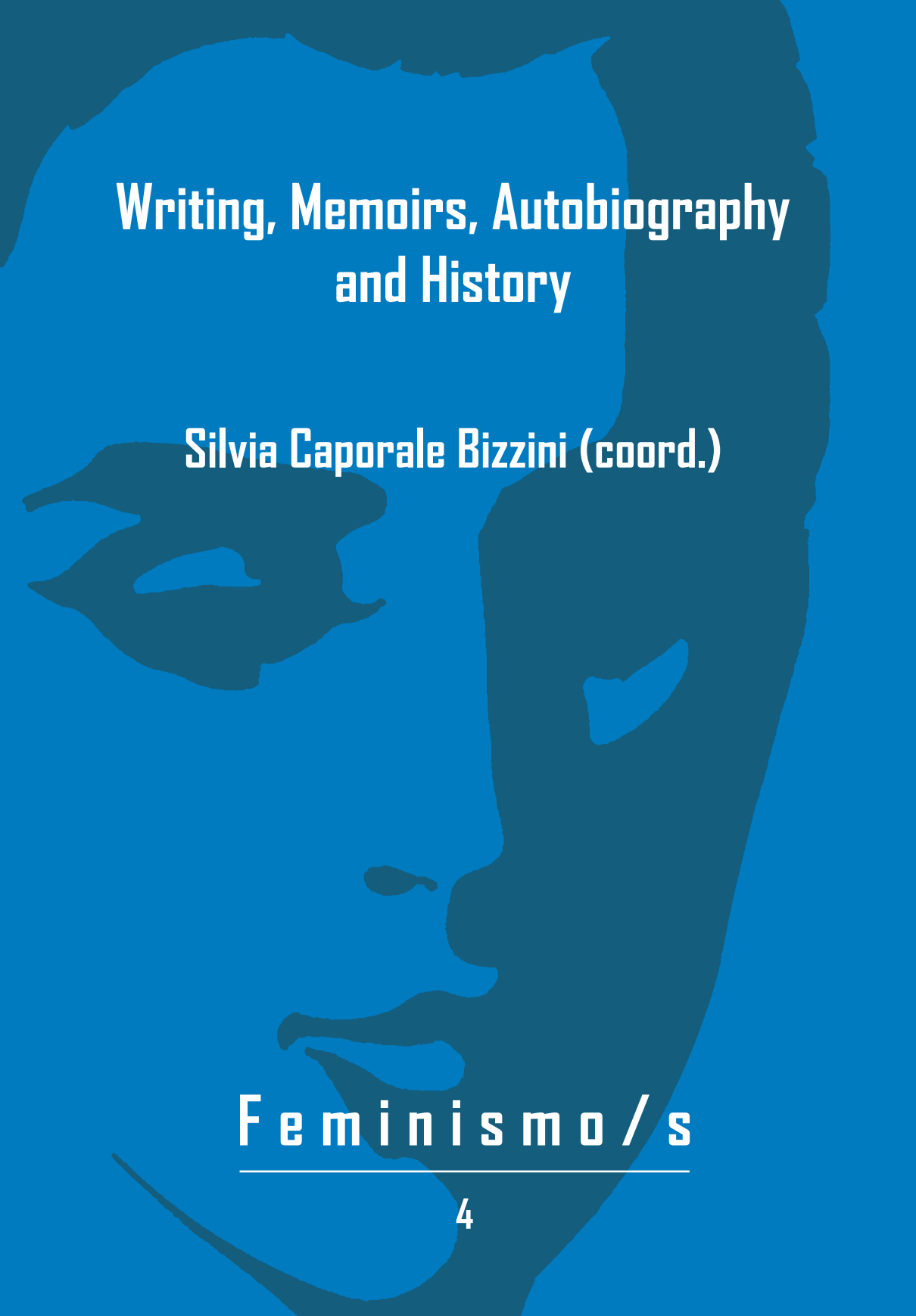

Writing, Memoirs, Autobiography and History

Silvia Caporale Bizzini (coord.)

Feminismo/s

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REDACCIÓN
Centro de Estudios sobre la Mujer de la Universidad de Alicante
Campus de Sant Vicent del Raspeig
Apdo. 99 E-03080 Alicante
Tel. 965 90 94 15 - Fax 965 90 96 58
e-mail: cem@ua.es - web: http://www.ua.es/cem

SUSCRIPCIÓN
Centro de Estudios sobre la Mujer de la Universidad de Alicante
Campus de Sant Vicent del Raspeig
Apdo. 99 E-03080 Alicante
Tel. 965 90 94 15 - Fax 965 90 96 58
e-mail: cem@ua.es - web: http://www.ua.es/cem
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PREFACE

SILVIA CAPORALE BIZZINI
University of Alicante

Writing, gender, history. These three concepts frequently lie behind the most varied instances of expression, ranging from recent wars to modern cartography, and including more subtle –but regrettably, commonplace– forms. Three key words to understand the cultural processes which shape contemporary society and which underlie the discourse, words and images that surround us.

In one way or another, our personal circumstances are continually shaping our cultural and intellectual universe, and no piece of academic work is ever born of indifference, but rather of an eagerness, of an inquiring mind, of something that either concerns us or appeals to us, and for which we feel a pressing need to know more, to investigate in order to comprehend. By employing study methods free of essentialist doctrines, the authors whose essays we publish examine and discuss the ways in which autobiographical experience and history shape gender in the written text. As intellectuals, writers have an important role to play in balancing the power/knowledge relationship and questioning the ahistorical nature of cultural mythology (as Roland Barthes maintained).

Writing that re-appropriates the first-person *I,* making it both subject and object of our own discourse, thus refuses to remain invisible and breaks with the feeling of «foreignness» in a cultural environment we supposedly identify with. Julia Kristeva, author of *Extranjeros para nosotros mismos*, dedicates a section of her book to the role of silence –and its significanc– in the life of a «foreigner». This term can be interpreted in several different ways, either literally or by giving it another connotation. For example, we could apply the term to a woman living in a culture run along masculine lines, and whose language not only does not belong to her but is in effect a foreign language: a language she knows perfectly and which she has had to learn and use at school, at work, in everyday life, but which is not hers. A language that traps her in thought structures which do not allow her to express herself fully and which compel her to keep silent –and not always in the metaphorical sense. Sara Suleri, a

writer of Anglo-Pakistani origin, expresses –in an autobiographical text– this feeling of partial alienation, as follows:

> «To a stranger or an acquaintance, however, some vestigial remoteness obliges me to explain that my reference is to a place where the concept of woman was not really part of an available vocabulary: we were too busy for that, just living and conducting precise negotiations with what it meant to be a sister or a child or a wife or a mother or a servant. By this point admittedly I am damned by my own discourse, and doubly damned when I add yes, once in a while, we naturally thought of ourselves as women, but only in some perfunctory biological way that we happened on perchance»[1]

The silence that Kristeva refers to becomes an absence which she defines as «… a silence that empties the mind, only to fill it with feelings of suffocation and oppression»; thus it represents the foreigner's prison, the cage of the animal that leaves its territory in search of freedom, only to find a different culture that –with language as its weapon– imprisons it within the confines of silence. For Kristeva, the inability to speak out is the result of this silence imposed on an identity that finds itself on the margins and which, for this very reason, becomes an absence, a lack, something that is *not*:

> «Not only has silence been imposed on you, it was already in you: your refusal to speak out, your long-cherished dream coupled with an anguish that stubbornly remains unspoken, your proud and tortured discretion, a blinding light. Nothing to say, nothing, nobody on the horizon. And an impenetrable lack of fulfilment: cold diamond, carefully protected secret treasure, unattainable. Not to say anything, nothing should be said, nothing can be said»[2]

If we consider studies of the autobiographical genre, we can see how writing offers an acceptable answer to the dilemma faced by Kristeva's «foreigner». The extensive Feminist literary theory concerning the use of autobiographical writing is based on solid premises. If «Literature is political», as Fetterley once declared, then autobiographical accounts have a fundamental role to play in the necessary re/defining of the ontology of feminine identity, while the choice of texts and the critical stance taken are in themselves autobiographical acts which, in turn, may result in hybrid forms of autobiographical narrative.

Judith Swindell, in *The Uses of Autobiography* (1995), stresses how the autobiographical genre is representative of the need of the first-person narrator to express the desire to fight, the tension, the rebelliousness, and the protest, and in general terms, the conflicts that arise between our conscience and the world around us, between people and the ideological construction(s) that shape their lives. In this same volume, Laura Marcus highlights a number of very interesting ideas. The «democratization» of the autobiographical genre (13) has become a reality, since autobiographical writing has redefined and

1. Suleri, Sara: «Excellent Things in Women», in *Meatless Days*, London, Flamingo, 1991, p. 1
2. Kristeva, Julia: *Extranjeros para nosotros mismos*, Barcelona, Plaza & Janés, 1991, p. 25.

incorporated life stories, as well as rethinking «memoirs» (memory work, 13). The incorporation of accessible narrative techniques that have not traditionally belonged to literature, has introduced an element of «literary hybridism» which, I believe, helps to illustrate and encourage the different ontologies of *self* that appear in autobiographical accounts in a deeper and more meaningful way.

One of the points that strikes me most about Markus's essay is the relationship that she draws between autobiography as a literary genre and its intrinsic capacity to bring together different disciplines: here, the interdisciplinary nature of much autobiographical writing echoes the new trends in cultural criticism and exemplifies a «...more conceptual approach» (16) to the rewriting of subjectivity, the notion of collective memory, and confessional literature (or testimonies). Another area that has complicated –or enriched– the literary panorama through its hybrid stance, is that of posthumous auto/biographical works, or those that play with autobiographical and biographical elements.

The articles that make up this edition of *Feminism/s* all spring from the ineluctable question marks raised by the words *writing, gender,* and *history*. Literature, clearly understood as the result and product of a particular historical and socio-cultural context, here becomes the medium through which we can question the power/knowledge relationship and the discursive practices that enclose identity within the limits set by the essentialist notion of what it means to be a woman or a man. The thoughts and ideas put forward in these articles also draw their inspiration from the historical moment in which we live, as well as from the need to reread the way feminine identity is represented in the autobiographical genre. We hope that the essays featured in this edition will meet the aims and expectations of our readers.

ESSAYS

YOUR HISTORY, MY NARRATIVE: UNCOVERING ME THROUGH YOU

NAWAR AL-HASSAN GOLLEY
American University of Sharjah (UAE)

This paper examines three books, *Khul-Khaal*[1], *Doing Daily Battle*[2] and *Both Right and Left Handed*[3], all of which were published in the 1980s. Their subtitles, *Five Egyptian Women Tell Their Stories*, *Interviews with Moroccan Women* and *Arab Women Talk About Their Lives* respectively, indicate that all three books contain life stories of women from Arab countries. These books, then, fall into one category, not only because of their subject matter but also because they raise similar sets of questions relating to their technique and conditions of production.

The paper offers a critique of the process of stereotyping and generalization drawn from these anthologies by the authors/editors themselves, as in *Khul-Khaal*, and comment on how readers also tend to generalize even without editorial prompting (a process discussed later when analyzing the other two texts). Nonetheless, these same texts, read carefully, can be potentially good sources of knowledge. This paper does not read these anthologies ethnographically, that is, it does not take the interviewee as typical of Arab culture, which is known to be too complex to be represented by these women alone. However, some conclusions, which necessarily entail some kind of generalization, about how a common culture affects self-image, can be drawn. Common culture here does not refer to a monolithic Arab culture as such but to the similar social and economic conditions which some of the women share. This paper also examines how class and economic positions interact with gender in these anthologies and produce different forms of oppression. Any

1. Atiya, Nayra: *Khul-Khaal: Five Egyptian Women Tell Their Stories*, London, Virago, 1988, hereafter *Khul-Khaal*.
2. Mernissi, Fatima: *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women*, Mary Jo Lakeland (trans.), London, The Women's Press, 1988, hereafter *Doing Daily Battle*.
3. Shaaban, Bouthaina: *Both Right and left Handed: Arab Women Talk About Their Lives*, London, The Women's Press, 1988, hereafter *Both Right and Left Handed*.

generalizations in this paper should not be harmful nor should they entail the risk of stereotyping involved in the cruder kinds of ethnographic reading.

1. TEXTUAL STRATEGIES: CONTROL AND DIALOGUE

To start with, each of these books is multi-authored, in the sense that each one contains life stories of the interviewees and of the interviewer herself to different degrees. Although they are multi-authored, only one name is presented on the cover of each book as the writer. This is justified in so far as the interviewed women did not themselves write their stories but told them, orally, to the interviewers. Nor did they initiate the telling of their stories, without which these books would have been impossible; their stories were instead solicited by academic Arab women, Nayra Atiya, Fatima Mernissi and Bouthaina Shaaban respectively, whose names we read under the titles of the books. These books are also multi edited, or at least doubly edited. Selectivity, which is necessarily practiced by any person who decides to record personal autobiography or memoirs, is here imposed according to specific criteria upon the interviewed women who, at the request of Atiya, Mernissi and Shaaban, answered certain selected questions about their lives. This is not to deny that the women themselves also, consciously or unconsciously, practiced selectivity. For they too must have chosen what to reveal in their answers and what to keep hidden. Generally speaking, all people exercise a strategy of deciding what to say depending upon whom they are addressing or who is likely to read or hear them.

The question of the implied or intended audience is especially relevant to these books. For they all are edited, structured, produced and translated, in a word, textualized for potential western readers. But the books have not been published in Arabic at all; Atiya and Shaaban translated the interviews and published them in English. Mernissi originally wrote her book in French, which was later translated for English readers by Mary Jo Lakeland. The way in which each individual book is textualized is examined later. For now, I want to argue that the fact that these books were published in English and French make them more ethnographic material than simply life stories of Arab women. I use the term «ethnographic» not in the sense that the interviewed women are taken by Atiya, Mernissi or Shaaban to be the «savage», «primitive» or «tribal» «others» who are the subjects of many ethnographic studies. The authors/editors intention cannot be said to be the same as that of a western ethnographer who merely seeks the knowledge of an «other», usually perceived as «inferior», for private or public reasons, or both. For besides wishing to display some kind of an alternative knowledge to western readers, the editors of these anthologies also aim, as their first objective so they claim, to allow a public «voice» for the women who have been unrepresented or underrepresented. An English or French reader is still bound to read the interviewed women as «exotic others», however, and thus read their stories ethnographically.

Whether intentionally or not, these books are made polemical. On the one hand, the titles and sub-titles present the books as stories of individual

Arab women; in their introductions, the interviewers themselves declare their objective of wanting to break the silence of the underprivileged by allowing them a voice through which each of them can express herself freely and publicly. On the other hand, another objective for Atiya, Mernissi and Shaaban, as they themselves admit, is to reveal to western readers their limited and mystified knowledge of Arab women. These works include the stories of many women, from the illiterate to the professional (in Atiya's book there are no professional women as such, but two women went to preparatory school). The writers of these books, especially Shaaban, hope to show the diversity of conditions of Arab women and to present them as powerful and always struggling to better themselves by the means available to them, in contrast to what has been believed about them in the west. Demystifying the harem, which (except in some areas) nowadays hardly exists beyond western fantasies and discourse, is one of the main aims of these texts. Thus, these books offer a kind of knowledge about Arab women in general. The voices of these women cease to be voices of individual women; their stories are presented to be read and remembered mostly as typical of Arab women.

The number of women whose life stories are included in each book also contributes to their typification. Five women are interviewed in *Khul-Khaal,* twelve in *Doing Daily Battle* and several dozen in *Both Right and Left Handed*. It becomes difficult for the reader to remember whose story is whose, either because the stories are so similar, as in Atiya's book, or because of the large number of women who are assigned limited space for their stories (as in the other two books). Moreover, the names of the women in *Khul-Khaal* are concealed under false ones, which makes them even more into types rather than individuals to be distinguished by their real names.

Furthermore, the nature of these books is dialogic: they are based on the question/answer model of interviews. Atiya, Mernissi and Shaaban have conducted «discourses», an adequate term for such interviews borrowed from Emile Benveniste, whose definition of discourse as «a mode of communication in which the presence of the speaking subject and of the immediate situation of communication are intrinsic»[4] is relevant to my reading of the three texts. According to Benveniste's definition, discourse should not be read outside its specific situation or occasion in which «a subject appropriates the resources of language in order to communicate dialogically»[5]. The women, in their answers, did not transcend the immediate context and the limited situation in which dialogues were communicated through language. The use of «I» (which necessarily implies a «you»), and of other deictic indicators, such as «this», «that», «now», and so on, signals «the present instance of discourse rather than something beyond it»[6]. In Benveniste's sense, then, discourse cannot or should

4. Quoted in Clifford, James: *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth- Century Ethnography, Literature and Art,* Cambridge, London and Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1988, p. 39
5. Ibid., p. 39.
6. Ibid., p. 39.

not be interpreted outside its situation. But Atiya, Mernissi and Shaaban did interpret the interviewees' discourses through the process of transforming them into texts. This process is called textualization, which is defined by James Clifford as a process through which unwritten behavior, speech, beliefs, oral tradition, and ritual come to be marked as a corpus, a potentially meaningful ensemble removed from an immediate discursive or performative situation[7].

Textualization, then, is the shaping and preparation process which precedes interpretation of a discourse. I want to add to Clifford's comments, that the process of textualization implies within it some kind of a conscious or unconscious generalization and typification, which also might lead to falsification. A textualized discourse may be turned into evidence of a generalized context, a cultural one. The textualization of the dialogic mode makes a type of a person. The subjectivities of the interviewed women are dissolved in the texts, but to varying degrees. In *Khul-Khaal*, textualization is taken to its extreme, whereas preserving the format of question and answer, as in the other two books, limit the extent of the process of textualization.

Before examining the extent of typification through textualization in each book separately, I want to argue that the convention of these kinds of texts (which are based on orally told stories conducted through interviews) was used by ethnographers as early as the nineteenth century. This method became valuable to anthropologists because it gave «the imprimatur of authenticity to their observations of the lifestyles» of the various «native» groups[8]. An American Indian, for example, may be interviewed over a period of time by a «white» ethnographer (who sometimes lives in the same household or nearby and probably learns some of the Indian's language) for the purpose of publishing a book, presenting it as the memoir or the autobiography of the interviewed Indian as written by him/herself.[9] The question/answer model is, of course, repressed in a first-person narrative, and the narrative is usually supplied with many footnotes and pictures as well as forewords, introductions, appendices and glossaries, usually with the help of a translator whose role is equally obscured. The interviewer who is also the editor and probably the translator, denies any significant interference, and, in effect, effaces him/herself in an attempt to claim full neutrality, sincerity and authenticity in the disguised descriptive ethnography. Atiya's text fits adequately in this structure (explained later).

Recent ethnographers, who have realized the need to announce themselves as the actual writers and interpreters of such so-called autobiographical accounts,

7. Ibid., p. 38.
8. In Helen CARR's «Native American Women's Autobiography», p. 2, who was kind enough to post me a copy of her article before publishing.
9. Examples of such autobiographies: JACKSON, Donald (ed.): *The Life of Black Hawk: An Autobiography,* Urbana, University of Illinois, 1933; BARRETT, S. M. (ed. 1906), newly edited by Frederick W Turner III: *Geronimo: His Own Story,* London, Abacus, 1974; LURIE, Nancy O. (ed.): *Mountain Wolf Woman: Sister of Crashing Thunder,* Ann Arbor, Michigan University Press, 1961.

keep the basic interview model in the final production of their texts. Presenting the discursive process in the form of a dialogue between two individuals somehow balances the authority of the ethnographer, it is claimed. That is, it gives a voice to the interviewee, whose knowledge as the other is sought, a voice which is no less distinct than that of the interviewer. This new mode is supposed to lessen the ethnographer's authoritative representation of the «other»; it does not completely stop typifying the «other» as a representative of a culture, however, although it does so to a lesser extent than in the repressed dialogic model. An example of such recent ethnographic material is a book called *Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan* (1980) written by Vincent Crapanzano who questions ethnographic authority from within the discipline[10].

Although these texts under examination are not written for ethnographic disciplines, in form, at least, they fit in this area. Like ethnographic books, these kinds of texts have had an increasing market in the west since the 1950s and form a new type of knowledge for westerners who for centuries have been studying and speaking for the rest of the world. Their classification as books on social conditions of women in Arab countries brings them even closer to ethnography. Technically speaking, Atiya's book fits in the first model whereas Mernissi's and Shaaban's books fit in the second. One main difference between ethnographic writing and the texts I am reading is that the writers of these texts are not foreign to the areas where they are conducting their interviews. They are western-educated Arab women. Their intention to present their material to westerners however, makes their situation almost similar to that of American and European ethnographers who seek knowledge of what they usually see as (inferior) «other» cultures. Although the women interviewed in these books are not «the other» as such for Mernissi and Shaaban, they are so for Atiya, who went to Egypt as an adult woman from the United States. But of course, even within one geographic area, «the other» may be constructed through class, education and dialectal difference.

2. KHUL-KHAAL: REPRESSED DIALOGUE

Khul-Khaal was first published in 1982 by Syracuse University Press in New York, and was republished by Virago in London in 1988 with an afterword by Nawal el-Saadawi (references here are to the London edition). The book also has a foreword by Andrea B. Rugh, a professional American anthropologist, who reads the book from this standpoint. These stories «provide a mine of information for anthropologists and others seeking an understanding of Egyptian culture», she comments. This has been stressed by Saadawi who reads the five women as «typically Egyptian». Rugh makes generalizations from these five stories about «Muslim women» at large, although one of the *Khul-Khaal* women is Christian. She concludes from her reading, for example,

10. Crapanzano, Vincent: *Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

that «the possibility men have to divorce fairly easily, however remote that eventuality, hangs like a cloud over the heads of Muslim women»[11], as if all Muslim women were living in fear of divorce and there were no Muslim women who would prefer a divorce to a marriage they were not happy in. Rugh also repeats some of the women's claims that «[m]oney and sex are the most basic problems discussed among Egyptian women»[12], as if it were the ultimate truth. Referring to Dunya's first husband, Hagg Ali, Rugh calls him, instead, the Libyan four times in her foreword; this makes him more of a stereotype than an individual.

Rugh does criticize western generalizations about «eastern people», for example that they have a «fatalistic nature» or that their women are «suppressed» and «passive» ; she explains that reading *Khul-Khaal* will correct some of the misrepresentation and misunderstanding of Egyptian and «Muslim» people. Rugh goes on, however, to romanticize the stories of the five Egyptian women. According to her, these women have «extraordinary natural perception about the world in which they live»[13], and they are philosophers. Such condescension is an underestimation of these Egyptian women although Rugh is trying to prove the opposite. The term «natural» in itself implies underestimation, and calling them «philosophers», when they are being commonsensical implies that they are not even expected to have common sense. These women are «talented storytellers», but again Rugh generalizes this into a characteristic «particularly developed among the folk of Egypt»[14]. The term «folk» romanticizes, generalizes, and dehistorizes.

Rugh, then, reads *Khul-Khaal* as «an encounter with a new culture»[15]. In her attempt to present the book to western readers, she makes Dunya, Suda, Om Gad, Om Naeema, and Alice stand for Egyptian, if not Muslim women: the names of these women, false anyway, do not matter any more. Instead of reading these accounts as life stories of individual women, the reader is led to generalize from them a knowledge about the culture that these women are made to exemplify.

Atiya was born in Egypt, but moved to the United States at eleven, only to return to Egypt as an educated adult woman at thirty-three. Although she spoke Arabic, Egyptian society felt strange and foreign to Atiya. Writing *Khul-Khaal* was her way of understanding Egypt. In her «Preface», she writes:

> «I felt I was being allowed a privileged peek into a society I knew almost nothing about and which I longed to understand, as much as I longed to become intimately acquainted with an Egypt I had left to go to the United States some twenty-five years earlier»[16].

11. Atiya, Nayra: Op. cit., p. 12.
12. Ibid., p. 12.
13. Ibid., p. 7.
14. Ibid., p. 8.
15. Ibid., p. 19.
16. Ibid., p. 23.

Although she is not an anthropologist herself, Atiya's situation is similar to Rugh's; for she, too, seeks knowledge of Egyptian society. Atiya denies that the five women are «representative of all Egyptian society» or «any particular social class or type of person»[17]. But among all the stories that she collected on her tapes, she chose the five that touched her most, whose «richness of detail ... added perspective to [her] efforts to understand Egypt and [her] people»[18]. Atiya's selective and emotional reaction, which is different from the objective stance of «knowledge», indicates that these women are typified, to herself most of all, for through their stories she claims to have understood Egypt and Egyptian people and from them draws a number of generalized conclusions. Atiya includes forty photographs in her book, which, she says, do not identify the five women, but are meant to illustrate the texts. The reader looking at the photographs of men, women and children is liable to take them as being representative of Egypt. The photographs, then, add to the process of typification.

Atiya tape-recorded these stories over a span of three years (1976-1979) yet the idea of publishing them is supposed to have been suggested by Rugh. Atiya also claims detachment from the stories: she says that she does not wish to make an analysis but prefers to leave the task for anthropologists and sociologists. Such a claim tends to conceal that the stories are her production more than anybody else's and that interpretation is already implied in her very writing and translation of them. Atiya did not have the women tell her their stories in one session. As she herself said, she met these women on many occasions, during which she recorded incidents and episodes of their lives. Yet Atiya collected and combined these elements as if they were «narrated» as complete stories. She admits editing the stories before translating them into English. Translation in itself changes a great deal: it «may render bizarre, exotic, downright irrational what would have been ordinary in its own context»[19], as Crapanzano argues. Atiya's interpretation is carried out within a complex process of, first, asking certain questions, second, editing fragmented stories, third, translating them and, finally, producing the book *Khul-Khaal.*

The sub-title of the book, *Five Egyptian Women Tell Their Stories*, reads as if these women actually told their stories themselves. In spite of all the efforts to convince the reader that the book is a spontaneous telling of women's lives as they were told, however, the book is clearly Atiya's intended version of such stories, which should be kept in mind for any kind of reading.

3. DOING DAILY BATTLE: TRANSPARENT DIALOGUE

Mernissi presents *Doing Daily Battle* in a much more straightforward way than Atiya. The sub-title is not disguised, it simply says *Interviews with Moroccan Women*, which conveys the real nature of the book. Unlike Aitya, Mernissi

17. Ibid., p. 28.
18. Ibid., p. 28.
19. Crapanzano, Vincent: Op. cit., p. 8.

keeps the question/answer model in her final production of the book. Mernissi, herself a sociologist, does not try to efface her personal motives nor herself for that matter. She declares, early in her introduction, that the objective of the book is to break the ancestral silence of Moroccan women, but also to see how Morocco appears through the words of its women. The implication is that the book is intended as knowledge about twentieth-century Moroccan women, but with no denial by the writer herself. It is meant to show the reader, first, that the harem time is almost over-only one of the twelve women, Batul Binjallna, spent her life in an actual harem-and second, that Moroccan women have a different story to tell about their lives and about their society than that told by men. But who is this knowledge addressed to?

Having been first written in French, then translated into English, *Doing Daily Battle* is clearly addressed to western readers. The introduction and the footnotes give details to readers who are presumed to know either very little or nothing or who have distorted knowledge of Morocco. The «Glossary» is particularly addressed to those who know no Arabic at all. French is widely spoken among the Moroccan educated elite, who also are potential readers of Mernissi's book. As a rhetorical device, and as a way of anticipating «his» response, Mernissi pretends to address herself particularly to an intended reader, who belongs to this last group, whom she calls «Mr. Terrorist», and who, she claims, would reject her book on the basis that the interviewed women are not representative of Moroccan reality. «Mr. Terrorist» stands for the men who monopolize the symbolic values of Arab societies. «Terrorist tactics» are adopted by these men, according to Mernissi, whenever a woman stands up to express herself, either by stopping her or by denigrating what she says. Mernissi explains to these men, who also reject feminist ideas as «imported» and hence contradictory to the local «cultural heritage», that although her women are not claimed to be representative of Moroccan women, their stories are real and true. Many «terrorist» men in other Arab countries speak only Arabic, however, and would not have Mernissi's message passed on to them.

While Atiya tries to conceal herself in her book, Mernissi avoids self-effacement in two ways. First, she introduces herself fully to the reader, summarizing her own story, unlike Atiya who keeps herself unknown to the reader except for the publishers' eleven-line summary of her life. By telling her story, Mernissi equates it with the stories of the women in her book, while Atiya looks detached and aloof. Second, Mernissi does not try to disguise herself by omitting her questions and diffusing the dialogue into a first person narrative, as Atiya does. Mernissi even admits that she was not objective in her attitude towards the women she interviewed: most of them were illiterate, and she says that she had a special affinity with them because she remained illiterate herself until the age of twenty. Mernissi refers disapprovingly to the objectivity of the «research technique» she was taught in French and American

20. Mernissi, Fatima: Op. cit., p. 19.

departments of sociology and anthropology. She also admits her «intervention in the preparation of the words of interviewees for the printed page»[20].

By preserving the question/answer model, Mernissi preserves some authority for these women and also some sense of identity. The answers are not taken out of context nor are they generalized into complete stories. Thus, these women are not presented as typical as are the women in Atiya's book. Mernissi's aim of depicting the stories of the women as facets of Moroccan reality, and not as the Moroccan reality, can be said to be achieved.

Mernissi considers her book an initiative towards understanding herself as well as the women she interviewed. This claim may very well be true, and I do not wish to dispute it. In fact, most people who have done this kind of research claim that they themselves go through a process of self-examination and self-understanding during and after the interviews. Crapanzano, for example, admits that he learned much about himself and his world through his encounter with Tuhami, and argues that fieldwork of this kind must be understood as a process of continual discovery and self-discovery[21]. The point I would make in relation to Mernissi's claim, however, is that she gives no tangible evidence for the reader to see her self-discovery taking place in the pages of her book. In other words, she does not translate for the reader the process of self-comprehension that she claims is taking place in her consciousness, whereas the third book I want to consider does exactly this.

4. BOTH RIGHT AND LEFT HANDED: INTEGRATED DIALOGUE

Shaaban presents her book, *Both Right and Left Handed* published in 1988, as part of her struggle for «mutual self-discovery among women»[22]. She achieves this not only by telling her own story, and with more details than Mernissi, but by full reciprocation in her conversation with the women she meets. Conversation is a more adequate term to describe Shaaban's dialogue with the women than interview, because although she, like Mernissi, preserves the question/answer model, she does so in a narrative mode. Mernissi registered her interviews in a formal and journalistic way, identifying questions with the letter «Q» and answers with «A». Shaaban preserves the dialogic mode as a novelist does. Technically speaking, her book reads as an autobiography. Shaaban herself can be read as the main character who is seeking self- understanding by the detour of comprehension of other women, the other characters. Unlike Atiya and Mernissi, Shaaban tells the reader about the setting, time and place, of her conversations with the women and explains when and through whom she met them. She describes the women themselves, how they dress, how they behave, and what they feel. She even introduces side plots, like quoting the conversation she overheard at the bus stop between two unknown women.

Above all Shaaban reflects upon herself. Every now and then, she makes flashes back on her own life and her relationship with her husband and her

21. Crapanzano, Vincent: Op. cit., p. 138.
22. Shaaban, Bouthaina: Op. cit., p. 2.

family, by narrating an incident or by comparing her own situation to those of the women she talks to. This technique makes Shaaban equal with the women she meets, more so than Mernissi. Apart from being the writer of the book, Shaaban does not seem to be practising authority which could make the women look like inferior others, whose stories are narrated with fascination and an awareness of difference as in Atiya's book. The women in Shaaban's book (as in Mernissis's book) might still be read as more typical than individual because Shaaban too selects the theme questions; however, the large number of women and the diversity of their stories make them more representative of their societies than, say, five Egyptian women whose stories are presented as almost the same.

There are also situations where Shaaban is engaged in a conversation with more than one woman at a time. This makes her book a real «attempt to enable a number of women caught up in a burning moment in history to share experience with others»[23]. Shaaban, though, has in effect limited the audience that could share her experience and those of the women in her book to English readers. Her stated purpose in publishing the book is:

> «…to enable other Arab women and Western women to share something of my experience, and to hear for themselves the voices of these women-fighters and professional, politicians, devoted wives and faithful mothers of martyrs.»[24]

But, of course, the number of Arab women who can read English is very limited; the majority of them will not be able to share the experience Shaaban wants them to. This point applies to all three books discussed in this paper. Atiya, Mernissi and Shaaban have limited the effect of their books by not publishing them in Arabic, a language they all know very well. Yet there are some publishers, such as Al-Saqi Books in London, that support feminist writing and publish such books. Had they been available in Arabic, these books could have contributed to the cause of Arab feminism. Reading these books in an context, given their potential value, would have fewer of the problematic aspects of the ethnographic use discussed above.

5. SHAPING THE DIALOGUE: THEMES

Thus, the themes around which these three books center cannot be voluntarily and freely chosen by the women interviewed, but are consciously and knowingly selected by the writers of these books. Rugh tries to absolve Atiya of deliberately choosing the themes of marriage, death, and circumcision, claiming that «the vivid details of these events have naturally flowed out of the narrative, not selected by [Atiya], but chosen by the women themselves as the subjects around which to organize their discourses»[25]. In Atiya's «Preface», however, we sense some kind of confession that she herself chose these topics,

23. Ibid., p. 2.
24. Ibid., pp. 1-2.
25. Atiya, Nayra: Op. cit., pp. 221-22.

which run through Dunya's story, the first woman Atiya interviewed. Atiya, fascinated by the experiences that Dunya went through, chose to «round out» these common experiences by making them the centre of her intended book. Mernissi does not deny that she aims in her book to see how the Moroccan women perceive «three phenomena: sex roles, the marital couple, and contraception»[26]. Her questions are directed towards these issues.

In Shaaban's book, the topics are varied and carefully chosen according to each woman's educational background. Unlike Atiya and Mernissi, Shaaban did not ask the women she met only about their personal lives, but brought them into serious discussions about different issues. There are discussions on family upbringing, inter-family and arranged marriages, motherhood, heterosexuality and homosexuality, relations between husbands and wives, mothers and sons and daughters, traditions, religions, education, professions and careers, the law, politics, feminism, the dichotomy between the private and the public and between theory and practice, comparisons between the position of western and Arabic women, and so on. The women include the illiterate and the highly educated, those who work as mothers and wives only and those who combine professions with these roles, the young and the old, the submissive and the rebellious or the feminist, the liberal and the militant. The intention here is not to set these books up along a spectrum of truth/falseness as such, but to show how they differ not only in form (as explained earlier) but also in content.

There are no complete life stories in these anthologies; there are rather extracts of lives. Each woman is interviewed within a limited time, and a limited space is assigned to each woman's story. Moreover, the type of questions addressed to each woman dictate what she tells about her life. Hence, questions related to the representation of self in relation to memoirs and autobiographies cannot be examined in relation to the short extracts in these anthologies. Although the stories are fairly short and organized in accordance with certain questions, it is still possible to look at the issues these women raised in their accounts and also the issues raised by the way they presented their accounts or the way these accounts have been presented for them by the editors.

The «voices» of these women can be read as calling for political action and change, when they talk about the necessity of education, when they complain about their arranged marriages and when they publicly describe certain sexual practices which contribute to their oppression. Their spelling out of sexual issues can be read as an act of publicizing what is perceived in their societies to be the most «private» and taboo of all matters. The practice of female circumcision and the ceremony of the bride's defloration both performed in a semi-public way is a contradiction in a society which considers sex a taboo question. Spilling the female child's blood at circumcision, and displaying the bride's virgin blood at defloration turns the female body into an object of

26. Mernissi, Fatima: Op. cit., p. 5.

control and a device to publicize the honor of the family in its men's interest. In these anthologies, the women publicize these «private» issues, by talking about them too, but in this case, in their own interest.

5.1. Change Through Work and Education

Most of the women who «speak» in these books and who are illiterate and of working class positions, do not offer a strong sense of individual self in the western sense of the term, though as noted later there are signs of self-reflection on their position. That is to say, they do not talk of themselves as independent individuals or of their lives as being of their own making, although it must always be remembered that a different impression might have been produced come had they been asked different questions. These women often attribute their «miserable» lot to fate or destiny in accord with conventional religious teaching. However, they do not seem to be totally submissive to such fate, for they themselves acknowledge the need for change through education and work, and there are moments when they appeared to aspire to a way of distinguishing themselves from others. Aware that if they sit at home without work their poor families or husbands cannot look after them, these same women go to look for work everywhere, no matter how far from home, in contrast to the traditional role, assigned by middle and upper class men, which confines women's work to the private realm of the household.

Learning a skill or a trade is essential for most of these women's and their children's survival. For some women, paid work is necessary for more than just survival. Nazha, for example, could not have continued her education had she not worked during vacations and after school hours. Necessity is, however, not the only reason why some of these women go out to work. Dawiya al-Falilia (born in 1913 in Morocco), did not like her second husband preventing her from working outside the home, although he could afford a comfortable life for her. For her, work was a means of socialization and integration with different people[27]. Suda, a Sudanese Egyptian, did not mind doing any type of work, even work as a maid, a job which she had to deny doing because her male guardians considered it «shameful». For Suda, any job is good as long as it gives her a «clean piaster». Work provides her with economic independence which gives her the right to choose when and whom she will marry. For these women, whether it is to spare them the humiliation of begging or dying of hunger, or to support their education, or even just to be able to communicate and socialize with more people, paid work provides them with some kind of independence, authority and respect, making them less liable to be oppressed and exploited by their men. Om Gad, for example, who helps her husband at the garage workshop, is the manager of the household financial affairs. Every

27. Mernissi, Fatima: Op. cit, p. 94.

28. Om Gad reminds me of my own mother, who is also illiterate, who, although she has never worked outside the home, has looked after her husband's and children's welfare with amazingly successful management using the limited income of my (educated) father.

now and then, her husband gives her all the money they have made, and she looks after the spendings and the savings. Had he not trusted her ability to do so he would never have given her control of the family's finances[28].

Speaking in the 1970s and 1980s, these women are also aware that education can provide them with better paid jobs and more humane conditions at work. Those who missed the chance of going to school are very keen on their children's education, for both sons and daughters. Dawiya admits that when she was young she did not know that education was important for her daughters; she did not enrol the eldest and accepted that the younger should leave school because she did not seem to be interested and because Dawiya thought that education would not help her daughters to find a job. But later she realizes that «an educated girl is somebody. A trade is also useful, but an education is more important»[29]. For Zubaida, too, education makes «somebody» of a girl. She was forced to leave school at the age of eleven, so she was trying hard to ensure that her daughters continued their education. For Alice, education and having a profession, for a woman, mean «not only self-support but a chance to have a say in things that matter to her»[30]. Among the working classes especially, this interest in education is part of a rising consciousness which is rapidly spreading even in the remotest areas in the Arab countries. It is surely a great help and hope for Arab feminism; for education helps people to question conditions that they would have taken for granted before.

The educated women are, first, more conscious of themselves and of what they have achieved, and second, more gender-conscious than their illiterate sisters. Abla, for example, is proud to have got her academic job in the History department in Damascus University in 1947 when most urban middle and upper class girls were doomed to «suffer the boredom of spending their time in total isolation at home waiting for eligible husbands» [31]. Abla talks about social discrimination against women in every field and criticizes «the degrading and outdated laws» of the country. She acknowledges the improvement in women's position since the seventies, but pleads with all women to continue the struggle for «real equality».

Makboula Shalaq is a lawyer who made history by being the first Syrian woman university student in 1941. She criticizes the dichotomy between what men preach and what they practise. Like Abla, Shalaq admits that Syrian women have proven their capacity and creativity in every field, yet they «are still regarded first and foremost as cooks and cleaners and only secondarily as creative workers»[32].

Thorea Hafez is proud to talk about her participation in the nationalist struggle for women's rights. She tells the story of the time in 1943 when she gathered with other women in the main square in Damascus and they publicly

29. Mernissi, Fatima: Op. cit., p. 104.
30. Atiya, Nayra: Op. cit., p. 39.
31. Shaaban, Bouthaina: Op. cit, pp. 32-33.
32. Ibid., p. 45.

took off their veils[33]. Hafez compares the past and the present and sees that Syrian women have achieved complete equality, especially now that the law has been reformed to women's advantage. She goes on to draw a rosy picture of the situation. Hafez is, of course, talking from her upper class position and overlooks the situation of other women whose poverty can prevent them from deploying the law on their side. This point is raised by Amal, a law student, who thinks that the law in Syria is «illiberal», remote from social reality and biased against women as all the judges are men. Amal also sees that the main problem that Arab women suffer from is the dichotomy of «what seems to be and what actually is, of our public and personal lives» [34].

5.2. Family, Class and Feminist Consciousness

To say that the more educated have more feminist consciousness is not to say that the illiterate women are not aware of any kind of oppression related to their gender. Malika, for example, who was never enrolled in school, sees marriage as an institution where women are oppressed, although she expresses it in her own simple terms. Had her father been alive (the father stands for social and emotional security as discussed below) and had she had a well-paid job, Malika says that she would never have wanted to get married. She prefers to work for her mother and herself rather than to serve a husband[35]. However, what we notice from the illiterate working class accounts is that they are more aware of the problems they suffer as poor people rather than as women. In other words, class-consciousness is more striking than gender consciousness in their accounts. Om Gad's class-consciousness, for example, is clear in her argument about her daughter's marriage. She wants her to marry a man of their own class; she does not want a middle or upper class son-in-law who would ridicule and humiliate them[36]. Om Gad's gender consciousness is very limited. There are a lot of stereotypical statements in her story. She thinks that her son is «a real man» because nothing moves him[37] and that «men are never afraid» [38]. Om Gad is aware that «a girl's life is difficult», but she thinks that this is the case in «every sort of family and among all nationalities» and does not «know why»[39]. In other words, she is aware that a girl suffers more than a boy, but this awareness is overshadowed by her worry about her poor family's survival.

Working class women may not develop a clear gender consciousness, as educated middle- and upper-class women may; however, they are more likely

33. In her *Harem Years*, Huda Shaarawi also talks about how she publically took the veil off at Cairo train station in 1923; edited by Margot Badran, London, Virago, 1986.
34. Ibid., p. 68.
35. Mernissi, Fatima: Op. cit., p. 122. But of course the bad working conditions of the uneducated women force many of them, like Malika who weaves carpets, to accept a husband who can promise a more comfortable life for them, according to Mernissi.
36. Atiya, Nayra: Op. cit., p. 22.
37. Ibid., p. 7.
38. Ibid., p. 14.
39. Ibid., pp. 17-18.

to develop not only a maturer class consciousness than middle- and upper-class women, but also a feeling of solidarity with the women of, at least, their own class. In the absence of any form of health insurance at work, Dawiya al-Filaliya, who works in a hand-made carpet workshop, speaks about how the women workers hide the sick ones in the middle of the wool and do their work so that the boss will not notice any reduction in production which is his main concern[40]. Alice, conscious of her middle class position, praises the working class's feeling of collectivity and readiness to unite and help each other, in contrast to middle class «selfishness»[41].

Educated or uneducated, upper, middle, or working class, aware of their unjust conditions or not, class- or gender-conscious or both, these women do not speak about themselves independently from their respective families. The family/class position is the milieu within which these women tell their stories. The family remains the main social unit in all Arab countries. The extended family is the old form which still exists; however the new form, which consists of a married couple and their children only, is rapidly taking over in most Arab countries, especially in the cities.

Whether extended or not, the family still plays a controversial role in Arab women's lives. In the family, many if not most women experience the first forms of discrimination from their fathers and brothers. Yet at the same time for many women, these same figures (fathers and brothers) can be the first source of social protection and support. The father either symbolizes utter oppression for some, or is idealized by others, especially in his absence or more paradoxically, both simultaneously. The women in *Khul-Khaal* think that their lives could have been much better had their fathers been alive. The brother also can be either the source of more oppression, or more support and help, or both. If it was not for her brother who had to leave school and look for a paid job, Nazha Zannati and her children could have not survived after the death of her husband. Shaaban's brother, in contrast, caused her a lot of suffering. Thus, the women in the above anthologies weave their life stories around their families and their family relationships.

5.3. Women Oppressing Other Women

The male members of the family may very well be the first oppressors of women, nevertheless, the women themselves are not completely innocent of all blame and responsibility. For they themselves exercise some kind of discrimination and even oppression, one could say, upon their own daughters, thus perpetuating the very problem they have been suffering from. Twenty-year-old Leila, from Damascus, tells how her mother discriminates against her although she is her only daughter. The mother had herself rebelled against her own family and eloped with a man, and as a consequence was «cut off from

40. Mernissi, Fatima: Op. cit., p. 99.
41. Atiya, Nayra: Op. cit., p. 52.

her social milieu». Yet, Leila comments, her mother loves her five sons while having a «nervous, erratic relationship» with her only daughter. Moreover, while stipulating to her sons that they could marry any woman of their own choice, the mother has tried to force her daughter into an arranged marriage, according to Leila. Leila tries to excuse her mother though, because she needed an outlet «and there was no-one around her on whom she could exercise authority except» Leila[42].

Egyptian Om Gad was proud and happy when she had «four men» who «filled the house with their presence. Their comings and goings were my joy. They made me feel needed and gave me hope in the future»[43]. But she does not mention anything special about her three daughters. Om Gad is a simple woman who might not see anything wrong with preferring boys to girls, perhaps because she sees everybody else so doing. But what excuse can Alice, a middle class educated woman, have when she admits that she prefers sons to daughters? Her marriage experience led to her «blind hatred» and «distrust» of all men and to regret that she ever married, as she repeats on many occasions, and she intelligently criticizes the social injustice against women in her society. She even seems to be conscious that preferring sons to daughters is not a very good thing, although she does not admit it overtly, for she says that there is one good thing to be said in her husband's favor, namely that he prefers daughters to sons[44].

5.4. Bodily Mutilation

Preferring sons to daughters, or discriminating between them, is only one form of many ideological contradictions which are to be traced in almost every Arab woman's life. Arab feminists have yet to liberate themselves fully from all the effects caused by centuries of oppression. Ideological contradictions of this kind are materialized sometimes in physical forms of oppression such as the tradition of circumcision, which is still in practice in Egypt, the Sudan, and other African countries, among Muslims and Christians alike. Although a complete stranger to this tradition, I do not hesitate to call circumcision a mutilation of the female body. The five women in *Khul-Khaal* describe this «unforgettable» experience in its horrid details which I prefer not to quote here, because of their sickening effect. It is enough to say that Suda describes it as an «ordeal» and as «hell». All of the women were circumcised in the presence of their mothers, who in their turn had been circumcised too. Having gone through the pain and torture they so vividly remember, these women helped to pass the same experience to their daughters.

Alice recalls the experience with severe criticism. On the one hand, girls are brought up and prepared for their future role as wives who have the duty

42. Shaaban, Bouthaina: Op. cit., pp. 69-70.
43. Atiya, Nayra: Op. cit., p. 10.
44. Ibid., p. 42.
45. Ibid., p. 41.

of sexually entertaining their husbands, on the other hand they themselves are not supposed to enjoy sex, for circumcision «makes it harder for a girl to enjoy sex», according to Alice[45]. Even Alice, however, took her eldest daughter to be circumcised although she went to a doctor to make it less painful for her, but when the doctor told her that the operation was illegal, she resorted to a midwife. But Alice did regret doing that, and saved her younger daughter who was fortunate enough to be born at a time when this operation was becoming less and less popular, especially in urban areas[46].

The same operation is supposed not to affect women's sexual desires, according to Om Gad, although she still describes it with similar painful details as Alice and the other women do. For Om Gad thinks that an uncircumcised girl is «disfigured»[47]. She does not say whether she was sexually affected or not. But even if she was not, this does not mean that Alice is wrong. Medical research has shown that circumcision does affect women's sexuality because the operation destroys very sensitive parts of the woman's sexual organs. One could argue that Muslim and Jewish boys are circumcised too. However, the effect of the operation has never been reported to have negatively affected men's sexuality in any way. On the contrary, boys are usually proud that they are circumcised. For them, it makes them clean and virile. Female circumcision is more painful and likely to lead to more infections and diseases because it is performed under no medical supervision.

Another kind of bodily mutilation, which I had never heard of until I read *Khul-Khaal* is the bride's deflowering by the hand. The *Khul-Khaal* women recall the disgust, pain and humiliation they felt when they were deflowered on their wedding night. In Arab and Muslim countries, the honor of the family is measured against the virginity of daughters before marriage. In some cases for a marriage to be complete, the bride's proof of virginity, a bed linen or a piece of cloth stained with her blood, has to be shown to everybody concerned. The convention of wedding parties in these countries has helped this tradition to continue. For wedding ceremonies, celebration and consummation take place in the bride's or bridegroom's parents' house, where the mothers of the wedded couple check the wedding bed in the morning. Until very recently, some brides have paid with their lives as punishment for failing the test. Some

46. The subject of female circumcision has been said to have caused political rows between Egypt and America after the CNN (American Television Network, which is one of the most widespread satellite television network world-wide) had broadcast and aired three times in one week a circumcision operation on a 10-year-old Egyptian girl. The CNN researcher was arrested in Cairo and charged with «distorting the image of Egypt». The Egyptian reaction is interesting to say the least. The CNN report has upset the Egyptian government although it is said to be campaigning against the practice of female circumcision. The documentary is «disgusting» according to *al-Akhbar* Egyptian newspaper, and the CNN should not have shown it especially after the «unlimited hospitality shown by the Ministry of Tourism to actress Jane Fonda, wife of CNN owner Ted Turner». Should hospitality and friendship be a pretext for concealing facts? See *The Independent*, 13th September 1994.
47. Ibid., p. 13.

were pressured to commit suicide rather than live as outcasts for the rest of their lives.

This tradition, it must be said, is gradually dying. Arranged marriages are becoming less fashionable. A man and a woman can choose to marry anyone they want provided their respective families agree. Even when the families do not agree, a man and a woman can elope and get married somewhere else: Beirut was a place where lovers fled to when all other Arab countries were still very strict as far as marriages were concerned. Whether arranged or unarranged, wedding consummation no longer has to take place in the parents' house. People who can afford it travel for a honeymoon after the wedding party; in that case it is only the groom who decides what to do if he finds out that his bride is not a virgin. Today Arab men have different attitudes towards this issue. The question of women's virginity before marriage is still important to many. Some men do not marry women they have been in love with and slept with before marriage, on the grounds that a woman who sleeps with a man before marriage may also sleep with other men too before and after marriage- she would be considered loose. This is why some women who lose their virginity before marriage resort to a doctor who can amend their hymen just before the wedding is to take place. Again, women are exploited by these same doctors who charge them a great deal of money and blackmail them as well, for it is an illegal operation.

This discussion might seem a diversion, but it is not. The way the *Khul-Khaal* women were deflowered must be one of the most traditionalist, and, I dare say, ugliest ways. The women were not even left alone with their husbands on the wedding night. The deflowering which was performed, using the finger, either by the husband himself or by an old woman relative was witnessed by a host of women relatives including the mothers of the bride and bridegroom. The main cultural contradiction here is that sex is one of the taboos in Arabic cultures, no-one would talk about sex publicly, especially within the family, yet the way the *Khul-Khaal* women are treated on their wedding nights makes it appear as if this sexual action were a public event. Moreover, this way of deflowering is a kind of mutilation because the women themselves describe it like this. Om Gad, at thirteen, had not yet developed breasts or menstruated, when she was married to a man twice her age. After the nauseating deflowering, she was left «limp» and «afraid», yet the husband went on mounting her all through the night[48]. Alice complained that she «was sore for about ten days» after her wedding night[49] .

The other two anthologies do not raise the issues of circumcision and deflowering, except for a brief reference to deflowering in Rabi'a's story. Answering Mernissi's question: «Did [your sister] accompany you in order to bring back the panties?» Rabi'a said: I wanted it to be done by a doctor». Rabi'a

48. Ibid., p. 15.
49. Ibid., p. 38.

was married at a distance to a man in France. She traveled with her sister from Morocco for the marriage consummation. Someone has to bring back a proof of the bride's virginity when the marriage is consummated away from the parents, which is what Mernissi meant by «bring back the panties». I would not have understood Rabi'a's answer had I not read *Khul-Khall*. Rabi'a wanted her deflowering to be done by a doctor, because she was frightened. This reference indicates that the same tradition of hand deflowering is also practised in Morocco; however, the women in *Doing Daily Battle* did not talk about it, no doubt because they were not specifically asked to do so.

5.5. Uncovering Sex and Sexuality

The question is: would the *Khul-Khaal* women have spoken about circumcision and deflowering had they not been deliberately asked to? In *Both Right and Left Handed*, Shaaban herself ventures into uncovering lesbian practices among some Arab women. She writes about the women she has seen in a back room at the hairdresser's in Damascus. She also asks one of her interviewees whether she has thought of making love to her friend. Om Muhammad, an illiterate woman who had just celebrated her sixtieth birthday at the time of the interview, was married to a man who already had a wife. After some tension in the beginning, the co-wives became «friends». Om Muhammad was relieved when her husband «took the unilateral decision not to sleep with [her]»[50]. Answering Shaaban's question, Om Muhammad tells how one cold night she and her «friend» slept together and how much they enjoyed it:

> «As usual, we felt close and intimate. Our legs touched, we hugged and we kissed each other, and suddenly our hearts started beating fast. We started panting, feeling all the warm blood in the world thrust into our veins»[51].

The women in *Khul-Khaal* do not speak about their own sexual desires. When they speak about sex, they refer to other women and seem to be inhibited about talking about their own sexuality. Om Gad thinks that women should be «reasonable» about sex, and that it is shameful for women to ask for sex. She complains that there are some women who

> «just want a man all the time. Others don't. There are some women who want a man with them morning, noon, and night. If a night passes when he hasn't «bathed» with her, as we call it, she becomes angry, nervous, and ill-humoured»[52].

It is also shameful for the woman in Suda's story who used to complain about her husband who had not slept with her for some time. She thought it was humiliating to ask for sex: «What can I do? Am I to sell myself? Do you think I can stoop so low as to say 'Come to me I want you?»[53]. Suda tells the

50. Shaaban, Bouthaina: Op. cit., p. 63.
51. Ibid., p. 65.
52. Atiya, Nayra: Op. cit., p. 13.
53. Ibid., p. 75.
54. Ibid., p. 79.

story and sounds appalled when she comments that Egyptian women were obsessed with sex and money[54]. Sex, for women who are forced into marriages at an age when they do not even understand the meaning of the word, is perceived as no more than a marital duty. In *Doing Daily Battle* and in *Khul-Khaal* most of the women were married before they had the chance to have any kind of love relationship. In that case, «sex is hateful, and a girl approaches it with fear», according to Alice[55].

The inhibition about talking about one's own sexuality among working-class women does not match the view expressed by middle and upper-class women of working-class women, who assume that working-class women are uninhibited about their bodies. This phenomenon can be explained as a result of not only having to work with other women during the day, because of poor working conditions, but also of sharing other bodily activities, such as bathing and sleeping, at home with other female members because of lack of enough space for each woman to have her own room. Lack of privacy at work and at home lessens some of the women's inhibitions about their bodies, without their necessarily losing inhibition about their own sexuality.

The lack of pre-marital love in these women's lives is not the only reason why sex is perceived as a burden (by Om Muhammad) or as shame (by Om Gad). The hardship of everyday life also contributes to limiting the sexual lives of these women. As Alice comments, women need to love, but also to be financially secure and bodily comfortable to be able to enjoy sex:

> «When a woman has no problems in her life and she loves the man she is married to, then sex is a pleasure. But if there is struggle or daily hardship connected with any part of her life, she resists it. It becomes intolerable to her. There is no sweetness in loving if you are in financial straits»[56].

Most of the women in *Doing Daily Battle* have to work long hours in bad conditions in order to survive. Sex would not be the main issue in their life stories. It is significant that the only woman in *Khul-Khaal*, who spoke about sex -Alice- connected it with class position and is a middle class woman who, although a working mother, did not have to work long hours in bad conditions. The working class women by contrast did not make a big issue of sex. Om Gad, for example, seems to be more submissive about the whole issue; having gone through a painful deflowering on her wedding night, as she describes it, she simply got «used» to her husband demanding sex all that night.

Women like Om Gad do not seem to be aware that there is any kind of oppression in circumcision, hand deflowering or the institution of marriage as a whole. Circumcision is a tradition which many of them pass to their own daughters. Om Gad's main concern, as far as her daughters are concerned, is to «place [them] happily in some man's house»[57]. Women like Om Gad, who

55. Ibid., p. 78.
56. Ibid., p. 38.
57. Ibid., p. 9.

believe strongly in traditions, do not see how their oppression as women could be different from that of the men of their own class. The similar bad conditions that both the men and the women of the working classes share make them brothers and sisters in suffering. Working class women's sympathetic attitude towards the men of their class seems to inhibit any awareness of distinct gender oppression being practised upon them. The lack of education and the belief in superstition and black magic, as we see in these anthologies, help these women to overlook their own suffering as women. It seems that women are more likely to be aware of their own oppression when they are educated and when they have the luxury of working and living in conditions that provide them with some kind of privacy and some spare time (privileges enjoyed by middle- and upper-class women). Education opens women's eyes to the falsity of many beliefs held as unquestionable traditions or else presents alternative values and life-styles, leading to inner conflict; and comfortable working and living conditions give them the time to think of themselves.

5.6. Exchange of Women?

Of equal importance to the women's differing educational and class positions is the historical process of economic changes and cultural shifts that allows older traditions and newer practices, older modes of thinking and newer ideals to co-exist in one society. The practice of male and female circumcision, but more particularly the practice of the semi-public deflowering can be seen as characteristic of marriage as a system of exchange between extended families. Such a system of exchange may be described as patriarchal in as much as the token of exchange is the female rather than the male body. The ritualistic significance attached to virginity and the much more drastic intervention in the female circumcision of the body, compared to male circumcision, reduce the young woman, more than the young man, to an object of value being exchanged.

The existing arranged marriages in Arab countries might be described as reminiscent of older times when the tribe or the extended family was (as it still is in some Gulf countries) the basic unit of the society. In such a society, the interest of the tribe or the family is above the individual's interest. The bodies of both men and women are completely taken up as social objects to enhance social alliance between families or tribes. A feminist reading is concerned with the much more drastic interventions and control of women's bodies evident in such practices as female circumcision, rather than with men's bodies, but the interrelatedness of the social control of women and men should be noted.

The idea of the exchange of women in marriage was discussed by Fredrich Engels in *The Origin of the Family: Private Property and The State*, (1884), and by Claude Levi-Strauss in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (first published in 1949). Engels argues that since antiquity, throughout the Middle Ages and up to modern times, marriage for the people who usually count as society (the free men and

58. Engels, Friedrich: *The Origin of the Family: Private Property and the State,* Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1985, p. 108.

women, and later the feudal and then the bourgeois classes) has been «arranged by the parents and the partners calmly accept their choice»[58]. Marriage in this sense becomes «a contract, a legal transaction» by which women, especially, are exchanged. With the advancement of capitalism, the dependence of marriage on economic considerations has become complete: for the bourgeoisie, marriage «is a political act, an opportunity to increase power by new alliances; the interest of the house must be decisive, not the wishes of an individual»[59].

Claude Levi-Strauss, as a structuralist, also views the exchange of women in marriage as universal. In *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, he sees women being treated, like words, as signs that can be exchanged. The difference is that women, unlike words, are persons and thus have a different kind of value. According to Levi-Strauss, women are seen

> «under two incompatible aspects: on the one hand, as the object of personal desire, thus exciting sexual and proprietorial instincts; and, on the other, as the subject of the desire of others, and seen as such, i.e., as the means of binding others through alliance with them»[60].

The exchange of women, which he believes takes different forms, «direct or indirect, general or special, immediate or deferred, explicit or implicit, close or open, concrete or symbolic», acts to establish kinship structures[61]. Levi-Strauss, of course, overlooks the role that women themselves play in such matchmaking arrangements. In some cases in Arabic societies, mothers are completely responsible for finding husbands for their daughters and fathers have only to approve of the mother's choices.

The attitude of older women and mothers, when they are eager to matchmake for their daughters and when they consciously or unconsciously perpetuate certain sexual practices, can be explained on two levels. On the economic level, these women are anxious that their daughters get married, for husbands are supposed to look after them. If circumcision is seen as necessary to guarantee husbands for their daughters, and if semi-public defloration is perceived as important to be sure of the honor and reputation of the family, then mothers have little choice in helping to practice them on their daughters. On the ideological level, the mental representation of material relations, mothers think that by preparing their daughters for acceptable marriages and by finding them what they see as suitable husbands, they are doing the best for them. Moreover, celibacy is discouraged in Islam. What is actually symbolized by turning the female body into a ritualistic object might have been forgotten, but the ritual is still significant as marking womanhood, even if paradoxically it also removes from women the possibility of sexual pleasure.

59. Ibid., p. 109.
60. Levi-Strauss, Claude: *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Rodney Needham (ed.), London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1969, p. 496.
61. Ibid., pp. 478-479.

Some Arab women are still being exchanged in arranged marriages, although the old significance of enforcing alliance between families might have been forgotten. This is not to decry all arranged marriages; the concept of exchanging women as objects and deciding their future partners for them doe not show respect to women. Love might not be a feminist issue for American or European women, but it certainly is for many Arab feminists, who until recently have not had the freedom of choice, in as much as choice implies having autonomy and control over one's own body. Some might argue that love, which is an individualistic conception and is glorified as the height of self-expression and self-experience, is, yet again, an import from the west. This is simply not true, for love is one of the major themes glorified in Arabic literature for centuries. Lovers, in pre-Islamic poetry, though, were usually not allowed to marry each other, especially when their love became known in the tribe.

The opposition to marriages based on love matches, especially when they clash with the interests of the families concerned, was shared by western societies as well until the beginning of the twentieth century. Engels argues that throughout antiquity «love relationships in the modern sense only occur... outside the official society»[62], that is among slaves[63]. Except among slaves, love affairs were found only as «products of the disintegration of the old world and carried on with women who also stand outside official society, with... foreigners or freed slaves». For free men and women, marriage «was arranged by the parents and the partners calmly accepted their choice»[64]. Love affairs occured among them but in the form of adultery, according to the same source. In the Middle Ages and in modern times, Engels has continued, marriage continues to be based on economic considerations rather than on individual and emotional relationships, especially among the upper classes. In twentieth-century societies, his distinction between bourgeois and working class marriages cannot be maintained because of the vast changes in social and economic structures. In Arabic societies today, the two systems, love matches and arranged marriages, are practiced side-by-side, especially where the nuclear family is taking over. In this case, changing consciousness and desires lead to conflict and make traditional practices look more problematic.

CONCLUSION

Khul-Khaal: Five Egyptian Women Tell Their Stories, *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews With Moroccan Women* and *Both Right And Left Handed: Arab Women Talk About Their Lives* are important mainly because they provide a voice for illiterate and working class women who otherwise would not have been heard nor represented. Although the life accounts or extracts in the above anthologies are not long enough to show self-reflection, there are signs of reflection in them.

62. Engels, Friedrich: Op. cit., p. 108.
63. Ibid., p. 108.
64. Ibid., p. 108.

The women, especially the illiterate ones, have shown a desire for change, although they do not seem to be completely capable of it themselves. Instead, they see that some of their aspirations are achieved through their daughters. It is evident that change is taking place, even in Om Gad, the illiterate woman who seems to perpetuate certain oppressive traditions without questioning them. Her insistence on educating her daughters in itself is a conscious or at least semi-conscious admission of the need for change. Class consciousness may foreground gender consciousness in most illiterate and working class women, however with education spreading fast among younger generations of women in most Arab countries, gender oppression is becoming a major issue for them.

Change has not yet led to liberation; full liberation is yet to be achieved by even the most conscious feminists in Arab countries. The basic reason is that feminist consciousness is not enough on its own to liberate women; adequate social, economic, legal and political revolutionary changes should take place too. The discussion of these anthologies has been predominantly based on the modes of production and modes of oppression, because of the way they are presented. This study of modes of self-representation has been limited both by the way in which the texts were produced and edited and by of the content. Examining images of self-construction in the interviewees' short accounts of their lives, which are responses to certain questions addressed to them by the editors/writers, was not possible.

WRITING WITHOUT THE 'PROTECTION OF ANGELS': NOTES FROM THE MIDDLE VOICE

VIOLET A. DUTCHER
Kent State University (USA)

As a plainly-dressed six-year-old, I was fascinated with our neighbor woman's jewelry and her make-up, particularly her red nail polish. I often wondered how my nails would look if they were transformed by the color red. One day in the first grade at our local Mennonite elementary school, I wondered no more. I colored my fingernails with my new bright red crayon. When we stood to pray before eating our lunches packed by our mothers, a few of the students called the teacher's attention to the forbidden color on my nails. She seemed dismissive at first, but then she said, «If she's not satisfied with how God made her nails...» My memory trails off at that point, but I do remember that I felt guilty, condemned, and different from my classmates. I hadn't realized I was dissatisfied with my nail color. I only knew red was beautiful.

Later in the year, over-attentive female students scrutinized my coloring and printing. My coloring was out of the lines, and my printing was «turkey scratches». However, on the night of the annual fall open house, I couldn't wait to show my parents my very own writing. We walked around the block walls looking at the lined paper torn from orange Golden Rod tablets holding our printing. That night, for the first time, I saw my writing in comparison to my peers. And it did, indeed, look like scratches in the dirt. Even the teacher told Mom and Dad that the printing efforts were scratches. One feeble attempt at making me right-handed made her abandon the attempt to «correct» my left-handedness.

The frustration experienced because of my less than acceptable attempts to form letters and the realization that I did not measure up to my peers in this activity were rendered insignificant, however, when it came to opening books and learning to read. When I sat at the small table in school with the other children in my reading group, I was a Bluebird. I took pride in the fact that the Bluebirds were the best, smarter than the Redbirds, smarter for sure than the Yellowbirds. Everyone knew that. What everyone knows now is how deficient and how damaging to some young children those specialized groups were.

However, membership in the Bluebirds gave me the leg up I needed in order to feel a part of the reading community that was reading aloud from the Dick and Sally series at school and Golden Books at home.

Frustration and alienation also were experienced on the playground during recess. Tradition dictated that the popular older students kicked off recess time by choosing the students who would play with them. The best-liked male students chose the boys they liked for the baseball game to be played during recess. They reserved the lesser liked boys for the last chosen. The best-liked female students were more ruthless. They chose who could play with them and did not include those whom they didn't like. On this particular day, as usual and for reasons unknown to me, I was not chosen. I wore a brown-checked gored dress that flared out widely around my waist when I twirled around in a circle. I liked to twirl when I wore that dress. I remember clearly telling myself that day that I would not always dress like this with my hair in two braids and my legs encased in brown cotton stockings. I would not have known how to phrase it then, but I believe I decided that day that I would not always be the one acted upon; I would someday be the one to act. I also didn't realize then that I was already taking the first step away by making that promise to myself. And so it was that at six years old, I began to leave my home community[1].

I spent the rest of my school years at the local public school. There, on the playground, no one chose sides. Students were free to play with whomever they wished. At the end of the first day of second grade, I got off the bus and ran in our long lane to tell my mother the good news. As I had noted the differences between myself and my home community during first grade, I now noted the differences between myself and the larger world I occupied. I especially dreaded the first day of junior high when I had to wear a prayer veiling or «covering» to school. What did my friends think about me suddenly showing up in that white netted marker of my difference as a woman, never mind that I was now «protected by the angels"[2]? Surprisingly, no one said anything. They, no doubt, expected it as common behavior among our people. But it mattered to me that my difference was now worn on the outside in a much more pronounced way than ever before.

Many years later, I left those external clothing markers behind me. However, *difference* branded my insides. Since the public Mennonite religious community

1. Mary Jean Kraybill, an Associate Dean at the University of Chicago, eloquently expresses the tension between the Anabaptist individual and her community: «Everything mattered. No action or activity was inconsequential. While I learned the valuable lesson that how one lives one's life matters and that actions must be consistent with beliefs, I also assimilated an attitude of ongoing anxiety that my behavior was not acceptable. I was obsessed with what others thought of me» (*Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 72-2 (2003), p. 221).
2. This phrase is based upon the deep conviction of members in the Amish/Mennonite community that young girls and women wearing their prayer veilings are protected by the angels from rape and other crimes against their bodies. This belief is strengthened whenever a story circulates that a would-be rapist confessed the chilling effect the prayer veiling had on his plans for the girl. To whom or why the so-called rapist is confessing is not a part of the story.

«is defined by men, not only in the absence of, but *against* [italics and emphasis mine] women»[3], those Mennonite women with ties to their Amish heritage[4] are not far removed from the church Bishop's mandates, and the memories weigh heavily. My childhood and adolescent memories of culture are different than my academic peers, and I have gaps in cultural experience. For example, we had no television in our home, and when I played at a neighbor's home, I was instructed by my mother not to «watch TV». Suffice it to say, I got quite a bit with side-long glances. Nonetheless, when colleagues discuss shows from the fifties and sixties, I often know of them by name only.

When I was eleven, my parents purchased our family's first radio. My parents allowed only two religious stations beamed into our home, and of these two, they preferred a satellite station from Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. From that small white rectangular box, I heard speakers' voices identify themselves as being associated with various colleges. I admired the way they used words. I admired their stories of adventures in far-away places. I longed to attend college. For several years during my adolescence, I requested and received a variety of college catalogs advertising that semester's offerings. I pored over them, constructing the ideal semester's workload based upon the available courses that caught my interest. Because high school was expected and college was forbidden in my home, this dream did not become my reality for many years. At the age of 51, I completed my doctoral degree in English with a concentration in Rhetoric and Composition.

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3. Ruether, Rosemary Radford: «The Feminist Critique in Religious Studies», in Thomas E. Dowdy and Patrick H. McNamara (eds.): *Religion: North American Style*, 3rd ed., New Brunswick -NJ, Rutgers University Press, 1997, p. 170.
4. Three Anabaptist (an historical name meaning *rebaptizer* given to those ancestors of the present day Amish, Mennonite, Hutterites, and some groups of Brethren who broke away from the state church during the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century) groups reside in my home community. However, for the sake of clarity in this article, I use *Mennonite* to refer to both conservative Mennonite women and Mennonite women. The only exception is in Table 1 where I keep the groups separate in order to more clearly chart their beliefs regarding education. A brief explanation of each group follows. The Old Order Amish, who broke away from the broader movement in the late seventeenth century citing worldly practices as a primary reason for their separation, are distinguished by their languages of oral Pennsylvania Dutch for everyday use and written and oral High German for use in worship, plain dress and hairstyles, transportation of horse and buggy, formal education to the eighth grade, resistance of modern electric conveniences, and religious practices. During the 1950s, many Amish members left their communities in the northeastern United States and formed a new group known as the Conservative Mennonites. These people, known as «the conservatives,» felt they had found a biblical compromise between the strict Amish group and the more worldly Mennonites, offspring of their ancestors who remained Mennonite and did not join the Amish movement. Within the Conservative Mennonite community, the regulations are not so all-encompassing; however, they exist unwritten, and members are expected to observe their congregations' regulations rigorously. The Mennonite community, however, is more concerned that members believe in community values, daily discipleship to God, and their peace stance. They are not likely to be concerned with regulating lifestyle in terms of modern conveniences, transportation, and education.

1. FINDING THE «MIDDLE VOICE»

The Irish poet Seamus Heaney, in his poem «Making Strange,» writes of three characters,

> «the one with his traveled intelligence
> and tawny containment,
> his speech like the twang of a bowstring,» and the second, «unshorn and bewildered
> in the tubs of his Wellingtons,
> smiling at me for help,
> faced with this stranger I'd brought him»[5].

The third character functions as a bridge between his countryman and the stranger:

> «A cunning middle voice
> came out of the field across the road
> saying, 'Be adept and be dialect,
> tell of this wind coming past the zinc hut,
> call me sweetbriar after the rain
> or snowberries cooled in the fog,
> But love the cut of this traveled one
> and call me also the cornfield of Boaz»[6].

Called by the «middle voice» to love both the strange and the familiar, Heaney writes,

> «I found myself driving the stranger
> through my own country, adept
> at dialect, reciting my pride
> in all that I knew, that began to make strange
> at that same recitation»[7].

On one level, this poem certainly can represent the impact of three individuals meeting each other: two who are from very different cultures and one who is familiar with both. The value of this reading is that this third individual is often instrumental in negotiating understanding between cultures. On another level, these three persons represent the multiple other voices residing within one individual who is a member of more than one discourse community, in this case, Mennonite and the academy. Stepping from one community into one that is very different may cause an internal clashing of communities so that a Mennonite woman, for example, may experience this clash as having to choose between two communities: the one in which she grew up and the one in which she is finding membership, the academy. More broadly, how

5. Heaney, Seamus: «Making Strange» in *Station Island*, New York, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1984, p. 32.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p. 33.

do community leaders, of both genders, construct lives for themselves out of the connection/dissonance they may experience, both for those who become Mennonite scholars and those who avoid higher education? Heaney provides a third voice: the voice of the «middle» to negotiate the two communities so that one can retain membership in both. When did I first hear the call of my «middle voice»? And when was I first compelled to «drive the stranger through my own country»[8]? When did I first hear the call of my «middle voice»?

Looking back, I believe it all began one fair spring evening on campus. As student editor for the literary journal at my university, I looked forward to that particular evening's event, which featured a prominent poet from the Midwest. After the poet's reading, I was scheduled to hold an interview with him for inclusion in the next publication of our journal. I took upon myself the responsibility to bring the refreshments and serve them after the poetry reading.

The night of the poetry reading was also the night for a televised super-bowl game, and many in our audience were eager to return home and watch the game. Consequently, when the reading was nearly finished, I began setting up the refreshments in the far back corner of the room. To accomplish the task of making the drink, I needed to get pitchers of water from a tap outside the room. The door creaked ominously. Several of my professors were seated toward the back, and I checked carefully to see if they appeared bothered by the interruption. The last time I came through the door and into the room with a full pitcher of water, the poet stopped his reading. He looked out over the audience and said loudly, «Will someone stop that woman?»

The next moments seemed to slow down and are as clear as my kitchen windows scrubbed by my grandmother with ammonia water. I remember leaning against the back wall mentally forcing myself to stay and to not deny this was happening, for I wanted to leave –to flee– never to return and pretend it never happened. I remember deciding to stay and serve refreshments to the guests.

Later, while guests enjoyed the refreshments, the poet made his way to my side. He did not apologize, but his eyes met mine as he explained that he just had not been able to bear the distraction. I apologized for distracting him, and then I said, «But above all that, you humiliated me, a student learning the ways of a campus, in front of my peers and my professors». He turned on his heel and walked away. Later, while another professor stood by during my interview with the poet, the large and ancient recording machine spun its wheels and let out an unearthly whine. The poet, clapped his hands over his ears, screamed obscenities, and left the room. I never saw him again.

This incident illustrates the misunderstandings that can occur between those familiar with the academic community and those coming from very different home communities, in this case, Mennonite. Refreshments were uppermost in my mind, as a good Mennonite woman, and from that community's perspective, my obligation to these guests was to have their refreshments ready

8. Ibid.

as soon as the reading was finished, and not a moment later. This value to work industriously in the common labor of serving food, however, collided with the academic value to revere silence during the individual labor of reading poetry. On the one hand, I was a Mennonite woman who, by that community's standards, should have been at home with my family that evening. On the other hand, I was present at the event because I was a student editor of a literary journal, and, by the academy's standards, I had work to perform. In the middle, was a Mennonite student who brought homemade desserts to the poetry reading. But in the poet's «that woman» was held all the tension of these two opposing circles in which I was a member. I was only «that woman». Suddenly, I did not seem like such a good Mennonite since I had stepped out of community boundaries and into the academy. And I did not seem like such a good student either since I had not realized how insignificant refreshments are to a poetry reading.

I have been in the classroom as instructor several years since that event. And I understand far better now the collision of cultures that night represents. This was a literacy event where a poet stood before his audience, mediating his written words through an oral reading. He read carefully. The audience listened carefully in hushed silence. This audience was given a snack after the reading, but food is secondary to the project at hand. It is doubtful that someone came to this event to eat snacks. The audience came to be served poetry. In the academic world, literacy events such as these are highly esteemed. It is not the sort of event where the audience comes and goes at will. As a professional now, I understand this. I have been in situations where I have not appreciated undue distraction from the literacy task at hand. And I remind myself that those creating the distractions are acting from the standpoint of backgrounds in differing communities between which bridges can be built.

In the years since this incident, I have been motivated, in large part, by a wish to understand how and why this incident, and others like it, occurred and still occur. And I often find «myself driving the stranger/through my own country»[9]. Importantly, this «stranger» not only represents those outside the Mennonite community, but she represents the part of me who is a part of the academy. On this journey, I, the part of me who bridges two worlds, take my academic self through the country of my Mennonite self «reciting my pride/in all that I knew» and «[beginning] to make strange at that same recitation»[10].

2. MENNONITES AND EDUCATION

Many Mennonites in my home community of Oak Glen[11] are suspicious of a liberal arts education beyond high school. John A. Hostetler[12], raised in

9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. I have changed the name of this community to protect the privacy of these individuals.
12. John A. Hostetler has served as expert witness in a number of legal cases involving educational and environmental problems encountered by the Amish. He fully supports their cause in

the Amish church and currently a professor emeritus of anthropology and sociology at Temple University, states that to the Amish, education «signifies ego advancement, independence, and cutting the ties that bind one to the community of faith and work»[13]. This belief is in stark contrast to other Mennonites who not only have college degrees but have established several Mennonite colleges with many Mennonite professors. The following table juxtaposes these three groups in the Oak Glen community with their views and practices concerning education for both males and females.

Formal Education as Influenced by Oak Glen Communal Religious Beliefs

	Amish	Conservative Mennonite	Mennonite
VIEWS	Suspicious of and forbid higher education	Suspicious of but allow higher education	Welcome/encourage higher education
GRADES ATTENDED	Grades 1 – 8	Kindergarten – Grade 12	Kindergarten – Grade 12
COLLEGE	No college permitted	College is allowed No overt encouragement Little assistance State universities with emphasis on career training	College is expected Overt expectation Assistance given Mennonite colleges with emphasis on liberal arts

While more conservative Mennonite members in Oak Glen may be suspicious of education, more and more members are allowing their young people to attend college and even attending college themselves. However, most are particularly suspicious and resistant to Mennonite colleges. They believe these colleges are sites of untruth, Biblical error, and rampant rebellion. Some of the more important issues alarming these Mennonites in Oak Glen are that the more liberal Mennonite college professors allegedly no longer believe in the virgin birth of Jesus, in the necessity of «being saved» or dependence upon God for salvation, and in the sinfulness of homosexual lifestyles. While a few will send their children to these colleges, many do not. In this new century, their children will, rather, attend public university. This is a far preferred site for post-secondary education since it is clearly the world –a separate community from these Mennonites. Thus, it does not threaten as powerfully as a college

resisting higher education even though he did not choose to live under these constraints himself. I found the following quote compelling: «While under cross-examination by Attorney John William Calhoun of the attorney general's office in the state of Wisconsin, he turned his swivel chair closer to me and asked: 'Now Professor, don't you think that a person needs to have an education to get ahead in the world?' I pondered the question and replied: 'It all depends on which world'» (Hostetler, John A.: «An Amish Beginning», *The American Scholar*, 61-4 (1992), p. 561).

13. Ibid.

proclaiming its Mennonite-ness, yet not remaining true to its heritage (in their eyes), and swallowing up their children in compromise.

Another phenomenon taking place and being commented upon is that a number of Mennonite women of Oak Glen are attending college as non-traditional students, and a significant number attend the university where I teach. An articulate Mennonite female student in my composition class said to me during office hours, «It would be hard to write like a Mennonite. For anyone it would be hard, but especially so for us Mennonites. It's hazardous». This student, like me, did not know Mennonites, such as Julia Kasdorf, Di Brandt, and Cheryl Nafziger-Leis, were writing about growing up Mennonite until she attended college. This same student has written a few poems in the past but keeps her voice muzzled for fear someone will hear it, and, as a consequence, be heard by the community. That voice, she instinctively knows, does not belong to the community as she knows it[14].

3. MENNONITES AND FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

The student above knows that writing content is not to focus on one's self for fear one will be perceived as prideful. Pride, in whatever form it may appear, whether negative or positive, is condemned by the Mennonite community, which labels it the central sin. However, community members have not rid themselves of it. In fact, the stories of Mennonites, while often rampant with brave young men refusing the military draft as well as men and women dying for their faith, often include stories «of bishops who rode roughshod over congregations, forcing others to humble themselves, while too often they exercised power in ways that seem to have shown a dangerous form of spiritual pride»[15]. They include stories of «fathers who bowed low in church and before Caesar but terrorized their wives and children at home»[16]. Even so, the pride, or its perception, is avoided. Anything else violates a fundamental value: «The individual is not the supreme reality»[17]. Rather, essential to the Amish/Mennonite heritage and to self-understanding are communal exile, suffering, and struggle. The following teaching is deep in the psychological makeup of a Mennonite: «If other people praise you, humble yourself. But do not praise yourself or boast, for that is the way of fools who seek vain praise [...] in tribulation be patient and humble yourself under the mighty hand of God»[18]. Indeed, even as a young girl, I knew clearly the instructions on what

14. Within this community, what is good for the community is valued above what is good for the individual. This value is in sharp contrast to the emphasis on the individual in the academy. Often, the Mennonite female student has no other recourse than to either reject the academy or reject her home communal circles.
15. Showalter, Shirley Hershey: «Bringing the Muse Into Our Country: A Response To Jeff Gundy's 'Humility In Mennonite Literature'», *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 63-1 (1989), p. 25.
16. Ibid.
17. Waltman, Gretchen H.: «Amish Women: From Martyrs to Entrepreneurs», in Maria Julia (ed.): *Constructing Gender: Multicultural Perspectives in Working With Women*, Belmont-CA, Wadsworth/Thomas Learning, 2000, p. 37.
18. Ibid., p. 7.

to read and how to write. As Andrea Fishman argues in her study of Amish school literacy, writing is expected to be about facts and/or spiritual truths. Thus, writing is required to stick to accurate details and to avoid giving voice to fiction/lies.

One Mennonite female student recalls a visit from an educated Mennonite relative to their small home when she was an adolescent. Her mother informed the relative that this daughter loved to read and was quite good at it. The relative expressed approval and interest in this phenomenon and promptly asked the participant to identify her favorite books. This student remembers clearly her painful attempts to recall authors and titles of biographies and other non-fiction works. She was both ashamed to admit to this relative that she loved reading fiction and ashamed of herself that she was not sticking to the truth about her reading practices. She was fortunate, however, to grow up in a home where reading fiction was considered a legitimate activity for leisure. She internalized this permission as a private affair and felt that telling, even a visiting relative in their home, was making the permission public and could, as a result, bring shame to her home[19].

4. GRIPPED BY FEAR

I join Julia Kasdorf who, after she published her first book of poetry *Sleeping Preacher,* felt «gripped by fear». «All the while», Kasdorf writes in *The Body and the Book: Writing from a Mennonite Life*, «I wondered where that fear comes from and whether those of us who try to write from our experiences in traditional, closed communities are especially prone to it[20]». Kasdorf continues, «Because there have been so few representations of Mennonites in mainstream literature, new publications naturally create some anxiety about issues of textual accuracy as well as author intent and authenticity -including her membership status in the community»[21]. For the Mennonite women who have ties to Amish traditions, the long-regulated Amish value of pleasing others dies hard. To write, therefore, with the possibility of communal displeasure is a fearsome task. My poetry may include inaccuracies in details for the sake of creating the truth, secrets cracked wide open, and flaws in Mennonite characters who may not appear like heroes but perhaps more like sinners with no sign of salvation in sight. With fear and trembling I make this writing available to my community. However, in spite of this tension, I will not write a moral to my story, shun writing about the self, avoid fiction, censor my writing for signs of weakness in Mennonite women, and will not sacrifice an authentic representation of this community at the altar of treasured common beliefs.

As a Mennonite female writing about Mennonite women, will I need to leave my Mennonite community or my home completely? Or will I be silenced,

19. Elizabeth Coblentz, interview by author, transcript, Canton, Ohio, 5 August 2000.
20. Kasdorf, Julia: *The Body and the Book: Writing from a Mennonite Life*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, p. 40.
21. Ibid., p. 62.

rendered invisible, by this community? I remember well, when I first imagined my dissertation, one of my mother's friends confronted me at the back of the church: «Are you able to do this and still cook supper for your husband and children? And what will you say anyway?» The expected negative answer to her first question was written on her face. Kasdorf articulates both the blessing and curse arising as a result of negotiation: «Cultural minorities like Mennonites, who carry a memory of persecution and feel their identity to be always endangered, see in the voices of imaginative writers like me the promise of preservation as well as the threat of misrepresentation»[22].

Thus, it is not only in the broader culture that silencing of Mennonite voices can occur. The silencing, including the misrepresentation, of Mennonites by Mennonites is a powerful way to manage deviant voices. Not mouthing weakness erases stories, stories rich with events exposing the emotions of a people. In addition to gaining approval and recognition for «mouthing» communal beliefs, dire consequences may result, consequences that render a perspective invisible. Ironically, while Amish/Mennonites often perceive silencing as something caused by outsiders, much of this perception has to do with the ways in which they separate themselves from the world, the historical silencing they have experienced and internalized as a group, and the way they experience strong, yet conflicting, emotions of simultaneous pride and shame concerning their own religious cultural practices. Kasdorf reports that «like other groups, [Mennonites] are capable of violating the interests of others in order to protect a sense of self, especially a collective self»[23].

5. FINDING A MENNONITE STORY

As I mention earlier, it took entering college for me to learn of my own culture's writings of its roots[24], to find the Mennonite story and my part in it. I well remember near the end of my undergraduate schooling when I entered a creative writing class and found a Mennonite poet in our course text writing about the Mennonite life. I went to a place where I could read in private and read every poem she wrote in the anthology. I did not know other Mennonites wrote poetry. I did not know other Mennonites experienced such intense emotion about anything, let alone growing up Mennonite. Something very deep inside began rising to the surface. With the encouragement of the professor, I began to write. I began to let myself experience emotion about being Mennonite and about being a Mennonite woman. I began to remember. I began to see the story. More importantly, I began to see that I was a character in the story. Coming from a cultural tradition where fiction is not allowed, emotional personal writing is suppressed, Bible reading is privileged and where, as in the white mill workers' community Heath studied, the Bible «was believed to be

22. Ibid., p. xii.
23. Ibid., p. 81.
24. Alice Walker reports that it was only in college, in 1970, that she first heard of Zora Neale Hurston, and then only Hurston's name (Chris).

the actual work of God and was taken literally, word for word»[25], a Mennonite woman may not only find it difficult to tell a story but to even, first, feel that she is a part of a story. And, indeed, this must come first.

Prior to taking this course, my coursework and my religio-communal life occupied two separate worlds, but at this juncture, for better or for worse, the two worlds I occupied began to move towards each other. One evening during class, we were given the assignment to write a Ten Minute Spill Poem –a poem in which we spilled out our work in ten minutes time. The following poem was the result:

> «When she comes in from picking blackberries
> Mother's hands are streaked red and stained with juice
> Like the bleeding sweet Jesus
> In the picture on the living room wall.
> Father's voice rough and graveled pierced like thorn needles
> Threw her tumbling down the cliff of his words
> Gathering wounds as rolling mass gathers stones.
> Some large, some loud; some shale, some shrill.
> All penetrated her softness.
> She said he did not know what he did.»

While our family, as good Mennonites, did not have a picture of Jesus hanging on the wall, he was certainly ever present in our home -hovering about- suffering and bleeding for us. In return, we were instructed to obey, be true, and be proven faithful to the end -to be submissive Mennonite females who obey the will of God and man.

Speaking to contemporary Mennonite women directly, Di Brandt writes:

> «I grew up in a church, as most of you did, in which the men sat on one side, and the women on the other. And all the talking, all the official words, were said by men. And the women, what were they doing? They were spending most of their energy subduing their children, keeping them quiet. And their own inner voices, their need to speak. Hiding their women's feelings and perceptions, covering their heads in deep shame»[26].

Traditional Mennonite history is male gendered. It is a history of our heroic men. Since traditional themes of war and its resistance have been played out for the most part with male characters, stories and writings about and by women have been largely excluded. This exclusion influences the ways Mennonite women know, believe, and do their writing and reading –with domesticated, unofficial, and often silenced voices. Our stories as women –as Mennonite women– are not so much about war and its resistance although we are actively concerned about this theme also. Rather, our stories have to do with stretching

25. Zinsser, Caroline: «For the Bible Tells Me So: Teaching Children in a Fundamentalist Church», in Bambi B. Schieffelin and Perry Gilmore (eds.): *The Acquisition of Literacy: Ethnographic Perspectives*, Norwood-NJ, Ablex Publishing Company, 1986, p. 55.

26. Brandt, Di: *Dancing naked: narrative strategies for writing across centuries*, Stratford-Ontario, Mercury Press, 1996, p. 55.

free past our bound-ness –past the forbidden areas of speaking one's mind– and with uncovering shamelessly the efforts to gain that which has been denied: studying for a formal education, finding release from household duties in order to write, to name but a few. Thus, to find that one can be a part of a story, and then that one can tell that story is heady business indeed. Carolyn Heilbrun argues, «There will be narratives of female lives only when women no longer live their lives in the houses and the stories of men»[27]. For the Mennonite woman who chooses to leave communal confines, stretching free includes reaching back.

Some time ago, I was invited by a Mennonite woman to her church to speak on a Sunday evening. She requested that I present my academic work on Mennonite women's recipes. Since this was also the church in which I grew up, it was an experience I will never forget. I keenly remember the 1950s when somber black-suited men seated on the platform and gazed down at those of us in the audience who, in turn, looked up at them for direction. The altar, located below the platform and between the leaders and the audience, was rarely touched by either the leaders or the lay people except during times of communion which was held twice yearly. But on this night, my grandmother's quilts were arranged on the platform. Her large stainless steel mixing bowl and wooden rolling pin dominated the altar along with her recipe collection. And a woman took a leadership role, standing not on the platform, but at the lectern placed on the same level as the audience. My husband and daughters served cookies, made from my grandmother's recipe, to the audience, which was a full house. I spoke in plain language, negotiating my academic work and my home community. I showed overheads of recipes and letters from women they knew. Afterward, several men attempted to articulate their amazement that a common recipe could represent their cultural values in a way they recognized as true. And women clustered in small groups discussing how recipes they used compared to the ones I had used as examples. It was an evening when the sacred became profane or everyday, and the profane became sacred.

Perhaps in this way the church becomes more like a woman's kitchen where, according to Sue Bender, a woman with graduate degrees from Harvard and Berkeley who lived with two different Amish families for several months,

> «[n]o distinction was made between the sacred and the everyday. Five minutes in the early morning and five minutes in the evening were devoted to prayer. The rest of the day was spent living their beliefs. Their life was all one piece. It was all sacred –and ordinary»[28].

I remember the solemn weekly occasions when Mennonite men, responsible for the running of our lives, told us what to wear, how to wear it, what songs

27. Heilbrun, Carolyn G.: *Writing a Woman's Life*, New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 1988, p. 47.
28. Bender, Sue: *Plain and Simple: A Journey to the Amish*, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1989, pp. 50-51.

we could sing, how we should sing them, what we should read, how we should read, and how and when to write. With many Oak Glen Mennonite women attending college, change will occur and is occurring even as I write this article. What are their voices saying? Can we in the academy hear them?

6. RESISTANCE AND NEGOTIATION

While Mennonite women work hard to find their voices, «outsiders,» have sometimes struggled to hear these voices in the midst of the silence. Silent discourse is a powerful force and keeps the outside at bay. Kasdorf writes that «the absence of literary activity has hidden Mennonite hearts and minds from the curious gaze of others. In the absence of published fiction and poetry, outsiders have no access to the experience and imagination of the community»[29]. Outsiders also seldom have access into the inner workings of the Amish/Mennonite community.

Kasdorf wonders if perhaps this «refusal of previous generations to publish imaginative work was another kind of cultural resistance, borne of distrust and of a fear that literature would somehow expose the interior life of the community –or of the individual– and thereby make them vulnerable to violation»[30]. Several years ago, many former Amish people, who still did not darken the doors of theatres, purchased tickets to see the movie *Witness*. These viewers experienced tension both while watching the movie and then reporting what they saw to others who did not see it. On the one hand, they wanted to view themselves on screen, to see that, at last, someone had got it right. There is a comfort in knowing that a community is known and understood. On the other hand, they watched carefully for signs in the movie to prove what they had known all along -outsiders cannot and will not get it right. There is also a comfort in knowing that a community has kept its secrets. Danger threatens when a community is revealed and vulnerable. One Mennonite woman, following a church service the morning after she saw the movie, commented to a group of other women who had not seen the movie: «I never saw so many thin women around a quilt before»[31]. Relieved laughter ensued. For this group of insiders at least, the outsiders had, once again, not got it right.

Some educated Mennonite female writers are using the emotive language of media such as stories, drama, sculpture, poetry, and song to express and arouse emotional responses towards the subject(s). For example, in her poem, «Houses», Shari Wagner writes about three sisters who hide homemade necklaces under their dresses.

> «The second sister dreams of rooms that lead into rooms no one has ever seen. Even the closets are larger than the bedroom she shares with her sisters. She can breathe in this house with places no one will see as she hides her only necklace –a

29. Kasdorf, Julia: *The Body*…, op. cit., p. 170.
30. Ibid.
31. Clara Sommers, interview by author, transcript, Canton, Ohio, 5 July 1996.

string of safety pins she dares to wear beneath her dress to school. She places the necklace in a drawer inside a drawer and when she takes it out there are rubies the color of her mother's climbing roses no one can take away»[32].

Mennonite women who hear this poem turned into song by Carol Ann Weaver often identify with the sister's emotional experience of desire and longing mingled with the required denial of certain material possessions as well as the emotions experienced with these losses.

Also denied are certain vocations, higher education, and sexual expression. *Quietly Landed*?[33], a musical dramatic work based upon the writings of Mennonite, Conservative Mennonite, and Amish women, includes several real-life accounts of Mennonite women's musings which include Mrs. H. E. Weis, who tells us that she, as a Mennonite pastor's wife, has no first name. She says aloud, «Sometimes I wonder what I would be doing if ...», and her voice trails away. Stories abound of young women wanting to remain in high school to fulfill the dream of being a teacher. Instead, church rules at the beginning and mid-twentieth century state that they must quit school and hire themselves out to families needing a strong hand around the house. One of the actors states with strong feeling: «I couldn't go [to high school]. That was it». Other women spoke of how their cape dresses[34] hid their sexuality. Another woman spoke of the hard work raising a family and filling the traditional woman's role: «Three weeks after the canning was done, the twins were born. One week later, their father left for [church] conference.» These women concluded that «[w]e need God in our own image». This represents a significant turn away from the primarily referential language of traditional Mennonite texts.

7. MENNONITES AND WITCHES

On March 23, 2000, I gazed into the waters of the canal in Alkmaar, Netherlands as my daughter's friend told me that in this canal «Mennonites and witches were drowned» in the sixteenth century. What, I wondered, is the connection between Mennonites and witches? In his article «Between the Devil and the Inquisitor: Anabaptists, Diabolical Conspiracies and Magical Beliefs in the Sixteenth-Century Netherlands», Gary K. Waite writes that «intersections [exist] between the heresy of Anabaptism [the historical name given to the ancestors of contemporary Amish and Mennonites] and the supposedly even

32. WAGNER, Shari: «Houses», Performed by Carol Ann Weaver and Cate Friesen, *Journey Begun,* World Records, 1999.

33. *Quietly Landed*? By Carol Ann Weaver, Carol Penner and Cheryl Nafziger-Leis. Dir. Cheryl Nafziger-Leis, St. Jacobs Schoolhouse Theatre, St. Jacobs, Ontario, 4 November 1995.

34. A cape dress is the traditional garb for Amish and some conservative Mennonite women and is worn when they become members of their local congregation as adolescent girls. It includes a shirtwaist dress with an additional cloth worn over the bodice in order to provide more modesty to a woman's breasts. Any woman or young girl who has just become a new member of the church knows well the difficulty and frustration to pin this cloth just so for a good fit. It is a labor-intensive task, and I well remember vowing to myself that I would never wear one again once I left my parents' home.

greater apostasy of demonic witchcraft»[35]. Although Waite goes on to state that of all the revolutionary religious movements occurring in the sixteenth century, «Anabaptists were the least caught up in magical beliefs or practices,» he also argues that «at the level of officialdom [...] the prosecution of sixteenth-century Anabaptism and of magical deviance had much in common»[36]. I couldn't help feeling some measure of amusement at the mental picture of a Mennonite witch.

However, and more soberly, does speaking through the middle voice imply that one may be both witch in one community and Mennonite in another? In one world, a Mennonite woman is one with the quiet in the land. In another world, she is no longer surrounded only by insular circles designed by male religious leaders who define *community* by those who obey their rules, thus, including certain members but also excluding others. Within this community, what is good for the community is valued above what is good for the individual. This value is in sharp contrast to the emphasis on the individual in the academy. Often, the Mennonite female student (turned witch perhaps?) has no other recourse than to either reject the academy or reject her home communal circles.

Shirley Hershey Showalter writes of her grandmother who grieved the loss of her child, the poet, who lived somewhere in Alaska in poverty. The realization that he could live without family, Showalter reports, was far more difficult to bear than the knowledge that he lived in poverty. «The Mennonite intelligentsia has oft lamented the departure of so many artistically inclined young people, and rightly so; this leaving has been a great loss»[37]. However, Showalter states that formerly this loss has only been determined in terms of the price the community pays in losing these young people: «Seldom have we recognized that those potential artists have also paid an exorbitant price -the loss of their roots and their nourishment»[38]. As Showalter points out, «[o]ne who leaves the community, especially when consumed by hatred or rebellion, also loses perceptive power»[39]. She then quotes African American novelist Toni Morrison who writes, «when you kill the ancestor you kill yourself»[40]. Sadly enough, in order to write their stories, Mennonite students, particularly those with ties to the Amish community, often must leave their home circles.

In the Oak Glen community, however, women primarily remain confined within their domestic space working cooperatively with each other and the

35. Waite, Gary K.: «Between the Devil and the Inquisitor: Anabaptists, Diabolical Conspiracies and Magical Beliefs in the Sixteenth-Century Netherlands», in Werner O. Packull and Geoffrey L. Dipple (eds.): *Radical Reformation Studies*, Aldershot-England, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1999, p. 120.
36. Ibid., p. 140.
37. Showalter, Shirley Hershey: Op. cit., p. 23.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Morrison, Toni: «Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation», in Mari Evans (ed.): *Black Women Writers (1950-1980): A Critical Evaluation*, New York, Anchor Books, 1984, p. 344.

church to serve their community. Often this lifestyle is romantically depicted by both outsiders and insiders as simple «with simple rhythms», as quiet «with quiet hope», as earthy «marked by the features of a working woman [...] where broad shoulders and large hands and strong arms and sturdy backs are beautiful», and as religious «marked by the features of a religious woman [...] where head coverings and uniform styles and Bibles and hymn books are lovely»[41]. Alma Hershberger, a woman who left the Amish church as an adult, writes with a poetic turn:

> «Amish woman is a flower blooming in the Amish country in the history and in the presence of their people. She is the flower of the true humanity and blooms with love, pain, beauty and sorry. She is a flower cultivated with a gentle touch, with a hand from heaven»[42].

While Gretchen Waltman states that the chief role of Amish women in their community is «to please others»[43], Hershberger is not quite so broad in this definition of Amish woman's role: «God created woman to please a man, for a companion and to give birth, a flower that radiates a glow of love for her people and hope for a better future for the young and for the generations to come»[44]. Waltman observes that persons leaving this community often have a variety of responses to their upbringing including placing distance between themselves and the community but still respecting it, romanticizing it as in Hershberger and Stoltzfus, while others are embittered.

When some Amish and Mennonite women make the decision to leave their community, they enter the broader society often with no driver's license, no modern clothing, and a limited education. This is especially true for an Amish woman, and the last two may be true for an Oak Glen Mennonite woman. One woman, now in her mid-eighties, speaks about those days long ago when she decided to leave the Amish community: «I felt so sorry for my parents. They wanted me to be baptized so badly. So I did, not really knowing what I was doing. I didn't realize then that I would pay for that decision for the rest of my life. I couldn't pass the tests; it seemed nothing I did was right. It was either my shoes, my hair...» (her voice drifts off)[45]. She states that for a short time, after leaving the Amish church, she was not welcome in her family's home. It took a much longer period of time for her many siblings to warm up to her, and many of her first cousins, who were like siblings, never did speak with her again. A few, she says, even seemed to go out of their way not to speak to her when they saw each other in town. Later, the same day of my interview with her, I sat at supper in an Amish home where I discovered during conversation that one of the elderly men is a cousin to this woman. When I told him of her recent

41. Hershberger, Alma: *Amish Women*, Danville-OH, Art of Amish Taste, 1992, p. 9.
42. Ibid., p. 14.
43. Waltman, Gretchen, H.: Op. cit., p. 43.
44. Hershberger, Alma: Op.cit., p. 14.
45. Martha Kurtz, interview by author, transcript, Canton, Ohio, 10 March 2002.

illness, he commented that he has not seen her since they were both quite young and that he should visit her. Then he said, «Is she still so independent?»

8. MENNONITE WOMEN AND CONFINEMENT

In contrast, many Amish and Mennonite women who choose to remain in the community, come to see their boundaries as borders around their contentment, not as binding them[46]. Stoltzfus records that one Amish woman she interviewed has made a «decided refusal to dwell on what her life might be like if she were not Amish.» It is not that she has given away all rights to personal preferences, writes Stoltzfus, «or that she never thinks about other ways of being and doing. She does. She just doesn't dwell on them»[47]. Although the case is made by some women with Amish background, who have since left it, that within the confines of this lifestyle are an abundance of choices[48], these choices are limited, limiting, and may, in some cases, be perceived as holding women hostage. This is particularly the case when decisions are made after community discussions among women, among men, between husbands and wives, and between church leaders and church member. Once the decision is made, communal conformity is expected and required. Those who do not conform, either by resisting the appropriate behavior within the community or by leaving, are confronted by those in church authority[49].

Louise Stoltzfus, another woman who left the Amish church as an adult, records this story told by an Amish woman she interviewed. One Sunday morning, a visiting minister preached the main sermon. During this event, he asked the audience this question: «'Who has the most important role in the church? The deacon? The minister? The bishop?'»[50] In a dramatic move, he turned to face the women, seated together on one side of the room, and «proclaimed, 'No, it is not the deacon, the minister, or the bishop; it is the mothers with babies on their laps who have the most important task in our church.'»[51] Stoltzfus reports that this woman told her that the entire room became silent while «[m]others with babies on their laps snuggled them a bit closer. Fathers nodded their heads ever so slightly. Grandmothers dabbed at their eyes with handkerchiefs.» Stoltzfus then declares «[t]o be a mother is a high and holy calling»[52]. Many women present that day felt highly blessed to be pointed out in such a way by a church leader. However, for the married women whose homes have not been blessed with children, for the single women, and for those married women with children who are desperate for a way out of the

46. Hershberger, Alma: Op. cit.; Stoltzfus, Louise: *Amish Women: Lives and Stories*, Intercourse-PA, Good Books, 1994 and Waltman, Gretchen, H.: Op. cit.
47. Stoltzfus, Louise: Op.cit, p. 57.
48. Hershberger, Alma: Op. cit. and Stoltzfus, Louise: Op. cit.
49. Stoltzfus, Louise: Op. cit.
50. Ibid., p. 64.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.

never-ending cycle of labor, these words may be a cloying blanket placed over their faces, which, when inhaled, takes their breaths away.

Because these Amish and Mennonite women know clearly what they are getting into when they join their churches with unmistakably assigned roles for them as women, they are often perceived by scholars, even by scholars with a feminist perspective, as being «empowered by ways other than earning high salaries and promotions»[53]. Donald B. Kraybill, a Mennonite male scholar, argues that Amish wives, ironically, have greater control over their work and daily affairs than do many modern women who hold full-time clerical and nonprofessional jobs. Unfettered by the pressure to succeed in a career, Amish women devote their energies to family living. And while their work is hard, it is *their* work and it brings as much if not more, satisfaction than a professional career[54].

Indeed, it is their work. They are not permitted the higher education necessary for a career. They are not permitted a professional career. This is the only work they have. Even if an entrepreneurial woman conducts a business on the side out of her home, her husband still expects her to cook supper for him that evening. And the church tells her to keep her business small so that it does not interfere with the family and community roles for her[55]. Thus she is sheltered, preserved for communal purposes.

On one of the first pages of her book, Hershberger states her purpose: «Hope this will answer many people's questions about the Amish women and realize that the Amish people are real people too»[56]. Early in the book, she includes this description of a «real» Amish woman with explicit instructions for the Amish woman's body parts:

> «An Amish woman's head of hair was given to her for her glory.
> Her mind is to think and teach her children right from wrong.
> Her eyes are to see that her children do no evil.
> Her nose is to smell the aroma of the food she prepares. To know when her baby needs a diaper changed.
> Her mouth is to give her family affectionate kisses.
> Her ears are to listen when a child cries in need.
> Her hands are filled with tender loving care and hard work.
> Her heart beats for peace.
> Her knees are used to kneel in prayer for the whole world.
> Her feet carry her to take care of her responsibility.
> Her body is given unto her husband with love. She gives birth for an extra pair of helping hands on the farm.

53. Waltman, Gretchen, H.: Op. cit., p. 57.
54. Kraybill, Donald B.: «Plotting Social Change Across Four Affiliations», in Donald B. Kraybill and Marc A. Olshan (eds.): *The Amish Struggle with Modernity*, Hanover, University Press of New England, 1994, p. 73.
55. Waltman, Gretchen, H.: Op. cit.
56. Hershberger, Alma: Op. cit., p. 3.

> She is a walking flower in full bloom. At the end the flower will die. She leaves good memories behind; Her [sic] family will miss her»[57].

Laboring under this image, many Amish and Mennonite women do not know the unfettered life as described by Kraybill. For example, a study of health risk factors utilizing a sample of Amish and non-Amish adults in Holmes, County, Ohio found that a significant number of Amish women (46.7%) reported feeling depressed, and Amish women (30.6%) reported that anxiety interfered with daily function in their homes[58]. Arguments such as the one made by Kraybill are arrived at by viewing Amish and Mennonite women from the outside in, through the lens of a professional male. By looking from the inside out, we can begin to construct a variety of emotional responses.

Where do we start in order to hear the voices of Mennonite women and other women entering our classrooms for the first time? In her keynote address at the 2000 Rhetoric Society of America conference[59], Patricia Bizzell argued that a major point of contention among some scholars today, has to do with the role of emotion. Bizzell states that researching the emotions of research subjects and recognizing the powerful link between research subjects and the researcher's emotions brings an essential truth to the research. She continues by calling for «the acknowledgment of the multiple functions of emotions and experiences in defining one's relationship to one's research, [which is] a departure from traditional methods»[60]. In the June 2, 2003 issue of the *Mennonite Weekly Review*, a weekly newspaper, Julia Kasdorf, acknowledged by the Mennonite academic community as one of their poets although she left the Mennonite church many years ago, «argued for a more personal point of view»[61] at Bluffton College while speaking at a historical society meeting. As the director of Pennsylvania State University's master's degree program in creative writing, she states that «[t]he personal is more complicated, but more enriching [...] We must include more of the personal in our scholarly writing»[62]. Our writing, then, has the potential to be rich with the emotions of the women who experienced them. And we can begin to understand how someone can find a middle voice, without breaking ties with the home community, in order to make a place for herself in the academy.

Mennonite women's lives have been informed and defined by their male-dominated religious communities which in turn carry collective memories of oppression and suffering, including death or exile at the hands of those in the

57. Ibid.
58. Fuchs, J. A. et al.: «Health Risk Factors Among the Amish: Results of a Survey», *Health Education Quarterly,* 17-2 (1990), p. 205.
59. Patricia Bizzell's address is now published as «Feminist Methods of Research in the History of Rhetoric: What Difference do They Make?», *Rhetoric Society Quarterly,* 30-4 (2000), pp. 5-17.
60. Ibid., p. 13.
61. Kasdorf, Julia: «Poet Calls for More Personal Approach to Writing History», *Mennonite Weekly Review*, 2 June 2003, p. 7.
62. Ibid.

outside world. Thus, female Mennonites, both past and present, experience a significant «double burial»[63] when their experiences are not visible in official society. «Those who do manage to develop as [...] thinkers are forgotten or have their stories told through male-defined standards of what women can be»[64]. This occurs not only because often men write the public texts, but also because men are the readers as well of the private texts written by women. Thus, when a Mennonite woman tells/writes a story, it may be labeled un-true or made up, and in this community, what is made up is a lie. Since lies are not tolerated and are sinful, the stories become absent in the community as well. Recognizing our traditional Mennonite history and how it has shaped the Mennonite world view including gendered roles of Mennonite males and Mennonite females is a start. Discussing and negotiating alternate ways to inform and define the contemporary Mennonite community is another important step. These are significant starting points for the Mennonite community in taking responsibility for initiating empowering change for Mennonite women.

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63. Anderson, Maggie, comments to the author, Kent, Ohio, 2 November 2001.
64. Ruether, Rosemary Radford: Op. cit., p. 170.

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A CHALLENGE TO TRAVEL LITERATURE AND STEREOTYPES BY TWO TURKISH WOMEN: ZEYNEB HANOUM AND SELMA EKREM

OZLEM EZER
York University (Canada)

The recent critical attention devoted to women's travel writing performs a logical transition from the ongoing focus on autobiography, representations of memory and multiculturalism as well as the issue of the Subject. Travel extends the inward direction of autobiographical experience to consider the journey outward. Regardless of the journey's motive (study, emigration, flight, conversion or domination) a journey changes both the country visited and the self that travels. I would like to introduce the travel accounts by two Turkish women written in English in the early 20th century from a feminist and critical perspective and deconstruct the Turkish women image of the West through their travel accounts[1].

The travel accounts by Western women in the early 20th century and earlier were not the most uncommon texts referred to in the feminist interpretations of travel literature by women. However, it has been extremely difficult to obtain any autobiographical accounts when one conducts a research on the other way around, namely Eastern women travelers who traveled to Europe and North America. The two Turkish women travelers' accounts presented here make this article exceptional in this sense. Both travel accounts are first-hand texts written by the Turkish women themselves in English, so no translation is needed. Both texts are (although easy to read in terms of English and structure like many other travelogues) full of complicated signs waiting to be analyzed related to these two upper-class Turkish women's self-definition, their use of language constructed for the Western audience an evaluation of the Turkish family life, customs and traditions, and their Western woman image. That is where the theories and illustrations of image/identity formation as well as

1. I am well aware of the risks and drawbacks of using broadly and relatively defined terms such as West/East, however due to limited space, I won't be able to discuss their associations and definitions extensively.

the most recent alternative criticism to orientalist discourse will be presented. Additionally, both sides of the coin will be shown, not just the orientalist products but also the Turkish women's own prejudices and partial comments towards the West as well. They can easily be labeled as an Oriental's «othering» without overlooking the fact that despite all the different misinterpretations and aspects from both sides, a common feminine language can be put forward after analyzing the texts written by the women mentioned here.

Based on Irvin C. Schick's argument, it is important to state the obvious reciprocal question which lies in the background of this discussion: could not other societies including those of the West, be viewed equally as exotic and engendered by the people, the writers and the elite of the Middle East? Western power and its self-appointed duty to speak on behalf of other cultures have some indirect claims such as knowing the «truth» about them and also some justifications on Western expansions[2]. What I try to achieve by presenting two Turkish women's impressions is in a way applying Schick's theory in their writings since the West was the «exotic» for these Turkish women. Before going further with these analyses, it is useful to include the summaries of the travel accounts and life stories of the two women which are inextricably woven together.

The first book, *A Turkish Woman's European Impressions*, is written by Zeyneb Hanoum, who was an expatriate with her sister between the years 1906-1912. The book was written in English and printed in 1913 in London when she was probably still in her twenties. The other book is called *Unveiled-The Autobiography of A Turkish Girl* written again originally in English by Selma Ekrem and printed in 1930 in New York. The book covers the years 1902-1923 and it had four prints successively from 1930 to 1936 in the United States and was highly praised by the critics at the time. Ekrem presents us some vivid observations and impressions of a sinking empire and the accounts of a series of compulsory journeys caused by her father's political position and her family past. Selma Ekrem moved to the United States in 1923, although her book *Unveiled* ends with her coming back to a new «modern» Turkey after a period of a deep longing. She completed her autobiography seven years after she moved to the United States, when she was only twenty-eight, when her memories were still fresh.

Zeyneb Hanoum's book is written in epistolary form, namely composed of the letters written to an English journalist woman, Grace Ellison, who is also the editor of the book. Zeyneb Hanoum who was a grown up, single, young woman shares her impressions of Europe very openly with her. She writes her impressions about countries such as France, England, Switzerland, Belgium, and Italy while at the same time sharing with Grace Ellison her experiences in Turkish culture, customs and family traditions, and making numerous comparisons. The initial point for both journeys (Zeyneb's and Selma's) is due

2. Basci, Pelin: «The Erotic Margin», *The Turkish Studies Association*, 24 (2000), p. 140.

to the political reasons and the milieu, namely the oppression and paranoia of the period during Abdulhamid the Second's reign (1842-1918). However, in Selma's case, it was her father who was charged because of the paranoia that reigned in the court trials. In Zeyneb Hanoum's case, she herself was accused because of her criticism of the sultan in her writings.

As one of the political results of Zeyneb Hanoum's rebellious character, her organization of the young-girls-only white dinner parties already drew suspicions on her. Therefore her awareness and aggressiveness is fully expressed in her letters as opposed to the more simple and naïve impressions of Selma Ekrem. However, by the time Selma reached puberty and was forced to wear her first *tscharshaf* (veil), her tone in the book suddenly changes into a very negative and obsessive resistance against the family and status quo in general.

Zeyneb Hanoum describes the Orient as such: «The Orient is like a beautiful poem which is always sad, even its very joy is sadness»[3]. I would also like to question her descriptions since I think that some of her passages carry an orientalist tone similar to her Westerner peers. The content of the book enables me to evaluate the text in both ways. While she is traveling around Europe, she comments on the countries' traditions, the details of daily life and the different values. Zeyneb Hanoum's comparisons of Turkey to Europe become more and more biased against Europe as she starts justifying almost each and every Turkish custom and the Turkish life style as a whole. I will speculate on what might be the possible reasons behind her disappointments since she did not encounter any particular negative or racist treatment that she relates in her letters. Towards the end of the book she mentions a «total lack of hospitality» in the west and concludes by saying that «it is in the west that I appreciate my country»[4]. Another question she poses is if women are really free in the West or not. This also is one of the questions that Fatima Mernissi asks in her book *Scheherazade Goes West*. On the other hand, the images that the Westerners have about a Turkish woman and their comments, questions and responses to Zeyneb Hanoum are also present in the book including the female editor, Grace Ellison. These details help us out to see the different images and impressions of the «foreigner» constructed on both sides.

Julia Kristeva claims that there are two kinds of foreigners, and this separates uprooted people of all countries into two uncompromising categories. On the one hand, there are those who waste away in an agonizing struggle between what no longer is and what will never be. They are not necessarily defeatists; they often become the best of ironists. On the other hand, there are those who transcend: living neither before nor now but beyond, they are bent with a passion that will remain forever unsatisfied. This is a passion for another land,

3. Hanoum, Zeyneb: *A Turkish Woman's European Impressions*, London, Seeley, Service &Co.Ltd., 1913, p. 117.
4. Ibid., p. 238.
5. Kristeva, Julia: *Strangers to Ourselves*, New York, Colombia University Press, 1991, p. 10.

always a promised one. These foreigners are believers, and they sometimes ripen into skeptics[5].

Kristeva's ideas contributed a great deal to explain the growing bitterness and extreme negativism of the tones two Turkish women's travel accounts, especially in Zeyneb Hanoum's case. At some point in her memoirs, she was asked the reason for her journeys while chatting with an English woman who thought that Zeyneb Hanoum was French without even asking her. Zeyneb Hanoum likens herself to Diogenes who tried to find a man. Instead she has been trying to find a free woman but has not been successful[6]. Even the change in the chapters' titles presents enough clues that reflect her mind: «Is this Really Freedom?», «Dreams and Realities», «Freedom's Doubtful Enchantment». In another instance, she acknowledges this «Western» and/or «European» illusion she created before she started her journeys and shares an anecdote told by her Koran teacher, which perfectly fits Kristeva's classification of the Foreigner(s):

> «There was a little girl in a country of Asia Minor who believed all she heard. One day she saw a chain of mountains blue in the distance. Is that really their color she asked? Yes, they answered. She was so delighted with the answer so goes out to get a nearer view of the blue mountains. After days of walking she got to the summit of the blue mountains. Only to find grass just as can be found anywhere else. But she would not give up. A shepherd there pointed her another chain of mountains higher and farther away, and she went there until the peak, and found the same grass. She went on and on until the evening of her life. She then understood that it was the distance that lent the mountains their hue. But it was too late to go back and she perished in the cold, biting snow»[7].

This anecdote can be considered as a key story in Zeyneb Hanoum's letters to Grace Ellison, which in fact combines many theories of otherness and perceptions of the foreigner in one paragraph. When I reflect on the travel accounts I have read so far (which cannot all possibly be listed) one element is quite common among them: the emergence of disappointment from both sides, Western and Eastern. Since the traveler acts on the knowledge obtained from the images and the secondary sources of the past, disappointment with the place or the people is almost inevitable.

The last sentence of Zeyneb's travel accounts is also in accordance with Kristeva's theory: since Zeyneb Hanoum wastes herself away in «an agonizing struggle between what no longer is and will never be», she will remain forever unsatisfied: «*Désenchantée* I left Turkey, *désenchantée* I have left Europe. Is that role to be mine till the end of my days?»[8]

Selma Ekrem presents a different attitude than Zeyneb Hanoum does probably due to the fact that starting from her childhood she had to travel to different countries and live there in longer time periods than Zeyneb Hanoum

6. Hanoum, Zeyneb: Op.cit., p. 200.
7. Ibid., p. 228.
8. Ibid., p. 246. (It is an allusion to Pierre Loti's novel *Disenchanted /Les Désenchantées* in which she gave body to one of its main characters).

did. Ekrem explains the main reason why she went to the States as such: « … to be able to wear a hat in peace»[9]. On the contrary, Zeyneb Hanoum does not like hats at all and calls it an «absurd fashion»[10].

A Western reader who reads Selma Ekrem's accounts would be very surprised with the multicultural household and the family relationships she experienced. Several languages can be heard at home since they have Greek servants and French teachers. In addition, the children attend to the Koran courses in order to acquire an appropriate religious background. Therefore, it can be inferred that the family's attitude towards education is a very cosmopolitan and sophisticated one (of course the French admiration was at a high level in Turkey at the time). At some point in their accounts both of the writers complain about this strange mixture and are aware that the great confusion they have in their minds and daily life practices are due to this type of education. Wine is served in Ekrem's family every night and interestingly she compares her aunts' responses when sitting next to each other at the table. The fact that one of her aunts is playing cards and drinking wine, whereas the other abstains from a single drop of alcohol due to her religious interpretations is a perfect example to demonstrate this confusion in a small scale of the Turkish society if the family is taken as a reflection of a society.

Another striking point to mention in a study of images in Selma Ekrem's account is her confusion in Jerusalem where they had *selamlık*(men-only space) and *harem*(women-only) for the first time: «We had never lived in such a house before, never had known a divided home»[11]. It is significant to note this detail when one talks about the Western constructions of Turkish woman image throughout the centuries[12]. Ekrem's immediate explanations after her comment on *harem* maintain her impartiality as a writer and do not mislead the reader during a potential reconstruction of the new image about Turkey:

> «In Constantinople we had not needed a harem for my father allowed mother appear before any friend of his whom she wanted to see. She had not been brought up in that narrow atmosphere where it was considered a sin to show one's face to men and to expose one's hair to casual glances in the streets. Her father was extremely liberal and she had brought to her home these liberal ideas which revolted the old heads»[13].

As it is quite clear from this paragraph, Selma Ekrem is not denying the facts of the Ottoman culture and practices other than her own family. However, what she is doing in her memoirs is new in the way that it challenges the

9. Ekrem, Selma: *Unveiled*, New York, Ives Washburn, 1930, p. 290.
10. Hanoum, Zeyneb: Op. cit., p. 66.
11. Ekrem, Selma: Op. cit., p. 290.
12. For an extensive search on the issue please see ARAT, Zehra (ed.): *Deconstructing images of the Turkish woman*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1998; and EVREN, Burçak (ed.): *Yabancı Gezginler ve Osmanlı Kadını* (*Foreign Travelers and Ottoman Woman*), Dilek Girgin Can., Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1997.
13. Ibid, p. 57.

stereotypical narration of the Turkish women throughout centuries. Irvin C. Schick's comment deserves be underlined here, he suggests that Western power including its literature -appointed itself to speak on behalf of other cultures which produced «truths» about them. One of these «truths» is the *harem*. Another woman writer who is also having serious difficulties in understanding the obsession of the West with the *harem* is the Moroccan sociologist Fatima Mernissi. Her contribution in corrections/reconstructions of Oriental images is not only about Turkish women but women of the Muslim societies in general. A striking example from her book related to Matisse, and not to mention Picasso's harem sketches, as late as 1955, fits here as a reminder to the Western reader:

> «In the 1920s, when Matisse was painting Turkish women as harem slaves in his paintings such as *Odalisque with Red Trousers*, Kemal Atatürk was promulgating feminist laws that granted Turkish women the right to education, the right to vote, and the right to hold public office»[14].

Selma Ekrem's travel to the United States, which takes place towards the end of the book, is an intensive part full of images where she is asked so many questions about Turkish women. The ignorance of Americans about Turkey brings her very close to Zeyneb Hanoum's cynical attitude in her book. In one occasion, where Selma meets some young girls in her friend's house, such a conversation takes place:

> «I would simply adore to be in a harem» one of the girls broke my cup of thoughts.
>
> «And lie on silken cushions and eat sweets and watch the dancing of the slave girls,» another laughed. (…)
>
> «A paradise indeed,» I sighed. «Could you tell me what is a harem? I never saw one.»
>
> «You never saw a harem!» the girls burst out. «And you come from Turkey?»
>
> «Yes, I come from Turkey,» I added firmly, «but I did not live in a marble palace, I did not have slaves, I did not lie on silken cushions. This harem you speak about exists only in your imagination»[15].

As can be observed from Selma's straightforward attitude towards these young American girls she meets for the first time in Washington, an ironical tone like Zeyneb Hanoum's becomes obvious. She leaves her listeners disappointed since she crushes their imaginary picture of an exotic land decorated with the soft mystery of silks, perfumes and music. She soon begins to express her criticism against America in a more professional way and starts making money by lecturing about Turkey to Americans. This experience actually becomes an example to my initial claim that there is a support and cooperation between the women of the West and Selma Ekrem, no matter how hard she may criticize them in several occasions. Ironically enough, the suggestion of giving

14. Mernissi, Fatima: *Scheherazade Goes West*, New York, Washington Square Press, 2001, p. 109.
15. Ekrem, Selma: Op. cit., pp. 311-312.

lectures on Turkey comes from an American friend of hers since there were no such practices in Turkey at that time yet. By lecturing in different states about Turkish women, their daily lives and traditions, Selma Ekrem certainly contributes to a positive Turkish women image, travels and makes money as well. One and a half years later, she misses Turkey, gets homesick and describes the feeling in this way: «The American tonic had become too strong for my Eastern nerves»[16]. However, my quotations might be misleading without mentioning the gap between the classes of the Turkish society at that time. It is not claimed here that the constructions of the Turkish women images in the West were fictive overall. There were actually *harem* and *selamlık* sections in many houses in different regions of Turkey when Selma was taken aback with the sight of a house where men and women were to sit separately in Jerusalem. Although Selma's and Zeyneb's families constitute a different class and have different background, they *are* still Turkish.

Unlike Zeyneb Hanoum, Selma Ekrem becomes so happy to find out that the Kemalist revolutions are put in practice and it is normal and accepted to wear a hat now on the streets for women when she comes back to Turkey in the late 1920s. She actually writes, «Turkey was a bit of America tamed and softened by the East»[17]. This analogy is something mostly used in a pejorative sense today whereas she meant it in a very positive way.

Zeyneb Hanoum and Selma Ekrem's disappointments and ironical criticisms about the Westerners' prejudices during their solo travels are mostly reasonable. These preconceptions are mostly the products of Western men, not the women since women are already silenced by the same system and mentality within their societies and ascribed certain roles. Besides the examples presented here, several interesting ones can be provided from Mernissi's book about this subject. It is difficult not to agree with her when she finds it strange that in the 1920s, an Oriental military man like Atatürk was dreaming of liberated women, while a man like Matisse, bred in a democracy, was dreaming of odalisques and an Islamic civilization that he confused with women's passivity[18].

Transformation of the female Self during traveling and its transcription into a text cannot always result as it is aimed[19]. That is why/how my claim of a distinctive and supportive language among women travelers can still be maintained despite some complexities in the texts of these travel accounts that may easily be labeled as «flaws». Women travelers whose roots are originated in the Western or Eastern cultures are willing to deconstruct images, stereotypes and prejudices. This genre's complexity should not prevent its recognition and hopefully open up some contemporary debates.

16. Ibid., p. 317.
17. Ekrem, Selma: Op. cit., p. 319.
18. Mernissi, Fatima: Op. cit., p. 200.
19. Mills, Sara: *An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism*, New York, Routledge, 1991, p. 36.

CLAIMING AND DISCLAIMING THE BODY IN THE EARLY DIARIES OF VIRGINIA WOOLF, ANAÏS NIN AND AINO KALLAS

LEENA KURVET-KÄOSAAR
University of Tartu (Estonia)

Autobiographical practices, as realized and conceptualized in the 20th century have, to a great extent, ignored the issues pertaining to the body. Shirley Neumann sees as one of the main reasons for this «the Platonic tradition that opposes the spiritual to the corporeal, and then identifies 'self' with the spiritual»[1]. In later considerations of autobiography that have been influenced by the postmodernist paradigm, the rationalist 'self' is replaced by the notion of the subject that views linguistic constructions of the self, or, in other words, textual markers of the subject as part of historic, social and cultural factors. According to Sidonie Smith, «subjectivity is not an out-of-body experience»[2]; rather it can be viewed as «the elaborate residue of the border politics of the body since bodies locate us topographically, temporally, socio-culturally as well as linguistically in a series of transcodings along multiple axes of meanings»[3]. By declaring that «the body has been made so problematic for women that it has often seemed easier to shrug it off and travel as a disembodied spirit»[4], Adrienne Rich voices an experience familiar to women belonging to various cultures, classes, ages and racial/ethnic backgrounds.

The Cartesian mind/body split placing women on the latter side of the divide has historically resulted in a textual neutralization or writing off the body in women's autobiographical texts. Several feminist autobiography scholars have argued that despite its problematic nature, the body is not

1. Neuman, Shirley: «'An appearance walking in a forest the sexes burn': Autobiography and the Construction of the Feminine Body», in Kathleen Ashley, Leigh Gilmore and Gerald Peters (eds.): *Autobiography & Postmodernism,* Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1994, p. 293.
2. Smith, Sidonie: «Identity's Body», in Kathleen Ashley, Leigh Gilmore and Gerald Peters (eds.), *Autobiography & Postmodernism,* Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1994, p. 266.
3. Smith, Sidonie: Op. cit., p. 267.
4. Rich, Adrienne: *Of Women Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution,* New York, W.W. Norton, 1976, p. 40.

entirely absent from women's autobiographical writings. As Smith further argues, «the women autobiographer always remained self-consciously in her body even as she erased the body from her text»[5]. The word 'erasure' here does not denote a mere absence but rather a presence that has been removed, or even more importantly, a presence that is continuously in the process of coming into being and being removed. Even with no visible readable presence, «(in autobiography) the body of the text, the body of the narrator, the body of the narrated I, the cultural body and the body politic must all merge in skins and skeins of meaning»[6].

Keeping a diary, especially for women, has been a practice of considerable continuity in the Western Culture. In an insightful attempt to conceptualize the diary, Felicity Nussbaum claims; «it is possible that women began the idea of private and later public, articulation of quotidian experience»[7]. The diary, looked upon as a textual practice both formally and thematically corresponding to women's pattern of life and way of thinking, has frequently been considered to be the 'feminine mode of writing' by feminist critics of autobiography[8]. While an exposure of the ways in which diaristic writings have been feminized and rejected in the classical theoretical and critical works on autobiography, it can certainly be considered a noteworthy contribution to autobiography criticism, the construction of the textual space of the diary as a safe secluded haven for the female pen runs, at some point, the risk of furthering the feminization and marginalization of the diary rather than expanding the autobiographical canon. An understanding of the diary format as a mode of writing that has been accessible and gratifying for women across centuries[9], however, makes it possible to view women's diaries as important sources providing access to the representation of the development of female subjectivity.

In many cases, women's diaries start with adolescence or girlhood. A renowned French scholar of autobiography, Philippe Lejeune, who has studied the diaries of French girls from the 17th century onwards, sees as the most difficult task in reading young girls diaries «in learning how to decipher the code or thematic framework within which the diary articulates itself»[10]. Lejeune mentions as one of the characteristic features of girlhood diaries the high degree of self-censorship,[11] everything pertaining to the body falling into the category

5. Smith, Sidonie: Op. cit., p. 272.
6. Ibid., p. 267.
7. Nussbaum, Felicity: «Toward Conceptualizing the Diary», in James Olney (ed.): *Studies in Autobiography,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 134.
8. See, for example, Moffat, Mary Jane, and Painter, Charlotte: *Revelations: Diaries of Women*, New York, Vintage, 1974, p. 5. Hogan, Rebecca: «Diarists on Diaries», *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies,* 2.2 (1986), p. 100.
9. Blodgett, Harriet: *Centuries of Female Days. Englishwomen's Private Diaries,* New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1988, p. 5.
10. Lejeune, Philippe: «The 'Journal de Jeune Fille' in Nineteenth-Century France», in Bunkers, Suzanne L. and Cynthia A. Huff, *Inscribing the Daily. Critical Essays on Women's Diaries,* Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1996, p. 111.
11. Lejeune, Philippe: Op. cit., p. 111.

of topics to be left out of the diary. «A girl could keep a diary», claims Lejeune, «without any interruption, between the ages of eight and seventeen, without mentioning at all any transformations brought about by puberty»[12]. The diaries of girlhood, adolescence and young womanhood offer extremely valuable insights into the textual negotiational practices through which women have attempted to locate themselves in their surroundings and contexts as well as their bodies. Nussbaum identifies the need for keeping a diary with the point when «the subject begins to believe that it cannot be intelligible to itself without written representation and articulation»[13]. Considering both the intellectual and ideological ways of male-dominated Western culture that submits women to multiple objectifying practices from quite an early age, it is not difficult to see why a written articulation and representation of experience has been of such crucial value for young women across various cultural contexts and time frames.

According to Bunkers and Huff, «women's daily experience» that has been articulated in the diary, «has been denigrated by mainstream Western epistemology in favor of universality is commonly related to the bodily and separated from the universality [of the mind in favor of the latter]»[14]. The binary opposition of mind and body, although commonly associated with Descartes, can be traced back to Plato, who views the body as a «tomb, or as a grave or a prison for the soul»[15]. Claiming that women live more through their bodies than men, Plato views the body as an enormous obstacle in seeing beauty, achieving knowledge and the highest forms of love[16]. Women's lives are seen as more related to the body than those of men and the diary has been viewed as a textual practice that, more than any other autobiographical discourse, as if bears trace of the operation of binary thought.

On the one hand, the diary is positioned in the canon of autobiography as a textual practice pertaining more to the body (characterized by qualities such as immanence, the daily, and being of local relevance) than to the mind (characterized by qualities such as universality and transcendence). On the other hand, as a rather loosely conceptualized and flexible genre the diary offers more varied and richer possibilities for writing the body. Diaries can be also viewed as having a positive relation to the body, as offering a home to the textual & textured body of the author's subjectivity. When keeping a diary, she calls into being a text that continually expands in time and space, the author

12. Ibid., p. 111.
13. Nussbaum, Felicity: Op. cit., p. 132.
14. Bunkers, Suzanne and Huff, Cynthia: «Issues in Studying Women's Diaries: A Theoretical and Critical Introduction», in Suzanne Bunkers and Cynthia Huff (eds.): *Inscribing the Daily; Critical Essays on Women's Diaries,* Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1996, p. 5.
15. Spelman, Elizabeth V.: «Woman as Body: Ancient and Contemporary Views», *Feminist Studies,* 8-1 (spring 1982), p. 136.
16. Spelman, Elizabeth V.: Op. cit., pp. 36, 37.

gradually claims a textual body, she possesses a text and is simultaneously contained by it.

As the diary is «experienced as writing without an end» [17], it lacks a pressure for closure, the need to declare itself finished, it acquires over time a more intimate and more immediate, or one may say more bodily, relation with its author. This is a feature that is characteristic of all diary texts that cover long periods of their authors' lives. It is clear for the reader that the diary is for its author a familiar and reliable writing situation or context, to which she is related via the dynamic patterns of previous entries. This, however, does not imply an obligation of the author to continue reproducing the style, length, mode and referential framework of previous entries. On the contrary, the familiarity of the context can be traced in the freedom of the author to vary and modify format and structure of the diary according to his/her needs.

Virginia Woolf, Anaïs Nin and Aino Kallas kept a diary more or less regularly for long periods of their lives. Virginia Woolf is the only one of the three women who did not publish her diary during her lifetime. Her diary, nevertheless, demonstrates an awareness of the possibility of letting go of the text for publication eventually. Both Aino Kallas and Anaïs Nin edited and published their diaries toward the end of their lives. For long periods of their lives though, the diary, kept more or less on a daily basis, remained a private body of text and did not enter «the realm of shared experience as works of literature do»[18]. The diaries of Virginia Woolf, Anaïs Nin and Aino Kallas display from the very first entries a relatively strong awareness of the characteristic features of textual production, including «an urge to give shape and meaning to life with words and to endow this meaning-making with a permanence that transcends time»[19]. All three diaries carefully document the publication of their authors' first pieces of writing. Although achieving literary fame is at that point several decades away from all three women, the diaries engage in what can be called a preparation for the profession of letters and reveal an increasing awareness of the process of textual production. Virginia Stephen's and Aino Krohn's diaries also play an especially important role as writers'sketchbooks. In Aino Krohn's diary this can be traced in the structure as well as in several comparisons of the diary (and life) with a novel[20]. In Virginia Stephen's diary this is noticeable in various entries that resemble the essay format, differing considerably from the range of topics and daily structure of her later diary. The awareness of that

17. Lejeune, Philippe: «How Do Diaries End?», *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*, 24-1 (winter 2001), p. 100.
18. Dalsimer, Katherine: *Female Adolescence. Psychoanalytic Reflections on Literature,* New Haven, Yale University Press, 1986, p. 2.
19. Culley, Margo: «Introduction», in Margo Culley (ed.): *A Day at a Time: Diary Literature of American Women, from 1764 to 1985,* New York, The Feminist Press at The City University of New York, 1985, p. 11.
20. See also Makkonen, Anna: «My Own Novel. Yes, really!», *Scandinavian Studies*, 71-4 (winter 1999), pp. 419-452.

vocation and the backgrounds of all three young women certainly caution the reading of the diaries as representative of average adolescent girls or young women of their respective temporal and cultural contexts.

My article focuses on the textual presence and absence of the body as a basis of formational processes of identity in the early diaries of Virginia Woolf, Anaïs Nin, and Aino Kallas. The early diaries of three outstanding women authors of the 20th century, covering the period of adolescence to womanhood, offer extremely interesting insights into the bodily processes of gendered identity-construction, the textual presence and absence of the body as the basis of autobiographical identification, the relationship between the public and private bodies and the traces of body politics in the diaries. I will be looking at the following volumes: *A Passionate Apprentice: The Early Diary of Virginia Woolf (1897-1909)*[21], Virginia Stephen aged 15 to 27, *The Early Diary of Anaïs Nin, Volume II (1920-1923)*[22], Nin aged 17 to 21 and *Pärjapunuja: päevaraamat aastaist 1897-1906*[23], Aino Krohn/Kallas aged 19 to 28.

Virginia Stephen's diaristic records of adolescence and young womanhood, varying in both content and form were edited for publication by Mitchell Leaska in 1990 bearing the title *A Passionate Apprentice*. The childhood, adolescence and young womanhood of Anaïs Nin is quite thoroughly documented in a posthumously published series of four volumes titled the *Early Diary of Anaïs Nin*.[24] The earliest diaries of Aino Kallas have not been preserved as the author herself later destroyed the volumes covering her school years[25]. It is for this reason that the diary of Aino Kallas starts on the threshold of womanhood, when the author is 19 years old.

The early diaries of Virginia Woolf, Anaïs Nin, and Aino Kallas cover a relatively similar period in the authors' lives. At the same time, the three women belong to different cultural spaces as well as slightly different time-frames. They share a rather similar background, all coming from outstanding and financially well-off families in their respective cultural contexts. Aino Krohn comes from a distinguished Finnish family of intellectuals, men (and women) of letters and public figures of Finnish national awakening. Virginia Stephen's father Leslie Stepen was a prominent Victorian intellectual and the first editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Anais Nin's family background from her mother's side was a well-off and artistic Cuban-Danish-French family residing in Cuba. All three women spent their childhood in both intellectually

21. Woolf, Virginia: *A Passionate Apprentice: The Early Journals, 1897-1909,* New York, London, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990.
22. Nin, Anaïs: *The Early Diary of Anaïs Nin, Volume II, 1920-1923,* New York, London, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982.
23. Kallas, Aino: *Pärjapunuja: päevaraamat aastaist 1897-1906,* Tallinn, Eesti Raamat, 1994.
24. *Linotte: The Early Diary of Anais Nin* 1914-1920 (New York, Harvest Books, 1980), *The Early Diary of Anaïs Nin, Volume II, 1920-1923* (New York, London, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), *Journal of A Wife: the Early Diary of Anais Nin, 1923-1927* (London, Peter Owen Publishers, 1984) and *The Early Diary of Anais Nin, 1927-1930* (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985).
25. Laitinen, Kai: *Aino Kallas,* Tallinn, Sinisukk, 1997, p. 561.

and financially affluent surroundings that for all of them were also darkened by traumatic personal losses. Aino Krohn's beloved father drowned on a boat trip in 1888 when Aino was 10 years old. Virginia Woolf lost her mother in 1895 at the age of 13, her half-sister Stella two years later and her father in 1904. Anaïs Nin's life was changed forever when her father abandoned the family and Anaïs had to suffer a painful loss of her familiar European cultural context and follow her mother and two brothers to the USA. When reading the diaries, it is very important to observe the relationship of the authors with their family members as well as with the surrounding world. Anaïs Nin's early diary reveals a rather withdrawn position of its author in her family, that, in turn, is marginal in its new socio-cultural settings in the USA. The reserved position of Virginia Stephen can be partially attributed to the loss of her parents and half-sister and her first outbreaks of mental instability as well as possible sexual harassment by two half-brothers.[26] The premarital years of Aino Krohn have been depicted in the diary from the position of full participation (and enjoyment) of the events and processes open to a young woman of her upbringing and background in her society. The author's status, however, changes radically right after marriage and she moves to St. Petersburg where the world of Aino Kallas, cut off from her Finnish roots, is suddenly reduced to home and the care of her children. Although not all differences in the depiction of the body and embodied subjectivity in the three diaries can be attributable to differences in cultural context and time frame, these are, nonetheless, factors that need to be accounted for.

* * *

Virginia Stephen's *A Passionate Apprentice* opens when Virginia was recovering from a nervous breakdown following her mother's death in May 1895.[27] Between this January and the autumn of 1904 she would also witness the deaths of her half-sister Stella and of her father and survive «a summer of madness and suicidal depression»[28]. Autumn 1904, when she started assisting a family friend Frederic Maitland with her father's biography, also marks the starting point of Virginia's career as a writer. In January 1905 she accepted a weekly teaching post at Morley College, an evening institute for working men

26. Woolf writes about it only at the end of her life, in a posthumously published autobiographical sketch *Moments of Being* (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985). This aspect of Virgina Woolf's life is also touched upon in all later biographies of her. One of the earliest and also most thorough considerations of this theme *Virginia Woolf. The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on Her Life and Work* (London, The Women's Press Ltd., 1989) was written by Louise DeSalvo who deconstructs the myths of Virginia's childhood home as a safe environment supporting harmonious development of the children, exposing several formerly unknown details concerning almost all family members.
27. Leaska, Mitchell A: «Introduction», in Virginia Woolf: *A Passionate Apprentice: The Early Journals, 1897-1909,* New York, London, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990, p. xv; Dalsimer, Katherine: *Virginia Woolf. Becoming a Writer,* New Haven, Yale University Press, 2001, p. 39.
28. Leaska, Mitchell A.: Op. cit., p. xv.

and women, in December 1904 three of her reviews were published in *The Guardian*, and in February 1905 she received an invitation to review books for the *Times Literary Supplement*.

According to Katherine Dalsimer, «what her adolescent diary reveals is that as early as age fifteen, writing was for Virginia Woolf as painting was for Lily Briscoe, 'the one dependable thing in a world of strife, ruin and chaos»[29]. The first entries from the years 1897 and 1899 are a rather laconic record of daily events. The next volumes, following a less strict and structured writing mode, demonstrate how the textual space of the diary becomes more familiar for the author and how, in order to find a diaristic style of her own, she is starting to feel freer to engage in textual experiments. In addition to documenting daily events, the diary now contains several entries that strive to produce a textual record of a mode or an atmosphere as well as other contemplations of more general nature.

As *A Passionate Apprentice* is rather incoherent in both the style of writing and the range of topics discussed, it would be quite difficult to provide a conclusive overview of the relation between body and subjectivity in it. Characteristically to Woolf's later diary volumes as well, the body is perceivable more through absence than through presence. Differing from the diaries of both Anaïs Nin and Aino Kallas, Virginia Stephen's diary contains no entries that would provide the reader with information about the looks of the author neither her attitude toward her appearance. The diary also contains few, if any, descriptions of social events that a girl of her age and background would normally participate in. One diary entry, however, contains a description of a dance that Virginia attended together with her sister. If Aino Krohn's diary contains several engaging descriptions of various dances and the diary of Anaïs Nin diary occasionally touches upon the at least partially enjoyable effect of such events, Virginia Stephen's attitude is clearly refractory. More than anything else, Virgina resists forced close physical contact with other people at the dance. Finding herself «shoved well into a thick knot of human beings»[30], Virginia's only wish is to escape from the crowd «trying to seize arms & waists & hurl each other thus united into the waltzing center of the room»[31].

The one bodily theme that keeps popping up in various contexts in *A Passionate Apprentice* is that of illness and death. The diary provides descriptions of minor colds and toothaches as well as serious diseases resulting in death. Illness is certainly one of the topics that interested Woolf all through her literary career. In her essay «On Illness», published in 1926, Woolf emphasizes the bodily basis of all life experience as such:

29. Dalsimer, Katherine: Op. cit., p. 56.
30. Woolf, Virgina: *A Passionate Apprentice*..., op. cit., p. 170.
31. Woolf, Virginia: Op. cit., p. 170.

> «All day, all night the body intervenes /.../ the creature within can only gaze through the pane-smudged or rosy; it cannot separate off from the body like the sheath of a knife or the pod of a pea for a single instant.»[32]

Woolf also emphasizes the need to coin a new language, «primitive, subtle, sensual, obscene»[33] as well as a «new hierarchy of the passions» where «love must be deposed in favor of a temperature of 104; jealousy give place to the pangs of sciatica»[34] that would provide the experience of being ill a place among the great themes of literature.

Of all bodily ailments, *A Passionate Apprentice* most noticeably focuses on various dental problems. The reason for this is probably not the relevance of dental problems in young Virginia Stephen's life as such but in the fact that this was an issue that was least related to various taboos concerning the body. It is also important that dental problems, though bothersome, hardly constituted a problem involving any serious health risks. The following example conveys a typical mood of the descriptions of several visits to the dentist included in the diary:

> «At 3:30 I was in Tisdall's chair & sat there an hour of an acute discomfort & some pain having a tooth stopped & that infernal crown jammed into my jaw which was finally done – but it aches (illegible) at this minute.»[35]

Descriptions of Virginia's visits to the dentist all share certain similar features. In all cases, the perspective conveyed is very much that of a passive object of the medial practice. In the above quoted section, the body emerges to signal acute discomfort coming not from itself but from the process of «having that infernal crown jammed» into Virginia's jaw. Woolf's description of the procedure implies being subjected to violent and aggressive medical act that calls into question the efficiency of the treatment, the act of fixing the body itself.

Virginia started her diary after a period of mental instability following her mother's death. As between January 1897 when the diary opens and 1904 she would also witness her half-sister Stella dying of peritonitis and her father dying of abdominal cancer, the reader half expects health related issues enjoying a solid presence in her diary but has to put up with a rather scanty and laconic textual record. It is also interesting to note that although Virginia's family members' bodily well-being was, through their illnesses, threatened from the inside, the diary displays an extensive, at times almost hyperbolic awareness of the common threats to the body by the outside worlds. During Stella's illness, for example, the diary contains various descriptions of carriage and omnibus accidents made in a rather alarmed tone.

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32. Woolf, Virginia: «On Being Ill,» *The Essays of Virginia Woolf, Volume IV*, 1925-1928, London, The Hogarth Press, 1994, p. 318.
33. Woolf, Virginia: «On Being Ill», op. cit., p. 319.
34. Ibid. p. 319.
35. Woolf, Virgina: *A Passionate Apprentice,* op. cit., pp. 226-227.

A Passionate Apprentice also contains entries immediately preceding and following Stella's death. Virginia had not been feeling well the preceding days and upon her visit to Stella (who lived across the street) her mental condition was considered vulnerable enough as not to risk transporting her to her own home that was in fact, only a few houses away. Virginia spends the last days of Stella's life in the room next-door, so-to-say, sharing Stella's condition of being ill. Virginia's diary entries from the period when Stella returned from her honeymoon in poor health demonstrate a continuous concern for Stella's health. This is evident from the fact that each entry contains a brief description of Stella's condition as well as comments on the opinions of the doctors. Several entries demonstrate how Virginia sees a discord between the optimistic prognoses of the doctors and how well Stella seems to be. The entries concerning the final stages of Stella's illness that seem to make an attempt to record the gradual fading away of Stella's physical presence and its final dissolution, are made retrospectively as Virginia did not have her diary with her during the days she spent at Stella's house.

The entries show intensive dedication to remembering and documenting every moment spent with Stella and every word exchanged between the two women. Other family members are referred to by their proper names, Stella by the personal pronoun 'she'. Virginia concentrates on Stella gradual physical detachment from Virginia. During the first day of her visit, Stella stays up with Virginia all through the night «stroking [her] till the fidgets went.»[36] Virginia sees Stella once more in passing and then the only contact between them is via voice: laying in bed in different rooms they call out for each other's health. When Virginia is transported to her house a day later, Stella cannot be present in person to see her off but she extends her material and maternal presence via lending Virginia her fur cape, into which Virginia is wrapped.

The entry recording Stella's death however, is not only devoid of emotion but also displays an interesting dispersal of voice, a dissolving of the speaking 'I':

> «At 3 this morning, Georgie & Nessa came to me, & told me that Stella was dead – That is all we have thought of since, & it is impossible to write of».[37]

First, Virginia is being told the news, then the position of her receiving information from George & Nessa shifts to an unelaborated 'we' and finally to a declaration of writer's block obviously referring to Virginia's writing but marked by an impersonal pronoun. The next page, though dated, remains blank in the diary. The blankness of the page, in my opinion, can be viewed as a non-verbal presence of Stella's death, the materiality of the blank page conveying the reality of her death and the material absence or a void created by it. By the blank page death acquires a physical presence, a space is allotted in the diary for that, reminding of the custom of commemorating those who have passed away by a moment of silence.

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36. Ibid., p. 114.
37. Ibid., p. 115.

When Nin left Barcelona for New York in the autumn of 1914, she began writing in French what she later called her childhood diary[38]. For Nin, the diary was first and foremost a means to communicate with her absent father who had left the family a year earlier when Nin was recovering from a serious surgery. Anaïs' mother, Rosa Nin-Culmell, settled in the outskirts of New York with Anaïs and her two sons and pursued several business ideas to support her family. Though there were more and less affluent times, she was not really a success and the family's life was marked by the modest living conditions that were in relatively sharp contrast with the luxurious context of Nin's European childhood. Nin attended several schools and also took a few courses at Columbia University but never pursued her academic career any further. In June 1922 Nin became engaged to Hugo Guiler, a young American from a good but not overly wealthy family, who was about to embark his career as a banker. Nin and Hugo married in 1923 in Havana.

The early diary of Anaïs Nin covers in much greater detail the adolescence and young womanhood of the author than the diaries of Virginia Woolf and Aino Kallas, offering a wide array of topics concerning the body. The one issue that keeps emerging with considerable stability is the author's strong preference of the matters pertaining to the mind over those pertaining to the body and practices that involve the body such as, for example, housework, sports, and dances. Considering the importance of perceiving herself as an embodied subject that is the focus of Nin's later diaries and the basis of her scandalous and contradictory reputation[39], such categorical binarization can be considered somewhat unexpected.

Nin developed the practice of keeping the diary that she would fanatically follow all though her lifetime at a relatively young age. Already in adolescence, the intensity of dedication to the diary made it necessary for Nin to cancel and postpone various other activities. According to Nin's biographer Deirdre Bair, Nin tended to neglect her household duties in order to devote herself to the «unbounded egotism of talking about [her] self»[40]. Anaïs Nin herself, however, discusses several times quite ironically how the expectations of her and her brothers differ greatly:

> «The dishwasher, the smell of kitchen soap, the dust – choke me! Once I remember wondering if heaven had meant woman for this kind of work. Joaquin[41] was playing his compositions and I was cooking, having just finished ironing his shirts and mending his socks, in short, attending to his physical comfort. If I had been writing upstairs, he would have not been fed and clothed, and fit to play and compose. Well there, Mimi, stay in the kitchen; genius must be served.»[42]

38. The diary from the years 1914-1920 is titled *Linotte: The Early Diary of Anais Nin*. It was published posthumously like all other volumes of Anais Nin's *Early Diary*.
39. See, Tookey, Helen: «'I am the Other Face of You': Anaïs Nin, Fantasies and Femininity», *Women: a Cultural Review,* 12-3 (2001), pp. 307-324.
40. Bair, Deidre: *Anaïs Nin. A Biography,* London, Bloomsbury, 1995, p. 39.
41. Anaïs Nin's younger brother.
42. Nin, Anaïs: Op. cit., p. 270.

Here Nin's choice of topic very much corresponds to a typical woman's diary. The focus of the collection articles, *Inscribing the Daily; Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*[43], for example, is mainly on the characteristic features of the textualization of everyday life in the diary format. Nin's diary, however, quite clearly voices different kinds of expectations of life, and daily events are rarely considered worthy to be mentioned in the diary.

In August 1922, Nin, who is then 19 years old, writes:

> «In seeking to know myself and the world and to put my knowledge into words, I have neglected to give my material a human shape, a reality. I have put forth ideas without a body, described emotions and given them no proper setting. /…/ Mine is the story of a soul and of the inner life and of its reactions to the outward life. It is as if … I was risking to be lost myself in a world of phantoms, spirits and souls. And to lose strength, to lose my grip and hold on the palpable would end in disaster».[44]

In this passage Nin seemingly scolds herself for losing her grip on the palpable world. The passage was triggered by a fear of being unable to communicate with the others while remaining inside her carefully crafted secluded realm of spiritual and intellectual pleasures. The body/mind split, though not Cartesian in origin, commonly carries within it the Cartesian notion of *res cogitans* and *res extensa,* «positioning consciousness outside of the world and outside its body [and] removing [it] from direct contact with other minds and a socio-cultural community»[45]. It is interesting that Nin's momentary doubt in the status of her position was fuelled by a question that has often been raised in the relation of the Cartesian binary: namely the danger of seclusion, the impossibility of communication in an intellectual framework where consciousness becomes «an island unto itself»[46]. Despite this feeling she admits only a few lines later how «like Amiel, sometimes [she] feels each day that [she] is becoming 'more purely a spirit; everything is growing transparent to [her]'»[47] and how the surrounding world recedes to mere «matter» waiting to be «spiritualized»[48].

One of Nin's favorite words in the early diary seems to be 'to soliqualize' and her diary contains numerous descriptions of blissful moments when Nin managed to sneak away from her daily duties and dedicated herself to the activity that mattered most to her. The diary plays, for Nin, a crucial role in her intellectual development; its «mere power of reflecting is worth more to her than all the sermons and advice in the world»[49]. The diary is for her «the strongest help to fulfill her vision to achieve womanhood»[50]. Nin's perception of womanhood, however, does not coincide with that of the people around

43. Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1996.
44. Nin Anaïs: Op. cit., p. 466.
45. Grosz, Elizabeth: *Volatile Bodies,* Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1994, p. 7.
46. Ibid., p. 7.
47. Nin Anaïs: Op. cit., p. 466.
48. Ibid., p. 466.
49. Ibid., p. 165.
50. Ibid., p. 165.

her. One diary entry contains an irritated description of a meeting with a boy named Herbet Ocres who, according to Nin, humiliates her by calling her a «wonderful girl»[51]. «It cannot be,» writes Nin,

> «that I am destined to be judged merely as a pretty doll to play with. Has not all my girlhood been spent in creating my ideal of womanhood and in trying to live up to it – an ideal which is made of all the intangible charms of education, intellect, knowledge?.»[52]

Over and over again, the diary positions itself almost categorically against various ways and forms of bodily materiality:

> «Woman, primitive and animalized, who rises no higher in her estimation of life than in seeking its physical joys and no higher in her relationship to man than to desire to please his senses - what an obstacle to civilization!.»[53]

However, it is not only women who become the object of Nin's criticism. «Hugo», she writes about her husband to be Hugo Guiler, «is essentially a pure physical being above all else»[54]. Hugo dissatisfies Nin for «letting the flesh control his emotions and moods as well as his love»[55]. According to the diary, Nin herself possesses «a control of such degree over her body that the physical is seldom responsible for her acts»[56]. In claiming control over her body and simultaneously disclaiming her body, Nin sounds almost heroic in emphasizing her ability to rise above «it all» and act sustained by some inner force which is beyond the human»[57].

* * *

Aino Krohn-Kallas, born 1878 into the family of prominent Finnish intellectuals and public figures of Finnish national awakening, is one of the very few women novelists of the first half of the 20th century both in Estonian and Finnish literature still read today. In 1900 she married Oskar Kallas, who was to be a well-known Estonian public figure, with a huge contribution to Estonian culture and education. After marriage they moved to St. Petersburg and a few years later to my hometown Tartu in Estonia. During the years covered in her first diary volume *Pärjapunuja. Päevaraamat aastaist 1897-1906* (*The Wreath-maker. Diary from the years 1897-1906)*[58], Aino Kallas married, left her homeland, gave birth to four children and published five books.

The early diary of Aino Krohn offers perhaps the most coherent and harmonious description of spiritual as well as corporeal development from

51. Ibid., p. 213.
52. Ibid., p. 213.
53. Ibid., pp. 517-518.
54. Ibid., p. 473.
55. Ibid., p. 473.
56. Ibid., p. 473.
57. Ibid., p. 473.
58. Tallinn, Eesti Raamat, 1994.

young womanhood to a married woman and a mother of the three diaries considered here. Although she too, like Nin, attributes greater significance to intellectual and creative matters, she retains a generally optimistic view of the effects of her bodily presence throughout her diary. The first part of the volume provides an overview of the typical life of a young woman of her background, highlighting lively social life that has, as one of its primary aims, meeting her future husband. While the attempts of George Duckworth, Virginia Stephen's half-brother, to present Virginia and her sister Vanessa in the upper middle class and aristocratic circles completely failed and while Anaïs Nin is tortured by doubts about her only value as a pretty girl after every dance, Aino Krohn seems to fully enjoy social life. The diary contains various detailed descriptions of parties that the author of the diary considers exciting and fully enjoyable. One of the central social events that the diary touches upon is the ceremony of running for title of the main wreath-maker (in Finnish yleinen seppeleensitojatar) during the graduation ceremony of Finnish-speaking students at Helsinki University in the spring of 1897. Aino Krohn describes her consent in the following way: «The honor was too tempting. I imagined in my mind how they would come to greet me with a song in white student hats and with waving flags. I saw in my mind crowds standing at my window with the eyes of everyone turned to me»[59]. One the one hand, it is clear that the honor for Aino Krohn does not merely lie in the ceremonial side of the process, as this was an event of some importance for promoting Finnish national identity. On the other, she also confesses to her diary of being flattered by the prospect of being the center of admiring gaze of many male students. The title of the main wreath-maker was finally given to the candidate set up by Swedish-speaking graduates but Aino Krohn participated in the graduation ceremony as the wreath-maker of one of the graduates. Before going to the graduation ceremony, she describes her clothing, «a white dress of slightly yellowish color», «carefully curled black hair» and «a red rosebud attached to her bosom»[60] in rather detailed manner. The description of the dress and hair also demonstrates the author's appreciative evaluation of her body that the carefully chosen attire is meant to accentuate.

While being well aware of and mostly enjoying the attention her looks grant her, she is also conscious of its dangers. During a boat trip to Stockholm with a female relative, Aino Krohn describes how «a finely dressed gentleman»[61] approaches her during one excursion, wishing to deliver a small note. The diary describes the confusion of the author upon the situation:

> «I wanted to read the note, still not realizing what his real aim was, but he stopped me, glancing toward aunt Wenell and repeated his question about my knowledge of German language. When I answered affirmatively, he bent over to me,

59. Kallas, Aino: *Pärjapunuja: päevaraamat aastaist 1897-1906,* Tallinn, Eesti Raamat, 1994, p. 7.
60. Ibid., p. 10.
61. Ibid., p. 21.

so close that I could feel his hot breath and said passionately 'Ich intertessiere mich für Ihre Persönlichkeit'. 'I'm interested in your personality'. His gaze, how disgusting it was! I naturally blushed terribly, threw the note by his feet and ran away.»[62]

The extract quoted above reveals quite clearly the hypocritical essence of the situation, the verbally expressed interest of the 'gentleman' in her personality and an interest of quite different kind, communicated via his gaze and hot breath. Aino Krohn, however, is not so much embarrassed but upset that something like this could happen «in broad daylight»[63]. The author is noticeably much more disturbed by the reviews of her first collection of poems that focus more on the author as a pretty young woman than the poetry itself:

«The review was as if written for a child – Roine[64] diminished my age by two years – or as if for a rather young girl, to whom men feel obliged to pay compliments – about the looks as well. Yes, I was a woman enough to be flattered but someone else in me got offended. /…/ Yes, my looks! I do know that I am pretty and I like it when other people notice it as well but I would never want this to be the only noteworthy thing about me.»[65]

In some sense this is a classic case of masculinist criticism of a work of literature by a woman author that has been pointed out by many feminist literary critics: the attention focuses only on the author's looks and the work itself becomes secondary[66]. Aino Krohn bitterly criticizes the author of the review for foregrounding the «pretty young girl of letters»[67] in a patronizing and objectifying manner over the text itself and refuses to accept his discouraging view of her future career as a writer since she is a young woman whose primary objective in life should be finding a proper husband.

Issues pertaining to the relationship between her mind and her body become central during Aino's engagement to Oskar Kallas. The diary entries offer an extremely interesting insight into a young woman's mind concerning the different sides of an ideal relationship between a husband and a wife. Aino Krohn admits that she has had to fight with «the pressure of the leading way of thought that builds a wall around a young girl»[68]. The central issue here is normative behavior concerning the physical side of marriage.

«A young girl is brought up so that she almost never – or very seldom - marries self-consciously, she should not wish to yield to a man, she should not feel it in herself as a force of nature or a demand. She is taught that this is an inevitability

62. Ibid., p. 21.
63. Ibid., p. 21.
64. The author of the review.
65. Kallas, Aino: Op. cit., p. 26.
66. See, for example, Atwood, Margaret: «Paradoxes and Dilemmas: The Woman as Writer», in Gwen Matheson (ed.), *Women in the Canadian Mosaic,* Toronto, Peter Martin Associates, 1976, p. 273.
67. Kallas, Aino: Op. cit., p. 26.
68. Ibid., p. 169.

> that she has to surrender to, no matter how difficult it would be for her, because the husband desires her. That this could also mean something to her, she should not know.»[69]

This reveals a very interesting paradox concerning the nature of marriage. As the beginning of the early diary clearly demonstrates, the whole life of a young woman presented in society circles around marriage. At the same time, however, the woman is nothing more than a passive object who, upon her marriage, does not express her own will or wishes but merely follows the norms prescribed by the society. Those norms also require that in the intimate relationship with her husband, the woman should passively surrender.

Aino Krohn has also grown up hearing the matters concerning physical relationship between a man and a woman being «discussed in secret, in covert manner as if they were shameful in essence»[70]. During her engagement, Aino Krohn contemplates on these matters very thoroughly, admitting to her diary though, that she has been unable to formulate all of it into words[71]. The conclusion she finally reaches differs considerably from the norm:

> «First I shared this point of view but to my surprise I started feeling differently. I felt a desire to give myself completely, so completely that I could as if melt into the being of the other, to get so close that I would not feel the borderline between myself and him.»[72]

Such argumentation shows the authors considerable boldness in resisting the norms of morality of her time and going beyond them by openly claiming her desiring quite natural and granting it, albeit not without some hesitation, an honorable position beside her mind and soul outside the denigrating binary oppositions. Secondly, the way Aino Krohn explores the desires of her newly discovered body is very interesting in its potential readiness to dissolve it's border, a body that its characterized by its volatile rather than its' solid and rigid capacities.

* * *

The development of embodied subjectivity in the early diaries of Virginia Woolf, Anaïs Nin and Aino Kallas varies in mode of expression and scope. The differences can be attributed to the variations in the normative setup of the cultural contexts of the authors as well as differences in their diaristic style. Virginia Woolf's diary contains very few entries that focus on the author's self-perception. While the aspects concerning the body and embodiment form no exceptions to the general structure of the diary, despite the fragmented and implied manner, however, they still emerge as a matter of some importance. The most visible aspect related to the body emphasized in Woolf's early diary

69. Ibid., p. 169.
70. Ibid., p. 169.
71. Ibid., p. 169.
72. Ibid., p. 169.

is the wish to retain from contact with unfamiliar bodies and the need for sharing the same physical space with people close to her. Anaïs Nin's diary strongly foregrounds the binary opposition of mind and body. The body and its manifestations are for Nin clearly obstacles for intellectual and spiritual development that have to be overcome in every possible way. Focusing first and foremost on the conflict between the two sides of the binary, the processes of suppressing and disclaiming the bodily emerge alongside the author's quest for intellectuality and spirituality. The early diary of Aino Kallas contains perhaps the most harmonious view of embodied subjectivity. Being well aware of the social norms creating the body/mind binary, Aino Kallas strives against them in order to find a perception of the body that would make it a fully recognizable and legitimized part of her subjectivity. Such embodied subjectivity finds its fullest expression in the entries from the period of the author's engagement to Oskar Kallas, viewing body and mind as interconnected and inseparable parts of subjectivity.

TELLING (HER)STORY: AN OVERVIEW OF SUBALTERN STUDIES

ANTONIA NAVARRO TEJERO
Universidad de Córdoba

1. THE RETHINKING OF HISTORY

Claire Colebrook claims that post-structuralism was a form of ahistoricism and that new historicism marked something like a 'return' to history. After the supposed formalist relativism of the 1980s, literary criticism found history again, although now in a more rigorous and enlightened form. The fact that history has been rethought so thoroughly by new historicism is a consequence of certain moves made in post-structuralist thought. A broad range of concerns that motivated the post-structuralist endeavor prompted the rethinking of history and historiography. Problems of the narrative or inscriptive nature of all knowledge, of legitimization and situatedness, the contingency of disciplinary boundaries, a sense of political crisis, and the absence of consensus and shared narratives all led to a questioning of history as the repository of truth. Not only does new historicism itself draw upon the work of Lacan, Derrida, Foucault and the broad range of post-structuralist thought, but also the questions raised by the problem of historicism have intensified rather than been resolved. If it is the case that the writing of history is a form of power –and a specifically Western and modern form at that– then new historicism may best be seen as a quite specific response within a larger field of questions.[1]

There has been a long tradition of attempting to relate literary texts to history (a tradition dominated by the Marxist enterprise). Not only does the problem of relation presuppose that the categories of literature and history are somehow already apparent, but it also implies that there is an opposition between the two fields. While some writers are united in their attempt to think of history in terms other than that of a context or horizon in which texts would be related, there is often a sense that the literary or aesthetic will provide an 'other' to

1. COLEBROOK, Claire: *New Literary Histories: New Historicism and Contemporary Criticism*, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 1997, p. 1.

history. Literature is often seen as a privileged site where the determinism of history is disrupted, questioned or opened. New historicism has constantly demonstrated the malleability, contingency and contested character of the category of literature. By demonstrating the complex relationship between the production of the categories of both literature and history, new historicism has contested the boundaries of traditional historiography and literary criticism. New historicism has responded to the more general question of knowledge and power.[2]

2. SUBALTERN STUDIES' HISTORY

It is necessary to include in this study the thoughts of Subaltern Studies. Dipesh Chakrabarty, in «A Small History of Subaltern Studies», makes a summary of the history of Subaltern Studies as a discipline. A series of volumes dedicated to Subaltern Studies began in 1982 under the title of *Subaltern Studies: Writings on Indian History and Society.* Ranajit Guha –the founding editor, who is a historian of India and teaches at University of Sussex (UK)– and eight other scholars based in India, the United Kingdom and Australia constituted the editorial collective[3]. Not only do the series offer debates specific to the writing of modern Indian history but also *Subaltern Studies* exceeds the discipline of history, participating in contemporary critiques of history and nationalism, and of orientalism and euro-centrism in the construction of social-science knowledge. There have also been discussions of *Subaltern Studies* in many history and social science journals. Selections from the series have come out in English, Bengali, and Hindi and are in the process of being brought out in Tamil, Spanish, and Japanese. A Latin American Subaltern Studies Association was established in North America in 1993[4].

Chakrabarty said that he concentrates on the discipline of history for two reasons:

> «(a) the relationship between the new field of postcolonial writing and historiography has not yet received the attention it deserves, and (b) to answer critics who say that *Subaltern Studies* was once «good» Marxist history in the same way that the English tradition of «history from below» was, but that it lost its way when it came into contact with Said's Orientalism, Spivak's deconstructionism, or Bhabha's analysis of colonial discourse.»[5]

2. Ibid., p. 2.
3. See their «Founding Statement» (1993).
4. As it exists now, the collective has the following members: Shahid Amin, David Arnold, Gautam Bhadra, Dipesh Chakrabarty; Partha Chatterjee, David Hardiman, Sudipta Kaviraj, Shail Mayaram, Gyan Pandey; M. S. S. Pandian, Gyan Prakash, Susie Tharu, and Ajay Skaria. Sumit Sarkar and Gayatri Spivak were members of the collective for specific periods in the 1980s and the 1990s respectively.
5. Chakrabarty, Dipesh: «A Small History of Subaltern Studies», in Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray (eds.): *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2000, p. 468.

Moreover, in a wide-ranging critique of postcolonial thinkers, Arif Dirlik once suggested that the historiographic innovations of *Subaltern Studies,* while welcome, were more applications of methods pioneered by British Marxist historians, albeit modified by 'Third World sensibilities'.

Subaltern Studies raised questions about history writing that made the business of a radical departure from English Marxist historiographical traditions, inescapable. It started as a critique of two contending schools of history: the Cambridge School and that of the nationalist historians. Both of these approaches, declared Guha in a statement that inaugurated the series *Subaltern Studies,* were elitist, as those historians could not understand: «the contributions made by people *on their own,* that is, *independent of the elite* to the making and development of this nationalism»[6], even as they wrote up the history of nationalism as the story of an achievement by the elite classes, whether Indian or British.

The academic subject called 'modern Indian history' is a relatively recent development, a result of research and discussion in various universities in India, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and elsewhere *after* the end of British imperial rule in August 1947. In its early phase, this area of scholarship bore all the signs of an ongoing struggle between tendencies, which were affiliated to imperialist biases in Indian history, and a nationalist desire on the part of historians in India to de-colonize the past. Marxism was understandably mobilized in aid of the nationalist project of intellectual de-colonization.

It looked for an anti-elitist approach to history-writing and in this it had much in common with the 'history from below' approaches pioneered in English historiography by Christopher Hill, E. P Thompson, E. J. Hobsbawm, and others. Both *Subaltern Studies* and the 'history from below' school were Marxist in inspiration, both owed a certain intellectual debt to the Italian communist Antonio Gramsci in trying to move away from deterministic, Stalinist readings of Marx. According to Chakrabarty, the word 'subaltern' itself and the concept of 'hegemony' so critical to the theoretical project of Subaltern Studies go back to the writings of Gramsci. Chakrabarty further states that as in the histories written by Thompson, Hobsbawm, Hill, and others, *Subaltern Studies* was also concerned about «rescuing from the condescension of posterity» the pasts of the socially subordinate groups in India, and hence the declared aim of *Subaltern Studies* was to produce historical analyses in which the subaltern groups were viewed as the subjects of their own history[7].

From its very beginning, *Subaltern Studies* positioned itself on an unorthodox territory of the left. What it inherited from Marxism was already in conversation with other and more recent currents of European thought, particularly those of structuralism. And there was a discernible sympathy with early Foucault in

6. Guha, Ranajit: «On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India», in Ed. Ranajit Guha: *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History anti Society,* Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1982, pp. 37-44.
7. Chakrabarty, Dipesh: «A Small History of Subaltern Studies...», op. cit., p. 471.

the way that Guha's writings posed the knowledge-power question. Guha retired from the editorial team of *Subaltern Studies* in 1988. In the same year, an anthology entitled *Selected Subaltern Studies* published from New York launched the global career of the project. Edward Said wrote a Foreword to the volume describing Guha's statement regarding the aims of *Subaltern Studies* as intellectually insurrectionary.

A text that can be considered as an insight into the subaltern is Foucault's *I, Pierre Rivière* (a peasant who killed his mother, sister and brother in 1835). It is interpreted as a protest against the intolerable conditions of everyday life in the French countryside, in which poverty, disease and exploitation deprived the peasants of their humanity, and their legally guaranteed claim to autonomous, rational subjecthood. In his making a bid to speak out, he is interpreted as a questioner of the system without the right to speak. In spite of the fact that feudalism had been legally abolished, the peasants were still perceived as monsters by other social groups.

The analysis of the discourses (over the meaning of the killings by the law) shows how the different elements available are selectively read or ignored in other to produce readings of the act and memoir as either monstrously evil or insane. Those laments, which are used to ground the legal case, are played down in the medical case and vice versa. In order to achieve a consistent argument, both are silent on the contents and argument of the memoir itself. It eludes that either classification or any serious consideration of it would undermine both the legal and medical cases. It is reduced to silence, taken as a manifestation of monstrosity or of madness. This silencing of the memoir renders it politically ineffectual. The only satisfactory way of silencing it, however, is by declaring Rivière insane, since to have him sane and monstrous would reflect on the common humanity of a society in which all were ostensibly equal. While Rivière is eventually committed, his suicide in prison is taken as a final statement that a reading of his deed and memoir in terms of insanity is inadequate.

The reading which the notes produce relies on a broad analysis of the historical context, the state of the peasantry and of the institutions of the law, medicine and politics, which stresses the unevenness in the social and economic shifts which mark the transition from feudalism to the bourgeois era. While it is but a version of this history, it is one with much explanatory power, showing the implications of the contest between discourses and interests over meaning for individual groups and classes and the effects of silencing on a class which had been led to believe that it now had a right to be heard.

Summing up, the Subaltern Studies discipline has two main objectives: (a) to challenge the elitism of Indian historiography in its nationalist and imperialist variants that saw the world of the peasantry and working class as simply exotic to the political and economic projects of the colonial period and irrelevant to the directions of Indian history; (b) to challenge this exoticisation via a historiography of the political (not pre-political) nature of popular struggles. Those two objectives were related through a critique of the terms of nationalist and imperialist historiographies and an attempt to use the documentation

provided by the same historiography to understand better the precise modes of mobilization and the goals of popular struggles. The principal theoretical literature that influenced attempts at linking (a) and (b) above drew on Marx and Gramsci. Marx, not merely because of the Communist influences in West Bengal, where many of the original historians of the subaltern originated, but because his writings provided an indispensable vantage point.

Chakrabarty's definition of historicism is so wide and indiscriminate that it brings history itself into question. This, no doubt, is where his dabbling in Foucault and Heidegger has led him –after all, history itself is simply a record of different ways of 'being in the world' of capitalism, and all relations of power are rendered opaque by power itself. In his *Provincializing Europe,* Chakrabarty seems to be suggesting that the older *Subaltern Studies'* emphasis on struggles for social justice, however inchoate, were a bad dream from which a mature version has woken up. To defuse the charge that he has replaced struggle with a kind of existentialist conservatism, Chakrabarty strives mightily to argue that the real roots of oppression in modern Bengal (or India, or the Third World by extension) lie in a rampant Eurocentrism and historicism, not in income inequalities, mass poverty, patriarchy, the exploitation of labor, or the manifold oppressions of the state. The struggle is displaced on to the level of discourse.

This combination of nativism and orientalism marks a definitive impasse for Subaltern Studies. Chakrabarty asserts that Historicism is what allowed European domination of the world, thereby correcting one's naïve assumption that it was the heavy artillery of imperialism. It does so by making modernity or capitalism look not simply global but global over time, by originating in one place and spreading to others. Historicism posits historical time as the measure of the cultural distance assumed to exist between the West and the non-West; in the colonies it legitimated the idea of civilization. It is in light of the above that we must assess Chakrabarty's claims about provincializing Europe, which he explains to be a way of exploring how European thought –both indispensable and inadequate to think about the thorny problems of colonial and postcolonial modernity– may be renewed from and for the margins.

In chapter three of his *Provincializing Europe*, Chakrabarty more or less tears up the idea that 'subaltern' refers to any particular social group or groups. We must assume that anyone who worlds the earth, experiences time, and so on, in ways that challenge the imperious code of historicism as subaltern. Social location itself is virtual; it is the tyranny of homogeneous, empty time that is the target of theoretical underlaboring. The practice of subaltern history is to take history, the code, to its limits in order to make its 'unworking' visible.[8] Chakrabarty makes much of the fact that Indian historians are expected to know the works of their European counterparts, i.e. European history is part of the archive of Indian history, but that the reverse is not true. The point is

8. Chakrabarty, Dipesh: *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference,* Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 2000, p. 96.

well taken but the issue is how effectively does he (or for that matter, Guha) use the European archive *to write history.* The Europe that he invokes is, by his own admission, hyperreal, and Europe's modernity is presented as some mythical Protestant ideal filtered through Locke and Hume. Huge chunks of counterhegemonic thought in Europe, and political economy, leave alone the critique of political economy, are simply ignored. What emerges is a caricature, one that is likely to be greeted with derision by European historians. Behind this, Chakrabarty maintains, lies an Indian tradition, unbroken before the colonial encounter, but which sustains itself now only in quotidian practice and in literature and art.

Guha starts with a tripartite division of historical development into three stages: slavery, feudalism, and capitalism, with historiographies that capture the peculiar aporias of each historical moment. In his *Dominance without Hegemony,* Guha's statement that «an uncoercive state is a liberal absurdity»[9] is perhaps a caution against getting carried away by a stark Europe-Other contrast but that insight is not developed in his comparative historiography. Eurocentric historians have tended to posit the rational rights-bearing individual, ostensibly a uniquely European phenomenon, as the heroic subject of their history.

According to Dirlik, postcolonial theory, the result of the arrival of the Third World intellectual in the First World academy as one of its more trenchant critics notes, has «rearranged the global situation, objectively quite pessimistic, into a celebration of the end of colonialism», and the necessary tasks for the near future as «the abolition of its ideological and cultural legacy»[10]. He continues saying that an exclusive focus on Eurocentrism as a cultural, ideological or discursive factor blurs the power relationship that dynamized it and endowed it with hegemonic persuasiveness. Postcolonial theory fails to explain why Eurocentrism, in contrast to local and regional ethnocentrisms, was able to define modern global history and «define itself as the universal aspiration and end of history»[11].

3. THE SUBALTERN AS FEMALE

Similarly, in «Can the Subaltern Speak?» –by the means of an extended discussion of *sati*–[12] Spivak presents as emblem of the subaltern in the case of a political activist who sought to communicate her personal predicament through her suicide, but whose communication was foiled by the codes of

9. Guha, Ranajit: *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India,* Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1997, p. 23.
10. Dirlik, Arif: «The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism», *Critical Inquiry,* 20 (Winter 1994), p. 343.
11. Ibid., p. 346-347.
12. The Hindu widow who immolates herself on the funeral pile with her husband's body. For a critique of this problematic, see Madhu Kishwar and Ruth Vanita (1987), Sujata Patel and Krishna Kuman (1988), Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (1981), Lata Mani (1986), Ashis Nandy (1982 and 1988), Shakuntala Narasimhan (1991), Spivak (1987), and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan (1993).

patriarchy and colonialism in which her actions were inevitably inscribed. Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri was a member of one of the many groups involved in the armed struggle for Indian independence. She hanged herself in 1926 at the onset of menstruation so that her death would not be diagnosed as the outcome of illegitimate passion. But her death was remembered as 'a case of illicit love'. Since her actions are not only inscribed, but also read in terms of the dominant codes of British imperialism and Indian patriarchy, Spivak concludes that the subaltern cannot speak. Her conclusion is preceded by a critique of Foucault and Deleuze, through which she discusses the dangers of re-inscribing imperial assumptions in colonial studies, and of Antonio Gramsci's and Ranajit Guha's treatments of subalternity, in which her main focus is Guha's analysis of the social structure of postcolonial societies.

In Spivak's provocative but complicated discussion of the subaltern as female, she seems to be arguing that the subaltern's voice/consciousness cannot be retrieved, and that analysis should indicate this impossibility by charting the positions from which the subaltern speaks, but 'cannot be heard or read'[13]. In a subsequent interview with Howard Winant, saying that she had been misunderstood, Spivak claimed that the purpose had been to counter the impulse to solve the problem of political subjectivity by romanticizing the subaltern. Instead of treating the subaltern as an unproblematic unified subject, she would apply to the subaltern «all the complications of 'subject production' which are applied to us.»[14] Spivak critiques Western poststructuralist theory as represented by Foucault and Deleuze and its tendency to reinstitute the notion of a Western sovereign subject in the act of deconstructing it. She goes on to posit the irretrievable heterogeneity of the subaltern subject, effaced by the orientalizing construction of sovereign subjectivity defined by power and desire. Foucault and Deleuze, she argues, inadvertently impose a Western Subject on the place of the subaltern. Spivak suggests that the term 'subaltern' refers to the margins (one can just as well say the silent, silenced center) of the circuit marked out by this epistemic violence [of imperialist/colonialist law and education], men and women among the illiterate peasantry, the tribals, the lowest strata of the urban subproletariat on the other side of the international division of labor form socialized capital.

In «Can the Subaltern Speak?» Spivak's aim is, in her words, «to learn to speak to (rather than listen to or speak for) the historically muted subject of the non-elite.»[15] Spivak suggests using the term 'subaltern' for everything that is different from organized resistance, justifying this usage by building on Guha's introduction to his *Subaltern Studies* where he is making an analysis of how a colonial society is structured, and what space can be spoken of as the subaltern space. Spivak's essay «Deconstructing Historiography» served

13. Spivak, Gayatri: «Can the Subaltern Speak?», in Cary Nelson and Larry Grossberg (eds.): *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1988, p. 308.
14. Spivak, Gayatri: «Gayatri Spivak on the Politics of the Subaltern (An Interview with Howard Winant)», in *Socialist Review,* 3 (1990), p. 90.
15. Spivak, Gayatri: «Can the Subaltern Speak?»..., op. cit., p. 271.

as the introduction to this selection. This essay of Spivak's and a review essay by Rosalind O'Hanlon published about the same time made two important criticisms of *Subaltern Studies,* which had a serious impact on the later intellectual trajectory of the project. Both Spivak and O'Hanlon pointed to the absence of gender questions in Subaltern Studies. They also made a more fundamental criticism of the theoretical orientation of the project. They pointed out, in effect, that *Subaltern Studies* historiography operated with an idea of the subject to make the subaltern the maker of his own destiny, which had not wrestled at all with critique of the very idea of the subject itself that had been mounted by poststructuralist thinkers.

Subaltern Studies scholars have since tried to take these criticisms on board. The charges about the absence of gender issues and the lack of engagement with feminist scholarship in *Subaltern Studies* have been met to some degree by some seminal essays by Ranajit Guha and Partha Chatterjee, and by contributions made by Susie Tharu on contemporary feminist theory in India. Partha Chatterjee's 1986 book *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* creatively applied Saidian and postcolonial perspectives to the study of non-Western nationalisms, using India as an example. Kamala Visweswaran distinguishes between the figure of 'woman' as subaltern and the question of subaltern women when considering the gendering of subalternity. She claims that there are two problems that mark the theorization of gender by the Subaltern Studies group: either gender is subsumed under the categories of caste and class or gender is seen to mark a social group apart from other subalterns[16].

According to Said's reading of Michel Foucault, *Orientalism* characteristically implies that the dominant power successfully maximized itself at the expense of the subject peoples, who were rendered almost entirely passive and silent by conquest. Unsurprisingly, then, Said's text focuses almost exclusively on the discourse and agency of the colonizer. Spivak remedies this imbalance by a consistent attention throughout her career to the less privileged sectors of the colonized peoples and to their successors in the neocolonial era. To describe these social formations, she adapts the term 'subaltern' from Gramsci (to whom *Orientalism* is also heavily indebted conceptually), in whose writing it signifies subordinate or marginalized social groups in European (more specifically, Italian) society[17].

Spivak's principal concern is the degree to which the (post)colonial subaltern, in particular, enjoys agency, an issue which she characteristically explores in terms of whether subalterns can speak for themselves, or whether they are condemned only to be known, represented, and spoken for in a distorted fashion by others, particularly by those who exploit them but also

16. Visweswaran, Kamala: «Small Speeches, Subaltern Gender: Nationalist Ideology and Its Historiography», in Shahid Amin and Dipesh Chakrabarty (eds.): *Subaltern Studies IX: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 90.
17. Gramsci himself invented the term 'subaltern' to replace 'proletariat' in order to evade prison censors.

by 'concerned' outsiders like aid-workers or seemingly 'disinterested' scholars, such as anthropologists. The conclusion reached by «Can the Subaltern Speak?» is that there is no space from which subalterns can speak and thus make their interests and experience known to others on their own terms[18].

In order to illustrate this argument, Spivak concentrates much of her attention on the mechanics of what she calls the 'itinerary of silencing,' which, paradoxically, accompanies the production of the (post)colonial subaltern as a seemingly freely speaking subject/agent in the discourses of the dominant order. Indeed, «Can the Subaltern Speak?» begins with an analysis of the silencing of the contemporary subaltern by western 'radical' intellectuals who ostensibly seek to champion those who are most oppressed by neocolonialism. Spivak's critique is partly methodological, partly political, in nature. First of all, she accuses figures like Deleuze and Foucault of assuming that they are transparent *vis-à-vis* the objects of their attention. In other words such 'radicals' too easily suppose that they are outside of the general system of exploitation of the 'Third World' in which western modes of cultural analysis and representation (including 'high' theory itself) and institutions of knowledge (such as the universities in which such theory is characteristically developed) are in fact deeply implicated. Secondly, while critics like Foucault and Deleuze announce the death of the (western, liberal, bourgeois, sovereign, male) subject of traditional humanism in the postmodern episteme, they retain what Spivak sees as a 'utopian' conception of the centered subject/agent in respect to marginalized groups, such as prisoners, women, or the Third World subaltern, who purportedly can speak for themselves despite all their various disadvantages. However, in ascribing a voice to the subaltern, according to Spivak, such intellectuals are in fact themselves representing (in the sense of speaking on behalf of or standing in for) the subaltern. This is not simply a problem in western radicalism. In «Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography» (1989), Spivak discerns a similarly 'utopian' vision of the resistant historical subaltern in the counter-hegemonic work of the Subaltern historians of India with whom she and Said collaborated in the 1980s.

In methodological terms, «Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism» demonstrates one of the ways in which Spivak diverges most markedly from Said's *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1983). The latter had provided a trenchant critique of Derrida (inspired by Foucault's account of his French colleague in *Madness and Civilization)* for allegedly failing to sufficiently articulate either critical or 'primary' cultural texts with 'worldly' (by which Said means real, political, historical) issues and engagements. By contrast, Spivak –who translated Derrida's *Of Grammatology* in 1976– attempts to demonstrate the usefulness of deconstruction to postcolonial studies at precisely this strategic level.

18. Spivak, Gayatri: «Can the Subaltern Speak?»..., op. cit., p. 103.

Gail Hershatter states that one could generalize Spivak's observation and propose by saying that it makes more visible the workings of other markers of identity, such as race, ethnicity, religion, or nationality, and not just 'across the class spectrum,' but in their mutual interactions, illuminating, in turn, the process of class formation itself. This inclusive definition of subaltern is emphatically not meant to suggest that all oppressions (or resistances) are equal, and that everyone is a subaltern in the same way. According to Hershatter, her hope is not to render oppression uniform and thus somehow less onerous, but rather to trace the ways that oppressions can be stacked, doubled, intertwined[19].

Fernando Coronil proposes that we view the subaltern neither as a sovereign- subject that actively occupies a bounded place nor as a vassal-subject that results from the dispersed effects of multiple external determinations, but as an agent of identity construction that participates, under determinate conditions within a field of power relations, in the organization of its multiple positionality and subjectivity. In his view, subalternity is a relational and a relative concept; there are times and places where subjects appear on the social stage as subaltern actors, just as there are times or places in which they play dominant roles. Moreover, at any given time or place, an actor may be subaltern in relation to another, yet dominant in relation to a third. Dominance and subalternity are not inherent, but relational characterizations. Subalternity defines not the being of a subject, but a subjected state of being. Yet because enduring subjection has the effect of fixing subjects into limiting positions, a relational conception of the subaltern requires a double vision that recognizes at one level a common ground among diverse forms of subjection and, at another, the intractable identity of subjects formed within uniquely constraining social worlds. While the first optic opens up a space for establishing links among subordinated subjects (including the analyst who takes a subaltern perspective), the second acknowledges the differentiating and ultimately unshareable effects of specific modalities of subjection. This relational and situational view of the subaltern may help anticolonial intellectuals avoid the we/they polarity underlying Spivak's analysis and listen to subaltern voices that speak from variously subordinated positions[20].

4. CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, this whole study has been an attempt to trace the development of theories of historiography as exposed by Subaltern Studies mainly. I have analyzed how power and hierarchy permeate everything in the interface among Indians. I have included as well controversies about the subalterns' agency and the ways to empower silenced groups through the power of

19. Hershatter, Gail: «The Subaltern Talks Back: Reflections on Subaltern Theory and Chinese History», *Positions,* 1.1 (1993), p. 112.
20. Coronil, Fernando: «Listening to the Subaltern: Postcolonial Studies and the Neocolonial Poetics of Subaltern States», in Laura Chrisman and Benita Parry (eds.): *Postcolonial Theory and Criticism*, Cambridge, The English Association, 2000, pp. 44-45.

the word, de-empowering –thus– those who are dominant, and not the subalterns. There are no easy or permanent answers to the complexities of power structures. However, within the context of women's –and subalterns' in general– movements that threaten the social, religious and familial institutions and the environment instruments they promote, subaltern studies with a gender perspective seem to be demystifying the links between power structures, cultural practices and gender relations.

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BEYOND BIOLOGICAL MATERNITY: KATHERINE MANSFIELD'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL EXPERIENCE

GERARDO RODRÍGUEZ SALAS
University of Granada

1. INTRODUCTION

The ambiguity that characterises Katherine Mansfield's writing, fictional and non-fictional, materialises in her perception of maternity. This is one of the issues that permeated both her written narratives and her real life, and with which she endeavoured to come to terms. In her fiction, Mansfield strongly criticises biological maternity that she conceives as limiting and mutilating for women, as can be inferred from the following examples taken from her stories «A Birthday» and «Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding»:

> «His wife simply 'dropped' her fourth [baby]»[1]; «Marriage certainly changed a woman far more than it did a man. Talk about sobering down. She had lost all her go in two months!»[2]; «[She was] the wife of a postman and the mother of five children»[3].

These images portray women as reproduction machines who have been programmed to give birth and to be burnt out in the process. Besides, their «labour» is not properly acknowledged, as they are not even granted an individual and independent status, but a subsidiary one to men and to the patriarchal system: that of «wives» (Frau or Mrs. Brechenmacher) or «mothers».

In a previous work[4], I offered a detailed analysis of this writer's criticism on maternity in her fiction, a criticism that gathers conviction through her technique of «intentional mimicry». This highly effective feminist technique

1. MANSFIELD, Katherine: *The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield*, London, Penguin Books, 1981 (1945), p. 735.
2. Ibid., p. 742.
3. Ibid., p. 706.
4. RODRÍGUEZ SALAS, Gerardo: «'Mimicry' o 'masquerade': la imitación intencionada» and «La *Mater Dolorosa*», in *La marginalidad como opción en Katherine Mansfield: postmodernismo, feminismo y relato corto*, Granada, Servicio de publicaciones de la Universidad de Granada, 2004, pp. 387-391 and 421-440.

was initially theorised by Joan Rivière in her article «Womanliness and Masquerade»[5], and later by Mary Ann Doane[6] or Luce Irigaray[7]. Catherine Porter explains this intentional mimicry or masquerade:

> «An interim strategy for dealing with the realm of discourse (where the speaking subject is posited as masculine), in which the woman deliberately assumes the feminine style and posture assigned to her within this discourse in order to uncover the mechanisms by which it exploits her»[8].

It is, therefore, an original and ironic weapon that allows women to consciously reproduce traditional gender roles (or «femininity») that patriarchal models have tailored for them since long ago; thus, they adopt an apparently innocent and infantile position, but their imitation is intentional and subversive.

The two main feminine gender roles that Mansfield parodies in her stories are the rebel woman (dramatised in the three stereotypes of the New Woman, the lesbian and the *femme fatale*) and the mother (reflected in the «Angel in the House» and, to a lesser extent, in the rebellious mother)[9]. Although the focus of this study will be the mother figure, the rebel woman will also be important in order to understand Mansfield's complex attitude towards maternity in her autobiographical experience. While in her fiction she successfully implements the conscious mimicry of biological maternity, in her real life (as can be inferred from her autobiographical material) she faced this issue with attitudes of greater complexity. She resorted to a metaphorical maternal figure that compensated for her sterility and covered the emotional gap that her husband, John Middleton Murry, could not fill. The study of her journal and letters as regards her ambiguous motherhood will be the topic of the present article.

2. DE BEAUVOIR AND KRISTEVA ON MATERNITY

To understand Mansfield's reaction against biological maternity in fiction and real life, we have to start theorising the negativity that has traditionally surrounded images of women. The writer's intention is to show that, not only the minds of men are full of negative representations of women, but women themselves have internalised these images and accepted them without further questioning. This feminine pessimism emerges as the negative equivalent to the figure of man and the traditional values attributed to him. Thus, Jacqueline Rose states that:

5. Rivière, Joan: «Womanliness As a Masquerade», in Athol Hughes (ed.): *The Inner World and Joan Rivière. Collected Papers: 1920-1958*, London and New York, Karnac Books, 1991 (1929), p. 95.
6. Doane, Mary Ann: *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*, New York and London, Routledge, 1991, p. 25.
7. Irigaray, Luce: «The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine: Interview», in Catherine Porter (trans.): *This Sex Which is Not One*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1996a (1985), p. 78; «Così Fan Tutti», in Ibid., p. 101.
8. Porter, Catherine: «Publisher's Note and Notes on Selected Terms», in Ibid., p. 200.
9. For a detailed analysis of these two stereotypes in Mansfield's fiction, see Rodríguez Salas, Gerardo: Op. Cit., pp. 399-440.

> «[t]he woman, therefore, is *not*, because she is defined purely against the man (she is the negative of that definition – 'man is *not* woman')»[10].

In turn, Simone de Beauvoir offers her theory of woman as «the Other», as she is not considered

> «positively, such as she seems to herself to be, but negatively, such as she appears to man. For if woman is not the only *Other*, it remains none the less true that she is always defined as the Other. And her ambiguity is just that of the concept of the Other: it is that of the human situation in so far as it is defined in its relation with the Other. As I have already said, the Other is Evil; but being necessary to the Good, it turns into the Good»[11].

Although de Beauvoir states that women see themselves positively, once they have internalised the negative perception that patriarchy has about them, they never manage to view themselves fully favourably again. A rooted guilt complex will be the result if they pursue their own desire and try to escape from the restrictive image they have been forced to internalise and carry.

Consequently, this vision of women leads to the appearance of a series of negative feminine myths within patriarchal society, initially defined by de Beauvoir, and later summarised by Julia Kristeva in her articles «About Chinese Women» and «Stabat Mater». Kristeva polarises these limiting stereotypes for women: Virgin Mary and Eve, the first woman[12]. Thus, she reminds us that, according to patriarchal convention, the former is associated with the life and purity of the dove, while the latter is linked with the death and corruption of the snake. In turn, using a traditional terminology, Mª del Mar Pérez Gil cites two other images that imply the same dichotomy: the «Angel in the House», that is, the woman confined at home who has to take care of her family and preserve her purity, and the «demon», or the woman who is expelled from society because she has flouted the rules that limit her, and whose association with the snake of the Bible is evident[13]. This binarism, regardless of the labels we use, summarises traditional feminine iconography and restricts the freedom of women by locating them obligatorily within one category or another. Of course, the «Angel in the House» is supported by the system, while the rebel woman is ostracised for life.

As regards the stereotype of the dependent woman, Kristeva associates it with the icon of the Virgin Mary that she considers as «one of the most powerful imaginary constructs known in the history of civilizations»[14] and calls

10. Rose, Jacqueline: «Introduction II», in Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose (ed.) and Jacqueline Rose (trans.): *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne*, Basingstoke, MacMillan, 1982, p. 49.
11. De Beauvoir, Simone: H.M. Parshley (ed. and trans.): *The Second Sex*, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1984 (1979), p. 175.
12. Kristeva, Julia: «Stabat Mater», in Toril Moi (ed.) and León S. Roudiez (trans.): *The Kristeva Reader*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986a (1977), pp. 165-166.
13. Pérez Gil, Mª del Mar: *La subversión del poder en Angela Carter*, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Servicio de Publicaciones, 1996, p. 60.
14. Kristeva, Julia: «Stabat Mater», op. cit., p. 163.

«the biblical woman», who will be «wife, daughter or sister, or all of them at once»[15]. Echoing the Church, she describes her as:

> «*mother* of her son and his *daughter* as well [...] and besides his wife: she therefore actualizes the threefold metamorphosis of a woman in the tightest parenthood structure»[16].

As the prototype of woman who has to be imitated by the rest according to the monolithic Christian-patriarchal model, Virgin Mary stands for the sacrificed image, subdued to men's superiority. Later, this Marian cult of medieval times, which Marina Warner traces back to the late eleventh century reaching its zenith in the fourteenth, was progressively secularised until it gave way to the image of the «Angel in the House»[17]. extended all over the Anglo-Saxon world with the poem of that title by Coventry Patmore (1854-1863). This icon established itself strongly within Victorian Puritanism, even surviving the dramatic social changes of the twentieth century.

In the case of these two intertwined images, the Virgin and the «Angel in the House», as Kristeva states[18], their function is to assure procreation and, therefore, the continuation of patriarchal omnipresence. This explains their positive presentation and their association with life, since they represent feminine maternity and virginity, turning into universal icons with which all women might identify. As Margaret Bruzelius points out[19], married women who have a family identify themselves with the maternal side, while conservative single women feel closer to the purity of the virgin. Thus, this double figure is the most limiting of them all. Focusing on the myth of maternity, Ann Oakley summarises the three traditional patriarchal reasons to keep it: children need their mothers, mothers need their children and maternity stands for the big achievement in women's lives and the only means of self-fulfilment[20].

The deconstructive process of this image started with such authors as de Beauvoir. For her, maternity has to be rejected, since it leads to the mutilation of feminine agency. She defines pregnancy as:

> «a drama that is acted out without the woman herself. She feels at once an enrichment and an injury; the foetus is a part of her body, and it is a parasite that feeds on it; she possesses it, and she is possessed by it»[21].

The baby becomes then a burden that annihilates the mother. Besides, she adds that maternity is the only female function almost impossible to fulfil in

15. Kristeva, Julia: «About Chinese Women», in Toril Moi (ed.) and Seán Hand (trans.): *The Kristeva Reader*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986b (1974), p. 140.
16. Kristeva, Julia: «Stabat Mater», op. cit., p. 169.
17. Warner, Marina: «Mater Dolorosa», in *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*, London, Vintage, 1976, p. 210.
18. Kristeva, Julia: «About Chinese Women», op. cit., p. 140.
19. Bruzelius, Margaret: «Mother's Pain, Mother's Voice: Gabriela Mistral, Julia Kristeva, and the Mater Dolorosa», *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 18.2 (1999), pp. 220-221.
20. Oakley, Ann: *Housewife*, London, Allen Lane Penguin Books, 1974, p. 186.
21. De Beauvoir, Simone: Op. cit., p. 512.

complete freedom[22]. Therefore, she suggests the poisonous effect of maternity for women and claims for its rejection in order to enter the masculine sphere, an opinion that is softened by other critics like Kristeva, who carries out a deconstruction of maternity without refuting it.

Kristeva starts acknowledging the annihilating origins of the concept of the *Mater Dolorosa*, or the woman who blindly accepts her maternity. In her article «Stabat Mater» she alludes to this figure that, as Toril Moi clarifies in her introduction to Kristeva's article, derives from a Latin hymn about Virgin Mary's agony at her son's crucifixion. This song starts with the words «[s]tabat mater dolorosa [...]»; that is, «stood the mournful Mother». In her study on the Virgin, particularly on Chapter 14, Warner considers that the myth joins in the medieval conception of life as a valley of tears and sacrifice for which we will be rewarded in a future life[23]. In Warner's opinion, the real intention behind this social construct is to keep women at the service of patriarchy. The negative consequences for them, as Bruzelius states, can even be perceived nowadays:

> «It is depressing to note that the identification of motherhood with suffering and the validation of the maternal voice through that suffering, which has been so effectively fostered by the church in the case of Mary, continues almost unquestioned today»[24].

The negativity of this image fabricated by one of the most powerful institutions of patriarchy, the Church, is equally acknowledged by Kristeva, when she associates it with the concept of «femininity» that, for her, is an empty signifier[25] or, as Luce Irigaray explains:

> «a role, an image, a value, imposed upon women by male systems of representation. In this masquerade of femininity, the woman loses herself, and loses herself by playing on her femininity»[26].

Kristeva speaks of an absorption of femininity by the maternal, which is common to many civilisations, although it reaches its climax in Christianity. At this point, Kristeva wonders whether such a reduction is no more than a masculine appropriation of maternity in line with the phantasmagoric reality of femininity that has been theorised by the critics above[27]. In this sense,

22. Ibid., p. 705.
23. Warner, Marina: Op. cit.
24. Bruzelius, Margaret: Op. cit., p. 215.
25. Kristeva, Julia: «Talking about *Polylogue*», in Toril Moi (ed.): *French Feminist Thought: A Reader*, New York, Basil Blackwell, 1989, p. 114.
26. Irigaray, Luce: «The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine: Interview», op. cit., p. 84. Other critics who view femininity as a mask that hides a void are Joan Riviére (op. cit., p. 95), Toril Moi («Feminist Literary Criticism», in Ann Jefferson and David Robey (eds.): *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction*, London, B.T. Batsford, 1993 (1982), p. 219), Mary Ann Doane (op. cit., pp. 25, 31) or M. Alison Arnett («A Metaphor of the Unspoken: Kristeva's Semiotic *Chora*», in Hugh J. Silverman (ed.): *Continental Philosophy VI. Cultural Semiosis: Tracing the Signifier*, New York and London, Routledge, 1998, p. 165).
27. Kristeva, Julia: «Stabat Mater», op. cit., p. 163.

motherhood participates in the artificiality of the «feminine», being both maternity and femininity a patriarchal construction with an appearance of reality, since women adopt these roles, although they are but a pure fantasy that authors like Kristeva endeavour to dismantle.

Illustrating Kristeva's theory on maternity, Bruzelius refers to the «personal emptiness» of Virgin Mary, and concludes that motherhood involves a «catastrophe» of identity associated with femininity, the absence of language and body[28]. The result of patriarchal control on the mother figure is the distinction between «pleasure» and «*jouissance*», which Charles Shepherdson links with «the maternal» and «the imaginary», respectively[29]; that is, «jouissance» implies a destructive drive that leads to feminine hysteria and the disobedient figure of the *femme fatale*, while «pleasure» involves the mediation of the runaway force of the *jouissance* through the symbolic order of patriarchy, which ends up limiting feminine expectations to avoid a female rebellion against the system.

However, despite recognising the mutilation of this feminine image, Kristeva does not reject it, as did de Beauvoir, but she claims for its reuse with a feminist goal. This is what she says in her article «Women's Time»:

> «To desire to be a mother, considered alienating and even reactionary by the preceding generation of feminists, has obviously not become a standard for the present generation. But we have seen in the past few years an increasing number of women who not only consider their maternity compatible with their professional life or their feminist involvement [...], but also find it indispensable to their discovery, not of the plenitude, but of the complexity of the female experience, with all that this complexity comprises in joy and pain»[30].

It is, thus, a matter of finding in maternity the complexity that characterises the semiotic order (that before entering the rationality of language and patriarchy), and not the restriction that imposes the symbolic order. As Ewa Plonowska Ziarek states:

> «any attempt to transform the maternal body into a coherent signifying position is a fraud, precisely because it is a heterogeneous site, constantly doubling itself and separating itself from itself. The maternal body, then, becomes a nonsite, an impurity and a distance encroaching on the positionality of the symbolic language»[31].

This is precisely what Kristeva advocates: to replace the loss of maternity and femininity with a variety that provides women with an endless range of possibilities. This study agrees with Eluned Summers-Bremner in stating that

28. Bruzelius, Margater: op. cit., pp. 226 and 228.
29. Shepherdson, Charles: *Vital Signs: Nature, Culture, Psychoanalysis*, New York and London, Routledge, 2000, pp. 71-72.
30. Kristeva, Julia: «Women's Time», in Toril Moi (ed.) and Alice Jardine and Harry Blake (trans.): *The Kristeva Reader*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986c (1979), p. 205.
31. Ziarek, Ewa Plonowska: «At The Limits of Discourse: Heterogeneity, Alterity, and the Maternal Body in Kristeva's Thought», in Christina Hendricks and Kelly Oliver (eds.): *Language and Liberation. Feminism, Philosophy, and Language*, Albany, New York, State University of New York Press, 1999, p. 334.

Kristeva usurps the Virgin as the agent that carries out transgression in her text; she deconstructs her passivity and negativity and reuses her as a receptacle of multiplicity and a vehicle that unchains a revolutionary process[32]. Thus, she endows the mother with a new signification and life, as can be seen in her essay «Stabat Mater». While the figures of the maternal and intellectual woman have always been perceived as contradictory and irreconcilable, in this article Kristeva makes them coexist to defend the multiplicity of the feminine position, as opposed to the patriarchal restriction of it. She divides the text into two columns: the left one, in bold type, is the maternal discourse, irrational and chaotic; the right one is the academic and intellectual speech. The last one predominates in the text, which is not surprising if we consider that, for Kristeva, the organising principle of the symbolic order is necessary for women to gain a voice in the patriarchal system and to prevent the uncontrolled force of the semiotic order that could lead to hysteria. At least, she offers an alternative: the possibility to read the dominant and/or the marginal/semiotic discourse at the same time. Her greatest achievement will be to revitalise the maternal image and to use it with subversive aims through what Summers-Bremner calls «subversive imitation»[33].

Therefore, we can say that all possible feminine roles for women are restrictive. The images of the *Mater Dolorosa* and the *femme fatale* are intertwined, and together they represent their own tragedy. The first one is no more than a social mask, since the woman pretends to be immaculate, but a powerful desire that cannot be ignored grows inside her. However, if she allows it to come outside, she becomes the *femme fatale* and the most negative connotations are attributed to her. There does not seem to exist here any hope for women. The only possible alternatives are to reuse these images with a parodying and strategic intention, inverting them in front of the readers' eyes so that a process of gradual awareness and future real revolution might take place, or to try to attain a synthesis of these two opposing images to give birth to a functional approach to living for flesh and bone women, who may then adopt a type of maternity that is not deadly for them.

Mansfield develops the first alternative in her fiction; she applies the second one to her autobiographical experience, and that is the focus of this article.

3. METAPHORICAL MATERNITY: MANSFIELD'S JOURNAL AND LETTERS

According to Patricia Moran[34], Mansfield resented the mother figure, which she considered as asphyxiating in its symbiotic fusion with the baby before its entry into the symbolic order. In Moran's opinion, this writer shows a «matrophobia», or fear of becoming a mother, and all that it implies. Mansfield

32. Summers-Bremner, Eluned: «Hysterical Visions: Kristeva and Irigaray on the Virgin Mary», *Women: A Cultural Review*, 9.2 (1998), p. 187.
33. Ibid., p. 184.
34. Moran, Patricia: «Unholy Meanings: Maternity, Creativity, and Orality in Katherine Mansfield», *Feminist Studies*, 17.1 (1991), p. 121.

never solved this conflict with maternity. Such critics as Cherry A. Hankin state that Mansfield, like her female parent, identified herself with «the unwilling mother», displaying a rejection of pregnancy and childbirth that led her to a rebellion against the biological imperative in women[35]; the opinion of this article, however, is that she never rejected completely the concept of maternity.

It is true that, from the beginning, Mansfield identified herself with her mother, Annie Burnell Beauchamp, to whom she attributed certain reticence towards the traditional maternal figure. Thus, recollecting the birth of her younger sister Gwen, who died soon after, Mansfield describes her mother's coldness with her daughters: «mother did not want to kiss me»[36], and draws again this reluctant matriarch in stories like «Prelude» and «At the Bay» in the character of Linda Burnell, who, in turn, preserves the same surname as Mansfield's mother. Both in real life and in fiction (e.g. «Prelude» and «At the Bay»), the grandmother played the maternal role. Nevertheless, despite exposing her mother's style of maternity, the author felt very close to her on several occasions («you and I are curiously near to each other»[37]), especially after her death:

> «My little mother, my star, my courage, my *own*. I seem to dwell in her now. We live in *the same world*» (*Journal*: 154); «I simply cannot *bear* the thought that I shall not see her again»[38].

Although the relationship between them was turbulent while they lived, to the extent that Annie ended up disinheriting her daughter, maybe Mansfield experienced this closeness to her precisely because of their similar personalities.

In any case, Mansfield's position towards marriage and maternity, the same as Annie's, was ambiguous. In spite of showing an utter fear for maternity and its consequences, the writer's desire to become a mother and to fulfil the typical role of a happily married woman was manifest in the course of her life. While her adventures as an adolescent girl were bohemian and risky, after meeting Murry her wish to marry and to form a family in the purest patriarchal style grew:

> «I wish I lived on a barge, with Jack for a husband and a little boy for a son»[39].

Besides, although being, in much of her writing, quite critical of marriage, which she perceives as poisonous for both men and women, in one of her letters she admits:

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35. Hankin, Cherry A.: *Katherine Mansfield and her Confessional Stories*, London and Basingstoke, MacMillan, 1983, p. 190.
36. Mansfield, Katherine: John Middleton Murry (ed.): *The Journal of Katherine Mansfield* (Definitive Edition), London, Constable, 1954, p. 101.
37. Mansfield, Katherine: Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott (eds.): *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, v.1 (1903-17), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1984, p. 144.
38. Mansfield, Katherine: Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott (eds.): *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, v.2 (1918-19), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987, p. 266.
39. Mansfield, Katherine: *Journal*, op. cit., p 58.

«I believe in marriage. It seems to me the only possible relation that really is satisfying»[40].

However, her wishes never came true: Mansfield strongly desired to have a traditional family, but nothing turned out right, and she examined and developed the concept within the theatre of her narratives. After her miscarriage in Germany and suffering from venereal disease, she became sterile and tried to supply her absence of real offspring with several alternatives, such as her Japanese porcelain doll, Ribni, which she considered as her daughter[41], her cats Charlie and Wingley, her failed experiment to adopt a child, which she verbalised in one of her letters to Murry[42], or the consideration of the children of her own fiction as her sons, this being the case of the protagonists of the story «Sun and Moon», whom she called «my babies»[43]. She also considered herself as the «mother» of her brother Leslie, as Christine Darrohn states[44], not only after his death and subsequent recreation in her fiction, but also when she was only twenty years old («I feel so maternal towards him»[45]), the same as with Murry's brother, Richard[46], who was like a brother to her, perhaps a substitute for her dead brother Leslie[47]. Even with her partners, Mansfield could not help but show her protective and maternal instinct (with Garnett Trowell[48], and with Murry[49]). With them, she replaced biological maternity that she never saw fulfilled.

With respect to the idea of a perfect husband, she also deceived herself with Murry and created an idyllic image of him that she had to accept as a failure with the passage of time. Her relationship with Murry was based on the fact that both kept an eternal infantile innocence and acted like children in a fantastic world of fairy tale. Thus, on several occasions she confesses to Murry:

«You and I don't live like grown up people»[50]; «we are two shining children»[51],

and she even calls Murry «little father»[52] in her desire to share with him a kind of fictional family structure. However, she soon wakes up from her

40. Mansfield, Katherine: Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott (eds.): *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, v.4 (1920-21), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 284.
41. Mansfield, Katherine: *The Collected Letters,* v. 2, op. cit., p. 107.
42. Mansfield, Katherine: Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott (eds.): *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, v.3 (1919-20), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993, p. 133.
43. Mansfield, Katherine: *The Collected Letters,* v. 2, op. cit., p. 74.
44. Darrohn, Christine: «'Blown to Bits!': Katherine Mansfield's 'The Garden-Party' and The Great War», *Modern Fiction Studies*, 44.3 (1998), p. 517.
45. Mansfield, Katherine: *The Collected Letters,* v. 1, op. cit., p. 41.
46. Mansfield called Murry's brother Richard, although his real name was Arthur.
47. Mansfield, Katherine: *The Collected Letters.* v. 4, op. cit., p. 164.
48. Mansfield, Katherine: *The Collected Letters,* v. 1, op. cit., p. 81.
49. Mansfield, Katherine: *The Collected Letters,* v. 2, op. cit., p. 41.
50. Mansfield, Katherine: *The Collected Letters,* v. 1, op. cit., p. 255.
51. Ibid., p. 355.
52. Mansfield, Katherine: *The Collected Letters,* v. 2, op. cit., p. 153.

dream to discover that she is living an actual nightmare, since reality is quite different:

> «[Murry] ought not to have married. There never was a creature less fitted by nature for life with a *woman*»[53].

On several times, she displays her disappointment and sees herself as an «unreal» wife, encouraging Murry to «truly» marry someone who can give him real children when she dies (she thinks of Dorothy Brett[54]).

Finally, in her wish to fulfil the role of a mother and a wife, she dreams with Murry about finding an idyllic home that fits their impossible dream. They call this place «the Heron» and, later, «Broomies», when Murry buys a cottage in Marsh Common, Chailey, Sussex in 1920. Mansfield defines the «Heron» with the following words:

> «It is the fortress and the hiding place of our love – the 'solid symbol'... Heavens! What would the world think if they looked through a little glass door into my head – and saw what sweete madnesse did afflict my brayne»[55].

This description suggests a medieval castle isolated from the world, where she and Murry are «children of the Heron». Mansfield is aware of her «madnesse», when she reproduces this quote of Spenser, and of her idealism, anticipating her feeling of being deceived when she comes up against reality. In fact, as she is becoming disenchanted with Murry and their false dream, she replaces this idyllic Heron with a real house where she spends her time working on her own without Murry, at Villa Isola Bella (Menton, France). At the beginning, still reluctant to awake from her chimera, she wants to see this place as the Heron of which both dreamt:

> «My feeling for this little house is that somehow it ought to be ours. It is I think a perfect house»[56].

Later, however, she starts to see reality and conceives this little cottage as her home, when she begins to build her own realistic dream as opposed to the common one with her husband:

> «Its the first real home of my own I have ever loved»[57].

At this point, Mansfield works out a new projection for her dream of maternity, as she substitutes the unreal and devious maternity of her biological and social plans with Murry with a metaphorical one: her labour as an artist. Hence, through her narrative and without the need to resort to the masculine element (her husband), she gives birth to her own children who bring her

53. Mansfield, Katherine: *Journal*, op. cit., p. 166.
54. Ibid., p. 148; Mansfield, Katherine: *The Collected Letters,* v. 2, op. cit., p. 356; Mansfield, Katherine: *The Collected Letters,* v. 3, op. cit., p. 236.
55. Mansfield, Katherine: *The Collected Letters,* v. 2, op. cit., p. 117.
56. Mansfield, Katherine: *The Collected Letters,* v. 4, op. cit., p. 43.
57. Ibid., p. 106.

a satisfaction, if not total, at least superior to that experienced with the misguided dream she shared with Murry. With her writing, she brings her brother, mother and children («Sun and Moon») back to life, allowing her to create with no boundaries everything she could not have during her existence in the real world. Therefore, with respect to her work, she asserts:

> «It takes the place of religion – it *is* religion – of people – I create my people: of 'life' – it *is* Life. The temptation is to kneel before it, to adore, to prostrate myself, to stay too long in a state of ecstasy before the *idea* of it»[58].

She sees herself as a goddess of creative fertility, who can create life and is totally satisfied with her art, a satisfaction that she never manager to express in her relation with Murry:

> «If I *had* done my work Id even go so far as to die. I mean to jolly well keep alive with the flag flying until there is a modest shelf of books with K.M. backs.»[59]

4. CONCLUSION

Mansfield seems to find the solution to the dichotomy mother/writer in her narrative maternity. In the same way that Kristeva combines both discourses in her essay «Stabat Mater» and suggests their coalescence, Mansfield finds the solution in writing, which lets women fulfil themselves professionally and, at the same time, lets them exercise their mother maternal labour in the production of endless lives in their stories. Of course, this «artificial» maternity never satisfied the author completely, but, in her fiction, biological maternity is much more devastating for women, since, as in the examples with which this article opens, they are condemned to endless procreation and the performance of domestic tasks that confine them forever in a frustrating role. The metaphorical maternity that Mansfield claims in her own figure as a real woman makes a sensible combination of the two limiting stereotypes for women that were mentioned before: the rebel woman, in that it allows this artificial mother the necessary freedom to write and perform a professional activity, and the Angel in the House with its maternal connotation, in that she has access to a family through the creation of endless lives. Of course, this metaphorical maternity is not as fulfilling as giving birth to children of flesh and bone, but it provides for a freedom and an eternity that can be more nourishing for a woman like Mansfield, who was prone to continuous dissatisfaction with her everyday life and was forced by her sterility to remain childless.

58. Mansfield, Katherine: *Journal*, op. cit., p. 161.
59. Mansfield, Katherine: *The Collected Letters,* v. 4, op. cit., p. 147.

POEMS

LIFE ON CHARLES STREET, FALL 1963*

Just a bit larger than a toddler's playpen,
my first studio apartment in Greenwich Village
was across the street from The Lion's Head
(which later moved to Christopher Street,
and which, like a lot of us, is now dead).
This tiny village pad is where I lost my virginity
and where I watched the world rumble by
on old pavements of Belgian blocks and memory.
Traffic spilled from my ears, my eyes, maybe
the same cars even now are still circling,
bearing New Yorkers up, up to Broadway,
to assignations at nice hotels, to little restaurants
narrow as coffins but no reservations needed,
then back to the Village for jazz. Maybe
you caught me staring at that cornet player
who had a loft in Chelsea. Let's see,
you could say it's all up from here, or falling,
as I went giddily down, fresh from the country,
in a young woman's boot camp of sexuality
and sound. I bought a stereo and played
the Beatles and show tunes and got laid,
and spent hours proofreading and writing ad
copy, spending it at Bendel's, when I got paid.
I saw a rat not far from my front door, a rodent,
you know, urban vermin. Romantic. This
dump, er, my first home in the big city
was not far from the wharves. Luckily, close
to the police station too. When a thief
broke in to steal my typewriter (a Royal),
a cop with a heart of gold showed up
to give me gentle advice about city life and locks.
«Get a Segal», he said, and I did. My castle
was now secure. I lay alone there at night
listening to ships, the cabs on Hudson Street,
and the guy next door making loud love
to his girl of the week. Think about that.
Up and down Charles Street people were
writing and humping. I was free to decide.
I spent the very next freelance check
on a little black and white TV and thus
was able to watch all the up-to-the-minute
coverage of the sexy President's assassination,
and ponder the motivations of rats and men.

Mary Kennan Herbert

STILL MORE JUICY GOSSIP*

Get this: she dumped all her tranquilizers (Librium)
down the toilet, with a gesture of moral righteousness or possibly opprobrium,
depending on the slant of autumnal sunlight in those fecund afternoons-
or maybe one's current point of view.

They wanted another baby. That was the plan. She wanted to get pregnant that fall,
and insisted with fervor: it's not good to be taking these. Any or all pills would be bad for the baby. Yes indeed.
Thank you.
So the lady agreed to live with demons for a while, if it would be better for the child.

Capsules swirl away down the drain. Smile.
With a high-minded goal, it is easy to flush away pain
with panache, with style. Those black and green containers of mercy, bye bye.
Rock-a-bye, baby. God of fertility, have mercy on me.

Maples shed their leaves in the meantime.
She watched the calendar, prayed and bled.
Kinda funny how toilets anchor our lives, how they provide the patience
one needs to do the kinder deed.

All offerings are accepted at the porcelain throne. Bring me your tired turds, your party excess, your barf-o-rama. Morning sickness, pills and potions,
too much beer and barbeque, all welcome here. The palette reveals: no baby yet for the class of 2020. A darling child the size of a shrimp gets
flushed away with bad memories

of a day much hated. Hyperplasia, the womb overgrown with tenets of desire and excess,
is saying enough, enough. Yes, the body says enough,
you're bloody well done with childbearing. And not only that, reports the grinning ob/gyn:
you've got a yeast infection.

Having a baby would be a final star in the crown the aging queen longs to wear.
Why should teen-agers procreate all day long while she stares down into murky depths

regarding her last chance as the water swirls around the tank and
GARUMPPHFfffllliissshhhhh-
flushes hope into the sewer, hope and reams of dreams.

And any other day, a week ago, a decade ago, this thought would have taken wing to fly
far beyond all this crap into an incredible dazzling light, out of harm's way.
Look: a light undimmed by regret or envy, or recent politics. Life is a gift.
Wings lift from the sludge. Look: a monarch butterfly, Cupid, angels from a children's picture book.

Mary Kennan Herbert

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MISCELANEOUS

SEXUAL POLITICS IN *THE WASTE LAND*: ELIOT'S TREATMENT OF WOMEN AND THEIR BODIES IN «A GAME OF CHESS» AND «THE FIRE SERMON»

JULIE ELAINE GOODSPEED-CHADWICK
Ball State University (USA)

1. INTRODUCTION

Feminists, like Hélène Cixous, would argue that it is not only inappropriate but it is impossible for men to write women's experience.

> «Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies»[1].
>
> «Women must write woman. And man, man»[2].

It is problematic, then, from Cixous's view to interpret the experience of woman in man's writing. However, is it possible for trauma to act as an intermediary between woman and man and reconcile the differences? Truly, women have experienced the trauma of being driven away from not only their bodies but from writing their stories. A traumatized man may have more in common with the plight of women than Cixous has considered. Although not female, T. S. Eliot perhaps had some knowledge of trauma and could realistically represent the rape of women in his work. What is more important than Eliot's traumatic experiences is an understanding of how rape, the epitome of sexual trauma, is figured in Eliot's work. Why is it important to discuss and analyze the use of rape in literature? If it is true that *The Waste Land* (1922) served to «shape the perception of Central Europe for a whole generation of British and American writers»[3] and continues to influence latter generations,

1. Cixous, Hélène: «The laugh of the medusa», in David Richter (comp.): *The critical tradition: classic texts and contemporary trends*, 2nd ed., Boston, Bedford, 1998, trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, p. 1454.
2. Ibid., p. 1455.
3. Smith, Stan: «Unreal cities and numinous maps: T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden as observers of central Europe», in Waldemar Zacharasiewicz (comp.): *Images of Central Europe in travelogues and fiction by North American writers*, Tübingen, Stauffenburg-Verl., 1995, p. 167.

then it is not only necessary but crucial to understand how Eliot treats rape and how it functions in his poetry.

2. ELIOT'S IDENTIFICATION WITH WOMEN

While the modernists claim the advantage of universality in their themes, the edwardians are left with the disparaging reputation of depending «too heavily on the world outside the book»[4]. Eliot, however, depends heavily on the post-WWI world for the tone and poetics of *The Waste Land*. The poem addresses the social ills and unhappiness Eliot perceived in both his personal life and the outside world. *The Waste Land* is very much a poem rooted in the conditions of its time. According to Stan Smith in «Unreal Cities and Numinous Maps: T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden as Observers of Central Europe,»: «The origins of *The Waste Land* are intimately bound up with Eliot's reflections on the state of Central Europe»[5].

He makes the case that: «Eliot's knowledge of [postwar] Central Europe's economic and social collapse was both intimate and professional»[6] because, by this time, he was living in Europe and working for Lloyds Bank and so had first hand knowledge of the social and economic conditions. One of Eliot's economic insights consists of the realization that London is functioning on «a *sexual economy* where there is more *money chasing* more *bodies*»[7].

With an economy that is still gendered as a result of a sexual division of labor in the early twentieth century, it is little wonder that those with money (primarily men) desire that which cannot be bought against the owner's will-bodies, particularly women's bodies. In «A Game of Chess,» while Lil's husband is away in the service of the army, she remains at home and is expected to make herself «a bit smart» in appearance because «he'll want to know what you done with that money he gave you To get yourself some teeth»[8]. If Lil decides not to accommodate, then Albert may very well leave her, predicts Lil's friend. Thus, we have at least one example of money chasing a body in the text. The change of Eliot's citizenship and the subsequent acculturation allowed him a unique perspective into «how images of otherness are constructed out of the desire to belong as well as to renounce»[9]. As a result, Eliot could relate to the marginalized position of women and may very well have identified with women in *The Waste Land*, as he appears to do with Marie early in the poem:

4. Kaplan, Carola M. and Simpson, Anne B.: «Edwardians and modernists: literary evaluation and the problem of history», in Carola M. Kaplan and Ann B. Simpson (comp.): *Revisioning edwardian and modernist literature*, New York, St. Martin's, 1996, p. xi.
5. Smith, Stan: Op. cit., p. 167.
6. Ibid., p. 170.
7. Levenson, Michael: «Does *The Waste Land* have a politics?», *Modernsim/Modernity*, 6.3 (1999), p. 8. Italics are mine.
8. Eliot, T. S.: *The Waste Land* in *The complete poems and plays of T. S. Eliot*, New York, Harcourt, 1991, pp. 37-55, lines 142-144.
9. Smith, Stan: Op. cit., p. 167.

«He said, Marie,
Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.
In the mountains there you feel free»[10].

Because Eliot associates the city with sex, it is noteworthy that it is in the mountains and away from the city that Marie feels liberated. Identification with women probably also stems not only from Eliot's knowledge of economics, his foreign background, but from his position as a writer. The number of high culture writers working within the Modernist movement was relatively small. According to Andreas Huyssen,

> «That such masculine identification with women, such imaginary femininity in the male writer, is itself historically determined is clear enough. [T]he phenomenon has a lot to do with the increasingly marginal position of literature and the arts in a society in which masculinity is identified with action, enterprise, and progress– with the realms of business, industry, science, and law»[11].

Eliot's sense of his own marginality enables him to represent at least one woman's experience, that of his former wife, Vivien. In fact, Vivien «found *The Waste Land*'s publication to be painful, since the poem was so tied to her»[12]. As for the connection between trauma, femininity, and Eliot, Vivien wrote: «As to Tom's mind, I am his mind»[13].

3. THE FEMINIST POETICS OF «A GAME OF CHESS»

«A Game of Chess» works itself out, line by line, to be a study in the depiction of rape and trauma. Like Middleton's *Women Beware Women* in which a seduction is paralleled to a game of chess, the careful unfolding of line after line in this section mirrors the strategic moves of a chess game in order to depict a rape and its aftermath. Subsequently, the woman appears traumatized in the following lines:

«'My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
'Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.
'What are you thinking of ? What thinking? What?
'I never know what you are thinking. Think.'»[14]

The insistent questioning and imperative commands by the woman belie the unsettling anxiety attributed to the female speaker in the poem. In this case, then, «speak to me» could easily be a metonymy for «speak for me.» On a broader scale, the repetitions of «bad,» «speak,» and «think» constitute the formula for salvation in the waste land: acknowledge that things are «bad,» «speak» out, and re-«think» that which enables «bad» to happen so as to

10. Eliot, T. S.: Op. cit., lines 15-17.
11. Huyssen, Andreas: *After the great divide: modernism, mass culture, postmodernism*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1986, p. 45.
12. Koestenbaum, Wayne: «*The Waste Land*: T. S. Eliot's and Ezra Pound's collaboration on hysteria», *Twentieth Century Literature*, 34.2 (1988), p. 113.
13. Ibid., p. 113.

activate an awareness of the need for change. In «What the Thunder Said,» Eliot advocates for a new belief system when he draws from the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad. He offers datta, dyadhvam, and damyata as a better alternative to the current belief systems illustrated in the poem. Surely the ideas of giving, mercy, and self-control—or, as Eliot roughly translates: give, sympathize, and control as a better alternative to the current belief systems, such as capitalism, illustrated in the poem. Salvation, symbolized as the coming of rain, is the end result when the new belief system is in place at the end of the poem.

4. THE FEMINIST POETICS OF «THE FIRE SERMON»

The allusion to Philomela is picked up again in «The Fire Sermon.» It is necessary to read the myth as an important intertext to *The Waste Land*. Asserts Levenson,

> «The barbarous king who rudely forced Philomela is the terrible figure for the politics of intimacy, power between bodies, whose effects are written throughout the poem»[15].

We should keep these sexual politics in mind when reading *The Waste Land*, even if Philomela is not overtly present in the text. In the ancient myth, Philamela's tongue was cut out in order to leave her with no opportunity to speak out and effect change. «The Fire Sermon» contains significant parallels to «A Game of Chess.» The following lines foreshadow what is to happen to the typist in much the same language as used earlier in the poem:

> «Twit twit twit
> Jug jug jug jug jug jug
> So rudely forc'd.»[16]

The ideology of patriarchal capitalism is critiqued because it has dirtied the ears to which the woman cries; «jug jug» is unintelligible and means nothing to anyone. The section progresses from here to show how rape is connected with economics. In line 216, Eliot refers to workers as «the human engine,» which begs acknowledgement of Marx. According to Marx,

> «Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine […]»[17].

The human engine is the collective description of the appendages of the machine, the workers. In «The Fire Sermon», the typist is never given a name. She has no individual character because she is simply known by her occupation, which emphasizes her relationship with her machine, the typewriter. Her work

14. Eliot, T. S.: Op. cit., lines 111-114.
15. Levenson, Michael: Op. cit., p. 5.
16. Eliot, T. S.: Op. cit., lines 201-204.
17. Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich: *The communist manifesto*, New York, Penguin, 1985. Trans. Samuel Moore, p. 87. Original publication date is 1888.

is not charming; by the end of the day she is «bored and tired»[18]. The typist is the perfect proletariat counterpart for the bourgeois woman in «A Game of Chess». The gaze is present in this scene as well, and this time the gazer is specifically defined:

> «'I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs
> Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest-'»[19]

Tiresias catalogues the activities of the typist and notes the clothes piled on her bed. He chronicles the rape in lines 237-242. After the rape, the typist, much like the bourgeois woman, concerns herself with her appearance. She too «looks a moment in the glass» and «smoothes her hair with automatic hand»[20]. This preoccupation with appearance recalls the bourgeois woman sitting at her dressing table and brushing her hair. Such a comparison strengthens the commodification of both women. Both are elaborately gazed upon, while the typist is also set up as a cog in the capitalistic machine. The parallels between the treatment of the two women serve to reinforce the similarity of their situations.

4. RAPE: A DISEASE OF PATRIARCHAL CAPITALISM

It is not too difficult to see how rape functions as a disease of capitalism. The woman's body becomes a commodity with the potential for enforced reproduction of more commodity. Capitalism produces commodity fetishization, and this fetishization enables the rapist to feel validated when he gets what he wants, even if he has to forcefully take it. In «T. S. Eliot and the Rape of God,» Sharon Stockton equates the body of the raped woman as the receptacle of the horror of capitalism:

> «The violated woman, like the soul cleansed in purgatory and then taken back into the bosom of God, becomes a vessel for the expression of transcendent meaning-as force and as horror. Hers is a face wiped clean of illusions about democracy, individuality, and material accumulation; [...] It is her body which becomes a 'receptacle' for the engendering of value-which becomes, in fact, through the transubstantive spectacle of willing submission to hierarchy and power, a new kin dof specie: she is the (now empty and purified) money form whose value can be imposed from outside and above, the product that has accumulated value at the cost of human repression[....]»[21].

Indeed, Eliot's woman, impaled on the burnished throne of capitalism, engenders her value by further commodifying herself as revealed through her fixation on the appearance of her hair. She participates in her own subjugation to some extent because she willingly submits to hierarchical power. She does

18. Eliot, T.S.: Op. cit., line 236.
19. Ibid., lines 228-229.
20. Ibid., lines 249 and 255.
21. Stockton, Sharon: «T. S. Eliot and the rape of God», *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 39.4 (1997), p. 380.

nothing to break out of the cycle and seems to want to elicit the gaze. The clerk, although he finds the typist unwilling:

> «endeavours to engage her in caresses
> Which still are unreproved»[22]

and since his «exploring hands encounter no defence»[23], he «makes a welcome of indifference»[24]. Because of the willingness to submit to hierarchical power, value is imposed upon the violated woman at the cost of her liberation[25].

5. ADVOCACY OF A DIFFERENT BELIEF SYSTEM

The vehicle for redemption is through the institution of a new belief system that will transform society, as «What the Thunder Said» purports. Although Eliot does not overtly specify that the treatment of women is his measuring stick of the success of a given society's organization, Marx does[26]. «Peuchet on Suicide,» translated and emended by Karl Marx in 1846, contains an explicit argument that the existing society causes suicide and that a total reorganization of society is needed, beginning with the abolition of all social classes, alienated labor, and the type of family that functions as an instrument of oppression. What is unusual is that Marx, like Eliot, deals with bourgeois women, a class that usually is passed over in discussions of the oppressed. Ignoring the most vulnerable group for suicide in his time, unmarried men[27], Marx translates four of Peuchet's six vignettes, and three of these concern bourgeois French women who commit suicide as a result of familial oppression (e.g., domestic violence, authoritarian parents, enslavement of the wife). These vignettes are used to show that society as a whole, not just the proletariat, suffer from the social condition of society, as the images in *The Waste Land* suggest.

Michael Levenson takes a similar view of Eliot's depiction of society in «Does *The Waste Land* Have a Politics?» According to Levenson,

> «Even as some modernists fought and died [. . .] those who stayed home in London had found an urban culture small and pliable enough to yield to literary activism. Surely it's telling that the great moment of crisis in Eliot's work coincides with the recovery of peace»[28].

22. Eliot, T. S.: Op. cit., lines 237-238.
23. Ibid., line 240.
24. Ibid., line 242.
25. Stockton, Sharon: Op. cit., p. 380.
26. Kevin Anderson argues that «Marx seems to give a greater emphasis to gender than even to class relations as a measure of human development.» See *Marx on Suicide*, p. 6. MARX, Karl: «Peuchet on suicide», in Eric A. Plaut and Kevin Anderson (comp.): *Marx on suicide*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1999, pp. 45-75. Trans. Eric. A. Plaut, Gabrielle Edgcomb and Kevin Anderson.
27. See statistics in Marx's «Peuchet on Suicide», p. 70.
28. Levenson, Michael: Op. cit., p. 3.

Levenson argues that *The Waste Land* should be viewed as a critique of postwar London society and not the London society of the war years because conditions were significantly different during and after the war. Most significantly, Levenson is the only critic to argue in a somewhat similar vein as this paper:

> «What the poem both dreads and desires is the annihilation of the city as apparatus, what Eliot calls 'the postwar machinery of life' with its 'horrible waste,' the city as the relentless wheel»[29].

Significantly, in the last stanza of the poem, Eliot writes,

> «London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down»[30].

This line would symbolize the annihilation that Levenson sees the poem preoccupied with, while

> «A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many
> I had not thought death had undone so many»[31]

indicates the horrible waste generated by the relentless wheel of capitalism. Although Levenson hesitates to position Eliot on either the right or left side of the politics fence, *The Waste Land* and «A Game of Chess» and «The Fire Sermon» in particular are sympathetic to the trauma experienced by women in the relentless wheel of capitalism and patriarchy, quite possibly because Eliot himself identified with women and their marginality because of the forces of modernity, as well as the traumatic incidences in his personal life.

Michael Tratner has an interesting take on the politics of *The Waste Land* in *Modernism and Mass Politics: Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, Yeats*. He attempts to articulate what the representations of women mean, especially when discussing «A Game of Chess.» He argues that Eliot employs a «radical political aesthetic in order to reverse bourgeois decay and reestablish any culture at all»[32].

However radical he thinks Eliot might be in his political aesthetic, he paints Eliot out to be extremely conservative and «rereads» Eliot in the traditional way. For instance, according to Tratner:

> «[I]n Eliot's works, the rapes are the cause of women's gaining voice, not the result. He was not so much seeking the liberation of women's voices as the return of males who did not use women (and workers) but took care of them and expressed women's concerns for women. Eliot was also identifying with the women and seeking to find a male leader figure who could take care of him and express his concerns better than he could»[33].

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29. Ibid., p. 4.
30. Eliot, T. S.: Op. cit., line 427.
31. Ibid., lines 62-63.
32. Tratner, Michael: *Modernism and mass politics: Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, Yeats*, Standford, Stanford University Press, 1995, p. 166.
33. Ibid., p. 172.

The problem with this argument is that it is not radically political as Tratner maintains[34]. Also, what woman is given voice as the cause of rape? The allusion to Philomela is found in sections II and III with an emphasis on the inarticulate «jug jug.» This speech, Eliot suggests, is the result of rape and not the cause. Thus, women are not empowered by rape, in contrast to what Tratner argues. Instead of reading any sort of trauma into the opening scene of «A Game of Chess,» Tratner declares that the woman is depicted as «too excited and exciting, too wet, taking control and engulfing the male [...] in her synthetic perfumes»[35]. If she is captured by the gaze, the gaze of the engulfed male, then she is controlled and not in power to control. The male's impression that the woman is in control because she entices him does not detract from the fact that he constructs her through his gaze. His act of bestowing power on her is only possible because he has the power to construct or reconstruct what he sees.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Eliot, much like Marx, harbors antagonistic feeling towards the bourgeoisie, although it should be remembered that both depict the unhappy situations of bourgeois women in their works with sympathy. In his 1923 *Dial* review of Marianne Moore's poetry, Eliot expresses his contempt for bourgeois art. For Eliot, the vitality of art in the modern era resides in the proletariat art, such as the art found in the music hall. Aristocratic art or high art is «the refinement, not the antithesis, of popular art»[36].

Thus, for Eliot, high art is only the integration and refinement of proletariat art. High art needs the vitality of proletariat art or it will cease to be popular and disappear. According to David Chinitz,

> «Eliot faults [...] an 'artificial and unimportant distinction' between 'proletariat' and 'aristocratic' art. This distinction, Eliot warns, has 'dangerous consequences'– again, presumably that a dissociation between popular culture and high culture will impoverish the first and kill off the second»[37].

34. According to Tratner, *The Waste Land* «points particularly to capitalism as the source of mistreatment of women and of the masses», p. 173. It would seem from this observation that Tratner would want to show in what ways women are depicted as victimized in order to support his assertion, but this is not the case, as can be seen above. Tratner attempts to link Eliot to Marx in several instances, but what he overlooks is that Marx never suggested that women be left in the hands of those who could oppress and control (which the act of rape signifies). Furthermore, if Eliot is interested in taking «care of [women]» and expressing «women's concerns for women,» then why, if women are subjected to abuse by men in power, should women be represented and taken care of by those very same men? On a positive note, what Tratner's argument wants to reinforce is the oppression that women and the masses experience as a result of capitalism and Eliot's subsequent identification with women.
35. Ibid., pp. 170-171.
36. Eliot is quoted in Chinitz, David: «T. S. Eliot and the cultural divide», *PMLA*, 110.2 (1995), p. 238.
37. Ibid., p. 238.

Eliot blames the bourgeois class for creating a divide between aristocratic art and proletariat art, and dismisses bourgeois art as nothing but «sham ideas, sham emotions, and even sham sensations».[38] Bourgeois art creates the divide because it wishes to disassociate itself from the proletariat in order to obtain the status of aristocratic art. Eliot understands the abolishment of bourgeois art as a necessity in order to pave the way for a popular art that promotes cultural unity through its associations with high art.

It appears that both Eliot and Marx considered the plight of bourgeois women as indicative and perhaps par exemplar of a faulty organization of society. Surely if one can compare the similarities in the treatment of women in writing between Eliot and the forefather of communism, Karl Marx, one cannot disagree that Eliot is closer to the edwardians in calling for social reform in socially minded literature than traditionally acknowledged. Some critics, like Marianne DeKoven, interpret «A Game of Chess» as rabidly anti-feminist. DeKoven dismisses «A Game of Chess» as «terminally degraded modern femininity» because of its «vicious representations of women»,[39] which is not a fair assessment. It is true that the women are degraded and assaulted in *The Waste Land*, but these depictions are not a result of overt misogyny. Instead, this paper strives to offer a better understanding of how Eliot construed the plights of the bourgeois woman in «A Game of Chess» and the typist in «The Fire Sermon» than what is traditionally understood in order to liberate *The Waste Land* from its reputation as anti-feminist. How can it be anti-feminist when Eliot, like Marx, can be read as an advocate for change in the material conditions of women? *The Waste Land* illustrates the need for social reform and even offers an alternative means of obtaining it.

38. Ibid., p. 239.
39. Dekoven, Marianne: *Rich and strange: gender, history, modernism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991, p. 192.

DEMYTHOLOGIZING HISTORY: JEANETTE WINTERSON'S FICTIONS AND HIS/TORIES

MINE ÖZYURT KILIÇ
Bilkent University (Turkey)

> «All the books speak to each other. They are only separate books because that's how they had to be written. I see them really as one long continuous piece of work. I've said that the seven books make a cycle or a series, and I believe that they do from *Oranges* to *The PowerBook*. And they interact and themes do occur and return, disappear, come back amplified or modified, changed in some way, because it's been my journey, it's the journey of my imagination, it's the journey of my soul in those books. So continually they must address one another»[1].

Winterson's novels continually address one another. Just as she states in the interview, starting with *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*[2] we find themes 'occurring, returning, coming back amplified or modified' in her fiction. Among the themes that recur, an intense preoccupation with history is central. Yet none of her novels can be classified as historical in the traditional sense. In her own words, Winterson uses the past as an «invented country»; she «land[s] on some moment of history and re-discovers it». Theoretically speaking, she writes «historiographic metaficton» that blurs the line between fiction and history. Thus, her novels problematise the validity of history, as well as the validity of the traditional view that the historical and fictional are separate[3]. With the theory of historiography that Hayden White offered in the 1970's, the separation of the once distinct realms of factual and fictional started to be questioned. The objectivity of historical knowledge seemed problematic. Realising that it was not the facts but the historian that speaks for the audience, White thought that the writing of history was then quite similar to the poetic process; thus he concludes that since historians are also preoccupied with the act of storytelling and with finding an appropriate narrative technique for

1. Reynolds, Margaret and Jonathan Noakes: *Jeanette Winterson: The Essential Guide*, London, Vintage, 2003, p. 25.
2. Winterson, Jeanette: *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*, London, Vintage, 2001.
3. Hutcheon, Linda: *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, New York, Routledge, 1988, p. 113.

ordering the events, history is «the literature of fact»[4]. This way of thinking puts an end to the traditional categorisation of history and fiction.

Winterson's novels (among many other postmodernist novels) can be seen as the embodiments of such views. As one major source of inspiration for Winterson, Angela Carter says for herself, Winterson's fiction offers the reader «an argument stated in fictional terms»[5]. In this sense, Winterson puts the postmodernist view of history into practice. Her views regarding history are like threads to her whole narrative adventure. Thus, what she says about history outside the fictional realm can be very enlightening in helping us understand how and why she resorts to history in her fiction. In the same interview quoted above, she explains her notion of the past and says that the past should be a place to re-invent:

> «... because the past is not a place that we know. We weren't there. And no matter what records are given to us, what objects, what stories, what histories, we don't know, because we weren't present. So to get at the past fiction is as likely a way of interpreting it as any. And I do think the history is a collection of found objects washed up through time, and that some of them we do hook out, and others we ignore. And as the pattern changes, the meaning changes. We are continually understanding our past in a different way because we are continually reinterpreting it and fiction does that very well. But you can only do it well if you let some freedom in your imagination. You can't do it well if you're trying to lock yourself slavishly into your notion of the past- which will not be true anyway. Or if you're making the past into the present, but in a silly wig and a different costume»[6].

Winterson 'lets her imagination free' and she never becomes the slave of the past narratives given to her. The Past in her fiction is always presented as something to invent, it is never a «silly wig» that is designed to cover up the real and to strike appearances for the slipshod.

The «talismanic» title she gives to the first novel of her cycle is integral to this innovative and pluralist attitude towards history: «Oranges are *'by no means'* the Only Fruit». The novel unfolds a personal history defying the accepted norms, which find diversity thrilling in its reductionist pose and thus equal fruit with oranges only. And it starts with the «Genesis» of Jeanette who falls in love with a girl, that is, who finds out that there are roads not taken; she takes one, and that makes all the difference: She suffers the exorcism and isolation. She is nullified, so is her story because she deviates from the normal. Therefore her story will not be recorded by the mainstream culture. History, simply, will not recognise her experience of falling in love with a girl as a fact. Winterson's critique of this traditional notion of history is embedded within Jeanette's life story that gloves the tale of Parcival as an emblem of loyalty to one's own values at the cost of everything:

4. White, Hayden: «The Fictions of Factual Representation», in Angus Fletcher (ed.): *The Literature of Fact*, New York, Columbia UP, 1976, p. 21.
5. Haffenden, John: *Novelists in Interview*, London, Methuen, 1985, p. 76.
6. Reynolds, Margaret and Jonathan Noakes: Op. cit., p. 22.

> «People like to separate storytelling which is not fact from history which is fact. They do this so that they know what to believe and what not to believe. This is very curious. How is it that no one will believe that the whale swallowed Jonah every day Jonah is swallowing the whale? I can see them now, stuffing down the fishiest of fish tales, and why? Because it is history. Knowing what to believe had its advantages. It built an empire and kept people where they belonged, in the bright realm of the wallet. Very often history is a means of denying the past. Denying the past is to refuse to recognise its integrity. To fit it, force it, function it, to suck out the spirit until it looks the way it should. We are all historians in our small way»[7].

When later Jeanette says «History is St George», she actually summarises the way she sees the History with capital H; she senses that the sum total of History is also made up of stories of the great church fathers, the great patriarchs. To question the validity of this history, Winterson uses the titles from the Old Testament for the chapter titles of Jeanette's autobiography: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth; and gives parallel yet secular stories of Jeanette's own Testament enveloped under these titles. The re-definition that Winterson offers with the use of this technique subverts the notion of the «sacred past» by placing a «profane content» into this already-known frame. To use a Biblical term, Winterson puts «new wine into old bottles», to break the bottles: «the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish»[8]. This indicates that the new spiritual order requires new practices; metaphorically the content and form of the material are incongruous; and in this incongruity lies the potential deconstruction which paves the way for reconstruction.

In that sense, Winterson offers a postmodernist reworking of the Old Testament and through this re-working, it is implied that Jeanette, the protagonist «cannot find her place in society, and acknowledges the fundamentally unstable condition of the world»[9], and is ultimately forced to find a way of existence by an act of redefining and rewriting. She knows that her efforts in creating a life of her own, her genesis and her exodus will not be recorded. When she comes to the understanding that «St George is history», she then realises that it merely ignores and mutes the distinct experiences, it only exorcises, it just discards. No wonder, her reflections upon this notion of history is not rewarding at all: «When I look at a history book and think of the imaginative effort it has taken to squeeze this oozing world between two boards and typeset, I am astonished»[10]. It is diminishing, yet there is still a way to hear the oozing world for Jeanette.

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7. Winterson, Jeanette: *Oranges…*, op. cit., pp. 91-92.
8. Matthew 9:16-17.
9. Gade, Bente: «Multiple Selves and Grafted Agents: A Postmodernist Reading of *Sexing the Cherry*», in Bengstson et.el. (ed.): *Sponsored by Demons: The Art of Jeanette Winterson*, Odense, Scholar's Press, 1999, p. 31.
10. Winterson, Jeanette: *Oranges…*, op. cit., p. 93.

The cure for this reduction and distortion is «self-service». What does it mean? OK! Rather than being a subject, a prey to the «Holy Service» performed by the patriarchal authorities, to protect our body against the harms of «too much refined food» we should have our own food: «If you always eat out you can never be sure what's going in, and received information is nobody's exercise. Rotten and rotting. Here is some advice. If you want to keep your own teeth make your own sandwiches»[11]. So, *Oranges* not only problematises the validity of patriarchal history, but also offers a solution: Record your own story, and do not rely on the History, served as fast food. As such, the «story» of Jeanette becomes a story of universal proportions in which the heroine struggles against the oppression of those obsessed with putting limits on passion, desire and the expression of love[12]. In this respect, it can be suggested that the historical fragments function as universalising agents for the fictional, and vice versa. (The fictional bit makes the historical sound less factual!).

Winterson's fiction elaborates on the concept of history, the notions of past and time also by juxtaposing the fictional and historical characters within the same space. Historical figures from different fields, namely political, military, religious and literary heroes exist side by side with the fictional characters. They are different, yet they share something in common: They are interestingly all male. These heroes, Napoléon, Cromwell, the Puritans and even the beheaded King Charles I are in fact powerful so much so that history does not mute them, knowledge does not refute their existence, (as it does to Cassandra in the myth/ poster) they are recognised everywhere and remembered at every pore. Nicholas Jordan in *Sexing the Cherry* who serves as her mouthpiece articulates Winterson's response to this male-centred notion of heroism. Upon reading selections from his favourite book, *The Boys' Book of Heroes*, a collection of the short biographies of men like William the Conqueror, Francis Drake, Lord Nelson and Christopher Colombus, Nicholas Jordan infers that:

> «If you are a hero you can be an idiot, behave badly, ruin your personal life, have any number of mistresses and talk about yourself all the time, and nobody minds. Heroes are immune. They have wide shoulders and plenty of hair and wherever they go a crowd gathers. Mostly they enjoy the company of other men, although attractive women are part of their reward»[13].

The ecologist girl's response is similar to that of Nicholas Jordan, whose plan is to do away first with the World Bank and then with the Pentagon. In an ideal world that achieves to beat the pollution, men should also act differently for her: «I don't hate men», she says, «I just wish they'd try harder. They all want to be heroes and all we want is for them to stay home and help with the housework and kids. That's not the heroism they enjoy»[14]. A reinforcement

11. Ibid., p. 93.
12. Kitzman, Andreas: «Untouchable Spaces: The Literary Inventions of Jeanette Winterson», in *Proceedings of the Seventeenth All-Turkey English Literature Conference, Sivas, 10-12 April 1996*, Sivas, Cumhuriyet University Press, 1996, p. 63.
13. Winterson, Jeanette: *Sexing the Cherry*, New York, Vintage, 1991, p. 113.
14. Ibid., p. 145.

of the critique she makes comes from another figure in the novel, Fortunata, one of the twelve dancing princesses who walks a different road (like Jeanette of *Oranges,* like the Dog-woman of *Sexing).* Fortunata is said to know about «the heroes and the home-makers, the great division that made life possible»[15]. Fortunata does not reject this division; instead she simply hopes to take on the freedoms of the other side, but then the question comes: «What if she travelled the world and the seven seas like a hero? Would she find something different or the old things in different disguises»[16].

The heroes from History co-habit with the fictional characters and they dwell both in the present and the past. And I think in placing these figures into the fictional space of her novels, and bringing them forth to the present, Winterson shakes the pedestals that these male heroes are put on from the roots. Meanwhile, through the simultaneous existence of both the fictional and the historical, the separation of the literary and the historical is challenged[17]. What Hutcheon says of such machinations is applicable to Winterson's fiction: «Postmodernist fiction suggests that to re-write or to re-present the past in fiction and in history is, in both cases, to open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological»[18].

In Winterson, the historical figures then cease to be as omnipotent and omniscient as they used to be in the social and cultural fictions governing the everyday life. Her novels give the lies away since they reveal that the heroes do not exist in the middle of nowhere. They are not beings apart indeed. The truth is, there are some other figures around who are ***equally*** real such as Napoléon's neck-wringer Henri who always wanted to be a drummer, who had dreams of being like Napoléon, and another ***equally*** real figure is Patrick, «the de-frocked priest with the eagle eye»[19]. Napoléon, General Hoche and Admiral Nelson of *The Passion,* and Cromwell, Charles I and the Puritans of *Sexing the Cherry* are all reduced to be mere subjects to their author's whims; their existence is just as precarious as the other characters, representatives of the common people, due to the breaks in narratives, intervening voices, different narrators and questions regarding the validity of fiction. How long do you think the myth of Napoléon can stand among the din of «I am telling you stories? Trust me.» How long can the serious and unyielding image of Cromwell and the Puritans sustain with the deconstructive notion of history pervading the novel:

> «There was no history that would not be rewritten and the earliest days were already too far away to see. What would history make of tonight? Tonight is clear and cold.... The stars show [the night] how to hang in space supported by nothing at all. Without medals or certificates or territories she owns, she can burn as they do, travelling through time until time has no meaning any more»[20].

15. Ibid, p. 150.
16. Ibid.
17. Hutcheon, Linda: Op. cit., p. 104.
18. Ibid., p. 110.
19. Winterson, Jeanette: *Passion,* London, Bloomsbury, 1991, p. 24.
20. Winterson, Jeanette: *Sexing...,* op. cit., p. 153.

Similar to Jordan's philosophising in *Sexing,* Henri's diary keeping during the Napelonic wars in *Passion* stands as an alternative form of history-writing to the military history supported by medals, certificates and territories. What the history books write is in Henri's hands turned into stories. Even this is problematised. This is emphasised by his friend Domino whose criticism of the way diaries are kept also questions the validity of the general trend in history-writing: «The way you see it now is no more real than the way you'll see it then». Henri cannot agree with him in drawing that then one should not write at all; however, he also thinks that he knows how old men blurred and lied making the past always the best because it was gone, thus questions the indisputable authority of the «old historian»:

> «'Look at you' said Domino, 'a young man brought up by a priest and a pious mother. A young man who can't pick up a musket to shoot a rabbit. What makes you think you can see anything clearly? What gives you the right to make a notebook and shake it at me in thirty years, if we're still alive, and say you've got the truth?»[21].

They settle the trouble when Henri tells Domino that what he cares about is not the facts but how he feels; he argues that how he feels will certainly change; so, he jots down his feelings since he wants to remember them. Thus, like Jordan, Henri deals with «the marginal (hi)stories that would not otherwise be told», and goes on with his diary-keeping[22]. Domino raises the issue once again when he tells Henri about the fortune-tellers he knows. There, he states the underlying notion of history in Winterson's fiction and addresses Henri whom is seen as the audience: «I tell you, Henri that every moment you steal from the present is a moment you have lost forever. There's only now»[23]. Then when Henri tells stories about the camp at Boulogne, he is aware of the distortion or revision that he, as a historian, makes: «I embroidered and invented and even lied. Why not? It made them happy. I didn't talk about the men who have married mermaids»[24]. The marriage of the soldiers to the mermaids refers to the disaster at sea, namely hundreds of them sinking into the depths of the sea in the battle. Both Henri and Domino articulate the underlying notion of history then: There is no single truth, the story told by a single person is not the absolute or the ultimate; in a sense, «History» is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing! Domino's commentary makes us realise that there is no one truth about history, only a series of versions, and that the past is available only in its various texts.

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21. Winterson, Jeanette: *Passion…,* op. cit., p. 47
22. Bengston, Helene: «The Vast Unmappable Cities of the Interior: Place and Passion in *The Passion*», in *Sponsored by Demons: The Art of Jeanette Winterson*, Odense, Scholar's Press, 1999, p. 23.
23. Winterson, Jeanette: *Passion…,* op. cit., p. 48.
24. Ibid., p. 50.

One technique Winterson uses in problematising history, as we have seen, is the juxtaposition of the characters –historical and fictional. Parallel events picked out from both the past and the present also help Winterson play with the ossified, monumental history, and destroy and the hard-boiled facts of that history. For instance, The Great Fire of London of 1666 and Nicholas Jordan's and the chemist girl's wish to burn down the polluting factory in modern London occur simultaneously. Two Londons, London of the past and the present exist side by side. The plague of 1665 is put against the pollution of the modern world. Jordan who belongs to the realm of the past events, an alter-ego to Nicholas Jordan, concludes that: «The future and the present and the past exist only in our minds, and from a distance the borders of each shrink and fade like the borders of hostile countries seen from a floating city in the sky... Empty space and points of light.[25]

So, important events like wars, executions, fires, victories, discoveries, that is the deeds of historical figures are seen as points of light in an empty space just like the other deeds of other characters. This is, I will call, a «demythologising notion of history» that levels down all the differences between male and female, now and then, Roundheads and the Royalists, the French and the English, the Emperor and the neck-wringer, the priest and a PeepingTom, a Fairy and a little girl, the Dog-woman and the ecologist. This sort of de-mythologising attitude also hightens the thematic effect that Winterson intends to create. The ultimate result of such plays is the universal dimension that the fictional world gains. For instance, Henri ends his life in a madhouse in an island, like Napoléon's exile in St Helene; Ali, the narrator of *The PowerBook*, feels like the tragic lovers of literary history Lancelot and Guinevere, Romeo and Juliet, Abelard and Heloise, Tristan and Isolde, frustrated desire of George Mallory who failed to reach the summit of Everest and the frustrated desire of Ali as a lover. These events are all put into the same bowl.

By putting such different figures from different periods of time together in a single thematic network, Winterson seems to deny the prevalent notion of time that separates these people from one another with the border of temporality. She makes different figures from various walks of life, from different historical periods come together in the same line of thought, in the same sort of mood; in a sense, it is not «when» but «what» that counts for these figures. *The PowerBook*, the last book of her first cycle has the motto. Ali, the narrator wonders if St Augustine might be right as he questions the validity of the prevalent notion of time:

> «St Augustine had said that the universe was not created *in time* but with time. This is true of the stories. They have no date. We can say when they were written or told, but they have no date. Stories are simultaneous with time. Ali the storyteller is no longer sure when things happen»[26].

25. Winterson, Jeanette: *Sexing…,* op. cit., p. 167.
26. Winterson, Jeanette: *The PowerBook*, London, Jonathan Cape, 2000, p. 216.

The juxtaposition she uses also makes the reader hear the echo of old Anglo-Saxon gleeman Deor who tries to comfort himself by remembering other sorrows of the world. To console himself of each sorrow, he says «That passed away; so may this»[27]. Winterson seems to recall the sorrows of others to measure the present sorrows against. Of course the pessimism pervading Deor's complaint is turned into hope in Winterson. Her fiction restores the lost hope and optimism.

In conclusion, the various forms of juxtapositions Winterson employs in her fiction enables the reader to grasp a new vision; the objects are washed up and hooked out from the river of events; the raw material is cooked, processed and prepared. Hence, the conclusive and teleological history is questioned at every pore: «Of course, it may well be that spiteful Suetonius (Roman historian) was a slandermonger. Perhaps Tiberius never did hurl his enemies into space-time». This sort of philosophising results in the distortion of the monolithic, stable and monumental history; her fiction gains an aspect of plasticity enabling the reader to see the past from a fresh perspective. It is clear that Winterson employs a regenerative technique: As the reader is able to find an individual voice in the historical material, s/he perceives the feeling of presence in the past. In other words, by historicizing the individual experiences, Winterson gives power and narratibility to individual lives to make them audible, narratable, and authorial.

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27. Urgan, Mina: *Ingiliz Edebiyatı Tarihi*, Vol. I, Istanbul, Altın Kitaplar, 1986, p. 20.

REPRESENTATIONS OF RELIGIOUS WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

Mª DEL CARMEN RODRÍGUEZ FERNÁNDEZ
University of Oviedo

In the late years of 20th. century and within the frames of Postmodernism there was a growing interest for revising and rewriting the biographies of some visionaries and scholars who devoted their lives to the Church. These revisions give the mystic visions and the works of the nuns and saints under study new and wider scopes other than the religious, and are very challenging reinterpretations of their autobiographical experiences for the critics involved in gender studies. The novels of Joan Ohanneson: *Scarlet Music*[1], Josefina Molina's *En el umbral de la hoguera*[2], Michele Roberts's *Impossible Saints*[3] and Carmel Bird's *The White Garden*[4] throw new lights on the lives of the Medieval nun Hildegard of Bingen, on Teresa of Ávila, who lived in the Spain of the Inquisition, and on Therese of Lissieux, the 19th. century French saint.

Whether they are medieval or modern, European or colonial they all have in common a patriarchal upbringing that limited their education and led them to take the religious vows however different their circumstances had been. Similarly, the contemporary authors of these works belong to cultural backgrounds as different as the Australian, the British, the Norwegian or the Spanish, which shows that there exists a feminist commitment spread all over the world to rescue and re/create the biographies of these women that rebel against their destiny and reject the submission to the political, scientific or religious authorities.

These gendered historical reinterpretations have been plotted following varied modes of discourse and subsequently the final upshot is also different. Some tell us about their daily lives and the domestic problems these women had to face, whereas others use a highly elaborated discourse full of metaphors

1. Ohannesson, Joan: *Scarlet Music, Una luz tan intensa,* Barcelona, Ed. B., 1998.
2. Molina, Josefina: *En el umbral de la hoguera,* Barcelona, Ed. Martínez Roca, 1999.
3. Roberts, Michele: *Impossible Saints,* London, Little & Brown, 1997.
4. Bird, Carmel: *The White Garden*, Queensland, University of Queensland Press, 1995.

and images that re/creates the world of the imagination. However varied these fictitious texts are, they are considered postmodernist and can be approached from the perspective of gender for the strength the subjects showed when trying to articulate their authority. The women who inspired these contemporary texts knew very wisely how to transgress and subvert their constrained existences in the cells and the cloisters of the convents and turned their contemplative and silent lives into forwarding and challenging undertakings. These characters find in their religious seclusion a space for self realisation that allows them to subvert the hierarchical authority: they know how to defy the patriarchal dictates and make of their private cells an open space of freedom and empowerment.

Feminist historians and theologians[5] have researched widely and deeply on the creation of patriarchy and on the importance of the reification of women's sexuality. Gerda Lerner explains that «it is not women who are reified and commodified, it is women's sexuality and reproductive capacity which is so treated»[6]. The control of their sexuality meant their psychological disadvantage against other groups of people. Another aspect, also connected with the aforementioned, which has been thoroughly studied, is the influence that Catholic religion exerted on women because they were the main victims in a society that sought to submit them for their own benefit, presenting the Virgin Mary as the paradigmatic example of renunciation, self-denial and desexualisation. This ideal, a mirror for Catholic girls according to patriarchal parameters, was the only way to achieve recognition in front of the religious authorities and consisted on renouncing their bodies and sensual appetites. As regards their fathers, husbands and brothers, this internalisation of the mariological model was also highly profitable because it ensured men's social superiority, sense of property and once again the control of women's sexuality.

5. For this analysis the following sources have been used: Anderson, Bonnie & Zinsser, Judith: *A History of Their Own* (1988). Traducción de Beatriz Villacañas, Barcelona, Crítica, 1991. This study analyses the history of women from a cronotopical approach and dedicates a very interesting chapter to «Religious Women». Bastida, Patricia: *Santas improbables: re/visiones de mitología cristiana en autoras contemporáneas,* Oviedo, KRK, Colección Alternativas, 1999 focuses her gender analysis of the Christian and feminist discourse applied to contemporary texts. CABALLÉ, Ana has coordinated the edition of a study in four volumes entitled *La vida escrita por las mujeres*, Barcelona, Círculo de Lectores, 2003. This work contains the most important biographical facts and excerpts of the literary work of these historical women, offering new views of their lives and works. Duby, George & Perrot, Michelle in their *Storia delle Donne* (*Historia de las mujeres*) Barcelona, Círculo de Lectores, 1994 (1990-91-92) give an accurate analysis of the history of women in six volumes. All these sources have been thoroughly studied and are the ideological basis for this essay although they may not be quoted.

6. Lerner, Gerda: *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness,* Oxford & New York, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 213. Lerner is one of the critical mainstays in this study. Her two volume work *The Creation of Patriarchy* and *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness* conform her magnum opus *Women and History* (1986) and it is a necessary tool for any scholar interested in women's life and education. Her work offers the explanation for the historical framework of feminine subordination and the development of women's feminist consciousness.

It is clear that religion became a strong weapon to restrain women's sexual life outside marriage; whether they were offered as oblatas to thank God for the favours received, whether they were secluded in the monasteries to safeguard them in wartime or to apart them from the social life if they had a physical defect that made them unlikely candidates for marriage, religious women were desexualised. This desexualisation turned upside down and against men because there were historical periods in which convents and other enclaves for single women created some sheltered space, where women could function and retain their respectability. Therefore, it meant their empowerment far from the constraints that the married life exerted on the rest of women. Consequently, nuns and saints became stronger making their abbeys be more prosperous and their lands be well administered. They influenced in some political and ecclesiastical circles and they were owners of their bodies and minds in the solitude that the cells and the cloisters inspired.

Through their writings and out of the contemporary fictionalised biographies, we discover new sides of their existences. We know that they were deprived of their full lives as women, which, on the one hand, would have been impossible at that time when they were dependent on the protection of male kin.The outcome of all this was that they had to put aside their desires, passions and needs for the sake of the internalisation of Christian models, but, on the other hand, they were privileged and could develop a rich and subversive intellectual life as they enjoyed a life within the walls of the convents that women outside these cloisters could not dream of. They had the space and the time necessary to try to articulate their existences. Their lives were marked by the canonical hours and prays but for the rest of their daily living, it was devoted to the reading, the copying of texts, the meditation, and the development of their creative inspiration. This measure of time in the convents had more similarities with the public obligations conveyed by men than with the domestic responsibilities that the rest of women had in their married lives. Furthermore, religious women eluded all the reproductive and house duties, and this was one of their mainstays: the religious condition offered a protection to carry out enterprises that otherwise would be done by men.

The thread that binds these works together in this essay is based on the modes of discourse chosen by the different writers of these novels and on the negotiation of the space, which they managed to achieve in front of the authorities. The distinction that David Lodge establishes when he speaks of metonymy and metaphor suits very well the building of the works chosen for this analysis and the division of this essay into two parts. For the British critic «metaphor juggles with selection and substitution; metonymy juggles with combination and context»[7] Although there are varieties and nuances that report how these protagonist characters tried to articulate their voices out of several devices, the fictional works above mentioned may be framed into this

7. Lodge, David: *Working with Structuralism,* London, Ark Paperback, 1986, p. 11.

categorisation: the authors of these biographies give their subject matters varied scopes by using different modes of writing. Ohanneson's and Molina's novels show an accurate and close to real life depiction of the problems Hildegard and Teresa faced. Carmel Bird's *The White Garden* or Michele Roberts's *Impossible Saints* offer metaphoric discourses that enrich even more the possibilities of interpreting the lives of the religious women. If the former reflect the external side of the difficult existence of these nuns that confronted the ecclesiastical authorities, managed to negotiate the tensions between the domestic and the public and knew how to combine the contemplative devotion with their active life inside and outside the cells, the latter (with their fissures, subtexts, deluded characters and exuberant figurative speech) create a profuse web of influences and cross-referencing that result in a dense and complex relationship. What is clear is that whatever the mode of discourse chosen, the subjects of these novels negotiated their space with the authorities openly or subversively.

1. STEPPING OUT OF THE CONVENT CELLS OR THE NEGOTIATION OF THE SPACE

If one of the mainstays of their independence was the authorisation they achieved, our consideration is that this was fulfilled with the control of the space, which they obtained individually and repetitiously. As Gerda Lerner says in *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*: «women had been marginalised from the male tradition and largely deprived of knowledge of a female tradition, individual women had to think their way out of patriarchal gender definitions and their constraining impact as though each of them were a lonely Robinson Crusoe, reinventing civilization»[8]. They lacked group consciousness because they had been erased from history; in Lerner's words:

> «Most significant of all the impediments toward developing group consciousness for women was the absence of a tradition which would reaffirm the independence and autonomy of women at any period in the past. There had never been any woman or group of women who had lived without male protection, as far as most women knew. There had never been any group of persons like them who had done anything significant for themselves. Women had no history-so they were told; so they believed. Thus, ultimately, it was men's hegemony over the symbol system which most decisively disadvantaged women.»[9]

It is certain that women had attempted to possess their own space repeatedly throughout the centuries whether out of their assertiveness whether through their artistic works and enterprises; however, this need was hardly achieved and it would not have been collectively recognised until the timing and the conditions were adequate. The independence for women, on which Virginia Woolf insisted in her essays, could only be obtained in the past by the women who did not take part in the marriage market and were desexualised

8. Lerner, Gerda: Op. Cit., p. 220.
9. Lerner, Gerda: *The Creation of Patriarchy,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 219.

at the eyes of men; moreover, women had been educationally marginalised and deprived of abstract thought, so it was a very hard task for them trying to convince their religious superiors of the authority they had received from God. They had to struggle with insistance on their capacity for thinking, for administering the land and for educating and organising nuns from other communities. They wanted to speak out the word of God and bring up more and more women under this Catholic and contradictory shelter. This protection apparently controlled their existences but at the same time meant a challenge that the rest of women would not reach until 20th Century.

Scarlet Music by Ohanneson narrates the life of Hildegard of Bingen from when she was taken to the abbey as oblate. The narration of her arrival at the convent would scare any woman nowadays, as it shows the inevitability of the young girl's fate, which the parents accept and consent to:

> «-Let me go! -she cried while Jutta remained knee-bent.
>
> The woman took her two small hands in hers and tried to kiss them while she shook weeping.
>
> At the bottom of the slope, far away, her parents stopped to look at the ermit for the last time. At the top of the mountain they could recognise two little arms and hands with frenzy movement, as if they were the wings of a scared butterfly.
>
> -MyLord! - she exclaimed with trembling voice– MyLady! You have forgotten me. You have forgotten to take me back home!»[10]

Hildegard grew stronger after years of tears and learning, enclosed with her *magistra* Jutta. Throughout her life, and due to this early enclosure, she suffered from severe illnesses that could only be mitigated when she travelled to different monasteries. What Ohanneson emphasizes in her work is how Hildegard empowered herself by showing to her authorities the need to speak out her word. She called herself «God's little trumpet», which gave her the authority to preach as she «had received» this gift from God through mystic revelations. This power allowed her to travel far and wide. At the same time that she visited other religious women explaining the gospels, she told the nuns about their rights on the administration of the properties obtained from subsequent dowries. Ohanneson also tells us how Hildegard used to visit the Bishop of Maguncia claiming a piece of land where she could found a new convent and how she faced the ecclesiastical hierarchy demanding the dowry of her nuns. The quotation from *Scarlet Music* explains clearly that religious women did not have any property rights and it shows Hildegard's view about this lack of authority imposed by men:

> «-'I must build an abbey for my nuns'
>
> -'But you have *one already*», replied the monk with an expression of astonishment, «an abbey that *protects* you'.

10. Ohannesson, Joan: Op. cit., p. 39. My translation.

- 'From what?' she inquired with an angry look, 'from knowing how to administer the land?' (...) I cannot tolerate it any longer. This monastery is too small for us; it does not satisfy our need'»[11].

If Hildegard undertook these economic confrontations with her superiors, Josefina Molina in *En el umbral de la hoguera* shows a similar and assertive characterisation of Teresa of Ávila. The Spanish nun from the Inquisitorial time set out burdensome expeditions across gorges and ridges in search for the most appropriate location for new convents that most of the times were founded in an illegal way at night. Molina's work is centred on the foundations of convents. Prosecuted by their superiors who saw how this rebellious woman managed to do her will, the novel explores this side of her life. Ohanneson and Molina write about the real enterprises these nuns handled and is well known and accepted that Hildegard bound herself to those commitments and that Teresa looked forward to founding houses where the nuns of her congregation could live plentiful lives. Both writers offer a mimetic representation of what the existences of these women must have been; in this sense their works are realistic, but with their contemporary commitment and authorship, they show that these nuns could be considered early feminists since the speaking characters appear as disobedient, assertive and strong willed when facing the hierarchical authority and that the negotiation of the space is one of their mainstays in the convent life.

Hildegard and Teresa knew how to articulate their «voices» by being assertive in front of the authority. They did so with the only device they had: subverting the contemplative life of the cell with the mystic visions that ordered them to step out of the convents and preach the word of God. Lerner has studied on the origin of these drives and fits and says that religious women were prone to feel revelations from God in the manner of visions and fits since they had internalised the models that imagery depicted in the churches, the Bible and the sacred manuscripts to which they may have had access, in addition to the contemplative life they led in the private spheres of the monasteries**: «**Mysticism asserted that transcendent knowledge came not as a product of rational thought but as a result of a way of life, of individual inspiration and sudden revelatory insight»[12].

They stepped out of the convent cells, travelled far and wide and they wrote down literary works and treatises on several fields of research. In a time when authority to women was utterly denied «Hildegard's achievement was possible because God «spoke to her» and she made those around her believe it and know it»[13]. She based the strength of her voice in the visions she received from God and she used them for her own purpose, as when in 1148 she had a vision telling her to found a new convent, which was to be denied by Abbot

11. Ibid., p. 159. My italics.
12. Lerner, Gerda: *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness...*, op. cit., p. 66
13. Ibid., p. 52.

Kuno causing her to fall into severe illness. She was also allowed to write down treatises on the sexuality of women that otherwise would be rejected by the ecclesiastical hierarchy were she not a woman with such a psychological strength. Similarly Teresa based her self-authorisation in the mystic visions which combined with political and public concerns and the physical illnesses that accompanied her throughout her life.

Teresa and Hildegard empowered themselves through the mysticism and the visions; they knew how to convince the authorities of their needs to spread the word and the work of God and were privileged in their ability to free themselves from traditional gender-roles since by living as part of a female community they enjoyed a «free space». They owned their time and their bodies, as Cristina Segura says in her essay[14]. The freedom that the convent life and the absence of women's domestic and reproductive responsibilities conveyed was greater for them; they knew how to transgress the rules of the convents by travelling and being powerful religious leaders in institution-building, in writing to and visiting the ecclesiastical authorities, as well as in speaking out their mystic visions and preaching. These were the escapes Hildegard and Teresa had: the former made the authorities believe that she had received special gifts from God and had been elected to exhort the Christians publicly and to found monasteries for women, whereas the latter developed a strong interior life by means of mysticism and literature and also thought necessary the foundation of more feminine convents.

This authority may have been unconscious, after the internalisation and the transformation of the models represented, or conscious, since by adopting the already internalised models and the biblical teaching that imputed them as weak and humble they subverted them and became strong by making everyone believe that they had received «the voice». In *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness* Lerner referring to Bynum points out that this authority came precisely because women were denied active roles in the institutionalised church. The self-authorisation they received by means of mysticism allowed them to step out of the convent cells and gain a position in the public life, to the point that they focused all the attention on the side of the hierarchical authorities who saw them as dangerous examples to be followed by other women.

Similarly, the severe illnesses they suffered were embodiments of their victimisation and deprivation as women. Because they lived in a sexed body and in a gendered society, these were not only physical but also psychological diseases: a subverted way of escaping from the contemplative life that the cell provided and an illustration of their self-authority. As Showalter says quoting Micale: «[hysteria] is not a disease; rather it is an alternative physical, verbal, and gestural language, an iconic social communication»[15]. Hildegard made use of it as a device to be taken into account; she convinced Abbot Kuno of

14. Segura, Cristina: «Las celdas de los conventos» in *Por mi alma os digo*, a herstory of women, Barcelona, Círculo de Lectores, 2003, pp. 11-120.

Disinbodenberg to grant her request to found a new monastery when she was severely ill and Teresa was so marked by different illnesses along her life that this was considered as a divine signal and she was allowed to travel and find locations for her nuns, as long as this activity relieved her of her physical pains. There are a lot of examples of this sort of subversion, and not only among those who were considered to be so highly illuminated by God: in Molina's novel there is the example of a wealthy lady that wanted to found a school for girls and that when the school was forbidden by the ecclesiastical authorities and had to close down the benefactress became severely ill. This sort of subversion proves that behind the spatial negotiation there is a transgressive attitude and a means of empowerement.

2. BETWEEN THE BED AND THE WALL OR THE SUBVERSION OF THE SPACE

If Ohanneson's and Molina's work approach a metonymical discourse and show this external side of the lives of saints, Roberts' and Bird's focus on the metaphorical subversion that some religious characters carried out in the solitude of the cells.

Teresa wrote her biography *Vida/Life* following the advice of her superiors to escape inquisition, as both Roberts and Molina maintain in their works, and this mode of subversion appears in both texts. These authors approach the biography of Teresa with different aims and whereas in Molina's work the emphasis is centred on the strong-headed character that managed to disobey her superiors and make her own will, Roberts' novel emphasises how biased and fragmented her official biography was. She offers a subversion of the history of Teresa by means of fissures, making the character write her life in tiny pieces of paper that rolled up around the thin cord on which her rosary was strung would be the legacy for her niece.

Impossible Saints is a historiographic and gender fiction of the lives of a group of saints, alternating with the fiction on Teresa/Josephine. All the stories are independent, and apparently there is not a link that connects them all, but going into the gaps and reading between the lines, you realise that there exists a thread that binds all the stories together. Roberts intertwins Teresa's biography and the lives of saints so that the readers understand how the religious models had been deeply internalised. The metaphoric mode of discourse is achieved with highly elaborated links that lay underneath that distorted and fragmented appearance. From the very first page the readers know what sort of fiction they have in their hands. When you start the reading of the introduction 'A Golden House' and you step down into this «golden chamber, where the bones were kept» (Roberts: 1)[16] you realise that, as reader, you have to try to «build the skeleton» and look for the clues that help with the understanding of the novel. There will be many different stories from saints and several lives lived

15. Showalter, Elaine: *Hystories*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997, p. 7.
16. Roberts, Michele: Op. cit., p. 1.

by Josephine/Teresa behind the official one. You only have tiny bits of those biographies, fragmented pieces that contemporary readers have to put together to read her life against the grain, because Josephine transgressed the fathers' command to write her biography when she wrote a second one twenty years later:

> «Twenty years later Josephine decided to write a second *Life.* As she had lived a secret life, so she would write one. This second book would be like the sister of the first, a younger sister kept shut up, about whom little or nothing is known. She does not appear in the biographies. Her absence is glossed over, no gap showing, no ripple to mark the trace of her passing. Her footsteps in the story are smoothed out and filled in. Yet, all the time she's there, breathing quietly under the surface of the prose, poking her finger through from time to time, like a ghost longing to be let in.»[17]

This second biography was written in the solitude of the cell, in the free time that the prayers and the religious duties allowed. In this way the fictitious Josephine subverted the time devoted to reflection. She elaborated a highly transgressive rosary without the crux, made with tiny beads that contained the fragments of her life. Isabel, narrator and niece to Josephine was the heiress, «she knew that she was looking at the first sheet of Josephine's secret *Life …I wrote my first book under obedience*. The beads were spindle shaped … bubbles of narrative that burst in all directions»[18]. Isabel is so excited when she realizes of what she has in her hands that starts opening the beads without any order; the result is that all the narrative has been spilled across the floor, spread over and once again Teresa's life will appear as inarticulated and biased. She was able to negotiate her space by writing her official life while she owned a secret one, but the complete truth of this reinterpretation of her biography will never be known. This is the purpose of the postmodernist fiction; it is not Roberts' aim to offer «the truth», but «a truth» different to the religious and canonical: a story that speaks of an inarticulated woman who suffered a lot in life, that was sent to the convent at the age of fifteen and was not given other options in her life.

The different sorts of subversions that, either conscious or unconscious, all the saints offer in Roberts' novel make these stories interesting and forwarding for their study from feminist approaches. They show to what extent women, but in particular the adolescent girls that took the veil out of the earnestness of their parents or of their own, were the victims of the patriarchal attitudes that imposed the models of obedience and self-denial on women. Once they had achieved adulthood they rebelled against the lack of election and the estrangement they had been victims of and developed their authorisation by subverting their lives in the convents and in the privacy of their cells. They stepped out of them and became empowered women out of their assertiveness and strong will.

17. Ibid., p. 34.
18. Ibid., p. 238.

The White Garden is another example of the importance of the metaphorical mode of discourse because it tells us how the characters may show a transgression in a written text. Carmel Bird's characters also rebel against the submission that patriarchy imposes on women. In the novel, Bird draws the attention of the readers on the unfulfilled desires of women, as a consequence of the education received that obliged them to renounce their bodies. The characters have internalised the personalities of paradigmatic saints that fused them with their owns, resulting in a profuse web of intertextuality that involves all the women in the novel. Bird gives the female characters Rosamund Price Jones and Therese Gillis and their surrogate selves Teresa of Ávila and Therese of Lissieux voices and personalities enabling them to struggle for their articulation in the small and contained world of a Psychiatric Clinic. By means of adopting the surrogate selves of these Catholic saints the characters subvert the personalities of the women they stand for and enjoy the status of deluded women. It is in this small world of delusion where they are the owners of their space. In the solitude of the cell, they will be able to speak out all their unsatisfied desires and needs by letting their subconscious outburst their passionate experiences. The possibility of articulating their selves in the shadow lands of delusion, in the privacy of their rooms and in the open-air white garden without showing any overt signs of assertiveness, but being highly disobedient, makes this novel very challenging and forwarding for the gender studies.

The overcharged symbolism of the mental house as a place of seclusion is embodied and carried out by Goddard, the director of the hospital and the person who controls the lives of the insane ones; there, the women are tied to their beds and the male power is reinforced by the jargon of psychiatry and the mystery surrounding the medical practices. This symbolic order which tries to structure all «their thoughts, intellect and visions to conform with patriarchal values and power»[19] opposes to the limitless possibilities that the female characters show. The mad women construct their own subversive language system and feel free from the patriarch's clutches in their *white garden* and in the solitude of their rooms. The deluded and naïve embodiments of the nuns and their world allow them to develop their own imaginative fantasies in the intimacy of their cells, between the bed and the wall, as one of the chapters reads, or in the white garden, built on the premises of the clinic where they construct their own transgressor language system as Julia Kristeva explains in *Desire in Language*[20].

According to Kristeva's theory of language and to the construction of subject identity, there exists a language in the pre-oedipal relationship between mother and child which provides and remains the foundation of all language. In the preverbal semiotic phase «the child has acquired no sense of separate identity:

19. Walker, Shirley: *Australian Women's Writing*, New England, UNE partnerships, 1996, p. 91.
20. Kristeva, Julia: *Desire in Language*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1980.

its physical experience is part of a continuum with the maternal body»[21]. Once the language is acquired the child enters the symbolic order, which is the aspect of language that the child directs towards the object world of other people and things. As regards *The White Garden*[22], Kristeva's critical theory gives the readers the clue for the understanding of the novel, because there is a confrontation between Goddard and his wishes to control the characters and the way the female characters behave. The symbolic is imposed through the different therapies and myriads of different pills he obliges them to take in order to master the women, but the characters develop their own code with their religious anxiety developed out of the internalisation of the models.

Bird elicits the complex world of the female characters in the novel by taking as the backdrop for her novel Vita Sackville-West and the white garden that her husband let her build in Sissinghurst to relieve all her anxieties and sexual misfits. Vita worked in her garden with a will, as a response to her hazardous and unaccepted life and her inarticulated position on a male dominant society. With this information in mind the «white garden» in Bird's novel is the metaphorical space, far from the male gaze, where the female characters and their religious icons solace, take refuge or empower through delusion. Bird handles very skilfully, in a chapter entitled «between the bed and the wall», how the world of the imagination cannot be snatched away from women to the point that this tiny space of the cell becomes their space to confront the patriarchal authority represented by Goddard.

Kristeva's idea of jouissance as «total joy or ecstasy» as well as her interpretation of the colours that she defines as: «the space where the prohibition foresees and gives rise to its own immediate transgression ... it is through colour- colours- that the subjects escapes its alienation within a code»[23] come to be very useful when interpreting this novel from a feminist approach. The garden in Bird's novel symbolises the female world as an open exhibition of their creativity. Apparently, it is the physical space that anyone can see and enjoy. However the images of the «white garden» on which all the novel is spun have multiple connotations that refer to the unfulfilled and misapprehended desires, needs and passions that women in general, but religious ones in particular, had to smother. All these wishes codified with colours cannot be perceived by people in general, they are only understood by these characters that have empowered themselves silently, musing their wishes in the space between the bed and the wall. This is their way to feel stronger and to subvert the obligations and rules imposed by Goddard. They make him believe that there is subordination and madness in their acts; but it is not submission, it is subversion. The white garden is the only open space they are allowed to go and where they take the

21. Kristeva in Morris, Pam: *Literature and Feminism*, Oxford, Basil and Blackwell, 1995, p. 144.
22. This phrase will appear in italics or inverted commas, depending on where it refers to the title of the novel or to the space created by women.
23. Kristeva, Julia: *Desire in Language*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1980, p. 221.

personifications of the internalised models of saints, since religion is the only way to escape from Goddard's clutches:

> «A White Garden doesn't mean you just go mad with the white flowers ... it is all a matter of light and shade and dark greens and light greens and silvers and greys. The overall impression is a sort of shimmering whiteness»[24]

«The white garden» is then an epitome of the representation of female freedom and triumph. This reference to the «light and shade» evokes the threshold site in the mind between the conscious and the unconscious that allows women to enjoy and recreate the experiences, desires and impulses that patriarchy has not been able to choke[25].

The characters from the novels analysed in this essay are all embodied representations of the very well known religious women, Hildegard of Bingen, Teresa of Ávila and Thérèse de Lissieux. They have had their share in the pages of history. But as the name indicates in the English language, that was *his*tory, the historical facts that men understood, handled, wrote and made public with examples of suffering, abnegation and self-denial for other women to follow.

The works that these contemporary authors have written are all fictitious reinterpretations of their lives, their concerns, the troubles they may have had with the religious authorities and the restlessness they may have felt with the internalisation of religious models. The need to have a room of their own made these contemporary authors imagine these women trying to convince the authorities to let them step out of the convents, to allow them to spread the word of God far and wide, to consent to the foundation of convents for other nuns and to agree to let them develop their creativity in the solitude of their cells.

They have all enjoyed that «white garden», that space of shade and light to transgress and subvert the patriarchal impositions. Ohanneson's and Molina's reinterpretations show how the lives of their characters have had shades and lights that they managed to transgress by negotiating the space and by empowering themselves with the administration of the land, a space that historically was in the hands of men.

Roberts' character, Josephine, knew how to hide her secret life with the hope that there would be a future heiress to whom she could give her legacy. That heiress character cannot articulate her inheritance completely,as there are aspects of her life nobody will know,but the readers nowadays have the tools to understand her thoughts and reinterpret her biased biography. As regards Bird's characters, they knew how to subvert the organised and controlled life of the mental house. Goddard wanted to control them, but he was defeated. He could master their daily routine with the timing of the pills and the sleeping hours, but he could not dominate their thoughts, their dreams, their visions

24. Bird, Carmel: *The White Garden...,* op.cit., p.18.
25. In Rodríguez Fernández: «Carmel Bird's *The White Garden:* symbols and images in a space of their own», *Journal of English Studies,* 2 (2000), pp. 79-92.

and their drives. There have always been ways of escaping from the cultural construction of gender and religious women were one of the first, if not the first, that knew how to create the paths and gardens for self-realisation and authorisation in the contained and protected world of the convents.

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THE HELPFUL ERROR IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN*

MELANIE M. STEELE
University of Minnesota, Duluth (USA)

Soon after Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* was published in 1929, Arnold Bennett published his article «Queen of the Highbrows», in which he says that Woolf «has her private notions about grammar»[1] and refers the reader to page fifty of Woolf's text. On page fifty of the edition Bennett would have consulted, one finds the following:

> «The most transient visitor to this planet, I thought, who picked up this paper could not fail to be aware, even from this scattered testimony, that England is under the rule of patriarchy. Nobody in their senses could fail to detect the dominance of the professor. His was the power and the money and the influence. He was the proprietor of the paper and its editor and sub-editor. He was the Foreign Secretary and the Judge. He was the cricketer; he owned the racehorses and the yachts. He was the director of the company that pays two hundred per cent to its shareholders. He left millions to charities and colleges that were ruled by himself. He suspended the film actress in mid-air. He will decide if the hair on the meat axe is human; he it is who will acquit or convict the murderer, and hang him, or let him go free. With the exception of the fog, he seemed to control everything. Yet he was angry»[2]

Bennett's reference seems to be to the use of *their* to refer to the singular pronoun *nobody* in the sentence «nobody in their senses …» According to the prescriptive grammar rule, «pronouns must agree with their antecedents…in gender and number»[3] and the sentence should have read instead «nobody in *his* senses». This rule was taught as correct in British schools from the eighteenth century until quite recently. Indeed, it was convention, and would have been

1. BENNETT, Arnold: «Queen of the high-brows», in Robin Majumdar and Allen McLaurin (comp.): *Virginia Woolf: The critical heritage,* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, pp. 258-260.
2. WOOLF, Virginia: *A room of one's own*, New York, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1991.
3. RILEY, Kathryn and Frank PARKER: *English grammar: prescriptive, descriptive, generative, performance*, Boston, Allyn and Bacon, 1998.

expected to be upheld by England's educated at the time Woolf wrote *A Room of One's Own*.

When Arnold Bennett, then, came across Woolf's misuse of the prescriptive rule, he interpreted it as an error, and criticized it as such. This criticism suggests that Woolf was ignorant or careless in her use of English grammar. Indeed, Bennett even marginalizes his criticism in parentheses, indicating that the error had little more significance than discrediting Woolf's authority. In fact, Bennett does not find the error worthy of description: rather, he sends the reader to find the error on his own, and assumes that it will be easily found. Bennett's attitude is indicative of one of the challenges Woolf faced when writing *A Room of One's Own*: not only was her grammar to be scrutinized, but so too was its meaning to be marginalized.

1

Bennett's attitude was not unique. Rather, it is indicative of widely held social attitudes of the time. In order to understand Bennett's perspective, the development of the rule to which he alludes, and its place in society, needs to be understood. Several critics have discussed the history of pronoun usage from a feminist perspective, including Anne Bodine in her article «Androcentrism in Prescriptive Grammar: Singular 'they', Sex-Indefinite 'he', and 'he or she'». She claims that «prior to the nineteenth century singular 'they' was widely used in written, therefore presumably also in spoken, English»[4]. Furthermore, Bodine continues, «this usage met with no opposition»[5] until the late 18th century, when the «usage came under attack by prescriptive grammarians»[6]. These grammarians «incorrectly analyzed ['they'] as only plural in number»[7], and then «tried to change the language to their conception of it»[8]. Significantly, Bodine argues that the solution that the prescriptive grammarians adopted to «correct» the problem of singular *they* was sexist. She states that «a non-sexist 'correction' would have been to advocate 'he or she', but rather than encourage this usage the grammarians actually tried to eradicate it also»[9]. Furthermore, Bodine argues, «it would appear that their choice was dictated by an androcentric world-view; linguistically, human beings were to be considered male unless proven otherwise»[10]. The people who perpetuate this rule, then, Bodine argues, «appear to be the docile heirs to the androcentric tradition of the prescriptive grammarians, failing to confront, if not implicitly subscribing to, the androcentric motive»[11].

4. Bodine, Anne: «Androcentrism in prescriptive grammar: singular 'they', sex-indefinite 'he', and 'he or she'», *Language and Society,* 4 (1975), pp. 129-146.
5. Ibid., p. 133.
6. Ibid., p. 133.
7. Ibid., p. 133.
8. Ibid., p. 133.
9. Ibid., p. 133.
10. Ibid., p. 133.
11. Ibid., p. 139.

In «Sexist Grammar», Julia P. Stanley agrees with Bodine's interpretation of the history of the prescriptive rule, claiming that «The usage of *man, mankind,* and *he* in the early grammars of English was not generic in any sense of that term, however one might wish to construe it»[12]. She discusses how grammarians came to argue that *he* was generic, but claims that «the label 'correct' came to be applied to so-called 'generic' uses of the masculine pronoun as a result of male control of the educational establishment in England (and the texts), and the consistent equation of the term *gender* with biological sex»[13]. Despite the grammarians' argument for the gender-neutrality of *he*, however, Stanley says that the prescriptive rule was sexist because it excluded «women from discussions of learning and language use»[14].

In «Sexist Grammar Revisited,» Elizabeth S. Sklar also explores the history of the development of the prescriptive grammatical rule and explores the meaning behind its usage. She traces the rule in English back to William Lily and John Colet's 1549 book, *A Short Introduction to Grammar,* where they adopt the Latin rule that «The masculine gender is more worthy than the Feminine, and the Feminine than the Neuter»[15]. Sklar notes that in its Latin form, this rule «appears to have been essentially value-free»[16] but that during its translation into the English language, the rule lost its neutrality[17]. The result, Sklar asserts, was that «English grammars assertions about gender were simultaneously assertions about language and assertions about the world. Thus if the 'masculine gender is more worthy than the feminine,' it follows that the male sex is more worthy than the female sex»[18]. Sklar also notes several instances where the syllogism was reversed: «for several grammarians the linguistic masculine precedence rule derives from what they perceive as the natural or social order as it relates to the comparative merit of the sexes»[19]. Over time, the underlying meaning and assumptions governing the rule began to be forgotten in favor of adherence to the traditional, customary, and accepted usage and style[20]. In essence, then, the rule was followed under the guise that it was simply the accepted rule. By the time Virginia Woolf was writing in 1929, prescriptive grammar's underlying social biases were largely ignored[21].

Woolf, however, was aware of the social implications of grammar and implicitly addressed them in her work. Laura Marcus has studied the feminist meaning attached to pronominal usage in Woolf's work. In general, Marcus states that Woolf's «Freudian slips, her deliberate verbal 'mistakes' seem to tap

12. Stanley, Julia P: «Sexist grammar» , *College English,* 39.7 (1978), pp. 800-811.
13. Ibid., p. 800.
14. Ibid., p. 801.
15. Sklar, Elizabeth S: «Sexist grammar revisited» , *College English,* 45.4 (1983), pp. 348-358.
16. Ibid., p.354.
17. Ibid., p. 355.
18. Ibid., pp. 355-356.
19. Ibid., p. 356.
20. Ibid., p. 357.
21. Ibid., p. 358.

a primal spring in the unconscious. In the role of asides or jokes in letters, these slips reveal that she is aware that she writes from within the prison-house of patriarchal language»[22]. As for pronoun use in general in *A Room of One's Own*, Marcus suggests that Woolf's pronouns all carry meaning. Marcus concentrates on the use of *one* and *it,* which she calls «uneasy» and says work to suggest «the uncertain place of women in a culture, a nation, which they cannot fully call their own»[23]. Indeed, «Woolf's jokes, slips, and asides are signals to the woman reader, who laughs in recognition or nods in assent over the page, that we are together, woman reader and woman writer, conspiring against the power of patriarchal language»[24]. Interestingly, Marcus describes the consciousness associated with pronominal choice as a «female grammar»[25]. That is, realizing and rebelling against the patriarchy associated with prescriptive grammatical rules, Marcus claims that Woolf robbed *one* of its impersonality as a gender-free pronoun[26]. Significantly, Virginia Woolf's pronoun usage challenged societal gender roles.

Adalaide Morris, in the article «First Persons Plural in Contemporary Feminist Fiction», looks at a specific pronoun use in *A Room of One's Own* and analyzes its significance, discussing how pronominal choice works to create identity. She discusses the importance of the personal pronoun *I* used by Mr. A in *A Room of One's Own*. Mr. A, Woolf's narrator's generic term for male writers, has a «well-nourished, well-educated, free mind, which has never been thwarted or opposed, but has had full liberty from birth to stretch itself in whatever way it liked»[27]. Morris discusses Mr. A's use of *I* as a deliberate narrative strategy, and argues that «the pronouns we select to stand in for us both respond to and shape our position in the social order: they react to specific historical pressures; they articulate problems and propose solutions»[28]. Thus Morris offers a perspective that places importance on a specific personal pronoun in *A Room of One's Own*. One can infer, then, that specific instances of pronominal use do carry meaning in the text.

Yet no one has yet applied the feminist criticism of pronominal choice to Woolf's use of the singular *their* in *A Room of One's Own*. This is true despite the fact that Bennett openly criticized it in his review. While Ellen Bayuk Rosenman addresses Bennett's comment in «*A Room of One's Own*: Women Writers and the Politics of Creativity,» she interprets the comment as ridiculous and dismisses it as not being worthy of attention[29]. In fact, Rosenman dismisses Bennett's

22. Marcus, Laura: «Woolf's feminism and feminism's Woolf», en Sue Roe and Susan Sellars (comp.): *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 209-244.
23. Ibid., p. 221.
24. Ibid., p. 138.
25. Ibid., p. 138.
26. Ibid., p. 149.
27. Woolf, Virginia: Op. cit., p. 109.
28. Morris, Adalaide: «First person plural in contemporary feminist fiction», *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 15.4 (1992), pp. 11-28.
29. Rosenman, Ellen Bayuk: *A room of one's own: women writers and the politics of creativity*, New York, Twayne Publishers, 1995.

comment as a «misreading», and goes on to discuss what she considers more worthy criticism of the text[30]. The significance of the appearance of the singular *their* is essentially ignored in favor of a general criticism of the fact that Bennett even took the time to comment on Woolf's grammar. What does it matter, she seems to say, if Woolf made a grammatical error in a text that is filled with such important ideas? The style pales in comparison to the content, and one small error is certainly not even worth mentioning. To Rosenman, Woolf's grammar is insignificant in relation to her ideas in the text. Consequently, Woolf's use of *their* and its significance in *A Room of One's Own* have been ignored.

However, as Marcus argues, Woolf's grammar *is* one of her ideas, and therefore deserves analysis equal with that of her other ideas in the text. Indeed, the use of the singular *their* that Bennett discovered and criticized deserves further analysis. Just as Woolf's other pronouns have been analyzed in terms of their social commentary, so too should her use of the singular *their* be analyzed in this way. I agree with Marcus's view that all of Woolf's pronoun uses carry meaning, and would further argue that her use of the singular *their* carries especially significant meaning, for it illustrates and aids three of the major social themes of *A Room of One's Own*. Indeed, the pronominal choice works to reinforce three main feminist views that appear as main themes in *A Room of One's Own*: Woolf's awareness of the patriarchal system ruling England, her awareness of the inequality associated with women's exclusion from formal education, and her belief that the only way the amelioration of women's position could be achieved was through the «outsider» perspective. Furthermore, the breaking of the prescriptive grammatical rule adds to the three main ideas around which the text is built. In each case, what Bennett perceived as a grammatical error, the use of the singular pronoun *their,* actually both reinforces and adds to the ideas in the text.

2

Virginia Woolf was indeed aware that she wrote in a patriarchal society. Despite the fact that women had won the long battle for the vote, Woolf believed that the fight for equality was far from won. She appreciated the struggles of her time, and spoke of the inadequacies that remained within the society after women won the vote[31]. It was precisely because it was commonly believed that the struggle was over, and the fight for equality had been won with the vote that Woolf's work contained and, in the case of *A Room of One's Own*, concentrated on feminist ideas. Writing in response to society's complacency, Woolf was saying that there was still much to do.

A main purpose of *A Room of One's Own* was to argue that, despite advances for women, England was still patriarchal. Indeed, it is clearly stated in the text

30. Ibid., p.17.

31. Blanchard, Margaret: «Socialization in Mrs. Dalloway», *College English*, 34.2 (1972), pp. 287-305.

that «England is under the rule of patriarchy»[32]. That clear statement serves as a basis on which rests much of the argument of the text. Despite the fact that «there have been at least two colleges for women in existence in England since the year 1866, …after the year 1880 a married woman was allowed by law to possess her own property, …and in 1919…she was given the vote»[33], «the patriarch» still controls society. As she does in much of her writing[34], then, Woolf is trying to reevaluate conventional truths by suggesting that despite advances for women, society is not equal.

The prescriptive grammatical rule to use *he* to refer to a gender-neutral subject illustrates the gender inequality of the patriarchal society. While the rule was presumably adopted with the notion that *he* would be gender-neutral, as Miriam Watkins Meyers states, it is «inadequate [to use] any gender-linked pronoun as a vehicle for gender-free meaning»[35]. The use of *he* maintained gender and came to symbolize man's superiority over women in society. As Martha Kolln states in *Understanding English Grammar*,

> «Times and attitudes have changed [since 1929], and we have come to recognize the power of language in shaping those attitudes. So an important step in reshaping society's views of women has been to eliminate the automatic use of «he» and «his» and «him» when the gender of someone referred to could just as easily been female»[36]

But in 1929 the use of «he» to refer to someone who could just as easily be female was conventional.

Woolf uses her narrator, Mary Beton, to break convention. She does this once when describing the luncheon she attends at the men's college, even though «it is part of the novelist's convention not to mention soup and salmon and ducklings, as if soup and salmon and ducklings were of no importance whatsoever»[37]. She begins her description by stating that she is taking «the liberty to defy that convention»[38], thereby setting the context for her next rebellion of convention, which occurs when she breaks the pronoun reference rule. Prescriptive grammar insists that is the narrator's responsibility to prove that the subject includes women: otherwise, she must use *he* to refer to her gender-neutral subject. Even though Mary Beton has informed the reader that the text will be devoted to the discussion of women and fiction[39], she has not done so explicitly in the passage in which the error occurs. Therefore, she is

32. Woolf, Virginia: Op. cit., p. 35.
33. Woolf, Virginia: Op. cit., p. 123
34. Rosenman, Ellen Bayuk: Op. cit., p. 38.
35. Meyers, Miriam Watkins: «Current generic pronoun usage: an empirical study», *American Speech*, 65.3 (1990), pp. 228-237.
36. Kolln, Martha, and Robert Funk: *Understanding english grammar,* New York, Longman Group, 2002.
37. Woolf, Virginia: Op. cit., p. 9.
38. Ibid., p. 9.
39. Ibid., p. 1.

still expected to abide by the grammatical rule to refer to the singular subject *nobody,* which obviously includes female subjects in the context of Mary Beton's meaning, with *he*. Even though the reader should be aware of the fact that the subject of the sentence includes women, then, the narrator is still considered deficient by readers like Bennett when she breaks the grammatical rule by using the pronoun that would agree in gender though not in number.

By having her narrator break the prescriptive rule, Woolf sheds light on the reality of the meaning underlying the rule: it is not simply a case of traditional and accepted usage, but rather a rule that continues to carry social implications regarding the status of women in society. While, as Elizabeth S. Sklar discusses, the rule was followed under the guise that it was simply the accepted rule, Woolf implicitly argues that it carries gender meaning. She does this through her narrator. On page 115 Woolf enters her own text, thus confirming the difference between herself and her narrator. It is her narrator, Woolf informs us, who has been the talking «I» until then. It is Mary Beton, Woolf states, who read the paper and decided that England is under the rule of patriarchy[40]. It is Mary Beton, then, who has committed the error. While Mary Beton was narrating the events of *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf comments, the reader «no doubt [has] been observing her failings and foibles and deciding what effect they have had on her opinions. You have been contradicting her and making whatever additions and deductions seem good to you. That is all as it should be, for in a question like this truth is only to be had by laying together many varieties of error»[41]. Mary Beton's breaking of the prescriptive grammatical rule that demands she use the male-gendered *he* to refer to a subject that obviously includes women helps to reveal the reality that England is, indeed, still under the rule of patriarchy.

3

Not only was Woolf distinctly aware that she wrote in a patriarchal society, but so too was she aware that women's inequality was associated with women's exclusion from formal education. Indeed, it has been documented that Woolf was insecure about what she considered to be her own deficient education. Blanchard, for instance, states that Woolf was insecure about «not having the formal university education her male peers enjoyed»[42]. Education, and women's exclusion from a formal education, was a subject that was relevant and important to Woolf.

Thus education plays an important role in *A Room of One's Own*. One of the important ideas in the text is that women have been intentionally excluded from the patriarchal system through their exclusion from the educational system. The fictional Oxbridge is a «British neologism of the two great British universities», to which women were «forbidden entrance until the twentieth

40. Ibid., p. 115.
41. Ibid., p. 139.
42. Blanchard, Margaret: Op. cit., p. 290.

century»[43]. Rachel Bowlby suggests «the colleges which do not admit women symbolize the male monopoly on every aspect of cultural authority»[44]. Indeed, according to Rosenman, «One of Woolf's goals in *A Room of One's Own* is to show how even apparently innocent institutions such as Oxford, Cambridge, and the British Museum are in fact extensions of patriarchy, whatever other function they perform. They appear in this essay as sites of privilege and power, as gateways at which the initiated are separated from the outsiders»[45]. The university, then, becomes a means of distinguishing insider from outsider, or educated from uneducated.

The prescriptive grammatical rule to use *he* to refer to a gender-neutral subject symbolizes the perpetuation of patriarchy through education. Before the creation of the prescriptive rule, as Anne Bodine discusses, the use of the singular pronoun *they* was widely used and accepted by even the most educated of society[46]. Indeed, as Julia P. Stanley confirms, «native speakers of English have consistently used singular *they* for the indefinite pronouns, at least since the Middle English period»[47]. Even when the prescriptive rule began to be taught in schools, in fact, there was still a great deal of what was then deemed as incorrect usage, because the rule to use *he* was counter-intuitive. People only used *he* if they have been taught to do so. The more education a person had, then, the more likely he was to know, and abide by, the rule. In this way, the use of *he* acted as an extension of the patriarchal society. The prescriptive grammatical rule, then, illustrates women's exclusion from the patriarchal system through their exclusion from the educational system.

Woolf shows the universities to be an extension of patriarchy to argue that any deficiency that women have, in comparison to men, is due to their exclusion from the educational system. Woolf uses her narrator to illustrate this idea: Mary Beton has not received the education that would have ensured her knowledge of the prescriptive grammatical rule. Indeed, she has not received a university education[48], which Woolf says is «the best education England can give»[49]. The reader witnesses the extent of Mary Beton's exclusion from the formal educational system when she is literally blocked from entering the university library because «ladies are only admitted to the library if accompanied by a Fellow of the College or furnished with a letter of introduction»[50]. She is not allowed to enter based on her own capacities, and Mary Beton therefore concludes that her education has been flawed[51].

43. Rosenman, Ellen Bayuk: Op. cit., p. 55.
44. Bowlby, Rachel: «The trained mind: A room of one's own», *Virginia Woolf: A collection of critical essays*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1993, pp. 174-195.
45. Rosenman, Ellen Bayuk: Op. cit., p. 54.
46. Bodine, Anne: Op. cit., p. 133.
47. Stanley, Julia P.: Op. cit., p. 806.
48. Woolf, Virginia: Op. cit., p. 29.
49. Ibid., p. 177.
50. Ibid., p. 6.
51. Ibid., p. 41.

Woolf uses her narrator to break the rule in order to reveal the outcome of a deficient education. By breaking the grammatical rule, Woolf's narrator reveals the distinction between education and patriarchal education. The reader can see from her ideas that the narrator is really not uneducated, as she claims to be. In fact, her thoughts reveal the contrary: she refers to Milton, Thackeray, and Shakespeare; she recognizes Tennyson's poetry instantly; she displays a clear understanding of literary history and criticism[52]; she shows that she is capable of literary criticism of her own when she compares the writing styles of female writers[53]. Indeed, rather than indicating an intellectual deficiency, her thoughts reveal her to be articulate and well read. In fact, in some ways she has even received a greater education than the «insiders» because hers allows and, indeed, requires original thought. Indeed, as Mary Beton herself concludes, addressing the patriarchs, «lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind»[54]. She cannot be satisfied with knowledge that she cannot access and therefore looks beyond the patriarchal walls «in the pursuit of truth»[55]. In contrast, the male «student who has been trained in research at Oxbridge»[56] sits «copying assiduously from a scientific manual…[and is able to extract] pure nuggets of essential ore every ten minutes or so»[57]. He is the insider, and is thus satisfied with the knowledge that has been passed down to him from the creators of the system to which he belongs, whereas Mary Beton is the outsider, who must seek her own truth. Thus, what Mary Beton refers to as her flawed education is really, we see, just a non-traditional education.

Furthermore, by breaking the prescriptive grammatical rule, the narrator rejects the educational system that has excluded her. She realizes that the education that men received within the patriarchal system «had in some ways been as faulty as [her] own»[58]. Through this realization, Mary Beton is able to open her eyes to her own realities. Relaying how the process of realizing the drawbacks of the educational system occurred for her, Mary Beton states that «by degree fear and bitterness modified themselves into pity and toleration; and then in a year or two, pity and toleration went, and the greatest release of all came, which is freedom to think of things in themselves. That building, for example, do I like it or not? Is that picture beautiful or not? Is that in my opinion a good book or a bad?»[59]. She can now think for herself, independent of the rules of the system, and form her own opinions and make her own choices. While the insider can just copy and memorize what has already been thought of, thereby perpetuating the thoughts within the system, the narrator attempts

52. Ibid., pp. 76-94.
53. Ibid., p. 83.
54. Ibid., p. 82.
55. Ibid., p. 27.
56. Ibid., p. 29.
57. Ibid., p. 29.
58. Ibid., p. 41.
59. Ibid., pp. 41-2.

to chart new ground, to find what has been ignored, and to uncover a new nugget of truth. Mary Beton then chooses the pronoun that most accurately reflects the meaning of her sentence, separate from the rules that govern usage to which she has not been privy.

The grammatical error, then, illustrates the idea of female exclusion from the patriarchal system by acting as the manifestation of the narrator's ignorance of the patriarchal rules. Furthermore, the error illustrates the narrator's unwillingness to learn the rules. The nature of the error is telling because it reveals the true deficiencies of the narrator: not that her «unpaid for» education is truly deficient in terms of knowledge, but rather that her education was achieved on the outside and, consequently, she had not been taught, and has not sought, the insider's language.

4

Writing in a patriarchal society and dealing with the issue of education, Woolf was confronted with the question of how to deal with societal inequality. Like the Suffragettes, Woolf was a feminist. However, unlike the Suffragettes, Woolf wanted full equality for women rather than merely the vote[60]. Woolf dealt in her own life with the issue of women's suffrage beyond the vote, and longed for true equality for women.

This idea manifests itself in *A Room of One's Own* through the idea of androgyny. According to Anne Fernald, Woolf «believed that human beings were potentially androgynous…so references to 'male' or patriarchal values refer to how men are socialized, not their inherent nature»[61]. Alex Zwerdling suggests that androgyny, the rejection of male/female distinction in favor of gender neutrality, works within the text to suggest the restored unity of the sexes[62]. This concept is central to the text because it offers a solution to the divide that Woolf insists exists within society. After Woolf's narrator has explained how England is under the rule of patriarchy and has illustrated how women have been intentionally excluded from that patriarchy, she then uses the concept of androgyny to suggest how society needs to evolve in order to include women.

The use of the pronoun *their* in *A Room of One's Own* is a result of the principle of androgyny at work in the text. The following options were available to the narrator when choosing a pronoun to refer to *nobody*:

> «Nobody in his senses.
> Nobody in her senses.
> Nobody in his or her senses.
> Nobody in their senses» .

60. Zwerdling, Alex: *Virginia Woolf and the real world*, Berkley, The University of California, 1986.
61. Fernald, Anne: «A room of one's own, personal criticism, and the essay», *Twentieth Century Literature,* 40.2 (1994), pp. 165-189.
62. Zwerdling, Alex: Op. cit., p. 260.

Of the four possible pronominal options, only *their* is gender-neutral. While Mary Beton chose the pronoun that most accurately reflected the meaning of her sentence, the pronominal choice may have carried more meaning for Woolf herself. By having her narrator choose *their,* Woolf has decided the opposite of what the prescriptive grammarians decided decades before her: gender concord is more important than number concord. In other words, it is more important that her narrator's pronominal choice mirror meaning than abide by the prescriptive rule.

The meaning that the pronoun carries in this context is to offer a solution to the problem of gender division. By having her narrator break the grammatical rule by not choosing the prescriptively correct *he,* Woolf rejects the patriarchal system and creates an alternative system. The error acts as an illustration of the idea that women should not work to uphold the masculine institution by creating a distinctive divide between the «us» and the «other,» which is far different than the patriarchal divide of «ruler» and «ruled.» The «other» is the «he» and «him» in the passage and is clearly separate from the narrator. Significantly, even though the «other» is made up of plural «patriarchs,» they are referred to with singular pronouns. The «patriarchs» are lumped together as «him,» as a group that does not include the narrator. The «their» in the passage, on the other hand, is the inclusive group, and it includes the narrator as well as anyone else who stands outside of the «him» group. Not only are there two distinct groups in the passage, the «him» group and the «their» group, but so too is the «their» group presented as the desirable group to belong to. It is they who can see the truth: that England is under the rule of patriarchy and that the patriarchs are angry. It is they, indeed, who have the sense to see the truth. In this way, the error illustrates a reversal by creating a distinction between the two groups, and making the outsider group the desirable group to belong to.

The error, then, ends up speaking to the issue of belonging and being satisfied with not belonging to the patriarchal society. Furthermore, it suggests that women may have been seeking a reward that they should not even want: they have been seeking acceptance into a society in which they will never be respected because it is based on their oppression. As Zwerdling suggests, Woolf wants women to be equal to men, but not to join them[63]. By acting as an indication that women should seek status on the outside, the error speaks to women's plight and indicates the path they should take: the outsider rather than the insider path. In this way, therefore, the use of *their* serves to reposition the outsider.

Through its status as the only gender-neutral pronominal choice available to fill the meaning of the sentence, the use of *their* also illustrates the nature of the outside. Not only should the outside system be appreciated and sought after, but it should also be based on the principles of true equality. This equality can only be achieved through transcendence of gender. Woolf does not have

63. Ibid., p. 239.

her narrator choose *his or her* or *her* because they are both gender-conscious, and Woolf believes that gender consciousness is fatal[64]. *Their*, then, is the only pronoun that could relay the importance of gender –equality within the sentence. It is only by leaving gender consciousness outside of the new system that, as Rosenman suggests, the new system would be exempt from patriarchy[65]. In order to create a new society, women cannot attempt to join the patriarchal society that already exists, but rather must form a new society that is based on true equality. In order for this society to be equal, furthermore, men would need to be permitted to join because without them the society would not be balanced. However, the men who joined could not bring their patriarchal notions about gender with them. In the equal society, the masculine cannot be emphasized and built-up, as it is in the patriarchal society[66] because an equal society must be based on the balance of feminine and masculine. Indeed, both men and women would need to cease applying the rules of patriarchy that they had been accustomed to outside of the new, equal society. Instead of being solely a man or a woman, people need to be a combination of both, for «it is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly»[67]. That is, neither gender can exclude the other. Rather, «some collaboration has to take place in the mind between the woman and the man before the act of creation can be accomplished. Some marriage of opposites has to be consummated»[68]. Unlike the patriarchal society, therefore, the new equal society is inclusive: the goal is balance rather than oppression.

In this new, truly equal society, free from patriarchal ideals, gender would cease to matter because everyone would be a balance of feminine and masculine. In this way, Woolf uses *their* to create androgyny in the text. She creates a divide between patriarchs and non-patriarchs, inside/outside, and then uses *their* to create a new inside: one that is separate from the patriarchal system. *Their* truly carries a different meaning than the *he* that the patriarchs use: *their* means the inhabitants of the equal society, whereas *he* means the inhabitants of the patriarchal society. The inhabitants of the equal society, furthermore, choose to use *their* because they refuse to follow the patriarchal rules that have been passed down and choose instead to live free from gender consciousness. They choose, essentially, to live in a society where the gender-neutral pronoun *their* can correctly refer to gender-neutral subjects.

5

By using *their* to refer to *nobody*, Woolf's narrator committed what Bennett interpreted as an error. However, the pronominal choice actually worked to both illustrate and reinforce the ideas within the text. In this way the narrator

64. Rosenman, Ellen Bayuk: Op. cit., p. 111.
65. Ibid., p. 112.
66. Ibid., pp. 37-38.
67. Ibid., p. 114.
68. Ibid., p. 114.

uses style to inform content. Its significance reached far beyond its grammatical implications into realms of social attitudes and traditional values. It challenged the reader to re-think her, or his, assumptions about gender class. It was not, then, an indication of ignorance, as first assumed, but rather an illustration of ideas that challenged traditional social norms. Therefore, as nobody in their senses could fail to see, the error was not really an error at all.

REVIEWS

AMANDA GREENWOOD: *EDNA O'BRIEN*, TAVISTOCK, NORTHCOTE HOUSE, 2003, 137 pp.

Mª ÁNGELES POZO MONTAÑO
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (USA)/Universidad de Sevilla

Greenwood's book about Edna O'Brien belongs to the new series of Northcote House in collaboration with the British Council called *Irish Writers and Their Work*. This critical work fills a gap of nearly thirty years, when the first book about Edna O'Brien and her work was published. O'Brien's prolific writing is a fertile land to explore. However, even though she has been widely studied by scholars, it is surprising that only two books about her writing have been published so far.

The book that foreruns Greenwood's is also called *Edna O'Brien* by Grace Eckley (1974)[1]. In her critical work Eckley analyzed O'Brien's fiction according to 1970s Anglo-American feminism. In her short book Eckley talks about O'Brien's «Personal Odyssey», which is a review of O'Brien's works up to her novel *Night* (1972). Eckley also studies O'Brien's portrayal of women in her chapters «Cinderella in Daylight, or Feminism and Shattered Shibboleths» and «Guilt by Inheritance.» Finally, Eckley devotes a last chapter to the connection between O'Brien's fiction and James Joyce's. Greenwood also sets forth feminist theories, namely those of Simone de Beauvoir, Luce Irigaray, Hélene Cixous and Toril Moi. Throughout the nine chapters in which the book is organized, Greenwood explores issues in O'Brien's fiction such as «femininity», «masculinity», and «Irishness», but above all, she draws from all that the basics to discover O'Brien's persona. From the vast list of O'Brien's works, Greenwood touches on twelve novels, one biography, one collection of short stories and one play.

In the first chapter, Greenwood ponders about how O'Brien is regarded in the press and how these commentaries have contributed to a constructed public opinion of O'Brian based on a polarized identity. In the first place, she pays attention to the duality of O'Brien's persona, which seems to be stuck in biased categorizations. Her first novels won her acclaim for her sentimental

1. ECKLEY, Grace: *Edna O'Brien*, Lewisburg, Bucknell UP, 1974.

writing. This fact, along with the semi-autobiographical character of her narrative created the preconception about O'Brien as a *femme fatale*. In keeping with this idea, Greenwood observes that O'Brien's good looks and some of her social interaction have undermined to a certain extent her position as a serious writer. Therefore, even though O'Brien has been working on other thematic fields, such as that of politics, she has found it difficult to free herself from the partiality of critics. An important landmark in O'Brien's criticism was the publication of a special edition of the *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* (*CJIS*)[2] in 1996, which contained eight essays written from a wide range of theoretical perspectives.

The following chapter discusses the historical and literary construction of Ireland and the Irish woman under the masculine gaze. Ireland has been traditionally considered a woman and the Irish woman has found it difficult to liberate herself from the roles of muse and mate. The outline of O'Brien's persona encounters this problematization because she fulfills what is expected of an Irish colleen but at the same time she resists and subverts masculine definitions.

Chapter 3 enrolls in the task of proving how some of O'Brien's most conventional feminine Irish books are subversive and deconstruct such notions as «femininity» and «Irishness». These books are *The Country Girls* trilogy, *August is a Wicked Month* (1965), *Casualties of Peace* (1966), and the short story collection *The Love Object* (1968). Greenwood denominates *The Country Girls* trilogy a «negative romance», expression that indicates «fiction which examines the condition of women under patriarchy by subverting «romance» while conforming superficially to the genre» (23). O'Brien destabilizes the protagonist's romantic and naïve expectations with the juxtaposition of her worldly loved men. Apart from the gap established between the protagonist and her lovers these books are filled with images that undermine the concept of «romance». *August is a Wicked Month*, *Casualties of Peace*, and *The Love Object* also destabilize the notion of «romance» by making the protagonists fluctuate between romance and reality.

The fourth chapter deals with the novels *A Pagan Place* (1970) and *Night* (1972). The analysis of both novels is tackled under the perspective of *écriture feminine*. Confronting the protagonists' writing with the body, there is the masculine dominance within the texts, especially the discourse of «fathers,» namely biological, literary and religious fathers.

Mother Ireland (1976) and *Virginia* (1981) are objects for discussion in the fifth chapter. Greenwood initiates her analysis of *Mother Ireland* with Toril Moi's assertion that autobiographical texts of an author need to be read «with and against each other in order to bring out their points of tension, contradictions and similarities» (50). Regarding O'Brien's autobiographical work, *Mother Ireland*, Greenwood addresses the question of how the writer's identity is shadowed by her literary father James Joyce and constructed by a colonized

2. Schrank, Bernice (ed.): *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 22.2 (1996).

notion of «Irishness.» As Greenwood explains O'Brien also creates her identity on a parallel with her country from the moment she establishes «the land itself» as the point of departure for her narrative. Greenwood explores the play *Virginia* considering it «an attempt to unite the fractured identities of two women writers» (59). Although belonging to different historical contexts, both writers fuse in this play to give voice to O'Brien's concern with creating a social and symbolic order «constructed according to the feminine» (62).

Chapter 6 readdresses the topic of female subjectivity in O'Brien's novel *The High Road* (1988). As in previous novels women are regarded in *The High Road* as commodities entrapped in the patriarchal symbolic order and values that construct their identities. The lesbian relationship between the protagonists and the recurrent imagery of fluids offer manifold interpretations. At the same time that they seem to vindicate for a maternal imaginary, both the lesbian bond and the metaphors of fluids have inconsistent meanings since they are also constructed within male references.

In the 1990's O'Brien turned her interests towards Irish social problems. She published her political trilogy drawn from issues that had befallen contemporary Ireland. *House of Splendid Isolation* (1994), *Down by the River* (1996) and *Wild Decembers* (1999) encompass the problems of terrorism, abortion and land ownership. According to Greenwood, O'Brien deconstructs «masculinity» as well as «femininity» throughout the trilogy.

Chapter 8 accounts for O'Brien's devotion to her literary father, James Joyce. Her commitment to Joyce culminated with the publication of her biography in 1999. Greenwood reacts against negative critics that followed the book and she defends O'Brien's authority to portray the life of his master. Greenwood analyzes O'Brien's biography according to notions of feminine and masculine constructions, what makes her establish parallels between O'Brien's comments on Joyce and feminist theory. She also introduces O'Brien's own fictional works to show how they answer both Joyce's life and his works, thus illustrating the influence of her literary father in her career.

It is a risky thing to write a book about a writer who is alive, especially when she is a fruitful writer. The latent problem of a book belonging to such an author emerges in Greenwood's work when the reader finds out two conclusions. Edna O'Brien is such a prolific writer that when it comes to commenting on her work one is never sure whether she has written something new in the last few months. Greenwood initially finished her book in chapter 8, dedicating it to the remaining and predictable topic about O'Brien and Joyce. At the same time this closing provided her book a structure that paralleled the last chapter of Eckley's manuscript. But this ending was truncated by the publication of one of O'Brien's most polemic books, *In The Forest* (2002). Even though her script had been already copied and edited, Greenwood felt the need to include another chapter commenting this novel and supporting O'Brien and her agent, David Godwin, on the integrity of the controversial book. Nevertheless, irrespective of Greenwood's attempt to make his work as complete as possible with the

latest of O'Brien's work, only one year later, the publication of O'Brien's play *Iphigenia* (2003)[3] made Greenwood's book deficient again.

Accordingly, the last chapter explores the novel *In the Forest* from a feminist perspective. Greenwood draws attention to how the protagonists mirror social and symbolic constructions of masculinity and femininity. One interesting thing that she observes is the fact that O'Brien's depiction of women throughout her literary career has been constantly polarized between «Madonna» and «witch» (107).

Finally, in spite of the remarkable study that Greenwood accomplishes, there is one flow that should be revised: the bibliography of primary sources. It is hard to find a rigorous bibliography that organizes O'Brien's numerous works according to literary genres and that exhaustively includes all her work within that classification. Most bibliographies, for example, fail to mention O'Brien's craft as a writer of books for children, and these books are, as a consequence, miscellaneously arranged within other genres. The category of books for children is absent in Greenwood's bibliography, and therefore, as a result of the trespassing of genres, *The Dazzle*, a juvenile piece of literature is found among the novels. Another collection of tales for children called *Tales for the Telling: Irish Folk and Fairy Stories* is classified as a collection of short stories. Furthermore, Greenwood considers in her selected bibliography book-length non-fiction books, but she includes *Arabian Days* among novels.

Apart from this nuance that needed clarification, the publication of this book is applauded by readers of feminist criticism and O'Brien's writing. Greenwood travels through time and space across O'Brien's most representative works to bring together in this book, on the one hand, her rendering of such issues as gender construction and Irishness, and on the other, an approach to O'Brien's thinking. This book appears in a moment that we could consider O'Brien's boom. Her works and her persona have raised much interest from critics since she started writing, but nowadays it is especially noticeable in academia. Sometimes praised as a feminist and some others rejected as such, Edna O'Brien remains controversial. However, this book places her writing within the pantheon of feminist criticism.

3. O'Brien, Edna: *Iphigenia*, London, Methuen, 2003.

RESÚMENES

Your History, My Narrative: Uncovering Me Through You
Nawar Al-Hassan Golley

Este trabajo estudia tres libros publicados en los años ochenta, *Khul-Khaal, Doing Daily Battle* y *Both Right and Left Handed*. Sus subtítulos, *Five Egyptian Women Tell Their Stories*, *Interviews with Moroccan Women* and *Arab Women Talk About Their Lives* respectivamente, indican que los tres libros contienen historias de vida de mujeres pertenecientes a países árabes. Estos textos, por tanto, entran en la misma categoría, no sólo por su tema sino porque guardan puntos en común en lo que se refiere a su técnica y a sus condiciones de producción. El presente trabajo trata de ofrecer un estudio del proceso de estereotipia y generalización que emerge de la labor de los propios autores/editores de las antologías, como en *Khul-Khaal*, y estudia también cómo los lectores tienden del mismo modo a generalizar, incluso sin sugerencia editorial ninguna al respecto (proceso que se discute más adelante, al analizar los otros dos textos). Sin embargo, estos mismos textos, leídos con atención, pueden convertirse potencialmente en valiosas fuentes de conocimiento. Mi trabajo no lee las antologías etnográficamente, es decir, no considera a las entrevistadas como típicas de la cultura árabe, demasiado compleja para ser representada sólo por ellas. Sin embargo, es posible extraer algunas conclusiones, que necesariamente implican algún tipo de generalización, acerca de cómo una cultura común afecta a la propia imagen. La cultura común no refiere aquí a una cultura árabe monolítica como tal, sino a las condiciones sociales y económicas que comparten algunas mujeres. Este trabajo estudia también la forma en que la clase social y las posiciones económicas interactúan con el género en estas antologías para producir diferentes formas de opresión. Las posibles generalizaciones realizadas en este trabajo no deberían pues ser perjudiciales ni entrañar el riesgo de estereotipia intrínseco a las formas más primitivas de lectura etnográfica.

Palabras clave: Mujeres árabes, cultura árabe, imagen, opresión, estereotipo, género.

Writing without the «Protection of Angels»: Notes from the Middle Voice
Violet A. Dutcher

El proceso de adaptación al que se someten las mujeres que crecen en comunidades religiosas «estrictas» tiene a menudo consecuencias severas e incluso inesperadas. Sin embargo, se están produciendo muchos cambios en las comunidades Amish y Mennonitas y uno de los más importantes es el ingreso de estudiantes Mennonitas, particularmente mujeres, en la universidad. Escribiendo desde una perspectiva contextual, declaro para las mujeres Amish y Mennonitas una identidad que está situada un contexto social y local específico, en un tiempo y en un lugar particulares. A través de esta perspectiva, realizo una crítica de esta comunidad que sólo es posible mediante el uso de mi «voz intermedia» –la voz que intermedia y pacta entre mi comunidad de origen y mi comunidad académica– ¡tan importante en las fusiones y en los choques entre estas dos comunidades.

Palabras clave: Mujeres Mennonitas, voz intermedia, comunidades religiosas, identidad.

A Challenge to Travel Literature and Stereotypes by Two Turkish Women: Zeyneb Hanoum and Selma Ekrem
Ozlem Ezer

Este artículo introduce los relatos de viajes de dos mujeres turcas escritos en inglés a princpios del siglo XX desde una perspectiva crítica feminista y desconstruye la imagen occidental de la mujer turca. Se presentan también las teorías e ilustraciones de la imagen y de la formación de la identidad, así como la alternativa crítica más reciente al discurso orientalista. Las viajeras cuyas raíces se originan en las culturas occidentales u orientales están más predispuetas a desconstruir imágenes, estereotipos y prejuicios que los viajeros. La existencia de un lenguaje distintivo, de apoyo mutuo entre las viajeras, se hace evidente a pesar de las complejidades y contradicciones que estos relatos de viaje pudieran tener.

Palabras clave: mujeres viajeras, literatura de viajes, mujeres turcas, imágenes.

Claiming and Disclaiming the Body in the Early Diaries of Virginia Woolf, Anaïs Nin and Aino Kallas
Leena Kurvet-Käosaar

Mi artículo, que se centra en los diarios juveniles de tres escritoras de la primera mitad del siglo XX pertenecientes a espacios culturales absolutamente diferentes –Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), Aino Kallas (1878-1956) y Anaïs Nin (1903-1977)–, explora la ausencia y la presencia textual del cuerpo como base de

la identificación autobiográfica, la relación entre los cuerpos públicos y privados y las huellas de la política del cuerpo en los diarios. Los diarios juveniles de las tres escritoras, que cubren el periodo de la adolescencia a la madurez, ofrecen en mi opinión elementos interesantes para comprender los procesos corporales en la construcción de la identidad de género. Subyace a mi investigación una exploración más general acerca de cómo el diario, constituyendo un género de autobiografía más conceptualizada y también más «fluida», ofrece posibilidades más ricas y diversas para escribir el cuerpo que otros tipos de prácticas y géneros autobiográficos.

Palabras clave: diarios, cuerpo, identidad, género, autobiografía, literatura del siglo XX.

Telling (Her)Story: an Overview of Subaltern Studies
Antonia Navarro Tejero

Este estudio pretende hacer un recorrido crítico por las teorías sobre historiografía, y en especial las disciplinas que favorecieron la aparición de los Subaltern Studies, como fueron los estudios post-estructuralistas de izquierda hasta los estudios feministas contemporáneos en el contexto del subcontinente indio. Un claro ejemplo de los códigos compartidos por la 'historia oficial' dominantes del imperialismo británico y el patriarcado indio es el caso de Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri, una mujer que luchó por la independencia de la India y que se suicidó mientras menstruaba para evitar que su muerte se interpretara como fruto de una pasión ilegítima. Sin embargo, la historia recordó su trágica muerte como consecuencia de un amor ilícito. Además, prestaremos atención a las continuas acusaciones a estas teorías por la ausencia de las implicaciones de género y la falta de compromiso con la teoría y crítica feminista. Finalmente, discutiremos cuestiones de género en la subalternity' (si la cuestión de género se enmarca bajo la categoría de casta y clase o si el género marca un grupo social aparte de otros subalternos), el silencio, la subjetividad, y el neocolonialismo.

Palabras clave: género, estudios subalternos, Historia, Poscolonial, patriarcado, India.

Beyond Biological Maternity: Katherine Mansfield's Autobiographical Experience
Gerardo Rodríguez Salas

El presente estudio parte de la visión contradictoria de la maternidad como rasgo distintivo del cuerpo de la mujer y punto de partida para establecer su identidad femenina. A partir de las teorías sobre la maternidad de dos grandes críticas feministas francesas (Simone de Beauvoir, que defiende un rechazo

radical de la maternidad que ha encarcelado de por vida a las mujeres, y Julia Kristeva, que en su ensayo «Stabat Mater» apunta la necesidad de utilizar estratégicamente el cuerpo de la madre, trascendiendo su esencialismo biológico y descubriendo el potencial que ofrece para la autorrealización femenina), se inspecciona la maternidad metafórica de la autora neocelandesa Katherine Mansfield tomando como corpus sus cartas y diarios para demostrar la alternativa literaria de esta escritora a las restricciones de la maternidad biológica de las protagonistas de sus relatos.

Palabras clave: Feminidad, imitación intencionada, maternidad biológica y metafórica, ángel doméstico.

Sexual Politics in *The Waste Land*: Eliot's Treatment of Women and Their Bodies in «Game of Chess« and «The Fire Sermon»
Julie Elaine Goodspeed-Chadwick

El tratamiento de la violación en *The Waste Land* (1922) permite establecer una conexión entre la víctima traumatizada y el también traumatizado mundo moderno. La Primera Guerra Mundial fue un desencadenante de la „literatura del trauma« subsiguiente, un acontecimiento amenazador que llevó a una generación de escritores a lidiar con el desplazamiento de su noción del mundo y a reevaluar el estado del mundo de la posguerra. A través de *The Waste Land*, se identifican los males sociales de la modernidad, pero el tratamiento que da Eliot a la mujer y a su cuerpo en «A Game of Chess» y «The Fire Sermon» subraya una identificación femenina así como un apoyo hacia un sistema de creencias diferente al capitalismo patriarcal. Mediante el estudio de la poética de Eliot y de su política sexual, este trabajo propugna la reconsideración de *The Waste Land* como obra literaria feminista.

Palabras clave: política sexual, identidad, literatura feminista, literatura del trauma, poética feminista, T. S. Eliot y *The Waste Land*, T.S. Eliot y la identificación femenina, cuerpo femenino y literatura.

Demythologizing History: Jeanette Wintersone's Fictions and His/Tories
Mine Özyurt Kılıç

Este trabajo estudia la forma tan eficiente en que Jeanette Wintersone utiliza el material histórico en su ficción. El uso que ella hace de la historia como tema de su ficción es interesante en la medida en que a través de los comentarios de la voz narradora sobre la naturaleza de la historia y de la escritura de la historia, y a través de la fusión entre historia y relato, la autora ofrece un nuevo punto de vista sobre el pasado. El hecho de que se inserten pasajes sobre la naturaleza de

la historia y del relato y de que se yuxtapongan el pasado y la teorización sobre el mismo, lleva al lector/a la lectora a empeñarse en esa misma tarea: la tarea de revisar la historia. En este sentido, los textos de Winterson tienen la función de invitar al lector/a la lectora a repensar, revisar y revisitar el pasado. El método de yuxtaposición que la autora usa con éxito, permite también al lector/ a la lectora captar una visión que surge del tratamiento del pasado como materia prima. Por ello, es posible plantear que Winterson usa el pasado como materia prima que espera ser cocinada, procesada y digerida, y comunica también esta visión al lector/ a la lectora. Así, en su ficción, la historia monolítica, estable y monumental gana una plasticidad que permite al lector/a la lectora ver el pasado desde una perspectiva nueva. Cuando el lector/la lectora consigue encontrar una voz individual en el material histórico, percibe la sensación de presencia en el pasado. En otras palabras, haciendo históricas las experiencias individuales da poder y narrabilidad a las vidas individuales para hacerlas audibles, narrables y autoriales. De esta manera, elimina de la narrativa la voz de la autoridad patriarcal y logocéntrica.

Palabras clave: Metaficción historiográfica, Jeanette Winterson, escritura feminista de la historia.

Representations of Religious Women in Contemporary Literature
Mª del Carmen Rodríguez Fernández

En la última década del siglo XX existió un interés creciente por revisar y reescribir las biografías de mujeres como Hildegard Von Bingen y Teresa de Ávila, cuyas vidas de ficción transcurren en el interior de los conventos y los claustros, pero que saben cómo transgredir y burlar las reglas impuestas por las autoridades patriarcales. Obras como la de Joan Ohanneson, *Una luz tan intensa* (1998), la de Josefina Molina, *En el umbral de la hoguera* (1999), la de Michèle Roberts, *Impossible Saints* (1997) o la de Carmel Bird, *The White Garden* (1995) arrojan nuevas luces a las vidas de Hildegard, la monja de la Edad Media, y a la de Teresa de Ávila, la mística española, y muestran la importancia que han tenido los espacios en la articulación personal. Ya sea que ellas salgan de las celdas de los conventos de manera literal o metafórica, ya sea que esto ocurra de manera abierta o encubierta, estas mujeres formidables han sabido cómo desafiar al patriarcado y hacer de sus espacios un lugar de libertad.

Palabras clave: mujeres, religiosas, biografías.

The Helpful Error in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*
Melanie M. Steele

Lo que los contemporáneos vieron como un error gramatical en *A Room of one's Own*, el uso del pronombre singular *their* para referirse al antecedente

singular *nobody*, ilustra y complementa actualmente los tres temas sociales más relevantes del texto: la conciencia de Woolf del sistema patriarcal imperante en Inglaterra, su conocimiento de la desigualdad asociada a la exclusión de la mujer de la educación formal, y su creencia en que la única forma en que la mejora de la posición de la mujer podía ser conseguida era a través de la perspectiva del «forastero». Lo que los contemporáneos de Woolf percibieron como un error gramatical refuerza actualmente las ideas del texto. El «error» no era, pues, una muestra de ignorancia como se asumió de entrada, sino más bien una ilustración de las ideas que desfiaban las normas sociales tradicionales.

Palabras clave: Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's* Own, sistema patriarcal, educación de la mujer, normas sociales, posición de la mujer, Inglaterra.

ABSTRACTS

Your History, My Narrative: Uncovering Me Through You
Nawar Al-Hassan Golley

This paper examines three books, *Khul-Khaal, Doing Daily Battle* and *Both Right and Left Handed* (BRLH), all of which were published in the 1980s. Their sub-titles, *Five Egyptian Women Tell Their Stories, Interviews with Moroccan Women* and *Arab Women Talk About Their Lives* respectively, indicate that all three books contain life stories of women from Arab countries. These books, then, fall into one category, not only because of their subject matter but also because they raise similar sets of questions relating to their technique and conditions of production. The paper offers a critique of the process of stereotyping and generalization drawn from these anthologies by the authors/editors themselves, as in *Khul-Khaal,* and comment on how readers also tend to generalize even without editorial prompting (a process discussed later when analyzing the other two texts.) Nonetheless, these same texts, read carefully, can be potentially good sources of knowledge. This paper does not read these anthologies ethnographically, that is, it does not take the interviewee as typical of Arab culture, which is known to be too complex to be represented by these women alone. However, some conclusions, which necessarily entail some kind of generalization, about how a common culture affects self-image, can be drawn. Common culture here does not refer to a monolithic Arab culture as such but to the similar social and economic conditions which some of the women share. This paper also examines how class and economic positions interact with gender in these anthologies and produce different forms of oppression. Any generalizations in this paper should not be harmful nor should they entail the risk of stereotyping involved in the cruder kinds of ethnographic reading.

Keywords: Life stories, Arab women, Arab culture, self-image, oppression, stereotyping, gender.

Writing without the «Protection of Angels» : Notes from the Middle Voice

Violet A. Dutcher

Women growing up in strong religious communities experience a shaping of their lives that often has severe consequences, some unexpected. However, many changes are occurring in Amish and Mennonite communities, and one important change is the enrollment of Mennonite students, particularly women, in the university. By writing from a contextual perspective, I assert an identity for Amish and Mennonite women that is located within a specific social and local context in a particular place and time. Through this perspective, I provide a critique of this home community that is only possible through the use of my «middle voice» –the voice that negotiates my home community and my academic community– so important in both merges and collisions of these communities.

Keywords: Mennonite women, middle voice, religious communities, identity.

A Challenge to Travel Literature and Stereotypes by Two Turkish Women: Zeyneb Hanoum and Selma Ekrem

Ozlem Ezer

This article will introduce the travel accounts by two Turkish women written in English in the early 20th century from a feminist and critical perspective and deconstruct the Turkish women's image of the West. The theories and illustrations of image and identity formation as well as the most recent alternative criticism to orientalist discourse will also be presented. Women travellers whose roots are originated in the western or eastern cultures are more willing to deconstruct images, stereotypes and prejudices than male travellers. Existence of a distinctive and supportive language among women travellers becomes evident despite of some complexities and contradictions in the texts of these travel accounts may have.

Keywords: women travellers, travel literature, Turkish women, images.

Claiming and Disclaiming the Body in the Early Diaries of Virginia Woolf, Anaïs Nin and Aino Kallas

Leena Kurvet-Käosaar

My article that focuses on the early diaries of three women writers of the first half of the twentieth century inhabiting vastly different cultural spaces –Virginia Woolf (1882- 1941), Aino Kallas (1878-1956), and Anaïs Nin

(1903-1977)– explores the textual presence and absence of the body as basis of autobiographical identification, the relationship between the public and private bodies and the traces of body politics in the diaries. The early diaries of the three writers, covering the period of adolescence to womanhood, in my opinion, offer interesting insights into the bodily processes of gendered identity-construction. Underlying my investigation is also a more general question of whether the diary as a more loosely conceptualized and perhaps also more 'fluid' type of autobiographical practice could offer richer and more diverse possibilities for writing the body as other kinds of autobiographical genres and practices.

Keywords: diaries, body, identity, gender, autobiography, twentieth century literature.

Telling (Her)Story: an Overview of Subaltern Studies
Antonia Navarro Tejero

This study seeks to make a critical overview of Subaltern Studies as a theoretical framework to discuss the intersections of gender and history since the post-structuralist thought till contemporary feminist studies in the Indian postcolonial context. A clear example of the dominant codes of British imperialism and Indian patriarchy shared by 'history' is the case of Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri, a woman who struggled for Indian independence, and who hanged herself in 1926 at the onset of menstruation so that her death would not be diagnosed as the outcome of illegitimate passion. However, her death was remembered as a case of illicit love. Furthermore, we will pay attention to the charges about the absence of gender issues and lack of engagement with feminist scholarship that these theories about historiography share. We will finally discuss issues such as the gendering of subalternity (whether gender is subsumed under the categories of caste and class or gender is seen to ark a social group apart from other subalterns), silence, subjectivity, neocolonialism and agency.

Keywords: gender, Subaltern Studies, History, postcolonial, patriarchy, India.

Beyond Biological Maternity: Katherine Mansfield's Autobiographical Experience
Gerardo Rodríguez Salas

The present study departs from a contradictory view on maternity as a distinctive trait of the woman's body and as a departure point to establish her feminine identity. Considering the theories on motherhood of two great French feminist critics (Simone de Beaouvoir, who claims for the radical rejection of

the maternity that has imprisoned women for life, and Julia Kristeva, who in her essay «Stabat Mater» points at the need to use strategically the mother's body, transcending its biological essentialism and discovering its potential for feminine self-fulfilment), I study New Zealand writer Katherine Mansfield's metaphorical maternity (with her letters and journals as a corpus) to show the literary alternative of this writer to the restrictions of biological maternity in the heroines of her short stories.

Keywords: Femininity, intentional mimicry, biological and metaphorical maternity, Angel in the House.

Sexual Politics in *The Waste Land*: Eliot's Treatment of Women and Their Bodies in «A Game of Chess» and «The Fire Sermon»

Julie Elaine Goodspeed-Chadwick

Rape in *The Waste Land* (1922) works on one level to allow for a connection between the traumatized rape victim and the traumatized modern world. World War I was the impetus for the trauma literature that followed it, a life-threatening event that caused a generation of writers to grapple with the displacement of their notions about the world and to reevalulate the state of the postwar world. Throughout *The Waste Land*, the social ills of modernity are addressed, but Eliot's treatment of women and their bodies in «A Game of Chess» and «The Fire Sermon» underscores a feminine identification, as well as advocacy for a belief system other than patriarchal capitalism. Through an examination of Eliot's poetics and sexual politics, this paper urges for a reconsideration of *The Waste Land* as a feminist literary work.

Keywords: sexual politics, identity politics, feminist literature, trauma literature, feminist poetics, T. S. Eliot and *The Waste Land*, T.S. Eliot and feminine identification, female body and literature.

Demythologizing History: Jeanette Wintersone's Fictions and His/Tories

Mine Özyurt Kılıç

The paper will examine how Jeanette Winterson makes efficient use of historical material in her fiction. Winterson's use of history as the subject material of her fiction is interesting in that through the narratorial comments upon the nature of history and history writing, and through a blend of history and story, she brings forth a fresh outlook on the past. The fact that she inserts passages on the nature of history and story and that she juxtaposes the past and the theorising of the past makes the reader also take on the same task: the task of revisioning the history. In this sense, Winterson's texts have a function

of inviting the reader to an act of rethinking, revising and revisiting the past. The juxtaposition method she successfully follows also enables the reader to grasp a vision that emerges out of this way of processing the past as a raw material. Then, it can also be suggested that Winterson takes the past as a raw material waiting to be cooked, processed and digested, and communicates this vision to the reader as well. Thus, in her fiction, monolithic, stable and monumental history gains an aspect of plasticity enabling the reader to see the past from a fresh perspective. As the reader is able to find an individual voice in the historical material, s/he perceives the feeling of presence in the past. In other words by historisizing the individual experiences, she gives power and narratibility to individual lives to make them audible, narratable and authorial. In this way, she eliminates the voice of patriarchal and logocentric authority in narratives.

Keywords**:** Historiographic metafiction, Jeanette Winterson, Feminist history writing.

Representations of religious Women in Contemporary Literature
Mª del Carmen Rodríguez Fernández

In the last decade of the twentieth century there existed a growing interest for revising and rewriting the biographies of women such as Hildegard Von Bingen and Teresa of Ávila whose fictionalised lives happen within the limits of convents and cloisters, but who know how to transgress and outwit the rules imposed by the patriarchal authorities. Works such as Joan Ohanneson's *Scarlet Music* (1998), Josefina Molina's *En el umbral de la hoguera* (1999), Michèle Roberts' *Impossible Saints* (1997) or Carmel Bird's *The White Garden* (1995) throw new lights on the lives of the Medieval nun and the Spanish mystic and show the importance of the spaces they have for self-realisation. Whether they step out of the convent cells in a literal or a metaphorical way, and whether this happens openly or subversively, these outstanding women know how to defy the dictates of patriarchy and make of these places a space of freedom.

Keywords: women, religious women, biographies.

The Helpful Error in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*
Melanie M. Steele

What Virginia Woolf's contemporaries viewed as a grammatical error in *A Room of One's Own*, the use of the singular pronoun *their* to refer to the singular antecedent *nobody*, actually illustrates and adds to three of the major social themes of the text: Woolf's awareness of the patriarchal system ruling England, her awareness of the inequality associated with women's exclusion

from formal education, and her belief that the only way the amelioration of women's position could be achieved was through the «outsider» perspective. In each case, what Woolf's contemporaries perceived as a grammatical error actually both reinforces and adds to the ideas in the text. The «error» was not, then, an indication of ignorance, as first assumed, but rather an illustration of ideas that challenged traditional social norms.

Keywords: Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's* Own, patriarchal system, women's education, social norms, women's position, England.

CONTRIBUTORS

Nawar Al-Hassan Golley

Is Assistant Professor of English and Critical Theory at the Department of English & Translation Studies of the American University of Sharjah. Dr. Golley teaches courses in literature, literary theory, communication and the media. A Syrian by origin, she completed her studies in British Universities. Golley obtained her Ph. D. in Critical Theory at the University of Nottingham. Her research interests are in Literary & Critical Theory, especially Feminism and Women's Studies, Post-Colonial Studies, and Cultural Studies. Golley presented several papers at international conferences such as the Berkshire on the History of Women. She published many articles in prestigeous journals. She translated several literary and critical works by writers such as Adonis, Edward Said, Etel Adnan and others. Her book, *Reading Arab Women's Autobiographies. Shahrazad Tells her Story*, was published in 2003 by the University of Texas Press.

Violet A. Dutcher

Is Assistant Professor Department of English at Kent State University, Stark Campus (USA).

Ozlem Ezer

Is a PhD Candidate at York University in Women's Studies Program in Toronto. She holds an MA degree in Gender and Women's Studies from METU, Ankara where she got transferred from Kassel University, Germany. She received a DAAD grant for the IFU (International Women's University) project in 2000 and focused more on the women's issues and literature ever since. She worked in several women's NGOs in Turkey, which included a project assistantship in UNDP (United Nation's Development Program) in 2001-02. Currently, her area of interest is on women's travel writing and the representations of women in women's travel accounts.

Julie Elaine Goodspeed-Chadwick

Is a doctoral student in English at Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, USA. Her research interests include trauma theory, feminist theory, and modernist literature. She has published seven articles in academic peer-reviewed journals,

six of them in journals indexed in the MLA International Bibliography. She presented an early version of this *Feminisimo/s* article at the American Literature Association Conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts as a member of the T. S. Eliot Society in 2003. She has taught at Ball State University and at the Australia Centre, New South Wales, Australia. Currently, she is the Doctoral Fellow of the Writing Desk, Learning Center, Ball State University.

Mary Kennan Herbert

Originally from St. Louis, Missouri, Ms. Herbert teaches literature and writing courses at Long Island University in Brooklyn, New York. Her poems have been published in 15 countries, in numerous literary journals and other periodicals. Six collections of her poetry have been published, and her poems have been included in several anthologies.

Leena Kurvet-Käosaar

Is a lecturer and a doctoral student at the Department of Comparative Literature of the University of Tartu, (Tartu, Estonia) where she teaches courses on literary modernism and postmodernism, metafiction and cyberfiction, feminist perspective in literature, and autobiography. She has a MA in Comparative Literature from Indiana University (Bloomington, USA) and is currently completing her doctoral thesis titled «Embodied Subjectivity in the diaries of Virginia Woolf, Anaïs Nin and Aino Kallas». She has published 14 articles on the perception of history and national identity in the works of women authors, women's autobiography and personal narratives of the Baltic women.

Antonia Navarro Tejero

She has lived and lectured in the USA, India and Spain. She holds a Ph.D. in English Literature and is an Associate Professor at Universidad de Córdoba (Spain). She is the author of the book *Matrimonio y patriarcado en autoras de la diáspora hindú* (2001), *Caste and Gender in South-Asian Women Writers* (forthcoming by The Edwin Mellen Press), and is currently completing a monograph on Githa Hariharan to be published by Foundation Books/Cambridge University Press. She is a 2005 Fulbright scholar at University of California, Berkeley.

Mine Özyurt Kılıç

She has been teaching at Department of Language and Literature Bilkent University since she received her M.A. degree in 1994 from the same university with a thesis on the poetry of T.S. Eliot. She is now a Ph.D. candidate studying towards the completion of her dissertation entitled «The Function of The Fantastic in Angela Carter's and Jeanette Winterson's Fiction». Her most recent publication is on one of the leading Turkish novelists Erendiz Atasü's award-winning novel *The Other Side of the Mountain*. Her article «Unveiling the Veiled Self: The Use of Metaphors in Atasü» appears in *Edebiyat, The Journal of Middle Eastern Literatures*, 13.1, Routledge. Among her research interests are critical theory, comparative literature, gender studies and history.

Mª Ángeles Pozo Montaño

Is a PhD candidate at both the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Seville, where she graduated after studying one year in University College, Dublin. She received an M.A. in Romance Languages from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she has been a teaching fellow in the Department of Romance Languages for three years. She has delivered papers and published articles on contemporary Hispanic-American, Spanish, and Irish literature.

Mª del Carmen Rodríguez Fernández

Es Profesora Titular del área de Filología Inglesa de la Universidad de Oviedo. Pertenece al Seminario Permanente Mujer y Literatura de la Universidad de Oviedo. Es profesora del Programa Interdepartamental de Doctorado de Estudios de la Mujer en su universidad. Ha sido investigadora secundaria en el proyecto, *Versiones y subversiones: la transformación de la escritura femenina*, cuyos resultados se recogen en la publicación *Mujeres históricas, mujeres narradas,* al que contribuyó con un capítulo dedicado a la escritura religiosa de las santas «La celda como espacio propio en las re/escrituras sobre monjas: las santas imposibles». En la actualidad es investigadora principal de un proyecto I+D+I del Principado de Asturias, *Miradas críticas:re/visiones fílmicas de arquetipos de género*.

Gerardo Rodríguez Salas

He finished his degree in English in 1998. In the same year, he was awarded a postgraduate scholarship in Women's Studies at the University of Oxford, England. In 2000, he was awarded a four-year scholarship to teach and research as a member of the English and German Department at the University of Granada. Since September 2003 he holds a Phd and has currently been awarded a postdoctoral scholarship to continue with his research on Jean Rhys and Angela Carter at the English Department of Birmingham University. His research interests are modernist women writers, particularly Katherine Mansfield, and the short story genre. He has also researched film adaptations of literary texts and Chicano literature. All these research interests have materialised in various articles, book chapters and participations in conferences, both national and international. In Spain, he has published with *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses, The Grove, Odisea,* and *ANILIJ*. Abroad, he has published with *Bilingual Review* (Arizona State), *FEMSPEC* (Ohio), *Agora* (Canada) and *Perspectives on Evil and Human Wickedness* (Oxford, United Kingdom).

Melanie M. Steele

She attended the University of Wisconsin in Superior, Wisconsin, as an undergraduate student. Currently an English graduate student at the University of Minnesota Duluth with an emphasis in literary studies, she will graduate in

the spring of 2005. She has presented research on Virginia Woolf as well as on technical writing. Her main research interest is women writers of the 19th and early 20th century. Her other research interests include the characterization of women in 19th and early 20th century British novels, politeness, and grammar.

La revista *Feminismo/s* se publica semestralmente. Está abierta a los aportes del personal investigador que compone el Centro de Estudios sobre la Mujer de la Universidad de Alicante, así como a toda la comunidad académica. La organización editorial se realiza a través de números monográficos, estando prevista también la publicación de algunos números en los que se presente una miscelánea de artículos. El carácter de la publicación, al igual que la del Centro de Estudios sobre la Mujer, es multidisciplinar.

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1) Los trabajos, que necesariamente deberán ser originales, se presentarán en soporte magnético utilizando el procesador de textos Word, y además impresos en la forma habitual. Los disquetes deben indicar en la carátula el nombre del archivo y el del autor o autora del mismo.

2) Los artículos serán redactados con letra Times New Roman de 12" y con un interlineado de un espacio y medio.

3) El título del artículo irá centrado y en letra mayúscula de 12". El nombre del autor o autora del trabajo se pondrá unas líneas debajo del título, también centrado, en letra de 10" y mayúscula. Justo debajo se escribirá el nombre de la Universidad o, en su defecto, la ciudad a la que el autor o autora pertenece, en letra minúscula de 10". Un ejemplo sería:

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>
> MARÍA ISABEL DURÁN PRIETO
> Universidad de Murcia

4) La extensión de los artículos será entre 15 y 18 páginas.

5) La primera línea de cada párrafo irá sangrado.

6) Las citas en el texto irán sangradas, entrecomilladas y en letra de 10".

7) Los títulos de libros y de revistas citados irán en letra cursiva. Los títulos de artículos o capítulos de libros se consignarán entre comillas.

8) Las notas serán a pie de página, con letra de 10" e interlineado sencillo.

9) Las referencias bibliográficas se harán siempre en nota a pie de página y no en el texto. El modelo para las citas de libros será el siguiente:

   WELLDON, Estela V.: *Madre, virgen, puta. Idealización y denigración de la maternidad*, Madrid, Siglo XXI, 1993.

10) Las citas de artículos o capítulos de libros se realizarán según el siguiente modelo:

    O'CONNOR, Patricia: «Mujeres sobre mujeres: teatro breve español», *Anales de Literatura Española Contemporánea*, 25 (2003), pp. 45-76.

    BENTOVIM, Arnold: «Therapeutic systems and settings in the treatment of child abuse», en A.W. Franklin (comp.): *The challenge of child abuse,* New York, Academic Press, 2001, pp. 249-259.

11) Si una obra ya ha sido citada con anterioridad, en la referencia bibliográfica se omitirá el título y se citará de la siguiente manera:

    [2] MANERO, José: Op. cit., p. 345.

    Si se citan a lo largo del trabajo diferentes obras de un/a mismo/a autor/a, se identificará el título del trabajo al que se hace referencia en cada ocasión:

    [6] MANERO, José: *Los elementos químicos...*, op. cit., p. 345.

    Si se cita varias veces seguidas la misma obra, se omitirán el título y el nombre del autor o autora y se seguirá el siguiente modelo de citación:

    [6] MANERO, José: *Los elementos químicos...*, op. cit., p. 345.
    [7] Ibíd., p. 22.
    [8] Ibíd., p. 35.

12) Los diferentes apartados del texto se ordenarán siguiendo la numeración arábiga (1,2,3,...) y el título de cada uno de ellos irá en letra mayúscula y en

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13) Los artículos irán acompañados de un resumen de 10 líneas en español y en inglés, unas palabras clave en español y en inglés, así como de un breve currículum del autor o autora (8 líneas).

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La revista *Feminismo/s* es publica semestralment. Està oberta a les aportacions del personal investigador del Centre d'Estudis sobre la Dona de la Universitat d'Alacant i a tota la comunitat acadèmica. L'organització editorial es fa a través de monogràfics encara que també està previst la publicació d'alguns números en els quals s'hi presente una miscel·lània d'articles. El caràcter de la publicació, com la del Centre d'Estudis sobre la Dona, és multidisciplinari.

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1) Els treballs, que necessàriament han de ser originals, cal presentar-los en suport magnètic, en format .doc (processador de textos Word) i impresos en la manera habitual. Els disquets han d'indicar el nom de l'arxiu i el de l'autor o autora.

2) Els articles s'han de presentar amb lletra Times New Roman de 12" i amb un interlineat d'un espai i mig.

3) El títol de l'article ha d'anar centrat i amb majúscula de 12". El nom de l'autor o autora del treball s'ha d'escriure unes línies a sota del títol, també centrat, amb lletra de 10" i majúscula. Tot just a sota cal escriure el nom de la Universitat o la ciutat a la qual pertany l'autor o autora, amb minúscula de 10". Un exemple pot ser el següent:

LA IMAGEN DE LA MUJER EN EL CINE ESPAÑOL
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MARÍA ISABEL DURÁN PRIETO
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5) La primera línia de cada paràgraf ha d'anar sagnada.

6) Les cites en el text han d'anar sagnades, entre cometes i amb lletra 10".

7) Els títols dels llibres i de revistes citats han d'anar amb cursiva. Els títols d'articles o capítols de llibres entre cometes.

8) Les notes han de ser a peu de pàgina, amb lletra 10" i interlineat senzill.

9) Les referències bibliogràfiques cal fer-les sempre en notes a peu de pàgina i no en el text. El model per a citar llibres ha de ser el següent:

   Welldon, Estela V. : *Madre, virgen, puta. Idealización y denigración de la maternidad*, Madrid, Siglo xxi, 1993.

10) Les cites d'articles o capítols de llibres cal fer-los segons el model següent:

    O'connor, Patricia: «Mujeres sobre mujeres: teatro breve español», *Anales de Literatura Española Contemporánea*, 25 (2003), pp. 45-76.

    Bentovim, Arnold: «Therapeutic systems and settings in the treatment of child abuse», dins A.W. Franklin (comp.): *The challenge of child abuse,* Nova York, Academic Press, 2001, pp. 249-259.

11) Si una obra ja ha estat citada anteriorment, cal ometre el títol en la referència bibliogràfica i citar-lo de la manera següent:

    [2] Manero, José: Op. cit., p. 345.

    Si se citen al llarg del treball diferents obres d'un mateix autor o autora, cal identificar el títol del treball al qual es fa referència en cada ocasió:

    [6] Manero, José: *Los elementos químicos...*, op. cit., p. 345.

    Si se cita diverses vegades la mateixa obra, cal ometre el títol i el nom de l'autor o autora i seguir el model de citació següent:

    [6] Manero, José: *Los elementos químicos...*, op. cit., p. 345.
    [7] Ibíd., p. 22.
    [8] Ibíd., p.35.

12) Cal ordenar els diferents apartats del text amb numeració aràbiga (1, 2, 3, etc.) i el títol de cadascun ha d'anar amb majúscules i negreta. Els subapartats cal numerar-los de la manera següent: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, etc. i els títols han d'anar en minúscula i negreta.

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Correu electrònic: cem@ua.es

Feminismo/s is published on a biannual basis, and encourages contributions from researchers at the Centre for Women's Studies of the University of Alicante, as well as from the academic community as a whole. The journal is generally published in issues devoted to a single subject, although occasional issues containing articles on a range of subjects may also be published. Both the journal and the Centre for Women's Studies are multidisciplinary in nature.

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2) Articles should be written in 12" Times New Roman letter font and with 1.5 line spacing.

3) The title of the article should be centred on the page and written in 12" capital letters. The name of the author should appear a few lines below the title and also centred, in 10" capital letters. The name of the university, institution or city should come just below this and in 10" lower-case letters. See the following example:

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4) Articles should be between 15 and 18 pages in length.

5) The first line of each paragraph should be indented.

6) Quotations in the text should be indented, enclosed in quotation marks and written in 10" letter size.

7) Titles of cited books and journals should be written in italics. Titles of articles and chapters of books should be enclosed in quotation marks.

8) Footnotes should appear at the bottom of the page, in 10" letter size and with single line spacing.

9) Bibliographical references should always appear as footnotes and not in the body of the text. See the following model for citing books:

   WELLDON, Estela V.: *Madre, virgen, puta. Idealización y denigración de la maternidad*, Madrid, Siglo XXI, 1993.

10) Articles and chapters of books should be cited as in the following example:

    O'CONNOR, Patricia: «Mujeres sobre mujeres: teatro breve español», *Anales de Literatura Española Contemporánea*, 25 (2003), pp. 45-76.

    BENTOVIM, Arnold: «Therapeutic systems and settings in the treatment of child abuse», in A.W. Franklin (comp.): *The challenge of child abuse,* New York, Academic Press, 2001, pp. 249-259.

11) If a work has already been cited, its title is omitted in subsequent references, as follows:

    [2] MANERO, José: Op. cit., p. 345.

    If different works by the same author are cited, then the title should be given in each reference:

    [6] MANERO, José: *Los elementos químicos...*, op. cit., p. 345.

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    [6] MANERO, José: *Los elementos químicos...*, op. cit., p. 345.
    [7] Ibid., p. 22.
    [8] Ibid., p.35.

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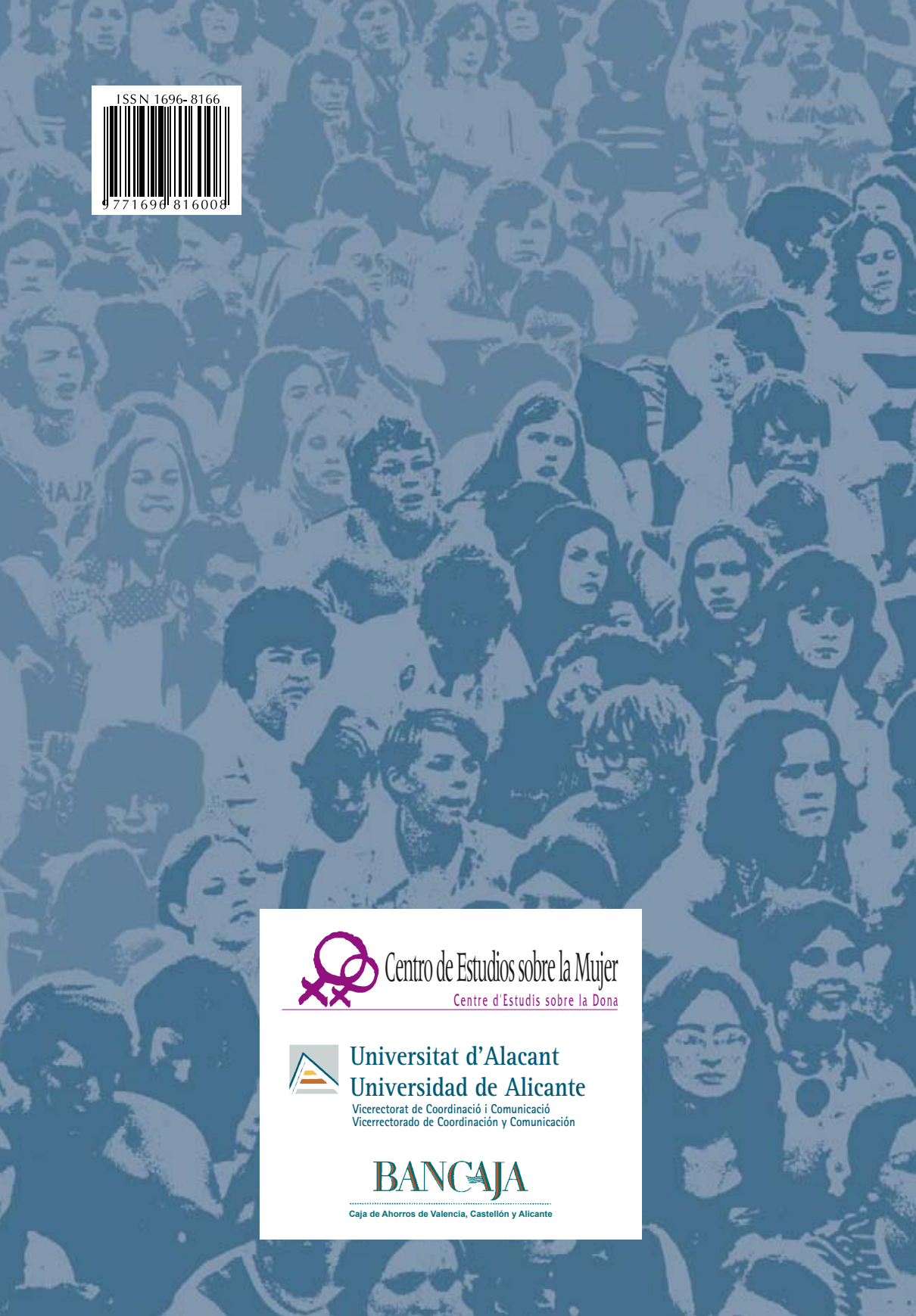

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