SPATIAL CRISES AND THE PLANETARY TURN: A RHYTHMANALYTIC READING OF SMITH'S SEASONAL QUARTET

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NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Spatial Crises and The Planetary Turn: A Rhythmanalytic Reading of Smith's Seasonal Quartet** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

Signature of Candidate

<u>Fatima Farhad</u>
Name of Candidate

Date: <u>August, 22, 2025</u>

ABSTRACT

Title: Spatial Crises and The Planetary Turn: A Rhythmanalytic Reading of Smith's Seasonal Quartet

The increasingly globalised world of the twenty-first century has led to many spatial and cultural crises. This dissertation is a reading of Ali Smith's *Seasonal Quartet* by applying rhythmanalysis to explore how it engages with a counter-globalist paradigm, planetarity. It achieves this via a methodology that allows for a two-fold analysis; to study the rhythmic alliances present between various instances in the novels and situate the spatial crises that exist there within a geomethodological planetary reading as outlined by Christian Moraru. I apply Lefebvre's rhythmanalytical reading and explore the multiple coexistences of harmonies and disharmonies exhibited by Smith's characters.The research also investigates the multiple iterations of a planetary epistemology across the 4 books. Studying *Autumn* (2016) uncovers Smith's engagement with spatial crises, particularly bureaucratic monotony, climate despair and catastrophe created by late-capitalist globalization. In *Winter* (2017), a geomethodological ethical relating to the past is applied to survey crises of hypernationalism and anti-immigrant hatred. The study of *Spring* (2019) evaluates the crises of immigration and border control, and the violence embedded in them within the cultural space of contemporary Britain, whereas examining *Summer* (2020) reveals governmental apathy and indifference toward people of marginalised identities during the pandemic within the national and cultural space of the UK. Characters from all four books cross boundaries of nationality and ethnicity as a planetary expression of their shared humanity. The research appraises the disjointed rhythms of history and present in the texts as it recounts classic narratives. Smith's linguistic flair for puns and wordplay places the texts within a planetary existence, free from the policing influence of globalization. The books may also be further studied from a political and social perspective to study how these crises are manifested in the novels.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to neurodivergent academics, survivors of the capitalist workforce and everyone choosing to pursue knowledge despite the ever-surmounting odds.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation has birthed many crises that the world is struggling to fight today, some of them are global pandemics, climate change, revival of global terrorism, international market collapse, civil wars, proxy wars, migration issues and refugee crises, resource scarcity - hydro warfare, hybrid warfare, democratization of information, rise of multinational corporations, terror groups on dark web, cyber transnational group, infodemics, pandemics, misinformation, interdependency and many others. As the dominant economic model of the century, it is important to re-evaluate and critique the role globalisation is playing in these issues. While these ideas frequently manifest within sociological, anthropological and political debates, it is also important to engage with their presence in our cultural, literary and aesthetic consciousness.

In this research, I am carrying out a critique of globalization as operant in the Seasonal Quartet by Ali Smith. It is a collection of four contemporary novels published in the midst of the global crises of the past five years. The books deal with the immanent predicaments of the geo-space that are prevalent as a direct result of globalization, including the climate crisis, hypernationalism, racism, refugee crises, and the risk of global pandemics. For this purpose, I deploy the concept of 'planetarity', originally given by Gayatri Spivak as an alternative to globalization. Within the planetary discourse, I will employ "planetary geomethodology" by Christian Moraru to situate the texts. In addition, I conduct a rhythmanalytical reading, (as originally pioneered by Henri Lefebvre) of the selected texts using Yi Chen's interpretation of rhythmanalysis. In this chapter, I introduce my primary texts, the four novels comprising the Seasonal Quartet by Ali Smith. This is followed by a discussion of the theoretical underpinnings as I locate spatiality and planetarity within a broader theoretical framework, and propose how a rhythmanalysis within this framework may be conducted.

Ali Smith's Seasonal Quartet is a series of four interconnected novels, which are at the same time capable of standing individually. She has written them in real-time, capturing Britain's political and socio-cultural climate around 2016-2020. Although they are primarily set in the UK, their themes and narratives transcend spacio-temporal boundaries, giving the books a global and cosmopolitan significance. They are wide-

ranging in timescale, documenting the passing of time and narrative by using the seasonal metaphor of the cyclical nature of beginnings and endings.

The first book, *Autumn*, was published in the fall of 2016. Set in the disillusioned aftermath of Brexit, the novel centers on the unconventional friendship between Elisabeth Demand and Daniel Gluck, continuously moving back and forth in time. Some major themes it deals with include citizenship, nationalism, immigration, inclusivity, diversity, storytelling, truth, memory, time, and the friction between old and new. The second book *Winter* uses non-linear storytelling and stream-of-consciousness narrative style to describe the interrelated nature of history and politics. The author uses wordplay on names and places to execute commentary on the divisive nature of language and communication. Her disjointed narrative style shows the fragmented nature of subjective experience. *Spring*, published in March 2019, is mainly concerned with Richard Lease, who is a filmmaker grieving the death of his friend and former colleague Patricia. His story is intertwined with that of Brittany (Brit), an officer at an immigration center, Florence, an unusual girl with an uncanny ability to trespass into inaccessible spaces, and Alda Lyons, a librarian who is aiding illegal detained immigrants via a secretive mission. It deals with the refugee crisis and issues of border control. *Summer*, published in August 2020, introduces Grace Greenlaw who is a single mother and former actress, sharing a neighbourhood with her ex-husband Jeff, and their two children Sacha and Robert. Some of the issues that come up across the narrative include coronavirus, climate change, failing politicians, protest and activism, fake news and the interconnected nature of humanity. All four books are rich in intertextuality; they not only make overt references to the likes of Dickens, Woolf, Shakespeare etc., but the narratives follow some Elizabethan drama arcs as well. Each seasonal volume features a different Shakespearean play and a Dickens novel (for example in *Summer* it is *A Winter's Tale* and *David Copperfield*). *Winter* (2017) is situated immediately after the Brexit vote and involves a reference to *Cymbeline*, where a character summarily describes one of Shakespeare's most infamously complicated plots such that its contemporary presence becomes incredibly relevant. It is a play, Smith states, "about a kingdom subsumed in chaos, lies, power mongering, division and a great deal of poisoning and self-poisoning" (Smith 142).

I would like to outline my main argument and also elaborate the terms used in the title. This study attempts to understand how the various kinds of rhythms, as defined

by Lefebvre and elucidated in detail in the theoretical framework, are manifested in the selected texts, and how they interact with one another to either establish and maintain, or counter the various spatial crises created by globalisation. As used in the title, "spatial crises" refer to the manifold and heterogeneous conflicts that arise in an operational time-space not necessarily limited to geographical space, but embodying social, cultural and political space. The phrase "planetary turn" has been selected from Elias and Moraru's collection of essays *The Planetary Turn* where they define the new condition of the contemporary aesthetic-critical milieu, which appears to be striving beyond neocolonial modernity and Marxist ideals of capitalist globalization towards a decisive reorientation and unfolding of the present dominant aesthetic and its cultural paradigm (Preface viii). A rhythmanalytic reading employs Henry Lefebvre's conceptualization of rhythmanalysis which has been explained in detail in the theoretical framework.

Spivak introduced a conceptualization of the world in the figure of the planetary to counter the globalist tendencies that have led to the current climate and financial crises, in the realm of critical scholarship and the literary imaginary. Her reimagination of the planet is an ethically corrected interpretation of the "anthropocentric" and "capitalist" urge to control and commodify the Earth. Spivak is particular about not placing planetarity in contrast with globalization, nor to romanticise an ancient rustic ideal. Rather the planet posits a countertext to the idea of city/nation, an instrument that places history in the forces of nature and away from the specificity of nations (Spivak 94). Doing so involves an attempt to depoliticize in order to move away from a politics of hostility, fear, and half solutions (4). Borrowing from Derrida's notion of teleopoiesis (*tele* meaning distant and *poiesis* meaning imaginative making), Spivak renders planetarity as the literary imagination of a future-to-come and an experience of the impossible. This theoretical move towards the planetary indicates a desire to move beyond neoliberal individualism into a new structure of feeling still based in our current state of global interconnectedness, but less exclusionary and environmentally destructive. Taking the above discussion into consideration, planetarity has been optimized as the epistemological paradigm for my research. Ontologically, it may be considered as an outgrowth from the crisis of globalisation, however, I would like to clarify that planetarity is not to be conflated with ecocriticism, which is focused on environmentalist concerns. Rather, planetarity is used as the foundational framework to study the political and cultural crises present in the selected novels.

For the purpose of this analysis, space is limited to geographical space in the cartographic sense. It looks at geographical spaces with defined borders and the global, political and cultural crises that arise within such spaces. For this purpose, it is important to consider globalization as a working concept. It is defined by the Oxford dictionary as "the process by which businesses or other organizations develop international influence or start operating on an international scale" (Globalism). For the sake of my research, the various issues that emerge in Smith's novels (as described above) are considered *globalist*; relating to or advocating the operation or planning of economic and foreign policy on a global basis (Globalist). Among the many cultural and spatial crises caused by globalisation, my thesis will explore the climate crisis, immigration and refugee crisis, and the global pandemic within the selected novels.

Elias and Moraru discuss the varying interpretations of the globe-based inflections by suggesting that "globality" has been defined by critics to mean our prolonged existence in a way that closed spaces have become illusory. No national or social group can close itself off to others anymore. Globality also indicates that everything that takes place on the planet transgresses local limitations: "all inventions, victories and catastrophes affect the whole world". However, globalism refers to an idea or potential, whereas, "globalization" is a "process, material phenomenon and destiny" (Elias xx).

In the introductory chapter to *The Planetary Turn*, Elias and Moraru differentiate between globalism, global, and globality in the following manner: Globalism is a subjective position used to consider ideas that interrelate to each other and "face up to their interdependence". He also argues that the global paradigm, as it exists, has failed to summarily investigate the ethical, cultural and political implications of interconnectedness, so to avoid the methodological and terminological ambiguities, they suggest planetarity as an alternative. The growing discourse refers to the impossibility of grasping "the world as a whole analytically" without mentioning the complexities and contradictions that make up its asymmetric features. Song argues that the nomos of globalization "divides, restricts, hierarchizes, and criminalizes", in place of which planetarity connects, relates, manifests movement and multitudes. Far from a complete rejection of globalization's presence in technology, economy, and culture, they argue for planetarity as a completion and critique of its loopholes. They place planetarity as a "soft materiality" as a counterresponse to the "selfsame",

"homogeneous" "hard" materiality of globalization. This "soft materiality" which interrelates differences helps foster ethical relationships worldwide. In this way the many forms of cultural rhetoric and voices can be recognised and witnessed (Elias xx).

Henri Lefebvre introduced the idea of "rhythmanalysis" to study the rhythms of urban spaces and how these rhythms affect people who occupy those spaces. While the general consensus remains that the pace of life in the western hemisphere has increased during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, it has also witnessed a slowing down as alternative modes of living have gained popularity. The speed and slowness, motion and stillness, experience has not been equally divided among people over time, in the same way that temporal autonomy and dependence has been uneven. While the time of professionals like doctors and lawyers is highly valued and rewarded, delivery drivers in the gig economy hardly manage to make ends meet. Service workers in low-paid industries on zero-hour contracts find their needs for work and income unsynchronised with those of their employers, further worsened by the temporal requirements of anticipation and presence in their work at all times.

While speed (and slowness) is quite pertinent to make sense of our time-space, it is often too singular to really take account of the transitory complications of lived experience. It leans towards a linear territorialization of time, whereas thinking in terms of rhythm offers a more pluralistic view. Rhythms allow for a meticulous expression of tempo, movement, flow, stasis and repetition of various phenomena. It builds an analytical mode that can identify various spatio-temporal relations and their presence in the world. By doing so, it brings to light in multiplicities the temperaments and territories of contemporary capitalism, differentiates the lived embodied experience of the everyday, and makes better sense of the world across these scales. Therefore, this research utilizes Henri Lefebvre's rhythmanalytical reading to study the types of rhythms (as described in the theoretical framework) and their correlations with and among each other in the planetary landscape of the novels. Rhythmanalysis is a conceptualization of reading the cyclical and linear rhythms of everyday life. Cyclical rhythms are connected to geographic or planetary phenomena and linear rhythms are connected to capitalist, industrial time. Both types of rhythms will be explored and analysed in the selected texts.

1.1 Thesis Statement

This dissertation is a reading of Ali Smith's *Seasonal Quartet* by way of rhythmanalysis to explore how it engages with the current theorisation of planetarity, which is a counter-globalist paradigm.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How does Smith employ the planetary to circumvent the bureaucratic modern rhythms and the climate crisis in *Autumn*, and the global pandemic in *Summer*?

2. How does Smith practice planetary geomethodology to engage with the hyper-nationalist immigration crisis in *Winter* and *Spring*?

3. What does applying Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis on the quartet reveal regarding Smith's portrayal of a globalized world from the perspective of the planetary?

1.3 Rationale of the Study

Spivak introduced her idea of planetarity as early as the late nineties, and while some significant work has been undertaken using her concept in conjunction with the global climate crisis, yet there is a significant gap in using it to situate contemporary political fiction. This research fills that gap by using planetarity to study a tetralogy of novels that are very distinctly situated in the recent socio-political climate.

Some of the books from the selected quartet have been nominated for many literary prizes, including the prestigious Man Booker Prize, placing them within an elite literary position. Moreover, planetarity has thus far not been studied in association with a rhythmanalytical reading of the socio-cultural crises inhabited within a text. Therefore, by employing this approach, this research embarks upon some important and timely questions regarding the cyclical nature of spatial crises.

1.4 Delimitation

Due to the time and length constraints of this thesis, the research solely focuses on the areas mentioned in the research questions, while keeping the sample limited to the selected texts. The theoretical framework has been developed while keeping the idea of planetarity in general, but it is not used to do a detailed exploration of all the aspects of the texts where it may apply. For this purpose, only selected themes like, immigration and border control, climate crisis, and the global pandemic have been outlined in only

the specific texts where they are most significantly apparent. Their presence in other parts of the quartet may be referred to where deemed necessary.

The current research is studying texts which narrate the incidents of various geospatial crises occurring specifically in the UK (or European Union, broadened to the Global North), which greatly limits the scope of this research as it does not allow for a more comprehensive comparative analysis with a similar study of geospatial crises in the Global South and elsewhere. The microscopic nature of the analysis renders it impossible to expand its range to include a comparison with texts from the other end of the globe, therefore such exploration has not been pursued in the current study.

1.5 Chapter Breakdown

1. The first chapter contextualises globalization, planetarity, and rhyhtmanalysis within the present literary and cultural milieu. It also discusses the selected texts for this study, the motivations that back this research, as well as the research questions and significance of this project.

2. The second chapter places the current research within the existing literature and charts its relevance to the scholarship undertaken in this area so far. It attempts this by defining planetarity and its scholarly history, and situates the four books within their current academic discourse.

3. The third chapter elaborates on the research methodology of this thesis, and presents the theoretical framework that is being applied. It discusses the terminology of "space" as employed in this research and connects how sociopolitical and cultural "space" will be studied alongside "rhythms" to arrive at a combined framework to study spatial crises.

4. The fourth and fifth chapters lay out the analysis undertaken. The fourth chapter undertakes each book of the quartet one-by-one to study how various rhythmic alliances contend with spatial crises within their narrative, while the fourth chapter studies the quartet as a whole. It delineates the rhythms presented across the four books on a broader and macrocosmic level to understand how the spatial crises change between and across the texts.

5. The sixth chapter concludes the research and sums up the discussion by overlaying the major findings reached.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will contextualise the current research in the scholarly tradition of planetarity and also situate it within the exploration of Ali Smith's Seasonal Quartet as crisis literature, as studied thus far. The first section will contextualise and ground the scholarship within a discourse of planetarity, and the second section will situate the seasonal quartet among the scholarship that has been undertaken around it thus far.

2.1 Defining the Planetary

In their introduction to the scholarly essay collection, *The Planetary Turn*, Elias and Moraru compare the rise of planetarity in parallel to the postcolonial and postmodern turns etc. within the literary milieu. They suggest that the influence this current concept is garnering is similar to that of previous cultural paradigms in the way that they engage with scholarly and critical concerns about the world as modernity's sociological, aesthetic, and political-economic systems grow obsolete. They suggest that modern paradigms increasingly fail to explain the twenty-first century world and its problems, from the global functioning of technologically advanced finance capital, to cosmopolitanism's struggle to reinvent itself from the ashes of post-empire Europe, and the risk that the escalating crises of world ecologies pose to the environment.

They describe planetarity as a move away from, and a critique of, "the totalizing paradigm of modern-age globalization" as an epistemology and its cultural histories (Elias 11). They also suggest that planetarity stands in contrast to the irony and suspicion characteristic of the structure-of-feeling characterised as "postmodernism". They consider it an emergent discourse that distinguishes itself as a "new structure of awareness", a methodology responding to the "geothematics of planetariness" characteristic of a rapidly growing collective of cultural formations (11). They argue that this cultural shift is a challenge to the homogenizing, monolithic propulsion of globalisation, and is a movement towards "relationality", a worlding of the disjointed spheres of the planet. They also suggest that, as twenty-first century planetary life consists of consistently expanding networks of relations among people, cultures and societies, to make sense of the planetary, inevitably includes embracing the relationality immersed in it. Planetarity is artistically, philosophically, and intellectually configured

through an alternative perspective, which proceeds in a different orientation. It stands for a multicultural state-of-being which is foundationally steeped in politics and economics, but its predominant approach is ethical.

In this emerging worldview and critical theory, they consider the planet as a living entity holding an ecology shared with, and embracing, the pathways undertaken by modernity as the "axial dimension in which writers and artists perceive themselves, their histories, and their aesthetic practices" (12). While it has yet to reach cultural and stylistic influence on a mass level, and has not yet fully formed a well-defined world culture and coherent model of "relational localisms" that might make up its transcultural aggregate (12), the increasingly growing discourse surrounding it is leading to a set of thematic, discursive, and cultural protocols that are more and more distinct and well-defined. While this paradigm is not completely novel or homogenous in its meaning and effects, it is coming together to be a powerful resource for imagining and understanding the world in the third millennium.

Multiple scholars have applied a planetary frame of reading to conduct a literary analysis in the past few years. Candice Amich's study of Cecilia Vicuña's film *Kon Kon* establishes a relationship between performance, cultural memory, and neoliberal erasure. It includes both documentary footage of the artist's works as well as that of the disappearing dunes and local fishermen's flute-playing orchestras that are threatened by the destruction of neoliberal globalisation. She argues that the precapitalist cultures shown in the innovative film, imagine a planetary future that interconnects nature and culture, thus refiguring the fragility of life into planetarity. Zong looks for planetary hauntings in her essay examining Filipina-Australian writer Merlinda Bobis' novel *Locust Girl* (2015). The novel considers tropes of nonhuman transformations which disturb anthropocentric configurations of subjectivity. By doing so, it brings to the front an ethics of alterity, achieved via connecting spectral futures that question the "uneven geographies of empire". It centers new historical interpretations of the "local" that have been ignored and in doing so centers an overlooked, minority writer's oeuvre within planetary discourse. This research is also attempting to study Smith's fiction as it highlights the figure of the overlooked alien and intrusive immigrant within the UK.

In her 2020 article on Planetary art, Joanna Page applies the planetary framework of reading to art-science projects that are taking on the process of making the invisible but sustaining systems of the planet visible, while also representing time

in geological and cosmic manifestations. She studies four contemporary artists including Rafael Lozano-Hemmer (Canada/Mexico), Claudia Müller (Chile), Paul Rosero Contreras (Ecuador) and Michelle-Marie Letelier (Germany/Chile), to posit how art plays a more seminal role in portraying geological phenomena as planetary. The artworks are discussed to show how they challenge anthropocentrism while placing human history in planetary time. The mentioned artists explore certain occurrences that are unaffected by human action like winds, solar flares, tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions etc. through a scientific lens while keeping in mind the imbalance of the dynamic of humans vs nonhuman elements in the study of such phenomena within the humanities and social sciences. She argues that these practices create a "planetary art", that creates a consideration of the planet detached from the human, while relocating human agency within the geological history of energy and matter. Such art is more aware of the dynamics of geopolitics as it engages with the precariousness of the Global South to climate disasters, leading to a decolonial evaluation of the objectification of nature under the pragmatist logics of modern science.

Her projects are transdisciplinary as they connect the aesthetic and the scientific, and involve a range of modelling and recording techniques to document planetary dynamics to be presented. They also share the purpose of adding to our comprehension of scientific and natural phenomena, similar to many scientific experiments and data analysis methods, but what specifies their redefined aesthetic ambitions is the displacement of humans from a privileged subjective position to one of co-agency with other living forms and the physical and chemical forces that create all life forms on earth. This way, a planetary engagement is achieved with the geological and cosmological systems of the planet. This particularity is also inherent in the way these projects let go of the scientific aims and purposes of their existence. For example, Rosero's renditions of seismic energy portray the tremors that shake the earth's core, but do not form a scientifically accurate record of earthquakes phenomena or their predictions. In a similar manner. Letelier and Müller create mapping that merely represent an impression of the phenomenon but are meant to represent the larger truth of the universal interconnectedness, and link human history with the galactic notion of time.

Page considers these works to be decolonial as they represent nature not as a quantity to be measured or exploited by human technology, towards a promotion of "sensory relationships" not based on processing nature for the sole purpose of conquering and commercialisation. They move away from imperial mapmaking and circumnavigation , and the "rationalizing" and "extractive" tradition of European science towards an "experiential knowledge" grounded in social and affective relations. In this way it tried to uncover the complicated dynamics between geopolitics and geophysics (Page 291). Page argues that these projects forge a new relationship for art, allowing it to engage critically and effectively with the inhuman. This way, they contribute to the role of the humanities in "humanising" scientific processes. Science allows us to understand how our actions are interwoven with the rest of the world, while also connecting it with the activities that take place in our absence. But during this process it gets disembodied from the social, political, ethical and cultural contexts from which it is derived, in order to become "generalizable knowledge" (291). By focusing on the sensory and emotive relations, these works are able to play with Earth forces outside human influence to create an imagination that is planetary and non-anthropocentric in its worldview.

2.2 Situating the Seasonal Quartet

This section will give an account of some of the scholarly work undertaken on Smith's quartet of novels, either on individual books, or the quartet as a whole. The purpose of this section is to situate and contextualise my research within the critical discussions that the books have inspired so far.

2.2.1 Climate Crisis and Post-Brexit Fiction

Climate change is an inevitably contemporary area of discussion right now, and while it is mostly considered the prerogative of dystopian or speculative fiction, more and more literary fiction is being written to tend to the anxieties of a changing biolandscape. Smith's books often address these anxieties head on. Cheng-ing Wu discusses Smith's use of positive Earth emotions as well as exploration of art-nature connectivity to tackle climate fears. Their thesis explores the "experience of phenology and seasonality under climate change" by reinterpreting conventional seasonal connotations to deal with the violence of climate change (Wu 90). Global warming has divested winter's coldness and summer's intensity of the nostalgia associated with it and instead made either of

them unbearable. This quartet refamiliarizes the seasons to us by placing characters through solastalgia and eco-anxiety, and suggesting ways of regeneration. The novels continuously reimagine creative interactions between people, nature, and art, and symbiotic relationships between them to help restore the balance of the universe. They also present the restorative nature of art and language and how either has the potential to transform the characters' realities. Wu also discusses the use of gender, immigration and borders to help establish the importance of multicultural coexistence, and diversity within modern British society. Her fiction propounds the idea of dual identity as a result of border crossing, helping people embrace multiple identities instead of having to pick just one. Wu calls Smith's focus as being on a sense of "global sense of identity", which is unlike her Brex-lit peers (Wu 93).

Charlotte Duistermaat discusses the Seasonal Quartet as an example of post-Brexit fiction and studies it from a narrative point of view. The narrative voice of the novel is studied and distinguished as divided between extradiegetic organizer and observer narrators, who bring out the fictionality of the text, and consider a post-referendum UK from an external, objective perspective. This narrative voice is coupled with alternative intradiegetic narration of either side of the Brexit vote, contributing to a variety of subjective opinions. Through this collage of narrators, Smith is able to portray the multiple opinions that existed in post-Brexit Britain in her "heteroglossic narrative" (1). This is further amplified by the microcosmic existence of families that portray the macroscopic division taking hold of the country. Many of them are cleaved by their opinions in the same way that the larger country is divided; not into groups that pre-existed the referendum but split unwillingly. Smith resolves these conflicts by relating with the Other, most often in the form of immigrants and refugees. The Otherised figures are able to help the families that have been detached to refill the gap and come closer. Duistermaat's thesis directly coincides with the purpose of this research, as the figure of the Otherised immigrant is a planetary signification of the micro in the whole. Smith's portrayal of extradiegetic and intradiegetic narrators side by side is also a representation of the multiple voices present and thriving within a counter-globalizing narrative.

Eleanor Byrne discusses the first three books of the quartet from a "weathering" perspective as climate fiction. She considers contemporary ecocritical and feminist conceptualisations of climate change and the interrelationships between ecological

crises and political upheavals to explore how these ideas are present in Smith's seasonal tetralogy. It also reflects on how the form of the novel has the potential to act as witness, as Smith's "fragmented and polyvocal texts" constitute of a politically informed approach to twenty-first century crises. She studies how these books hold dialogues between groups whose positions are at a communal impasse. She argues through the concept of "weathering", as employed by Astrida Neimanis and Jennifer Mae Hamilton; feminist, materialist ecocritics, that Smith's fiction is able to acknowledge the ways our bodies, places and the weather are all implicated together in the changing climate of the world. They also posit that we should consider the environment's totality as "naturalcultural, all the way down". Both of these approaches are different forms of "weathering", new ecologies to survive the hostile climate. The essay considers the reading of weather in Smith's books to understand her own narrative strategies birthed to deal with the harshness of Brexit season. They argue that the repercussions of the Brexit vote were less about claiming political or economic autonomy and more about "ethnic nationalism doing the dirty work of capitalism". *Autumn*, *Winter* and *Spring*, act as weathering texts to engage with the crises of the present political climate and also give forth strategies to live together through dialogue while understanding how the historical past imbricates the "geostories" of the present. By doing so, the novels of the quartet act out important pathways out of apparently irredeemable conflicts through hospitality, empathy and building of an ecological consciousness.

2.2.2 Hospitality and Connecting with the "Other"

The quartet also portrays the potential of fiction to pose as a counterpoint to the indifference towards local and global issues like "ecological decline and refugee crises". Sara Upstone contends, while discussing *Autumn* as a modernist novel, that the fictional nature of the novel opens it to the possibilities of many "hopeful [revisions]", guaranteeing that no matter how sanguine despite the present circumstances may be, the story can keep going and find a better end (Calder). A lot of characters frequently enter the other novels in the form of mentioned names in memory flashbacks and/or inspiration for projects, thus allowing much connectedness in the narrative despite the books being standalone. These aspects make the seasonal quartet a newer version of the political novel, one which employs affect to connect with political realities, and finding "alternative notions" of intersubjective connectivities. It does so by using "mutable

storytelling" to document the current time period and making stories the benchmark through which to call out to experiences not our own. (Calder)

Tomasz Dobrogoszcz discusses the effect of right-wing propaganda in marginalising othered figures in the quartet. Braidotti's "nomadic theory of the subject" is used for this purpose (Dobrogoszcz 149). They argue that Smith is able to refigure the role of the nomad in her quartet via various characters' ability to transgress the borders forced upon them and break through the "European fortress" even after making the exit from EU. Some of the characters pointed out are Iris from *Winter*, who chains herself to a fence as part of her climate activism, and also helps in releasing fifteen people from the detention center mentioned in *Summer*. The next character is Florence featured in *Spring*, who along with other activists portrays feats of bravado as they outwit the security state. Dobrogoszcz refers to the character Wendy in *Autumn*, as a metaphorical representation of Smith's role in this process. Wendy throws historical artefacts at a detention center fence in protest when they announce that the government is cutting off funding for asylum seekers' children. She bombards the fence with people's histories and collective memories through the objects she has chosen, and Dobrogoszcz believes that Smith's speed-writing of these four books in the aftermath of Brexit is a similar provocation of the figurative and literal borders, with appropriate allusions to historical events, intertextual references, and diverse characters, thus opening up the British identity to nomadic otherness.

Brianne Christensen discusses Smith's use of hospitality as a countercurrent to the hostilities prevalent in post-Brexit Britain to usher in a New Sincerity aesthetic through her writing in the seasonal quartet. She argues that Smith recognizes the impossibility of an unfettered openness and the risks it involves but chooses to overlook them. She thus, refers to hospitality's material benefits like, economic and cultural production, and also discusses its "crucial affective elements: relationality on local, national, and global scales with a sincere conceptualization of ethical human relations as based on mutuality" (Christensen 85). Her frequent references to the events of hospitality and inhospitality using mundane and ordinary examples to highlight the surreality of the times she is documenting give the four novels a distinct ethical dimension. Christensen believes that Smith provides "ethical authorship and sincere engagement with art" in a time of extraordinary crises (85). The works allow for unpredictable results via encounters both within and outside the text.

Laura Aldeguer Pardo discusses the figure of the migrant as a narrative connective by studying the European migrant Daniel Gluck in *Autumn* in detail. She uses Sara Ahmed's figurisation of the stranger as someone who is not unknown but rather characterised as such. This is usually encountered via experiences that take place in the present while referring to stereotypes formed as a result of past experiences. The essay takes account of examples where the European protagonist interacts with British characters who try to characterize him on the basis of stereotypical ontological definitions of a stranger. Ahmed's theorization of processes that fetishize the figure of the stranger makes *Autumn's* protagonist's rebellion from it very clear. The literary analysis shows that the European character Daniel allows multiple subjectivities to coexist, thus embracing the transmission of moralities embodied by different types of people living in the UK. This is made possible through examining the bonds present in the friendship between Elisabeth and Daniel which transgress the wide gaps of generational as well as cultural differences. Pardo also discusses that Daniels's wisdom cannot be entirely assigned to his role as a migrant, but rather the insights provided foster the "acquisition of a relational point of view, based on empathy, a sense of communitarianism and critical thinking" (201). His identity is not "unstable", nor does his migrant perspective come in opposition to others, instead he exists in solidarity to the people around him. This allows the characters around him to also reap from the benefits of a consciousness that considers everyone's situation uniquely. The essay shows how past and present political rhetoric presents native characters with authority to define themselves as subjects in their relationships with Daniel as a European migrant. Her analysis of temporal and symbolic use of nature shows the story's ability to relate a number of individual as well as collective situations that go past Brexit. Daniel's introspective temperament, for example, allows him the use of nature-based metaphors and imagery to express his fluid identity, foregoing any negative stereotypes related to migrancy. This process grants him significant agency. Similarly, the focus on nature elements in his friendship with Elisabeth, which further extends to the relationship between Elisabeth and her mother Wendy, and in his use of intertextual allusions, displays how intersubjective connections can be made possible beyond geographical and historical scales.

John Masterson also discusses *Spring* in the context of transnational populism and the discourses surrounding xenophobia and detention, concluding that Smith uses

creative forms of resistance to aesthetically and ethically show the dependence of human dignity on the potential of collective and individual stories.

2.2.3 An Experimental Novel

A lot of scholars have focused on Smith's use of art in the quartet and their relevant impact in changing perceptions about social issues, in particular, Theuma discusses the role of art in "self-empowerment and to the ever-lasting necessity of hope" (5). She discusses the perception and experience of life through the idea of seasonality and the cyclical nature of time and history. She centres her analysis in the desensitization that takes place with relation to climate change and racism.

Smith's experimental style of writing has consistently aroused discussion, particularly her books *Hotel World* and *And But For The*. This quartet of books also achieves a novel form by breaking the formalistic structure of the novel, and allowing all four texts to bleed into each other quite fluidly. One significant aspect of this fluidity is the emergent seriality of the quartet, as discussed by Alex J. Calder. He claims that the tetralogy of novels is able to hold on to the "connective value of storytelling" and cross-cultural relationships despite all kinds of social crises. One of the modes of this seriality is via intertextuality. She relies heavily on Dickensian and Shakespearean references to overlay a foundation for her text which is able to reflect on the sociocultural situation of the immediate present while cementing it in literary history. Calder regards it as a confluence of Shakespearean and Dickensian influences that develop the novels' attempt to "mediate contemporaneity" and spotlight the role art is playing to creative art "transformative" experiences (para. 3). This is not limited to purely textual references as each book is also in conversation with the work of a female artist/painter; for example, Pauline Boty's art characterised as pop art, drives the narrative in *Autumn*, Barbara Hepworth's sculptures take the front seat in *Winter*, Tacita Dean's contemporary art practice are a frequent discussion in *Spring*, while the filmmaker Lorenza Mazzetti is mentioned in *Summer*. The seriality is further supplanted by a temporally fragmentary narrative, which slows down political news events and reflects on them with a perspective from the present. Particularly *Autumn* reevaluates interpretations of the present to be recontextualized through the ongoing political developments.

Smith is also able to critique the boundaries of not only geographical nation states, and the violence needed to maintain them, but also borders of gender. Tove

Conway in particular discusses her use of feminist art to reevaluate the place of marginalised identities and their relationship with the larger cultural landscape. Her work questions the form of borders as divisive and suggests that maybe they are unifying instead, as remarked by the character Florence in *Spring*: "What if, the girl says. Instead of saying, this border divides these places. We said, this border unites these places" (Smith, *Spring* 133). She is able to do this in literal as well as formalist ways as the formal structure of the novel is very fluid and undivided by strict chapter or thematic divisions. The events of multiple timelines flow into each other to show us how the form can "change all the time" (Smith, *Winter* 66). Conway posits that Smith reinhabits two subjects into her novels that have conventionally not held the highlight of art, that is women and nature, and she uses modern art to interconnect feminist and environmental subjects. In Smith's imaginary, ecofeminism paves the way to heal the wounds of geographical border divisions. Smith is able to use her literary form to suggest a solution to the politics of border violence. This is particularly noticeable in *Spring*, where a mother and daughter are separated due to border restrictions. By making the borders between her four novels porous; characters, events, seasons all enter and depart as they please, Smith has suggested possible reimaginings of the geographical borders too. Moreover, the use of feminist are also critiques "our notions of the permanency of frames and fences" (Conway 111).

Dirk Wiemann discusses Smith's use of the cyclical seasons in his essay, arguing that Britain appears to be a chronotopic presentation of a place in a constant state of crisis in the form of upheaval alternating with stasis. The seasonality of nature provides coherence as well as stability, but this coherence is not necessarily a function of the plot, but rather their cyclical turns act as a "guarantor of a patterned continuity" (5). Wiemann looks at the political consequences of such an aesthetic that subverts a permanent state of crisis by employing nature's temporal resignation of narrative authorship. The next section will discuss the significance of this research and how it fills an important gap in the existing scholarship.

2.3 Significance of the Study

This section will underline the importance of this research while also highlighting the knowledge gap that it will endeavour to fill. Spivak introduced her idea of planetarity as early as the late nineties, and while some significant work has been undertaken using her concept in conjunction with the global climate crisis, yet there is a significant gap

in using it to situate contemporary political fiction. This research fills that gap by using planetarity to study a tetralogy of novels that are very distinctly situated in the recent socio-political climate.

In 2016, the United Kingdom government held a referendum on 23rd June posing the question: 'Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?'. 51.89% of the population opted to leave (BBC, Brexit). This began a transition period that continued till 31st December, 2020. During this time, the previous terms of trade continued till they agreed when a new deal was negotiated. After the UK officially left the European Union, many of its free trade deals continued to be in place. However, a lot of other freedoms that the UK residents enjoyed regarding travel, tariffs, border restrictions, trade policies, delays in goods transfer, etc. did not remain the same way. Ali Smith's quartet begin with the Brexit vote in *Autumn* and her final installment *Summer* arrives as the transition period comes to an end. So, the quartet acts as a faithful chronicler of not only the mass sentiments and reactions that came as a consequence of the vote, but also documents the effects it had on the national, cultural and aesthetic consciousness of the country and its people. Thus, studying its texts is bound to reveal important confessions regarding Brexit's large-scale effects on the culture. Studying it from a planetary perspective will thoroughly expose the consequences that the end of a globalised trade-deal will have on its parties' economies and cultural health. Therefore, my research is taking a pertinent approach in applying my framework on these texts from a cultural analysis perspective.

The quartet's engagement with contemporary themes like the climate and immigration crisis, and the problems arising due to border restrictions as a result of the pandemic, make Smith's four-year long endeavour a faithful chronicler of the recent past, therefore certifying it as a work of literature worth exploring within the current scholarly discourse surrounding globalism and cosmopolitanism. The above discussion shows how Wu has studied the quartet's representation of seasons by re-imbibing them with nostalgia that has been robbed by global warming. The political discourse in Great Britain following its departure from the European Union has left many immigrants seeking shelter from war and conflict in a state of insecurity and homelessness. As the UK immigration laws became stricter with the 2020 pandemic, life for refugees became one of increased strife and racism grew. According to a report by *The Migration Observatory*, immigration became an issue of salience for the British people between

2000 and 2016, and declined after the Brexit referendum, however since 2022, it has been gaining salience. During this period, it has been in the news with the net migration numbers being reported in headlines, and irregular migration and problems of housing the asylum seekers have been gaining traction in political agendas. According to their survey on April 2023, 36% British people believe that immigration to the UK should be made more difficult for asylum seekers (Blinder et al.). These reports show that the crises of crossing borders, occupying the same political and cultural space as people of other nationalities, and the conflicts that arise from doing so are an ever-present source of cultural and political disorder. All of these conflicts have been documented in fiction, and have been discussed in the literature review discussion above, for example Wu's interpretation of the way Smith is able to reconcile conflicting opinions on Brexit and questions of immigration underpin the scholarship on which my research stands as well.

Similarly, Christensen discusses Smith's use of hospitality as a countercurrent to the hostilities prevalent in post-Brexit Britain to usher in a New Sincerity aesthetic through her writing. Many such incidents occurring between 2016 and 2020 have been fictionalised in this quartet, and studying them from a rhythmanalytic and cultural point of view is important to understand how they are deeply intertwined within the cultural and social fabric of the world inhabited by them. Since these crises have been rising due to an increasingly globalized world as international gatekeeping becomes stronger, therefore it is important to see how Ali Smith refigures them within a globality that is planetary in nature. Her attempts to do so give the readers a timely and prescient itinerary to follow as we chart our way through a world increasingly marred and fractured by sociopolitical and nationalist divisions as discussed with references to Pardo's research above as well. This analysis foregrounds a way forward in coming to terms with the reality of a world interconnected in time and distance, without letting our chance to occupy these closed quarters with each other turn into a failure of humanity. Smith's books portray how people from different regions, holding opposing perspectives can occupy the same space, and have the various rhythms of their lives conjoin and coexist without leading to disharmony and disarray.

The research also brings an intervention by creating a novel and niche theoretical framework that combines sociological-urban theory and literary/aesthetic criticism to create a frame of reference that can study the rhythmic alliances and conjunctions in any literary phenomenon. Some of the books from the selected quartet

have been nominated for many literary prizes, including the prestigious Man Booker Prize, placing them within an elite literary position. Moreover, planetarity has thus far not been studied in association with a rhythmanalytical reading of the socio-cultural crises inhabited within a text. Therefore, by employing this approach, this research embarks upon some important and timely questions regarding the cyclical nature of spatial crises.

In conclusion, Smith's project of a four year mapping of Britain's sociopolitical and cultural milieu is a contemporary version of the "Condition of England" novels of the 19th century. While these books have been studied from various perspectives, their niche positionality on interpretations of crises of space has not been studied so far. Therefore this research's exploration of these books from the perspective of sociocultural space and rhythmic analysis fills that gap.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework and research methodology used to analyse Ali Smith's Seasonal Quartet. The theoretical framework is constructed via the concepts of geomethodology derived by Christian Moraru from planetarity which was introduced by Gayatri Spivak. The analysis also uses Henri Lefebvre's mode of rhythmanalytical reading to explore the selected texts. The research methodology employed is cultural analysis which I will expand on later in this chapter.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This research uses a combined framework of a planetary and rhythmanalytical reading based on the concepts founded by Gayatri Spivak and Henry Lefebvre, and further developed by Elias Moraru and Yi Chen respectively. The quartet will be studied from the perspective of both theories through a close reading of all four books individually, followed by a summative reading of the quartet as a whole, where planetarity and rhythmanalysis will be deployed as conceptual lenses that complement each other. The first section will define "rhythm" as a concept and outline "rhythmanalytical reading" as an analytical tool.

3.1.1 Rhythm as Reading: A Rhythmanalysis

Rhythm is defined as "a regularly occurring sequence of events or processes" by *The Oxford English Dictionary,* such as the rhythm of the tides (Lyon 3). In a similar manner, it refers to the repetitive pattern-like nature of music or language where there is a "relation of long and short or stressed and unstressed syllables" (3). Henri Lefebvre, an Urban Studies theorist and sociologist, proposes that any interaction between "a place, a time and an expenditure of energy" constitutes a rhythm (Lefebvre "Rhythmanalysis" 15). Lefebvre differentiates his conception of rhythm from basic repetition by adding that "there is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference" (6). Such repetitive difference allows for the isolation of a particular rhythm in a text to be studied and analysed.

For Lefebvre, rhythm is closely tied to our understanding of time and repetition. It is a component of our social life of towns, cities and any movement through space. In the various conjunctures at which our natural cycles and social timetables coincide,

rhythmic analysis provides an insight into the workings of everyday life. Some of the themes Lefebvre considers include "the thing, the object, life in the urban or rural environment, the role of media, political discipline and the notion of dressage, and music" all of them considered from the perspective of rhythm. He is particularly concerned with the image of the body under capitalism in his work *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*. He notes the "push–pull exchange" between the general and the specific, by looking at the abstraction of ideas and the concrete analysis of mundane objects (Lefebvre "Rhythmanalysis" 8). He starts by considering abstractions and being fully conscious of them, he is able "to arrive at the concrete" (8). *In Elements of Rhythamansylsis,* it is defined as, "Everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm". Therefore, all such (a) repetition of kinds of movements, actions, action, events, breaks in the patterns (differences), (b) interruptions of linear systems and cycles, and (c) the loop of birth and death, growth and peak, decline and end. Examples of such repetition that are analysed in this research involve interactions between humans, human and nonhuman entities, humans and systems, systems that exist beyond human reach, narrative or literary rhythms, rhythms between historical and chronological events, or between natural phenomena.

According to Lefebvre, the expenditure of energy that produces rhythm happens through repetition, interferences and "birth, growth, peak, decline and end" (Lefebvre, "Rhythmanalysis" 15). Rhythms greatly differ in the amplitude and energy shown by them, as well as the frequency with which they are anticipated varies in intensity, tension and action. He contends that while we embody rhythms in our lives, we are not privy to their knowledge, and thus the meaning of the term rhythm [remains] obscure' (5). Despite this reluctance, he defines some of the key terms primary to rhythmanalysis as follows. Regarding "repetition" Lefebvre explains that "there is no identical absolute repetition indefinitely". Difference is important as a novel and foreign arrival into the repetitive (6). If this were not true, the cyclic nature of circles would be exhaustive and vicious to any possibility of life. Lefebvre argues that repetition and difference are linked in two ways; firstly, each repeated element is different from its precedent because it is not the previous one, and secondly, the very act of repetition produces difference (7). A rhythmanalyst is expected to be attentive to both meaningful information, and also confessions, noises, and silences. This conceptualization of

rhythms is applied to the various patterns of crises present in the texts. As a rhythmanalyst, the researcher will explore repetitions of various phenomena (including crises of space in their various iterations) across the texts, and isolate rhythms that cease to produce harmony or lead to conflict. Now that the concept of "rhythm" has been explored according to Lefebvre's conceptualisation, forms of rhythms, like linear and cyclical, will be discussed.

Linear rhythm is described as "quantified and fragmented time, imposed by technology, industry and consumption", this includes the timelines followed by urban life and the time of the city. It is closer to repetition than rhythm (Lyon 25). Cyclical rhythm, on the other hand, is the time of nature, as observed in seasonal changes, the circadian rhythms of day and night, the body's biological rhythms, like heartbeat and eye movements. It is a characteristic of rural life – destroyed by capitalism. It includes both repetition and difference. Some of the other key terms discussed across his work are as follows:

Polyrhythmia: A multitude of rhythms; the effects of different configurations of rhythm

Eurhythmia: When rhythms combine smoothly, for example in good health

Arrhythmia: Discordance between rhythms, being 'out of step'

Isorhythmia: An 'equality of rhythms' beyond eurhythmia, for example in the coordination of an orchestra

Dressage Process: of bodily entrainment and repetition through which rhythm is learnt and becomes evident in the body over time, for example in military drills. (Lyon 25)

Lefebvre describes cyclical time scales as being linked to nature and everyday life (Lefebvre, "Toward an Architecture" 341). They comprise rhythms that are "present from molecules to galaxies, passing through the beatings of the heart, the blinking of the eyelids and breathing, the alternation of days and nights, months and seasons and so on" (Lefebvre and Régulier 76). In contrast, the quantified, linear time of capitalism is "homogeneous" and "fragmented", "monotonous, tiring and even intolerable". Linear time is forced upon us by capitalist, industrial labour practices and technological accessories, and it mostly concerns itself with mechanical accumulation of time. It "designates any series of identical facts separated by long or short periods of time: the

fall of a drop of water, the blows of a hammer, the noise of an engine, and so on" but these do not amount to rhythm since "only a non-mechanical movement can have rhythm" (Lefebvre and Régulier 76–8). According to Lefebvre, this less-than-human linear time of modernity has replaced the natural rhythms of human life that are cyclical in nature. Consumer capitalism turns time into a commodity by breaking it up and bringing about "lassitude, boredom and fatigue" and also burn out and breakdown. Now that a general understanding of types of rhythms has been established, the next paragraph will discuss rhythmic disturbance in the commodified space of a capitalist world, and how it leads to crises.

Lefebvre claims in *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* , "The commodity prevails over everything" (6). Thus social space and time become the space and time of markets, as they get influenced by continuous exchanges. Although they are not "things", but since they induce rhythms, they enter into "products" (6). He propounds that the antagonistic nature of cyclical and linear leads towards disturbances or compromises. The circular course of the clock's tick-tock constructs time, and in turn rhythms. Lefebvre's conception of rhythmanalysis bridges the gap between material and social bodies, by considering all of the rhythms in interactions which cannot fixate on a singular analysis but are always open to further negotiations.

One important aspect of rhythmanalysis is that crises originate from rhythmic disruptions, and then lead to rhythmic shifts. Lefebvre asserts, "Social times disclose diverse, contradictory possibilities: delays and early arrivals, reappearances (repetitions) of an (apparently) rich past, and revolutions that brusquely introduce a new content and sometimes change the form of society" (14). He further elaborates that it's historians who set the rhythm of a period following any crisis thus brought forth. A social group must "designate itself as an *innovator* or *producer of meaning*" (14), and it is only through attention that the "novelty" that comes into being as a result of the crisis becomes visible (15). The deregulation produces opposing effects which disrupts and "throws out of order", symbolizing a disruption that is profound and makes normal functioning of the society impossible (44). It creates a lacuna, which can be filled by an invention. Thus, a period of crisis originates rhythms as it disrupts the social order of time and space. The effects reach across institutions, populations and exchanges alike. Such disruptions of the social order are represented at many points across the selected texts and they will be studied to understand how they contribute to capital crises. Now

that a link has been established between rhythms and crises, the next passage will discuss practicing rhythmanalysis as a methodological tool.

While Lefebvre's theorisation of rhythm is fundamental to the analysis of my primary texts, and I will continue to use his terms to discuss rhythmic interactions, I will also utilise another interpretation of rhythmanalysis, developed by Yi Chen. This is because Lefebvre's original discussion took place in the 1980s, and a lot of discourse has developed in this area ever since. To ensure my research engages with the latest iterations of rhythmanalysis, I will be applying and involving Yi Chen's concepts as well.

In his book *Practicing Rhythmanalysis*, Yi Chen elaborates on rhythmanalysis as a methodology by linking it to the coexistence of rhythms in social relations as "Alliances suppose harmony between different rhythms; conflict supposes arrhythmia: a divergence in time, in space, in the use of energies" (Chen 6). He further builds on Lefebvre's conception of rhythms as repetitions by considering its characterisation and flow on "cultural, industrial and cosmological" (3) and how they interact and orchestrate "lived experience" (4). He believes that rhythms are the consequence of timespacing practices which occur as a result of materialities placed in order. This includes both bodily rhythms as social/institutional relationships which may not generate identical repetitions but they produce various rhythms.

This thesis will employ Chen's concept of rhythmic assemblages as the sites of rhythmic production whereby social agents align and "generate temporal-spatial relationships" (4). He uses rhythms interchangeably with 'time-spaces', and considers it a non-essentialist method which disentangles the construction of rhythmic assemblages to understand "the materialisation of experiences in time-space", instead of being constrained by time and space (4). Chen considers the social as a polyrhythmia citing Lefebvre's famous "the crowd is a body, the body is a crowd", and considers the assemblages of cosmological rhythms permeating bodily ones, the capitalist rhythms continue to impede and impose on biological rhythms (Lefebvre 42). Their exploration explains "the push-pull exchange between the general and the particular, the abstraction of concepts and the concrete analysis of the mundane, starting with the body" (Elden viii). Alongside these, there are infinite unknown rhythmic assemblages, and rhythmanalysis may construct them and delineate the social processes embedded therein.

With this research, I consider how the various kinds of rhythms are manifested in the selected texts, and how they interact with one another to either establish and maintain, or counter the various spatial crises created by globalization. These rhythms are looked at via a geomethodological reading (as explained below) to analyse how the selected texts spatialise various cultural rhythms, exploring the "here" of cultural tendencies with the planetary "whole".

3.1.2 Historicising "space"

This dissertation explores how Smith engages with spatial crises in the novels, therefore it is incumbent to define and historicise "space". Within spatial theory, spatiality is discussed as the presence of space and its effects on actions, interactions, entities, and theories. It has been defined and described in a number of ways by different theorists according to their specific disciplines, for example Sheppard and Antipode discuss it within Economics as, "Spatiality is a social construct, not an exogenously given, absolute coordinate system…but a product of the political economic system" (Sheppard 36, Antipode 3; as cited in "Spatiality"). The Dictionary of Geography describes it as thus, "From the perspective of spatiality, space and society do not gaze at each other but rather are mutually embedded" ("Spatiality"). The idea of spatiality is also synonymous with distribution, or spatial expression.

In order to understand this research's use of the term "spatial crises", it is important to first study the history of the term "space". In their work *Space and Spatiality in Theory,* Peter Merriman et al. discuss the history of space and spatiality in theory by referring to the manifold ontological presumptions and epistemological voids that differentiate philosophical methods from geographical ones. This discourse contextualises space within the traditions held by scholars like Aristotle and Plato, Bergson and Einstein, Euclid and Carnap, and also Newton, Descartes, Leibniz and Kant (4). They discuss the shift in discussions of space and spatiality in human geography that has been observed in the past few decades, whereby these concepts are understood as social and cultural, as well as quasi-material, "productions". More recently, Massey, Thrift and others (as cited in Merriman et al.) have suggested that our focus must be on "time-space" or "space-time". Massey has outlined how space and time "are integral to one another", "distinct" but "co-implicated", and "it is on both of them, necessarily together, that rests the liveliness of the world" (pp. 47, 55, 56 as cited in Merriman et al.). She is of the view that a relational understanding of time-space

allows a connection between the spatial and the political, and also brings human and physical geographers into dialogue. While many geographers set to operate on apparently more embodied concepts, such as place, environment, landscape, region and locale, in their studies than the more abstract concept of space, it is actually the multiplicitous and heterogeneous nature of space and spatiality, as "abstract and concrete, produced and producing, imagined and materialized, structured and lived, relational, relative and absolute", which lends the concept a powerful and wide-reaching functionality (Merriman et al. 4). The purpose of thus situating space and spatiality is to clarify how this study will employ the term "spatial crisis", as any crisis of space, where space refers to any of the multiple epithets, as discussed in this paragraph.

3.1.3 Reading "with" and "for" the Planet: A Geomethodology

After outlining space as a concept, I will now discuss the origin of the term "planetarity". The primary theoretical framework for this thesis is based on the concept of planetarity as conceptualized by Gayatari Spivak. She first used the term in a paper presented at Stiftung-Dialogik in Zurich, December 16, 1997, entitled "Imperatives to Re-Imagine the Planet," and later printed in 1999. She theorises planetarity as a term distinct from the standard meanings of "the planetary, the planet, the earth, the world, the globe, globalization", and others in their conventional use (Spivak 23). The term is famously untranslatable in critical scholarship due to the way Spivak chooses to define it. She places her definition in counterpoint to one derived from the idea of "the planet" as an object, because it inevitably evolves into a discussion of the planet vis-à-vis environmentalism, leading it to be considered as an "undivided 'natural' space rather than a differentiated political space" (72). Her problem with this formulation is it invariably segues into the interests of nation-state geopolitics as the focus is shifted towards saving the resources of the planet and other environmentalist issues, keeping the capital's usefulness intact and the need for global capitalism unquestioned. She argues that the concept of globalisation fails because it refers to trade and the exchange of information, and the globe it refers to is a nontangible "gridwork of electronic capital" which is not actually inhabited by anyone (72). The global has been used to refer to the imaginary lines of the equator, tropics, latitudes and longitudes and also the GIS system.

Spivak argues for a subjective envisioning of the term planet, without referring to its object too explicitly, providing an ethical framework of reconsidering collectivity by separating the natural from the cultural. She calls its epistemological nature into question by writing in *Death of a Discipline* that "The planet is in the species of alterity" (72). She believes that the notion of the globe allows us to assume that we can choose to control its "globality", whereas the planet epistemologically "in alterity" belongs to another system, used by us on loan. It does not give way to a clear contrast with the globe, rather refers to the struggle embedded in figuring "the (im)possibility of this underived intuition" (72). She refers to all the notions associated with origin of life like, Mother, Nation, God, Nature as "transcendental figurations", as putative nicknames of alterity (73). Spivak believes if we were to consider ourselves as planetary subjects instead of global agents, then this alterity remains "underived" from us. This way it cannot be considered dialectical negation, rather it contains us as equally as it abandons us. Such a mindset helps us transgress the metaphor by which we consider the outer and inner space as beyond our reach, and thus neither continuous nor discontinuous, but rather both. After discussing the originary conceptualisation of planetarity, the following section will examine the three steps of a more recent interpretation, namely "geomethodology" conceptualized by Elias Moraru, which will guide the theoretical framework of this research. While Spivak's concept of planetarity forms the foundation for my research's engagement with this concept, I will also be referring to a more recent interpretation of planetarity to analyse the primary texts. This is being done to ensure my theoretical framework engages with updated and latest discourse within this theoretical arena.

The idea of planetarity has been developed over time to a concept more relevant to the concerns of the 21st century, namely geomethodology. In the final chapter of *The Planetary Turn,* a collection of essays edited by Amy J. Elias and Christian Moraru, documenting the contemporary discourse on planetary fiction, Christian Moraru has formulated a step-by-step geomethodology to understand the planetary object, moment and environment. He calls the first step "topological" as it constitutes planetarity as a spatialized version of the world and aesthetic routines. He considers planetarization as a trans-territorial "dislocation, reallocation, and novel aggregation" of any given space on earth.

The second step is structural and relational. It highlights a particular aspect of the work being studied to pinpoint its planetary signature, for example "the "here"-"there," "we"-"they," "part"-"whole" relatedness structure folded into them". Moraru clarifies that different cultural codes may require a different decoding mechanism, thus geomethodoology emphasizes reading the "here" of topo-cultural tendencies with the planetary "whole" broad "there" (216). It works by associating meaning to the aesthetic of spaces through a "self-distancing" understanding of local and proximal spaces. Opposite to globality's hyperfocus on exchanges, planetarity creates interrelationships to make connections between the "aesthetically immeasurable, and the culturally asymmetrical" (220). It not only prevails over the local-global theoretical cul-de-sac but also the much-criticised North-South contradiction in Spivak's conceptualization as well. It bridges the gap without outright cancelling it, warranting a constant to-and-fro movement between 1) "spatially distinct", connected units ("works, genres, authors, movements") and 2) from one semantic level to another within the same unit cluster or adjacent/overlapping units.

The third step is largely ethical. It goes beyond mere description and equips the "with" alongside a critical "for", so geomethodology not only traces planetary manifestations in the text but also reads "for the planet". In this way interpretation and planetary regulation come together and beckons us to "relate" to those we meet on our critical journey (Moraru 216-217). Moraru delves into the ethical gaze of geomethodology by suggesting that that the "scopic-interpretive gap" between a first and second reading is filled by what we see on the surface and what comes into sight on a deeper inspection as we construct a "cultural negative" of the text in question. The distance has not been eliminated, its geographical dimension transfers to a discursive encoding between the work's external and deeper layers.

Moraru uses the analogy of a micro-telescope to show that a planetary reading shrinks down the macro, and then using its magnifying techniques, expands the "whole" in the "fragment", the planetary embedded inside the indigenous and the "place-bound" (222). This critical-epistemological microscope seeks the "planetary spatialization of the geocultural sample" to find relational connectedness between and among the loci (222). A planetary reading studies any site by juxtaposing "here" and "ours" into a relationship of "spatialised distant kinship" with "there" and "theirs". In this way the cultural "haecceity" of a particular place is not in an opposing relation to planetarity

but rather occupies an appropriate space. He calls this space a downscaled "with-world". In this way, the site "cites ("telescopes") the planet spatially and intertextually, "sites" (situates) and quotes" and inhabits a relational worldliness that needs to be closely observed to be noticed. All such readings are "watermarked" by the planet's figure and its "sitational, textual-spatial formation" is applicable to a multitude of local figurations, where the planet's figuration acts as its conduit and decoding mechanism (Moraru 223).

Moraru differentiates planetary "(micro)reading" from New Critics' close reading by suggesting that instead of dissolving contradictory impulses in the text, it creates the complexities by making them visible (223). This way it visibilizes the nation-state's institutionalized erasure of cultural genealogies by marking the multiplicity in the time, place and discourse. He considers culture to be a dissimulating force, exposed by a cross-cultural reading "with" the planet to reveal the outsourced indigenous mythologies and the worldly nature of a seemingly homogenous bricolage. Supposedly isolated traditions are discovered to hold "worldly relationality" despite their apparent self-sufficient unity (223).

3.1.3 Spatial Crises as Rhythms of the Planet

Now that "geomethodology" has been scrutinised as a mode of planetary study, this section will outline how it will be employed alongside a rhythmanalytical reading to carry out the analysis of this research. The two theories of planetarity and rhythmanalysis discussed above will be applied to the full quartet at the end of the analysis to understand how the various spatial crises of climate crisis, global pandemic, hypernationalism, the immigration crisis etc. are presented as rhythms in the quartet, and how the text subverts the rhythmic nature of the crises to arrive at an understanding of their spatiality that is planetary in any of its geomethodological manifestations (Moraru 216-217).

This is undertaken by first studying various rhythmic assemblages and alliances across the four books individually. For this purpose, some specific scenes from the books are explored in-depth. This exploration is going to define how a specific crisis is being presented or subverted by the author in any of the texts. Multiple types of rhythms like chronological, historical, bureaucratic, intertextual, etc. will be explored in various books to understand how they present some of the crises mentioned above. For this purpose, the two theoretical concepts, planetarity and rhythmanalysis, work together to

inform the analysis. Each book is studied individually by an in-depth exploration of a rhythmic alliance present in one or more scenes. These scenes and the rhythms within them are analysed via one of the steps of geomethodology to understand how they place the books within a planetary epistemology. This combined framework allows the investigation of rhythmic forces present in the text and how they exist between the overall quartet as a whole, and also places each book individually as well as the quartet as a collective, within a counter-globalist planetary framework. In this way, the spatial crises of the books will be studied via a geomethodological reading to study how the rhythms present between them sustain or disrupt the globalised phenomena.

3.2 Research Methodology

This research will attempt at providing an interpretive analysis of a literary text, hence the paradigm of this research is qualitative. According to the SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research,

> "Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. [It] consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them." (Denzin & Lincoln 43).

Denzin and Lincoln discuss multiple forms of qualitative research, the definition that applies to this thesis is "The analysis of the politics of representation and the textual analyses of literary and cultural forms, including their production, distribution, and consumption" (19). My research opts to study literature as a cultural artefact using urban studies theorist Henri Lefebvre's conceptualisation of rhythms. It also complicates the crises of space by considering the characters' relationships to the rhythms of their lives, thus the books' representative "politics" are analysed alongside their forms and structures.

3.2.1 Research Method

The research method employed in this research is cultural analysis. It considers literary texts as cultural artifacts, reprehensive of the larger culture's concerns. McGuigan defines it as, "A multidimensional analysis [that] seeks to make sense of the ontological complexity of cultural phenomena – that is, the many-sidedness of their existence. It is

concerned with the circulation of culture and the interaction of production and consumption, including the materiality and significatory qualities of cultural forms" (1). The proposed research is a cultural analysis of the selected texts to delineate the themes and ideas outlined. The approach to reading the texts in order to conduct this analysis is informed by Henri Lefebvre's conceptualization of "rhythm-analysis." As Lefebvre's theory comes within Urban Cultural Studies, therefore, my research applies rhythmanalysis as a mode of cultural analytical reading lens, where literature is considered a cultural artifact, studied as a phenomenon influenced by various modes of cultural interactions. I take account of the ways in which various spatial crises are present in the novels by looking at them through cultural signifiers that may constitute various rhythmic relations. The correlations among and between those rhythms are studied via textual reading of different phenomena present, for example the climate crisis, global pandemic, hypernationalism, the immigration crisis etc.

3.2.2 Rhythmanalysis as Method

Under the larger umbrella of cultural analysis, the work of the cultural theorist, sociologist and urban theorist Henri Lefebvre is used as the theoretical frame work of rhythmanalysis. In order to adapt rhythmanalysis to a literary text, Yi Chen's conceptualization of rhythmanalysis will be applied. Chen expounds on the significance of rhythmanalysis as a method by saying that the parameters outlined by it for conceptualising the 'problems' of research are very different compared to traditional methods. For example, the 'scale of analysis' goes beyond geographical understanding of 'global', 'international' and 'local', rather the topological understanding is that "rhythmic assemblages are constitutive rather than hierarchical", foregoing ideas of local/central and national/global (Chen 6). He outlines two ways of conducting rhythmanalysis; the first one identifies a singular dominant rhythm and arrives at the polyrhythmia of social processes associated with the central rhythm at the rhythmic site. It is followed by understanding the tensions and discordances that interrupt the rhythmic alliance, thus helping identify a site of disorder. The second method involves starting with a polyrhythmic assemblage, and then considering the "alignment, negotiation and realignment" of various rhythms within the ensemble. Chen also discusses that rhythmanalysis offers methods of cultural analysis that consider social processes as "decentred, dispersed and dynamic" (6). This allows for the analysis to

work centrifugally from the central site towards the rhythmic effects that are inflected in multiple aggregates. This allows the discovery of "microcurrents" and contradictory rhythmic forces that negotiate power inside the social realities (6). He further clarifies the nature of this dual pathway as not a dichotomy but an oscillatory push-pull relationship between the rhythms in the polyrhythmic ensemble. Putting the two methods together allows them to converge the various materialities which run a range of tonalities with their own political implications.

The current research will proceed by applying both the above processes i.e. identifying a single rhythm in the text and following the other rhythms accompanying it and/or finding a polyrhythmic assemblage in a particular scene in the books, and then exploring the various rhythms that are present inside it.

In conclusion, this research will employ a combined framework of rhythmanalysis and planetarity to study the spatial crises present in the four selected texts by outlining their various rhythmic alliances. The broader method employed is cultural analysis, including studying the rhythmic alliances portrayed through different cultural signifiers, identified via a textual reading. Multiple such examples are studied as instances of polyrhythmic assemblages to understand the assertion and negotiation of spatial crises.

CHAPTER 4

"THE BODY IS A CROWD": RHYTMANALYSIS OF THE CRISES IN THE BOOKS

Lefebvre encapsulated the idea that rhythms hold individual as well as interconnected significance at the same time in his well-known reference, "the body is a crowd, the crowd is a body" (Lefebvre 42). This multifaceted existence of rhythms also informs the structure of this research's analysis and discussion chapters. Chapter three conducts a rhythmanalytic reading of the four books on-by-one, whereas chapter four explores the rhythmic alliances present in the quartet as a whole.

This chapter will attempt to analyse the four books *Autumn*, *Winter*, *Spring* and *Summer* by studying some of the rhythmic interactions presented between their many characters, and how they find their way out of various spatial crises like immigration, borders, climate crisis, pandemic etc. by overcoming them. The analysis will seek to also place the various rhythmic alliances outlined in this section within the planetary framework, established in the "Theoretical Framework" section of the thesis. The analysis will first explore individual occurrences of such rhythms within the four books each, and then study them together as a quartet in the following chapter.

4.1 "Things just happened … Time just passed": The Rhythms of Mechanised Modernity in *Autumn* (2016)

Autumn, published in 2016, is the first book of the quartet. It focuses on the intertwining story of art lecturer Elisabeth Demand, and her friend and neighbour Daniel Gluck. Elisabeth is experiencing a midlife crisis while Daniel is comatose, and she spends time reading to him by his bedside, while her childhood spent with him learning about various forms of art and literature is narrated in flashbacks. The book also includes interludes to Elisabeth's relationship with her mother. Both mother-daughter duo hold strong opinions about the cultural changes taking over their country in the aftermath of the Brexit vote.

Some of the rhythms present in *Autumn* include Elisabeth's visits to the post office, to check in on Mr. Gluck, and to visit her mother, and multiple others. This section will focus on select examples from the text to show some of the rhythmic

assemblages present therein. There are multiple rhythmic assemblages present in the sociocultural landscape of *Autumn*. Due to the constraints of space, this research will analyse two of them in detail. I will start by studying a scene in the first half of the book. Elisabeth Demand goes to a Postal Office to renew her passport, her interactions with the postal system and its bureaucratic idiosyncrasies reveal many rhythms that must come together in order to facilitate the apparently simple process of renewing one's passport (Smith, *Autumn*).

Lefebvre remarks about the prevalent nature of commodities, that social space and time, when frequently exchanged, "become the time and space of markets", and by inducing rhythms they enter products (Lefebvre 6). Elisabeth's Check & Send form goes through multiple offices, officials, revisions, is frequently stamped and dismissed or approved, and even the nature of a passport's expiry in a ten-year time period, turns the passport into a global product, valued by the rhythmic journey it carries across its lifetime.

The Post Office ticket machine issues her token number 233 (she later has to get another which is bumped to 365) This is the first linear rhythm she interacts with; she also observes a queue around the self-service machines where there is no ticketing system, she does not interact with that rhythm but a clear parallel can be observed here. Her token number is a hundred numbers ahead of the numbers in circulation, so she proceeds to visit a bookstore instead of waiting in the communal seating area. She brings back Brave New World from the bookstore and finds herself in a cinematic moment when she looks up from a passage quoting Shakespeare and her eyes dart towards commemorative coins on the Post Office wall placed there on Shakespeare's deathday anniversary. It is interesting to note here that while she refuses to participate in the ritualistic waiting period by leaving the Post office and getting a book, thus breaking off the linear rhythmic operation of the Post Office, upon return her number has passed and she is forced to pick another further-off number, forcing her to wait even longer. So, while she breaks away and thus breaks free from a bureaucratic rhythm without the monotony of waiting, she is inadvertently pulled back into it (Smith, *Autumn*).

> The woman pushes her chair back and takes the photo sheet round to the counter where Travel Cash is issued. She shows it to a man there. The man comes back to the counter with her.

> There may be a problem with your photograph, he says, in that my colleague thinks the hair is touching the face in it.
>
> In any case, the hair is irrelevant, the woman says. Your eyes are too small.
>
> Oh God, Elisabeth says.
>
> The man goes back to his Travel Cash counter. The woman is sliding the pictures of Elisabeth up and down inside a transparent plastic chart with markings and measurements in different boxes printed all over it. (87)

The above passage describes, in painstaking detail, how many steps are involved in a simple stamping visit to the Post Office, and how they keep changing the specifications of hair and eyes without any logic to continue delaying the process, almost intentionally. Some of the other rhythmic alliances present in this scene are those of the PO officials walking between the sliding doors, beginning and closing their shifts, their alternate shifts cause a disruption in Elisabeth's process as she has to explain the same menial error in her photos to two different people, leading to further wastage of time. The passage of the form through the PO and then to the passport office is another rhythm that gets disrupted when she is told her head is not the right size or her eyes are off-center. The expectations of the government is that the people should come back to the PO office however many times as needed, and go through the ritualistic waiting period to be accommodated only to find another error in their forms, thus repeating the process over and over again till their forms successfully pass through. All these official processes constitute a rhythmic assemblage that Elisabeth opts to break through by asking the second official to send her form, despite being warned of its incomplete nature, risking a return. Elisabeth disrupts the isorhythmic institution of the Post Office Operations despite being warned twice.

At multiple points, Elisabeth observes the rhythmic movement of the front desk clerks while she waits in offices. The repetitive movement is described to show the monotonous nature of such institutions where the workers' days are occupied by opening drawers and files without much purpose to them. One such example is: "The receptionist clicks on another file and then goes to the back of the room and opens a drawer in a filing cabinet. She takes out a piece of paper, reads it, then puts it back in and shuts the drawer. She comes back and sits down" (Smith 84).

The verbs of movement in the above passage show how these rhythmic passageways exist and create a polyrhythmia in the Post Office institute but while they allow for a smooth functioning of the institute, they lead to a vast expenditure of energy in the form of time and space as the customer has to wait at multiple junctions, only to be facilitated for a very short amount of time. Lefebvre comments on modernity's supposed "enlargement", "deepening", and "dilapidation" of the present. The apparent reduction of distances and waiting periods by way of systemic organisation appears to "amplify" the present, but as the above example shows, it only serves to hinder the smooth processing of functional rhythms. This has also been worsened by majorly inconvenient globalist networking across the world (Lefebvre 31). Processes like interstate or inter-continental travel could involve life-threatening reasons, but the freezing of bureaucratic processes halt the rhythmic flow that is required to keep requirements of life going. The same rhythmic disruption affects migrants fleeing wartorn countries. The wars that require them to abandon their homelands are also instigated by the butterfly effect of globalisation-led states of insecurity, but the same system that causes these immigrants to flee keeps them from seeking shelter and safety.

Autumn uses polyrhythmic assemblages as a trope to link the many different lives inhabited by its characters. Smith uses copious amounts of ecological imagery to draw a surrealist relationship between its characters' inner and exterior lives. On the one hand, they are placed in another world, where they are present embodying plants, animals, as well as the human embodiment in a post-death state, while on the other hand, their daily lives are also depicted in a realistic fashion. In the beginning of the book David Gluck appears on a beach after having recently experienced death, he seems to be in a comatose state while retaining consciousness, his comments exhibit an alienation from the people on the shore.

Another scene shows David's consciousness trapped inside a tree trunk, involved in a war-drama enactment of a scene, before being violently gunned down. The presentation of these examples portrays a planetary signification while from a rhythmanalytic perspective, they present a multiple conjoinment of varying rhythms (ecological, social, physiological, spiritual). This part of the analysis will study one such passage and attempt to study the rhythms presented.

> An old man is sleeping in a bed in a care facility on his back with his head
> pillow-propped. His heart is beating and his blood's going round his body, he's

> breathing in then out, he is asleep and awake and he's nothing but a torn leaf
> scrap on the surface of a running brook, green veins and leaf-stuff, water and
> current, (Smith 135)

David's bodily rhythms are placed in conjunction with leaves, the multiple puns implying the "leaf" of his senses as he is about to depart from life. Lefebvre believes that crises cause disruptions in the normal functioning of rhythms. It is interesting to note that the moment in time of David's life that is captured by the book is caused by a disruption of his bodily rhythms i.e. a coma. The description of leaves appearing on all his bodily orifices just as he is making the transition from a human state to make a final descent towards the earth signifies the cyclical nature of life and death as mentioned by Lefebvre multiple times.

> Daniel Gluck taking leaf of his senses at last, his tongue a broad green leaf,
> leaves growing through the sockets of his eyes, leaves thrustling (very good
> word for it) out of his ears, leaves tendrilling down through the caves of his
> nostrils and out and round till he's swathed in foliage, leafskin, relief. (Smith
> 135)

This description is planetary as the various plant life-forms are considered on equal terms with the comatose human they are being used to describe. By placing his anatomical functions like blood going around his body, heart beating, sleeping and waking, as a nothing but a leaf on the "surface of a running brook", reinterprets planetary flora as an equal inhabitant of the world as human beings. This undoes the anthropocentric view of human life, which considers other life forms as inferior. Not only is he described as a comatose leaf on the surface of a body of water, but these floral lifeforms are departing from the aforementioned eyes, ears and nostrils. This shows how human and nonhuman entities can exist in a harmonious existence where the "we" of humanity is associated with the "they" of nonhuman entities, and they exhibit a "novel aggregation" of their place on earth (Moraru 216).

The next rhythmic assemblage in the book that is worth exploring occurs around the end. Elisabeth's mother and her friend are sitting in her mother's house recounting their experiences of observing antiques while being part of a reality show. Smith considers the display of all the old objects "like a huge national orchestra biding its time, the bows held just above the strings, all the fabrics muted, all the objects holding

still and silent till the shops empty of people" her imagery is similar to Lefebvre's use of musical harmony to expose the rhythmic repetition inbound it. She, similarly, compares the presence of these artifacts from the past as being a part of the rhythmic continuation of the past into the present. But she warns of what would happen "when darkness falls" the differences between the real and the reproduced will be blurred. Here she is referring to one of the many crises immanent in the cultural and political atmosphere of the book. Smith continues the foreboding symbolism as, "The symphony of the sold and the discarded. The symphony of all the lives that had these things in them once. The symphony of worth and worthlessness … Yes, but would the real things sound any different from the reproduction things?" (160). Smith expertly connects Britain's past incidents of colonial loot with its present day spatial crises by exposing how they are interlinked in this assemblage. While on the surface the scene merely shows two characters conversing of their experience observing ancient artifacts, but deconstructing it via rhythmanalysis uncovers the many different cycles that are rooted in this single incident. The sold and discarded, worth, and worthless objects in a symphony refers to the immigrants in Britain who are ushered in and out like inanimate objects on a T.V. show. All their past lives exist in symphonic rhythms with their current reality that is riled with injustices and cruelties due to the sociopolitical climate of the country.

These remarks that interlink the histories of the objects they observe with the current day technology's ability to recreate the ancient world harkens back to Lefebvre's warnings about the present and its simulations. He mentions in Rhythmanalysis that, "your present is composed of simulacra; the image before you simulates the real, drives it out" (Lefebvre 32). Lefebvre discusses this idea in the context of the reproduced images taking over the place and significance of the original objects that they purport to represent. It shows the muddled-up nature of reality in general, but specifically the ways in which such simulacra conceal the global injustices present behind the facades.

In the above scene, the two characters find themselves in an antique shop and consider the historical nature of the objects they are observing while referring back to the colonial and imperialistic reasons behind their presence in their current location. In this way, an everyday ordinary object of an urban landscape becomes a conduit for the global nature of transmissions and translocation of not just the material, but a spatial

crisis like climate change is also an unpleasant consequence of such global relationships.

Autumn portrays the growing climate crises that are gripping the earth. Instead of reverting to the all-consuming disaster trope of climate fiction, Smith interweaves the minutiae of climate crises into the everyday lives of the characters. Such symbols of ecological disturbance are scattered throughout the book. This includes not just material disturbance brought upon by changing weather conditions, but the small impacts that relatively unnoticed seasonal changes have on people's lives. Elisabeth's mother refers to the time when David would set up a film projector to show Elisabeth old films: "That was back in the years when we still had summers. When we still had seasons, not just the monoseason we have now" (Smith 157-158).

Elisabath's mother finds a security fence off on one of her walks across her small village. Nearby, a World War II pillbox drowns due to the rising sea levels and disappearing coastlines. The bus-stop is engraved by someone with "Go Home". Even though all of these are isolated incidents, they are not isolated in the narrative. Elisabeth's mother, who is also an anti-nuclear arms activist, is soon after observed throwing the antique objects she saw at the shop at the wired fence in a display of protest against the climate catastrophe that nuclear weapons hold the potential for. The fence also represents the immigration restrictions and border policing that is about to be strictly reinforced in the wake of the Brexit vote. All of these incidents can be related back to the ongoing climate catastrophe in one way or another. The pattern of global migration and the consequential retort of hypernationalism has been triggered by the disturbance of longstanding ecological establishments. In this sense, it may be posited that through her engagement with the simulacra observed in a shop, she is also able to retaliate against the injustices represented by it. Elisabeth's mother, through her intense but temporary bravado, is able to disturb the ongoing rhythm of climate despair and anxiety while also regaining some agency.

This is also particularly relevant in the context of the nuclear arms interventions recently undertaken by the UK government at the time of Brexit. According to the UK's nuclear disarmament policy of 2010 to 2015, they intended to reduce the stockpile of weapons at home to "no more than 180 warheads, and a maximum of 40 per boat" ("2010 to 2015 Government Policy: Nuclear Disarmament"). They also intended to complete this by the mid-2020s. However, according to the nuclear deterrence facts on

their website, they justify spending up to 2% GDP on defence because the "cost of operating, maintaining, and renewing the nuclear deterrent is substantial, but short-term economic pressure does not justify taking long term risks with the security of the UK and your safety" ("The UK's Nuclear Deterrent: The Facts"). The government uses the narrative of safety and security of its populace to justify an exorbitant amount of its GDP on defence, cause distress to the environment, while also creating an atmosphere of insecurity and threat to national peace which calls for stricter border control and anti-immigration policies. They further justify the cost of the nuclear deterrent by referring to the jobs created by it, while also asserting that the economic impact that creates these jobs is also going to support the nuclear deterrent. They cite "extreme acts of aggression that threaten our national security" as cause for taking this economic capital away from being spent on public services, and instead taken towards national defence ("The UK's Nuclear Deterrent: The Facts").

Policy decisions like the above greatly impact the economic equilibrium of a state, and affect the economy, thus adversely affecting citizens and causing distress and turmoil. Elisabeth's mother reacts to this distress in protest, because she has no other means of getting her voice heard. Smith shows the disturbance in the rhythm of national harmony when governmental decisions like these do not take into account the actual needs of their citizens and take actions that cause further chaos and disorder.

The above analysis shows how the characters in *Autumn* disturb the rhythmic patterns of their life by bringing in an arrhythmic conjoinment, and thus are able to engage with the crises that are confronting them a little more proactively. These include the disruption of a modern, mechanized, bureaucratic life by Elisabeth, and her mother's offensive retort to a climate crisis and border-enforcing forces. Lefebvre considers arrhythmia a state of discordance between rhythms, and while this is generally understood as a negative break in natural rhythms, here the discordant rhythms of a late-capitalist globalized world allow the characters to engage with the spatial crises of the world inhabited by them. This is significant as the cultural context inhabited by these characters corresponds to the sociopolitical climate of the UK on ground. The government's undue allocation of budgetary resources to nuclear deterrents as opposed to citizen's wellbeing is something that has been protested far and wide by the British people. So, Smith is able to break through the spatial crisis of climate despair and catastrophe created by globalization, by breaking free of their

mechanised urban lives, and standing against the policing of their governments. By doing so, the characters ground themselves within a planetary visualisation of the narratives of their lives.

4.2 "Into whose myth do we choose to buy?": Temporal-Intertextual Rhythms in *Winter* (2017)

Contrary to *Autumn*, which captures the essence of the British cultural climate leading up to the EU referendum, *Winter* holds the period of waiting, of being stuck in stasis, being frozen, not only in the weather-material sense, but of the freezing of time and communication. This is marked by a layering of intertextual rhythming of multiple narratives and references to classics, linguistic wordplay, and grammatical maneuvering which overturns our narrative understanding of the way time is constructed in storytelling. Here "rhythming" is understood as a layering over of multiple stories together or next to each other in such a way that they exist in a repetitive pattern, as described by Lefebvre. The patterns are repetitive but not unchanging across its multiple iterations, rather "difference", as explained by Lefebvre and discussed in the theoretical framework, is introduced with every new layer. This section of the analysis will focus on unpacking some of the wordplay as well the interchanging use of tenses to understand the linguistic rhythms present in the text. It will be later studied in conjunction with the references to the refugee crisis in the last section of the analysis vis-à-vis a planetary perspective.

The book starts with a dual reference to Nietzsche and Dickens, by rewriting a line from *A Christmas Carol*, "Marley was dead: to begin with" as, "God was dead: to begin with" (Smith, *Winter* 9). It is important that here God is being compared to the ghost character of the Marley from *A Christmas Carol*. Dickens uses multiple logical references to convince the reader of the death of his character because he is expected to return later as a ghost, whereas here that figure is replaced with God, this very first sentence foretells a haunting of the past which will foreshadow the rest of the book as well.

There are also multiple references to Christmas. One is the Christmas occurring during the spatiotemporal situation of the novel, as the family is getting together to celebrate Christmas, the other is the Christmas Carol references, this is further layered by the references to the refugee crisis, centering how Jesus himself was also a refugee.

In its own way, the triplicate Christmases mirror the ghosts of Christmas "Past, Present and Yet to Come" from A Christmas Carol as well. Lefebvre mentions detangling rhythms in the chapter "Scene from a Window" of his book *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, where he describes in intimate detail the standstill nature of traffic as observed from a French window. Here a similar standstill freezing of time can be observed as the three apparently disjointed narratives come through time and space to exist in the same dimension.

A distinct feature of *Winter* is Smith's interchanging use of tenses to tell her story. She uses present tense to recount past events, and past events to narrate the present. This interplay of chronological time, far from causing confusions or ambiguity, serves to enhance the reader's simultaneous communion with the events of the past and present. Lefebvre has frequently commented on the overtake of natural cyclical rhythms by capitalist linear time. Through her alternative tenses, Smith is able to recreate the cyclical orientation of time in her narrative, thus restoring the natural balance of the temporal rhythms. This narrative choice also helps her keep the narratives of times past in conversation with those of the present, as seen in the previous section. Not only is she able to keep fictional and classic works of literature in dialogue with the present literary and artistic discourse, but historical events, as well as fictional events of the characters' lives continue to coexist, influence and get influenced by the present.

Yi Chen emphasizes on the construction of rhythmic assemblages to highlight the materialization of experiences in time-space instead of being trapped by time and space. The following extract shows the transition between these interplaying chronological rhythms which give rise to the existing polyrhythmia of the novel. It portrays the character Art waking up on Christmas morning, after a bizarre dream,

> He doesn't want to have to turn on his phone to see what time it is. There's a smell of something cooking. But it's still dark out.
>
> The stranger, Lux, isn't here.
>
> Well, she wouldn't be, would she?

Christmas is an important cultural event, which makes it a significant subject of cultural analysis. The sensorial experiences associated with it, whether they be visual, auditory, or olfactory all hold their particular association, so Art's confusion upon not being able to locate Lux in the morning leads to his reliance on his pre-existing cultural schemas

of Christmas. This involves the smell and visual clutter associated with Christmas, but since his mother opts to not decorate her house for Christmas, or at all, for that matter, he is lost in the empty rooms:

> He has no idea where she'll be. This house has so many rooms, he still has no idea how many. The downstairs rooms are full of the usual stuff, the stuff you expect, done out like a normal house. All the upstairs rooms are as empty of stuff as an empty house's rooms. (109)

It can be seen how the transitions are being made from the present tense ("doesn't want", "isn't here", "has", "has") towards present perfect ("has been") before eventually turning towards the past tense ("found", "sorted"). This is very significant as the story is set on Christmas morning, so the events before are narrated as being from the past, and narrated using the present tense. The present-day events are narrated using the past tense.

> He has been curled up on the floor in this one in some bedding they found in a cupboard.

> Lux found the bedding. She sorted a room for Iris. (109)

In another instance, Smith demonstrates the same in the words of Art as he explains the nature of time to a child who is confused about the mention of "to-day" in *A Christmas Carol*,

> Well, this story is from the past, Art says, so the today it's about is in the past now. And obviously, it's about Christmas, this is a story set at Christmas time, and it's June right now, so this also means it's not the same as today. That's one of the things stories and books can do, they can make more than one time possible at once. (159)

This passage neatly places the multiple conjoined rhythms of time, as well as the triplicate Christmases that exist in the novel in the same time-space by declaring that it is the nature of literary works to be able to cross boundaries of time and space to show the interconnected nature of life and the world. In this way Smith has been able to create a polyrhythmic assemblage of her multiple narratives using the dominant rhythm of the novel's fictional characters to "[inflect] an aggregate of multiple rhythmic interactions" that include the present-day political protests, refugee crises, as well as references to multiple English classics texts.

Similar to the other texts, the political climate exists in the periphery of *Winter*'s characters' minds and lives. They discuss nuclear wars, women's rights, the refugee crisis, and climate change but the presence of all these issues is marginal to the main drama of their lives, quite metaphorically encapsulating the presence of refugees in a particular space.

The main character Sophia Cleaves has been having vision problems where she keeps seeing an infant's head in front of her, even though the doctor claims that her eyes are in perfect shape. This is a figurative representation of her other oversight regarding the state of her country, the "Atrocities" she has been apparently blind to despite a full vision. She laments not being aware of the state of people around her as much as she wants to be,

> Refugees in the sea. Children in ambulances. Blood-soaked men running to hospitals or away from burning hospitals carrying blood-covered children. Dust covered dead people by the sides of roads. (26)

Her visions have multiple references to the calamities brought forth by climate crises and political upheavals: "People beaten up and tortured in cells", and her previous obliviousness ("Sophia had been feeling nothing for some time now".) to it is now breaking as she has an increasing number of encounters with the victims of these crises (26). This is manifested in the appearance of the severed head. The head changes its form across the narrative as her perceptions change, from a sweet-faced child to a Green Man, to eventually a stone-faced boulder. It seems to be shape shifting like Scrooge's ghostly visitors from *A Christmas Carol*. Her ability to become rhythmically aware of these occurrences only after her literal vision has begun deteriorating signals the development of an ethical planetary vision.

Art discounts his nature-writing as apolitical, using hedgerows as an example of a nonpolitical structure, blind to the irony:

> "Well, I'm just not a politico, he said. What I do is by its nature not political. Politics is transitory. What I do is the opposite of transitory. I watch the progress of the year in the fields, I look closely at the structures of hedgerows. Hedgerows are, well, they're hedgerows. They just aren't political."

> "She laughed in his face. She shouted about how very political hedgerows in fact were." (45)

Art is portrayed as someone who is unaware of the political implications of an entity as seemingly innocent as hedgerows, and by extension nature writing. Hedgerows represent borders and the idea of keeping "foreign objects" at bay, the same logic followed by national borders and the violence that is associated with trying to cross them. Hedgerows maintain the property lines and create stock-proof barriers, ensuring livestock remains within their designated areas. They are added to ensure no animals transgress and ruin a crop that could lead to loss of the expected profit. Charlotte considers them political because while they ensure the boundaries of a profit yielding crop, they harm animals and plants in the process. Their existence and maintenance solely for the conservation of a globalized exchange of agricultural capital, despite the harm they may cause. This passage has been pointed out as a plenary revision would not be inclusive of such boundaries that harm other species for the sustenance of human beings, or rather global capital. The resultant row after this conversation portrays Charlotte's indignant response at Art's political apathy.

Smith connects the multiple rhythms of historical and fictional narratives with the political rhythms of the UK. For this purpose, consider the following passage, where the main character Sophia Cleaves is ruminating upon an imaginary Christmas in a fictional story as an alternative reality to the one she is living. I would like to read the passage below through the step two of planetary geomethodology, that is interrelationality between the "aesthetically immeasurable, and the culturally asymmetrical".

> [A]nd here instead's another version of what was happening that morning, as if from a novel in which Sophia is the kind of character she'd choose to be, prefer to be, a character in a much more classic sort of story (Smith 26)

Sophia can be seen struggling with her own identity throughout the book, as she slowly comes to understand the plight of the refugees, she is also able to come to terms with her own inherent loneliness and dissatisfaction with her life. Thus, she is looking at the "we" of her situation with the "they": the refugee's plight and seeming to aspire towards an alterity where she can coexist with them in a world without "atrocities or murderers or terrorisms".

> how something at the heart of us, at the heart of all our cold and frozen states, melts when we encounter a time of peace on earth, goodwill to all men; a story

> in which there's no room for severed heads; a work in which Sophia's perfectly honed minor-symphony modesty and narrative decorum complement the story she's in with the right kind of quiet wisdom-from-experience ageing female status, (Smith 26)

This is further complimented by the author's references to the gleaning nature of winter's seasonal rhythm message of "goodwill to all men". This asserts that nature's repetitive and consistent rhythms can be relied on to push us through the crises brought forth by unchecked globalisation.

> snow falling to whiten, soften, blur and prettify even further a landscape where there are no heads divided from bodies hanging around in the air or anywhere, either new ones, from new atrocities or murders or terrorisms,

It is also worth-noting that Smith's constant reliance on the seasonal metaphor is particularly forming a eurhythmic alliance between the dominant rhythm of winter and its convergence with all her personal crises of the present moment, like seeing a disembodied head in her vision, and the violence and bloodshed of wars past and present:

> or old ones, left over from old historic atrocities and murders and terrorisms and bequeathed to the future as if in old French Revolution baskets, their wickerwork brown with the old dried blood, placed on the doorsteps of the neat and central-heating-interactive houses of now with notes tied to the handles saying *please look after this head thank you*, (Smith 27)

The last sentence of the passage refers to the British animated show "The Adventures of Paddington Bear", whose first episode is titled, "Please Look After This Bear". The bear in question, Paddington, is also a refugee from Peru who appears outside his adopted parents' house with a note asking to be taken in. Smith mirrors that trope with Sophia Cleave finding an infant's head leading to her adoption of empathy towards refugees.

Sophia's wish to escape her present reality towards a romanticised "classic sort of story" reveals her internal discomfort with the political atmosphere she inhabits, and the revelation of this wish is done so through the seasonally ceasing and rebirthing effect of winter. In this way, the text spatialises the "here" with the planetary "there". At a later point, Sophia's sister Iris remarks,

[W]hen you're a citizen of the world who's been working with all the other citizens of the world, to be told you're a citizen of nowhere, to hear that the world's been equated with nowhere by a British Prime Minister. Ask them what kind of vicar, what kind of church, brings a child up to think that words like very and hostile and environment and refugees can ever go together in any response to what happens to people in the real world. (165)

Iris is a political activist and has spent her whole life campaigning for various political causes. The arguments between them over the refugee crisis reassert the perceptions Sophia holds about them. By referring to British refugees as "citizens of the world", they have been "cited" on the planetary "site" spatially and presented them as embodying "world relationality". Instead of limiting their presence in the cultural and political space of Britain, associating them with the "world", connects them to the "whole" of the planet, thus "citing" them spatially on a planetary "site" of existence. The reference to cultural schemas of "vicar" and "church" also associates generosity and hospitality with religion. Iris's comments resignify the crisis of refugee influx as a planetary issue where the entry of foreign individuals is not alienated but welcomed as an inherent part of the "cultural haecceity" of the planet (Moraru 223). She questions the connection between words representing hostility to immigrants in a single sentence as a linguistic impossibility, despite many such sentenced ideas being openly discussed in the culture at large. In this way, she realigns the subjects which have otherwise been ostracised from this cultural discourse back within its folds.

A similar idea is depicted in Lux's narration of the Shakespearean play *Cymbeline*, from which she concludes that people are occupying the same world, however, "separately from each other", implying that all these "worlds" have become "disjoined", requiring a mutual "[stepping out]" of oneself to "see and hear" that it is the same "play and the same "world" that is being co-occupied by them. Only then will they realize that they are part of the "same story." (142). Once again, the text refers to the events of the novel while seemingly discussing a classic text. Their discussion on Cymbeline is invariably reflective of the situation they are facing. This employs the third step of geomethodology, an ethical "[relating]" to the narrative by placing it in

conjunction with narratives from the planetary past. The planetary gaze is "refractive[1]" rather than "reflective", the text's engagement with classic texts is not surface-level nods, but Dickens and Shakespeare's plots, structures as well as characters are embodied in the text. Thus, it provides an alternative look at the crises presented here, which presents an "alterity" that appreciates the differences instead of overlooking them. In *Cymbeline*, the Roman Empire quells England's growing attempts at independence, but Shakespeare frames it to be reflective of Britain's colonial ambitions. Smith's inclusion of this play in *Winter* is important as it plays on similar anxieties that the British people felt in the aftermath of the Brexit vote and their newfound independence from the European Union.

The above analysis discusses how the author uses intertextual narrative rhythms to ground her book *Winter* within a historical structure, and studying those rhythms makes the book a perfect subject for a planetary reading. The hypernationalism and anti-immigrant hatred that had taken over Britain in the wake of Brexit is peripherally present in the book, although it mostly focuses on the characters' familial drama and responses to the political climate surrounding them. According to a survey conducted by the Guardian, 71% people belonging to ethnic minorities have reported facing racial discrimination, as opposed to 58% in January 2016, before the EU vote (Booth). This trend is equally visible in figures of hate crime, which have also doubled since the referendum. The analysis of Smith's books written during this time period is very significant as this shows how culturally motivated racism is present in the books. It is also important because Smith's portrayal of this racism is not self-victimising or hopeless, as shown in the analysis. This analysis places the crisis within a planetary framework and explores how the refugees, despite being marginalised, are re-placed within the sociocultural fabric of Britian by the characters who are able to overcome the hatred and bigotry surrounding them on a large-scale by disrupting the historical rhythms of their lives. In the case of *Winter*, it is shown by characters relying on classical literature and pop culture to remind themselves of the world that exists beyond their present hypernationalist fantasies. By including examples of refugee assimilation from history, literature, and media, the characters come to terms with their own

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[1] Refraction, in physics, refers to the change in direction of a wave passing from one medium to another caused by its change in speed. Moraru uses the term to refer to the nature of planetary reading as changing direction according to its ethical concerns, rather than *reflecting* back to itself in a solipsistic manner.

interactions with them as more humane, and motivated by a shared culture that goes beyond a homogenized identity.

4.3 "What we want is repetition. What we want is repetition": Cyclical-Historical Rhythms in *Spring* (2019)

Spring was published in 2019 and engages with controversies in the aftermath of Brexit, as well as immigrant detention, and the politics of Boris Johnson and Donald Trump. Many of these political events show up in passages throughout the novel, anchoring the novel firmly in the present historical moment. It revolves around the lives of Richard Lease, a filmmaker grieving the death of his colleague Patricia; Brittany, an official at an immigration centre; and Florence, a 12-year-old girl with an uncanny ability to pass through enclosed spaces, among others.

In this section, I would like to study one specific passage as a polyrhythmic assemblage as an assortment of historical rhythms still in conversation with a contemporary event i.e. the reunion of the character Florence with her estranged mother. In the final scene in *Spring*, Florence and her mother are helped in their reunion by a network called "The Auld Alliance" which helps people trying to leave the UK detention system. The name of this network has been derived from an allied relationship between France and Scotland founded in the thirteenth century which mutually fought against undue expansion by England. Interestingly, it plays a similar role here. The setting for the scene is also very significant: during the Jacobite uprising of 1745, the last battle between England and Scotland was fought here, acting as a parallel to the contemporary battle between Scotland's progressive or England's conservative policies on immigration. The rhythmic assemblage that comes into play in this interaction is significant as history is thrice juxtaposed here; the setting is rooted between the Jacobite uprising and a modern-day immigration crisis while also presenting itself as a consumerist tourist place, where actors are present to dramatise the war and random passers-by pause to record the scene of a mother and daughter being separated by the police apparatus of the state. This section will attempt a 'rhythmanalytical' reading of this scene by laying bare the way various elements interact through time and space to present the multiple rhythms unfolding herein.

The scene begins by setting the stage in autumn and progressively moving towards winter and spring while simultaneously leaping through time and space

according to the various events being presented, "It's still October. There's a countrywide wintering to go through yet." and "the Jacobite army … fought the Government army … in the cold Spring sleet and the hail" (Smith, *Spring* 228). We are introduced to the scene through the perspective of the tourists lugging their cameras at the historical site, they act as agents of rhythmanalysis, observing, recording and bringing the rhythmic site into origin: "They wander past the Well of the Dead. They take photos of the Memorial Cairn. They visit the only cottage left standing now that was there on the day of the battle." Smith describes the carnage of the war and then swiftly turns the eye of the camera towards "today's battlefield" as "Fast forward a blink of history's eye, 272 years from then, give or take a half year" (228). The close juxtaposition between the historical violence of the past and the present spectacle is particularly significant, especially in the light of Lefebvre's discussion of the contrasting nature of rhythmic alliances across historical time periods. He asks,

> What does the proximity between a certain archaism attached to history and the exhibited supra-modernity whisper? … Without doubt, but the time and the age that inscribe themselves in the performance of this spectacle, that give it meaning, should not be forgotten. (Lefebvre 34)

The historical significance of the setting provides an appropriate background to the present-day drama of the immigration crisis to show the cyclical nature of time and tyranny. This "exhibited supra-modernity" cannot but coexist right next to the historical violence that is memorialised at the very same place. Lefebvre considers rhythmanalysis as the "convergence" that may occur when "materialities" and "materialisations" are thus placed together to display the same rhythmic effect, in this case the crisis of the foreign other (Chen 11). This singular site of rhythmic assemblage i.e. the Memorial Cairn "politicises" the two contemporary events through the "singularity" of the initial rhythm i.e. the Jacobite uprising. Here this uprising is considered as a "rhythm" because it qualifies as a historical event, and according to Lefebvre's discussion of the historical repetition of events, the uprising is one such historical event, which is resurfacing with "difference" in the form of an immigration crisis, violent in different but similar ways.

The same incident can also be studied from the alternative mode of rhythmanalysis proposed by Yi Chen, which involves detracking the greater assemblages from a singular site of rhythm, thus "orchestrating their rhythmic effects

through the singularity of that initial rhythm". Lefebvre's famous "The crowd is a body, the body is a crowd" (Lefebvre 42) connects the interrelated mature of the multiplicitous rhythms that are ongoing at any given moment. This interpretation is relevant in considering the setting under discussion in *Spring* as Yi Chen considers this bifold mode of analysis particularly when the rhythmic site has the potential of politicising a situation, which is reflected in the contemporary reenactment of the historical Jacobite uprising.

Here the tourists play the role of rhythmanalysts, or are agents thereof, capturing the scene's brutality on their phones, even as they are forbidden to do so by the police. Their voyeuristic witnessing of the repetition of an historic violence is also a rhythmic repetition of the bystander always standing and watching, unable to intervene. The actors who are present to perform the historic battle's reenactment are present in costume, "dressed up as people from the past … ghosts from both sides of the battle" (Smith 229). Smith indulges in a blank-sentence description of the resolution of the scene to add to the theatrical dénouement of the spectacle.

> When the vans have gone they film the white woman who is standing shouting in the middle of the road at the going vans, like shouting at them'll make a difference. They film her being loaded into the police car.
>
> They film the police car driving off with the woman in it. They film the man watching it all, who comes over to them and asks the people who've recorded what's happening on their phones if he can have their contact details. (230)

The repetitive use of "they film" constrains the image in a cyclical reenactment of, not only the characters' unending entrapment within political border laws in their immediate present, but also a repetition of the vicious cycle of history that appears to repeat itself of its own accord, while the public watches, and films it. The scene ends with the following review-style comments on this entourage's depiction of the battle:

> The 360-degree CGI re-enactment of the last battle fought on British soil is reputed to be really good, to really bring the battle to life. 700 Highlanders dead in three minutes and a free audio guide with GPS. Not too expensive, rated excellent, five stars from most of the people on TripAdvisor. And that's all there is, for now anyway. Story over. (230)

The distant observation of this scene brings home the detached relationship that the public has with political and social forces, and violence begotten by them. An event which has powerfully disrupted a familial bond, violated the human rights of two people, appears to be juxtaposed on the same platform as an exaggerated historic scene, and advertised for tourists as a sight for consumption.

As a lot of rhythmic sites are brought into construction by the rhythmanalyst, and by doing so they are also constructing their "constitutive materialities" with full differentiation of them as "social processes", therefore, when bystanders are witness to such patterns and fail to intervene or change the rhythm, it leads to a crisis (Chen 14). Lefebvre claims that forces' interrelationships require one force to dominate another, and to form alliances, while also involving the "disassembly" of relative rhythmic time and space. (Lefbvre 68). Lefebvre also posits that crises are birthed via rhythmic disruptions and revolutions produce rhythmic shifts. In the given example in *Spring*, the immigration crisis is leading to a rhythmic disruption of the progression of history, but it remains in suspension. This is because, while there is a repetition of the rhythm (i.e. violence between groups), there is no "difference" to disrupt the rhythmic alliance and lead to a "shift". So, there is no change in how events progress, there are no "revolutions", and the injustices continue as before. As quoted above, the markers of time that are "[inscribed]" upon this setting, in the performance of yet another spatial conflict that is just as violent as the one that preceded it two hundred and seventy-two years ago.

The same scene makes for a very interesting study from a planetary perspective. Lefebvre has commented on the ways social times reveal complicated rhythms that are diverse in their possibilities signifying, "delays and early arrivals, reappearances (repetitions) of an (apparently) rich past, and revolutions that brusquely introduce a new content and sometimes change the form of society" (14). He posits that while revolutions and crises have always occurred, it is the historian who has the burdened job of imprinting a "rhythm" upon them to signify their eventuality in history. This is where the idea of "difference" enters. It is only possible for the historian to notice the disruption in a rhythm, producing by a differing quality, by a repetition that does not merely mirror its previous iteration. Smith's presentation of the spatial crisis of immigration and border controls is thus novel and disruptive because it does not merely repeat, but also differs from its history.

Burns discusses in her thesis that "Despite the temporal and national barriers that would normally prevent a meeting between the two sides of a battle or between people from across the world, crossing the Scottish border diminishes these barriers" (Burns 49). She further elaborates on the setting as one where a violent Scottish history is being commodified as a tourist spot, while the lives of Florence and her mother are also presented for consumption by the UK detention system. This simultaneity of the space can be understood to hold a "distant kinship" with "there" and "theirs", as explained by Moraru (Moraru 223). The two sites, by virtue of existing in the same plane, and being witness to violent histories unfolding, can no longer be observed individually, or opposed to planetarity but "apposite" to it. To use Moraru's terminology, they are "[citing]" the planet geographically, while "[siting]" it and situating it historically (223). By applying, an alterity-focused for-the-planet reading on the space of the scene and not just the social and cultural rhythms surrounding it, we are able to witness a disruption of the rhythm, which is not noticeable otherwise. Even as the ghosts of the Battle of Culloden, the actors bringing them to life, and the UK detention officers, all exist in the same time and space, thus cohabiting a singular rhythm, by applying planetary "micro-reading" in lieu of close reading, we are able to dissimulate the diverse cultural genealogies embedded in the text. The empire's erasure of the violences that are obfuscated, either due to historical interpretation or to contemporary racism, are thus exposed by a cross-cultural reading "with" the planet.

Continuing the third step of Moraru's geomethodology, reading "with" and "for" the planet also involves transferring the interpretive gap between the text's external and internal layers. While, on first glance, the setting portrays nothing more than a reunion violated by the state elements, signifying a spatial crisis in the form of immigration and refugees, but a closer inspection reveals that buried within this rhythmic "site" is a barrage of historical violence. All instances of which, have been written over and re-encoded by the strident hands of history, rhythmically repeated and witnessed en masse. This has largely subjected the marginalized refugees and immigrants to violation, and not so much affected the privileged local citizen, despite their many outcries of immigrant contamination.

Nguyen discusses how Smith presents the urgency of detention centers as "chronotopes" where the other is either "invisible or hypervisible, but rarely just visible." (Nguyen). It is incredibly relevant and significant as the time that book was

published (2019) witnessed some of the most intolerance towards asylum seekers and refugees in the Great Britain. As recently as April 2023, 36% British people believe that immigration to the UK should be made more difficult (The Migration Observatory). Therefore, the current analysis shows how Smith is able to engage with the refugee crisis and border control by placing the contemporary and historical violence of such "spaces" in juxtaposition. She has been able to re-evaluate our definition of how such a "space" may be considered not only geopolitically but culturally and socially, through the interaction present between different characters. This has been discussed by analysing the scene of forced separation of a mother and daughter as a "rhythmic site" containing multiple rhythmic assemblages, and also as a spatial site of violence characterised by a globalization-led immigration crisis. A planetary reading is able to glean out the multiple spaces inhabited by these characters that go beyond their otherised status of an alien and place them as an inherent part of this space, regardless of historical violence or contemporary racism.

4.4 "new eras can begin": New Rhythms in a Post-pandemic *Summer* (2020)

Summer starts with a chorus-like voice warning against the consequences of indifference, as exemplified by history. "[h]istory's made it clear what happens when we're indifferent, and what the consequences are of the political cultivation of indifference" (Smith, *Summer* 13). There is further commentary on the politician's indifferences towards the many crises gripping the world. "Everybody said: so? As in so what? As in shoulder shrug, or what do you expect me to do about it?" (12). The novel rejuvenates a lot of characters from former books, like Art and Charlotte from *Winter*, and Daniel Gluck from *Autumn*. The main protagonists are 16-year-old Sacha who is a socioculturally aware activist, writing letters to people in detention centers, and her younger brother who is a polar opposite, obsessed with Albert Einstein. Their journey with Art and Charlotte towards Norfolk, who are delivering a memento to Daniel Gluck, leads to some interactions that will be studied in the following section. I will now provide a reading of the rhythmic alliances portrayed during some of the interactions present in the novel while following step 3 of geomethodology, i.e. an ethical planetarity.

Summer was published in August 2020, and skillfully encapsulated the aftermath of Brexit UK grappling with a viral pandemic. It showcases how COVID-19 worsened the preexisting social lacuna in the political arena of Britain that made racism worse for immigrants. Sacha's best friend Melanie reaches out to her in distress as she is locked behind closed blinds with her family, not only because of the safety regulations of the pandemic but because her Chinese mother received a racist insult. A woman told her not to "breathe near her children" (Smith 37). This incident shows how the association of Chinese ethnicity with virulence is a form of violence upon the immigrant Chinese identity, and in doing so legitimizes violent actions carried upon the immigrant "others". This relates back to the Syrian detainee Hero who is in touch with Sacha expressing his concerns about the dangers of a viral epidemic at a detention center without any ventilation.

The narration of this incident is significant as Elias and Ben discuss the role media played during the pandemic in increasing the racist stereotypes created against the Chinese people and particularly "encouraging scapegoating and Othering … circulating anti-Chinese and anti-immigrant discourses (Elias and Ben). Trump referred to the virus as "The Chinese Virus" in a tweet. The term reportedly enraged Chinese government officials, while experts warned that it would lead to xenophobia that should be discouraged. Asian-Americans frequently complained of being subjected to physical and verbal violence n the form of "racial slurs" due to the impression created that the virus was caused by the Chinese (Rogers et al.). Smith's reportage of such incidents in *Summer* grounds it within the contemporary sociopolitical landscape. Smith reports the incident within the context of the immigration crisis faced by the British people and reimagines it within the ethical step of the geomethodology. By humanising an ethnic other in the form of the Syrina refugee, the text is able to portray the crisis from the persepective of the planet, and "relate" to the ethnic other he is being subjected to. Here, a "cultural negative" of the crisis is created in the text of the pandemic-driven racism and this negative does not mirror, but rather subverts the stereotyping of the Chinese people.

Sacha's mother reminisces the first part of a famous Dickensian line: "Whether I shall turn out to be the heroine of my own life", she is unable to remember the rest of it and walks around in agony (15). Right after, Sacha is looking for the source of a quotation on forgiveness, as part of a school assignment, but is unable to find it and

wants to cite the internet as the primary source (the quote belongs to Hannah Arendt). Both of them are grappling with the inability to source a memory. Smith has effectively used intertextual refences similarly to draw a connection between the protagonists' twenty first century concerns with their historical forebears, through rhythmically aligning the issues that concern them. Moraru calls this sort of alliance an "An aesthetic site where "here" and "ours" are spatialized into "distant kinship" with "there" and "theirs,""(Moraru 223). Thus, the individual placidness and aesthetic locus are no longer opposed to each other but are planetarily apposite. It is also important to note here that one of the long-term side effects of COVID-19 include memory problems, particularly in the case of long COVID. Sacha's mother unable to complete a line she seems to understand well enough, and the internet failing her teenage daughter are both foreshadowing the arrhythmic break in collective memory that the oncoming pandemic is about to bring. Smith is able to ground the seasonality of history and its rhythmic repetition by showing how collective memory of the people fades and allows for the same atrocities to be repeat over and over again. Lefebvre considers a discordance between rhythms as an arrhythmic disruption of the natural flow of energy. The viral pandemic apparently introduced arrhythmia through a biological virus but the way it allowed for other natural and cyclical rhythms of the world to be restored appears to have had a eurhythmic effect on the state of the world.

Mousazadeh discusses the positive environmental effects of the COVID quarantine, decreasing electricity demand by 12–20% in France, Germany, Spain, India, and the UK, and the fuel waste by 4%. Global coal demand decreased by 8%, particulate matter level was brought down 5-10% in Western Europe, making unmatched improvements to the air quality. Traffic congestion got reduced worldwide, even by 50% in some areas, water quality improved, CO_2 emission also reduced greatly. All in all, the pandemic pared down the global economy by 13-32%, leaving great potential for "permanent revival of the global ecosystem" (Mousazadeh et al.).

These rejuvenating ecological consequences are also presented by Smith in *Summer*, as the pandemic is repeatedly shown as an instrument which brings people disbarred from one another together. The following comments by Hannah written to her brother in a letter effectively sum up *Summer*'s approach towards a self-aware reflection of the ways human beings connect to each other:

"It's that the foulness happening every day round us is a growth without roots. […] The foulness just wants one thing, more of its self. It wants self self self self nothing but self over and over again. I begin to realize that this makes it very like the blowaway moss that spreads fast across everything but can easily be kicked away because its grip is only about surface. Just the act of thinking this kicks it loose and blows it away." (Smith 175).

She believes that the indifference, as pointed out by the choir in the beginning of the novel, can be worked on because its foundations are very "loose". Moraru mentions in *The Planetary Turn*, that the "planetary sublime is refractive rather than sterilely reflective" (236). When the gaze of the planetary reading returns to its origin, it is steeped in ethical concerns so it does not reinforce the "selfsame's epistemological cocoon" but rather takes a detour. The alternative path taken allows it to chart an "alterity that acknowledges others and their faces" (236). This can be applied to Hannah's reconceptualising tendency towards the people who are at odds with each other due to the polarising Brexit vote. Considering the surface level "foulness" of such "moss", the refraction of a planetary approach allows it to be "[blown]" away quite easily, thus Smith uses the seasonal metaphor to show an "[alternative]" reading of planetary relations.

Summer continues in the ethical dimension of the geomethodology outlined by Moraru and highlights "inclusivity and connectivity against the self-centred, isolated self" (CAN 178). Smith's characters offer their interdependence as an antidote to the dehumanizing and violent narratives imposed upon them. *Summer* highlights the ethical responsibility of individuals to be thoughtful in their considerations, and thus attempt to reduce the "precarity of the Other" and establish a community grounded in equality (CAN 183). The novel also transgresses national borders by showing the interchanges of solidarity between characters bound off by physical, geographical, socioeconomic and psychological boundaries. Sacha writes letters to the Syrian detainee Hero to "to send [him] a friendly word or two" (Smith 117). She emphasises that they should "stop being poisonous to each other and the world" (180), honing the novel's commitment to "thought-becoming" (Moraru 223), by pointing out the plurality of community within the outwardly monistic. In a similar manner, Art and Charlotte decide to hold daily phone calls during the lockdown and exchange their day's events "just as a token, a little door open into each other's day" (Smith 234). They also intend to share these

conversations and open them up to everyone else online. This exchange is considered a "gift" for the rest of the world from their own "isolation", thus breaking off the walls erected by the pandemic via the timeless medium of storytelling (234).

Furthermore, Charlotte recounts the story of her aunt who is a senior activist delivering aid to disenfranchised people despite risks to her well-being. "She's been cycling to town and back, delivering bags of food and things to people thirty years younger than she is, and yelling hello at everyone she passes, asking them if they need anything or if she can help. […] There's no stopping her" (238). Iris articulates a critique of the undemocratic policies enacted by biopolitical regimes under the guise of pandemic control measures. She highlights the systemic disparities and injustices exacerbated by the pandemic, advocating for collective action against the exploitation of vulnerable populations by powerful economic interests. Iris's call for collective resistance underscores the narrative's thematic exploration of solidarity and collective agency in the face of socio-political challenges: "A government treating them like rubbish. […] , happy to count the heads of their so-called herd, like we're cattle, like they think they own us and have the right to send thousands of us to slaughter to keep the money coming in" (241). Moraru considers the ethical dimension of a planetary fiction as one which is able to hold the "incoherent genealogies" that are constantly being displaced and deleted by the institution of culture and nation-state. He refers to them as the "endogenous fantasies" of a state, to exclude and marginalise the people with otherised identities (Moraru 223).

The above discussion shows how the text is able to overturn the political crisis of governmental apathy and indifference toward people of marginalised identities, refugees, immigrants during the pandemic within the national and cultural space of the UK. This apathy is driven by the globalized nature of the world, where proxy wars waged in the middle east led refugees to seek shelter in European countries but they are never truly accepted. Smith's portrayal of characters who trespass the nationalist and ethnic lines, as well as government policy decisions to connect with people from marginalised identities is a planetary manifestation of their shared humanity. Smith is able to achieve this via referring to the cultural modes of exchange that the characters go through in their interactions with one another. Moraru deems culture as a dissimulating force, revealing the hidden indigenous narratives beyond the homogeneity of nationalist myths. This is clearly visible through the exchanges

discussed between characters belonging to different cultures (British, Syrian, Chinese), and also the intertextual references made to classic texts. A rhythmanalysis also reveals the way pandemic has brought an apparent arrhythmia to modern urban life by bringing it to a halt, but in turn the natural and ecological rhythms of the world have been restored.

4.5 Conclusion

The above discussion sheds light on some of the ways the modern life and climate crises are rhythmically disrupted in *Autumn*, how border policing, immigration crises, hypernationalism have affected the characters in *Winter* and *Spring*, and the characters' engagement with the pandemic as a crisis by hospitality to strangers in *Summer*. All the aforementioned spatial crises are traced across all four books as they inhabit a collective sociopolitical climate, and they also bleed from narrative into another because, much like reality, the temporal dimension of the novels does not bifurcate the many crises from one another. Therefore, it is also important to understand the rhythmic connections present between the four books collectively, and to place them within a planetary framework as well.

CHAPTER 5

"THE CROWD IS A BODY": THE QUARTET AS MACROCOSM

This section will study the rhythmic alliances that are present between the four books of the quartet as a whole, and how those rhythms allow Smith to present so many spatial crises in a planetary manner. While all four books of this quartet can be read, enjoyed and studied in isolation, Smith wrote and published them in the successive years of the Brexit vote, so they encapsulate the political and cultural climate of the UK in specific, and also the rest of the world at large. Her storytelling involves heavy use of intertextual and mythological references, ekphrasis, framed storytelling and other experimental narrative interventions which make her writing style uniquely her own. These elements provide a circular, rhythmic nature to these four books when considered together, therefore, it is worth exploring how the crises of space and their interlinked rhythms, as discussed in the four books in chapter 4, work together in harmony and/or disharmony across the four books.

This chapter will study the quartet as a 'macrocosm', differentiating between the various strands of its universe. Macrocosm here refers to the quartet as a part of Smith's larger, broader body of work while holding its own distinct place. Instead of a microscopic analysis of specific events, scenes and rhythmic alliances as discussed among the 4 books above, this chapter will study the larger rhythms of storytelling that are present in Smith's writing. In particular, Smith's engagement with the seasonal cycle is studied to understand how seasonal rhythms have been used as a metaphor to reframe a planetary crisis, intertextual references are studied to qualify Smith's grounding of the contemporary crises in the literary and cultural consciousness of the past and how different narratives and stories converge and diverge to build rhythmic alliances, the rhythmic reinterpretations of time, and the motif of the stranger as a singular connective rhythm to resituate the crises.

Yi Chen interprets rhythmanalysis as a research method which goes beyond the binary of global vs local in its study of rhythmic interactions. Therefore, this chapter attempts

to study the quartet on a macrocosmic level, whereby it considers the smaller rhythmic crises of the books while connecting them to the larger rhythms of the quartet as a whole, this is achieved by this dissolution of the global/local binary. As rhythms are considered constitutive rather than hierarchical, it follows by delineating the tensions present at a "site" of alliance and finding the discordance and conflicts. In this way the local site is "cited" with the planetary "whole" (as discussed in Chapter 3). This step also aligns with Moraru's geomethodology step 2, where the planetary "there" is held side by side with the indigenous or local "here". Combining Moraru's geomethodological step 2 with Yi Chen's conception of rhythmic alliances reveals the macro-currents of contradictory and harmonious rhythms occurring between the crises presented across the four books and their negotiations of power. This macro-reading is carried out not as a dichotomy but as an oscillatory push-pull relationship between the rhythms in the polyrhythmic ensemble.

5.1 Planetary Re-familiarisation of the Seasons

The seasonal metaphor is much discussed in the books. Not only do all the books follow along the season they are titled after in their publication dates, but many aesthetic associations with them are also littered across the narratives in their themes, repetition of characters, relationships, crises etc. There is a consistent meditation on the changing and cyclical rhythms of time and nature that ground the turbulent events that the novels are describing, for example the following narration is an epiphany on the presence of light at the heart of *Winter*, "the shift, the reversal, from increase of darkness to increase of light, revealed that a coming back of light was at the heart of midwinter equally as much as the waning of light" (Smith, *Winter* 102-103). Smith reinterprets the association of darkness with winter into one composed of light and clarity. This is made clear through the plot of the text as the novel begins in a bleak emotional space of isolation, takes a turn towards high conflict in the middle, and ends on a note of reunion for the characters, as if blessed by the "coming back of light" of the winter season. The cyclical turn of winter light thus described mirrors and creates a parallelism with the plot of *Winter,* harkening to Lefebvre's pronouncement of the cyclical nature of time mirroring that of the natural seasons and stories. The seasonal rhythm is seamlessly embedded within the story, in this way the text's interpretation of seasons is planetary, closely linked with the lives of the characters, and not a mere objective phenomenon observed on the outside.

Despite the "un-familiarization of seasons" Smith is able to refamiliarize us with the seasonality lost due to climate change by reconnecting humans with nature. But she also innovates these associations, for example autumn is related to emotions of transformation and change, but Smith complicates that association with the renewed understanding of what climate-led catastrophe means for transformation. She also changes our perception of autumn as not only the season in-between but also one that renews the cycle, that gives birth to new formations. The traditional association of winter is with coldness and death-in-nature. Smith revises it by bringing forth the chemical pollution that has taken over while also considering it a time of rest and recollection.

While spring is associated with fertility and birth, Smith brings to the fore of our general consciousness, the violence and injustices showing nature as an overseeing force that watches over all these problems. But through the unifying bonds present between the characters, they are able to overcome the violence and reconnect. Similarly, summer is associated with merry-making, festivities and rites, but the pandemic put a stop to all that and locked us behind closed doors. Smith uses it as a metaphor to show how humans can overcome physical and psychological borders brought upon us as result of a highly globalised world, and still connect on a human-to-human level. This phenological reinterpretation of seasonality is exactly what Moraru calls a reading against the "ominous oneness", that does away with a "wrongheaded, unethical, … globalist undertaking" Instead, it takes hold of the multiplicity of archives of which its "fragile, pluricentric, and makeshift whole" is made of (Moraru 213). A planetary reading is supposed to encapsulate the holistic nature of the text or narrative's existence vis-à-vis the planet, and its characters as human beings extending over cultural or national differences. While the differences that make up such diversity may be fragile and easily disturbed, giving way to violent tendencies, when collectively pursued, they create a harmonious rhythmic chant that brings us closer to our shared humanity. Smith is able to achieve this by revising our previous interpretations of seasons as singularly based on certain stereotypes that have existed across centuries unquestioned. She refrains from taking any critical stances towards them but rather engages in transforming them through the narrative power of human interactions. For example, Florence and Sacha (in *Spring* and *Summer* respectively) constitute a new generation

of youth unencumbered by national and psychological borders, and act as a counterglobalist planetary response to the "oneness" imposed by globalizing narratives.

5.2 Rhythmic Cycles of Time

The fast-tracked process of publication allowed Smith to capture the political events in the immediacy in which they were happening. The books offer a mirror of Britain's (and in some ways the rest of the world's) sociopolitical climate from the aftermath of the Brexit vote till the repercussions that came into effect as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The speediness of the publication schedule also plays its role in the quartet's commentary on the cyclical nature of time. They are interconnected with loose threads but do not follow narrative chronology, being equally sensible if read in any order. For example, the characters, Daniel, the Greenlaws, Charlotte, and Art all re-enter the narrative in *Summer* but through all four books, these characters find themselves at different points in their lives, chasing varied events. All four books also feature different artists, and other motifs, without relying on an overarching unifying story that threads through all four books. All four books are about four different groups of people, battling their unique crises, only interconnected via their shared humanity. Lefebvre critiques modernity's pseudo-reduction of distances and waiting time by positing that it has deceptively "deepened and at the same time dilapidated the present", through innovative media (31). But this reduction is only apparent, because media can only interpret reality in shadows and reflections. Despite a superficial subjectivity to universal events, we are mostly only privy to a simulacrum of reality that is mediated by media.

The final book, *Summer*, acts as a connecting link between all the texts as characters from previous books re-emerge to conclude and continue their journeys. Einstein's chronological theories also feature prominently in *Summer*. For example, Robert Greenlaw thinks,

> And because time is relative and there is more than one kind of time, today time can be my time and I will make it all the more mine by not worshipping acquisitive educational success, to quote Einstein. Given that Einstein himself was a rubbish school student. (Smith, *Summer* 43)

The above passage aligns with Lefebvre's theory of the cyclical nature of time. Robert uses it to appease himself that the relativity of time, while used by Einstein in quantum

mechanics, can be applied to the circumstances of his life, allowing him to undo and redo his past actions and instigate change. Ironically that change is not seeking "acquisitive educational success" and choosing to ignore his preciously acquired education (43). Robert Greenlaw is obsessed with Einstein's visits to different parts of the UK but is terribly upset that he did not visit his hometown Brighton.

> I mean, Einstein's school, when Einstein was Robert Greenlaw's age, thought Einstein was stupid. Einstein! Infra dignit catastrophe. (Smith, *Summer* 43)

The final line in Latin which translates to, "Einstein! Below is a catastrophe" seems to time-travel back into a century to convey the mediated state of the current world. There is also a reference to the discovery of Einstein's racist remarks against the Chinese people, showing how the changing nature of time affects our notions of political correctness.

Marta Bagüés Bautista calls Smith's depiction of time as "an unchronological entity". The circularity of the stories and plotlines truly transforms and rewrites the way time is experienced by the characters, it is rhythmic and repetitive without being monotonous. Through this rhythmic existence in the time-space continuum, the characters are able to achieve a planetary reconfiguration of their many crises.

5.3 Rhythms of History: Intertextuality in the Quartet

Moraru discusses the inherent intertextual nature of planetarity by arguing that it is not possible for any literary work to exist without another "alien" presence inside it. It must have its "its roots, its origin, somewhere else, in another text" (Moraru 227). This is very clearly visible as Smith's texts are full of intertextuality from Shakespeare to Dickens and Mansfield, and Rilke to Woolf. Each book begins with an epilogue of quotations from various canonised texts, grounding it in the classical literature tradition while also providing a necessary foreshadow for what is about to follow. Each epilogue contains four quotations that refer to either a seasonal aspect, an emotion associated with the season, or a political aspect like climate crisis. Moraru talks about the need for a parasitic other that makes the "whole" more holistic. The intertextuality present in the books is manifold, characters are based after classical archetypes, many books follow the plot structure of Shakespearean plays in some of their events, lines are metaphorically repurposed many times. This expresses the "cosmology as cosmallogy" theory of Moraru regarding planetary fiction (Moraru 228). He argues against the

"original" identity of a book, that it cannot have a self entirely of its own, but rather any text acts as a "site of astonishing otherness and size locked inside the nation-state's paranoically policed borders" (228).

The above idea applies to the intertextual rhythmic alliance that exists in the beginning of all four books, as different lines from various Charles Dickens books are rewritten to foreshadow the events of the upcoming novel. All such books are considered "Condition of England" novels by Dickens as they chart the socio-economic condition of English as it traversed a world after the industrial revolution. Since Smith's project also attempts to faithfully represent the current sociopolitical milieu of England in real-time, it only makes sense that she would use Dickensian novels as reference points.

Autumn begins with "It was the worst of times, it was the worst of times." referring to rewriting the famous first line of *A Tale of Two Cities,* to emphasise the post-Brexit chaos that had taken over (Smith, *Autumn* 17). The reference builds an intertextual rhythm with the French Revolution's causes and aftermath with the consequences of Britain's departure from the European Union, one of the themes of *Autumn*. Similar to the class divide that led to the French Revolution, and the violence and bloodshed that followed in its wake, *Autumn* hints at the possibility of violence that could occur as the Brexit vote also grounded itself in a class struggle, as well as racist anti-immigration policy. *Winter* begins with, "God was dead: to begin with." which reinterprets Marley's death from *A Christmas Carol* as the ghost of Christmas past, present and future makes its presence known (Smith, *Winter* 9). Not only is Dickens' text used to foreshadow the themes of Christmas-based family reunions, reopening conflicts and drama, but also to highlight the potential for generosity, connection and general goodwill while placing it in contrast to winter's isolated and cold backdrop. *A Christmas Carol* is set against a post-industrial revolution Britain, the poverty and class inequality that was rampant at the time acts a rhythmic foreshadowing of the hypernationalist crises presented in *Winter*. It can also be considered a harkening to Nietzsche's pronouncement of God's death in a postwar world. Similarly, *Spring* starts with, "Now what we don't want is Facts." calling out the character Gradgrind in Dickens' *Hard Times* and reversing his rationalist philosophy of emphasising the importance of facts (Smith, *Spring* 9). *Spring* underscores the importance of truth-based facts in a Trumpian era of fake news and misinformation, so referring to *Hard Times*

links the contrast between a rational reliance on facts-based education as Thomas Gradgrind aimed to do in the book. This is an example of a historical rhythm being repeated but instead of mirroring its previous iteration, "difference" is introduced according to the change in current sociopolitical values. Finally, *Summer* begins with, "Everybody said: so?" (Smith, *Summer* 12). which changes the punctuation of "Everybody said so" in Dicken's short story "The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain", which is a dark appraisal of *A Christmas Carol* (Dickens 3). Smith uses it to explain her commentary on the indifference that had overtaken people in the wake of the political turmoil in the country. She connects the crisis of apathy and social disconnection of the contemporary world to the commentary on the universality of social norms and opinion in the aforementioned story. This rhythmically aligns the current apathy to the status of a norm that has been established for centuries.

The intertextuality in the beginning of the books creates a rhythmic connection between the start of every seasonal chapter of the narratives Smith is portraying and by doing so, she is able to show the interconnected nature of history and the repetition and revival of similar concerns that have beholden people. But she does not merely repeat sentences verbatim, but changes them. Lefebvre talks about difference as an essential element of rhythmic repetition, that each new cycle brings something new while renewing the old. Smith's practice of difference allows a planetary mode to the text, as she is able to grasp multiplicities, without falling into the homogeneity of a single narrative. This interpretation is planetary because it shows how her texts reconnect with history, show the origins and repetitive circles in which history operates, and planetary micro-reading is about looking for and finding those hidden narratives that a macro-reading misses out on.

Intertextuality also exists as ekphrasis in the novels. Smith has referred to copious descriptions of artists, writers, and filmmakers and their works as interludes in the plot of every book. Through its many recurring characters, the quartet is able to create a dialogue between the past and the present by uncovering forgotten memories while rescuing artists lost to the waves of time, whose work holds important truths about the current moment. References are made to a diverse coterie of artists belonging to different artforms and mediums, for example, *Autumn* alludes to the work of the pop-artist Pauline Boty, Winter includes the sculptor artist Barbara Hepworth, Spring uses stories of Katherine Mansfield and Rainer Maria Rilke as clear influences for its two

protagonists, while Summer uses Lorenza Mazzetti's films to reconcile the many strands of narratives created. These artists exist alongside the characters' personal relationships with art. Being an art teacher, writing music, detecting copyright transgressions in media, or simply being open and receptive to the meanings held by these works, the characters exist in a rhythmic harmony with the artistic representations of the past and allow them to influence their own art and life. Louvel argues that the inclusion of a spatial object like the ones mentioned above, "spatialises" narrative by blurring the differences that create the "freeze-time effect". This is achieved because such descriptions decelerate the pace of the plot. (Louvel, qtd. in Karastathi, 95). Smith archives something similar in her extended ekphrastic inclusions, she allows the characters to escape the space beholden to many cultural crises and re-enter it via a rhythmic exchange which makes the crisis bearable, and refigures their engagement with it from a victim of a globalised world to a planetary agent.

In the first book, *Autumn*, Elisabeth Demand is an art history lecturer, but her relationship with paintings and art is formed early on in her childhood through her interactions with her neighbour, Mr. Gluck. She describes to her mother the nature of the artworks that he discusses with her as: "They're pictures people can't actually go and see. So he tells me them." (53) His access to art and culture through experience and age is available to Elisabeth regardless of their own age difference; they converse as equal intellectuals. This mutual exchange of artistic interest is free of the capitalist notions of accumulating cultural capital as currency, rather it nourishes them as people. Daniel shares Pauline Botty's paintings with Elisabteh, one of which is described as

> the painting of a woman sitting on a backwards-turned chair with no clothes on, who brought a government down, and all the red paint and the black smudges through the red, that look, Daniel says, like nuclear fallout. (55)

This is a description of Boty's painting "Scandal '63", which references the notorious Profumo Affair, which led to the defeat of the Conservative party in the subsequent election. The British Secretary of State for War, John Profumo was introduced to a 19 year old dancer, Christine Keeler, as rumours about their affair spread, Profume lied to the parliament about any involvement, but later on evidence showed a contrary situation, this led to the government being discredited and losing the election. The reference to the above painting which shows Keele sitting on a chair as being like "nuclear fallout" shows the stark consequences of impulsive, personal actions on the

state of politics. Calling it nuclear fallout is also hyperbolic because this was an affair carried out by a member of the government with someone significantly younger, who was tried for perjury and conspiracy, so the fallout clearly was not as equal as nuclear fallouts tend to be. As Elisabeth's mother protests nuclear operations and is a part of climate protests carried out in the country, this painting draws a connection between the climate crisis and its connection to the political crises happening in the political sphere of the country and shows they are intricately linked. In this "space" is narrativised, it is not merely overtaken by a dominant class, but constantly being contested and negotiated by "push-pull exchange" between the planetary whole and the individual fragments.

Winter explores the works of the sculptor artist Barbara Hepwroth. The character Sophia has a vision malfunction whereby she is followed around by an infant's disembodied head in the beginning of the book. She is portrayed as being cold and detached, and even alienated from her son and family in the earlier chapters. As the winter cold thaws, so does her emotional state as she rebuilds previously lost connections and new, unexpected ones with her son and his partner. Over the couse of the book, the vision that follows her around eventually metamorphoses into a round stone structure, description of which appears to be that of "Nesting Stones", a sculptor by Hepworth. "She didn't really know what to call it now, head? stone? It was neither dead nor head. [...] But she felt for it. She didn't want it to grow cold." (Smith 102). This change in her perception for an inanimate object, represented via a sculpture representing a mother-child relationship as concentric circular rocks is very significant. Firstly, it represents the progress Sophia makes over the course of the book in her relationship with her son, secondly, the concentric rocks symbolise the circular rhythmic nature of time, and portrays time and history as circular concepts where the present, past and the future intersect and coexist. In the beginning of the book, she spends some time speculating whether the "heas" she was ewing was indeed alive or dead, so the reference in the aforementioned quote to it being neither yet evoking a depth of maternal feeling in her. Thus, through ekphrasis, Smith is able to create a rhythmic alliance between Sophia's past and present, while healing a relationship, and spatialising her crisis of familial disconnection.

These two authors, despite being from New Zealand and Austria, coincided in Switzerland for a period of time: "Literary giants, Mansfield and Rilke, same place,

same time. Amazing." (27). This storyline creates a stark contrast between these author's fruitfulness when being allowed to travel and leave their home countries and the misery created by the migration policies of the United Kingdom and the inhumane treatment of migrants in detention centres, presented through the storyline of Florence, a young girl who has been separated from her mother, and Brittany, a worker from one of these prison-like detention centres whom the child befriends when trying to be reunited with her mother.

Spring reinterprets the spatial crises of immigration and border control by placing Katherine Mansfield and Rainer Maria Rilke in glaring contrast to the characters Florence and her mother, who have been separated and detained, unable to reunite. The two authors were known to be in Switzerland at the same time without knowing of each other's presence, while originally being from New Zealand and Austria. As Paddy remarks, "Literary giants, Mansfield and Rilke, same place, same time. Amazing" (27). It is particularly striking because they did not face the visa and immigration issues of the current climate despite occupying a world far less globalised and given to the trade exchange as that of today. It also implicitly comments on Britain's decision to leave the European Union. As Paddy and Richard discuss the literary output of the two authors while on vacation in Switzerland, Florence and Brittany are fighting tooth and nail to help the imprisoned in the detention centre recapture their lost humanity.

By narrativising these two crises next to each other, the text is able to inhabit the planetary "distant kinship" across the chronological and geographical landscapes and achieve a "planetary spatialization of the geocultural sample" to find relational connectedness between and among the loci (222). Not only are the characters consoled by the ever-present embrace of literature's empathy and humanity, but as readers, we also feel the rhythmic grip of history which truly proves that these crises of space are man-made and un-planetary. This encounter allows us to dream of a world free from policed borders and a harmonious rhythmic exchange of culture and ideas among the peoples of the world.

Similarly, *Summer* explores the cinema of the Italian filmmaker Lorenza Mazzetti who escaped a Nazi raid, immigrated to England and became a seminal part of the Free Cinema Movement. The book portrays her renegotiation of a spatial crisis as her border crossing allowed her to produce some amazing films. Her film *Together*

is discussed in *Summer* as: " It's really startling. About two men who are friends and are both deaf mutes, who can't talk like everyone else does. [...] And the film says all these complicated things, and it does it without saying a word" (Smith 71). The character Charlotte brings up her story during a discussion on being a neighbour. In *Summer*, all the characters that have come to pass in the previous books find each other and new interconnections between them are revealed. All these characters who have been through the Brexit referendum and isolations of the pandemic are forced to find new ways to survive and exist beyond these crises. They discuss Mazetti's story, her ability to cross nationalist borders to arrive in England and make groundbreaking cinematic experiences, which would not be possible in the hyper-globalised world of today.

In the same way, the artworks from previous books also reappear and inform the plot of *Summer*, for example the nesting stones' sculpture resembling stone possessed by Sophia in *Spring* are passed down to her son Art: "the thing [she] was talking about in her will, the man says. [...] A smooth round stone among my possessions" (69). The stone becomes a similar conduit of vulnerability and connection for Arthur as it once was for his mother. The interlinked progression of symbolic harmony through art shows the intertextual powers of literature.

In conclusion, all four books convey an ekphrastic dialogue with each other through descriptions of art and cinema which show how the rhythms of history and time are resonant in the contemporary crises of immigration and border issues. Ali Smith has successfully been able to intervene within the capitalist rhythms upheld by bureaucratic processes and sociopolitical crises by using art, literature, and cinema to slow down the unending overlay of such events within the characters lives. By allowing them to reflect on art, holding conversations and dialogue about literature, engaging in conflict and debate over writers' lives, they are able to escape the arhythmic hold of globalised, capitalist rhythms on their lives, and achieve, for however brief a moment, a freely planetary existence. They are able to inhabit a world that, in the words of Merriman et al, both abstract and concrete, produced and producing, imagined and materialized, structured and lived, relational, relative and absolute by virtue of not relenting to the crises that threatened their existence.

5.4 Polyrhythmia and the Stranger

Lefebvre considers polyrhythmia as a harmonious coexistence of various rhythmic processes, and Smith's quartet exemplifies the way all these pluralities exist in the form of multiple realities together without impinging on each other. Not only are these rhythmic alliances an example of a larger polyrhytmia, but they are also planetary in nature because there is no singularity operating dominant here. CAN discusses that such interactions resist a singular narrative interpretation of and "imply the characters' reciprocal liberations from biopolitical divisions and segregation by meeting and being exposed to the Other" (178). By constantly engaging with and being influenced by another in the form of a stranger or alien figure, all the characters in these books are able to resist a homogenous existence and encourage and include excluded "others". *Summer*, in particular, shows the coming home of all these extended connections, and people who do not belong to a uniform category of divisions to come together and "[respond] with heart and decency to personal and global crises" (McAlpin). Smith has discussed her use of the device of the "stranger" in interviews as well. For Smith, the stranger is able to help us put into perspective the smallness of our bordered worlds, and how hospitality was always considered akin to survival, "never mind to immortality, and also simply to obvious benign-ness" (O'Donnell 142). If the loudest narratives ask us to be suspicious of the stranger, it will be impossible to manage our humanities. It is the repetitive presence of the figure of the stranger that rhythmically aligns the four books, and represents the idea of an intruder as benign and welcoming. Through this rhythmic alliance, Smith is able to refigure the spatial crises brought upon a late capitalist world like the immigration and refugee crises that consistently try to deport and send off people from the Global South fleeing wars to seek shelter in European lands. Her books, by welcoming various characters that would be traditionally interpreted as strangers and alien figures in the peaceful British land, subverts the anxieties associated with borders and the policing that takes place to maintain the homogeneity of a certain type of (White) humanity allowed to prevail in these spaces. Thus, she brings forth a new space where these crises are resolved and an alterity exists, as well as an "itinerary across alterity that acknowledges others and their faces" (Moraru 236).

CAN also discusses the circular nature of the seasonal titles and how it connects with the events and characters presented in the books, and the interconnectedness of the

world. The thematic unity of the quartet shows that we are mutually dependent on each other for survival. It also emphasises the rhythmic nature of life, and the connection of ends with beginnings. Daniel Gluck is introduced as a dying man in *Autumn*, but he finally reunites with his sister and grandchildren in *Summer*. CAN discuss the frame of a seasonal tetralogy mirroring the circularity of seasons to show the "overreaching connections among the characters and their personal metamorphoses corresponding to societal transformations" (CAN 178). All the characters' encounters in each others' lives as strangers and acquaintances lead to various metamorphoses in their lives. For example, Elisabeth and Daniel influence each other greatly in *Autumn*, Lux positively upends the family dynamic of the Cleves family in *Winter*, Florence intrudes upon Brittany and Richard's lives in *Spring*, Art and Charlotte's journey with the Greenlaws to meet Daniel in *Summer*, all of them are greatly transformed by these interactions. All these encounters exist in a rhythmic alliance as they are all interconnected and influence each other, existing in a polyrhythmic alliance.

5.5 Conclusion

The above analysis shows how the seasonal metaphor is used as a unifying thread to bring about the many strands of an otherwise fragmented narrative. This is achieved via a refamiliarization of the passing of seasons by revising the cultural interpretations of the seasons, and the author is able to achieve this despite following a fast-tracked publication schedule, making the stories narrated of immediate concern and happening in real time. She is able to weave the past with the present by frequent direct and indirect intertextual references to classic literary texts, artworks, and cinema. She also uses the figure of the alien or stranger to draw out the disconnections existing between the characters and to remind them of their interconnectedness despite the differences.

To conclude, by reverting to the diversity and plurality of humanity, it is possible to avert the direst of crises that have overtaken us in the recent past and present. These books show the power literature and storytelling holds in building bridges across national and cultural divides, and its ability to resist singular narratives and realities by allowing "space" for multiple subjectivities to coexist in harmony.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This research set out to explore the presence of spatial crises in Ali Smith's *Seasonal Quartet* while studying the various rhythmic interactions between the characters, events of their life, as well as the portrayal of their narratives by the author. In doing so, it was able to discuss the interrelationships between the characters' personal and intimate lives with their sociopolitical interactions with each other in the world, as represented fictionally within the span of the tumultuous climate of 2016-2020 Britain. The methodology chosen allowed for a two-fold analysis; to study the rhythmic alliances present between various instances in the novels and situate the spatial crises that exist there within a geomethodological planetary reading.

Reconsidering the first research question outlined in the introduction section of the research, it can be concluded that Lefebvre's rhythmanalytical reading has served as an appropriate tool to study a tetralogy of novels documenting the sociocultural transformations of a tumultuous time period. It has revealed that Smith's fiction is able to fit within the planetarity conceptualized by Spivak, and developed further by Moraru. This is made possible because of the ways in which her characters interrelate and connect with each other. The multiple coexistences of harmonies and disharmonies, disjointed rhythms of history and present, recounting of classic narratives and her linguistic flair for puns and wordplay has allowed her fiction to appear emergent of a new sensibility that takes the small and minute alongside the large and whole. This has allowed for the characters and their lives to inhabit a world that is more attuned to a planetary existence and free from the policing influence of globalization.

As regards the research questions 2 and 3, Smith has employed multiple iterations of a planetary epistemology to discusses climate crises and their repercussions in *Autumn* and the global pandemic in *Summer*, and also re-engaged with the hypernationalism and the immigration crisis in *Winter* and *Spring*. This can be further clarified through the interrelationships between the many characters as discussed below.

In *Autumn*, immigration crisis in the UK worsened after the Brexit vote, which is analysed by looking at the rhythmic interactions between time and space. It shows

the character Elisabeth Demand breaking bureaucratic rhythms of a post office to disrupt the movement of people across global borders as ordained by idiosyncratic passport documentation. The rhythmic operations of a post office are studied to show how one character's disruptions of the time and energy expended on the maintenance of these operations, displays the author's reinterpretation of the globalist borders, and ripples across the narrative to show her mother's disruption of a border fence. She is shown throwing objects collected from an antique shop at an electric fence erected to keep off wanderers as part of her climate activism. Her daughter's breakage of everyday rhythms and the mother's disruption of a state's means of control serves as a planetary resignification of the spatial crises of climate catastrophe brought forth as a result of globalisation. They are able to achieve this by bringing an arrhythmic conjoinment, which in Lefebvre's words is a state of discordance between rhythms. The characters are able to employ the discord between a late-capitalist globalized world to engage with the spatial crises, in particular bureaucratic monotony and climate crisis. This holds significance as it represents the on-ground sociopolitical environment of the UK. It is clearly visible in the demonstrations protesting the UK government's unchecked allocation of budgetary resources to nuclear deterrents as opposed to the national economy. So, Smith is able to break through the spatial crisis of climate despair and catastrophe created by globalization, by breaking free of their mechanised urban lives, and standing against the policing of their governments.

In *Winter*, Smith uses intertextual references as well as linguistic wordplay to draw attention to the refugee crisis that came into being as a result of stricter post-Brexit border restrictions. It does so by referring to Shakespearean and Dickensian plotlines while discussing narrative events of the twenty-first century. Using non-chronological tenses to subvert the mechanised perception of time, *Winter* breaks off the globalized rhythms of narrative and linear time, allowing it to study multiple stories at once. By constructing rhythms with classic texts, the narrative is able to refer back to historical events while re-engaging with them in a novel way, what Lefebvre considers as the "difference" of each new cycle of rhythmical repetition. This allows a geomethodological ethical relating to the past, and holding it in parallel with the present. This narrative mode allows Smith to present the many spatial crises created due to a hypernationalist atmosphere in a way that is planetary, and antiglobalist. Analysis of *Winter* is particularly significant as the hypernationalism and anti-

immigrant hatred that had taken over Britain in the wake of Brexit is presented in the book. This analysis studies the racial discrimination faced by ethnic minorities as portrayed in Winter while studying the books' characters' dialogue with changing chronological rhythms. They are able to coexist with the racist rhythms of history, and consider it on the same terms as the racial climate of post-Brexit Britain. By placing the crisis within a planetary framework and exploring how the refugees, despite being marginalised, are re-placed within the sociocultural fabric of Britian, a rhythmanalytical reading shows the characters capable of overcoming the hatred and bigotry surrounding them on a large-scale by disrupting the historical rhythms of their lives. In the case of *Winter*, it is shown by characters relying on classical literature and pop culture to remind themselves of the world that exists beyond their present hypernationalist fantasies. By including examples of refugee assimilation from history, literature, and media, the characters come to terms with their own interactions with them as more humane, and motivated by a shared culture that goes beyond a homogenized identity.

Spring portrays a rejuvenation of crises as time passes. A reunion scene between a mother and daughter displays the many ways policing forces from history come to intervene in the present moment. Studying the geographical significance of the space, it is easily noticeable that while the scene studied shows a violation of human rights upon those of two members of a family within the larger crisis of refugee displacement, a planetary micro-reading recontextualises it and reveals the scene as witness to many such violations spanning across centuries. By applying Lefebvre's conceptualization of a rhythmic difference, these repeated violations can be distinguished by a rhythmanalyst in the form of a historian and also placed within the wider spatial crises of immigration that are embodied there. Since intolerance towards asylum seekers and refugees was at its highest at the time of publication of the book *Spring,* this analysis significantly evaluates the crises of immigration and border control and the violence embedded in them within the cultural space of contemporary Britain. It helps understand how such a "space" may be considered not only geopolitically but culturally and socially, through the interaction present between different characters. This has been discussed by analysing the scene of forced separation of a mother and daughter as a "rhythmic site" containing multiple rhythmic assemblages, and also as a spatial site of violence characterised by a globalization-led immigration crisis. A planetary reading is able to glean out the multiple spaces inhabited by these characters that go beyond their

otherised status of an alien and place them as an inherent part of this space, regardless of historical violence or contemporary racism.

The coronavirus pandemic in *Summer* continues and concludes the rhythmic cycles of the books while also allowing them to exist in a repeated continuum that does not have a finishing line, but rather loops around the same tales. *Summer* is the most grounding depiction of the polyrhythmia that Lefebvre considers the most harmonious form of coexistence of multiple rhythms. It brings characters from different and opposing walks of life together and allows them to face each other in their varying pluralities and empathise with one another. This includes people with varying opinions on the Brexit vote, as well as people who feel differently about the immigration policies of the country. By referring to their shared humanities, they are able to truly embody the third step of the geomethdology that planetary fiction holds close: to exist with and for the planet. This has been shown through the portrayal of the political crisis that is governmental apathy and indifference toward people of marginalised identities, refugees, immigrants during the pandemic within the national and cultural space of the UK. Smith effectively depicts characters who cross boundaries of nationality and ethnicity, as well as governmental actions to connect with marginalized groups, as a planetary expression of their shared humanity. This is achieved through the cultural exchanges the characters undergo in their interactions. Moraru views culture as a revealing force, uncovering indigenous narratives amidst nationalist myths. This is evident in the exchanges between characters of diverse cultures (British, Syrian, Chinese), and in intertextual references to classic literature and artworks. Additionally, a rhythmanalysis illustrates how the pandemic disrupts modern urban life's rhythms and restores natural ecological rhythms.

6.1 Recommendations for Further Research

While this research only makes selective references to spatial crises within the given books, most prominent among which is the immigration and border policing, there are many overlaps present in between the crises of space and all of them are worth studying. This research has attempted to study the smaller rhythms of characters' lives to see how they are present in a planetary-focused narrative of their lives, as they grapple with many of the struggles they face in a highly globalised world. The books may also be further studied from a political and social perspective to study how these crises are manifested in the novels. The books can also be further researched to understand their

"condition of the world" significance as they have a lot to share about the political and geological climate of 2016-2020, a time marked by significant events on the global scale.

The research also brings an intervention by creating a novel and niche theoretical framework that combines sociological-urban theory and literary/aesthetic criticism to create a frame of reference that can study the rhythmic alliances and conjunctions in any literary phenomenon. The framework's engagement with space can be further interpreted towards geophysical, sociological, psychological, economic and emotive space and be applied to many contemporary works of fiction.

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