

**TRAUMA AND MOURNING:
A KLEINIAN PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE
ON THE NOVEL *BLACK ROCK WHITE CITY***

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Abstract

The paper analyses the novel *Black Rock White City* (2015) by A. S. Patrić through the lens of Kleinian psychoanalysis. The novel follows Serbian refugees Jovan and Suzana as they navigate the long-term repercussions of war and the loss of their children, while attempting to assimilate into Australian society. Jovan's encounter with Melbourne particularly through his work as a janitor and his obsession with the cryptic graffiti of Mr. Graffito—serves as a manifestation of his unprocessed trauma, reflecting Melanie Klein's concept of the paranoid-schizoid position, splitting and projection of persecutory objects. In contrast, Suzana's gradual engagement with daily life suggests a movement toward reparation. This study interrogates the limitations of assimilation caused by the psychological processes. The analysis ultimately underscores the novel's exploration of projection, paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, trauma and mourning along with the existential struggle for meaning in the aftermath of loss.

Key words: paranoid-schizoid position, depressive position, persecutory objects, *Black Rock White City*, Melanie Klein.

**ТРАУМА И ЖАЛОВАЊЕ:
КЛАЈНИЈАНСКА ПСИХОАНАЛИТИЧКА ПЕРСПЕКТИВА
РОМАНА „ЦРНА СТЕНА БЕЛИ ГРАД“**

Апстракт

Рада се бави анализом романа *Black Rock White City* (2015) А.С. Патрића применом важних концепата клајнијанске психоанализе. Роман прати српске избеглице Јована и Сузану док се суочавају са дуготрајним последицама рата и гу-

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битком деце, покушавајући да се прилагоде новој средини у Аустралији. Јованов однос према Мелбурну, превасходно кроз његов посао домара и опсесију заго-нетним графитима мистериозног господина Графита, представља одраз његове трауме, чиме одражава концепте параноидно-схизоидне позиције, цепања и про-јекције прогањајућих објеката (Klein, 1946). Насупрот томе, Сузанино постепено прилагођавање свакодневним активностима у новом окружењу указује на њену могућност репарације. Рад истражује ограничења асимилације која су условљена психолошким процесима. Клајнијанско тумачење романа указује на то да се текст може интерпретирати кроз феномене попут пројекције, параноидно-схизоидне и депресивне позиције, трауме и жаловања, као и егзистенцијалне борбе за смислом након губитка.

Кључне речи: параноидно-схизоидна позиција, депресивна позиција, персекуторни објекти, *Црна стена бели град*, Мелани Клајн.

INTRODUCTION

The award-winning novel *Black Rock White City* by A. S. Patrić (2015), an Australian novelist of Serbian origin, explores the lives of Jovan and Suzana, Serbian refugees in Melbourne, as they grapple with the deep scars of trauma caused by the Yugoslav war and the loss of their children. While striving to build a new life in an Australian suburb, their past intertwines with the present, triggering internal conflicts, guilt, and a profound sense of alienation. Patrić employs multiple perspectives and richly atmospheric descriptions to vividly portray the psychological states of his characters, closely linking them to themes of trauma, loss, estrangement, and migration. The two central protagonists, husband and wife Jovan and Suzana, experience the process of mourning and grief in exile in fundamentally different ways. The story continuously shifts between past events, memories, dreams, and some random poetic thoughts, frequently interrupting the present timeline. Additionally, the novel is focused on space and atmosphere. Melbourne, with its orderliness and underlying sense of detachment, serves as the stage for Jovan and Suzana's struggles. The city is not merely a backdrop but an integral part of their psychological dynamic—both a place that promises a new beginning and one that underscores their isolation. Through these elements, the novel explores not only the personal traumas of its protagonists but also the broader realities of exile and the existential search for meaning. The transition between different environments may be a liberating experience for some immigrants, while for others, it can create a distressing sense of being caught between worlds, ultimately resulting in a feeling of belonging nowhere (Stock, 2010, p. 26).

Jovan's encounter with the city, particularly through the institution of the hospital where he works as a janitor, becomes a crucial site that reactivates his trauma and reflects his inability to repair and heal. Once a university professor, Jovan now finds himself in a drastically different social position, and while working as a janitor, he comes across disturbing

graffiti that mirror his inner turmoil. Gradually, he becomes obsessed with Mr. Graffito, a mysterious and elusive figure who leaves cryptic, enigmatic and chaotic messages on various surfaces, messages that eventually seem to be directed at Jovan personally. The connection between Mr. Graffito and Jovan emerges as the novel's central tension, while the surreal nature of the narrative raises questions about the reliability of storytelling. It blurs the lines between truth and imagination, casting doubt on the validity of external events and suggesting that they may, in fact, be projections of the protagonist's inner state.

Jovan's projection of anger and suffering onto the graffiti symbolises his inability to confront the past, ultimately leaving him trapped in what Melanie Klein (1946) describes as a paranoid-schizoid position. In contrast, Suzana attempts to integrate her grief into daily life through small rituals, acts of empathy, and gradually accepting new circumstances, indicating a potential path toward reparation. Through its complex psychological portraits, the novel delves into themes of loss, alienation, exile, dissociation, projection, and the tension between destruction and creation, offering a profound exploration of human resilience and the search for meaning. In this context, the novel can be interpreted through the lens of Kleinian psychoanalysis, which serves as the central analytical framework of this paper.

KLEINIAN PSYCHOANALYSIS

Object Relations Theory is a psychoanalytic theory that focuses on the development of the self in relation to others, emphasising the importance of early relationships, particularly between a child and their primary caregivers, in shaping personality and psychological functioning. In this context, 'objects' refer to people (or parts of people, such as a caregiver's breast) that an individual relates to. These objects become internalised mental representations that influence later relationships. Internal objects are "images occurring in phantasies which are treated as 'real'. They are derived from external objects by projection and are conceived to be located in internal (psychical) reality" (Rycroft, 1972, p. 100). According to Kleinian school of thought, unconscious phantasy lies beneath every mental process and accompanies the entire mental activity (Isaacs, 2002). The first year of life forms the foundation for an individual's future development. For this reason, Melanie Klein (1946) places particular emphasis on this period, believing that development can be understood through the concept of positions, which are flexible and fluctuate throughout life. During the early months of life, the paranoid-schizoid position prevails. It is characterised by the experience of the death instinct's activity within the infant as an overwhelming fear of annihilation. In an effort to manage this anxiety, the primitive ego splits and projects part of the death instinct onto

an external object, which then becomes persecutory. Also, the life instinct is projected onto external objects, leading to their idealisation and affectionate attachment. This mechanism is known as splitting. It is characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid position, within which libidinal cathexes are attached to partial objects. The splitting of the object is accompanied by a parallel process of splitting the ego into a good and a bad ego, which is constituted exclusively through the introjection of objects (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1974, p. 430). According to Klein (1946/1984, p. 5):

the early ego splits the object and the relation to it in an active way, and this may imply some active splitting of the ego itself. In any case, the result of splitting is a dispersal of the destructive impulse which is felt as the source of danger. I suggest that the primary anxiety of being annihilated by a destructive force within, with the ego's specific response of failing to pieces or splitting itself, may be extremely important in all schizophrenic processes.

(Klein, 1946/1984, p. 5)

Another important concept, projective identification would imply its effectiveness on a phantasmatic level. Specifically, it involves projecting parts of the self onto the other—the object—in order to harm, possess, or control it (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1974, p. 356). This term is understood as the infant's defensive strategy to cope with internal persecutory anxieties, aiming to protect the self by displacing unwanted or feared aspects of the self and object-representations onto or, as Klein (1946/1984, p. 8) preferred to describe it, into the mother. By employing this defence mechanism, the infant is able to maintain a stable and positive sense of self. The self in Kleinian discourse refers to the totality of mentality; the comprehensiveness of the psyche, which includes not only the Ego but also, in Freudian terms, the Id. Namely, “the Kleinian self represents the essential unity of the subject” (Kristeva, 2001, p. 107). Alongside the paranoid-schizoid position, Klein (1946) introduced the depressive position, in which the infant begins to perceive whole objects and relate to them. This shift allows for reparation, as the earlier split between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ objects dissolves:

the loved and hated aspects of the mother are no longer felt to be widely separated and the result is an increased fear of loss, states akin to mourning and a strong feeling of guilt, because the aggressive impulses are felt to be directed against the loved object.

(Klein, 1946/1984, p. 14)

Klein emphasises that some degree of fluctuation between the two positions always occur and therefore a clear division cannot be drawn (Klein 1946/1984, p. 16). Most patients actually oscillate back and forth between what Melzer (2008) refers to as ‘the threshold of the depressive position.’

*TRAUMA, MOURNING AND EXILE F
ROM JOVAN'S PERSPECTIVE*

The protagonists of the novel have endured both personal and national tragedies, compelling them into exile. This displacement not only raises questions of identity and the challenges of resettlement but also necessitates a profound process of mourning. Moreover, exile requires a constant struggle and ongoing confrontation with a new reality, an unfamiliar environment, and an unknown language.

Sigmund Freud describes mourning as “a reaction to the loss of a loved one, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one’s country, liberty, and ideal, and so on” (Freud, 1957, p. 243). This process results in “profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, [and] inhibition of all activity” (Freud, 1957, p. 244). In other words, detachment from the external world is an expected response to loss, whether that loss is literal or symbolic.

According to Volkan (2017, p. 13), mourning is an essential response to loss. For adult immigrants and refugees, this process often involves revisiting memories of what they left behind. While some individuals manage to move forward, others remain preoccupied with their past. If the process of grieving is disrupted, individuals may become trapped in a cycle of unresolved grief, intensifying emotional responses and complicating adaptation (Volkan, 2017, p. 13).

However, in Kleinian psychoanalysis, mourning is understood as a process that necessitates accepting and confronting loss, ultimately leading to what Klein (1940/1948, p. 331) defines as the *depressive position* or in other words, reparation and integration:

In normal mourning the individual reintjects and reinstates, as well as the actual lost person, his loved parents who are felt to be his ‘good’ inner objects. His inner world, the one which he has built up from his earliest days onwards, in his phantasy was destroyed when the actual loss occurred. The rebuilding of this inner world characterizes the successful work of mourning.

(Klein, 1940/1948, p. 331)

Jovan and Suzana exemplify different ways in which individuals process mourning depending on their respective psychological positions (Klein 1946). Jovan, in particular, struggles to detach himself from his former life, and the trauma of exile, coupled with the loss of his children, leads him into a state of alienation and emotional numbness. The change in environment and identity, along with his personal tragedy, has profoundly impacted his behaviour. He was once full of enthusiasm, as described by a former student he encountered in Melbourne: “... his personality was so light, his face mobile with his rapid thoughts and every electric surge of

enthusiasm. He'd clap when a student was brilliant, yell out bravo" (Patrić, 2015, p. 191).

However, in the new circumstances, Jovan is now described to be "as expressionless as a death mask" (Patrić, 2015, p. 191).

Jovan appears to be trapped in a paranoid-schizoid *position*, which significantly hinders his ability to mourn effectively. Mourning requires progressing through the stages of grief, which entails acknowledging and processing loss. However, the paranoid-schizoid position is marked by a fragmented sense of self, profound distrust, and defensive mechanisms that obstruct the emotional engagement necessary for mourning. Jovan's psychological state, shaped by his traumatic past and exile, prevents him from fully confronting his grief. Instead of mourning, he fixates on his pain, channelling it into isolation and avoidance behaviours while experiencing intense paranoid anxiety.

Jovan's avoidance behaviour manifests in his silence and emotional withdrawal, his face frozen in an unresponsive expression: "His thoughts never register on his face. Looking at him you would think there's nothing more to him than the effort to dislodge ink from a concrete wall. (Patrić, 2015, p. 5). Furthermore, Jovan is eager to stay quiet whenever he can: "If there was no demand on him to speak he'd be delighted to nod at people as they talked and toasted his friend's *slava*, raising glass after glass to each other, celebrating the world they were living in" (Patrić, 2015, p. 20). Moreover, his disengagement is evident in his relationship with Suzana—he frequently retreats into himself, emotionally distancing himself from her. After their first intimate encounter following the tragedy, Patrić (2015, p. 179) contrasts Jovan's and Suzana's reactions, emphasising his overwhelming sense of guilt in contrast to Suzana's feeling of security, as illustrated in the following passage:

Jovan showered afterwards. The feeling of euphoria hadn't lasted long. The illusion that they would be well again and they might find happiness wasn't something he could believe even at the height of the delusion- Suzana's head on his chest, feeling her drift away in sleep so deep it wheezed in the back of her throat. The trust and safety of him there in the Cotton Tree holiday shack. At home with him again. She need not worry. She could drift away.

(Patrić, 2015, p. 179)

The act of taking a shower signifies his desire to cleanse himself of the feeling of guilt. However, the guilt he experiences is persecutory, preventing him from achieving the integration of different aspects of the self. Grinberg & Grinberg (1989, p. 68) identify two types of guilt - persecutory and depressive. The former is linked to pathological mourning which can potentially lead to depression and psychosis, whereas depressive facilitates a healthier process of coping with grief by fostering feelings of concern and sorrow. Jovan's emotional withdrawal reflects his internal turmoil and

the burden of unresolved guilt over their shared loss. It further leads him to the self-destructive behaviours, such as infidelity (Patrić 2015, p. 8, 31). By distancing himself from his wife, he avoids confronting their loss. Relationship with Tammy remains superficial and insignificant, in stark contrast to his former closeness with Suzana, with whom he once shared intellectual pursuits (Patrić, 2015, p. 175). Jovan's disturbed object relation with Suzana can be explained through the projection of aggressive tendencies onto external objects, leading to increased anxiety. Jovan perceives Suzana as a bad and threatening object, provoking anxiety in him, from which he tries to escape. According to Melanie Klein (1933, p. 270), the rise of sadistic impulses stems from anxiety, which drives attacks on hostile objects to avoid their perceived threat. This cycle leads to antisocial and criminal tendencies as a consequence of a strict and cruel Superego. Fear of such a Superego later causes avoidance of threats, disrupting object relationships and creating a distorted object relation. Jovan undergoes a profound transformation, becoming a man consumed by the fear that he may never regain his ability to think (Patrić, 2015, 20). Now working as a janitor, he perceives his existence as defined by deterioration: "there will be nothing other than deepening waste and grime. Perhaps that's the reason he never puts his thoughts down on paper anymore" (Patrić, 2015, p. 27). Ultimately, he refuses to accept his new reality or integrate past sources of fulfilment, such as writing, into his present circumstances, regardless of his professional role. This resistance highlights his inability to achieve reparation. This concept refers to a psychological defence mechanism aimed at alleviating guilt. It involves actions intended to compensate for harm inflicted on an object or person toward whom the individual has ambivalent feelings. This process may also include the restoration of a damaged internal object, often occurring in phantasy. Melanie Klein suggests that artistic and creative endeavours serve as forms of reparation, enabling individuals to process conflicting emotions and regain a sense of equilibrium (Rycroft, 1972, p. 141). The inability to experience mourning can manifest as a severe restriction of emotional life, leading to the impoverishment of one's overall personality (Klein, 1940, p. 336-337). This is evident in Jovan, both in the given example and in his general existence as previously noted. Furthermore, Jovan's dream about searching for Suzana in an empty house on an alien planet indicates how much his inner world, if interpreted as an empty house, has been impoverished:

In the dream, he walked from house to house, through unknown suburbs looking for his wife, because he knew she was cleaning one of the homes. He walked into twenty or thirty, maybe forty different houses, knowing she had to be close from the wafts of her perfume. Every house had been cleaned yet was also empty of everything. No furniture, pictures, plates. The wardrobes without clothes. He was mystified, wondering where everyone and their belongings were. It

felt epic, a search that could go on for the rest of his life, looking for his wife through the many empty houses of the suburbs. That it would go on, forever and ever, as in fairytales. He walked into an empty, antiseptically clean kitchen, and saw a spotless glass on the bench. The only bit of anything indicating domestic life he'd seen in all the houses. It still had a cardboard smell to it and it sat on a flyer—serving as a paperweight. He lifted the piece of paper. It was a welcome to his new home on this new planet. Soon to be populated and called Crumbs.

(Patrić, 2015, p. 42)

The dream conveys the profound sense of emptiness and impoverishment in Jovan's inner world by using the metaphor of the house—traditionally a symbol of warmth, security, and domesticity—now stripped of all its defining elements. Jovan's endless searching implies that his emotional and existential void is unrelenting. Instead of the home he yearns for, he finds only a sterile, uninhabited space, implying that even new beginnings in this world are lifeless. The name of the planet, 'Crumbs,' signifies the remnants of a once-cohesive whole, a world reduced to fragments, mirroring the disintegration of Jovan's sense of self.

PARANOID ANXIETY AND OBSESSION WITH MR. GRAFFITO

Jovan's internal conflicts and fragmented sense of self, which he is unable to reconcile, are projected onto his external environment, particularly the hospital. The unsettling atmosphere—exemplified by the engraved word "inspiration" on a corpse (Patrić, 2015, p. 11), the murder of a nurse (Patrić, 2015, p. 203), and other similar eerie occurrences—serves as a symbolic manifestation of the persecutory states embedded within his psyche. For migrants, various forms of anxiety can pathologically escalate into severe psychotic conditions. In cases of paranoia and pronounced persecutory delusions, individuals may perceive their entire environment as threatening and hostile, believing they are trapped in conspiracies designed to harm or endanger them (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 88). Although Jovan is not considered paranoid, it can be argued that he remains confined within a psychotic state, projecting his inner turmoil and distress onto his surroundings, particularly the hostile atmosphere of the hospital. In Kleinian words, Jovan's internal world is full of bad and hostile objects. Namely, Jovan's paranoid anxiety is symbolically reflected in the graffiti he encounters. The increasingly threatening messages he is required to remove at the hospital become the centre of his fixation. His persistent efforts to interpret these inscriptions can be understood as an expression of his internal struggle and an unconscious attempt to seek meaning or redemption after his loss. According to Klein (1940, p. 320), the intensity of mourning for a lost loved one is significantly amplified by unconscious fears of losing internal

good objects as well. The individual feels overwhelmed by negative objects, creating a sense that their inner world is at risk of disintegration. Furthermore, Klein points out that such states are accompanied by the emergence of persecutory anxiety (1940, p. 321). It could be argued that the novel blurs the line between reality and Jovan's mental state, leaving it uncertain whether the messages really exist and are truly meant for him, or are the result of his paranoid projections, despite the eventual identification of the culprit. Namely, at the very end of the novel, the author reveals that Mr. Graffito is, in fact, a surgeon from the hospital where Jovan works. However, if we interpret the novel through the lens of Kleinian psychoanalysis, this detail can be questioned and understood as Jovan's internal need to project his inner world onto a specific individual—in this case, the surgeon. This interpretation is reinforced by a pivotal moment in the novel when Jovan finds a package labelled *bomb* in his own van. Without any inclination to open it, he discards it already knowing what is in it. Patrić remarks that it embodies Jovan's own displaced emotions: "No doubt what's in it. Harm. Pain for Jovan. An invitation to torment" (Patrić, 2015, p. 125). Thus, Mr. Graffito sends Jovan precisely what Jovan feels. These two characters become connected on a deeper level, and Jovan's obsession grows increasingly tangible in his thoughts. The words Jovan attributes to Graffito hinder his ability to accept loss, engage in genuine mourning, and ultimately move forward: "He could almost hear Dr. Graffito whispering some absurdity in his ear about burying a Black Rock in White City" (Patrić, 2015, p. 17). The sentence references the novel's two title locations, symbolising past and present—lost ease and current darkness. For Jovan, both cities become bad objects: Melbourne reflects his struggle to adapt, while Belgrade reminds him of profound loss. In his thoughts, Mr. Graffito represents a rigid and cruel superego which is a part of Jovan's inner world and an extension of his aggressive impulses. According to Melanie Klein (Klein, 1933/1948, p. 270), the early Superego stems from powerful and destructive drives, encompassing both libidinal and aggressive impulses. As a result, the source of anxiety is displaced onto the external environment, transforming external objects into threatening ones. However, this perceived danger is inherently tied to the individual's aggressive drives. Based on this, we can conclude that the fear of objects is proportional to the intensity of sadistic impulses. The fear Jovan experiences is projected outward, onto Mr. Graffito while the fear he is disconnected from actually resides within him:

There's a space in his life these messages fill. It isn't that he thinks they're profound. He finds them interesting. It's a shame they have been made by a madman, because that worries Jovan – having these insane messages floating around in his head.

(Patrić, 2015, pp. 25-26)

One particular graffiti containing the word *ogre* PAGE sparks Jovan's obsession with the term, which his mistress Tammy defines as a synonym for 'monster.' Initially projected onto Graffito as a persecutory object, the monster ultimately comes to symbolise Jovan's own inner world—an embodiment of the persecutory Superego that consumes any possibility of mourning and reparation:

No matter how much time passes he knows it is there, that it will descend and lay a heavy blanket of suffocation over him again. He has tried to think his way out. He has tried to allow it to wash away; ease it through to nothing. It persists, perches on a cornice of his brain, glaring down on his mind like a gargoyle. A different kind of monster. Not a flash-eater at least. This one, a devourer of peace and soul, memories, sleep, and dreams.

(Patrić, 2015, p. 30)

Jovan suggests that even if the monster is imaginary, it still wants to become real and dangerous. He further wonders while speaking in broken English with Mr. Dickens about Mr. Graffito:

'What if the man has this monster in the imagination?' Jovan asks.
'And monster wants to come out? Into this world? He wants to live here. Making a story for him does not make him something else. He is still the monster. He still want to eat people. Monster want to be real'

(Patrić, 2015, p. 41)

The monster's desire to 'come out into this world' suggests that Jovan's internal conflicts are spilling into his reality, shaping how he perceives and interacts with the world. His fear lies in these inner turmoils manifesting destructively. The pieces of graffiti throughout the novel, though grammatically correct, are nonsensical—mirroring Jovan's psychological disarray and his struggle with language, identity, and adaptation. His obsessive cleaning of the graffiti, which he subconsciously projects, symbolises a refusal to accept the new language and confront his emotions: "Whoever Doctor Graffito is, he would know that Jovan is the man obliterating all his words" (Patrić, 2015, p. 14).

DEPRESSIVE POSITION – JOVAN AND SUZANA

Unlike Jovan, Suzana exhibits signs that suggest she has reached the depressive position. In the narrative following her life, Patrić (2015, p. 163) shows that Suzana often thinks of her husband, suggesting there is still space for him in her world. Suzana's process of healing is expressed through creativity in writing. She wonders whether Jovan has read her manuscript, implying that this was an activity they once practiced together (Patrić, 2015, p. 165). This highlights her need to restore the kind of rela-

tionship they had in their homeland and to feel that Jovan's mind is once again open and accessible to her: "Suzana pages through her notebooks. She's disappointed to see no hint of marginalia, no phrases underlined, no scratch of ink to indicate that he had indeed read what she'd written" (Patrić, 2015, p. 165). She rationalises his lack of engagement with her manuscript by attributing it to the fact that she wrote the chapter in English, a language he finds challenging (Patrić, 2015, p. 165). However, Suzana's decision to write a novel in a non-native language, the language of her new environment, while Jovan struggles to master it (evident in the errors in his speech in the narrative) and refuses to use it, underscores her readiness to move forward with her life. Which further means that mourning is possible for her. Furthermore, it is Suzana who suggests having another child (Patrić, 2015, p. 73). and who still believes that "life is not absurd" (Patrić, 2015, p. 149). Furthermore, unlike Jovan, Suzana is willing to embrace the novelties offered by her new homeland and integrate them into her own experiences: "Cinnamon was never something they used for French toast back in Yugoslavia. It's an idea she has picked up in the Black Rock house" (Patrić, 2015, p. 73). However, despite being trapped in the paranoid-schizoid position, Jovan occasionally exhibits signs of the depressive position. At certain moments, a sense of poeticism emerges—he becomes immersed in poetry that envelops him, experiencing a fleeting sense of peace:

He doesn't own this tranquility. Moments like these are rare gifts that come his way accidentally, wrapped and intended for others. He can hold them, briefly as he does now, pausing beside his rust-spotted white Ford panel van. Soon he'll have to surrender them.

(Patrić, 2015, p. 10)

At certain moments, Jovan realises that the affair influences his sense of guilt. However, the guilt he is prone to is not strong enough to lead him to genuine mourning. Moreover, he attempts to justify his actions. After an intimate encounter with Tammi, Jovan reflects in the following way:

That revulsion grows stronger in Jovan after Tammie is gone. So much what happens shouldn't happen. There is a kind of helplessness that we learn, he thinks. A helplessness that is bred into us from the very earliest moments of our lives and the world goes on happening in ways that it should or shouldn't.

(Patrić, 2015, p. 31)

This description evokes a sense of entrapment, anxiety, and limitation. His choices appear predetermined or without real consequence, further amplifying his sense of powerlessness to achieve reparation. However, the novel's conclusion suggests that Jovan, after being accused of being Dr. Graffito himself, made the decision to leave the hospital, a place that prevented him from moving forward with his life. Symbolically, Graffito releases Jovan from his world—that is, from the hospital: "The hospital is

his [Graffito's] world and everyone within it belongs to him" (Patrić, 2015, p. 219). This act signifies Jovan's departure from his paranoid-schizoid position, setting him on a path toward healing and reparation. Successful reparation, according to Melanie Klein, implies the predominance and victory of the life drive (La Planche & Pontalis, 1974, p. 389). Furthermore, in response to Suzana's question - "So you're done with that place?" - Jovan affirms his willingness to leave his job with the words, "Done as the dog's dinner" (Patrić, 2015, p. 220). He expresses this in clear English, "sounding Aussie for the first time ever, and makes Suzana laugh" (Patrić, 2015, p. 220), signalling his readiness for integration. Now, as he exhibits a tendency to restore the disrupted object relationship with his wife, Jovan experiences a decrease in sadism. With a reduction in sadism and a change in the Superego's function, anxiety decreases while feelings of guilt increase, promoting moral and ethical behaviour, greater caution toward others, and a growing interest in society (Klein, 1933, p. 271). In such moments Jovan's reparation emerges, and his relationship with his wife will strive toward renewal.

CONCLUSION

The novel *Black Rock White City* depicts the lives of Jovan and Suzana, refugees from Yugoslavia, and their process of adapting to new circumstances in a foreign environment. Jovan's adaptation is significantly hindered as he remains trapped in the paranoid-schizoid position (Klein 1946), whereas Suzana demonstrates signs of reparation and finds it easier to move forward with her life. The actions of the protagonists are being interpreted through the lens of Kleinian psychoanalysis. Jovan's rigid superego and persecutory objects prevent him from engaging in genuine mourning. Through a constant projection of the bad objects, he remains caught in a cycle of persecutory thoughts, displacing them onto the hospital, which exudes a haunting and oppressive atmosphere. However, by the end of the novel, Jovan begins to show signs of readiness for reparation, demonstrated by his decisive decision to leave his current job—a symbolic act representing his departure from the paranoid-schizoid position. Through his narrative, Patrić effectively illustrates the complexity of the refugee experience and the extent to which one's internal world contributes to the challenges of adaptation.

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**ТРАУМА И ЖАЛОВАЊЕ: КЛАЈНИЈАНСКА
ПСИХОАНАЛИТИЧКА ПЕРСПЕКТИВА РОМАНА
„ЦРНА СТЕНА БЕЛИ ГРАД“**

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Резиме

Рад се бави тумачењем ликова романа *Black Rock White City* А.С. Патрића у кључу клајнијанске психоанализе. Роман прати Јована и Сузану, српске избеглице које живе у Аустралији док се суочавају са дуготрајним психолошким последицама рата и трауматичним губитком деце. Радња смештена у Мелбурн истражује теме жаловања, расељености и унутрашњих конфликта који се јављају током покушаја прилагођавања новој култури и средини. Јованов унутрашњи свет испуњен је прогањајучим објектима које пројектује на болничку атмосферу и опсесивну заокупљеност загонетним

графитима које оставља мистериозни господин Графито. Дакле, ови елементи симболично одражавају Јованову неразрешену трауму и представљају изразе клајнијанских појмова параноидно-схизоидне позиције, цепања и пројекције проганјајућих објеката. Јован је заробљен у параноидно-схизоидној позицији, што значајно омета његову способност да ефикасно тугује. Ова позиција карактерише фрагментисан доживљај селфа, дубоко неповерење и одбрамбене механизме који спречавају емоционално ангажовање неопходно за процес жаловања. Јован је представљен као безизражајан, без ентузијазма и отуђен. Међутим, крај романа показује његову спремност да искорачи ка депресивној позицији, а самим тим и репарацији. Супротно томе, Сузанино постепено укључивање у свакодневне активности и могућност да функционише у новој средини указују на помак ка репарацији и прихватању губитка. Рад сугерише да роман приказује психолошке границе асимилације, обликоване унутрашњим световима својих протагониста. Клајнијанска интерпретација омогућава анализу начина на који траума, пројекција и осцилације између параноидно-схизоидне и депресивне позиције структуришу односе ликова према себи, другима и својој околини.