Abstract

E. M. Forster’s *A Room with a View* (1908) delineates Italy as liberal, passionate and invigorating, whereas England is portrayed as rigid, conventional and restrictive. Due to spatial and cultural impact, the protagonist, Lucy, changes her view about life by degrees as soon as she travels in Italy. By means of her interactions with the urban space and her encounters with the other in Italy, Lucy gradually enters her becoming-other and breaks through the Victorian confinement into a nomadic traveler. This thesis employs a spatial perspective to investigate spatial becoming embodied on Lucy during her travel, and the formation of her nomadic self.

Chapter One is an overall introduction to the whole thesis. As for chapter Two, I focus on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s nomadology and becoming, and Syed Manzurul Islam’s extension in travel theory to explore how Italian and English spatiality influences the contained subjects. By characterizing England as a room and Italy as a view, this chapter explores how Lucy confronts with her conflicts and develops her reconfigured self. Lucy’s nomadic changes, however, should not be regarded as a self-searching pursuit in terms of identity politics. Instead, her transformation transcends binary opposition between men and women, heading toward her becoming-traveler.

Chapter Three utilizes Michel de Certeau’s concept of walking in the city to examine how street-walking and encounters with Italian life and culture lead to the change in Lucy. Since street-walking alone is a forbidden behavior for Victorian women, Lucy’s street-walking goes through certain struggles. Rather than passively receives the built image from urban designers, Lucy is gradually able to read and interpret the city from her observation of the cityscape. From following others’ guidance to gradual independence, Lucy crosses the boundary of Victorian
confinement and gets to encounter the other. Her walking experiences significantly open up her view and initiate her spatial becoming. Her interaction with a lived city rekindles her desire for freedom and autonomy.

Chapter Four concentrates on the analysis of Lucy’s changes in England as a result of her Italian travel. I apply Syed Manzurul Islam’s idea to claim Lucy as a transformative nomadic traveler in contrast to her fiancé Cecil as a changeless sedentary traveler. I argue that with her formation of nomadic self, the return to English spatiality only leads to ineluctable conflicts between Lucy, her family and Cecil. Lucy accordingly seeks to leave for Italy and continues her endless travel. Italy triggers her irreversible becoming-other and becoming-traveler.

Conclusively speaking, in *A Room with a View*, Lucy’s interaction with the Italian spatiality inspires her to cross the boundary and makes her transformation possible. Yet, Italy is only a prologue to her journey, bringing her out of the rigid convention. Her nomadic change is not a pinpointed result, but a shifting and ceaseless process.