Journal of English Studies

volume

8

2010

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES • Logroño • v. 8 (2010) • 210 págs. • ISSN 1576-6357

UNIVERSIDAD DE LA RIOJA

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES
Volume 8 (2010)
ISSN 1576-6357

***JES* is published and distributed by:**

Universidad de La Rioja
Servicio de Publicaciones
Calle Piscinas, s/n
26004 LOGROÑO (España)
Tel.: (+34) 941 299 187 Fax: (+34) 941 299 193
E-mail: publicaciones@unirioja.es
http://publicaciones.unirioja.es

***JES* is available electronically at:**

http://publicaciones.unirioja.es/ej/jes/jes.shtml

Exchange issues should be sent to:

Biblioteca Universitaria - Hemeroteca
Universidad de La Rioja
Calle Piscinas, s/n
26004 LOGROÑO (España)

Subscription rates:

Spain: 15.00 € Other countries: 18.00 €

Old issues:

Spain: 12.00 € Other countries: 15.00 €

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

VOLUME 8 (2010)
ISSN 1576-6357

UNIVERSIDAD DE LA RIOJA
Servicio de Publicaciones
LOGROÑO (España)

Journal of English Studies /
Universidad de La Rioja, Servicio de Publicaciones. —
Vol. 8 (2010)- .— Logroño : Universidad de La Rioja,
Servicio de Publicaciones, 1999.— v.; 24 cm
Anual
ISSN 1576-6357
1. Lengua inglesa I. Universidad de La Rioja, Servicio de Publicaciones
811.111

Edita: Universidad de La Rioja. Servicio de Publicaciones
Logroño 2010
ISSN 1576-6357
Depósito Legal : LR-382-1999
Imprime: INO Reproducciones
Impreso en España - Printed in Spain

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES – VOLUME 8 (2010), 5-6

CONTENTS

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES - VOLUME 8 (2010), 7-22

SHE LURES, SHE GUIDES, SHE QUITS: FEMALE CHARACTERS IN TIM WINTON'S *THE RIDERS*

Mª Pilar Baines Alarcos*
University of Zaragoza

ABSTRACT. *Tim Winton is an Australian writer whose male characters often defy the traditional concept of masculinity. As for the notion of femininity, however, this kind of defiance is not displayed. In this essay, I study the presentation of the female protagonists in* The Riders *in order to illustrate this point, bearing in mind the Australian social and cultural context that surrounds them. Winton's fictional women, no matter whether they are strong or weak, are normally depicted according to female archetypes. This leads to their negative portrayal as ambivalent beings, thus making them unreliable and even dangerous, as is the case of Jennifer and Irma. In contrast, Billie is a positive female character. She, who is also significantly a child, combines both feminine and masculine qualities. It is precisely this characteristic that enables her to be her father's protector.*

Keywords: women, stereotypes, Australia, patriarchal society, female ambiguity, silence.

---

* Correspondence should be sent to: Mª Pilar Baines Alarcos. Email: pilarbaines@yahoo.es

Mª PILAR BAINES ALARCOS

ELLA ATRAE, ELLA GUÍA, ELLA SE VA: LOS PERSONAJES FEMENINOS EN *THE RIDERS* DE TIM WINTON

RESUMEN. *Tim Winton es un escritor australiano cuyos personajes masculinos desafían a menudo el concepto tradicional de masculinidad. Sin embargo, no se encuentra este desafío con respecto a la noción de femininidad. En este artículo estudio la descripción de las protagonistas en* The Riders *para demostrar este punto, teniendo en cuenta el contexto australiano social y cultural que las rodea. Los personajes femeninos de Winton, independientemente de si son fuertes o débiles, son presentados siguiendo estereotipos femeninos. Esto lleva a que sean descritas como seres ambivalentes, haciendo así que no se pueda confiar en ellas y que incluso resulten peligrosas, como es el caso de Jennifer e Irma. Por contraste, Billie es un personaje femenino positivo. Ella, que es significativamente una niña, combina cualidades femeninas y masculinas. Esta es precisamente la característica que le permite ser la protectora de su padre.*

Palabras clave: mujeres, estereotipos, Australia, sociedad patriarcal, ambigüedad femenina, silencio.

Received 15 April 2010
Revised version accepted 6 August 2010

1. INTRODUCTION

The Riders (1994) tells the story of Fred Scully, an Australian in the process of settling down in the Irish countryside with his wife, Jennifer, and his seven-year-old daughter, Billie. The narrative opens with Scully giving the final touches to the old cottage where they are going to live. He is picking Jennifer and Billy up at the airport the following morning. However, only his daughter turns up. His wife has left them without an explanation. The fact that Billie refuses to say a single word adds up to Scully's anxiety. As a result, Scully sets off on a journey across Europe with Billie in a desperate search for his wife and hoping to find out the reason why she has abandoned them. In his journey, he meets Irma, a woman who sticks to him and interferes with his search. Along the way Scully gains in self-knowledge and forms a stronger and more independent identity. Jennifer, Billy and Irma fuel his journey of self-discovery in different, and often contradictory ways. The purpose of this essay is to analyse these three characters with a view to exploring the messages on femininity conveyed in the novel. Sarah A. Aguiar claims that female archetypes

"were created and propagated by men as the traditional writers of civilization. The characters passed down through legend and the oral tradition, even if they originated in female consciousness, reveal a deeply ingrained capitulation to patriarchal doctrine" (2001: 134). My aim is to study how *The Riders* contributes to the prevalence of female stereotypes.

To begin with, I will deal with Jennifer. Since she is conceived as the representative of the modern emancipated woman, I will start her analysis with a brief summary of the evolution of universal images of women until the present. Besides, I will relate her role as a modern woman and her ambitions with the fact that she comes from Australia. In fact, my thesis is that her patriarchal characterisation as an ambivalent being and the contradictory feelings she arises can be connected to the Australian attitude towards the land. Afterwards, I will study Irma, an ambiguous character who is presented as an obstacle for the protagonist's success. Finally, I will tackle little Billie and explore her function as Scully's guide and saviour.

2. JENNIFER

The world of women, and thus the world of intimacy to which they had always been relegated, underwent a considerable change in the second half of the twentieth century. Jennifer is an example of this change. That is why, before analysing this character, I think it is crucial to give a short account of the changing social attitudes towards women throughout history. Since this novel deals with Australia, it is essential to have a look at how these changes have affected this country in particular.

Men and women are assigned different roles in society. As happens with all cultural constructions, these values are transmitted through socialisation. Socialisation is a process through which people are taught the values and roles they are expected to comply with in their own culture. This process is carried out through conscious and unconscious messages conveyed by several socialising agents. Although the whole society is actually involved, there are some institutionalised sources which are vital, such as the family, the school, language — whose omnipresence makes it one of the most compelling actors —, religion and the mass media (Poal 1993: 76-77). It is by means of differential socialisation that women have traditionally been trained for the private sphere — domesticity, affection, reproduction, etc —, while men have been trained for the public sphere — politics, science, culture, etc.

Taking into account social attitudes towards women in history, in the book *La tercera mujer. Permanencia y revolución de lo femenino* (1997), Gilles Lipovetsky divides women into three historical categories. To start with, the "first woman",

a woman who was considered devious and dangerous. She represented evil, disorder, lies, etc. She was despised and regarded as inferior, and thus, she was marginalised to inferior roles. Later, in the Middle Ages, the "second woman" appeared. At the beginning, this "second woman" was idealised in the fashion of courtly love. With the passing of time, this sort of idealisation underwent a number of transformations that finally led to the Victorian concept of woman as "the angel in the house", labelled as such after Coventry Patmore's poem which celebrated the stereotype of the domestic woman. The praised roles of this angelic woman were exclusively those of daughter, wife, and mother (Auerbach 1982: 66, 69). These two types of women had in common their subordination to men. Western contemporary society has produced a third type of woman who is independent and able to define herself:

> [La] lógica de dependencia respecto de los hombres ya no es la que rige en lo más hondo la condición femenina en las democracias occidentales. Desvitalización del ideal de la mujer de su casa, legitimidad de los estudios y el trabajo femeninos, derecho de sufragio, «descasamiento», libertad sexual, control sobre la procreación son otras tantas manifestaciones del acceso de las mujeres a la completa disposición de sí mismas en todas las esferas de la existencia, otros tantos dispositivos que construyen el modelo de la «tercera mujer». (Lipovetsky 1999: 218)

The common perception of woman as dutiful wife and caring mother has faded away nowadays. Anthony Giddens states that contemporary society has questioned all the principles that gave men mastery over women. These principles were:

> 1. the domination of men over the public sphere; 2. the double standard [of morality]; 3. the associated schism of women into pure (marriageable) and impure (prostitutes, harlots, concubines, witches); 4. the understanding of sexual difference as given by god, nature or biology; 5. the problematising of women as opaque or irrational in their desires and actions; 6. the sexual division of labour. (1995: 111)

He adds that the questioning of these principles has brought about the democratisation of intimacy, a fact which is closely connected to the empowerment of women.

The empowerment of women and the rise of feminism have made it possible to problematise the dominant version of masculinity which, according to Hélène Cixous, rests on a series of binary oppositions which always relegate women to the negative side: activity/passivity, reason/feelings, sexual/spiritual, public/private, culture/nature, etc (1992: 146). This new female power has put to the test the patriarchal assumption that man is strong, aggressive and sexually potent, and that he is supposed to take the iniciative in courtship, to be the breadwinner, to protect

women and children, and to be the primary head at home. As a result, the traditional version of masculinity has been challenged and regarded as a cultural construction rather than an immutable essence (Arizti 2002: 32).

Australia has gone through this transformation in gender roles too. Here the impact has been more significant, since Australia is a country whose national identity has strongly been defined by virility:

> the image of the ideal or typical Australian associated with the new nationalism of the 1890s was a decidedly masculine one, whether conceived as a pioneer, gold-miner, or bushman. The figure of the soldier or digger was added to this list by the coming of World War I, and particularly events at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, subsequently enshrined in the Australian calendar as Anzac Day. (Webby 2000: 9)

Although the concept of Australianness is still biased by traditional notions of masculinity, Australian identity is currently undergoing a process of revision and now more attention is being paid to women, migrants, Aborigines, and all those who have usually occupied a marginal position as "others" to the white, male, Western European norm (Schaffer 1988: 6). Nevertheless, despite the fact that twenty-first century Australia is considered to be multicultural, another major shift seems necessary to really achieve this, since Australia remains a country "overwhelmingly white [...,] ancestrally British, [...and] a persistent echo of the 'old memories'" can still be heard (Feingold 2007: 70).

Jennifer is the prototype of the modern independent woman, the "third woman". She is depicted as atypical, not attached to the home and lacking motherly instincts. In Scully's words: "[She] loved working, you know. She was never the type to stay in and look after the kids. That was more me" (39). Or according to Alex: "[She was] sensibly deserting domestic bliss" (157). Jennifer plays the active part of the couple. She is the one who always takes the initiative. For instance, she was the one who started courtship when she met Scully (39), or she was the one who proposed travelling around Europe and settling down in Ireland: "Used to be men who followed", comments Peter surprised (40).

Not only is Jennifer atypical, but she is married to an atypical man as well. Scully is uncommon because in their marriage he plays the role that has usually been attributed to women. He is the one in charge of the private domestic sphere. As Tim Winton explains: "Scully has been the kind of man who's stayed home, looked after the child, while his wife had a career. He's been a follower and happy to do that" (Wachtel 1997: 76). In addition, he owns characteristics usually considered feminine — for example: he is sensitive, he cries, etc (84) — and is always willing to do whatever Jennifer proposes: "Admit it, Scully, he thought. You followed, you'd follow her anywhere" (40-41). But it is vital to highlight that Scully's unusual masculine role does not contradict his portrayal as the stereotypical Australian

male: "his adeptness with his hands and his willingness to tackle hard outdoors work and improvise, his basic honesty and goodness and, it must be said, his inability to understand women" are evidence of his conformity with "the Australian of the legend" (Taylor 1998: 109).

Jennifer and Scully are opposite poles. This is emphasised by describing them in opposition in every possible aspect: beautiful/ugly, ambitious/easily safistied, middle-class/working-class, career-oriented/domestic, active/passive, intellectual/natural, etc (Arizti 2002: 39). There is also opposition between the worlds they prefer to move in. Jennifer prefers Europe — which stands for the city, culture, reason, intellect, independence, freedom, etc —, whereas Scully does not fit in Europe — except in Ireland — and prefers Australia — which symbolises the country, nature, feelings, egalitarianism, mateship, etc.

Jennifer is said to be "straight" and likes things "neat and sharp" (72). She works as a civil servant in Australia, but she hates being ordinary. She wishes to be an artist. She longs for something new, self-fulfilling, "weird, risky things" (72). She feels "safe, dull" (72), so she decides to quit her job and go to Europe. It is significant that she desires to be an artist, a profession characterised by freedom and independence, something that Jennifer desperately wants. Once, referring to the foreigners that live in Greece, Scully comments: "Jennifer found them engaging. She loved their backlog of stories, she envied the poets their old words, the sculptors their hands, idle or not, and the heirs their independence" (132).

Her reasons to leave Australia may be linked to current living conditions in that country. Although changes are going on, as has been clarified before, Australia is still a very male culture. As regards women, writer Peter Carey asserts: "Women have a tough time in Australia. And when Australian women who have lived outside Australia go back, many of them can't believe that they ever put up with it. It's no accident that we've produced Germaine Greer" (Tausky 1990: 33). What is more, Australian identity has been constructed in opposition to the British, a parental authority that represents an old-world bourgeois culture. Therefore, as Kay Schaffer declares:

> since the construction opposes the natural to the cultural, aspects of culture inherited from the parent culture (religion, intellectual and cultural pursuits generally, and also class divisions and the authority of members of the ruling class) are given negative value. Within discourse, in relation to masculine-feminine dichotomies, that which is demeaned in value is also feminized. So, the city, urban life, morals, intellectual and cultural pursuits come to be represented as derivative, inauthentic, unnatural and thus 'feminine'. (1988: 21)

Consequently, Jennifer is a woman with a cultural goal in a country which is still hostile towards both women and culture. For this reason, only outside Australia can Jennifer find some freedom as an individual and make her artistic dreams

come true. Andrew Taylor points out the significance that in the novel "artistic pretensions, even aspirations [...] are the domain of women and foreigners" (1998: 111). This may also be related to the tendency of Australians to regard all things Australian as inferior to things abroad, an attitude branded as "the cultural cringe" by A. A. Phillips in the middle of the twentieth century (Birns 2007: 2). This feeling of inferiority led many writers and artists to go abroad in search of artistic freedom and success (2007: 4). Sahlia Ben-Messahel describes Jennifer as an alienated cultural other and asserts that: "Jennifer [...] still believes in the cultural grandeur of Europe, and imagines that she can give up her life and routine with Scully and Billie in order to express herself through art. Her fascination for European culture stems from her belief that Australia is a cultural desert" (2006: 89).

Jennifer is a transgressor of patriarchy. However, she is portrayed in the negative, so the new model of woman she is representative of is depicted in a negative way too. Her negativity is mainly conveyed through her role as a mother. In sharp contrast with Scully, she is described as an incompetent mother. She favours her own interests and desires in detriment to her family, to the point of abandoning her little daughter Billie on a plane. But even before this, a reproach against modern women as mothers is made by Scully: "this stuff [motherhood] used to be automatic, you know, natural. Women aren't so keen to have them [children] anymore [...]. They've got other fish to fry, which is fair enough. But they don't realize, sometimes, what they're missing, or what they're withholding" (58). The message against Jennifer as an irresponsible mother is also conveyed through several images. For instance, through the dog that attacks Billie (176). From a patriarchal perspective, this dog — significantly owned by a woman — embodies Jennifer, a woman able to destroy her daughter by neglecting her. Another example is when Irma gives Billie some stick-on tattoos. One of them has the word "mother", but immediately afterwards, there is a tattoo with the picture of a shark (302). In this way, Jennifer and emancipated women who are mothers are connected to animals that can kill their own children (Arizti 2002: 40).

Jennifer is also an ambiguous character because she is portrayed from an archetypical perspective of femininity. This kind of ambiguity is more clearly seen when Scully dreams the following situation:

> she surfaced beneath him in the clear shade of the boat, naked and slick, breasts engorged, belly huge. Jennifer. Laughing, calling, buoyant. He didn't even hesitate. He went over the side in his sea-boots and heavy apron, the gloves greedily sucking water at his elbows, and he sank like a ballasted pot, roaring down in a trail of bubbles to the hairy, livid base of the reef where Billie waited smiling, her face ragged from sharks, her body breaking up and the shadow of the swimmer on the surface passing over like the angel of death. (253)

This scene clearly displays the stereotypical double nature ascribed to women (Creed 1994: 106). Scully sees Jennifer as desirable, attractive, fascinating. But at the same time, he finds her repulsive, horrible, dangerous. These contradictory feelings are related to the archetypical conception of women as life givers — Jennifer is pregnant, the presence of water — and life usurpers — Jennifer is compared to a shark or called "the angel of death". In relation to this, Barbara Creed argues in *The Monstruous Feminine. Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis:*

> What is most interesting about the mythological figure of woman as the source of all life is that, within patriarchal signifying practices, [...] she is reconstructed and re-presented as a *negative* figure, one associated with the dread of the generative mother seen only as the abyss, the all-incorporating black hole which threatens to reabsorb what it once birthed. (1994: 27. Original emphasis)

Therefore, the dream clearly points to male fears of woman as castrating other. Susan Lurie, challenging Freudian theory, explains that men are afraid of women, not because women are castrated, but because they can castrate, in other words, they possess a *vagina dentata*: "woman is *not* mutilated like man might be *if he were* castrated; woman is physically whole, intact and in possession of all her sexual powers. The notion of the castrated woman is a phantasy intended to ameliorate man's real fear of what woman might do to him" (in Creed 1994: 6. Original emphasis).

The fantasy of the castrating woman, found in many cultures and under different shapes, still exists in the modern world. Several images such as "knives, axes, ice picks, spiked instruments, teeth, yawning chasms, jagged rocks, the deadly *vagina dentata*" are connected to this kind of woman (Creed 1994: 151). Hence, the association of Jennifer with a fierce dog and sharks — animals provided with deadly teeth — links her to the figure of the castrating woman. Billie and Scully's scars are proof of her castrating powers. Moreover, Scully has a damaged eye and he cannot see properly with it. Blindness is also related to castration. Sigmund Freud asserts in "The Uncanny" (1919) that: "no physical injury is so much dreaded by them [children and adults] as an injury to the eye [...]. A study of dreams, phantasies and myths has taught us that anxiety about one's eyes, the fear of going blind, is often enough a substitute for the dread of being castrated" (1985: 352). There are two types of castration: genital and symbolical. The latter can be experienced by men and women alike, and it may involve loss of mother's body or breast, or loss of identity (Creed 1994: 107). In *The Riders*, the castration inflicted by Jennifer is symbolic: she deprives Billie of nourishment and a maternal body, and she also causes a loss of identity in Scully (Arizti 2002: 41).

Jennifer's depiction as a castrating being can be related to the Australian attitude towards the land. The bush has usually been imagined as feminine, which means that the ambivalence applied to women is also applied to the bush. Accordingly, the bush is regarded as an Edenic place desired to be conquered, possessed and tamed, but it is also loathed and feared because it has the power to cause defeat, madness, despair, isolation or death (Schaffer 1988: 22-23). The concept of the land as mother earth is a universal idea. But since the Australian landscape is so harsh and hostile, this idea becomes problematic here. Thus, Australians have defined their landscape as a cruel or castrating mother, something/somebody "dangerous, non-nurturing and not to be trusted" (1988: 62). However, it is necessary to clarify that this peculiar relationship with the land affects white Australians mainly. The Aborigines' connection to the land is fundamentally different from that of the white colonisers. They do not regard it as property. They are linked to it spiritually. The Aborigines have never felt the Australian land as a hostile force, but as an ally: "El aborigen, animado por el respeto que siente hacia el mundo y el medio ambiente y a su preocupación por sobrevivir, distingue en la naturaleza los signos de una complicidad y se acerca al arte del saber" (Crossman 2007: 267). The land provides them with everything they need to live: "El desierto australiano es un granero inextinguible, una tienda sin paredes, pasturas sin límites" (2007: 279). In return, they respect and look after it.

Another stereotypical way of presenting Jennifer is by not allowing her to speak. She does not really appear in the novel. We only know her through the focalisation and the memories of other characters, mainly Scully. Her silence and absence place her in a marginal position in the story. As Gayatry Spivak declares with reference to women in patriarchal systems: "she is assigned no position of enunciation [...] every one else speaks for her, so that she is rewritten continuously as the object of patriarchy [...]. She is a signifier, whose distinction is that she is shifted from one position to another without being allowed any content" (in Young 1995: 164). There seems to be an exception on page 271, when we get the point of view of a mysterious woman. This woman runs into Scully and Billie in Paris, but she hides before she is seen and watches them pass her by. The information we get about this character is so little that we can never know who she really is. It could be Jennifer, but it could also be Irma because the feelings expressed here could belong to any of them.

Jennifer's permanent silence pictures her as an enigma. We will never know why she deserts her family. But that is precisely what makes the story so interesting. For this reason, despite her absence, Jennifer is an essential and powerful character. If she had not disappeared, there would be no story — "Recovering his absent wife is the motivation for the hero's voyage" (Ben-Messahel 1998: 68) —, following in

this way the Australian literary tradition of presenting women as the source of all trouble (Arizti 2002: 34). If we knew the reasons for her behaviour, we would not find the story so intriguing. As Andrew Taylor states, her power lies in her silence: "*The Riders*, by disenabling Jennifer's ability to speak, emphasises her power, but augments her as enigma" (1998: 110). However, the downside is that her picture as a mystery helps to reinforce the myth of women as inscrutable riddles, as the "other" of men (Arizti 2002: 42). In addition, by not allowing Jennifer to speak, something that also happens with the other female characters as will be seen, the novel perfectly reflects women's powerlessness in a phallocentric society where female voices are silenced or conveniently distorted by men.

Among the multiple imagined reasons for Jennifer's desertion, the lesbian relationship with Dominique seems to be the most probable. First of all, thanks to this relationship Jennifer would not only satisfy sexual desires, but also individual and artistic, because Dominique is European and a photographer — an artist. In addition, through a lesbian relationship Jennifer would defy patriarchy "not only in neglecting her duties as a mother and wife but also in favouring an unproductive gay relationship over the heterosexual norm" (Arizti 2002: 41). Therefore, her relationship with Dominique would mean more than just being unfaithful to Scully, it would be another step to challenge the patriarchal society she lives in.

3. IRMA

Irma is also characterised in the negative. She is another version of the dangerous woman, the stereotypical Circe (Taylor 1998: 109) or Calypso (Ben-Messahel 1998: 70) in Homer's *Odyssey*. She appears in the middle of the story and threatens to put a stop to Scully's physical and introspective journey: "He knew now that he had to get free of her. She was like a foul wind, the whispering breath of nightmares" (223). She is a castrating woman who "promises paradise in order to ensnare her victims" (Creed 1994: 106). As Irma defines herself: "I'm the good, the bad and the ugly" (225). She is constantly trying to excite Scully sexually (212, 305) and Scully sometimes refers to her as a whore (220, 303). She is often compared to a snake (302, 305) — the symbol of temptation and sin par excellence. She is also associated with objects such as a knife, a too-wide mouth, teeth, nails, a cigarette, etc (202, 302, 312), which depict her as a castrating woman, that is, provided with a *vagina dentata*.

Scully's journey follows the archetypal journey of the hero described by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). After tracing virtually all the mythologies of the world, Campbell establishes a constant that can be found in narrative everywhere. Somebody sets off on a journey full of obstacles to fulfill a

special mission. When this person returns, they will have stregthened their own personal identity. In the light of Campbell's description of this journey, Irma comes to represent the temptress of the hero's — Scully's — quest. At this stage of the journey, the ambiguous nature of woman is clearly shown because she no longer stands for life but for evil. She becomes "the queen of sin". Thus, she has to be rejected so that the hero can succeed (1973: 122-123).

Irma poses a further threat to Scully. Since she gets on so well with Billie, she may steal her from him: "Last night this woman had his wallet open and this morning she was dressing his kid. She's moving in on you, mate" (220). The reason why Billie likes Irma is because she is similar to Scully (322). Both are childish, drink a lot, have marks on their bodies — scars and bruises —, but above all, both are dependent beings who have been abandoned. Regarding their dependent nature, an ironic situation arises. Scully is so attached to his wife that he sets off on a journey around the world to find her. Irma is in the same situation: "'We're in the same boat [...] I mean our situation. I'm abandoned too.'" (217). She has been abandoned by her lover, and as she does not have a strong sense of identity, she needs somebody to stick to, so she follows Scully everywhere. Consequently, what Irma is doing to Scully is an ironic and grotesque representation of what Scully is doing to Jennifer. In this way, both chases are presented as crazy and suffocating for the victims. This repetition can also be described as uncanny, as defined by Sigmund Freud. According to him, repetition, when it is involuntary, produces a feeling of uncanniness. Therefore, "what would otherwise be innocent enough" becomes uncanny "and forces upon us the idea of something fateful and inescapable when otherwise we should have spoken only of 'chance'" (1985: 359-360). He goes on to claim that in the unconscious mind there is a compulsion to repeat, which probably lies in the natural instincts of the human being, "a compulsion [...] lending to certain aspects of the mind their daemonic character" (1985: 360-361), and whatever reminds us of this inner compulsion is perceived as uncanny.

Irma also serves to bring to light the violent side of Scully (226-227). The violence inflicted on Irma is caused by the arousal of Scully's masculine side because he is afraid of being castrated, "of being weakened by the woman [...] infected by her femininity" (Creed 1988: 162). This explains why he is able to make ill use of her in Paris: he drops her after having sex, steals her money, does not pay the bill of the hotel and writes an unkind message on the bathroom mirror (315). At the same time, this course of action offers him the opportunity to take revenge on Jennifer for her desertion (Ben-Messahel 1998: 70).

It is important to point out that Irma's negativity is only transmitted through Scully's male-biased focalisation. As happens with Jennifer, Irma is not allowed a position of enuntiation. We can never hear her own voice, so she cannot define

herself. She appears as an object of patriarchy, something that can be used and dropped without further consequences, as Scully's behaviour towards her seems to prove. It is only when we briefly get Billie's focalisation that we get a different version of Irma. Thanks to this, Scully's version is put to the test: "She felt bad about her. Irma wasn't a real grown up. She was little inside, but her heart was big. One day Scully would see that. Irma wasn't a statue [...]. She was just like Scully. Maybe that's why Billie liked her. Yes, she'd find them and Billie wouldn't mind at all. All anyone needed was a good heart" (322). Billie's perspective contributes to portraying Irma as a more complex being. It makes us realise that there is something more that we cannot see. According to Tim Winton, it is like Hemingway's idea of the story as iceberg because we can only see the tip, but there is a lot more underneath (McGirr 1999: 115). It is precisely this fact that reinforces the mystery that surrounds Irma, as is the case with Jennifer. Unfortunately, these women pay a high price for their association with mystery, since it comes from their portrayal as negative archetypes.

4. BILLIE

Billie is the typical child in Winton's fiction, that is, she is a "little-woman" (168), too mature for her age. She is seven years old and maintains a very good relationship with her father, since she has always been more in touch with him than with her mother. He is the one who has looked after her, an unusual role for a man, but something that Billie loves and appreciates: "She feels sorry for kids with ordinary fathers. They only made one Scully" (83).

Despite Scully's strong love of her daughter, he becomes so obsessed with the search for his wife that he neglects Billie. In relation to this, Tim Winton comments: "He runs the real risk of destroying his daughter in the search for her mother. He thinks he's doing the right thing but is liable to destroy what he has left" (McGirr 1999: 118). A different interpretation of the dog's attack on Billie provides us with a physical proof — her bruised face — of her father's neglect. Dogs are domesticated animals whose well-known feature is loyalty, but as happens in this case, they can sometimes turn wild and kill. The following parallels can be drawn between Scully and the dog of the novel: firstly, both are domesticated beings and owned by a woman — Jennifer, in the case of Scully —, and secondly, both turn mad and wild in the story. Another symbol of Scully's neglect is the doll on the river. Scully tries to save a doll that is floating on the river, but he fails (293). This can be seen as a foreshadow of what might happen to Billie if he continues with his crazy quest: he might lose her and see her go away, as he sees the doll float away.

Billie is the only female character presented in the positive. She is also the only female with a voice of her own. Her moments of focalisation are few and short, but they offer a more realistic perspective. They help to make us realise Scully's distortion or idealisation of other characters and events. At the beginning, she does not talk to anybody at all. The following explanation is suggested by the author: "She is traumatised, I imagine [...] she knows what took place at the airport and it's as though she knows way too much to bear. She's protecting herself and him [Scully] from the truth, I think. Maybe" (McGirr 1999: 114). But if she talked, if she told Scully what she knows, Scully's quest would not start. In this way, her temporary silence carries the same weight as Jennifer's in two aspects: firstly, in the process of educating Scully, and secondly, as a way of giving an intriguing touch to the story.

Billie grows more powerful as the novel develops. She guides Scully, forced by his immature behaviour. They interchange roles, so she ends up being the child-carer, the nurturing mother. She leads him to the houseboat in Amsterdam, which is described as a "cocoon" (368), a metaphorical womb where Scully — the hero — goes to be born again (Campbell 1973: 91). Besides, it is Billie that saves him and makes him come back to the real world. She makes him leave the boat and return home when she phones Peter (370). And at the end of the novel, she pulls Scully away from the riders. The riders are mysterious figures. Scully sees them twice in front of a ruined castle at night: the first time just before the beginning of his journey (79-81), and the second time after returning home at the end of the story. The figure of the rider in the novel can be read as a metaphor for Scully's inner battle to achieve a strong identity. A rider is somebody who controls a horse, and from a more general view, it can be said that a rider is somebody who masters hostile forces. Scully is in search of his own identity, so he has to get to know and dominate himself. However, if he enters the castle with the other riders, his identity, and thus himself, will be lost there forever. By preventing Scully from joining the riders, Billie saves him (377). The fact that she is Scully's saviour is reminded over and over in the story, as the next fragment illustrates:

> snagged by the hair in the huge bare tree. Scully. Crying, he was, calling out, begging for help and no one down there in the deep mud moving at all [...]. Billie just prayed for an angel, prayed and prayed [...] and suddenly someone else was up there [...]. Billie saw it now, it was her up there, Billie Ann Scully [...]. A silver flash. She saw it, the little glowing hand reaching out with the scissors open [...] cutting his hair free so that he fell, calm and still [...]. Billie saw herself up there, the crying girl with wings, slumped in the tree like a bird. (289-290)

On this ground, Billie fits the functions of the goddess that the hero meets in his quest. Joseph Campbell explains that: "As he [the hero] progresses in the

slow initiation which is life, the form of the goddess undergoes for him a series of transfigurations: she can never be greater than himself, though she can always promise more than he is yet capable of comprehending. She lures, she guides, she bids him burst his fetters" (1973: 116).

Furthermore, Billie can be seen as the ideal woman of the future, somebody able to combine feminine and masculine qualities (Arizti 2002: 43). In the novel she is depicted as an androgynous being. For instance, she has a masculine name (Ben-Messahel 1998: 69) and she is often compared to an angel (290, 351), that is, an asexual being. Moreover, she is still a child, so the sexual organs that can mark her more clearly as a woman are not totally developed. Regarding her androgynous qualities, she can be related to the male-female gods that are often found in mythology (Arizti 2002: 41). According to Campbell, when the integration of opposites takes place at the end of the hero's quest, the image of the divine is recollected and wisdom regained (1973: 153-154). Thus, Billie does not only embody the masculine and the feminine, but also all sorts of femininity. Scully takes part in this defiance too — in his case, regarding masculinity — because, thanks to Billie's help, he is finally able to integrate his feminine and masculine sides (Arizti 2002: 44-45). Accordingly, at the end of the novel Scully succeeds in forming a fuller identity, he recovers control of himself, and accepts his new life without Jennifer.

5. CONCLUSION

The Riders is a novel that conveys contradictory messages about women. On the one hand, Jennifer and Irma are portrayed from an archetypical male perspective. Both are seen as ambiguous, and thus unreliable beings, whose only function is to cause trouble to the male protagonist. What is more, Jennifer is regarded as an irresponsible mother who gives priority to her own interests over her family's. Consequently, the new type of independent woman she represents is severely critisised. However, on the other hand, there is Billie, a female viewed in the positive. She is used as a symbol of the ideal union of the masculine and feminine qualities that every person should have in order to get rid of prejudices and achieve more egalitarian roles for men and women in society. That is precisely how Billie saves her father: she helps him to come to terms with his masculine and feminine side.

Tim Winton defies notions of masculinity is his stories, but he often reinforces female archetypes, as my analysis of *The Riders* proves. It may be argued that *The Riders* is male-biased because it is focalised mainly through Scully, since he is the centre of the novel. It is exactly the lack of other non-male perspectives that prevents the novel from challenging female stereotypes. The moments in which Billie acts as a focaliser are few and far between, so they fail to demystify Jennifer and Irma. Although the ending promotes the integration of the culturally

constructed masculine and feminine qualities as personified in the character of Billie, this does not serve to erase the negative images that have been ascribed to Jennifer and Irma from the very beginning. Therefore, it can be said that *The Riders* contributes to spreading deep-rooted conceptions of women that go against the pluralism of contemporary female roles.

REFERENCES

Aguiar, S. A. 2001. *The Bitch Is Back. Wicked Women in Literature*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press.

Arizti, B. 2002. "The Crisis of Masculinity in Tim Winton's *The Riders*". *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* 24 (2): Spring 2002: 29-45.

Auerbach, N. 1982. *Woman and the Demon. The Life of a Victorian Myth*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press.

Ben-Messahel, S. 1998. "The Boomerang Effect of Time and History in Tim Winton's Fictionalized Australia". *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* 21(1): Autumn 1998: 63-71.

Ben-Messahel, S. 2006. *Mind the Country. Tim Winton's Fiction*. Crawley: University of Western Australia Press.

Birns, N. and R. McNeer, eds. 2007. *A Companion to Australian Literature since 1900*. Rochester, New York: Camden Press.

Campbell, J. 1973 (1949). *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Bollingen Series XVII.

Cixous, H. 1992 (1986). "Sorties". *A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*. Eds. A. Easthope, and K. McGowan. Buckingham: Open University Press. 146-157.

Creed, B. 1994 (1993). *The Monstruous Feminine. Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. London, New York: Routledge.

Crossman, S. and J. P. Barou. 2007. *Saberes indígenas. Estudios sobre los tibetanos, los navajo y los aborígenes*. Castellón: Ellago Ediciones.

Dickson, A., ed. 1985. *Art and Literature: Jensen's Gradiva, Leonardo da Vinci and Other Works*. Vol. 14. Harmondsworth: Penguin. Penguin Freud Library.

Easthope, A. and K. McGowan, eds. 1992. *A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Feingold, R. 2007. "From Empire to Nation: The Shifting Sands of Australian National Identity". *A Companion to Australian Literature since 1900*. Eds. N. Birns, and R. McNeer. Rochester, New York: Camden House. 61-71.

Freud, S. 1985 (1919). "The Uncanny". *Art and Literature: Jensen's Gradiva, Leonardo da Vinci and Other Works*. Vol. 14. Ed. A. Dickson. Harmondsworth: Penguin. Penguin Freud Library. 339-376.

Giddens, A. 1995 (1992). *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Erotism in Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lipovetsky, G. 1999 (1997). *La tercera mujer. Permanencia y revolución de lo femenino*. Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama.

McGirr, M. 1999. *Tim Winton: The Writer and His Work*. South Yarra: Macmillan.

Poal Marcet, G. 1993. *Entrar, quedarse, avanzar. Aspectos psicosociales de la relación mujer-mundo laboral*. Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno.

Schaffer, K. 1988. *Women and the Bush: Forces of Desire in an Australian Cultural Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tausky, T. E. 1990. "Getting the Corner Right. An Interview with Peter Carey". *Australian and New Zealand Studies in Canada* 4: 27-38.

Taylor, A. 1998. "Tim Winton's *The Riders*. A Construction of Difference". *Westerly*, Spring 1998: 99-112.

Wachtel, E. 1997. "Eleanor Wachtel with Tim Winton". *Malahat Review* 121, Winter 1997: 63-81.

Webby, E., ed. 2000. *The Cambridge Companion to Australian Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Winton, T. 1994. *The Riders*. London: Picador.

Young, R. 1995 (1990). *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*. London and New York: Routledge.

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES - VOLUME 8 (2010), 23-56

THE LANGUAGE OF WOUNDS AND SCARS IN EDWIDGE DANTICAT'S *THE DEW BREAKER*, A CASE STUDY IN TRAUMA SYMPTOMS AND THE RECOVERY PROCESS

AITOR IBARROLA ARMENDARIZ*
University of Deusto

ABSTRACT. *This article examines the representation of a violent and traumatizing past in Edwidge Danticat's* The Dew Breaker *(2004), a collection of short stories that depicts the effects of a torturer's atrocious crimes on the lives of his victims and their descendants. The contribution argues that this work of fiction by the Haitian-American writer is structured upon the principle that traumatic experiences can only become intelligible – and, therefore, "representable" – by considering the severe psychical wounds and scars they leave on the victims. These scars habitually take the form of paranoia, nightmares, ghostly presences, schizophrenia, and "dead spots" that have a very difficult time finding their place in the protagonists' consciousness and language. In spite of the fragmented and discontinuous character of these representations, the writer manages to unveil the kind of psychological and social dysfunctions that often surface when people have not fully accepted or assimilated aspects of the past that keep itching in their unconscious. However, despite the prevailingly bleak tone of the stories, Danticat still leaves some room for hope and recovery, as many of the victims find ways to come to terms with and overcome those individual and collective dysfunctions.*

Keywords: Haitian history, Edwidge Danticat, violence, memory, trauma theory, recovery strategies.

* Correspondence should be sent to: Dr. Aitor Ibarrola Armendariz. University of Deusto. Dept. of Modern Languages, Facultad de CC. Sociales y Humanas, Apdo. 1, 48080. Bilbao, Spain. Email: aitor.ibarrola@deusto.es

AITOR IBARROLA ARMENDARIZ

EL IDIOMA DE LAS HERIDAS Y LAS CICATRICES EN *THE DEW BREAKER* DE EDWIDGE DANTICAT, UN ANÁLISIS DE LOS SÍNTOMAS DEL TRAUMA Y DEL PROCESO DE RECUPERACIÓN

RESUMEN. *Este artículo estudia la representación de un pasado violento y traumático en* The Dew Breaker *(2004), una colección de relatos que muestra las consecuencias que los atroces crímenes de un torturador tienen en las vidas de sus víctimas y de los descendientes de éstas. El trabajo mantiene que esta obra de la escritora haitiana está estructurada de acuerdo al principio de que las experiencias traumáticas sólo se hacen inteligibles – y, por lo tanto, "representables" – cuando se tienen en cuenta las profundas heridas y cicatrices que dejan en las víctimas inocentes. Estas cicatrices tienden a aparecer representadas en forma de paranoias, pesadillas, presencias fantasmagóricas, esquizofrenias, y "zonas muertas" que sólo consiguen abrirse paso con dificultad en la conciencia y el discurso de los protagonistas. A pesar de lo discontinuas y fragmentadas que resultan estas representaciones, la escritora logra hacer evidentes la clase de disfunciones psicológicas y sociales que con frecuencia surgen cuando la gente no ha aceptado o asimilado del todo aspectos de un pasado todavía latentes en su subconsciente. Sin embargo, a pesar del tono trágico de los relatos, Danticat descubre ciertos espacios para la esperanza y la recuperación, ya que muchas de las víctimas encuentran la manera de aceptar y superar esas disfunciones individuales y colectivas.*

Palabras clave: historia de Haití, Edwidge Danticat, violencia, memoria, teoría del trauma, estrategias de recuperación.

Received 03 April 2010
Revised version accepted 10 June 2010

The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma. People who have survived atrocities often tell their stories in a highly emotional, contradictory, and fragmented manner that undermines their credibility and thereby serves the twin imperatives of truth-telling and secrecy. When the truth is finally recognized, survivors can begin their recovery. But far too often secrecy prevails, and the story of the traumatic event surfaces not as verbal narrative but as a symptom.

Judith L. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*

> In the dark, listening to her aunt conduct entire conversations in her sleep, he realized that aside from blood, she and he shared nocturnal habits. They were both palannits, night talkers, people who wet their beds not with urine but with words. He too spoke his dreams aloud in the night, to the point of sometimes jolting himself awake with the sound of his own voice. Usually he could remember only the very last words he spoke, but remained with a lingering sensation that he had been talking, laughing, and at times crying all night long.
>
> Edwidge Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*

1. INTRODUCTION: HAITI HISTORY REVISITED

One could argue that revisiting Haiti's agonizing and violence-ridden history only a few weeks after a 7.0-strength earthquake hit the island on January 12, 2010, may seem like a sadistic exercise all too prone to fall into deterministic interpretations that leave little space for the analysis of the impact of human agency on the predicament of a country. And yet, it is usually at these peak moments of material devastation and destitution that the First-World nations turn their eyes – if not for too long – towards areas of the globe that, otherwise, remain utterly forgotten or only sporadically heard about. Of course, a death toll that may soon rise above the 200,000 mark could hardly have gone unnoticed in a world that, at least regarding communication technologies, is growing increasingly interconnected. Which is good, for medical teams and equipment, and relief supplies, would never have reached the island with the required urgency if news reports had not made apparent the magnitude of the catastrophe. But beyond this, and more importantly perhaps, images of the unprecedented destruction have also served the purpose of raising the viewers' awareness of the real conditions in the country *before* the natural disaster took place. As a report in *Times Magazine* pointed out:

> […] Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere, can't and shouldn't simply be restored to what it was before the quake. The catastrophic death toll was a result not so much of the earthquake's strength but of Haiti's history of corruption, its shoddy buildings and ultimately its poverty. As we have seen in the aftermath of previous disasters, rebuilding takes time, commitment and sustained funding – and in Haiti's case, they're especially important. What's at stake goes beyond that nation's shores. (Walsh *et al*. 2010: 24)

While few people would disagree with this last statement, what history shows is that this is, by no means, the first time in which the future of the country has depended on somebody else's willingness to help. Unfortunately, as Flood rightly notes, Haiti's recurrent calls for attention and assistance from the rest of the world have usually been "rewarded with centuries of invasion, blackmail, the robbery of Haiti's natural resources and the impoverishment of its people" (2010: 1).

According to Edouard Glissant, one of the foremost specialists in Caribbean identities and cultural expressions, when talking about the modern history of Haiti, it is more accurate to speak of a "non-history" (1997: 62), since, from the very moment in which Europeans reached the island of Hispaniola in December 1492, the place has been plagued by crimes and brutal exploitation that have made it quite impossible for its people to build a collective memory to give shape and sense to the events taking place on the island. Any quick survey of the recorded history of the territory is likely to leave one shocked by the fast succession of emperors, kings, revolutionaries, dictators, and for-life presidents who have misruled the land for over five hundred years. Farmer, among others, has shown that in most cases the blatant thefts and corruption that have historically governed Haitian politics find their origin in foreign interventions and the kind of popular uprisings that usually responded to them (2003). The first instance of such insurrections took place, in fact, only one year after Columbus reached the shores of the Caribbean isle, when the Taíno natives destroyed the fort of La Natividad, which the Spaniards had built to conduct their feudal-colonial form of government. As Columbus wrote in his log, when he returned the following year, he found the fort reduced to ashes and his men's corpses scattered on the beach (Cohen 1969: 127 & ff.). The Spanish explorer learnt later on that the natives had risen up against his men due to their cruel mistreatment of the Taíno workers and the kidnapping of their women.

Of course, the tensions in Spanish-Indian relations did not finish with this incident. The Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas chronicled in his well-know *Very Brief Relation* the hair-raising atrocities that the Taínos suffered under the rule of the Spanish conquistadors who, apart from implanting the vicious plantation system of *encomiendas y repartimientos*, frequently punished the natives by cutting their limbs off, bleeding them to death or burning them alive. Several Taíno chiefs led uprisings and revolts in the mountainous regions of the island but most of them, weakened by disease and starvation, ended up in brutal human massacres. It is little wonder that by the early 1520s – only 30 years after Europeans had reached the New World – over 85 percent of the Taíno population had died as a result of either the infamous labor system or the highly infectious illnesses that the newcomers brought from the Old World.

With the near-extinction of the native inhabitants of the island, African slaves were brought over to the sugar plantations by the Spaniards, as an ever-growing number of hands was needed to make their business profitable. Césaire and Glissant speak of the slave trade in these colonial contexts as a case of "traumatic dislocation", (1981; 1997) since it entailed not only the forced transportation of black disposable bodies across the Atlantic but, to be usable in the plantation system, they also needed to be fully deprived of consciousness of who they were

and where they came from. In order to consummate this complete erasure of their shared memories, black slaves were subjected to all kinds of physical and psychological tortures that inevitably generated absences, silences, and negations as the essential ingredients of their traumatic past. As Gilroy has maintained, "plantation slavery was more than just a system of labour and a distinct mode of racial domination. […] it provided the foundations for a distinctive network of economic, social, and political relations" (1993: 55). One would have to be really naïve not to see the elongated shadow of this distinctive network of relations working its way through the history of a country that has been mostly characterized by coups and disruptions, not to mention the interferences from outside. It is no coincidence that by the 1530s plantation owners had already begun to refer to the natives, blacks, and maroons who offered some resistance to their dehumanizing rule as *cimarrones* or "wild animals". The tendency among Euro-Americans to describe the inhabitants of this half of the island in animalistic terms has remained a constant throughout their history and has contributed to the perpetuation of the image of Haitian people as ungovernable.

When the Spanish settlers became aware that the chances of finding gold and silver were much greater in the American mainland – Mexico and South America – some insular colonies went into decline. As a result of the increasing poverty in the second half of the 16th century, the social boundaries among the different ethnic groups started to break down and a good deal of the population came to be of mixed Taíno, Spanish, and African descent. Puri and others have argued that racial and cultural hybridity have been one of the most outstanding characteristics of Antillean societies from those early days (2004: 2). This does not mean, however, that social stratification did not occur along racial lines; in fact, the plantation system continued to be an effective way of preventing most coloured people from gaining access to the resources and social power structures in the land. By the early 17th century, the Spanish settlers were afraid of slave revolts and pirate attacks in the outer settlements and, as a result, most of the population was obliged to move closer to Santo Domingo. The effects of this forced migration, known now as the *devastaciones* (devastations), could not have been more disastrous: on the one hand, half the people died of starvation and epidemic diseases and, on the other, the settlements abandoned on the northern and western coasts of the island were captured by French, British, and Dutch buccaneers.

Haggerty has documented the first French settlements on the island of Tortuga, off the northern coast of today's Haiti (1989). In the first half of the 17th century, most of these adventurers were outlaws who managed to survive by assaulting Spanish ships and hunting wild animals. Finally, King Louis XIV established the first official colony on Tortuga in 1659 and, soon after, the new French West India

Company took control over this territory and also claimed the western part of the island of Hispaniola, which was named Saint-Domingue. The imperialist conflict over this part of the island came to an end in 1697 with the Treaty of Ryswick, which gave to France one third of the total surface of the isle. Soon the fertile lands around the main northern port of Cap-François attracted numerous French planters who, with the support of the King, made huge fortunes from the intensive crops of sugar, tobacco, coffee, cotton, and indigo. But the rapid expansion of the economy in the colony in the first half of the 18th century also meant an intensification of the slave trade, since it is estimated that one third of the Africans died within the first two years after their arrival and half of them did not last longer than five years on the plantations. The *Code Noir* imposed by Louis XIV, which was originally intended to grant some basic human rights to the slaves, also approved brutal corporal punishments if they did not show due respect and submission to the master. James states that although an average of 25,000 slaves were brought to the island each year during the second half of the 18th century, the black population hardly ever surpassed 500,000 and was in constant need of being replenished by new slaves stolen from the western coast of Africa (1963: 55). Although there were not many survivors of this vicious system of exploitation, it may be worthwhile retrieving the voice of one of the few, Henri Christophe's personal secretary, who reported the obnoxious abuses:

> Have they not hung up men with heads downward, drowned them in sacks, crucified them on planks, buried them alive, crushed them in mortars? Have they not forced them to eat excrement? And, having flayed them with the lash, have they not cast them alive to be devoured by worms, or onto anthills, or lashed them to stakes in the swamps to be devoured by the mosquitoes? Have they not thrown them into boiling cauldrons of cane syrup? (Qted. in Farmer 2003: 64)

Two significant consequences originated from the continuous mistreatment and annihilation that Africans suffered in the Caribbean colonies. To start with, the fact that the cruel plantation system never allowed a natural increase of their population meant that it could never adapt and be integrated in the receiving societies. Many specialists have referred to the strong influence of some aspects of Western African cultures in countries such as Haiti. One example often given to illustrate this continuing influence is the folk religion called *voudou*, which combines elements of traditional ancestor worship among many African tribes with other elements borrowed from the Catholic liturgy. As will be seen below, voodoo has been used and misused by revolutionary and political black leaders throughout Haitian history to provide a kind of socio-cultural "glue" that would bring their people together whenever they felt that exogenous forces could threaten their own traditions and way of life. The second consequence of the plantation economy is,

in fact, related to these early versions of cultural nationalism, since many of the revolts in the second half of the 18th century were organized by escaped slaves who preached the destruction of the plantation system and the expulsion of the white colonists. These uprisings were led by rebels such as François Mackandal and Vincent Ogé, who took some of the abandoned plantations and claimed new rights for the maroon and black population. Both of them suffered, however, very cruel public executions and, despite the differences in number (in 1790 there were about 40,000 white settlers and over half a million enslaved Africans), racial discrimination remained a common practice. It is true, though, that the growing number of mulattoes on the island (about 25,000) were born free and some came to own extensive plots of land – almost one third of the plantation property –, becoming quite wealthy by the time of the French Revolution.

When the white colonists realized that these *gens de couleur* were gathering too much power and beginning to gain a status similar to their own – for the Revolutionary government in France had granted them full citizenship –, they began to enact a number of statutes that banned them from certain occupations, forbade them to marry white women or excluded them from a number of social activities. Because the republic was at war with Britain and Spain in the early 1790s, though, they were forced to make concessions to the black republicans dominating the northern part of the island, and many slaves were freed by their colored landowners. It was in late August 1791 that the Haitian Revolution proper began, led in the Cap-Français area by a Houngan (voodoo) priest named Dutty Boukman, who burnt down many of the plantations of the region. Although he was captured and summarily executed, the revolt spread very quickly to other parts of the colony. France then sent the commander Léger-Felicité Sonthonax to try to stabilize the situation by proclaiming the freedom of slaves – which was already a *de facto* reality –, although with some limits, of course. With the assistance of British settlers, many white planters resisted the application of the new policy, and it was only in February 1794, when the French National Assembly ratified the abolition of slavery in all their colonies, that Toussaint L'Ouverture and his well-disciplined army of former slaves started to play a key role in the colonial conflict. After defeating and driving back the British in 1797, L'Ouverture – with Jean-Jaques Dessalines and Henry Christophe – became the real ruler of the colony. Four years on, L'Ouverture was already in control of the whole island, after taking the eastern part of the territory from the Spaniards, and immediately abolishing slavery. However, Napoleon sent a huge army to re-conquer the colony and re-establish the plantation system under his brother-in-law Charles Leclerc. The armed conflict that ensued was among the bloodiest ever to have been fought in the Caribbean with over 40,000 casualties on each side, many of them caused by the yellow fever and malaria that appeared with the rainy season in 1802 (Cf. James 1963: 355).

Toussaint L'Ouverture never saw the end of the conflict and the declaration of independence of his country, as he was captured and deported to France, where he died in prison. Generals Dessalines and François Capois led the revolutionary army which, outraged by the brutality of the French – they hanged, burned alive, drowned, and tortured their prisoners – paid their enemies back the same way. Napoleon finally had to abandon his idea of restoring France's New World empire, as Dessalines and his troops defeated the French army at the Battle of Vertières in November 1803. Two months later, on the first day of 1804, the General declared the independence of the country and renamed it, using the indigenous term "Haiti". But, unlike L'Ouverture, Dessalines showed absolutely no mercy with the French troops and civilians that were left behind and, according to Heiln he slaughtered over 3,000 whites in the days following the Declaration of Independence (1996: 122-25). This bloodbath had very harmful effects on the image of the new nation abroad, and most European powers refused to recognize its sovereignty. As James (1963: 390) observes, despite the significance of the hemispheric event, which set hundreds of thousands of enslaved individuals free and later helped decisively in the abolition of slavery elsewhere, the episode has been underrepresented in most world histories and was even unknown to outstanding political analysts of the day. But as if this almost complete lack of recognition by foreign powers were not enough, the aftermath of the revolution made it clear that, ironically, Haiti's future was not going to be any brighter than before.

When France finally recognized the independence of the county in 1825, it was at a price of 150 million gold francs as compensation for "lost property" (land, slaves, machinery, etc.). In order to force Haiti to pay this debt, France, Britain, and the U.S. imposed a very rigid embargo which, basically, excluded the country from all the important world markets. From the beginning, the government was forced to ask for high-interest loans, which have constantly crippled their economy. Moreover, as is the case in many Third-World nations, the revolution was almost immediately followed by a coup d'état and a civil war – between Christophe and Pétion – that did nothing but to throw the country back into its earlier state of chaos. It is true that Haiti helped Simon Bolívar with his liberation of South American territories from Spanish rule, but this was at a cost of being almost perpetually in a state of bankruptcy. Although the above-mentioned debt to France was reduced to 90 million francs, still the country was not able to pay it until 1947. Pétion's successor, Jean-Pierre Boyer, came to power soon after Christophe committed suicide in 1820, and for a period of over twenty years he achieved the unity of the island. This came to an end in 1844, when a nationalist group called "La Trinidad" led a revolt in the eastern part of the island and the Dominican Republic was born as a result. What followed during the second half of the 19th century was a long period of political instability caused by the conflicts between the dominant classes and different

foreign business corporations. Leaders all-too-fond of calling themselves emperors, kings, or generals came to power to last rarely more than three or four years. There were periods – such as the 1870s and 1880s, under Domingue and Salomon – of peace and respite, when the Haitian economy and cultural life seemed at last to flourish. However, recovering from the shocks of over thirty coups in less than a century was not an easy task, and it became impossible when foreign nations began to intervene in Haitian politics in the last decade of the 19th century.

In Chapter 8 of his book *Year 501: The Conquest Continues*, Chomsky explains that from 1888 on the US Marines made their presence felt in Haitian waters, and in 1914 they invaded the island in response to a peasant insurrection which broke out as a result of the despotism of the last five presidents, who were either killed or escaped into exile between 1911 and 1915 (1993: 197 & ff.). Although the political situation in the country had become quite unsustainable, it was also evident that Americans had grown apprehensive of the role that a few hundred Germans were beginning to play in the economy of the nation. The German community, mostly composed of traders and entrepreneurs, had integrated very successfully in the local, land-owning aristocracy and were already financing some of the new industries and the commerce on the island. The U.S. saw this fact as a serious threat to their own interests and the State Department supported a consortium of investors that were to take control of the National Bank of Haiti and the government Treasury. The occupation of the island by U.S. troops lasted twenty years and, in fact, it meant a throwback to the plantation economy, as laws were passed to force peasant freeholders to work as unpaid hands building roads and other infrastructures to make the businesses of American companies profitable. Although the military forces were withdrawn in 1934, the U.S. remained in control of the country's economy and finances until the end of the following decade. And this brings us to the period about that we hear about, if mostly only obliquely, in Edwidge Danticat's *The Dew Breaker* (2004): the corrupt and bloodthirsty Duvalier dictatorship which lasted almost three decades, from 1957 to 1986.

Although, as several reviewers have remarked, specific references to the brutal regime are few, by the end of the collection of short stories we come to understand that every character has been touched by the disruption and violence that underlie Haiti's history (Charles 2004; Marshall 2004). The Duvalier era (which comprises the dictatorships of François "*Papa Doc*" Duvalier and his son, Jean-Claude "*Baby Doc*") was characterized by replicating in a more intense manner the corruption and repression that had governed the politics of the country in earlier periods. As becomes evident in the stories "Monkey Tails" and "The Dew Breaker", both regimes managed to instil terror by combining the exploitation of voodoo and black magic rituals with the extreme violence against political opponents practiced

by a paramilitary police – popularly known as the *tonton macoutes* – which Duvalier father created soon after his accession to power. In fact, the so-called "Volunteers for National Security" were nothing but death squads made up of poor and uneducated men who were kept loyal by being given land confiscated from other peasants. It is estimated that well over 30,000 Haitians were murdered during the Duvalier era by methods of torture not easily conceived by even the most sadistic minds. About the title character in Danticat's book we read that

> [t]he way he acted at the inquisitions in his own private cell at Casernes eventually earned him a lofty reputation among his peers. He was the one who came up with the most physically and psychologically taxing trials for the prisoners in his block. He was suffering, he knew it now from what one of his most famous victims, the novelist Jacques Alexis, had written was the greatest hazard of the job. Tu deviens un véritable gendarme, un bourreau. It was becoming like any other job. He liked questioning the prisoners, teaching them to play zo and bezik, stapling clothespins to their ears as they lost and removing them as he let them win, convincing them that their false victories would save their lives. He liked to paddle them with braided cowhide, stand on their cracking backs and jump up and down like a drunk on a trampoline, pound a rock on the protruding bone behind their earlobes until they couldn't hear the orders he was shouting at them, tie blocks of concrete to the end of sisal ropes and balance them off their testicles if they were men or their breasts if they were women.
>
> When one of the women who had been his prisoner at Casarnes was interviewed three decades later for a documentary film in her tiny restaurant in Miami's Little Haiti neighborhood, the gaunt, stoop-shouldered octogenarian, it was said, would stammer for an hour before finally managing to speak, pausing for a breath between each word. She couldn't remember his name, nor could she even imagine what he might look like these days, yet she swore she could never get him out of her head. (Danticat 2005: 197-198)

According to Herman and Scarry, this endless fluctuation between forgetting and recalling those awful memories is typical in trauma victims who find it difficult to articulate the horrors that have left them maimed for life (1992; 1985). *The Dew Breaker*, as Dorsía Smith explains, "reconstructs the Macoutes' violent reign by collecting the memories of those Haitians who suffered under their vindictive rule" (2007: 133). The book is especially successful in representing the effects – nightmares, ghostly figures, paranoic conduct, etc. – of the terrible violence described above on the victims and their continuing influence on the turmoil, economic decline, and political volatility of the country. Predictably, poverty and lack of education soared during this period, and thousands of Haitians decided to flee the country. Thomson has recently argued that this period has contributed decisively to the myth of Haiti as "a pariah, excluded from the family of nations and trapped in a time warp where there was little room for progress" (2010).

Without ever pontificating, Danticat's collection offers a redemptive picture of the reasons that make it so complicated for people who have lived for so long in a historical spiral of repression and violence to recover from their psychologically and physically crippled condition.

2. A TYPOLOGY OF TRAUMATIC *SEQUELAE* IN DANTICAT'S *THE DEW BREAKER*

In her collection of essays *Unclaimed Experience*, Cathy Caruth remarks that "trauma is not locatable in the simple violent and original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely not known in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on" (1996: 4). Indeed, the brutality of the original event often assails the victims with such abruptness that their minds are unable to fully recognize the damage that is being inflicted upon them. Furthermore, when the violence is so generalized and has become so unremitting as has been the case in some Latin American and Caribbean countries during the 20th century, victims are likely to repress their experiences in their unconscious to the extent that, eventually, they may not be readily available in their memory. In an attempt to explain these bouts of amnesia, Hayden White observes that "the notion of the historical event has undergone radical transformation as a result of the occurrence in our century of events of a scope, scale, and depth unimaginable by earlier historians and the dismantling of the concept of the event as an object of a specifically scientific kind of knowledge" (1999: 72). Although White refers particularly to the Holocaust of the European Jews during the Second World War, the same point could be made in relation to the Duvaliers' regime in Haiti, which also proved extremely successful in deferring the trauma that derived from the cruelties that the people had experienced. In fact, it could be argued that "the truth and the real" no longer lay primarily in the crimes perpetrated against the mostly innocent victims but, rather, in the *sequelae* left on their personal and collective psyches by events that have remained unintelligible and unassimilated. Douglass and Vogler remark that "the traumatic event bears a striking similarity to the always absent signified or referent of the poststructuralist discourse, an object that can by definition only be constructed retroactively, never observed directly" (2003: 5).

Despite the conspicuous difficulties in unravelling and constructing a collective past from the shards of a vase that has been repeatedly shattered into a thousand pieces, this is precisely the task that Danticat takes upon herself with an emotional involvement which, some would say, verges on the pathological. It is interesting to note that some of the stories in *The Dew Breaker* oddly resemble the testimonies that are beginning to be reported by earthquake survivors. Massimo wrote in a

review of Danticat's book that it offers "a compelling portrait of individuals united against their will, even without their knowledge, by pain, trauma, and loss. A collection of perspectives that, together, give a snapshot of a community struggling to get out from under the tragedy" (2004). Of course, the tragedy in this case does not involve pulling dead relatives out of the rubble or carrying their corpses to mass graves without any ceremony, but the effects seem to be very much the same, or even worse, since the trauma and loss are more deeply-felt and unfathomable when the wounds have been human-inflicted. As critics have observed, what characterizes Danticat's collection most distinctly is the sense of disjunction and fragmentation that the stories present, compelling the reader to delve more deeply into the dilemmas faced by the victims. Eder says about the book that "there are horrors so heavy that they seem untellable. To bear to tell them so that we can bear to read them, a writer must find somewhere outside – peaceful, unmarked – to project them from" (2004). It seems that Danticat has found in a community of her compatriots living in a Brooklyn neighborhood that "site of memory" (see Nora 1989) from which she can start what Jeffrey Alexander calls the "trauma process", which begins with a realization that there is a fundamental "gap between event and representation" (2004: 11).

The Dew Breaker opens precisely at just such a moment. The first chapter of the collection, "The Book of the Dead", presents us with a road story seen through the eyes of "Ka" Bienaimé, a second-generation Haitian-American sculptor who is travelling with her father from New York to Miami to deliver a sculpture of the latter to a TV-series star, a Haitian herself. Father and daughter have already reached Florida when the story begins but, somehow mysteriously, the old man vanishes – with the artwork – the night before they have to make their delivery to the actress, and after a number of hours, the narrator feels urged to call the local police. Ka and her mother, who has stayed back in Brooklyn, grow increasingly anxious until, late in the evening, the father "appears in the hotel room doorway. He looks like a much younger man and appears calm and rested, as if bronzed after a long day at the beach" (13). When the old man is questioned and reprimanded by his daughter for his unexpected disappearance, his reluctant explanations bring us slowly closer to the climax of the story. He drives Ka to the shore of a man-made lake where he tells her that he has thrown into the water the beautiful mahogany carving of himself "naked, kneeling on a half-foot-square base, his back arched like the curve of a crescent moon, his downcast eyes fixed on his very long fingers and the large palms of his hands" (6). By turns, the daughter thinks of him and his behavior as either stupid, insane or the outrageous result of a fatal illness that he has not yet confessed even to his closest kin. But then, the critical revelation comes: "Ka, I don't deserve a statue, […] not a whole one, at least. You see, Ka, your father was

the hunter, he was not the prey" (20). This sudden removal of his long-standing mask as a prisoner – instead of the torturer he was – not only shocks his daughter nearly out of her wits but also raises all kinds of questions in her mind: Is this why her parents have never had close friends in New York and Haiti? Is this why they rarely speak of their country of origin? Has her mother been a secret sharer of this unspeakable truth all these years? Although the former "dew breaker" (another name for the *tonton macoutes*, François "Papa Doc" Duvalier's murderous police) tries to buffer the impact of the revelation by confiding to her how dramatically he had changed after they came to the U.S., Ka feels troubled during the rest of the journey by the need to recompose an image of her parents that would be more "truthful" to their real history and motivations. The task of telling Gabrielle Fonteneau – the TV celebrity – about the loss of her much-wished sculpture seems easy in comparison with the immense efforts she must make to interpret every word, act, and gesture in the light of her new knowledge:

> […] my father, if anyone could, must have already understood that confessions do not lighten living hearts.
> I had always thought that my father's only ordeal was that he'd left his country and moved to a place where everything from the climate to the language was so unlike his own, a place where he never quite seemed to fit in, never appeared to belong. The only thing I can grasp now, as I drive way beyond the speed limit down yet another highway, is why the unfamiliar might have been so comforting, rather than distressing, to my father. And why he has never wanted the person he was, is, permanently documented in anyway. (33-34)

For a more conventional writer and one less familiarized with the workings of trauma, the natural way to proceed would have been to throw us back thirty years plus in this man's life to witness what he had done in the old country that would explain his way of life, fears, and behavior in the Brooklyn neighborhood in which he lives now. Nevertheless, Danticat seems perfectly aware that, as Caruth contends, the reactions to the traumatic events are not to be found in the immediate aftermath of the atrocious experiences but, rather, "occur in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (1996: 11). The fact that in the next seven stories we hardly get to see the title character face to face, and that the stories are mostly centered on the lives of a younger generation who have decided to carve their future in a country different from their parents', shows that the author finds it more appropriate and illuminating to explore the later life of the torturer's victims than to simply present this man's brutal violations. Of course, this does not mean that the objective crimes that caused the original disruption and brought radical changes to the lives of the afflicted are irrelevant; but rather, as Neal explains, they are the ones that

"command the attention of all major subgroups of the population" and of outside observers who will also be moved to react (1998: 9-10). Nevertheless, the true impact of the trauma becomes fully apparent only when we see it emerge in the form of psychotic symptoms affecting a group of people whose individual and collective identity has been deeply disarrayed. In regard to the main characters in these stories, Kakutani observes that "they all find themselves haunted by the long events that left them with chastised bodies, fractured families or smashed hopes. For these characters the dead are not merely ghosts; they are palpable, intimately felt presences in their lives" (2006). As will be seen below, it is in the representation of those "palpable presences" – or absences, I would say – that Danticat seems to take particular interest, since they prove especially revealing about the kind of wounds and scars her characters reveal.

This is definitely the case of Dany Dorméus in the story "Night Talkers", who is impelled to return to visit his elderly aunt Estina in Haiti when he thinks he has found in New York City the man who had killed his parents thirty-five years ago. His aunt, who raised him, although she had been deprived of her sight the same night that his parents were murdered, is absolutely delighted to learn that her beloved nephew has come back after ten years: "You have made your old aunt a young woman again" (95). She wants to know the reason why Dany has decided to come to visit her all of a sudden, without even informing her of his intention: Has he been expelled from the U.S.? Is there any problem with his health? Why did he not send word that he was coming?

> "You're right," he said. "I didn't just drop out of the sky. I came because I want to tell you something."
> "What is it, Da?" she asked, weaving and unweaving her fingers. "Are you finally getting married?"
> "No," he said. "That's not it. I found him. I found him in New York, the man who killed Papa and Manman and took your sight." (97)

Just as he makes this important revelation, they are interrupted by the old man who had earlier brought him to his aunt, and other villagers who present them with a selection of local specialties. After sampling all the dishes, Dany is quite surprised that his aunt does not show any interest in hearing more about the story he has come to tell her and, instead, goes to sleep to have her dreams spoken aloud during the night, like him. As Herman and others have argued, these troubling nightmares are a clear sign of the victims' difficulties forming and sustaining a self in the wake of the existential crisis that trauma invariably produces (1992: 51). Curiously, the next day aunt Estina still seems intent on not letting her nephew complete his story; she invites a young man, Claude, who has been sent back from abroad for committing a crime, to have a long interview with Dany, who of course

fails to see at first the sense of this new relationship that appears to have nothing to do with the original object of his journey.

In fact, Dany is eventually compelled to rehearse in a dream the conversation he so much wants to maintain with his aunt: "They were sitting on the step where he and Claude had spoken. He began the conversation by recalling with his aunt the day his parents died" (104). The exchange the protagonist has with his aunt follows very much the lines that he had expected it to take in reality, with the elderly woman asking about the details he had gathered about the murderer. Near the end of the exchange, though, Dany is forced to admit that when he finally found a chance to take revenge on the monster who had murdered both his parents, he lost the nerve to do it:

> Looking down at the barber's face, which had shrunk so much over the years, he lost the desire to kill. It wasn't that he was afraid, for he was momentarily feeling bold, fearless. It wasn't pity, either. He was too angry to feel pity. It was something else, something less measurable. It was the dread of being wrong, of harming the wrong man, of making the wrong woman a widow and the wrong child an orphan. It was the realization that he would never know why – why one single person had been given the power to destroy his entire life. (107)

The next morning, his aunt wakes him up and tells him that he has been calling his parents in his sleep. She allows him, then, to complete his narration and to ask the inevitable questions about the reason for his progenitors' murder. When he inquires whether they were in politics or were mistaken for some other activists, his aunt replies: "M pa konnen, […] I don't know, Da. Maybe they were mistaken for all of us. There's a belief that if you kill people, you can take their knowledge, become everything they were. Maybe they wanted to take all that knowledge for themselves. I don't know, Da" (109). And with these few sentences which, instead of casting light on the matter, only increase the darkness in which Dany has lived all these years, Estina goes to sleep never to wake up again. Dany Dorméus is certainly a good representative of most of the key characters in the collection who, like him, "are caught in silences while their minds labor through impossible demands" (Charles 2004). In Dany's case, those "demands" are mostly articulated in his night talks which, in Herman's view, imply "the repetitive reliving of the traumatic experience [and] represent a spontaneous, unsuccessful attempt at healing" (1992: 44).

"The Funeral Singer" is another story that "uses its characters' experiences as a prism to examine Haiti's own difficulties in breaking free from a centuries-old cycle of violence and vengeance that continues through today, […]" (Kakutani 2004). Here, the main characters are three young women living in New York as members of the Haitian diaspora, who are taking basic-ed lessons and trying hard to learn to

live with the grave traumas that their experiences in the old country left in them. One night, after one of their classes, they cook a dinner together and sit down to confide to each other what it was that brought them there. Mariselle's husband had been an artist who, unfortunately, painted an unflattering portrait of the president [Duvalier]. He was shot soon after, as he was leaving the gallery show where the portrait was displayed. Freda, the narrator of the story, had to leave the country when she declined to sing at the national palace after her father, a fisherman, was robbed of his business and brutally tortured by a *macoute*. "The next night he took his boat out to sea and, with a mouth full of blood, vanished forever" (172). The past of the third member of this female trio, Rézia, is by no means any more pleasant, as she was raped in her childhood by another paramilitary man:

> This is Rézia's story: When she was a girl, her parents couldn't afford to keep her, so they sent her to live with an aunt who ran a brothel. They lived in three rooms behind the brothel and that's where Rézia spent most of her time. One night when she was sleeping, a uniformed man walked in. She dug herself into the bed, but it did no good, so she passed out. (173)

Needless to say, a very significant part of this story of unutterable grief and repressed memories concentrates on the tactics each of the three women develop to cope with a past that keeps haunting them. As Suk demonstrates in her discussion of postcolonial paradoxes, although those harmful original events appear inaccessible to those who suffered them, yet they are "too available in nightmare, hallucination, and unwanted repetition. […] The event evades direct reference and knowledge, and yet provides constant torment" (2001: 75). The reader finds a clear instance of this fact when their language teacher shows them a painting full of sunflowers and tells them there are no dead spots in it. Yet the three Haitian women can only respond that "life is full of dead spots" (169), so colorless and senseless has their existence become. Freda, the funeral singer, also recalls that as a child she used to sketch figures in her notebook that "were drawn so close together that they looked like they were fighting one another". Her mother made a rag doll for her to try to relieve the pain of seeing all those frightening "phantoms" at night but, "[…] after my father was gone, I twisted the doll's neck night after night. During the day, I crowded the pages in my notebook with more tiny faces, to keep me company in case my mother also disappeared" (178).

Anybody familiar with the symptoms of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) would recognize more than enough manifestations of the condition in the behavior and comments of the three main characters in "The Funeral Singer". Having been the passive recipients of the traumatic events when they were still very young, the three of them have serious problems in trying to render their lives wholesome, even in exile. In Eder's opinion, "these characters are like swimmers pulled from

the depths. Nitrogen bubbles course agonizingly in their bloodstream, memory racks them" (2004). The most recent research in trauma theory has found, on the other hand, that apart from the traditional categories of victim and survivor, there may be others such as those of onlookers and secondary witnesses, which may also be useful in the study of traumatic phenomena in certain communities. The story entitled "The Bridal Seamstress" offers very interesting material in this direction, since it recounts the experience of a journalist, who has never been to Haiti herself, but who is brought into fairly close contact with a survivor of the Duvalier regime. Aline Cajuste, an intern at the *Haitian American Weekly*, is sent by her superior to interview Beatrice Saint Fort, a lady who has spent her life making wedding dresses and is now giving up the trade. During the first part of their conversation, it becomes clear that a remarkable cultural distance separates the two women, who often get impatient with each other because they repeatedly ask the wrong questions and reveal only general information. Aline feels at several points that, as her editor in chief had warned her, she is losing control of the interview, for it is the elderly woman that seems to hold the reins of the conversation. The interview gains in interest, though, when, while strolling around Beatrice's neighborhood, she anxiously declares that one of the houses down the street is owned by a Haitian prison guard:

> "We called them choukèt lawoze," Beatrice said, the couch's plastic cover squeaking beneath her. "They'd break into your house. Mostly it was at night. But often they'd come before dawn, as the dew was settling on the leaves, and they'd take you away. He was one of them, the guard." (131)

Later on, the old lady shows Aline the soles of her feet, where the stigmas left by the whipping she received in prison just because she had refused to dance with the *macoute* are still perfectly visible. Although the journalism intern is at first reluctant to ask the inevitable question because she knows Beatrice will feel insulted, she eventually inquires how she can be so sure that it is the same person after so many years: "No one will ever have that much of your attention. No matter how much he'd changed, I would know him anywhere" (132). When Aline calls her editor to inform her about the results of the interview, she explains that the old seamstress is "a bit nutty" and that maybe her report is not worthwhile. Her boss is not too sympathetic, though: "[…] I didn't send you there to judge her state of mind. Come back and write what I sent you to write: Bridal Seamstress Retires. Simple" (133). Aline goes to her car thinking of heading back immediately to the office to type up the story, but she notices the prison guard's house and begins to wonder whether there might not be a bigger story there, one that would earn her boss's respect. So she decides to have a look around the place and to find out if the old lady's fears were in fact justified. After

she has inspected the house, which is apparently empty, the next-door neighbor tells her that nobody has been living there for some time, and that the owner, a Colombian woman, is ineffectively trying to sell it from Bogotá. The intern returns to Beatrice's house to tell her the real facts, but the old seamstress insists that the guard uses the empty premises as a hideout to keep an eye on her. It also becomes evident that the real motivation behind Beatrice's retirement is that she thinks she can be more easily tracked down while in business. By the end of the story, Aline seems to be convinced that the former seamstress is a paranoid who never managed to fully recover from the psychic wounds she received in her youth. Nevertheless, she develops an unexpected empathy with her interviewee, which could easily be described as a "secondary form of PTSD":

> Growing up poor but sheltered in Somerville, Massachusetts, Aline had never imagined that people like Beatrice existed, men and women whose tremendous agonies filled every blank space in their lives. Maybe there were hundreds, even thousands, of people like this, men and women chasing fragments of themselves long lost to others. Maybe Aline herself was one of them. (137-138)

Writing about an earlier novel by Danticat, Martin Munro cogently explains that "trauma creates a kind of restlessness, an anxiety about stopping for even an instant, and they both work constantly to escape the 'phantoms'…" (2006: 88). Beatrice, Freda, and Dany are clear examples of people running away from ghosts that their Haitian past has deeply branded on their psyches. All of them carry the indelible image of the cruel *macoute* who truncated their lives by killing their parents, and then threatened them to continue the slaughter if they revealed the truth. It is no wonder that, as Herman points out in one of the epigraphs to this article, these characters should be endlessly caught in the dilemma of denying the events that hurt them so much and proclaiming them aloud to obtain some justice and recognition for the innocent victims (1992: 1). *The Dew Breaker* is particularly successful in representing the wounds and scars of those Haitians who suffered under the Duvalier regime and the "reign" of their unscrupulous torturers because we are allowed to see the terrible economic, political, and social ramifications that this oppressive system – like slavery – brought to the lives of the whole population. Not even those who have abandoned the country or were only tangentially touched by the torturers' cruelties, such as the protagonists of "Seven" or "Water Child", seem totally free from that violent legacy that impedes their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. In Charles' opinion, the sense of dislocation and disjunction that pervades the book "is thematically significant in a way that it can be in few other novels made of collected stories" (2004). This is, no doubt, because the broken "non-history" of the nation keeps endlessly returning to torment and traumatize the private existence of its citizens, even when they have

experienced it only indirectly. As will be seen below, still more intriguing is the fact that the perpetrators are by no means excluded from this collective trauma, since they are among the most deeply haunted by those phantoms and vacant spaces that they themselves contributed to conjuring up. Both the opening and the closing chapters of the collection offer much evidence suggesting that, wicked and terrifying as the title character may seem, he is as susceptible to the workings of trauma as anyone else. Marshall concludes that, by covering all those perspectives, the "novel is a serious-minded work of a mature talent, a searching examination of murderous terror and its lingering aftershocks on generations" (2004).

3. PATHS TO RECOVERY: STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH TRAUMA AND GRIEF

As should have become clear in my discussion above, "the traces of violence, rupture and dislocation continue to possess and to haunt generations of Haitians, thereby producing a present that is played out as repetition and recurrence, endlessly circling around a central lacuna of loss and dispossession" (Sweeney 2007: 54). This is true not only of the victims who suffered the violence and abuse in their own flesh, but also of those others who witnessed it only obliquely or heard about it indirectly. In fact, it could be argued that differences in class, color, education, gender or language do not seem very effective in protecting anybody from the workings of trauma. We have observed that even the everyday life of people living abroad, having enjoyed a good education, speaking a different language, and fairly disconnected from the history of their native country, may be deeply affected by the shadow of events that took place when their subjectivity had not even begun to form. In Caruth's words,

> it is this inherent latency of the event that paradoxically explains the peculiar temporal structure, the belatedness, of historical experience: since the traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place and another time. (1996: 8)

Characters such as Ka Bienaimé and Aline Cajuste have lived their entire lives in North America, and yet they are also stalked by revelations about the past that will compel them to look upon their present condition and future aspirations in a different light. It is not just that, as most of the children of exiles, they want to develop a kind of double identity and a "double consciousness" through contact with home cultures and diasporic communities; in order to gain control over their future life, they feel they must reclaim their right to know and give a new shape to a past that has been most often suppressed (Cf. Singh *et al.*, 1994: 19). This is not an easy task because, as we have seen, most of the memories haunting them

take the form of psychological shrapnel that proceeds from brutal violence and political terror. Still, most of the stories in *The Dew Breaker* seem to indicate that even those most deeply stricken by trauma and grief may manage to find those links of continuity between past and present, between reality and representation, and between who they are and who they believe themselves to be that will allow them to build a new sense of self.

Despite everything said above about the paralyzing and incapacitating powers of trauma, Lambek and Antze have argued that "remembering trauma may be personally empowering and sometimes leads to collective organizing. The inscription of trauma narratives may be a necessary, sufficient, and compelling means of establishing recognition" (1996: xxiv). This is certainly the case of the group of young women in "The Funeral Singer", who simply by sharing their traumatic experiences during their after-class reunions come to realize that they are not the only ones having to endure such painful memories: "I thought exposing a few details of my life would inspire them to do the same and slowly we'd parcel out our sorrows, each walking out with fewer than we'd carried in" (170). Although it is obviously difficult for them to represent those sorrows in articulate ways, it soon becomes clear that having to refashion them in a more intelligible manner turns the whole exercise into a therapy that may even succeed in de-reifying the original event. Something of that sort happens to Freda, the narrator of the story, who has always associated her father's disappearance with her public role as a funeral singer: "The first time I ever sang in public was at my father's memorial Mass. I sang 'Brother Timonie,' a song whose cadence rises and falls, like the waves in the ocean" (175). After she has told her friends about the sadness she felt on that occasion, and probably encouraged by the rum they ingest during their meetings, she confesses that she is proud of the comfort she offered other families by singing at their funeral ceremonies: "[…] I was always appreciated and well-compensated" (175). In an even more cheerful vein, Mariselle relates to them the funny story of how her slaughtered husband once came to make a portrait of Jackie Kennedy at the Port-au-Prince harbor. By combining their excruciating experiences in Haiti with others more light-hearted – and even parodic – in nature, these three women manage to appease the ghosts that have been haunting them for a long time. White has discussed at some length the therapeutic potential of certain narrative modes:

> Modernist techniques of representation provide the possibility of defetishizing both events and the fantasy accounts of them which deny the threat they pose in the very process of pretending to represent them realistically and clear the way for the process of mourning which alone can relieve the burden of history and make a more if not totally realistic perception of current problems possible. (1999: 82)

The fact that "The Funeral Singer" concludes with the three friends singing together a last performance of "Brother Timonie" is a clear sign that they have completed quite successfully the first part of the trauma process: "When we've exhausted poor Timonie, we move onto a few more songs, happier songs. And for the rest of the night we raise our glasses, broken and unbroken alike, to the terrible days behind us and the uncertain ones ahead" (181).

Douglass and Vogler have spoken of collective trauma – such as that produced by the blood-thirsty *macoutes* – as a form of "social glue" that is likely to bring groups of people together on the basis of ethnicity, gender, race, handicap, etc. (2003: 12). This is certainly the case of Freda, Mariselle, and Rézia in "The Funeral Singer" who, by retrieving their respective memories, come to see them as part of a social narrative which makes them members of an "imagined community" whose main aim is to heal the wounds past events have produced. Most of the characters in Danticat's collection, however, are not as lucky as these three women, since they are condemned to face their tribulations on their own. As my discussion of the consequences of traumatic events should have shown, one of the habitual effects of this type of experience is precisely to make the individual feel isolated, either as a result of shame, remorse or just anxiety. In her book *Trauma and Recovery*, Herman explains that pulling out of a traumatic condition tends to be easier when a person builds a "healing relationship" with others who have gone through similar experiences (1992: 134). Now, *The Dew Breaker* presents us with several characters who find it difficult to relate to others mainly because they carry burdens from their past that they feel they need to deal with by themselves if they ever want to recover a state of normalcy and stability. It is not a coincidence, in this sense, that one of the words appearing recurrently in reviews of the book is "redemption" for, paradoxically enough, many of the victims seem also to be in need of paying a price for their long fear of and secrecy about those ghosts. Curiously, the trauma process in these cases is only triggered off when they come into contact with others who have been more deeply hurt or damaged by different catastrophes.

Nadine Osnac, the protagonist of "Water Child", is a character who would fit quite squarely into the archetype of the dysfunctional exile who can barely cope with an existence that has left her stranded between two worlds. The symptoms of her personal and social disease are evident from the outset of the story, as she rereads her parents' letters from home many times, trying to find "between the lines, a note of sympathy, commiseration, condolence. But it simply wasn't there" (54). Her parents wrongly assume that because she was given the chance to escape the context of violence and poverty on the island, she will be responsible for providing materially and emotionally for those left behind. However, her life and work in a Brooklyn neighborhood turn out quite different from what she had

expected. She feels very much like her post-op patients in the hospital ward where she works as a nurse who, after waking up from the anesthetic, are "bewildered to discover that their total laryngectomies meant they would no longer be able to talk. No matter how the doctors, nurses, and counsellors prepared them, it was still a shock" (55). Like them, Nadine finds it impossible to communicate naturally with her colleagues at work, her parents, and even her boyfriend – all of them connected to her homeland – who fail to see the pressures she is living under. Talking to them "always made her wish to be the one guarded, rather than the guardian, to be reassured now and then that some wounds could be healed, that some decisions would not haunt her forever" (63). It is no wonder that at the end of the story, when she sees her own distorted reflection on the shiny metal doors of an elevator at the hospital, she should find that woman, who needs to protect so many others, "unrecognizable". As Scarry has observed, it is fairly common for trauma victims to undergo this type of schizophrenic "split" when they try to pull out of their painful condition (1985: 48).

Nevertheless, what captures this writer's – and the readers' – attention in this and other chapters of the book is the highly personal tactics that the shell-shocked characters develop to fill in the immense lacunae that they find in their lives. Nadine is partly able to overcome the pain of having to look after her parents and being asked by her lover to miscarry her baby by trying to give consolation to her voiceless patients in the hospital and building an altar for the unborn child at home: "She had once read about a shrine to unborn children in Japan, where water was poured over altars of stone to honor them, so she had filled her favorite drinking glass with water and a pebble and had added that to her own shrine,…" (57). Like Dany in "Night Talkers", Nadine seems to see her trauma in more relative terms when she compares her situation to that of other people who have their lives (and deaths) indelibly marked by some unexpected twists of fortune. This is what Dany Dorméus also comes to realize during the long wake for his aunt, when the mourners tell him stories of the immense support that she had given to everyone in the village. Only then does he become aware of the important mission the old lady had left for him, which involves helping somebody – whom he despises because of his crimes – to come out of the type of darkness and despair that he himself has experienced. His exchanges with Claude, the young criminal, make him look at the reasons for returning to his village in a conspicuously different light: "Perhaps she had summoned him here so he could at last witness a peaceful death and see how it was meant to be mourned. Perhaps the barber was not his parents' murderer after all, but just a phantom who'd shown up to escort him back here" (116). In a way, this conversion of the torturer into a "friendly phantom", encouraging him to come back to his native land in time to see his aunt die in peace – and also to

provide assistance to somebody not less cruel than the dew breaker – is a sign that Dany is finally coming to terms with his past. He is still a night talker at the end of the story, but he has at least taught someone as badly-hurt as himself to relieve his guilt by undergoing a similar catharsis:

> […] The only thing Dany could think to do for his aunt now was to keep Claude speaking, which wouldn't be so hard, since Claude was already one of them, a member of their tribe. Claude was a palannit, a night talker, one of those who spoke their nightmares out loud to themselves. Except Claude was even luckier than he realized, for he was able to speak his nightmares to himself as well as to others, in the nighttime as well as in the hours past dawn, when the moon had completely vanished from the sky. (120)

Although Kakutani is right in stating that Danticat's collection is mostly about the age-old "cycle of violence and vengeance" disrupting Haiti and its population, she also adds that it "unfolds to become a philosophical meditation on the possibility of redemption and the longing of victims and victimizers alike to believe in the promise of new beginnings held forth by the American Dream" (2004). Obviously, in the cases of Dany and Nadine, the possibility of this rebirth into a new sense of identity, free of those phantoms from their past, depends on their ability to empathize with others who have faced similar trials and to find a niche for themselves in the new environment in which they live now. The same argument would also be valid for Aline Cajuste in "The Bridal Seamstress" who, after her first-hand witnessing of the effects of trauma on Beatrice, the seamstress, is transformed into a much more determined and responsible journalist. A completely new set of career aims emerge in her, instead of her earlier compliance with the dictates of her editor at the magazine: "These were the people Aline wanted to try to write about now, no matter what Marjorie Voltaire said. And if Marjorie didn't like it, then she would quit and go work somewhere else. She might even return to Somerville and, at last, let her parents learn who she was" (138). In Singh's opinion, the emergence of all these long-silenced stories that Aline now wants to report is "a means of creating community as part of the dialectic between past and present in moving toward the future. It allows for a narrative exploration of the past that rejects or circumvents positivistic assumptions about truth and history" (1994: 18).

This idea of the revisionist and regenerative power of narrative, especially in cases in which traumatic experiences are still very much present in people's minds, becomes even more evident when the subjects affected are not just the victims but also the perpetrators and their closest kin. Trauma theories have traditionally tended to draw a clear line between victims, perpetrators, and witnesses, thus conveying the idea that while the first group is in need of mourning, re-membering, reconnecting and building some sort of commonality (Herman 1992), the second

should be approached from the perspective of their accountability and responsibility for the crimes. *The Dew Breaker*, however, is as much about the possibility of recovery for those who were victimized by the extreme violence as about the possibility of repentance and regeneration for those who inflicted it on others. As the author explained in an interview with Hong soon after the publication of the novel, she was particularly interested in representing how the effects of the Duvalier dictatorship were equally observable in the victims and supporters of the regime (2004). We already observed earlier in the article how the daughter of the torturer had to reconsider her position in the community and her whole existence when she learnt about her father's unspeakable past:

> Watching my father accept with a nod of thanks, I remember the chapter "Driving Back Slaughters" from *The Book of the Dead*, which my father sometimes read to me to drive away the fear of imagined monsters. It was a chapter full of terrible lines like "My mouth is the keeper of both speech and silence. I am the child who travels the roads of yesterday, the one who has been wrought from his eye." (31-32)

But if Ka Bienaimé is forced to assign a new meaning to every single move or gesture her father makes after the knowledge she has newly acquired, her mother's situation is even more unnerving because she has had to live with the burden of that knowledge for over thirty years. Although her devotion to her husband, the dew-breaker-turned-into-barber, is unquestionable, there are of course moments when her confidence and self-control are tried: "It was always like this, her life a pendulum between forgiveness and regret, but when the anger dissipated she considered it a small miracle…" (86). It is precisely this distressing oscillation and its eventual metamorphosis into a work of providence due to the incommensurable power of her will – or her faith, as she would probably prefer to put it – that we are privy to in the chapter "The Book of Miracles".

Told from the point of view of Anne, the former torturer's wife, the story tells us about the experiences of the family on a Christmas Eve when, encouraged by this pious woman, the threesome go to the midnight Mass in their neighorhood. As they drive toward the church, the mother entertains her daughter and husband by recounting the stories of different miracles that have occurred in other parts of the globe. But when they go by the cemetery, she holds her breath for a very long time, as she recalls her younger brother's disappearance under the waves in Haiti – an accident she has never told Ka about. Nevertheless, "her daughter had already concluded early in life that this, like many unexplained aspects of her parents' life, was connected to 'some event that happened in Haiti'" (72). As they drive toward the church, we become aware of how different their Christmases have been from those of other members of the community and how Anne has needed to think

of all kinds of superstitions to justify their distance and difference from the rest. Yet, she has always wondered if there was reason for all their caution: "[…] soon after her husband had opened his barbershop, he'd discovered that since he'd lost eighty pounds, changed his name, and given as his place of birth a village deep in the mountains of Léogâne, no one asked about him any more, thinking he was just a peasant who'd made good in New York" (77). The story, however, takes a new turn when, already at the service, Ka believes that she sees Emmanuel Constant in the congregation, a man who is "wanted for crimes against the Haitian people". At first, Anne feels quite proud of her daughter's righteous displeasure when she stares at the back of the criminal but, naturally, all kinds of questions begin to trouble her soon after:

> What if it were Constant? What would she do? Would she spit in his face or embrace him, acknowledging a kinship of shame and guilt that she'd inherited by marrying her husband? How would she even know whether Constant felt any guilt or shame? What if he'd come to this Mass to flaunt his freedom? To taunt those who'd been affected by his crimes? What if he didn't even see it that way? What if he considered himself innocent? (81)

Fortunately, in the end the man was not the criminal that Ka had assumed him to be, and this comes as a great relief to her mother. Still, those moments of tension are not enough to encourage her to reveal the truth to her daughter and she needs to resort to her usual ritual in order to stabilize her vertiginous oscillation between "forgiveness and regret":

> *A long time ago, more than thirty years ago, in Haiti, your father worked in a prison, where he hurt many people. Now look at him. Look how calm he is. Look how patient he is. Look how he just drove forty miles, to your apartment in Westchester, to pick you up for Christmas Eve Mass.* That was the miracle Anne wanted to share with her daughter on this Christmas Eve night, the simple miracle of her husband's transformation, but of course she couldn't, at least not yet, instead she told another kind of miracle. (72-73; italics in original)

"The Book of Miracles" demonstrates that the abuses and atrocities committed in the old country can be as heavy a burden and as disturbing for those who suffered or witnessed them as for those others who are related to the inflictors. The latter are also prisoners of a past that greatly conditions their daily life and creates a profound sense of restlessness and insecurity. It is not just that they frequently fear the retaliation or vengeance that their relatives may suffer from former victims but, more critically, they can never be sure whether the version they have heard of the incidents that have marked their existence is complete and accurate. Two of the stories in the collection, "Monkey Tails" and

"The Dew Breaker", throw us back into the past by nearly twenty and forty years, respectively, to let the reader be privy at first hand to events that took place on the island and that left a lot of people maimed. The first story moves back and forth between the same date (February 7) in 1986 in Haiti, when "Baby Doc" Duvalier made his escape to France, and in Brooklyn in 2004, when one of the survivors of that chaotic day is about to be a father of his first child. The protagonist, Michel, was only twelve when the dictator decided to leave the country with his wife, and he tells us his innocent perception of the turmoil into which everything went when people thought they were finally free after thirty years of harrowing oppression. Michel was doubly traumatized on that unforgettable day in 1986 because he saw for the last time his best friend – who happened to be the son of a *tonton macoute* – and because he was informed of who his real father was – a man in his ghetto who had made it his business to exploit all his poor neighbors. As he now lies in bed with his wife in New York, he is recording on a tape all the experiences he went through on that day as a kind of therapy and as homage to his childhood friend: "As for you, my son, your myth is this: it's now past mid-night, if you're born today, on this, the anniversary of the day that everything changed for me, on the day that I became a man, your name will be Romain, after my first true friend" (164).

The closing chapter of the book, "The Dew Breaker", has received much praise from critics and reviewers because it presents in all its crudity the work of the vicious torturer we have heard about in the previous stories from the perspective of his victims, his family members, his tenants, etc. In Charles' opinion, "it's a flawless finale that frustrates our desire to see the monster drawn to mythic proportions" (2004). While it is true that he is as cruel as ever to his last victim, a subversive preacher who had been trying to inspire his followers to rise up against the "beast" – Duvalier father – , we are also allowed to see his constant doubts and even remorse in regard to the activities he has carried out to support the regime: "He had been constantly thinking about getting out of this life, moving to Florida, or even New York, making himself part of the new Haitian communities there, to keep an eye on the movements that were fuelling the expatriate invasions at the borders" (189). While he is working on his last kill, he is troubled by thoughts of his reasons for joining the death squads, the pain he has caused to people he did not even know, the possible ways of escape using the money he has been saving up. It is in one of these moments of absent-mindedness that the preacher manages to grab the broken leg of a chair and "to slide the piece of wood down the fat man's face, tearing the skin down to his jawline" (226). The preacher knows, of course, that by having done so he has signed his death sentence,

> and yet he had not been completely defeated. The wound on the man's face wasn't what he had hoped, he hadn't blinded him or removed some of his teeth, but at least he'd left a mark on him, a brand that he would carry for the rest of his life. Every time he looked in the mirror, he would have to confront this mark and remember him. Whenever people asked what happened to his face, he would have to tell a lie, a lie that would further remind him of the truth. (227-228)

The few glimpses that we get of the title character throughout the book – except for the opening and closing chapters, in which he's of course central – clearly prove that the preacher was completely right in his assumptions about the influence of the scar on the torturer's future life. It is one of the great paradoxes in the book that it is the perpetrator of the crimes who should carry the most visible sign of his horrendous deeds in the past; but it gradually becomes very appropriate, as the reader realizes that he has also been tortured by the nightmares and silences that his victims have learnt to bear:

> In the early years, there had been more silence than words between them [he and his wife, Anne, the murdered preacher's stepsister]. But when their daughter was born, they were forced to talk to and about her. And when their daughter began to talk back, it made things all that much easier. She was like an orator at a pantomime. She was their Ka, their good angel.
> After her daughter was born, she and her husband would talk about her brother. But only briefly. He referring to his "last prisoner," the one that scarred his face, and she to "my stepbrother, the famous preacher," neither of them venturing beyond these coded utterances, dreading the day when someone other than themselves would more fully convene the two halves of this same person. (241)

Most trauma theorists would agree that this is a good recapitulation of what the trauma process is all about: "Forgetting here is as much an active process as remembering; both require effort and energy. Identity of any kind requires steering a course between holding on and letting go" (Lambek and Antze 1996: xxix). As happens with many of the other characters discussed here, the dew breaker can also find partial redemption and alleviation of his former psychic wounds and scars by sharing his story at least with those who need and deserve to know. Whether complete atonement and reparation is possible for somebody who had produced so much pain is unclear at the end of the book, but it is clear that he has found some strategies to relieve his burden by speaking out about some of the truths that have been torturing him for nearly forty years.

4. CLOSING REMARKS: REFRAMING TRAUMA LANDSCAPES

Fredric Jameson opens his insightful discussion of *The Political Unconscious* in narrative with a preface in which he stresses the importance of always "historicizing"

whatever the object of our analysis happens to be (1981: 9). He soon admits, however, that the historicizing operation can follow two distinct paths: "the path of the object and the path of the subject, the historical origins of the things themselves and that more intangible historicity of the concepts and categories by which we attempt to understand those things" (9). In most ways, my analysis of Danticat's *The Dew Breaker* has followed Jameson's recommendation to concentrate our efforts on the dynamics of the act of interpretation because, in fact, events and texts always reach us as the "always-already-read". As the first section of my contribution shows, this does not mean that one should completely disregard the historical antecedents of "things themselves" but, rather, that our readings of the past will gain significance only in the light of our experience of the present. Nowhere is this more evident than in any study of Haiti's corruption-ridden and violent history, which can hardly be presented as a *continuum*, not just because of the constant lacunae and disjunctions that the very object shows, but because of the *sequelae* left on the minds of Haitians by their colonial and politically-restless past. In Munro's words, "it almost goes without saying that trauma is an inescapable aspect of Haitian and Caribbean historical experience. The memory of slavery's brutal uprooting and its enduring after-effects remain to be lulled, domesticated, and made sense of" (2006: 81). It could easily be argued that this is one of the main objectives of Edwidge Danticat's fiction, which tries in various ways to make more intelligible and to pacify to the ghosts that have been haunting her compatriots for centuries now. According to Hong, "Danticat's books are each a gift of knowledge that encourages – even seduces – readers to reach out of their comfort zone, to bear witness, and to find empathy in the experiences of others" (2004).

Although it is true that, in *The Dew Breaker*, she focuses more closely on the aftershocks of the terror and abuses of the Duvalier era, it is quite impossible not to see this period as a foreseeable culmination of the processes of foreign intervention, social deterioration, economic decline, and cultural impoverishment that had preceded it. Flood points out that

> when, in 1985, the people of Haiti had risen up again against the Duvalier dictatorship, one of their first acts was to pull down the Port-au-Prince statue of Christopher Columbus and throw it into the sea, demonstrating that ordinary Haitian people understand the role foreign intervention has played in their past even if few outside do. (2010)

If anything becomes evident in my initial revision of the country's history, it is that one cannot easily isolate particular chapters of it and study them without bearing in mind the long shadows that prior events were casting upon them. Even in the case of processes that, in principle, should be interpreted as positive turns in their historical trajectory – such as their independence from European imperial

powers or the syncretism among different cultural traditions –, it is interesting to observe that they have often been interpreted as signs of "a country that was never meant to be" (Thomson 2010) due to Haiti's symbolic potential as anti-colonial, racially hybrid and dangerously resistant to the imposition of foreign socio-cultural models. Considering all these factors, it is not so surprising that Haiti should repeatedly be described as the "ungovernable country" or the "most inconsistent and perverted political system" in the Antilles. The influence of this collective unconscious becomes most evident in the psyches and behavior of Haitians who have happened to escape the horrors in their homeland, but are still seen to carry the burden of the language of wounds and scars that their history has taught them.

As should have become clear, Danticat's *The Dew Breaker* is a collection of short stories structured upon the principle that the significance of traumatizing events can only be partly grasped when we look into the effects that they have produced on the lives of those who, directly or indirectly, have been touched by the unutterable crimes. The author uses a community of exiled Haitians now living in Brooklyn as a human laboratory where she examines the dysfunctions that result from the long-delayed and often repressed memories of experiences that victims and their descendants suffered or witnessed in the old country. Marshall points out that "individual stories may remain sketchy, in a cinematic fashion, but Danticat demonstrates a resonant ability to create character and scene with the telling little detail of the emblematic incident" (2004). Indeed, we see only very specific dimensions of the characters as they come into contact with the dew breaker – a sort of catalyst – and are reminded of some harrowing events that marked them for life. The memories that come back to haunt them are predictably broken and discontinuous, and it is quite impossible for the reader to gain access to the original event since, as Lambek and Antze note, what we see are "screens always already impressed by the fantasies and distortions of a series of succeeding rememberings" (1996: xii). Hence, the secret preoccupations of characters such as Dany Dorméus, Nadine Osnac, and Beatrice Saint Font mostly emerge in the form of highly condensed symbols that need to be delved into and unravelled for us to figure out their meaning. These intriguing manifestations of the workings of trauma are the only signals we are given of the severe identity crisis that invades people when the chasm between their past and present, their experiences and how they are represented in their minds now become evident.

The second part of this contribution has dissected in some detail and classified the different symptoms produced by trauma in characters that suffered, either directly or as onlookers, the violence of the ruthless *tonton macoutes*. We have observed that their irrational fears recurrently revisit them in the form of nightmares or hallucinations that make them prisoners of a past that they have not fully come

to grips with. Most of them are constantly oscillating between the urge to know more and the temptation to deny that those horrific experiences happened to them. Some of them – Dany and Michel – are even given a chance to avenge earlier crimes upon the figure of the dew breaker, but characteristically they end up paralyzed either by uncertainty or by the conviction that punishment will mean little reparation. Indeed, the reader frequently discovers that the damage done is so profound that revenge will provide no satisfaction for characters like Beatrice Saint Font or Estina Estéme, who have carried the burden for too long to be relieved now of its effects on their bodies and minds. It is not surprising to discover that the incidence of mental disorders, such as paranoia or schizophrenia, are very common among the direct victims. But the most interesting finding in this section of the article is that trauma may prove incredibly contagious and assail the minds of those who were not even born when the real events took place. The cases of Ka Bienaimé and Aline Cajuste are paradigmatic in this sense, since both of them are allowed to look into the fissures in Haitian history thanks to the confidences revealed to them by some elder characters. Curiously, however, their grief and their urge to know may become as intense as it does for those who suffered the abuses in their flesh. Douglas and Vogler rightly argue that a "vicarious traumatization" often spreads over the younger generations of descendants who know only very vaguely about the originating event of their problem (2003: 10).

Sweeney affirms that although elements of resistance and solidarity reverberate in Haitian culture, "it is the repetitive non-history of its unmemorialized experience of slavery, the descent into poverty, civil unrest, and internal terror and corruption that more acutely occupies the present" (2007: 55). And we do certainly find traces of these illnesses in many of the characters that are represented in *The Dew Breaker*. Their stories are governed by an endless return to those huge disruptions in their memories that usually prevent them from turning their eyes toward the future. Yet, as has also become apparent in the last part of my discussion, the book offers a number of attempts to recount the traumatic past against the pattern of mere repetition and puts forth some strategies that may help individuals and the collectivity of Haitians to evade the vicious circle. Herman remarks that "traumatic events call into question basic human relationships. They breach the attachments of family, friendship, love, and community. They shatter the construction of the self that is formed and sustained in relation to others" (1992: 51). *The Dew Breaker* contains, of course, many characters whose process of self-formation is constantly interrupted by memories that separate the afflicted from others who have lived through similar experiences. Nevertheless, it is also true that on other occasions they may be brought together by chance – like the three young women in "The Funeral Singer" – and begin to build community by exchanging their stories. As

Alexander sees it, the successful representation of trauma depends fundamentally on the creation of a compelling framework of cultural classification within which the new stories may find their place (2004: 12-15). Apart from revealing the key aspects of the nature of the pain and of the victim, the latter should also manage to make the audience of the trauma representation feel certain empathy or, even, an identity with the victimized group. In most instances, Danticat can be seen to achieve this goal through her characters' revelation of those dark recesses of their unconscious where they have kept for a long time their painful memories. Even those who do not count on the company of compatriots who have travelled similarly tortuous roads do eventually find some rituals to pacify their pain and grief, and to start anew the trauma process that will allow them to reconstruct their identity, at least partially.

Some of the characters come to appease their ghosts from the past by being brought into contact with other individuals who have seen their lives truncated by unexpected catastrophes. Nadine and Dany, for example, undergo important changes when their own trauma is relativized by being set side by side with those of others who are experiencing tribulations at least as trying as their own. The fact that they feel compelled to assist those others through their dire straits help them to see their own problems in a new light and to realize that, traumatic as their experiences may have been, they are not alone in having to cope with the burden. Others experience similarly cathartic processes by memorializing the suffering of members of the older generation and projecting it onto their own existence. Aline and Michel decide to take important decisions about their future as a journalist and a father, respectively, in the light of what they learnt had happened in Haiti only a few decades ago. As Munro notes, Danticat's fiction not only presents the effects of trauma on the individual and the community, but she also identifies what is destroyed by trauma and indicates the new strategies and sensibilities that will help the characters to recover (2006: 83). This fact applies, of course, to both victims and onlookers of the disrupting events but, most interestingly, it is equally valid for perpetrators and their kin, who are also seen to suffer from dysfunctions not very different from those affecting the "prey".

Several reviewers underlined the fact that one of the most interesting contributions of the book was, in fact, that the boundaries between the consequences suffered by victims and perpetrators of the violence are often blurred (see Charles 2004), as all of them prove to be stigmatized by scars that make them feel embarrassed and remorseful, alternatively. The last part of the contribution has delved into the difficulties that the title character has to live with, the secret knowledge that at any moment his past may be unveiled by a member of his community or, even worse, by one of his closest kin or friends. The scar on his face is a constant reminder that, like the other characters in the collection, he has also needed to learn to live

with corrosive memories and an especially large set of ghosts that keep him in the unremitting state of anxiety typical of trauma victims. Unlike most trauma theorists, Danticat is a bit more reluctant to mark a clear division between victimizer and victimized, since all of them seem to be burdened by a history in which they have been pawns of forces they could not really control. This fact becomes particularly evident in the two chapters of the collection – "The Book of the Dead" and "The Book of Miracles" – in which we are given portrayals of the former torturer from the point of view of his daughter and his wife, both of whom feel compelled to consider their own position regarding his past:

> It has always amazed me how much my mother and father echo each other, in their speech, their actions, even in their businesses. I wonder how much more alike they could possibly be. But why shouldn't they be alike? Like all parents, they were a society of two, sharing a series of private codes and associations, a past that even if I'd been born in the country of their birth, I still wouldn't have known, couldn't have known, thoroughly. I was a part of them. Some might say I belonged to them. But I wasn't them. (25)

Like most of the other characters in the book, ka is required, after learning of her father's atrocious crimes in the past, Ka is also required to reconsider her identity, since her knowledge of the gap between who she is and who she had thought herself to be creates new demands and pressures that she had not experienced before. Probably, she will feel, like her mother, that "there is no way to escape this dread any more, this pendulum between regret and forgiveness, this fright that the most important relationships of her life were always on the verge of being severed or lost, that the people closest to her were always disappearing" (242).

REFERENCES

Alexander, J. C. 2004. "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma". *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity.* Ed. J.C. Alexander *et al*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1-30.

Caruth, C. 1996. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Césaire, A. 1981. *Toussaint L'Ouverture: La Révolution française et le problème colonial*. Paris: Présence Africaine.

Charles, R. 2004. "A Spectrum of Lives Touched by Torture: Stories about the Legacy of Abuse in Haiti". Review of *The Dew Breaker*. *The Christian Science Monitor*. March 23, 2005.

Chomsky, N. 1993. *Year 501: The Conquest Continues*. Cambridge, MA: Sound End Press.

Cohen, J.M. 1969. *The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus: Being his own Log-Book, Letters and Dispatches with Connecting Narrative Drawn from the Life of the Admiral*. London, UK: Penguin Classics.

Danticat, E. 2005 (2004). *The Dew Breaker*. New York: Vintage.

De las Casas, B. 1976 (1552). *The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account*. New York: Continuum. Trans. by Crossroads Publishing Co.

Douglass, A. and T. A. Vogler, eds. 2003. Introduction to *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma*. New York and London: Routledge. 1-53.

Eder, R. 2004. "Off the Island". Review of *The Dew Breaker*. *The New York Times*. 21 March. <http://query.nytimes.com>. (Accessed 10 October 2010)

Farmer, P. 2003 (1996). *The Uses of Haiti*. 3rd edition. London: Common Courage Press.

Flood, A. 2010. "Haiti – A History of Intervention, Occupation and Resistance". *Anarchist Writers*. <http://anarchist.pageabode.com>. (Accessed 30 January 2010)

Gilroy, P. 1993. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Glissant, E. 1997. *Poetics of Relation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Trans. Betsy Wing.

Haggerty, R. A. 1989. "Haiti, A Country Study: French Settlement and Sovereignty". U.S. Library of Congress. <http://countrystudies.us/haiti/7.htm>. (Accessed 30 January 2010)

Heiln, R. D. and N. G. Heiln. 1996. *Written in Blood: The History of the Haitian People*. Revised edition. Landham, MD: University Press of America.

Herman, J. L. 1992. *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York: Harper/Collins/Basic Books.

Hong, T. 2004. "Horror, Hope & Redemption: A Talk with Edwidge Danticat about her Latest Novel, *The Dew Breaker*". *The Bloomsbury Review* 24 (5). <http://www.bloomsburyreview.com/Archives/Edwidge%20Danticott.pdf>. (Accessed 30 January 2010)

James, C.L.R. 1990 (1963). *The Black Jacobins*. New York: Vintage Books.

Kakutani, M. 2004. "Books of the Times; Hiding from a Brutal Past Spent Shattering Lives in Haiti". Review of *The Dew Breaker*. *The New York Times*. 10 March.

Lambek, M. and P. Antze. 1996. "Introduction: Forecasting Memory". *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory.* Ed. P. Antze and M. Lambek. London: Routledge. xi-xxxviii.

Marshall, J. 2004. "A Poetic Novel is Haunted by the Haiti of Today and Yesterday". Review of *The Dew Breaker*. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. 12 March. <http://seattlepi.nwsource.com>. (Accessed 10 October 2006)

Massimo, R. 2004. Review of *The Dew Breaker*. *Providence Journal*. 1 April.

Munro, M. 2006. "Writing Disaster: Trauma, Memory, and History in Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones*". *Ethnologies* 28 (1): 81-98.

Neal, A. 1998. *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Nora, P. 1989. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux of Mémoire". *Representations* 26: 7-25.

Puri, S. 2004. *The Caribbean Postcolonial: Social Equality, Post-nationalism, and Cultural Hybridity*. New York and Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Scarry, E. 1985. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Singh, A. *et al*., 1994. eds. "Introduction". *Memory, Narrative, and Identity: New Essays in Ethnic American Literature*. Boston: Northeastern University Press. 6-25.

Smith, D. 2007. "A Violent Homeland: Recalling Haiti in Edwidge Danticat's Novels". *Narrating the Past: (Re)constructing Memory, (Re)negotiating History*. Ed. N. Batra. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars. 133-140.

Suk, J. 2001. *Postcolonial Paradoxes in French Caribbean Writing: Césaire, Glissant, Condé*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Sweeney, C. 2007. "The Unmaking of the World: Haiti, History, and Writing in Edouard Glissant and Edwidge Danticat". *Atlantic Studies* 4 (1) (April): 51-66.

Thomson, I. 2010. "Haiti: Enslaved by its Dark History". *Telegraph*. 14 January. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk>. (Accessed 30 January 2010)

Walsh, B. *et al*. 2010. "Aftershock". *Time Magazine* 175 (4), 1 February: 22-29.

White, H. 1999. "The Modernist Event". *Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press. 66-86.

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES - VOLUME 8 (2010), 57-71

SOOTHSAYING SONG THRUSHES AND LIFE-GIVING SNAILS: MOTIFS IN A.S.BYATT'S *BABEL TOWER* AND *A WHISTLING WOMAN*

JENNIFER ANNE JOHNSON*
University of Málaga

ABSTRACT. *Thrushes and snails are scattered throughout the pages of A .S. Byatt's* Babel Tower *and* A Whistling Woman*, functioning as motifs that link the main narrative with its intertexts, thematically and symbolically. Although the thrush appears to be a predatory creature, it links a line of soothsayers and helpers created by Byatt herself as well as others in the works of Robert Browning, J.R.R. Tolkien and Thomas Hardy. The snail is a complex figure, associated with myths of life and death as well as with scientific research into neuroscience, environmental studies and DNA, the basis for all life. As a result it serves to bridge the two cultures of the literary and scientific worlds in the second half of Byatt's tetralogy.*

Keywords: A. S. Byatt, contemporary British fiction, song thrush and snails, intertextuality, fiction and science.

---

* Correspondence should be sent to: Jennifer Anne Johnson. I.E.S. Almenara, C/Francisco Labao s/n. 29200 Vélez - Málaga. Spain. Email: jajasp.johnson@gmail.com

JENNIFER ANNE JOHNSON

LA CANCIÓN PROFÉTICA DE LOS TORDOS Y LOS CARACOLES QUE DAN LA VIDA: MOTIVOS EN *BABEL TOWER* Y *A WHISTLING WOMAN*

RESUMEN. *Las novelas* Babel Tower *y* A Whistling Woman*, de la autora británica A.S. Byatt, están llenas de referencias a los tordos y los caracoles. Funcionan como motivos que relacionan la narrativa principal con sus intertextos de manera temática y simbólica. Aunque a primera vista el tordo parece ser un ave predatoria, emerge aquí como eslabón que une una serie de figuras que ayudan y que dicen la verdad. Algunas de estas figuras son creaciones de Byatt, además de otras de Robert Browning, J.R.R.Tolkien y Thomas Hardy. El caracol es un ser complejo, asociado con los mitos de la muerte y la vida a la vez que con la investigación científica en los campos de la neurociencia, los estudios ambientales y el ADN, la base de vida. Por lo tanto, sirve para vincular las dos culturas de los mundos de la literatura y la ciencia en la segunda mitad de la tetralogía de Byatt.*

Palabras clave: A. S. Byatt, novela inglesa contemporánea, tordos y caracoles, intertextualidad, ficción y ciencia.

Received 18 April 2010
Revised version accepted 30 July 2010

1. INTRODUCTION

A.S. Byatt's novel *Babel Tower* (1996), the third in her quartet, opens with a vivid portrait of a thrush beside his anvil. The anvil is where he smashes a hapless snail before eating it, appreciatively it seems, and then bursting into song. The image of a thrush cracking a vulnerable snail on a stone in order to prise out the tender flesh might, at first sight, suggest symbolism related to the random nature of accident and death, the harsh cruelty of nature in particular or of all life in general. This approach could resonate with comments such as Henry Smee's in "The Changeling", from Byatt's *Sugar & Other Stories* when this character observes that "The world is more terrible than most people ever let themselves imagine. Isn't it?" (Byatt 1987: 155). But although this observation does indeed reflect an underlying awareness of the randomness of human destiny in Byatt's fiction, this interpretation falls short when we read the complex mesh of references to thrushes and snails throughout *Babel Tower* and the concluding novel of the quartet, *A Whistling Woman* (2002). The song thrush is connected with a line of wise thrushes in literature, while the snail functions both on a literary level as a symbol of life and, in a scientific sense, as a means of studying genetics and neuroscience.

Byatt's interest in natural history is clear to see in her fiction and in her critical work. The novella "Morpho Eugenia" (1992) uses insects as metaphors and also as an important element of the plot, intertwined with a tissue of intertextual references which Byatt discusses in *On Histories and Stories* (2000).[1] In *Possession* (1990), the Victorian poet Randolph Henry Ash displays a voracious desire for all types of knowledge, "Ash had been interested in everything. Arab astronomy and African transport systems […] ectoplasm and solar mythology, the last meals of mastodons and the true nature of manna" (Byatt 1990: 28). This is a trait which, inevitably, he shares with Byatt herself. Her range of interests and references is enormous and covers both arts and sciences. In *A Whistling Woman* she uses peacocks and bower birds both as objects of scientific research and as metaphors, while her ornithological interests are also displayed in her collaboration with the photographer Victor Schrager for whose *Bird Hand Book* (2001) she wrote the texts.

In an article published in *Nature* in 2005, A. S. Byatt wrote about her interest in science as a fascinating source of ideas and new ways of looking at the world. She also described her delight on discovering that there was a link between snails, their name in Latin, the shape of their shells and the double helix of DNA. Moreover, all this could be incorporated into her writing:

> I realized, one idle morning, that a snail in Latin is *helix*. And a snail's shell is in the form of a spiral. Later, I discovered that there were two species of snail, *Helix hortensis* and *Helix nemoralis* (the snails of the garden and the grove) that could be fitted into both my paradise garden imagery and my realist scientific tale. (Byatt 2005)

She uses the names and descriptions of these two species of snails on the opening page of *Babel Tower*, referring also to broken alphabets, Greek letters, runes and "C and T, A and G" (Byatt 1996: 1). This brief reference to the four letters of the DNA code hints at a scientific message in what appears to be a literary text, a word picture. In *A.S. Byatt and the Heliotropic Imagination*, Jane Campbell points out that the snail shells can even be seen as a text, given that the scientists who Frederica Potter meets in the novel "can read the snails' DNA on their shells" (Campbell 2004: 233). From the first page, science and literature are intertwined in references to thrushes and snails. Surprisingly, this first page is not the only beginning. There are another three, each of which also opens with the words "It might begin:" Richard Todd has explored the significance of these in the structure of the novel.

> *Babel Tower* offers three openings that correspond to the three main strands of the story, prefaced by a fourth that provides a kind of continuo. These alternate

1. Two of the articles in this book, "Ancestors" and "True Stories and Facts in Fiction" are relevant.

> beginnings are of organic importance to both the book's form and content, for they initiate an interwoven, or braided structure. That structure can be figured as a helix or spiral of arbitrary length which, when imagined vertically, assists in our understanding of the book's title. (Todd 1997: 63)

We soon realize that the motifs of thrushes and snails haunt the three main story lines (which do not correspond exactly to the three openings) as well as the continuo. Firstly, in the principal narrative, which recounts Frederica Potter's struggles to lead an independent life in the 60s, there are many references to the world of science in which both thrushes and snails are linked with scientific research and concern for the environment. Secondly, an acquaintance of Frederica's has written a novel entitled *Babbletower,* a gruesomely dark dystopia that has two characters named after the song thrush as well as references to the symbolic use of snails in festivals. In addition, images of snail shells are sprinkled throughout *Babel Tower* in order to mark the beginning and end of each section of *Babbletower*. Thirdly, a woman friend of Frederica's is in the process of telling a children's tale that has a thrush within it as well as a character named after the song thrush.

Jane Campbell has a concise summary of some of the clustering snail and thrush motifs in *Babel Tower* (2004: 232-33), but a few pages later asks "Is there significance in Dol Throstle's being named for the predatory thrush, when she, as a member of the travelling company in Agatha's story, is a benign and helpful figure?" (2004: 236). A closer look at the characters named after thrushes, and the literary connotations of the thrush, reveals that they do not represent a predatory presence, but rather belong to a line of soothsayers and guides that lead us to the truth.

2. THE THRUSH AS SOOTHSAYER AND GUIDE

As we know, the opening scene of *Babel Tower* describes a thrush, apparently outside the main narrative, but the fourth beginning to the novel introduces us to another one among the characters of Jude Mason's as yet unfinished book, *Babbletower*. Here, "a small band of free spirits" (Byatt 1996: 10) flee the French Terror and seek to set up a Utopian community without the usual constraints imposed by conventional society. One member of this group is "an older man, who called himself Turdus Cantor" (Byatt 1996: 12). Some readers may be disconcerted by what Celia Wallhead calls "the farcical name of 'The Singing Turd' (1997: 134), but Campbell points out that "in spite of its scatological suggestiveness [this] is the Latin name of the song thrush" (2004: 233). Indeed, *Turdus* is the Latin for thrush and a Cantor is a singer, so clearly Byatt intends us to understand this reference, but it is intriguing to note that the true Latin name for the song thrush is *Turdus*

philomelos. As the author is known to have a mind which she calls "naturally inclusive" (Reynolds and Noakes 2004: 11) she is unlikely to be unaware of this or of the implications of the story of Philomela who, according to Ovid, was shut up in a tower after being raped by her brother-in-law. He also cut out her tongue to prevent her telling the story of her suffering, but she managed to escape after sending her sister a tapestry that revealed the truth. There are resonances here with the outermost narrative, that of Frederica who has found herself hidden away in the country, deprived of her individual voice and identity and subject to violent abuse by her husband. However, Philomela's salient trait is her determination to resist tyranny and to tell the truth. A study of the character Turdus Cantor soon reveals that he is one of only three men in the community of *Babbletower* who resist the dominance of their leader Culvert. When Culvert suggests innovations that the reader sees may lead to further manipulation and degradation for the members of the community, it is usually Turdus Cantor who asks pertinent questions about his intentions. Soon after their arrival at the Utopian community, La Tour Bruyade, Culvert argues in favour of communal story-telling:

> And as the narrators become more skilled and trusting, and as the listeners become more subtle in questioning and probing, so shall the stories become more and more truthful, as hidden things, shameful things, shameful secrets, desires repressed with violence in the harsh old days, are brought out into a clear, and reasonable, friendly and accepting light and warmth. (Byatt 1996: 65)

His suggestion is met with enthusiasm, but it is Turdus Cantor who queries the advisability of this proposal, asking if it "did not smack in some way of the confessional practices of the old Church, and might not be, as the confessional had been, manipulated by unscrupulous men to instill fear and obedience in the weak" (Byatt 1996: 66). Throughout the novel, Turdus Cantor's comments serve to reveal the underlying purpose of Culvert's proposals and actions. When Cantor is given the role of Logos in the New Year festival, he points out that he can no longer sing sweetly as required, as his old voice is cracked (Byatt 1996: 264), and so he has to play pan-pipes instead, but his role as Logos, the word or reason, alerts us to his soothsaying role in the story of *Babbletower*. Moreover, the last page of both this novel within a novel and of *Babel Tower* itself gives him the final word, "Let us go away from here' said Turdus Cantor" (Byatt 1996: 617), as the three friends, the only survivors of La Tour Bruyade and Culvert's experiment, walk away from the ruins, looking back on a scene that recalls the snail shells around the thrush's anvil on the opening page, although this time the creatures devoured were human beings, not snails. Turdus Cantor's role in *Babbletower* as a speaker of necessary truths, contrasted with the roles of other characters, is emphasized in a comment by the author of the novel, Jude Mason, who objects to an analysis of his work by

a "cold philosopher" because she discourses on the philosophy that underlies the story without ever referring to the characters, so that in this objectionable article about his book "[n]owhere does Culvert *do* or Samson Origen *think* or Turdus Cantor *speak*" (Byatt 1996: 416).

Cantor is not the only character in *Babbletower* who is named after the song thrush. The woman who Culvert perceives as being in opposition to his projects, mainly due to her concern that his plans for communal childcare will destroy the bond between mothers and their children (which is indeed his intention), is called Mavis, an English dialect word, derived from the Old French *mauvis,* for the song thrush. Like Turdus Cantor, she resists some of Culvert's plans and asks him questions that help to reveal the path that the community is following under his guidance. She is a maternal woman who craves the nurturing role that has been made obsolescent in this new world of Culvert's. She realizes that she and her husband will be hated for keeping themselves apart from the licentious, frenetic pleasures of the rest of the group because they prefer their monogamous relationship, but she cannot persuade her husband to "entertain" other lovers. He points out that "it would be a blow against freedom of desire to indulge in variety for fear of social disapproval. For such conventional prescription of behavior is what we fled" (Byatt 1996: 206). However, Mavis is right in feeling uneasy about their position within the community, because "Culvert had marked her as his opposer" (Byatt 1996: 205), and he soon contrives her destruction.

The reader discovers that Culvert is not only irritated by her opposition but also disgusted by the sight of her breasts gushing with milk as she suckles her baby. "He felt a desire, as he saw her placidly feeding her child, to run at her with his hands, or even a weapon, to pierce or bruise those assertive rounds, to mix hot blood with the pallid milk, to slice, to sever…" (Byatt 1996: 207). The narrator observes at this point that Culvert did not analyse his feelings about this maternal figure and why he wished to hurt her, but the repulsion that the Lady Mavis inspires in him guides the reader toward a realization that this man, so obsessed with sex, is in fact a woman-hater. Later he meets, but does not at first recognize (although she calls him "my nurseling"), an old crone in a scene that replicates the scene from the tale of Sleeping Beauty when the princess pricks her finger on a spindle in a tower. The old woman instructs him as to the nature of snails and their role in the Feast of Misrule at New Year. Then, when he fails to heed her advice and stop fiddling with her distaff (ancient symbol of womanhood) he pricks himself, and she sucks his bloodied finger. At that point, he is suddenly overwhelmed by a sensuous memory of his infancy, when the crone had been his wet-nurse:

> And as his blood ran into the wet saliva and apple-juice on her tongue he remembered everything, his nose up against the warm bag of her breast, the scent

> of her milk, his little fists kneading her like sweet pastry, the hot swaddling bands between his legs. And tears ran down his cheeks, for the onward flow of time, for the crumpling and drying of flesh and blood, for the singularity of a man shut in his skin as time sucked the marrow from his bones. (Byatt 1996: 263)

Clearly, we are meant to understand that Culvert had been deprived of contact with his mother during infancy, put out to wet-nurse as was the custom at that time in France.[2] This theme of the separation of mothers from their children, often because they are sent to boarding school, is pervasive in *Babel Tower* and this text within a text, *Babbletower*, is attributed to Jude Mason, who suffered from sexual abuse and bullying at boarding school. The subject of such abuse emerges in other parts of the quartet, as well as in various works by A.S. Byatt such as "The Changeling" (1987) and *The Children's Book* (2009).

The truthful, sincere and non-manipulative Lady Mavis is destroyed by Culvert. First, her children are targeted by bullies in the communal children's dormitory. The youngest, a girl ironically called Felicitas, is reduced to a drooling idiot, and her older brother Florian tells his mother how this came about. She refuses to understand that evil can flourish amongst children and lets the aggressors know that she is aware of their responsibility, although she is not vengeful and has no intention of seeking punishment for them. However, the bullies *are* vengeful, and Florian soon disappears. Mavis comes to understand that it was her own ingenuous intervention that led to his death, and commits suicide in the hope that her death will, somehow, remove the blood-lust that has invaded the community, although she is well aware that there is no god to be propitiated by her sacrifice. Her young daughter has already been described in terms of a snail, "she often lay curled like a desperate snail in its shell" (Byatt 1996: 269), and now Mavis herself becomes another snail-like victim as she crashes headlong from the parapet, rejecting her avian nature and willing her own destruction:

> So the Lady Mavis came down like a great bird, swaying in her skirts amongst the child's raucous cries and her own singing. But when she saw the treetops, where she might alight like a bird, or break her fall, she made various ungainly movements with her body, twisting and turning, and managed to project herself head-first […] And her head hit a sharp rock, like a snail dropped by a thrush, and burst apart […] (Byatt 1996: 275)

2. According to Lawrence Stone, by the second half of the eighteenth century England was unusual in advancing the practice of breast-feeding and abandoning the use of wet-nurses. "The use of rural wet-nurses was more or less universal among all but the lowest classes in the towns and cities of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century France, causing a very high rate of infant mortality. The practice seems to have died out in France only in the late nineteenth century and in Germany only in the twentieth, to be replaced in many cases by bottle-feeding" (Stone 1977: 273).

Culvert's reaction to the Lady Mavis and his rejection of her femaleness as manifested in her maternal role draws attention to his hatred of women, appearances to the contrary. By the end of the book, it is revealed that he has devised an ingeniously cruel instrument of sexual torture with which to put to death his original female partner, Lady Roseace, and that this murder had always been in his mind, even before their arrival at La Tour Bruyade. However the reader has been prepared for this revelation by Culvert's earlier treatment of the Lady Mavis. Culvert chooses to destroy each of these women in a way which is appropriate to the female roles that they fulfill. Because the Lady Mavis lives through her motherhood, he deprives her of her children. Roseace has been his lover, so when he tires of her (and she no longer trusts him) he kills her through her sex. This cruelty is dimly reflected in the outer narrative, which describes Frederica's relationship with her husband Nigel, who was also sent away from his mother, to boarding school. He treats his wife violently and is found to have a secret store of sadistic pornography. From our reading of Culvert's reactions to the Lady Mavis and the crone in the tower, we might conclude that Nigel's inability to have a mature sexual relationship between equals is the product of his early separation from his mother.

The third character who is named after a song thrush is the one mentioned by Jane Campbell, Dol Throstle (from the Old English name for the bird). She is indeed a benign and helpful figure but, as we have seen, in this she follows the nature of the song thrush in Byatt's novel as represented by Turdus Cantor and the Lady Mavis. Dol Throstle is the cook's maid who accompanies Prince Artegall and Mark, his page on their Tolkienesque journey in *Flight North*. This is a children's story which is being narrated by Agatha Mond (the woman that Frederica shares a house with) throughout *Babel Tower* and into *A Whistling Woman*. Dol is no Philomela-like character, but she does exert a guiding influence on the two boys and is the one who first gives Artegall the idea of fleeing north to find refuge from spies and assassins with his father's legendary cousin, Hamraskar Kveld-Ulf. Later he confesses that he is no longer sure, saying "doubtfully that maybe the Northern Kingdom was only legend. Dol had spoken of it with certainty when she hid him in the laundry-cart, but the certainty had diminished with the rough journey" (Byatt 2002: 6). However, Dol Throstle has told the truth and guided him well and, after many dangerous adventures, they reach this sanctuary.

On the way, she befriends an old woman called Throgga, who warns her that the villagers mean to harm Dol and her companions. Throgga also tells Dol tales about the "Bale Fire", giving her valuable information which helps save the travelers by enabling them to help the resentful, suspicious villagers light their sodden firewood and so celebrate the Winter Solstice. In general, Dol Throstle's part is that of a valuable companion who gives good advice and tries to protect her fellow travelers from some of the dangers that lie in wait for them.

So, why should A.S. Byatt use song thrushes as part of a private mythology that draws our attention to characters who tell the truth and provide hope, rather than stressing the predatory aspect of the snail-smashing bird? There are literary clues that illuminate the role of Byatt's thrushes through some of her intertextual references. In *Flight North*, by the time of the Bale Fire, the companions have "acquired an ancient, draggled Thrush, who speaks when he chooses, which is not often" (Byatt 1996: 394). One moment when he chooses to speak is to warn the travellers of the dangers that lie ahead of them in the form of some hybrid bird-women known as the Whistlers. "No one has seen the Whistlers and lived,' said the thrush. 'Indeed, even to hear them is fatal" (Byatt 2002: 247).

This is yet another thrush, and one who, physically, is reminiscent of Thomas Hardy's "Darkling Thrush": "An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,/ In blast-beruffled plume," who "Had chosen thus to fling his soul/ Upon the growing gloom." (1900). Hardy, reluctantly, reads hope for the dawning twentieth century in the bedraggled thrush's joyful song, despite the bleak surroundings. Apart from the physical resemblance between Hardy's and Byatt's birds, and the fact that this is one of the two most famous literary thrushes that Byatt's readers are likely to associate with her characters, Hardy's poetry has already been used in the tetralogy. At the end of *Still Life* (1985), when the members of the Potter family are reeling after the death of Frederic's sister, Stephanie, their father seeks some comfort in Hardy's poem "Heredity", published in 1917, a reflection on how the dead live on in the features of their descendants and other family members. Significantly, this is a topic explored through the scientific discourse of genetics in the last two volumes of the quartet.

The other most famous literary thrush sings in Robert Browning's "Home Thoughts from Abroad" (1835). Browning was one of Byatt's sources for Randolph Henry Ash in *Possession,*[3] and her admiration for the Victorian poet, is obvious:

> He is one of the very greatest English poets, and his greatness has never been fully acknowledged or described, in part at least because his prolific writing and his huge and idiosyncratic erudition make him hard to come to terms with all at once, and in part because he is difficult to docket in terms of the usual literary discussions of Victorian poetry. (Byatt 1991: 29)

Byatt has often referred to Browning, whose life and poetry have influenced her for decades, so his "wise thrush [who] sings each song twice over,/ Lest you

3. "The literary giant of his day, *Randolph Ash* is a cross between Browning and Tennyson, with bits of Wordsworth, Arnold, Morris, Ruskin and Carlyle. His imaginary poetry is Browningesque no only in style but in subject as well" (Kelly 1996: 81).

think he never could recapture / The first fine careless rapture!" is a probable intertextual reference which hints at the wisdom of the song thrush.

In *Babel Tower*, one of Byatt's many intertextual references is to J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1937) in which a wise thrush plays a vital part in the downfall of the dragon and the triumph of Bilbo Baggins and his friends. He helps the travellers gain access to the dragon's lair and later guides a man of Dale who, being one of the old race of men from that area, can understand his speech, and shows him how to kill the dragon. Later, the dwarfs and Bilbo are told that thrushes are good and friendly and that they may trust the thrush's account of events (Tolkien 1937: 54, 178, 192, 209, 216). *Babel Tower* contains many intertexts that that the author has written herself and included in the novel, such as *Babbletower,* and *Flight North,* together with several fragments of Frederica Potter's Burroughs-influenced book, *Laminations*. Of necessity, this last contains fragments of many works of poetry and prose, fact and fiction, written by other authors as well as Byatt. However, one book that is quoted at some length, the only literary work that Frederica's husband, Nigel, is ever shown to have enjoyed, is *The Hobbit*. When Frederica reads it to their young son, Nigel declares that "it's my absolutely favourite book, *The Hobbit*" (Byatt 1996: 34). This is the first time that Nigel enters the novel, and the only occasion on which we see the small family enjoying a harmonious moment together. Byatt has spoken about the influence of Tolkien on the 60s in the UK,[4] and we may assume that Tolkien's thrush has contributed to her personal associations for the song thrush. In each of Byatt's thrush-related characters, the bird has positive connotations that are generally associated with wisdom, guidance, truthfulness and foresight.

3. LIFE-GIVING SNAILS IN LITERATURE AND SCIENCE

The connection between song thrushes and snails is established on the opening page of *Babel Tower*, with the portrait of the thrush on his anvil or altar, while the symbolic significance of snails is revealed in the inner text *Babbletower*, when Culvert meets the crone in the tower. She describes how the Feast of Misrule used to be celebrated at the turn of the year. Each festive dish involved eating snails, some of them roasted alive in their shells, for there is "spirit life in snails [because] men say they go between us and those who sleep under the earth" (Byatt 1996:

4. On her web page: http://www.asbyatt.com, Byatt comments on the ubiquity and significance of Tolkien's fiction in the sixties, saying "I found, rather to my surprise, when I began to think about "the sixties" coolly and at a distance, that there were two equal powers ruling the landscape of our imaginations, the Hobbit and the Marquis de Sade".

262). She explains that they are creatures of both the night and the day, they travel between the dead and the living, neither fish nor flesh nor fowl, and so they are "magical, as things undecided are magical, because they are not fixed". As part of the Feast, after the snails have been "sucked from their hiding place" little lamps are made of their dead shells. The image of a snail, vulnerable despite being curled up within its shell, is used several times throughout *Babel Tower*, as we have seen with reference to the Lady Mavis and her children. However, snails are not only emblems of vulnerability. Their association with life makes them appropriate in the description of sex between Frederica and John Ottokar. "On an impulse she touches his sex, the two balls hanging loose and separate in the cool bag of skin. The penis shrinks like a soft curled snail, and then swings out blindly, a lumbering and supple serpent becoming a rod or a branch" (Byatt 1996: 360).

Babel Tower and *A Whistling Woman* contain and hint at many stories in a polyvocal style, but the main narrative belongs to the Potter family, of whom Frederica is the nearest to a protagonist in a large cast. This narrative interweaves her story with several other narrative threads, one of which is associated with scientific research in the areas of genetics and neuroscience. The link is through Frederica's younger brother, Marcus, a mathematician whose friend, Jacqueline is a biologist doing a Ph.D. which involves monitoring colonies of snails, studying "the genetic changes in their populations, which can be read in the varied bands on the creatures' shells" (Byatt 1996: 53). Jacqueline has become passionately interested in the new science of ecological studies and gives Marcus a copy of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1963), a seminal work that revealed the disastrous consequences of indiscriminate use of the new pesticides which worked their way into the habitat and also into the food chain of birds. On the moors where Marcus lives, the resulting drop in thrush population is an unknown variable in the future of the snail population in Jacqueline's study. A fellow researcher, Lysgaard-Peacock, explains how the link between snails and thrushes helps their work on genetics and natural selection:

> [W]e look for changes in snails with changes in the environment. Some are pink, some are yellow and there is evidence that unbanded snails are more numerous in beechwoods, and striped snails in hedgerows where they may be disguised from thrushes. We came here because there is a thrush's anvil here where we collect the broken shells – as you see- and count the numbers, and their changes in pattern. (Byatt 1996: 356)

Later, Jacqueline becomes interested in the use of snails' large neurons as a means of studying the chemistry of memory (Byatt 2002: 52-3), so snails are connected with two areas of research, both fundamental for our understanding of what it means to be human: genetics and neuroscience, as well as with research into humankind's destruction of the planet through our poisoning of ecosystems.

In *A Whistling Woman*, the relevance of snails and thrushes is further developed in the main narrative, as Jacqueline and the other scientist continue to monitor the snails, both the living specimens and the dead, whose shells they find by examining the areas around song thrushes' anvils. This research is carried out on an isolated farm, involving them in a case of domestic violence and later on in the growth of a strange, isolated cult, so that the scientific work becomes an increasingly integral part of the plot in the last book of the quartet. The significance of snails in the tetralogy becomes clear in the *Nature* article referred to earlier, in which Byatt comments on her meeting with Steve Jones (a scientist who has become very well-known in Britain as a result of his television appearances), whose help she acknowledges in *A Whistling Woman*.

> By pure luck I met Steve Jones, an evolutionary biologist at University College London […]. I discovered that Steve was the world expert on what had […] been renamed *Cepaea hortensis* and *Cepaea nemoralis*. He had been studying the genetics of the external spiral of colours on the shells of snails […]. I later asked Steve if he could see any connection at all between snails and work on neurons in the brain, on memory: he said that snails had giant neurons which made them peculiarly apt for this kind of experiment. I had an imagined woman scientist whom I needed to move from snail genetics to neuroscience. Curiosity is a profound drive in both novelists and scientists. I took great pleasure in learning about snails. (Byatt 2005: 295)

Snail shells are part of mathematical enigmas too. The mathematician, Marcus, is fascinated by the Fibonacci spiral, exemplified in natural phenomena such as fir cones and some snail shells, which "became closer and closer to the ratio of the Golden Section as the series progressed. As though 0.618034 was a mystical constant in the geometry of life" (Byatt 2002: 67). This observation highlights the link between snails and all other types of life, as well as recalling the observation, made by Frederica's lover, John Ottokar, that God was "to be seen in mathematics. God is mathematics, the form that is in everything" (Byatt 2002: 64). Byatt has stated her belief that the Fibonacci spiral is "an example of a platonic order – a sense that an invisible mathematical order informed all our physical accidental world. My fearful mathematician at the end of the third novel moves from studying the computer as a brain to studying this spiral. This is for him a kind of paradisal completeness" (Byatt 2005: 295).

The opening page of *Babel Tower* refers to the beauty of the thrush's song, whose "limited lovely notes […] give us such pleasure" (Byatt 1996: 1), while snails are delightful too. The mathematical elegance inherent in their spiral shells implies beauty, and the snails in the early morning mist are described in loving detail that lingers on their colours and shapes as they slide over turf and stone walls:

> [T]heir dove-grey translucent bodies glistening with their own secretions, their fine horns wavering before them, testing the air, peering quietly around. Their

> shells were variegated and lovely, some a delicate lemon, some a deep rose, some a greenish soot-black, some striped boldly in dark spirals on buff, some with creamy spirals on rose, some with a single band of dark on gold, some like ghosts, greyish-white coiled on chalk-white. (Byatt 2002: 17)

This colourful description recalls others by Byatt, about snakes in *The Game* (1967) and "A Lamia in the Cévennes" (1995) and reminds us that there is beauty in unexpected places. Snails are thus connected with science, literature, sex, legends and beauty as well as symbolizing the fragility of life in the face of inevitable violence, either on the thrush's anvil or due to the cruelty of men. In death, snails are associated with stones, which also recur throughout *Babel Tower* and *A Whistling Woman*, but their principal resonance is with life, both symbolically and through their use for scientists who work in two of the most significant areas of modern research: genetics and neuroscience. The study of science implies the search for truth, and the link between these snails and their predator, the song thrush, leads us to characters who speak the truth and are not the violent dealers of death one might expect from the portrait of a thrush on the opening page of *Babel Tower*.

4. CONCLUSION

In *Babel Tower*, the use of thrushes as a motif guides our understanding of characters who speak the truth and who are to be trusted, thereby also linking three layers of tales within tales in this novel: *Babel Tower*, *Babbletower* and *Flight North*. This perception of how Byatt uses thrushes has been overlooked by critics who have only seen the bird as a menacing predator and who fail to understand why Byatt has named several of her "good" characters after such an apparently unsavoury creature.

The figure of the thrush is used to establish intertextual connections with thrushes in the works of three other writers whose writing resonates through Byatt's fictional and critical publications: Robert Browning, Thomas Hardy and J. R. R. Tolkien. Through the Latin name for the song-thrush there is also an association with Ovid's tale of Philomela.

Snails are significant symbolically in the tales within the novel *Babel Tower* and thematically as part of the scientific discourse in both this and in the last volume of the tetralogy, *A Whistling Woman*. The disciplines of genetics and neuroscience are explored throughout the second half of the quartet, and in both of these areas snails are involved, in the former through the study of the markings on their shells and in the latter due to their large neurons, which render them exceptionally useful for experiments. As a result, the symbolic and scientific levels of Byatt's narratives are associated through the figure of the snail.

Both thrushes and snails contributed to what was a new area of scientific and political controversy in the 1960s, that of ecological studies and the growing awareness of environmental issues. We have seen that one of Byatt's intertextual references is to Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, a seminal work in this area. The quartet is a work of historical fiction, although it is about relatively recent history, and the awareness of this issue in these novels highlights the shift in our attitudes since the mid-twentieth century. Concern for the environment and interest in the scientific research associated with it also arise in other work of Byatt's, such as *The Biographer's Tale* (2000), in which the narrator evolves from being a postmodern literary theorist to working as an amateur assistant to a bee taxonomist who researches palaeoecology. Even in these circumstances, the scientific discourse at the end of the book is intertwined with references to poetry, from Ovid to Sidney to Tennyson. In literature and in science Byatt has found discourses which are fruitful in their intermingling, and this interdisciplinary dialogue is exemplified in *Babel Tower* and *A Whistling Woman* by her use of the thrush and the snail.

REFERENCES

Browning, R. 2000 (1845). "Home Thoughts from Abroad". *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Ed. M. H. Abrams. New York. W. W. Norton & Company. 1358.

Byatt, A. S. 1967. *The Game*. London: Chatto & Windus.

Byatt, A. S. 1986 (1985). *Still Life*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Byatt, A. S. 1993 (1991) *Passions of the Mind*. London: Vintage.

Byatt, A. S. 1995 (1987). "The Changeling". *Sugar & Other Stories*. London: Vintage. 147-160.

Byatt, A. S. 1995 (1992). "Morpho Eugenia". *Angels and Insects*. London: Vintage. 3-160.

Byatt, A. S. 1997 (1996). *Babel Tower*. London: Vintage.

Byatt, A. S. 1998 (1995). "A Lamia in the Cévennes". *Elementals, Stories of Fire and Ice*. London: Vintage. 79-111.

Byatt, A. S. 2000. *The Biographer's Tale*. London: Chatto & Windus.

Byatt, A. S. 2001 (2000). *On Histories and Stories Selected Essays*. London: Vintage.

Byatt, A. S. 2003 (2002). *A Whistling Woman*. London: Vintage.

Byatt. A. S. 2005. "Fiction informed by science". *Nature* 434 (March): 294-297.

Byatt, A. S. 2009. *The Children's Book*. London: Chatto and Windus.

Campbell, J. 2004. *A. S. Byatt and the Heliotropic Imagination*. Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier UP.

Hardy, T. (1900) "Darkling Thrush." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Ed. M. H. Abrams. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. 1937.

Kelly, K. C. 1996. *A. S. Byatt*. New York: Twayne Publishers.

Reynolds, M. and J. Noakes. 2004. "Interview with A. S. Byatt". *A. S. Byatt The Essential Guide*. London: Vintage. 11-32.

Schrager, V. and A. S. Byatt. 2001. *Bird Hand Book*. New York: Watson-Guptill Publications.

Stone, L.1979 (1977). *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*. Reading: Pelican Books.

Todd, R. 1997. *A. S. Byatt*. Plymouth, U.K.: Northcote House Publishers Ltd.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 1975 (1937). *The Hobbit or There and Back Again*. London: Unwin Paperbacks.

Wallhead, C. 1997. "The Un-Utopian Babelic Fallenness of Language: A. S. Byatt's *Babel Tower*". *Dreams and Realities. Versions of Utopia in English Fiction from Dickens to Byatt*. Annette Gomis van Hetteren and Miguel Martínez López, eds. Almería: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Almería. 1333-1350.

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES - VOLUME 8 (2010), 73-102

RULERS AGAINST WRITERS, WRITERS AGAINST RULERS: THE FAILED PROMISE OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE IN POSTCOLONIAL NIGERIAN FICTION

AYO KEHINDE*
University of Ibadan

ABSTRACT. *Various literary critics have dwelt on the nature, tenets and trends of commitment in Nigerian literature. However, there is paucity of studies on the imaginative narration of the impediments facing the actualization of the public sphere in postcolonial Nigeria. This paper examines the strategies and techniques of representing the failed promise of the public sphere in postcolonial Nigerian fiction, using the examples provided by Chinua Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah, Ben Okri's The Famished Road and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Purple Hibiscus. The methodology involves a close reading of the selected texts, using Jurgen Habermas' Public Sphere as analytical concept. In the selected novels, Nigeria is depicted as a country where the rulers disallow the existence of the 'public sphere', which is supposed to provide a liminal space among the private realms of civil society and the family, as well as the sphere of public authority. This is disclosed in the refusal of the characters, who typify the rulers, to disregard status altogether.*

Keywords: Public Sphere, Postcolonial Nigerian Fiction, Chinua Achebe, Ben Okri, Chimamanda Adichie, Jurgen Habermas.

---

* Correspondence should be sent to: Dr. Ayo Kehinde. Dept. of English. University of Ibadan. Nigeria. Email: ayobamikehinde2000@yahoo.com/ma.kehinde@mail.ui.edu.ng

GOBERNANTES CONTRA ESCRITORES, ESCRITORES CONTRA GOBERNANTES: LA PROMESA FALLIDA DE LA ESFERA PÚBLICA EN LA FICCIÓN NIGERIANA POSCOLONIAL

RESUMEN. Diversos críticos literarios se han detenido a analizar la naturaleza, los principios y modos de compromiso en la literatura de Nigeria. Sin embargo, hay una carencia de estudios sobre la narración imaginativa de los impedimentos a los que se enfrenta la actualización de la esfera pública en la Nigeria poscolonial. Este ensayo examina las estrategias y técnicas en la representación de la promesa fallida de la esfera pública en la ficción poscolonial nigeriana, utilizando los ejemplos que proporcionan Chinua Achebe en *Anthills of the Savannah, Ben Okri* en *The Famished Road* y *Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie* en *Purple Hibiscus*. La metodología implica una lectura detallada de los textos seleccionados, usando el término "esfera pública" de Jurgen Habermas como marco conceptual. En las novelas seleccionadas, Nigeria se representa como un país donde los gobernantes desestiman la existencia de la "esfera pública", que se supone que proporciona un espacio liminal entre los ámbitos privados de la sociedad civil y la familia, así como en la esfera de la autoridad pública. Esto se revela en el rechazo de los personajes que tipifican a los gobernantes a ignorar un status todos juntos.

Palabras clave: esfera pública, ficción nigeriana poscolonial, Chinua Achebe, Ben Okri, Chimamanda Adichie, Jurgen Habermas

Received 15 June 2009
Revised version accepted 30 July 2010

1. INTRODUCTION

Habermas' perspective on the Public Sphere is unarguably an influential variety of Marxism. His theory has, however, grown and become more diverse, "as he has addressed, and incorporated, the ideas of a wide number of sociological theorists, most recently and most notably those of George Herbert Mead, Talcott Parsons, Alfred Schutz, and Emile Durkheim" (Ritzer 2000: 548). Habermas's major focus is on communicative action; he believes that free and open communication is a pertinent ingredient for sustainable political development in any society. To him, "the construction of an unlimited and undistorted discourse can serve at most as a foil for setting off more glaringly the rather ambiguous developmental tendencies in modern society" (Habermas 1987: 107). Habermas's focal interest is the way in which the public sphere is perverted in contemporary societies.

The 'Public Sphere', viewed from the perspective of literature, is a polysemic concept, designating, as it does, a form of art, an ideological thrust, a purpose and

a literary tone. For many years, much thought on this topic has been influenced by Jurgen Habermas, who proposes that, in eighteenth-century England, middle-class citizens began to see themselves as effective members of a rational public. Communicating ever more volubly in café society, literary clubs and the press, more and more British subjects could see it as their proper role to debate and pass judgements on matters they deemed important to the collective life of the nation. This set of communicative institutions and behaviours Habermas designates 'the bourgeois public sphere' (Habermas 1991: 12). Fraser (1992: 110) argues that the public sphere is a "conceptual resource designating a theatre in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, and hence an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction". Thus, the public sphere is an ideal of unrestricted rational discussion of public matters, a space where interlocutors set aside characteristics, such as difference in birth and fortune, and speak to one another as if they were social and economic peers. However, gender, sex, race, ethnicity, social class, and many other factors always affect the operation of the public sphere. Therefore, this mode of communicative rationality was displaced, in subsequent centuries, by the logic of consumer capitalism (Habermas' real target). Whether anyone at the time really imagined himself or herself taking part in the pure exchange of ideas is debatable.

The primary tenet of the ideal public sphere, in Habermas' conception, is similar to the experience of the Nigerian masses who were always involved, at least indirectly, during the pre-colonial era, in the gathering of public opinion on politics, commerce, entertainment, the arts, ecology and religion. For instance, among the Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria, in the past, the calabash would be opened for a bad king whose rule was threatening the life of the community. This is an *aroko* (sign communication), telling him to vacate the throne through an act of suicide. At Onitsha, in Anambra State of Nigeria, a king whose reign threatened the life of the community would be asked to vacate the throne and commit suicide by ritual death through the occupation of the throne by a royal masquerade. This signifies a condition of equality among speakers and listeners, not necessarily in wealth or social influence, but in the ability to speak and be heard. In the public sphere, people become important, because other people find their actions or attributes worth talking about. A public figure can become so only by the rational affirmation of many citizens speaking to one another. According to Glover (2004: 10), "to be public is to do something that the public will recognize and acclaim". This is also the case of fictional heroes in prose fiction whose virtues make them admirable.

However, Habermas himself points out, in a brief aside on Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1991), that this idea of the public sphere does not always sit well with the people it supposedly benefits. Rather, most of them go for

Monarch's Publicness whereby they appear as superior beings and as allegorical figures representing something greater than their individual persons. They scarcely try to enter discussions or appeal to the judgement of the citizens. In fact, they reject the contest of ideas, thereby behaving like anti-heroes or antagonists in prose fiction. According to Habermas, the life-world and communicative action are 'complementary' concepts. Specifically, communicative action can be seen as occurring within the life-world, which is "the transcendental site where speaker and hearer meet, where they reciprocally raise claims that their utterances fit the world […] and where they can criticise and confirm those validity claims, settle their disagreements, and arrive at agreements" (Habermas 1987: 126). However, the complementary relationship between the life world and communicative action is subverted in many neo-colonial African nations, including Nigeria, which is the main focus of this paper.

Against this background, this paper examines the troubles that Nigerian writers face in carrying out the task of exposing their rulers' efforts to alienate the governed from the public sphere. It also investigates and critiques three fictional case studies of the ways in which neo-colonial Nigerian rulers exclude some citizens from the utopian space of the public sphere. In the main, there is an attempt to explore the socio-economic and political dimensions of Habermas' concept, the public sphere, as represented in selected Nigerian novels. It is argued that Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah,* Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* and Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* yield singular insight and provocation to a theoretical understanding of the concept of the public sphere. It is also argued that Nigerian postcolonial fiction is an indispensable medium for teasing out and exploring the antithetical meanings embedded within the notion of the public sphere. By revealing the unfairness of the contemporary regime of the public sphere in the nation, postcolonial Nigerian fiction paradoxically suggests a location for a re-conceptualization of a newly invigorated, capacious and robust vision of social justice in the nation.

2. THE SWORD AND THE PEN: AN ENDURING DISSONANT RELATIONSHIP

Knowledge is developing, and the divisions that existed among different disciplines are being erased. This informs the synergy between literature and fields of social sciences and Human Communication. Thus, the rapprochement between African fiction and Jurgen Habermas' theory of the public sphere is not an anathema. Most African writers are useful as watchdogs in their societies, as they help protect the public from those who do harm – from high government officials to petty criminals. They help to shape public thought, spark debates and fight for societal good and against societal ills. They embolden the masses and give them

hope when it seems there is none. Writers may be too critical and too adversarial or become like mere lapdogs, too timid to take on the sometimes dangerous, often tedious and costly task. Over the years, politics and socio-historical realities have exerted a pull on Nigerian writers. However, writers' endeavours to expose and critique the misdeeds of rulers have always been challenged.

The ancient beliefs that the poet (writer) has magical powers still survive in certain distorted ways today. In early European culture, the writer was associated with awful audacity. He had the ability to encroach on divine prerogative, akin to the Yoruba belief that the writer is a sacred cow. In traditional Yoruba society, the writer was sacred, even for a king. Therefore, he – simultaneously – was an object of peoples' admiration, target of their ambivalence, dogged, and heroically prepared to die in defence of the ancient right of poets. He stood in a very special relation to his society by enhancing its well-being, defending it from its enemies, and mediating between the governed and the rulers. However, all the writer's virtues, rights and obligations came with their complementary danger, both personal and social. He was an object of hatred and fear, honoured and loved for his patriotic roles. He was hated and feared because of his power to expose ills. Such was and is the ambivalent attitude of society toward its writers. The ancient law, most especially The Roman Twelve Tables, threatened with death anyone who would "chant an evil charm" (Elliott 1972: 262). Plato's laws also recommended extremely severe penalties against similar activities (Elliott 1972: 260). Old Irish law undertook, zealously, to regulate the activities of writers, making provision for the reward of 'good' writing (directed toward socially sanctioned end) but laying down heavy penalties for 'bad' writing, that which wantonly injured (Elliott 1972: 260). Writers were then banned on libels, skated on the thin edge of censorship and legal retribution.

Creative writers face comparable problems today. Even in democratic countries, like Nigeria, the writer attacks individuals only at the risk of grave financial loss to himself and his publisher; he also risked death during the era of military dictatorship that ended in 1999. In fact, there are lots of demonstrable effects of socio-political and economic pressures on Nigerian writers in forms of restrictions and repressions. In Nigeria, like in many other countries of the world, freedom of expression and the press/writer is the exception rather than the rule. Some writers in the country have been subjected to imprisonment, and some have been gruesomely murdered. There seems to be a cold war between the sword (the ruler) and the pen (the writer) in Nigeria. Freedom House rates Nigeria news media as "partly free", with 53 points on a scale of zero to hundred (www.freedomhouse.org//accessed 23 July, 2008). Behind this rating is Nigeria's constitution which guarantees freedom

of expression and of the press. However, the security apparatuses of the country, most especially the police and other armed forces, often act arbitrarily and use extra-legal measures to suppress political criticism and expression in the media and creative writings. Libel remains a criminal offence in Nigeria, and the burden of proof in such cases rests with the defendant. Nigeria's State Security Service is known to use arbitrary detention and extra-judicial measures in attempts to suppress freedom of speech and muffle political activism and criticism.

Do writers attack institutions or perversions of institutions? To Frye (1945), a writer attacks primarily neither the man nor the institution; he only attacks an evil man who is given gigantic stature and protected by the prestige of the institution. In Frye's words, "the cowl might make the monk if it were not for the satirist" (1945: 80). However, rulers frequently react violently against writers' attacks, which they conceive as embarrassing and insurgence. What primarily stands as a personal attack often ends by calling the whole position which the individual occupies into question. Therefore, the ruler will keep on suspecting the writer, and the relationship of a writer to society will necessarily remain problematic. A very recent example of the dissonant relationship between rulers and writers in Nigeria was the conflict between the writers in Kano State and the Censors Board that was constituted and inaugurated by the government of the state. In his defence of the government's attempt to censor all publications in the state, Abubakar Rabo, the Director-General affirms that:

> Knowing how important reading is to the development of the mind, it is very essential that we safeguard what the public is reading, especially our youths. There are some literatures that are obscene going around, such are the types we are trying to kick against (*The Nation,* August 6, 2008: 26).

However, some Nigerian writers see the Censors Board as outrageous and anachronistic. For instance, Denja Abdullahi, the National Secretary of the Association of Nigerian Authors (A.N.A) in a quick reaction to the setting up of the board, opines that:

> The action is condemnable. It is like taking us back to the Stone Age. Banning of literature in a society sets it back to the time of the Stone Age. It is not good for the country and the society at large. There is no need for that. Presently, there is no place in the world where such is done (*The Nation,* August 6, 2008: 27).

Osundare frankly lampoons the Board:

> Censors board? What does Censors board have to do with writing? It is backward and extensively diversionary. This is grotesquery. I thought we had left this behind hundreds of years ago. At a time when the whole world is moving forward, Nigeria appears to be backward, and with this development, then, it shows that we are

> actually retrogressing very fast. This takes us back to 1744 when John Milton the great English poet wrote *Areopagitica*. He did it in respect of free speech and unhampered expression (*The Nation Newspaper,* August 6, 2008: 27).

Thus, it is an open secret that there is an uneasy relationship between the rulers and the writers in Nigeria. Governments have always imposed varying levels of censorship on the writers. Even, whether censored or not, their works are, at times, subjected to intense scrutiny. At one extreme, Nigerian writers, including the Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Festus Iyayi and Ogaga Ifowodo, have been called propagandists, labelled unpatriotic, even treasonous. However, freedom of writers and the press is a cornerstone of democracy. People have a need to know, and writers have a right to tell. Nigeria is experiencing unusual social and political excesses, and there is an alarming climate of political, social and economic tensions in the country. A writer's responsibility in exposing and condemning these excesses includes the duty to be fair and objective.

3. FICTIONAL CASE STUDIES OF THE FAILED PROMISE OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Nigerian writers are still vibrant and especially vocal against unpopular state policies despite the upheaval and violence against them. They serve as a source of inspiration and consolation through their works, during the reigns of despots who enact poison-tipped policies, ruling the nation with rod and scorpion. During the period of dictatorship, the country does not progress as it is supposed to; only official corruption, official killing, do-or-die politics and the like thrive unabated. Most Nigerian writers rise to the occasion and challenge governments' excesses that are detrimental to the well-being of the nation and her citizens. Actually, what Nigerian writers are doing to sustain the evolving democracy is indeterminate. One wonders what the nation would have become in the hands of the neo-colonial rulers of the country if the Nigerian writers have hung up their pens. Integral to this conviction is Williams's contention that:

> African writers have resisted oppression and injustice on the continent with great force and courage. Literature is fundamentally incompatible with tyranny. In its purest state, literature is subversive of authority and authoritarian rulers. Its joyous and spontaneous celebration of life, its near anarchic contempt for regulation and regimentation makes it the most natural enemy of dictatorship. While the dictator seeks a total domination of men and society, literature often seeks their total liberation (1996: 350).

Therefore, the indispensable role of literature for effectuating communal restructure in Nigeria is more than ever before required. It is no longer a question of how the British colonialists 'ruined' the country, but of how Nigerian leaders

have aborted the great hopes and expectations of independence. Therefore, in support of Osundare's (2007) assertion, socio-political commitment is not an aside, a parenthesis or a footnote in the creative consciousness of postcolonial Nigerian writers. Most of them write not only to entertain and please, but to change their society in the process.

3.1. *Chinua Achebe's* Anthills of the Savannah*: an imaginative chronicle of "the trouble with Nigeria's" public sphere*

In his essays and interviews, Achebe maintains that literature is a communal celebration in Africa. Therefore, the African writer has no choice but to be committed, for there is no room for art for art's sake; rather, in Africa, there is always art for life's sake (Kehinde 2005: 266). In his texts, Achebe traces the trouble with Nigeria to the doorstep of tribalism, absence of patriotism, social injustice, indiscipline, corruption, and the like. These vices, Achebe (1984: 3) believes, originate at the top of the political order and work their way down.

Concern with the Public Sphere and the necessary conditions for a genuine democracy, which is the critical theme of Haberma's concept of the public sphere, is the foundational preoccupation of Achebe in *Anthills of the Savannah*. Following the example offered by JanMohamed in his analysis of Achebe's writing through Georg Lukács's theory of realism, the main characters in *Anthills of the Savannah* are held in this paper to be profoundly alienated or about to be alienated from their society. Achebe employs three main characters (Ikem Osodi, the Editor of the *National Gazette*; Beatrice Okoh, Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Finance; and Chris Oriko, the Commissioner for Information) who narrate the story in turns. With this unique narrative point of view, the reader is able to learn more about His Excellency (Sam) and understand the problem of the failed promise of the public sphere in Nigeria from a multi-dimensional perspective. Sam is depicted as a ruler who does not tolerate the voice of the citizens of his country. This is antithetical to the tenets of the public sphere.

Anthills of the Savannah is Achebe's most sustained treatment of political issues in post-independence Nigeria. The president of a fictional African state, Kangan (unmistakably Nigeria) is intoxicated with power. In *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Achebe (1984: 1) affirms that the 'trouble' with the country is "simply and squarely a failure of leadership"; *Anthills of the Savannah* is the fictional exposition of this source of failure. In the text, there is a transition from love and friendship to disillusionment and violence. The President, in his anti-public-sphere temper, does not tolerate dialogue, constructive criticism, egalitarianism and communication. He does not allow the public sphere to exist in his domain, because it is seen as an anathema.

In the world of the novel, the public sphere is not allowed to materialize. The expected avenue "made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state" (Habermas 1991: 176) is not allowed to function in the cosmos of Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*. Rather, flattery comes to assume the place of real debate, and the moral force of governing is displaced by an internal power. For instance, the narrator believes that, in order not to irk the president, it is good to "keep your mouth shut" (2). The Head of State even says authoritatively: "You know I've never relied on you fellows for information on anything or anybody" (15). He informs the Commissioner for Justice and Attorney-General: "You may be the Attorney, but don't forget I am the General" (24). Surprisingly, the Attorney-General also concurs by saying: "[…] we have no problem worshipping a man like you" (24). This reverence is due to His Excellency's socio-economic background. The Attorney-General attended a "bush grammar school", unlike His Excellency who was born with a silver spoon in his mouth and attended an elite school. In fact, within two years of holding the reign of governance, Sam has become a totalitarian dictator. The government is absolute in power; it "holds the yam and holds the knife" (33). Beatrice Okoh, an official in the Ministry of Finance and girl friend of Chris, testifies to the sudden negative metamorphosis of the president:

> In the early days of his coming to power I had gone fairly often to the Palace with Chris and sometimes Chris and Ikem. But then things had changed quite dramatically after about a year and now apart from viewing him virtually every night on television news I had not actually set eyes on him nor had any kind of direct contact for well over a year (71).

The President recoils up the hill, communes with his cronies and forgets the very people who legitimize his authority. As a dictator, he banishes the public sphere from his governance. This attests to the fact that many postcolonial African leaders tend to forget that, in Africa, every event or person is connected, interrelated and dependent in order to exist. The President of Kangan fails to observe this popular tenet; instead, he engages in massive corruption, subservience to foreign manipulation, second-class hand-me-down capitalism, damnable shooting of striking workers and demonstrating students, and destruction and thereafter banning of independent unions and cooperatives. There are lots of fugitives in the fictional nation of Kangan (Nigeria); for instance, Emmanuel Obete, a former President of the Students Union. These problems are attributed to the failure or neglect of the public sphere in the nation, that is: "the failure of our rulers to re-establish vital inner links with the poor and dispossessed of this country, with the bruised heart that throbs painfully at the core of the nation's being" (*Anthills of the Savannah*, 141).

The leadership style of His Excellency, Sam, shows that the military operates on the basis that "might is right", and is usually tyrannical in approach. In fact, the ordeals of the people of Kangan reveal that military rulers are mostly dictators under whom the masses suffer untold economic and psychological hardship. And for the simple reason that man desires comfort, he rebels against oppressive tendencies in the rulers. Young (2004) makes a similar comment on this claim thus:

> Military intervention became the sole mechanism to displace incumbents, but the putschist in power normally formed a new single party to legitimize permanent status for his rule. Thus citizens became once again merely subjects, facing an exclusion from the public domain reminiscent of colonial times. One important difference: whereas the colonial state asked only obedience, the post-colonial polity demanded affection. Mere submission did not suffice; active participation in rituals, loyally (support marches, assemblies to applaud touring dignitaries, purchase of Party cards, display of the presidential portrait, participation in plebiscitary elections) were mandatory (25).

Because the people become terrified under dictatorship, just a few courageous members of the society take it upon themselves to bear the burden of all and sundry. These individuals become martyrs and heroes in the process. It is the attempt by a few courageous individuals to create an alternative voice through which the masses can be informed of developments in their society that gives rise to the resistance temper which runs through Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*.

According to Habermas (1991), an independent press assists tremendously in intensifying the public discussions that take place in the public sphere. However, in *Anthills of the Savannah,* it becomes rather difficult for the press to write and publish what is true. The attempt of the press to ignore the warning signal, the brutality that befalls the masses of the nation, would have served as a cruel reminder of an intolerant regime that permits and promotes falsehood above national ethics and moral ethos. Oppressive and repressive regimes antagonise freedom of speech to their personal advantages. Since words alone cannot sufficiently bring down a tyrant, there is, therefore, the need for collaboration between the press and members of the 'pro-democracy' and pressure groups to create a bigger platform with which the tyrant is confronted and hunted down eventually. Therefore, Sam's attitude to opposition, especially critical views by the press, makes Ikem and his collaborators (Beatrice, activists, labour leaders, and the like) utilize alternative means of resisting the draconian rule of military dictatorship.

To Ikem, journalism is not meant to make the environment cosy for leaders who are despotic. It is meant to prod them to act in the interest of the larger society and cause them sleepless nights (Ajibade 2003: 39). The press is one organised group that has helped to give bite to the cause of human struggle and resistance

against oppression and oppressors in the nation of Kangan. This is a commendable action because, if the press abdicates this responsibility, there would be problems; the leaders would be operating without restraints. This is in consonance with Habermas' view that "inasmuch as the mass media today strip away the literary husks from the kind of bourgeois self-interpretation and utilize them as marketable forms for the public services, provided in a culture of consumers, the original meaning is reversed" (1989: 171).

According to Ojinma (1991: 61), "such concepts, as moral principles, tolerance for opposition, and the use of power for the benefit of the people, do not have much meaning to the leaders" (61). Sam begins to demonstrate his despotism at a cabinet meeting when he obstinately refuses to visit the drought-stricken province of Abazon. He wants no opposition, and, at all cost, demands the submission of a dissident province to the central authority. He addresses and harasses his cabinet without caring whose ox is gored. His high-handedness is, thus, reflected in his abusive words to Chris, the Commissioner for Information: "I will not go to Abazon. Finish! *Kabisa*!" (1). This rejection of assembly and dialogue unveils the stark reality that military dictators habitually distance themselves from the people they rule. Sam orders Professor Okong, the Commissioner for Home Affairs, to meet the Abazon delegates and give them empty promises about the welfare of the dispossessed and forgotten inhabitants of the province. He urges the Commissioner to: "find some nice words to them. Tell them we are tied up … with very important matters of the State…tell them they can rest assured that their complaints or rather problem …will receive His Excellency's personal attention" (17). Therefore, Sam, in his anti-public-sphere posture, rejects the opportunity of generating opinions and attitudes which could have served to affirm or challenge, and, therefore, guide the affairs of the nation. Consequently, there is no ideal public sphere in Kangan, due to the anti-democratic temper of the Head of State, who, according to Rutherford (2000: 18), refuses the public opinions needed to "legitimate authority in any functioning democracy". Therefore, in Kangan, legitimate law and democratic rule are not compatible. This is because the latter does not "have an internal relation to the search for truth" (Habermas 1996: 475). To Habermas, "public discourse must mediate between reason and will, between the opinion-formation of all and the majoritarian will-formation of the representatives" (Popular Sovereignty 1996: 475).

Thus, abuse of human rights is an endemic problem engulfing the fictional State of Kangan. It is right, therefore, to support Ojinma's (1991: 86) assertion that "Achebe sees the soldiers as not being any better than the civilians they ousted […] they have become worse, having perfected torture, intimidation and cold-blooded killing as weapons to cow the opponents of their policies". In his bid to undermine

Press freedom, Sam charges Chris to check the Editorial 'excesses' of Ikem, the Editor of the state-owned newspaper, *The Gazette,* so that the naked truth of the president's dictatorship would remain covered. Cases of arbitrary arrest which are replete in Kangan also corroborate the satanic inclination of the military tyrants to unleash the reign of terror on dissidents, as demonstrations, whether peaceful or violent, become a taboo. Six Abazon leaders are brutally punished because of their alleged complicity in staging a protest against the military despots. The omniscient narrator explains: "Six leaders from Abazon who were involved in a recent illegal march on the Presidential Palace without police permit as required by decree had been arrested" (150).

The educated elite living in the capital city (Chris, Ikem and Beatrice) believe in the creation of a nation-state; they refuse to accept the distinction between State and nation, as practised by Sam, the Head of State and the people of Abazon. The elite, due to their respect for the public sphere, believe in identifying a State and a national atmosphere where the ruler must come from among the people of the nation, identify with them, and the people, in turn, would identify with the State. However, Sam's regime, because of its apathy towards the Habermasian public sphere, does not allow the masses to have a stake in the country. Even, there is isolation of the governing elite from the masses, symbolized by the air conditioner in the Council Chamber. This literally cuts off the noise of the people protesting outside, thereby depriving the elite of a vital source of socio-economic knowledge in the everyday experience of the people, which should have informed its political consciousness. Sam turns his cabinet to a group of timorous courtiers and hedonists, who only strive for personal survival and advancement. No critical debates essential for informed process of policy-making exist in the cabinet.

Ikem, a seasoned journalist, is expected to proclaim and protect the President's image by disseminating only what he tells him. On the contrary, Ikem holds tenaciously to the freedom of the press. Achebe seems to rely on the courageous and principled stance that some members of the elite take to envision a nation where the yearning of the masses for the public sphere is met. Ikem, for instance, attempts to provide genuine independent political opinions. However, he is soon labelled as subversive and, subsequently, murdered by a security police. He traces the trouble of the nation to "the failure of our rulers to establish vital links with the poor and disposed of his country, with the bruised heart that throbs painfully at the core of the nation's being" (141). Sam is killed in a coup, and his tragic flaw is his inability to embrace the establishment of a nation-state. He encourages the potentially disastrous discrepancy between the state and the nation. To Habermas, the existence of a distinct public sphere mainly rests upon access to full information being guaranteed to all citizens, not just only self-selecting and

more or less privileged particular public as the case is in Sam's Kangan. Also, the key idea of attaining Truth through unrestricted public discussion among knowledgeable citizens is not allowed by the despot. Through the misrule of Sam, Achebe has, therefore, taken the wrapping off the military government and laid bare its perfidies.

Incompatibility of social classes leads to inevitability of conflicts and struggles. The society is completely in the grip of the 'petit bourgeoisie' and the intelligentsia. The oppressed and deprived people (the workers and peasants) are not given major roles to play in the society. According to Emmanuel Ngara (1990: 122), they are "either pushed to periphery or relegated to oblivion". There is a huge gap between the hybrid class of intellectuals and the class of oppressors. This rape of democracy, that is the failure of the public sphere, leads to crisis in the society that is depicted in the novel. There are agitations for free debates against the encroachment of totalitarian control of the military despot and his collaborators, popular protests and later a *coup d'état*. Since Sam refuses to carry out exchange of ideas with people in public arenas, that is, he refuses to dialogue with the Abazon delegates, Ikem persists in believing that he can, through his Editorials in *The Gazette*, make the President realize that despotism is an abomination in a democratic state. This is achieved through the efforts of Chris, Ikem and Beatrice to re-establish bonds with the people (shops saleswomen, taxi drivers, student activists, trade unionists, village elders, and the like). Through this effort, they are able to forge at least a brief period of national solidarity and truly representative political consciousness.

Commendably, the hybrid classes of intellectuals – Chris, Ikem and Beatrice as representatives – are dynamic characters who take on the responsibility of playing a redemptive role in the society. Kangan workers and peasants are depicted as a social class with enormous potential. This unity-in-diversity temper shakes the rule of His Excellency and frightens him. In his early study of students and politics, Habermas defended the principles of popular sovereignty, formal law, constitutionally guaranteed rights and civil liberties as part of the progressive heritage of bourgeois society. Similarly, the masses of Kangan prove that they are unwilling to remain oppressed, but would rather choose to fight consciously against the lies, corruption and despotism of the ruling class in order to protect their interests. However, their revolutionary candour is with limitations. They are not able to fight effectively as they lack the power to do so. This is captured in the allegory of the battle between the Tortoise and the Leopard. Therefore, although the masses (the students, the taxi drivers, the transport union members, and the like) attempt to fight for their rights, they do not have any idealistic hope of winning; they only fight symbolically to gain some psychological satisfaction. This is why they need the intellectual guidance

and inspiration of the hybrid class. However, the hybrid class, in its attempts to play a redemptive role in the society, faces two hurdles. In the first instance, the members of the class need to abandon their social status as members of the ruling class. Secondly, they need to immerse themselves in the mass of ordinary people, that is, identify themselves with the people and become part of them. They should, therefore, cross two class borders.

The heroic deaths of Chris and Ikem appear to [or serve to] educate the masses of Kangan and enable them to become aware that reconciliation among various social classes is essential for the unity of the nation. Achebe's prescription for the failed promise of the public sphere in the country is reconciliation among the various social classes. They should re-adjust and improve human relationship for the sake of the stability of the nation. The rulers should also humble themselves in order to truly understand and care about the people in the downtrodden class. The governed also need to make compromises while fighting to survive. This is revealed, for instance, in the cross-class love between Ikem and Elewa, cross-class understanding between Beatrice and Agatha, and especially in the new born baby, Amaechiwa (May-the-path-never-end) in Igbo.

Therefore, Achebe seems to suggest a solution to the trouble with Nigeria. For him, the Platonic Philosopher King, who would lend substance to position of leadership and defeat the cynicism of the people that he describes in the text, is the ideal ruler for the nation. Therefore, in *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe, more than ever before, admits the possibility of democracy in Nigeria. He imagines the feasibility or even the necessity of political agency originating from the masses rather than from the newly enlightened elite. This is very similar to Habermas' conceptual clarification of the public sphere in *Student und Politik* (1961) where he calls for democratisation and political participation.

3.2. *Ben Okri's* The Famished Road: *A Magical Refraction of the Failed Promise of the Public Sphere in Nigeria*

Radical democracy, which is envisioned in Okri's *The Famished Road*, is an overlooked subtext of many of Habermas' works on the public sphere. Although the text offers an insight into a pre-independence epoch, it is highly reflective of a post-independence African era, a revelation of the unsavoury intricacies that permeate the socio-political terrain of a developing country as a result of skewed human relationship and the failed promise of the public sphere. The Abiku myth is used as a political metaphor. The exploits and ordeals of the spirit-child, his vacillation between two worlds (terrestrial and extra-terrestrial) unfold in the

socio-political, cultural and moral fabrics of the society. The episodic plot of the novel involves a quest motif, involving three characters (Azaro, Black Tyger/Dad and Jeremiah, the photographer). One of them (Azaro) is recognized at the apex of the identity-search ladder; the other two are significantly subsumed in the first, but their search is single-mindedly political. The pursuit of a humane and just society in the physical realm is uppermost in their consciousness. Azaro's attempt to navigate life towards self-discovery, as encompassed by the road myth, seems to be rough, tortuous and sinuous:

> In the beginning, there was a river. The river became a road, and the road branched out to the whole world. And because the road was once a river, it was always hungry (1).
>
> The road became my torment, my aimless pilgrimage, and I found myself walking to discover where all the roads lead to, where they end (114).

The major theme of Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* is that big economic and governmental organisations have taken over the public sphere, while citizens have become primarily consumers of goods, services and political administration. This is reflected in Okri's novel. For instance, through the exploits of Azaro, the reader is able to understand the rigour of existence: "the unfulfilled longings, the enshrined injustices of the world, the labyrinths of love, the ignorance of parents, the fact of dying" (3). The socio-political system is turned into a festering sore. The wide gulf between the rich and the poor is revealed in some people living in clover, while others are condemned to the impecuniousness of the slums, religious perversity, political insincerity on the part of both the Party of the Rich and that of the Poor, and other eccentricities. These impediments discourage Azaro from defining himself permanently within the corporeal reality. In the milieu imaginatively portrayed in this novel, revolutionary nationalist hopes have given way to the disappointments and disillusionment of the corrupt post-independence state that Fanon simultaneously describes and prophesies in *The Wretched of the Earth*. The succession of one corrupt regime by another (like the 'coming and going' of the 'Abiku' child) has been a persistent pattern that has defined the politics of almost the entire continent, and one which shows little sign of changing and abating.

Dad (Black Tyger), as a result of his abject poverty and unemployment, resolves to become a boxer to earn a living. His status as a boxer and non-conformist pits him against the Party of the Rich, the governing authorities, his landlord, and at times, Madame Koto - the last two being members of the Party of the Rich. Because of Dad's unyielding opposition to the Party, his landlord jerks up his rent, which he bemoans in statements tinged with socio-political rage: "where am I going to find

that kind of money every month, eh? That's how they make you commit murder. Do you see how they force a man to become an armed robber" (237). He rebuffs his landlord's attempt to coerce him to vote for the Party of the Rich during an election: "what right has the landlord to bully us, to tell us who to vote for, eh? Is he God? Even God can't tell us who to vote for. Don't be afraid. We may be poor, but we are no slaves" (203). Thus, as suggested in Habermas' public sphere, Okri, in *The Famished Road,* prioritises democratisation; there is an emphasis on political participation as the core of a democratic society and as an element in individual self-development.

In essence, in the society portrayed in *The Famished Road,* politicians are presented as embodiments of greed and corruption. They are antithetical to the ideal envisioned in Habermas' public sphere. Okri is equally concerned with the indifference which most of the exploited members of the society show toward their conditions. The interrelationship and interdependence required of them to change the status quo is, however, lacking. In spite of the fact that Okri paints a bleak social and political picture of this period of Nigeria's history, he leaves everyone in doubt as to the solution to the problems he has portrayed. This confirms Cooper's (1998) assertion that Okri's novel is elusive "with regard to the possibility of change" (89). Okri's ability to create the impossibility of a stable and acceptable public sphere among the people situates the text within a particular historical period, and this removes it from being a mere magical realist novel and qualifies it as a social realistic text. It is when we consider these dissonant and discriminatory human interactions in the novel that the full impact of the social and political decadence strikes us fully. The actions and dealings of the characters reveal the reality of their socio-political world, and by implication, their economic situation.

The society depicted in the novel is polarized into the poor, represented by Dad's household, the rich, represented by Dad's landlord and Madame Koto. Okri shows that this society, like most stratified societies, is characterized by the exploitation of the poor by the rich. Dad and his neighbours are subjected to constant exploitation by the landlord. Even though the roof is leaking, the landlord continues to increase the rent and often threatens them with thugs. Only Dad is aware of their conditions and sometimes challenges him, while others seem to be less concerned. There are no serious and purposeful social interactions geared towards catalyzing a change among the deprived masses. Dad seems to be the only man of conscience struggling to change the society for good. His metamorphosis into a boxer is to improve the society, because his family have to cut down the food in order to afford the rent. Whereas their conditions worsen, those of Madame Koto and the landlord improve. Madame Koto transforms from the kind of woman who helps her needy neighbours. Her metamorphosis is so absolute that Azaro says: "she changed completely from the person I used to know, her big frame which seemed to me full of warmth now seemed full of

wickedness. I didn't know why she had changed" (251). Madame Koto becomes a stranger to the ghetto dwellers when she comes in contact with the politicians. Through this negative metamorphosis, Okri conjures, in detail, the abuse of power and national resources by Nigeria's ruling class.

Dad, in his uncontrolled outburst declares: "some people have too much, and their dogs eat better food, while others suffer and keep quiet until the day they die" (380). His efforts to earn a livelihood afford him an insight into the realities of his society. He awakens to the realities that he, along with other members of his social class, has been condemned to lead a life of hardship and abject poverty from which it is impossible to escape. This situation is even worse on the political front. Political affiliation is well polarized along two lines (The Party of the Rich and The Party of the Poor). Okri has used this polarization to show the difference between the lifestyles of members of the Party of the Rich and their supporters and those of The Party of the Poor. For members of the former, wealth and power have become the principal pursuit, and the unavoidable consequence is a total disregard of any moral or social consideration in the drive to satisfy individual desires. This recalls Liman's (1999) comment that *The Famished Road* is "a way of depicting the life of the poor in Nigeria who are caught between the urge to live a better life and the difficulties of a system built on injustice and exploitation of man by man" (70).

For Okri, Nigeria is – metaphorically – an Abiku child who comes and goes at will. For instance, Dad has a similar notion, as he observes and avers that: "ours too was an *abiku* nation, a spirit-child, one that keeps being reborn and after each birth comes blood and betrayal, the child of ours will refuse to stay till we have made propitious sacrifice and displayed our serious intent to bear the weight of a unique destiny" (494). However, despite all this, Dad is optimistic. He believes that one day:

> There will be change […] and when people least expect it; a great transformation is going to take place in the world. Suffering people will know justice and beauty. A wonderful change is coming from far away and people will realize the great meaning of struggle and hope, there will be peace (478).

For Habermas, the existence of a distinct public sphere mainly rests upon access to full information being guaranteed to all citizens. However, this right is absent in the society being fictionalised in Okri's *The Famished Road*. For instance, the travails of Jeremiah, the photographer, are reflective of the cat-and-mouse relationship between the press/writer and a repressive regime. His ordeals depict the life of many freedom fighters and writers in Africa who are silenced by the government or politicians for attempting to challenge the authority. Many of them have been clandestinely murdered, completely silenced by the government,

and those who refuse to be silenced live more of their lives in incarceration. Once, the photographer has to disappear for a long time because of minatory attacks on him by the thugs of the Party of the Rich. When his house is attacked, he withdraws into quagmire. He is also dismissed from a relative's house when it comes under surveillance. The cause of his trouble is the taking of the pictures of the riot against the Party of the Rich, at the moment the poisoned milk is being distributed. He takes pictures of the miserable members, especially Black Tyger's landlord who is left reeling in the mire with his torn clothes. He records moments of triumph by the ghetto dwellers and the burnt van of the Party of the Rich. The Party's humiliation gains so much prominence in the papers that thugs seek Jeremiah out for extermination. He is arrested and released after three days, telling the tales of torture and brutality he receives from security agents. For displaying the moments of Rich Party's disgrace in his cabinet for public glare, thugs vandalize it. However, this makes him become a legend, but highly endangered, as he could no more practise his trade without molestation. He now only appears nocturnally, becomes a tramp, leads a vagrant life, and begs for food due to his inability to practise his profession meaningfully again. However, despite being hounded, his courage and uncompromising will to expose the ills of the ruling elite are exemplary and 'legendary'. He, therefore, continues to take pictures of market women fighting with thugs and those of policemen collecting bribes. This is a confirmation of one of the basic tenets of Habermas' public sphere. That is, the public sphere can be animated by opinion-forming associations (voluntary associations, social organizations, churches, sports, clubs, group of concerned citizens, grass-roots movements, trade unions, etc) to counter or refashion the messages of authority.

In this text, Okri transmits, analyses, critiques and even transgresses the socio-historical realities of his nation through engagements with myth and historicity and by probing the images and realities of Nigeria's postcolonial experiences. From these mytho-cultural experiences and sociological inclinations that have a solid ideological subtext arises a successful production of a story that narrates the issue of the failed promise of the public sphere in Nigeria. Although the narrative centres on the Abiku myth and is surrounded by almost unending mysteries, the reader is able to have a full grasp of political issues in Nigeria. If the continuous disorder and chaos in human life, especially in Nigeria, are anything to go by, there is a need to mythologize experiences and break the barriers of conventional realism. This has made Okri's *The Famished Road* a "distinctive combination of the African, and the European, which reflects the collective modes of discourse underlying postmodern parody" (Ogunsanwo 1995: 48). Okri uses magic, drawn from the African oral tradition, to make a social statement - all is not well with Nigeria's public sphere.

3.3. *Chimamanda Adichie's* Purple Hibiscus*: Allegorizing the Failed Promise of the Public Sphere in Nigeria*

Although *Purple Hibiscus* may be read – on one level – as a family saga, it has political overtones. It captures the socio-political ills of a neo-colonial African country. It is about tyranny (oppression) and people's complicity in their being oppressed; it evokes the Nigerian political landscape powerfully. Through the unhealthy consequences of the filial/domestic conflicts in the story, Adichie makes a call for an all-inclusive public sphere in Nigerian society. In this novel, Adichie pays a special attention to communicative processes in human societies, most especially in the family sphere. The events in the novel are reflective of the wide array of interactions between rationality and power that occur in modern social systems (Habermas 1991). The actions of the paterfamilias of the family depict the factors that constrain the efficiency of the public sphere in modern societies. Habermas opines that public opinion is rational because it takes place "in principle without regard to all pre-existing social and political rank and in accord with universal rules" (Habermas, 1989: 54). However, what is found in the society that is depicted in Adichie's novel is antithetical to free-flow of communication and encouragement of an effective public sphere.

The novel is a political satire that makes a call for change in a nation stunted due to the failed promise of the public sphere. An archetype of an average neo-colonial Nigerian ruler, Papa Eugene, is intolerant and disallows his family members from the public sphere of his household (allegorically the Nigerian neo-colony). He is, therefore, depicted as a fanatically religious patriarch, who places too much academic and religious pressure on his children and debars them from interacting with their neighbourhood, their family and the Igbo tradition. Davidson's (1992) comment on the failure of the public sphere in African countries is relevant to the reading of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* as a socio-political allegory:

> If the postcolonial nation-state had become a shackle on progress […] the prime reason could appear in little doubt. The state was not liberating and protective of its citizens, no matter what its propaganda claimed: On the contrary, its gross effect was constricting and exploitative, or else had simply failed to operate in any social sense at all (23).

Therefore, in this article, it is assumed that meaning is not inherent in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*; rather, it is contextual – a function of the situation in which it is articulated. Therefore, this discourse relies on a situated and historical analysis of the specific conditions of the socio-political groups in the story. Thus, Papa Eugene is conceived as a nation's tyrannical ruler; his household is a metonym for the nation, and his family signify the dehumanized citizens of that nation. Papa Nnukwu and Aunt Ifeoma are allegorical representations of the radicals/

pro-democracy groups in this nation. In Papa Eugene's 'nation', all the factors that are germane to the success of the public sphere are lacking. This is because the extent of access to the public sphere is not close to universal; the citizens are not free of coercion, and hierarchy is not rejected in the milieu, as each member of the family is not given the right to participate on an equal footing (Rutherford 2000).

From the beginning of the story, Papa displays his masculine dominance in his typical African home setting. It is Palm Sunday, and his son (Jaja) refuses to take communion. On getting home, Papa demands to know why Jaja did not attend the communion. Jaja's reasons are that the substances used as the body of Christ give him bad breath, and the priest touches his mouth nauseatingly. Jaja's refusal to attend the communion infuriates Papa who throws his heavy missal at him. This misses the boy but breaks a glass étagère, a precious possession of Mama. Therefore, the story starts with violence due to the attempt of Papa Eugene to bracket off his wife and children from the family's public sphere. This is first revealed in Jaja's defiance and rebellion: "Things started to fall apart at home when my brother, Jaja, did not go to communion and Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the étagère" (4).

Papa Eugene rules his household like a tyrant. This attitude, the narrator juxtaposes with that of the tyrant military Head of State of the nation being fictionalized around the time the story is set. Papa's habitual resort to violence, like an average African despotic ruler, marks the beginning of the breakdown of the family. The family is ruled by the strict authoritarian father, Eugene, who dictates their every move – study schedules, prayer, mass, sleep, church, visitations and the like. He even bans them from spending time with their aged grandfather (his own father) whom he condemns as a heathen. Papa Eugene controls his family through fear and violence, but the violence is never spoken about by the family members who initially keep silent in the face of tyranny. For instance, Kambili and Jaja only communicate with each other through sign language. Papa Eugene's style of 'ruling' his household (his kingdom) is one that offends all known administrative and judicial process, civilian or military. Things are done authoritatively in a manner reminiscent of the Stone Age where bestiality was the order of the day. He adopts a monarchical approach to dealing with his family, talking down to them in a manner that makes them felt unworthy of their being human beings.

In the cosmos of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus,* the bourgeois public sphere makes it impossible, even a crime, to offer public opinions that can oppose state power and the powerful interests that can shape bourgeois society. There is a cat-and-mouse game between the agents of oppressive forces (the ruler of the day and his cohorts) and resistance forces represented by the tireless press, most especially *The Standard*. Journalists are always in a privileged position which enables them to mould the opinions of the people by appealing to their sentiments. Unlike other

professions in which practitioners may die obscure, journalists are exposed to a vista of opportunities on a daily basis, because the community has confidence in them and trusts their judgements. They also have the liberty to address the people and direct their thinking concerning a particular matter. For this reason, journalism becomes a yoke for Ade Coker, the versatile Editor of *The Standard*. The reason for his ordeals is not difficult to find. The same privilege that he enjoys as a journalist is coveted by the dictator; that is, the capacity to control reason, to reinvent and affect other people's thinking. This gives reason for the prevalent tension between the efficient press (represented by Ade Coker, in this text) and the totalitarian State. The press is reputed to have incredibly withstood the tyranny of Nigerian dictators and has gone above and beyond to scoop news under extremely difficult circumstances at great personal risks. Of the whole group, Ade Coker is portrayed as the arrow-head. He may not have suffered losses greater than any other journalist in the country, but he is more resolute and vows to put an end to the despot's reign by whatever means.

Papa Eugene's religious intolerance symbolizes the ugly side of the Nigerian state. The government of the day is depicted as an intolerant one, most especially in its consistent censoring of the press. According to Father Benedict, Papa "used *Standard* to speak the truth even though it meant the paper lost advertising" (3). Papa Eugene also asserts, after a coup, that the newspapers in the country "are all afraid. Writing about how corrupt the civilian government was, as if they think the military will not be corrupt. This country is going down, way down" (26). Kambili, the narrator, also adds that "in the following weeks, the newspapers we read during family time sounded different, more subdued" (27). During the military regimes in Nigeria, press freedom was always hampered, mostly extremely. The Nigerian Press, that was known to be voluble, if not irascible, buoyed by a no-holds-barred approach to matters of national interest and with a capacity for advocacy and adversarial haggling against those it considered guilty of malfeasance objective, suddenly lost its salt in the military attempt to subordinate it to the State. This is revealed in the case of Ade Coker, a victim of a government clamp-down, who is eventually killed by a letter bomb. This is a literary intertext of the circumstances surrounding the extra-judicial murder of the popular Editor of *Newswatch Magazine,* Dele Giwa, in 1986. Thus, in the society being fictionalized in Adichie's novel, the functions of the media have been transformed from facilitating rational discourse and debate within the public sphere into shaping, constructing and limiting public discourse to those themes validated and approved by media corporations and private owners like Papa Eugene.

Also, in the face of military dictatorship, some journalists become hypocritical, constituting themselves as mere appendages of the military. An example of this is

found in the instances where all the other magazines and newspapers in the nation, except *The Standard,* refuse to condemn the incessant coups in the country, but instead tagged the recurrence of coups in the nation as "Change of Guard" (25). This confirms Rutherford's assertion that large newspapers devoted to profit have turned the press into an agent of manipulation: "It became the gate through which privileged private interests invaded the public sphere" (2000: 185). The veracity of the claim of Mazrui (2005: 69) that Africa, as a continent, is marked by "conquerability, docility, malleability and fundamental inferiority" is confirmed in the initial docility of the citizens of the society, which is fictionalized in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus.*

However, Adichie suggests a way out of the political problem. To have a space in the public sphere of the society, Mama (Beatrice) and her children (Jaja and Kambili) later reject Papa Eugene's despotic and intolerant acts. Therefore, they try to correct the anomalies through protests and defiance by Jaja and Kambili, and later through a 'revolution' or 'bloody coup' by Mama. Also, Adichie does not fail to suggest what the situation ought to be in a true democratic setting. This she does through the use of foil characters like Papa-Nnukwu, Jaja and Kambili, and more significantly, Ifeoma, and her children. Despite the fact that Eugene does everything he could to make his father abandon his faith and embrace the Catholic faith, the old man remains resolute:

> Papa-Nnukwu had told the Umunnaow Papa had offered to build him a house, buy him a car, and hire him a driver as long as he converted and threw away the chi in the thatch shrine in his yard […] Papa Nnukwu laughed and said […] he would not throw away his chi; he had already told Papa this many times (61).

In spite of his poor conditions of living, Papa-Nnukwu stands his ground. This is a literary testimony to the unyielding anti-dictatorship temper of a few Nigerians who always remain on the side of the masses and refuse appointment offers by tyrannical rulers. Also significant is the tendentious resistance frequently put up by Jaja. The various episodes of his resistance are suggestive of the hidden-cry for Nigerian masses to find a true expression in a society where the promise of the public sphere has remained perennially unattainable.

On a particular occasion, Kambili suffers menstrual cramps on a Sunday morning, and Mama urges her to take pain killers. As a result of this, Kambili takes her breakfast ten minutes before Mass, which, according to Papa Eugene, is a desecration of the Eucharist fast. Papa Eugene is infuriated, without listening to the reason for this desecration. He turns wild:

> He unbuckles his belt slowly. It was a heavy belt […] it landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder. Then Mama raised her hands as it landed on her upper arm […] I put the bowl down just as the belt landed on my back (102).

Papa Eugene does not encourage the public sphere to exist in his family; rather, there is an exertion of arbitrary forms of power and domination. Papa's reason for the indiscriminate flogging of his wife with the children is because she watches as the children desecrate the Mass. Papa as a patriarch is well defined – he is cruel, brutal, religiously fanatical, high-handed and oppressive. In another instance, he chops away Jaja's little finger because he misses a question at the Catechism class. Surprisingly, Papa, the looming male figure in the story, is a modern and educated man. However, despite his academic sophistication and business acumen, he is bestial in the way he treats his wife and children. He is hard-nosed, and he subjects his family's pain and paeans to his whims and caprices. He himself gives the reader the impression that his demeanours are conditioned and dictated by religion.

Antagonistic relationships between feminist knowledge/politics and the modernist private/public divide have undoubtedly been a catalyst for women's seclusion, marginalisation and exclusion from the democratic light of the public sphere. One major way this subjection of women has continued and thrived is the traditional belief in the society. In other words, societal customs, culture and ways of life help to facilitate norms that subdue women. Papa's hard-nosed stance is sometimes at the detriment of Mama's health. Once, on their way to visit Father Benedict after church, Mama starts to feel ill at ease because of her pregnancy, and she pleads with her husband to allow her stay back in the car. Papa asks twice, "I asked if you were sure you wanted to stay in the car: "Mama looked up, "I'll come with you; it's really not that bad" (29). She agrees to go with her husband (by coercion) not because she is willing or physically fit enough, but because she does not want to displease her husband. Her initial unwillingness to go on the visit is interpreted by Papa as thwarting God's will by putting her selfish desires first. Papa Eugene so much dominates his family that it is only his voice that is loud. He treats other members of the family as mere appendages. Everything, every action and every belief is ranked and scaled according to his standard. In fact, the politicization of experience (Habermas 1991) has brought the private (the self, the familial, the domestic and the intimate) into a close dialectical relationship with the public. It is, therefore, convenient to agree with Mabura's (2008) reading of Adichie's text as a postcolonial gothic novel. This is because the anti-heroic tendencies of Papa Eugene are similar to the features of a gothic character.

The last brutal act of Eugene against his wife is breaking a table on her belly, thereby terminating her six-week pregnancy: "You know that small table where we keep the family bible, nne? Your father broke it on my belly... My blood finished on that floor even before he took me to St. Agnes. My doctor said there was nothing he could do to save it" (47). One gets the impression that Papa Eugene has gone morally derailed, for his actions cannot be biblically supported.

Through this, and many other similar events in the story, Chimamanda Adichie is trying to discourage the oppressed from over-condoning injustice and oppression before the dehumanizing acts degenerate. Papa Eugene's anti-democratic posture had initially been taken without any counter-reaction. However, this situation transforms Mama into a violent person as revealed in the event that unfolds later. Before her transition into a radical feminist, Mama is depicted as a quintessential womanist who does not import Western feminist ideologies into the African worldview. Rather, she establishes a 'safe' point that is favourable to the worldview. She also recognizes the nature of her society as being ancient, and that practices and traditions that have existed for years might not be easily changed. With these ideas, she rejects the proposal by her sister-in-law, Ifeoma, on the need to call her marriage off considering the brutalities she has experienced.

Therefore, propelled by her natural pacifist ideology, Mama initially endures her marriage, hoping things will change for the better. For instance, rather than become furious as a result of the unfair treatment meted on her by her husband, Mama always remains calm. In a particular instance, when Papa beats her and her children, Mama takes the belt he uses to flog them from him and lays it on the table. However, human patience and resistance to injustice is definite and limited. Patience, alongside the mechanism for its operation and manifestation, is elastic. It detaches upon further stretching; that is, one tends to exhaust one's patience when evolving circumstances are ridiculous, hence unbearable. As a result of this, Papa Eugene's death, through poisoning, is Mama's way of asserting herself and her will. Papa Eugene's tragic end confirms the assertion that oppression will always meet with equal resistance, no matter the place and people, and that good triumphs over evil ultimately, no matter how long evil lasts. The narrator recalls Mama's ingenious way of exterminating the source of her (and her children's) woes:

> They have found the poison in your father's body. She sounded as though the poison in Papa's body was something we all had known about, something we had put in there to be found, the way it was done in the books I read where white people hid Easter eggs for their children to find (290).

Mama's system of eradicating Papa Eugene, because of his overbearing attitude, is in consonance with the principle of Radical Feminism; that is the adoption of violence in putting an end to masculine dominance, hence enhancing the liberation of women from the alleged bondage in which men have put them. Through the dissenting relation of Mama to the dominant patriarchal tradition of Africa, Chimamanda Adichie is insinuating that the dimension the feminist campaign is taking currently is bitter, and arms alternative is impending in the nearest future.

This insinuation has a trait in the latter-life radical temper of Mama. This is also revealed in Mama's confession to killing her husband: "I started putting the poison in his tea before I came to Nsukka. Sisi got it for me; her uncle is a powerful witch doctor" (290). This is a reflection of the radical dimension to feminist ideology in most African countries. Mama now believes, like other radical feminists, that violence is the most effective strategy for achieving her freedom. However, one wonders why the woman, who had been submissive to a fault, suddenly turns out to be the murderer of her husband. It is also discovered that the violent dimension to the whole situation is to make the statement that there is aggression hidden in every patient woman (the representative of the masses) and that circumstances may impel her (them) to it to safeguard herself (themselves). It also means that silence should not be taken or interpreted to mean foolishness, laziness, complacency or stupidity. Thus, Mama's later radical temper is in line with Habermas' theory which seeks to break the stranglehold of the totally administered society by exploring the emancipatory potential of communicative rationality. The public (represented by Mama) challenges the absolute sovereign rule by force, will and secrecy.

African women are asserting themselves in different ways and techniques; it is just that hopeless situations, at times, need radical solutions. The central character, Kambili, the representative of the author's ideology and beliefs, revolts against the established norms in a society where the promises of the public sphere have consistently failed. Therefore, Adichie envisions a nation where the disempowered womenfolk (the masses) will transgress heterosexual codes in order to free themselves from the shackles of patriarchal suppression. This is an element of resistance against the processes of objectification and heterosexual oppression. Thus, Mama, Kambili and the male-feminist (Jaja) oppose compulsory heterosexuality and gender constrictions in order to liberate their true selves and desires. In fact, the enduring brilliance of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is its ability to oppose hegemony in an effort to counterbalance the distribution of power and challenge the authoritative power that disempowers the African woman (the marginal subject). Through this effort, Adichie re-empowers the womenfolk (the masses) by giving them a space from which they generate alternative interpretative modes and, in turn, speak out and become an agent of their own history. Towards the end of the story, the trio (Mama, Jaja and Kambili) formerly positioned in the peripheries, now move in a series of resisting movements – translocation and masquerading. Consequently, they are able to protect themselves from being totally decoded. This ultimate resistance serves as a buffer to help in preventing Papa Eugene's continuing acts of appropriation and egocentric manipulation of the family's (nation's) Public Sphere.

4. CONCLUSION

Achebe, Okri and Adichie have enriched and enlarged the discourse of the failed promise of the public sphere in Nigerian socio-political set-up through the ideas promoted in their individual works. Despite all odds against their lives and arts, Nigerian writers continue to disentangle their dilemma both as writers and public intellectuals. They refuse to be caged, and they constantly intervene in the public sphere of their nation. In the novels treated in this paper, there is the suspicion of the public sphere, which is depicted by the absence of a public concern with the sphere. This is an imaginative mimetic representation of the social urgency of fragmentation, state oppression, censorship of Nigerian writers and the masses and increasing national exploitation. The political concerns of Nigerian writers, most especially the desire to take on the power of representation of neo-colonial disillusionment in their country and serve as the conscience of the nation, are vividly exposed. Nigerian rulers have refused to allow the public sphere to be practicable and accommodate every member of the society. In fact, the actions, inactions, histrionics and dialogues of the characters in the selected novels reveal that the little political freedom granted the Nigerian masses during the colonial period has disappeared due to the unbridled power of the rulers and their fierce pursuit of self-interest.

The idea that is emphasised in the novels is that, instead of engaging in free 'interchange' of views, Nigerian neo-colonial rulers, fictionally represented by the President for Life of Kangan (Nigeria) in *Anthills of the Savannah*, the fanatically religious paterfamilias (Papa Eugene) in *Purple Hibiscus* and the violent politicians in *The Famished Road*, repress, judicially murder and jail the governed for daring to express views which are different from the rulers'. This is symptomatic of the breakdown of the public sphere into violence in the milieus of the texts. Therefore, in this period of terror, feeble democracy and dictatorship in the country, the public sphere is sacrificed to the urgency of political action. This confrontation makes Ikem (in *Anthills of the Savannah*), Kambili and Jaja (in *Purple Hibiscus*) and the hopeless masses (in *The Famished Road*) realize that there is a fundamental contradiction between the utopian space of the public sphere and a tyrannical system of governance in Nigeria that remains largely unchanged since independence.

Achebe, Okri and Adichie present the failed promise of the public sphere as an important element in Nigerian political society. Therefore, this paper argues that the novelists, in their respective texts, represent the problem of the potential expansion of the utopian state (the public sphere) to include the political and social concerns of Nigerians; that is, the desire of Nigerian masses to take on the power of representation and to speak for themselves. It is also argued that their

novels reveal Nigerian rulers' refusal to become more inclusive. Ikem (in *Anthills of the Savannah)* Black Tyger and Photographer (in *The Famished Road)* and Jaja, Kambili and Mama (in *Purple Hibiscus*) who think their voices should be heard on public issues, are expelled from the public sphere.

It has also been established that, beyond exhibiting topicality and stylistic innovations, postcolonial Nigerian fiction offers a sustained exploration of the issue of the failed promise of the public sphere, a much-needed theme in current Nigerian literary discourse. It is revealed that, despite all odds against postcolonial Nigerian fiction writers, there is no sign that an interest in literature of commitment is waning in the country. The reading public of Nigerian fiction has been given a clearer picture of the conditions of the nation's masses than the one offered on the television, radio and the print medium. What the three selected novelists have in common, thematically, is a scathing exposure of post-independence disillusionment, a result of the failure of the new governing classes to fulfil the emancipatory promises of independence. Thus, what stands foregrounded in the novels is the disillusionment of the masses, that is, the disgust felt with the mess that their elected representatives and the military rulers have made of their country. What is highlighted and critically interrogated in the texts is the attempt of the rulers to erode the legitimacy of a defensible core of rights (public sphere). There is, therefore, a sense in which we can say that postcolonial Nigerian fiction offers imaginative case studies of allegations of violated human rights in the nation. Questions of human rights' abuse and the failed promise of the public sphere dominate both the trajectory of the plots and the philosophical quandaries at issues in the three selected texts. The formal structures of the novels also revolve around dissonance between rulers and the ruled, as a result of the conspicuous failure of the public sphere. The texts give imaginative representations of the many theoretical reservations about the public sphere, offer a vision of human vulnerability and dependency that presents a much-needed corrective to the excessively inflated present-day aspirations for human rights.

The survival of the philosophy of harmony and integration among the diverse people of Nigeria, that is, the concept and significance of the collective will, is being threatened in the cosmos of each of the novels. Due to the refusal of the rulers to allow the masses to be active participants in the nation's public sphere, the expected collective will is jettisoned in favour of the European cosmic will. Collective will is a force that operates in a communalistic society like Nigeria, where the emphasis for group survival overrides that of the individual. The primacy of place is supposed to be given to the group rather than the individual, because it is understood that the part exists within the whole (Sofola, 1988). Therefore, Sam, the Head of State of Kangan (in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*) the corrupt

politicians and their cohorts (in Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*) and Papa Eugene, the tyrannical, puritan and fanatical paterfamilias (in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*) advertently forget that, in Africa, the power and strength of the individual exist in the strength of the collective will of the group (Nkrumah's *Conscienticism,* 1964). Each of the fictional despots falls from grace to grass because of his hubris; that is, appropriation of the power of the collective will to themselves.

It can, therefore, be inferred that the novelists, through their works, seem to be suggesting that all-involved public sphere and freedom of the press and creative writers are the cornerstone of democracy. Nigerian writers have a right to serve as the conscience of their society. Therefore, Nigerian writers should be able to enjoy the hard-won freedom of imaginatively reflecting and refracting the foibles of their rulers and the ruled. Neo-colonial Nigerian rulers should see the writers as partners in progress, rather than seeing them as illegitimate interlocutors in the nation's public sphere.

Given all that has been discussed about the problem of the failed promise of the public sphere in Nigeria, as narrated in the selected prose texts, it is suggested that there should be a harmonious blend of all the segments of the citizens of the nation (poor or rich, young or old, female or male, disabled or non-disabled, employee or employer, ruler or the ruled, literate or illiterate, and the like) to enable each citizen fulfil his/her destiny and achieve the inalienable right of self-realization and actualization without the destruction of the whole. It is the total rejection of this philosophy that leads the rulers in the texts to have tragic ends. They use the power vested in them to destroy other lives and are, therefore, evil agents who must be punished and expunged. Therefore, one didactic message which is a motif in postcolonial Nigerian fiction is that legal and obedient citizens of the country must be allowed to take their rightful place in the order of the universe and the political set-up of the nation, and they must seek to maintain cosmic equilibrium in the nation. This viewpoint conscientizes the masses of the societies portrayed in the selected novels to engage in real and latent revolts. They are ready to drive basic issues home and effect a change. This temper may offer an antidote for leading our groping nation from the woods of confusion, despotism, totalitarianism and anarchy.

REFERENCES

Abdullahi, D. 2008. "The State vs The Writer: Kano Writers on War". *The Nation,* Wednesday, August 6, 26-27.

Achebe, C. 1984. *The Trouble with Nigeria*. London: Heinemann.

Achebe, C. 1987. *Anthills of the Savannah*. London: Heinemann.

Adichie, C. 2003. *Purple Hibiscus.* Lagos: Farafina.

Ajibade, K. 2003. *Jailed for Life: A Reporter's Prison Notes.* Ibadan: Heinemann.

Cooper, B. 1998. *Magical Realism in West African Fiction: Seeing with a Third Eye*. New York: Routledge.

Davidson, B. 1992. *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Course of the Nation State.* New York: Times Books.

Elliot, R. 1972. *The Power of Satire. Magic, Ritual, Art.* New Jersey: Princeton.

Fanon, F. 1968. *The Wretched of the Earth.* New York: Grove Press. Trans. Constance Farrington.

Fraser, N. 1992. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy". *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Ed. C. Calhoun. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 1-32.

Freedom House. 2008. www.freedomhouse.org//accessed 23 July.

Frye, N. 1945. "The Nature of Satire". *University of Toronto Quarterly.* XIV: 79-80.

Glover, B. 2004. *The Public Sphere and Formal Nostalgia, 1709-1785.* Ph.D Dissertation, University of Virginia.

Habermas, J. 1987. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Habermas, J. 1991. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Trans., Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence.

Habermas, J. 1996. "Popular Sovereignty as Procedure". Cambridge: MIT Press, *Between Facts and Norms.* Trans., Williams Rehg. 463-90.

JanMohamed, A. 1983. *Manichean Aesthetics.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Kehinde, A. 2005. "Rethinking African Fiction in the Era of Globalization: A Contest of Text and Context." *Journal of the Nigeria English Studies Association,* Volume 11(1): 87-100.

Liman, A. 1999. "Postcolonial Discourse: The Case of Ben Okri's *Famished Road*. *Currents in African Literature and the English Language,* Volume 1(1): 63-79.

Mabura, L. 2008. "Breaking Gods: An African Postcolonial Gothic Reading of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half a Yellow Sun*". *Research in African Literatures* 39 (1): 203-22.

Mazrui, A. 2005. "The Re-invention of Africa: Edward Said, Y.Y. Mudimbe and Beyond". *Research in African Literatures* 36 (3): 68-82.

Ngara, E. 1990. "Achebe as Artist: The Place and Significance of *Anthills of the Savannah*." *Kunapipi* 12 (2): 113-29.

Nkrumah, K. 1964. *Conscienticism*. London: Heinemann.

Ogunsanwo, O. 1995. "Intertextuality and Post-Colonial Literature in Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*". *Research in African Literatures* 26(1): 40-52.

Ojinma, U. 1991. *Chinua Achebe: New Perspectives*. Ibadan: Spectrum.

Okri, B. 1991. *The Famished Road*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Osundare, N. 2007. *The Writer as a Righter*. Ibadan: Hope Publications.

Osundare, N. 2008. "The State *vs* The Writer: Kano Writers on War". *The Nation,* Wednesday, August 6, 26-27.

Rabo, A. 2008. "The State *vs* The Writer: Kano Writers on War". *The Nation,* Wednesday, August 6, 26-27.

Ritzer, G. 2000. *Sociological Theory.* New York: The McGraw-Hill.

Rutherford, P. 2000. *Endless Propaganda: The Advertising of Public Goods*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Sofola, Z. 1988. "African Society and the Concept of Freedom". *Okike* 27/28: 74-87.

Szeman, I. 1952. *On National Cultures: Literary Politics in Canada, The Caribbean and Nigeria, 1952-1970*. Doctoral Thesis, Duke University.

Williams, A. 1996. "Literature in the Time of Tyranny: African Writers and the Crisis of Governance". *Third World Quarterly* 17(2): 349-62.

Young, C. 2004. "The End of Post-colonial State in Africa? Reflection on Changing African Political Dynamics". *African Affairs* 103: 23-49.

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES - VOLUME 8 (2010), 103-118

A SPANISH PORTRAIT: SPAIN AND ITS CONNECTIONS WITH THE THEMATIC AND STRUCTURAL DIMENSIONS OF FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

RICARDO MARÍN RUIZ*
University of Castilla-La Mancha

ABSTRACT. *After having visited several countries in Europe and Africa, Hemingway found in Spain a land which would play a key role in his later literary career. His first stay in our country in the early twenties would mean the outset of a closed and long relationship with Spain that took almost forty years. During his different travels to Spain, Hemingway had the chance of discovering in the Spanish people a set of values and traits for which he felt a special attraction, such as violence, rebelliousness and, above all, a fatalistic vision of existence where death was inherent to life itself. In his most renowned novel,* For Whom the Bell Tolls *(1940), Hemingway offers a wider and deeper vision of those characteristics which made the Spanish soul so particular from his point of view. We identify some of them by analyzing the main structural and thematic elements of this novel set in the Spanish Civil War.*

Keywords: Spaniards, idyosyncrasy, image, war, themes, structure.

---

* Correspondence should be sent to: Dr. Ricardo Marín Ruiz. Facultad de Humanidades de Albacete. Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha. Edificio Benjamín Palencia. Campus Universitario s/n. 02071-Albacete. Spain. Email: Ricardo.Marin@uclm.es

RICARDO MARÍN RUIZ

UN RETRATO ESPAÑOL: ESPAÑA Y SUS CONEXIONES CON LAS DIMENSIONES TEMÁTICA Y ESTRUCTURAL DE *FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS*

RESUMEN. *Tras visitar distintos países en Europa y África, Hemingway encontró en España una tierra que marcaría su posterior carrera literaria. La primera visita que el escritor realizó a nuestro país a comienzo de la década de los veinte significó el comienzo de una estrecha y prolongada relación de casi cuarenta años con España. A lo largo de sus sucesivos viajes a la Península, Hemingway tuvo la oportunidad de descubrir en el carácter español una serie de valores por los que sentía una especial predilección, tales como la violencia, la rebeldía y, especialmente, una visión fatalista de la existencia donde la muerte era parte consustancial de la vida misma. En su novela más conocida,* For Whom the Bell Tolls *(1940), donde Hemingway ofrece una visión más amplia y detallada de aquellas características que, desde su punto de vista, particularizaban el espíritu español. Se identifican aquí algunos de estos rasgos mediante el análisis de los principales elementos temáticos y estilísticos de* For Whom the Bell Tolls.

Palabras clave: españoles, idiosincrasia, imagen, guerra, temas, estructura.

Received 15 October 2009
Revised version accepted 25 March 2010

1. INTRODUCTION

Having been ignored by the international community during the second half of the 19th century and the first of the 20th, Spain drew the attention of European and non-European countries at the outbreak of the Civil War which devastated the country between 1936 and 1939. Apart from countless historical, international and social analysis, the conflict generated a great number of poems, essays, novels like *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, plays, films and documentaries. Though they were created to support either the Republic or the Nationalists, many of them sympathized with the former and condemned the generals' rebellion. Beyond their mere propagandist value, these artistic manifestations are interesting because they still hold stereotypes inherited from the past; the cliché of Spaniards as ruthless, fanatic, violent and dauntless people was often associated with those who were for the Republican side, whereas the image given of the Nationalist side recalled the dark version of 16th-century Spain, as the rebels portrayed themselves as "'crusaders' taking a stand against the infidel" (López de Abiada 2004: 246). As we can see, the conflict reactivated many Romantic stereotypes that had a powerful appeal for

many foreign volunteers who saw in Spain the opportunity to live an adventure and to fight for ideals not very different from those for which Byron fought in Greece: the defense of liberty against totalitarianism. Undoubtedly, this kind of motivation led many foreign volunteers to enlist in the International Brigades, which were the main manifestation of the Romantic spirit that nourished those who were determined to leave their relatively comfortable lives behind to defend the Republic on Spanish soil. However, the enthusiasm and idealism shown by the foreigners who visited Spain during the war –writers such as George Orwell, Stephen Spender and André Malraux were among them– started to wither soon as the military and numerical superiority of the rebels and the divisions existing in the Republican side became insurmountable obstacles for Loyalist aspirations.

The main goal of this essay is to reconstruct the image of Spain in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* through the analysis of the main structural and thematic elements of this novel published in 1940. Nowadays, the study of the image of a foreign culture contained in literary texts is one of the branches of Comparative Literature known as imagology. Though we can track the origins of this discipline to Ancient Greece, Herodotus being one of its pioneers, and later on with the contribution of authors like Herder, Goethe, Lessing and Mme. De Staël among others, it is not until the beginning of the 20th century, however, that imagological studies reach a scientific status. During the 1950's, imagology took a decisive turn coinciding with the criticism made from the United States by Rene Wellek against the French scholar Jean-Marie Carré, whose investigations showed, according to Wellek, a manifest influence of outdated Positivism and a lack of objectivity judging by their invectives against Germany. When the American critic called Carré's ideas into question, he was underlining the necessity to reconstruct comparativism which, in his opinion, had focused on factors external to texts rather than those internal to them. The distinction imposed by Wellek between intrinsic textual analysis and extrinsic contextualization provoked the paralyzation of Comparative Literature worldwide. This uncertain situation for imagology in particular and comparative studies in general came to an end thanks to the contributions made by Hugo Dyserinck during the 1960's and the 1970's. The German scholar formulated a series of theses –namely, the necessity for imagological analysis to be devoid of ideology and the existence of an image function inherent to the text– that revolutionized imagology. Since then, the study of national representations in literary texts has undergone a continuous transformation, especially in the 90's, at the hands of scholars like Daniel-Henry Pageaux, Jean-Marc Moura, Joep Leersen and Anthony Johnson. As a result, the new imagology has widened its scope to such an extent that nowadays the studies dealing with images are closely linked to different areas such as Anthropology, History or Philosophy.

Curiously enough, many of the studies carried out recently about the image of Spain abroad deal with its evolution from the 16th to the 20th century: we can take as examples publications like "Reflexiones sobre el ser de España" (1998), by Carmen Iglesias and *Sol y Sangre. La imagen de España en el mundo* (2001), by Rafael Núñez Florencio– . Especial attention has been paid to the anti-Spanish attitudes in the framework of the Black Legend as we can see, for example, in Ricardo García Cárcel's *La leyenda negra: historia y opinión* (1992), Michel Fernández-Gaichat's *Les Espagnols à Paris à l'époque de Philipe III* (1997), Ulrike Hönsch's *Wege des Spanienbildes im Deutschland des 18* (2000), Trevor Dadson's "The image of Spain in England during the 16th and 17th centuries" (2004) or J.M López de Abiada's *Imágenes de España en culturas y literaturas europeas. Siglos XVI y XVII* (2004). Nevertheless, the image of the country in foreign literatures throughout the 20th century, particularly during the Civil War, is still a topic to be studied in detail. The ensuing analysis attempts to pave the way for further investigation about an issue that from an imagological point of view should render interesting results. This is more evident if we take into account that the Civil War meant for Spain, on the one hand, the aperture to the international scenery and, on the other, being the object on which many countries turned their eyes.

2. HEMINGWAY AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

One of the most notable aspects in Hemingway's biography is his persistent wish to leave his homeland. Neither his hometown –Oak Park, Illinois– nor by extension his country were significant for him; they just represented unpleasant family recollections –such as the suicide of his father– and a way of life with which he did not feel identified. Italy, France, Cuba or the African savanna were some of the many destinations that Hemingway visited during his lifetime. However, none of these places seduced him as much as Spain, a country for which he demonstrated a special predilection from his first stay in 1923 until his last days. Soon after his first visit to the country, Hemingway declared in a letter: "Spain is the very best country of all. It's unspoiled and unbelievably tough and wonderful" (Baker 1985: 107). The American writer would not only discover in Spain beautiful spots, a quiet life and picturesque traditions, but also a people whose values were the same as his, such as their fatalist vision of life and innate rebelliousness. What the author got to know about Spain was not the result of an occasional stay in our country, but the outcome of a forty-year relationship; in fact, few foreign writers have been as closely linked to Spain. He declared in a letter written in 1956: "In spite of having been on the Republican side I am considered a Spanish author who happened to be in America" (Baker 1985: 873). Apart from those aspects in the Spanish personality which he found attractive, it was his special

interest in violence and death that drove him to Spain several times. Thanks to his fondness for bullfights and his experience in World War I and the Spanish Civil War, Hemingway dealt with two different sides of violence: the ritual and that not following any kind of rules.

The strong ties which Hemingway felt for Spain prevented him from remaining indifferent towards the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Despite having taken side for the Republican side, the ideals which caused him to live this conflict in first person were humanitarian rather than political. Then, it is no wonder that Hemingway was more liable in his war reports to tell the stories of small combat units or anonymous people than those related to the widely known events of the war (White 1967: 240). The absence of a firm political engagement in Hemingway was due primarily to his literary philosophy; according to him, the writer who sold out to political propaganda committed a fraud since its main function was to write clear and sincere prose dealing, above all, with human beings (Benson 1977: 280). Secondly, Hemingway's apolitical position towards the Spanish Civil War also stemmed from his experience as an ambulance driver in Italy during World War I; it was then that he could see the devastating effects of modern war, which caused him to mistrust the dominant political tendencies in the 1920's and the 1930's. At first he rejected Fascism as an ideology which concealed a categorical contempt for liberty behind an appearance of order and efficiency. For similar reasons, it would not take long for the author of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* to reject the Communist postulates; in a letter dated in 1935 to the Russian critic Ivan Kashkeen, he confessed: "I cannot be a Communist now, because I believe only in one thing: liberty" (Baker 1985: 418). Like Orwell, Hemingway conceived Communist orthodoxy as a threat to individual liberties. However, his distrust of Communism, especially those who were not Spanish, did not prevent him from feeling a deep interest for the Republic. Like many other antifascist writers, Hemingway thought that the Republican cause represented not only a few ideals in which he believed –liberty, equality, justice – but also the Spanish people, to whom he always felt sympathetic: "The Reds may be as bad as they say but they are the people of the country versus the absentee landlords, the Moors, the Italians, the Germans" (Benson 1967: 458). Consequently, when the war broke out, Hemingway collaborated actively with the Republic either by raising funds in his country or working as a reporter in Spain. Between 1937 and 1938, Hemingway traveled to Spain on four occasions as a correspondent for the North American Newspaper Alliance. During his first trip, he visited the front line near Madrid, at Casa de Campo, Brihuega and the Guadarrama mountain range. Despite his intention to remain impartial before the wide range of political tendencies in Spain, he was soon associated with Communism. His antifascist tendencies

and close relationship with some members from the International Brigades as well as certain representatives of the soviet government –such as Koltsov– were interpreted as an evident sign of his sympathy for Communist ideology. However, like other writers such as André Malraux or Gustav Regler, Hemingway supported Communism for practical rather than ideological reasons; though none of them became a member of the Communist Party, they all believed that this organization had enough discipline and efficiency to defeat Fascism. Nevertheless, discipline meant for the Stalin-supported Commuist Party the elimination of any element regarded as subversive or suspicious by the Soviet regime – as was exposed by Orwell denounces in *Homage to Catalonia* (1938). The American writer did not seem to care about this repression as he considered it a nasty, but at the same time necessary, means to amend in the fight against Franco.

Hemingway returned to his country in May 1937 with the purpose of arranging the soundtrack of the film *The Spanish Earth* and participating in the American Writers' Congress. His speech at this conference, held in New York on June 4th, has been seen as one of the most political acts in his lifetime (Cooper 1987: 84). Besides trying to make the intellectuals taking part in this meeting aware of the necessity to help the Spanish Republic, he also dealt with issues such as the difficult task of writing about war without regarding political matters. After a short stay in the United States, Hemingway returned to Spain again in August 1937. The panorama he found in Madrid was heartrending as he met a city devastated by air raids and hunger. In addition to the delicate situation of the capital, Hemingway received two pieces of bad news: the death of his friend Lukacz –one of the main officials at the International Brigades– and the control that Franco had obtained over three-fourths of the country. These were not obstacles to continuing with his journalistic and literary activity. Many times accompanied by the American reporters Herbert Matthews and Martha Gellhorn, he managed to slip into the areas where some of the decisive battles of the war were fought, such as Teruel, Brunete, and Belchite. During his visit to the last, Hemingway met Robert Merriman, an American volunteer from the 15th International Brigade who would inspire Hemingway to create the figure of Robert Jordan, the main character in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

After leaving Spain in December 1937, Hemingway returned to our country twice. The first one was in March 1938, when, in spite of his apparent confidence in the Loyalist victory, he admitted privately that the defeat was inevitable (Baker 1956: 236); in fact, the war had evolved by then very favorably for Franco's interests while Germany and Italy continued to supply the Nationalists with men and weapons. The fourth and last time Hemingway visited Spain during the conflict was in September 1938. The writer stayed in the country until the end of the war, he witnessed the fall of Barcelona in January 1939 and later the defeat of Madrid

in March. When he went back to the United States, he worked hard on his novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, in which the author conveys –particularly through Jordan's death– his conviction that the Republican defeat was due to foreign intervention and certain peculiarities in the Spanish character, such as selfishness, individualism, indiscipline and the tendency to insubordination and treachery. As a result, the Romantic portray of Spain painted by Hemingway at first darkened when he noticed the fallacy of the supposedly irreproachable behavior of the Spanish people (Broer 1974: 14).

Despite being out of Spain for fourteen years after Franco's victory, Hemingway did not lose contact with his Spanish friends nor with the local culture. Finally, in the summer of 1953 and under the excuse of compiling materials for his book *Death in the Afternoon*, the American writer was able to come back to Spain on condition that he refrain from talking about politics. Hemingway saw his return to the Spain under Franco's dictatorship as an adventure whose risks, far from scaring him, increased his desire to come back once again: he would say then that it had required great *cojones* to reenter Franco's Spain (Baker 1985: 511). During his visit, Hemingway began a close friendship with the bullfighter Antonio Ordóñez. Moreover, the author showed his wife Mary the scenery which had served as an inspiration for *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. He was really satisfied at his having described faithfully in the novel the landscape of the mountains near Madrid (Baker 1985: 512). He returned to Spain for the last time in 1960, when he continued to have the idea that travelling around our country was a good reason to go on living (Baker 1985; 544). However, Hemingway had sunk by then in a deep depression which led him to suicide one year later.

3. THE REFLECTION OF HEMINGWAY'S VISION OF SPAIN; ON THE STRUCTURAL AND THEMATIC ELEMENTS OF FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

The structure of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is organized in several apparently unrelated stories. He had already used such an arrangement in *To Have and Have Not* (1937) in which he tells two seemingly unconnected stories –one of them concerning Harry and Marie Morgan and the other Richard and Helen Gordon. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the main story deals with the blowing-up of a bridge; this is the mission which Robert Jordan must accomplish with the help of a group of partisans who live in the mountains near Madrid. Apart from this principal matter, Hemingway introduces other of a considerable length in the novel; we can mention, for example, the love story of Jordan and María, the relationship between Pablo and Pilar or the life in the Republican rearguard where some historical characters –Karkov, Golz, Kleber, Marty, etc.– appear. Contrary to what some critics like Chaman Nahal have suggested (1971: 131), the different plots which make up

the internal structure of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* do not coexist separately. One of the reasons ruling out this hypothesis is the connection of the different stories developed throughout the novel hold with Jordan's mission. Taking this premise into account, it is possible to conceive an internal structure where the several plots are laid out in concentric circles around the main story. The blowing-up of the bridge is the starting point for the rest of the stories; we can take as an example the relationship between Jordan and María, a story which would never have begun if the American volunteer had not been entrusted with the mission of destroying the bridge. Now let us think about the turbulent marriage of Pilar and Pablo, who are about to split up when he runs away with some explosives needed to blow up the bridge. Carlos Baker has compared the set of secondary stories told in the novel with a network of radial roads which stem from and lead to the same point–the attack against the bridge (1956: 247).

This sort of construction is an element central to the understanding not only of the inner structure of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, but also of the imagological dimension of the book. In his book about the Spanish War, Hemingway puts the image of the bridge in close relation to Robert Jordan, as his mission consists in destroying one of them in the mountains near Madrid. The author establishes this association between the bridge and the main character to emphasize two topics which are essential in his novel as well as in his vision of Spain: the close relationship between life and death and the interconnectedness among all existing things. It is no wonder that the first of these topics is especially important in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* since violence and death were two recurrent, even obsessive, themes throughout Hemingway's literary career. His contact with the Spanish culture was decisive for dealing with the binomial life-death from a new perspective; as it has been mentioned before, the American writer discovered in Spain a conception of death which, unlike in other cultures, did not consider this phenomenon as something contrary to life, but as a continuation of it. Bullrings were one of the places where Hemingway took notice of this peculiarity of Spanish culture: "The only place where you could see life and death, i.e. violent death […] was in the bullring and I wanted very much to go to Spain where I could study it" (2003: 2). The author also saw in bullrings the possibility to observe "a certain definite action which would give me the feeling of life and death I was working for" (2003: 2). In other words, Hemingway found in bullrings the scenery where man and beast performed a show in which life and death intermingled extraordinarily.

The American writer introduced this conception of existence in many of his books, often by relating it to the image of the bridge; it is not a mere coincidence that, for example, in "The Old Man at the Bridge" (1938) the main character awaits for his time to come on a bridge. Similarly, in *Islands in the Stream* (1970), Thomas Hudson dies on the bridge of his ship. However, it is *For Whom the Bell Tolls* the

book that best represents the thin line separating life and death through the image of the bridge. Neither Robert Jordan nor the partisans he lives with face death until the ending of the novel, when they have to accomplish the destruction of the bridge. This mission involves a final attack which decides in a few minutes who can and cannot go across the bridge that separates life from death. Hemingway also resorts to this kind of construction to pose the above-mentioned topic of the ties binding all existing things. Robert Jordan undertakes the blowing-up of the bridge not only to fulfill the orders given by his superiors, but also on account of the interests of Mankind: "There is a bridge and that bridge can be the point on which the future of the human race can turn" (Hemingway 1967: 45). The idea that any deed or action, no matter how remote or isolated it may be, can have an effect on other spheres, according to the connection among all things, lies in these words uttered by Jordan. Under this conviction, the American novelist conceived the Spanish War as a conflict whose consequences would not only be felt within Spain, but also abroad. Many foreign volunteers understood the confrontation in the same way as Hemingway and they did not hesitate to come to the Peninsula to fight in a war that apparently was not theirs.

One of these combatants is Robert Jordan, who decides to fight in Spain on account of his love of the country and his Marxist ideals: "He fought now in this war because it had started in a country that he loved and he believed in the Republic and if it was destroyed life would be unbearable for all those people who lived in it" (Hemingway 1967: 158). Nevertheless, his idealism dwindles after he contacts Pablo's band. After having spent a few hours with the partisans, he realizes the difficulties he will find on his way to blow up the bridge; the selfish and treacherous behavior of Pablo, the incompetence and indiscipline of Rafael or the inadequate military training of all the members from the band are some of the obstacles that Jordan is not able to overcome to fulfill his mission successfully. Besides the blowup of the bridge, the American volunteer has another aspiration: reaching a state of absolute communion with everything around him. Achieving this aim involves, in the case of Jordan, the integration with the Spanish people and their customs. The interaction of the American volunteer with the local culture –represented by Pablo's band– is one of the narrative lines on which Hemingway projects his view of Spain to a larger extent. Despite being deeply acquainted with our country, Jordan cannot get rid of the customs and values from his homeland. As a result, his incorporation to Pablo's band means the clash between two cultures, an episode which reveals how the author regarded the Spanish personality. We can take as an example of this the distrust of Jordan shown at first by some partisans. They all think that the mission entrusted to the American volunteer will reveal their presence in the mountains and, therefore, put an end to the relatively tranquil life they had led so far. Hemingway underlines this reaction raised by Jordan's arrival

to emphasize two traits of the Spanish character: the initial mistrust towards the foreigner and the prevalence of individual interests over the collective ones.

Along with the key role played by the bridge blown up by Jordan, the internal structure of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* offers two further aspects which must be also regarded in connection with the vision of Spain contained in this book: the relation between the main plot and the historical context and the epic connotations of the novel. Regarding the first of these aspects, it is interesting to observe, as we have seen before, how Hemingway focuses more on a particular event –the destruction of a bridge– than on general issues concerning the war –often political and military matters. This circumstance reveals the greater attention the novelist paid to anonymous stories to the detriment of those alluding to the ideological side of the conflict. Unlike other books dealing with the Spanish War, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is a work where the title role is not played by political theories, but by people who fought for them; making reference to his novel, Hemingway stated: "But it wasn't just the Civil War I put into it, it was everything I had learned about Spain for eighteen years" (Sanders 1960: 134).

As for the second aspect, the use of the conflict as a background for a group of particular stories has been interpreted as a meeting point between the novel and the epic genre; with regard to this aspect, Brenner has underlined a parallelism between *The Iliad* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, insomuch as in the former the main topic is Achilles's wrath and not the Trojan War, whereas in the latter the narrator dwells more on the story of Robert Jordan rather than on the Spanish War (1983: 127). Another "epic" connotation of the novel would be the episodic nature of the inner structure since there is a main character who finds on his way several adverse situations to accomplish his mission and several stories inserted in the central plot. If Hemingway provided his book about Spain with an epic air it was not by chance; the identification of certain Homeric echoes in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* may be owing to the author's determination to portray Spain as a country stuck in a remote time where superstition and primitivism preserved the same vigor as many centuries ago. This hypothesis is in accordance with the description which the American writer made of Spain as an enclave whose people led simple lives and preserved a series of timeless and violent traditions. Moreover, Hemingway depicts the country as a place far from the *pernicious* influence of the modern world: "It was one of the few places left in Europe that had not been ruined by railroads and motorcars […] Spain was the real old stuff" (Broer 1974: 5).

Some of the topics dealt with in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* are closely linked to the vision which Hemingway held about the Spanish War in particular and the country in general. One of these themes is the opposition between life and death. A structural analysis of the novel reveals how scenes concerning these two topics

follow one another immediately. Far from being a mere coincidence, this disposition of scenes is attributable to a strategy by which the author intends to convey one of the features of the Spanish personality in which he was most interested: the Spaniard's inability to conceive life separated from death. The disposition of scenes is not the only means by which Hemingway hints at this topic, but also a series of symbols appearing throughout the novel. Many of them have a double meaning: a positive one, concerning life, and a negative one, alluding to death. The bridge that Jordan must blow up represents, according to his opinion, a place where the destiny of Mankind may change, but it is at the same time the place where he meets death; the mountains may be seen as an idyllic scenery, though they are shown in the end as a huge burrow where the main character and his partners are trapped and killed; the sleeping bag used by Jordan is the symbol of his love for María, but it recalls a tomb too (Grebstein 1973: 46); the Nationalist planes provoke Jordan's astonishment as he stares at them flying over the cave, but he does not forget that they are a "mechanized doom" for the Republic (Hemingway 1967: 85).

Another opposition that may be related to the image of Spain in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is between tragedy and comedy. Hemingway inserts throughout the novel some humorous hints interspersed with scenes of a remarkably tragic intensity. Apart from being a means of lessening the dramatic stress undergone at moments marked by violence and tragedy, humor also plays an important role in the depiction of the Spanish people; more specifically, Hemingway intends to show how they do not lose their sense of humor and optimism in spite of the adversities brought by war. We can see an illustrative example, though grim, of this in the attitude adopted by *El Sordo*, just before dying; it is then that, having given up any chance of not succumbing to the enemy fire, he cannot avoid laughing at death itself –"he joked about it to himself" (Hemingway 1967: 295). Though he is conscious that his life is about to come to an end, this character does not surrender to death easily and he resorts to mockery and irony as a way of expressing boastfully his resistance to disappear. Besides joviality and pride, the attitude shown by this partisan unveils one of the traits in the Spanish character which captivated Hemingway most in his progressive discovery of the local idiosyncrasy: rebelliousness. According to the American novelist, people in Spain assume death as universal fate. However, this does not involve a resigned acceptance of death, especially in those cases where the mode of dying is not honorable; in other words, Spaniards desire to die well. Hemingway first perceived this behavior in bullrings, where people swarmed in attracted by "the feeling of rebellion against death which comes from its administering" (2003: 233). On joking about his tragic fate, *El Sordo* shows his absolute rejection to a death which he considers unworthy of him. This partisan does not hate death itself, but the way he is going to die–under the bombs dropped by enemy planes instead of hand-to-hand combat.

The killing of *El Sordo* is not the only scene where death, violence and destruction are present. In fact, they are recurrent topics in Hemingway's books in general and in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in particular. This is no wonder if we consider that they were familiar to him during his lifetime, taking into account his participation in two conflicts –World War One and the Spanish Civil War– and the suicide of his father. The analysis of the different narrative segments reveals the importance of these themes throughout the novel; the stories told by Pilar and María are good examples. Instead of touching on few details, they both dwell on lurid images of horror and violence in their respective narrations. In this sense, Pilar remembers the slaughter of those who were supposedly for the Nationalists in Pablo's village at the beginning of the conflict. Far from being killed in a quick and clean way by the bullets of their executors, the victims undergo a slow and painful death occasioned by the injuries that a drunken mob inflicted on them with their pitchforks. The torture does not come to an end until their bodies are thrown into a river at the bottom of a cliff. Similarly, María narrates a story of barbarity and hatred as she recalls how a group of Fascists broke into her village, killed all the peasants they found on their way and raped several girls –María was in that number– whose heads had been previously cropped. Likewise, violence, death and horror pervade the moments previous to the fall of *El Sordo* and his men, as we can see in the image of a dead horse used as a barricade by the Loyalists or that of a Fascist official forcing one of his soldiers to get closer to the positions held by the partisans. Despite the cruelty and rawness present in the scenes above mentioned, there is nothing in the entire novel nowhere near as shocking and horrible as the decapitation of the corpses of *El Sordo* and his band.

The presence of the couple horror-death in many of the scenes which are key throughout the novel may be attributed to a double intention. On the one hand, Hemingway suggests the idea that the violent personality of Spanish people was responsible for the atrocities committed during the war. The American writer had witnessed a conflict aroused not only by the ideological differences, but also by the intense wrath which stemmed from the enormous social and economic gulfs –this to such an extent that he could talk about two Spains– and the radical interpretation of religious questions. Though Hemingway was acquainted with violence –apart from his participation in two wars, he also turned out in bloody spectacles like bullfights, cockfights and boxing combats– his experience in the Spanish Civil War gave him the chance to know a kind of violence he had never seen before. Thanks to his job as a war correspondent, Hemingway could have access to anonymous stories which he regarded as so cruel and horrifying that they seemed to have happened during the times of the Inquisition or the Black Legend rather than in the 20th century; as a result, this circumstance reinforced the image of Spain as a primitive and savage country anchored in its customs, a

vision of which Hemingway had been always fond. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the author introduces some scenes alluding to this timeless and unleashed violence inspired in real stories which he witnessed or which were reported to him. We can find a clear example of this in chapter 23; Jordan and Agustín –one of the members of Pablo's band– lie in ambush for four fascist soldiers to pass. It is then that Jordan notices the increasing hatred and resentment that take hold of Agustín as he sees the enemy march in front of him. At that moment the partisan desires nothing more than to launch an attack on the fascists. However, Jordan, anticipating the disastrous consequences that this action could have for the band, dissuades Agustín from shooting the soldiers. This episode makes Jordan ponder on the deep contrast between the Anglo-Saxon coldness and pragmatism and the Spanish passion and irascibility:

> Yes, Robert Jordan thought. We do it coldly but they do not, not ever have. It is their extra sacrament. Their old one that they had before the new religion came from the far end of the Mediterranean, the one they have never abandoned but only suppressed and hidden to bring it out again in wars and inquisitions. They are the people of the Auto de Fe; the act of faith. Killing is something one must do, but ours are different from theirs (Hemingway 1967: 273).

The high number of scenes of violent death and horror in the novel may also be regarded as a strategy employed by the author to protest against the atrocities carried out during the war. Hemingway does not tackle the conflict as a pamphleteer who condemns the outrages committed by the enemy and ignores those taking place on his own side. On the contrary, the American writer tries to offer a vision as objective as possible of what was happening on both sides; as Benson has pointed out, Hemingway shows the ravages of the Spanish war to call for the end of the destruction and the killing of thousands of innocents rather than to glorify the deeds of the Loyalist army and omit its mistakes (1977: 287). The anti-war position adopted by Hemingway is clearly connected to one the main themes in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*: the communion between all existing things. More specifically, the author believes that the war must end because the death of any individual, regardless its ideological orientation, may have a negative effect on each of us.

Finally, we must not conclude our analysis without considering a series of scenes which, despite not being in direct relation to the main topics of the novel, are of paramount importance when interpreting Hemingway's view of Spain and the Spanish Civil War that Hemingway casts in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Let us consider two scenes which are illustrative examples in this regards. The first is set at the prestigious Gaylord's Hotel, the headquarters for many foreign war correspondents and Soviet commissars who stayed in Madrid during the war.

Unlike other places slightly described throughout the novel, Hemingway offers a more detailed depiction of the hotel which contains a satiric vision of the Loyalist rearguard; more specifically, the author criticizes, on the one hand, how the foreign journalists lived surrounded by all sorts of luxury comforts while the people of Madrid suffered the scourge of war and, on the other, the increasing control that the Communist commissars had on the Republican authorities. The second example refers to the scene where Jordan finds out that Pablo has fled with the explosives necessary to blow up the bridge. This disastrous event for the interests of the militiamen stirs up in Jordan's mind a series of reflections which are very revealing of the opposing sentiments that the Hispanic personality aroused in Hemingway. Ruled by frustration at that moment, the protagonist cannot help regarding the Spanish people as treacherous and selfish. However, a short time later the American volunteer rectifies and directs his criticism at the authorities that have ruled the country from the 16th century. This change of mind is quite meaningful as it hints at two aspects of the traditional Anglo-Saxon vision of Spain: the Black Legend and the belief that the Spanish are the best people ruled by the worst governments:

> Muck the whole treachery-ridden country. Muck their egotism and their selfishness and their selfishness and their egotism and their conceit and their treachery […] And that Pablo that just mucked off with my exploder and my box of detonators. Oh muck him to deepest hell. But no. He's mucked us instead. They always mucked you instead from Cortez, and Menéndez de Ávila down to Miaja […] Muck all the insane, egoistical, treacherous swine that have always governed Spain and ruled her armies. Muck everybody but the people… (Hemingway 1967: 259-250)

4. CONCLUSION

The study of the internal organization of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* suggests the existence of some elements which must be taken into account when dealing with the image of Spain reflected in that novel. In this sense, we have considered the higher importance of the scenes where characters who are not widely known– such as Jordan or the partisans– take part and particular events happen–the attack on a bridge– over those concerning the political and military facets of the war. This fact has been interpreted in our study as the expression at structural level of the author's determination to paint the portrait of a divided and convulsed country where the great battles and ideological tendencies are left behind in favor of stories referring to common individuals. Another remarkable aspect concerning the internal structure of the book is the episodic structure, which, along with the consideration of war just as a background for the actions performed by characters

that are not known at first by readers, underlines the connections existing between the novel and the Homeric poems. It is not a coincidence that Hemingway inserts these epic connotations in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, but a strategy by which he intends to depict Spain as a place anchored in beliefs and customs characteristic of immemorial times. Lastly, it is also worth mentioning the arrangement of the different plots developed throughout the book around the scene where Jordan's mission comes unsuccessfully to an end. Like other Hemingway's works, the image of this sort of construction in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is strongly linked to death, in this case to the killing of the protagonist. That the American volunteer loses his life near a bridge in the most relevant scene throughout the novel is symptomatic, on the one hand, of the importance of death in Hemingway's literary universe and, on the other, of the fascination –even obsession– he became to feel about this topic since his first contact with the Spanish culture; not in vain, Hemingway did not only discovered in Spain a particular way of living, but also of dying.

In relation to the imagological dimension of the themes appearing in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, we can see how Hemingway makes use of them to show an image of Spain which, at first sight, is not very different from that appearing in *The Sun Also Rises* and *Death in the Afternoon*: a country whose ancient customs, especially bullfighting, reveal a conception of existence where death is anything but the prolongation of life. Nevertheless, the analysis of the thematic features of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* reveals a vision of Spain with a higher number of nuances; in this novel, set in the Civil War, Hemingway does not only employ the binomial life-death to convey his interpretation of the Spanish personality and customs, but also other themes framed in the context of war, such as violence, horror or humor. The reiterative presence of these topics in many scenes throughout the novel constitutes an image of Spain where the American author, apart from insisting on the particular way in which the Spanish people assume death, reflects on how certain facets of their personality –individualism, indiscipline, passion– were aroused with the outbreak of the conflict and how some of them contributed to the Loyalist defeat.

REFERENCES

Baker, C. 1956. *Hemingway. The Writer as Artist*. New York: Princeton University Press.

Baker, C. 1985. *Ernest Hemingway. Selected Letters (1917-1961)*. New York: Scribner.

Benson, F.R. 1977. "Ernest Hemingway". *Los intelectuales y la guerra de España*. Eds. J.C. Corrales Egea and M. Tuñón de Lara. Caracas: Monte Ávila. 278-295.

Brenner, G. 1983. *Concealments in Hemingway's Works*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Broer, L. R. 1974. *Hemingway's Spanish Tragedy*. Birmingham: U of Alabama Press.

Cooper, S. 1987. *The Politics of Ernest Hemingway*. Ann Arbor: UMI.

Dadson, T. "La imagen de España en Inglaterra durante los siglos XVI y XVII". *Imágenes de España en culturas y literaturas europeas (siglos XVI y XVII)*. Ed. José Manuel López de Abiada. Madrid: Verbum. 127-175.

Fernández-Gaichat, M. 1997. *Les Espagnols à Paris à l'époque de Philipe III*. Paris: Droz.

García Cárcel, R. 1992. *La leyenda negra: historia y opinión*. Madrid: Anaya.

Grebstein, S. N. 1973. *Hemingway's Craft*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Hemingway, E. 1967 (1955). *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Hammondsworth: Penguin.

Hemingway, E. 1995. "The Old Man at the Bridge". *The Short Stories*. New York: Scribner. 106-109.

Hemingway, E. 2000. *The Sun Also Rises*. London: Vintage.

Hemingway, E. 2003. *Death in the Afternoon*. New York: Scribner.

Hönsch, U. 2000. *Wege des Spanienbildes im Deutschland des 18*. Tübingen: Jahrhunderts.

Iglesias, C. 1998. "España desde fuera". *España: reflexiones sobre el ser de España*. Ed. Benito Ruano. Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia. 377-428.

López de Abiada, J. M. ed. 2004. *Imágenes de España en culturas y literaturas europeas. Siglos XVI-XVII*. Madrid: Verbum.

Nahal, C. 1971. *The Narrative Pattern in Ernest Hemingway's Fiction*. New Jersey: Associated University Presses.

Núñez Florencio, R. 2001. *Sol y sangre. La imagen de España en el mundo*. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe.

Orwell, G. 1998. *Homage to Catalonia*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Sanders, D. 1960. "Ernest Hemingway's Spanish Civil War". *American Quarterly Review* 12 (2): 128-137.

White, W. ed. 1967. *By-line: E. Hemingway. Selected Articles and Dispatches of Four Decades*. New York: Scribner.

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES - VOLUME 8 (2010), 119-140

MARY REILLY AS JEKYLL OR HYDE: NEO-VICTORIAN (RE)CREATIONS OF FEMININITY AND FEMINISM

MARTA MIQUEL-BALDELLOU*
University of Lleida

ABSTRACT. *In his article "What is Neo-Victorian Studies?" (2008), Mark Lewellyn argues that the term neo-Victorian fiction refers to works that are consciously set in the Victorian period, but introduce representations of marginalised voices, new histories of sexuality, post-colonial viewpoints and other generally 'different' versions of the Victorian era. Valerie Martin's gothic-romance* Mary Reilly *drew on Stevenson's novella to introduce a woman's perspective on the puzzle of Jekyll and Hyde. Almost twenty-years after the publication of Martin's novel, the newly established field of research in Neo-Victorian fiction has questioned the extent to which Neo-Victorian recreations of the Victorian past respond to postmodern contemporary reflections and ideas about the period. This article aims to examine the ways in which this Neo-Victorian gothic text addresses both the issues of Victorian femininity and feminist principles now in the light of later Neo-Victorian precepts, taking into consideration that Martin's novel introduces a woman's perspective as a feminist response to Stevenson's text but also includes many allusions to the cult of domesticity as a legacy of the Victorian gothic romance.*

Keywords: neo-Victorian, femininity, feminism, Victorian gothic romance, postmodernism, critical f(r)iction.

---

* Correspondence should be sent to: Dr. Marta Miquel-Baldellou. Avda. Alcalde Recasens nº 66, 1º, C.P. 25005. Lleida. Spain. Email: mmiquel@dal.udl.cat/marta.miquel@hotmail.com

MARY REILLY COMO JEKYLL O HYDE: (RE)CREACIONES NEO-VICTORIANAS DE FEMINIDAD Y FEMINISMO

RESUMEN. *En su artículo "What is Neo-Victorian Studies?" (2008), Mark Lewellyn argumenta que el término* ficción neo-victoriana *alude a obras que están conscientemente ambientadas en el periodo victoriano, pero que introducen voces provenientes de los márgenes, nuevas historias de sexualidad, perspectivas postcoloniales y otras versiones generalmente 'diferentes' de la era victoriana. La novela gótico-romántica* Mary Reilly *de Valerie Martin se basaba en la obra de Stevenson para introducir una perspectiva de mujer en el misterio de Jekyll y Hyde. Casi veinte años después de la publicación de la novela de Martin, el recientemente establecido campo de investigación alrededor de la ficción neo-victoriana ha cuestionado hasta qué punto las recreaciones del pasado victoriano responden a reflexiones e ideas contemporáneas y posmodernistas acerca de este periodo. Este artículo propone examinar el modo en que esta obra gótica neo-victoriana examina temáticas en relación a la feminidad victoriana y los principios feministas a la luz de los recientes preceptos neo-victorianos, tomando en consideración que la novela de Martin introduce la perspectiva de una mujer como respuesta feminista al texto de Stevenson pero también incluye numerosas alusiones al culto de la domesticidad como legado de las novelas gótico-románticas victorianas.*

Palabras clave: neo-victoriano, feminidad, feminismo, novela gótico-romántica victoriana, postmodernismo, f(r)icción crítica.

Received 23 April 2010
Revised version accepted 10 June 2010

1. A PRELIMINARY INSIGHT INTO NEO-VICTORIAN RECREATIONS

Soon after its publication, Valerie Martin's novel, *Mary Reilly*, was highlighted as an original interpretation of Jekyll's tragedy, a fresh twist on the classic Jekyll-and-Hyde story. Drawing faithfully on details from Stevenson's novel, Martin endowed this Victorian seminal novella with even further complexity, introducing the captivating character of Mary, portrayed as scarred but strong, familiar with evil yet brimming with devotion. Taking the role of Mr. Utterson, Dr. Lanyon, and even Henry Jekyll himself as male narrators of Stevenson's novel, Mary secretly sits down to write the intricacies of Jekyll's household every night in her diary, portraying not only her own account of the story, but also her own personal experience as a Victorian maid, her own narrative as Jekyll and Hyde. In Martin's

novel, Jekyll-and-Hyde's transformation merely contributes to replicating Mary's own conversion, enacting her inner progression from subdued to emerging sexuality; to use Showalter's words, from feminine to feminist and back again, gaining insight into the gradual development of her female identity. Nonetheless, *Mary Reilly* has also been highlighted as a Neo-Victorian popular romance, as Martin transformed Stevenson's gothic novella into a gothic love story.

The origin of Valerie Martin's novel lies in Mr Utterson's description of the maid servant who witnesses Sir Danvers Carew's murder at Hyde's hands, as described in Stevenson's classic in the following terms:

> A maid servant living alone in a house not far from the river had gone upstairs to bed about eleven. Although a fog rolled over the city in the small hours, the early part of the night was cloudless, and the lane, which the maid's window overlooked, was brilliantly lit by the full moon. It seems she was romantically given; for she sat down upon her box, which stood immediately under the window, and fell into a dream of musing. Never (she used to say, with streaming tears, when she narrated that experience), never she felt more at peace with all men or thought more kindly of the world (29).

This nameless maid who breaks the community's silence over Mr Hyde's deeds exists on the fringes of the privileged network, but will never belong (Lepine 2009: 85). As Chase and Levenson assert, the story of Victorian domestic discourse is to a considerable degree a tale of moving walls from which emanates the immovable barrier that separates privilege from dispossession, and privacy from public life (2005: 426). Keeping servants was a clear mark of ascendancy into respectable classes, but in the very act, the privileged also compromised their own privacy, as they felt obliged to maintain distance from those who brought so close, but were different - others. The issue of walled protection did no longer lie in how to construct an imposing barrier against the streets, but how to arrange a pattern of rooms and staircases to manage household workers, thus highlighting the boundary between inner and outer. Any assumed Victorian separation over the horizontal axis - public and private -, or the vertical axis - upstairs and downstairs -, is thus subverted in Martin's novel, from the moment a female and a member of the underprivileged classes takes the lead of the narrative. In this respect, it fulfils the aim of Neo-Victorian fiction as far as it can be described as historical narratives of that period "representing marginalised voices, new histories of sexuality, post-colonial viewpoints and other generally 'different' versions of the Victorian" (Llewellyn 2008: 165). In this respect, Martin's novel, published in 1990, accounts for the fin-de-siècle Victorian revivalism which "located the Victorian age as historically central to late-century postmodern consciousness" (Kucich and Sadoff 2000: xi).

2. PROBLEMATISING GENDER AND SOCIAL BOUNDARIES: REGRESSION AND REVERSAL

Martin's Neo-Victorian appropriation, and thus, recreation of alleged Victorian binary oppositions is manifested through metaphors of alternative enclosure and release which explore as well as subvert Victorian gender policies. Like Jane Eyre, whom Mrs Reed encloses in the red-room as a means of punishment for having scolded Master John Reed, Mary early on recalls her father locking her up in a tiny cupboard after accidentally dropping a cup. In Bronte's novel, John finds Jane perusing one of his books and reprimands her for getting above herself, and it is in retaliation that Jane beats her master badly, which ultimately brings about Mrs Reed's reproach. It is believed Mrs Reed's husband who was also Jane's uncle, died in that room, and on his death bed, asked his wife to take care of Jane in his absence. Owing to the fact his widow unfulfilled her promise, Jane firmly believes his uncle's spirit still remains in the room, and given her rampant imagination, she promptly indulges in reveries, believing her uncle has come back to haunt her to the extent she suffers spasms as a result of terror. In clear analogy with Jane's episode of enclosure in early childhood, soon after Mary's arrival at Dr. Jekyll's house, her Master - as she calls him - notices her deep scars on hands and neck, which shortly awaken his medical curiosity. As Mary unfolds, her alcoholic father used to lock her up, depriving her of her liberty, and condemned her to fit in her proper place. Nevertheless, on one occasion, her father did not leave her alone in her enclosure, as she recalls in the narrative she writes at Harry Jekyll's request.

> I knew at once that there was something in the bag, that it was meant to harm me, but what it was my childish imagination couldn't conjure. Then I felt it moving and knew it was some animal, no doubt as frightened as I was, I'd only a thin skirt on, which I had pulled down over my knees as best I could, so it wasn't long before the creature began to work its way through the two thin layers separating us in that narrow, breathless space. I felt a claw sink into my thigh, and I pulled myself up rigid, as if I could make more room, but there was no more room to make and I think the rat sense that as well as I (3).

Even if at Dr. Jekyll's request, through writing down her clinical case, Mary reflects on the source of her fears from an adult perspective - her claustrophobia and hatred of rats, the primal scene she is compelled to behold at such as a young age, her first bodily invasion, and the primitive struggle between propriety and instinct - which will ultimately reverberate in the days to come at Jekyll's house. Mary's tragic incident in her early childhood will haunt her all through her adult life as a reminder of her assigned place in society as a female servant, child of an abusive father, as well as a victim of forbidden and invisible terrors: those of her

own sexuality. With regard to the entrapped wild animal, struggling to set himself free and punish her, Mary asserts "though I never saw him, he was heavy as a dog" (9). As an untamed animal, the rodent represents both the source of sin and the agent of punishment, Mary's source of fear and her father's mediator to inflict his discipline, as well as the reification of her instincts that are soon to re-emerge again.

Dr. Jekyll's examination of Mary's scars finds its parallel in Mary's cautious observance of her master's hands, thus noticing, in the following terms, the clear contrast between her masculine and rough hands, those of a maid, and Jekyll's delicate and even feminine ones, those of a man of science.

> While he was looking at my poor hands I took the chance to look at his, and a more refined, gentlemanly hand I think I've never seen. His fingers are long and delicate, almost like a lady's, and the nails is all smooth and trimmed evenly, so I thought here are hands such as should never know work, and I wanted to hide my own rough red hands away (8).

This gender-reversal depiction anticipates both Jekyll's and Mary's duality as individuals, and further explores both characters' struggle between reason and passion, ethics and instinct, as this gender-crossing destabilises Victorian established standards of femininity and masculinity. According to Michie, during the Victorian period, "with the emergence of middle-class culture came a new norm of masculinity explicitly defined against an aristocratic model that was seen as increasingly self-indulgent, immoral, and indeed, effeminate" (2005: 413). Taking this premise into account, Jekyll shortly notices Mary's franks and earnest manners, and feels charmed at her bold outbursts when she significantly asserts "I try to speak honest, sir […] as I've nothing to hide" (9). Her statement apparently contrasts with Jekyll's subdued manners and detached approach, aware of his position as a member of the privileged, and what is at stake should he trespass any forbidden boundaries. In this respect, it is Mary who leads Jekyll to question the socially established separation of spheres. Mary soon defies Jekyll's clear scheme of social order as he discovers her fondness of reading as well as her careful style at writing. However, Mary is also highly conscious of her social condition and assigned place in society since she was a child. Owing to her upbringing, she feels utterly guilty when her master discovers her reading Macaulay's volume in his library, well-aware she must be getting above herself.

> I could hardly speak, so shocked I was to be caught out and ashamed too. But I found my voice and said, 'Oh, sir, I do apologize. It was a book that was lying open and I couldn't help but look into it and then when I saw what it was I did stop to read a page or two' (10).

3. FINDING A VOICE OF HER OWN: WRITING THE SELF

Mary's literacy leads Jekyll to ask her to write, and thus, reflect on the source of both her physical and also psychological scars. Her narrative ultimately entails Jekyll's own process of psychoanalysis, as Mary's account of the rat's success in finding his way out of the bag and her final release at her mother's hands, anticipate Jekyll's struggle for freedom and eventual creation of his alter ego. Through examining Mary's scars and reading her telling narrative Jekyll examines his own reflection, his own illicit fears.

Mary firstly writes an accurate account of her case for her master, but this initial experience of writing and shaping her own story encourage her to write her journal, thus documenting all the events that take place in Dr. Jekyll's house since her arrival. Mary's frank and honest manner, as well as her intelligence and literacy, set her apart from the rest of servants, just like Jekyll's subdued instincts render him an outcast from his own social class. Nonetheless, owing to her upbringing as a maid in Victorian times, Mary is well-aware of those limits she should not dare trespass. Thus, the encounter taking place between Jekyll and Mary threatens to destabilise their socially established assumptions, which will ultimately subvert any clearly-cut divisions between separate spheres, established social roles, as well as ontological notions of reason and instinct. Mary's narrative awakens Jekyll's unconscious fearful wishes of liberation, while Jekyll's approaches stir up Mary's dormant sexuality which results in her consequent recriminating remarks and corrective need to subdue her instincts.

> Then I fell on thinking of his cool fingers against my neck, which was a thought I knew I had no business to be entertaining and I gave myself a talking to on the subject of a servant's foolishness and how wrong it is ever to have fancies outside one's station as it always leads to misery, as I've observed myself often enough, and in the midst of lecturing myself I fell asleep (12).

At night, by candlelight, as if perpetrating a wicked deed, Mary puts down in words her daily experiences, thus also leading a double life as a maid in the daylight and as a female writer at night, which clearly contrasts with her roommate Annie, a good and hard-working girl who, in Mary's words, "seems to have no life but working and sleeping" (13). Mary's writing is initially unproblematic as she only follows master's orders, and is clearly aware of the readership she is addressing as she unveils "I thought over my writing to see had I left anything out or said anything too crudely so that he would be offended" (14). Nonetheless, Mary's literacy, her eagerness for writing her own story, subtly endows her with more confidence and high-esteem, for which she ultimately needs to reprimand herself, admitting only misery "comes of wanting to be important and feel different

from others in the same station" (16). Soon after reading Mary's account of her childhood punishment, the encounter taking place between her and Harry begins to anticipate an exchange and reversal of strength and influence. Mary increasingly feels more empowered, while Jekyll's appearance grows weaker and weaker each day as she discloses: "I stopped being nervous for myself and noticed that he [Jekyll] looked very unwell. His face was as pale as paper and his eyes had dark circles underneath" (17). Owing to Mary's narrative and her grievous past, Jekyll identifies her "profound view of social order and propriety" (17) while he subtly shows his contempt for his righteous butler Mr Poole, as a result of which Mary gains insight into Jekyll's contradictory terms as follows: "I could not feel easy about the way Master had spoken of him as 'the virtuous Poole', showing me his contempt and taking me, whom he don't know, into his confidence" (18). Mary thus gains insight into Jekyll's contradictory beliefs which clearly reflect her own position as a maid and her master's confidante.

4. SELF-REFLECTIVE DUALITIES: JEKYLL AND MARY

Jekyll may well identify both Poole's incorrupt behaviour, as a reification of his own Freudian *super-ego*, as well as Mary's unconscious double-sidedness, as a reflection of his own persona, his *ego*, struggling to do what is thought best and subduing any wishes to step off the boundaries, to give free vent to his instincts, ultimately his *id* inner self. While Jekyll seems unconcerned about his inappropriate comments on the virtuous Poole, Mary is apt to confess her guilt when she moves from her master's chamber downstairs to fill her assigned niche in the social ladder. Accordingly, Mary unconsciously notices that her master's contradictory comments voice her own inconsistent condition as an educated maid.

> When I went back into the kitchen, Mr Poole was at the sideboard decanting a bottle of port and as I come in he gave me a sharp, critical look which, because of my guilty heart, I could not meet honestly, which shows what comes of sneaking about and, as the saying goes, 'trying to serve two masters' (19).

Mary's inherent sense of guilt at getting above herself clearly contrasts with Jekyll's efforts to release his basest instincts, thus performing continuous ascending and descending moves within Jekyll's house, upstairs and downstairs, thus literally enacting their respective, and converse, inner strife, given their own disparate social positions. Jekyll's will to remain a recluse also contrasts with Mary's outings to slum-dwellings in Soho at her master's command, given Henry Jekyll's inability to move around such surroundings so as to avoid putting his status in jeopardy. In this respect, Mary possesses more freedom of movement than Jekyll, thus reversing any given notions of Victorian standards as regards the separation of public and private

spheres. Even if Jekyll, being a man, should presumably master over the public sphere, it is only Mary who dares trespass the house's threshold so as to venture into the backstreets of Victorian Soho. These continuous upward-and-downward moves within the house, as well as the public-and-private reversal of the Victorian policies of space in Martin's novel, are ultimately underlined by the subversion of gender standards. Mary's vigorous ways and strength due to her strenuous physical work contrasts with Jekyll's infirmity and increasing frailness as she beholds her master's emaciated condition every morning on serving breakfast: "Even though I scarcely looked at him I took in enough to see that he was propped on his pillow like an invalid looking as pale as death" (22). As Jekyll's basest instincts gain terrain over his morals, his alter ego absorbs Jekyll's manliness and turns it into aggressive masculinity every night, thus rendering Jekyll weaker and weaker each day, as his femininity gradually overwhelms his masculine traits.

Mary's ancestral fears are rooted in her childhood punishment, as the remembrance of the rat gnawing its way through the bag still fills her with terror. And yet, it is from this tragic episode a more prominent agent of horror emerges, that of her father, the real source of her mental fears, the presence that still haunts her in adulthood. Mary's father reminds her of her own fragility, her humble origins, and her terror at not being able to forget her past of abuse and mistreatment. As the rat struggled to be released, Mary's father also gave free vent to his degeneracy, choosing Mary as his utmost and favourite easy prey. When Jekyll attends to Mary's recollections at his request, she admits it was drink that made her father so capable of evil: " 'He was a different man then – he even looked different, sir, as if the cruel man was always inside him and the drinking brought him out' " (24). Mary's testimony of her father's disorder clearly raises Jekyll's interest as it establishes a clear analogy with his own case. Nonetheless, if Jekyll beholds his dark self in Mary's father's shadow, Mary's conversation with her master awakens latent memories to the extent she perceives her father may be still alive. Thus, Mary cannot help but establishing some link between her master and her father as her following words unveil:

> It come back to me again, as it did so hard this afternoon, that my father is alive still, even if it is only in my own poor head, that he was gone for a while and that somehow Master's kindness and interest has brought him back to life for me (36).

Mary's wish to grow a garden in the house reflects her process of digging up her own childhood, as well as the fears that come along with those bleak days that set her apart from the rest of her fellows. Despite any difference existing between master Jekyll and maid Mary, Jekyll's need to release his dark side and Mary's wish to block her memories render them parallel figures, thus producing a double figure all together as Mary asserts in this way:

> All the world was standing between us and we'd no way ever to cross it, but also that somehow we was also two sides of the same coin, doing our different work in the same house and as close, without speaking, as a dog and his shadow (30).

Even if Mary is still unaware, Jekyll stirs Mary's memories of her father as far as he foreshadows his alter ego Hyde, as his way of walking clearly resembles Mary's father's, thus becoming the presently source of her nightmares.

> I heard the door to Master's room open and he went in, so of course it was him, though there was something in the step, so halting, as if he was dragging one foot a little, whereas Master has a light, even way of walking (35).

Jekyll's gradual transformation echoes Mary's own process of puzzlement as her master's psychoanalytical endeavours reawaken her forbidden memories. If Mary is able to perceive Jekyll's apparent doubleness is precisely because her nature is also double-sided. Hyde reminds Mary of her father as far as he personifies crude instinct. Nonetheless, even Hyde himself is double-sided, as Mary is unable to distinguish Hyde's brutality from his direct appeal to her own sexuality, thus enacting a permanent process of attraction and revulsion, analogous to Mary's both deference and appeal with regard to her Master.

Jekyll's duality becomes more evident when he requires a looking-glass be placed in his laboratory. His double sidedness also emerges in his questioning Mary whether she has ever wished to have another life in which consequences or regrets had no role to play. Despite her initial puzzlement, Mary confidently asserts she believes there cannot be any actions without consequences. Her immediate and honest response puzzles Jekyll, and yet, her mere presence, and the increasing attraction Jekyll feels for her, urge Jekyll to indulge in a double life, an existence in which they could both stay together despite their social difference. In this sense, Mary acts as Jekyll's double, as she represents his both bright and darker self at once, his will to mean well along with his ultimate need to release his subdued passion. Even if unconsciously, Mary also undergoes a similar process, as she would like to hold on to her upright principles, but feels her latent and dormant feelings are bound to emerge at any time. Mary's duality manifests every time she beholds her image in any of the mirrors of the house.

> I turned to see myself looking at my own reflection in the glass, for they had it all unwrapped and in place, and as I peered at my own figure for a moment it seemed I was looking back at myself from the edge of the world, and if I didn't step carefully I would fall off into nothing. I shook myself, for I seemed to be standing in a dream, and took myself back to my work (48).

Mary thus begins to gain insight into her own complexities as well as into the latent passion she has been suppressing for such a long time. At this stage,

Mary gains awareness of her body and her sexuality, as she recalls her master's words and the deep effect they exerted over her conscience, while she beholds the reflection of her body in the mirror at night.

> I know it is that Master called me fair, and has stirred up my vanity to be something I am not. Before I sat down to write I lit the candle and looked at my face in the glass for a long time. As I put on my shift I stopped a moment to look at my body. How white my skin looks in the candlelight. I brushed my hair down and let it fall over my breasts and I thought, is this a sight my master would care to see? (48-9)

While Jekyll beholds his darker self in the mirror as he undergoes his transformation from Jekyll to Hyde, Mary also observes her duality, her righteous self as a result of a severe and repressive upbringing, as well as her subdued passionate self, which is about to emerge. Both Jekyll's and Mary's looking at their respective mirror images emulates a multilayered process of parallel images as they look at each other – Jekyll at Mary, and Mary at Jekyll - thus enacting a mutual process of reverberation, of both observance and reflection which takes place in front of the looking-glass and beyond. Likewise, both Jekyll and Mary, and their reflection in the mirror, recall Joyce's "paradoxical sense of looking forward to see what is behind us" (2002: 3).

5. SUBVERTING AND ASSUMING ROLES: EMPOWERED AND ENFEEBLED

Through a mutual process of observation and surveillance, Jekyll and Mary seem to exchange certain qualities which will ultimately result in Mary's process of empowerment and Jekyll's resulting debasement. This reversal of roles is gradually enacted as Hyde gains terrain over Jekyll, and Mary begins to exert a deep influence over her master, thus acquiring some sort of mild authority.

> I felt a little annoyed to be lectured on my stupidity, so I looked right at Master and to my surprise he seemed to blush, though perhaps it was only that the fire had made his blood rise, which I felt timid to observe in my own head as it might be another mistake on my part (51).

Even though Mary is still hesitant about her way to proceed and behave in relation to her Master, she gradually attains more confidence to the extent her presence becomes indispensable for Jekyll and his future plans, so that a sense of mutual dependence is established, as if they were two separate selves in need of each other to become a complete individual. This interactive exchange of powerfulness between Master and maid is addressed when Jekyll and Mary discuss the survival of the fittest during one of their evening conversations. As Mary observes, taking her own experience as a case in point, children "grow strong when no one cares for them and seem to love whatever life they can eke out and

will kill to keep it, while the pampered child sickens and dies" (52). In this respect, as Mary acknowledges wildness, thus unruliness, seems to entail a greater will to live, and consequently, because of the fact they are precisely more detached, these wilder creatures also seem more apt to survive than the rest.

Mary's comments seem enlightening to Jekyll to the extent he chooses her as an accomplice to carry out his experiments as opposed to his virtuous butler, Poole, as would have been expected. When Jekyll asks Mary to deliver a letter to Mrs Farraday in Soho, her righteous nature immediately leads her to ascertain "no gentleman could have any business at that address as could do anything but bring ruin to his name" (54), which again proclaims Mary's concern about appearances and social expectations. Nonetheless, althrough Mary promptly notices Jekyll must be involved in some dubious matters, even if inadvertently, she is also liable to trespass dangerous limits, even if inadvertently as the awakening attraction she feels towards her Master begins to set in.

> I stood a moment looking at his back, at his hair which is thick, silver and a little long for the fashion, curling over his collar, and I thought I would like to cut a lock of it. Then, shocked at my own strange whims, which it seems I never can control, I went out, closing the door quietly behind me (55).

Mary's altered senses and inability to take control over her awakening feelings clearly reflect Jekyll's gradual process of transformation into Hyde. Mary is caught between suppressing her feelings and giving free vent to them, between the socially-established role assigned to a woman of her social class, and the unsanctioned ways to act according to her own will. Jekyll's *super-ego* figures are personified by his male friends pertaining to the establishment such as his lawyer Mr Utterson, Dr Lanyon, who clearly disapproves of Jekyll's experiments, as well as Mr Poole, whose righteous behaviour clearly reflects social awe for order and loyalty. With regard to Mary, her rigid upbringing at school as well as her mother's devotion to labour and righteousness became her own particular personifications of the *super-ego*. Thus, high reverence for morals and social expectations are inherent in Mary due to her strict upbringing. In this respect, Mary feels fortunate her mother was able to teach her love and esteem for herself, while her father clearly personified the exact opposite of what her mother meant to her, that is, wickedness and depravity, thus inheriting a double-sided legacy between upright morals and degeneration from her parents.

Mary's walk along the streets of Soho to deliver her master's letter to Mrs. Farraday becomes specially significant to her, as she confesses she may have well become any of the girls from those streets had her mother not saved her from turning into one. In this respect, through her way to Soho, Mary undergoes a regressive process into her childhood, knowing her most acute terrors still lie

dormant. Her upbringing and her mother's intervention helped Mary move to the brightest part of the city, and even if as a maid, she managed to leave behind all the unsavoury districts so familiar to her during her dejected childhood. Her both physical and psychological journey back in time awakens Mary's guilt as she admits after her visit to Mrs Farraday's brothel. However, she appeases her sense of right and wrong by repeating she only followed master's orders "I slept poorly all night, doubtless from the weight of guilt I feel about my errand yesterday, though it does seem it isn't my own, but rather Master's, as doing his bidding is only my duty" (63).

6. GUILT AND DESIRE: AWAKENING SEXUALITY

Mary's true sense of guilt does not lie in her fulfilling her master's dubious demands, but in the awakening of her own suppressed feelings. At this stage, Mary is haunted by the belief her father is still alive, the dragging sound of steps that disturb her sleep at night, and especially, the increasingly affectionate bond that brings her closer to her Master, which is both encouraged and repelled by surrounding circumstances.

> I remembered what seemed like so long ago, when Master took my hands in his own and looked at them in the lamplight, of how shy and embarrassed I felt, but yet, I cannot deny it, pleased as well to be noticed by him, to feel I was of interest to him. As I was having these sad thoughts Mr Poole put his head out the kitchen door and called to me (68-9).

Mary leads Jekyll to question the current belief in the division of social classes. When he invites some fellows for dinner, they address the issue whether educating the poor is a dangerous pastime. Jekyll immediately draws their attention to Mary as an example of an inherently good-hearted and gifted person despite her humble origins, thus justifying the education of the underprivileged. Deep inside, however, Jekyll envies Mary's liberty to roam free in certain districts where his presence is banned, as well as her apparent capacity to do what is right, as she promptly urges him to notice being and doing are often quite different matters. Mary confesses she has never wished to do wrong, and only wishes to remain as she is. And yet, her night thoughts secretly betray her inner feelings. Her puzzlement and confusion at different ways of acting are also brought to the floor when she doubts whether her position as a maid should compel her to accept orders that deviate from her righteous conscience. And yet again, she feels puzzled so as to ascertain whether accepting her master's orders is really a sign of her submission or an acknowledgment of her forbidden desire, as can be inferred from her words.

> Can he feel that I am here, listening to him, sleepless on his account? Will he think of me as he goes into his room, lights the lamp I trimmed for him, sits on the bed

> I made for him, drinks the water I brought for him, or perhaps lights the fire I laid for him and stands gazing at the burning coals until sleep finally finds us both? (74).

Mary's increasing attraction towards Jekyll, as well as his resulting dependence on Mary as his accomplice, become more evident once Jekyll informs the servants about the arrival of his young assistant Edward Hyde at the house. Hyde embodies Mary's dormant passion and Jekyll's subdued evil. His presence gradually diminishes Jekyll's strength, his masculinity, and also Mary's principles, her femininity. Her dreams are often haunted by dim memories of her father whom she still suspects to be living, as she overhears Hyde's peculiar dragging steps that clearly remind those of her own father. Thus, Mary's newly-acquired confidence and sense of security in Jekyll's house is at points diminished, as her miserable past is reawakened and threatens to dismantle her faith in principles and discipline.

Mary's comforting memories of days spent serving Master Jekyll are gradually deconstructed by parallel episodes which recur on the arrival of Edward Hyde. Jekyll's gradual transformation echoes Mary's own metamorphosis as their body images clearly reflect their analogous internal change. Mary's tiresome appearance clearly resembles Jekyll's enfeebled condition to the extent their external look underlines Jekyll's process of feminisation and Mary's ongoing emasculation.

> I went to Master's shaving mirror and looked at my face in the glass. My hair was down and wild around my face, which looked very pale and vexed to me, and my eyes seemed bright, no doubt from being washed by tears. I saw there was two lines in my forehead and I rubbed at them. I dropped my cloak on the carpet to look at my neck and shoulders – also, it seemed to me, too pale even against the white of my night shift. But my shoulders and arms are strong, from the heavy work I do, especially getting the coal up (91).

Soon after Mary's arrival, Jekyll realised she is not an ordinary maid. Mary is not only literate but she is also very fond of reading, as Jekyll finds her perusing his books. Nonetheless, once Hyde makes his appearance in the house, Mary's reading habits are even troubled as she finds her master's books filled with Hyde's immoral scribbling.

> I wish I could say I did not know the meaning of what was written there. Certain they was such words as I have never spoke nor writ myself, though, growing up as I did, I was not spared the unpleasantness of hearing them often enough. It seemed very odd to read such filth as was there, especially written in so fine a hand (143).

Mary's furtive act of reading in the library, afraid the other servants would think she is getting above herself, becomes literally immoral when she gets to read Hyde's books filled with atrocious remarks and filthy words. As she also notices, however, Mary is familiar with such despicable language since, in her childhood,

she often found herself in close contact with this use of words. What she finds so terrifying in Hyde is that he inevitably reminds Mary of her origins, and ultimately, her own suppressed nature. Hyde clearly exerts an attracting and repulsive power over Mary to the extent she mentions, despite the revulsion she feels: "[…] there was something that seemed to hold me still and make me stare" (144). Hyde gets Mary back to her humble origins and clearly stands for her most ancestral fears. Mary often feels guilty for subverting her social position, as she is literate and able to comprehend her master. Through Hyde's endeavours and his immoral scribbling over Jekyll's volumes of metaphysics and science, Hyde echoes Mary's actions as she is imbruting and menacing to predate over the social establishment. In this respect, as Jekyll and Mary are ultimately bound together, due to Jekyll's wish to liberate his instincts and Mary's release of her emergent sexuality, Hyde also resembles Mary's darker side, as he reminds her of her inability to escape her fears and her past of abuse.

7. INSTINCT ROAMING FREE: MARY AND HYDE

If Jekyll's first approach to Mary in the library is subsequently reversed by Hyde's visit to her as she reads through his vicious scribbling on the margins of the page, Mary's confession about her father's abuse also finds it parallel with Hyde. Her intense fear of secluded places and rats, as a result of the ominous punishment Mary's father inflicted on her, is revived by means of Hyde's actions as he deliberately breaks a cup in her presence. Hyde's act of caressing Mary's face and mouth with his bleeding hands re-enacts her particular primal scene, the seminal source of all her fears.

> I stood quite still as he got up and took the few steps that stood between us. When he leaned over the table, bringing his bleeding hand to my face, I felt an aching in my chest and a sob broke out from my mouth, but still I did not pull away. I knew the tears overflowed but I could not raise my hand even to brush them away. I closed my eyes when his hand touched my face, just at the corner of my mouth, and I kept my eyes closed while he dragged his bleeding fingers slow, slow, across my mouth, pulling my lips apart (148).

If the tragic episode Mary experienced in her childhood led her to repress her past as a result of fear, Hyde awakens her subdued sexuality by enacting a parallel situation with a disparate result. Despite her intense fear and her phobia, Mary still feels attracted to Hyde as she inevitably identifies some familiar traces in him to the extent Hyde inquires "Don't you know who I am, Mary?" (148). Even if unaware, Mary perceives Jekyll's shadow behind Hyde's eyes, and yet Hyde's meaningful

question, as well as his actions, betray he knows Mary very well, so well as only a father would.

Hyde's presence also prompts Mary's transformation, which endows her with boldness and defiance to subvert socially established rules, encouraging her to indulge in daydreams and reveries about her master. Her initial subdued attraction is thus overcome when she approaches his bed in his absence.

> I felt so bold then that I went over to it and smoothed the coverlet, then rested my cheek against it. All my fear was vanished, and even it seemed most of my sense, for at the thought that Mr Poole might come in and see me in my shift, swooning over Master's bed, I had to hold down a laugh (92).

The image of Mary stifling a laugh in Martin's novel is remindful of Bertha Mason in Rochester's Thornfield, as Jane hears her laughing soon after her arrival at the house. Feminist critics like Gilbert and Gubar already pointed at Bertha as Jane's enraged double, hiding in the attic as a reflection of Jane's latent, but subdued, sexuality, thus contending "the madwoman in the attic emerges as a projection of her heroine's secret desires" (2000: 425). In this respect, Mary seems to fulfil that role with regard to Jekyll, as Mary's more masculine appearance contrasts with Jekyll's consequent physical decline after Hyde comes into being, as she herself notices.

> It shocked me to see too that he looks old, though the bones in his face are so sharp and elegant, age only makes him the more distinguished and respectable-looking. One lock of silver hair had strayed over his brow and it was all I could do to keep from pushing it back, wanting to arrange him, I thought, as if he was dead (100).

Clearly opposed to Jekyll's increasingly emaciated expression, Hyde, even if none of the servants agree on his actual appearance, is described as younger and more robust, with a more acute will to live, as can be inferred from Cook's depiction based on Mr Poole's examination:

> […] he says he is very young, that his voice is coarse though he speaks well enough and must have got some education somewhere, and that his clothes is well made, of good quality, even to his boots, which was made by Master's own bootmaker. He is small, and, as I said, has a deal of dark hair, dark eyes, and is clean-shaven (106).

Hyde's wicked endeavours at night also echo Mary's own conversion as her sexual awakening begins to take place. Every night, from her room, she attentively listens to Hyde's movements in Jekyll's library to the extent his dragging steps haunt Mary's nights as they stir latent memories of her father's abusing manners. Mary thus observes how her repressed past has come to haunt her back. In this respect, she mentions

> My hands was both of them numb when I woke so I could not move my fingers and the scars in my neck was throbbing so I thought they must be standing out, but when I looked in the hall mirror I saw I look as always (108).

Mary's protruding scars seem to evoke Mary's latent sexuality, which is about to emerge. Thus, while Jekyll explores the forbidden limits of science in his laboratory, Mary's subdued nature and basest instincts begin to emerge and assume more entity. It is at this stage Jekyll asks Mary whether she is ever afraid of herself, thus giving voice to his own personal fears as he perceives he is no longer able to control the frenzied outbursts of his evil side. Jekyll's intricate question reifies Mary's latest ponderings as regards the personal turmoil she is experiencing, which brings Mary to assert: "when I feel afraid it is what I imagine that frightens me most, which is, in a way, a fear of what is in my own head" (130). Jekyll and Mary are truly two separate selves in need of one another to feel self-fulfilled. Their social difference and upbringing forbids their mutual attraction, and yet, their magnetism prompts their need to release their instincts and thus reject any defying barrier. In Martin's novel, Hyde is ultimately the resulting figure emerging out of Jekyll's impossibility to fulfil his desire towards Mary. Likewise, Mary sets a parallelism between Hyde and her father, as prompters of sin and shame, thus perceiving her own feelings towards her master to be wicked and out of place. These evil projections are creations of their own, alternative beings that emerge as a result of a cathartic experience. Through the transformative process Mary undergoes, she confesses "I feel so confused by these last days and don't know where I stand, with Master or with my fellows" (137), thus proving her awareness of the change she is going through, and her midway between her will and her assigned place.

8. DOMESTIC DISCOURSE AND NEO-VICTORIAN ROMANCE

Even though Martin's novel revises Stevenson's novella from a female perspective, Mary's role in Victorian society is inevitably doubly invisible as she is not only a woman but also a servant. Thus, despite Martin's revisionist aim, any attempt at inscribing a feminist discourse may also be problematised as, drawing on Stevenson's novella, Martin's novel also underlines the perpetuation of a domestic discourse. If Jekyll's scientific background and status as a male endow him with the possibility of attempting to release his basest instincts, Mary may only experience a surrogate personal catharsis through Jekyll's transformation so as to gain insight into the possibility of defying socially established constraints and coming to terms with her awakening sexuality. Mary merely witnesses her master's own metamorphosis, instead of experiencing any real transformation of her own.

As was usually the case in Victorian times, women might only attain some power as a result of the influence they exerted on their male companions, and consequently, Mary may only aspire to some sort of empowerment through the love Jekyll starts professing as he chooses her to help in his experiments.

In this sense, Martin's novel transforms Stevenson's classic novella into a gothic romance whereby Mary ultimately arises as the most powerful reason why Jekyll feels the need to create his own Hyde. Likewise, Mary's gradual attraction to Jekyll transmutes into a love willing to risk anything, and yet it is precisely this which anticipates his ultimate destruction and her ultimate subservience. Mary is deeply committed to duty and service to her master, but in doing so, she goes beyond the limits of her position and her prospects, thus running the risk of stigmatisation as a woman and as a servant. Her devotion to her master betrays an ongoing dependence and submission which trespass the limits of a maid's duty. Mary's devoted submission is made clear by the editor of Mary's diaries as she admits that "it is interesting to note that she [Mary] always failed to capitalize the word 'i' and never failed to capitalize the word 'Master'" (243). Thus, her master, Jekyll, takes precedence over her own self. Likewise, Mary's increasing attraction to Hyde, as she is able to perceive some familiarity in him, underscores Mary's irrevocable attraction towards a reification of a savage and unfettered masculinity, rendering her literally in love with a monster.

In Jekyll's abode, Mary also triggers Jekyll's subdued sexuality as well as subverts the clearly-cut conventions of social classes. Mary destabilizes Victorian gender and class boundaries, but in doing so, she also becomes a source of disruption objectified in women belonging to the working classes. Thus, Mary is ultimately intimately implicated in Jekyll's downfall, despite the fact that, in Stevenson's novella, no direct connection is established between any woman and Jekyll's corruption, and consequently, no female is explicitly held responsible in Stevenson's Victorian text. Nonetheless, in Stephen Frears' cinematic adaptation of Martin's novel, some moments before his death, Hyde openly confesses to Mary that he always knew she would be the death of both, meaning Jekyll and himself, thus identifying her as the ultimate source of their destruction.

Consequently, Martin's novel is not only a Neo-Victorian recreation which subverts gender and social conventions, but it also illustrates Neo-Victorian fiction as far as it indulges in the traditionally well-known romantic plot of the governess as a protagonist, not far removed from Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, and especially, Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. Martin's novel is thus rooted in the classical concept of romance, which Light describes as "coercive and stereotyping narratives which invite the reader to identify with a passive

heroine who only finds true happiness in submitting to a masterful male" (1997: 222). After all, Mary's cathartical experience ultimately aids in reinforcing her socially and sexually subordinated place to the extent she acquires her gendered subjectivity while Jekyll is destroyed, as he gains insight into the impossibility of keeping public and private spheres separate. Nonetheless, even if Martin's novel may also be interpreted as a Neo-Victorian popular romance, romance fiction may also appear as less reactionary as it has lately been interpreted as a type of fiction indicative of women's victimisation in the capitalist market, as well as a sign of discontent and a technique for women's survival (Light 1997: 224). In this respect, according to Light, romance usually creates peace, security and ease in the end, precisely because the heroine undergoes dissension, insecurity and difficulty all the way through the narrative.

9. CORRECTING THE SELF

It is significant to notice that when her father's memories threaten to destabilise her life, Mary receives a letter reporting her mother's demise. Mary's father stands for repression and subjugation, for her permanent fears as well as her self-inflicting sense of punishment, should she step off the assigned boundaries society has set for her as a woman and a member of the working-class. Conversely, Mary's mother gave her the strength to release herself from her father's subjugating manners, and live a life of her own. In this respect, Mary has been battling against these contradictory forces all through her life, and her struggle is further enacted once again through the attraction-and-repulsion she feels towards both Jekyll-and-Hyde. Mary is thus truly Jekyll's double as she experiences the same kind of anxiety that troubles her master. Nonetheless, as a woman, she is unable to separate both selves of her being, as women were granted no place in the public sphere. Thus, Mary's inner battle is even more intimate than that of Jekyll as it involves her own sexuality, her own identity as a woman. The death of Mary's mother precisely takes place when Mary feels she can no longer trust her righteous principles, those she learnt through her mother's teaching. Deprived of her mother, when she attends to her burial's arrangements, she is informed an unknown man has contributed to pay off her debts. Mary immediately entertains the belief her father may still be alive. Her suspicions are finally confirmed by Mr Haffinger, the owner of the house where Mary's mother spent her last days. Her father's memories haunt her even more deeply on her return to Jekyll's house on learning he is still living. This pervasive presence echoes Hyde's more frequent visits in the house, as well as Mary's conviction of his criminal deeds. Mary's visit to Mrs Farraday's

brothel, as well as Sir Danvers Carew's violent death, confirm Hyde's murderous deeds as well as Jekyll's continuous struggle to defend his protégée. Hyde's increasing criminalisation goes hand in hand with Jekyll's more frequent meetings to engage in charitable initiatives, surely to appease his conscience. Nevertheless, Hyde gradually gains more strength as Jekyll is no longer able to control Hyde's enraged outbursts. Just like Mary feels both attracted and repelled by Hyde, Jekyll is horrified by his assistant's crimes and yet cannot help but admire his incessant eagerness for life.

Likewise, when Sir Danvers Carew's murder clearly incriminates Hyde, he disappears for a significant lapse of time so as to avoid prosecution. It is at this stage Jekyll, even if momentarily, goes back to his old righteous ways and meets with respectable members of society again. Similarly, aware of Hyde's disappearance, Mary feels safer and she regains some confidence by entertaining new thoughts about her father that underline his age and helplessness.

> Two times have I dreamed of my father and in both dreams he was not the cruel tyrant of my memory, but an old man, stopped and weak, a threat to no one, and in both he has tried to speak to me, but I have turned away. So I woke feeling a fine resolve, and I think perhaps right now he is dying somewhere, beaten and friendless, while I am safe in my bed (188).

And yet, Mary is well aware that Hyde's presence can still be perceived in the house as long as Jekyll is also there. Drawing on the perpetual reverberation of parallel episodes, Jekyll's approach to Mary, so as to caress the scars on her throat and ears, inevitably remind her of Hyde, and the way he pressed his bleeding fingers on her face after breaking the cup. Thus, Mary's fears are always latent as she suspects they are predictably bound to emerge again, and only remain momentarily subdued.

Mary's last encounter with Hyde takes place on the night of his last appearance, when Jekyll perpetrates committing suicide so as to get rid of his wicked half. As Otto Rank remarked, the figure of 'the double' is originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego, a denial of the power of death, and yet, when the narcissistic stage is surmounted, from having become an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny forerunner of death (1997: 166). Some instants before he dies, Hyde's disclosure of his true identity only confirms Mary's permanent suspicions, and yet helps her exorcise and expel her fears for good. As a corpse, Hyde's appearance is not entirely unlike the way Mary imagined her father to be in his last days. Nonetheless, Mary is also aware that behind Hyde's corpse also lies that of her master, thus gaining insight into the impossibilities of separating the

two sides of the same coin, kindness and wickedness, as one cannot exist without the other.

The attachment Mary feels towards both Jekyll-and-Hyde, now quite knowingly, is further confirmed in the closing scene of the novel whereby Mary lies down beside Hyde's corpse and mentions "I could hear my own heart in my ear and it seemed to be beating against his still one" (237). Holding on Hyde's corpse, she perceives her master's presence underneath, and yet it is Hyde whom she embraces as a last attempt to retain the embodiment of her desire. In Martin's novel, just like Mary leaves the memories of her father behind, as well as her fears, Jekyll manages to get rid of Hyde even if it is at his own expense. Similarly, through Hyde's demise, Mary gains insight into the still presence of her inner desire, and yet becomes aware of her inability to fulfil it as Hyde's death also inevitably entails that of Jekyll. And yet, despite Mary's need to go back to her old self, the meek Mary on whom she could only rely, her endeavours have clearly defied established beliefs with regard to women's sphere. In this respect, at the end of the novel, the editor of Mary's diaries is well aware of Mary's defiant behaviour all through her stay in Jekyll's house thus contending:

> Given the compromising situation in which she was discovered (even by contemporary standards, a domestic found late at night in her nightgown embracing her dead employer might expect repercussions), it seems probable that she did not leave Jekyll's house with that document most vital to the Victorian servant, that passport from hardship and squalor to the haven of domestic servitude: a good 'character' (243).

Mary has trespassed forbidden limits for a maid and a woman by writing down her master's as well as her own story in her diary. As the editor of her diaries mentions, the account of a housemaid unveiling her employer's endeavours should have created a scandal and a great deal of anxiety in any upper-class household. Mary discloses her dual aim at writing her diaries, stating she writes because it eases her to write what she cannot say, and because, what she writes now cannot be denied in the future. In this respect, she points at the cathartic experience of writing, secretly indulging in her sexuality through the creative process of fictionalisation.

To conclude, in Stevenson's novel, Jekyll attempts to surmount the Victorian policies of public and private spheres from a male perspective, while in Martin's recreation, Mary struggles to subdue her emergent sexuality while resorting to the namely Victorian cult of true womanhood, while Jekyll's struggle to both invigorate and supress his darker self problematises issues pertaining to traditional masculinity. In this respect, Mary's fictional testimony addresses "the self-conscious writing of

historical narratives to highlight the suppressed histories of gender and sexuality, race and empire, as well as challenges to the conventional understandings of the historical itself" (Kaplan 2007: 3). Drawing on Michie's words, for Victorians, "an imaginative and moral challenge was to get under the skin of the other, [while] for Victorianists [as well as for Neo-Victorian writers] the challenge is to come to terms with the otherness of the Victorian period" (2005: 423). In this respect, Martin's novel fulfils Llewellyn's main aims of Neo-Victorian fiction, namely, what he coined as *critical f(r)iction*, the blending of criticism and creativity, thus including the critical apparatus of gender subversion within a fictional text. Martin's novel thus fulfils the aim of Neo-Victorian fiction inasmuch as it revises a classic Victorian novel from a female perspective, as well as it transforms a Victorian gothic novella into a popular postmodern gothic romance. While questioning the established Victorian discourse of gender and social status as a revisionary text, it also reinforces a reactionary domestic discourse as Martin inscribes it within the genre of psychological romance.

REFERENCES

Bronte, C. 1996 (1847). *Jane Eyre*. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics.

Chase, K. and M. Levenson. 2005. "On the Parapets of Privacy". *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*. Ed. Herbert F. Tucker. Oxford: Blackwell. 425-437.

Gilbert, S. and S. Gubar. 2000 (1979). *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Joyce, S. 2002. "The Victorians in the Rearview Mirror". *Functions of Victorian Culture at the Present Time*. Ed. Christine L. Krueger. Ohio: Ohio University Press.

Kaplan, C. 2007. *Victoriana: Histories, Fiction, Criticism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Kucich, J. and D. F. Sadoff, eds. 2000. *Victorian Afterlives: Postmodern Culture Rewrites the Nineteenth-Century*. London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Lepine, A. 2009. "Hyde and Seek in an Age of Surveillance: Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and the BBC's *Jekyll*". *Neo-Victorian Studies* 1.2 (Winter): 78-102.

Light, A. 1997."'Returning to Manderley': Romance Fiction, Female Sexuality and Class". *Reading Popular Narrative: A Source Book*. Ed. B. Ashley. 222-226.

Llewellyn, M. 2008. "What is Neo-Victorian Studies?" *Neo-Victorian Studies* 1.1 (Autumn): 164-185.

Martin, V. 2003 (1990). *Mary Reilly*. London: Abacus.

Michie, H. 2005. "Under Victorian Skins: The Bodies Beneath". *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*. Ed. Herbert F. Tucker. Oxford: Blackwell. 407-424.

Rank, O. 1997. "The Double: A Psychoanalytical Study" (1914). *Reading Popular Narrative: A Source Book*. Ed. Bob Ashley. London and Washington: Leicester University Press. 164-166.

Showalter, E. 1986. "Towards a Feminist Poetics". *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*. Ed. Elaine Showalter. London: Virago. 125-143.

Stevenson, R. L. 1994 (1886). *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr.Hyde*. London: Penguin Popular Classics.

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES - VOLUME 8 (2010), 141-158

FALLEN WOMEN AND THE LONDON LOCK HOSPITAL LAWS AND BY-LAWS OF 1840 (REVISED 1848)

María Isabel Romero Ruiz*
University of Málaga

ABSTRACT. *The nineteenth century witnessed a huge increase in both private and public institutions to control and to contain two elements deemed to be the most dangerous in British society: the prostitute and the fallen woman. These individuals were considered deviant at a time when the middle-class exercised philanthropy supporting the double standard code of morality. Charity and state intervention were carried out by two kinds of institutions which were closely connected: lock hospitals and lock asylums. However, the role of lock hospitals was to cure venereal disease, whereas the role of the lock asylums was the reformation and instruction of these women. As a consequence, this paper seeks to examine the importance of the London Lock Hospital and Asylum Laws and By-laws of 1840, especially in relation to female patients and penitents, so as to ascertain the roles of these two institutions in the reproduction of the moral standards of the middle-class and of the religious discourse of the time. We shall see that these regulations reflect the ideas of industriousness, repentance and atonement for these women's past lives, emphasizing the differences between the sexes as far as sexual and moral behaviour were concerned.*

Keywords: fallen women, venereal disease, lock hospital, lock asylum, philanthropy, double-standard code of morality.

---

* Correspondence should be sent to: Dr. María Isabel Romero Ruiz. C/Pintor Francisco Boigas Aguilar, 10, 29016-Málaga. Spain. Email: mirr@uma.es

MARÍA ISABEL ROMERO RUIZ

MUJERES CAÍDAS Y LAS NORMAS DEL HOSPITAL DE ENFERMEDADES VENÉREAS Y DEL REFORMATORIO DE MUJERES DE LONDRES DE 1840 (REVISADAS 1848)

RESUMEN. *El siglo XIX fue testigo de de un enorme incremento en instituciones tanto públicas como privadas para controlar y contener dos de los elementos más peligrosos de la sociedad británica: la prostituta y la mujer caída. Estas mujeres eran consideradas desviadas en una época en que la clase media ejercía la filantropía siguiendo un doble código de moralidad. La caridad y la intervención estatal se llevaban a cabo por medio de dos instituciones que estaban íntimamente relacionadas: los hospitales de enfermedades venéreas y los reformatorios de mujeres. Sin embargo, el papel de estos hospitales era el de curar enfermedades venéreas, mientras que el de los reformatorios era la reforma e instrucción de estas mujeres. Como consecuencia, este artículo trata de examinar la importancia de las normas del Hospital de Enfermedades Venéreas y del Reformatorio de Mujeres de Londres de 1840, especialmente en relación a las pacientes femeninas y penitentes con objeto de establecer los roles de estas dos instituciones en la reproducción de los valores morales de la clase media y del discurso religioso de la época. Veremos cómo estas normas reflejan las ideas de diligencia, arrepentimiento y expiación por sus vidas pasadas, enfatizando las diferencias entre los sexos en lo que se refiere al comportamiento moral y sexual.*

Palabras clave: mujeres caídas, enfermedad venérea, hospital de enfermedades venéreas, reformatorio de mujeres con enfermedades venéreas, filantropía, doble código moral.

Received 1 May 2010
Revised version accepted 16 June 2010

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to analyse the role of the London Lock Hospital and the London Lock Asylum in their effort to contain and control two of the elements in Victorian society which were perceived as most dangerous: the prostitute and the fallen woman.[1] Both were considered deviant and these two charitable institutions tried to exercise an influence on these women's behaviour through a set of regulations known as the *Laws of the London Lock Hospital and Asylum*.

1. This article is based on a paper delivered at the Social History Society Conference held at the University of Warwick, 3-5 April 2009.

Like many other nineteenth-century institutions and organizations, the London Lock Hospital and Asylum reproduced a double-standard code of morality which established that there were separate spheres for men and women. Men belonged to the public sphere of business, politics and work, and women belonged to the private sphere of home and family. For this theory, the image of the asexual respectable woman was determining, and female pleasure was defined in relation to marriage and reproduction; the notion of purity was essential for the single-code of sexual morality, based on the model of female sexual restraint. Thanks to this ideology behind the sexual nature of women, they could be the guardians of the private sphere and the keepers of the domestic and social order. Respectability was also associated with certain modes of behaviour, language and appearance, and with traits like dependency, delicacy and frailty (Nead 1988: 19-29).

The role of the lock hospital was to cure venereal disease, and the role of asylums was to provide deviant women with a moral cure. Men and women underwent a treatment for venereal disease in the Lock Hospital, but only women received a moral cure in the Lock Asylum, as men had a natural sexual impulse which they could not control because it was innate in them, but women were held to be responsible for the purity of the nation, therefore they had to be chaste. The concept of chastity in women was based on two principles: woman's place and woman's special nature. Woman's place had to do with the preservation of the purity of the English breed "as the channel through which the property passed" (Mitchell 1981: xi). Woman's nature was connected with her moral superiority and her lack of sexual appetite. In lock asylums women were taught appropriate behaviour through religious instruction, and a decent working-class profession, so that a process of inclusion in respectable society would be fulfilled after a process of exclusion had taken place in an institution that was run according to middle-class values.

Although David Innes Williams in his 1995 book, *The London Lock: A Charitable Hospital, 1746-1952*, writes a careful history of the Hospital from its foundation in 1746 to its closure in 1952, analysing different periods in relation to aspects such as the treatment of venereal disease, medical theory and practice, the patients, the staff, the governors, finance, the Chapel and chaplains, the buildings and the situation of the Hospital and Asylum at the different stages of their existence, there are other aspects which need further consideration. Those aspects concerning the female patients and penitents and the social and moral implications of the treatment of Victorian prostitutes and fallen women were especially important. His work as well as mine is based on the archives of the London Lock Hospital and Asylum that have survived and are kept at the Royal College of Surgeons of England Library in London.

Other scholars have also focused their attention on different reform institutions and hospitals. One of them is Judith Walkowitz, who writes about the Royal Albert and the Royal Portsmouth, two hospitals which had lock wards for women in Southampton and Portsmouth respectively in her book *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State* (1980); also Frances Finnegan in her volume of 1979 entitled *Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York* talks about rescue and reform at the York Penitentiary. This Penitentiary had many similarities with the London Lock Asylum, regarding the running of the institution, its fund-raising propaganda and its aims in reforming and teaching prostitutes and fallen women; Linda Mahood in *The Magdalenes: Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century* (1990) deals with the Glasgow Lock Hospital and Asylum in several chapters as an example of a Scottish institution for the reform and cure of Victorian prostitutes. Finally, Frances Finnegan has published another book, *Do Penance or Perish: A Study of Mgadalen Asylums in Ireland* (2001) which deals with the history of Magdalen institutions in Ireland; she establishes a comparison between the English and the Irish systems, highlighting the importance of the Catholic element in the latter, which made rescue work of deviant women a completely different matter. However, I have chosen to focus this article on the London Lock because it was one of the first institutions of its kind in Britain and one of the most important, and has systematically been ignored in the scholarly work that has been done on institutions of this type in the last decades.

In this paper, I will closely examine the *Laws of the London Lock Hospital and Asylum* of 1840 and revised in 1848, and will analyse the way in which these norms reproduce the moral standards of the middle-class and of the religious discourse of the time. Also, evidence will be shown as to the existing differences concerning gender and class in the way these laws and by-laws were applied. As a consequence, women and not men were the objects of discrimination and reformation in lock asylums and penitentiaries, and of instruction in propriety and a decent working-class profession.

2. THE HISTORY OF THE LONDON LOCK IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Throughout the nineteenth century, several institutions ranging from penitentiaries and asylums to specialised homes were founded by middle-class philanthropists to rescue and reform prostitutes. Significantly, similar institutions were not created for men who had had recourse to prostitution as an escape for their perceived sexual needs. The prostitute was defined in Victorian discourses as a woman who had been seduced and abandoned, with no friends. She had to turn to prostitution to earn her living, thus entering a downward path which led to a ruined constitution and a premature death. She became an outcast and a social

victim, but at the same time she was represented as a figure of contagion and disease that had to be controlled and contained. There were no clear boundaries between prostitutes and *fallen women,* being these last two words a kind of euphemism for the first, although the concept of fallen women was usually associated with the middle-class. In Lynda Nead's words:

> The category of 'prostitute' was not fixed or internally coherent; it was accommodating and flexible and could define any woman who transgressed the bourgeois code of morality. The prostitute was understood in terms of her difference from the norm of respectable femininity: if the feminine ideal stood for normal, acceptable sexuality, then the prostitute represented deviant, dangerous and illicit sex. (1988: 94-95)

Nonetheless, the term used for working-class women who regularly gave sexual favours to clients in return for money was prostitute, and the *fallen woman* was usually a middle-class woman who had been seduced and abandoned, sometimes even with a child, who was stigmatized and had to work as a dressmaker or a governess—the typical middle-class women's professions—in order to survive.

Penitentiaries were the hallmark of both the Established Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church and were involved in the reform of prostitutes and fallen women using the penitential system of incarceration and punishment of inmates. In the middle of the century, the number of penitentiaries increased with the formation of the Church Penitentiary Association (CPA) inspired by the Oxford Movement. Due to an evangelical revival which advocated an alternative system of rescue work based on a family system instead of a penitential one, homes for fallen women began to flourish. (Bartley 2000: 25-26) Homes for fallen women were often called Magdalen Homes, following the Biblical reference to Mary Magdalen. Paula Bartley argues that the name *home* for these institutions had connotations of domesticity, being seen as woman's natural environment, but also of comfort and support, the number of inmates being considerably inferior in comparison with penitentiaries. (2000: 30) Power relations were still present as women were made dependent and submissive, and male and middle-class control was exercised over them. They were subject to a strict discipline and forced to behave as children who depended on their moral superiors. It was obviously the middle-class concept of home that was reproduced, and most of these girls came from disrupted families which had never constituted a proper home.

Not only homes and penitentiaries but also lock hospitals taught women submissiveness and patriarchal values, accepting the supervision of the medical officer and then the matron, who was set as an example of proper feminine behaviour. Differences of sex and class were reinforced in these hospitals. (Walkowitz 1991: 221) Again, women were taught middle-class social and moral

values, and were trained to return to the private sphere as domestic servants. However, many lock hospitals added an asylum to their installations for those women cured of venereal disease who wanted to devote two years of their lives to being morally reformed via a period of instruction which would turn them into decent working-class women. Asylums were very similar to homes in their organization and structure.

Those fallen women who were pregnant or diseased were not so lucky. They were not accepted in Lock Asylums or Magdalen Homes. Their only place to go, if they were destitute, was the workhouse. After the New Poor Law of 1834, workhouses were built throughout England to provide the poor with in-door relief. This law abolished out-relief to unsupported women, who were the second largest group in workhouses. Among them, abandoned women, domestic servants between jobs, widows and women of low character could be found. For groups ranging from young women who were pregnant or diseased to hardened prostitutes, workhouses were the only place to seek relief. (Longmate 2003: 156-193) Life was harsh inside the workhouse: inmates had to wear uniforms, they had to do tiring, monotonous jobs like picking oukum-- which consisted in untwisting and picking the yarn out of the old ropes--, bone-breaking or stone-breaking, and women and children in particular had to get involved in hard domestic chores. The diet was clearly insufficient and the food was uneatable. The discipline and system of punishment were almost unbearable. These places were most hated by the poor and they called them "the Bastilles".

With the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869, women venereally diseased were taken into lock wards or lock hospitals to be treated.[2] Some of these women when they were cured and some of the pregnant girls after having had their babies were accepted in lock asylums. For that, they needed to show that they had an inclination for reformation and a docile nature that would, the hope was, allow the Institution to indoctrinate them in such religious and moral values as prevailed in middle-class discourses.

The London Lock Hospital and the London Lock Asylum were merely two of the first charitable institutions founded to cure venereal disease and to rescue fallen women in the eighteenth century. The London Lock Hospital had been created by

2. The Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866, and 1869 allowed the police to detain any working-class woman suspected of being a prostitute. They were taken to a lock hospital or ward to undergo a medical inspection which reformers rightly denounced as *the rape of the speculum*. If they did not want to submit to the examination they could be sent to prison. After that, if they were found venereally diseased they were kept in hospital for a period of about two months. When they were cured they were released and given a certificate. These laws were a government measure to control the spread of venereal disease and promiscuity among the military population and the rest of society. They were suspended in 1883 and repealed in 1886. (Romero Ruiz 2008: 103-110)

William Bromfield to be the first of the many specialist hospitals in London.[3] The perception of the need to cure the undeserving sick who suffered from venereal disease and of the spread of an illness which was affecting various sectors in Victorian society was behind its erection, according to the opinion of the times. The word *lock* implied a social evil which respectable society perceived as a peril.[4] The Hospital was to be run by public subscription which entitled subscribers to control the management of the institution as Governors, but legacies and donations were also welcome. Governors had the prerogative to recommend patients for admission in the first stages of the Hospital, and the need for an institution of this sort was repetitively rehearsed in the pages of many Annual Reports and Accounts, as in those for 1837, where it is stated:

> The malady, to the cure of which the Lock Hospital is appropriated, peculiarly requires medical assistance; and if neglected, or, improperly treated, it must terminate fatally by the most dreadful progress of lingering sufferings…We may indeed consider the dire distemper itself, as a declaration how greatly and holy God abhors licentiousness; yet hath he mercifully provided medicines which seldom fail, when judiciously used, to eradicate it completely. (MS0022/3/8, RCSE Library)

Accounts of the Lock Hospital and Asylum and Annual Reports were published every year to make it known to the general public how these institutions produced results in the cure of these maladies and in the reform of fallen women. They functioned as propaganda making an appeal to middle-class philanthropists to make a contribution to the running of the Hospital and Asylum. Arguments, from God's abhorrence of the existence of venereal disease and promiscuity to God's compassion for these sinners were used to justify their existence. Also, the idea that many respectable married women and innocent children were infected by dissolute husbands was put forward to appeal to the contributor's compassion. Meetings were also held to obtain extra funds in times of special need (like the construction of new buildings) as well as dinners; similarly, advertisements appeared in the newspapers of the day to appeal for funding.

3. William Bromfield was one of a small group of men, the Surgeons to the Great Hospitals of London, who in the eighteenth century established a tradition of general surgery which was to dominate British surgical practice until well into the twentieth. Surgeon to HRH the Prince of Wales and to St. George's Hospital, he saw the need of a hospital for people with venereal disease, who could not be treated at general hospitals. (Innes Williams 1995: 11-17)

4. The word *lock* had been used in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to refer to hospitals where lepers were kept. Leprosy had then been considered a very dangerous malady that had to be contained, and lepers were segregated from the rest of society to avoid the spread of this disease which provoked social panic.

The Lock Chapel, which had outstanding figures amongst its chaplains and became very popular amongst the middle-class, also made a very important contribution to the running of the Hospital and Asylum. The Chapel was founded by Martin Madan and was completed in 1762.[5] The evangelical revival became crucial in the success of the Lock Chapel and its role in the salvation of prostitutes and fallen women. With it, moral values were brought to the aristocracy, and the middle-classes which emerged after the process of the Industrial Revolution became very much involved in church-going and philanthropy. Religious services and sermons became an important element in middle-class social and religious life. (Innes Williams 1995: 49)

The London Lock Asylum for the Reception of Penitent Female Patients was established in 1792, and the Chaplain Thomas Scott was the spirit behind this charitable project.[6] It was funded by a different appeal and list of subscribers, and became a key element in the history of the London Lock till its disappearance in the twentieth century. (Innes Williams 1995: 57) The Lock Asylum became very popular, but its degree of success in reforming deviant women was not as impressive as was expected. Only young women who were not hardened prostitutes were admitted, and the theory of the double standard, which became so powerful in the nineteenth century, was clearly behind the aims of this asylum which tried to reproduce the structure of a middle-class home. Hence, a statement like this is made in the *Account for the Lock Asylum* of 1841:

> But while the male patients when cured, return to their former occupations, without any peculiar obstacle to their reformation, most of the women are of that class whose misery and baneful influence have been noticed; many of them have no method of subsistence but by prostitution, and can procure no lodging but in a house of infamy. These have scarcely no alternative, but of starving on the one hand, or returning to their former practices on the other. (MS0022/3/8, RCSE Library)

As a consequence, it was women who had to be the objects of reform and religious indoctrination and of instruction for a decent working-class job. They were the ones responsible for the spread of illness and sexual promiscuity and the ones who had to be secluded. This idea was behind the medical discourse of

5. Martin Madan was appointed Chaplain to the London Lock Hospital in 1758, and one year later he obtained permission from the Board to transform the men's ward into a Chapel. Through it, he gave the London Lock a source of income and introduced the evangelical element. He resigned in 1776. (Innes Williams 1995: 35)

6. When Rev. Thomas Scott became Chaplain, he realized that it was difficult for girls leaving the Hospital to avoid former friends, and that an Asylum should be created. The decision to found the Asylum was made at a meeting on 18 April 1789.

the time: doctors like William Acton[7] and others believed that it was women and not men that were the source of contagion for venereal disease, and prostitutes were defined as *The Great Social Evil* and as women who had a sexual impulse like men. This notion was also behind the spirit of the Contagious Diseases Acts above mentioned, as it was women who had to submit to medical examination and control to avoid the sexual and moral contamination of the rest of society, whereas men were not subjected to this process of degradation and incarceration. According to many women reformers and feminists of the time, like Josephine Butler and Florence Nightingale[8], this practice was unfair since the blame was put on one half of the human race, while ignoring and in effect sanctioning the responsibility of the other.

3. THE LAWS OF THE LONDON LOCK HOSPITAL AND ASYLUM OF 1840, REVISED 1848

The *Laws of the London Lock Hospital and Asylum* of 1840 and revised in 1848 are part of a manuscript kept in the Hunterian Library at the Royal College of Surgeons of England. They were published in a little book with blue covers by Chapman Printer, Star Street, Paddington. The Institution was under the patronage of HRH the Duke of Cambridge, with the Duke of Sutherland as its President.[9] The version that this manuscript contains is that of June 1848, with the Asylum Regulations at the end. (MS0022/5/2, RCSE Library) The book contains notes on the margins written in the 1860's with corrections, suppressions and additions to these rules, and two other books of rules -- for 1814 and 1890 -- have survived.

The first section of the *Laws* is devoted to the Governing Body, which consists of a Patron, a President, twelve Vice-Presidents, two Treasurers and a number of Governors. Governors had to contribute yearly with a minimum of five guineas,

7. William Acton was a very well-known doctor and an advocate of the Contagious Diseases Acts. He supported the theory of the double-standard and the single-code of sexual morality. He published a book entitled *Prostitution Considered in its Moral, Social and Sanitary Aspects* in 1857, which became very popular.

8. Josephine Butler was a middle-class reformer and feminist who spent her years after the death of her only daughter on the rescue of prostitutes and fallen women; she became the leader of the Repeal Campaign against the application of the Contagious Diseases Acts. When these Acts were finally abolished she devoted her last years to the campaign for legal reform to put an end to child prostitution and sexual abuse which culminated in the passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885. Florence Nightingale, known as "The Lady with the Lamp", was a feminist and the founder of the nursing profession, and a supporter of the Repeal Campaign and women's rights.

9. Members of the Royal Family and the aristocracy were patrons and presidents of the Institution – as they were, of course, of a wide range of hospitals and other charitable institutions.

becoming Subscribers, or to give a donation of 50 pounds or more, becoming Benefactors. They had the right to attend at all Weekly, Quarterly and Special Boards and to speak and vote on all questions. They could recommend a number of in-patients and out-patients.

This was especially significant as a meeting of the Weekly Board was held every Thursday, where patients were admitted following the recommendation of letters brought by Governors, although urgent cases without letters could be admitted by the Surgeon. Also patients were discharged according to the reports of the physicians and surgeons. Every month a deputation was appointed "to inspect the wards and receive any complaints from the patients". (MS0022/5/2, RCSE Library) This was one of the very few ways in which the patients' voices could be heard. The Weekly Board had also to examine and order the payment of all the bills, and to purchase the things the Hospital needed, ordering repairs and alterations when they were deemed necessary. However, financial matters were in the hands of the Treasurers, the Trustees and the Collector. Important posts were those of the Chaplain and Secretary.

The Chaplain was a crucial figure at the London Lock. Rev. James Gibson and Rev. Thomas Garnier were chaplains at the time these rules were approved and then revised.[10] Chaplains started all meetings with prayers and had to be in full orders in the Church of England. They were appointed by the Trustees of the Lock Chapel and were very influential figures. From the pulpit and with their sermons they contributed to the financial support of the Institution. However, their most important role was the salvation of sinners. Although forgiveness was emphasized, punishment remained essential in asylums for fallen women and prostitutes who should repent their past life and ask forgiveness for their sins. The focus of rescue work became redemption and to reclaim the sinner's soul, and this idea would promote the concept of the prostitute as a victim of social injustice and "the parable of the lost sheep was used constantly as a comparison between rescue work, prostitution and religion". (Bartley 2000: 31-33) At the London Lock Hospital, the Chaplain had to provide the patients with religious services and instruction. He had to visit the wards once a week "in order to perform all such religious offices, either by consolation or exhortation, or administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper". (MS0022/5/2, RCSE Library) Among his functions was to recommend religious books to patients, so that these sinners could be rescued and saved, and

10. Rev. James Gibson was appointed Chaplain in 1811 and resigned in 1818; he was appointed Chaplain again in 1832 till 1847 when Rev. Thomas Garnier succeeded him. (MS0022/6/3, RCSE Library)

to inform the Weekly Board of "all abuses and irregularities" that he witnessed. (MS0022/5/2, RCSE Library)

The Secretary was another crucial figure in the London Lock Hospital: his functions were closely connected with those of the Matron. Apart from being the Secretary at all meetings of the different Boards and Committees, he was responsible for all the official documents of the Institution such as letters, accounts, books and deeds. He also had to keep a list of all the Governors, Subscribers and Benefactors, and to enter new or amended rules in the book for the *Laws of the London Lock Hospital and Asylum*. The rules, therefore, were a dynamic set of regulations that could be changed, and additions and suppressions could also be made to them.

The Secretary had a salary and lived in the premises. He was in charge of all the businesses related to the male patients and the male servants and nurses in the male wards in the hospital. This meant that he had to inspect and visit these wards at least once a day, and he had to attend the Chapel of the Hospital every Sunday, together with the patients, nurses and servants in the male wards. According to these *Laws*, "He shall be master of the household, and as such, shall, in conjunction with the matron, be responsible to the Weekly Board for the order and good government of the household in every respect". (MS0022/5/2, RCSE Library) That is, he was like a kind of *paterfamilias*, representing masculine power according to the principles of 19th century England. From these rules concerning the Secretary who was in charge of the male wards, and from those concerning the Matron who was in charge of the female, we can observe that the principle of segregation was kept at the London Lock Hospital, which was the common practice in those days, keeping male and female patients apart, and at the same time the religious principles of the Church of England governed the rules and routines of this Institution.

The Matron was another outstanding figure in the London Lock. Together with the Secretary, she had to reside in the House, and she was paid a salary. She had to fulfil a series of requisites: she had to be single and without family, to be between thirty and forty-five at the time of her election and would cease to be matron at the age of sixty-five. She had to be a decent woman of good reputation and a member of the Church of England, reproducing then the middle-class moral standards. Like the Secretary, she had to visit the female wards once a day and read aloud the rules to nurses and patients at least once a week; all the nurses and female servants were under her supervision, and she was also in charge of the Asylum inmates. She represented the female authority that was sanctioned in all Victorian discourses, limiting her functions to the private sphere and keeping her

appropriate gender roles. She had to have an irreproachable behaviour and be an example for the female inmates.

The Matron was a very important and very influential figure for female patients and inmates. In many of the *Annual Reports* and *Accounts* we can read letters of mistresses to the Matron giving a progress-report on an ex-inmate who was working as a servant in her household, and letters from the girls to the Matron telling her how well they were doing after they had left the Home, which obviously had a propagandistic intention. Thus, in the *Account of the Lock Hospital and the Lock Asylum* of 1837, we can find a letter from a mistress to the Matron that reads as follows:

> My dear Madam,
>
> > I have much satisfaction in informing you, the conduct of M.A.W. during her residence with me has been most exemplary; she is an amiable and trustworthy young woman, and it will give me great pleasure to see her good conduct rewarded by the members of your benevolent institution. (MS0022/3/8, RCSE Library)

Girls were given a pecuniary reward after remaining for a time in service and for their good behaviour. We must bear in mind that one of the roles of the Asylum was to follow its former inmates' careers and to care for their welfare. Also, matrons were quite often regarded as mothers by some former inmates, as there were many of them who were orphans or came from broken families. So it is not surprising that it was really difficult to find a suitable person for the post, and the poor salary in most cases made things worse. The Matron had to be understanding but firm at the same time, in order to teach girls religious values of submission and fear of God, and a decent working-class profession. (Finnegan 1979: 182)

In the London Lock Asylum, inmates were taught laundry-work which paid in part for their maintenance and later on sewing and embroidery were added. The Matron had to supervise this work and to keep an inventory of all furniture, wares, bedding, linen, etc., and was responsible for the cleanliness of the Hospital. The Matron had also the obligation to go to the Chapel every Sunday together with the nurses and patients in the female wards and the female servants.

The medical officers at the London Lock Hospital, like the Consulting Physician and Physician, the Surgeons and Assistant Surgeon, the Visiting Apothecaries and the Apothecary, the House Surgeon, the Pupils and the Nurses, had to follow their own rules too.[11] All patients had to be seen by a Surgeon or Assistant Surgeon

11. Pupils were medical students in the nineteenth century who paid a sum of money to established surgeons or physicians to be instructed at various London hospitals so that they could start a practice of their own.

twice a week, or even oftener in more urgent or serious cases, except out-patients who were attended less frequently. One of the Surgeons would examine all the people applying to be admitted into the Hospital every Thursday and would give a report to the Weekly Board of those who should be accepted as patients. Surgeons had the power to order admission of urgent cases that then had to be sanctioned by the same Weekly Board. Also, the House Surgeon had to report to the Board the number of vacant beds, of patients admitted during the week and of those about to be discharged in that period.

Nurses were difficult to recruit and their behaviour had to be carefully checked as most of them came from the working-classes and were not trained in most cases. The nursing profession was not consolidated till the last decades of the nineteenth century. In the London Lock Hospital, nurses were appointed by the Matron, and there were also Head Nurses and Night Nurses. They had to be between thirty and forty-five at the time of their appointment, and had to be literate. The nurses had to obey the orders of the Matron and Secretary, and the fact that the words "Any nurse receiving any sum of money, treat, present or gratuity, from any patient, in respect of the services of such a Nurse in the Hospital, shall be dismissed, and shall be incapable of re-appointment" (MS0022/5/2, RCSE Library) are included in the regulations show that either there must have been problems with the nurses' behaviour or that middle-class prejudices against the working-classes are deeply embedded in these norms.

These regulations also reproduced the gender division that was found in Victorian times for the world of work. In the London Lock Hospital and Asylum, women fulfilled jobs connected with their sphere and their caring, tendering nature, that is, they were matrons, servants or nurses; men held posts associated with the secretarial, managerial or medical professions, following the long-established patriarchal division of gender roles that were reproduced in the middle-class family and in society in general.

As far as patients were concerned, they were in the Hospital between six and eight weeks. The same as in earlier times, most cases were suffering from secondary or tertiary syphilis, chancroid, complicated gonorrhoea or venereal warts[12], according to Innes Williams. (1995: 67-68) Most female patients came from various parishes in London and the provinces. They were in their late teens and early twenties and had been in domestic service before moving into prostitution. They got infected

12. There is a first stage in syphilis known as "primary", but at this stage patients did not go to the Lock Hospital.

after roughly two years in the trade and many of them claimed to be orphans. A minority were married women infected by their promiscuous husbands; only a few were widows or under the age of sixteen. There were occasional miscarriages in the wards, but pregnant women were not usually accepted and children are hardly mentioned.[13] Such mothers, as has been mentioned, were sent to the workhouse. Male patients in the London Lock were usually older than girls, their age usually ranging from eighteen to their thirties. Most came from outside London, were single and working-class. (Innes Williams 1995: 68-69) Most patients in the London Lock Hospital were therefore working-class, and men and women from the superior classes who suffered form venereal disease went to private doctors to obtain treatment. The women patients were considered deviant, promiscuous and riotous and the perception of their lives of sin was biased by middle-class standards; only some married women and mothers were regarded as decent by the authorities running the Institution. In the regulations for 1814, activities usually associated with the working-classes like gambling, drinking, swearing or rioting were forbidden for the patients, being an example of the prejudices that the bourgeoisie had against the lower orders and which frequently categorised them as *the undeserving poor*. (MS0022/5/3, RCSE Library)

The last group of people under these regulations were the Porter and other Servants, who were all working-class and were at the bottom of the job hierarchy that existed in the London Lock Hospital and Asylum.

The Asylum Regulations came at the end of the *Laws* and were thirteen in number. About one quarter of the girls released from the London Lock Hospital entered the Lock Asylum. The first of the Asylum regulations said that "the object of the Institution is to afford a refuge to such of the female Patients of the Lock Hospital, as appear sincerely desirous of quitting their evil courses". (MS0022/5/2, RCSE Library) From this statement we can deduce that only female patients from the Hospital were admitted, and the selection criteria was that they had to show a deep feeling of repentance and a serious desire of being reformed. It was the Chaplain who decided "after careful examination" which girls deserved the chance to be religiously instructed and to be taught a decent occupation before being sent out to service or restored to family or friends. The task of the London Lock Asylum

13. Nonetheless, among the manuscripts of the Lock Hospital there are some drawings of patients painted by J. Holt in the middle of the nineteenth century, MS0022/6/3, where some children with venereal disease can be found, like the child of Mary Ann Angus (22 May 1850) and the child of Eliza Morris (20 April 1850).

did not finish with the girls being found a respectable situation, but their careers and future lives were closely followed after they left the Institution. This task was done by the Matron and the Ladies' Committee, who were responsible for the welfare of ex-mates.

The girls admitted had to go through a probation period that lasted two months, and after that they stayed in the Asylum for about two years, but some of them left after only a few weeks; it seems that some of them could not stand the strict discipline, the hard work and the sense of feeling sinful and unclean that was supposed to be instilled into them, however, their moral values and their views on sex were different from those of their middle-class reformers. (Innes Williams 1995: 70-71) They had to do laundry work, which has been interpreted as a kind of process of cleansing of their moral sins and a way of redemption from their pasts. The aim was also that they could contribute to the maintenance of the institution. They were therefore detained inside the Asylum and they lost any contact with their families or friends who could only visit them under the approval and the supervision of the Matron. Every contact with the world outside was cut and it was almost impossible to leave these places during the probation period and the two-year period of confinement; punishment and expulsion were the usual measures taken to subjugate them. The education and training they received was oriented to the re-inclusion of these young women again in Victorian society, following the patterns of jobs that were seen as appropriate for working-class women. They were not taught literacy and numeracy, which would have enabled them to have better future prospects and a better education. Nothing is mentioned about inmates wearing uniforms, although it was compulsory in many reform institutions and in workhouses.

The management of this Institution was then, according to these regulations, in the hands of the Chaplain and a Committee of Ladies who would supervise everything and meet once a month to make arrangements and take decisions concerning the inmates significantly called *Penitents*. Some of them would visit the Asylum every week, and their control over the girls went to the extent that they granted them rewards for good behaviour after they left. Homes and asylums for girls under sixteen were established after the 1830's, following the Victorian trend of segregation and classification. (Jackson 2000: 132-137) As the century progressed, these institutions became more specialized and divisions of inmates according to age, class or health were undertaken in bigger premises. All of them were subject to a process of seclusion and of transformation of their identities to become restored to society, following middle-class standards. Aspects such as

incarceration, disruption of families, indoctrination, education and training were key elements in the process of re-inclusion of these deviant women in Victorian society, as we have seen. (Mahood 1990: 81-83)

4. CONCLUSION

This paper has examined *The Laws of the London Lock Hospital and Asylum* of 1840 and revised in 1848 against the background of the long-term histories of this and similar institutions. Both male and female patients were kept in lock hospitals to be cured from venereal disease; men and women were treated in different wards so that they had no contact and the spread of promiscuity was avoided, although this measure was not invariably successful. Nonetheless, sexual discrimination was even more evident when it came to moral reformation; men were released when healed and allowed to return to their former jobs and relatives, but women did not have anywhere to go to recover a decent life. They did not have decent working-class jobs --they were ex-prostitutes-- family or appropriate friends, not even a place where to dwell.

Through the Hospital and Asylum regulations, it can be seen that women were moulded according to middle-class assumptions of respectability and to religious values which put the emphasis on a life of exclusion and atonement for these fallen women. The aim was to indoctrinate these women and prepare them for a decent job to be included again in society. As a consequence, only when an inmate had changed completely according to middle-class standards of feminine propriety, could she be released, and the estimated length of time for seclusion was two years to achieve the expected results. The home reproduced the paternalistic structure of bourgeois society, the Chaplain and other male authorities playing the role of the father and the Matron and other female staff representing the mother-figure and setting an example of appropriate behaviour.

The intention behind the control and discipline exercised on these women on the part of the middle-class reformers and philanthropists and the Church was probably good, but the failure of these institutions was attributable to the fact that many of these women did not perceive themselves as sinful and had different habits and beliefs regarding sex and premarital relations. Purity and chastity were middle-class conceptions that did not have the same connotations for women of the labouring classes; it was really hard for these women to return to a life of hardness and misery becoming servants in middle-class households, a life even harder than prostitution.

In the case of the London Lock Hospital and Asylum, the regulations reflect all these ideas. Men and women were treated differently and were kept apart, the

religious element was present in all the activities of the Institution, a paternalistic structure could be observed, a stern control was kept over the inmates, especially over women, and middle-class and religious values were present in all the efforts of reform of fallen women made at the Lock Asylum. The aim was to return decent and healthy working-class individuals to society. The important decisions were taken by male authorities, except for the Matron and the Ladies' Committee for the Asylum, and always reproducing the gender roles sanctioned by these middle-class reformers. These philanthropists devoted an important part of their time and efforts to improve and restore deviant elements but without detaching themselves from the social and moral bias in which they were immersed, which was in fact what could be expected of them.

REFERENCES

An Abstract of the Rules and Orders for the Government of the Lock Hospital, near Hyde Park Corner, Instituted July 4, 1746, for the Relief of Venereal Patients Only, By Order of the Annual General Court held April 21, 1814, N. Meredith, Secretary, Printed by Meredith and Son, Mount-Street, Lambeth, The Hunterian Library, Royal College of Surgeons of England, London, MS0022/5/3.

An Account of the Nature and Intention of the Lock Asylum, for the Reception of Penitent Female Patients when Discharged from the Lock Hospital: with an Abstract of the Accounts from the First Institution, to LADY-DAY, 1837. Also the Code of Regulations, with a List of Benefactors and Subscribers, 1837, The Hunterian Library, Royal College of Surgeons of England, London, MS0022/3/8.

An Account of the Lock Hospital; to Which is Added an Account of the Lock Asylum, 1837, The Hunterian Library, Royal College of Surgeons of England, London, MS0022/3/8.

Account for the Lock Hospital and Asylum of 1841, The Hunterian Library, Royal College of Surgeons of England, London, MS0022/3/8.

Bartley, P. 2000. *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914*. London and New York: Routledge.

Finnegan, F. 1979. *Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Innes Williams, D. 1995. *The London Lock: A Charitable Hospital, 1746-1952*. London and New York: Royal Society of Medicine Press Ltd.

Jackson, L. 2000. *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*. Routledge: London and New York.

Laws of the London Lock Hospital and Asylum, Revised (1840), 1848, The Hunterian Library, Royal College of Surgeons of England, London, MS0022/5/2.

Longmate, N. 2003. *The Workhouse: A Social History*. London: Pimlico.

Mahood, L. 1990. *The Magdalenes: Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century*. London and New York: Routledge.

Mitchell, S. 1981. *The Fallen Angel: Chastity, Class and Women's Reading 1835-1880*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press.

Nead, L. 1988. *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain*. London: Blackwell.

Romero Ruiz, M.I. 2008. "The Plots of History and the Rape of the Speculum: The Contagious Diseases Acts and the Violation of Women's Rights". *Historia y representación en la cultura global*. Eds. C. Rodríguez González and R. Valdés Mirayes. Oviedo: KRK Ediciones, 103-110.

Walkowitz, J.R. 1991 (1980). *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES - VOLUME 8 (2010), 159-173

PEEKING BEHIND THE VEIL: MIGRATORY WOMEN IN AFRICA IN NURUDDIN FARAH'S *FROM A CROOKED RIB* (1970), *A NAKED NEEDLE* (1976) AND *KNOTS* (2007), AND NADINE GORDIMER'S *THE PICKUP* (2001)

BRIAN WORSFOLD*
University of Lleida

ABSTRACT. *The experience of women moving across national frontiers and cultural, ethnic and religious divides in Africa is a major topic in Nuruddin Farah's* From a Crooked Rib *(1970),* A Naked Needle *(1976) and* Knots *(2007), and Nadine Gordimer's* The Pickup *(2001). In* From a Crooked Rib *and* Knots*, Nuruddin Farah presents the dilemmas faced by the protagonists – Ebla in* From a Crooked Rib *and Cambara in* Knots *(2007) – as they attempt to move back into Somalia in an effort to integrate into a society that is fractured by clan warfare, gender discrimination, religious fundamentalism and ethnic hatred. These characterisations are thrown into sharp relief by those of Nancy in Nuruddin Farah's* A Naked Needle, *and of Julie Summers in Nadine Gordimer's* The Pickup *who, departing from England and South Africa respectively, achieve controversially mixed success at crossing the cultural and religious divides. This study sets out to identify the factors that impede the integration of women migrants in Africa as depicted in the novels of these two African writers, and to demonstrate how these issues are treated aesthetically in the fictionalisations.*

Keywords: Africa, literature, English, migration, women, Muslim.

---

* Correspondence should be sent to: Dr. Brian Worsfold. Plaça de Víctor Siurana, 1/E-25003. Lleida. Catalunya, Spain. Email: bworsfold@dal.udl.cat

DESVELANDO EL ROSTRO: LAS MUJERES MIGRATORIAS EN ÁFRICA EN *FROM A CROOKED RIB* (1970), *A NAKED NEEDLE* (1976) Y *KNOTS* (2007) DE NURUDDIN FARAH, Y EN *THE PICKUP* (2001) DE NADINE GORDIMER

RESUMEN. *La experiencia de las mujeres que cruzan fronteras nacionales y barreras religiosas en África es un tema de gran importancia en* From a Crooked Rib*,* A Naked Needle *y* Knots *de Nuruddin Farah, y* The Pickup *de Nadine Gordimer. En* From a Crooked Rib *y* Knots*, Nuruddin Farah presenta los dilemas con los que se enfrentan las protagonistas – Ebla en* From a Crooked Rib *y Cambara en* Knots *– al intentar regresar a Somalia con la voluntad de integrarse en una sociedad quebrantada por las guerras de clanes, la discriminación de género, el fundamentalismo religioso y el odio entre etnias. Estas caracterizaciones se realzan de manera clara con los personajes de Nancy en* A Naked Needle *de Nuruddin Farah y de Julie Summers en* The Pickup *de Nadine Gordimer que se desplazan desde Inglaterra y África del Sur respectivamente, y alcanzan un cierto éxito rodeado de controversia al franquear las divisiones culturales y religiosas. El objetivo de este estudio es identificar los factores que impiden la integración de las mujeres migrantes en África tal como se representa en las novelas de este escritor y esta escritora africanos y demostrar de qué forma tratan estéticamente estas cuestiones en la ficción.*

Palabras clave: África, literatura, inglés, migración, mujeres, musulmán.

Received 28 February 2010
Revised version accepted 19 May 2010

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1997, in "The World and the Home," Homi Bhabha perceptively observed that, in the postcolonial era, migration and the stories of migrants, accounts of what he termed those "freak displacements," would come to be a major discourse topic in world literature. He wrote,

> Where the transmission of "national" traditions was once the major theme of a world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that trans-national histories of migrants, the colonized or political refugees – these border and frontier conditions – may be the terrains of world literature. The center of such a study would neither be the "sovereignty" of national cultures nor the "universalism" of human culture but a focus on those "freak displacements" … that have been caused within cultural lives of postcolonial societies. (McClintock, Mufti, and Shohat, eds. 1997: 449)

In respect of world literature, Bhabha's prediction has been validated. Today, emigration and immigration are not only high-profile issues in the political agendas of politicians and administrators across the world but, as Bhabha foresaw, the fictionalisation of migratory experience constitutes the core of a great number of contemporary works of literature. Among these works are two of Nuruddin Farah's latest novels, *Links* (2005)[1] and *Knots* (2007), and Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* (2001). Yet Nuruddin Farah had already written on the topic of human migration in Somalia some thirty years before Homi Bhabha's premonition was published. His first novel *From a Crooked Rib* was published in 1970 and his second novel, *A Naked Needle*, in 1976, in Heinemann's African Writers Series.[2] The reason for this is rooted undoubtedly in the writer's personal experience.

2. *FROM A CROOKED RIB* (1970)

Born in Baidoa, in Italian Somaliland, in 1945, Nuruddin Farah already had personal experience of migration when he came to write *From a Crooked Rib* (1970). He began his education in the Ogaden region, went on to the Institutio Magistrate in Mogadiscio, capital of the Somali Republic to complete his secondary education, studying in both English and Italian and, after leaving school and working at the Ministry of Education for a few years, he left Somalia to go and study in India. In 1966 he began reading for a degree in literature and philosophy at the Punjab University of Chandigarh, obtaining his BA degree in 1970. It was when he was at university in India, in just four weeks, between the 19th March and the 15th April 1968, [3] that he wrote his first novel *From a Crooked Rib*. Following his marriage to an Indian woman, Nuruddin Farah returned with his wife to Somalia and, from 1970 until 1974, taught at a secondary school in Mogadiscio.

It is not surprising, therefore, that migration, and specifically the internal migration of a Somali woman in search of her emancipation, is the theme of Nuruddin Farah's first novel *From a Crooked Rib*. The novel tells the story of Ebla, a young Somali woman who defies tradition and seeks emancipation as she migrates

1. Nuruddin Farah's *Links* (2005) narrates the experiences of a Somali *man* who returns to Mogadiscio after living for twenty years in Canada.

2. *From a Crooked Rib* was published in 1970 as number 80 and *A Naked Needle* in 1976 as number 184 in Heinemann's African Writers Series.

3. In this respect, a work of great intensity and conciseness, Nuruddin Farah's writing of F*rom a Crooked Rib* can be compared with the achievement of Yoruba writer Amos Tutuola, who took only a few days to write his famous work, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952).

from the patriarchal tyranny of her extended family in the Ogaden desert, first to her cousin Gheddi's house in Belet Wene and then, as a newly-wed, with her husband Awill, to the relative modernity of the capital Mogadiscio.

Ebla achieves her freedom gradually during the process of her migration thanks to the assistance and advice of her female friends and acquaintances who help her to realise how to manage her life the way she wants to live it. Applying Herbert Blumer's concept of symbolic interactionism to the plot of *From a Crooked Rib*, we can see that Ebla's journey towards emancipation is a series of interactions with different people in different settings.[4] Each person Ebla interacts with symbolises a social category, and the women she associates with especially reveal to her a way forward and an alternative to the patriarchal oppression of the Somali hinterland. In Gheddi's house, she experiences at first hand the birth of Gheddi's wife Aowralla's first child. Subsequently, Gheddi's neighbour, a middle-aged widow, introduces Ebla to the world of women married to Muslim, Arab men. Later, in Mogadiscio, Awill and Ebla's landlady Asha, an urban, cosmopolitan woman, advises Ebla on how to manage Awill's absence from her;[5] how to cope with her marriage to a second husband, the middle-aged Tiffo; and how, as a woman who has been infibulated at a young age, she can decide on matters concerning her sexuality and the issue of her re-infibulation. Each interaction in each of the respective settings – the Ogaden desert, Belet Wene and Mogadiscio – is symbolic and, therefore, meaningful in terms of Ebla's quest for her emancipation. Each woman that Ebla interacts with represents a social type, and each individual provides interactional feedback that enables Ebla to make decisions about herself and about the world around her, so that she can take those decisions that lead her to greater emancipation.

4. The basic premise of Symbolic Interactionism is that all acts of communication are symbolic; therefore, all interactions are meaningful. In *Symbolic Interactionism Perspective and Method*, Herbert Blumer writes:

> 'Symbolic interactionism [. . .] sees meaning as arising in the process of interaction between people. The meaning of a thing for a person grows out of the ways in which other persons act towards the person with regard to the thing. Their actions operate to define the thing for the person. Thus, symbolic interactionism sees meanings as social products, as creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact. (Blumer, H. 1998: 4-5)

5. As a state teacher, Awill goes to Italy for some months on a training course organised by the Somali Ministry of Education.

3. *A NAKED NEEDLE* (1976)

By the time he came to write *A Naked Needle*, Nuruddin Farah had deepened his personal experience of migration. In 1974, at the age of twenty-nine, he emigrated to England to study at the University of Essex and, therefore, it is highly probable that much of *A Naked Needle*, which was published in 1976, was written in England. Just as when he came to write *From a Crooked Rib* in Chandigarh, when he wrote *A Naked Needle* in England, Nuruddin Farah had even greater experience of the modalities of migration at first hand. Moreover, by this time, as the husband of an Indian woman, he was also in a position to understand the complexities involved for an immigrant woman who tries to adapt and integrate into a foreign country with an alien culture.

A Naked Needle tells the story of Koschin, a 40-year-old Somali man, who tries to see Somali culture and Mogadiscio society from a woman's perspective.[6] The reason he needs to do this is that Koschin awaits the imminent arrival of Nancy, an English woman, who has sent him a telegram announcing that she is coming to see him in Mogadiscio. While in England, Koschin had met Nancy, they had become friends, and they had agreed that if neither of them had married within two years from the time they parted, then Nancy would come to Somalia, or Koschin would go to England, or they would meet elsewhere (18). The telegram arouses great anxiety in Koschin. He is worried that, once in Mogadiscio, Nancy will find the place unbearable and the culture entirely alien to her. What worries him especially is that he will be transformed unwillingly into "a naked needle,"[7] that is, the protector of Nancy, and this worry is made even more extreme by the fact that the society into which Nancy is to settle is violent and unstable. Not only is Nancy a White, Christian, European woman wishing to integrate into an African culture, an essentially Arab society and a Muslim way-of-life, but at this time Somalia is torn apart by ethnic tensions; by ideological difference – Marxism and Capitalism; by religious dogmas – Islam, Christianity and traditional African belief systems; by racial frictions between Arabs and Africans; and by the struggle between the super-powers – the Russians and the Americans, a struggle super-imposed on the divisions of the colonial era when Italy and Britain, especially, fought for domination. At this time, in the early 1970s, Somalia is a country of clans – corruption runs deep, and political intrigue and in-fighting abound – all under the oppressive rule of Siyaad Barre's dictatorial regime.

6. It should be borne in mind that the novel is written by a Somali man.

7. "The needle that stitches the clothes of people remains naked itself" (*An Arabic Proverb*).

Yet the value of *A Naked Needle* as a novel about migration is not so much the cultural, religious and social iniquities and the unpleasantness of contemporary life in Mogadiscio forty years ago, but the concept of the "naked needle," an image that constitutes a literary conceit and that is pertinent to all forms of migration at a personal level. A "naked needle" is an agent of migration, a facilitator, an enabler. In a sense, in *From a Crooked Rib*, Aowralla, the widow and Asha in their different ways are all "naked needles" who facilitate Ebla's journey towards her emancipation. However, in *A Naked Needle* Koschin does not want this role for himself in his relationship with Nancy. The image that stands as the title of the novel points to the nature of the anxiety that invades Koschin when he finally meets Nancy in the house of his friends Barbara and Mohamed and thinks to himself, "I, Koschin, don't wish to be the naked needle which clothes others while it remains naked" (70).

Koschin is all too aware of the subliminal danger inherent in the metaphor. The sewing needle must be very sharp and thin, that is, naked, in order to pass the thread through the cloth, but while the finished garment clothes the person, the needle must itself remain unclothed, that is, naked, otherwise it loses its functionality. Koschin, the "needle," is preparing to "clothe" Nancy in a protective shield while he himself will necessarily remain unprotected and, therefore, vulnerable. The front cover of the African Writers Series edition depicts the dilemma exactly, Koschin providing shelter for Nancy with his wide, full, black cloak.

Koschin is aware that he must try to protect Nancy against the masculinist and patriarchal mindset of Somali men – men whose aggression towards their wives he perceives as being inbred, instinctive, and as deriving from their upbringing in traditional Somali families, "an environment where violence between husband and wife was an everyday affair" (66). Yet it is not the Somali man's potential for domestic violence, for wife-beating, that most worries Koschin in his preoccupation for Nancy's welfare, for which he sees himself responsible. More than anything else, he is anxious about how Nancy will be received by other *women* in this Muslim society. He worries in particular that the Somali women, "the poverty-stricken people in Somalia would offer her […] their hate in abundance" (34) and, on the morning of her arrival, he thinks to himself that he must warn Nancy,

> – Never face to face with women, Nancy, no confrontation, if you can help it. They are wild, they are untamable [*sic*] here. […] Be very discreet! [...]
> – Believe it on trust from me, Nancy, your religion is more repulsive to them than your skin. Seeing your repellent hide, the Somalis will immediately ask me if you are a Muslim. If you are not (which you are not, to the best of my knowledge), they will enquire further if there is any likelihood of your ever embracing the Islamic faith. (10)

Koschin worries that it is with these women and their children that Nancy will have to learn to cohabit and to interact. However, in spite of these aspects of Somali culture and society that Koschin perceives as obstacles to Nancy's integration, by the end of the novel both Nancy and Koschin still wish to remain in Mogadiscio and give their personal relationship a try.

4. *KNOTS* (2007)

Both *From a Crooked Rib* and *A Naked Needle* were written during the period of Siyaad Barre's dictatorship in Somalia and well before Homi Bhabha's prediction in 1997. As has been posited already, Farah's observations regarding migration in these early novels were based on his personal experience of living in India and England. By the time he came to write *Links* (2005) and *Knots* (2007), Siyaad Barre had been supplanted and had fled into exile, the United States marines had failed in their attempts to control the Somali warlords and their militias, and Nuruddin Farah himself had travelled very widely and had acquired a much broader vision of the world. His ninth novel *Links* relates the experiences of a Somali man who returns to Mogadiscio after spending twenty-years in Canada only to find that, due to the endemic feuding, he cannot resettle in his home country and is forced back into exile. This narrative has parallels in *Knots* which relates the experience of Cambara, a Somali woman who returns to Mogadiscio from Canada in order to try to reclaim her family's property and to re-establish herself in the city, something she manages to achieve with some success. Unlike Jeebleh, the male protagonist in *Links*, Cambara, the female protagonist in *Knots*, though faced with the same anarchic and violent social situation, *does* succeed in staying.

The reason Cambara succeeds where Jeebleh fails is down to the support the Somali woman receives from other Somali women, initially from Raxma in Canada and subsequently, and crucially, from Kiin in Mogadiscio. Kiin serves as Cambara's "naked needle" in Mogadiscio in her attempt to re-accommodate herself in the strife-torn city. Kiin is the leader of Women for Peace, an NGO in Somalia funded by the European Union. Moreover, as the owner-manager of the five-star Maanta Hotel, Kiin commands a network of persons she can call on at any time for her protection. On meeting Kiin for the first time, Cambara "prays that she and Kiin will share the sort of friendship only women are capable of forging" (144), because "[t]he Lord knows how badly a woman needs the friendship of other women in a civil war repugnant with the trigger-happy degeneracy of its militiamen" (144).

Cambara is not disappointed. Kiin is a rich, impressive and powerful Somali woman who can pull strings in the city that enable Cambara to succeed in her aims. Kiin introduces herself: "I am Kiin," the woman in all-black chador and white

bandanna says, "come to welcome you to Mogadiscio" (144). Soon after their first meeting, Kiin suggests that Cambara move into her hotel, where she will be able to enjoy first-world comforts:

> At Maanta, there is running water, the toilets are clean, the kitchen functions twenty-four hours a day, and we have power all day and all night. It is very secure too. We'll provide you with rides to and from any part of the city you require to get to; we'll do your shopping and your laundry; and we'll get you connected: e-mail, mobile, you name it. (146)

Yet in spite of Kiin's power and influence, Cambara is all too aware of the risk Kiin is taking on her behalf as her "naked needle." Given the danger she faces, "She can only pray that it will be without detriment to Kiin or any other person who has given her a hand in achieving her aims. Not that she minds facing the consequences of her actions herself, but she would feel terrible if something were to happen to any of her well-wishers. (266) Towards the end of the novel, as she prepares to move into her house that she has succeeded in re-possessing and before she is eventually reunited in Mogadiscio with Raxma and her mother Arda who have flown to Somalia from Canada, Cambara acknowledges her debt to Kiin without whose support and friendship she would not have been able to achieve her aims – "It's all been wonderful staying here (in the Maanta Hotel) and enjoying all your lavish kindness. Thank you very much; you've been all sweet and a boon to me, better than manna from any heaven, considering." (356)

5. *THE PICKUP* (2001)

It has been shown how, in *From a Crooked Rib* and *Knots*, Nuruddin Farah presents Somali women who migrate to Mogadiscio, Ebla from the Ogaden via Belet Wene and Cambara from Canada. In *A Naked Needle*, Farah reveals the obstacles and cultural barriers that Nancy, a Westernised, Christian woman, will face when trying to integrate into the Muslim world of war-torn Mogadiscio. In *The Pickup*, however, Nadine Gordimer turns much of Koschin's perception of his own Muslim, Somali society on its head, implicitly denying the religious and cultural constraints on the kind of cultural integration that Koschin is so anxious about.

In some respects, *The Pickup* presents a mirror-image of *A Naked Needle*. Whereas the author of *A Naked Needle* is a Somali man, the author of *The Pickup* is a White South African woman. While Koschin, the protagonist of *A Naked Needle*, is a Somali man, the protagonist of *The Pickup* is Julie Summers, a twenty-nine year old White South African woman from the leafy suburbs of Johannesburg. But similarities are also apparent. In both *A Naked Needle* and *The Pickup*, the immigrants are White women who move from their Western cultures into African/

Arab, Muslim cultures in northern Africa. In *A Naked Needle*, Nancy migrates from London to Mogadiscio; in *The Pickup*, Julie migrates from Johannesburg to an unnamed Muslim country in Africa, probably Morocco.[8] But whereas in *A Naked Needle*, Koschin tries to build a protective wall around Nancy by identifying those aspects of Somali society he thinks she will find impossible to accept and become reconciled with, in *The Pickup*, it is Abdu—Ibrahim ibn Musa—Julie's husband, who, desperate to emigrate from the poverty of his own rural home to a Western city, finds it inconceivable that his Westernised wife should find anything attractive about living in his home village.

The power and strangeness of Nadine Gordimer's narrative lies in Julie's decision, when Abdu eventually obtains a visa to reside in the USA, not to accompany him there, but to stay on, living with her husband's family in his village in the desert. When Julie tells him, "I am not going – coming to America" (248), Abdu is taken completely by surprise and, when Julie goes on to say that she is not returning to her home in Johannesburg either and that she is going to stay in his home with his mother and sisters, Abdu is shocked beyond belief:

> What are you talking? What is it. You are not going to America. That's what you say. You are not going to your home. That is what you say. (253)
> Or was that true then, and now – I don't know, out of the sky something somebody has changed your mind, driven you crazy? Where did you get the idea from, how, where? (262)

Julie's answer to her husband is unutterable, "And while his anguish batters them both she now knows where. The desert" (262).

But in fact there are really two aspects of life in Abdu's home that lie at the root of Julie's decision to stay. One aspect, as Julie herself admits, is the desert. The second, equally powerful aspect is the warm camaraderie and the company of the women in her husband's family household. In his collection of essays *Inner Workings. Literary Essays 2000-2005*, J.M. Coetzee has an essay on Nadine Gordimer in which he devotes most of the space to an account and analysis of the plot of *The Pickup*.[9] Coetzee finds *The Pickup* "not just an interesting book, in fact, but an astonishing one" (251). Some of Coetzee's astonishment must lie in the reason

8. Evidence that Abdu, Julie Summer's husband, comes from Morocco is presented here:
> Tourists don't come here, what for. The tomb of Sidi Yusuf, the holy man from long ago, supposed to be why this place grew. Not much of a shrine, only people from round about in the desert come to it. (125)

The tomb of Sidi Yusuf, one of the so-called "Seven Men" of Marrakech, is located in Marrakech, Morocco.

9. J.M. Coetzee (2007: 244-256).

for Julie's decision to live amongst her Muslim in-laws rather than accompany her husband to the United States of America or return to Johannesburg. Coetzee detects a spiritual dimension to her decision. He writes, "Her spiritual development is effected […] by what one can only call the spirit of the place. A few blocks away from the family home starts the desert. It becomes Julie's habit to rise before dawn and sit at the edge of the desert, allowing the desert to enter her" (249).

Coetzee's sexual innuendo is misplaced here. It is the desert's timelessness – its infinity, and its immutability – that penetrates Julie's Westernised consciousness. For Julie, being alone in the desert, with only the minaret visible on the distant horizon, provides a glimpse of eternity. The desert is minimalist – sand, horizon, sky – and it is so powerful, so immense that it minimises everything in it. In the desert community, individual human beings and human interactions are reduced to their barest essentials. This minimalism and the attraction of minimalism catch Julie by surprise. She had come completely unprepared for the fatal attraction of the desert – the power of space and time, the fourth dimension, not the time that flows as in the developed world of capitalism with its futures and hedge funds, but real time, the dimension through which we pass in consciousness for the duration of our life-times. She is overwhelmed by the mystical power of nothingness, a feeling that gives rise to an inexplicable sense of enlightenment and a deep awareness of one's own mortality:

> The desert. No seasons of bloom and decay. Just the endless turn of night and day. Out of time: and she is gazing – not over it, for it has no measure of space, features that mark distance from here to there. In a film of haze there is no horizon, the pallor of sand, pink-traced, lilac-luminous with its own colour of faint light, has no demarcation from land to air. Sky-haze is indistinguishable from sand-haze. All drifts together, and there is no onlooker; the desert is eternity. (172)

But for Julie, on a par with the overwhelming attraction of the desert, and perhaps equally surprising to the Western reader, is the attraction she feels for the company of women. Like Ebla in *From a Crooked Rib* and Cambara in *Knots*, Julie Summers finds a deep-rooted affinity with those women from other African cultures with whom she interacts. While Julie is drawn by the minimalism of the desert, of life in the desert village, she is especially enamoured of the close, spontaneous, sincere relationships that she establishes with her sisters-in-law Maryam and Amina. Although not explicitly categorised as such, Maryam and Amina are the "naked needles" who ease Julie into the Muslim women's society. From the moment Julie arrives in Abdu's home in the desert village, she is made welcome by the women of the house. The child of a broken home in Johannesburg, Julie had lived on her own, occasionally visiting her father and

his second wife, Danielle. Julie's own mother lives in California with her second husband, a casino owner. Here in Abdu's household, for the first time in her life, Julie experiences the love of family members – "I've never lived in a family before, just made substitutes out of other people, ties, I suppose – though I didn't realize that, either, then. There are ... things ... between people here, that are important, no, necessary to them ..." (187).

Julie quickly develops an especially close relationship with Abdu's sisters, Maryam and Amina, and with a small girl, Leila, and she empathises deeply with Khadija, Abdu's sister-in-law, whose husband is away working on an oil-field. In a world in which there is a strict division of labour, in which men have their own room and the women have the kitchen and a smaller living space, where the men eat together, and the women – the cooks – eat later on by themselves, it is the physicality, affectivity and sensuousness of Julie's relationship with the women that endears them to her. Julie finds the touch of a young girl's hand, and the simplicity and elemental quality of the women's space powerful ties – "For the meal after midday prayers the child put her hand, a delicate frond of fingers, in Julie's and led her along with Maryam to where in a room with no defined purpose the women of the house cooked food for everyone on two spirit burners ..." (136). But she is also attracted to the double-life led by the women in their world. When the men are out of the house, there is a deep tranquillity in the house – "It was a quiet time in this house that reverberated with many lives; the small children in bed, the women waiting for the men. [...] Sometimes Maryam came hesitantly after her, and settled with legs crossed under her garment on the floor beside the bed where she lounged" (165).

The women of the village are also kind and hospitable. The women hold regular get-togethers in the house of one of them. During Ramadan, a month of day-time fasting and abstinence from sexual acts, "[s]ometimes the women visited one another, gathered at this neighbouring house or that" (154), and Julie remarks on the liveliness of these gatherings – "They're sweet, but the chatter – it gets to be like being caught in an aviary" (155). In their gatherings the women form virtual sororities. It is during their soirées that women discuss their shared problems, gossip, and generally socialise. But the gatherings are also times for the exchange of information about the latest fashions and for buying and selling clothes and fashion accessories.[10] In a culture of arranged marriages, the chador, burka, hijab and galabiah, and strict adherence to traditional interpretations of the Koran, it is surprising to learn that the women are so fashion-conscious and enthusiastic about

10. *Cf.* Tupperware and Avon "parties" in the Western world.

fashion accessories. Julie notes that the wife of Abdu's wealthy uncle was "bound about with gold jewellery on wrists and ox-blood-fingernailed hands" (128), and that, in the women's quarters of the house, where the daughters remained during the visit – "what seemed in contradiction of orthodox modesty, while one of the young women was dressed in flowing tradition like the mother, the other daughter wore jeans and the latest in high platform-soled boots" (128).

Apart from the women of her own age and the young girls, Julie finds Abdu's mother particularly admirable. She develops a great respect, even reverence, for the elderly woman who complies rigorously with her religion's obligation to pray five times-a-day. Eventually, after becoming accustomed to Julie's presence among them, her mother-in-law allows Julie to participate in preparing the meals, even "to take part in the cooking preparations for the feast of *Eid al-fitr*" (161). What impresses Julie most is the natural dignity of the woman and the order and stability that her Muslim code allows her to sustain in her life in the face of great difficulties. And even in the desert, Julie finds some deep, primitive affinity with a lone Bedouin girl:

> The goats with the Bedouin woman appeared before her in the desert as if conjured up.
> There was one morning when they were discovered close; close enough to be advanced to. The woman turned out to be hardly more than a child – perhaps twelve years old. For a few moments the desert opened, the two saw each other, the woman under her bushveld hat, the girl-child a pair of keen eyes from a small figure swathed against the sun.
> She smiled but the other responded only by the eyes' acknowledgement of a presence. (199)

This is a kind of epiphany for Julie – eye-contact with the Bedouin girl, the hidden, the secretive, the mysterious, the unknowable. In many ways, Nadine Gordimer's descriptions of Julie's feeling for the desert and her descriptions of the desert itself and the camaraderie amongst the women constitute some of her finest prose and it is, perhaps, the sensitivity of Gordimer's narrative that takes J.M. Coetzee by surprise and leads him to comment that, "it is hard to conceive of a more sympathetic, more intimate introduction to the lives of ordinary Muslims than we are given here, and from the hand of a Jewish writer too" (251).

6. CONCLUSIONS

In *From a Crooked Rib*, *A Naked Needle* and *Knots*, Nuruddin Farah gives an insight into the world of Muslim women, a world about which most Western readers have little knowledge because it is concealed not only from non-Muslim

citizens, but also from many Muslim men, the men who cohabit with their wives but turn their back on the day-to-day existence of their womenfolk. Nadine Gordimer also writes perceptively about the desert and the women who live there.[11] In *A Naked Needle*, Nuruddin Farah presents the reasons why, from a male viewpoint, a woman from the West might not like to settle in Somalia; in *The Pickup*, Nadine Gordimer presents reasons why a Westernised woman from South Africa might like to settle in a Muslim, desert society. Both novels underscore the importance of personal perception, aspirations and expectancy in acts of migration. Both Nuruddin Farah and Nadine Gordimer, perhaps surprisingly, come to the same conclusion; that, despite the cultural and religious differences, it *is* viable and comprehensible that a Westernised, non-Muslim woman should wish to and effectively *does* settle in a Muslim society in North Africa.

Yet it is the Horn of Africa, the setting of Nuruddin Farah's *A Naked Needle*, where Arabia and Africa meet, where Islam brushes up against traditional African religions, where Arab custom sits side by side with African rites and ceremony, fusing partially. It is also the space in which the burka, with its veil, exists side by side with female genital mutilation, each custom 'protecting' women while at the same time violating their sexuality. Within a wide band stretching from the Atlantic coast to the Indian Ocean, in the southern regions of Saharan Africa and in the Horn of Africa, the practice of infibulation and re-infibulation conditions the lives of most African girls and young women.[12] On the other hand, in Morocco, the North African setting of Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*, it is the full headcovering afforded by the veil and niqab that saves girls and young women from mutilation and the fear of mutilation. As Fatima bint Thabit, an Arab mother, points out in Nuruddin Farah's novel *Sardines*,

> The tradition of my people encages me in a four-walled prison and makes me the exclusive property of a man. The same tradition, or an abstracted borrowing from similar ones, **exempts me from being circumcised in the same way as the African woman**, whether she is Somali or Kenyan or Togolese. (Nuruddin Farah. *Sardines*. 1992: 144)

In *A Naked Needle*, therefore, Nancy will be eased into Somali society only to find herself living among women, some of whom wear the burka and some of

11. On a page at the end of the book, she thanks her 'mentor,' Philip J. Stewart of the University of Oxford, a student of Arabic and Hebrew, and a forestry engineer who has spent time in Egypt and Algeria carrying out research into the relationship between animal husbandry, Islam and the ecology of desert regions.

12 The subject of female genital mutilation (FGM), specifically infibulation and re-infibulation as practised in Somalia, is touched on in From a Crooked Rib, Knots, and other novels by Nuruddin Farah.

whom have been infibulated and re-infibulated.[13] In *The Pickup*, however, while Nadine Gordimer implies that Julie Summers adapts easily to the traditions and lifestyles of the Muslim women with whom she cohabits, in the Moroccan desert she must grow accustomed to women who choose to – and who are forced to – wear the burka in all social interactions beyond the confines of their domestic space. As Western, migratory women, therefore, both Nancy in Mogadiscio and Julie Summers in the Moroccan village will find their sexuality challenged. In *Inner Workings. Literary Essays 2000-2005*, J.M. Coetzee observes ominously that, for Julie Summers, "in her lone daily confrontation with the desert, this young woman, who has already turned her back in most ways that matter on the allure of the materialistic West, is learning to face her own death" (250). The specific reference here is to the spiritual power of the desert, but Coetzee also infers that, in her interaction with female companions in the Moroccan desert, Julie Summers will be confronted with death, the death, that is, of her own sexuality. A similar consequence may be the outcome of Nancy's experience as a migrant woman in Somalia.

The underlying meaning of Nuruddin Farah's *From a Crooked Rib, A Naked Needle*, and *Knots*, and Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* derives from the experiences of women who move within or to North Africa, with the aim of settling in a different cultural and religious space. However, while there can be no doubt that varieties and modalities of the acculturated practices of wearing the burka and female genital mutilation constitute major constraints in respect of the cultural and social integration of migratory women within the host societies in Morocco and Somalia, the novels discussed here do not focus specifically on either of these customs. Notwithstanding, these novels by Nuruddin Farah and Nadine Gordimer do provide rare glimpses into the world of women who live with the burka or with the dread of mutilation, revealing, from behind the veil of ignorance and inaccessibility, the human face of women in North Africa.

13 The practices of infibulation and re-infibulation are widespread in Somalia and other parts of northern Africa. In Somalia, over 90 percent of girls are subjected to diverse forms of infibulation. As a result, many girls and young women die or suffer from serious physical and psychological damage, some for the rest of their lives. (See Korn 2006: 41-2)

REFERENCES

Bhabha, H. 1997. "The World and the Home." *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives*. Eds. A. McClintock, A. Mufti, and E. Shohat. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 445-455.

Blumer, H. 1998 (1969). *Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and Method*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 4-5.

Coetzee, J.M. 2007. *Inner Workings. Literary Essays 2000-2005*. London: Harvill Secker.

Farah, N. 2003 (1970). *From a Crooked Rib*. London: Penguin.

Farah, N. 1976. *A Naked Needle*. London: Heinemann (Africa Writers Series).

Farah, N. 1992 (1981). *Sardines*. Saint Paul, Minnesota: Graywolf Press.

Farah, N. 2005. *Links*. London: Gerald Duckworth.

Farah, N. 2007. *Knots*. London: Riverhead Books (Penguin).

Gordimer, N. 2002 (2001). *The Pickup*. London: Bloomsbury.

Korn, F. 2006 (2004). *Born in the Big Rains. A Memoir of Somalia and Survival*. Trans. T. Levin. New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York.

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES - VOLUME 8 (2010), 175-186

CONTESTING IDENTITIES: REPRESENTING BRITISH SOUTH ASIANS IN DAMIEN O'DONNELL'S *EAST IS EAST*

SARAH ZAPATA*
University of Zaragoza

ABSTRACT. *The presence of Asian in Great Britain has added a new perspective to debates about notions such as 'identity', 'multiculturalism' and 'Englishness'.* East is East (*Damien O'Donnell, 1999) explores the culture clash that occurs in the context of a half Pakistani and half British family living in early 1970's Salford. Through its representation of an atypical family the film's emphasis lies most conspicuously on its portrayal of the beginnings of contemporary multi-ethnic and multicultural British society. This way, the film highlights issues of cultural diversity, difference and hybridity while also raising questions about identity, belonging and the concept of Englishness. The aim of this essay will therefore be to examine how Daniel O'Donnell's film* East is East *explores the paradoxical nature of "identities" inevitably swaying in between two cultures by looking at the diverse discourses on identity and how they have been constructed.*

Keywords: identity, multiculturalism, hybridity, questioning of stereotypes, representation, Englishness.

---

* Correspondence should be sent to: Dr. Sarah Zapata. Santa Catalina n1, 4B. 50001. Zaragoza. Email: sarica_saad@yahoo.es

SARAH ZAPATA

IDENTIDADES ENFRENTADAS: REPRESENTANDO SUDASIÁTICOS BRITÁNICOS EN *EAST IS EAST* DE DAMIEN O'DONNELL

RESUMEN. *La presencia de asiáticos en Gran Bretaña ha añadido una nueva perspectiva a los debates sobre nociones como 'identidad', 'multiculturalismo' e identidad inglesa.* East is East *(Damien O'Donnell, 1999) explora el conflicto existente en el contexto de una familia mitad Paquistaní y mitad Británica a principios de 1970 en Salford. A través de la representación de una familia atípica el énfasis de la película recae en el retrato de los orígenes de la actual multiétnica y multicultural sociedad británica. El propósito del ensayo es cómo la película explora la naturaleza paradójica de las identidades atrapadas entre dos culturas investigando los diversos discursos sobre identidad y como han sido construidos.*

Palabras clave: identidad, multiculturalismo, hibridad, cuestionamiento de estereotipos, representación, identidad inglesa.

Received 30 April 2010
Revised version accepted 10 June 2010

East is East (Damien O'Donnell, 1999) explores the culture clash that occurs in the context of a half Pakistani and half British family living in early 1970's Salford. Hence, through its representation of an atypical family it can be said that the film's emphasis lies most conspicuously on its portrayal of the beginnings of contemporary multi-ethnic and multicultural British society. This way, the film highlights issues of cultural diversity, difference and hybridity while also raising questions about identity, belonging and the concept of Englishness.

Given this preamble, the aim of this essay is, broadly speaking, to interpret Daniel O'Donnell's *East is East* as a film that explores the paradoxical nature of "identities" inevitably swaying in between two cultures. For that purpose, I shall first look at the diverse discourses on identity and how they have been constructed. In the same way, my aim is to highlight to what extent characters' language is used as a powerful weapon in the construction and assertion of identity. From there, I shall then proceed with the idea of how culture, tradition and history are key concepts in the analysis of identity. In the same way, I shall propose to analyse whether it is possible to negotiate identity and difference in multicultural societies. No less important is how comedy serves to heighten tensions and prejudices. I shall, therefore, examine to what extent much of the humour in the film reinforces typical stereotypes and assumptions about South-Asians.

Identity is a key concept in the contemporary world. Since the Second World War, the legacies of colonialism, migration and the rise of new social movements have put into question taken for granted ideas of identity and belonging. In order to understand the power of identity, and particularly the role it plays in the construction of both the individual and society, we need to theorise about it in relation to different discourses of race, gender or sexuality. A brief look at different approaches on identity almost immediately leads one to two contradictory perspectives: an essentialist outlook and a non-essentialist one. The essentialist view sees identity as something fixed, unchanging and related to a biological source (Woodward 1997: 12). In contrast, the non-essentialist perspective regards identity as fluid, constantly changing, contingent and, in the words of Jeffrey Weeks emanating from "different elements which can be reconstructed in new cultural conditions" (Woodward 1997: 26).

In his article "Cultural identity and diaspora" (1990), Stuart Hall also distinguishes two different ways of thinking about cultural identity. In his view, essentialism defines cultural identity as one community's shared knowledge or truth about its own history and culture. This "truth" is conceived by the people pertaining to this community as their point of reference and meaning. As Hall states "this 'oneness' underlying all the other, more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence" (1990: 222).

On the other hand, the second, non-essentialist view of cultural identity takes into consideration the never-ending similarities and differences which make up the historically contingent meaning of the sense of "being". In this respect, Hall argues that we cannot simply talk about "one experience, one identity". On the contrary, people need instead to reflect on all the changes, adjustments and adaptations embedded in the sense of "being". In this way, cultural identity is a "matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'" (Hall 1990: 225). In this way, Hall claims that although identity is related to the past, people keep reconstructing their cultural identities because, as he states, identities "are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power" (1990: 225).

After this brief exposition what stands out is that the concept of identity is problematic and complex. What I propose to do is to examine how the characters in the film represent or embody the opposite approaches of fixity and fluidity.

East is East[1] is set in Salford in 1971. The crowded back-to-back terraced house with an outside toilet, where the Khan family lives, portrays the poverty of a

1. It has to be noted that the film, with the funding of Channel Four, became a huge commercial success and won several awards such as the audience award at Cannes and also the support of big US investors (Miramax) for US distribution (Black Film Bulletin Winter 2000 vol. 7. 4, p.20).

working-class neighbourhood in that period. The film, adapted from a Royal Court production also written by Ayub Khan-Din, follows the story of the Khan family. George Khan, is a strict Muslim from Pakistan who settled in Manchester and eventually married Ella, a white, English, working-class Catholic, despite the fact his first wife still lives in Pakistan. George and Ella have seven children and run a fish and chip shop. He attends the mosque regularly and wants to raise his mixed-race children within the tradition of Muslim faith. The film is based on an auto-biographical play by Ayub Khan-Din that he began in drama school and performed fifteen years later. In his introduction to the screenplay, Khan-Din writes:

> It was important to me from the early stages that this shouldn't be just one son's story but the story of a whole family, and not just an excuse for Paki-bashing my father (although this would have been easy to do as he behaved monstrously at times). But the more I looked at my parents and their relationship, especially considering the times they lived in, the more admiration I felt for their bravery. This was not a time of mixed-race marriages, which were barely acceptable in the middle-class salons of London. Anywhere else in Britain a white woman with a black man would be considered a prostitute. It must have been very hard for them, the hatred and the bigotry that they would have faced. (1999: viii)

The basic themes of the film therefore are the culture and identity conflicts suffered by these second generation children as a result of the clash between their own aspirations and their father's expectations. As Sarita Malik argues in her review: "Locked somewhere between the style of a northern "kitchen sink" drama and a modern interrogation into identity, belonging and Britishness, *East is East* tells an intensely moral tale—about freedom over oppression" (2000: 20).

The opening scene patently sets out the family's main problem. It shows a Catholic procession in which the six sons and only daughter of the Khan family actively take part. Maneer (Emil Marwa), Khan's most devoted son, is carrying the Virgin effigy together with several of his brothers; before them in the procession, Meenah (Archie Panjabi) is the bearer of a crucifix, while the youngest of all, Sajid (Jordan Routledge), is strewing rose petals in the street. They are all smiling and happy. Although their physique clearly denotes their non-British roots, they are portrayed as wholly integrated in the religious celebration. While portrayed as fully involved in the ritual, it is clear before long that their participation in the procession is being kept secret from their father. The next scene shows them running across the narrow streets in order to hide from George who has returned earlier than expected from the mosque.

This early scene thus already underscores that the real problem for the children is not how to fit in with their English neighbours, but how to accommodate their identities within their own family. From there, the film's focus on the children's

rebellion against their father's attempts to raise them as traditional Muslims. In the process, the offspring of this mixed-marriage come to build their own identities both as individuals and as part of a family and community.

Thus, the construction of identity is shown to take place both personally and in the social spheres. In his essay, *On Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, Althusser (1971) argues that identity is shaped and located in and by different social and cultural situations of daily life. In other words, we represent ourselves to others differently in each context (work, home, school).

Following this line of thought, it appears that the children's identities in the film are shaped and located in and by different places and situations such as the mosque, the chippy shop, the street where they play, night-clubs or even visits to Bradford. For instance, the children hide when the van comes to take them to the mosque where they have to attend religious and Urdu lessons. Several scenes show them sitting bored and unengaged during their lessons. Apparently for them, the mosque is anyone else's sacred space but nothing to do with them. Likewise, although once a month the Khan family visit their Pakistani relatives in Bradford ("Bradistan" in the film), where they eat curry food and go to the cinema to watch a Bollywood film, the mixed-race children feel as outsiders among the large Pakistani community. Tariq's passion for night-clubs is also highlighted in the film. Several scenes show him going out with Stella, an English neighbour, and drinking alcohol which is not allowed for Muslims. Another scene pictures the children eating bacon and sausages at home when their father is out. In this way, the film underlines the children's constant rebellion against the Pakistani education imposed on them. In other words, these scenes illustrate the young generation's daily struggle to strike a balance between opposing expectations and activities: taking religious lessons and spending nights out at clubs. Hence, the film focuses on the children's main problem, their "in-betweeness" or identity sliding between two cultures.

Let us now, look at the "survival" tactics used by each individual child. Nazir, the eldest, escapes from George Khan's oppressive treatment and rejects the Pakistani tradition of an arranged marriage by refusing to marry the girl his father had chosen for him and walking out on the guests during the wedding ceremony. Instead of returning home he starts a new life in Eccles with, as it turns out, a gay partner. Maneer keeps Muslim traditional customs such as praying five times daily and reading the Koran. By highlighting in this way his religious convictions, the film presents him as the only child who respects his father's authority. At the opposite end, Tariq is the most extreme and rebellious of all. He asserts his Englishness by changing his name for "Tony" to get into a disco that exclude Pakistanis. Nor does Saleem want to obey his father's demands, but he acts in a subtler way, not confronting him directly. Although supposedly to be studying

engineering, he is attending an art school. In the same manner, Adbul goes along with his father's wishes just to keep peace and avoid George's violent outbursts. For her part, Meenah is characterised as a tomboy who prefers playing football to behaving like a proper traditional Pakistani woman. Finally, Sajid keeps his parka hood constantly over his head, as a way of protecting himself from the episodes of domestic violence. By means of the characterisation of the children (second generation immigrants) the film thus underlines the children's constant rejection of Pakistani culture and any form of Pakistani identity.

Evidently, these second generation, mixed-race children are not willing to settle for traditions, and their challenges to their father's oppressive patriarchal practices produce family tensions and even domestic violence. Although the film deals with serious issues (Islam values and practices, gender and racial difference and domestic violence), these are smoothed over by the use of comedy. In other words, it is precisely the family's infighting and Pakistani culture that provide all the laughs in *East is East*.

East is East has strong comic elements but theses do not detract from the seriousness of the issues dealt with. In examining the issue of comedy in the film, various factors need to be taken into account. An important issue at stake here is humour and laughter. In *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), Freud analyses the purposes of jokes and the nature of the pleasure derived from them. Although he initially differentiated between tendentious and non-tendentious jokes, he later acknowledged that all joke-making was "tendentious". In other words, jokes are *hostile* because they "serve the purpose of aggressiveness, satire or defense" (Freud 1959: 97). In this way, Freud argues that a person telling a joke which has as its butt another person or member or a certain social group is expressing a kind of aggression towards them, one of verbal kind. In *East is East* George and his Pakistani ways are the butt of the joke and the source of laughter most of the times. According to Freud's argument the film is expressing to some extent an aggression towards that social group. Moreover, Freud argues that the narrator of the joke invites the listener/spectator to take pleasure in the act of aggression. Hence, the joke allows the narrator to express aggression in a form that "will evade restrictions and open sources of pleasure that have become inaccessible" (Freud 1959: 102-103). Therefore, a function for comedy and other means of arousing laughter (such as jokes) is "[to] gratify impulses which we normally have to repress" (Nelson 1990: 4).

Owing to this, it has to be considered that much of the humour of the film is at George's expense due to his oppressive patriarchal characterization. As Ali Nobil argues: "It seems that the archetypal image of the eastern male, brutish and oppressive, retains a powerful hold over the English imagination" (1999/2000: 105). Most of the comic scenes can be read as excessive and stylised caricatures of racial stereotypes. For instance, the scene before Sajid is taken to hospital for a

circumcision operation shows an enraged greatly offended George at the thought that Sajid has not been circumcised yet. In contrast, the audience enjoys seeing how the child hides from his father while Annie, Ella's friend, checks that this is true. In the same way, the comically ugly physical appearance of the Pakistani brides George has sought for Tariq and Adbul, invites laughter on the part of the audience. Much of the humour in the film can be read as, on the one hand, foregrounding negative stereotypes about Pakistanis, while suggesting that identity is a question of culture and background rather than one's physical appearance or who one's parents are.

Thus it can be said that the narrative reproduces "negative images" of South-Asian community and culture, and in so doing much of the humour reinforces stereotypes about Pakistanis in Britain. Moreover the film operates within a body of fixed assumptions and stereotypes about Muslim religious values and Eastern cultures.

From there, the audience is another aspect that needs some consideration. As Marcel Pagnol (quoted in Corrigan 1981: 75) suggested in *Notes sur le rire,* the source of laughter lies in the subject who laughs. In many theories of laughter and humour (Bergson 1900; Freud 1905), it has been argued that comedy is a means through which membership of a particular group identity can be reinforced. In other words, a whole identified group laughs at something or someone which seems to be different from them. Regarding this, Henri Bergson states "However spontaneous it seems, laughter always implies a kind of secret freemasonry, or even complicity, with other laughers, real or imaginary" (in Corrigan 1981: 329-330). Weedon in *Identity and Culture* (2004: 126) puts forward the same argument: "Comedy works as a double-edged sword, that may both deconstruct and reinforce stereotypes depending on the viewing subject and position from which it is viewed". The problematic revolves around the issue of representation and whether texts should only portray positive images or deal with the race relations discourse and the complexity of South Asian communities at stake. Like filmmakers of African descent, British South Asian film directors are constantly faced with tensions and dilemmas over representation. As black filmmaker Isaac Julien and critic Kobena Mercer have argued: "If only one voice is given the "right to speak", that voice will be heard, by the major culture as "speaking for" the many who are excluded or marginalised from access to the means of representation" (1988: 4). Therefore, one of the main issues faced by Black and South Asian film directors is the problem of being expected to represent an entire ethnic minority community. This issue is intimately linked to the potential danger of showing negative images that might reinforce racist views in white British audiences.

So far I have considered certain aspects concerning the concept of identity and how comedy can serve to bring to the fore tensions and prejudices. At this point,

I wish to examine other ways in which the film highlights the generational conflict within the family.

The younger generation's revolt against imposed identity is subtly brought to light through the film's emphasis on language. In *Identity and Culture* Weedon states: "language constitutes rather than reflects or expresses the meaning of experience and identity[...] it is in the process of using language[...] that we take up positions as speaking and thinking subjects and the identities that go with them" (2004: 18). In the film we have evidence of this through the language the children (except Maneer) use to refer to Pakistani people. Despite being called "Pakis" by their neighbours, they do not identify themselves as Pakistani. On the contrary, they themselves talk scornfully about others being "Pakis". For example, when Meenah, Tariq and Saleem discover in their father's trunk the clothes and presents for Abdul and Tariq's arranged weddings, Tariq exclaims: "I'm not going to marry a fucking Paki". Likewise, Sajid cries out "The Pakis are here" when the visitors from Bradford come to their house. Each and everyone of these scenes stresses how powerful language is in the construction of identity. Evidently, George's children are using language to defy the identity imposed on them by their father and community. Thus, language in the film is shown to be a powerful weapon in the assertion of one's own identity. Although the children are mixed-race, they see themselves as English not Pakistani. Their English identity is what leads them to reject any aspect of Pakistani culture.

The children's reassertion of their English identity against George's traditional Pakistani one therefore brings up the concept of Englishness in the film. After the Second World War, migrations from the ex-colonies were significantly large. The influx of immigrants increased the diversity of Britain. In the film, Salford and Bradford offer an example of multicultural cities that resulted from migration during the 60's. Consequently, migration plays a key role in reshaping societies and politics (Woodward 1997: 16). During the 60's and 70's "exclusively white norms of Britishness were hegemonic and assimilation dominated thinking about migrants to Britain" (Weedon 2004: 23). In this way migrants had to adapt to the British culture and be "like" the British.

However, since then there have been social, cultural, economic and political changes which made necessary a redefinition of the hegemonic discourses of nation, culture and identity. As the Parekh Report (2000) states: "given the changes to Britain that had occurred in the second half of the twentieth century, there is a pressing need to redefine current norms of Britishness" (in Weedon 2004: 55). This need for redefinition was also provoked by the emergence of new identities as the ones we find in the film: the children's hybrid identities. The idea of what it is to be English is constantly brought to the fore both by George and the children. George defines Englishness against his own nationality: he and his family are Pakistanis not English. George tries to reinforce this difference throughout the

narrative, stressing the importance of Pakistani cultural and religious practices and authoritatively imposing his own identity upon his children. George is unable to recognize that his children are mixed-race and fails to listen to and understand their aspirations. This is made patent in a scene where Tariq tells his father he doesn't want an arranged marriage and that all the family is fed up with his oppressive patriarchal ways. George replies in his broken English: "I not bring you up to give me no respect. Pakistanis always show respect". Then Tariq insists: "I don't know Pakistani, I was born here, I speak English not Urdu". These words show him reasserting his personal identity. George finally says: "You are not English! English people are never accepting you! In Islam everyone is equal, or black man or white man or Muslim, special community".

On the one hand, Tariq's argument highlights the idea that identity comes from one's immediate background, friends, school. In this sense identity is seen as always in movement and as a matter of constant "becoming" (Hall 1990). He and his brothers and sister were also born in England, which gives them their sense of belonging to English society. "Identity, then", as Autar Brah argues, "is simultaneously subjective and social, and is constituted in and through culture. Indeed, culture and identity are inextricably linked concepts" (1996: 21). They want to be included and accepted.

On the other hand, George learnt that Pakistanis were not considered English due to their race. Therefore he wants to bring up his children within the Pakistani tradition and the Muslim community, vigorously reinforcing his own identity of origin as something fixed, unchanging and as a matter of "being".

Although he is married to an English woman, he prevents his sons from marrying English women because "they are no good, drink alcohol, go with men and don't look after". However there is a contradiction between George's wishes for his children and the choices he himself has made. After all, his opting to marry a British woman, who does not share his faith, obviously went beyond the bounds of the traditions he is now fiercely imposing on his children. For this reason George is perhaps the most problematic character of all. He is shown to be anchored in tradition to the point of having lost touch with his own Pakistani culture. For instance when he criticizes the Pakistani clothes his daughter is wearing, which are more trendy leaving some parts of the body uncovered, he does not realise that his own culture has also evolved. Instead, he reacts furiously at his daughter's indecency. Nevertheless, other scenes make patent George's ambivalence towards the English culture. For instance, he is very proud of his fish and chip shop which Ella runs and he accepts half a cup of tea after arguments or joyful moments with Ella, which means he accepts English culture partially.

Having dealt with individual and national identities, I shall consider now how concepts of community and collective identity work in *East is East*. In the film

George's clinging to traditional Pakistani values and Muslim religion underscores the importance of tradition and community in the construction of identity. He wants to be part of the local Muslim community by raising his children as good Muslims, but he is set apart from his own community both by his marriage to an English Catholic and by the fact that his children are no longer willing to conform to his expectations. For instance, when his oldest son, Nazir, is getting ready for his wedding his brothers laugh at the traditional Pakistani clothes he is made to wear. George tells them: "it is tradition son, all our people wear this". Second, both in this scene and in the one after Sajid's circumcision, George gives his "about-to-be-wedded" sons two watches with their names in Arabic, the language of the Koran. In this way, we see how George holds strong values regarding religion and culture and wants to transmit them to the children. Community is essential at this point.

In his book *Social Identity* Richard Jenkins examines Anthony Cohen's concept of community and collective identity as "symbolic constructions". First, Cohen argues that symbols produce a sense of shared belonging, considering religious and cultural shared rituals as symbols of the community too. If, as Jenkins argues, community is "a powerful notion in terms of which people organise their lives and understand the settlements and localities in which they live" (1996: 105), then it can be argued that the film shows the arranged weddings and circumcision operations as quintessential rituals of the Muslim community.

Furthermore, Jenkins (1996: 107) quotes Cohen's definition of community as "essentially enshrined in the concept of boundary" in order to emphasize its power of exclusion and inclusion. Together with the concept of difference this factor plays a key role in the film. The exclusion from the Muslim community is first suffered by George when he married Ella and then when Nazir runs away from his wedding ceremony. After the failed attempt to marry Nazir, George tells the Mullah he doesn't understand his son's behaviour and the Mullah says: "It will always be difficult for you, they are different". The children are marked as different by the community because they are mixed-race. Despite all the efforts made by George to integrate the children into the Muslim community, they are not seen as proper Pakistanis but as aliens to the community. Hence, what the film enhances through George's failed efforts to integrate his children in "the community" is the problematic nature of group identity: tensions evidently exist within the community itself—between members and between generations.

Another important issue in the film is the way people do or do not negotiate difference and identity. On the one hand, only one of the white neighbours, Mr Moorhouse, bears any visible ill will against the Khan family, sticking on his window a poster of Enoch Powell.[2] Despite this, his daughter Stella and his grandson

2. Enoch Powell, Conservative MP during the 1960's, was famous for his extremely racist speeches.

Earnest are good examples of how difference can be negotiated. Stella is going out with Tariq. For his part, Earnest is Sajid's best friend. They play football together. He speaks Urdu with the Khan family and has a crush on Sajid's sister Meenah. Neither Stella nor Earnest have prejudices against their Pakistani neighbours. On the other hand, the Muslim community struggles to negotiate the difference of being mixed-race and bi-cultural, as they have some prejudices against George and the children. On the whole, because the children suffer the imposition of their father's culture and beliefs, they try to negotiate a bi-cultural existence. Negotiation will lead to a redefinition of boundaries.

If we analyse the final scene, we see how after an episode of domestic violence Ella goes to the chippy shop and offers George some tea. Her support for him is unwavering, but perhaps after this big argument George is able to realise that his children are mixed-race and are no longer willing to accept such oppressive parental authority and control. It is also very relevant that at the end Abdul accidentally ripps Sajid's hood, exposing him to the outside world he associated with his father's patriarchal treatment. This is why he constantly had his parka hood on, to avoid the hostile domestic setting. This event may mean that there exists a possibility for these mixed-race children to go on and live their hybrid identities.

To sum up, through the representation of this British-Asian family as site of conflict between Pakistani traditional values and new mixed-race hybrid identities *East is East* subverts the taken-for-granted notion of the Asian community in Great Britain as the homogeneous entity which earlier British-Asian films and directors portrayed in order to fight the negative representations that white audiences have made of them. Likewise, the paradoxical nature of both the adaptation and integration of the Pakistani community in England and of inter-generational conflict within Pakistani families are reasserted throughout the film. According to this, identity should be thought of as something in process, changing and complex. In *East is East* identities are portrayed both as fluid and changing in the case of the children and to some extent stable and fixed in the case of George. In a sense, it could be said that the film comically focuses on how both stances fare when shown between two cultures. Through its contrast between comic and dramatic scenes the film highlights the paradoxical nature of identity inevitably slipping away between two worlds.

By taking up Freud's view of jokes as always somehow hostile, it appears that the film indirectly criticises George Khan's concept of identity as something immune and unchanging. In this respect the dramatisation of his exaggerated authority within his own family is an underlying comic theme that sparks off different subsistence reactions on the part of his British born children. Thus, the young British-Asian protagonists of the film are represented in their individualistic

struggle as trying to construct their sense of identity and belonging within the context of the two different cultures that inform their ethnic hybridity. In the same manner, the portrayal of George as "different" and hence an outsider to the Muslim community also serves to highlight how mistaken the notion of rigid, pre-set identities can be.

Finally, it is therefore through the characters of Maneer, Meenah, Sajid ... that *East is East* calls attention to the only viable way forward: new hybrid identities, which try to negotiate mainstream and fixed forms of identity. Hence, it can be said that the film's emphasis lies most conspicuously on its portrayal of hybrid identity as a site of negotiation between different individual, communal and national identifications.

REFERENCES

Althusser, L. 1971. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. London: New Left Books.

Bergson, H. 1981 (1900). "From Laughter". *Comedy: Meaning and Form*. Ed. R. Corrigan. New York, Cambridge, Hagerstown, Philadelphia, San Francisco, London, Mexico City, Sào Paulo, Sydney: Harper and Row Publishers. 328-332.

Brah, A. 1996. *Cartographies of Diaspora*. London: Routledge.

Corrigan, R. ed. 1981. *Comedy: Meaning and Form*. New York, Cambridge, Hagerstown, Philadelphia, San Francisco, London, Mexico City, Sáo Paulo, Sydney: Harper and Row Publishers.

Freud, S. 1959 (1905). *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis. Trans. James Strachey.

Hall, S. 1990. "Cultural identity and Diaspora". *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. J. Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wishart. 222-237.

Jenkins, R. 2000. *Social Identity*. London: Routledge.

Julien, I. and K. Mercer. 1988. "De Margin and de Centre". *Screen* 29 (4): 2-10.

Khan-Din, A. 1999. *East is East*. London: Film Four Books.

Malik, S. 2000. "East is East". *Black Film Bulletin* 7(4): 20-21.

Nelson, T. G. A. 1990. *Comedy: Theory of Comedy in Literature, Drama and Cinema*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nobil, A. Winter 1999/2000. "Is East… East?". *Third Text* 49: 105-107.

Rutherford, J. ed. 1990. *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Weedon, C. 2004. *Identity and Culture: Narratives of Difference and Belonging*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Woodward, K. ed. 1997. *Identity and Difference*. London: Sage.

Woodward, K. 2000. *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Nation*. London: Routledge.

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES (JES)

EDITORIAL POLICY, GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS AND STYLESHEET

1. EDITORIAL POLICY

1.1. Journal description. *JES* is the journal of the English Studies Division at the University of La Rioja. It accepts for publication, after favourable reports from two anonymous referees, original scholarly contributions in all research areas within the domain of English studies (linguistics, literature, literary theory, cultural studies, film studies, etc.). Proposals for publication may fall under one of the following three categories:

A. Research papers involving empirical investigations and methodological or theoretical studies within the field of English Studies (min. 15 and max. 30 double-spaced pages).
B. State of the art reports of recent books covering issues relating to the area of interest of the journal (max. 8 double-spaced pages).
C. Notes and squibs (max. 6 double-spaced pages).

Exceptionally, and with a positive report by the Editorial Board, contributions which exceed these maximum lengths may be considered for publication on the grounds of their scientific relevance.

1.2. Language. *JES* only accepts for publication contributions written in English.

1.3. Evaluation. Contributions for publication will be sent to two anonymous referees proposed by the members of the Editorial Board and/or Advisory Board. In order to be accepted for publication in *JES*, contributions should be informed positively in relation to the following criteria:

– Originality and interest concerning the subject-matter, methodology, and conclusions of the study.
– Relevance concerning current research in the field.
– Knowledge of previous research in the same field.
– Scientific rigour and depth of analysis.
– Accuracy in the use of concepts, methods, and terms.
– Relevance of the theoretical implications of the study.
– Use of updated bibliography.

Journal of English Studies,
vol. 8 (2010) 187-195

– Correct use of language and correction in the organization of contents and other formal aspects of the text.
– Clarity, elegance, and conciseness in the exposition.
– Suitability to the range of topics of interest for the journal

Evaluation reports will be carried out anonymously within three months from their reception. Once the evaluation process is completed, authors will receive a statement of the editorial decision together with an anonymous copy of the reports on which the decision is based. The editorial decision will be considered final.

1.4. Revision and proof-reading. Should any formal or content aspect of the contributions be improved and/or modified, it will be the authors' responsibility to return the new version within the deadline established by the Editor. Failing to do so will result in the non-publication of the contribution.

Likewise, authors are responsible for proof-reading their contributions and returning the revised versions by the deadline established by the Editor.

1.5. Copyright. Authors warrant that their contributions to *JES* are original and have neither been submitted for publication, nor have been published elsewhere.

Once published, *JES* holds the copyright of any contribution. In order to re-publish any part of a contribution in any other venue and/or format, authors must ask for written permission to the Editor.

1.6. Exchange policy. *JES* welcomes exchanges with similar publications in the field of English Studies and other related areas.

2. Submission of proposals

Proposals should be sent to:

Dr. Mª Pilar Agustín Llach

Secretary of *JES*

E-mail: maria-del-pilar.agustin@unirioja.es

For further information, contact the Editor of *JES*

Dr. Melania Terrazas Gallego

E-mail: melania.terrazas@unirioja.es

In order to be sent off for evaluation, proposals must follow the guidelines below.

3. INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTRIBUTORS

3.1. What to send. Authors should send their proposals via e-mail, indicating the title of the proposal that is being submitted in order to be evaluated for publication in *JES*.

Attached to the message, authors should send two Word or RTF documents. In the first document, authors should include the title of the proposal (in **bold face**), the name/s of the author/s (in Small Capitals), their institutional affiliation (in *italics*) and any other relevant information, such as e-mail and postal address and telephone and fax number.

In the case of multiple authorship, please state clearly which of the contributors will be in charge of the ensuing correspondence with *JES*.

Authors should also include here a brief biographical note of about 100 words.

The second document should include the full proposal to be sent off for evaluation. Authors should be extremely careful to avoid any kind of information which might reveal their identity.

3.2. Artwork, tables, figures and images. These should be included in the text file. Tone art, or photographic images, should be saved as JPG or TIFF files with a resolution of 300 dpi at final size.

3.3. Copyright information. If a preliminary version of the proposal has been presented at a conference, information about the name of the conference, the name of the sponsoring organization, the exact date(s) of the conference or paper presentation and the city in which the conference was held should be provided in a footnote in the first page of the document. Seeking permission for the use of copyright material is the responsibility of the author.

4. MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

4.1. Formatting. Minimum formatting should be used. Indentation, underlining and tabulation should be avoided unless absolutely necessary.

4.2. Document. All margins in the document should be of 2.54 cms. Paragraphs should be fully justified. The main text of the proposal should be written in 12-point Garamond. Quotations will be in 11-point Garamond when they appear in an independent paragraph. Abstracts, keywords, footnotes, superscript numbers, tables and figures will appear in 10-point Garamond.

4.3. Title. The title of the proposal should be centred and written in 12-point Garamond bold. Capitals should be used for both title and subtitle.

A Spanish translation of the title of the proposal should also be included. For those contributors who do not handle Spanish, a translation will be provided by the Editor.

4.4. Abstract and keywords. Each title should be followed by a brief abstract (100-150 words each): the first one should be written in English, while the second one should be written in Spanish. For those contributors who do not handle Spanish, a translation of the abstract will be provided by the Editor. Abstracts should be single-spaced, typed in 10-point Garamond *italics* (titles of books and keywords will appear in normal characters), justified on both sides, and indented 1 cm. from the left-hand margin. Abstracts should have no footnotes. The word ABSTRACT/RESUMEN (in normal characters and capital letters), followed by a full-stop and a single space, will precede the text of the abstract.

Abstracts will be followed by a list of six keywords, written in normal characters in the corresponding language, English or Spanish, so that contributions can be accurately classified by international reference indexes. The word *Keywords/ Palabras clave* (in italics), followed by a semi-colon and a single space, will precede the keywords.

4.5. Paragraphs. Paragraphs in the main text should not be separated by a blank line. The first line of each paragraph will be indented 1 cm. from the left-hand margin. Words will not be divided at the end of a line either. There should be only one space between words and only one space after any punctuation.

4.6. Italics. Words in a language other than English should be italicized; italics should also be used in order to emphasize some *key words*. If the word that has to be emphasized is located in a paragraph which is already in italics, the key word will appear in normal characters.

4.7. Figures, illustrations, and tables. They should be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals and referred to by their numbers within the text (e.g. as we see in example/figure/table 1). They should be accompanied by an explanatory foot (in 10-point Garamond italics, single-spaced).

4.8. Headings. Headings of sections should be typed in Small Capitals, and separated with two blank spaces from the previous text and with one blank space from the following text. They must be preceded by Arabic numerals separated by a full stop and a blank space (e.g. 1. Introduction).

Headings of subsections should be typed in *italics*, and separated with one space from both the previous and the following text. They must be numbered as in the example (e.g. 1.1., 1.2., etc.).

Headings of inferior levels of subsections should be avoided as much as possible. If they are included, they should also be numbered with Arabic numerals (e.g. 1.1.1., 1.1.2., etc.) and they will be typed in normal characters.

4.9. Asides. For asides other than parenthetical asides, dashes (and not hyphens) should be used, preceded and followed by a blank space. For compounds use hyphens. Notice the following example:

> "Teaching in English **– as many subjects as possible –** seems to offer a **second-best** solution insofar as it entails much more exposure of the foreign language".

4.10. Punctuation. Authors are requested to make their usage of punctuation as consistent as possible. Commas, full stops, colons and semi-colons will be placed after inverted commas (";).

Capital letters will keep their natural punctuation such as accents, etc. (e.g. PUNTUACIÓN, LINGÜÍSTICA, etc.).

Apostrophes (’), not accents (’), should be used for abbreviations and the saxon genitive.

4.11. Footnotes. Footnotes should only be explanatory (references should be provided only in the main text). Footnotes will appear at the end of the page. Superscript numbers will be separated from the main text of the footnote by a blank space.

References to footnotes should be marked in the text with consecutive superscript Arabic numerals, which should be placed after all punctuation (including parenthesis and quotation marks).

4.12. Quotations. Quotations should normally appear in the body of the text, enclosed in double quotation marks. Single quotation marks will be used to locate a quotation within another quotation (e.g. "toward a unified policy that 'natural' English was altogether preferable").

Quotations of four lines or longer should be set in a separate paragraph, without quotation marks, typed in 11-point Garamond and indented 1,5 cms. from the left-hand margin. They should be separated from both the previous and the following text with one blank line.

Omissions within quoted text should be indicated by means of suspension points in square brackets (e.g. […]).

4.13. In-text citations. References must be made in the text and placed within parentheses. Parentheses should contain the author's surname followed by a space before the date of publication which, should, in turn, be followed by a colon and a space before the page number(s). Example:

> "Certainly, the conventional romance plot is a construction of the ideology of patriarchy" (Brush 1994: 238).

If the sentence includes the author's name (example 1) or if it includes the date of publication (example 2), that information should not be repeated in the parentheses:

Example 1:

> Johnson has drawn our attention to the fact that we are aware of our bodies as three-dimensional containers (1987: 21).

Example 2:

> In appearance and aspirations he is culturally androgynous like Frankie. He is sexually ambivalent and "Light Skinned" (McCullers 1962: 155) and "could talk like a white school-teacher" (48).

If the quotation includes several pages, numbers will be provided in full, as in the example:

> In the world she would create "there would be no separate coloured people […] but all human beings would be light brown colour with blue eyes and black hair. There would be no coloured people and no white people to make coloured people feel cheap and sorry all through their lives" (McCullers 1962: 114-115).

If several authors are parenthetically cited at the same time, they should be arranged chronologically and separated with a semi-colon:

> (Richards 1971: 210; Arabski 1979: 43; Selinker 1991: 16)

If there are two or more works by the same author published in the same year, a lower-case letter should be added to the year, as in the example:

> (Montrose 1986a: 332) (Montrose 1986b: 9)

Parenthetical citations should be placed immediately after each quotation, both when the quoted passage is incorporated into the text and when the passage is longer than four lines and needs to be set in a separate paragraph. Put this parenthetical citation after the quotation marks but before the comma or period when the quotation is part of your text:

> The readers being addressed are mainly white and anglophone, for, as Atwood said "survival was part of the English-Canadian cultural nationalism that peaked in about 1975" (1981: 387).

When the quotation is set off from the text in indented form, the parenthetical citation follows all punctuation:

Even Cranny-Francis points to the subversive potential of the romance plot:

> Romance is often written into texts dominated by other genres, such as SF, utopian or detective fiction, where it may operate as one of the conventions of those genres. Feminist revisions of these genres also use romance and, in dialogue with other generic conventions, it has been used successfully to interrogate the construction of masculinity and femininity and of interpersonal relationships. (1990: 190)

4.14. Bibliographical references. All (and only those) books and articles quoted or referred to in the text (those quoted in the footnotes included) should appear in a final bibliographical list of references, which completes the information provided by the in-text citations provided in the text.

The heading for this list should be REFERENCES.

Hanging or reverse indentation (i.e. indentation of all lines of a paragraph except the first one, which is a full line) of 1 cm. from the left-hand margin should be used.

This list should be arranged in alphabetical order and chronologically, when two or more works by the same author are cited. The author's full name should be repeated in all cases. Example:

Langacker, R. 1991. *Foundations of cognitive grammar 2: Descriptive application*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Wierzbicka, A. 1988. *The Semantics of Grammar*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Wierzbicka, A. 1992. *Semantics, Culture, and Cognition: Universal Human Concepts in Culture-Specific Configurations*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Books. References to books will include: author's surname and name; year of publication (first edition in parentheses, if different); title (in italics); place of publication; publisher's name. If the book is a translation, the name of the translator should be indicated at the end. Contributors are requested to pay special attention to punctuation in the following examples:

Taylor, J. R. 1995 (1989). *Linguistic Categorization: Prototypes in Linguistic Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Kristeva, J. 2000. *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt*. New York: Columbia University Press. Trans. Jeanine Herman.

Articles. Titles of articles should be given in inverted commas. Titles of journals should appear in italics. Volume, number (between parentheses) should follow. Then page numbers, separated by a colon:

Haiman, J. 1978. "Conditionals are topics". *Language* 54 (2): 564-589.

Frye, N. 1940. "The Resurgent". *Canadian Forum* 19: 357-61.

Books edited. Volumes edited by one or more authors should be referred to as follows (notice the use of abbreviations ed. and eds.):

Miller, N. C., ed. 1986. *The Poetics of Gender*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Richards, J. C. and D. Nunan, eds. 1990. *Second Language Teacher Education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Articles in books. References to articles published in works edited by other authors or in conference proceedings should be cited as in the example:

Fowler, R. 1983. "Polyphony and Problematic in *Hard Times*". *The Changing World of Charles Dickens*. Ed. R. Giddings. London: Vision Press. 91-108.

Traugott, E. C. 1988. "Pragmatic strengthening and grammaticalization". *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*. Eds. S. Axmaker, A. Jaisser, and H. Singmaster. Berkeley, Ca.: Berkeley Linguistics Society. 406-416.

Several authors. A journal article with three authors:

Golberg, H., Paradis, J. and M. Crago. 2008. "Lexical acquisition over time in minority first language children learning English as a second language". *Applied Psycholinguistics* 29: 41-65.

Magazine article in a weekly or biweekly publication:

Allen, B. 1995. "Leaving Behind Daydreams for Nightmares". *Wall Street Journal*, 11 October, A12.

A **review** in a journal:

Judie Newman. 2007. "*Fictions of America. Narratives of Global Empire*", by P. Martín Salván. *Atlantis* 31 (1): 165-170.

An **unpublished dissertation**:

Arús, J. 2003. *Towards a Computational Specification of Transitivity in Spanish: A Contrastive Study with English*. Unpublished Ph. D. thesis. Universidad Complutense de Madrid: Spain.

An **on-line** publication:

Pierce, David. "Irish Studies round the world-2007: Introduction." <http://www.estudiosirlandeses.org/Issue3/Issue3InternationalReviews/PdfIStudiesRoundtheWorldbyDPierce.pdf>. (Accessed 7 May 2008)

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES (JES)

Política Editorial, Presentación de Originales y Hoja de Estilo

1. POLÍTICA EDITORIAL

1.1. Descripción de la revista. *JES* es una publicación del Área de Filología Inglesa del Departamento de Filologías Modernas de la Universidad de la Rioja dedicada a la difusión de estudios en todas las áreas de investigación que se engloban en el ámbito de los Estudios Ingleses. Se aceptarán para su publicación, previo informe favorable de dos evaluadores anónimos, trabajos originales que se integren en alguna de las áreas temáticas relacionadas con los Estudios Ingleses (lingüística, literatura, teoría literaria, estudios culturales, estudios fílmicos, etc.), debiendo acogerse además a alguna de las siguientes modalidades:

A. Artículos sobre cualquiera de las áreas temáticas que se engloban dentro de los Estudios Ingleses (mínimo 15 y máximo 30 páginas a doble espacio, incluyendo referencias bibliográficas, notas, apéndices, figuras y tablas).
B: Reseñas y recensiones de libros recientes publicados en el campo de los Estudios Ingleses (máximo 8 páginas a doble espacio).
C. Notas o reflexiones críticas breves (*squibs*) (máximo 6 páginas a doble espacio).

Excepcionalmente, y siempre acompañados de un informe positivo del *Consejo Científico*, se admitirán trabajos que superen la extensión indicada, cuando la relevancia de los mismos lo justifique.

1.2. Idioma. JES sólo admite propuestas de publicación escritas en inglés.

1.3. Evaluación. Los trabajos serán remitidos a dos evaluadores anónimos propuestos por los miembros del *Consejo de Redacción* y/o *Consejo Científico* de *JES*. Es requisito imprescindible para la publicación de los trabajos la obtención de dos evaluaciones positivas. La evaluación se efectuará en relación a los siguientes criterios:

– Originalidad e interés en cuanto a tema, método, datos, resultados, etc.
– Pertinencia en relación con las investigaciones actuales en el área.
– Revisión de trabajos de otros autores sobre el mismo asunto.
– Rigor en la argumentación y en el análisis.
– Precisión en el uso de conceptos y métodos.
– Discusión de implicaciones y aspectos teóricos del tema estudiado.

– Utilización de bibliografía actualizada.
– Corrección lingüística, organización y presentación formal del texto.
– Claridad, elegancia y concisión expositivas.
– Adecuación a la temática propia de *JES*.

La evaluación se realizará respetando el anonimato, tanto de los autores como de los evaluadores; posteriormente, en el plazo de tres meses desde la recepción del artículo, los autores recibirán los correspondientes informes sobre sus trabajos, junto con la decisión editorial sobre la pertinencia de su publicación, sin que exista la posibilidad de correspondencia posterior sobre los resultados de la evaluación.

1.4. Revisión y pruebas de imprenta. Si fuera necesaria la revisión de alguno de los aspectos formales o de contenido de la propuesta de publicación, ésta será responsabilidad exclusiva del autor, quien deberá entregar el documento informático de la nueva versión corregida en el plazo establecido por la dirección de la revista. De no hacerlo así, el trabajo no será publicado aunque hubiera sido evaluado positivamente.

Asimismo, los autores son responsables de la corrección de las pruebas de imprenta, debiendo remitir los textos corregidos en el plazo indicado por la dirección de la revista.

1.5. Copyright. Los autores se comprometen a que sus propuestas de publicación sean originales, no habiendo sido publicadas previamente, ni enviadas a evaluar a otras revistas. La publicación de artículos en *JES* no da derecho a remuneración alguna; los derechos de edición pertenecen a *JES* y es necesario su permiso para cualquier reproducción parcial o total cuya procedencia, en todo caso, será de citación obligatoria.

1.6. Política de intercambio. *JES* está interesado en realizar intercambios con otras publicaciones similares dentro del campo de los estudios ingleses o de otras áreas de conocimiento relacionadas.

2. ENVÍO DE PROPUESTAS

Los trabajos se remitirán en formato Word o RTF como documentos adjuntos de correo electrónico a la secretaria de la revista:

Dr. Mª Pilar Agustín Llach

Secretaria de *JES*

E-mail: maria-del-pilar.agustin@unirioja.es

For further information, contact the Editor of *JES*

Dr. Melania Terrazas Gallego

E-mail: melania.terrazas@unirioja.es

Antes de ser enviados a evaluar, la presentación de los originales ha de ajustarse a las siguientes normas.

3. INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS AUTORES

3.1. Qué enviar. Los autores enviarán sus propuestas por correo electrónico, indicando el título del trabajo que se envía para evaluar de cara a su publicación en *JES*.

Junto con el mensaje, los autores enviarán dos documentos en formato Word o RTF. En el primer documento, los autores incluirán el título del artículo (en **negrita**), el nombre (en Versalita), la afiliación del autor o autores (en *cursiva*) y cualquier otra información relevante como su dirección postal y la de correo electrónico o el número de teléfono y de fax.

En el caso de autoría compartida, se indicará el nombre y la dirección de correo electrónico de la persona a quien deben dirigirse la correspondencia y las pruebas de imprenta.

Los autores deberán incluir también una breve nota biográfica (de unas 100 palabras).

El segundo documento contendrá el artículo que ha de enviarse para su evaluación. Por tanto los autores deberán ser extremadamente cautos para evitar que aparezca cualquier tipo de información personal que permita identificar a los autores del trabajo.

3.2. Tablas, figuras e imágenes. Deberán incluirse en el texto en el lugar adecuado. Las imágenes se guardarán en formato JPG o TIFF con una resolución de 300 dpi, tamaño final.

3.3. Información sobre copyright. En el caso de que una parte del artículo se haya presentado con anterioridad en un congreso, se debe incluir una nota en la que se indique el nombre del congreso, el de la institución que lo organizó, las fechas exactas del congreso o el día en el que se presentó la ponencia y la ciudad donde se celebró el congreso. La obtención de los permisos necesarios para utilizar material sujeto a copyright es responsabilidad de los autores.

4. PREPARACIÓN DEL MANUSCRITO

4.1. Formato. Se ruega reducir al mínimo el número de formatos. No se utilizarán sangrías, subrayados o tabulaciones a menos que sea absolutamente necesario.

4.2. Documento. La medida de todos los márgenes (izquierdo, derecho, superior e inferior) en el documento será de 2,54 cms. Todos los párrafos estarán justificados y se utilizará la letra Garamond de 12 puntos para el texto y la bibliografía, de 11 puntos para las citas que aparezcan en un párrafo separado de la estructura del texto y de 10 puntos para los resúmenes o abstracts, las palabras clave, las notas, los números sobrescritos, las tablas y las figuras.

4.3. Título. El título del artículo se presentará centrado con letra Garamond 12 negrita. Se utilizarán las mayúsculas tanto para el título, como para el subtítulo, si lo hubiera.

El título deberá estar traducido al español. El editor se encargará de la traducción cuando el autor no sepa español.

4.4. Resumen y palabras clave. El título inglés y el español irán seguidos de sendos resúmenes (de entre 100 y 150 palabras cada uno): el primero, en inglés, y el segundo en español. El editor se encargará de la traducción cuando el autor no sepa español. Los resúmenes se presentarán en letra Garamond de 10 puntos y en *cursiva* (los títulos de libros y las palabras clave irán en caracteres normales), con justificación completa, a un solo espacio y sangrados un centímetro del margen izquierdo. Los resúmenes no podrán incluir notas al pie. La palabra RESUMEN/ ABSTRACT (en caracteres normales y mayúsculas) estarán separados del resumen por un punto y un espacio.

Cada resumen irá seguido de una lista de seis *palabras clave* en el idioma correspondiente: inglés o español, para facilitar así la clasificación correcta de los artículos en índices de referencia internacional. La palabra *Palabras clave/ Keywords* (en cursiva), seguidas de dos puntos y un espacio, precederán a los términos elegidos.

4.5. Párrafos. La distancia entre los párrafos será la misma que la utilizada en el espacio interlineal, y por lo que se refiere a la primera línea de cada párrafo, ésta irá sangrada un centímetro hacia la derecha. No se dividirán palabras al final de una línea. Se incluirá solo un espacio entre palabras y un solo espacio después de cada signo de puntuación.

4.6. Cursiva. Las palabras en una lengua diferente a la de la redacción del texto aparecerán en cursiva; asimismo se empleará este tipo de letra para resaltar

alguna palabra clave, y cuando esto suceda en un fragmento textual en cursiva, se procederá de modo contrario, i.e., se destacará la palabra clave en caracteres normales.

4.7. Figuras, ilustraciones y tablas. Las figuras, ilustraciones y tablas deberán ir numeradas con cifras arábigas y se hará referencia a sus números dentro del texto (v.gr., como vemos en la imagen/ilustración/tabla/ejemplo 1). Irán acompañadas de un pie en el que se indique su contenido (en letra Garamond de 10 puntos y en *cursiva* y a un solo espacio).

4.8. Títulos de los apartados. Los títulos de los apartados se presentarán en letra versalita común, numerados con cifras arábigas que estarán separadas del título por un punto y un espacio (v.gr., 1. Introduction); los títulos estarán separados del texto anterior por dos líneas y del texto siguiente por una.

Los títulos de los subapartados se anotarán en *cursiva* común y serán nuevamente numerados (v. gr., 1.1., 1.2., 1.3.), debiendo separarse tanto del texto que antecede como del texto siguiente por una línea.

Los niveles inferiores a los subapartados deberán evitarse en lo posible. Si se utilizan serán numerados igualmente con cifras arábigas y se escribirán en texto común (v. gr., 1.1.1., 1.1.2.; 1.1.1.1., 1.1.1.2.).

4.9. Aclaraciones. En los casos en los que se hagan aclaraciones en las que no se utilice un paréntesis sino guiones, el guión estará separado tanto de la primera como de la última palabra de la aclaración por un espacio, como el en ejemplo:

> "Teaching in English **– as many subjects as possible –** seems to offer a **second-best** solution insofar as it entails much more exposure of the foreign language".

4.10. Puntuación. La puntuación ortográfica (coma, punto, punto y coma, dos puntos, etc) deberá colocarse detrás de las comillas (";).

La escritura en mayúsculas conservará, en su caso, la acentuación gráfica correspondiente (v. gr., INTRODUCCIÓN, LINGÜÍSTICA, BIBLIOGRAFÍA).

Se utilizará un apóstrofe (') y no una tilde (') en abreviaturas y genitivos sajón.

4.11. Notas al pie. Las notas al pie serán breves y aclaratorias. Como regla general, se evitará el uso de notas al pie para registrar únicamente referencias bibliográficas. Se incorporarán al final de página. Los números de nota sobreescritos estarán separados del texto de la nota por un espacio.

Las notas irán numeradas con cifras arábigas consecutivas que se colocarán detrás de todos los signos de puntuación (incluidos paréntesis y comillas).

4.12. Citas. Las citas textuales de hasta cuatro líneas de longitud se integrarán en el texto e irán señaladas mediante comillas dobles. Las comillas simples se

utilizarán para ubicar citas dentro de las citas (v.gr., "toward a unified policy that 'natural' English was altogether preferable").

Las citas de extensión igual o superior a cuatro líneas se presentarán en un párrafo separado del texto por una línea, tanto al principio como al final, y sin comillas, en letra Garamond 11 y sangradas a 1,5 cms. del margen izquierdo.

Las omisiones dentro de las citas se indicarán por medio de puntos suspensivos entre corchetes (v. gr., […]).

4.13. Referencias en el texto. Las referencias a las citas deben hacerse en el propio texto entre paréntesis. Dentro del paréntesis deberá incluirse el apellido del autor, seguido de un espacio, seguido de la fecha de publicación, seguida de dos puntos y un espacio, seguidos del número o número de páginas. Ejemplo:

> "Certainly, the conventional romance plot is a construction of the ideology of patriarchy" (Brush 1994: 238).

Cuando en la frase se cita el nombre del autor (ejemplo 1) o la fecha de publicación (ejemplo 2), esa información no debe repetirse en el paréntesis:

Ejemplo 1:

> Johnson has drawn our attention to the fact that we are aware of our bodies as three-dimensional containers (1987: 21).

Ejemplo 2:

> In appearance and aspirations he is culturally androgynous like Frankie. He is sexually ambivalent and "Light Skinned" (McCullers 1962: 155) and "could talk like a white school-teacher" (48).

Cuando la cita incluye varias páginas, los números de página aparecerán completos, como en el ejemplo:

> In the world she would create "there would be no separate coloured people […] but all human beings would be light brown colour with blue eyes and black hair. There would be no coloured people and no white people to make coloured people feel cheap and sorry all through their lives" (McCullers 1962: 114-115).

Cuando se citan varias obras a la vez en el mismo paréntesis, éstas deben ser ordenadas cronológicamente y separadas entre sí por un punto y coma:

> (Richards 1971: 210; Arabski 1979: 43; Selinker 1991: 16)

Cuando se citan dos o más obras del mismo autor publicadas en el mismo año, se debe añadir una letra minúscula al año, como en el ejemplo:

> (Montrose 1986a: 332) (Montrose 1986b: 9)

Las referencias entre paréntesis deben colocarse inmediatamente después de cada cita, independientemente de si la cita se incluye en el propio texto como si aparece en un párrafo aparte. La referencia debe colocarse después de las comillas pero antes de la coma o del signo de puntuación si la cita aparece en el propio texto:

> The readers being addressed are mainly white and anglophone, for, as Atwood said "survival was part of the English-Canadian cultural nationalism that peaked in about 1975" (1981: 387).

En cambio, si la cita está en un párrafo aparte, la referencia se sitúa después del signo de puntuación:

Even Cranny-Francis points to the subversive potential of the romance plot:

> Romance is often written into texts dominated by other genres, such as SF, utopian or detective fiction, where it may operate as one of the conventions of those genres. Feminist revisions of these genres also use romance and, in dialogue with other generic conventions, it has been used successfully to interrogate the construction of masculinity and femininity and of interpersonal relationships. (1990: 190)

4.14. Referencias bibliográficas. Todos (y solamente aquellos) libros y artículos citados o parafraseados en el texto (incluyendo los que aparecen en la notas al pie) deben aparecer en una lista de referencias bibliográficas al final del documento, de modo que complete la información dada en las citas entre paréntesis a lo largo del texto.

Esta lista se agrupará bajo el título REFERENCES, escrito en mayúsculas, en letra Garamond 12 común, sin numerar y en un párrafo a doble espacio separado del texto por dos espacios en blanco.

Cada una de las referencias bibliográficas aparecerá en un párrafo a doble espacio, con una sangría francesa (en la que se sangran todas las líneas del párrafo excepto la primera) de 1 cm., en letra Garamond 12 común.

La lista estará ordenada alfabéticamente y cronológicamente, en el caso de que se citen dos o más obras del mismo autor. El nombre completo del autor se repetirá en todos los casos. Ejemplo:

Langacker, R. 1991. *Foundations of cognitive grammar 2: Descriptive application*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Wierzbicka, A. 1988. *The Semantics of Grammar*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Wierzbicka, A. 1992. *Semantics, Culture, and Cognition: Universal Human Concepts in Culture-Specific Configurations*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Libros. Las referencias a libros completos deberán incluir: apellidos y nombre del autor; año de publicación (entre paréntesis el de la primera edición, si es distinta); el título (en cursiva); el lugar de publicación; y la editorial. Si el libro es una traducción, se indicará al final el nombre del traductor. Se ruega a los autores que presten atención a la puntuación en los siguientes ejemplos:

Taylor, J. R. 1995 (1989). *Linguistic Categorization: Prototypes in Linguistic Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Kristeva, J. 2000. *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt*. New York: Columbia University Press. Trans. Jeanine Herman.

Artículos. En las referencias a artículos, los títulos de los artículos aparecerán entre comillas; el de la revista en la que aparecen en cursiva; seguidos del volumen y el número (entre parentesis) de la revista. Luego irán los números de páginas, separados por dos puntos:

Haiman, J. 1978. "Conditionals are topics". *Language* 54 (2): 564-589.

Frye, N. 1940. "The Resurgent". *Canadian Forum* 19: 357-61.

Libros editados. Las obras editadas por uno o varios autores deberán citarse como sigue (se utilizarán las abreviaturas ed. o eds.):

Miller, N. C., ed. 1986. *The Poetics of Gender*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Richards, J. C. and D. Nunan, eds. 1990. *Second Language Teacher Education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Artículos publicados en libros. Las referencias a artículos publicados en obras editadas por otros autores o en actas de congresos se escribirán como se indica en el ejemplo:

Fowler, R. 1983. "Polyphony and Problematic in *Hard Times*". *The Changing World of Charles Dickens*. Ed. R. Giddings. London: Vision Press. 91-108.

Traugott, E. C. 1988. "Pragmatic strengthening and grammaticalization". *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*. Eds. S. Axmaker, A. Jaisser, and H. Singmaster. Berkeley, Ca.: Berkeley Linguistics Society. 406-416.

Varios autores. Artículo de revista con tres autores:

Golberg, H., Paradis, J. and M. Crago. 2008. "Lexical acquisition over time in minority first language children learning English as a second language". *Applied Psycholinguistics* 29: 41-65.

Artículo en una publicación semanal o quincenal:

Allen, B. 1995. "Leaving Behind Daydreams for Nightmares". *Wall Street Journal*, 11 October, A12.

Reseña en una revista:

Judie Newman. 2007. "*Fictions of America. Narratives of Global Empire*", by P. Martín Salván. *Atlantis* 31 (1): 165-170.

Tesis sin publicar:

Arús, J. 2003. *Towards a Computational Specification of Transitivity in Spanish: A Contrastive Study with English*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. Universidad Complutense de Madrid: Spain.

Publicaciones **on-line**:

Pierce, David. "Irish Studies round the world-2007: Introduction." <http://www.estudiosirlandeses.org/Issue3/Issue3InternationalReviews/PdfIStudiesRoundtheWorldbyDPierce.pdf>. (Accessed 7 May 2008)

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Journal of English Studies (JES) invites submissions for issue n. 9 on all areas of research within the domain of English Studies (linguistics, literature, literary theory, film studies, cultural studies, etc.). *The Journal of English Studies* is published by the Modern Languages Department at the University of La Rioja. All articles must be written in English. For further information about the guidelines for publication, please, visit: http://publicaciones.uniroja.es/revistas/jes.shtml.

Deadline for submissions: February 15th, 2011.

Manuscripts should be sent via e-mail directly to the Secretary of JES:

Dr. Mª Pilar Agustín Llach
Journal of English Studies (JES)
E-mail: maria-del-pilar.agustin@unirioja.es
Tel. 941 299 435
Fax: 941 299 419

For further information, contact the Editor of JES:

Dr. Melania Terrazas Gallego
E-mail: melania.terrazas@unirioja.es
Tel. 941 299 420
Fax: 941 299 419

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

ISSN 1576-6357
VOL. 8 (2010)

CONTENTS

UNIVERSIDAD DE LA RIOJA