusing on black people that served in the war and states that "returning soldiers evinced a special aggressiveness in demanding their civil rights. Many black servicemen apparently calculated that if they were good enough to die for their country, they were also good enough to vote, to work, or to attend school with white people" (1994: 17). Meanwhile, the movement of second wave feminism raised awareness of gender equality and women's empowerment, changing the dynamics of work, family, and society. Nancy A. Hewitt explores feminism based on two distinct sets of roots as the equal rights tendency and women's liberation, stating that "the equal rights tendency derived in part from women's activist networks during the New Deal and World War II. Although few women were raising gender issues at that time, some female leaders both in and outside the government were active in social justice and human welfare campaigns" (2005: 414). Through these movements, identity and societal transformation became prominent problems and the social fabric of the world started to change. In addition, the psychological effects of the Cold War caused the cultural fragmentation. The Cold War significantly altered the cultural environment and created a climate of fear and distrust that pervaded everything. With the nuclear conflict and the threat of communism, the terrifying condition of individuals emerged in literature, arts, and public discourse. These psychological effects deepened the multifaceted nature of the post-World War II era, and individuals grappled with profound cultural and social changes that mirrored the complexities and transformations of the time.

To conclude, in the aftermath of World War II, the world witnessed a seismic shift that reshaped nations and redefined the human existence. Geopolitically, while the United States and the Soviet Union vied for supremacy, the division of Germany and the erection of the Berlin Wall represented the Cold War's ideological strife. The process of decolonization reached across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, and granted newfound independence to nations that sought independence and self-rule. Economically, the Marshall Plan and the advent of globalization laid the groundwork for post-war recovery and a more interconnected world, yet it also laid bare the disparities between nations due to their different levels of development. On the social and cultural front, the 1960s witnessed transformative movements which advocate

for civil rights and gender equality, but brought along divisions within societies. As a result, with transformations and divisions in various aspects, the post-World War II era signifies an epoch where the world was fractured by unprecedented destruction. It reveals not only the resilience of nations and individuals seeking to rebuild and redefine the values of justice, equality, and human rights but also the reality of the world as marked by fragmentation.

B. Postmodernism and Its Legacy

Following World War II, the upheaval that the globe underwent affected various aspects of human existence, including literature, psychiatry, and the fundamental notion of individual identity. As a result of the damage caused by the war, which led to the disintegration of established norms both in the external world and the condition of the human psyche, linguistic structures and societal frameworks had been re-evaluated. The literary landscape reflected the fragmentation of reality with the split of the sign concept and the debates about the death of the author. In addition, questioning the traditional concepts with deconstructive methods led to new perspectives on not only literary texts but also Western notions that define the understanding of the world and the self. In the realm of mental health, new approaches emerged that challenged traditional psychiatric procedures. Concurrently, the redefinition of psychotic experiences the anti-psychiatric movement argued echoed in literature, especially with woman authors. The historical events, psychiatric ideas, with a special emphasis on schizophrenia, and revolutionary literary theories mirrored the fragmentary characteristic of the post-World War II era, influencing the core values of postmodernism. According to *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, "[p]ostmodernism borrows from modernism disillusionment with the givens of society; a penchant for irony; the self-conscious 'play' within the work of art; fragmentation and ambiguity; and a destructured, decentered, dehumanized subject" (Guerin et al., 2005: 300-301). Therefore, unravelling the layers of post-war intellectual and cultural evolution in necessary to examine the roots of fragmentation, which is the cornerstone of postmodernism's legacy, and understand how it shapes our perceptions of literature, psychiatry, and identity in the contemporary world.

During 1950s, structuralism and the theories of Ferdinand de Saussure held prominence in the field of linguistic studies. Saussure's ideas regarding the structure of the language were initially presented in the notes from his lectures, later compiled and published under the title *Cours de Linguistique Générale* (1916). Saussure introduces two key concepts in linguistics: language referring to the general structured system of signs and rules, and speech referring to the use of language by individuals, which should be primarily focused on as it is the direct and natural representation of linguistic communication. Saussure prioritizes speech over other means by arguing "language [langue] … is not to be confused with human speech [langage], of which it is only a definite part, though certainly an essential one" (2011: 9). To unravel how language functions, Saussure examines linguistics synchronically rather than diachronically and incorporates the concept of semiology, focusing on linguistic signs and their role in conveying meaning. Aiming to dispel ambiguity arising from the imprecise use of terms to represent the components of the linguistic signs, especially the link with the mental concept and its corresponding sound image, he introduces three key notions. Saussure explains this by stating, "I propose to retain the word *sign* [*signe*] to designate the whole and to replace concept and *sound-image* respectively by *signified* [*signifié*] and *signifier* [*signifiant*]; the last two terms have the advantage of indicating the opposition that separates them from each other and from the whole of which they are parts" (2011: 67). By establishing a systematic and oppositional framework within linguistic analysis, Saussure creates a distinction between the two components of the linguistic sign and emphasises their role in opposition to each other, arguing that each word gains meaning because of its difference from the other one.

Moreover, exploring the nature of the relationship between the signifier and the signified, Saussure emphasizes that the connection between the two is "arbitrary in that it actually has no natural connection with the signified" (2011: 69). Saussure's theory of signs indicates that language does not simply mirror the external reality but functions as a system that is employed in the construction of meaning based on differences. Adding the arbitrariness in the linguistic sign that introduces a split in the presumed link between words, his ideas challenge the traditional view of language, and art consequently, reflecting reality and paved the way to question established notions of objectivity and truth in various disciplines. According to Julia

Kristeva, Saussure's theory based on the gap between the signifier and the signified contributes to the disconnection between truth and the speaking subject. Kristeva states that "[d]etermining truth was reduced to a seeking out of the object-utterance's internal coherence, which was predetermined by the coherence of the particular metalinguistic theory within which the search was conducted" (1980: 24) and highlights the problem of accuracy that may emerge from the inherent constraints within the framework of sign, signifier, and signified. Building on this perspective, Aryan observes that, "what has come to be known as the crisis or critique of the representation of reality, that reached its acme in poststructuralism, was mainly triggered by Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic model and observation of the arbitrariness of the relation between the signifier and the signified" (2022: 17). This observation contributes significantly to the notion of the reconceptualization of truth that came with structuralism. In essence, Saussure's introduction of semiology, in which the resultant meaning is split into two separate entities as the signifier and the signified, introduced a rupture in traditional linguistic thought by challenging the direct correspondence between language and reality. This change in the understanding of language, meaning and representation paved the way for new perspectives and discussions in various academic disciplines, laying the groundwork for poststructuralist inquiries.

Building on Saussure's transformative ideas, scholars in the 1960s, such as Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, began to criticize Saussure's linguistic model and move beyond structuralist approaches. Taking Saussure's questioning of the orthodox notion of language to another level and marking the beginning of poststructuralism, they challenged the traditional systems of meaning and approached universal truths with scepticism. In *Writing and Difference*, Derrida argues that "[b]y virtue of its innermost intention, and like all questions about language, structuralism escapes the classical history of ideas which already supposes structuralism's possibility, for the latter naively belongs to the province of language and propounds itself within it" (2002: 2). Therefore, Derrida highlights that structuralism confines itself within the scope of language due to its synchronic approach that disregards the complexity of language and this limitation is not sufficient to fully address the complexities of meaning, knowledge, and intellectual history. While *Writing and Difference* lays the groundwork for Derrida's critique of

structuralism, it is in *Of Grammatology* that he criticizes the traditional Western metaphysics and the privileging of speech over writing. Opposing Saussure's theory of linguistics which presents writing as a representational figuration of language that is outside the internal system of language, Derrida argues that writing has a more complex role that influences and determines the structure of language. He states that "a science of language must recover the natural-that is, the simple and original-relationships between speech and writing, that is, between an inside and an outside" (Derrida, 1997: 35). He deconstructs the traditional opposition between speech and writing and highlights the role of writing in the production of meaning. Thus, Derrida's own notion of deconstruction is a response to and a critique of the limitations of structuralism, a notion that seeks to explore and transcend the boundaries set by structuralism.

In his influential essay "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences" (1966), Derrida establishes the foundations of deconstruction. He problematises the centred way of thinking, logocentric, of Levi-Strauss and Saussure, because it causes one opposing term to supress the other. In order to show the formation of reflexive thought in a contradictory and differential language without a centre, Derrida states:

> We could thus take up all the coupled oppositions on which philosophy is constructed, and from which our language lives, not in order to see opposition vanish but to see the emergence of a necessity such that one of the terms appears as the *différance* of the other, the other as "differed" within the systematic ordering of the same (e.g., the intelligible as differing from the sensible, as sensible differed; the concept differed-differing intuition, life as differed-differing matter; mind as differed-differing life; culture as differed-differing nature...). (1973: 148-149)

Emphasizing the interdependence of opposing concepts, Derrida introduces the term he coined *différance*, which denotes both difference and deferral. Within this framework, différance suggests that meaning arises from the differences between concepts. For example, we understand 'light' because it is not 'darkness', or 'man' because it differs from 'woman'. Simultaneously, différance also conveys the idea of deferral, as the final meaning is forever postponed. This deferral occurs because one

signifier becomes a signified, which in turn becomes a signifier leading to another signified, and so on, ad infinitum. This perpetual process of signification results in a constant postponement of any definitive meaning and challenges traditional notions of stability, origin, and fixed meaning within language and thought. The absence of a fixed center leads to rupture and reshapes the understanding of linguistic and conceptual structures. He explains the result of this lack as "a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely" (2002: 354). Put differently, Derrida expands Saussure's understanding of signs based on their differences and states that meaning does not reside only within the word, rather in its relationship to other signs, relying on the outside of the sign itself. Furthermore, he argues for the idea of an infinite delay of meaning as a result of this difference.

Since the meaning of a word is not immediately present when encountered but becomes clearer when considered with its relationship to other words in discourse, it leads to an endless chain of signification, causing a delay in the formation of meaning. As David Lodge and Nigel Wood assert "[t]he promise that the trace seems to offer of a presence on which the play of signification can come to rest in a determinate reference is thus never realizable, but incessantly deferred, put off, delayed" (2000: 246). Since defining signs is accomplished by replacing them with other signs, these new signs employed to reach meaning only push the fixed and clear meaning further away. In this context, with the absence of authorial intent, the reader's act of interpretation becomes significant within a text. Noting that Derrida's deconstruction is often interpreted as advocating for the adoption of the second interpretation to support the concept of free play of meaning, Jonathan D. Culler states that "the attempt to make meaning the experience of the reader does not solve the problem of meaning but displaces it, producing a divided and deferred concept of experience" (1985:132). Culler's 'view underscores that within deconstruction, the interplay of difference and deferral renders the reader's experience incapable of achieving a fixed meaning for any concept. Another understanding of Derrida that challenged the traditional view of language and meaning was presented in his book *Of Grammatology* with the famous quote "Il n'ya pas de hors texte" (1997: 158), which translates to "there is nothing outside the text." By asserting this, Derrida

emphasizes the self-referential nature of language and challenges the conventional idea of a direct correspondence between the intentions of a subject and the meaning of linguistic signs. While the traditional view suggests a complete authorial control over the meaning in expressions and reader's uncovering of the author's intended meaning, Derrida's notion argues for the instability of signification. It suggests that in the absence of a fixed, stable point of reference, everything exists within a network of interconnected signifiers, leading to potential new meanings and interpretations. In this regard, spoken language, symbols, and even how individuals understand and interpret the world is intertextual in nature.

Derrida's emphasis on the inherent instability of signification emphasizes that meaning is not confined to the boundaries of a singular text but extends into a complex interplay of cultural discourses and previous texts. Examining the plural meaning of text involving the play of signifiers, Graham Allen puts it as:

> The theory of the text, therefore, involves a theory of intertextuality, since the text not only sets going a plurality of meanings but is also woven out of numerous discourses and spun from already existent meaning. The text's plurality is neither wholly an 'inside' nor an 'outside', since the text itself is not a unified, isolated object upon which an 'inside' and an 'outside' can be fixed. (2000: 67)

Therefore, with meaning being subject to a constant state of differentiation, an endless deferral in reaching meaning, and the influence of the broader linguistic context, Derrida's concept disrupts the conventional understanding of language as a transparent medium for conveying pre-established meanings, and highlights the importance of considering the text not as an isolated object but as a convergence of connected meanings and discourses.

The impact of poststructuralism exceeds the scope of language with its deconstruction strategy of reading. Since anything that conveys meaning, such as identity and selfhood, is a sign split into a signifier and a never-ending chain of signifieds, Derrida's notion challenges the authorial voice and leads to the fragmentation of individual, problematising the expression of identity with the focus on the subject. Derrida's examination of the stable relationship between the signifier and the signified that depends on hierarchy as proposed by the Western philosophical tradition highlights the illusion of transcendental signified. He suggests that how

language works is not as straightforward as we might think, and its nature of instability challenges traditional concepts. Derrida defines transcendental signified as "which in and of itself, in its essence, would refer to no signifier, would exceed the chain of signs, and would no longer itself function as a signifier" (1981: 19-20). In this regard, God is considered a transcendental signified in many religious traditions. God is assumed to be a concept that is self-contained and not dependent on anything else with its ultimate and unquestionable meaning. Derrida questions the validity of transcendental signified with deconstruction and states that "from the moment that one questions the possibility of such a transcendental signified, … that one recognizes that every signified is also in the position of a signifier, the distinction between signified and signifier becomes problematical at its root" (1981: 20). Since the meaning of a concept is not fixed, depending on the context and the relationships it forms with other signifiers, the ongoing process of reference and reinterpretation challenges the traditional stable and direct correspondence between words and their meanings, hence leads to a decentred understanding of the self and the subject. Allen asserts that "[t]he author, traditionally, is a transcendental signified, standing behind the work as God is thought to stand behind the material universe. A divine figure, in this sense, the author thus gives stability and order to the work" (2003: 74). Since the author's words are subject to the same instability and reinterpretation as any other linguistic element, breaking down the assumed coherence and stability results in the fragmentation of the authorial voice. Therefore, challenging these transcendental signifieds not only undermines the stability of every conceptual foundation, including the authorial voice, but also contributes to the fragmentation of individual identity, as traditional anchors of stable meaning are disrupted and examined with a decentralized understanding of the self and the subject.

Similarly, Roland Barthes emphasizes the continuous deferral of meaning within the linguistic system and rejects the idea that language can express subjectivity or definite concepts with stable signifieds. In his famous essay "The Death of the Author," (1967) which delves into the linguistic nature of the pronoun I, Barthes states that "language knows a 'subject', not a 'person', and this subject, empty outside the very enunciation which defines it, suffices to make language 'hold together,' suffices, that is to say, to exhaust it" (1977: 145). He refers to the grammatical function of the pronoun I, as opposed to the person, and suggests that

the pronoun I gains meaning and significance only within the act of speaking or writing, being essentially empty or devoid of inherent meaning. As Aryan explicates, "identity and subjectivity is constructed in this language system, so becoming fragmented, split and underdetermined and is therefore no longer understood as an inner core identity finding direct expression through a language which is simply its verbal reflection" (2020: 18). Moreover, Barthes declares the disappearance of the author's identity by asserting that "[w]riting is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing" (1977:142). The author undergoes a symbolic demise during the act of writing because the texts crafted by the author surpasses his/her control and gain a life of their own with the reader's interpretation. The rejection of the idea that language expresses subjectivity or definite concepts with stable signifieds suggests that identity and subjectivity are contingent on linguistic structures. For Barthes, as for many other poststructuralists, identity is a textual construct with no preceding agent and is constantly being constructed and deconstructed in the process of writing. In so doing, Barthes contributes to the narrative of identity fragmentation. He replaces the concept of the author whose identity precedes his work with the modern writer who "is in no way supplied with a being which precedes or transcends his writing, he is in no way the subject of which his book is the predicate; there is no other time than that of the utterance, and every text is eternally written here and now" (Barthes, 1977: 145).

The impact of deconstruction on the understanding of self and psyche intensified the sense of fragmentation that people had already been dealing with in the aftermath of World War II. Individuals struggled both with the linguistic and psychological breakdown of traditional narratives. Beginning with the catastrophic events of World War II, the latter half of the 20th century saw profound shifts in global geopolitics, economy, and social structures. The post-war era witnessed a new set of challenges including the Cold War, ideological disputes between the East and West, and the malevolent use of technological advancements. However, the age also had a profound impact on the human psyche. Those who survived World War II, directly or indirectly affected, grappled with an array of psychological challenges stemming from the trauma of war, loss of loved ones, and the involuntary displacement of refugees. Moreover, the Holocaust, along with other genocides and

war crimes, caused indelible wounds not only on the sufferers but also on the collective psyche with the moral dilemma it brought. Furthermore, the postwar era presented a new level of terror, which was compounded by technical breakthroughs such as the use of nuclear bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In this context, the psyche became a battleground of fragmentation, leading to various psychiatric conditions stemming from the disintegration of the self. In the study of trauma and narrative after World War II, Ville Kivimäki states that "[h]istories of both world wars, as well as many other violent aspects of the twentieth century, were increasingly being discussed from the perspective of trauma, thus emphasizing the mental shocks caused by modern industrialized warfare and genocide" (2022: v). Trauma became the defining feature of the 20th century with its catastrophic events and created indelible scars in human psyche. Peter Leese explains the relation of trauma and fragmentation as:

> Violations of personhood and the traumatized memories that result are, by definition, filled with gaps and disruptions. In one interpretation of this process, personal narratives characteristically split off and slip out of speakability to become spectral and incomplete presences. The difficulties of achieving narrativization in the face of such emotional and cognitive fragmentation thereafter become all the more greater. (2022: 14)

This dissociated psyche explanation finds resonance in Aryan's analysis, particularly in the way literary narratives reflect the disintegration of self-awareness. The condition of the post-war individual is that of Beckett's protagonist in *The Unnamable* which "shows the breakdown of the Cartesian Cogito in a post-war soulless world in which its inhabitants suffer from disconnectedness" (Aryan, 2019: 107). As a result, the fragmentation in individuals' psyche during this time increased the focus on psychiatric examinations and treatments. Costas N. Stefanis mentions the conceptualisation of psychiatric disorders after World War II with the emergence of the psychodynamic concept and states that "[s]ince the mid-1950s with the development of neuroleptic drugs, and subsequent social shifts toward patient rights, accountability as well as technologic advances in data acquisition and processing, the biologic and nosologic points of view have become preeminent" (1990: 49). In this context, among various psychiatric disorders, schizophrenia requires a special

examination since it “literally means split mind” (Kales et al., 1990: 17) and highlights the sense of disarray and fragmentation of psyche of an individual who struggles to make sense of a world that has been altered by the war and destruction of concepts acknowledged as truth for centuries.

While the conceptualization and treatment of psychiatric disorders were gaining prominence, as a reaction to the prevailing psychiatric concepts and practices of the mid-20th century, the anti-psychiatry movement emerged, gaining momentum particularly during the 1960s and 1970s. The harsh and dehumanizing conditions of psychiatric institutions, the lack of personalized care, abusive treatments, including electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), lobotomy, hydrotherapy and insulin shock, and a significant trend toward medicalizing mental illness, treating it primarily as a biological and neurological issue, were among the reasons for this movement. The anti-psychiatry movement sought to challenge these aspects of traditional psychiatry and advocated for more humane and patient-centred approaches. Intellectuals such as Ronald David Laing, Thomas Szasz, and David Cooper questioned the conceptual foundations of mental illness and the societal response to it. Examining Laing and the paths of anti-psychiatry, Zbigniew Kotowicz states that “[t]hey (the anti-psychiatrists) argued that the psychiatric diagnosis is scientifically meaningless. It is a way of labelling undesirable behaviour, under the guise of medical intervention” (2005: 4-5). Since the existing structure of psychiatry declares patients unsuitable to function in an ordinary community and these patients are often imprisoned in hospitals against their wills, the anti-psychiatrists opposed to conventional treatments, arguing that the system makes it impossible to truly understand mental suffering.

One of the key figures of the movement, Laing, emphasizes the need for a paradigm shift in understanding mental health and challenged the psychiatric establishment in his work *The Divided Self* (1990). Throughout the 20th century, schizophrenia was accepted to be a mental disorder which can even become dangerous for both the patient and to the ones around that individual. Manfred Bleuler’s description of a schizophrenic sums up the accepted notion of the schizophrenic as “totally strange, puzzling, inconceivable, uncanny, and incapable of empathy, even to the point of being sinister and frightening” 1978: 15). Laing’s view of schizophrenia, on the other hand, changes the understanding of labelling

individuals' reaction to external traumatic events as a disease and instead posits that acute mental and emotional disorder should be acknowledged and explored in depth. As Laing states "[t]he clinical psychiatrist, wishing to be more 'scientific' or 'objective', may propose to confine himself to the 'objectively' observable behaviour of the patient before him. ... To see 'signs' of 'disease' is not to see neutrally" (1990: 31). Building on Laing's emphasis on the misguidance of approaching a schizophrenic solely as a medical case and searching for symptoms of a disease, Szasz echoes a similar sentiment against the labelling by contending that "the idea of mental illness is believed to denote the 'essence' of the mental patient's personality. This is a distinguishing feature … to define the identity of a scapegoat … transcendent malefactor, the Evil One" (1997: 241). The point that both Laing and Szasz assert is that the concept of mental illness as a valid and scientific category is an act of stigmatization that diminishes the identity of a person.

In *The Divided Self*, Laing focuses on schizophrenia and questions conventional notions of it. Examining the terms "schizoid" and "schizophrenic" in a phenomenological and existential perspective rather than in a clinical psychiatric, he contends that the technical vocabulary employed in psychiatry presents a significant challenge. According to Laing:

> The most serious objection to the technical vocabulary currently used to describe psychiatric patients is that it consists of words which split man up verbally in a way which is analogous to the existential splits we have to describe here. But we cannot give an adequate account of the existential splits unless we can begin from the concept of a unitary whole, and no such concept exists, nor can any such concept be expressed within the current language system of psychiatry or psycho-analysis. (1990: 19)

Laing's initiation of the analysis of psychiatric concepts by examining their expression in language and problematising it due to its divisive nature coincides with the broader fragmentation of language witnessed in the second half of the 20th century. Asserting that psychiatric language inherently divides and isolates aspects of human experience, he emphasizes the need for a concept of a unitary whole to truly understand the existential splits, which is absent in the current language system. This impact of language contributes to the conceptual fragmentation of the individual;

therefore, it is necessary to approach the concept of an individual in relation to others. He further advocates for a perspective which acknowledges individuals as persons with subjective agencies, experiences and intentions rather than as organisms of atoms that lack desires, fears or hope, and states that “the theory of man as person loses its way if it falls into an account of man as a machine or man as an organismic system of it-processes” (1990: 23). With this holistic approach, Laing defines the underlying reason of schizophrenia as “the issues involved where there is the partial or almost complete absence of the assurances derived from an existential position of … ontological security: with anxieties and dangers” (1990: 39). According to Laing, the individual with this ontological insecurity experiences a “split … as an attempt to deal with the basic underlying insecurity” (1990: 65) and creates false selves to protect the core identity, true self, from the anxiety and danger. Therefore, the false self that a schizophrenic creates is a shield for protection, an identity that is created which the individual believes to be a stronger autonomy or at least a perceived capability to survive the dangerous environment. His definition of schizophrenic that avoids the term of disease is not a refusal of the disorder but is more an existentialist approach to the stigmatised concept that aims to understand the true nature of psychotic behaviour.

The problem that arises with the schizophrenic according to Laing is in the absence of agency and authority. Discussing two fundamental existential settings as embodied and unembodied self in which individuals experience their own being, Laing examines some cases of schizophrenia involving unembodied self, in which the individual sees him/herself detached from the body. Laing argues that “[i]nstead of being the core of his true self, the body is felt as the core of a *false self*, which a detached, disembodied, 'inner', 'true' self looks on at with tenderness, amusement, or hatred as the case may be” (1990: 69). The behaviours and actions that an individual performs defines the identity. In this regard, with an emphasis on the significance of action as the movement of its author, Christine Korsgaard states that “it is essential to the concept of agency that an agent be unified” and continues “to regard some movement of my mind or my body as *my action*, I must see it as an expression of my self as a whole, rather than as a product of some force that is at work *on me* or *in me*” (2009: 18). In this context, as the schizophrenic constructs a detached and depersonalized world separate from the existing, authentic reality, and makes this

constructed, false self a representation of the identity to the outside world, the dissociation experienced signifies not only the estrangement from the true self but also a deprivation of agency and authority.

Examining the fragmented nature of post-World War II era, the condition of the schizophrenic with the false self aligns with what individuals experienced during this challenging and transformative period. In this context, the schizophrenic individual who creates his/her own world requires an inquiry on a philosophical level with solipsism which questions the certainty of external reality. Louis Sass argues that "[t]he standard definitions -delusion as 'incorrect belief,' hallucination as 'perception without an object'- hardly seem helpful in characterizing … schizophrenics" (1994: 4) but rather expresses his understanding of schizophrenia, through the famous case of German judge Daniel Paul Schreber, by likening it to "the philosophical doctrine of solipsism, according to which the whole of reality, including the external world and other persons, is but a representation appearing to a single, individual self, namely, the self of the philosopher who holds the doctrine" (1994: 8). Therefore, when considering Laing's view of delusion as a defence mechanism, some aspects of schizophrenia such as the alternative reality and self indicate the core of solipsism, a self-constructed world which gives a sense of security. Sass also mentions a significant quality of the solipsist's perception which "does not distort or deny the more objective qualities of the perceptual world … [but] only the prominence or meaning attributed" (1994: 31). This attribute signifies that a solipsist maintains the ability to acknowledge some objective qualities of the external world, but it is the change in perception that primarily alters the emphasis or significance attached to these qualities, highlighting the subjective nature of their interpretation.

To Laing's examination of schizophrenic which struggles with the maintenance of agency, Sass presents a paradox in the case of a solipsist regarding the expression of the self. Sass draws attention to the fact that unlike solipsists who acknowledge the exterior world accurately on the physiological level but perceives it differently on a subjective level, schizophrenics may make "claims that refer to an external or consensual reality beyond the confines of a purely subjective realm and that could legitimately be said to be falsifiable in objective or consensual terms" and adds that, unlike the solipsist being in control and in center, this can even reach to a

point for the schizophrenics in which they “experience their actions or thoughts as under the scrutiny and control, or in the presence or possession, of some alien and presumably more encompassing other mind” (1994: 51). Yet this does not mean that solipsism maintains a unified agency. Although in solipsism an individual believes that the entire reality, including the external world and other people, is a representation perceived by a single self, suggesting an agency in control, there is a paradox within the concept in terms of the existential level according to Sass. Based on Ludwig Wittgenstein’s examination of schizophrenia and solipsism, Sass explains this paradox as:

> [I]f the solipsist referred with absolute consistency and self-insight only to the experienced world-the "visual room" or "visual stove" are Wittgenstein's examples-such a person would have to recognize the emptiness of his claim that "the world is my world." For to say that the room-as-seen-by-me can only be seen by me is tautologous; it is what Wittgenstein calls a merely grammatical move. (1994: 55)

In solipsistic language, phrases like “the world is my world” seem to make empirical statements, but the referents of indexicals do not have fixed meanings independent of the speaker, changing based on who is talking. Therefore, the paradox of the agency in this context also refers to the linguistic change of the 20th century that creates fragmentation which inevitably affects the acknowledgement of individual. The split and instability of concepts in language argued by Saussure, Derrida and Barthes support the existential paradox of solipsism, signalling that it demands an acknowledgment of other minds, as they align with structural and grammatical perspectives that emphasize the lack of fixed meanings and the continuous flux of language. This paradoxical quality of solipsism leads to the conclusion that in order for solipsism not to be an absurdity, it should be accepted as a contradictory concept in which the agency is not the central, but accepting the existence and power of others. This contradictory situation is what schizophrenic experiences with the true self losing its agency because of the false selves created to be acknowledged by the external world, causing depersonalisation.

The similarity of schizophrenia and solipsism which the individuals present a mirroring of their modified consciousness onto the external world in order to express themselves indicates a subjective relativism of authorship which presents a self-

constructed world according to the author's perception. Regarding woman authors of 1960s and Laing's reassessment of schizophrenia, Aryan asserts that:

> When applying, or appropriating, Laing's ideas in the understanding of the work of key women writers of the time, for whom "madness" is taken to be a key political theme, one might liken the condition of the woman writer to that of Laing's schizoid or schizophrenic in the sense that the woman writer effects a paranoiac condition strategically as a consequence of her lack of control but ultimately as an extreme means by which to gain the control of which she has been deprived by patriarchy. (2020: 96)

Therefore, in a patriarchal society which repeatedly denies women's individuality and self-recognition, women might undergo experiences similar to schizoid conditions by embracing a form of madness. While this self-constructed world leads to the detachment of their true selves from the external world, it also serves as safeguarding, to reclaim agency and identity. In this context, the emotions and perception of the author is mirrored in the text similar to the way of expressing oneself in solipsism, opposing the idea of Barthes's notion of the death of author which argues that the author's intentions and identity are irrelevant once the text is released to the audience.

With the disintegration of the world that started with World War II and intensified with the events in its aftermath, the deconstruction of language, concepts and their meanings, and the split of psyche due to the break of the world and language, life became profoundly contradictive, uncertain and unreliable. It affected literature and gave rise to literary movements that reflected the fragmented nature of existence, questioning the established norms of storytelling, authorship, and the structure of narratives. Frederic Jameson addresses the theme of postmodernism's fragmentation under the scope of economics, as an extension of a cultural concept. By employing a Marxist framework and approaching postmodernism as a response to the evolving nature of the capitalist system, Jameson contends that postmodernism is "no longer a matter of the breakup of some preexisting older organic totality, but rather the emergence of the multiple in new and unexpected ways, unrelated strings of events, types of discourse, modes of classification, and compartments of reality" (1991: 372). Associating this absolute and random pluralism with the rhetoric of

decentring, Jameson suggests that this condition precedes and influences the psychological processes, what he calls as “postmodern schizo-fragmentation” (1991: 372). Therefore, the psychological consequences of postmodernism emerge as challenging and problematic with the struggles of a simple organism trying to adapt to a highly complex and unfamiliar environment. In addition, by delving into Marxism to trace its foundational concepts, Jameson identifies a gap in its discourse concerning the absence of a distinct concept despite the relevance of the logic of separation. Drawing a comparison with this characteristic of postmodernism, Jameson states:

> The logic of separation may have become even more relevant for our own period, and for the diagnosis of Postmodernism, in which psychic fragmentation and the resistance to totalities, interrelation by way of difference and the schizophrenic present, and above all the systematic delegitimation described here, all in one way or another exemplify the proteiform nature and effects of this particular disjunctive process. (1991: 399)

In the wake of World War II, the seeds of postmodernism’s defining theme of fragmentation were sown with the shattering in the world, language, and psyche. The devastation of the war led to a radical revaluation of established norms with the rise of structuralism and linguistic theories that challenged conventional views on language and meaning. Ferdinand de Saussure’s structuralism and Jacques Derrida’s deconstruction highlighted the arbitrariness of linguistic signs and questioned the assumed link between words and fixed meanings. The poststructuralist critique extended beyond language and influenced the understanding of self and identity, as exemplified by Roland Barthes and the anti-psychiatry movement. Moreover, Frederic Jameson's exploration of postmodern schizo-fragmentation underscored the psychological consequences of this epoch, aligning with the questioning of psychiatric approaches of the time. The impact of these transitions reverberated on literature as the legacy of postmodernism became scepticism, irony, and commitment to questioning established truths, which was a critical stance born from the horrors of authoritarianism during the war. In this regard, Aryan adds to the study of postmodernist texts and authors through the perspective of Cold War and the schizophrenic author. In his analysis of Vladimir Nabokov’s Pale Fire (1962) he

contends that “paranoia as a psychological illness was expanded into a social mood or condition during the Cold War era” (2020: 162). Exceeding the psychological dimensions of paranoia, he unveils a broader socio-cultural condition in the post-war era. The echoes of this era continue to resonate, necessitating an inquiry of the complexities of contemporary existence which is marked by the transformative force of 21st century: globalisation.

C. The Dynamics of Globalisation

The late 20th century marked a significant turning point in human history with the advent of globalization, which is a phenomenon characterized by unprecedented interconnectedness across political, economic, and cultural spheres. As the barriers between nations dissolved and the world became increasingly integrated, the repercussions of globalization echoed across every aspect of society. At its core, globalization represents more than just economic integration; it embodies a transformative force that has redefined notions of identity, community, and belonging. With the breakdown of traditional geopolitical boundaries, individuals are no longer bound only by national connections but find themselves involved in a complex web of global interactions. Furthermore, globalisation has spurred the emergence of new cultural hybridities and transnational identities that challenge conventional understandings of language, culture, and tradition. In this era of unprecedented interconnectedness, contemporary literature serves as a vital tool for examining and critiquing the complexities of the human condition. As globalisation continues to reshape our world, literature provides a lens through which the multifaceted implications of this transformative force can be explored. Through narratives that traverse borders and cultures, literature not only captures the diverse experiences of individuals in the globalised contemporary age but also sheds light on the tensions and contradictions inherent in this process of global integration. Moreover, it illuminates the legacy of fragmentation that has become prevalent with the aftermath of World War II and its profound impact on language and societal structures.

Although many theorists define globalisation focusing on different aspects of it, such as transnational politics, economic interdependence, cultural hybridisation or threats and challenges that emerged as the unintended consequences, they agree on

the comprehensive definition that emphasizes its versatile aspect. As Anthony Giddens states, with an emphasis on its source, "[g]lobalisation is restructuring the ways in which we live, and in a very profound manner. It is led from the west, bears the strong imprint of American political and economic power, and is highly uneven in its consequences" (2002: 23). Since the transition from the 20th century to the 21st century introduced a shift from late capitalism to transnational capitalism, affecting not only economic structures but also reshaping the geopolitical affairs and cultural dynamics on a global scale, it is crucial to examine the impact of globalisation starting with the economic aspect. In this regard, Jeffrey T. Nealon's examination of the contemporary culture, post-postmodernism, presents the significant link between neoliberalism and globalisation. Nealon calls for a new definition of the contemporary culture as opposed to Frederic Jameson's by stating that:

> If Jameson's two 1984 essays suggest … that many left-leaning academics in the mid-'80s were still stuck in an outmoded mind-set of the 1960s, and that an economic analysis was the clearest way to show this, I want to fast-forward that hypothesis into our present. … [M]uch North American humanities 'theory' of the present moment is essentially stuck in and around 'the '80s'; and perhaps the easiest and most effective way of breaking that spell is to try to think economically as well as culturally about the differences between the two periods. (2015: 119)

According to Nealon's statement, the economic structure that runs the 21st century world, transnational capitalism, is the result of an intensification of major concepts in the contemporary time. Expanding the limits of 20th century's capitalism, transnational capitalism includes the intensification of finance, production, marketing and trade, and technology, all of which aim to reshape economic structures on a global level. Building on Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's analysis of the postmodernisation of the global economy, which emphasizes the intensification of biopolitical production and the convergence of economic, political, and cultural realms, Nealon emphasizes that in a world devoid of untapped resources or new markets, any system aiming to expand must inevitably intensify its existing resources. Highlighting that this intensification applies not only to economic endeavours but also to subjective experiences, reflecting a fundamental shift in the logic of contemporary society, Nealon examines the change in gambling practices

that provides a clear illustration of the intensification, and states that "[t]his intensification, to take only the most obvious example, is what's on display when gamblers 'chase' losses: increasing their bets, and their risk, in the hope of getting even" (2015: 123). Furthermore, this globalised capitalism of the contemporary era does not only impact the economy but also the governance of societies and individuals with the governments being able to reach every aspect of individuals' lives through technological advancements. The new concept defining the societies of the contemporary era is "control societies", unlike the disciplinary societies defining the 20th century. Underlying the change of society's structure from Foucault's disciplinary society, Deleuze states that "[w]e're moving toward control societies that no longer operate by confining people but through continuous control and instant communication" (1995: 174). With the shift to more technology-driven structures in work, education and socialisation, societies are now controlled through continuous and fluid monitoring networks, data collection, and information flow. This transformation has led surveillance to become the new notion of power for societies to be controlled in the globalised age. Agreeing this shift in the structure of societies in the age of intensification, Nealon explicates that "discipline's limit has become a threshold, inexorably transforming this form of power into … a 'lighter' and even more effective style of surveillance that can only accelerate the already lightning-fast spread of that monstrous form of power/knowledge known as globalisation" (2015: 131-132).

In recent decades, the world has witnessed a series of crises that transcend regional boundaries, signalling a shift towards global challenges. The incidents that happened in the late 20th century and 21st century brought about more than a change in the global economic structure and the emergence of control societies. The Asian Economic Crisis (1997), the financial crisis of Russia (1998) and other regional economic shocks emphasized the vulnerability of the global economy. In addition, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre known as the 9/11 (2001), the rise of ISIS (2014), and sustained attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan elevated terrorism to a global threat. The distress of people further increased due to nuclear disasters with consequences beyond people's control and environmental degradation, including climate change, ozone layer depletion and the loss of biodiversity. In this context, Anthony Giddens illuminates the evolving nature of risk in our time and defines the

role of risk in the contemporary age as:

> Our age is not more dangerous – not more risky – than those of earlier generations, but the balance of risks and dangers has shifted. We live in a world where hazards created by ourselves are as, or more, threatening than those that come from the outside. Some of these are genuinely catastrophic, such as global ecological risk, nuclear proliferation or the meltdown of the world economy. Others affect us as individuals much more directly, for instance those involved in diet, medicine or even marriage. (2002: 41)

To examine the uncertainty and risk effect of these incidents which can emerge in every aspect of the world and its inhabitants, Ulrich Beck's concept of risk society provides a comprehensive framework. Focusing on the theory of modernisation with the notion of risk in centre, he examines risk not only as a physical harm possibility but also linked to the quality of relations in social structures. Underlying the irreversible effect of the risks that modernisation brings upon all beings, Beck states:

> Unlike the factory-related or occupational hazards of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, these can no longer be limited to certain localities or groups, but rather exhibit a tendency to globalization which spans production *and* reproduction as much as national borders, and in this sense brings into being *supra*-national and *non*-class-specific *global hazards* with a new type of social and political dynamism. (1992: 13)

With the impact of risks reaching a global level rather than a regional one, the process of modernisation has brought irreversible consequences affecting the structures of societies deeply within various scopes. Beck suggests this fundamental shift in the dynamics of modern societies with "in the risk society the unknown and unintended consequences come to be a dominant force in history and society" (1992: 22). As societies undergo rapid changes associated with modernization, social hazards and their cultural and political potential on societies underscore the emergence of a new paradigm where the dynamics of risk transcend the confines of localized impacts.

In his examination of contemporary societies, Beck introduces the concept of risk society and defines the characteristics of it with five distinct features. Differing from the old paradigm in which the risks arose from the unequal distribution of wealth in an industrial or class society, risks of the contemporary age rise from "radioactivity, which completely evades human perceptive abilities, but also toxins and pollutants in the air, the water and foodstuffs, together with the accompanying short- and long-term effects on plants, animals and people" (Beck, 1992: 22). In these risk societies, characterized by uncontrollable and destructive threats that may disproportionately impact certain individuals or groups, particularly those facing poverty, everyone becomes vulnerable to the risks of modernization. Therefore, the unceasing dynamics of risk societies allow capitalist powers benefit from this endless demand and turns civilization risks into a self-renewing tool for both economic gain and political influence. Beck's theory of risk society redefines the understanding of modern society by highlighting the multifaceted impact of risks on societal and political structures, adding up to the controlled aspect of society in the globalised age.

In addition to the cultural and political consequences of hazards, Beck also examines if advanced societies of the age are class societies like before. Arguing that the impact of social classes has decreased, he asserts that "[i]n all wealthy Western and industrialized countries, a process of individualization has taken place" (Beck, 1992: 92). Although this transformation seems to increase the value of individual, it also brings many disadvantages in terms of the formation of identity in relation to social class, leading to a sense of uncertainty. Beck explains another disadvantage of this individualisation process as the new form of inequality in relation to the individualisation of social risks. "The result is that social problems are increasingly perceived in terms of psychological dispositions: as personal inadequacies, guilt feelings, anxieties, conflicts, and neuroses" (Beck, 1992: 100). With the transformation of social crises into individual crises, challenges are often seen as personal shortcomings rather than systemic issues. This situation has led to the emerge of a notion called therapeutic culture, as proposed by Frank Furedi. Furedi examines the inclination to resort to therapy and medical interference in order to deal with the uncertainty created by risk societies and states his counterargument of therapy culture by stating that "the individual self is defined by its vulnerability. As

noted previously, contemporary culture valorises the help-seeking self. The very fact that the realisation of the self is predicated on a relationship of dependence on therapeutics, calls into question the quality and meaning of individual autonomy" (2004: 106-107). According to Furedi, therapy culture defines individuals as vulnerable and constantly in need of external assistance, which inevitably diminishes their coping mechanisms. This leads to a persistent sense of psychic fragmentation and a reliance on external forces in the pursuit of a stable and satisfactory mental state.

D. The Role of the Author in the Age of Globalisation

The impact of globalisation on these various scopes of contemporary age revealed itself in literature with a change in the conception and role of authorship. Since risks of this age, emerging from global crises and changing cultural landscape are different, contemporary writers look for different ways of experimentation with and representation of them. The intensity of these challenges and risks have led the contemporary author to adopt a manner which is not only more involved with global issues and their impact but also away from some of the distinctive features of postmodernism, such as the playful and ironic tone, as well as the self-reflexivity. As Aryan argues:

> A new concept of authorship emerges in this more globalised and fragile new risk therapy culture for it produces pressures on novelists not only to embrace the New Sincerity but to return to the old eighteenth-century ideals of the novelist as a purveyor of moral sentiment within the new version of liberal economics. The novelist is seen to have a new responsibility, contemporaneous with the rise of Risk Society appears the pressure to redefine authorship for a new globalised Risk world. (2020: 179)

The contemporary author's detachment from irony towards adopting a more direct tone allows for more earnest and genuine expression of emotions and themes to emerge within this straightforward narrative approach, leading to resurgence of the author's influence and authority in the narrative landscape.

Shaped by the post-war effect in the second half of 20th century,

postmodernism provided a fresh perspective on traditional norms and values of world, history, language and self by challenging established conventions with a sceptical approach. The playful tone created ironic detachment for critical thinking purposes, allowing postmodernist authors to questions the stability of meaning. Yet, the application of too much irony also paved the way for a sentiment of apathy to infiltrate the public landscape. Critical of the impact of the excessive use of irony and detachment in the postmodern era and specifically culture, David Foster Wallace points out the devastating legacy of postmodernism:

> [W]hat's been passed down from the postmodern heyday is sarcasm, cynicism, a manic ennui, suspicion of all authority, suspicion of all constraints on conduct, and a terrible penchant for ironic diagnosis of unpleasantness instead of an ambition not just to diagnose and ridicule but to redeem. You've got to understand that this stuff has permeated the culture. It's become our language; we're so in it we don't even see that it's one perspective, one among many possible ways of seeing. Postmodern irony's become our environment. (1993: 49)

As Wallace aptly observes, the ironic detachment of postmodernism created a sense of indifference with the limited perception of life marked by apathy and a reluctance to engage with a more profound understanding.

Similarly, Jim McGuigan underscores the drawback of postmodernism by "[i]t is this ironic detachment which is the epitome of postmodernism … It is undeniably attractive and not inaccurate, up to a point. The refusal of critical reason is, however, ultimately nihilistic. It is not enough to simply throw your hands up at the absurdity of it all" (2006: 171). In this regard, when approaching every aspect of life through the ironic and sceptical lens of postmodernism, individuals may grapple with a loss of meaning in various areas of life, living constantly in a state of uncertainty, a postmodern achievement, unable to make proper decisions. For many contemporary thinkers such as Wallace, this perspective proves insufficient to cope with the global challenges of contemporary life which necessitate collective decision making and action. McGuigan explains this as:

> We live in a world of globalizing capitalism, of environmental risk and great uncertainty. Yet there is considerable hope in the sheer fluidity of culture and identity, of the breaking down of old barriers and

> the opening up of new networks of possibility. In this kind of context, different modes of reasoning perform different functions. Instrumental reason is useful but blind. Ironic reason is fun but irresponsible. Critical reason is vital. (2006: 171)

Therefore, considering the interconnected structure of this globalised world, as well as the fragmentation that arose with the incidents after World War II in various aspects like world, language, and psyche, postmodernism's appreciation of this fragmentation has started to fall short in efficiency. The lack of solution and goal-oriented approach in postmodernism, whose only responsibility seems to be questioning and challenging concepts such as authorship and autonomy of the self with scepticism, have led to an indecisive and eventually inactive state. Yet, acting is a significant element that constructs the self on a philosophical level. Christine Korsgaard contends that "[i]f, when we act, we are trying to constitute ourselves as the authors of our own movements, and at the same time, we are making ourselves into the particular people who we are, then we may say that the function of action is *self-constitution*" (2009: xii). In other words, action is not only a response to challenges but also a fundamental mechanism through which individuals actively participate in the ongoing process of defining and constructing their own selves. What is more, this construction of the self expands with the recognition of our contingent practical identities being normative in connection with our human identity and the perception of our lives as specific embodiments of human possibility. Korsgaard puts it as "in being the author of your own actions, you are also a co-author of the human story, our collective, public, story" (2009: 212).

The drawbacks of postmodernism, such as apathy and excessive use of irony, have instigated a new stance in literature with The New Sincerity movement. To the challenges of the contemporary age which require a serious and responsible attitude on behalf of the author, rather than a cynical one, the movement offers a refreshing perspective by urging authors to approach societal issues with sincerity, empathy, and a commitment to positive change. When tracing the origins of the New Sincerity movement, it is critical to recognize Wallace's vision in predicting a shift in literary styles with his statement:

> The next real literary "rebels" in this country might well emerge as some weird bunch of "anti-rebels," born oglers who dare to back away

> from ironic watching, who have the childish gall actually to endorse single-entendre values. Who treat old untrendy human troubles and emotions in U.S. life with reverence and conviction. Who eschew self-consciousness and fatigue. These anti-rebels would be outdated, of course, before they even started. Too sincere. Clearly repressed. Backward, quaint, naive, anachronistic. (Wallace, 1993: 192-93)

In contrast to the detached irony of postmodernism, the New Sincerity promotes a more direct and sincere interaction with the audience, with a sense of empathy, hence establishing a connection and shared humanity. By employing sincerity as the core notion, the movement challenges the aloofness of poststructuralism and postmodernism which decreased the importance placed on inner life as the world's focus shifts to capital, technology, culture, and language.

In his analysis of the New Sincerity, Adam Kelly examines the new definition and portrayal of sincerity and states that "[a]mong the things theory has taught contemporary writers is that sincerity, expressed through language, can never be pure, and must instead be conceived in inextricable conjunction with ostensibly opposing terms, including irony and manipulation" (2016: 201). The themes of sincerity, empathy, and a commitment to genuine engagement with societal issues, central to the New Sincerity movement, also echo in the context of Metamodernism. Although the term metamodern first appeared in Mas'ud Zavarzadeh's article "The Apocalyptic Fact and the Eclipse of Fiction in Recent American Prose Narratives" almost synonymous with postmodernism, Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker uses the term to designate a new sentiment in contemporary cultural productions. In "Notes on Metamodernism" (2010), Vermeulen and Akker identify the emergence of a new discourse which oscillates between modern enthusiasm and postmodern irony stating that "metamodernism should be situated epistemologically with (post) modernism, ontologically between (post) modernism, and historically beyond (post) modernism" (2010: 2). They point out the inefficiency of postmodernism to explain and provide any solutions to the significant and destructive changes of the contemporary society in domains of environment, finance, geopolitics, and art. Their observation of contemporary art in which "new generations of artists increasingly abandon the aesthetic precepts of deconstruction, parataxis, and pastiche in favor of aesth-ethical notions of reconstruction, myth, and

metaxis" (2010: 2) indicates a need for departure from the irony and scepticism associated with postmodern aesthetics towards a more hopeful and sincere approach which values ethics.

Dissatisfied with the concepts that have emerged and adopted in the 21st century, Vermeulen and Akker present metamodernism based on "current generation's attitude … [which] can be conceived of as a kind of informed naivety, a pragmatic idealism" (2010: 5), implying a combination of a modern desire for progress with a postmodern scepticism. In this regard, the change in the current generation's attitude under the effect of "[t]he threefold 'threat' of the credit crunch, a collapsed center, and climate change" (2010: 5), which creates a sense of uncertainty and doubt about the existing systems and ideologies, individuals are prompted to engage in introspection and critical reflection with establishing ideas and a search for new ways of thinking and addressing problems. Hence, metamodernism emerges as the new cultural sensibility that involves both modern desires for progress, optimism, and idealism, and the postmodern scepticism and awareness of the complexities inherent in contemporary issues. Like postmodernism, which rejects the idea of a singular, overarching purpose or narrative in history due to a rejection of grand narratives, metamodernism recognizes that achieving the purpose of history is impossible. It also approaches the purpose of it "as if" it exists and consciously commits itself to an impossible possibility. On an epistemological level, the metamodern aligns itself with Kant's ''negative'' idealism, which Curtis Peters explains as the view of "human history as if mankind had a life narrative which describes its self-movement toward its full rational/social potential ... to view history as if it were the story of mankind's development" (1993: 117). Thus, despite its awareness that success might be elusive, metamodernism persistently strives with the quest for a truth it never anticipates to fully grasp. On an ontological level, "[i]t oscillates between a modern enthusiasm and a postmodern irony, between hope and melancholy, between naïveté and knowingness, empathy and apathy, unity and plurality, totality and fragmentation, purity and ambiguity" (Vermeulen et al., 2010: 5-6). Therefore, it avoids the extremes of fanaticism and apathy and presents a nuanced approach that embraces the tension between opposing forces. Yet, it is crucial, as stated by Vermeulen and Akker, "not to confuse this oscillating tension (a both-neither) with some kind of postmodern in-between (a neither-nor)" (2010: 9-

10). While both adopt pluralism, irony, and deconstruction as responses to modernist fanaticism, metamodernism employs these tools to balance and engage with modern aspirations with a genuine desire for something beyond, unlike postmodernism utilising these elements to negate or dismiss modernist aspirations with more apathy and detachment.

Taking the contemporary culture's shift to metamodernism into consideration, the late 20th and the 21st centuries present a framework that is getting away from the distance and apathy of postmodernism, leading to a state that seeks to find a middle ground. Metamodernism embraces the inherent contradictions of human existence in a globalised world where societies come to be defined as risk societies, controlled through transnational capitalism, and the environment suffers from degradation. Yet, it brings about a new attitude which is more constructive, responsible, sincere and empathetic with its emphasis on engagement and positive action. This transformation in the perception of life indicates a change in the role of the contemporary author with a more empathetic and constructive attitude, aiming to reach out to the reader while being the voice of sufferers. In terms of humanity, the new zeitgeist involves empathy, which becomes the means to have an active state on behalf of the author. Korsgaard argues that "respect for humanity is a necessary condition of effective action. It enables you to legislate a law under which you can be genuinely unified, and it is only to the extent that you are genuinely unified that your movements can be attributable to you, rather than to forces working in you or on you, and so can be actions" (2009: 206). Korsgaard's perspective reinforces the idea that the new attitude of empathy and active engagement help the reconstruction of the fragmented identity of individuals in a world defined by interconnectedness. As Aryan contends:

> [T]he author (together with the novel) might now be seen to have a therapeutic function in an age of globalised risk and trauma: the author becomes a kind of therapist for the present and a curator of the past. The distinctive tone of this new fiction departs from the sceptical textualism of the postmodern to produce a new blend of the ironic and the sincere. This new author is both healer and wounded figure, committed to pushing the boundaries of the novel (towards the infinite) and to exploring the power of fiction in connecting to the globalised world, facilitating our understanding of the suffering of others on a more global

scale. (2020: 231)

Moreover, this empathetic perception reaches a global level with the involvement of environmental issues that have consequences extending beyond the scope of individual repairment, and evoking an acknowledgement of collective responsibility, emphasizing the importance of caring for the world and its inhabitants.

In accordance with the societal and literary changes that started in the post-war era and made a significant turn in the 21st century, the contemporary woman author takes a different role, defying her traditional label of being the oppressed and weak sex which is stigmatised with mental illness. The self-constructed world of the contemporary woman author, similar to the one of a mentally disturbed person, serves in fact as a mirror to reflect the truth that has been ignored or fragmented for decades. This constructed world becomes a means to give voice to sufferers, both on an individual and environmental state, and to reclaim agency for the fragmented self. Finding a remedy for the world falling apart, the contemporary woman author becomes the healer in an age defined with mental health issues and therapy. Storytelling, as her strongest means, appears both as a bridge linking the author to readers and a constructive tool that brings together the pieces of the longstanding fragmentation in individuals, leading evidentially to a re-connection of the world as a whole. As Hanna Meretoja's examination of the function of storytelling in the contemporary age states "[n]on-human reality may lack meaningful order, but we still need stories to bear, unsettle and transform us as we journey through the labyrinth of our lives. Stories are interpretations but never mere interpretations: they take part in weaving, unravelling and reconstructing the fragile fabric of our narrative existence" (2014: 230).

In the context of societal and literary transformations spanning from the post-war era to the present day, contemporary women authors have assumed a multifaceted role that challenges traditional perceptions of femininity and mental health. Rather than being relegated to the archetype of the oppressed and mentally unstable, these authors construct narrative worlds that serve as mirrors reflecting neglected truths and fractured identities. This constructed narrative space not only provides a platform for individual and environmental suffering but also serves as a vehicle for reclaiming agency and healing fragmented selves. Therefore, this study will explore the thematic intersections of risk society, control society, and therapy

culture within the novels of Mantel's *Beyond Black* and Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping*. Through a metamodern lens, this analysis aims to elucidate the impact of globalization on both the environment and human experiences, especially on women, highlighting evolving norms, values, and the imperative for personal and collective healing.

III. BEYOND BLACK

This chapter argues that in Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black*, published in 2005, the narrative transcends postmodernist storytelling embodying a shift towards a new worldview characterized by sincerity and active engagement rather than the excessive irony and detachment associated with postmodernism. Focusing on this transition, this chapter delves into the themes of trauma, identity, empathy, and societal critique of the contemporary age as depicted through the protagonist, Alison Hart. Through an analysis of narrative structure and character development, this study seeks to elucidate how Mantel's narrative challenges literary conventions including those of postmodernism and offers a nuanced portrayal of the human condition in an era which exceeds postmodernism. Against the backdrop of a fragmented world shaped by historical upheavals starting with WWII, linguistic deconstruction initiated with Saussure's linguistic model followed by poststructuralist and postmodernist theories, and psychological disintegration of the human psyche in the constantly changing world of risks, uncertainties and control, Mantel navigates the complexities of contemporary existence by delving into the depths of human experiences. This chapter argues that as Alison grapples with her fragmented psyche and seeks to reconcile her past traumas, the narrative becomes an exploration of the human longing for connection and coherence amidst chaos and fragmentation. By exploring the interplay between sincerity and irony, Mantel confronts existential dilemmas and societal oppressions, inviting readers to confront the fragmented nature of the self in an increasingly globalized world. Furthermore, this chapter aims to highlight the transformative power of storytelling in fostering empathy, connection, and meaningful engagement with the complexities of contemporary life, which reveals the changing role of the contemporary woman author as a healer that brings together the fragmented pieces and offers profound reconciliation in an era characterised by a longing for interconnectedness and coherence.

Hilary Mantel, born on July 6, 1952, is a British writer famous with her incisive prose, rich historical settings, and complex characterisations. Growing up in a working-class family in Derbyshire, Mantel developed an early passion for storytelling, immersing herself in literature and history from a young age. Her formative years were marked by struggles with illness, including severe endometriosis, which would later inform her writing and shape her perspective on themes of pain, trauma, and resilience. As the editor Nicholas Pearson states in *A Memoir of My Former Self: A Life in Writing*, "[i]n fiction, writers tuck themselves away to various degrees, sometimes telling stories to escape themselves, even if they are hiding in plain sight. The story of Hilary Mantel is scattered throughout her novels. But in her journalism and essays a full and exhilarating self-portrait emerges: she isn't afraid to lay herself bare" (2023: 5). This self-disclosure scattered in her fictions is especially visible through the use of ghosts in Mantel's writings. For her memoir *Giving Up the Ghost* (2003), Mantel states that it is not only about her childhood but also about her "ancestors and children who were never born, and about the ghosts we all have in our lives: the ghosts of possibility, the paths we didn't take, and the choices we didn't make, and expectations, which seemed perfectly valid at the time, but which somehow or other weren't fulfilled" (2023: 389). Therefore, the traumas depicted in Mantel's works extend beyond her personal sufferings and experiences, serving as symbolic representations of the collective ghosts haunting individuals in the contemporary age. Suggesting an understanding of life based on hope and action, Mantel becomes the embodiment of the contemporary author with a stark departure from the detached irony often associated with postmodernism. This view of life positions Mantel as the contemporary author with a new role, whose work transcends the boundaries of postmodernism by emphasizing the enduring human pursuit of meaning amidst darkness and uncertainty.

In *Beyond Black*, Mantel constructs a rich narrative by intricately intertwining the ordinary with the supernatural against the contemporary English backdrop. The protagonist, a middle-aged medium named Alison Hart, grapples not only with the spirits she communicates with but also confronts the ghosts of her own past in a world fraught with uncertainty and meaninglessness, particularly for women violated by patriarchal forces. As Alison navigates her profession, she forms an unexpected connection with Colette, her bold and unconventional partner/assistant, whose

presence offers both comfort and challenge. Accompanied by the contentious spirit guide Morris, they journey around London's outskirts, attending psychic fairs and exploring the enigmatic spirit world from the late 1990s to the early 2000s. The novel, published only four years after the 9/11 terrorist attack, reveals the aftermath of globalisation as Alison and Colette struggle to survive in the suburban wastelands of London. During their psychic adventures, Colette interviews Alison with the intent of writing a book, showcasing the impact of globalized capitalism on their lives amidst the suburban landscape. With the death of Princess Diana, the narrative captures the zeitgeist before the turn of the millennium and the subsequent upheavals, also indicating a change in the attitude of Alison with more sincerity and empathy. Subsequently, as they relocate to a newly constructed suburban residence in Surrey, Alison and Colette aim to escape their traumatic pasts. In the chaos of their psychic escapades, while Colette tries to form a new self after her failing marriage and new career path, Alison confronts the traumas of her childhood abuse filled with belittlement, sexual abuse and violence, with the haunting visions – hallucinations – and inner turmoil. At Admiral Drive, a pivotal moment unfolds as Mort, a homeless man sheltering in Alison's backyard, commits suicide. As Alison empathizes with Mort and witnesses him being overtaken by her haunting ghosts, she finds herself drawn into a deeper understanding of her own traumas. Amidst this emotional turmoil, Alison discovers newfound agency, empowering her to take control of her life's narrative through empathy and sympathy, catalysed by sincere and empathetic moments such as Mort's and Princess Diana's deaths. As the novel concludes, Colette departs, returning to her ex-husband, while Alison asserts her agency in her conversations with Morris, finds solace in a heartfelt bond with two elderly lady ghosts, marking a poignant moment of acceptance and reconciliation.

The opening of the novel, set in the early 2000s, portrays an environment deeply influenced by globalisation. "The motorway, its wastes looping London: the margin's scrub grass flaring orange in the lights, and the leaves of the poisoned shrubs striped yellow-green like a cantaloupe melon" (Mantel, 2005: 6) vividly describes the neglected and poisoned areas of factories, warehouses, and other industrial sites. This imagery captures the contrast between the bustling urban center and the marginalized spaces on the city's periphery, emphasizing the impact of globalisation on urban landscapes. Moreover, Mantel depicts the threatening

environment in which the marginalised inhabitants are pushed aside, like outcasts:

> This is marginal land: fields of strung wire, of treadless tyres in ditches, fridges dead on their backs, and starving ponies cropping the mud. It is a landscape running with outcasts and escapees, with Afghans, Turks and Kurds: with scapegoats, scarred with bottle and burn marks, limping from the cities with broken ribs. The life forms here are rejects, or anomalies: the cats tipped from speeding cars, and the Heathrow sheep, their fleece clotted with the stench of aviation fuel. (2005: 6)

The portrayal indicates the risk society in which "[a]t the center lie the risks and consequences of modernization, which are revealed as irreversible threats to the life of plants, animals, and human beings" (Beck, 1992: 13). With a landscape teeming with outcasts, immigrants, and scapegoats, scarred and marginalized by society, and the environmental degradation caused by industrial activity create an image of a profoundly unsafe metropolis and its outer landscapes, inhabited by impoverished immigrants and other marginalized individuals. The modern age of uncertainties and risks becomes a threatening environment that imprison the disadvantaged ones in "a time of suspension, of hesitation, of the indrawn breath" in which Alison had "never had a choice" (2005: 7). These descriptions evoke a sense of heaviness and oppression emphasizing the atmosphere of uncertainty, as well as Alison's lack of agency or choice in these circumstances.

The impact of industrial and technological advancements on nature continues to emerge throughout the novel repeatedly. Admiral Drive, where Alison and Colette plan to restart their life together, is a suburban area depicting how urban sprawl and modern development can encroach upon and degrade natural landscapes, often leading to environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity. Through the portrayal of Admiral Drive, Mantel underscores the theme of the consequences of unchecked urbanization and the exploitation of natural resources as:

> Violence hung in the air, like the smell of explosive. Birds had flown. Foxes had abandoned their lairs. The bones of mice and voles were mulched into mud, and she sensed the minute snapping of frail necks and the grinding into paste of muscle and fur … She looked up, to the grassland that remained. The site was framed by a belt of conifers, like a baffle wall; you could not guess what lay beyond it … Towards the

> main road to Guildford, she could see a hedge, a miscarried foetus dug in beneath it. She could see ghost horses, huddled in the shadow of a wall. It was an indifferent place; no better nor worse than most others (Mantel, 2005: 189-190).

The indifferent portrayal of Admiral Drive as a mundane suburban area reflects Mantel's commentary on the normalization of environmental degradation within the context of a risk society, where indifference to ecological concerns has become pervasive. In addition, the impact on nature is starkly revealed in a dialogue between Alison and her neighbour Michelle, where Michelle mentions the 'plague of rabbit deaths' witnessed by little kids in the nursery, describing it as "with a horrible trickle of black blood coming out of its mouth" (2005: 269). The rabbit, afflicted and suffering amidst its supposed natural habitat, serves as a reminder of the far-reaching consequences of human intervention and environmental neglect.

Beside the destruction of the environment, *Beyond Black* depicts a new world that is ruled under transnational capitalism. Starting with the late 20th century, the transformations in diverse scopes reached a level that brought about unexpected consequences with the pervasiveness of the concept of globalisation. The new era of global politics experienced a fundamental restructuring of diverse national institutions, political structures, and economic frameworks. In this context, transnational capitalism refers to the interconnectedness and interdependence of various entities across national borders, facilitated by advancements in technology and communication. As Manuel Castells argues, "[c]apital markets are globally interdependent … New information systems and communication technologies allow capital to be shuttled back and forth between economies in very short time, so that capital, and therefore savings and investment, are interconnected worldwide" (2003: 311-312). In *Beyond Black*, Mantel explores the ramifications of transnational capitalism and globalisation through Alison's experiences as she navigates the rapidly changing socioeconomic landscape. Alison's work as a psychic medium involves conducting psychic shows that connect the living with the deceased. However, these shows are increasingly commercialized, catering to a global audience driven by consumer demand. The advertisement of Alison in a magazine saying "Alison, psychic since birth. Private consultations. Professional and caring. Relationships, business, health. Spiritual guidance" (2005: 127) suggests the broader

trend of capitalism infiltrating all aspects of life, including the realm of spirituality. In addition, the novel depicts how Alison's psychic shows are influenced by the changing global media and entertainment industries. The portrayal of psychic phenomena in popular culture, such as television shows and movies, shapes public perceptions and expectations surrounding Alison's performances. The phone conversation between another psychic, Mandy, and Alison, focusing on "offering something to the punters that they can't get from satellite TV … a bit more upmarket than going on the razz and sicking up vodka outside some club" (2005: 279) reveals the globalisation of media, influencing the content and format of Alison's shows, and the interconnectedness of local practices with global trends.

As Jeffrey T. Nealon states, the contemporary age has changed because "capitalism itself is the thing that's intensified most radically since … '80s" (2015: 118). This intensification of capitalism in the 21st century shows its impact on individuals' daily struggles, trying to secure themselves financially. In addition to Alison's struggle to fit in the new system to fend for herself, her business partner Colette's anxieties about financial stability are palpable as she contemplates her dependence on Alison, both financially and professionally. As a woman who possesses basic secretary skills, involving how to use certain computer programs or do taxes, the lack of any special talent of Colette and her joint mortgage with Alison bind the two together financially, making it daunting for Colette to envision a future without Alison. This dependency is further underscored by Colette's desperate plea, thinking "if I quit working for her … how would I get another job? When it comes to YOUR LAST POSITION, what would I put on my CV?" (2005: 22). Fearing she will not be able to find a path of her own to survive, Colette silently conveys her desperation as "Al, don't leave me, don't die and leave me without a house and a job. You're a silly cow, but I don't want to do this world on my own" (2005: 43). In the midst of these financial uncertainties, even Morris, Alison's spirit guide, reflects on the precariousness of employment in the contemporary era. He acknowledges the shifting dynamics of the job market, recognizing the necessity of constant adaptation and retraining to remain relevant in an environment where job security is a thing of the past. As Morris puts it, "What brings me back? I have got a mission. I have got a big job on. I have got taken on a project. You've got to retrain these days. You've got to update yourself. You don't want to go getting made redundant. There's no

such thing anymore as a job for life" (2005: 326). His words highlight the broader socioeconomic context in which characters like Colette and Alison navigate, where the impermanence of employment looms large, demanding constant adaptation and resilience.

As a result of these changes in the contemporary globalised age, profound anxiety permeates society as individuals grapple with uncertainty and insecurity in a rapidly changing world. Zygmunt Bauman's analysis of anxiety emphasizes the significance of understanding personal safety in society. Bauman argues that "[t]he preoccupation with personal safety, inflated and overloaded with meanings beyond its capacity due to the tributaries of existential insecurity and psychological uncertainty, towers yet higher over all other articulated fears, casting all other reasons of anxiety into yet deeper shade" (2005: 119). Therefore, in this context concerns about personal safety are magnified and contribute to a pervasive sense of anxiety among individuals. In this regard, Alison's profession as a psychic medium, traveling around London to perform psychic shows, serves as a reflection of the uncertainty and anxiety prevalent in contemporary society. Her clients seek reassurance and guidance in an increasingly complex and unpredictable world, where traditional sources of stability and security may no longer suffice. This reliance on mediums like Alison extends beyond personal concerns to encompass various aspects of life, including romance and love life. For instance, the novel portrays scenes of hen parties with psychics "giving advice on love and marriage" (2005: 281) that highlights the societal tendency to seek guidance and validation from alternative sources amidst the pervasive anxiety of the modern age.

In exploring the anxiety and uncertainty of contemporary society, Mantel adeptly portrays how individuals, particularly women like Colette and Alison, grapple with these challenges in distinct ways, revealing contrasting responses to the newly emerged globalized world. The characters of Colette and Alison embody contrasting responses to the newly emerged globalized world both with their appearances and characteristics. Colette, whose name implies victory and success, epitomizes the aspirations of this globalized power and tries to live according to the ideal woman image of the globalised society. Her thin appearance and focus on financial success align with the ideals imposed by this society, contrasting sharply with Alison's rejection of these norms with her overweight and out-of-norms career.

Therefore, Alison's weight becomes an indication of an intentional rejection of the imposed standards of the globalized society and serves as a symbolic resistance to the pressures of assimilation and commodification. Furthermore, Colette stands as the representative of this newly emerged, globalised power, deciding to expand the business globally and turn Alison into a transnational brand. The narrator describes her intentions by stating that "Colette had got her online these days, e-mailing predictions around the globe and doing readings for people in different time zones. 'I'd like to make you a global brand,' Colette said. 'Like …' Her sentence had tailed off. She could only think of fat things, like McDonald's and Coca-Cola. In Al's belief, the four of swords governed the Internet" (2005: 306). This passage not only highlights Colette's ambition to transform Alison into a global phenomenon but also underscores the extent to which Colette views success through the lens of mass consumption and commercialization, even making fun of Alison through their perspective. Despite this effort of Colette, Alison shows no interest in being part of this transformation and resists Colette's attempts to conform to the dictates of the globalized world.

The contrast between Alison and Colette is also evident in their personalities, highlighting their differing approaches to contemporary issues. Alison, whose name denotes nobility and exaltation, has a character suiting her name that embodies sincerity and empathy in her interactions with others, displaying a genuine concern for their well-being. While "Colette [is] sharp, rude and effective" (2005: 14), unable to feel anything, not even when "her heart was touched: where her heart would be" (2005: 377), Alison is an emotional and sincere woman who displays compassion and empathy towards others. For instance, despite Colette's apparent lack of emotional connection, Alison expresses gratitude towards her, acknowledging, "Colette, I don't know how you do it. All your patience. These broken nights … I'm grateful. I might not show it. But I am, sweetheart. I don't know where I'd be now, if we'd never met" (2005: 43). Throughout the novel, Alison demonstrates resilience in the face of adversity and strives to find hope and meaning in her work as a medium. In contrast, Colette presents a starkly different persona, characterized by a cold and harsh demeanour that reflects her cynical outlook on life. Therefore, her interactions are often transactional and calculated, lacking the warmth and authenticity that define Alison's approach. In other words, whereas Colette represents the drive

towards global commodification and objectification, seeking to turn Alison into a marketable product, Alison embodies resistance to this transformation, clinging to sincerity and authenticity in the face of globalized capitalism. By juxtaposing these two characters, Mantel reveals the struggles of contemporary womanhood and the different ways in which women navigate and respond to the pressures and uncertainties of modern life.

The novel's exploration of the diverse coping approaches of Alison and Colette, as well as all the other characters who strive to survive, serves as a microcosm for the societal transformation into what Frank Furedi terms "therapy culture." In this culture, "[t]he emphasis placed on human vulnerability dooms people to the role of helpless victims of circumstance. This deflation in the status of human subjectivity coincides with the inflation of the threat that external circumstances represent to the integrity of the individual self" (Furedi, 2004: 127). Therefore, in this new global age individuals are made to feel more vulnerable and less capable of navigating the challenges of the world on their own. This perception of increased vulnerability and powerlessness contributes to feelings of anxiety, fear, and a diminished sense of self-efficacy among individuals in contemporary society. In the 21st century's more globalized world, problems and concerns, including trauma, have become globalized. Issues such as the transition to a risk society, the destabilizing impact of transnationalism, environmental degradation, and the invasion of privacy are among the prominent challenges faced globally, as portrayed in *Beyond Black*. Furedi explains the concept of risk creating the therapy culture as:

> It is generally represented as a force that exists independent of the people confronted by it. Once risk is seen to exist in its own right and is therefore only minimally subject to human intervention, the only possible role for a person is to avoid or to minimise a pre-existing risk. In this scenario, the risks are the active agents and people at risk are cast in the role of passivity. The diminution of the human agency that is implicit in the 'at risk' concept acquires clear definition in contemporary therapeutic ideas about the powerless self. Contemporary consciousness of being at risk - that is, existing in a state of powerlessness - gains shape and definition through therapeutic culture's focus on emotional vulnerability. People who are at risk or people confronting risky situations do not

> simply face physical harm. Increasingly, it is the element of psychological distress that dominates deliberations surrounding anxieties about risks. (2004: 131)

Furedi's analysis illuminates the pervasive influence of therapy culture on contemporary society, a theme echoed in *Beyond Black*. Through the characters' struggles, Mantel offers a commentary on the erosion of individual agency in the face of societal transformations. The novel serves as a compelling exploration of vulnerability and the relentless pursuit of stability amidst global uncertainties.

Building on Furedi's analysis, the personal traumas of characters like Alison illustrates how the trauma concept of therapy culture shapes their experiences and perceptions. Furedi states that "[t]he metaphor of trauma clearly captures the way that therapeutic culture conceptualises the relationship between the self and external reality. The external world is conceptualised as an object over which people can have little control. Through this objectification of social reality people are recast into a powerless role" (2004: 127). In this regard, Alison's childhood traumas serve as poignant illustrations of Furedi's assertion. The scenes portraying Alison growing up with a neglectful mother who "forgot to send her to school" (Mantel, 2005: 91), or being attacked by a dog and requiring medical attention, only to be met with her mother's refusal, citing that "she couldn't be sitting in a queue all afternoon" (Mantel, 2005: 92), highlight the profound lack of care and concern in her upbringing. These instances exemplify the emotional neglect and abandonment Alison experienced in her formative years, contributing to her sense of powerlessness and vulnerability as described by Furedi. In addition, as the narrative unfolds, a dialogue between Colette and Alison during an interview for their book sheds light on the physical violation of Alison. Colette's direct assertion "Al, face up to it. You didn't dream it. She had you molested. Probably sold tickets. God knows." and Alison's reply "I think I'd already been—that. What you say. Molested" (Mantel, 2005: 103) show how she has been violated by patriarchy since childhood, by customers and partners of her prostitute mother, hence becoming traumatised with memory issues. Moreover, her being molested by even her teacher, Mr. Naysmith, who is supposed to guide her in her future, with "pulling [her] skirt up" and "intruding on [her] private reverie" (Mantel, 2005: 117) highlights the failure of institutions to protect vulnerable individuals like Alison.

Even when she becomes an adult, the violation continues with the ghosts of the past that do not let her go. Most importantly, her so-called spirit guide, Morris, who has been with Alison since her childhood, is described as a spirit which "insisted that she give him a good character, and if he wasn't flattered and talked up, he'd get his revenge" (2005: 35). This constant presence of Morris, exerting control over how Alison perceives and presents him, symbolizes the enduring power dynamics of her past traumas and the patriarchal violation on her sense of agency and integrity. In addition to Morris's manipulation, the depiction of what Alison goes through when she tries to resist further underscores the relentless grip of her past experiences. As the narrator describes, "[a]t first she thought that by an effort of will and concentration, she would make him keep his distance. But if she resists Morris, there is a buildup of pressure in her cheekbones and her teeth. There is a crawling feeling inside her spine, which is like slow torture; sooner or later you have to give in, and listen to what he's saying" (2005: 123). In continuation, this dialogue between Morris and Alison signifies the enduring trauma that haunts Alison's existence. Morris's callous reminder of her past traumas vividly exposes the deep scars that continue to afflict her psyche. His assertion, "where would you be if it weren't for me? If it hadn't been for me, the boys would have cut you up a bloody sight worse. You'd be disfigured," mercilessly highlights the extent of the horrors she endured in her childhood (2005: 35). Alison's response, filled with bewilderment and pain, encapsulates the profound sense of injustice and confusion that permeates her existence. Her plea for understanding, questioning Morris "why did they do it? What did I ever do to you? I was a child, for pity's sake, who would want to take a knife and slice up a child's legs and leave her scarred?" (2005: 35) lays bare the raw vulnerability and enduring trauma that she grapples with daily. This poignant exchange not only reveals the depths of Alison's suffering but also underscores the insidious nature of the patriarchal forces that have shaped her life.

Analysing the impact of traumatic experiences, Theresa Edlmann articulates:

> [T]he way in which the previously coherent and often well-rehearsed stories of a person's life history, their identity and their place in the world up to that point are disrupted and fragmented. The result is that it is impossible to piece together a clear account of themselves, what happened during particular traumatic experiences, or what the effects and

> legacies of those traumas have been. The courage and psychological resources required to reconfigure coherent personal narratives in the face of emotional, mental and physical fragmentation are intense enough. They become even more so in a context and society that itself remains deeply fractured, and where violence, poverty and crime are relentless and ongoing realities. (2019: 115)

Therefore, Alison's ongoing struggles in an age of emptied meanings, lacking core values and connection eventually lead to the fragmentation of her psyche, to a mental state like schizophrenia, exemplified by Alison's ghosts as for the hallucinations. Colette's observation saying, "I have to believe in what you do, because I see you doing it, I see and hear you, but how can I believe it, when it's against the laws of nature?" (2005: 135) further accentuates the surreal nature of Alison's experiences, as she grapples with the inexplicable. Although she creates this world to escape the brutal realities of life, she continues to be haunted by the ghosts of her past. The occurrences of the impact of traumatised women appears during one of the psychic sessions when Alison's psychic friend Mrs. Etchell encounters familiar faces from Alison's past, signifying also a connection with sympathy and empathy that allows them to share vision, sharing the pain of fragmented women. Her statement, "I saw Capstick at the back there. And the rest. All that old gang. I recognized them large as life. But they've got modifications. It was horrible. It turned me up" (2005: 318) underscores this imprint of Alison's traumatic past on her current reality. All these traumatic experiences shed light on the violation of women and reflect the broader societal challenges of the contemporary age. As exemplified with Alison, when someone's psyche is fragmented and traumatised, it leads to a disconnection from reality and self. As R. D. Laing states "a divorce of self from body deprives the unembodied self from direct participation in any aspect of the life of the world, which is mediated exclusively through the body's perceptions, feelings and movements (expressions, gestures, words, actions, etc.)" (1990: 69). In this regard, Laing's assertion underscores how Alison's fragmented psyche disconnects her from direct engagement with reality and worsens her feeling of confusion and surrealism. Experiencing a loss of agency, with intrusive voices referring to existential threats that cause powerlessness and lack of control over one's own mind, Alison's hallucinations serve as a manifestation of this split psyche, in which the fragmented

parts of her consciousness remain unaware of each other, as if there is another agent doing the talking, and reinforce her sense of disconnection and loss of agency.

For someone grappling with a split personality, the stakes lie in maintaining human agency, the sense of control over one's life story. When one begins to write, it entails recounting that narrative, thereby assuming the role of the author. This grants a form of authoritative agency and fosters a sense of control. As Aryan argues:

> Alison appears to be a victim of a patriarchal society (under the coercion of the voices/ghosts). However, she experiences a spectrum that expands from agentlessness (victimisation) towards a process of gaining agency by coming to terms with the voices she hears. Her lack of agency is more apparent when the voices talk about her, not directly to her. This implies that Alison experiences herself as an object, rather than an active subject. (2020: 221)

Additionally, the existence of an unlocatable, disembodied voice, a hallucination, poses an existential threat as it appears external and unfamiliar. This sense of unfamiliarity contributes to its uncanny effect. In exploring this phenomenon, Steven Connor introduces the concept of the vocalic body, describing it as "the idea – which can take the form of dream, fantasy, ideal, theological doctrine, or hallucination – of a surrogate or secondary body, a projection of a new way of having or being a body, formed and sustained out of the autonomous operations of the voice" (2000: 35). Therefore, the voices Allison imagines and hears, despite lacking physical presence, have the power to evoke a quasi-corporeal sensation, intensifying the existential unease experienced by the individual. Furthermore, this concept of the vocalic body not only sheds light on the complexity of perception and reality in Alison's experience but also underscores the profound psychological toll of her fragmented existence.

In this journey trapped within a perilous world, Alison grapples with the aftermath of her traumas by seeking refuge amidst her fragmented psyche. Yet, in this fractured reality, her memories emerge as fragmented pieces which reflect the emptiness of an age devoid of core values and connections. As Louis A. Sass explains, in schizophrenia, "feeling, wishing, thinking, and memory processes … become different, uncertain, intolerably changed" (1995: 24). Hence, the loss of memory becomes a self-defence mechanism for the traumatised psyche that tries to

forget the traumatic experience in order to allow moving on. Through this struggle, Alison confronts the alienation and dislocation inherent in a world where the self is detached from the body. In the midst of this existential struggle, Alison's hallucinations emerge as tangible manifestations of her fractured psyche, reinforcing her sense of disconnection and loss of agency amidst her memory issues. Referring to sensitive people, traumatised ones who can communicate with these hallucination-ghosts, Alison articulates her experiences as:

> [Their] heads, on the inside, the content is all mixed up and it's gone putrid. They've gone rotten inside from thinking about things, things that the other sort of people never have to think about. And if you have low, rotten thoughts, not only do you get surrounded by low entities, but they start to be attracted, you see, like flies around a dustbin, and they start laying eggs in you and breeding. And ever since I was a little kid I've been trying to have nice thoughts. But how could I? My head was stuffed with memories. I can't help what's in there. And with Morris and his mates, it's damage that attracts them. ... And so when you have certain thoughts … these sort of spirits come rushing round. And you can't dislodge them. Not unless you could get the inside of your head hoovered out. (Mantel, 2005: 320-321)

Her description suggests that she perceives the thoughts and memories within her mind as "rotten" and "putrid," indicating a deep sense of distress and trauma. Additionally, she describes how these negative thoughts attract "low entities" and "spirits," which metaphorically represent the haunting nature of her past experiences and traumas, such as Morris and his mates, or the struggle of survival since childhood, contributing to this trauma. Therefore, it portrays Alison as a traumatized individual grappling with a split psyche, where each traumatic memory or person manifests as a ghost-like entity that haunts her agency and mental well-being. In addition, Alison's lament regarding her memory of molestation underscores the enduring impact of trauma on her psyche. As she reflects on her experience, "I must have screamed, she thought, I must have screamed but I don't remember. I must have screamed but no one heard me" (2005: 353), it displays a sense of isolation and abandonment she experiences, underscoring the impact of trauma on memory and identity.

As Alison grapples with the fragmented aftermath of her traumas, sincerity emerges as the guiding principle, illuminating her authentic self amidst a fractured reality. Authenticity and sincerity guide her actions as she endeavours to be true to herself and others, recognizing the need for a global approach to addressing societal fragmentation and trauma. Whether directed towards her business partner, and customers, or simply towards all those who endure, with both irony and sincerity being in the framework, Alison consistently demonstrates a commitment to genuine connection and understanding. Although throughout the novel, Colette accuses Alison of being insincere and dishonest on many cases, exemplified with Colette's thoughts of Alison, as "[b]eing nice. Being professional. It's all the same to you. You're the most insincere person I know" (2005: 202), Alison actually presents her sincere self and thoughts on many cases. One example for that can be seen in Alison's conversation with Colette after a psychic show, explaining why Alison has an evil spirit guide instead of an angel. As Alison says "if you ask why I have an evil guide, it's to do with the fact that I'm a bad person, because the people who were around me in my childhood were bad. They took out my will and put in their own" (2005: 321), she confesses her true thoughts about her identity and self, thus being sincere both with her past and her psyche even if it means the resurgence of past traumas. In addition, Colette's tape-recording Alison in order to write a book of her life presents the honest and sincere attitude of Alison. As a traumatised woman who has supressed her memories, the more Alison talks about her past, trying to remember and bring the pieces together, she reaches to a point where she can self-criticise herself and speaks of her life and thoughts sincerely.

In *Beyond Black*, the fragmented memory finds cohesion and healing through the transformative power of storytelling, accompanied with sincerity and empathy. Alison's split psyche, characterized by hallucinations and the creation of other characters, indicates a rich inner world where her mind is capable of generating multifaceted personalities and scenarios. Such a condition implies a heightened imaginative capacity and a significant degree of introspection. Alison's split psyche serves as a coping mechanism or a means of processing complex emotions and experiences. Through the creation of alternate personas, she explores aspects of herself and externalizes her inner conflicts. For example, Alison's empathetic faculty is exemplified in her behaviour towards Mart, a troubled and emotionally unstable

homeless young man hired for gardening. By feeding and listening to him, and letting him crash in her shed, Alison demonstrates her unwavering empathy towards Mart. Trying to offer Mart some support, Alison thinks "[w]hat would he enjoy? Poor little bugger. You see somebody like that and say, well, his mother must have loved him; but in his case, no … I feel sorry for the bloke. Homeless and down on his luck" (2005: 256). Rather than dismissing him or treating him with indifference, Alison extends a compassionate hand and recognizes his humanity and inherent worth. She offers him not only practical assistance but also a sense of belonging and acceptance, creating a safe space where Mart feels seen and understood. Alison's actions exemplify her commitment to embodying the sincerity. Furthermore, when Colette accuses Alison of harbouring Mart, Alison replies with "I don't know … I don't think so. I didn't have an intention, I just wanted to do a good action, I suppose I didn't think; I just felt sorry for him, because he's got nowhere to go and so he has to go in a shed" (2005: 273). These reveal that Alison's empathy extends beyond mere sympathy or pity; it reflects a profound understanding of others' struggles and a genuine desire to alleviate their suffering.

Furthermore, Alison's characterization of traumas through the ghosts and hallucinations reflects her role as an author in the contemporary age. This act not only sheds light on societal issues but also embodies her as a psychic attempting to bridge the gap between the deceased and the living. As she undergoes transformation and actively engages in benevolent actions, she emerges as a healer of the age, symbolizing the healing role of contemporary female authors. Aryan highlights the significance of Alison's profession as:

> The psychic profession ("crystal healing" [38], fortune telling, tarots) gives her, even unknowingly, the opportunity to negotiate with her own past, an act that other instruments, that claim they could bring about therapy, fail to do. This act of practising mediumship allows Alison to write an illness narrative which touches upon the risky, fragile, threatening world around her. – a solution to the failure of therapy culture that diminishes an individual's agency and power. (2020: 218-219)

In this regard, the depth of Alison's empathy becomes even more pronounced in the aftermath of Princess Diana's death. As the narrator states, "[i]t seems another era now, another world: before the millennium, before the Queen's Jubilee, before the

Twin Towers burned" (2005: 124). The change of Alison's attitude not only refers to the impact of global incidents at the turn of the century, but also underscores her growing awareness of the interconnectedness of global events and personal experiences. Aspiring to be like Princess Diana, the Queen of Hearts, Alison embraces sincerity and empathy as a coping mechanism against the escalating complexities and uncertainties of the age. Amidst a changing world, Alison grapples with the desire to emulate Princess Diana's altruism. Reflecting on her struggles, she remarks "I wanted to do a good action but I never seem to manage it. It's not enough just to be nice. It's not enough just to ignore it when people put you down. It's not enough to be—forbearing. You have to do a good action" (2005: 293). In the midst of these trials, Alison's pursuit of empathy and action stands as a beacon of hope, signalling a shift towards a more proactive and compassionate approach to addressing societal injustices and personal challenges.

Alison's empathetic interactions with ghosts intertwine with her storytelling prowess, shaping not only the narrative of her life but also her very sense of self. Phyllis Hastings explains the relationship between storytelling and the formation of identity by delineating "three facets of selfhood, one's identity. First is the essential personality one was born with. Second is associations and interactions with others. Third is the person's connection with the larger world" (2019: 34). Considering these as aspects of an individual's evolving self-awareness and interpersonal skills, Hastings describes them as "building a set of personal values to live by; dealing with emotional drives; and developing and using imaginative thinking" (2019: 35). This perspective reveals the significance of storytelling in shaping one's identity. Therefore, Alison's communication with her inner voices not only externalizes trauma but also facilitates a dialogue with her own psyche, bridging the gap between fragmented pieces of memory, being the author of her own narrative. In this context, Alison is a storyteller because she does characterisation. The things she sees are not real, but she creates them. It shows that she is a traumatised woman, a legacy of postmodernism, reflecting the traumatised psyche. She endeavours to heal and recover the pieces by telling the stories of these voices, characterizing each. Alison's introduction of her spirit guide as "Morris is the name. Been with me since I was a child" (2005: 19) illustrates her deep connection with these imagined entities. A flashback of Alison's past, regarding her humiliation by her teacher, reveals Alison's

talent on storytelling, emerging at a young age. Alison's dialogue of dogs in her diary, saying "'Slurp, slurp, yum yum,' said Harry. 'Give us some,' said Blighto. 'No,' said Harry. 'Today it is all for me.'" (2005: 101) reveals a world Alison has created in her mind, with its characters playing their roles in a created scenario. This imaginative prowess empowers Alison to transcend the limitations of her fragmented psyche, transforming it into a tool for understanding and connection with others, functioning like an author. Through storytelling, Alison transforms her disembodied voices into sources of healing and gains power against their threatening nature by bringing them into the realm of embodied entities. In other words, storytelling allows her to reclaim agency and connection, transcending traditional storytelling conventions as the boundaries between reality and imagination blur.

Overall, being a psychic and facilitating a connection between the dead and the living, and providing closure or assurance to her customers, as well as herself, Alison assumes the role of a healer within therapy culture as a medium. Her empathetic approach, evident from her first encounter with Colette at a psychic session, reflects her ability to connect deeply with others, offering solace and understanding in a society marked by emotional vulnerability. Unlike her counterpart Natasha, Alison embodies sincerity and empathy. As Colette's narrative reflects:

> Natasha had been a spiteful little slag, and the woman on the platform seemed to have no spite in her; Natasha had implied she was too old for new experiences, but Alison spoke as if she had her life before her. She spoke as if her feelings and thoughts could be mended; she imagined popping into the dry cleaners and getting the broken zip replaced, the zip that joined her thought to her feelings and joined her up inside. (Mantel, 2005: 68)

Therefore, through her compassionate demeanour and optimistic outlook, Alison symbolizes hope and resilience in the face of adversity, reflecting the contemporary woman's capacity for growth and self-discovery. Operating within a framework that emphasizes emotional vulnerability and the need for healing, Alison's interactions with clients seeking solace and guidance reflect the broader societal reliance on mediums and therapists to navigate personal struggles and trauma. Additionally, her psychic abilities serve as a metaphor for the therapeutic process, wherein individuals confront their inner demons and past traumas in search of healing and self-

understanding. Thus, Alison's role as a medium not only facilitates communication with spirits but also mirrors the therapeutic journey of self-discovery and healing in the face of societal challenges.

Building upon the transformative potential of trauma and the complexities of therapy culture in modern society, and Alison's utilization of storytelling with sincerity and empathy as a potent tool for individuals to reconstruct their sense of self and navigate the challenges of contemporary existence, Alison signifies the contemporary author who employs storytelling as the means to bridge the gap between inner and outer worlds, between fragmented pieces, and reclaiming agency and integrity in the face of pervasive societal fragmentation. As Aryan contends, Mantel is one of the contemporary authors who "employ the technique of ironic distanciation to create a sense of fellow-feeling, without falling into sentimentalism or complete scepticism. [Her] novels, via self-reflexivity, mise-en abyme, together with postmodernist scepticism, explore the limits of empathetic imagining" (2020: 205). This perspective illuminates Mantel's skilful navigation of empathetic storytelling, enriching her narratives with layers of depth and insight into the complexities of human experience and emotion. Since there has been a discernible departure from the detached irony of postmodernism towards a more sincere narrative approach within the contemporary dynamic literary landscape, Mantel and Alison's new and unorthodox healer role as an author demonstrates how postmodern irony, with its critique of grand narratives and playful cynicism, has led to the emergence of various new theories in storytelling.

The impact on literature pronounced with embracing a sincere one on behalf of the author by abandoning the excessive irony and carefree attitude of postmodernism signals a transformation beyond the conventional realms of postmodernism and into the territory of metamodernism. As Nicholas Stavris states, "faced with a contemporary culture of anxiety, artists attempt to overcome the uncertainties of the human condition in the twenty-first century by reaching out for a renewed period of sincerity. Authenticity is the new focus for the present day artist" (2015: 407). Similarly, Arya Aryan remarks this positive change in literature by noting that a "new concept of authorship emerges in this more globalised and fragile new risk therapy culture for it produces pressures on novelists not only to embrace the New Sincerity but to return to the old eighteenth-century ideals of the novelist as

a purveyor of moral sentiment within the new version of liberal economics" (2020: 179). This shift reflects an evolution in the role of the author, from detached observer to active participant in shaping societal discourse and moral reflection.

In conclusion, the novel *Beyond Black* offers a profound exploration of societal and personal struggles against the backdrop of contemporary Britain's wastelands. Through Alison's interactions with spectral beings and her navigation of psychic landscapes, Mantel delves into the complexities of globalisation's impact and sheds light on broader societal and environmental issues. Furthermore, Alison's encounters with violent male ghosts serve as poignant symbols of patriarchal oppression, allowing Mantel to illuminate the systemic struggles faced by contemporary women. These spectral encounters not only critique societal norms but also provide Alison with a pathway towards healing and self-discovery, enabling her to confront and cope with her suppressed traumas. As Aryan contends, "[t]he Victorian preoccupation with spiritualism, the invocation of the voices of the dead, becomes a figure for the contemporary woman writer's externalisation of an inner dialogic conflict that is concretised through the creation of character" (2020: 207). Through the interaction with ghosts, Alison faces her supressed and fragmented self, and as she comes to terms with them and assert her authority again, she builds up her psyche and self, creating interconnectedness between the fragmented pieces.

IV. LIGHTHOUSEKEEPING

This chapter analyses Jeanette Winterson's novel *Lighthousekeeping* (2004), with a focus on the impact of globalisation on personal and communal identities, which are intricately woven into the narrative structure and thematic fabric of the text. It explores how these transformations reveal the characteristic fragmentation of the age, as depicted through the psyche of contemporary women and the society at large during the turn of the century. Specifically, the analysis delves into the complexities of human experience - such as memory, longing, and identity - through the protagonist Silver's journey. Addressing themes of love, loss, and the quest for meaning in an uncertain world, her journey serves as an in-depth exploration of the human condition in the contemporary age. Analyzing this journey, where storytelling is interwoven with empathy at its core, this study reveals the healing effects of narration and empathy on fragmentation, as they foster understanding and connection in a globalized context. The chapter also reflects on how Winterson, representative of contemporary women authors, influences shifts in contemporary literature and signals a departure from the irony and detachment typical of postmodernist literature towards a worldview characterized by sincerity and profound engagement. Her approach in the novel navigates between modernist sincerity and postmodernist irony, capturing the oscillation between hope and melancholy that defines the contemporary human experience, a characteristic embraced by metamodernism. This analysis argues that through Silver's narrative, storytelling emerges not only as a narrative technique but also as a therapeutic medium that reduces anxiety and helps individuals articulate their experiences amidst rapid changes and existential threats. This therapeutic action is achieved by fostering deeper engagement with personal and collective narratives, which promotes a sense of shared human experience and facilitates personal agency, healing the fragmented psyche.

Jeanette Winterson, born in 1959, is celebrated in literature for her daring exploration of themes such as love, identity, and sexuality in her works. Adopted by working-class parents, Winterson went through her childhood in harsh conditions.

She grew up in a modest household, facing various socioeconomic struggles that deeply influenced her worldview and later, her writing. In her autobiography *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* (2011), Winterson portrays her mother as a multifaceted figure who adopted her "because she wanted a friend … and because [Jeanette] was like a flare sent out into the world" (2011: 9), suggesting that her mother sought to leave a lasting impression through Jeanette's existence. Having experienced abuse as a child, including incidents such as being "locked out overnight … sat on the doorstep till the milkman came, drank both pints … and walked to school" (2011: 10), Winterson's early experiences deeply shaped her resilience and informed her portrayal of adversity in her writing. Throughout her career, Winterson has continued to challenge literary conventions, blending genres and styles with a masterful command of language. Her exploration of themes such as love, empathy, and the search for meaning, as exemplified through Silver, who embodies a healer role in the contemporary globalized world, underscores the love and empathy that Jeanette Winterson could not receive from her mother. Furthermore, Winterson's narrative style represents a new stance, which is explained by Martyn Colebrook as "many writers who were associated with postmodernism in their early careers have perhaps stepped back from its more extreme philosophical relativism whilst retaining in their 2000s fiction broadly experimental approaches, including … Jeanette Winterson" (2015: 18).

Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping* is a captivating tale that delves into the complexities of identity and the quest for meaning. Set in the fictional English village of Salts, the story follows the life of a young orphan girl named Silver. Taking place primarily in the latter half of the 20th century, the narrative reflects Silver's upbringing and experiences during this period. Losing her mother at a young age, as Silver finds herself adrift in the governmental system, navigating through the challenges of finding a home and an occupation, she also grapples with the fragmentation of her identity, feeling the lack of a stable familial structure to provide a sense of belonging and identity. After her mother's death, taken under the wing of Pew, the inhabitant and worker of the town lighthouse, Silver discovers solace in the stories he shares about her ancestors and the rich history of the lighthouse, including tales involving Babel Dark. However, the automation of the lighthouse brings significant change with Pew's departure and Silver's journey of finding her place in

society. Later, going to Bristol, Silver struggles to adapt to urban life and attempts to find a job. However, she faces challenges due to societal norms and her lack of official identity. Afterwards, in her next stop, in Capri, Silver encounters a talking bird which gets her attention by calling her name, leading her to steal it in a quest for connection and self-understanding. However, this action triggers mental health struggles with official authorities and prompts reflections on identity and existential questions. Finally, upon arriving in Athens and journeying to the island of Hydra, Silver continues to reflect on love, identity, and the nature of reality with the scenes of her unnamed lover. As the story progresses, it unveils the protagonist's deep longing and loneliness following her lover's departure. Concluding with the protagonist's solitary return to the lighthouse, where they contemplate their time with Pew, Silver meditates on the transient essence of life and love. Expressing affection for her absent lover, she confronts the uncertainty of life and future, ultimately embracing the beauty and fragility of existence while cherishing the memories of the past.

The impact of globalisation on the environment and society is portrayed through Silver's hometown Salts, which goes through a transformation in various aspects. The descriptions of the town as "a sea village, a fishing village, where every wife and sailor had to believe that the unpredictable waves could be calmed by a dependable god" (Winterson, 2004: 84), and as "the place that would provide the food and the fuel for the lighthousekeeper and his family" (2004: 17) depict Salts before the onset of automation and modernization. These portrayals show that, in its origin, the town was in harmony with nature and provided labour for its people. Yet, the effects of global economic shifts and technological advancements become noticeable with its effect on the lives of its inhabitants and its environment. As for the main struggle of the contemporary age, Winterson depicts a community grappling with unemployment and economic stagnation. In this context, Ulrich Beck's insights into the systemic transformation of the labour market become particularly relevant. He notes that "[i]n the current and coming waves of automation, this system of standardized full employment is beginning to soften and fray at the margins into flexibilizations of its three supporting pillars: labor law, work site and working hours. Thus the boundaries between work and non-work are becoming fluid. Flexible, pluralized forms of underemployment are spreading"

(Beck, 1992: 142). Beck's observation about the erosion of traditional, standardized employment systems by technological advances and globalisation which lead to more flexible and unstable employment conditions, mirrors the socio-economic condition in Salts. The economic base of the community shifts away from stable, traditional jobs toward a more uncertain environment characterized by unemployment.

The impact of globalisation revealing the destabilization of traditional employment structures as analyzed by Beck is presented in the novel through the automation of the lighthouse, which mirrors the shifting economic landscape and the challenges facing traditional industries and ways of life. Miss Pinch's question to Silver, "'[o]ne day the ships will have no crew, and the aeroplanes will have no pilots, and the factories will be run by robots, and computers will answer the telephone, and what will happen to the people?'" (2004: 74-75) foreshadows the impending changes brought by new modernization. In addition, this shift is exemplified in the abandonment of homes that once belonged to prosperous tradesmen, signifying economic decline and a move away from traditional forms of labour. This change is evident in Miss Pinch's neighbourhood, where "a terrace of houses set back from the road. … They had once been the houses of prosperous tradesmen, but it was a long time since anybody had prospered in Salts, and now all the houses were boarded up. Miss Pinch's house was boarded up too, because she said she didn't want to attract burglars" (2004: 14). As Clive Howard Lee states regarding the economic structure after joining the European Community in 1973, around the time Silver becomes orphaned, "[t]he merging of separate economies into a customs union removes all artificial restraints on trade, such as tariffs or quotas, so that trade between them is determined by market forces. The formation of a common market allows the free movement of labour and capital between the member states" (Lee, 1995: 23-24). Consequently, the abandonment of tradesmen's houses hints at the economic decline of Salts, a phenomenon exacerbated by globalisation.

While the setting of *Lighthousekeeping* begins to signal transformations in societal structures, such as socio-economic shifts, it also embodies Ulrich Beck's concept of the risk society. The novel portrays Salts as a microcosm of the broader societal shifts in traditional livelihoods and a diminishing sense of security. These narrative elements resonate with the observations made by Manuel Castells, who

notes:

> Toward the end of the second millennium of the Christian era … [a] technological revolution, centered around information technologies, began to reshape, at accelerated pace, the material basis of society. Economies throughout the world have become globally interdependent, introducing a new form of relationship between economy, state, and society, in a system of variable geometry. (2010: 1)

This global interdependence and the reshaping of societal foundations as described by Castells is observable in Winterson's depiction of the external economic forces shaping local realities, illustrating the practical impacts of these theoretical concepts. As Silver continues her journey of growth with Pew, these shifts in the economic structure become more pronounced. Winterson further illustrates the reach of transnational capitalism through the strategic placement of lighthouses, dictated by powerful business interests from major urban centers, as she writes "England was a maritime nation, and powerful business interests in London, Liverpool, and Bristol demanded that a lighthouse be built here... To protect the Turning Point, a light needed to be built at Cape Wrath" (2004: 15-16). This demonstrates how economic imperatives from powerful urban centers drive infrastructure development, such as the construction of lighthouses, which in turn supports global trade networks and profoundly affects remote locations.

In the novel, Silver's daily routine, consisting of making "the first pot of Full Strength Samson," along with the context of the post she reads to Pew involving "brass instrument catalogues, special offer oilskin coats, thermal underwear from Wolsey – the suppliers of Captain Scott's 1913 Polar Expedition" (2004: 73), illustrates a consumer culture shaped by global economic forces. Even in a remote setting like the lighthouse, the effects of transnational capitalism are manifest through the circulation of goods and services facilitated by modern communication and economic systems. Peter Dicken clarifies this by stating "[g]lobalization processes are qualitatively different from internationalization processes. They involve not merely the geographical extension of economic activity across national boundaries but also - and more importantly - the functional integration of such internationally dispersed activities" (2003: 305). This suggests that the global reach of products like the brass instruments and oilskin coats reflects a deeper integration

of global economic processes rather than mere international trade. Moreover, the scene in which Pew receives a letter from Glasgow regarding the automation of the lighthouse underscores the impact of economic changes on traditional livelihoods. Despite Pew's resistance to leaving, the impersonal bureaucracy of the Northern Lighthouse Board ultimately prevails, demonstrating the inevitability of technological progress in the face of individual attachment to tradition. Although Pew defiantly declares, "I don't need money, child. I need what I have. You write to them and tell them that Pew is staying. They can stop paying me, but I'm staying where I am," the sequence of events that follows—a petition, letters in the newspapers, a small item on the television news, a picket in Glasgow, and a period of 'consultation'—illustrates the futility of individual resistance against institutional change, highlighting the influence of economic imperatives and bureaucratic processes on the lives of ordinary people like Pew and Silver. Dicken further underscores this integration into a global economic fabric by noting "[e]ach one of us is now more fully involved in a global economic system than were our parents and grandparents. Few, if any, industries now have much 'natural protection' from international competition" (2003: 303). This reflects the inescapable reach of globalisation that affects even the most isolated locales and traditional ways of life.

Building on this notion of pervasive global influences, the novel further explores their impact on individual lives, particularly through the character of Silver. Her upbringing in a tilted house before being guarded by Pew exemplifies the personal effects of global forces. Silver's childhood marked by the need to adapt to a literally and metaphorically unbalanced environment sets the stage for understanding the increasing effect of globalisation as she matures. As Silver reflects on her upbringing:

> I lived in a house cut steep into the bank. The chairs had to be nailed to the floor, and we were never allowed to eat spaghetti. We ate food that stuck to the plate – shepherd's pie, goulash, risotto, scrambled egg. We tried peas once – what a disaster – and sometimes we still find them, dusty and green in the corners of the room. Some people are raised on a hill, others in the valley. Most of us are brought up on the flat. I came at life at an angle, and that's how I've lived ever since. (Winterson, 2004: 11)

While the description of harsh conditions with a house built into the side of a hill reflects a life constrained by external forces, it also metaphorically conveys the socio-economic precariousness brought about by globalisation. Being “raised on a hill” or “coming at life at an angle” resonates with the dislocation and marginalization experienced by many in a globalized world. These individuals often find themselves needing to adapt to the uneven terrain of economic and cultural shifts, living lives that deviate from conventional expectations, thus living “on the fringes” of mainstream society. This alignment of Silver’s personal circumstances with the impact of globalisation shows how individual lives are shaped by and respond to global forces, and emphasizes the survival in an interconnected but unequal world.

In this context, Silver’s upbringing in an unconventional household adds another layer to her sense of alienation and marginalization. Her explanation regarding the unusual house she was brought up in sheds light on her feelings of being an outsider. As Silver explains:

> Why didn’t we move house? My mother was a single parent and she had conceived out of wedlock. There had been no lock on her door that night when my father came to call. So she was sent up the hill, away from the town, with the curious result that she looked down on it. Salts. My home town. A sea-flung, rock-bitten, sand-edged shell of a town. Oh, and a lighthouse. (Winterson, 2004: 12).

This passage reveals Silver’s alienation both physically and socially. The fact that her mother “was sent up the hill” signifies a literal and metaphorical distancing from the town and suggests a societal exile due to her mother’s status as a single parent and the circumstances of Silver’s conception. This physical separation from Salts reflects the social stigma they face, and Silver’s description of the town as a “sea-flung, rock-bitten, sand-edged shell” conveys a sense of harshness and isolation that echoes her feelings of detachment and marginalization. Moreover, the mention of the lighthouse, typically a symbol of guidance and safety, ironically underscores her own absence of direction and protection in her community. Bauman’s analysis adds depth to this depiction by illustrating the broader societal dynamics at play. He notes that '‘poverty = hunger’ conceals are many other and complex aspects of poverty – ‘horrible living and housing conditions, illness, illiteracy, aggression,

falling apart families, weakening of social bonds, lack of future and non-productiveness' (Bauman, 2005: 74). These insights highlight the myriad ways in which economic and social structures influence and exacerbate the conditions of marginalization experienced by individuals like Silver.

In this atmosphere of exclusion, the personal dynamics between Silver and her schoolteacher, Miss Pinch, further underscore the deep-seated societal challenges and the glaring absence of supportive structures. Her indifferent and cold approach towards Silver upon the automation decision of the lighthouse, which would leave Silver futureless in terms of occupation, highlights the lack of support among women and the inefficiency of societal institutions like schools, where one would typically expect teachers to serve as beacons of guidance for the younger generation. Miss Pinch's pessimist and limiting view for Silver's future indicates a discouraging lack of belief in her potential, as illustrated in:

> 'Isn't there anything else I could do?' I asked Miss Pinch.
>
> 'Very unlikely.'
>
> 'I'd like to work on a ship.'
>
> 'That would be itinerant.'
>
> 'My father was crew on a ship.'
>
> 'And look what happened to him.'
>
> 'We don't know what happened to him.'
>
> 'We know he was your father.'
>
> 'You mean I happened to him?'
>
> 'Exactly. And look how difficult that has been.' (Winterson, 2004: 73)

This dialogue shows Miss Pinch's indifferent attitude towards Silver's aspirations and signals the limited support and narrow opportunities offered to Silver within her community. Miss Pinch's responses referencing Silver's absent father emphasize societal prejudices and the stigmatization faced by individuals from non-traditional or marginalized backgrounds. Therefore, this exchange illustrates the theme of societal alienation and the challenge of self-empowerment in the face of rigid societal norms.

Building on the theme of marginalization and the disparities fostered by globalisation, *Lighthousekeeping* reveals a pervasive sense of anxiety that permeates the modern age. This widespread anxiety stems from the destabilisation of traditional structures and the uncertainty that comes with navigating an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing world. In *Lighthousekeeping*, Winterson explores this theme of by portraying individuals grappling with existential and psychological ambiguity amid the upheaval of modernization. The novel presents anxiety not just as a personal experience but also as a symptom of societal transformations. She expresses this sentiment with "[w]e're here, there, not here, not there, swirling like specks of dust, claiming for ourselves the rights of the universe. Being important, being nothing, being caught in lives of our own making that we never wanted. Breaking out, trying again, wondering why the past comes with us, wondering how to talk about the past at all" (2004: 90). The dislocation mentioned here reflects the contemporary individual's experience of living in a globalized world, where identities and locations become fluid and uncertain. Beck illuminates this phenomenon, noting that "mobility should be understood in a new way... It is possible to be immobile according to official registration statistics, and yet to live a non-settled existence in several places at once" (2009: 51). This inner mobility, or the feeling of being both here and there, captures the existential insignificance felt by individuals in modern societies. In such an environment, the smallness of human beings is depicted by likening them to insignificant dust particles, capturing a sense of existential insignificance. Moreover, the phrase "being caught in lives of our own making" signifies the contradiction of feeling trapped even though these are the lives they have chosen, leading to dissatisfaction and the struggle to live authentically.

This existential uncertainty and personal dislocation are vividly captured in a unique setting within the narrative. Winterson introduces a symbol of modern-day confession that further explores these themes of identity and self-reflection. Reflecting on this digital confessional, she muses:

> There's a booth in Grand Central Station where you can go and record your life. You talk. It tapes. It's the modern-day confessional – no priest, just your voice in the silence. What you were, digitally saved for the future. Forty minutes is yours. So what would you say in those forty minutes – what would be your death-bed decisions? What of your life

> will sink under the waves, and what will be like the lighthouse, calling you home? We're told not to privilege one story above another. All the stories must be told. (Winterson, 2004: 90)

The digital confessional here serves as a metaphor for the modern individual's struggle with identity amid societal changes. By juxtaposing the vast, impersonal space of Grand Central with the intimate confessions within the booth, Winterson highlights the paradox of visibility and invisibility that globalization imposes on individuals. serves as a potent metaphor for the modern individual's struggle with identity amid societal changes. Winterson masterfully juxtaposes the vast, impersonal space of Grand Central with the confessions made within the booth, highlighting the paradox of visibility and invisibility that globalization imposes on individuals. This scene symbolically explores how the public sphere demands visibility while personal struggles often remain hidden and creates a dichotomy of exposure and concealment in the lives of individuals. Here, Frank Furedi's insights highlight the novel's portrayal of therapeutic culture, where the confessional booth serves as a symbolic space for self-disclosure and navigating personal crises in the public eye. Furedi notes that, "[t]he demand for disclosure and the obsession to talk about one's feeling are strongly supported by the value system of therapeutic culture. Disclosure represents the point of departure in the act of seeking help - an act of virtue in therapeutic culture. Help-seeking also constitutes the precondition for the management of people's emotion." (2004: 42). This cultural push for emotional openness supports Winterson's depiction of the confessional booth as a modern arena for self-expression and therapeutic narrative, where individuals navigate their private crises in public spaces. Furthermore, the lighthouse emerges as a symbol of guidance amid this uncertainty, anchoring Silver's personal narrative in a broader search for meaning. This portrayal captures the essential challenge of maintaining personal identity and coherence in a world where traditional points of reference are increasingly fluid, reflecting the profound societal and psychological shifts that characterize the contemporary era.

Silver's schoolteacher, Miss Pinch, also embodies the anxiety prevalent in the society of contemporary age. The scene where Miss Pinch "dragged open the rain-soaked marine-ply that was hinged over the front door, and undid the triple locks that secured the main door" (2004: 14) indicates a need to safeguard oneself against

external uncertainties, a reflection of the insecurity that accompanies the erosion of traditional societal norms and structures. This theme of anxiety is revisited near the novel's end, underscoring its persistent and growing impact within the community. The economic struggle experienced by George, a character Silver observes while in Ironbridge, reflects the personal economic struggles that are shaped according to global economic changes. George's condition is vividly illustrated when Silver notes "[t]he one they called George was quiet because his wife had got pregnant again. He couldn't afford another child. But he could do an extra shift, if his body could stand it. I felt his anxiety in the cold fog now beginning to rise from the River" (2004: 138). This moment not only reflects George's personal struggle but also the anxiety over economic instability and the future. In this context, Zygmunt Bauman's observation on contemporary anxiety further illuminates this narrative. He notes that "[t]he disintegration of the social network, the falling apart of effective agencies of collective action is often noted with a good deal of anxiety and bewailed as the unanticipated 'side effect' of the new lightness and fluidity of the increasingly mobile, slippery, shifty, evasive, and fugitive power" (2006: 14). Bauman's analysis dovetails with the anxieties depicted in *Lighthousekeeping*, where the impact of automation on traditional roles, such as those of lighthouse keepers, and symbolizes the disintegration of roles and identities within society.

Moving from societal interactions to individual coping mechanisms, Silver's encounter with the talking bird in Capri reflects the personal crises that often intertwine with cultural narratives of therapy and identity. Seeking solace in the calming presence of water, Silver encounters a bird in a window cage, unexpectedly calling out her name. Despite recognizing it as a coincidence, she feels a deep resonance with the moment. Although she attempts to purchase it, its owner refuses to sell it because the bird holds significant emotional value for her. Despite the woman's attachment, Silver's desire for the bird leads her to commit an act of desperation and impulsivity by stealing it that night. Hiding on the island for six months to avoid detection after the theft, Silver endures significant personal sacrifices risking her business and a relationship. Her reflection on this act reveals the depth of her existential turmoil as "I had forgotten myself, long since, long before the bird, and I wanted, in a messy, maddening way, to go on forgetting myself and yet, to find myself too. When the bird said my name it was … like … coming out of

a drugged dream. ‘Bongiorno, Silver!’ Every day the bird reminded me of my name, which is to say, who I am” (2004: 105). Silver’s experience with the talking bird indicates her desperate attempt to reclaim a sense of identity and purpose amidst a rapidly changing world and reflects the existential struggles faced by many individuals in contemporary society. Manuel Castells adds depth to this discussion, noting that “[i]n a world of global flows of wealth, power, and images, the search for identity ... becomes the fundamental source of social meaning” (Castells, 2010: 3). This observation underscores the complexity of Silver’s psychological journey, influenced by global changes, helps her deal with the challenges of modern life. Therefore, Silver’s actions that are driven by a desire to both forget and rediscover herself highlight the profound impact of societal pressures and the quest for self-understanding. It also resonates with the implications of therapy culture in which individuals grapple with internal and external conflicts while seeking meaning and stability.

Silver’s case of stealing the bird also reflects another dimension of the society when she is forced to take therapy sessions from a psychiatrist at the Tavistock Clinic in London and prescribed with Prozac as the consequence of her theft. Expressing her desire to be clearer with her reason of stealing, she states “[m]y life had no light. My life was eating me alive” (2004: 105). This sentiment underscores her oppressed struggle with existential despair and the internal turmoil she experiences. As a session between Silver and the therapist shows, Silver resists to therapy methods used by asserting, “I went to a therapist once, and she gave me a copy of a book called *The Web Not Woven*. Frankly, I would rather listen to the bird” (2004: 105). This shows her resistance to the therapy culture which persuades individuals to get professional help and her alternative therapy which is the bird and her function. In addition, dismissing the psychiatrist’s inquiry about seeking help and asserting her self-sufficiency in daily activities, Silver justifies her act of stealing to her fascination with stories, stating, “I love the stories of Talking Birds, especially Siegfried, who is led out of the forest and into the treasure by the Woodbird. Siegfried is stupid enough to listen to birds, and I thought that the peck, peck, pecking at the pane of my life might mean that I should listen too … I know the bird was talking to me.” (2004: 104-105). Silver’s preference for the talking bird over conventional therapy in here emphasizes her quest for alternative forms of healing

and identity affirmation. Her reliance on the bird for a sense of self shows the limited efficacy of traditional therapeutic approaches in addressing profound existential crises.

In accordance with all these, the novel sheds light on Silver's main distress, the fragmentation of her psyche and the loss of meaning in both her life and the world. The so-called remedy of prescribing her pills aligns with what Furedi states as "[t]he growth of individuation, the erosion of social solidarity and community and the disorganisation of the private sphere has contributed to a sense of isolation which disposes many people to interpret emotional problems through the disease metaphor" (2004: 173). Therefore, while Silver intentionally resists the medicalization of emotional distress and alienation as prescribed by contemporary psychiatry, her journey reveals the limitations of such psychiatric treatments and serves as a significant commentary on larger societal trends towards medicalizing emotional distress. By grappling with existential despair and seeking solace in forms of communication, Silver challenges the notion that mental health can be neatly categorized and treated with medication alone. Her story underscores the importance of recognizing the complexity of individual experiences and the need for more holistic approaches to mental well-being. Moreover, as Furedi argues, the therapy culture often convinces individuals that their problems are solely personal, rather than social or political; however, Silver's challenges clearly extend beyond the individual, reflecting broader societal and political issues. Hence, her story underscores the importance of recognizing the complexity of individual experiences and the need for more holistic approaches to mental well-being.

In the face of the challenges Silver encounters throughout her life, particularly in dealing with traumatic experiences, the ultimate outcome turns out to be the disruption of her life story and identity. Commenting upon Crossley's statement of 'traumatic experiences ruining the narrative', Theresa Edlmann states that:

> [T]he previously coherent and often well-rehearsed stories of a person's life history, their identity and their place in the world up to that point are disrupted and fragmented. The result is that it is impossible to piece together a clear account of themselves … They become even more so in a context and society that itself remains deeply fractured, and where

> violence, poverty and crime are relentless and ongoing realities. (2019: 115)

In this regard, the stories that Silver has absorbed from Pew or novels, along with the diaries she has both written and read, serve as the fragments that form Silver's psyche, dispersed and disconnected, akin to the fragmented psyche of someone experiencing schizophrenia. Louise A. Sass provides a compelling framework for understanding the complexities of the schizophrenic psyche, particularly in how it interacts with modern societal conditions. He notes, "[t]he view I propose differs equally from the psychoanalytic, medical-model, and antipsychiatric positions—as it also does from the three legacies analyzed by Foucault, those of the Modern Age, the Enlightenment, and the Renaissance. Madness, on my reading, is neither the psyche's return to its primordial condition, nor the malfunctioning of reason, nor even some inspired alternative to human reason" (1995: 12). This perspective is crucial in analyzing Silver's mental landscape, as it underscores how her psychological distress is also significantly shaped by the pressures and alienations of her social environment.

On the other hand, as Elizabeth Mary Cummings contends, "[p]ersonal stories can help; can work towards healing, educating and building new connections. From the moment we open ourselves to such stories, we are there as listeners to listen respectfully, actively, openly. The storyteller is giving the listener their trust and this is a way for them both to reach new meaning and gain new strength by sharing" (2019:138). Hence, by embracing and sharing personal narratives, storytelling becomes a transformative tool for Silver to navigate her experiences and find solace through self-discovery. This transformative power of storytelling is further enhanced when Silver engages with the talking bird, initiating a dialogue that becomes therapeutic by allowing her to vocalize and reflect on her internal struggles. Through the creation of worlds using imagination and characterization in storytelling, narratives of the authors, both Silver and Jeanette Winterson, offer a pathway to reunite the fragmented parts of the psyche, fostering healing and wholeness. This transformative power of storytelling is further enhanced with Silver's engagement with the talking bird, initiating a dialogue, characterising it, hence becoming a therapeutic act by allowing her to vocalize and reflect on her internal struggles. Through the creation of worlds using imagination and characterization in

storytelling, narratives of the authors, both Silver and Jeannette Winterson offer a pathway to reunite the fragmented parts of the psyche while fostering healing and wholeness.

The healing effect of storytelling on the fragmented psyche, which is the consequence of the postmodern late capitalism, is exemplified in Silver's self-discovery journey. As she puts it:

> And I did, and the stories I want to tell you will light up part of my life, and leave the rest in darkness. You don't need to know everything. There is no everything. The stories themselves make the meaning … And in every still-life, there is a story, the story that tells you everything you need to know. There it is; the light across the water. Your story. Mine. His. It has to be seen to be believed. And it has to be heard. In the endless babble of narrative, in spite of the daily noise, the story waits to be heard. (Winterson, 2004: 91)

Encapsulating the selective nature of narrative and its power to shape reality, Silver's statement reveals how storytelling selectively illuminates certain aspects of our lives while leaving others obscured. Silver acknowledges that not all parts of one's life need to be revealed for a story to be meaningful; indeed, the act of choosing what to tell and what to withhold is itself significant. This acknowledgement mirrors how individuals often understand and represent themselves, focusing on certain memories and experiences that shape their identity while potentially neglecting others. Additionally, Elizabeth Mary Cummings argues that "[e]ngaging the listener in new ways of thinking can help to take away the stigma, the fear, and the ignorance that block pathways to healing. Not only does this approach help with the treatment of the individual but it also helps those who are supporting loved ones to process what they are dealing with so that they can cope and work through their feelings" (2019: 140). By breaking down barriers and fostering empathy, storytelling not only aids in individual healing but also empowers communities to navigate collective trauma and support one another through shared understanding and compassion. Silver's interaction with the talking bird and her subsequent narrative journey underscore the therapeutic aspects of storytelling in fiction. These elements illustrate how storytelling facilitates a deeper connection to self and others, allowing individuals like Silver to articulate their fears and find meaning amidst uncertainty.

This theme of storytelling as a connector and healer extends to the communal and economic changes impacting the community in Silver's world. Pew's reflection on the automation of the lighthouse illustrates the broader societal shifts and the specific losses that accompany technological progress. He observes, "[w]hen the men with computers came to automate it, it would flash every four seconds as it always did, but there would be no one to tend it, and no stories to tell. When the ships came past, no one would be saying, 'Old Pew's in there, lying his head off with his stories.' Take the life away and only the shell is left" (2004: 75). This narrative captures the profound impact of automation, not just the loss of jobs but the erosion of rich traditions and communal identity that were once integral to the fabric of the community. The removal of human presence from the lighthouse symbolizes the broader displacement occurring within societies as they adapt to the new economic realities driven by technological advancement. Here, storytelling, as seen through Pew's lament, serves as a vital record of human experience and a means to preserve community identity amid the ceaseless march of progress. Thus, the act of storytelling in *Lighthousekeeping* is not merely therapeutic but also a resistance against the depersonalization and isolation brought by globalisation and modernisation, highlighting its role in sustaining community cohesion and identity.

In *Lighthousekeeping*, empathy emerges alongside storytelling as a vital element in fostering connections between detached individuals in a society where fragmentation prevails and the longing for connection is palpable. Emphasizing the concept of love, the themes of human connection and understanding are scattered around the novel not only with Silver but also other characters, too. Not knowing her ancestors or even her father, and becoming an orphan at a young age in a risky, uncertain world, Silver grapples with a profound sense of detachment, leading to gaps in her identity. Yet, empathy emerges as the long-forgotten value, accompanying the narrations she encounters, leading to meaningful relations and making sense of life. In this regard, storytelling woven with empathy becomes the means to heal the fragmentation by empowering Silver to navigate complex emotions and relationships. Arthur J. Clark emphasizes the transformative power of such empathic engagement in therapeutic settings, stating, "[t]hrough an enhanced knowledge of a client, a counselor or therapist is in a position to express an increased understanding in an empathic form. In turn, the therapeutic alliance is strengthened

as an individual experiences a deeper sense of empathic understanding" (2013: 11). This perspective aligns with Silver's experience as she forges meaningful connections with others, overcoming her initial sense of detachment that has grown within her since her childhood. This is echoed in Silver's reflection stating, "I am shy with strangers – all those years alone on the rock with Pew. Our only visitor was Miss Pinch, and she was unrepresentative of the human race. So now, when I meet someone new, I do the only thing I know how to do: Tell you a story" (2004: 129).

In addition, Silver's encounter with the woman from whom she stole the bird reflects the novel's themes of empathy and understanding, illustrating the broader implications of forging connections between individuals. Despite Silver's theft, the woman demonstrates compassion and empathy toward her, a poignant moment revealing the depth of human interconnectedness. Winterson captures this interaction with "[t]he woman whose bird it had been, and was again, felt sorry for me; after all, she might have lost a parrot but she was not cuckoo. She gave me a pile of old National Geographic magazines to read in the loony bin, which is where the nice man at the pizza place told her I would be spending the rest of my life" (2004: 105). Highlighting the capacity for empathy and forgiveness, this scene also underscores the interconnectedness of human experiences, as both Silver and the woman navigate their own struggles and challenges. In this context, Jean Decety's insights into the concept of empathy … "[t]he term empathy is applied to various phenomena that cover a broad spectrum, ranging from feelings of concern for other people, experiencing emotions that match another individual's emotions, knowing what another is thinking or feeling, to blurring the line between self and other" (Decety, 2011: 35). This spectrum underscores how empathy, especially as portrayed through Silver's interactions, bridges the divides created by isolation and fragmentation, enabling individuals to connect on profound levels. Therefore, empathy, intertwined with storytelling, emerges not just as a narrative technique but as a crucial means for Silver to forge meaningful relationships and illustrates how empathic connections can transcend the barriers of individual isolation.

In accordance with Decety's statement, the dialogue between Pew and Silver at the end of a story Pew tells her exemplifies the intersection of empathy and storytelling, also indicating Silver's capacity of empathy:

'Pew?'

‘Go to bed.’

‘What do you think happened to the baby?’

‘Who knows? It was a child born of chance.’

‘Like me?’

‘Yes, like you.’ (Winterson, 2004: 29)

This exchange underscores Silver’s empathetic connection to the characters in Pew’s story, particularly the abandoned baby, as she seeks to identify herself within a narrative that, in Silver's case, is filled with gaps. Through Silver’s identification with the baby’s circumstances and Pew’s acknowledgment of her similarity, a profound sense of empathy is established. Moreover, in the novel, the significance of empathy embedded within storytelling appears with a scene regarding the automation of the lighthouse. Silver’s reflection on the automation process illuminates the transformative power of storytelling, depicting it as a vital element in preserving human connection and identity. As Silver states:

> When the men with computers came to automate it, it would flash every four seconds as it always did, but there would be no one to tend it, and no stories to tell. When the ships came past, no one would be saying, ‘Old Pew’s in there, lying his head off with his stories.’ Take the life away and only the shell is left. (2004: 74)

Therefore, the transformative power of storytelling is evident, depicting it as a vital element in preserving human connection and identity. In *Lighthousekeeping*, Silver emerges as a surrogate for the contemporary woman author who utilizes empathy to navigate the complexities of human experience and societal challenges through storytelling. Her role as an author transcends mere storytelling; it becomes a form of healing within therapy culture society. Through her narratives, Silver delves into the depths of the human psyche, mirroring her own role as an author in the contemporary age.

In essence, Silver emerges as a symbol of healing and reconciliation within the narrative of *Lighthousekeeping*. Her journey of self-discovery and healing parallels the broader themes of the novel, which transcend the boundaries of postmodernism and embrace a metamodernist perspective. The novel exhibits a

metamodernist aspect through its re-evaluation of traditional roles and narratives within the context of contemporary society. In terms of this, Susana Onega's analysis of the novel indicates the metamodernist aspect of the novel. It illuminates how *Lighthousekeeping* reconciles with Jeanette Winterson's earlier rejection of Victorian realism, showcasing a newfound appreciation for the art of storytelling. Onega states:

> The publication of *Lighthousekeeping* nine years after these provocative statements shows Winterson reconsidering them, since *Lighthousekeeping* is a novel about learning the art of storytelling and the story that Silver, the protagonist, tells is fully indebted to key Victorian texts, both real and fictional … as Samantha Matthews has pointedly remarked, readers of Treasure Island 'will recognise in the narrator's opening words – "My mother called me Silver. I was born part precious metal part pirate" – a play on the anti-hero Long John Silver. Similarly, Pew, the lighthousekeeper, is named after 'the sinister pirate Blind Pew who brings "the black spot", while the boy-hero Jim Hawkins is recalled here as Silver's wonky-legged terrier DogJim. (2006: 221)

Onega's observation about the novel suggests a reconciliation with traditional storytelling forms while also incorporating them into a contemporary narrative framework, which is characteristic of metamodernism. By weaving together elements from both past and present, Winterson invites readers to reconsider the boundaries between historical tradition and contemporary innovation, fostering a deeper appreciation for the enduring power of storytelling across generations. Furthermore, the novel showcases metamodern characteristics through its approach to storytelling and character development. Alison Gibbons discusses the rise of autofiction and its implications in the metamodern context, stating "the boom of life writing feeds into what Pine and Gilmore have termed the experience economy, where personal experience is a precious commodity" (2017: 118). This reflects in *Lighthousekeeping* where Silver uses storytelling to navigate and construct her identity with the fragmented realities of her life. Gibbons further argues that contemporary autofiction "moves beyond postmodern self-aggrandizement to a narrative form that seeks to connect the self with broader existential and historical truths" (2017: 118). This reflects in Winterson's approach in *Lighthousekeeping*, where the weaving of personal history with wider cultural narratives showcases a metamodernist affect.

Gibbons notes that this affect "integrates personal experiences into a larger, meaningful context of understanding" (2017: 118) and highlights how Winterson's narrative transcends postmodernism's often relativistic tendencies, engaging more profoundly with the human condition.

Regarding literature and the contemporary age, Nicholas Stavris observes that "it seems that we are now in a state of slow recovery from postmodernism, as we attempt to locate and give meaning to our present condition. This search for meaning can be found in artistic attempts to recapture reality, and presents a shift from postmodern scepticism surrounding authenticity" (2015: 409). In the wake of postmodernism's scepticism and fragmentation, there arises a yearning for connection and meaning in an increasingly interconnected world. Therefore, in case of *Lighthousekeeping*, Silver's journey exemplifies this search for meaning by navigating through the fragmented narratives of her life to find healing and wholeness. In this healing process, Silver's role as a contemporary woman author serves as a bridge between past and present, tradition and innovation. By embracing empathy and weaving personal narratives into her storytelling, Silver acts as a healer, not only for herself but also for readers who embark on her journey of self-discovery. As readers engage with Silver's narrative, they are invited to explore the intricate interplay between empathy, storytelling, and the human experience. Through Silver's storytelling, Jeanette Winterson challenges the limitations of postmodern literature and offers a new attitude that celebrates the transformative power of storytelling, particularly in the hands of contemporary women authors like Silver herself.

In conclusion, *Lighthousekeeping* stands as a compelling testament to the transformative power of storytelling in a world deeply marked by fragmentation and interconnectivity. Through the engaging narrative of Silver, Winterson urges her readers to reconnect with lost ties and find deeper meaning amidst the complexities of contemporary life. Silver's role as a healer, adept at weaving connections among those fragmented by modern challenges, highlights the vital role of storytelling in bridging divides and fulfilling our innate need for understanding and belonging. Moreover, Winterson showcases how empathetic storytelling serves as a powerful conduit for connection, healing, and understanding, effectively restoring the elements of human experience that postmodernism often overlooks. Therefore, *Lighthousekeeping* not only celebrates Winterson's narrative artistry but also offers

solace and hope to those trying to make sense of the modern world's challenges. It underscores her ability to transcend traditional literary forms, making a compelling case for the enduring power of stories to illuminate and heal.

V. CONCLUSION

Through an in-depth analysis of Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black* and Jeanette Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping*, this research has explored the themes of fragmentation, the existential quest for meaning, agency and empathy, all set against the backdrop of globalisation. These novels reflect the complexities of the modern world and provide profound insights into how individuals grapple with the forces of globalisation in their daily lives. By focusing on the characters, especially the protagonists, and the challenging environments they navigate, this thesis demonstrates how these narratives reveal the fragmented reality of our contemporary world, with particular emphasis on its impact on marginalized groups, women and nature. Furthermore, this analysis shows that Mantel and Winterson's narrative techniques transcend the typical fragmentation and irony of postmodernism, evolving towards a more integrative approach that aims to reconnect individuals with a broader human experience, through empathy. In addressing the protagonists' quests for existential meaning amid the challenges and uncertainties brought about by global cultural and societal shifts, this research posits that storytelling, enriched with empathy, serves as a vital mechanism for healing, understanding, and connection, effective on both personal and global scales. The emerging role of contemporary women authors as healers who use storytelling enriched with empathy to weave together fragmented narratives offers new perspectives on life that are both questioning and hopeful, providing deeper understanding and connection. It also underscores significant shifts in contemporary literature by examining how these authors depict the transformation of personal and collective identities under global pressures, engaging with new movements like new sincerity and metamodernism. These movements reflect constructions of authorship that go beyond postmodernism and respond to a world characterized by risk and uncertainty, under the influence of transnational and globalized social control, enlightening and connecting people with empathy.

Both *Beyond Black* and *Lighthousekeeping*, set around the turn of the century, capture the impact of globalisation infiltrating into every aspect of life and serve as rich textual references that reveal the complexities of modern existence. Liam Connell's perspective that globalisation "must be properly understood as a change in the manner in which these processes are narrated or explained, so as to suggest a growing interconnectedness but also a diminishing variance of experience at the global level" (2004: 82) provides a critical lens through which these narratives can be analysed. This viewpoint emphasizes the role of narrative as both a mirror and constructor of our understanding of global dynamics. Through their portrayal of a fragmented world, these novels reflect characteristics of Ulrich Beck's "risk society" and Gilles Deleuze's "control society." In *Beyond Black*, the risk society is evident in the way societal fears and uncertainties shape individual lives. Alison's profession as a psychic, places her at the intersection of personal vulnerabilities and societal anxieties about death and the afterlife. In addition, the control society can be seen in the pervasive surveillance and commodification of personal lives. Colette's attempt to turn Alison into a commercial brand represents the control exerted by market forces over individual identity. Similarly, *Lighthousekeeping* presents a risk society through the depiction of a coastal town adapting to economic changes and the looming threat of industrial decline. The community's shift from traditional industries to tourism highlights the risks associated with economic globalization and the resultant precariousness for local livelihoods. Also, control society is exemplified through many restrictions Silver deals with, including her teacher Miss Pinch's authoritative influence. By constantly reminding Silver of her status as an orphan and her limited prospects, urging her to aspire only to be a librarian, Miss Pinch exerts a form of narrative control that shapes Silver's self-perception and limits her worldview.

Apart from depicting a world characterized by risk and control, both novels also explore the psychological and mental states of individuals in the contemporary age. In this context, analyzing the novels through the lens of Frank Furedi's "therapy culture" underscores the mental state of modern individuals, who increasingly shift from seeking theoretical solutions to embracing therapeutic responses. Furedi notes that "[i]t has been noted that the intensity of public anxiety about environmental and toxic disasters is underpinned by a profound sense of powerlessness and

vulnerability" (2004: 131). In *Beyond Black*, Alison's use of psychic abilities to connect with the spirit world and getting answers to the questions of livings is not merely a professional endeavour but also serves a therapeutic function. This mirrors Furedi's observation of a society where individuals, feeling perpetually at risk, turn to therapeutic services. The portrayal of Alison's sessions, where clients seek comfort in spiritual explanations for their troubles, underscores the therapeutic culture that prioritizes personal healing over addressing broader societal issues. Similarly, *Lighthousekeeping* introduces the therapy culture through Silver being subjected to therapeutic interventions after stealing bird. In a world that tries to stigmatise her for trying to be herself and find connection, Pew's stories help Silver navigate her fragmented sense of identity and history, providing not just knowledge but emotional solace. This internalization of trauma and subsequent therapeutic narrative intervention effectively illustrates how modern individuals are encouraged to view their challenges through a personal, medicalized lens, sidelining political or collective solutions. This reliance on therapy and personal healing reflects a broader societal anxiety where individuals increasingly internalize global uncertainties as personal failures or psychological burdens. Both Alison and Silver, through their respective narratives, exhibit signs of anxiety and split psyche conditions exacerbated by their environments and the societal expectations placed upon them. Therefore, these therapeutic narratives highlight individual struggles with mental health and identity and also criticise the medicalization of everyday life, where personal and societal anxieties are managed through individualized therapeutic interventions rather than collective action.

In *Beyond Black*, Hilary Mantel presents the anxieties and uncertainties of contemporary society through the contrasting experiences of Colette and Alison, trying to overcome the challenges of a globalised world with markedly different approaches. Colette, ambitious and success-driven, embodies the ideals of a globalized society that prizes financial prosperity and societal conformity. Her efforts to transform Alison into a global brand underscore the influence of mass consumption and commercialization, reflecting a broader societal trend towards commodifying personal identities and experiences. This commercialization not only impacts personal relationships but also creates a culture where success is measured by visibility and material wealth, further alienating individuals from their authentic

selves. In contrast, Alison resists these pressures, valuing authenticity and sincerity over the superficial success promoted by Colette. Her rejection of these norms provides a powerful commentary on the struggles faced by contemporary women, highlighting the diverse ways in which they navigate and often resist the pressures of modern life. Through these two characters, Mantel examines the societal shift towards therapy culture, characterized by an emphasis on human vulnerability and a diminished sense of individual agency. This cultural transformation contributes to increased feelings of anxiety and fear, as individuals feel less equipped to manage life's challenges independently. Alison's resistance also illustrates the potential for resilience and the search for genuine human connections amidst a society that often values appearance over substance. As Giddens notes, "we shall never be able to feel entirely secure, because the terrain across which it runs is fraught with risks of high consequence. Feelings of ontological security and existential anxiety will coexist in ambivalence" (1996: 139). This sense of ambivalence pervades the novel, capturing the complex interplay between societal expectations and personal identity in the modern age.

Mantel uses Alison's character to delve deeper into the impacts of this cultural shift, illustrating the resultant feelings of disempowerment and loss of control. Alison's personal history of trauma, depicted through her fragmented psyche and haunting ghosts, shows the lasting effects of trauma on identity and memory. Her experiences of neglect, abuse, and violation are not just personal afflictions but are emblematic of broader societal issues of marginalization and the exploitation of the vulnerable. The enduring trauma, hallucinations, that haunts Alison's existence underscores the deep scars left by patriarchal forces and also illuminates the complexities of trauma and the struggle for agency within a society where such pressures are omnipresent. Through Alison's interactions and inner conflicts, Mantel criticises the violation of individual agency in contemporary settings, highlighting the resilience required to confront these societal challenges. Thus, *Beyond Black* stands as a microcosm of a society in transition, reflecting the profound and often painful transitions in an era of global change. This depiction of Alison's life not only underscores the personal impact of global societal shifts but also challenges readers to reflect on the resilience and adaptability required to navigate such landscapes.

In *Lighthousekeeping*, Jeanette Winterson explores the effects of globalisation

through the experiences of Silver. Set in a small coastal town undergoing economic and cultural shifts due to global influences, the novel captures the challenges and adaptations faced by its inhabitants. Orphaned and vulnerable, Silver finds guidance and comfort under Pew, the lighthouse keeper, whose stories weave together local traditions with universal themes, linking the personal with the global. The lighthouse stands as a symbol of stability amid the rapid changes brought on by globalisation, offering continuity where traditional ways of life are threatened by market expansion and cultural blending. Pew's role as a storyteller is crucial; his narratives help Silver and the town's residents preserve their identities, providing a sense of belonging as they navigate the sweeping changes around them. These stories not only offer historical context but also impart moral lessons that resonate with Silver's personal struggles, helping her understand her role in a broader narrative. Through Pew's storytelling, the community finds a way to understand their transforming world, connecting their local experiences to the global forces reshaping their reality. This connection is especially vital for Silver, assisting her in finding her place not only within her local community but also in the broader global landscape. Additionally, the tales of past lighthouse keepers and the lore of the sea infuse a sense of continuity and resilience, inspiring the community to maintain their cultural heritage despite external pressures.

As the narrative unfolds in *Lighthousekeeping*, Silver navigates a society fragmented by industrial progress and its decline. The closure of mines and the shift towards tourism signify the town's uneasy transition into the global economy, embodying the broader environmental and social displacements typical of the risk society, where local impacts of global risks become increasingly visible and palpable, challenging the possibility of stable futures. Jeanette Winterson's depiction of the town's transformation resonates with the concept of control society, where the control of history, memory, and identity through storytelling serves both as a confining and liberating force. Zygmunt Bauman articulates this modern condition, stating, "[t]he disintegration of the social network, the falling apart of effective agencies of collective action is often noted with a good deal of anxiety and bewailed as the unanticipated 'side effect' of the new lightness and fluidity of the increasingly mobile, slippery, shifty, evasive and fugitive power" (2000: 14). This perspective highlights how global powers dismantle traditional networks to maintain their agility,

mirroring the novel's exploration of how personal and collective narratives are manipulated to maintain control over societal changes. Furthermore, the novel's portrayal of uncertainty and the quest for meaning align with the notion of therapy culture. Through Pew's stories, Silver's journey of self-discovery becomes a therapeutic process that reconciles personal and collective histories, demonstrating the novel's critique of the homogenizing pressures of globalization and its spotlight on potential pathways for healing within a fragmented world.

In a world profoundly affected by globalisation, both novels depict individuals grappling with a fragmented psyche due to the uncertain and risky environment of the contemporary age, in addition to survival struggles of it. Analysing the societies becoming risk societies under the impact of advancements and globalisation, Beck states that now "[t]here emerges … a new *immediacy of individual and society, a direct relation between crisis and sickness*. Social crises appear as individual crises, which are no longer (or are only very indirectly) perceived in terms of their rootedness in the social realm. This is one of the explanations for the current revival of interest in psychology" (1992: 100). In other words, Beck highlights how societal challenges are increasingly internalized as personal crises, often obscured from their social origins and addressed through psychological frameworks rather than collective societal action. The protagonists, Alison and Silver, exemplify this phenomenon as they navigate their personal traumas within environments shaped by global changes and societal neglect. Until they heal themselves and regain their agencies, the protagonists are depicted as women who have largely been on their own throughout their lives, enduring oppression that violates their agency. In *Beyond Black*, Alison's hallucinations, stemming from her traumatic past, symbolize the fractured parts of her consciousness and her unresolved traumas. These spectral appearances are not just figments of imagination but pivotal elements of her healing process, as the characterisation of ghosts becomes the characterisation of narrative, becoming a conduit for reconciling her troubled past with her present. Similarly, in *Lighthousekeeping*, Silver's complex relationship with storytelling illustrates her fragmented psyche. Her journey of self-discovery is guided by Pew's narratives, which help her piece together her identity from the stories she inherits. This weaving of personal and historical narratives allows Silver to forge a continuous sense of self in a world that feels discontinuous

and fragmented, but also shows her fragmentation, too. Through storytelling, both Alison and Silver manage to find coherence and meaning in a world of oppression and detachment. Storytelling in these novels does more than recounting events; it actively works to reconstruct broken lives and mend the fragmented selves that populate their worlds.

This function of storytelling is particularly significant in the context of modern therapy cultures, where narrative therapy has gained prominence as a means of addressing the psychological rifts caused by trauma and loss. The stories told by Alison and Silver are not merely narratives but are transformative acts that heal their fragmented selves, illustrating the profound impact of storytelling on personal healing. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar articulate this dynamic, stating, "[i]n order to define herself as an author, she [the woman writer] must redefine the terms of her socialization" (Gilbert et al., 2000: 48), a process deeply analogous to the protagonists' journey in the novels. Focusing on storytelling and its therapeutic effects by emphasizing the empowering aspect of narrative creation for women writers, they suggest that for a woman to establish herself as an author, she must challenge and redefine the conditions imposed on her by societal norms, and reconstruct the narrative of her own identity. This process mirrors the journeys of Alison and Silver in the novels, where storytelling becomes a means not only of personal healing but also of redefining and reclaiming their identities from the fragmented realities they inhabit. This reclamation and challenge are essential for their psychological healing and underscore the transformative potential of storytelling within the novels. By redefining the terms of their socialization, Alison and Silver assert themselves as authors of their own lives and agents of therapeutic change, highlighting the unique role of contemporary women writers in reshaping narrative structures and reflecting broader societal transformations.

In this context, both *Beyond Black* and *Lighthousekeeping* underscore the transformative power of empathy embedded within storytelling. Empathy emerges as a pivotal theme, serving as a conduit through which the characters form deeper connections with others and gain a more nuanced understanding of themselves, leading to overcoming traumas. Susana Onega reflects on this transformative power, suggesting it is essential to "transform the self-centred and greedy individual subject produced by the ideology of progress into a loving and empathic, relational subject in

harmony with nature and with other human beings, irrespective of race, class and gender" (2014: 499), emphasizing the significance of narrative empathy in fostering relational identities and challenging the emotional distance often criticized in postmodern narrative techniques. This empathetic engagement challenges the often-criticized emotional distance characteristic of postmodern narrative techniques, advocating for a literature that profoundly acknowledges the interconnectedness of human experiences. In *Beyond Black*, empathy allows Mantel to draw readers into Alison's interior world, making her spiritual and emotional struggles intensely palpable. Similarly, Winterson integrates empathy into *Lighthousekeeping* as a fundamental narrative strategy, where the empathetic bonds between characters like Pew and Silver form the emotional core of the narrative and model meaningful reader engagement. Empathy in these novels is not just a thematic layer; it is integral to the narrative structure, facilitating a transformative engagement with the text. Mantel and Winterson skilfully employ empathetic storytelling to dissolve barriers between characters and individuals, fostering an immersive experience that deepens understanding of the emotional landscapes. This understanding leads to connection, a sense of belonging while keeping the integrity of agency, healing also on a global scale.

Hilary Mantel positions her narrative in *Beyond Black* as a powerful vehicle for psychological and emotional healing, weaving a complex web of traumas, ghosts, and narrative healing through the experiences of the protagonist, Alison. As Alison confronts her traumatic past and gradually gains control over her spectral interactions, she goes through a profound transformation within her character. This process is underscored by the narrative revelation that "[a]t some point on your road you have to turn and start walking back towards yourself. Or the past will pursue you, and bite the nape of your neck, leave you bleeding in the ditch. Better to turn and face it with such weapons as you possess" (2005: 359). This statement emphasizes the importance of confronting one's history and signals Alison's shifting role from a passive to an active participant in her own life story. Hence, despite her own deep-seated traumas, Alison emerges as a healer within the therapeutic culture portrayed in the novel. She uses storytelling, imbued with sincerity and empathy, as a potent tool for self-discovery and healing. Her interactions with clients and her constant engagement with spectral beings allow her to navigate the complexities of

trauma and societal fragmentation, thereby offering solace and understanding to those around her. This role mirrors the broader societal reliance on mediums and therapists who guide individuals through their personal struggles. Through her narrative, Mantel explores the depths of trauma and the potential for healing, offering a profound commentary on the ways contemporary society handles. Alison's journey illustrates how storytelling, especially when enriched with empathy, becomes more than just sharing experiences; it transforms into a therapeutic dialogue that fosters genuine understanding and healing. Mantel's exploration goes beyond individual narratives to comment on the societal challenges and the often-painful journey towards achieving personal authenticity and agency in the face of overwhelming societal pressures. Therefore, the narrative underscores the transformative power of storytelling in achieving emotional resilience and a more authentic sense of self.

In *Lighthousekeeping*, Jeanette Winterson explores the transformative power of storytelling amidst societal fragmentation and upheaval. Through Silver's journey, Winterson delves into the impact of personal narratives on healing and self-discovery. Silver's embrace of storytelling serves as a pathway to reunite fragmented aspects of her psyche, fostering healing and wholeness. By sharing personal narratives, Silver navigates her experiences, finding solace and meaning in self-expression. The impact of narration on the building process of Silver's character is evident when she reflects, "[w]hen I look back across the span of water I call my life, I can see me there in the lighthouse with Pew, or in The Rock and Pit, or on a cliff edge finding fossils that turned out to be other lives. My life. His life. Pew. Babel Dark. All of us bound together, tidal, moon drawn, past, present and future in the break of a wave" (Winterson, 2004: 89). This statement links her personal growth directly to her storytelling, highlighting it as a transformative tool that enables individuals to navigate complex emotions and relationships, ultimately fostering connection and understanding. Therefore, the novel highlights storytelling as a transformative tool, enabling individuals to navigate complex emotions and relationships, ultimately fostering connection and understanding. Empathy emerges as a vital element in fostering connections within a fragmented society depicted in the novel. Silver's encounters with others highlight the capacity for empathy and forgiveness. Through storytelling woven with empathy, Silver overcomes her initial sense of detachment, forging meaningful connections with others. Winterson

skilfully intertwines themes of human connection and understanding, showcasing the power of empathy to bridge divides and navigate collective trauma. Winterson's incorporation of Victorian storytelling techniques into a modern narrative framework showcases a newfound appreciation for the enduring power of storytelling. Additionally, the interplay of history and personal story in Silver's life illustrates how our pasts are not just backgrounds but active elements shaping our present interactions and future possibilities. This integration of history enriches the narrative, suggesting that understanding our past is crucial for navigating the present and influencing the future.

With the detailed analysis of *Beyond Black* and *Lighthousekeeping*, this thesis has illuminated how contemporary literature serves as both a reflective and transformative medium, adeptly mirroring the complexities of modern existence while offering pathways for emotional and existential reconciliation. These novels exemplify the capacity of narrative to bridge individual and collective experiences, thereby fostering a deeper understanding and empathy among readers. Arthur W. Frank's concept of "illness narratives" as forms of "self-story" that include "spiritual autobiographies, stories of becoming a man or a woman and what that gender identity involves, and finally survivor stories of inflicted traumas such as war, captivity, incest, and abuse" (1995: 69) resonates deeply with the narrative methods observed in these novels. They underscore contemporary literature's vital role in addressing and articulating the deep-seated human need for connection and significance in an increasingly globalized world. Additionally, the exploration of female agency and narrative authority in these novels provides critical insights into the ongoing discourse on gender and power dynamics in contemporary literature. Alison and Silver, the protagonists of these stories, are portrayed not as passive characters but as active narrators who challenge and subvert traditional narratives about female roles and capabilities. Their stories contribute to a larger conversation about how contemporary women authors use narrative to challenge existing power structures and advocate for a more inclusive understanding of agency and authority. This thesis further underscores how Hilary Mantel and Jeanette Winterson push beyond traditional literary boundaries to redefine what it means to be a protagonist and a storyteller in the contemporary world. By highlighting the evolving roles of women in literature and society, these authors enrich the literary landscape and

reflect significant shifts in societal norms and expectations. Their narratives, rich with thematic depth and innovative narrative techniques, exemplify the dynamic interplay between literature and societal evolution, showcasing the unique ways literature can influence and reflect cultural and existential paradigms.

In conclusion, the exploration of globalisation's impact on women's agency and the landscape in Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black* and Jeanette Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping* reveals profound insights into the interconnectedness of contemporary literature with the complexities of our times. Positioned within the framework of a risk society, characterized by uncertainty and fragmentation, the heroines of these novels navigate the psychological landscape of trauma, agency, and identity in the face of personal and historical challenges. Through their utilization of Victorian spiritualism and storytelling as therapeutic acts, they embark on a quest for integrity, seeking to reclaim agency and narrative identity within the fragmented narratives of modernity. As storytellers, they harness empathy as a transformative force, weaving together fragmented experiences into cohesive narratives that promote empathy, solidarity, and interconnectedness amidst diversity. In doing so, they not only preserve individual integrity but also contribute to collective healing and renewal in an increasingly interconnected world. The shift in contemporary literature from postmodern irony to a renewed focus on authenticity reflects a growing desire among authors, particularly contemporary women writers, to address the anxieties and uncertainties of our time through sincere and direct engagement with human experience. As empowered voices of change, contemporary women authors embrace an ethical responsibility to facilitate understanding and empathy on a global scale, using storytelling as a means to connect with the shared narratives of our times. Through the exploration of themes, characters, and narrative techniques in *Beyond Black* and *Lighthousekeeping*, this thesis sheds light on the ways in which contemporary literature engages with the challenges and opportunities of the globalized world. By delving into themes of trauma, agency, identity, and globalisation, it offers insights into the complexities of human experience depicted in these novels, paving the way for a deeper understanding of the transformative potential of storytelling in an interconnected world. This thesis contributes significantly to the ongoing conversation surrounding the role of literature in shaping our understanding of contemporary life and offers a framework for further

exploration of these themes in literature and beyond.

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