

**DAVID MITCHELL'S *BLACK SWAN*
GREEN AND THE CHILDHOOD PERSPECTIVE
OF THE FORMATIVE PROCESS WITHIN AND
BEYOND THE POSTMODERN CONTEXT**

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**Yüksek Lisans Tezi
İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı
Danışman: Doç. Dr. Petru GOLBAN**

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**T.C.
TEKİRDAĞ NAMIK KEMAL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI
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**TEKİRDAĞ-2019
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Begüm TANRITANI tarafından hazırlanan “**Postmodern Bağlamda David Mitchell’in *Black Swan Green* Romanının Ana Karakterinin Çocuk Perspektifinden Gelişme Süreci - David Mitchell’s Novel *Black Swan Green* And The Childhood Perspective Of The Formative Process Within And Beyond The Postmodern Context**” konulu YÜKSEK LİSANS Tezinin Sınavı, Tekirdağ Namık Kemal Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim Öğretim Yönetmeliği uyarınca 02.08.2019 Cuma günü saat 11.00’da yapılmış olup, tezin OYBİRLİĞİ / OYÇOKLUĞU ile karar verilmiştir.

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ÖZET

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Bu tez, bir postmodern bildungsroman romanının, Postmodernizmin ve Postmodern kurgunun temel özellikleri ile olan ilişkisini irdelleyecektir. Bu tezin ana yaklaşımları David Mitchell'in *Black Swan Green* romanını bir postmodern bildungsroman yapan postmodern etkenleri ortaya çıkarmak, bu romanın hangi yönlerden bir Bildungsroman özelliği taşıdığını belirlemek, ve nasıl Postmodernizm ile ilgili olduğunu saptamak şeklindedir. Bir çok edebi eleştirmenler tarafından sürekli deneyen ve yenilikçi bir yazar olarak görülen David Mitchell'in eseri, postmodern bağlamda romanının öyküsel ve tematik yönlerine bakılarak analiz edilecektir, aynı zamanda da hikâyedeki karakter dinamikleri çok büyük önem taşımaktadır; bu yüzden, bu araştırmada ana karakterlerin, özellikle çocuk karakterler, postmodern bir çevrede nasıl temsil edildikleri, etraflarındaki diğer insanlarla nasıl etkileşimler içerisinde oldukları vb. ögeler yansıtılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: postmodern bildungsroman, yenilikçi, postmodern, çocuk karakterler

ABSTRACT

Institution, Institute, : Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University, Institute of Social Sciences,
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This thesis points out those characteristics of Postmodernism and postmodern fiction which would be most congenial in the approach to a particular type of novel, which is the Bildungsroman. The aim of the thesis is to identify certain postmodern elements that makes David Mitchell's novel *Black Swan Green* a postmodern Bildungsroman and to demonstrate how, as a bildungsroman, it belongs to the postmodern context. Mitchell's fiction, which is considered experimental and innovative by the literary critics, is analysed by looking at the narrative and thematic aspects of the novel in postmodern context and, at the character dynamics in the story which is very essential for the overall meaning of the story. For this reason, the study reflects on how the main characters, especially the child characters, are represented in a postmodern environment, and how the people interact with such an environment.

Key words: Postmodern fiction, Bildungsroman, experimental, child characters, Postmodern Bildungsroman.

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INTRODUCTION

Bildungsroman which is also called as ‘formation novel’ is a trend in literature that was first originated in Germany in the 18th century with Goethe’s novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795). It can be said that the Bildungsroman tradition firstly rooted in German literature with the attributions of the romantic writers like Wieland, Wetzell, Hippel and, first and foremost Goethe, after the midst of the 18th century. After the consolidation of Bildungsroman tradition as a literary trend in German literature; it started to become popular in England as well. The rising of the Bildungsroman tradition in England generally corresponds to the Victorian Age literature. The trend mostly became popular with the realist writers, because of the fact that they found it suitable to render conjointly the many aspects of the individual and the society. In the age of Modernism, it can be said that Bildungsroman tradition lost its significance, as many modernist writers preferred to focus more on the psychological experience of the individual rather than the social and moral aspects of the individual which were the main concerns of an individual in the realist literature. In the postmodernity, the bildungsroman tradition starts to rise again, in which the period mainly covers the two important issues: the development of the character personality in relation to the shaping of the identity, which will also comprise of the basis and the main context of this study.

In terms of a general definition, the Bildungsroman is a kind of novel that basically tells the story of a child, from his/her early childhood period to the late adulthood period, by focusing on the psychological and the moral aspects of the main character. In a Bildungsroman, the process of formation and the the process of maturation of the main character against the social and moral aspects of his/her contemporary age that he/she lives in, constitutes the main narrative of the novel. During this process of formation, the protagonist of the novel goes through some stages that will shape the growth and the formation of the protagonist’s character. This process of formation can be perceived, in a way, in a heroic sense.

The protagonist embarks on a kind of a spiritual and a physical journey to find solutions to inner conflicts of the self, or, basically, to find a meaningful existence in the life. The protagonist's story starts with him leaving his domestic environment which is mostly stimulated by a tragedy or a loss, or by yearning for an educational experience, a vocational experience, a psychological experience and an emotional experience which is the love life of the hero. Golban states as: "Bildungsroman includes some form of loss or discontent which makes the hero or heroine start at an early stage their journey away from the home or family setting." (2003: 111) After the departure from the home, the hero starts his journey and, during this journey, he undergoes some ordeals and trials which will affect the decision making mechanism of the hero in his decision and choices.

Throughout his journey, the hero experiences some spiritual distress and pain due to the constant clashes between hero's own desires and needs and the societal norms and rules; for that reason, the hero's journey becomes a long and a painful one for hero to complete his journey and to fully achieve his character formation process. The hero's journey ends when he reaches his adulthood with a more mature and an experienced attitude towards the environment and the incidents around him; the completion of hero's journey is somehow threefold; the character formation of the hero is either a success or a failure, or the character formation of the hero is a partial one which means the formation is ambiguous, it is neither a success nor a failure.

The character in a Bildungsroman can be perceived as one of the alter egos, or one of the mirror image of the author. In that sense, a number of Bildungsroman novels is somehow autobiographical or semi-autobiographical, in which the author reflects his/her own experiences, ideas, feelings and thoughts into the fictional character into novel. This kind of character representation is a common aspect, especially among the Victorian realist writers like Charles Dickens, Brönte Sisters, George Eliot, William Makepeace Thackeray etc. It can be acknowledged from their works that through fictionalization, they aim to achieve the things that they couldn't do or achieve in real life, in a way, they try to come up with a better alternative or a solution to a certain important experience, idea or incident of the author.

Furthermore, the main character in a Bildungsroman somehow represents a static unity in which Bakhtin, in his essay explains as:

“The hero is a constant in the novel’s formula and all other quantities— the spatial environment, social position, fortune, in brief, all aspects of the hero’s life and destiny— can therefore be **variables**.” (1986: 21)

According to Bakhtin’s statement, the hero is a static entity in the novel in which all the events that he experienced, all the people that he met, all the fears, obstacles and problems that he faced and all the shifts in the settings, somehow, constitute the plot of the novel, and contributes the hero’s already existed qualities in his process of formation.

English writer David Mitchell was born on Southport, Merseyside, United Kingdom, in 1969 and grew up in Malvern, Worcestershire. He completed his college education at the University of Kent. After graduating, he resided in Sicily and then, he moved to Hiroshima, Japan in which he had an eight-years teaching experience before going back to England. Following to returning to England, he published his first novel *Ghostwritten* (1999). Afterwards, in 2001, his critically-acclaimed second novel *number9dream* was published, and following to that, in 2002, it was nominated for Man Booker Prize for Fiction. In 2004, his most popular novel *Cloud Atlas* was published and, like *number9dream*, it was also nominated for Man Booker Prize for Fiction. Following to that, in 2006, Mitchell’s other novel *Black Swan Green* was published. Currently, David Mitchell resides in Ireland with his family. Recently published books of David Mitchell include, in 2010 *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet*, in 2013 *The Bone Clocks* and in 2015 *Slade House*.

Fictional style of Mitchell can be identified as genre-bending, nostalgic and semi-autobiographic by many literary critics as he makes plenty of allusions about his own personal experiences in many of his novels, and uses unconventional narrative/writing techniques and language in his literary works. Also, his fictional style is sort of a universe where there are many characters, multiple stories and events, time and space and in those kind of atmosphere the main characters can act

freely in the narrative without paying attention the conventional, strict narrative rules. Furthermore, Mitchell creates many opportunities for his readers to grasp the relationship between stories and the novel itself.

The most common themes that Mitchell addresses in novels can be identified as consumerism, ranks related to authority, class distinctions, rivalry, fate, human nature in relation to the nature, the arbitrariness of human life etc. The characters in Mitchell's books are generally presented as in pursuit of becoming complete individuals.

In his novel, *Black Swan Green* (2006) the author mirrors his own childhood experiences into a 12-years-old named Jason Taylor. The setting and the characters of the novel bear a striking resemblance to the actual places that the author had lived, the actual people that he had acquainted with and the partially real events that he had experienced in his youth. For example, just like Mitchell himself, the protagonist of *Black Swan Green* also has a stammer which is one of the key points of the novel that functions as a big impediment for Jason Taylor to achieve his character formation.

This study aims at identifying the characteristics of postmodernism and postmodern literature in terms of the characteristics of postmodern bildungsroman genre in relation to Mitchell's novel *Black Swan Green*. This thesis also focuses on the certain postmodern elements that make *Black Swan Green* a postmodern bildungsroman, and a postmodern fiction.

The first chapter of the thesis focuses on identifying and explaining the postmodernism and its related terminology, postmodern thinking, postmodern culture and postmodern literature in terms of fiction. Moreover, after explaining postmodernism and postmodernity, the characteristics of postmodern fiction in relation to the novel take place. At the same time, this chapter focuses on one of the most important postmodern features which is the 'fragmentariness'. The postmodern fragmentariness is the key element that makes *Black Swan Green* a 'postmodern fiction' as well along with being a 'bildungsroman'. For that reason, the chapter aims

at identifying the elements related to fragmentariness and fragmentary writing in the novel as well.

The second chapter of the thesis focuses on identifying and examining the concepts of 'the self' and 'the identity' in postmodern period on the grounds of Friedrich Hegel and Martin Heidegger's philosophies on 'self' and 'identity'. Besides, the chapter also focuses on the condition of 'the self' and 'the identity in the late modernity and postmodernity by discovering the links between David Mitchell's *Black Swan Green*.

The final chapter of the thesis focuses on the elements of postmodern bildungsroman. As the novel belongs to the bildungsroman genre, this chapter focuses on the condition of postmodern bildungsroman and the revival of bildungsroman genre in postmodernity. Furthermore, this chapter also reveals in what ways Mitchell's *Black Swan Green* follows the bildungsroman genre and deviates from the bildungsroman genre. This chapter, at the same time, explains the postcolonial and magical realist aspects of the novel.

I. POSTMODERNISM & THE POSTMODERNIST FICTION

1.1. Condition of Postmodernism in Postmodernity

Postmodernism is quite broad, a generic and a problematic term which brings three conjugated words that is related to postmodernism into discussion while reading about it. These terms are ‘*postmodern*’, ‘*postmodernity*’ and ‘*postmodernism*’. To be able to understand the essence of the *Postmodernism*, it is important to know the meanings of these terms beforehand. Bran Nicol in his book *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction* (2009) addresses the complications these terms have on the readers while reading a postmodern text and, also he states that to less complicate the further readings about Postmodernism, the readers must know what each of these term connote. Nicol explain these terms as:

‘Postmodern’ is an adjective that refers both to a particular period in literary and perhaps cultural history[...] which begins in the 1950’s and continues until the 1990’s [...], and to set of aesthetic styles and principles which characterize literary production in this period and which are shaped by the context of postmodernism and postmodernity. Where ‘postmodernity’ refers to the way the world has changed in this period, due to developments in the political, social, economic, and media spheres, ‘postmodernism’ (and the related adjective ‘postmodernist’) refers to a set of ideas developed from philosophy and theory and related to aesthetic production. (2009: 1)

It is said that the emergence of postmodernism is related to the important changes that occurred in the society. The economical, technological and media related changes paved a way for some noticeable changes in aesthetic and cultural spheres. With the changing of the world and adapting into new mentalities, people started to think, act, and feel differently than before in this postmodern period. In postmodern period, a sense of transition to globalization and consumerism is the main concern for literary and artistic production. As Nicol explains in his book:

“In effect late capitalism sees the accumulative logic of capitalism extend into every possible area of society, and into every corner of the globe, eliminating any remaining pockets of ‘precapitalism’.” (2009: 3)

To clarify the subject, Nicol points out in his book that now; capitalism has reached out through the every scopes of society - such as the art, the media and the education- which had not been affected by the previous capitalist agendas before. He also suggests that, all these rapid changes in the society lead to a culturally ‘eclectic’ environment.

Postmodernism is a term that contains in itself a duality which implies a rejection of some of the modernist values and ideologies and a continuation of some attitudes and beliefs in artistic movements and trends of Modernism in the postmodern era. To be able to understand Postmodernism greatly, the readers must look at the previous movement which is called ‘Modernism’, and must know the similarities and differences between these two phenomena. According to many theoreticians and literary critics, to eliminate the questions about postmodernism, the conditions in the ‘modernity’ must be brought into discussion.

The relationship between modernity and postmodernity can be contextualized in a twofold way; firstly, by maintaining some modernist values and beliefs, and secondly, by simply rejecting them. Zima explains as: “[...] postmodern literature revolts against the metaphysical residues of modernity in modernism.” (Zima, 2010: 132) In other words, the literary and artistic differences between modernism and postmodernism correlate to sociological, philosophical, technological and historical differences between modernity and postmodernity. Accordingly, Hutcheon (1988) suggests that modernism and postmodernism are two different ideological systems in that postmodernism rejects the modernist ideology of artistic autonomy, individual expressions, and the deliberate separation of art from mass culture and everyday life.

In postmodernity, apart from the modernist ideology of the proclamation of author and authorship; the idea of no authorship instead the language comes to the forefront. This textual hypothesis has been brought into discussion by Roland Barthes with the publication of his essay *The Death of the Author* (1968), and since its publication it

has become the motto of postmodernism. In his essay, Barthes argues that the author is not responsible for the creation of the meaning, actually creates nothing. In fact, the author does not exist; actually the writer is the one who is existed. Barthes suggests in his essay as: “[...] the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author.” (1968: 1)

According to the postmodernists, the authorship disables the readers’ possibility of interpretation of the given literary text. The author is solely unable to provide the meaning as postmodernism is an eclectic, a generic term which contains in itself a plurality of meaning, diversity in thinking etc.; he/she is incapable of providing the meaning oneself. In other words, the readers replace the author in the process of meaning making actively. Moreover, the readers are also given a chance to identify what kind of a text they are about read. This also brings Barthes’s another argument about textualization which is the concept of ‘writerly’ and ‘readerly’ text.

Briefly, for a ‘writerly text’, the meaning is not given, the reader produces it. This concept is widely used in the modernist experimental literature. For instance, James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* are two of the most prominent experimental texts that are considered as a ‘writerly text’ in terms of their multifaceted use of the language. On the other hand, for a ‘readerly text’, the reader is more passive, guided by the author to comprehend the meaning by using less complex language and more traditional narrative techniques. For instance, the works of the realist writers like George Eliot, William Makepeace Thackeray are mostly considered as a ‘readerly text’ as most of their novels is written in an understandable language and a plot with realistic characters and events.

Postmodern thinking and ideology has brought significant changes in the cultural spheres of the postmodernity, too. According to postmodernists, reality does not exist, but is replaced by the simulation of reality where the media images are replaced what is thought to be real. All the media spheres like television, internet, social media etc. have become places where the reality has come to a state of illusion. Jean Baudrillard in his essay *Simulacra and Simulations* (1988) argues that the real world is replaced by illusion. Everything we see or hear on the media does

not reflect the reality but, in Baudrillard's words, hyperreality which results from the simulation of reality. To be able to understand the concept of 'simulacra', the distinction between simulacra and non-reality must be made. Simulacra connote a non-real reality. Baudrillard explain this as: "The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth--it is the truth which conceals that there is none."¹ Furthermore, Baudrillard also argues that 'simulacra' can be explained as the images of the non-existing reality which means they seem so real that they give the illusion that they really exist in real world. Everything we see is only the images and the signs that roam around the media.

Baudrillard also explains it as 'copies without originals'. This concept reveals that how a consumerist the societies and cultures have become in time. Especially with television, people are constantly being exposed to certain contents, images and texts. For postmodernists, due to the 'simulacriztion' process by mass media in the postmodernity; the issues related to creativity have come forth. Baudrillard argues that as there is no reality and with reality being neutralized, there is no meaning, too. Hence, the creativity is destroyed as well as the meaning. In other words, the value of art is said to have been decreased since the postmodern artists appears to create more materialized, reified and more commercial/consumer art unlike the modernist view of art as a product of high or elite culture.

Postmodern period is also a period in which multiculturalism in its highest point. Many postmodernists argues that the society has never belonged to only one culture, one religion, one feeling, one sensation, one ethnicity or one language. They suggest that what makes the society a 'one big unity' is actually these different societal norms like religion, language, ethnicity etc. All of these are kind of different fragments that are needed to form a bigger, more eclectic and more multicultural community. To exemplify that, in Jean-Francois Lyotard's book *The Postmodern Condition* (1984), he speaks about the idea of the replacement of the real world by the illusion of computer world. He thinks that with the technological advancements and easy access to scientific knowledge; the humanity is basically moving into a

¹ Jean Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, ed. Mark Poster (Stanford; Stanford University Press, 1988), pp.166-184

computer world. For instance, in modernity a continuous pursuit of order, measure, structure and rationality was the dominant ideology which means that the more an ordered a society is the more rationally- which is a good thing- it functions. At the same time, to achieve and to maintain order, society also needs a bit disorder, chaos to fight with. This contradiction introduces the principle of ‘binary oppositions’ which generally represents the contrasts and the conflict between order and disorder. In postmodernity, ‘the binary oppositions’ manifested itself as the split of identity and reality such as the binary oppositions between center and margin, self and other etc. The principle of ‘binary oppositions’ is one of the most important postmodern features that reflects the postmodern condition in postmodern fictions.

In addition, Lyotard suggests that the scientific knowledge is not the solution for everything. Unlike providing solid and permanent solutions, scientific knowledge only provides for temporary effective solutions. In terms of science in postmodernity, Lyotard argues that science is no longer corresponds to the psychological developments and problems of humanity; instead it only serves as a matter of scientific researches. On the other hand, Lyotard also talks about ‘metanarratives’. In postmodernism, the discourse of ‘metanarratives’ has raised some doubts among the postmodernists. As ‘metanarratives’ serve as the foundations to build a modern society; they mostly deal with the universally accepted truths. Based on this idea, the postmodernists reject the discourse of ‘metanarratives’. Lyotard explains this situation as: “I define **postmodern** as incredulity towards metanarratives.” (Lyotard, 1984: 22) Because, in an environment where the society has transformed into a ‘fragmented’ community; the ‘metanarratives’ become dysfunctional as they serve for a greater good not for the individuals’ good.

Another philosophical ideology that shapes the postmodernism belongs to Jacques Derrida’s theory of ‘deconstruction’. The theory basically based on the postmodern discourse of the rejection of essence, ground and foundation. Like Lyotard, Derrida also aims against modern, western culture and philosophy. He suggests that western thoughts rely on the strong grounds, essences and theories. Deconstruction connotes that the work of literature deconstructs itself and the meaning emerges from its discrepancy. It can also be explained as ‘deconstruction’ is the type of reading that

relies on the reading process and the concept of textuality. In addition to that, deconstruction tries to highlight the essences and grounds that many texts which were relied on, are actually not stable at all but it is ever-changing.

Michel Foucault's discussion of the relationship between discourse and power underpins the postmodern ideology along with the other theoreticians like Derrida, Lyotard, Barthes and Baudrillard. According to Foucault, 'discourse' is a historically developed set of opinions that are used to define a concern. On the other hand, 'power' is basically related to the concept of ideology which is also related to political authority. He argues that the relationship between power and authority reveals how modernity paved way to the rise of the lack of freedom. For instance, all social theories like *Feminism*, *Materialism*, and *New Historicism* etc. are part of the concept of ideology that becomes powerful discourses.

Furthermore, ideologies become powerful discourses which are designed to control people by different social systems like schools, universities, hospitals, exams etc. In terms of postmodernity, the relationship between power and discourse is the key factor that shapes the current identity of postmodernism.

In postmodernity, the issues related to the identity and the individual experience have been rather important especially in terms of representation in social spheres and in literature. Postmodernism postulates two issues related to identity. The first one suggests that the individual is a subject where his/her experience is self-sufficient. The second one suggests that the individual is a subjected, ordered subject who is subjected to desire, power, ideology and knowledge. Butler explains these issues related to the 'subject' in his book as:

“For the postmodernist view of this ‘socially constructed self’ ignores the way the self is constituted by an individual’s maintenance of an original, often idiosyncratic **narrative of him or herself**. This is the key to creativity in the individual.” (2002: 57-58)

Postmodern period has opened up a new discussion about the issues related to individuality. With the rapidly-growing society and the effects of globalization on

the people; the individual experience is much more convoluted than it was in modernity. For instance; in postmodern period, the individuals feel the constant need of keeping up with the growing, constantly-changing demands of the society. In order to fit in with the crowd, the individuals become subjected to the outcries of society. According to postmodernists, in order to achieve the identity and the self; the one must acknowledge their differences and specificity. Hutcheon makes a statement about the identity and the self as: “[...] this assertion of identity through difference and specificity is a constant in postmodern thought.” (1988: 59)

1.2. Characteristics of Postmodern Fiction

Postmodern literature manifested itself primarily in fiction, novel writing, and to a certain extent in poetry (Ted Hughes, Philip Larkin, and Seamus Heaney) as well as drama in the form of ‘the absurdist theatre’ with the important dramatists like Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, and Tom Stoppard etc. Internationally, postmodern fiction is a quite popular literary genre with a plenty of significant writers all around the world such as in German literature Gunter Grass and Peter Hanke, in Italian literature Italo Calvino and Umberto Eco, in British literature Salman Rushdie and Angela Carter, and many more writers including Kurt Vonnegut, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Vladimir Nabokov, Paul Auster, Donald Barthelme, William Burroughs etc. The principle postmodern elements of these writers’ fictions can be explained as:

“temporal disorder; the erosion of the sense of time; a pervasive and pointless use of pastiche; a foregrounding of words as fragmenting material signs; the loose association of ideas; paranoia; and vicious circles, or a loss of distinction between logically separate levels of discourse.” (Lewis, 2011: 123)

Postmodernism manifested itself in literature by means of novel as the dominant genre in number of literary trends and styles such as metafiction, intertextuality, historiographic metafiction, magical realism, postcolonial novel, postmodern campus novel, dystopia, simulacra, racial novel etc. The important representatives and novels of these literary trends and styles in postmodern period refer to David Lodge for the representative of metafiction and campus novel with his novel *Changing Places*; Julian Barnes with his two important novels *England, England* and *A History of the*

World in Ten and Half Chapters by making use of dystopia, reality vs. simulacra, historiographic metafiction, intertextuality, and postmodern fragmentariness; Graham Swift with his novel *Waterland* by making use of historiographic metafiction; Angela Carter with her novel *Nights at the Circus* by making use of magical realism and neofeminism; Kazuo Ishiguro with his novel *Never Let Me Go* by making use of dystopia and subjected subject; and Salman Rushdie with his novel *Midnight's Children* by making use of historiographic metafiction, self-reflexive novel, bildungsroman, magical realism and postcolonial novel.

Major characteristics of postmodern literature comprise of the idea of fiction replaced by metafiction; the idea of language does not represent but constitute reality; the idea of meaning is not definite, not overall produced by a writer, a reader, in relation to the text, text deconstructed itself; the idea of the individual as subjected subject to discourse, desire, power; the idea of knowledge positioned within a particular structure; the idea of reality is being replaced by simulacra; the idea of there are no foundation, essence, and grounds for reality, knowledge, and truth; the idea of the sense of loss of history; the idea of proclaiming fragmentariness; the idea of textualization and language plays; the idea of the application of the principle of binary opposition; and, lastly the idea of rejecting the idea of originality and proclaiming intertextuality by means of irony, parody, and pastiche.

'Intertextuality' is a widely-used postmodern phenomenon which appears in the text, and it was firstly coined by Julia Kristeva. Linda Hutcheon explains 'intertextuality' as : "[...] intertextuality replaces the challenged author-text relationship with one between reader and text, one that situates the locus of textual meaning within the history of discourse itself." (1988: 26) The concept of 'intertextuality' is derived from Bakhtin's concepts of 'dialogism' which refers to between texts and 'heteroglossia' which is a language system consisting of various linguistic dialects. In other words, 'heteroglossia' means different types of discourses and speech belonging to authors, characters, narrative within the language.

In postmodern fiction, the meaning of the word emerges in relation to the other work. In a given text, it occurs when the reader can establish relations between this

text and the other text. It is basically a matter of finding references to the other text. For that reason, intertextuality mainly works on thematic level not structural level. Intertextuality emerges from the two postmodern views; the first one is reality is relative or there is no reality, and the second one is there is no originality. To be more specific, intertextuality implies that a text refers not to the reality but to other texts, not to the external reality but to the other text. Therefore, every text is in relation to the other text. That's why; a text focuses on itself in relation to the other text.

Additionally, 'intertextuality' brings about the concepts of pastiche and parody. Both of the concepts are directly related to other literary works with regards to them both imitating. In terms of meaning of the words, 'pastiche' is explained as an imitation to praise, to show the importance, to celebrate. In relation to 'intertextuality', pastiche refers to borrowing ideas from the past literary trends and styles; and then, combining them together to constitute a new literary style or trend. Barry Lewis explains the concept of 'pastiche' as: "Pastiche is rather like creating an anagram, not of letters, but the components of a style. Pastiche is therefore a kind of permutation, a shuffling of generic and grammatical ties." (2011: 125) On the other hand, 'parody' means to imitation to mock. In postmodern fiction, the author expresses an ironic, parodic attitude for discrepancy, contrast, and opposition in a text. Hutcheon in *A Poetics of Postmodernism* explains parody as: "Parody is the ironic mode of intertextuality that enables such revisitations of the past." (1988: 225) Hutcheon also suggests that parody both incorporates and challenges perfectly what is about to parodied.

'Metafiction' is another postmodern literary form that is also an aspect of 'intertextuality'. In terms of a definition, 'metafiction' is fiction focuses on itself in relation to other text or, making readers be aware of what they are reading is a work of fiction. Many postmodern writers use metafiction to create awareness on readers about the function of the text or to demonstrate the existence of the narrator in a text. Nicol explain this as: "The effect of metafiction is principally draw attention to the frames involved in fiction, which are usually concealed by realism." (2009: 35) Both Kristeva and Barthes emphasize that the meaning of the text is shaped by another text, and for

Barthes the meaning of a text is not produced in text but, is produced by the reader in relation to the text and its connections to the other texts involved in the reading. Roland Barthes explains this idea in his essay *Death of the Author* as: “*The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture.*” (1968: 146)

‘Historiographic metafiction’ is an aspect of metafiction which refers to a fiction with historical concerns. In postmodernity, modern historical novel becomes historiographic metafiction because of the changes in conceptions. For example; in postmodernity, writing fiction has turned in to a ‘self-reflexive’ writing, about itself not about the world; concerning history becomes historiographic; history does not exist as we have only written documents of history without an objective past. Many postmodernists asserts that like reality, history is a construct; like fiction it consists of a plot. Hutcheon suggest in her book as:

“[...] those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages: *The French Lieutenant’s Woman, Midnight’s Children, Ragtime, Legs, G., Famous Last Words.*” (1988: 5)

‘Magical realism’ is an important postmodern literary technique that is used to make supernatural and fantastic elements be accepted as probable and real in fiction. In classical realism, the ‘verisimilitude’ of individual experience and social background was a dominant mode. In postmodernity, ‘verisimilitude’ is given through fantastic and supernatural elements. Magical realism is the creation of the non-centre, non-Western that generally produced by so-called post-colonialists. The major representatives of magical realism are Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Angela Carter Salman Rushdie whom generally known as giving emphasis on postcolonial issues.

‘Postcolonial novel’ is another postmodern literary genre that was emerged as a result of the rise of multiculturalism in postmodernity and the colonial issues between East and West. Many postcolonial writers reflect the negative effects of ‘imperialism’ on their writings; furthermore, they try to prove that they have a culture of their own not the colonizers’. As a part of spreading their ideology and their discourse, colonizers implement various social, economic, political, religious

and cultural forms into the colonized region/culture. Bran Nicol explains the postcolonial writing as: “Postmodern–postcolonial writing repeatedly suggests that the writing of history is the chief ideological means of imprisoning subjects in a subordinate social and political position.” (2009: 123)

‘Paranoia’ is a postmodern literary technique that postulates the belief of all the chaos of the world has been initiated by an unknown ruling system and the fear or the threat of being controlled by this unknown ruling system. For postmodernists who always champion the freedom of individuality and the idea of non-existing of a ruling system; the idea of someone else controlling your life and the feeling that you are no longer in control is very a frustrating and disturbing situation. Barry Lewis explains ‘paranoia’ as:

“Paranoia, or the threat of total engulfment by somebody else’s system, is keenly felt by many of the dramatis personae of postmodern fiction. It is tempting to speculate that this is an indirect mimetic representation of the climate of fear and suspicion that prevailed throughout the Cold War.” (2011: 129)

In postmodern fiction, the most common issues related ‘paranoia’ can be explained as: “[...] the distrust of fixity, of being circumscribed to anyone particular place or identity, the conviction that society is conspiring against the individual, and the multiplication of self-made plots to counter the scheming of others.” (Lewis, 2011: 130)

Briefly, postmodern fiction does not completely oppose to the ideas and the literary techniques and styles that modernist writing proposes; instead it strikes an ambivalent attitude toward it. It can be said that postmodern fiction only reach the status of ‘realistic’ by means of scrutinizing the essence and the function of a text. Furthermore, postmodern fiction- unlike modernism which usually aims at complicating the reader’s perception of a text, presents the text as an aesthetic piece of art with complex usage of language and literary techniques as Barthes identifies a modernist writing as a ‘writerly’ text- can be identified as more reader-oriented writing which does not try to exclude the reader out of the text but rather treats the reader as a part of the meaning making process along with the author.

1.2.1. David Mitchell's Fiction in Relation to *Black Swan Green* as a Postmodern Fiction

Published in 2006 by English contemporary writer David Mitchell, *Black Swan Green* is a coming-of-age novel or, in literal terms, is a 'bildungsroman novel' in which tells the story of a 13-years-old boy named Jason Taylor who lives in a small town of Worcestershire, England with his family. *Black Swan Green* is described as: "[...] a curious mixture of stylistics pyrotechnics and dramatic cliché, and the book ends with a resounding, transcendent success." (Watman, 2006: 62)

Black Swan Green with its autobiographical aspects, its unconventional fragmented structural organisation, and its playful and complex usage of language along with belonging to a 'bildungsroman' genre; it also considered as a postmodern fiction as a whole. To be able to understand and assess the novel in a postmodern frame; firstly David Mitchell's fictional style must be brought into discussion by means of providing a general overview of 'new British fiction' as well. David Mitchell's fictional style can be identified as highly 'experimental', 'genre-bending' and 'cosmopolitan' as for touching some sociocultural issues of Britain in contemporary British literature. Patrick O'Donnell in his article *New British Fiction* describes Mitchell as:

"David Mitchell, born in 1969 and raised in the stolidly middle-class domain of Malvern, Worcestershire (the setting of his semi-autobiographical fourth novel *Black Swan Green* [2006]), but whose itinerary includes eight years of teaching English to technical students in Japan and whose nomadic experiences everywhere undergird his cosmopolitan, futuristic multinovels." (2012: 429)

David Mitchell's writing can be identified under the name of 'new wave of British fiction'. Most of the millennial generation of British writers' works- including David Mitchell's works - does not heavily relies on the postmodern aspects; instead, it carries some 'modernist' traces in its application to the postmodernism. This millennial generation of writers' writing can be identified as a 'hybrid' genre with the coexistence of modernist and postmodernist elements together to create a new form of writing; the writing is also displays some common use of irony, parody,

pastiche and language games. O'Donnell explains this condition of new British fiction as:

“[...] the authors of new British fiction productively make use of postmodernism's concerns with identity-formation, history and historiography, and the relation between aesthetics and politics, while developing new ways of addressing questions of genre, identity, language, as well as emergent issues related to the environment, globalization, technology, literariness, and authenticity that reflect the historical specificities of the millennia.” (2012: 432)

In terms of his novels, Mitchell creates a kind of a ‘universe’ where all of his novels are binded together in a way that all the characters and the events roam freely from one to another novel without any limitations of time and space. Parker explains this as:

“[...] as O'Donnell notes, ‘Mitchell's novels fabricate a ‘spacetime’ in which the fatal and the serendipitous cross paths [...] where the primary tense is that of the ‘future present’, implying the coexistence of multiple futures, including the potential ‘futurelessness’ of global apocalypse’ (p.16)” (2017: 446)

To exemplify that, in *Black Swan Green*, the ‘grand macronovel universe’ of David Mitchell is explained as in a scene where Jason goes to a tourist shop and says as: “[...] I bought a series of thirteen dinosaur postcards. Each one's got a different dinosaur, but if you put them end to end in order, the background landscape joins up and forms a frieze.” (Mitchell, 2006: 212-213)

Mitchell's fiction also reflects the ‘cosmopolitan’ nature of his novels. In the twenty-first century, with globalization quickly spreading all around the world as in many spheres chaos prevails such as tensions on policy, economic recessions due to the Thatcher-era policies, multiculturalism etc. In order to achieve stability and to build a better future for the next generations; the fiction itself provides opportunities for new socio-cultural paradigms to be constructed under the name of ‘cosmopolitanism’. Shaw explains this as:

“The fragility of the contemporary environment is intimately connected with a growing cosmopolitan consciousness in literature – indeed, threat of global

ecological crises and globalizing processes emerge in literature as the facilitator of a tentative cosmopolitanism.” (2015: 110)

Additionally, Mitchell’s fiction aims at depicting the world as a real environment not like a dystopian type of future but with its flaws, its chaos, its heterogeneity. Shaw also comes up with an explanation by saying: “[...] it is the depiction of an environment built on the conflict, diversity and discord of a future **imperfect**.” (2015: 117) Starting from this, in *Black Swan Green*, Mitchell lays emphasis on the issues related the politics, nationalism, the sociocultural aspects of the British society such as religion, ethnicity, the class war in terms of social ranks, the clash between the centre and margin- in terms of the novel which is the clash between the minority groups and the locals of the town, and the clash between the popular children and the marginalized children in the school- and, lastly the colonial concerns in terms of the novel, the effects of the Falkland Wars on society and its people and the rising nationalistic pride among the British people resulting in people to focus on these issues more but rather ignoring to communicate and listen to each other. Shaw explains these issues circulating in the novel as following:

“Mitchell’s novels ultimately reflect a post-millennial re-routing of postcolonial or postmodern literary paradigms - a twenty-first century encapsulation, then, of *both* the notions of global multitude and global finitude. The novels examine the potential for the human project in light of the inequalities of the human condition, offering two alternative directions, for the novel as form *and* for the future of humanity: neither dystopian, but merely mediated pragmatic realities for a world in transition.” (2015: 119)

Postmodern aspects that are subject to the novel can be identified as postmodern fragmentariness, paranoia, to a lesser extent magical realism, post colonialism, the concept of binary opposition and the individual as a subjected subject.

In *Black Swan Green*, the feeling of ‘paranoia’ is a very common mode that can be linked to the economic issues related to the negative effects of Margaret Thatcher’s policies on the lower class and working class people of the town; and also it can be linked to ‘the complex of insularity of British people’ in relation to the tense

relationship between the townsfolk and the gypsy community in terms of trying to cast them aside from their community to preserve their ‘Britishness’. Postcolonial and the magical realist elements are also present in *Black Swan Green*. In terms of post colonialism, the effects of the Falkland Wars between England and Argentina on the British also reflect the imperialist ideology of Britain. Correlatively, these postcolonial issues create a difference of opinions among the townsfolk.

1.3. Postmodern Fragmentariness and Temporal Distortion in *Black Swan Green*

Postmodernism manifests itself in number of literary styles and techniques. ‘Fragmentariness’ and ‘temporal distortion’ are two of the important postmodern aspects that should be brought into discussion with its relation to *Black Swan Green* as a postmodern fiction. The main idea of ‘fragmentariness’ can be explained as putting emphasis on ‘non-linearity’ and ‘opposing the conventional narrativization’. Rubenstein describes ‘fragmentariness’ as: “[...] fragmentation functions as both social condition and narrative strategy.” (1994: 144) Postmodern writers rule out the traditional narrative forms with a consistent and a linear narration; instead they play with the structural forms, and try to deconstruct it by giving ambiguous or various endings in their novel; or by creating fragmented text in fragments or in episodic chapters. Correlatively, postmodern writers believe that through fragments and fragmentary writing; it enables to discover great amount of meaning from the text. “[...] the scriptable or ‘writerly text’, [...], with this text readers are obliged to produce their own meanings from fragmentary or contradictory clues [...].” (Nicol, 2010: 44)

Similarly, the postmodern literary technique of ‘temporal distortion’ must be contextualized as a branch of ‘postmodern fragmentariness’. Temporal distortion refers to the non-linear elements in the narrative such as creating and using ‘time jumps’ or making arbitrary literary allusions in the text. As fragmentariness and non-linear narrative are commonly used techniques in both modernity and postmodernity; in postmodern fiction, ‘temporal distortion’ unlike ‘fragmentariness’ provides an ‘ironic’ point of view.

Black Swan Green which focuses on a year in 12-years old Jason Taylor's life consists of thirteen chapters. Each chapter coincides with a month in the year of his life Parker explains as: "[...] a novel told from a seemingly singular perspective (that of the thirteen-year-old protagonist, who recounts thirteen stories of his life over one year) once more features an identity that 'expands and multiplies' [...]" (2017: 446) The novel is presented in an unorthodox narrative structure in which there is no consistency around the plot and the characters that every chapter functions independently, finishes suddenly without providing the readers a resolution, some important characters disappear without any explanation and also reappear- if they remerge again, we see the character or the event in an arbitrary chapter, not in a chronological sense in the chapters. This can be explained due to the 'semi-autobiographical', 'rhizomic' and 'fragmented' nature of the novel.

Mitchell deliberately constructs his narrative in episodic form as to highlight the most important turning points and events in Jason's life and, to allow the protagonist to connect all the dots like the pieces of a puzzle, and in the end to allow him to gain a clear point of view towards his environment. For instance, Madame Crommelynck – Jason's unusual friend and 'mentor' – without achieving her breakthrough moment in her character development in the novel; suddenly disappears. Moreover, Jason's very first kiss with a new girl in school named Holly Deblin is eclipsed with another important event for Jason which is his parents' divorce, and correspondingly we never hear from her again in the novel. In the last chapter of the novel, Jason says as:

"The world won't leave things be. It's always injecting endings into beginnings. Leaves tweezers themselves from these weeping willows. Leaves fall into the lake and dissolve into slime. Where's the sense in that? Mum and Dad fell in love, had Julia, had me. They fall out of love, Julia moves off to Edinburgh, Mum to Cheltenham and Dad to Oxford with Cynthia. The world never stops unmaking what the world never stops making." (Mitchell, 2006: 360)

'Postmodern fragmentariness' can be associated with 'modernist alienation' in terms of character representation. Harper finds a link between modernism and postmodernism as: "[...] postmodern thematizations of subjective fragmentation are actually traceable to a fundamental modernist concern." (1994: 20) In *Black Swan Green*,

the protagonist Jason Taylor exhibits a certain ‘modernist’ behaviour. For instance, in modernist terms, Jason Taylor’s problems in his social, family and school life makes him a kind of alienated self due to the fact that he is bullied and tormented by his schoolmate, is unable to make friends easily etc. On the other hand, in terms of his self, Jason Taylor is not a unified self instead a fragmented one. For that reason, he internalized all of his feelings, thoughts and emotions; and, in a way created his own world where he can be anyone who always wanted to be “I can never tell Dad what I really think like that. I can feel the stuff I don’t say rotting inside me like mildew spuds in a sack.” (Mitchell, 2006: 40).

To exemplify that, Jason created alter egos to him and named them according to their functions in his life. The first alter ego of Jason is named as ‘Hangman’ and it represents his stammer- a speech impediment. ‘Hangman’ usually shows itself when Jason is not in his comfort zone and forced to do something that he does not want to. For instance when Jason’s bullying taken its extreme form and, also when his teacher compels him to read a poem in front of the whole classroom; ‘Hangman’ takes the stage and all things gets worse for Jason. In the first chapters of the novel, ‘Hangman’ who represents the speech impediment of Jason, has a dominant role in Jason’s decision-making mechanisms about his life. Throughout the novel, we see ‘Hangman’ intensely controls his social life. Until the end of the novel, Jason shifts his point of view about his stammer; and, ultimately realizes that it is not the stammer that causes him social distress and alienation instead the people and their expectations of him causes him think and feel that way. Jason states as:

“S’pose it isn’t Hangman who causes it? S’pose it’s the other person? The other person’s expectations. S’pose that’s why I can read aloud in an empty room, perfectly, or to a horse, or a dog, or myself? [...] S’pose there’s a time fuse lit when it’s a human listening, like a stick of Tom and Jerry dynamite? S’pose if you don’t get the word out before this fuse is burnt away, a couple seconds, say, the dynamite goes off? S’pose what triggers the stammer’s the stress of hearing that fuse going sssssss? [...] How? By honestly not caring how long the other person’ll have to wait for me. Two seconds? Two minutes? No, two years. [...] If I can reach

this state of not caring, Hangman'll remove his finger from my lips"
(Mitchell, 2006: 365-366)

Jason Taylor's another alter ego which is named as 'Unborn Twin', is the embodiment of his conscience and also acts as a friend to Jason who always seeks the best for him in the story. It can also be identified as the 'real self' that Jason aspires to be in real life. In Jason's internal monologue, 'Unborn Twin' also wants to replace Jason in real life as he constantly judges him, refutes him, and approves or disapproves his decisions. On the other hand, the other alter ego of Jason is named as 'Maggot' who is the embodiment of all the offensive and derogatory words that he has constantly received from his school friends. In the novel Jason talks about 'Unborn Twin' and 'Maggot' as: "Go home, urged the nervy Maggot in me. What if he is a ghost? My Unborn Twin can't stand Maggot. What if he is a ghost?" (Mitchell, 2006: 20) In the novel, we see 'Unborn Twin' and 'Maggot' in a conflicting relationship as 'Unborn Twin' represents the true self of Jason; on the contrary, 'Maggot' represents the negative things that Jason had exposed in his life such as the humiliations and the torments he got from his schoolmates. 'Unborn Twin' sarcastically refers to 'Maggot' as: "Once a Maggot, mocked Unborn Twin, always a Maggots." (Mitchell, 2006: 267)

The fourth alter ego of Jason is named as 'Eliot Bolivar' who is the embodiment of Jason's artistic self. At the same time, Jason Taylor uses the name of 'Eliot Bolivar' as a pseudonym for his poems. The reason for using a pseudonym for his writing is explained in terms of Jason's obsession of being popular among the schoolmates. For him, 'writing poetry' connotes 'homosexuality', is something effeminate, and belongs to the genre marginalized people use. Jason explains to Madame Crommelynck the reason why he does not use his real name as:

"[...] I believe the truth is, you use your pseudonym because your poetry is a shameful secret. I am correct? "Shameful" isn't the exact word, exactly.' 'Oh, so what is the exact word, exactly? 'Writing poetry's, I looked around the solarium, but Madame Crommelynck's got a tractor beam, 'sort of... gay.' 'Gay'? A merry activity? This was hopeless. 'Writing poem is ... what creeps and poofers do.' (Mitchell, 2006: 194)

In another scene in the novel where Jason talks about his Christmas presents to his friend Dean Moran, and makes another ‘homosexual’ statement about ‘writing poetry’ and ‘books’ in general, he comments as: “ Moron asked me what I’d got for Christmas. I’d actually got £13.50 in book tokens and a poster of Middle Earth, but books’re **gay** so I talked about the Game of Life which I’d got from Uncle Brian and Aunt Alice.” (Mitchell, 2006: 5) In another scene where Jason’s mother takes him to see his doctor Mrs. De Roo, he makes another homosexual statement, when he sees a boy from another rival school as:

“Every year, according to Pete Redmarley and Gilbert Swinyard, all the Dyson Perrins fourth-years and all our fourth-years skive off school and meet in this secret arena walled in by gorse on Poolbrook Common for a mass scrap. If you chicken out you’re homo and if you tell a teacher you’re dead.” (Mitchell, 2006: 29)

Therefore, to achieve a popular status among the other boys; he must sacrifice his artistic side by hiding it behind his alter ego ‘Eliot Bolivar’, and must play the role of ‘a tough guy’ without showing any feelings and emotions. Madame Crommelynck preaches about coming out as a true artist with his real name she says as: “If you are not truthful to the world about who and what you are, your art will stink of falsenesses.” (Mitchell, 2006: 195)

As a result, the postmodern concepts of fragmentariness and temporal distortion are the crucial postmodern aspects that make the novel a postmodern fiction. Jason Taylor’s fragmented self is exhibited in a fragmented writing that also can be identified with the life itself as life is an unexpected and mystery concept where there is no linearity and no certainty. Mitchell’s purpose here is to use this type narration in the novel is to remind the readers that the novel is narrated from a child’s perspective. For that reason, the readers should be aware of reading the story of Jason Taylor as 13-years old boy experiences; and should not look for consistency and reasonable actions always.

II. CONCEPTS OF IDENTITY AND SELF IN RELATION TO *BLACK SWAN GREEN*

2.1. Friedrich Hegel on Self and Identity

Hegel is considered among the group of philosophers like Kant and Descartes that expresses his opinions about ‘self’ and ‘identity’; and, tries to come up with a definition of his own. According to Hegel, he postulates that the issues of ‘identity’ and ‘difference’ are two interrelated concepts that should be analysed together. Harris explains Hegel’s concept of this mutual relationship of the ‘identity’ and the ‘difference’ as:

“Hegel seeks to establish that these two concepts are mutually implicative; he insists that there can be no bare, or pure, identity, because the identity of any object or concept is constituted by its relation to what it differs from, so that to identify is always by the same token to distinguish.” (1989: 135)

Harris tries to explore here is that the identity is essentially an identity with difference. Hegel deduces that we form our own identities by expressing our differences from the ‘Others’ that play a vital role ‘shaping’ our identities. Berenson postulates as:

“Each of us is a self in that we exist for ourselves as well as for others—we are both objects and subjects, part of one reality, and we come to know selves through our interaction with others in a common Form of Life. [...] The individual self does not strive in any way to absorb other selves into itself, nor to surrender completely to another. We would take such a being as an inadequate personality in some way.” (1982: 86)

Hegel believes that the concept of ‘identity’ is founded on the notion that there is no pure, unique identity or, a truthful identification of any objects or person. He also believes that ‘difference’ cannot originate from the purity of identity or identification. As soon as the individuals realize that the identity becomes a valid one, but the ‘absurdity’ arises if the individuals reject it.

“[...] the law of identity is perfectly legitimate when it is recognized that identity and identification always depend on the reciprocal definition of finite things and concepts by their relations to other correlative to them in a systematic whole.” (Harris, 1989: 137-138)

Hegel, in relation to ‘identity’, proposes the shift from the concept of ‘Reason’ from the concept of ‘Spirit’. According to Hegel, ‘cognition’ stems from the realistic and rational approaches of the individuals who represent the ‘Spirit’ rather than Kantian approach of the passive individuals who assumes the role of an observer who represents the ‘Reason’. Additionally, Hegel gives meaning to ‘Spirit’ as the person who is conscious of his/her reality or actuality through his/her doings. In other words, ‘Spirit’ is the abstract phenomena that by reflecting itself in reality, begins to turn itself complete. He thinks that individuals are constituted by society, and history. For that reason, the individuals, in a way, intercede between his/her collective thoughts, feelings and understandings; and his/her understandings and the ideas of the world where there are also other people exist. Berenson refers to Hegel’s idea as: “Hegel identifies the human with the divine self-consciousness, which is a unification of consciousness (self and other) in a single, universal self.” (1982: 86)

Hegel also puts emphasis on the aspects of human experiences such as culture, religion, consciousness, society etc. in his philosophy. According to Hegel, human beings are not simply the individuals that perceive his/her surroundings rather are culturally induced social beings. Harris refers to ‘identity’ in relation to ‘others’ as:

“[...] every concept, in principle, is identical with itself only in its identity with its other, and if isolated from this relation to other, inevitably contradicts itself. This is because the truth is the whole, which is a system, in which every partial element is what it is by virtue of its coherency with and adaptation to every other, so that, if it is divorced from its proper context, it at once invokes it (to maintain its identity) while, through assumed isolation, it denies it. (1989: 143)

2.2. Martin Heidegger on Self and Identity

Martin Heidegger, like Hegel, also touches on the subjects of ‘self’ and ‘identity’; in the light of his book *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger proposes the idea of human beings are ‘pure’ entities that are characterized as ‘Dasein’. Wild defines the term ‘Dasein’ as:

“*Dasein* (human being) has no essence in the traditional sense. The “essence” of this being lies not in any set of properties, but “in its *Existenz*”. (H, 42). [...] “the characteristics of this being that can be brought out of it into the light are not qualities or states (*Eigenschaften*) of something before us that looks so and so, but ways of being that are always possible for it.” (1962: 300)

For Heidegger, ‘Dasein’ fundamentally connotes the ‘essence of being’ in which the all the individuals possess ‘Dasein’. In other words, ‘Dasein’ represents the human existence. Furthermore, Heidegger believes that the human identity can be understood through revealing its relationship with the others as it is innately secluded. When the individuals are not related to the others and the outside world; ‘Dasein’ is not capable of verbalizing itself. Mansbach refers to Heidegger’s idea of Dasein as:

“[...] Heidegger proposes Dasein as a transcendental subject, defining it as a relational rather than a substantial entity. Dasein is not a substance which relates to that which is outside itself: Dasein is transcendence, it goes beyond its own borders.” (1991: 68-69)

Additionally, Heidegger brings the concept of the Self into the discussion. He postulates that by making ‘Dasein’ visible, external; a ‘Self’ comes into existence. Mansbach explains Heidegger’s Self as:

“[...] similar to the traditional ‘I’ in that it is that which remain constant throughout experience, but Dasein has two modes of being between which it can ‘choose’: authenticity and inauthenticity. The constancy of the Self (*Ständigkeit des Selbst*) is [...] the authentic. Inauthentic, non-Self-constancy (*Unselbst- ständigkeit*) is also a possibility.” (1991: 71)

The 'self' in relation to 'human experience' is explained by three concepts which refer to Being in, self and world related to the concept of 'Dasein'. The concept of 'being-in' is identified as: "[...] is unique to human beings. [...] Being-in makes possible disclosure of the nature of all entities. It expresses the "character of overstepping of transcendence (BPP 301/428)." (Mansbach, 1991: 72) On the other hand, the concept of the 'world' refers to the aspect that forms the 'Dasein'. Mansbach refers to it as:

"On Heidegger's view, "world" is an ontological concept which designates a characteristic of Dasein itself, not as something attached to it but as pertaining to it essentially. Dasein possesses an understanding of that world which is expressed in its ability to cope with it, to get along in it." (1971: 72)

According to Heidegger, 'Self' is considered as inauthentic. As Dasein finds itself in a world where the Others from the past or the Others from the present have already produced everything that belongs to the world. For that reason, Dasein generally focuses on 'the future' by means of understanding the world. Mansbach refers to this as:

"The world shaped is not Dasein's own and the Self which is configured through existence is unauthentic: it is the 'they' (*das Man*). Dasein's inauthenticity is thus due to the fact that it is delivered over to the domination of Others. The 'the "they" dictates Dasein's Self." (1971: 75)

Heidegger also highlights the relationship between humans and the world by emphasizing the importance of the human-specific phenomenons like experiencing death, fear, anxiety and conscience. These phenomenons of human being help Dasein to come forward and be an 'authentic' self. Mansbach explain it as:

"Heidegger shows that the relationship between the human being and the world can be severed by introducing "facing death", "anxiety" (*Angst*) and the "voice of conscience" (*Stimme des Gewissens*) as "moments" which make the world and everyday familiarity fade away." (1971: 77)

Furthermore, Heidegger also expresses an opinion about 'individuality'. To be able to acknowledge the concept of 'individuality', the 'authenticity' should be discussed with it altogether. Mansbach refers to Heidegger's idea about 'individuals' as: "It is

only within the individual that authenticity and inauthenticity, resoluteness and practical attitude, can be differentiated.” (1971: 86)

Heidegger’s ‘Temporality’ is another concept correlated to the human experience. The temporality can basically be defined as the union of past, present, and future. For Dasein to be successful entity, these three concepts are required for human existence to be counted as a whole. Mansbach refers to Heidegger’s idea of Temporality as:

“Temporality in its unity individuates by holding the entire structure of human existence together and making it possible for Dasein to grasp its existence in its totality.” (1971: 89)

Consequently, Heidegger postulates that the individual identity is formed on the grounds of ‘Dasein’ who serves as a the ‘soul’ of the individual to become more understandable as an identity. Briefly, Dasein is a necessary force to form a human identity. For that reason, ‘Dasein’ must be a social being rather than a passive one.

2.3. Representation of Postmodern Identity and Self in *Black Swan Green*

Today, the postmodern philosophy and the condition of modernity subsequent to postmodernity generally touch on the subjects of the ‘self’ and the ‘identity’. Butler defines ‘the self’ as:

“[...] the nature of the self [...] the term preferred by postmodernists to apply to individuals is not so much ‘self’ as ‘subject’, because the latter term implicitly draws attention to the ‘subject-ed’ condition of persons who are, whether they know it or not, ‘controlled’ [...] or ‘constituted’ [...] by the ideologically motivated discourses of power which predominate in the society they inhabit.” (2002: 50)

The postmodern concepts of ‘self’ and ‘the identity’ has become a bit blurry concepts because of the fact that in the late modernity and the postmodern period, these concepts are attributed an ambiguous and a diverse connotations rather than having a straightforward ones. Gubrium and Holstein explain the postmodern condition of the ‘self’ as:

“Self no longer simply references an entity, a presence or presences. It is possible to speak of diversity of self in both modern and postmodern discourse, but modern diversity is substantial while postmodern is constitutive, insubstantial. Neither the old fashioned idea of a core self nor the more recent notion of nonpathological, multiple, and performative self can represent its postmodern condition.” (1994: 687), with the rapidly growing urbanization and mass culture

In modernist literature, the individuals reflect the fragmentariness of the self where the character is not a master of his/her destiny, not an integrated personality, not a unified self but a tragic, unheroic figure revealing his/her sense of alienation and frustration. On the other hand, in postmodern literature, the individuals are represented as ‘multidimensional’ and, ‘variable’ individuals, always changing and adapting themselves into the contemporary needs of the society. Gubrium and Holstein also postulate about the ‘postmodern self’ as:

“Contrary to the inclination of postmodernists to see a radical break between modern and postmodern experience, we view the postmodern self as not so totally new. Rather, self’s social and intellectual conditioning over the years has dislodged it from traditional analytic and experiential moorings. While some would say that this self has ceased to exist as a significant category of contemporary life, we contend that it is the self’s voicing that has noticeably changed.” (1994: 690)

Furthermore, the concepts of ‘identity’ and ‘self’ in postmodernity can be explained in twofold way. Firstly, with the technological advancements in the society especially in the media spheres like television, computer and the Internet; the perception of ‘the identity’ and ‘the self’ has relatively changed. Baudrillard’s famous concept of ‘simulacrum’ emerged out of this postmodern aspect. Baudrillard argues that the real world is replaced by illusion, non-reality. In the media or in television, we see the images of non-existing reality. Regarding this, in postmodern period, shaping of the identity is perceived as ‘fragmented’ and ‘flexible’ not a static one, and also a subjected subject.

Another way to explain the concepts of ‘the identity’ and ‘the self’ is to reflect upon the effects of ‘consumerist society’ on the individuals. In terms of these two postmodern dynamics, in the meantime, the idea of ‘binary oppositions’ emerges as postmodernists are both feel liberated to assert their identity on their own, on the other hand, they feel some sort of distress as they don’t know who their real ‘self’ is. Linda Hutcheon explains this paradox of ‘binary opposition’ as:

“The concept of alienated otherness (based on binary oppositions that conceal hierarchies) gives way, as I have argued, to that of differences, that is to assertion, not of centralized sameness, but of decentralized community – another postmodern paradox.” (1988: 12)

Binary oppositions emerge in postmodern fiction owing to the concepts of ‘the identity’ and ‘the self’; the issues related to post colonialism, or the issues related to ‘minority groups’ in the society, in other words the ‘marginalized’ and ‘alienated’ people. Therefore, the most known binary oppositions can be identified as the centre and margin, East and West, male and female etc. In terms of *Black Swan Green* these people can be exemplified as Jason Taylor, Madame Crommelynck, Jason’s friend Dean Moran, and the gypsies in the town.

David Mitchell’s *Black Swan Green* chooses a marginalized character as a protagonist. In terms of the novel; the binary oppositions of centre and margins, and the popularity vs. unpopularity, nationalistic pride vs. ruling out the different ethnicities etc. can be presented as the main themes of the novel as well. These are the main binary oppositions that take place in the novel. In terms of centre vs. margin, the centre represents the schoolmates of Jason Taylor. They are popular children of the school and, they embody all corruption and immorality such as bad habits like smoking and drinking, bullying, using swear words etc. These popular children of the school to stay popular all the time act in this way.

For instance, they are one of the primary reasons that make Jason’s life miserable. They constantly bully him because of his stammer, always making fun of him and, even beat him up brutally. On the other hand, the margin represents the unpopular,

regular children of the school. Jason Taylor represents the margin in the novel. He was marginalized and alienated by his social relations.

Another binary opposition that has a common usage is that the binary opposition ‘popularity vs. unpopularity’. The popularity is an important issue in the novel considering the protagonist is a 13-years teen who wants be a part of something. In the first chapters of the novel, we see Jason is trying to be one of those popular children. The reason why he wants to be a part of their group is that if he becomes one of them, they would not bully and humiliate him anymore; at the same time, he would reach the level of ‘cool guys’ and following he can gain self-confidence and, in the end makes friends easily including developing love relationship, too.

Furthermore, the popular children of the school have a secret group named the Spooks which is a members-only group. In this group, the boys play some games and sports in the name of power and proving who the rowdiest one among them. Whoever wins these games; he becomes a new leader and is announced as the toughest one in the group. It is simply a matter of rank among the boys. Jason sarcastically describes the activities in the group as: “Games and sports aren’t about taking part or even about winning. Games and sports’re really about humiliating your enemies.” (Mitchell, 2006: 7) Jason also characterizes the group as: “About twenty-or twenty-five of us boys, plus Dawn Madden, stood in a bunch to picked like slaves in a slave market.” (Mitchell, 2006: 6). This binary opposition of novel bears a striking resemblance to William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* (1954) both having a similar plot and characters in terms of the Spooks in *Black Swan Green*.

In short, the aspects of ‘the identity’ and ‘the self’ are contextualized in postmodern fiction by means of the binary oppositions and, social conditions. In postmodernity, individuals are depicted in search of acquiring a self or; they must be free themselves from the external societal norms that hinders him/her from acquiring the self. In order to do that, the individual must embrace his/ her ‘self’ by being completely true to himself/herself or by accepting his/her ‘self’ through difference and specificity. In terms of *Black Swan Green*, Mitchell mostly focuses on giving a voice for the ‘margin’. For instance Jason’s embracing his artistic self or standing up

against the bullies can be associated with ‘margin’ is becoming a ‘centre’ in a very postmodern sense.

2.3.1. Jason Taylor as a Postmodern Protagonist

Postmodern period shed lights on the issues related to the self and other, the issue of identity, and also issues related to individuality. Stuart Hall also characterizes the identities as:

“[...] identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation.” (2011: 4)

In postmodernity, individual is subjected, dominated, constructed by history and the cultural background. Individual can acquire a self by means of his/her experience. Butler explains the individual self as: “The postmodernist self, [...] is supposed to be capable of being autonomous, rational and centred, and somehow free of any particular cultural, ethnic, or gendered characteristics.”(2002: 59) Stuart Hall also characterizes the ‘postmodern subject’ as:

“It is historically, not biologically, defined. The subject assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent “self”. Within us are contradictory identities, pulling in different directions, so that our identifications are continuously being shifted about. If we feel we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or “narrative of the self” about ourselves (see Hall, 1990).” (Hall, 1996: 598)

In postmodernity, according to postmodernists, the individual identity can only be achieved by embracing the difference and specificity. For instance, in *Black Swan Green* we see 13-years old Jason Taylor depicted as an outcast, who is unable to find his place in society mostly because of his speech impediment. His stammer somehow stands in Jason’s way, prevents him from being a popular child at school, prevents

him from having normal friendships or intimate relationships with his crushes and also prevents him from his acquiring his true artistic self.

With regards to that, Jason becomes an alienated and a solitary child as he is unable to find happiness and contentment in his presence; and creates himself a world where he has four alter egos with him that lead and interfere with his life. Also, in this world he can be the true version of himself without his stammer and the bullying.

As a children protagonist, Jason Taylor's the quest for his 'true self' is narrated in a childish manner as he is a boy with a very rich imagination and wit, that enables him to enjoy his own company. For instance, every time he leaves the house for taking a stroll or play with his friend Dean; these outings always mean something 'adventurous'. For many people, the places he has been to or, the people whom he met seem pretty ordinary or normal. However – especially in the first chapters, he perceives his surrounding as a magical place. For instance, the forest signifies a magical, fantastic place where the supernatural phenomenas reside in such ghosts, witches, the shadows etc. Throughout the novel, we see Jason is less interested in the nature and the supernatural and the fantastic aspects of the forest.

Postmodernism suggests the idea of subjected subject. Jason as a postmodern protagonist is subjected to desire as he wants to be an aspiring poet, also he wants to have functioning social relationships with other people and, at the same time he seeks for a romantic relationship, too.

III. *BLACK SWAN GREEN* AS A POSTMODERN BILDUNGSROMAN

3.1. The Condition Of Postmodern Literature In Relation To The Re-emergence Of The *Bildungsroman* Tradition In Postmodernity

Postmodern period is, first of all, a historical period that mostly covers the second half of the 20th century, dates from 1950's to the present time. It is a period which expresses a way in which the world changes after *the World War II*, following to that the developments in political, social, economic and cultural spheres. In that sense, postmodern period has become a kind of a transition period to consumerism and globalization in which a number of postmodern thinkers support the idea of internationalism rather than nationalism— the idea of nationalism is, somehow, dangerous and, has a triggering power for the wars to outbreak, they think.

In postmodern period, there is a sense of no absolute truth and reality which means reality does not exist but constitute reality, it was replaced by the simulation of reality through media images. Another aspect of the postmodern period is that the emphasis on the binary oppositions between center and margin, self and other, East and West, and, male and female etc. These binary oppositions create a kind of fragmented, split identities in which the individual becomes a subjected subject, subjected to desire, power and discourse. In postmodernism, there is also the rejections of the sense of history and the possibility to acknowledge an objective past. Many postmodernists believe that history does not represent the historical facts as they are; instead they are, somehow, fictionalized, a product of a narrativization which denotes history to be historiographic in postmodern sense.

Postmodern period manifested itself in literature in a number of trends and styles such as metafiction, intertextuality, historiographic metafiction, magical realism etc. In postmodern literature, there is this idea of no originality but intertextuality through irony, parody and pastiche. As the postmodern period mainly takes place during the World War II era, many postmodern writers grounded their works on serious subjects like the war itself, the Cold war period, the nuclear war threats etc. For that reason, with the aim of expressing their frustration towards the gloominess of the war-torn

environment, the writers assume, a kind of an ironic, parodic attitude in their literary works.

Another important aspect of the postmodern literature is intertextuality. Intertextuality emerges from the two postmodern views; the idea of reality or there is no reality; and the idea of there is no originality. These two postmodern ideas underpin the basis of intertextuality. In other words, it is related to a reader's ability to establish relations in a given text at the same time by referring to other text. A text does not refer to reality but to the other text. In relation to intertextuality, there is a similar postmodern concept which is metafiction.

Basically, metafiction is related to a text, a text of fiction referring to the other text, and it is also related to make the readers aware of the fictionality of the work they read. Postmodern authors believe that every text refers to the other text, they even parodize to each other in their textual relationship. By using the methods like irony, parody, pastiche, allusions, and even plagiarism etc., the authors aim to create a foundation, a basis for their work to be evaluated as credible by the readers. In brief, the postmodern literature which emerges as a reaction against the modernist literature, serves as a rejection of the modernist literary aspects and literary styles; and, by doing that assumes an ironic, mocking, even a playful attitude. For that reason, it can be said that postmodern literature is, a kind of a parody of the modernist literature.

To give some information about the postmodern mentality, unlike the modernist writers who depict the world as a period of crisis, troubled, chaotic and the people of this kind of environment as a kind of frustrated, alienated individuals in their literary work; instead, postmodern writers assume a more pessimistic attitude towards their environment. For instance, they understand that the world is not going any better and will not get better either, from this point, and, as there are so many chaos, wars and evil in the world; these factors, in a way, affect the individuals as negatively. Let's say, the individuals become more paranoid about the possible, upcoming threats to their lives as result of the destructive effects of the World War II.

From this point, I will try to provide some information about the condition of the bildungsroman tradition in the postmodern period. In postmodernity, there are two important issues related to the condition of the individual. The first one is about the individual is a subject and, the second one is about the individual is subjected, dominated, constructed ordered— socially, textually, historically. As Butler explains this aspect in his book as:

“For the postmodernist view of this ‘socially constructed’ self ignores the way the self is constituted by an individual’s maintenance of an original, often idiosyncratic **narrative of him or herself**. This is the key to creativity in the individual.” (2002: 57-58)

In postmodern period, for an individual to acquire his/her self becomes by means of his/her experience. In many postmodern fictions, the protagonist’s process of acquiring his self is depicted through expressing his/her difference and specificity. Hutcheon identifies the self as: “This assertion of identity through difference and specificity is a constant in postmodern thought.” (1988: 59)

In the postmodern period, bildungsroman tradition, in general terms, covers the two issues which are the development of the character personality goes in parallel to the shaping of the identity. A bildungsroman generally functions not only as a form of entertainment but as a piece of education, guidance book for young people in the postmodernity as well; as it contains important life lessons and moralizing aspects in itself for the young people to take inspirations for their real life acts and, in additionally, to educate themselves.

Besides, it can be seen in the contemporary period that the traditional literary aspects of bildungsroman trend in fiction has started to undergo some variations due to the cultural and social progresses over the time. For instance, during the late 20th century and in the early 21st century, the bildungsroman tradition has become one of the popular genres as their target audiences have mostly consisted of the youngsters and the teenagers. As a result of that, these popularized coming-of-age novels lack the necessary realistic elements in their representation of the protagonist’s life and

the representation of the chronotop of the novel; instead, the writers of the kind of book make use of the supernatural, the fantastic, the unreal.

In the general sense, although there have been cultural and social changes in the daily lives of the people and in the literature, of course; the thematic aspects of the traditional bildungsroman system continue its existence with the addition of the new, the contemporary facets. Also, in the postmodern bildungsroman, the writers tend to focus more on the psychological aspects of the protagonist in the novels. The inner psyche of the protagonist and his/her inner turmoils play important role to the hero to achieve his character formation and acquire a self, rather than focusing on the protagonist's relationship with the external world, the society.

3.2. David Mitchell's Novel *Black Swan Green* Both Following and Deviating The Bildungsroman Tradition

David Mitchell's coming-of-age novel *Black Swan Green* is a "formation novel" which is set in 1980's England, and it follows the story of a thirteen-years old stammer boy named Jason Taylor. The setting takes place in a provincial town of Worchestershire, England which is called 'Black Swan Green'. The novel, also carries some semi-autobiographical elements in which the writer himself has a stammer like the main character of the novel and because of that stammer, he struggled deeply as a child. In addition, like Jason Taylor, Mitchell as well was writing poetry when he was a teenager. All these personal informations of the author were reflected in the novel.

The title of the book is the same title of the setting that all the main plot revolves around which can be perceived as an interesting, an ironic choice for a title, as in *Black Swan Green* (as a town) the swans are seemingly absent. Mitchell's purpose here to give such a title to the book carries a metaphorical meaning. The black swan metaphor suggest a kind of the embowered meanings of the novel. The meaning of the metaphor can be explained as:

"The analogy is drawn from the discovery of black swans in Western Australia by Dutch explorer Willem de Vlamingh in the 17th century. At

the time, Europeans had believed that all swans were white, so finding a black variety was a completely unexpected event which had never been experienced before. By extension then, a **black swan** is used to describe any phenomenon which occurs even though people think it impossible.”

From the meaning of the black swan metaphor, “a black swan” can be associated with a person or an event. In terms of the novel, the metaphor, in a way, represents the protagonist, Jason’s unexpected, temperamental nature as a human being, and in general, it reflects the arbitrariness of the people and of the incidents. In the novel, Jason is represented as an outsider who is constantly alienated, humiliated and, even tormented by his schoolmates because of his stammering which makes him a joking matter among the other “popular kids” at school. Through the course of the novel, unlike his introverted and, somehow cowardish representation in the novel, Jason performs some bold and unexpected acts like giving away the names of the bullying schoolmates to the school board, and also when he finds his ultimate tormentor Ross Wilcox’s wallet at the fair which is a very big deal for him, and decides not to give him back with the sense of a revenge and so on. All these acts, in a way, makes him “a black swan” who shows that the unpredictability and the arbitrariness of the human nature and, of course the human psyche.

From this point, I will try to provide the similar thematic and structural aspects of the bildungsroman tradition in the novel. A typical bildungsroman literary pattern consists of some certain patterns that the main character goes through in his/her journey.

First element of the typical literary bildungsroman pattern is that the hero should be a child— mostly an orphan or a fatherless child— living in a provincial environment (it can be a town, a village). As a similar aspect, the protagonist of the novel, Jason Taylor is a 13-years-old child who lives in a village of Worcestershire, which is called ‘Black Swan Green’. Jason describes the town of Black Swan Green as :

“As aquatic spectacles go, I am a trifle underwhelmed by your lake. Is this where the swans are? ‘There aren’t any actual swans in Black Swan Green.’

[...] ‘It’s a sort of village joke. The lake was classic in January, mind. It froze over. We played British Bulldogs actually on the ice. Though I found out afterwards there’s about twenty kids who’ve drowned in this lake, down the years.’ ‘Who could blame them?’ Hugo did a very sigh. ‘Black Swan Green might not be the arsehole of the world, but it’s got a damn good view of it.’ (Mitchell, 2006: 82-83)

Second element is that there is a conflict with the real parents of the child, especially with the father or it can be any parental figure in the family. In many bildungsroman novels, the figure of the father is either depicted very limitedly which means he is not very influential in the child’s life, or he is simply absent from the child’s life and has zero effect on the child’s character formation process. Jason describes his father’s temper as: “Dad’s a pair of scissors at times. Snip *snip* snip *snip*.” (Mitchell, 2006: 15) The non-presence of a father figure in the child’s life can be perceived as ‘liberating’ for a child to grow more freely, without any patriarchal oppression; but, actually, this is not the case. This non-presence of the father is, in fact, upsetting for the child. As an orphan, a fatherless child, growing up becomes a much more challenging experience as the sense of loss and the sense of longing for a father make their presence felt constantly in the child’s life, and the child does not fully achieve his identity in his process of formation. As a result, the identity problems that the child has to endure throughout his growing up process arise from due to the absence of the father, in other words, the father becomes the one who is to blame for all the deficiencies in the child’s personality.

Actually, the situation remains almost the same, although the father is present in a child’s life. The presence of the father in the family, in a typical bildungsroman story, can be identified as dysfunctional. The father is also characterized as indifferent towards the both physical and emotional needs of the child. Therefore, the child, again, feels himself alone and ignored constantly and this situation leaves in child’s life a negative mark. Jason reflects on this issue as:

“Dad always picks fault with what I buy. If it isn’t tat from Taiwan, I paid for too much for something I’ll only use twice. If he can’t see a problem he’ll make one up, like that time I bought BMX transfers for my bike and he made a

massive *drama* out of getting out insurance forms and altering the ‘Description’ box. It’s so unfair. I don’t criticize how he spends *his* money.” (Mitchell, 2006: 225)

The father-child relationship basically lacks communication and mutual understanding. When Jason and his father interacts with together, it somehow creates an awkwardness and a skittishness between them. For that reason, he tries to evade his father questions, and internalises his actual answers to his questions just for not exposing to his father’s deeper interrogation about his answer. For instance, Jason reflects on this as:

“‘So, Jason, how was school?’ My stomach granny-knotted up. Hangman blocked ‘Not so bad’. ‘Jason?’ Dad’s voice went hot and red. ‘I asked you how school was.’ ‘Fine, thanks.’ (Today’d been crap. Mr Kempsey bollocked me for cake crumbs in my music book and Mr Carver’d told me I was a ‘useful as a spastic’ at hockey.)[...] ‘Excellent,’ said Dad.” (Mitchell, 2006: 124-125)

In terms of the novel, Jason’s family is present in his life but, somehow the familial relationships are overshadowed by the every members of the family’s their own issues. Jason’s father Michael is a kind of workaholic who always preoccupies with his job, constantly goes to business trips and stays at home very little. When Michael decides to spend more time with Jason, and takes him to his business trip with him where they can also have fun together as father and son; things does not go as planned for Jason when Michael preoccupies with his work more than Jason. Jason brokenheartedly reflects on it as:

“The alarm radio said 7:15 but no sign of Dad yet. Chariots of Fire began at 7:30, said the poster. I’d memorized the route to the cinema to impress Dad. Seven twenty-five came. Dad doesn’t forget appointments. He’d be coming. [...] At 7:35 Dad’s footsteps came thumping down the corridor outside. ‘Right!’ he’d burst in. ‘Off we go!’ The footsteps thumped past our door. They didn’t come back. [...] If Dad guessed I was trying to make him feel guilty, that’d give him the excuse to not let me. So after nine o’clock, [...] A key turned in the lock and Dad tripped into the room. ‘Ah, Jason, here you are.’ Where else’d I be? I dared myself to not to reply to Dad.” (Mitchell, 2006: 223-224)

Due to the fact Jason's parents are constantly criticizing and disappointing him, he psychologically becomes an unhappy individual. He criticizes - internally- his parents about how much they make no account of his feelings and how much unfair they be towards him. Jason says as:

“Mum and Dad can be as ratty or sarcastic or angry as they want to me, but if I every show a flicker of being pissed off then they act like I've murdered babies. I hate them for that. But I hate my guts for never standing up to Dad like Julia does. So I hate their guts for making me hate my guts. Kids can never complain about unfairness 'cause everyone knows kids always complain about that. 'Life isn't fair, Jason, and the sooner you learn that, the better.' So there. That's that sorted. It's fine for Mum and Dad to scrunch up any promise they make to me and flush it down the bog, and why? Because life isn't fair, Jason.” (Mitchell, 2006: 225)

When he is at home, he is somehow disinterested in socializing with the other family members. Jason's mother, also, displays some form of disinterest towards Jason's needs (especially in emotional and psychological level). For example; is a scene where Jason's aunt, his uncle and his cousin come to visit them in their house; in their first encounter, Jason's mother compliments to Jason's cousins about how grown you have become in front of Jason without realizing it might hurt Jason's feelings as:

“ But look at you three boys! You've shot up again! Whatever are you putting on their corn flakes, Alice? Whatever it is, I should put some on Jason's. *That* was a kick in the ribs.” (Mitchell, 2006: 54)

Both of Jason's parents are not completely obstructing, a threat to his existence. But, somehow they are not present in Jason's life and the escalating tension and conflicts between the parents' marriage pushes Jason into loneliness. Jason reflects on the tension between his mother and father, he says as:

“ Mum, me and Dad ate our butterscotch Angel Delight without a word. I didn't dare even look at my parents. I couldn't ask to get down early too 'cause Julia'd already used that card. Why I was in the dog house was clear enough, but God

knows why Mum and Dad were giving each other the silent treatment.”
(Mitchell, 2006: 16)

From time to time, they become aware of their lack of communication and everyone is being indifferent to each other; and it makes them upset for a while, but, they do not perform any efforts to communicate to each other and to socialize with each other to make things right like every other healthy families do. For Jason, the conflict between his parents, affects his personality and his social life in a negative way. He verbalizes his concerns about his family as:

“Up in my room I played the Game of Life but being two players at once is no fun. [...] My billion problems kept bobbing up like corpses in a flooded city. Mum and Dad at lunch. Hangman colonizing the alphabet . At this rate I’m going to have to learn sign language. [...] Wished there was a crack to slip through and leave all this behind.” (Mitchell, 2006: 17)

Through the course of the novel, Jason reflects on more about the escalating tension between his parents by making a naïve remarks about their current relationship as:

“Dad went to bed. He’s sleeping in the spare room at the moment,’cause of his back, though Mum told me it’s ’cause he tosses and turns so much. It’s probably both. They had a right barney this evening, actually over the dinner table. With me and Julia both there.” (Mitchell, 2006: 122)

In another scene in the novel, we see how Jason becomes more and more worried over their parents’s constant arguments in the house. When Jason’s mother Helena finds out about her husband Michael’s mortgaging their house without her notice, she becomes quite furious and confronts Michael about it. When Jason hears them arguing about it, he becomes quite anxious and sorry for both them. He says as: “ Dad stomped upstairs. He’s slamming his filing-cabinet drawers. Mum hasn’t left the dining room. I hope to *God* she isn’t crying. Wish *Tomorrow’s World* open up and swallow me.” (Mitchell, 2006: 131)

He becomes more alone and more introvert day by day and tries to solve his problem on his own , with his own ways. As the parents are incapable of showing

their understanding, their love and care; he reflects and contrast this lack of being loved, cared and taken care from his family, into being respected and trying to be counted among the “popular kids” in the school.

Third element of the typical bildungsroman literary pattern is that the hero leaves the home environment which is usually stimulated by the external factors like entering upon a bigger environment like a citadel for the purpose of a professional or an educational career, or by internal factors (psychological experience of the hero) like self-education, self-discovery, or an existential crisis. In *Black Swan Green*, Jason Taylor’s the departure from home—not in the literal meaning— happens mostly through his inner stimulus. All the familial and the social pressures of Jason’s life reveal much of his adventurous personality.

As a 13-years old boy, Jason is a very curious, highly-imaginative child, to move away from all his problems, he goes on some adventures which the most of them take place in a natural setting which is mainly the forest, and then, the lakes, the hills, the garden etc. In that sense Jason’s departure from home share some similarities with the traditional bildungsroman scenario; but this departure signifies the yearning for escaping from the static and the awkward atmosphere of the home environment and to act freely and to reflect his true self. On the other hand, Jason’s departure from home signifies a pursuit of his artistic self. For instance, Jason goes to vicarage to discuss his poetry without noticing his parents. This can also perceived as a form of adventure for Jason. He reflects on it as: “ I was worried the smell of cigarette smoke’d stick to my clothes and I’d have to make up a story for Mum and Dad about where I’d been.” (Mitchell, 2006: 183)

The *fourth* element of the typical bildungsroman literary pattern is that the protagonist’ yearnings for seeking social relationships with the other people. This thematic aspect has an important role to main narrative of the novel. Through the course of the novel, Jason’s social interactions with the other people and the the other kids at his school are in a constant state of flux. Because of his stammer, he is constantly getting bullied, tortured and alienated by the popular kids of the school

and also by the random people whom he socially interacted with. Jason reflects upon how his stammer make him feel miserable and unhappy as:

“In the next room a freckly girl Julia’s age sat in a wheelchair. One of her legs wasn’t there. She’s probably love to have my stammer if she could have her leg back, and I wondered if being happy’s about other people’s misery. That cuts both ways, mind. People’ll look at me tomorrow morning and think, **Well, my life may be a swamp of shit but at least I’m not in Jason Taylor’s shoes. At least I can talk.**” (Mitchell, 2006: 34)

Whenever Jason sees Ross Wilcox— the ultimate tormentor of Jason— and his gang, he tries to imitate these boys by imitating their acts like smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, involving in some criminal acts, uttering profane language, talking about sex and money etc. When Jason crossed path with Grant Burch and his friends at the Bridle Path, he is invited to join them for smoking. Jason reflects it as:

“A middle ranking kid like me shouldn’t refuse an invitation from an older kid like Grant Burch. I held the Woodbine like my cousin’d shown me, and pretended to take a deep drag. (Actually I kept the smoke in my mouth.) Ant Little was hoping I’d cough my guts up. But I just breathed out the smoke like I’d done it a million times before, and passed the cigarette to Darren Croome.” (Mitchell, 2006: 92)

Jason naively thinks that by imitating such inappropriate behaviours he can be finally accepted among them and be respected by them.

For instance, when Jason was accepted to join to the Spooks— the secret society that led by the school’s bad boys Ross Wilcox and Grant Burch and only the older, the popular and the toughest boys are allowed in the organization— he was, in a way, under the protection by Ross and Grant. For example, when Jason successfully managed to complete task given by the Spooks leaders Ross Wilcox and Grant Burch, he feels himself very victorious and self-confident as:

“‘Should’ve seen your face when the window went,’ snargled Ross Wilcox as I got back to the climbing frame. ‘Shat your cacks, it looked like!’ But no one else joined in. Pete Redmarley flobbed. ‘Least he did it, Wilcox.’ ‘Aye,’ Gilbert

Swinyard gobbled, 'took guts, did that.' Dean Moran said, 'Nice one, Jace.' By telepathy I told Dawn Madden, *Your spazzo boyfriend hasn't got the nerve to do that.*" (Mitchell, 2006: 152)

On the contrary, when he lost to a fight to Grant Burch, which means showing weakness, Jason is again alienated and bullied by the other kids. To get rid of all the abuse and the torture which were caused by the "popular kids", Jason, at the beginnings of the novel, tries to make himself accepted among the group of popular kids by performing some brave and heroic acts.

Furthermore, The popularity issue among the children in Jason's school is a very changeable concept as nobody's place in this paradigm of popularity is not rock solid. Whoever holds the power and the toughest one among all the boys at school, the social relations and alliances are formed according to that. When Jason got himself a reputation with his act in the Spooks; he becomes a sort of popular kid where everybody starts to admire him now. Jason reflects on this as:

"Neal Brose's been giving me the cold shoulder this term, but today he called out, 'What'll it be, Jace?' His friendliness made my mind go blank. 'Double Decker?' A Double Decker flew at my face. I raised a hand to stop it. The chocolate bar landed there, moulded to my hand, perfectly. Loads of kids saw it." (Mitchell, 2006: 157)

After his brave acts in the Spooks earlier, Jason got another invitation from the gang. Jason merrily says as: " In my pencil case I found a note that sent the art room spinning. 'the Graveyard 8 tonite Spooks'. One number and four words'd just changed my life. [...] My bravery last night obviously must've impressed the right people. [...] *Who cares who slipped me the note? [...] It got there.*" (Mitchell, 2006: 158-159)

In another example, when Jason gave away the names who bullied him and the other children like him at the school to the school administration, he suddenly becomes one of the popular kids of the school just because he managed Ross and his gang to be punished, and even one of them got expelled.

After the courageous act and the victory, Jason gained some self-confidence and joy, and found some opportunities to do the things he always wanted to do—especially having the very first kiss with a girl. On the other hand, Jason's social interactions does not only comprises of his peers but also the other people who exist outside the school environment. Jason manages to find social interactions with another places. For instance; he makes a good friendship with Dean Moran who is another castaway like Jason. Also, he gets to know a mysterious old lady named Madame Crommelynck with whom he has many exchange of ideas on art and literature. Jason describes Madame Crommelynck as:

“Old but grand, like she'd stepped out of a portrait, with silver hair and a royal purple shawl. I guessed she was the vicar's mother. Her jewels were big as Cola Cubes and Sherbet Lemons. Maybe she was sixty, maybe seventy. With old people and little kids you can't be sure. [...] Her knuckles were as ridged as Toblerone. Every now and then her bony fingers swept ash off the page. [...] If a peacock had a human voice, that'd be hers.” (Mitchell, 2006: 181)

She can be considered one of the important characters in the novel, as she encourages Jason to be a poet, judges his writings constantly to make him a better poet. When Madame Crommelynck looks through Jason poems, Jason has mixed feelings about the possibility of his poetry to come to the light. He reflects on it as:

“ I felt giddy with importance that **my** words'd captured the attention of this exotic woman. Fear, too. If you show someone something you've written, you give them a sharpened stake, lie down in your coffin and say, 'When you're ready.'” (Mitchell, 2006: 183)

Jason uses the pseudonym of Eliot Bolivar in his writings, he prefers to be anonymous, does not wanted to be known that he is writing poetry for fear of getting ridiculed and judged by other people. When Jason saw his pseudonym at the vicarage, he gets excited about seeing his name down there as:

“ [...] an envelope'd been Sellotaped over the letter box. FOR THE ATTENTION OF ELIOT BOLIVAR, POET. Inside was a short letter written in lilac ink on slate-grey paper. It invited me to come to the vicarage to discuss my

work at three o'clock on Sunday. 'Work'. Nobody's ever called Eliot Bolivar's poems 'work'." (Mitchell, 2006: 179)

When Jason's mother mentions about Jason's prize for poetry in front of his uncle, aunt and his cousin Hugo. He somehow becomes stressed and feels kind of humiliated. He says as:

"I *had* to write it. Shame boiled my earlobes and there was nowhere to look but at my food. 'In English. I didn't' (I tested the word *know* a couple of times but saw I was going to stammer spastically on it) 'I didn't *realize* Miss Lippetts was even going to enter it.'" (Mitchell, 2006: 60).

In this scene, it can be seen that Jason rejects his artistic self for fear of being judged or ridiculed, and instead comes up with an excuse about writing poetry. But, Madame Crommelyck wants him to reveal his true identity as she thinks that he is good at writing poetry and he should not keep this as a secret, and should reveal his true feelings, emotions, ideas, and most importantly his true identity via his poetry. They often argue over this issue as:

" 'Aha! Truth! You are afraid the hairy barbarians will not accept you in their tribe if you write poetry.' 'That's more or less it, yeah ...' 'More? Or less? Which is the exact word, exactly? (She's a pain sometimes.) 'That's it. Exactly.' 'And you *wish* to become an hairy barbarian?' 'I'm a *kid*. I'm thirteen. *You* said it's a miserable age, being thirteen, and you're right. If you don't fit in, they make your life a misery. Like Floyd Chaceley or Nicholas Briar.' 'Now you are talking like a real poet.' [...] So you want a **double life**. One Jason Taylor who seeks approval of hairy barbarians. Another Jason Taylor is Eliot Bolivar who seeks approval of the literary world.' (Mitchell, 2006: 194-195)

For that reason, Madame Crommelyck functions as a mentor, maybe as another parental figure besides his real family that does many things that Jason's real family supposed to be doing— the parenting to the child both psychologically and physically. Additionally, Jason's cousin Hugo encourages him to be himself and not to allow bullies to repress his true personality. Hugo preaches to Jason as:

“Then Hugo said, ‘I was you myself, Jace, once. Just the same. Always afraid. But there’s another reason why you **must** smoke this cigarette. Not because it’s the first step to becoming someone your turkey-shagging schoolmates will respect instead of exploit. Not because a young blood with a mature cigarette is a better proposition to the ladies than a boy with a sherbert dip. It’s this. Come here. I’ll whisper. [...] ‘If you don’t kill “not today”, Hugo did a horror-movie trailer voice, **‘One day you’ll wake up, look in the mirror and see Brian and Uncle Michael!’** (Mitchell, 2006: 81-82)

With the unexpected departure of Madame Crommelynck from England for good, Jason, in a way, comes back to reality and feels very disappointed. With Madame Crommelynck’s influence, Jason had started to believe in his artistic side, his poetry, and was willing to accept his true self; but, now, he is all by himself again; his self-destructiveness comes to the forefront. He reflects on the departure of Madame Crommelynck as:

“The solarium’s gone. My poems are crap. How could they not be? I’m thirteen. What do I know about Beauty and Truth? Better bury Eliot Bolivar than let him carry on churning out shite. Me? Learn French? What was I thinking? [...] A brick of loneliness is reaching terminal velocity inside me.” (Mitchell, 2006: 210)

The *fifth* element of the typical bildungsroman literary pattern is that the protagonist’s love relationships and the interactions with the opposite sex. For the most part of the novel, Jason was platonically in love with a girl named Dawn Madden who is, a kind of the embodiment of the unreachable girl because of the fact that he is not very good at talking to the girls.

Jason’s relationship with Dawn Madden can be identified and analysed as a *bildungsroman* in itself, too, as we observe the evolution of their relationship through the course of the novel. For instance, in the beginnings of the novel, at first Jason forms a distant interest towards her. He finds her very attractive, beautiful, but, at the same time terrifying (she is like a tomboy, lets say). Because of that, whenever they see each other or talk to each other; he is incapable of telling his real feelings to her,

and instead they talk about random, ordinary things. With their first encounter together alone in Bridle Path, Jason admiringly describes Dawn Madden as:

“Dawn Madden sat in the cockpit of an ancient tractor, whittling a stick. She wore a bomber jacket and mud-starred Doc Martens with red laces. [...] Her oil-black hair’s sort of punky. She must use gel. I’d love to gel her gel in for her. [...] I badly wanted to obey her. [...] Her lipstick was Fruit Gum redcurrant. [...] Dawn Madden unzipped her bomber jacket. [...] Her crucifix was chunky and black like a Goth’s and nestled between her subtle breasts. [...] She peered at me round an invisible curtain. [...] Stewy air stroked Dawn Madden’s milk chocolate throat. [...] Dawn Madden’s eyes are dark honey. (Mitchell, 2006: 103-105)

To exemplify Dawn’s ‘tomboyish’ character as well when Dawn asks for Jason’s knife and suddenly throws it to Jason; terrified Jason says as:

“Dawn Madden tossed her knife, right at me. It was sheer fluke that it was the blade’s handle that hit my rib and not its fang. ‘Madden!’ [...] ‘That could’ve stuck right into me!’” (Mitchell, 2006: 105)

In the midst of the novel, Jason’s relationship with Dawn Madden picks up some steam, especially in the episode where Jason goes on a quest to the bridle path, Dawn, in a way, lurks him and tries to seduce him. Jason depicts this senseous interaction with Dawn as:

“She pricked my Adam’s apple with her arrow. Dawn Madden leaned in so close I could smell the sugar in her breath ‘Do I look like I’m joking, Jason Taylor? That arrow was really sharp. I probably could’ve swatted it off before she could puncture my windpipe. Probably. But it wasn’t that simple. For one thing, I had a boner as big as Dobermann.” (Mitchell, 2006: 106)

Dawn Madden basically flirts with Jason and, as a result of this senseous interaction with her alone, when there is nobody else around; Jason develops more intense feelings towards her- he says as:

“I was still thinking about Dawn Madden. I didn’t understand. She must sort of fancy me. She wouldn’t’ve given her only Danish pastry to just any kid who happened along. And I sure as hell fancied Dawn Madden.” (Mitchell, 2006: 107)

Even if this interaction ends up with a sudden some form of humiliation and, still he carves her name into a tree with his name together as the token of his love for her. After carving Dawn Madden’s name into the tree, Jason verbalizes his love for her as:

“Miss Throckmorton might be right but she can’t’ve ever been a thirteen-year-old-boy who met a girl like Dawn Madden. **One day**, I thought, **I’ll bring her up to show her this**. I’d do my first kiss with her. Right here. She’d touch me. Right here.” (Mitchell, 2006: 109)

Towards the ends of the novel, Jason starts to lose his interest towards Dawn Madden, especially when he found out that she is in a relationship with his arch enemy, the ultimate bully Ross Wilcox. And, in the very end of the novel, Dawn Madden becomes an ordinary girl from his town with no special meaning to Jason. So, Jason simply extracts Dawn Madden from his life while he is getting mature through the course of the novel. Another short-termed love interest of Jason is Holly Deblin who is the new girl at the school. Jason refers to Holly in the town dance as: “Holly Deblin’d noticed me. She was tying back her hair to stop it getting caught in the lathe. [...] *I think she likes us*, whispered Unborn Twin. *Blow her a kiss*.” (Mitchell, 2006: 328)

Holly is the girl with whom he shared his first kiss at the the town dance. Their mutual interaction is only limited with this moment and they do not start a love relationship together. Jason reflects on the first kiss he had with Holly as:

“Holly Deblin twizzled my moussed hair. The skin round her neck’s the softest thing I’ve ever stroked. And she let me. That’s the amazing bit. She let me. Perfume counters in department stores, Holly Deblin smells of, the middle of July, and cinnamon Tic-Tacs. My cousin Hugo reckons he’s kissed thirty girls (and not only kissed) and he’s probably up to fifty by now, but you can only have one first one.” (Mitchell, 2006: 348)

As the *final* element of the typical bildungsroman tradition, the protagonist is now mature and more experienced than his initial starting point and he experiences some epiphanies that lead to his final stage of his formation period. In terms of the novel, Jason Taylor's character formation is partially successful. As the novel ends up with his parents are getting divorce, his sister Julia leaves for college to Scotland and Jason leaves his town to live with his mother in Cheltenham from now on. In the consideration of all these negative instances, Jason's formative process is not successful as he was unable to attain social determinism of his own life—family union is broken as a result of the divorce, also there is no friends, and love life, he also stops writing poetry. On the other hand, it is said that Jason's formative process is successful as he is more mature and more experienced now. He made so much progress and learned so many things about life during his formative process. Consequently, Jason formation is ambiguous, he could not provide an harmony between his inner and outer societal needs. The end of the novel also reflects the ambiguous nature of Jason's character formation as:

“ [...] This divorce's like in a disaster film when a crack zigzags along the street and a chasm opens up under someone's feet. I'm that someone. Mum's on one side with Julia, Dad's on the other with Cynthia. If I don't jump one way or other I'm going to fall into bottomless blackness. [...] I haven't cried about the divorce once. I'm not going to now. No *bloody* way am I crying! I'll be fourteen in a few days. 'It'll be all right,' [...], 'in the end, Jace.' 'It doesn't feel very all right.' 'That's because it's not the end.'”

3.3. Investigation Of The Magical Realist Aspects Of The Novel

Black Swan Green as a postmodern bildungsroman consists of some postmodern aspects in itself. Magical realism is one of the most notable postmodern aspect in the novel as the story is narrated from a child's perspective; all the events and the people in the plot are narrated as if it is some form of a fairytale in which all the characters, the setting and the events represented as fantastic, unreal, fairytale-like.

As Jason Taylor is a kid that has a very great imagination and he is also good at making allusions between the real and the unreal things, the plot of the novel

resembles somehow to the *Grimm Brothers Tales*. The symbol of the forest as a magical place can also be analysed as a bildungsroman, too, as we can observe the changes of the perception of the forest as a magical place in Jason's mind through the course of the novel. In the beginnings of the novel, we see Jason showing that he believes the forest is the embodiment of the magic and the wonder and he also believes that there are some supernatural beings like ghosts, shadows that reside in the woods. Balée identifies Jason's love for the forest as: "Jason finds some solace in nature – the fields and forests and streams of dull old Worcestershire – Mitchell makes it sound lovelier than the Lake District. Sheep dot the fields." (2006: 490)

For instance; the ghost of a drowned boy who follows the every act of Jason when he was playing with the other children on the frozen lake near the forest. Jason talks about the 'supernatural' phenomenas on the lake, he says as:

"Did the kids who'd drowned in the lake down the years mind me trespassing on their roof? Do they *want* new kids to fall through? For company? Do they envy the living? Even me? (Mitchell, 2006: 17)

He also believes that when he accidentally sprained his ankle, he blames the ghost for this accident to happen. Jason says as: "I spun and slid to a shuddery stop by the edge of the lake. For a bit, all I could do was lie there, basking in that **supernatural** pain." (Mitchell, 2006: 22) Following to that, as limping he goes into the woods to find the house of a wizard-witch like woman to heal his foot, and interestingly enough the woman heals his foot with a kind of folk remedy and he falls into sleep there. Jason refers to the old lady as: "The sour aunt smeared the goo on till it was used up and my ankle'd completely clagged." (Mitchell, 2006: 23)

Through the midst of the novel, Jason starts to be more mature as the time passes and the fascination towards the magic in the forest fades in him.

At the end of the novel, Jason has grown and matured significantly and he believes that there are very little magic left in there. For example, Jason goes back to the house in the woods in which the the witch-like healer woman lives and when he arrives at the house, he realizes that the the house is empty. A relative of the old woman tells Jason that Mrs. Gretton has moved in to a flat located across the street.

So, Jason thinks that the woods are not that big as he think like and the people are not that mysterious as he imagined in his head. Jason refers to it as:

“ Seet that yellow building, out the back, just through them trees? That’s us.’
 ‘But ... I thought this place was ... miles from anywhere.’ ‘Here? Nah! Just between Pig Lane and the quarry. Where the gypsies camp in the autumn. This whole wood’s only a few acres, y’know. Two or three footy pitches, tops. Amazonia. Hardly Sherwood Forest.’ (Mitchell, 2006: 364)

3.4. Investigation Of The Postcolonial and The Political Aspects Of The Novel

In *Black Swan Green*, Mitchell touches on the postcolonial and the political issues of the contemporary era of the novel. For instance, the Falkland Wars between England and Argentina and its pysical effects on the peoples lives; also from the political perspective, Margaret Thatcher’s economical implementations’ negative effects on the people of England in a way, create a negative atmosphere for people to communicate together healthily. In the *Black Swan Green*, we see these issues’ reflecitons on people’s lives. Everyone in the town is somehow affected from these issues. Some of them have economic problems, on the other hand, some of them have war-related problem, or some of them have both of these issues at the same time. Jason talks about the war as: “War may be an auction for countries. For soldiers it’s a lottery.” (Mitchell, 2006: 137) When England goes into war with Argentina, the townsfolk of Black Swan Green reveals different opinions about Margaret Thatcher and her policies. Even Jason and his sister Julia have some opinions about the war. They discuss the government policies of war as:

“John Nott, our Minister of Defence, would never lie to us. Julia asked how I *knew* we weren’t being lied to? ‘We’re British,’ I told her. ‘ Why *would* the government lie?’ Julia replied that it was to assure us that our wonderful war is going swimmingly when in fact it’s going down the toilet. ‘But,’ went my answer, ‘we’re not being lied to.’ Julia said that’s exactly what Argentinian people’ll be saying right now. Right now. That’s what’s freaks me.” (Mitchell, 2006: 132)

At the time of war, it can be seen that the people meet on a common ground about their Prime Minister. Jason reflects on the powerful stance of Margaret Thatcher during the time of war. He admiringly describes her as:

“She said something like, ‘The father and mothers of our country did not elect me the Prime Minister of this country to gamble with the lives of their sons over questions of legal niceties. Must I remind you that **we** are a country at **war**? The whole studio cheered and the whole country cheered too, I reckon, ’cept for Michael Foot and Red Ken Livingstone and Anthony Wedgwood Benn and all those Loony Lefites. Mrs Thatcher’s bloody **ace**. She’s so strong, so calm, so sure. Loads more use than the Queen, who hasn’t said a dickie-bird since the war began.’” (Mitchell, 2006: 125-126)

In terms of the novel, Jason Taylor’s problematic family and his social life is mirrored through these bigger issues like the the war and the economic problems of the people especially on the working class and the lower middle class families that is also the place that Jason and his family lives. Economic problems affect the social dynamics between the characters. The economic problems are one of the prime factors that causes the lack of communication and lack of socializing of the family members, especially for Jason’s father Michael. He is constantly preoccupied with his job and due to the economic crisis in the country, Michael was fired from his job. The Thatcherism, lets say, affects the townfolks and they have dissenting ideas about the situation. When Jason’s uncle Brian and his family came to visit the Taylors, Uncle Brian and Jason’s father found themselves in a heated dispute over the the negative and the positive aspects of the Thatcher’s policies. It can be clearly understood that the external factors can be very influential in the social interactions of the people. For instance; Jason alludes to the heated conversation about economic recession and Margaret Thatcher policies between his father Micheal and his uncle Brian. Uncle Brian fervently talks about it as:

“The “pinch”? Blimey O’Riley, Michael, they’re taking it in the teeth! Bankruptcies and foreclosures, morning, noon and night! We’re rushed off our bloody feet, pardon my French. Swamped! Tell you, I’m grateful to that woman in Downing Street for this financial - what ‘s that latest fad?- anorexia.

Us number-crunchers are making a killing! And as partners' bonuses are profit related, yours truly is sitting rather pretty.” (Mitchell, 2006: 57)

On the other hand, Jason's father Michael comments on the situation as:

“ I think not, said Dad's wagging finger ‘The hallmark of switched-on management is success in the lean years, not the years of plenty. Unemployment may be up to three million, but Greenland took on ten management trainees this quarter. Customers want quality food at bulk prices.’ (Mitchell, 2006: 57)

From a postcolonial perspective, the war, in a way, evoked the nationalistic spirit on the people. It can be understood that in difficult times, people put their differences and personal problems aside, and come together in a nationalistic, patriotic spirit. For instance, while the war between Britain and Argentina escalates; one of the British ship was bombed by a missile and causes several explosions and following, casualties. We see Jason's family come together for the first time in a while over this horrible event. Jason comments on this as:

“An Exocet missile from a Super Étendard smashed into the frigate and ‘caused an unconfirmed number of serious explosions.’ Mum, Dad, Julia and me all sat in the living room together (for the first time in ages), watching the the box in silence.” (Mitchell, 2006: 121)

Jason also makes a naïve, childish comparison about the Falklands War. He compares it ‘the World Cup’ football match between England and Argentina as: “Till today, the Falkland's been like the World Cup. Argentina's got a strong football team, but in army terms they're only a corned-beef republic. [...] Great Britain was going to *thrash* them.” (Mitchell, 2006: 121)

One of the local people, also one of Jason's schoolmates, Tom Yew's brother Nick Yew also participates in the war. Unfortunately, when he was killed in action at the sea, he becomes one of the local heroes of the town, and also he stirs great sadness and sorrows to his family and to the whole town. Jason reflects on this situation as:

“ Tom Yew’s death killed the thrill of the war. There was no way to get his body back to Worchestershire so he’s been buried out there, on those rocky islands still being fought over. Nothing’s got back to normal yet. Make-believe grief is fun. But when someone really dies, there’s just this horrible draggingness.” (Mitchell, 2006: 140-141)

When the war is over, Jason and all England rejoice as they win the war. Jason reflects on how a great leadership Margaret Thatcher portrayed during the war times. Jason depicts the aftermath of the war both in his town and, in general, in whole Great Britain pridefully and in an very patriotic manner as:

“The whole of Great Britain’s like it’s Bonfire Night and Christmas Day and St George’s Day and the Queen’s Silver Jubilee all rolled into one. Mrs Thatcher appeared outside 10 Downing Street, saying, ‘Rejoice! Just Rejoice!’ [...] The Daily Mail’s full of how Great British guts and Great British leadership won the war. No prime minister’s *ever* been more popular than Premier Margaret Thatcher in the entire history of opinion polls. I *should* be really happy” (Mitchell, 2006: 144-145)

In *Black Swan Green*, there is also a racial conflict about the gypsies between the townfolks. The local people of the town are against to a gypsy community settlement in their living areas and to protest it they organize a meeting where all the townfolks of Black Swan Green gathers together. The gypsies are not welcoming well by the locals as they see them as dangerous, criminals and immoral and a threat to their existence in the town. But, on the contrary to the all the negative things told about the gypsies, Jason symphatizes with them when he encounters them and they seem to be good people, friendlier and helpful as opposed to the wrong impressions of the townfolks.

CONCLUSION

As a postmodern bildungsroman, David Mitchell's novel *Black Swan Green* both carries some traditional bildungsroman fictional aspects and the postmodern aspects. The writer, in this novel, tries to combine the traditional bildungsroman pattern with the new postmodern concerns of the individual. The novel also discusses some important social, political and cultural phenomenons of its time period. For instance the representation of the Falkland Wars between England and Argentina is depicted on the novel on the microcosmic level which means the social spheres; also the war reveals the postcolonial aspects of the novel.

One of the most vivid postmodern aspect of the novel *Black Swan Green* is the utilization of the magical realist aspects, as the novel centers around a child protagonist's life, the use of magical realist aspects definitely makes sense and the readers get a chance to see through the events and the general mood and the psychology of the main character from a child's perspective. In a way, magical realist aspect in the novel enables readers to be emphatic towards the hero of the novel.

The novel successfully renders the uncertainty and the arbitrariness of the life through the protagonist's story. It shows us that nothing is fixed and permanent. Everything can change in any minutes on people's lives. Also, the novel shows us that nothing is as it seems, from humanistic perspective, humans are not single-layered instead they are multi-layered, complex beings that possess different characteristics of the self. That's why, the structural organization of the novel is a bit different from the traditional type structural organization as the whole narrative consists of episodic chapters in which each of the chapters focuses on the certain memorable things that happened throughout Jason's life. Also, all the chapters end suddenly without providing any resolution to the event. To sum up, all these things are done deliberately by the author to make the readers realize that this story is being narrated by a child and his world of imagination and the perception of the things and events differs from an adult's perception of the events.

As a way of providing a critical analysis of the novel in a postmodern frame; it can be understood that structurally, Mitchell purposefully constructs his narrative in an episodic chapters which each of them has a significant connotation for both Jason Taylor and the author David Mitchell himself - *Black Swan Green* is a semi-autobiographical novel. He also applies the most striking postmodern literary aspect which is the postmodern fragmentariness. Postmodern fragmentariness is the literary technique that makes the novel a postmodern fiction as well.

Postmodern fragmentariness also contextualized in the novel in relation to the novel. The concepts of 'self' and 'identity' of *Black Swan Green* are rendered through postmodern 'fragmentariness. The identity issues circulating through the novel hold a great importance for the protagonist of the novel. In terms of postmodern fragmentariness, the individual identity is identified as a 'fragmented self'. The fragmented self and identity are the main concerns of the novel. In *Black Swan Green*, Jason Taylor represents a 'fragmented self', a 'split identity' where he is unable to acquire a unified self. For instance, to demonstrate his 'fragmented self', Jason creates himself 'alter egos'. There are four alter egos that Jason has created which are *Hangman* (his stammer), *Unborn Twin* (his true self, acts as a true friend to Jason), *Maggot* (his bullyings and torments), and *Eliot Bolivar* (a pseudonym for Jason's poem, represents his artistic self).

This study provides the reader the general characteristics of postmodernism and postmodern fiction by exemplifying Mitchell's *Black Swan Green* in the postmodern frame. The study also explains and analyses the two postmodern aspects that makes *Black Swan Green* a postmodern fiction, too, along with being a postmodern bildungsroman. Furthermore, this study further analyses the Friedrich Hegel and Martin Heidegger's philosophies on self and identity in relation to the questions of how 'the identity' and 'the self' contextualized in the novel, and in what ways Jason Taylor is postmodern protagonist.

Lastly, this study examines *Black Swan Green* as a postmodern bildungsroman. The questions related to the novel are; what is the condition of postmodern bildungsroman and how is the genre re-emerged in the postmodernity as well as what are the magical realist and post colonial aspects of the novel and how are these two postmodern aspects contextualized in *Black Swan Green*. The thesis, in terms of the Bildungsroman thematic pattern, identifies Jason Taylor's process of formation as an ambiguous one as the protagonist's process of formation is both a failure and a success. The failure in the process of formation of the protagonist is caused by Jason's lack of social determinism as the family union is broken as a result of the divorce of his parents, no friends, a love relationship, and he also stops writing poetry. On the other hand, the success in the process of formation of the protagonist arises from as he is more mature and more experienced now. He made so much progress and learned so many things about life during his formative process. As a result, Jason's process of formation is ambiguous, in that he could not provide an harmony between his inner and outer societal needs.

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