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ESCAPING AND WITHSTANDING THE REALITY THROUGH ART IN EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL'S STATION ELEVEN

Emily St. John Mandel' in Station Eleven Eserinde Sanat Yoluyla Realiteden Kaçış Ve Realiteye Direniş

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Bülent ALAN

Mardin Artuklu Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı, Mardin/Türkiye

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-2057-3493

Arş. Gör. Yunus MAVIŞ

Mardin Artuklu Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı, Mardin/Türkiye

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-0150-6321



ABSTRACT

Having been an ever-present part of Western culture, end of time speculations, namely apocalypse scenarios, are largely originated in biblical ending scenarios and have always appealed to and intrigued the scholars in a wide range of fields, including the literati. These apocalypse and post-apocalypse scenarios have found a dominating place in literature as part of ecocriticism, which in general terms, puts nature and the themes focusing on ecology in the focal point. Covering dystopian, apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic narratives as genres, ecocriticism includes a broad range of literary and artistic studies and critical theories that emphasize nature and environment-relevant problems. Emily St. John Mandel's Station Eleven (2014) is a distinctive example for dystopian and post-apocalyptic narratives describing the beginning of a global epidemic, Georgia Flu, and life twenty years after the catastrophe, because it both tries to explore man's potential to create and sustain meaning through art, story and sharing in an ambitious and versatile way, and scrutinizes whether the ethical and cultural values still exist in a post-apocalyptic world, and the likely ways people live together, which is of the set of ideas suggested by post-apocalyptic literature. In this study, we argue that in Station Eleven (2014), Emily St. John Mandel considers art as an intrinsic need for humanity and the real survivor even after a probable apocalypse, and becomes a source of endurance against harsh realities of life, functioning like a home that shelters humans to which they escape.

Key Words: Emily St. John Mandel, Station Eleven, Post-apocalypse, Art, Dystopian

ÖZET

Batı kültürünün her zaman mevcut bir parçası olagelen dünyanın sonu spekülasyonları, diğer bir deyişle kıyamet senaryoları, büyük ölçüde İncil'deki dünyanın sonu senaryolarından esinlenmiş ve her zaman, edebiyat da dahil olmak üzere, çok çeşitli alanlardaki bilim insanlarına hitap etmiş ve onların ilgisini çekmiştir. Bu kıyamet ve kıyamet sonrası senaryoları, genel anlamda doğayı ve ekolojiye odaklanan temaları odak noktasına koyan eko-eleştirisinin bir parçası olarak edebiyatta hakim bir yer bulmuştur. Distopik, kıyamet ve kıyamet sonrası anlatıları tür olarak kapsayan eko-kritizm, doğa ve çevre ile ilgili sorunları vurgulayan çok çeşitli edebi ve sanatsal çalışmaları ve eleştirel teorileri içermektedir. Emily St. John Mandel'in Station Eleven (2014) adlı eseri, küresel bir salgın olan Georgia Gribinin başlangıcını ve salgın felaketinden sonraki yirmi yılda yaşananları ele alan, distopik ve kıyamet sonrası anlatıların ayırt edici bir örneğidir, çünkü hem insanın kıyamet sonrası bir dünyada sanat, hikaye ve paylaşım yoluyla, tutkulu ve çok yönlü bir şekilde anlam yaratma ve sürdürme potansiyelini, hem de kıyamet sonrası bir dünyada etik ve kültürel değerlerin hala var olup olmadığını ve insanların birlikte yaşama olasılıklarını ayrıntısıyla irdelemektedir. Bu çalışmadaki temel argümanımız, Station Eleven (2014) adlı eserinde yazarın, sanatı, insanlık için içsel bir ihtiyaç ve olası bir kıyametten sonra bile geride kalan tek gerçek olgu olarak gördüğü ve hayatın acımasız gerçekliklerine karşı bir dayanıklılık kaynağı olduğu, kendisine sığınanları koruyan bir barınak misali işlev gördüğü yönündedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Emily St. John Mandel, Station Eleven, Kıyamet-sonrası Sanat, Distopik

1. INTRODUCTION

Born in Comox, Canada, in 1979 and raised on the tiny Denman Island of rural British Columbia on which she bases Delano Island in the book, Emily St. John Mandel is the Canadian author of the critically acclaimed Novel *Station Eleven* (2014). Due to the poor-quality education provided by local schools, her family home-schooled her till she became fifteen. Considering that she studied at the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, which explains why she seems to have dedicated *Station Eleven* (2014) to Shakespeare and theatre, and art in general, one can easily realize why she establishes in her work, the art, as the mere catalyst in rebuilding the civilisation. Mandel opens the book with the 4th act of Shakespeare's *King Lear* and throughout the work, echoes Shakespeare's life that was marked with a plague that wiped out a quarter of the population of Stratford. Another wave of the plague occurred in 1603 when he was working in the theatres of London, and his life underwent, for a second time, a drastic change due to the epidemic sweeping through London forcing theatres to close for nearly one year and making Shakespeare's company head out on the road to tour the provinces, which is echoed by the Travelling Symphony in the *Station Eleven* (2014). Mandel relocated to New York before she lived in Montreal for a while. She works as a staff writer for *The Millions*, and lives in New York City with her husband and daughter.

Speculations about the end of time have always fascinated and intrigued the writers in a wide range of fields, from pious individuals to literary scholars. By large having their origins in biblical scenarios of ending through the apocalypse, end of time narrations and speculations have always constituted a part of Western culture. The visions and fears about the end appear to have ever influenced writers, which confronts the reader in the form of a gloomy narrative voice in depicting the end, as the population of the world is almost extinct or heavily reduced. The forms of literature shaped out of the apocalypse, alongside dystopian literature, can be categorised as speculative fiction, which brings about a link between the two. (Manjikian, 2012, p. 22)

Eco criticism, on the other hand, is a broadly inclusive term used to address the literary and artistic studies relevant to the environment and the theories that lay emphasis on this kind of critical practice, and a new way, for the critics, of analysing the literature. In a broad sense, it is in regard to writing about nature and the themes that put ecology in the focal point. Ecological problems like climate change, deforestation, and extinction of the species, global warming, and pollution in general sense and so forth compromise the problems it deals with. It aims to evoke the collective conscious and desire to scrutiny and resolve the current environmental issues. Being the study of literature and environment, eco-criticism aims to figure out probable solutions to resolve the environment-relevant problems of today, through an interdisciplinary perspective where all of the sciences collaborate in order to analyse the nature and environment. (Mukhtar, 2017)

Dystopia, a genre involved in eco-fiction, as a term, describes a world where everything is faulty and keeps going terribly wrong. Dystopian literature, on the other hand, portrays a world with a possible scenario of apocalypse in the near future. Another genre covered by eco-fiction, post-apocalypse, illustrates a time period which starts immediately after a massively destructive event that kills the majority of the world's population, although there are some tackle the definition distinctively by looking at the etymological meaning initially, in an attempt to correctly grasp the real meaning of apocalypse by contrast with what is known to be true.

We tend to think about the apocalypse as a catastrophe of enormous proportions and overwhelming consequences, something which, then, brings about a dystopian post-apocalyptic scenario. But *apocalypse*, from the Greek *apocalypsein*, etymologically means to unveil or to reveal, and the revelations of the traditional apocalyptic paradigm are intertwined with time and utopia. (de Cristofaro, 2018, p. 37)

In comparison to the post-apocalypse, which is comparatively new, the apocalypse is an ancient genre. While the Book of Revelation is known, at least, to be the first novel which has prophesized

the end of the world, the first novel in English-language which characterizes the survivors of a civilization ended by a catastrophe was Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*, in 1826. (Joyce, 2016)

The post-apocalyptic genre deprives society of its physical and ideological structures. Therefore, the apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic scenarios offer an opportunity to analyse these aspects when everything else is lost, except for the most basic and central aspects of society. In the apocalyptic scenario, social status, cultural creations, social traditions, and physical structures that help identify individuals and groups are destroyed. The post-apocalyptic scenario, however, reduces these descriptive factors to the most basic forms of them along with maintaining their complexity. Post-apocalypses provide opinions regarding the centre of society, the possibility of the existence of ethical values in a post-apocalyptic world and the likely ways people can live together. The post-apocalyptic genre explores a presence in which all descriptive effects are eliminated and people need to create new ways of identifying, connecting, moralizing, and coexisting. (Toone, 2015) Mandel's *Station Eleven* (2014) could naturally be described as a post-apocalyptic literary work, in this sense, as a great majority of the people mentioned in the work put a great effort to find ways of identifying, connecting, moralizing and coexisting, along with ethical values.

It will be accurate to bring an explanation to a question which arises as to "why do we need apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic narratives?" We witness that the narratives about the end of the world multiply in contemporary fiction and cinema. These post-apocalyptic texts portray the life in a world that is destroyed or dramatically changed by climate disasters, zombie apocalypse, or global outbreaks. Although short and in no way complete, this schematic sketch proves that the popular contemporary narrative is exposed to the dreams of a future that resembles a ruinous world. It is of no surprise that the post-apocalyptic stories have been gaining tremendous popularity given the many serious crises the global community is currently facing. These crises lead to insecurities that find their place in the gloomy atmosphere of the future. Post-apocalyptic fiction offers imaginary extrapolations for a future environment of current trends, and therefore can present warnings of possible consequences if the current trends persist. It can show possible alternatives to the current situation at a time when change is still possible. Less optimistically, it can be read as a way to attune the reader to possible post-apocalyptic scenarios or to normalize an inevitable result. (Tate, 2017, as cited in Feldner, 2018)

Although Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven* (2014) is a successful and convincing post-apocalyptic narrative in many respects, it is distinctly different from other representatives of the genre as it attaches importance to and focuses on the possibility and necessity of cultural expression in a post-apocalyptic setting even in the tense conditions that apocalypse bring about, instead of survival, struggle and conflict. Describing the beginning of a global epidemic, Georgia Flu, and life twenty years after the catastrophe, "the novel tries to explore man's potential of creating and sustaining meaning through art, story and sharing, in an ambitious and versatile way (Tate, 2017, as cited in Feldner, 2018). The novel achieves this through the elements such as a group of musicians and actors called the Traveling Symphony, which travels to the now emptied out North America to play the music and Shakespeare for the survivors, and the Museum of Civilization, which collects the belongings of the pre-collapse world, the nostalgic remains that are of no use anymore, rather than being the reminders of the past. *Station Eleven* (2014), "by celebrating the beauty of the present flawed world", presents an extraordinarily optimistic and hopeful vision of a future that would otherwise be very dismal, (Tate, 2017, as cited in Feldner, 2018).

The novel emphasizes the resilience of cultural objects in a brave new world where Shakespeare and obscure science fiction comics apparently coexist in terms of cultural importance. The troupe's motto, "Survival is not enough," stresses the importance of a renewed idea of culture in defining what is human. While in other postapocalyptic texts humanity is defined through individual moral choices—such as those made by the ones "carrying the fire" in Cormac McCarthy's 2006 *The Road*—*Station Eleven* suggests that, were humans to survive such an

unprecedented crisis, the only hope to escape brutalization lies in a communal, continuous effort to recreate culture. *Station Eleven* stands out as a rare, hopeful postapocalyptic text, underlining the importance of art and culture for our species and the deeply moral individual and communal choices necessary to recover from crisis by practicing and conserving culture. (Méndez-García, 2017, p. 111)

Station Eleven (2014), a dystopian and post-apocalyptic page-turner consisting of fifty-five chapters, covers twenty years after the collapse of civilization following the Georgian Flu rooted in Georgia and Russia passing on to Toronto through flights and quickly spreading all over the world and killing 99% of the world's population, consequently. Mandel makes simultaneous time shifts throughout the novel. For example, she opens the novel with the 4th act of Shakespeare's *King Lear* at a winter night at Elgin Theatre in Toronto during a performance of Shakespeare's *King Lear* when Arthur suffers a massive heart attack that kills him, and again she closes it with the same scene, but in Arthur's point of view this time. Yet, in between the opening and closing is described the drastic changes the world undergoes during twenty years after the collapse of civilization. The aging central character, Arthur Leander, who is on the verge of his death, plays *King Lear*. It is the last performance of him before he suffers a massive heart attack and passes away.

Here, a question regarding the preference of *King Lear* over the other plays of Shakespeare is likely to arise. Purcell (2016) explains it as such; some narratives in the film, on television, and in popular fiction have central characters that follow or execute a fictional construction of *King Lear*. In such narratives, even mere Shakespeare texts can be shown only concurrently, using the main scenes and speeches to represent the play as a whole. *King Lear* symbolically reflects such themes as aging, parent-child relationships, memory and mental regression, human cruelty, and weakness of the human body in the narratives in which it has been embedded. Surprisingly, *King Lear*'s fictional performances often serve as catalysts for some kind of reconciliation or social renewal in their frame narratives. *King Lear*'s fictional performances reveal a lot about the way the play emerges in the popular imagination. A series of narratives in film, television and popular fiction have central characters who watch or act in the play, and in each of these narratives, the play is necessarily reduced to a small number of inclusionary instants. The selected instants to represent the play as a whole often, within the frame narrative, become the symbol of the play's function.

Although no specific historical events are included in *Station Eleven* (2014) as the parts comprising its plot, there seems to be some providing inspiration for the novel as a source, the first of which is the spread of the bubonic plague (or Black Death) covering Asia, Africa and Europe during the 14th century perishing a quarter of the population. By occasional returns of the plague all the theatres in England closed during Shakespeare's time, which makes Shakespeare's plays an abundant source of material for Mandel and the characters of *Station Eleven* (2014). Another notable historical event is the 2009 "Swine Flu" pandemic, which spread monstrous fear and became a current issue in media then, and the latest one, 2014 Ebola outbreak, which took place around the publication time of the novel.

In this study, we argue that Emily St. John Mandel, in her *Station Eleven* (2014), treats and considers art as an intrinsic need for humanity even after a probable apocalypse, and that it endures, makes life meaningful, and functions like a home that survives and shelters humans to which they escape.

2. ART AND STATION ELEVEN (2014)

Etymologically, "art", as a term, is related to "ars", the Latin word which means art, skill, or craft. The first use of the term "art" is found in the 13th century manuscripts, however, the word *art* and many variants of it like (*artem*, *ear*, etc.) have probably been in existence since the foundation of Rome (Marder, 2020), which could possibly be taken as an indicator for the possibility that art has always been an intrinsic need for human being as it helps man to contemplate, think and reflect his ideas. Now the following questions arise as to: "When did art begin for the first time?" and "Why do

human beings need art?" The following quote provides us with the necessary information as an answer for the first question we addressed.

The first step towards the making of art had been taken more than two million years ago in east-central Africa when pebbles were first made into rudimentary tools by breaking off part of the surface to form a working edge. These first artefacts were made by man-like creatures, sometimes identified as *Homo habilis* (able or handy man), a species of the zoological genus of hominids. (Honour & Fleming, 2005, p. 24)

We may deduce, from the quotation above, that art has been existing since pre-historic times and it has grown out of the life-sustaining needs of human beings initially, which would turn the mentioned object into a piece of art work that functioned like a tool easing daily life. This deduction takes us to support a likely assertion that art and life is intermingled and interdependent in the final analysis, which supports our argument that Mandel seem to consider the art as an intrinsic need for humanity. Through the following lines, especially the last two ones from *Station Eleven* (2014), we come to realize the natural need of humanity for art, which communicates people and allow them with an ability to escape and endure the harsh realities of the catastrophe by easing the process of endurance:

...Clark took these artefacts back to the Skymiles Lounge and laid them side by side under the glass. They looked insubstantial there, so he added his laptop, and this was the beginning of the Museum of Civilization. He mentioned it to no one, but when he came back a few hours later, someone had added another iPhone, a pair of five-inch red stiletto heels, and a snow globe. (Mandel, 2014, Chapter 43)

Let us go on with answering the second question, the answer of which will almost constitute the main body of our study. We humans need art, because we are beings with a natural inclination to aesthetics, that is, anything beautiful will naturally draw our attention and evoke excitement with us. Lents (2020) states that cultural implications aside, art could be claimed to be all about expressing beauty. Throughout history, a great deal of art works has been produced with a sheer motive and purpose of beauty, and thus, it is natural for any individual to hold and admire a beautiful, interesting and exciting artwork as it breathtakingly evokes emotions. Such a piece of artwork can inspire any individual and make them feel connected to something. The following lines from *Station Eleven* (2014) exemplify the uniqueness and joyfulness of art quite beautifully:

In the children's dressing room, Tanya was giving Kirsten a paperweight. "Here," she said, as she placed it into Kirsten's hands, "I'm going to keep trying to reach your parents, and you just try to stop crying and look at this pretty thing ...," and Kirsten, teary-eyed and breathless, a few days shy of her eighth birthday, gazed at the object and thought it was the most beautiful, the most wonderful, the strangest thing anyone had ever given her. It was a lump of glass with a storm cloud trapped inside. (Mandel, 2014, Chapter 2)

Societies are an outcome of creativity and innovation. Creation is essential in moving forward as a human society, thus every piece crafted could be considered a step forward in societal boost. Here, art gives boost to any society in terms of creativity and unleashing innovation eventually. Because art is innovative naturally, it may not be appreciated in the time it was created, however, the importance of it can be realized much later as in Van Gogh's case of Eiffel Tower in Paris. In the nineteenth century many people did not know about such constructions of iron, a fairly new material for the time. But, today we highly appreciate the artistic value of Eiffel Tower. (Niето, 2020) Through the following quote, we clearly see the creativity of men as a result of artistic expression:

...Consider the snow globe. Consider the mind that invented those miniature storms, the factory worker who turned sheets of plastic into white flakes of snow, the hand that drew the plan for the miniature Severn City with its church steeple and city hall, the assembly-line worker who watched the globe glide past on a conveyer belt somewhere in China. Consider the white gloves

on the hands of the woman who inserted the snow globes into boxes, to be packed into larger boxes, crates, shipping containers. ...Consider the signature on the shipping manifest when the ship reached port, a signature unlike any other on earth, the coffee cup in the hand of the driver delivering boxes to the distribution centre... (Mandel, 2014, Chapter 43)

Man is more than his physical being, which means he has feelings, thoughts, reasoning and a soul. Thus, he contemplates, thinks and reflects his ideas through art itself. Being an intellectual activity that enriches thoughts, art raises the level of consciousness and urges us to thinking, states Nieto (2020). In the following statements from the closing lines of the book, we clearly figure out that Clark Thompson is caught with a familiar scene of a dinner party on *Station Eleven* (2014) with Miranda Carroll, Arthur's first wife, the artist who draws *Dr. Eleven* comics having mirrored her thoughts and feelings through that scene, replacing Dr. Eleven with her own in the scene:

...He pauses over a scene of a dinner party on *Station Eleven*. There's something familiar about it. A woman with square-framed glasses is reminiscing about life on Earth: "I travelled the world before the war," she says. "I spent some time in the Czech Republic, you know, in Praha ...," and tears come to his eyes because all at once he recognizes the dinner party, he was *there*, he remembers the Praha woman, her glasses and her pretension. ...On the page, only Miranda is missing, her chair taken by Dr. Eleven. (Mandel, 2014, Chapter 55)

Nieto (2020) adds that art unifies and brings together all the people no matter what language they speak and of what culture they are, it functions like a universal language known to every individual in the world. Let us take Pablo Picasso's painting *Guernica* for example, any individual from any society in the world will approximately guess that it tells about killing, and it evokes sorrowful feelings, though they do not know about the details of the event. Taking the *Station Eleven's* (2014) *Travelling Symphony* as an example, we see that guitars, violins, horns, musicians in short, and actors performing Shakespeare plays have united to maintain art and go beyond mere survival, which makes life meaningful for them. In a post-apocalyptic world where a catastrophe has caused mass destruction and wiped out a great number of the world's population, art becomes a home, a shelter, a means of unification, endurance and escape from the reality, because it conveys feelings, morals, history, religion, philosophy, ideas and values. This statement "...The Symphony was insufferable, hell was other flutes or other people or whoever had used the last of the rosin or whoever missed the most rehearsals, but the truth was that the Symphony was their only home." (Mandel, 2014, Chapter 10) clearly indicates the smooth reflection of the unifying power of art, its function as a means of endurance and escape.

Dr. Eleven Comics, passed by Arthur on to his son Tyler (the Prophet) and Kristen, are Miranda Carroll's constant in which she finds joy and relief that helps her forget about what goes on around while working on them. As a means of artistic expression, Dr. Eleven Comics help Miranda Carroll to relieve stress. This allegedly benefit of art to individuals' physical and psychological health, regardless of the artistic event or activity they take part in, (as cited in Guetzkow, 2002) is backed by Angus (1999); Baklien (2000); Ball and Keating (2002); Bygren, Konlaan and Johansson (1996); HDA (2000); Thoits and Hewitt (2001). The ability of the artistic event or activity in question is thought to partially cause relieving stress. Furthermore, Baklien (2000: 250-51); Ball and Keating (2002) (as cited in Guetzkow, 2002) add that any individual can improve their health by engaging in artistic events or activities, as such activities widens and strengthens social bonds. Going further on a more physiological level, Bygren, Konlaan and Johansson (1996: 1580) (as cited in Guetzkow, 2002) explain that "It is a well-known fact that the organism reacts to the changes in the humoral nervous system. Verbal expression of traumatic experiences, for example, improves physical health, enhances immune function, and has little to do with medical visits." Furthermore, the studies by Lynch and Chosa (1996); Seham (1997); Weitz (1996); Williams (1995), (as cited in Guetzkow, 2002) puts forth that participation in arts events may be stimulating and stress relieving, thus, leading to a happier and satisfactory life. In addition, taking active part in the arts leads to improved self-

concept and sense of control over one's life. The following quote clearly indicates how Miranda finds joy in working on Dr. Eleven Comics and their function, as a means of art, of sheltering her against the traumatic results of the post-collapse world:

Miranda reads the news for a while, spends some time looking at a map of the Korean peninsula, realizes that she's been staring blankly at the screen and thinking of the world of her project, her graphic novel, her comic-book series, her whatever-it-is that she's been working on since she graduated from art school. She retrieves her sketchbook from its hiding space under the files in her top desk drawer. (Mandel, 2014, Chapter 14)

Kristen attends the Travelling Symphony, which is a band of Shakespeare actors and musicians travelling between quite small, isolated settlements in the former United States' Great Lakes region once North America, performing music and Shakespeare plays. In this point, it may sound fairly rational to come up with a question like why would the performers of the Travelling Symphony dedicate themselves to art, music and theatre, instead of rebuilding the civilization back starting with the essentials like agriculture, transportation, health, communication etc.? Regarding this issue, Jurecic & Marchalik (2016) denote that all the essentials aforementioned necessitate a community wherein they are of common interest, and that it is preliminary to rebuild the culture and create a common consciousness for sharing and appreciating beauty in order to rebuild the collapsed civilization in all aspects.

To Méndez-García (2017), the motto of the Travelling Symphony "Survival is insufficient," lifted from the TV series *Star Trek: Voyager*, could be taken as an indication for the explicit importance the author attaches to art, no matter of what origin it is, as it is from a source out of Shakespeare texts. Human beings need living and that covers enjoying the beauties in the world and the company of other people. Furthermore, it smoothly shows a connection that takes them to their past, not only as a species but also as a civilized society with authentic norms and in all aspects. The members of the Travelling Symphony rehearse for a production of *King Lear*, twenty years after the Georgia Flu outbreak (Mandel, 2014, Chapter 7), which collapsed civilization. Instead of searching for a settlement, the attendance of Kristen in the Travelling Symphony to play music and Shakespeare indicates how Mandel clings to the idea that even in the most challenging times art can unite and shelter man (in any possible form, such as a travelling symphony, or a museum in the case of *Station Eleven*) for example, and helps him endure the reality.

"Enter Lear," Kristen said. Twenty years earlier, in a life she mostly couldn't remember, she had a small nonspeaking role in a short-lived Toronto production of *King Lear*. Now she walked in sandals whose soles had been cut from an automobile tire, three knives in her belt. She was carrying a paperback version of the play, the stage directions highlighted in yellow. "Mad," she said, continuing, "fantastically dressed with wild flowers." (Mandel, 2014, Chapter 7)

Along with the *Dr. Eleven* comics, Kristen carries in her bag tabloids that detail Arthur Leander's life, and a paperweight, as artistic expressions memorial of the pre-pandemic world. Symbolizing the interconnectivity between humans, the paperweight is also an art work from pre-collapse world, which was first purchased by Clark from a museum and passed onto many important characters of the novel like Arthur, Miranda, Arthur again, Tanya, and finally Kristen, respectively. Kristen finds it a beautiful piece of art that, as a reminder of the world before pandemic, takes her to the pre-collapse world years after the collapse, though for an instant:

The paperweight was a smooth lump of glass with storm clouds in it, about the size of a plum. It was of no practical use whatsoever, nothing but dead weight in the bag but she found it beautiful. A woman had given it to her just before the collapse, but she couldn't remember the woman's name. Kirsten held it in the palm of her hand for a moment before she turned to her collection. (Mandel, 2014, Chapter 12)

Nieto (2020) states that we are able to know about the ancient civilizations through their art, which survives up to today, and it helps us categorize the society in question as agricultural or industrial through their artefacts, which is true of us as well, as the following generations will be able to know about us the same way. The products we use today such as laptop computers, smart TV's, smart houses, buildings constructed in modern concepts, satellites, cars, airplanes etc. will be memorials of our times for the next generations, just like we know about ancient civilisations through their artworks survived up to today, great pyramids for example, are ancient Egypt's world-renowned artworks telling us about the level of architectural technique and artistic expression they have arrived. In the case of *Station Eleven* (2014), we confront with the fact that the author puts heavy emphasis on Dr. Eleven Comics, which reveals that Mandel attaches significant importance to books as artefacts in the post-collapse world, which indicates the importance of art for her. Dr. Eleven graphic novels and a collection of tabloid clippings are the precious possessions of Kristen as a reminder of Arthur. On the other hand, August collects books of poetry and TV Guides as reminders of the past. The symphony attentively guards the copies of Shakespeare's plays it owns, because they are the pieces of art from the past. Symbolizing knowledge, a connection with the old world, and an escape from the terror of the post-collapse world, books are the only way of connecting with the old modern world which is out of their memories. They also represent the attempt and struggle to build the civilization back up. The following lines clearly indicates the function of books both as artefacts and reminders of the past: "Nothing in Kirsten's collection suggested the Arthur Leander she remembered, but what did she actually remember? Arthur was a fleeting impression of kindness and grey hair, a man who'd once pressed two comic books into her hands—"I have a present for you," she was almost certain he'd said (Mandel, 2014, Chapter 27).

During the first days after the Georgia Flu outbreak, Jeevan asks Frank, his paraplegic brother, with whom they have been trying to survive the pandemic in the glass tower Frank lived in on the south edge of the city, to read him something. This request of Jeevan, and Frank's project on which he has been working for a while indicate their need, through art, for endurance and escape from the catastrophe that has already killed a great number of the world's population up to that time:

"Read me something," Jeevan said, on the fifty-eighth day. He was lying on the sofa, staring up at the ceiling, and he'd been drifting in and out of sleep. It was the first thing he'd said in two days. Frank cleared his throat.

"Anything in particular?" He hadn't spoken in two days either.

"The page you're working on now."

"Really? You want some over-privileged philanthropist's thoughts on the charity work of Hollywood actors?"

"Why not?"

Frank cleared his throat. "The immortal words of a philanthropist whose name I'm not allowed to divulge but whom you've never heard of anyway," he said. (Mandel, 2014, Chapter 34)

Music, the books covering Shakespeare's plays, tabloids that Arthur gave Kristen Raymonde when she was an eight-year-old child actor once played the child version of *King Lear*'s daughter at Elgin Theatre in Toronto, the quote "...because survival is insufficient." (St. John Mandel, 2014, Chapter 11) on the leading caravan of the Travelling Symphony, the tabloids that Kristen collects as reminders of Arthur, even the characters' setting up a symphony that travels among settlements playing music and Shakespeare come to be the artistic pieces and acts as the reminders of the past and also a means for enduring and escaping the difficulties and the harsh realities of the post-collapse world.

Naming almost all the characters in the Travelling Symphony after some musical instruments, Mandel indicates, regardless of the form and source, how significant art is to her. "...Start, for example, with the third cello...Dieter did, however, harbour considerable resentment toward the second horn, ...

Anyway, the seventh guitar, whose eyesight was so bad that he couldn't do most of..." (Mandel, 2014, Chapter 10).

3. CONCLUSIONS

"Art", etymologically, is related to "ars", the Latin word, which means art, skill or craft. The first examples of artworks were pebbles made into rudimentary tools by breaking off part of the surface to form a working edge, more than two million years ago, in east-central Africa. The 13th-century manuscripts are the sources wherein we encounter the first use of the word "art". The mentioned manuscripts, and the first examples of artworks made out of pebbles more than two million years ago indicate that art has grown out of the life-sustaining needs of man since early times, and it has ever been a natural and unique means of creation, expression and reflection of their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Being with a natural inclination to aesthetics, man is fascinated with a beautifully crafted artwork as it naturally draws his attention and evokes excitement. Almost all the artworks have been produced with a sheer motive of beauty and joy throughout history, thus, it is natural for any individual to hold and admire a beautiful, interesting and exciting artwork that can inspire any individual and make them feel connected to something. Creativity and innovation are the two key factors that lead to the formation and development of societies. In this point, art boosts any society in terms of creativity, which unleashes innovation eventually. Being an intellectual activity that enriches thoughts, art raises the level of consciousness and urges us to thinking. It has the power to unite all the people in the world regardless of the language they speak and the culture they live in. Regardless of the artistic event or activity they take part in, art is claimed to help individuals improve their physical and psychological health. Furthermore, we are able to reveal the ancient civilizations through their art which survives up to today, giving us an idea regarding what they used to do in terms of creativity. In this study we tried to support our argument that regardless of natural and environmental conditions, even in an apocalyptic or post-apocalyptic world where the norms of life drastically change for the worse, art survives, providing humanity with a source of escapism and endurance against and the reality of life. It is what we believe Mandel puts forth in her *Station Eleven* (2014) by considering art as an intrinsic need for humanity and a home that shelters humans to which they escape.

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