Abstract

This article focuses on the reflections of the theory, “The Death of the Author”, put forward by Roland Barthes in 1967, on To the Hermitage written by British academic, critic, television scriptwriter, biographer and novelist Malcolm Bradbury, and published in 2000. Although that he imposes his certain personal characteristics or idiosyncrasies to the narrator-main character, and more importantly, metafictional elements such as interventions, digressions, comments and explanations he adopts in To the Hermitage by being especially stylistically affected by French philosopher and writer Denis Diderot’s works, particularly by his Jacques the Fatalist and Rameau’s Nephew, give the impression that Bradbury aims to refute Barthes’s theory, an attentive reading or stylistic examination of the novel reveals the fact that he supports this theory, but by using unusual methods or ways, or that he wants to add new elements or features to it, especially with his own theory called “Postmortemism” which covers the posthumous “experiences” or adventures of remarkable figures: their funerals and disinterments, and artistic or literary, adventures of their works, especially after their deaths, that is, intertextuality. From a different viewpoint, with this brand new theory which at first sight can be considered as a counter-theory to that of Barthes, Bradbury actually wants to offer a different division for the periods in literature such as “The Period Before the Death of the Author”, “The Period of the Death of the Author” and “The Period of Postmortemism”, that is, “After the Death of the Author” or “Post-postmodernism”, so to draw attention to the period after 1967.

Keywords: Malcolm Bradbury, To the Hermitage, Roland Barthes, the Death of the Author, Postmortemism

Öz

Bu makale Roland Barthes tarafından 1967 yılında öne sürülen “Yazarın Ölümü” kuramının İngiliz akademisyen, eleştirmen, televizyon senaryo yazarı, biyografi ve roman yazarı Malcolm Bradbury tarafından yazılan ve 2000 yılında yayınlanan To the Hermitage’taki yansımalara üzerine yoğunlaşmaktadır. Anlatıcı ve başkaraktere kendi

Anahtar Kelimeler: Malcolm Bradbury, To the Hermitage, Roland Barthes, Yazarın Ölümü, Postmortemizm

Introduction
British author, academic, critic, biographer, television scriptwriter and novelist Malcolm Bradbury’s last novel To the Hermitage, published in 2000 consists of 36 chapters and has a double narrative: “now” which concerns an English professor, who is also the narrator, travelling to St. Petersburg on a ferry from Stockholm as a member of Diderot Project, and “then” which is the story of Denis Diderot’s trip to the same city in 1773 at the request of Tzarina Catherine II.

Bradbury’s last but not least novel, written partly as a result of experiences and impressions he had in Stockholm and in St Petersburg as a member of the real life Diderot Project, and Russian librarian he met in St Petersburg, and partly of his readings of French philosopher Denis Diderot, naturally bears traces of this prominent figure of the Age of the Enlightenment, and his famous works in terms of theme and characterization. However, Diderot’s influence is not limited to these areas, one can easily identify or feel his stylistic influence throughout the entire novel as well.

Upon a close reading, it appears that besides such triggers, there are some other impulses that drive this prolific writer to write such a novel: to probe the Death of the Author, a literary concept put forward by the French literary critic and theorist Roland Barthes, in a rather different way, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, which entails his another important or probably primary aim which is to introduce his own theory called “Postmortemizm” which at first sight can be considered as a counter-theory to that of Barthes.

Since it can be associated with “postmodernizm”, this new concept may be confused with postmodernism. In fact, it is a derivation of the word “post-mortem” which is defined in the Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary as:

Post-mortem (examination) noun 1 a medical examination of a dead person’s body in order to find out the cause of death; an autopsy 2 informal a discussion of an event after it has happened, especially of what was wrong with it or why it failed. (Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 1105)

And in Merriam Webster’s online dictionary:
Medical: happening after death 1 : done, occurring, or collected after death
Still Alive?

2: following the event.

Bradbury adds suffix “–ism” to the word “post-mortem” and coins the word “postmortem-ism” to discuss and also parody Roland Barthes’s theory. It is indisputably one of his most remarkable neologisms since Bradbury’s brand new word is not just a name to a concept or notion, but a name to a new theory, or a new period. The word “postmortem” with the suffix “–ism” also gives the impression of a literary movement like romanticism, realism, naturalism, etc. As a matter of fact, he coins this word not only to deal with or parody the Death of the Author but also to introduce and explain his new theory to the reader, which, as indicated above, is one of his main aims to write *To the Hermitage*.

Based on particularly the first definitions of the word given in both dictionaries, Bradbury, like a medical doctor, performs an autopsy, but a literary one, and tries to identify what happened to the important (literary) figures and their works after their deaths in a parodic and ironic way. He starts to explain his theory in the 3rd and the 5th chapters, gives a detailed description in his fictional paper called “Paper that is not a Paper” in the 11th chapter, and also introduces another example in the 36th chapter. Thus, this study takes as its main point of departure Bradbury’s theory Postmortemism, and his concern of the Death of the Author by looking at the examples and stylistic features in *To the Hermitage*.

**After the Death of the Author**

The theory Postmortemism, as noted above, is related to the posthumous “experiences” or adventures of remarkable figures: their funerals and disinterments, and artistic, particularly literary, adventures of their works, especially after their deaths, that is, intertextuality.

Bradbury not only gives theoretical information about Postmortemism but also he puts it into practice, first by setting out on a journey to find Descartes’ tomb, and then by introducing some confusing, surprising and strange facts he is confronted with during his quest, and he tells stories about what happened to, for example, Descartes’, Sterne’s, Voltaire’s and Diderot’s corpses, and mostly humorous stories about their funerals.

Although one can feel the effect of this theory throughout the entire novel, he brings it into forefront in certain chapters, so it is worth dwelling on the examples in those chapters, and then discussing the influences of literary figures, especially Diderot, and some metafictional features which cause him to be seen against Roland Barthes’s theory. However, for the sake of saving space, I will prefer to give most, if not all, of the examples just as a summary.

The first example is from the 3rd chapter. In this chapter, he starts to find evidence for his theory, whose name will however be revealed in the 11th chapter, by tracking down Descartes’s tomb. Firstly, he goes to Storkyrkan in Old Town, Stockholm, where there are royal tombs, and visits several other churches, but he cannot find any trace of him. Nobody knows where Descartes’s tomb is. However, he cannot stop his search and visits many other churches, then goes to the out-of-town shopping centres, the blank pedestrian precincts, so he spends his whole afternoon to find Descartes’s tomb, but still, he cannot find it or any trace: “Of the thinker’s thinker, there is neither tomb nor trace, effigy or epitaph, residue nor relic, sign nor designation.” (Bradbury, 2000: 37-38).

As for in the 5th chapter, he meets Bo and Alma Luneberg, and mentions them about his wish or quest to find Descartes’s tomb. They talk about Descartes’s burials and disinterments, how his bones had been stolen, what happened to his corpse, bones and his skull or whatever is left of him in a parodic
manner till Bo warns Bradbury that he invited him to Stockholm for the Diderot Project (54–61).

It would not be wrong to say that in the context of Postmortemism, the 11th chapter of the novel has an important and special place among others because in this chapter, besides his account of burial and post funeral adventures of such important figures as Shelley, Byron, Browning, Hardy, Voltaire, La Fontaine, Moliere, D. H. Lawrence, Ezra Pound, Stravinsky, Dostoyevsky, Tchaikovsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov, without going into particulars, Bradbury both ironically and parodically gives a detailed account of his own theory within his fictional paper called “Paper that is not a Paper” which reminds us Diderot’s This Is Not a Story in which “what he is recounting is not fiction but truth.” (Furbank, 1992: 443), but he, unlike Diderot, emphasizes what he is recounting is not truth but story/fiction.

Moreover, this chapter hosts not only the definition and explanation of Postmortemism but also the Death of the Author, but Bradbury prefers to explain Barthes’s theory in accordance with his own theory (151-4). In the 11th chapter, on pages 155-8 of the novel, within his fictional paper, he also extensively mentions Sterne’s ironic as well as humorous, and in some sense tragic story: his death, funeral and misfortunes that befall his corpse, again in a parodic way.

As all the remarks in the entire novel and especially in his fictional paper laid bare, incidents that befall famous figures’ corpses and all the funerals Bradbury tells about are actually tragic, but Sterne’s all funerals and his corpse’s journey are more than tragic, and can be considered well within the realm of parody, so this makes his funerals a parody of a funeral. Bradbury makes this sorrowful story, which is already comic as well, more humorous with his subtle stylistic tactics, and with his well-selected words and phrases, literary devices and sentences.

His last example appears in the 36th chapter. In this chapter, after giving the causes of Diderot’s death in 1784 and some events happened when Diderot died, he completes his novel with Diderot’s funeral. Despite his atheist ideas or his Encyclopedia, Diderot is buried in the Chapel of the Virgin in the city church of Saint Roch. After a short while, however, his remains suffer from the destiny of Sterne’s or other aforementioned figures’ corpses, that is, both his coffin and his body have been exhumed and even today, nobody knows where they have been taken to (495-6):

*When, only a short time later, these same slabs are lifted up again, both the coffin and the body have completely disappeared. Neither the one nor the other has been seen anywhere since. ’Diderot le philosophe? Disparu,’ the sacristan will tell you, if, as I do, you care to visit Saint-Roch today. (496)*

Although he parodies the Death of the Author with his Postmortemism, and looks as if he is against it, Bradbury’s ideas about Barthes’s theory cannot actually be identified exactly or easily. Because while some narrative techniques or stylistic features he borrows especially from Diderot cause him to be seen against Barthes’s theory or to be in favour of the presence of the author, some of his ideas show parallelism with Barthes’s ideas for the death of the author.

One of the points that he shares with Barthes is intertextuality which “was introduced first into French criticism in the late 1960s by Julia Kristeva in her discussion and elaboration of the ideas of the Russian linguist-philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin…” (Wales, 2011: 235) to indicate some sort of exchange or borrowing between texts, whether literary or non-literary, whether spoken or written, just as languages borrow words, phrases, or sometimes even syntactic properties from each other to keep themselves alive. In “The Death of The Author”, Barthes rearticulates this concept as follows:
We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture. Similar to Bouvard and Pecuchet, those eternal copyists, at once sublime and comic and whose profound ridiculousness indicates precisely the truth, of writing, the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them. (Barthes, 1977: 146; emphasis in the original)

In the same vein, in accordance with Postmortemism, Bradbury asserts that even if authors die, they will continue to live literally, and each work of art will revive again and again in the works of other writers or artists. Bradbury puts emphasize on this issue in both narratives as well as in the last pages of To the Hermitage. For example, in the 9th chapter, in the conversation between the main character-narrator Bradbury and Birgitta Lindhorst, he deals with the idea that books breed other books:

'This Jacques, you know who he is, of course.'

'He's a man who believes in providence, and the servant of his master.'

'No, he's the great factotum. You remember the great factotum?'

'Oh, you mean the Barber of Seville.'

'Did Diderot know Beaumarchais?'

'Yes, he did. They were acquaintances, maybe friends.'

'Well, there in this book there is already Figaro. He must have passed him on to Beaumarchais.'

'Who gave him to Mozart and Rossini.'

'Which shows that your book can turn into my music. And that is why I decide I can like your Diderot. Because you can sing him, you mean?' (129)

The idea that books breed books appears not only as a topic of discussion between characters of fictional world, but also in the last pages as a full list of the resources Bradbury—"the real author" (Chatman, 1978: 28, 147) utilized while writing To the Hermitage. So, he starts the "Note" at the end of the novel with "Books breed books; many helped breed this one" (497).

In addition, from the first pages he keeps many famous artists, literary and philosophical figures and their notable concepts and works alive through allusion and parody: Along with Diderot and his Encyclopedia, Jacques the Fatalist and his Master, Rameau’s Nephew, Conversation between D’Alembert and Diderot, D’Alembert’s Dream, The Paradox of Acting, his essay on The Sufficiency of Natural Religion, The Sceptic Takes a Walk, Letter on the Blind for the Use of Those Who See, Conversation of a Philosopher with the Marechale De— and The Letters to Sophie Volland and Sterne’s Tristram Shandy, the novel hosts other important figures and their famous works including Gogol’s Dead Souls, Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina, Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin, Nathaniel Hawthorne’s The Scarlet Letter, Herman Melville’s Moby Dick, Beaumarchais and his comedy the Barber of Seville and The Marriage of Figaro, Dostoyevsky’s Crime and Punishment, Shakespeare and his Hamlet and As You Like It, Lewis Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland, Michel Foucault’s The Order of Things, Swedish author Par Lagerkvist and his famous work The Hangman and Swedish novelist and playwright Johan August Strindberg, Percy Bysshe Shelly’s poem ‘Ozymandias’, and also his own works such as Rates of Exchange, Why Come to Slaka?, The History Man, My Strange
Quest for Mensonge, Cuts, and Doctor Criminale, and philosophers such as Descartes and his Cartesian philosophy, Voltaire, Rousseau and d’Holbach, painters such as Picasso and his ‘Les Demoiselles d’Avignon’, opera singers such as Swedish opera singer Jenny Lind, who is known as “Swedish Nightingale” which is also the title of Birgitta Lindhorst in the novel, and composers such as Mozart and Rossini and their works, director Ingmar Bergman and his movies Winter Light and Summer with Monica, and so on.

Thus, examples and explanations adopted in the foregoing paragraphs as well as his remarks such as:

But Denis being Denis, the book that started out this way turned into something quite different. The wounded Uncle Toby turns into a fatalistic servant, bold enough to tell his master the one reason he’ll be remembered is because he had such a famous valet. (BIRGITTA: Ah, my darling, I know what it is. Jacques the Fatalist And His Master . . .) The servant became a significant figure of the day, in fact finally became— (BIRGITTA: Figaro, of course. I told you that). So we can say Sterne turns into Diderot; who turns into Beaumarchais; who turns into Mozart; who turns into Rossini. He also turns into Proust and Joyce, Beckett and Nabokov, and thus an essential part of our own literature. Instead of writing a book nobody would remember, because as Dr Johnson said nothing so odd can live long, he became the source of a whole tradition of stories, plays, operas - a classic case of Postmortemism. (161)

have strong similarities with Barthes’s ideas he put forward in his "The Death of the Author" and also in The Pleasure of the Text although James Shapiro asserts the contrary in his "Adventures in Postmortemism":

The best of these is an off-the-cuff lecture by the English writer— "A Paper That Is Not a Paper" – and its message is at the heart of the book. Rebutting Roland Barthes’s famous essay "The Death of the Author," it proposes a countertheory called postmortemism, a hilarious and gruesome argument that authors are never really dead and buried. To illustrate this point, we are taken through a “burlesque necrology” in which the physical remains of great writers – including Lawrence Sterne, Voltaire and Descartes – are variously buried, exhumed, dismembered and misplaced. (Shapiro, 2001; emphasis in the original)

As indicated earlier Bradbury adopts some narrative techniques, tactics or stylistic features that can be seen in Diderot’s works, especially in Jacques the Fatalist (1796). He also alludes to Sterne’s Tristram Shandy (1759) at times since both Jacques the Fatalist and Tristram Shandy are the kinds of novels in which the authors use tricks or tactics to amuse their readers as well as themselves. These famous works include some notes which remind the reader that they are reading books. They enable readers to estimate about an event or a situation. However, after a time, the readers get confused when they realize that their logical inferences and assumptions are invalid, and understand that they are deceived by the authors (Fredman, 1955: 57). According to Furbank:

These amusements and diversions serve a deep purpose, one intrinsic to Diderot’s conception of fiction as a form with it roots in fraud and deception. He presents this theme in teasing fashion. One of the Narrator’s favourite ploys is to warn the Reader against automatic scepticism and against assuming that, just because there is no limit to the fictions that a story-teller can devise, everything being related is a fiction. (Furbank, 1992: 442)

Walter Redfern also argues that:
Playing games with the reader presupposes an agonistic set-up. You rarely play games against yourself. The author’s game also encourages a reader’s sense of humour to come into play... By seemingly alienating us, the author entraps us... We should remain equally alert to the laughter between characters in the text as a crucial part of their social interaction... So, the relationship is dialectical. There is precious little, in Diderot, of the elitist, even sadistic, pleasure taken by some authors in defeating, the reader, by private jokes, persistent red herrings, etc. (Redfern, 2008: 27-8; emphasis in the original)

Like Diderot and Sterne, Bradbury aims to win his reader’s trust from the very beginning of the novel by clearly declaring to the reader what s/he is reading is a book, a fiction, and by pretending to share the same platform or venue with him/her: ‘But America’s not where I’m going — or not for many pages yet’ (15). By this clue, he drops a hint to his reader that he will give information about America and bring Diderot and Thomas Jefferson together at the end of the novel since some of Diderot’s ideas, as Lester G. Crocker indicated, found their way into the American Declaration of Independence (Crocker, 1974: 129).

It is also worth emphasizing here that this stylistic method or tactic that is not just peculiar to the first chapter of the novel, and can be seen in most of the chapters, for example, in the 5th chapter: “Bo Luneberg, let me explain, is a very old academic friend of mine.” (51), and in the 7th chapter: “‘Postmodern’ means: guess what, we managed to get a corporate sponsor to pay for it.” (76), can also be considered as Bradbury’s allusion to another remarkable 18th century novel: Henry Fielding’s Tom Jones whose narrator “addresses the reader as though he/she were someone sitting opposite in the office, house or drawing room... [Fielding’s narrator] achieves a similar though far more complex conflation of the spatio-temporal deictics of the narrative with a sense of the characters and events narrated as part of a real continuum of experience which he shares with the reader...” (Bradford, 1997: 133).

In the following extract, Andreia Irina Suciu evaluates Bradbury’s such interventions into the text:

One of Bradbury’s favourite technical practices is his frequent intervention or violating intrusion into the text, from the position of a meta-author who destroys the illusory reality of the fictional world and creates what seems to be “a real world” in which the author occupies a superior ontological position. The surprise comes with Bradbury each time because after the metafictional gesture of frame-breaking, the reader is still aware that the “absolute” reality of the author is just another level of fiction. (Suciu, 2011: 329; emphases in the original)

She continues her evaluation, and also identifies Bradbury’s two important stylistic tactics, which will be elaborated with some examples on the following pages of this study as well, while discussing Bradbury’s other tactics he uses throughout To the Hermitage to test his reader’s vigilance:

Thus, Bradbury performs two operations – he both introduces the author into the fiction in an undisguised manner (sometimes making a full portrait of himself and his habits and idiosyncrasies, a process as a result of which there arises “the postmodernist topos of the writer at his desk’...”) or he leads the reader into believing that it is his voice speaking until he breaks the mystery into total parody for everything is just a fictional reconstruc-
tion after all and the author in the book is as fictional as any other character. What we assist now seems to be not the death of the author but a permanent interplay of “Exit author” – “Enter author”. The postmodern author as a guest in his own text has surpassed the classical visible but intrusive paper author, the modernist effaced author, and he has reached the process of self-advertisement and emergence to the surface of the text. He is now neither a presence nor an absence but a construct of /in the reading process. (Suciu, 2011: 330; emphases in the original)

Other stylistic device or technique Bradbury borrows from Diderot is “digression”. In Jacques the Fatalist, to create suspense, to try the reader’s vigilance or to educate the reader not to be so impatient, Diderot uses this technique:

Among the tactics used by Diderot to counteract the clichés of traditional fiction are digressions (designed to stop the onward march of predictability) … Jacques and his master habitually interrupt each other, anecdotes dislocate or rather syncopate, the main story. Interruptions, however infuriating to the interrupted one, are the life and soul of social discourse. (Redfern, 2008: 27-30)

For Miyamasu, too, Diderot’s major theme in Jacques the Fatalist is the nature of the novel and to deal with this theme he employs digression to “distort the chronology of “real” events” (Miyamasu, 2000: 103; emphasis in the original), and to “frustrate [by frustrating] the reader’s expectations regarding the story (since that story flow is constantly interrupted) and thus to prove [proving] that the story is controlled”, and to reflect “its inherent non-linearity” (Miyamasu, 2000: 102).

The reader of To the Hermitage can also come across Bradbury’s such sudden interruptions at times. Like Diderot, he aims to break the linear progression of the plot, to reflect the non-linear communication between speakers, also to make the reader confused, and to create suspense or to see whether s/he is vigilant. For example, in the 19th chapter whose title is “A Small Finnish Interlude”, he tells his experiences in Finland, and gives information about Finnish history, geography, architecture, literature, language, and so on. The reader who has to be vigilant or patient looks forward to the moment when he finishes this story and goes back to the main story.

Another feature he uses to try his readers’ vigilance, as he frankly indicated in the “Introduction”, is to make some deliberate changes in dates, individuals, and historical events throughout the novel. He also emphasizes this in the 5th chapter where he completes Bo’s remarks “We must not always believe what we read in books.” (54) with “Especially my books” (54). So, anachronism is his another tactic or trick that shows he is playing with the reader or he wants to see whether his reader in his/her reading duty or not. For example, in the 11th chapter he says “He soon caught a chill and died of it, at the age of fifty-six.” (150) for Descartes, but Descartes lived between 1596 and 1650, so died at the age of fifty-four (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy).

There is also a puzzling sentence in the 7th chapter in which he seems he supports the presence of the author in a work: “As random life is to destiny, so stories are to great authors - who (despite modern theory) really exist, and provided us with some of the highest pleasures and the most wonderful mystifications we can find” (84-85).

Besides, in the 11th chapter, while telling how he attended a literary funeral, the funeral of the author in 1968, he overtly says that he admires the author, so implies that he is in favour of the presence of the author: “Which, by more transverse zig-zaggery, takes me back to 1968, the same year Barthes published his essay. Because that year I was present at an important literary funeral - in
fact the funeral of the author I probably admire most in the world ...” (154).

Another important stylistic feature that reflects the fictionality of *To the Hermitage* is that Bradbury arranges his characters’ names to make them to have a sense. This feature also serves him to adopt or parody the Death of the Author when the character Jack Paul is taken into consideration. The surname of this character, “Verso”, means “the page on the left side of an open book” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, 2010: 1654). Based on certain characteristics of him, for example, he is deconstructionist, Jack Paul Verso is thus Bradbury himself, or in other words he is indeed Bradbury’s “lui” or “alter ego”. The conversation between Verso and Bradbury in the 15th chapter implies such a relationship between them:

VERS0 (to me)
I hope you didn’t mind what I said about you. It was all in the highest interests of philosophical thought.

MOI
I almost agree with you. In fact I might well have said almost the same thing myself.

VERS0
Only you couldn’t, could you? Which is exactly why every Moi needs to have a little Lui. Let’s go and see what’s happening in Russia. Feel like a Jim Beam in the bar? (201)

The foregoing discussion and examples have intimated that this conversation is not between two people: the narrator-main character Bradbury and Verso, but actually Bradbury is alone and talks to himself.

So, the disappearance of Verso in the 33rd chapter of the novel reminds us *Mensonge*, that is, the Death of the Author. In this respect, Bradbury, like Diderot in *Jacques the Fatalist* and *Rameau’s Nephew* (1805), divides himself into two and removes Verso, but he leaves the other side, namely “moi” or narrator-main character-fictional author-Bradbury to complete the novel.

Lidia Vianu, in her *British Desperadoes at the Turn of the Millennium*, states her admiration for *Mensonge*, and adds that in this book Bradbury becomes “an ironist of the intellect” and emphasizes the importance and resources of everyday language. For her, *Mensonge* unburdens its readers from “the incomprehensible theories that lead nowhere, the babble of minds which have lost all love of and sense of everyday language”, and makes fun of those who want to overlook or ignore “relaxed, unpretentious readers, who merely want to enjoy a text, not hack it”. She also makes an important inference that “It is subtle humour for a very good cause. Actually, *Mensonge* may be Bradbury at his best” (Vianu, 2005: 163).

From this point of view, both Mensonge and Jack Paul Verso are highly likely the same person, that is, Bradbury. In other words, Mensonge turns into Verso in *To the Hermitage*. Consequently, Bradbury actually divides himself into three, not into two.

Another clue that unveils the moi-lui relationship between Bradbury and Verso is that as Bradbury’s alter-ego or lui, or “third/other self”, Verso harshly criticizes Bradbury’s paper called “Paper that is not a

1 Diderot establishes a connection between the past and the present, and constructs dialogues with imaginary readers and with himself, split in two. These two personalities have opposite characters, yet complete each other and supply each other’s deficiencies like Sancho Panza and Quixote in *Don Quixote*. For example, in *Rameau’s Nephew*, he splits into two and talks to his other side. Unlike the orderly world of Moi (Diderot) whose one of the great pleasures is watching chess-players, Lui (Nephew) has an inconsistent and complicated life. He suddenly walks into Moi’s life and disrupts it, and becomes ‘an oxymoron, a living paradox’ and therefore ‘his own alter ego’. In *Jacques the Fatalist*, too, Diderot appears as both Jacques and his Master. These two parts have disagreements, but they are still inseparable. Diderot gives them a shared past and present (Redfern, 9, 14, 25).
Paper” he presented in the 11th chapter, and by doing so, like Nephew or Jacques, he aims to articulate or make up Bradbury’s deficiencies.

In addition to the fictional paper in which Bradbury parodies Barthes’s theory with his Postmortemism, there is another point that makes the 11th chapter important: it starts with the sentence “ODD. HOW VERY ODD. I’m waking again; it’s another autumnal morning” (147). Through these remarks he seems he wants to give the reader a message that he, as an author, exists or he is “still alive”.

He emphatically repeats this sentence at the end of the novel, in the 36th chapter, again, but this time to mean Diderot: “But how odd, how very very odd …” (496), which can be evaluated, on the one hand, as one of the points he makes throughout the novel to draw parallelism between himself and Diderot, on the other hand, as his desire to emphasize that, like him, Diderot is still alive, at least in To the Hermitage.

The closing sentences he utters to address likely to those who think that Diderot is dead may also be interpreted as a sign for the French philosopher’s literary resurrection in To the Hermitage: “But he who laughs last laughs best, or that’s what they always say…” (496).

The other important point that makes even the scrupulous reader confused is that Bradbury takes his inspiration to write To the Hermitage from a real life project called Diderot Project and a conference on Diderot held in 1993. A group of academics, writers and artists under the presidency of researchers such as Bo Göranzon and Magnus Florin gathered at the Stockholm Royal Dramatic Theatre, where Diderot’s dialogues were presented (Vaux, 1990; Göranzon and Florin, 1992; Göranzon, 1995). After this conference a small group of researchers, including Malcolm Bradbury ferried to St. Petersburg. The aim of this group arrived in Russia during the transition period between the Soviet and Capitalist regime was to visit the Diderot Library at the Hermitage Museum, where Bradbury was totally influenced by a lady who was responsible for the Diderot Library, and he took notes and made meticulous observations for his new novel (Doering, 2001: 162). Jonathan W. Doering introduces this fact with Bradbury’s own remarks:

The genesis for To The Hermitage was a real life ‘Diderot Project’ organised by the Technical University in Stockholm, attended by several academics and writers from U.E.A. in the early 1990s. Debating the merits of rigorous academic inquiry and artistic freedom, the group ferried across the Baltic to a St. Petersburg caught up in the transition between Soviet and Capitalist Russia, ‘... I met an elderly Russian librarian who was struggling so hard to save the Diderot Library [it was moved to the Winter Palace after the writer’s death]. I was so struck by her that I started the novel the very next day. The following year she had died, been replaced by these spooks who wanted to do deals with you, a few roubles to look at this letter or whatever’. (Doering, 2001: 162)

So, the reader who gets such first-hand accounts automatically regards both the first and the third person narrator as Bradbury himself.

Mention should also be made of his other trick to make his readers confused: he ascribes some of his real life personal characteristics to the first person narrator of the “now” narrative, and sometimes to the third person narrator of the “then” narrative. When the readers who have the opportunity to study or read his biography meet the narrator who has some of his characteristics, they begin to suspect whether the person who speaks is Bradbury himself or not.

The day after Bradbury passed away, in her article, “Obituary: Sir Malcolm Bradbury”, Harriet Harvey-Wood emphasizes one
of his particular characteristics which is “his inability to reject appeals for help”:

His generosity to all literary ventures he regarded as worthy was remarkable, and his inability to reject appeals for help was a severe trial to his agent. The list of organisations to which he was prepared to give precious time was impressive, and included the Booker Prize management committee, the British Association for American Studies, the SDP arts policy committee, the Eastern Arts Association, the King’s Lynn literary festival and the Norwich festival. (Harvey-Wood, 2000)

Bradbury refers to this characteristic in the 7th chapter: “I say yes, of course — yes is what I nearly always say.” (76), “When Bo Luneberg summoned me wet from my English bath with his mysterious telephone invitation to join his Diderot pilgrims, it was the name of the boat we’d sail on that made me say ‘Yes.’ (Even though I often do, as I rather think I said.)” (85); in the 11th chapter: “My paper, where is it? I’m a sound and responsible academic type, so surely I must have written it. I always write it. When I say yes to something, I do it.” (148); and in the 35th chapter: “Good, do you hear that, he is saying yes,’ says Bo. ‘Whenever he says no he always really means yes. Isn’t it true?’” (462).

Malcolm Bradbury was born in Sheffield (Garfield, 2011: 1) which is a city in Yorkshire. So, in the 11th chapter, such remarks as: “It took place in Yorkshire, Britain’s largest and most literary county (the county I come from myself).” (154) can be considered as another clue that reveals the narrator’s identity.

His another important personal trait is his love for alcohol, and evidence for it comes from Ian McEwan’s article called “The Great Listener” in The Guardian:

Like Howard Kirk, the academic Machiavel of The History Man, Malcolm liked a good party. Just as that novel is structured round social gatherings, so were the literary conferences over which Malcolm brilliantly presided. A Cambridge college, a German monastery set in a desert of potato fields, a disintegrating Polish palace, were some of the settings for the best intellectual revels of the 80s and 90s.

Music, dancing and sex were not conspicuous ingredients. The business was talking and drinking - complementary human pleasures in which Malcolm took serious delight. After the last conference session of the afternoon, people would begin to gather in the bar and the circles formed. Limitless wine, writers far from home with nowhere else to go, nothing else to do: a delicious freedom was in the air, and the anticipation of a long journey into the night across unknown territory. (McEwan, 2000)

And from another online newspaper, The Independent:

He was a devoted family man, a keen smoker and someone who could consume heroic quantities of alcohol in the course of endlessly sociable and happy evenings while remaining perfectly sober and articulate; all this in a man who had had heart trouble in his youth. (“How Malcolm Bradbury Killed Society,” 2006)

In several chapters of the novel, too, the first person narrator emphasizes wherever he goes in Stockholm is “alkoholfri”, for example, in the 5th chapter, when he learns this fact from Alma and Bo Luneberg:
But I already had herring at lunchtime. No, I think I’ll try the pasta. And may I have a bottle of beer?

A beat. Shocked faces.

SHE

A bottle of... beer?

HE

Nej, nej. We are alkoholfri here. Drink is a very big problem in Sweden.

ME

What, getting hold of it, you mean?

and in the 11th chapter, when he complains about it: “Worse still, the occasion, like Stockholm, was totally alkoholfri. British Rail had also been entrusted with the case of port.”

(55)

Doubtless, with the help of all these tactics or tricks, Bradbury pretends to stand by his readers or to be at their disposal, so he wins the trust of his readers, but the readers can only realize that s/he has been deceived after reading or reviewing the entire novel.

Suciu’s ideas about Bradbury’s another remarkable novel The History Man (1975) can be applicable for To the Hermitage as well: “It is clear that the author actually “breathes” (not his last breath) throughout these last pages. Taking the place of his hero as a trickster, an experimenter, Bradbury plays a joke on the reader’s vigilance...” (Suciu, 2011: 34), however, although he acts in a parodic manner in both Doctor Criminale and To the Hermitage, he seems to attempt to give the “author(ship) its formal place and value” (Suciu, 2011: 204).

Suciu’s ideas about Bradbury’s another remarkable novel The History Man (1975) can be applicable for To the Hermitage as well: “It is clear that the author actually “breathes” (not his last breath) throughout these last pages. Taking the place of his hero as a trickster, an experimenter, Bradbury plays a joke on the reader’s vigilance...” (Suciu, 2011: 199; emphasis in the original).

However, if the reader is not vigilant, s/he can fall into Bradbury’s trap, and believe mistakenly that only authority in the novel, even if fictional, is the author and s/he will be guided by this author who decides and controls everything from the very beginning to the end.

Whereas Barthes, who finds the roots of his theory in Mallarmé states that:

In France, Mallarmé was doubtless the first to see and to foresee in its full extent the necessity to substitute language itself for the person who until then had been supposed to be its owner. For him, for us too, it is language which speaks, not the author; to write is, through a prerequisite impersonality (not at all to be confused with the castrating objectivity of the realist novelist), to reach that point where only language acts, ‘performs’, and not ‘me’. (Barthes, 1977: 143)

As a matter of fact, in My Strange Quest for Mensonge, that he parodies the Death of the Author with “his ideal hero”, Mensonge, who is “practically non-existent” (Vianu, 2006: 140), and teaches the reader about the writer’s ability to penetrate into the whole text, from the first page to the last, from forewords to afterwords (Suciu, 2011: 175-6), and he uses Michel Foucault’s “What difference does it make who is speaking?” (Bradbury, 1987), and that he continues his parodic quest in To the Hermitage, even if it is “perforce useless” since the word “Mensonge” means “lie” in French (‘How Malcolm Bradbury Killed,’ 2006) give the impression that Bradbury thinks that discussions about this theory is highly exaggerated or redundant, and it is not important who is speaking: the author or the text or language. Therefore, he wants to give the reader a message that “Just enjoy your reading”. Vianu’s remarks about My Strange Quest for Mensonge quoted above (Vianu, 2005: 163), and Suciu’s views stated below also support this idea:

At the same time the exploitation of an author that both permeates and is above his work is at stake in Bradbury’s work and he manages to play such a skilled game that we get caught in the pleasure of reading, for-
getting actually to discard the author as postmodern tenets would require us to do. (Suciu, 2011: 347)

For Suciu, Bradbury is not an ordinary “author” though, he takes on different roles or identities in his works such as critic, impresario, organizer, manager, creator-analyst, manipulator of characters and readers, prestidigilator, lawyer, judge, fraudulent and meta-author (Suciu, 2011). In the same vein, by utilizing Brian McHale’s ideas, she makes some interesting points:

Bradbury sometimes mixes the functions of the protagonist with those of the narrator, of the ‘recorder’ and ultimately author, his authority collapsing in a single self… on the one hand, it is a sign that in postmodernist fiction the novelist resumes the guise of God despite the postmodern contention that the author is dead; on the other hand, it shows the author’s obsession with the need of asserting their authority over the fictional world. Disguised behind the overtones of an ironic voice there is still the author imposing to us his perspective of the world and its reality. (Suciu, 2011: 330; emphasis in the original)

While also giving general description of her book’s chapters, she identifies how Bradbury comes up with a solution to the problem of his role in his works: “…postmodernism has as definitive feature the subverting of the role of the author as ultimate creator and this is the reason for which he becomes a self-mocking figure that apparently lets his work write itself” (Suciu, 2011: 14). So, these may be the reasons why the reader forgets to discard the author, that is, Bradbury, from the text.

Conclusion
As all these brief analyses indicate, that he imposes some of his personal characteristics or idiosyncrasies to the narrator-main character, more importantly, certain metafictional elements such as interventions, digressions, comments and explanations Bradbury adopts throughout the novel, and his warnings about the fictionality of two narratives, characters, places or events which cause the reader to feel and hear his ironic voice can be seen as his tricks or tactics to pose questions in the reader’s mind, to make him/her confused or to create an illusion that there is an author.

These elements actually make To the Hermitage a postmodern novel like Jacques the Fatalist and Tristram Shandy which were written many years ago, still well ahead of their times. So, Bradbury indeed supports Barthes’s theory, but in a different way or in some respects.

To analyse Bradbury’s views about the Death of the Author, Suciu makes a distinction between Bradbury-as-a-critic and Bradbury-as-a-writer, and she states that:

Malcolm Bradbury develops a subtle irony towards such theories not being able to undersign the obituary of the author from the position of the critic while the writer was still issuing a strong call. He becomes instead a figure that handles playfully this status and re-contextualizes the position. (Suciu, 2011: 14)

Thus, Suciu’s, especially, last words prove that Bradbury’s theory Postmortemism is just a seemingly refutation to Barthes’s theory. Therefore, it appears that while parodying Barthes’s theory with his own theory, Bradbury also wants to teach those who do not adopt The Death of the Author or to add a new dimension to it in a sense, and by doing so, he takes it a step further.

From another vantage point, he wants to offer a different division for the periods in literature such as “The Period Before the Death of the Author”, “The Period of the
Death of the Author” and “The Period of Postmortemism”, that is, “After the Death of the Author” or “Post-postmodernism”, and to put emphasis on the period after the Death of the Author.

REFERENCES


