

## **NEW KNOWLEDGE, NEW NORM, LANGUAGE AND NEW STRUCTURE: AN ENQUIRY INTO THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE NEW KNOWLEDGE AND THE NEW WRITING TECHNIQUES AND SCHOOLS**

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### **Introduction**

During the final decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, human beliefs-remaining unchanged from the time knowledge-based, moral and religious norms had first emerged- were most challenged. Classic or traditional beliefs of the era were challenged by scholars of different fields. Although natural scientists like Copernicus and Galileo had already attacked traditional beliefs, but new scientific and philosophical movements occurred at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the time, Darwin and Darwinism were well-known throughout Europe. As far as natural sciences are concerned, Europeans were acquainted with Sigmund Freud and his theories of “Unconscious Mind” and “Psychological Determinism”. In physics, Heisenberg and Einstein had undermined the most dogmatic common beliefs concerning time and space. In philosophy, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer were at work. In his works, Nietzsche challenged all idolized concepts of human mind. This article casts a furtive glance at the vitality and dynamics of language and literature, correspondent with developments in the other fields.

### **The fundamental question**

It goes without saying that surrealist and Dadaist movements, free wandering flow of mind (as a literary technique) and feminist style are among the most prominent phenomena of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries' first decades. Exploring all available resources to realize the concepts of the mentioned terms, the approximately same definitions are found. As defined in the valuable encyclopedia of “Cambridge Guide to Literature in English”, free wandering flow of mind is a technique or method novelists apply to express a character's contemplations, emotions and imaginations without using grammatical rules and logical trends (Cambridge Guide, 1074).

Having published a separate encyclopedia of English literature titled “Guide to English Literature”, Ian Ousby provides his readers with a quite different definition (Ousby, 377). Having defined the free wandering flow of mind, he mentioned the fact that the term has been originally used by William James, in his book “Principles of Psychology”. According to Ian Ousby, free wandering flow of mind is a technique used for expressing the unclipped syllabicity of conscious and subconscious contemplations and emotions of human mind. Then, he reminds his readers of the technique's prominent role upon the emergence of modernism (ibid).

To find an appropriate definition of Surrealism, we would rather take a glance at the Abrams's “Glossary of Literary Terms” based on which Surrealism is an art movement.... It's a revolution against all obstacles to human creativity some of which are logical reasons, normalized moralities, artistic and social norms and conventions and all other deliberate and intentional obstacles. To ensure the

unconstrained activity of the mind's deep layers, which according to them are the only sources of true knowledge (besides art); surrealists utilize the "Automatic Writing Technique" (Abrams, 204).

Following the above-mentioned explanations, it is worth mentioning that a large number of modern poetry and prose writers have been influenced by direct or indirect consequences of the surrealistic innovations. These writers selected clipped structures, distortions in logic and timing, nightmare-like and dream-like chains, addition of opposites, astonishment, unrelated images.

One of the contributions of the feminist thought and attitude toward past events was the emergence of feminist style and a new approach to the accepted and institutionalized writing (especially story writing) principles. This critical approach is rooted in the critical modernist attitudes, duly discussed in the final section. In this regard, the subject matter worth mentioning is the womanish sentence appearing in unstable and detached forms, as Wolf puts it (Cambridge Guide, 383).

But as far as Dadaism is concerned, it would be sufficient to merely focus on this school's abnormality, since a comprehensive investigation of Dadaism would distract our attention from the main subject, say the relationship between the modern abnormal writing phenomena and the norm-breaking scientific, philosophical and psychological developments. Having mentioned two stanzas composed in a Dadaistic style, Sarvat remarks: "this is tomfoolery and satire rather than mere humor, resembling a psychotic's deliriums. Dadaists have turned against all literary principles, conventions and traditions (Sarvat, 211).

It must not be neglected that such techniques had been already implemented in literature. This historical background is worth meticulous investigation.

As mentioned, the norms and principles governing peoples' minds as strict beliefs suddenly and instantaneously underwent alteration and reversal. Though not a prelude to the scientific empirical movements of the time, it might be contemplated that these huge alterations in the previous stable literary structures have at least paralleled the mentioned movements. This section aims at investigating the new alterations and developments and their effects on public attitudes. It will definitely take a few volumes to investigate an abridged corpus on the subject. Due to this fact, this study focuses on the contributions of Charles Darwin, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud; to natural sciences, philosophy and psychology, respectively.

### **Darwin: overturning human's arrogant divinity**

Darwin refers to the fact that, due to his arrogance, human sees himself an extraordinary creature worthy to be the heir to god. I beg your pardon to consider him descendent of animals.

In 1859, in the middle of the Victorian era in England, Charles Darwin published a book which contradicted the conventional religious thoughts. "The Origin of Species" substantiates the idea that human is a descendent of abject species rather than being created by a superior power. Nature, as Darwin sees it, is the perpetual battleground of warriors of different adaptation capabilities. Some observers consider this battle an interspecies rather than intra-species battle. As inter-kind battles were replaced by intra-kind ones, Darwin postulated that species with more valuable adaptation would survive this battle and new species would evolve (Shidler, 23-4).

During Darwin's lifetime, members of human community got accustomed to consider themselves as constructs of society and history, biological factors and gender. Human is no more the progeny of god seeded on the earth and superior to animals, as he used to be during the era of religious hierarchy and superiority of men to women (Ibid).

Though men of the Victorian era attempted to get aside from Darwinian distorted nature by distinguishing themselves from inferiors like animals and women, but before long, Darwinism conquered the whole Europe. Translation of “The Origins of Species” in Scandinavia, immediately after its publication in England, and its effects on Scandinavian writers, like Ibsen and Strindberg, is a proof of the claim. Taking the form of “genders battle”, Darwinism is reflected in literary works such as Hedda Gabler and Miss Julie.

What is of paramount importance in this section is that the primary principles taken for granted by human during his history of life on the earth were so instantaneously overturned that he had to take pains realizing the changes. It is not necessary to explicate more on Darwinian thought. But, the question remaining to be answered is if situation is as fatal and complicated as it is claimed? To answer this question, let’s take a look at “An Introduction to the Theories of Learning” by Hergenhahn and Olson where they postulate that Charles Darwin instantiated his idea of biological evolution by providing huge scientific evidences to convince his readers. Clergies seriously turned against him. Darwin, himself, was so concerned about his ideas’ effects on contradicting religious beliefs that he wished his book had been published after his death (Hergenhahn and Olson, 64).

But it was not as simple as that. Darwinism approval by scientific circles was destructive for human thought and philosophy of history. As he puts it, evolution is the missing link between human and other animals, denied for so many centuries. The explicit Distinction of human from the other animals, as the cornerstone of the philosophical paradigms brought forth by Plato, Aristotle, Descartes and Kant vanished. If human is biologically related to inferior animals, does he have mind, spirit or inherent thought categories? (Hergenhahn & Olson, 64-5).

### **Nietzsche, bravely norm-breaking**

In the previous section it was revealed that Darwin and Darwinism were huge challenges to the beliefs of the people of the era, degrading them from their glorious sovereignty to disgraceful animalism. Dissemination of Nietzsche’s thoughts strengthened Darwinian movement. Poor commons were incessantly posed to new torrents of theories challenging their beliefs. Nietzsche is a courageous, merciless scholar. Inconsiderately, innegligibly, incisively and oppressively; he utters whatever he ought to utter, regardless of its consequences. In his opinion, to fulfill it<sup>1</sup>, no instrument must be spared. All is for the best. Above all is the war (Nietzsche, 2005: 17).

Though the above-mentioned paragraphs considerably reveal the harsh attacks of Nietzsche on moral and religious beliefs of commons, but we can clarify the subject. Challenging the common beliefs of the era and even the attitudes of the prominent scholars of his time, Nietzsche is so capable and adroit that no scholar can oppose his attitudes. He has gloriously called himself the creator of ideas too abstruse to be realized by his era. Further, he mentions that the brevity and eloquence he is the first master of which among Germans are eternal. He is striving in expressing so many concepts in ten sentences others would express in a volume. Perhaps they wouldn’t (Ibid, 161).

We are seeking some evidences for proving Nietzsche’s claims. Are his words as influential as he claims to be? Challenging sensualism, Nietzsche mentions that some claim that the outer world is the construct of our members. So; our body, as a part of the outer world, is the construct of our own members, too. As he sees it, the latter statement is quite absurd (Nietzsche, 2000: 45). Having reviewed the mentioned arguments, let’s take a general glance at Nietzsche and investigate his contributions to the subject of this study. In the work “Twilight of the Idols”, this scholar challenges all idolized beliefs of his era. He considers himself Ibrahim, the iconoclast, proclaiming the absurdity of the long-held beliefs of his

era. In his preface to “Twilight of the Idols”, Nietzsche reminds us that, prior to capsizing the idols; he had struck the idols on their members with his hatchet to reveal their hollowness (Nietzsche, 2005: 19). All through his book, Nietzsche severely criticizes different figures and scholars and their beliefs. Some chapters of his book are titled “problem of Socrates”, “how true world turned out to be a myth”, “morality as anti-nature”. A wide range of Nietzsche’s attitudes are related to this article’s subject. He distinguishes between science and philosophy. Yet, he has largely contributed to human’s philosophical and etymological attitudes. In his small volume, Nietzsche has questioned the most prominent ideological developments of human being and contradicted them.

What are these ideologies and where do they originate from? It goes without saying that these are the principles and norms accepted by destitute masses whose lives are based upon them. Now, Nietzsche has ridiculed all these attitudes. Masses must take pains realizing the absurdity and futility of their beliefs. Certainly, people of the era led a bitter life and held an agitated and anxious mind. This fact led them toward surrealist and Dadaist writings.

To conclude our remarks regarding Nietzsche, let’s take a glance at his attitude toward Darwin and Darwinism. In the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of “Twilight of the Idols” (in a section called “Expeditions of Untimely Man”), Nietzsche draws upon Darwin and Darwinism. In his opinion, as it comes to “struggle for life” in the famous Darwinian Theory, it seems to have been more evidenced and less proved. This struggle happens but rarely. Life is not for destitute and hunger. It’s green, fruitful and unaccountably sumptuous. All struggles are for power (Nietzsche, 2005: 113).

It is worth mentioning here that Nietzsche has accepted Darwinism and only partially disagree with him. As Nietzsche puts it, struggle is for life rather than survival (as Darwin supposes).

Anyway, Nietzsche has confirmed Darwinism and people of the era have to resist the scholars’ persistence in rejecting their beliefs.

### **Freud: destructor of the free will**

Undoubtedly, Sigmund Freud is the most prominent figure mentioned in this article. Freud’s psychology and his definition and description of human personality persists to be the most comprehensive and influential theory of personality (Hillgard, 458). So, it’s not necessary to review this great figure. But as far as His ideas are related to this study, they are numerated concisely and laconically.

Prior to discussing “free association”, let’s first draw upon Freud’s ideas concerning human mind and psychological causality. Freud resembles human mind to iceberg. The small tip of the iceberg is the conscious mind. This part covers the current human consciousness and awareness of his situation. Subconscious mind covers all information not currently available but retrievable to the conscious mind (e.g. US president’s name). The large part of the iceberg under the water surface reflects human’s unconscious mind which is full of actions, desires and unreachable memories affecting individuals’ thoughts and behaviors (Hillgard, 458).

The fact that human behavior is affected by factors not controlled by him leads us to another part of Freud thoughts called “psychological causality”. This term reflects the idea that all human thoughts, emotions and actions are effects of some causes... he even believes that dreams, jokes, language slips and forgetting aim at releasing human from psychological tensions by relieving prohibited egos or unfulfilled desires(Ibid). That is to say that human has no will to control his actions and desires.

Having analyzed Freud’s attitudes in its relationship with Darwin and Nietzsche, we might conclude that no aspect of human thoughts and beliefs during 20<sup>th</sup> century has been immune to the deconstructive attitudes of these prominent figures.

### **Darwin, Nietzsche and Freud: the anti-woman supporting feminism and feminist styles**

Considering the formation trend of the feminist style, Virginia wolf's statement attracts our attention and turns out to be related to this article's subject. As mentioned above, the womanish sentence wolf refers to appears in attached unstable forms (Cambridge guide, 383). Although this article aims at investigating the relationships between literary movements of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the new wonderful scientific and philosophical movements capsizing the long-held institutional beliefs of the people of the era, but the undeniable and unsubstitutable roles of scholars in establishing and improving feminist ideas and womanish style is clear. Perhaps the names of the three scholars remind us of their famous statements against and opposing women. This is especially the case with Nietzsche quoting an old woman in "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" as he says that, approaching women, whip must not be spared (Nietzsche, 2007: 80).

Undoubtedly, in numerous statements; these three scholars have mercilessly attacked women, a few examples of which are mentioned. In each of his works, Nietzsche has taken anti-womanish attitude in several cases. Look at the following examples:

"A young women, a flowered den; an old woman, an aggressive dragon" (Nietzsche, 2000: 211)

"Woman is seen as abstruse. Why? Since no one can discover her depth. But the fact of the matter is that she is nothing but shallow" (Nietzsche, 2005: 28).

But, what about Sigmund Freud? Commenting on Freud's attitudes toward women in his book "sociology", George Ritzier writes:" in Freud's view, women are second-order creatures whose fundamental psychological nature has prepared them for an inferior life compared to that of men" (Ritzier, 485).

Now, let's take a look at Darwin and his attitudes toward women. To realize Darwin's ideas, it is better review the book "Questioning the Father" by Ross Shidler. In his book, Shidler comments:

"Darwin draws on the fact that women, due to their motherhood instincts, are more kindly and less selfish than men. According to Darwin, it is commonly agreed that the direct perception abilities in women is stronger than men. But at least some of these abilities are characteristics of inferior races and lower degrees of civilization".

The main factor distinguishing men and women is the rational thinking. It enables men achieve higher positions in whatever route they select compared to women. It doesn't matter they are involved in profound thinking, argumentation, imagination or activities based on hands and perceptions. Darwin argues that males are stronger in imagination and argumentation. These precedent characteristics are developed in the same manner as the antecedent characteristics (genius). This development occurs partly through sexual selection (competing with other males) and partly through natural selection (the result of winning the competition for survival). But, men are finally superior to women. Fortunately, the equality law governs the transfer of characteristics to both sexes in mammals. Otherwise, men would get such superiority over women as male peacock to the female one (Ibid).

But how these two contradictory attitudes can overlap? Holding such anti-women attitudes, how the three scholars can be pioneers of feminist thinking and assistants of feminism theoreticians? At the first glance, it might seem foolish and impossible to hold and support such an attitude. But it was previously mentioned that the three scholars like many others have persistently attempted to abolish the dominant beliefs of the era and attack the stabilized norms of the people. This new movement created such a huge wave that challenged, reassessed and reevaluated all concepts, norms, principles, laws, beliefs, opinions, behaviors and traditions under its merciless magnifier. In the first chapter of his book "modernism and critical thinking", Babak Ahmadi proposes that modernism and all so-called traditional

and classic concepts be criticized. Indeed, patriarchy and men's sovereignty were the prevalent traditional beliefs all over the world, prior to the emergence of the three scholars. On one hand the three scholars held anti-womanish attitudes, as revealed in their statements. On the other hand, they were to challenge the traditional beliefs governing their societies. Democracy is one of the classic and traditional beliefs, challenged by the new horrible torrent of criticism pioneered and championed by the three scholars. In this regard, it is unjust to ignore the roles played by Nietzsche, Freud and Darwin in overturning the dominant patriarchal beliefs.

### **Conclusion**

Originating from romanticism (*Holding a Light In front Of Concave Mirrors*, 357), Superrealism is a movement and a school which reminds us of revolution, metamorphosis and non-conformism. Superrealism is based on guarding against the golden moderation and the rule-governed friendship of neoclassism. The fiction-writing techniques applied in Superrealism and Dadaism, as two schools and trends of "the free wandering flow of mind", and feminist style are all bound to break rational norms, principles and conventions leading writers to scholastic, norm-adhering, polite and prestigious style. The helpless minds of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were seeking an assistant to rescue them from anxiety and helplessness. As previously discussed, scientific, empirical and philosophical developments of the era were so perplexing and tremendous that writers of the era could hardly contemplate on language logical structures, chronological order of events and etc. Being astonished, all of us stammer words without observing grammatical rules. Dizzy and perplexed, no one can think of speaking and narrating in an ordinary manner. The three scholars whose attitudes were explained in this section have demolished the beliefs forming the mental identity of the people. Having lost their beliefs in the most primary and evident principles, the hesitating minds can trust in no attitude that would not be rejected or ridiculed by Nietzsche, Darwin and Freud. Their disbelief in norms could lead them but to Dadaist and superrealistic writing. This article does not aim at limiting the initial and final causes of Dadaism and Superrealism to the above-mentioned circumstances. Undoubtedly; political, economic, social, cultural, historical, material and spiritual factors create new schools. These factors have been investigated in different books of "literary schools". The author proposes that the factors mentioned in this section be considered beside other factors. Taking a glance at psychiatric medications, the "free association" concept is worth mentioning. As a medication method, "free association" is so similar to the writing style of "free wandering flow of mind" that attracts our attention. Let's take a look at Hilgard psychology. "One of the main methods used by psychiatrists for facilitating the unconscious conflicts' retrieval is the "free association method". In this treatment technique, patients are encouraged to release their thoughts and emotions and express whatever occurs to their minds precisely and straightly (Hilgard, 56).

In this regard, writers like Marcel Prost, Virginia Wolf, James Joyce, Frantz Kafka and Sadiq Hedayat are considered as patients referring to psychiatrists. They obey no rules and principles and express their thoughts and feelings straightly. Investigating form, plot, progress and the other fiction techniques from feminist perspective and reviewing Superrealism and the free wandering flow of mind from a psychiatric point of view; we might realize more interesting points regarding the relationships among romanticism, Superrealism, feminism, psychiatrics and the three mentioned scholars. These relationships remain to be investigated in the next studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche is referring to the reevaluation of all values, discussed in the first chapter of “Twilight of The Idols”