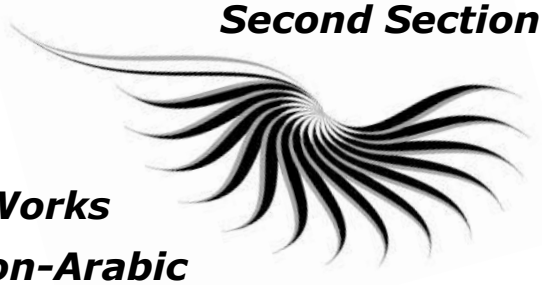
## *Second Section*



# *Works in Non-Arabic Languages*

# A Text World Theory reading of the Absurd in Rose Tremain's *Trespass*

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***Abstract**:*

This paper investigates how far Tremain's *Trespass* is informed by a vision of absurdity. The study elicits how the life and death of the protagonist represents a major absurdist truism of the contradictory relationship between man's expectations and the response of the world. Rather than embarking on an investigation of the absurdist thematic features in the novel, the present study focuses on its absurd discoursal structures.

The central framework of analysis is Joanna Gavins' Text World Theory. As the novel has at its centre a protagonist who tries to change his world, the paper offers a cognitive oriented approach to his conceptual world. The present study proves that *Trespass* exists on the boundaries of the absurd. A major absurdist feature described by Albert Camus as the world's negative response to man's hopes is detected in the novel. Other absurdist features, pointed out by Joanna Gavins, of man's separateness from the world, narratorial unreliability and dysfunctional communication with others are proven to be embedded in the novel, and focused on in this study.

***Keywords:***

absurd, deictics, Gavins, mental models, modality,

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Text World, Tremain,

**الملخص:**

يتناول هذا البحث موضوع العبث في رواية "التعدي" لروز تريمين. تركز الدراسة علي معالجة فكرة رئيسية في حركة العبث الأدبية، وهي العلاقة العكسية بين آمال الإنسان و مدي استجابة العالم له. تقوم الدراسة علي تطبيق النظرية المعرفية لجوانا جافيينز، التي تسمي بنظرية عالم النص، وفي إطار تطبيق هذه النظرية يركز البحث علي بنية الخطاب العبثي من منظور معرفي لبطل الرواية.

**الكلمات الدالة:**

نظرية عالم النص – العبث – الشخصية العبثية – رواية "التعدي – الرؤية المشوشة للحياة.

*Trespass* is informed by a vision of absurdity; whether the life of the protagonist represents the absurdist view on the contradictory relationship between man's expectations and the response of the world. Rather than embarking on an investigation of the absurdist thematic features in the novel, the present study focuses on its absurd discoursal structures. As the novel has at its centre a protagonist who tries to change his world, the paper offers a cognitive oriented approach to his conceptual world. Other characters are also engaged in this investigation as long as they relate to the protagonist's absurd world.

***Introduction***

The aim of this paper is to investigate how far Tremain's

Rose Tremain (1943 -- ) is one of the widely read contemporary English writers. She has written fifteen novels which range from historical to contemporary; she also

wrote short stories as well as plays for radio and television. According to the writer's website, www.rosetremain.co.uk, a number of these novels are either prize-winners or shortlisted. Tremain won the James Tait Black Memorial prize for *Sacred Country* (1992), the Whitbread Award for *Music and Silence* (1999), the Orange Broadband for *The Road Home* (2007), and her novels *Restoration* (1989) and *The Colour* (2003) were shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction.

Contemporary rural France is the main setting of *Trespass* (2010). The novel is about Anthony, a rich English antique dealer who, owing to the decline of his business, decides in his sixties to move to France to start a new life there. His decision makes his life intertwined with that of three characters. They are Anthony's sister, Veronica, who already lives in France, and two French siblings who own the property that Anthony intends to buy. These four characters belong to the same age group as they are all in their sixties.

The issue of making decisions in old age and the consequences on others is dramatized in the novel. In an interview with *The Scotsman,* Tremain (2010) refers to the issue of characters' age in *Trespass*. She states, "I wanted to write about how people try to make sense of the last third of their lives . . . You don't know how much longer you've got. You start to look back and see the shape of your whole life. It sounds depressing, but it's important." Tremain's tone here sounds negative and pessimistic as her contemplations hint to old people's recognition of the

shortness of their future. Her sentiments are echoed in the novel's portrayal of the absurdity of planning fresh beginning at old age as the present study aims to investigate.

### *Defining the Absurd*

The concept of the absurd, like some other literary concepts, does not have a clear-cut definition. Some dictionaries of literary terms give it a rather nebulous definition like, "unreasonable, ridiculous" ( Frye et al 2). Other dictionaries do not have the entry at all. For example, in J. A. Cuddon's *Dictionary of Literary Terms* the "absurd" is not given an independent entry of its own, but in defining "existentialism" the noun absurdity is briefly mentioned. "Theatre of the absurd" entry explains the concept together with other issues such as dramatists who produced absurd plays and history of this particular drama genre. Cuddon briefly refers to how "the concept of *homo absurdus* has acquired a rather more specific meaning . . . partly . . . owing to the need to provide an explanation of man's apparently purposeless role and position in a universe which is popularly imagined to have no discernible reason for existence" (967). This justification, to some extent, corresponds to the notion of the absurd as "unreasonable and ridiculous." Likewise, in his reflections on man's position in this world, Albert Camus (1955) sees that "the absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world" (28). Camus does not offer a clear-cut definition of the absurd; he focuses on the

incoherent relationship between man and the world.

In her elaborate study, *Reading the Absurd,* Joanna Gavins also refers to the "vagueness" of the concept of the absurd. She points out that the "notorious nebulousness of the concept" (10), is partly the reason for its appeal for academics. Gavins also adds, "our individual notions of . . . the absurd, will contain a variety of examples, ranging from those texts which we consider to be prototypically absurd and those which . . . belong only peripherally to the group. These groupings of texts . . . form the cognitive basis of our notions of literary genre" (14). Here, individual human understanding of literary texts makes them subject to imprecise literary categorization. Thus, the boundaries between literary categories are not fixed; a particular text can belong to more than one category: absurd, postcolonial, feminist, humorous…etc; due to these factors, the diverse academic literary studies have not decided on a unified definition of the absurd.

On the other hand, W. Weinberg, as cited in Gavins (2013: 22), distinguishes between two types of absurd novels; those which "convey existentialist concerns through a conventional narrative structure and those which strive to achieve a more stylistically innovative expression of the human condition." Weinberg's view refers to the level of realism in each of the two types of absurd novels. The novels with "conventional narrative structures" are more realistic than those that form an absurdist vision by means

of "stylistically innovative expression of absurdity." Weinberg refers to some of the characteristics of the second type of absurd novels as "[t]hrough exaggeration and repetitions; grotesque; unique, exotic, bizarre or strange symbols . . . the absurdity found in life is transcribed through surreal descriptions" (qtd in Gavins 2013: 22). It is noteworthy here that *Trespass* does not belong to that second category which Weinberg terms as "stylized absurd surface" (Gavins 2013: 22), rather the thematic absurdity is realistically formed by Tremain as the present study reveals.

***Text World Theory***

This paper attempts a cognitive-oriented approach to Rose Tremain's *Trespass*. The central framework of analysis is Joanna Gavins' Text World Theory. The approach to the literary absurd in the novel focuses primarily on language; it offers a systematic investigation of its linguistic features. Further, Text World Theory offers "a model of human language processing which is based on the notions of mental representation found in Cognitive Psychology, and which shares the experientalist principles of Cognitive Linguistics" (Gavins 2007: 8). Gavins further defines the nature of the theory as "a discourse framework" which is "fully sensitive to all the situational, social, historical and psychological factors which play a crucial role in our cognition of language" (9). Thus, in its handling of mental representation constructions, Text World Theory engages situational, psychological and social factors as these

constitute characters' context surrounding. The term text-world itself refers to readers' construction of mental representations which enables them "to conceptualize and understand every piece of language [they] encounter (Gavins 2007: 2). Thus, the theory focuses on the formation, the conceptual configuration of text worlds and how readers make use of them.

On the other hand, Text World Theory has its own characteristic terminology which the present study applies. World-building elements are markers that "define the spatio-temporal . . . or objects present in the world and establish social and physical relationships between these entities" (Gavins 2013: 32). The term "enactor" is used in reference to fictional character; "function advancing elements", actions and events; "world switches", memories, remote or unrealized situations. The term "modal world" is used as to describe mental construction which is "separate from its originating text-world" (Gavins 2007: 94). There are three forms of modal-worlds: boulomaic, deontic and epistemic. Gavins explains them as follows.

> Firstly boulomaic modality, including any description of wishes, desires or fantasies, will generate a boulomaic modal-world in the minds of the discourse participants. Secondly, the expression of any degree of obligation, from permission through to requirement, will generate a deontic modal-world. Finally, epistemic modal-worlds occur whenever some form of epistemic

> commitment is expressed in discourse . . . this category of modal-worlds includes any articulation of personal belief or knowledge, the representation of the thoughts and beliefs of others, hypothetical constructions and conditionality. (2007: 126)

Omniscient narration in *Trespass* allows unlimited access to the enactors' thoughts and feelings. Gavins' categorization of modalities provides the present study with the means of systematic examination of these internal perspectives.

### *Analysis: Introducing Anthony*

The reader's first encounter with the text world enactor, Anthony, is when he is sitting in his antique shop surveying its artistic pieces. His conceptual world reveals how he relates to these entities that partly constitute the world-building elements. In the novel, a history of whatever piece Anthony's eyes lie on is always reported, even if he is only reading its name in his Sale Entries.

He turned to the Sale Entries for the month of March: an undistinguished portrait ('English School, early 18th century. Sir Comus Delapole, QC, and Lady Delapole. Pastel with touches of watercolour'), a majolica jar ('Ovoid, Italian 17th century, decorated with large scrolling foliage clusters'), a George III silver teapot ('The circular body engraved with a band of anthemions and wrigglework') . . . ( *Trespass* 16-7)

A feeling of orientation between Anthony and his physical

environment, which is mainly populated by his antiques, is evoked here. The enactor's manner of surveying his Sale Entries creates such an atmosphere. Each item on the list is followed with its own history. Alternately, each one of these works that populate the text world is preceded by the infinite article 'a' which, when first read, the reader might conceive their insignificance for Anthony. But despite this indefiniteness, each one is immediately followed by detailed information on temporal and spatial deictics as well as identifying its artistic school and artist/s that produced it. In addition, reporting these details in free direct thought presentation mode gives the artistic pieces greater volume. It is noteworthy here that ellipsis and dashes that mark hesitance in thought presentation are not used here; an indication of Anthony's understanding and appreciation of the history of his antiques which he conceives as his "beloveds" (*Trespass* 15). Also, information about the sold pieces could have been given collectively in a number of consequent sentences. However, the use of parenthesis in telling the history of each single artistic piece indicates that he conceives these 'beloveds' individually. Whenever Anthony sees any artistic work, even if it does not belong to him, the same type of mental identification follows i.e. temporal and spatial deictics, name of the piece's artistic school and artists are all put in parenthesis. This recurrent manner of identification suggests that in the above quoted passage, the information that follows each artistic piece is not scribbled in the

Sale Entry. Anthony's conception of the artistic works, after selling them, indicates that they individually occupy separate mental spaces as well as have an enduring presence in his mind; even when they are mere names recorded in his Sale Entries. However, the sense of orientation which Anthony enjoys in his antique shop is often interrupted by his recurrent world-switches, which signify his sense of loneliness and isolation from the real world.

***Anthony's world switch***

Anthony's conceptual world is constructed mainly of his boyhood memories of his mother. Being a boy is not exactly what Anthony wishes to relive, rather, it is the company of his mother that he longs for. He has a strong belief that she always supported him with care and love.

The only boy who visited Anthony – in dreams and in those empty times when he sat at the back of the shop and no customers came in – was the boy he himself had once been.

He knew that was abject, a sentimental surrender, but he couldn't help it; this was who he yearned to be: himself as a boy, sitting with his mother, Lal, staring at the rainbow colours the sunshine magicked into the bonbonniere on the dinning-room table of her house in Hampshire, while the two of them entranced themselves polishing silver, and outside in the garden one of the long untroubled summers of the 1950s went solely by.

> . . . Anthony told nobody . . . that what he longed for was to be the child he'd once been . . . If he'd admitted that where he dreamed of being was in the old Hmpshire dining room, aged ten or eleven, cleaning with Lal, V would have been stern with him. 'O for God's sake. Anthony. Cleaning silver! Of all pointless tasks. Have you forgotten how it tarnishes?'
>
> He and Lal never minded about that. When it started to go brown, they just cleaned it again. They sometimes sang as they worked, he and Lal in perfect harmony. (*Trespass* 33-4)

The spatial and temporal deictics are decided here. This is Hampshire in the 1950s. Anthony's world switch is twice signaled by the temporal locatives "as a boy" and "aged ten or eleven." Thus, Anthony looks back on events in his life from a specified spatial temporal location as he is now "a sixty-four-year-old man" (11), sitting in his shop at "the westerly end of the Pimlico Road, London" (15). His internal focalization reveals the remote perspective he had on the anecdote of silver polish at the time of its occurrence. The focus here is on the activity he enjoyed sharing his mother as well as the sense of harmony he experienced.

Anthony's world switch is shown to be derivative from both his loneliness and declining business. The use of the modal lexical verb "knew," in "He knew that was abject," marks an internal conflict to which he is subjected. The conflict here is between common knowledge of the impossibility of the return of the

past and his wish to retain his boyhood. Here, epistemic modality which, as explained earlier, expresses belief and knowledge, is followed by the opposing force in Anthony's internal conflict represented by the boulomaic modality of the modal lexical verbs "yearned," "longed for" and "dreamed of." As mentioned earlier, according to Text World Theory, verbs that express wishes are categorized as boulomaic modality.

Apart from revealing Anthony's internal conflict, boulomaic modality has a further effect of constructing "a modal-world which is separate from its originating text world" (Gavins 2007: 94). Anthony separates himself from the present and gets himself immersed in boyhood days as he often expresses his wish to be "thirteen years old again" (Trespass 197), and rejects his sister's advice "to let go of the past" (185) by inquiring "why I like it there" (185). Anthony's indulgence in the past illustrates a prominent characteristic of the absurd; as Camus puts it, ". . . in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger . . . This divorce between man and his life . . . is properly the feeling of absurdity" (3). The 'divorce' between Anthony and life is shown in his present situation. He has no family; his sister Veronica is his only relative and the one who really cares for him. As for his business, the figures in his Sale Entries are sharply declining. Thus, Anthony's desire to re-live the past marks a sense of his separation from the present world as well as recognition of the

meaninglessness of his present life.

On the other hand, a third enactor in Anthony's world switch, who does not take part in silver polish, is his sister Veronica. It is suggested that her presence is hypothetical. Anthony's anticipation of her negative reaction to his indulgence in polishing silver is what brings her into the scene. Temporal and spatial deictics of such hypothetical presence are not mentioned. These would have helped to know whether Anthony's construction of Veronica's hypothetical blame is recent or part of his world switch. It is noteworthy here that his sister's rhetorical question is in the present perfect, which suggests that it has been recently posed. Yet, the use of the pronoun "that" in the following sentence "He and Lal never minded that," makes the time zone of his hypothesis of Veronica's disapproval more ambiguous. Another ambiguity of the temporal deictics is whether Anthony's world switch is always accompanied by such hypothesis, or is it a one which he had constructed at the time of silver polish.

### *Anthony's narratorial unreliability*

Rose Tremain's placement of Anthony's time switch early in the novel, together with the engagement of Veronica in this particular mental model, prepares the reader for his elder sister's practical character. Veronica does not share her brother's nostalgia for the past. Her retrieval of memories is for the purpose of reminding herself of her life-long commitment to protect Anthony.

> . . . she found herself remembering how Lal . . . had always scorned the idea that anybody needed shade as protection from the sun in England . . .
> . . . In the garden of Bartle House, she'd lie on a cane lounger . .
>
> The boy, Anthony, would bring out an old tartan rug and put it down on the grass and play with his toy soldiers . . .
>
> One time, Anthony stayed too long in the sun . . . His face went very red, then pale, then he was sick on the lawn . . . he was ill with sunstroke for days and days. But Lal was a careless nurse . . . as soon as Anthony showed signs of recovery, she abandoned them altogether and went to London, to stay at the Berkeley Hotel. 'You'll be *fine,* darlings,' she said. 'Mrs. Brigstock will keep an eye. She'll ring if there's any kind of crisis.' (*Trespass* 233-4)

Unlike Anthony's earlier world switch, where temporal and spatial deictics are stated clearly, Veronica's does not exactly specify them. So the reader might make some guesses as to decide spatio-temporal deixis of the sister's world switch. Dates are not given, and it is only the name of the house that is provided, without mentioning its location. Yet, it is clear that this episode occurred in

the siblings' childhood and that summer is

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Anthony's earlier world switch has specified. Thus, the apparently vague spatio temporal deictics are identified with the help of clues from the two siblings' world switch.

On the other hand, the voice that dominates Veronica's world switch is rather ambiguous. The enactors who show up are Anthony, the mother, Veronica and Mrs. Brigstock, their housekeeper. Only Anthony and the mother are foregrounded, and the focus is on the deteriorating health of the former and the reaction of the latter. The rhythm of the description of Anthony's failing health is fast, yet details are given, though in a telegraphic manner. The passage begins with Veronica's involuntary act of remembering a childhood episode. This is indicated in "she found herself remembering," yet, possessive pronouns are discarded here. The enactor, Veronica, who experiences this world switch, is mentioned by her name when it should be "me" in "she left Veronica." Also, it should be "us" instead of "them" in "she abandoned them altogether." Ambiguity of focalization here implies a general consensus of the narrator and Veronica on the incompetence of Lal as a mother. Likewise, reporting Lal's words to her children in direct speech presentation mode, despite the time gap of fifty years, indicates that these words are deeply engraved on Veronica's memory. The negative effect of the mother's abandoning words is clear in the daughter's branding her mother as a "careless nurse." It is noteworthy here that the children's reply to their mother is not reported; an implication of their sense of

helplessness. Tremain employs these narrative techniques to bring into focus the negligence of the mother.

The antithetical mental models of the mother produced by her children's world switch brings up the issue of the unreliability of Anthony's narrative. Gavins points out, "narratorial unreliability . . . [is] a device by now emerging as a key trait in absurdist narratives" (2013: 137). The unreliability of Anthony alerts the reader to his absurdist characteristics. In addition, the reader's sense of the reliability of Veronica's mental model is stronger than that of Anthony's. Gavins sheds light on the part played by memories in creating mental models.

> Our memories of faces . . . and complex actions are good examples of how our minds store perceptual wholes . . . Mental models allow us to present all these aspects of our everyday lives in our minds in the same detail as they exist in the real world. Consequently, we are able to make inferences, predictions, to understand the world around us, and to make decisions about how to act in certain situations (2007: 4).

Memories here are considered as crucial factors in man's perceptual world. So, if Anthony's perceptual world is proven to be muddled, then, according to Gavins, he is prone to making wrong decisions.

***Anthony's disillusion***

One of the decisions that Anthony makes when he is in his sixties is to sell his business in London and move to France where his sister lives. He believes that by

living near his sister he would be "reborn" (*Trespass* 83), "become the younger brother again" (71), thus, "remake his life" (97). Boyd Tonkin (2010) describes this particular decision as a "whim" occasioned by richness, "the luxury of choice and wealth allows foreign fantasists to sleepwalk into someone else's heartland almost on a whim." This view predicts how people become disillusioned as they choose to settle in foreign countries for no other reason than financial ability. Tonkin implicitly disapproves Anthony's decision with its baseless ground. In the novel, the validity of this decision is checked by the views of Veronica and her friend on the issue of settling in a foreign country. The two women already live in France, but deep inside they know that they are intruders on a land that, one day, would repulse them.

> They both knew that it was borrowed: the view of hills; even the sunsets and the clarity of the stars. Somewhere, they knew it didn't belong to them. Because if you left your own country, if you left it late, and made your home in someone else's country, there was always a feeling that you were breaking an invisible law, always the irrational fear that, one day, some 'rightful owner' would arrive to take it all away, and you would be driven out – back to London or Hampshire or Norfolk, to whatever place you could legitimately lay claim. (41)

The above passage reveals the thought and perception of

Veronica and her friend Kitty on migration. The dominant narrative mode of their thought presentation is narrative report of thought act because of the removal of "the introductory reporting clause . . . and the conversion of the first person pronoun to the third person . . . " (Leech and Short 338). The collective point of view of the text world's enactors, Veronica and Kitty, is indicated by the use of the adjective "both" in "both knew." The repetition of the epistemic modality "knew" emphasizes their conviction that their stay in France is threatened by the sheer fact of their foreignness. Their own processing of their view follows as they focus on the consequences of deciding to leave one's country; this is shown in repeating the verb "left" twice. The shift from third person pronoun "they" to second person "you" engages the reader in their cognitive processing as this direct form of address, "specifies the inclusion of an actor of the reader in the text-world" (Gavins, 2007: 84). It also abolishes barriers between reader and narrator; thus establishes a feeling of intimacy. In consequence to this "powerful empathetic connection" (2013:145), the reader shares the insight and views of text world enactors. On the other hand, these enactors' sense of apprehension is emphasized by Tremain (2010) as she reflects on the issue of late-age migration. In her interview with *The Independent*, she states,

> Exile is a very difficult condition . . . I know friends who have tried living in France or Spain. They've tried it for maybe 10 years, and have felt that they were cut off from something very precious to them. They felt

> that they were trespassing in some measure. However good their language skills might be, however willing to integrate they were, the culture remains in some fundamental way beyond them. Which is a profoundly unhappy state.

Tremain's view merges with that of Veronica and Kitty. Unlike her characters who do not offer a specific reason for their apprehension, Tremain identifies "culture" as the main reason for foreigners' being repulsed by the hosting country. She even excludes foreigners' acquirement of the hosting country language as a source of relief of their apprehension. As for Anthony, he neither has French language skills nor intends to integrate with the new community as will be shown later. He decides to leave to France obsessed with the hope of regaining his past happiness.

The nature of Anthony's decision is foreshadowed by the time of his arrival to France, "Dark was nearing as Anthony stepped out of the train . . . He watched dark dragon clouds stretch themselves across the pearly horizon" (*Trespass* 69-70). The temporal deictics here are decided by the approaching darkness that marks the end of the day; an implication of the lateness of Anthony's decision. Further, the "dark dragon clouds" that Anthony sees on his arrival to the station represent images of despair and evil. "Dark" indicates absence of light; which creates a pessimistic atmosphere. "Dragon" is a fairy creature that has its own negative connotation. For example, in "church art and writings, dragons always stood for evil . . ."

(Simpson and Roud 98). In English folktales," the dragons are creatures to be feared—a plague on the land—and their passing much to be celebrated" (Keding and Douglas 208). As for "cloud", it symbolizes absence of hope. These negative images of darkness, evil, and despair are characteristic of absurd fiction. Such unpromising atmosphere is further emphasized by the time Anthony and his sister go to see the house he intends to buy in the country, "as the sun began its decline . . . the Vereys got their first glimpse of his future . . ." (*Trespass* 102). Like the time of Anthony's arrival to the station, the temporal deictics here are indicated by the movement of the sun which also marks the end of the day. Sunset, the decline of the sun, and evening are all used in literature as traditional metaphors of old age; as Aristotle puts it, "as old age is to life so is evening to the day: one may then say the evening is the day's old age, or to speak of old age as . . . evening of life or (as did Empedocles) the sunset of life" ( Baxter and Arther 151). The use of this metaphor is yet another indication of the lateness of Anthony's decision. Further, the noun "decline" is closely related to Anthony's "future" in France as it carries the meaning of "gradual and continued loss of strength" (*OED*). Such foreboding atmosphere foreshadows the failure of Anthony's search for happiness in a foreign country.

***Dysfunctional communication between text-world enactors***

Anthony visits one of the French country houses to negotiate buying it. Audrun, the sister of the French landlord, does not want to

part with the family property; hence, she tries to obstruct the deal. As for Anthony, his muddled vision of both past and future is further echoed in dealing with her, especially as he considers her his social inferior.

> The sky is huge . . .
>
> Audrun is standing under that sky . . .
>
> The Englishman . . . knocks at the door
>
> Audrun stops her work. She likes the thrill of it, suddenly, that she's here alone with the English tourist and can do what she likes with him. The land is hers . . . and he is trespassing on it and she can taunt Very with whatever comes into her mind.
>
> . . . He gives her a disdainful look ('the bungalow owner . . . the one I'd like to obliterate . . .') then he remembers he has to be polite, so he shakes her hand. (*Trespass* 327)

The above extract portrays Anthony's encounter with Audrun, one of the French owners of the property that he intends to buy. The narrator focuses mostly on the woman's focalization which creates a sense of her dominance of the scene.

The passage begins with a focus on the external perspective of Audrun as she is shown to be standing under the sky of her property, which strengthens the reader's sense of her ownership of the place. Then the reader gets an access to her internal perspective which reveals her attitude towards Anthony. A sense of conflict is clear here, of which Anthony is not aware, as Audrun considers him a trespasser. Audrun

empowers herself by means of her conceptual emphasis on Anthony's foreignness. She views him as "The Englishman" and "English tourist." Reference to his foreign nationality and identity indicates Audrun's self- assurance that he is a mere passer- by, even a trespasser; therefore, his stay is only temporal and that eventually he will be leaving to his country. Having empowered herself by such estranging sentiments, Audrun anticipates the thrill of the encounter with Anthony.

The shift to Anthony's internal perspective is preceded by reference to "the disdainful look" that he gives to Audrun. This brief focus on his external perspective exhibits an entanglement of the voices of Audrun and the narrator. Anthony's brief focalization matches with his "disdainful look" and is reported in free direct thought presentation. Such a mode of transmission deflects the narrator's intervention between the reader and focalizer, therefore, facilitates a smooth and quick transition of Antony's perspectives: from the external to the internal.

On the other hand, Audrun further empowers herself over Anthony by self-assertion of knowledge of his thoughts as she shows him around the property.

> . . . She knows that he's imagining himself as the owner of the Mas Lunel, and she thinks how, if Bernadette [her mother] were here, she'd smile her sweet smile and say quietly to him, 'No, I'm sorry, Monsieur, but I'm afraid you're wrong about that. This is my house.' (328)

In the above extract, the narrator withdraws to the

background allowing Audrun an access to Anthony's mind. The epistemic modal verb "knows" is used to show her confidence of such mental access. Here, other modal epistemic verbs such as "thinks and believes," preceded by epistemic adverbs like "supposedly, perhaps and possible" could have been used to express Audrun's predictions. Instead, the epistemic modal verb "knows" is used in the simple present tense to convey a confident knowledge, rather than a mere speculation, of Anthony's thoughts. Audrun's reading of Anthony's mind is followed by her construction of a hypothetical scene, marked by the use of the epistemic modal verb "thinks", of her dead mother's negative response to Anthony's offer. The *if-* clause here generates an epistemic modal world where the hypothetical encounter between the dead woman and Anthony is realized. The mother's negative response accords with the daughter's rejection of the idea of selling the family house. It is noteworthy here that Audrun's thought presentation is reported in free direct style which indicates a firm belief in no other than her mother's firm negative response.

The negative response of Audrun and her mother to Anthony echoes Tremain's sentiments on intrusive foreigners. She comments on this issue in her interview with *The Independent*, "I've always been attracted to the idea of wildernesses . . . places that are unknowable in a profound sense, and have their own contained weather, culture and language, so that it's very difficult for the outsider to understand." Foreigners finding difficulty in

understanding the mentality of the locals is reflected in the rest of the encounter between Anthony and Audrun. The negative spirit that characterizes their encounter is generated not only by Audrun's attitude, but also by Anthony's ignorance of the culture of the place and its people.

> . . . he [ Anthony] turns to Audrun and says in his faltering French, 'If I bought the house . . . which I think I am going to do . . . would you work for me? I'm going to need somebody to keep everything clean . . .?'
>
> She stares at him, at this stranger in her room. She pictures herself getting down on her hands and knees, scrubbing the floor for him . . Audrun and Verey are walking towards the river now. . .
>
> Audrun has Aramon's shotgun slung over her shoulder . . .
>
> 'Herons,' she said as she hefted the gun
>
> 'Herons?' said Verey.
>
> 'Yes,' she said. 'Devil birds, we call them.'
>
> She didn't know whether this Englishman understood all of what she was saying, but she thought that this didn't really matter.
>
> ' . . . They're like vultures . . . they have to be culled.'
>
> 'Culled?' said Verey.
>
> 'Killed,' she said.
>
> 'Ah, yes, I see.' (*Trespass* 328-9)

Unlike the earlier quoted passage where the enactors' encounter is almost a silent one, this passage reports their engagement in a dialogue. Characterized by the same

antagonistic spirit, their dialogue exhibits more than one feature of dysfunctional communication. The first feature is that the participants do not share an adequate linguistic knowledge with one another, in other words, neither Audrun's English nor Anthony's French are fluent enough. This is clear in referring to Anthony's French as "faltering" and in the recurrent use of ellipsis as he addresses Audrun. It is also evident in Audrun's use of the word "culled' instead of "killed" as she corrects herself.

The second feature of obstructed effective communication is that each of the participants engages in this discourse with conflicting interests. The first participant, Audrun, is driven by the "human volition" (Gavins, 2007: 19) of preventing the sale of her family house, while Anthony's is to buy it. Thus, each participant's volition dictates her/his conduct toward the other. Audrun, as shown earlier, is empowered by her intention to manipulate Anthony, and the latter's snobbery drives him to ask her to "work for him" as a charwoman. Up till this moment, Audrun's basic expectation of discoursing with Anthony has been revolving around the latter's intention to buy the house. So far, this expectation has been the driving force behind her exchange of words with him. Yet, her shock at his job offer interrupts her communication for some time. Her persistence with the conversation temporarily halts as she finds Anthony Verey, developing an illogical discourse: she, the owner of the place, works for this outsider English tourist. So, instead of giving him a reply, she constructs a mental representation of herself working for him for the rest of her

life. This mental representation of her future degrading life inspires her to kill him.

When the dialogue resumes, it is done with a rather different human volition of the participants; Anthony's is to explore the neighbourhood, while Audrun's is a two-fold one. The first is to inform Anthony of the nature and history of the place, the second volition, which is implicit, is to kill him. According to text world theory, Audrun's first explicit volition denotes "the need or desire to impart or gain some kind of knowledge [which] is seen as the common motivating factor behind all acts of communication" ( Gavins , 2007: 21). Audrun does not want to gain any kind of knowledge from Anthony, actually she imparts knowledge that is "context sensitive" which means that "the immediate physical surroundings and the participants [here it is only Audrun] background . . . affect the discourse process"(Gavins 2007: 21). Being one of the locals, Audrun imparts context- sensitive knowledge to Anthony that fish is essential for the locals' diet and how it is endangered by herons, therefore the need to get rid of these birds. At the same time, this knowledge is metaphoric of her implicit volition of killing him. The herons that eat fish on which Audrun and the locals feed are to be killed, just as she plans to kill Anthony who wants to deprive her of the family property. Thus, the evil dragons which filled the sky on Anthony's arrival to France are clearly echoed in this particular encounter.

Tremain manipulates the landscape to prepare for Anthony's murder.

> Audrun and Verey go down through the ash grove where the leaves are yellowing and flying in the wind . . .
>
> Down they go, side by side, through the lower pasture, then along the impenetrable, overgrown bank of the river to where about a hundred yards further east, there's a narrow pathway made of stones. This pathway to the river, emerging opposite a deep pool, is a secret, Audrun tells Verey. It was laid down long ago by her father . . . He carried the heavy stones . . . and pressed them into the earth . . . (*Trespass* 330-1)

The above passage is dedicated to describing the walk of Audrun and Anthony towards the river and the murder of the latter. The reader is not informed of Audrun's intention to kill Anthony. Yet, the first part of the passage offers a description of the landscape which evokes an atmosphere of death and burial. As Ben Stoltzfuz (2015) points out,

> . . . the topography of what is not stated is implied because the characters behavior and surrounding landscape function as objective correlatives. As a result descriptions of things and places become visual statements of what a character is thinking or feeling. (170)

Stoltzfuz establishes a relationship between enactors' intentions and their physical environment; which strongly applies to Audrun's mischievous thoughts.

The French woman is leading the 'English tourist' to his death. Tremain describes the two enactors as walking side by side. But it is understood that Audrun is the one to decide which way to go; the one who is taking the lead. Anthony, as a foreigner, is disoriented to the place, and Audrun, a local who has lived all her life there, is fully oriented to this area. Anthony's fatal end is foreshadowed in the use of the phrasal verb 'go down' which evokes the act of going down the grave to bury the dead. The noun 'grave' is not used here; instead, it is 'grove' where 'yellow [dead] leaves' are falling off the trees; thus, the ground of the grove becomes the grave where the leaves are buried. The noun 'ash' that initiates the description of the enactors' journey evokes the Biblical phrase "ashes to ashes" usually quoted during burial service. Tremain further persists in selecting a style that is connotative of the mysterious nature of death: impenetrable," "secret" and "void", as well as depicting features of grave architecture: "narrow pathway made of stone" and "deep." The atmosphere of death and burial is also emphasized by Audrun's father act of pressing the stones "into the earth," which represents the final stage of burying the dead. This atmosphere of death is eventually actualized by the murder of Anthony.

> For a few moments, there's darkness now, a void.
>
> Then, as if seen down a long, silent tunnel, Verey's face stares mutely at Audrun, his blue eyes, his sunburnt lips. He shows no surprise. His mouth doesn't open in a

> cry. It's almost as though he's already accepted what's going to happen, as though he were just murmuring to himself: *So this is it after all. This is the way it ends* . . .
>
> Verey falls backwards. Blood bursts around him and the crimson droplets hang there in the sunlit air. (*Trespass* 331)

The above passage portrays one of Audrun's psychic fits and its fatal consequence on Anthony. These fits are referred to in the novel as "*episode*" (326), as she suffers a temporal loss of memory. They are marked by her experience of a sense of 'darkness' and 'void.' The short duration of the current fit is indicated in the use of the determiner 'few,' and its temporality in the adverb of time 'now.' The use of the conjunction 'as if' implies another symptom shown in Audrun's blurred vision of Anthon. Further, the conjunctions used here indicate the dominance of Audrun's point of view; they imply a hesitant voice, which does not characterize omniscient point of view. Thus, Anthony's external and eternal perspectives are described by Audrun rather than the omniscient narrator. On the other hand, Audrun's action of shooting Anthony with her gun is not portrayed. Instead, her focus on Anthony's external perspective shifts to the internal as she predicts his final thoughts. Her prediction, which is based on reading his blank look, suggests his acceptance of his fate. It is also based on Anthony's negative reaction as he neither resists her nor defends himself.

The aesthetics of the absurd is emphasized by the concept's truisms.

Albert Camus expresses his belief that man "stands face to face with the irrational. He feels within him his longing for happiness . . . The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world" (16). Camus confirms the futility of man's effort toward happiness; the world will neither share nor help in achieving these dreams. Anthony's predicted final thought signifies Camus' truism as it decides the world's stance to man's desires. Likewise, the dysfunctional communication between Anthony and Audrun represents the world's hostility and unresponsive attitude towards man's hopes. Thus, Anthony's dreams of regaining his glamorous life, his plans "to save . . . [his] soul . . . or what's left of it" (85) are never to be achieved. On the contrary, coming to France brings a sudden end to both his dreams and life.

***Conclusion***

The present study has attempted to prove that *Trespass* exists on the boundaries of the absurd. Rose Tremain does not employ characteristic absurdist stylistic features such as grotesque, repetition, exaggeration and bizarre symbols. Yet, major absurdist features described by Albert Camus (1955) and Joanna Gavins(2013) are detected in the novel. Camus absurdist truism of the world's negative response to man's hopes is shown to be embedded in the novel. Other absurdist features, pointed out by Joanna Gavins, of man's separateness from the world,

narratorial unreliability and dysfunctional communication with others are also there and focused on in this study.

Within the framework of Gavins' Text World Theory, the study has conducted an analysis of the characters' conceptual world. The focus is mainly on the absurdist features of Anthony's character. Antony's separation from the world is shown in his aspiration to retain his childhood happiness. His world switch is proven to mark his separateness from his present actual world as well as his recognition of the meaningless of his life. Signs of Anthony's narratorial unreliability are detected in the study which further assigns him as an absurd figure. His world switch is also employed as an evidence for his muddled vision; which eventually leads him, when he is in his sixties, to move to France as to begin a new life. The analysis of temporal deictics of Anthony's arrival to France is shown to be foreshadowing the failure of his future plans. A further systematic analysis of his old-age decision is conducted by focusing on the crucial encounter between him and Adurun. The study shows that, owing to certain factors such as the enactors' inadequate linguistic knowledge of one another's language and their contradictory human volition, their communication is dysfunctional. This failure causes an abrupt end to Anthony's life, hence, the failure of his dreams. Anthony's death yet fulfills one of the absurd landmark truisms of the world's negative response to man's hopes.

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