



Exploring Rhetoric of Motives in Ali Smith's Political Novel *Autumn*

Hoda Shabrang*

Department of English Language, Khatam University, Tehran, Iran
h.shabrang@khatam.ac.ir

Mahsa Ebrahimi

Department of English Language and Literature, Ershad Damavand Institute, Tehran, Iran.
mahsaeb23@gmail.com

Abstract

In his political novel, *Autumn*, Ali Smith has implicitly integrated family life with political matrices of British-European relations. In this study, *Autumn* was investigated in light of Kenneth Burke's notions of identification, substance, symbolism, and imagination known as rhetoric of motives. Identification refers to identifying with characters having some components or substances in common. Rhetoric of motives refers to the application of terms with persuasive function that move people into action. The themes of Ali Smith's *Autumn* are in congruity with Kenneth Burke's theoretical ideas represented as theme of love to explain illogical coupling of a young woman and an old man that recalls England and Europe/EU interconnection and mismatching relations. This study explored how the rhetoric and dialect of Smith that have symbolic meanings and functions is motivating through identification with characters. Burke believes that through rhetoric of motives and grammar of motives it is possible to create protagonists that people can easily identify with to persuade them into action based on their intended political views. Through rhetoric of motives by the seasonal novel via identification, symbolism, and imagination, Smith indirectly portrays the political event of Brexit (British Exit) and its consequences in British society.

Keywords: Ali Smith, Brexit, Identification, Kenneth Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, Symbolism

Received: 2021-03-16

Accepted: 2021-07-29

Available Online: 2021-08-01

DOI: 10.22034/efl.2021.275996.1087

* Corresponding Author

1. Introduction

Ali Smith born in 1962, is a Scottish novelist and short story writer, mostly notable for *Hotel World* (2001), *The Accidental* (2005) and *How to Be Both* (2014). She has published four short story collections, one of which was awarded the Saltire First Book of the Year Award (*Free Love and Other Stories*, 1995). She aimed at writing political novels after Brexit dilemma. *Autumn* is the first book of Smith's cyclical or seasonal novels, a narrative of young Elisabeth's love for Daniel, a 101 years old man who is dying. The narrator remembers the story when Elisabeth is bedside Daniel in a hospice dreaming and flashbacks to the past and the present time. Elisabeth's mother, Wendy, finds her daughter's devotion for Daniel unusual and her worry about the relations is highlighted in the novel. Wendy is a protestor who reflects on social problems, but frequently persecuted and detained. The novel provides clues that emphasize on Smith's standpoints on Brexit dilemma and outcomes awaiting Britain.

Notably, characters of the novel are figures well representative of the present world occurrences such as political movements, war, immigration crisis, and natural disasters. Activists, protesters and common people are closely the people of Britain who demand sharing with European Union the current protocols to refuge the immigrants and behold continental treaties of environmental changes. Characters in the novel are the most likely to be considered as patterns for imitation so that people in the novel or in real political conditions can identify with them.

The rhetorical and prosodic language of Smith concerns images and symbols familiar in political discourse of Britain. The use of rhetoric conveys aesthetic and social competence that is why a text can rarely be reduced to purely scientific or political implications. To provide a connection between linguistic aspects of Smith's novel and the political content of the novel Kenneth Burke's rhetoric of motives are used as the basic method of the analysis. [Burke \(1969\)](#) indicates "rhetoric forms our social identity by a series of events usually based on linguistics, but more generally by the use of any symbolic figures" ([Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 1969](#), p.19).

This article examines the way rhetorical love makes main characters endure suffering of true love through identification and the way they could connect their emotions with power of imagination. In addition, it explores the usage of figures of speech and intertextuality to examine how such instruments in Smith's novel represent her current political standpoints. In effect, the study would render the way symbolic language of love between characters in its micro level can refer to nationalism, socialism, and separation in macro level. In the following sections, a related literature review is provided and then theoretical background of the study is explained. Accordingly, in the discussion section, Burke's identification,



persuasion, symbolic and imagery concepts are discussed with regard to textual instantiations.

2. Literature Review

Recently published seasonal novels of Smith are not represented in the critical reviews in a large scope, probably due to late reactions of scholarly works. In “A Brief Review of the Novel *Autumn*”, [María Hernández García \(2017\)](#) refers to main points in the novel including harsh political decisions that fence around the country to prevent immigrants and Brexit decisions. The main subject of the novel as she discussed is the platonic love of Elisabeth and Daniel that represents Elisabeth’s unconscious devotion. She refers to the use of “quotations and allusions to great literature works, like that of Shakespeare in *Macbeth* when Daniel opposes a man fancied like a tree to the man armed with a gun that Elisabeth has imagined” ([Hernández García, 2017](#), p. 3).

In another study, “The Return to Political Fiction?”, [Johannes Wally \(2018\)](#) believes that the political changes “led to politicization of the literary world” and declares that the *Autumn* is a “specific extra-fictional” novel with “political purpose” that its function is to “bond between author and the reader, who, in order to engage in this type of literary communication, must have similar social and educational backgrounds ([Wally, 2018](#), p. 63).

[Lejla Mulalić \(2020\)](#) in her recent article, “Politics and the Novel in a Post-Brexit World: Ali Smith’s *Autumn*” introduced *Autumn* as a political novel and explored the overt reaction of middle class to Brexit crisis and believes that “*Autumn* addresses the complex inscrutable present alongside ghosts from the past” ([Mulalić, 2020](#), p. 43). She indicates that there is an “autumnal interplay of life and death through Elisabeth and Daniel’s friendship” which through power of language and empathy as a way of healing addresses the reader. *Autumn* is a Post-Brexit novel that “reflect and determine one another in pursuit of new ways in which to manage the contemporary” ([Mulalić, 2020](#), p. 50).

3. Method

3.1. Corpus

The corpus of the present study includes Ali Smith’s novel, *Autumn*, published by Pantheon Book in the New York on 7 February 2017. The novel grabbed many attention in and outside United Kingdom and brought many awards for the author such as Washington Post Notable Book and one of the 10 Best Books of the Year from The New York Times. This research is limited to exploration of the rhetoric of motives and symbolic language, using Burke’s concepts of identification and substance. All these notions are taken from Burks’s books A

Rhetoric of Motives and *The Grammar of Motives*. This novel is chosen since it deals with a very controversial political matter of its time, Brexit. As Smith states “All across the country, people felt it was the wrong thing. All across the country, people felt it was the right thing. All across the country, people felt they’d really lost. All across the country, people felt they’d really won. All across the country, people felt they’d done the right thing and other people had done the wrong thing” (Smith, 2016, p.27). In this novel, Smith not only portrays the Brexit and its consequences but also the confusion of people. By applying symbolic language Smith implicitly persuades her readers to look at this political issue from different perspectives, in order to have better understanding of it.

3.2. Theoretical Background

The most critical notion in Burke theory is rhetoric of motives. These motives are new to current languages and social changes, but they are not dissociated from traditional rhetoric, because traditional rhetoric deals with archetypical symbols and common usage of figures of speech, while in new rhetoric symbols are things that people have something in common with, and can identify themselves with them. In Burke’s terms, “The Grammar dealt with the universal paradoxes of substance. It considered resources of placement and definition common to all thought. The Symbolic should deal with unique individuals, each its own peculiarly constructed act, or form” (Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 1969, p. 21).

Another key concept of Burke theory is identification. Theoretically, Burke (1969) explains identification when A follows B’s interests; therefore, A and B have something in common that means, “A is consubstantial with B” (Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 1969, p.21). Smith’s *Autumn* can also be explained in terms of identification, since characters in the novel and events represent signified events implicitly mentioned in the novel. Accordingly, readers’ identification with characters occurs due to similarity of the conditions facing characters in the novel and ordinary people, mainly in Britain. This identification is interpreted as persuasion into action, which is highlighted in Burke so that it can be undertaken for the theoretical basis of the study.

Burke (1969) indicates that in old philosophies substance “was an act; and a way of life is an acting-together; and in acting together, men have common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes that makes them consubstantial” (Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 1969, p.21). Generally, the concepts or terms we are using are cosubstantial, because the meaning of terms are shared among people. In political discourse, however, many interests might met with people’s interests, but people are inactive to them or they are not enough motivated, the function of persuasion or rhetoric of motive is to lead people into action by invoking them to reminds their cosubstance.



According to [Burke \(1969\)](#), human beings form selves or identities through the various properties of substance such as physical objects, occupations, friends, activities beliefs and values. We can understand that, when one identifies, associates or allies with the ‘other’, it is because the ‘self’ and the other share the ‘substance. Therefore, identifying with the ‘other’ for Burke is nothing more than being ‘united in substance’ through common ideas, attitudes, material possessions, or other properties, that is, to be ‘consubstantial’ with the ‘other’ ([Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 1996](#), p. 22). Accordingly, *Autumn* is substantiated as textual source of the analysis and cases related to identification – characters, activities, and proper nouns like geographical names and elements – that are identified with political discourse elements including Brexit, Post-Brexit Britain, and socio-political subjects are discussed. Then instantiations from the novels with symbolic meaning are introduced and their referential entities are elaborated. ([Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 1969](#), p. 55).

3.3. Procedure

Ali Smith is a writer whose voice on Britain’s political decisions is heard louder by publishing a seasonal novel series. Smith’s reaction against Brexit and consequences for Britain is reflected in *Autumn* through using symbolic and metaphorical language. Identification is a key term in what Burke calls the new rhetoric and his theoretical attention focuses on rhetoric as persuasion. One common instrument to address politicians and policy makers is the use of rhetorical language to invite people to an action or to prevent them from an action. The symbolic language is a common way to express the intentions. Accordingly, the sign language and semiotics can explain how writers aim at persuasion of people through their rhetoric. People or more specifically speaking, readers of literature try to identify themselves with characters of the novels that have symbolic roles and functions. Indeed, Smith’s rhetoric in presentation of ideas is a persuasive language that brings upon myths, history and classic literature, mainly those of Shakespeare and Dickens. She uses the concept of rhetoric love, family breakdown, and symbolic names and actions to be the voice of social demands that call for connection with the world than isolation from other nations in post-Brexit Britain. In fact, this study attempts to show how Smith’s characters are created to introduce unilateral political decisions that are not beneficial for British people and discusses the way they are identified with the characters such as Wendy and Elisabeth due to similar fates and conditions of life. Smith employs different kinds of rhetoric to show her resistance against the political changes which according to her are mostly build upon big lies which have dramatic consequences for society at large in the political sphere. In the interview with *The Guardian*, she stated that

There’s great entertainment value – and divisive rhetorical persuasion – in the antics of a union-jack-the-lad. But people aren’t that gullible... Meanwhile, the

time itself is tearing itself apart because there has been a massive lie and the lie has come from parliament and dissolved itself right the way through the country and things change. It's a pivotal moment. We were dealing with a kind of mass culture of lies. And it's a question of what happens culturally when something is built on a lie. (Laing, 2016)

In the same interview, she explicitly spoke about the referendum of Brexit which persuaded and fooled people that they are deciding about the destiny of their country

The notion of a referendum is in any case a divisory line: you choose one side. Meanwhile, you've got the mass division of 65 million people crossing the world from parts of it which are untenable, unliveable and in flames. And what's left of the world deciding whether or not to open the gates or the walls or to build more gates or walls. How can we live in the world and not put our hand across a divide? How can we live with ourselves? It isn't either/or. It's and/and/and. That's what life is. (Laing, 2016)

4. Discussion

4.1. Rhetoric of Identification and Persuasion in *Autumn*

Smith's *Autumn* begins with intertextual expressions that are hints or inverted, but it is clear that the expression "it was the worst of times" (Smith, 2016, p.1) belongs to the initial sentence of Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, but when Dickens indicates "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times" (Smith, 2016, p.2), Smith repeats the expression "it was the worst of times" twice in a sentence. This is the specific rhetoric of Smith that inaugurates her novel with a prediction of something worse. In the third sentence, she indicates, "they fall apart" which refers to Chinua Achebe *Things Fall Apart*, a narrative about African people and exploitation. The opening lines of *Autumn* represents the time of the year when leaves fall out of trees to lead nature into dormancy. Smith has started the novel with related expressions which can be, however, attributed to the external substances or things. Burke (1969) believes that substance is something that is shared among people even with different fractions and ideas (Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, p. 21). It reveals that the worst stage of life (in Dickens) and falling apart (Achebe) have shared a substance that one can identify with it, if his or her life is fractured or is over like autumn season.

Sarah Lyall (2017) in "From Ali Smith, It's the First Great Brexit Novel" indicates that the writer is against Brexit and represents problems facing European Union and England. She believes that Smith through reference to other texts compares situations with regard to intertextual materials,



The reference to *A Tale of Two Cities* is deliberate. It's one of the works Elisabeth reads or thinks about in the novel, a list that also includes *The Tempest*, *Brave New World* and *Metamorphoses*. Their themes — disruption and displacement; the harshness of bureaucracy; states of wonder and states of fear; the promise of transformation; the power of storytelling itself — feature, too, in *Autumn*. Smith teases out big ideas so slyly and lightly that you can miss how artfully she goes about it. (Lyall, 2017, p. 3)

Smith's novel has political implications and refers to Brexit and England's decision to separate from European Union. To call for action or at least reminding the side effects of exiting from European Union, Smith uses different motives in the novel that are explained and substantiated. The time that is considered as the worst of times, and expression of chaos through intertextuality and quotes from English literature functioned as a mirror to events of 2016 in United Kingdom and the decisions to exit from European Union. It is expressed through a narrative of a spiritual and semi-romantic love between an old man, Daniel, who is 101 years old and Elisabeth Demand. Daniel's age is considerable, because the number 101 shows one century and one extra digit that implies Daniel is overage. The rhetoric of this special number, 101, as a numeric vocabulary refers to Smith's usage of a number that is worth attention. On the other hand, Elisabeth is 32 years old girl who is friend with Daniel from the age of eight. This friendship is not normal since the two lovers are not in the same range of age, but their differences imply that there is some spiritual attachment between them that made them so connected.

Elisabeth's mother, Wendy, is worried about her daughter's friendship with the old man through identifying Daniel with gays,

And anyway, why else are you always hanging round an old gay man? (That was her mother.)

I don't have a father fixation, Elisabeth said. And Daniel's not gay. He's European. Call him Mr. Gluck, her mother said. And how do you know he is not gay? And if that's true and he is not gay, then what does he want with you?

Or if he is, Elisabeth said, then he is not just gay. He's not just one thing or another. Nobody is. Not even you. (Smith, 2016, p. 34)

Identifying Daniel with gays is Wendy's strategy to encourage her daughter to speak about Daniel's sexual orientation. Wendy's expressions are significant since she asks indirectly or uses rhetoric to imply she is aware of Daniel's orientation. By the way, she studies her daughter's reaction, but Elisabeth is clever enough to reject the accusation of gay on Daniel and in turn convicts her mother with duplicity, because one who might be bisexual cannot be tagged

merely as gay. Therefore, through the logical deduction, Elisabeth reveals that Daniel is neither gay nor they have heterosexual relationship. Burke discusses substance as shared quality of quantity of friendships or identification. When Daniel is identified with gays, Elisabeth rejects this idea, because it is not related to Elisabeth, but if he is heterosexual then there might be some relationships. However, when she proves that she is not consubstantiated with Daniel on sexual matters, Wendy finds that their relationship is a spiritual love, since all the time they speak about art, literature and painting.

In [Burke's \(1969\)](#) terms, “put identification and division ambiguously together, so that you cannot know for certain just where one ends and the other begins, and you have the characteristic invitation to rhetoric (Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, p. 25). Therefore, the above discussion implies the ambiguity which through division Daniel and Elisabeth's consubstantiation is revealed. When Elisabeth justifies that they are speaking about literature and art, her mother tries to find the reason her daughter is friend of Daniel,

He is my friend, Elisabeth said.

He is eighty five, her mother said. How is an eighty five years old man your friend? Why can't you have **normal** friends like **normal** thirteen years old?

It depends on how you'd define **normal**, Elisabeth said. Which would be different from how I'd define **normal**. Since we all live in relatively and mine at the moment is not and I suspect never will be the same as yours. ([Smith, 2016](#), p.35).

The term “normal” in the excerpt is a rhetorical term that evokes Elisabeth to answer and defend her relationship with Daniel. While reminding that definition of terms like “normal” is relative, Elisabeth tries to acknowledge her mother the differences between them that cause ambiguity and suspect. When Wendy persists to understand what she and Daniel discuss in daily walks, Elisabeth says they discuss about stuffs,

What stuff? Her mother said.

Stuff, Elisabeth said. He tells me about books and things.

Books, her mother said.

He knows about Dylan, Elisabeth said.

Bob Dylan, her mother said.

[...]



And he knows about that poet you like who killed herself, Elisabeth said.

Plath? Her mother said. About suicide?

You so don't get it, Elisabeth said.

What exactly don't I get about an old man putting ideas about suicide and a lot of lies about Bob Dylan into my thirteen years old daughter's head? Her mother said. (Smith, 2016, p.35)

It can be inferred that Wendy's step by step questioning and accusation of Elisabeth and Daniel's content of dialogues are the result of her obsession with this type of strange friendship. The friendship relation of Elisabeth and Daniel is an ordinary relationship and a win-win relation. Wendy finds that their friendship gets on its way by adding up Elisabeth's knowledge of literature and art, meanwhile the old man is not alone, though his friendship with a small girl is strange. Burke (1969) states that "when two men collaborate in an enterprise to which they contribute different kinds of services and from which they derive different amounts and kinds of profit, who is to say one and for all just where cooperation ends and one partner's exploitation of the other begins" (Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, p. 25). In the present novel, the win-win relationship is assumed when Elisabeth speaks, but her mother tries to discover everything not to let the old man exploit her daughter.

It is assumed that Wendy is the symbol of old and historical England, because she is a mother who concerns about her daughter and tries to prevent her from exploitation. In fact, using Burke's ideas of identification it can be derived that Wendy is identified with old England. In addition, Daniel is identified with Europe in general. Daniel is the source of music, art, and literature. Similar to dependency of England to Europe in importation of different literary forms, religion and art during previous centuries, one may perceive that Daniel's age and knowledge represents his great potency that in Smith's novel this dependency is vanishing temporarily. The death of the old man is not due to separation from Elisabeth, but it is due to his long age and tedious life. Accordingly, when Wendy rebukes her daughter about this relationship she means that you are young and need to establish a relationship that deserves you. But Smith justifies Elisabeth's position and stance in the novel and is not believed in borders and division, implying that Europe and England have so many things in common that their differences is not significant to separate for it.

The old man is dying in the hospital and Elisabeth goes beside her bed and reads books for him. She reads different books especially *A Tale of Two Cities* and the well-known initial sentences which implies that there were two cities one city was suffering a bad condition and the other was in its good condition. In A

Tale of Two Cities, French is not in a good condition, because it is the time of revolution and there is a significant distinction between England and French in that time. The worst time of French is similar to the current time in Europe in which due to war in Syria many Arab immigrants were scattered in European countries. England refused to accept immigrants and closed its borders, at the same time England exited from Union left the European Union alone to fight with the problem of immigrants and economic crisis of their member countries. The story of Smith implies that now that the old man (Europe) is caught in crisis and death, it is not logical to separate from this country that they have lots of history and substance in common.

In the same vein, the slogans that Elisabeth's mother is interceded are "wisdom, Justice, Compassion, and Integrity" and since the term "integrity" is important to her, she says,

It's the word integrity, her mother said. It does it every time. I hear it and I see in my head the faces of the liars.

Elisabeth grimaced. Every morning she wakes up feeling cheated of something all over the country, no matter what they voted.

Uh.huh, she said.

I'm still looking at properties p there, her mother said. I'm not leaving the EU. (Smith, 2016, p. 145)

At the beginning, the novel identified characters with seasons, countries, and continents such as England and Europe, here in the above excerpt, the clear reaction of Elisabeth and Wendy to separation and referendum is clearly stated. As there was an internal conflict between Elisabeth and her mother over friendship with Daniel (representative of old European history), here the conflict between Elisabeth and her mother raises once more. Her Mother likes to vote for integrity with the EU and uses the rhetoric of the term integrity. Elisabeth believes that her mother has lived her life and now that it is the time for her, she does not let her to manage her own life. She refers to the slogans of those against integrity and repeats the slogans "first we will get the Poles. And then we will get the Muslims. Then we will get the gyppos, then the gays, you lot are on the run and we are coming after you, a right-wing spokesman had shouted at a female" (Smith, 2016, p. 145). Therefore, in spite of her mother's attempt and protestors' positive reaction to separation, Elisabeth is against her mother's ideas and nationalist protestors. Elisabeth thinks that people and her mother are cheated using the rhetoric of the term integrity. Protestors are in favor of separation from EU to protect the country from immigrants including Muslims, gyppos and gays. To sum up, protestors and Elisabeth's mother use the rhetoric of unity and



integrity as a nationalist term and vote for Brexit, while Elisabeth thinks that one morning they wake up and think they are cheated and separated from other European countries.

Generally, it seems that Smith has connected characters with lots of differences by the substance they share based on what Burke introduced as substance and identification. Accordingly, in the novel Elisabeth is consubstantiated with Daniel in case of their interests and intellect such as the art knowledge of Daniel and information about Bob Dylan and writers such as Shakespeare. At the same time, Elisabeth is a professor of literature at the college. In addition, the language of rhetoric or persuasion used in the novel is more symbolic than direct persuasion into action. Finally, the conflict between Elisabeth and her mother over political issues implies that the rhetoric of the term integrity persuades people to vote for Brexit, while the meaning of real integrity cheats them.

4.2. *Symbol and Imagery in Autumn*

Smith's *Autumn* uses symbolic language and images to connect the objects and ideas intended by the narrator. The concept of autumn itself as the title of the novel suggests is a season that extends from September to the December and is known as fall. According to Cirlot (2006) autumn or the fall "signifies the incarnation of the spirit" in which "the divine essence or 'inner corporeity' suffers physical 'death' (Cirlot, 2006, p. 101). In congruous with the title of the novel, Daniel is an old man dying due to senility. Since Michelson believes that symbolism is the practice or art of using an object, an action, a person, a place, or a word to represent an abstract idea, for Burke language is a symbolic action, which indicates symbol using different actions and argues that reality is revealed through symbolic system. In the present novel, symbols are geographic and physical entities. The seasons and months are the symbols of the life cycle.

According to Hernández García (2017) in his "Review on Ali Smith's Novel *Autumn*" the conflict between the mother and the girl is highlighted as two opposite stances in the novel. The mother's image can be considered as the symbol of land and motherland, while the girl's father is died and Daniel is an alternative to his father, an adopted father. In addition, Hernández García (2017) regarding the other images in the novel indicates that,

Autumn is a very poetical book, not only by its argument and characters but also by the rhythm of some passages and above all for the images that reveals; like that of Elisabeth at the fence, which evokes our divided world; and it is also a very visual novel plenty of color, in which the emphasis of pictures is a crucial point. (Hernández García, 2017, p. 3)

In the novel, autumn as a season between summer and winter is depicted which is attributed to the Daniel as a dying person. He is on bed waiting for death or winter, but he is living the last days of autumn. “The actual autumn is not far off, it’s better weather. Up to now it has been fly-fetid, heavy-clouded, cool and autumnal all summer, pretty much since the first time Elisabeth went to the post office” (Smith, 2016, p. 128). The symbolic terms in this excerpt such as autumn, summer, cool and cloud represent weather and geographic concepts that are attributed to the political actions and movements in the country. Michael Ferber (1999) indicates that,

Autumn has been a frequent subject of literature since the classical Roman era, when certain conventions were established. Autumn, of course, has two aspects: it completes summer and it anticipates winter, it celebrates the harvest of the summer’s crops and it mourns the death of the year. (Ferber, 1999, p. 17)

Accordingly, the symbol of autumn in the novel with regard to the old man dying implies that he has lived his age and spent the summer and crops were over and now it is the time to mourn for the winter. In fact, the symbolic representation of the autumn in the novel refers to the condition of England after exiting from the European Union. Elisabeth goes to the Post Office for her Passport, because she would be a foreigner in the countries united as European Union. Foregrounding the concept of post office and Europe in the following section is considerable,

It is now that her new passport arrives in the post.

Her hair must have passed the test after all. The placing of her eyes must also pass the test. She shows the new passport to her mother. Her mother points to the words European Union at the top of the cover of the passport and makes a sad face. Then she flicks through it. (Smith, 2016, p. 128)

Elisabeth has to take a new passport to travel every country especially European countries. Foregrounding the concept of passport represents the issue of traveling and communicating with other countries. The signature or emblem of European Union on the passport may refer to freedom to identify with European countries as homeland. Such a homeland now spends its autumn or falling session, since the law of separation with European Union still has not occurred (represents the winter or Post-Brexit condition) but it is on the way because autumn is a season that leads to winter, the symbol of death and decay.

The novel implies that England in its political perspective is spending its autumn season and winter is coming. The term autumn is a mythical symbol which in Michael Ferber (1999) different scholar have used the term. “Virgil calls autumn ‘vine-leafed’, Horace imagines his head decked with ripe fruit,



Lucretius has Bacchus arrive with him, Ovid describes a nymph bearing “the horn with all its wealth” (Ferber, 1999, p. 17). Nearly, in ancient terms it is contributed with crops, harvest, and ripeness. In the novel, the ripeness is perceived to be followed by death, because winter is coming on the one hand and Daniel is dying on the other hand.

Through the rhetoric of symbolic language, Smith connected or consubstantiated with history, myths, geography and policy. Since language symbolizes reality, it can be trusted to reveal authentic human meaning- the community’s experience of reality. To this aim, she used symbols that are historically laden and policies of the country for referendum. Since the old man is dying, the spirit of unity with the European nations and shared history and culture is dying. However, the death of Daniel and the spiritual love of Elisabeth for Daniel is a rhetorical idea that indicates a young woman’s love for an old man ends with death of one part, while the love remains forever, because love is a rhetorical symbolic term with transcendent meaning.

The images of death, fall, and destruction in the novel which overlap with Elisabeth imaginations can be regarded as symbols in literature represented through intertextuality. According to Burke (1969) theories of imagination “work best in those areas where poetic and scientist thought overlap” and indicates that “the concern with imagination as a sensitive device does not reach full expression until the modern era” (Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, p. 78).

In reference to imaginations in the novel, Daniel concerns the power of stories by representing pictures that require imaginations to be considered. Daniel says “every picture tells a story. Two. Every story tells a picture” (Smith, 2016, p. 52). And when there is a confusion how the image or the story works she asks, what does every story tells a picture mean? Elisabeth said. “Today it means that I’ll describe a collage to you, Daniel said, and you can tell me what you think of it” (Smith, 2016, p. 32).

Through imagination and thinking of reality of things many dialogues between Daniel and Elisabeth goes by and sometimes Daniel describes books and characters and Elisabeth develops her mental picture about such characters of books. According to Brooke Koritala (2019) “Daniel uses art to encourage Elisabeth to stand up for herself and express her creativity. When Elisabeth is eight, Daniel describes a collage by Pauline Boty that he has seen, using imagery in an attempt for Elisabeth to visualize the collage (Koritala, 2019, p. 70).

When Daniel is dying in the hospital and Elisabeth reads the books for him, the connection of Daniel and the real world occurs through the power of Imagination. Accordingly, the rhetoric of imagination and stories constitutes a considerable part of the novel that plays a pivotal role in relating images and

figures of the past to the current political events in the real world that are both implied and explicitly mentioned in the novel.

5. Conclusion

In the article it was discussed that Smith's *Autumn* has used terms and concepts that can be argued in terms of Burke's identification theory, symbolic language and imagination which are instruments of rhetoric of motives. Smith used terms and concepts related to autumn and implied meanings associated with this concept. It was discussed that Elisabeth's spiritual love for Daniel is a rhetorical love that aims at political dilemma of Brexit, exiting England from EU through identifying Daniel as the spirit of Europe and Elisabeth is the identification of England. Wendy, Elisabeth's mother implored her daughter to be away from Daniel and indicates that he is gay and not suitable for being friend with Elisabeth. Wendy is in favor of voting for Brexit, while Elisabeth is against her idea and believes that real integrity is when no passport is required to travel across all countries. In fact, Elisabeth and protesters that are against voting for Brexit are consubstantiated with Elisabeth, it means that they have some particulars in common, even though they might disagree in many cases. As discussed, Daniel is identified with the spirit of Europe that its old age, misery, and art are in common with European countries history, art and longevity.

The relationships between Elisabeth and Daniel was spiritual, emotional, and platonic one. According to Jackson Miller (2019) "Daniel attempts to build a relationship based on logical reasoning, not on personal feelings" (Miller, 2019, p. 95). Accordingly, the logical reasoning in their relationship and logical reasoning of Europe and England relations have many things in common which implies that by logical reasoning relations should be established, as it exists between an old man and a young girl. Miller (2019) indicated that Daniel and Elisabeth's relationship stems from their personal outlooks of each other and shifts as their communication changes over time. Although Elisabeth knows she cannot have what she truly wants—her idea of Daniel's love—she understands that he has given her an overwhelming sense of understanding society. By using and not using Daniel's lessons, Elisabeth forged her own path to personal fulfillment despite the adversity of a hostile post-Brexit society (Miller, 2019, p. 99).

Symbols as rhetoric of motives in *Autumn* are represented as terms or concepts with seasonal and geographical meaning which most of them concern the shared substance with autumn as a season of spiritual ripeness that follows by winter of grief. Symbols such as autumn, death and senility are in facts symbolic language to relate them with political movements in Europe and referendum. The sadness of autumn as a season followed by winter, dormant and death refers to the end of relations with EU and history of Europe and its art, literature and all



connections aftermath.

In addition, another instrument of rhetorical motives in *Autumn* is imagination and developing the power of memory and imagination in Elisabeth. Images of college Pauline Boty, books, and paintings and recreation of them in the mind of Elisabeth is a motive to pursue Elisabeth for developing her intellects and relationship between herself and her society. In the same vein, Koritala (2019) indicated that “through visualizing Pauline Boty’s collage in order to create a different perspective on immigration, through asking for a different dissertation chair in order to argue on behalf of not only Pauline Boty but also all women, and through building a relationship with her mother, Elisabeth is able to self-actualize” (Koritala, 2019, p. 74). Therefore, immigration and global concerns are the most important issues in congruous with the present study.

References

- Burke, Kenneth. (1969). *A Grammar of Motives*. University of California Press.
- Burke, Kenneth. (1969). *A Rhetoric of Motives*. University of California Press.
- Cirlot, J. C. (2006). *Dictionary of symbols*. Routledge.
- Ferber, M. (1999). *A dictionary of Literary Symbols* (pp. 185-90). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hernández García, María Luisa. (2017). "Review of Ali Smith's novel *Autumn*." *Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research* 5.2.: Book Review ©Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain.
- Koritala, B. (2019). “Essay 1 on Ali Smith’s *Autumn*: The Effects of Art and Insight”. *Butler Journal of Undergraduate Research*, 5(1), 5.
- Laing, O. (2016). “Ali Smith: ‘It’s a pivotal moment... a question of what happens culturally when something is built on a lie’”. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/oct/16/ali-smith-autumn-interview-how-can-we-live-ina-world-and-not-put-a-hand-across-a-divide-brexite-profu>
- Lyll, S. (2017). From Ali Smith, it’s the first great Brexit novel. *The New York Times*, 17.
- Miller, J. (2019). “Essay 2 on Ali Smith’s *Autumn*: Establishing Ethical Dialogues”. *Butler Journal of Undergraduate Research*, 5(1), 7.
- Mulalić, L. (2020). “Politics and the Novel in a Post-Brexit World: Ali Smith’s *Autumn*”. *Journal of Education and Humanities (JEH)*, 3(1), 43-52.
- Smith, Ali. (2016). *Autumn*. Penguin UK.

Wally, J. (2018). "The Return of Political Fiction?: An Analysis of Howard Jacobson's *Pussy* (2017) and Ali Smith's *Autumn* (2016) as First Reactions to the Phenomena 'Donald Trump' and 'Brexit' in Contemporary British Literature". *AAA: Arbeiten Aus Anglistik Und Amerikanistik*, 43(1), 63-86. Retrieved March 30, 2021, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26556725>Winterowd,

