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The Counter-Discourses of Femininity

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Abstract
The Counter-Discourses of Femininity

This thesis is devoted to Elizabeth Bowen's search for the new counter-discourses of femininity that encompass undeniably important questions of subjectification and identification. It analyses the two chosen novels: *The House in Paris* (1935/1976) and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* (1968/1999) as the primary bibliography and as Elizabeth Bowen's successful exercises in laying the foundations for her precursory philosophy of narrativization of identity through the analysis of the following processes: the search within the external and internal relations of selfhood and otherness and a better understanding of the founding concepts of maternity, femininity, and gender. It uses various theories of feminist scholarship postulated during the last thirty years of the twentieth century until the first decade of the new century.

Moreover, the thesis focuses on the ideas of narrative, hermeneutical and dynamic approaches to the themes of identity and gender. The theoretical deliberations are, thus, based on the writings of Nancy Chodorow, Julia Kristeva, Elizabeth Grosz, Mikhail Bakhtin, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guatarri, Emmanuel Levinas, and Paul Ricoeur among many others.

The thesis ventures to prove the existence and understanding of the new discourses of identification that can be found in Bowen's fiction, and which, I believe, re-position the female subject within existing narratives of culture and consequently power. Here, the female subject is seen as purely different in itself, disseminating life, multiple and dynamic, which opposes the traditional understanding of male/female binary opposition. Only this way can one reach a better understanding of the personal and subjective topography that can offer a solution to the growing threat of desiccation and displacedness of every *I*.

Above all, the thesis defends the idea that identity is built upon narrative hermeneutical processes that require the subject to respond to the necessity of translating, understanding and welcoming the other. This way an attempt to *de'sire* the language can be made to make claim for the new discourses of femininity understood as desiring, fluid and autonomous.

Resumo

Esta tese de doutoramento intitula-se *The Counter-Discourses of Femininity* e procura encontrar e defender um novo discurso feminista ainda que não militante. O trabalho constitui uma investigação sobre os complexos processos de identificação e subjectivização com base no sujeito feminino em discurso. O estudo resulta de uma prolongada e detalhada investigação no âmbito de um percurso de doutoramento em Estudos Literários iniciado com especialidade como Literatura Inglesa e também desenvolvido em áreas como os Estudos de Identidade e de Género, na Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa

A tese de doutoramento é um olhar crítico sobre a escrita de Elizabeth Bowen e procura analisar os dois romances escolhidos, *The House in Paris* (1935/1976) e *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* (1968/1999), a partir da crítica e teoria literária pós-modernista, incluindo perspectivas como a psicanálise e a teoria feminista.

Os textos críticos escolhidos para elaboração deste trabalho de doutoramento dividem-se em dois grupos sendo o primeiro grupo dedicado às questões de narratividade da identidade, construção de temporalidade, corporalidade, e à psicanálise. Os autores escolhidos são Mikhail Bakhtin, Gilles Deleuze, Emmanuel Levinas, Paul Ricoeur, entre outros. Assim sendo, os conceitos-chave Bakhtinianos abrangem o carnavalesco, o riso, como também o dialogismo. A escrita de Deleuze elucida ideias como o dinâmico ‘becoming’, a existência de forcas molares e moleculares na construção da identidade, diferença, *Corpo-sem-Órgãos*, rizoma, ‘becoming-little-girl’ e ‘becoming-woman’. O enfoque em artes cinematográficas e conceito de imagem-movimento fundamentam a teorização da temporalidade na tese. As teorias de Levinas dizem respeito à melhor compreensão do outro, como à necessidade de acolher o outro na esperança de melhor vivência da natureza humana. Ricoeur, por sua vez, elucida as ideias já presentes nos outros teóricos referentes à dinâmica relação entre o *eu* e o *outro*, ajudando a uma melhor reflexão sobre o si mesmo como um outro. As ideias-chave de Ricoeur abrangem as questões de temporalidade compreendida como contínua e vinculada ao presente, e de hermenêutica com a sua base em textos sagrados do cristianismo. A identidade narrativa de Ricoeur é aqui usada para melhor argumentação

sobre a maneira como a realidade de uma pessoa é configurada pela sua percepção de eventos no mundo. A tese, seguindo Ricoeur, privilegia a escuta e a tradução de discurso do outro e também a atenção profunda à assimetria possível no diálogo que por sua vez enriquece qualquer identidade. O segundo grupo de textos críticos centra-se na crítica feminista estabelecendo o seu vínculo com o primeiro grupo através da escrita de Julia Kristeva, cuja obra acolhe tanto as questões de natureza psicanalítica como as de natureza feminista. A par de Julia Kristeva são ainda usados textos de Judith Butler, Nancy Chodorow, Elizabeth Grosz, Luce Irigaray, Toril Moi e Adrienne Rich. Consequentemente, as ideias expostas são: a maternidade como instituição e como uma experiência privada, a linguagem feminina baseada em teorias essencialistas, a identidade performativa, a (de)construção de género, a crítica às dicotomias binárias, e a política e representação feminista.

São precisamente as atenções críticas do segundo grupo que servem aqui de base para melhor compreensão e (re)descoberta de um novo discurso feminista na obra de Elizabeth Bowen. Assim, esta tese de doutoramento avalia a construção e elaboração de vários processos de identificação e subjectivização implícitos no *corpus* escolhido.

Em primeiro lugar a tese de doutoramento assenta em dois conceitos-chave para a construção e melhor percepção de identidade, sendo eles: (I) a ideia de *becoming* ou seja, construção e vivência dinâmica de vida que naturalmente contradiz conceitos como essencialismo, sedimentação e o simples *ser*; (II) o conceito de maternidade que aqui é concebido não como função ou papel biológico somente pertencente à mulher, mas sim como um modo de vivência que define relações entre o *eu* e o *outro*, compreendido como o estranho e o estrangeiro, que se revelam tanto no exterior como no interior da identidade. É destes novos conceitos de maternidade e de dialogismo que decorre o interesse do estudo pela exploração de conceitos como a mãe arcaica ou fálica, o semiótico, o simbólico e a *chora*. As palavras-chave que definem o novo discurso feminista proposto aqui são as seguintes: autonomia relacional, *agency*, alteridade, multiplicidade, hermenêutica e o carnavalesco. Todas as referências e escolhas teóricas nesta tese decorrem da compreensão de que algumas das disparidades na percepção da escrita de Elizabeth Bowen poderão advir de uma atenção insuficiente, devido às complexidades teóricas apresentadas pela autora. Tais só podem ser compreendidas e decodificadas com as recentes descobertas no campo psicanalítico e feminista que na tese ajudam a redefinir um novo mapa semiótico da autora.

A dissertação de doutoramento está dividida em três capítulos sendo que o primeiro incide sobre a crítica literária e psicanalítica recolhida. O capítulo é intitulado “Discussion. The Dialogue and the Difference.” É dividido pelos conceitos e ideias-chave que têm como função guiar o leitor pelas descobertas nos capítulos seguintes. O segundo capítulo é intitulado “*The House in Paris. (M)Other and Child’s Boundary Crossing*” e incide sobre um dos primeiros romances da Elizabeth Bowen – *The House in Paris* (1935). Este romance desde logo apresenta o interesse de Bowen por processos intrínsecos à identidade, nomeadamente os mutuamente exclusivos, dialogismo e abjectivismo, encarados como *praxis* teórica no encontro do *eu* e o *outro*. O segundo capítulo estuda também os processos compreendidos como (re)descoberta da mãe, ou seja redescoberta de um modo de ‘fazer’ ou ‘actuar’ maternidade. O capítulo investiga a aprendizagem de um novo discurso feminista que assenta em ideais de necessidade de diálogo, caridade e responsabilidade perante um outro. Este capítulo avalia também os processos de *becoming*, acentuando elementos tais como dinamismo de vida, multiplicidade, mobilidade e heterogeneidade a par de ritualização, de subjectivização e o Gótico conceito de consumir o outro. O terceiro capítulo intitula-se “Eva Trout – a Journey towards New Discourse” e incide sobre o último romance da Elizabeth Bowen – *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* (1969). Este romance é aqui entendido como o mais representativo de um novo discurso feminista na obra da autora. É em *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* que as tendências pós-modernistas na compreensão de identidade são mais visíveis e mais bem tematizadas. Por sua vez, este capítulo apresenta uma análise detalhada dos processos teóricos apresentados nos primeiros dois capítulos com a sua cuidadosa contextualização no romance. Entre os conceitos-chave destacam-se aqui o carnavalesco, a monstruosidade, a alteridade, a imagem-movimento e a imagem-tempo, como também a dinamização e narrativização de vida. Mais uma vez o enfoque central é dado à construção de maternidade como primária, dinâmica e omnipresente em todos os processos de identificação.

As perspectivas críticas formuladas nos primeiros três capítulos estão presentes na última parte da tese, “Conclusion”. As conclusões acentuam mais uma vez todas as tendências e descobertas teóricas que fazem parte de um novo discurso feminista, tal como é apresentado por Elizabeth Bowen e compreendido como múltiplo, fluído e não essencialista. É sublinhada a necessidade de ir contra um futuro sem linguagem e de se impulsionar a proliferação de uma nova hermenêutica de palavras, imagens e sinais.

Neste capítulo também se propõe a procura de uma chamada topografia identitária de Elizabeth Bowen que assenta na melhor descolonização de discurso feita através de um novo conceito compreendido como *'de'siring' of the language* – de-masculinização e desapropriação de discurso devido à sua *'specula(riza)tion'* narrativa. Por sua vez *desiring of the language* atravessa todos os temas previamente apresentados acentuando, mais uma vez, as ideias-chave como maternidade, *female desire* e *desire in language* que podem ser aproveitadas por novas teorias feministas no geral.

For my husband José Carlos Almeida Sanches,

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Abbreviations

HP – The House in Paris.

ET – Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes.

Other novels by Elizabeth Bowen are cited conforming to the APA (American Psychological Association) citation style with first: the date of the first publication, and second: the date of the edition used by the author of the thesis.

Further critical and essayistic writing by Elizabeth Bowen is indicated by the date of the publication and edition used by the author and subsequently the original date of publication to be found in the Bibliography at the end of the thesis.

All reference to the editions of Elizabeth Bowen's fictional and non-fictional works, as well as the theoretical background, and all written scholarship informing the thesis is contained in the Bibliography in an adapted APA citation style.

Introduction.

This doctoral thesis is a consequence of the author's undaunted and unabashed belief in the precursory character of Elizabeth Bowen's fictional and non-fictional discourses: the counter-discourses of femininity and identity as such, that had come to precede the findings of late twentieth century feminist theory. Since the modern feminist scholarship, mainly that from the decades encompassing the seventies, eighties and nineties, was interested in the processes of active identification of the female subject, it is the author's strong conviction that Bowen anticipated its findings through her heightened sensibility towards the question of the brittle, delicate and yet dynamic self.

Furthermore, this work conjugates a four-year investigation into Bowenesque elaboration of the new textual and non-textual discourses only decipherable thanks to the theoretical concepts of hermeneutics, dialogism and narrativization of discourse. As a result other key terms delineate the investigation of this work among them: responsibility, care for the other, becoming, alterity, the grotesque, and, above all, motherhood.

This thesis takes as its *nexus* Elizabeth Bowen's longer fiction, psychoanalysis, philosophy and literary theory. It is destined to be an inter-textual reading between Elizabeth Bowen's two novels – *The House in Paris* and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* – as well as chosen feminist studies, along with psychoanalytical and philosophical theories of the development of subjectivity and identification, above all in relation to the female discourse.

One of the important questions that arise when contemplating Bowen's literary oeuvre is whether it is sufficient to recognize the foreigner – whether it is sufficient to welcome and accept the stranger within oneself. An answer should be found to the *aporia* of transgressive subjectivity that like a *Möbius strip* captures the sense of interconnectedness and change. Are men usually centre-stage and women confined to the margins and if so what are the disruptive forces that inevitably underlie the *status quo*? These very questions will reflect the huge disruptions and transformations in how one sees identity and femininity embedded in the processes of subjectification. There are all sorts of questions central to feminist scholarship and psychoanalysis that I examine in this thesis. As such they are issues that have become important due to a wide

range of theoretical findings used in this work as well as Bowen's own prefiguration of new discourses of femininity.

It is for this reason that the thesis will postulate a greater focus on the idea of *becoming* – becoming the outsider while becoming oneself, and embracing the other while creating the self. The stranger the subject enters into a dialogue with can be the stranger represented as the child- or the little-girl-within, the female monster or the deeply entrenched archaic mother. However, in the process of reconfiguring the mother function it is not the biological motherhood that should be highlighted but rather the mother function expressed by the concepts of care, fluidity and multiplicity. Denial of performing these functions subjectively and against the law of the phallus stands for a denial of selfhood. Consequently comprehending and incorporating the new language of identity will mean a *de'siring* of the language of power. It will stand for returning to the basic concepts of desire in language and decolonization of discourse.

In the end, the question of what constitutes Bowen's private and public topography will be answered. The *desideratum* should be searched for in the new shapes of selfhood. These will need to be discerned both in the public and the private scenes.

Consequently having the above in mind, this thesis will seek to understand better the operations of subjectification within different discourses a subject may produce – especially those operations that point towards the differentiation of the feminine from the masculine. Both of these filters of analysis are to contribute to a major discussion of re-thinking discourse and performance as gender dependent, as well as re-thinking the canon in women's literature, where Elizabeth Bowen came to occupy a secondary position.

Philosophy and psychoanalysis are useful tools and yet their usefulness may be deceiving. On one hand, they are useful while attempting to solve the problems of the continuum or *(dis)continuum* between the subject formation and that subject's subsequent production. Within this preserve, the *aporia* of identity is made up of relations to the (maternal) body as well as relations to the social order – the symbolic and semiotic representations of identity. Decoding of the *(dis)continuum* is a primary and inter-textual process and the analytical tools present a chance of tracing the permutation of subject during a production of a text – cultural or literary. However, in using philosophy and psychoanalysis, it is necessary to remember the importance of the

text in question – the text that is being analysed. For analysis is, too, an inter-textual or rather inter-discursive process, aiming at the establishing of meeting point between the private sphere of the text and the public sphere of its meaning, changeable according to readership, context and tradition.

Furthermore, it is of utmost importance that analysis promotes the text and its author in the first place, and pursues its own goals in the second place – the goals of enriching, developing and reinforcing equality between the discourses of the self and the other, the feminine and the masculine.

As a result, this work has as its objective a two-fold task. Above all, it aspires to understand the writing of Elizabeth Bowen, as an example of a centre-defiant writing, able to contribute to the problematic of gender equality and identity formation. This, I signal in the thesis' title – *The Counter-Discourses of Femininity*. Elizabeth Bowen's work creates an illusion of middle-brow realist fiction that too often fell into the category of fiction for women with all the depreciative connotations of the term. For many causes Bowen was not considered canonical in her own twentieth century, this had happened “for various contingent reasons – of background, geography, temperament and opportunity, for instance, and probably of gender too” (Corcoran, xiii, in Walshe, 2009). However, Bowen's materialist/realist discourse skilfully drills the plots that it consequently dissolves through a search for the deeper structures of identification and subjectification. And hopefully, the new theoretical tools of ascending critical schools of feminism, Queer theory and psychoanalysis will be able to respond to all the alternative directions that Bowen's fiction takes us towards. As with the material part of human life, the desiccation of traditional discourse is more painful and more palpable than the vanquishing of human lives, which according to Bowen is inevitable. Elizabeth Bowen remains defiant in her mockery of common truths, as well as in their blatant reinforcement. This apparently paradoxical *side-by-side* of the formal conforming style as well as a new and disruptive discourse accounts for the breaks within the false appearance of identity and continuity. Elizabeth Bowen's style has a capacity to figure the undoing of the symbolic and the subject of the symbolic. Her narrative is a continuous dis-appropriation of propriety. The exposure of narratives underlying the dogmatic discourse stands for a capacity for change – “a kind of drivenness” (Corcoran, xiii, in Walshe, 2009) behind every self “following in their own footsteps, of knowing only by going where it is they have to go” (Corcoran, xiii, in

Walshe, 2009). As in Bakhtinian carnivalesque discourse, exposure allows one to be what one is and to become somebody else. It allows for highlighting the false seamlessness of our identities by insisting on the presence and power of the gaps that bind identities together, making them possible, at the same time leaving them vulnerable to their destruction and transformation. As much as in Elizabeth Bowen the discourse is a reiterated performance, her narrative is a spectacle, where identities are continuously re-assembled and re-montaged, bearing in mind that when one writes identities the term not only refers to the plots of Bowen's works but also to the identities of the reader who chooses to embark on the adventure of being 'changed' in the process of responding to Elizabeth Bowen's discourse. In Elizabeth Bowen's literary oeuvre and thanks to Elizabeth Bowen intellectual contribution all discourses' and all fictions' coherence is dissolved.

Having the above in mind, the thesis seeks to understand better the operations of subjectification within different discourses a subject may produce – especially those operations that point towards the differentiation of the feminine from the masculine. Both of these filters of analysis are to contribute to a major discussion of re-thinking discourse and performance as gender dependent, as well as re-thinking the canon in women's literature, where Elizabeth Bowen came to occupy a secondary position.

This study takes as its nexus Elizabeth Bowen's longer fiction, psychoanalysis, philosophy and literary theory. It is destined to be an inter-textual reading between Elizabeth Bowen's two novels – *The House in Paris* and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* – as well as chosen feminist studies, along with psychoanalytical and philosophical theories of the development of subjectivity and identification, above all in relation to female discourse.

PART I

The Counter-Discourses of Femininity:

Discussion. The Dialogue and the Difference.

1. Narrative Identification.

Elizabeth Bowen's topography oscillates somewhere between amorphousness and a concrete material detail, the *desideratum* being that however fluid and alternative identity it still requires estimation. However generic and homogenous it may appear, Bowenesque identity can be considered relational and multifarious. As such, moving towards the ideas of nomadism, displacement and identitarian travelling, we must first focalize on the concepts of narrativity in identification.

In *Time and Narrative*, Paul Ricoeur postulates that identity is constructed not as identical with itself, self-referential and unitary but by a means of detour from oneself to the other:

the identity of this 'who' therefore itself must be narrative identity. (. ...) Without the recourse to narration, the problem of personal identity would in fact be condemned to an antimony with no solution. Either we must posit a subject identical with itself through the diversity of its different states, or, following Hume and Nietzsche, we must hold that this identical subject is nothing more than a substantialist illusion (...). (Ricoeur, 1984, 246)

Our identity is incomplete. The very fact that we are seeking identities means that we don't have them. We are always dispossessed. There is no "proper" self. Narrative identity obliges the subject to acknowledge the existence of the other. It opens new worlds of molecular bodies in becoming. Textual production, in which I am oneself as well as other to oneself, offers "creative or imaginative substrate to action" (McNay, 2000, 22). As the site where intersubjectivity is constructed, it is a form of agency that can "underline certain transformations within gender relations" (McNay, 2000, 22). It allows the condition of possibility of certain types of autonomous agency understood as the ability to act in an unexpected fashion or to institute new and unanticipated modes of behavior" (McNay, 2000, 22). Narrative identity is the identity of character; it is also the identity which bridges *idem* and *ipse* where that narrativity stands for dialogism between *ipse* and *idem* similar to oneself and another. Writing about selfhood as adulthood and childhood as otherness in discourse, Bowen expresses her faith in reciprocal relationship between sameness and otherness. She says that "The child lives

in the book; but just as much the book lives in the child. I mean that, admittedly, the process of reading is reciprocal.” (Bowen, 1999k, 51)

That said, we are subjects in our and others’ stories, the narratives of identity being intricately interwoven. The feminine is a subject of a masculine story/identity – the mother subjects in the child’s narrative and the child surfaces as a latent agent in an adult’s narrative. In “Notes on Writing a Novel” Bowen writes that “Speech is what the characters do to each other” (Bowen, 1999k, 41). Contextualization can also be seen from a different angle – that which escapes the existence of the external other, so that acts have their meaning even if no one receives them, especially in the case of perlocutionary acts, performed/enlivened by saying something. This guides us towards the role of agency in subjectification. In fact the other is still there but within the subject whose role it is to decode, translate and acquire the stories it encounters, both the narratives outside and inside oneself.

The interplay of selfhood and otherness challenges the existential phenomenology of being used as a means of ontological analysis. Narrative construction of identity, as it has become to be known, rejects the idea of transcendental *ego* and claims after Heidegger that the possible outcomes and destinies of philosophy are inevitably intertwined with human existence, and thus with temporality and with historicity, taking into account not only the needs of the I but also the requirements of the other. The science of *being qua being* does not go beyond the particular thing and the Cartesian other, making it difficult to understand who is the audience that individuals use when thinking about the self, and how the division between the self and other fluctuates between the internal and external worlds.

In a similar manner, the substantialist idea that all subjects have intrinsic properties does not exhaust the problematic of the self, especially if we bear in mind as Heidegger did the constant exchange through language in use. As has been noted in various post-modernist studies, for the post-structural Foucauldian subject it is of more importance to be able “to engage in self-transformatory practices of the self” (Khan-2006) than to reach the understanding of its metaphysica since metaphysica is a fallacy.

Narrative identity shifts our interest in the self and other towards the discussion of corporeality. The definition of boundaries of self and other crosses the boundaries of bodies. And yet, this phenomenon of reflexivity, “does not fully address the problem in which the material body may impact on this self-styling, resisting conscious attempts to

change, or significantly distracting from them” (Khan, 2006). The definition of boundaries of self and other crosses the boundaries of bodies. The emphasis on the body in literature revolves around questions of to what extent “each person is for himself his own body” (Ricoeur, 1994a, 319). That said, we may ask to what extent the body becomes one’s corporeal and mental criteria of identity. The body and the world as a perceiving thing are intricately intertwined since it is through the body that we gain a sense of belonging and it is through the body that the influence of “habitus, roles, and identifications” (Ricoeur, 1994a, 319) are channelled. Consequently, it is through the body that passivity of existence is transformed into active participation of the world. The knowledge of the other transcends our view, but is manifest precisely by presenting itself to a range of possible views, just like looking at and from different angles of the body. As such, the essential partiality of our view of things as being presented only in a certain perspective and at a certain moment in time does not diminish their reality. The object of perception is immanently tied to its background, that is, to the body, which becomes the nexus of meaningful relations among objects within the world. Inevitably, as Ricoeur writes in *Oneself as Another* “the constancy of a self (...) finds its anchor in its own body” (Ricoeur, 1994a, 319). The body is the site of dialectics between the concepts of the self, sameness, selfhood and otherness as well as the permanent condition of experience. It becomes inevitable that the body constitutes the landscape and perceptual *gestalt* of selfhood. In this way we should treat identity as a temporal and spatial phenomenon that could be designated as the territories of war¹.

Lois MacNay has written in her *Gender and Agency: Reconfiguring the Subject in Feminist and Social Theory*, that we owe to the scientific presuppositions of the phenomenology of the body what can be called “generative understanding of subjectification” (McNay, 2000, 164). To better account for a plurality of subject identifications that may overlap and even cooperate rather than work at odds, McNay asks us to consider Paul Ricoeur’s work on narrative because it allows a sense of temporal fluctuation to enter into the discussion on subject cohesion. A similar use of these two concepts can be found in Paul Ricoeur who also claims that the phenomenological construction of the self relies on the social relations the subject

¹ See, Celine Magnot, “Elizabeth Bowen’s London in *The Heat of the Day*: An Impression of the City in the Territory of War.”(1995). <http://www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/march2005/Magot.html>
Retrieved April 11, 2009.

engages into, and which affect the subject's embodied self. Presentation which is a way of self-explanation and transformation becomes a manner of exercising agency over one's own discourse. This maintains itself meaningful as long as it is representative of *the self* and a product of *the self*. A discourse produced by a subject may not be compliant with the dominant ideology but exercise an ionizing effect on the hegemony. In order to better understand subjectivity, especially the female one for the purpose of this study, we must take into account three elements of production: the material and symbolic aspects of subjectification, identity and coherence of *the self*, and the relationship between individual psyche and the larger social world.

The emphasis on the body in literature revolves around questions of to what extent "each person is for himself his own body" (Ricoeur, 1994a, 319). That said, we may ask to what extent the body becomes one's corporeal and mental criteria of identity since it is through the body that we gain a sense of belonging and it is through the body that the influence of "habitus, roles, and identifications" (Ricoeur, 1994a, 319) are channelled. One of the major weaknesses of much of modern sociology, for instance seen in Pierre Bourdieu's work, is its "failure to consider sufficiently the gendered habitus." (McNay, 2000, 32)

In corporeality, it is through the body that passivity of existence is transformed into active participation in the world. As has been noted earlier, it is in the body that "the constancy of a self (...) finds its anchor in its own body" (Ricoeur, 1994a, 319). This does not, necessarily, mean that the body is the slowing-down element of selfhood. Rather, it is a filter of patterns and styles – a body creates its own character that cannot be prescribed to others but responds to the constant yet homogenous metamorphoses of the body. As such the body is the site of dialectics between the self, sameness, selfhood and otherness.

Even though one's own body and mind can be a source of suffering, it is through the interaction with sameness and otherness that the mind is exposed to suffering inflicted by others. 'Undergoing and enduring' belong to a dimension that is enhanced by the act of suffering.

But we must go further and take into account more deeply concealed forms of suffering: the incapacity to tell a story, the refusal to recount, the insistence of the untellable – phenomena that go far beyond mishaps and adventures, which can always be made meaningful through the strategy of emplotment. (Ricoeur, 1994a, 320)

Mental violence and repression stimulate forms of bodily performance – and this perpetuates the operations of further repression directly resulting from the search of the perpetrator inside oneself. The bodily chronotope changes into that of living dead – escaping Butlerian sedimentation of living, but also marking bodily desiccation. Bowen’s work dramatizes the stilling of the body through her narrative failure to reach the other. This process may be called the Bowenesque “burgeoning discourse” as already used in literature (Backus, 1999, 49). Bowen’s novels problematize “repression of crude material techniques of surveillance and physical coercion” which “correspond to Foucault’s earlier emphasis on discipline and punish” (Backus, 1999, 49). Almost like Richardsonian characters Bowen’s characters experience suffering which commences with unusual “decrease of the power of acting, experienced as a decrease of the effort of existing.” (Ricoeur, 1994a, 320) In sedimentation of life “the reign of suffering, properly speaking, commences” (Ricoeur, 1994a, 320). Only those characters, which we will consider of extraordinary personal dynamics, manage to remain in motion – only those characters, with emphasis on the female ones, manage to attain a certain level of relative discursive autonomy. This will be juxtaposed against the theories of Jurij M. Lotman as well as feminist theories that defend in their scope the idea of relationally autonomous self and boundary-crossing, as exemplified in the novels *The House in Paris* (1976) and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* (1999).

Using the idea of narrative identity with its emphasis on spuriousness of subjectification and a sense of temporal fluctuation helps us read into Bowenesque characters and either their inability to act, or activity in surplus. It is both in their passivity and activity culminating in certain autophagy that the body consumes itself or devours the other in an overwhelming desire to live. It is in this “perversely asocial desire, enforced repetition and the *Unheimlich*” (Corcoran, xiv, in Walshe, 2009) that a rejection of conventional existence is written in. It is the repressed desire towards life and death that originates in suffering often accompanied with autophagous wants. Since an early age, autophagy becomes a means of “assertive action that symbolically recapitulates the infant’s original break with the nursing mother” (Backus, 1999, 52) as in Raymond F. Hilliard’s description of ritual cannibalism and femininity in his text entitled “Clarissa and Ritual Cannibalism” (1999).

In his study, Hilliard draws on Pierre Fauchery's description of ritual sacrifice of women as a topos central to the representation of women in the eighteenth century European novel. It is not merely a ritual sacrifice, according to Hilliard, but ritual cannibalism that delineates the discourse on femininity starting with eighteenth century fiction. In suffering subjects auto-consume themselves but they too consume the other in living with the other that is perceived as a source of suffering. As such suffering is a double edged sword. The origins of such can be traced in the long process that gave rise to the introduction of the capitalist family cell already described by Foucault. Cannibalism and authorial autophagy can also be linked to mother-child dyad and the child devouring the mother's breast, as well as textual practice of showing tempting femininity through exposing female pleasure drawn from eating, drinking, or smoking, and thus attracting the male gaze.

Contrary to what Pierre Fauchery postulates as a purely aesthetic value of female sacrifice, the cannibalistic discourse has its policing role. In suffering dominant discourses are voiced, transformed and deciphered. Bearing this in mind, what Paul Ricoeur seems to be choosing to highlight in suffering escaping presentation is that it results from two overlapping instances of living – victimization as a result of passivity as well as compulsory passivity as an essential part of any human relationship on which hegemonies are built.

Most of the sufferings are inflicted on humans by humans. The result is that most of the evil in the world comes from violence among human beings. Here, the passivity belonging to the metacategory of one's own body overlaps with the passivity belonging to the category of other people; the passivity of the suffering self becomes indistinguishable from the passivity of being the victim of the other (than) self. Victimization appears then as passivity's underside, casting a gloom over the "glory" of action. (Ricoeur, 1994a, 320)

This we may compare with the discourse of femininity as produced by traditionally obligatorily passive subjects victimized in hegemonic power relationships between subjects. Many a times the victimized subject, here a woman, is responsible and compliant with the oppressor. The woman and the mother tempt for the philosophy to which peripheries she belongs but whose existence she also promotes. As such, we must also stress that any form of action or agency is inevitably related to the process of victimization, notably because it is a direct result of anxiety felt in the face of horror and disillusionment. Nevertheless the answer to oppression seems to be found in self

presentation and iterability of this self-presentation of which most refined and developed examples will be found in Bowen's *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*.

If we break the complex process of presentation into two parts, we see that it functions based on two approaches to the subject as proposed by Ricoeur. Ricoeur describes two manners of performing identity – 'identifying reference' and 'self-designation' (Ricoeur, 1994a, 31). Identifying reference is revealed in an interlocutory situation, when "speaking subjects designate to their interlocutors which particular they choose to speak about out of range particulars of the same type" (Ricoeur, 1994a, 31).

Physical bodies and the persons we ourselves are constitute (...) basic particulars in the sense that nothing at all can be identified unless it ultimately refers to one or the other of these two kinds of basic particulars. (Ricoeur, 1994a, 31)

To Ricoeur, identity is concealed in the category of *idem*, that is, it is revealed in sameness rather than in selfhood since the interlocutors refer to the same thing. This meaning, if there exists ontology of particulars it is not related to what they are but rather to what they refer to. This process being more fluid contradicts the essentialist philosophy of being, making the idea of becoming and presenting solid foundations of a subject's identity.

By placing its main emphasis not on the 'who' of the one speaking but on the 'what' of the particulars about which one speaks, including persons, the entire analysis of the person, as a basic particular is placed on the public level of locating things in relation to the spatiotemporal schema that contains it. (Ricoeur, 1994a, 32)

Through narrating the self subjects discursively constitute themselves what here is delineated as 'the narrative identity'. This idea is concealed in the hermeneutical notion of selfhood and sameness which can be divided into numerical identity: being one and not many and qualitative identity: being substitutable; both are identities in the sense of *sameness*. Character is "the set of distinctive marks which permit the re-identification of a human being as the same, through its identification with the external particular namely by the descriptive features that will be given. This way the individual compounds numerical identity and qualitative identity, uninterrupted continuity and permanence in time." (Ricoeur, 1994a, xx)

The identity of character emploted, so to speak, can only be understood in terms of this dialectic [of concordance and discordance]. (. ...) The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her identity, in constructing the story told. It is the identity of the story which makes the identity of the character. (Ricoeur, 1994a, 147-8)

The ‘I’ is not inherent to *cogito* but is an interpretation of a causal type. The ‘I’ is taken as a cause of what is, the effect of its own effect. The *I* is the result of the exchange between the I and the other that has left a visible mark on the other. The iterability of the idea of effect of one’s own effect can be better explained in Ricoeur’s theory of *mimesis*, which he divides into *Mimesis One*, *Mimesis Two* and *Mimesis Three*. *Mimesis One* refers the subject to its ability of the pre-figuration of the field of action. This is similar to what J. L. Austin notices in human discourse, namely the idea that we expect the other to be able to decipher the meaning of our words and that the other has the competency to follow the syntagmatic order of narration. *Mimesis Two* stands for emplotment that is configuration of the field of action. *Mimesis Three* stands for translating the emploted, fictive experience into actual lived experience. Therefore, in this cyclical process of *Mimesis One*, *Two* and *Three* the subject not only re-interprets the narration of the other but also its own narration of re-interpretation, and the whole process reinforces the subject’s narration of the (within) the cosmological time. It is precisely in suffering that *mimesis* helps the subject share the narrative between itself and the other – the narrative, which refers to the knowledge of their vulnerability – “from the suffering Other there comes a giving that is no longer drawn from the power of acting and existing, but precisely from weakness itself” (Ricoeur, 1994a, 188-9).

Closely related to the idea of *mimesis* are the ways of building an intra-subject, or sharing the suffering with the other through translation, exchange of memories, forgiveness. For Ricoeur they form the basis of human existence in time founded on the ideas of reciprocity and redemption. In transitions from *Mimesis One* to *Mimesis Two* and then *Mimesis Three* a relationship of reciprocity is established between the personal narrative and the chronotope of the present. It is based on the body’s participation in the world similar to the transmission established between our “present acting and suffering” (Kearney, 2004, 63) and effects of historical meaning.

Subjectivity to Ricoeur is a philosophy of translation as well as philosophy as translation. In Kearney’s *On Paul Ricoeur: The Owl Minerva* we read that the very human existence is a mode of interpretation of otherness which selfhood encounters

over time and needs to reconfigure in its own discourse. In his book, Kearney explains that Ricoeur “argued (...) that the meaning of Being is always mediated through an endless process of interpretations - cultural, religious, political, historical, and scientific.” (Kearney, 2004, 1) As such, narrative identity becomes synonymous with hermeneutics of being as “the art of deciphering indirect meaning” (Kearney, 2004, 1) and it is an ability to decipher meaning from somebody else’s point of view. As has been written the “shortest route to the self [happens] through the other (...)” (Kearney, 2004, 2). Thus, the self “returns to itself after numerous hermeneutic detours through the language of others to find itself enlarged and enriched by the journey.” (Kearney, 2004, 2) That said, in this thesis we will see how the self of a little boy and a little girl returns ‘home’ from the/a house in Paris, driven again in a swerving taxi, having accomplished its journey through the personal and cultural discourses of the father, the mother and the stranger, where the guiding lines of *The Strand Magazine* are no longer needed and lost. We will too see eponymous Eva Trout on her own personal journey through the concatenations of lives, texts and discourses. Bearing this in mind, the conclusion will be sought following the idea that all meaning is inter-subjective but never objective or radically relative, that is subjective. Through Ricoeur’s and Bowen’s work we will try to see how the

narrative understanding provides us with both a poetics and an ethics of responsibility in that it propels us beyond self-reference to relation with others. (. ...) This extension of the circle of selfhood involves an ‘enlarged mentality’ capable of imagining the self in the place of the other. (Kearney, 2004, 173)

In feminist studies, the iterability of selfhood is most evident in the self’s close relations to the other based on the concept of both devout care and autonomy. The self’s hermeneutical detour through various discourses can, for instance, be rendered in the concept of motherhood, which characterizes the mother’s infinite responsibility to the other. Similar to that, a post-modern ethical philosopher Emmanuel Levinas compares ethical responsibility to a maternal body that bears the other in the same without assimilation. In explicating this trope, he refers to a biblical passage in which Moses is like a ‘wet nurse’ rearing ‘others’ whom he has neither conceived nor given birth to. The child as the other is both part of and exceeds the confines of the self – the mother. In fact, the Catholic faith stretches this comparison to the *New Testament* where the

Church finding is compared to a maternal body whose head is represented by Jesus and the rest of the body by the Church's members in *Diaspora* on earth. The Church is too a mother and Jesus Christ simultaneously takes on the maternal function towards the Church's members. Drawing on the founding Christian concepts the construction of feminist has been enmeshed into the conceptualization of motherhood. It has been argued that femininity depends particularly on the concepts of ethical substitution and the material practice of mothering, where autonomy and sexual difference play a larger part. The relationship between the mother and the child are best found on the idea of reciprocal autonomy and relational care. Through the metaphor of suckling, as well as Christian partaking in Christ's sacrifice through the act of communion, both the mother and the child can be found within one another. The child when found within the mother can open up new paths to understanding identity. Elizabeth Bowen too writes that if she "could read [my] way back, analytically, through the books of my childhood, the clues to everything could be found" (Bowen, 1999k, 51).

As in the *mythos* of motherhood, both on the private and public planes, the subject transcends itself in a detour from selfhood to otherness, dialogical response to the creation of a myriad of possible worlds.

the original potential of any genuine myth will always transcend the confines of a particular community or nation. The *mythos* of any community is the bearer of something which exceeds its own frontiers; it is the bearer of other possible worlds. (Kearney, 2004, 123)

The *mythos* of motherhood is the bearer of other possible selves and others. It carries the load of cultural investment in the categories of womanhood and selfhood through motherhood and care.

Relatively, the very same *mythos* casts a new light on the modern Irish fiction written by women, of which examples can be found in writing by Emma Donoghue, Marry Morrissey, Mary Rose Callaghan, and Jennifer Johnston. Their woman-authored worldview centres on an acute sense of inseparateness of childhood and adulthood. There the intertwinedness of concepts of the mother and the child informs personal narratives of trauma and violence, as well as underscores the discourses of mutual care and responsibility of indistinguishable subjects of the child and the adult in one female

body². What arises is the idea of iterability of the subject that is mobile in constructing conjoined categories of representation.

The idea of iterability implicates the subject's involvement with time for the purpose of narrative identification can be described as three-fold³. Its three-foldness refers to its extra-temporal character as in Lyotard. On the other hand, its three-foldness present contradicts the idea of the contemporary. In this understanding, contemporariness is archaic and juxtaposes the idea of chronology. One may compare this non-contemporary understanding of the present to Nietzschean philosophy of the future. As a result, manifestations of the present are precisely past events or archaic problems. This may be best explained in the work of a feminist and literary critic Avital Ronell⁴ and her 'posthumanist' philosophy. In her oeuvre Avital Ronell points towards a cyclical understanding of culture. She admits vaguely that what has been happening today has been happening for a long time now. In the three-fold understanding of the present, the emphasis is shifted from the present towards the process of narrativity, Nietzschean circle of events, towards the relationship the addresser develops with the addressee, or in other words the relationship the self develops with the other. Non-contemporary present obliges the subject to deal with the mythoi, the symbols, the signifiers that transcend the grasp of the cosmological present, whereas in fact their retaining their constant character since the narrative construction of self becomes a constant fact for the subject and a day-to-day necessity.

The generative explanation of categories of historical memory – without which there is no actual knowledge – as proposed by Ricoeur corroborate Ronell's ideas since even "traditionality means, in short, that 'the temporal distance which separates us from

² As Patricia Coughlan writes in one of her texts on Bowen "Bowen's intense interest in childhood and its formation of the adult self is one of the most characteristic aspects of her vision, and potentially aligns her with Klein's pioneering work in child analysis" (Coughlan, 2009, 57). The unquestionable and undividable relationship between a child subject and an adult subject in one female narrative has been called by Melanie Klein a *self-fulfilling prophecy*, where the original *paranoid-schizoid position* informs all future relationships a subject fosters with others, where this very position is based on the relationship, either negative or positive, a child has with his or her primary caregiver, most often the mother.

³ Paul Ricoeur writes in his *Time and Narrative* 3 Vols. (1983, 1984, 1984) about the idea of the three-fold present developed by St Augustine in his *Confessions* and roughly understood as distention of temporality and selfhood towards God and the eternal life.

⁴ See Avital Ronell, (2008)

the past is not a dead interval but a generative transmission of meaning” (Kearney, 2004, 63). Generative transmission is yet another facet of maternity based subjectivity. However, this also makes one consider that many problems women and then feminism faced in the past are still alive. Similarly Ronell agrees that what is happening nowadays may have been triggered by what has already happened – it may be controlled by the political powers of the past or by linguistic constructions of the past⁵, which in our case inevitably signify time-penetrating powers of the phallic hegemony. Following Slavoj Zizek’s pronouncement on the modern world, there has never been a society that, at the level of individual and communal micro-practice, was regulated to such a great extent⁶. There has never been a society whose subjects found their performative practices so much controlled. According to Zizek, the notion of censor operations of state apparatuses is based on the presupposition of Lacan’s paradox where God is considered dead at hand of the ever-growing necessity and obligation of every subject to be one’s own god. Curiously, in such cultural discourse almost everything becomes prohibited to facilitate the subject’s quest for pleasure. Such is the paradox of modern permissiveness – one is obliged to achieve absolute pleasure, according to nowadays’ extreme materialism, and yet to do so one finds oneself in a totally controlled and regulated society. The modern pleasure principle is criticised by Bowen in that her female characters find themselves cast into the growing paralysis of ‘what next’ – if they reject matrimony, as in *The Hotel* (2003b) or *The Last September* (1998c), they are unable to enact any other role, and their seem castrated of their generative power. What becomes obvious is that, in Bowen’s fiction, one should take on the responsibility for not only present and future, but the past too. As to the modern times, Zizek explains that nowadays maximal fulfilment is obligatory but without the dangerous aspect of it: Colin Powell’s idea of war without war, or virtual sex without sex. If one agrees with this hedonistic vision of the reality based on the Nietzschean idea of the lust man, where

⁵ One may find parallel interest about the operations of the past and “desiccation of reality” in Bowen’s longer and shorter fiction.

⁶ Zizek expresses his preoccupation with hegemonic ideologies operating on the subjects on many occasions. The example of the micro-practice and control was given during Zizek’s lecture at The European Graduate School in August, 1999 in a talk entitled “The Super Ego and the Act.” <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/slavoj-zizek/articles/the-superego-and-the-act/> 23 April, 2009. For further reading on the concept of ideologies and subjectivity see Slavoj Zizek, *Mapping Ideology* (1995).

everything is permitted but deprived of its substance – the implications for gender practices need to be considered, especially at the level of female category and construction of femininity or motherhood. Casting away the responsibility for the other can produce a ghetto of fairly homogeneous feminism. It follows that, in feminism, this can be expressed as the idea of regulated liberties, which “echoes the concern expressed by Butler and other feminist theorists urging one to think of political agency and change within gender norms in non-propositional terms” (McNay, 2000, 58). Regulated liberties echoes what Avital Ronell calls after Wordsworth “the legalized exclusion”⁷, which has characterized the marginal character of women over the centuries. Through peaceful assimilation of the tools of hegemonies into colonized territories, this process “provides a way of obviating simplified theories of oppression and is useful for an understanding of what are perceived to be significant assertions of women’s autonomy” (McNay, 2000, 58). It is only through the actual materiality of concepts and language that language can triumph over the concept, including the concept of a subject. This can only be carried out through the force of a critical clearing and does not imply the shell-shock stoppage of devastation.

Many terms that refer to the dynamic character of identification have already been mentioned. Among them there should be re-mentioned the hermeneutics of being, performativity and iterability of the subject. The question of iterability echoes that of narrative identity and can best be described as a movement to and from or from the inside towards the outside epitomized in Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* (2000) and the contradictory movements of Lily and Mrs Ramsay, as in constantly opposite fluctuations of the category of mother and daughter in the process of identification. Iterability stands for the reiteration of subjectivity while repeating given acts that position the self by reference to a previous pattern of behaviour recognized by significant others. Hence, identity forms certain behavioural patterns of performativity, which the others are expected to read so as to build a sense of our narratives. Iterability of socially accepted behaviours as well as gender performativity have been at the core of Judith Butler’s philosophy of identification and engenderment. The salient thesis of her work is that gender is performed rather than directly inborn, so that “identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results”

⁷ See, William Wordsworth *The Prelude* (1850): “All institutes for ever blotted out, that legalized exclusion, empty pump Abolished, sensual state and cruel power.” (Wordsworth, 2004, 351)

(Butler, 1990, 25). According to the theories of reiteration that are based on Nietzschean nihilism of being there is no being behind the doing of it. In *Bodies that Matter* Butler develops her theory of relationship between the concepts of iterability and performativity,

Performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. And this repetition is not performed *by* a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject. This iterability implies that 'performance' is not a singular 'act' or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production, but not, I will insist, determining it fully in advance (Butler 1993, 95).

Butler suggests in both of her shorter texts entitled *Critically Queer* and *Melancholy Gender*, that the child/subject's ability to grieve the loss of the same-sex parent as a viable love object is barred. According to Freud and his notion of melancholia, such repudiation results in a heightened identification with the other that cannot be loved. This again results in enacting gender performances which allegorize and internalize the lost love that the subject is subsequently unable to acknowledge or grieve. As such masculinity is based on the idea of conceptual avoidance where

a masculine gender is formed from the refusal to grieve the masculine as a possibility of love; a feminine gender is formed (taken on, assumed) through the incorporative fantasy by which the feminine is excluded as a possible object of love, an exclusion never grieved, but 'preserved' through the heightening of feminine identification itself. (Butler, 1993, 25)

In this situation narrative presentation of subjectivity complements Butler's use of temporality in performance since we may infer that Butler's model is overly invested in the idea that subjectivity is a process of sedimentation in time. It thus weakens the overall project to liberate the concept of female agency from the monolithic concept of Freud-Lacanian lack. Whereas in Butler the focus of the analysis falls on the discursive production and types of self-representation, in narrative identification this shifts towards time frames in which performance and performativity happen. What this makes visible are the operations of agency within a hostile discourse – life happens and concatenation continues.

Recently, Butler has shifted her attention towards the issue of fallibility of narrativity. She has posed a question of what it means to give an account of oneself if one is not transparent to oneself, if either one's language is not understood or one does not speak the language of discourse fluently enough. She asks a questions about the *I* – whether it is accountable for its accountability, when it seems the least stable element in narration - the structures of address and the other (the addressee) being the other two important elements in narrativity. Butler's discourse on identification and engenderment has a tendency to shift from positive criticism of narrativity towards the criticism of it. She very often focuses on the negative aspects of dialogism, where there is an obvious failure between the addresser and the addressee visible in asymbolia, melancholy or problems with accountability for what the subject has given an account of. According to Butler, melancholia experienced by the subject is the result of the laceration of the super-ego. In melancholia, the other who is marked as lost becomes part of the super-ego of the subject. For instance, Freud noted that in melancholia the subject continues to commune with the other internally. In psychoanalysis, this is mirrored by the conflicting relation the child has towards the mother – especially the female child, whose violent insertion into maturity, thus phallic discourse, has forbidden her to mourn the lost territory of the maternal semiotic⁸. This difficult relationship between the female child and the mother is made worse where the female child becomes a mother herself and sees the phallic definition of motherhood imposed on her maternal practices. Now she needs to devote herself to the child like the Madonna to Christ and take pleasure in emulating herself for the other. It may be that to emend the trauma emphasis needs to be given to re-experiencing/re-living childhood again and re-finding the body of the buried mother. Kristeva writes that in the process of childbearing the woman becomes reunited with the body of her own mother. Otherwise, melancholia or in other words the refusal to mourn, can set and result in what Freud called moral masochism – either murder or suicide according to Judith Butler. That said, one may question the origins of

⁸ In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva finds intertextuality functions within the semiotic *chora*, that is the womb or receptacle of becoming, a space of pre-linguistic, prelapsarian plenitude initially totally identified with the maternal body. It is through this relationship towards the semiotic *chora* that women manage re-configuration of the male author's anxiety of influence into a female affiliation process, in which "(...) the daughter of too few mothers, today's female writer feels that she is helping to create a viable tradition which is at last definitively emerging" (*Gilbert and Gubar*, 1984, 50).

matricide and whether it is an essential step on a child's development towards maturity or whether it is a mere result of phallic politics against mourning the loss of the mother, the loss of the semiotic where the self co-exists peacefully with the other. Even though identification and subjectification have been based on operations of narrativity, it by no means signifies a peaceful and reciprocal relationship between the *I* and the other. Judith Butler notices that very often the *I* constructs itself at the expense of the other. The life of the *I* is the result of the death of the other. Women are not expected to mourn the loss of their singularity but rather to rejoice in their emulation for the other. The female claim for subjectivity provokes crisis. Those who survive the insertion into the father's *parole* develop a discourse of uneasiness of those who endure the phallogentric oppression. It may well be said that this uneasiness in part contradicts what Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar supported as the first version of female affiliation complex in *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1984), where "the son of too many fathers, today's male writer feels hopelessly belated" (Gilbert, Gubar, 1984, 50) and the daughter feels strengthened thanks to her heritage. More influenced by the work of Harold Bloom, Gilbert and Gubar came to see poetic influence as what Freud called anxiety-principle or melancholia.⁹

In response to Helen Vendler's criticism of *Feminism and Literature: An Exchange* Gilbert and Gubar write

as we noted in a chapter of *The War of the Words*¹⁰ entitled "Forward into the Past: The Female Affiliation Complex" rivalry between women is fostered both by a need for

⁹ See also "Forward into the Past: The Complex Female Affiliation Complex" (In *Historical Studies and Literary Criticism*. Ed. Jerome J. McGann. 1985, 240-65) – here Gilbert and Gubar reconsider their understanding of the female affiliation complex and grant it a more Bloomian reading. They offer women three ways of dealing with authorial anxiety. The first one is identification with the male precursor, the second one is rejection of both paternal and maternal influences; the third one is embracing maternal tradition.

¹⁰ In *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century: The War of the Words* (1989) Gilbert and Gubar focus on the demise of any single normative definition of the feminine and the rise of masquerades of femininity amounting to female female impersonation as well as later male male impersonation.

(exclusive) male approval and, more importantly, by an anxiety about the contamination associated with a shared oppression. (Gilbert, Gubar, 1990)¹¹

Following that of Judith Butler, today's female author feels belated by her experience of oppression and a growing uneasiness she came to feel towards those women who engage in commonly accepted female practices. It is not only that in maturation a subject jettisons parts of itself to strengthen the borders of its *super-ego*, it too jettisons the other, obliterates it to construct itself at its expense and in opposition to the other. Furthermore the operations of melancholia not only put in question the subject's relation to the other but also the subject's truthfulness to itself. In performing gender and identity the subject may remain unfaithful, opaque and incomprehensible to itself, as Butler has highlighted. In narrativity, the story we tell and how we tell it may be untrue to whom we really are. And yet, even though many times incomprehensible, the path to self-understanding may be in constant re-telling the story – “the self comes to know itself by retelling itself” (Kearney, 2004, 110) in diverse performative practices.

Faced with a lack of linguistic proficiency or transparency, the subject is equally obliged to engage in a circle of interpretation using hermeneutic of imagination, which “provides us with projects of action” and which faces “back to the being that is revealed and forward to the language that is revealing” (Kearney, 2004, 41). Kearney writes that,

Imagination can be recognized accordingly as the act of responding to a demand for new meaning, the demand of emerging realities to be by being said in many ways (...) the poetic image places us at the origin of the speaking being (...) and respond[s] to the desire of being to be expressed. (Kearney, 2004, 40-41)

The hermeneutic imagination does not merely rely on linguistic analysis of the texts, which for various reasons may be impossible for the subject to convey, but it opens up onto different worlds and texts. As Ricoeur writes in his *De l'Interprétation: essai sur*

¹¹ This citation comes from an exchange of a series of critical letters between Gilbert, Gubar and Helen Vendler. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/3531> - *Feminism and Literature: An Exchange*. Felicia Bonaparte, Susan Gubar, Sandra Gilbert, Camille Paglia, Vol 37, n°13, 16 August, 1990. Retrieved August 13, 2007.

Freud “expressivity of the world comes to language through the symbol as double meaning” (Ricoeur, 1965 in Kearney, 1998, 151). Performativity is an art of double meaning, the iterability of a sign and a symbol is an event when

language produces composite signs where the meaning, not content to designate something directly, points to another meaning which can only be reached (indirectly) by means of this designation. (Ricoeur, 1965 in Kearney, 1998, 151)

In a similar fashion subjectification is also based on the processes of iterability. A detailed analysis of iterability of a subject can follow two separate and yet complimentary and equally dynamic tropes. The first trope runs through Deleuzian postmodern epistemology of being as a desiring machine - an open-ended entity whose identity depends strictly on fluid and ever-mutating connections between other entities as will be explained later in this chapter. If analyzed separately constituting elements of systems, according to Deleuzian materialism, remain meaningless. To feminism Deleuzian thinking offers a chance of theorising the difference and becoming a category free from its previous patriarchal encumbrances. The second trope of iterability is the trope of narrativity of the self – the *ipse*-dynamic self, “where the subject becomes, to borrow a Proustian formula, both reader and writer of its own life. Selfhood is a cloth woven of stories told” (Ricoeur in Kearney, 2004, 108-109). This trope too includes the elements of mutability and change but it retains a special kind of moral compromise towards the self. It has a compromise of

enduring identity of a person, presupposed by the designation of a proper name (...) provided by the narrative conviction that it is the same subject who perdures through its diverse acts and words between birth and death. (Kearney, 2004, 108)

This understanding of selfhood not only focuses on the future but offers feminism a chance to re-examine its past, thus diversity, in constructing present stories.

In Ricoeur, hermeneutics of narrative identity is based on Heidegger’s notion of temporality as the crucial element to mould subjectivity. To him, identity is made up of stories told and stories received. This on its part bases itself on the idea of a human subject being capable of constant questioning oneself being able to reinterpret and acquire the stories that constitute one’s identity and a manner they are told in.

Identification as a dynamic and temporal concept has long drawn attention of the younger generation of postmodern scholars in culture and literature. As an example, in “The Repetition of Violence: Dialogue, the Exchange of Memory, and the Question of Convivial Socialities.” Couze Venn, whose research has long centred on the questions of identity and narrativity of the human subject, re-establishes the importance of narrativity percolating through the dyad of the self/other as in Ricoeur’s oeuvre. In the theory of life narratives, Ricoeur’s concept of narrative identity corroborates the discourse of being in its arbitration between

the phenomenological and the cosmological apprehension of time, that is to say, the mediation between time as lived, inscribed in activities in the world, and encrypted (that is, at once inscribed and encrypted) in life narratives, and time in the singular, the intuition of a dimension that cannot be derived from the experiential but encompasses and transcends it. (Venn, 2005, 286)

Narrativity is a dynamic process not only because of it being a dynamic exchange between two subjects but also because it is an active mediation between historical knowledge, epistemological judgement and political calculations without necessarily seeking any ‘objective reality’. It is an exchange between the domain of existing practices and discursive practices that construct knowledge. Narrativity is of a similar structure to that of the hermeneutic circle as a closed circuit but in a constant forward motion. What drives narratives forward are the internal pressures for greater internal coherence. As such narrativity remains a-temporal at its core and at the same time temporal in its relation to the outside. It is propelled forward through the constant operations of forces from within and outside of it. Narrativity is hence a place of power production since in it both private and public discourses merge indistinguishably. With its shifting time frames, narrativity enables us to de-construct and re-construct the other, and through that the self, from the relational and ontological perspectives. For this reason the most private and unimportant stories transform themselves into stories of public importance – stories told in Bowen’s fiction carry with themselves conscious and subjective narratives of critical character, directed at notions of femininity, power relations and identity.

Owing to the operations of narrativity, which assents on the idea of mediating the past and the future through the present, the subject can overcome the problem of un-

representability of time. Narrativity locates itself in the present – the present of the subject’s mind and the subject’s body (or rather the sum total of it) which is the voicing place for the meaning of the past and the future. By narrativity we “express the lived, or phenomenal, aspect of the temporality of being” that can be designated as (Venn, 2005, 287) finitude. We then shift it towards monumental temporality of being the so-called infinitude and that which St Augustine addressed as God’s eternity. Even though philosophy aims at the metaphysical aspects of life, there is no denying that it opens up to a plethora of everyday discourses as identity representative. The discourses on femininity are constructed from everyday lives and experiences and have an urgent character. Since traditionally from the age of the Enlightenment women, among other marginalized groups such as the idiots and the children, are barred from having memories, their immediate surroundings and their bodies become the sites where the new women’s discourse is created¹².

Narrativity is a means of uniting the place (*Dasein*¹³) of the subject’s existence with the idea of monumental time through a detour of present, past and future. If, in general, the relationship the subject has with the other is volatile and changing over time and through different points of view – the binary opposition of the female and male subject forming the ethos of the phallogentric discourse undergoes the same changes.

At the core of narrative identity lies the idea of temporal discontinuity that suggests that change and exchange between genders is uneven “arising from the increasingly dysfunctional effects of the dominant economy of clock time for both women and men” (McNay, 2000, 112). Narrativity has a double effect on lives of both men and women, on one hand pulling their biographies apart, on the other trying to standardize them in an attempt to create legible meaning. This reveals ambiguity of this process, “the effect on the lives of men and women of having to negotiate this multiplication of narratives is ambiguous” (McNay, 2000, 112) and yet it may

¹² This idea is tackled in the thesis in the chapter on *Eva Trout* and the spaces of alterity.

¹³ In *Being and Time* Martin Heidegger describes *Dasein* as being-in-the-world (the word *Sein* standing for ‘being’). In *Dasein* being and the world are reciprocally disclosed. What follows is that “when *Dasein* does not exist – independence does not either” (in Bernard Magnus’ *Heidegger’s Metahistory of Philosophy. Amor Fati, Being and Truth*. Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, Netherlands, 1970). Richard Kearney writes that *Dasein* means that “Being must be (...) understood as a temporal horizon of human existence” (Kearney, 2004, 36). What is more, *Dasein* takes philosophy to embrace the idea of hermeneutics of existence.

contribute to a breakdown of traditional gender relations. As such narratives become “biographies in transition” (McNay, 2000, 113) where gender is negotiated to the extent the limits of our bodies offer. However, the idea of *ipseity* shows us that biographies are entangled with but not entirely reducible to corporeality (*idem*). Following that of Simone de Beauvoir woman’s body is one of the “essential elements” but “not enough to define her as a woman” (Beauvoir, 1972, 69). Corporeality is not lived in a straightforward manner but disrupted by temporality. The internal and external chronotopes merge in a process of mediation. The dialogue between *ipseity* and *idem* identity based on the non-adequation of the gendered self to a corporeal identity permits the possibility of autonomous action.

Filtering narrative identity through the intricacies of gender relations is simply placing them within the limits of power relations, something that Paul Ricoeur fails to do. The feminist concern should fall onto the question of gender differences being transformed into social inequalities. The concept of narrative identity gains viability thanks to its translation into the public sphere. Similar to that, we see Elizabeth Bowen merges the dynamics of narrativity with a concern with power relations. In her “Out of a Book”, Bowen states that “What applies to people, applies to books” (Bowen, 1999k, 50), the narratives. She exposes the “emergence, contestation and coexistence of narratives” (McNay, 2000, 115) as interrelated with “cultural struggle and relations of illocutionary force” (McNay, 2000, 115). Bowen struggles to understand to what extent is narrativity equal to agency reduced to intentionality of subjects as opposed to its inevitable exteriorization and sedimentation within the social realm. It may be that women’s narratives are not entirely integrative and liberatory and yet they are not solely a product of the hegemonic discourse. The co-existence of the *I* and the other during self-formation points to its reflexivity and thus subject position within a distinct gendered narrative. Women’s narratives may not be entirely integrative and liberating thus as a result they lead to dis-identification as used to “capture the ambiguities inherent to the process of identification through which subjectivity is stabilized” (McNay, 2000, 103). Judith Butler uses the notion of dis-identification, which symbolizes the relation to hegemonies “as neither one of recognition and consent (identification) nor refusal and rebellion (counter-identification)” (McNay, 2000, 103). Dis-identification may be a key concept to understanding Bowen’s creation of female characters in her longer fiction. Dis-identification is a relational view denoting

dislocation “arising from the deployment of the tools and symbols of the dominant by the marginalized” (McNay, 2000, 103). That said, Bowen is by all means aware of the fact that human understanding is historically situated, making hers the claim that total objectivity is illusory and playing with this presupposition in creating her characters. Since the task of hermeneutics is to uncover the history and tradition, Bowen’s challenge is to uncover the underlying dominant history and tradition behind her narratives. However, she makes no secret of her use of hegemonic culture, not so much in resignation in the face of its omnipresence but in recognition of its interdependence on the marginal. As in Ricoeur’s *From Text to Action* (1991) the past cannot free itself from the present as much as it is embedded in the same concept of innocence and care for the other

Historical knowledge cannot free itself from the historical condition. It follows that the project of a science free from prejudices is impossible. (. ...) Man’s links to the past precedes and envelops the purely objective treatment of historical facts. (Ricoeur, 1991, 76)

Historical condition directs feminist interest towards temporal meditation on identity where it pictures the “ebb and flow of the experience of sexual identity as it is mediated through other social roles and practices” (McNay, 2000, 111). Bowen reveals herself to be aware of the temporal complexity and discontinuity in her longer fiction, making to a disruptive effect of time as exercised over our lives in both her novels *The House in Paris* and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*. In Bowen, dis-identification is complemented by the idea of narrativization of the self when its self-identification is a means of reiterating autonomous subjectivity.

In her work Bowen interweaves different temporal planes of cyclical and linear times - her discourse on women’s temporality is on one hand embodied and on the other hand it makes claim to a different embodiment than that of a biological time as usually ascribed to women.

Narrative identity finds fertile ground in the field of cultural studies where scholars attempt to re-assess their national narratives. In an essay entitled “Telling Identity Stories: The Routinisation of Racialisation of Irishness” (2005) Elaine Moriarty, a sociologist at Trinity College, Dublin, focuses on a dialectical approach to discourses, narratives and identities in twentieth first century Irish culture of ‘the Celtic tiger economy’. She bases her criticism on the premise of representational and

ontological narrativity being a crucial element in constructing a subject's identity. She writes that "story telling is a mediated discursive practice whereby meaning is constructed through a relational communicative production between past and present, memories and imaginings, discourses and representations" (Moriarty, 2005, 6.9¹⁴). In a similar manner, in "Reclaiming the Epistemological 'Other': Narrative and the Social Constitution of Identity" Somers and Gibson put forward an idea of

distinguishing representational and ontological narrativity. While initially there was a preoccupation with narratives as modes of representing knowledge or explaining social life, more substantial claims about narratives propose that 'social life is itself storied and that narrative is an ontological condition of social life. (Somers and Gibson, 1993, 38)

From the idea of analyzing national and personal narratives, whose common denominator is that they are performative and iterable, as a fundamental move towards understanding identity formation, the concept of performativity of narratives is recapitulated again:

Narratives in this way are more than informative, they are also performative as argued by theorists of narrativity such as Judith Butler (1990, 1993, 1997), Paul Ricoeur (1991¹⁵) and Couze Venn (1999), who suggest that narratives are never fixed, they are subject to change at the moment of telling, they can be interpreted in new ways, enriched with new meanings or liberated of old ones. (Moriarty, 2005)

As it has been mentioned, narrative identification is a dynamic process based on exchanging texts and performing or rather, after Jean-François Lyotard, 'presenting roles'. Even though we agree that the idea of performance is the founding one of the subject's singularity, the premise of depending on the operations of the other both from inside and outside is important too. According to Judith Butler performative narratives rely not so much on the existence of external audience but on the extent to which they

¹⁴ Here Moriarty comes close to Ricoeurian dialectical traditionality that creates its own idiom of identity based on the values of the past, the present and a belief in common future, as well as the rapport that the narrative and historical time manage to establish through the common concepts of suffering and action. Retrieved October 13, 2008 from website <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/10/3/moriarty.html>

¹⁵ For further elucidation on hermeneutics and texts, the nature of meaning, of action, of interpretation and of subjectivity, see, Paul Ricoeur, (1991).

are repeated as discourse. *Bodies that Matter*, reject the idea of singularity of performance

[P]erformativity is (...) not a singular 'act', for it is always reiteration of a norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status (...) it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition (Butler, 1993, 12).

This leads us to acknowledge the difference between the performative subject and its routinized performance. Repeated performances then have the cumulative effect of normalizing their own assertions. The less we question these norms the more successful they become at achieving authority as natural or ideal. If we return to Moriarty's research, the connection to normativity is a key concept to understanding the difference between performance as a singular act and performativity as routinised. Therefore, the performative subject cannot be separated from the normalised routinisation process of which it is a part, both as subject and object.

This constitutive matrix is key to my argument that the enactment of narrativity is concurrently a mode of knowledge creation, the transmission of knowledge and the product of such power/knowledge systems. In this sense narratives are constitutive of the way we experience life (Butler, 1993), and as Ronit Lentin argues, narratives are also transformative, because in constructing the self, they can also bring about a transformation of society (Lentin, 2000, 101). Hence, Paul Ricoeur's (1991) assertion that life becomes human by being articulated in a narrative way enables me to theorize (...) as site where meaning is created and identity is constructed. (Moriarty, 2005, 2.9)

The routinisation is an effect of the subject's urge to perform and becomes visible in all its textual practices. The idea of femininity must, therefore, be constructed from texts told, performed and received. Since on the outside textual practices are embedded into a temporal frame, they soon disseminate exposing the operations that constructed them, depending on, as Venn says "the questions one asks, and on the point of departure and the point of arrival" (Venn, 1999, 120). As such, "The tensions of the male/female bond are temporally conceived (...) and hence obviously volatile" (Butler, 1993, 45). They are essential for the dialogical formation of identities but as they tear, they are a source of dissemination as well. Moriarty is right to reach back to *The*

Location of Culture in which Homi Bhabha sees the ambivalence of the self/other or self/stranger dyad. Henceforth, Moriarty writes that,

Indeed, according to Bhabha the practices of classifying, separating and dichotomising contain the potential for their own destruction. The appearance of the stranger contributes to the quest for the rearticulation of identity and belonging, and at the same time provokes uncertainties around the fixity of the nation. (Moriarty, 2005, 7.4)

The mother /child dyad has received attention not only from male postmodern scholars but from female scholars too, among them many feminists. As has been mentioned the mother/child dyad is most exemplary of the hermeneutic exchange between selfhood and otherness. It not only possesses a secondary character to the development of the self and other as already existing, but seems to be one of the primary processes in the subject's development. This is marked by the idea of abjecting the mother, as well as prior to that, semiotic habitation of the world of bliss designated as the maternal before entering the father's *parole*. If we understand the mother/child dyad founding of the self/other binary opposition, we are able to prove how turbulent these relations are. Carrying a possibility of dissemination and constitution, the categories of mother and child are both exclusive and inclusive. Owing to the deconstructive character that both of them exercise mutually, their position within the discourse can be extremely unstable and volatile. This contradicts the idea of stable centre and periphery that these concepts should form. As such, one should look at the mother/child dyad not as at a stable and exclusive binary but rather as a multitude of different discursive positions through which seeps a myriad of different power operations. Similarly to what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick postulates in her *Epistemology of the Closet* (2008), one must try to look beyond binary divisions and rather analyze the power effects they produce. To Sedgwick, it is unimportant to insist on deciding whether sexuality is a kind of natural given or a Foucauldian 'historical construct'. Of all, it is more urgent to see through the aftermath of such distinction. Henceforth, it may be useless to procure a unique definition of categories such as motherhood, gender, heterosexuality and homosexuality as these concepts are too volatile and multiple. It is of more importance to look at the processes of routinisation and institutionalization that shape our embodied existence and facilitate even the most radical and indeterminate actions. All gender and sexual categories serving as generalizing, they escape

categorization since they depend on far more factors than normalization of gender divisions and roles. And yet it goes without denying that they are most exposed to manipulation as they form a structure on which hegemonies rest and power relations are distributed. However, it seems far more productive and genuine (not to perpetuate the operations of generalization) to understand how individual subjects behave when enacting these categories in different social and temporal context. As Bowen says in her essay “Out of a Book”, “It could lead to madness to look back and back for the true primary impression or sensation; (...)” (Bowen, 1999k, 53). As such one should rather strive to re-create “what was created for me” (Bowen, 1999k, 53).

As an example, gender to Judith Butler is a sum total of attenuated and politically coerced performativity. To Butler writing in *Gender Trouble* “gender is an ‘act’, as it were, that is open to splitting self-parody, self-criticism, and those hyperbolic exhibitions of the ‘natural’, that in their very exaggeration, reveal its very phantasmatic status” (Butler, 1990, 146-7). The extent to which individual subjects are autonomous to exercise agency over determinate forms of social life should rather be measured. In feminism an interpretative engagement with certain lived dimensions of gender subjectivity is important simply to understand the social conditions of possibility for effective political agency.

The concepts of autonomy and agency have long been criticized and baffling for modern feminism. The most recent voices have raised questions to what extent gendered identity should not be shifted to post-identity approach. McNay writes about this claim as paraphrased in her own words. Over the last few years, several influential feminists have argued that feminism should shift its focus from issues of gender identity in order to engage with a more general set of post-identity concerns. The claim is that the preoccupation with gender identity has enmeshed feminism in a politics of recognition which is too often essentialist and balkanised and which, ultimately, prevents feminists from engaging in broader democratic debates.

To this McNay responds that post-identity cannot answer the issues of embodied experience of determinate subjects. At the same time it fails to explain agency as indeterminacy. Recently, a greater scholarly focus has fallen on the implications of the meaning of gender on concepts such as identity, autonomy and agency, where the reality of the post-colonial times is continuously delineated by the unresolved theme of

traditionality. One of the voices belongs to Alya Khan who rightly sums the original and much criticized meaning of unrelational agency

as a capacity that can best be theorized as potentially exercisable by the abstract and discrete rational-logical individual-chooser of modernity - a figure that has been much criticized by feminists of many persuasions for its exclusivity and hidden masculine bias (not least because of its disembodied and socially disembedded nature. (Khan, 2006)

If it is difficult to speak about autonomy within the feminist paradigm, especially taking that autonomy and agency are the terms from masculine dominant discourse dictionary. Similarly, it is extremely difficult to talk about the idea of autonomy within mother/child relationships. In a reference to this problem, Khan reminds us that many feminists “have rejected the concept altogether, suggesting that any characterization will be inadequate for praxis aimed at eradicating women’s social oppression” (Khan, 2006). As a result the concept of autonomy may be considered in feminist studies as conceptually forced and strained. Another American feminist who devoted most of her life to the four ‘f’s’: family, friendship, feminism and ‘f’ilosophy, Marilyn Friedman says that: ‘a subject need not be absolutely unified, coherent or transparently and incorrigibly self-aware in order to exercise autonomy; she need merely have those traits to a sufficient degree’ (Friedman, 1993, 220). Autonomy means in fact separating oneself from the bulk of essentialist feminist philosophy. But by doing so, we need to redefine the concept of autonomy against the popular male definition that, in the end, is too a fantasy and a fraud. Unfortunately, the idea of total autonomy, one’s wish to distance oneself from- and reinforce one’s individuality does not only form a typically masculinist discourse but is also an essential part of much of psychological aesthetics of the *fin de siècle*. Fiction about desire “to be free from one’s class, one’s gender, one’s marriage and reproductive function (...) to live aesthetically” (Gagnier, 2000, 53) tends to automatically be anti aesthetic “showing how social institutions oppose the aesthetic life” (Gagnier, 2000, 53). Yet, the ideas of desire and ultimate individual need persist even in our consumer culture making a claim that after all taste is an exogenous concept, whereas desire, autonomy and agency precede it. Consumerism then, is a concept split between culturally controlled performance and initial autonomous desire independent of a need. The division between worker and consumer was traditionally gendered, the latter being female as an inevitably passive

element in the system of distribution of goods. However, through enhanced consumerism one may claim a way to a new discourse on agency autonomy, originally male concepts. Rightly so, in Bowen's fiction there is a passage from passive to active consumerism as a means of achieving of what Elizabeth Grosz calls "an embodied subjectivity or psychological corporeality" (Grosz, 1994, 22). To have a building influence on the subject this concept needs to be redefined. In a newly sexed body the body of a consumer and a mother are a point at which agency, autonomy and desire meet.

In Bowen's fiction, the concepts of autonomy, agency and desire are juxtaposed in analysis of two opposing ways of life – that of consumer who experiences operations of ideologies as relationships to the universe through commodities, and that of a mother. Furthermore the concepts of mother/child dyad, autonomy, agency and desire are understood to influence the concept of subjectivity and the concept of unified self.

Developing the traits of empathy, nurturance, taking the role of the other necessary for good mothering is a far more challenging task. These are the very traits that often remain underdeveloped or atrophied in the men's life history. In motherhood, informed by the ethics of 'care' like the concept of relational autonomy, the mother takes on the role as the other for the child – the other within, as opposed to the father who is an unequally concomitant outsider. It is through the mother that the world's operations of desire to achieve things through the other are installed, as admits Lacan. Within the figure of the mother, desire originally de-centered by the world's structures gains a centre again within the apparently inseparable mother/child dyad –oneself as another. According to Lacan, in their first year of life children try to phantom what their mother desires. In this cluster of similarities, mother's desire too is changed through the child's desire. In Lacanian analysis it obviously is the phallus that the mother desires for herself and so this influences the choices the child makes over time to procure a closer relationship with the father. Be it different for male and female child, the appearance of the father is highly questionable as to its role in imposing the father's *parole*, does bear a profound influence over the father himself. The father's desire is changed through the child. Within the attempt to move towards symbolic parenting, the man needs to become a mother rather than a father figure. As a result all categories are understood as relational.

Relational autonomy thus emphasizes two coordinates: on the one hand, the concrete and yet relational context forming values, desires, images (including self-images) and, on the other hand, the space that is *beyond* this influence. Central for this space – and this makes up the autonomous dimension – are the capabilities of critical reflection and self-reflection as well as feelings, memory, and imagination. Relationally conceived autonomy thus does not imply that one creates values and desires *ex nihilo* or that one mysteriously escapes altogether from social influences but rather that one is able to fashion a certain response to it. Relational autonomy that hinges at the idea of fertile imagination is clearly intertwined with the dynamic and constructive character of narrativity of subject that has been traditionally banished from fostering memories. Imagistic thinking has a central role in self-reflection and self-construction. As Catriona Mackenzie writes in her “Imagining Oneself Otherwise”:

We use mental imagining not only as a mnemonic device or to provide us with pleasurable relief from the humdrum of our daily lives but also as an aid in understanding ourselves and others. (Mackenzie and Stoljar, 2005, 127)

Imagining has an affective and performative force influencing the bodily sensations and responses constructive of a narrative self. Drawing on our earlier discussion on time in imagining, namely in centrally imagining, experiential memory, and previsagement, the time merges into a three-fold present.

In that Bowen approximates herself to ponder the process of self-definition which relies on the following elements: “the point of view, the self-conception and values, ideas, commitments and cares” (Mackenzie and Stoljar, 2005, 133) that are of matter to the subject. Bowen’s characters struggle with the dominant notion of stability that implies that the subject who “is persistently internally divided or whose sense of self is seriously fragmented cannot achieve the kind of reflective equilibrium necessary for unified agency” (Mackenzie and Stoljar, 2005, 135). However, what Bowen sees is that the very concept of agency, and not the construction of subjectivity, remains faulty in the dominant discourse, the former having to be re-worked and re-thought to better fit the marginalized feminine cause. The question that Bowen poses refers to the character of the unity - what it means and when (if ever) it is achieved.

In the introduction to *The House in Paris* (1976) A. S. Byatt writes

It is not simply authorial sleight-of-hand that gives Elizabeth Bowen the authority to open her fictional account of Leopold's origins with a claim that an *imaginary* mother, like a work of art, can tell the truth because she is not encumbered by either time or conventions. (Byatt, 1976, 11)

Precisely, it is rather the idea that in imagination has an affective and performative force constructive of a narrative self. In the keywords of imagination, timelessness and unconventionality lies the subject's agency for greater self-definition and self-knowledge. Imagination, like art, has a role of self-understanding and self-reflection, and when not abstracted from oppressive socialization "can erode competence at rational consideration by restricting person's capacities for imagining with sufficient sensitivity and seriousness major alterations in the prevalent gender system" (Benson, in Mackenzie and Stoljar, 2005, 124).

As a great advocate of art, Virginia Woolf wrote to her artist sister Vanessa Bell "One should be a painter. As a writer, I feel the beauty, which is almost entirely colour, very subtle, very changeable, running over my pen, as if you poured a jug of champagne over a hairpin" (Woolf, 1947, in Goldman, 1998, 233-234). Writers, according to Woolf, do not attend art exhibitions "to understand the problems of the painter's art. They are after "something that may be helpful to themselves" (Woolf, 1947, in Goldman, 1998, 139). What Elizabeth Bowen does is shift the category of a mother to the space of imagination so that she sublimes it into a poetic category capable of escaping 'either time or conventions' enclosed in the categories and in fixed practices. Those who do follow the routes of conventional practices are, according to Virginia Woolf "irresponsible dragon-flies, mere insects, children wantonly destroying works of art by pulling petal from petal" (Woolf, 1947 in Goldman, 1998, 139). The conventions of dominant discourses start to operate on us in early infancy. Bowen writes on the role of imagination and its origins in art,

All susceptibility belongs to the age of magic, the Eden where fact and fiction were the same; the imaginative writer was the imaginative child (...) It could lead to madness to look back and back for the true primary impression and sensation. (Bowen, 1999k, 53)

If one moves on to compare Bowen's literary choices, which result in so called 'fine-drawn sensibility' and the novel as object (A. S. Byatt Introduction to Penguin edition of *The House in Paris*), inexorably shaped and limited by its own internal laws'

to those of Vanessa Bell, one does stumble upon more similarities. Vanessa Bell's paintings are resistant in showing "representations of observed objects" (Goldman, 1998, 146). Jane Goldman writes that as Vanessa "moves on from this period of total abstraction, her painting reverts to more naturalistic imagery, but 'with hindsight her entire career bears down relentlessly on this point of technical and conceptual sophistication'" (Goldman, 1998, 146). Ultimately, Vanessa Bell finds herself unable "to abandon subject matter in favour of pure abstraction" (Goldman, 1998, 146). In a letter to Leonard Woolf she explains herself of her choices giving an example of a painting by Picasso, which inspired her emotions strongly:

but it wasn't changed when weeks afterwards it was pointed out to me by chance that the blue was a lake. (. . .) The picture does convey the idea of form, of what you call secondary form I suppose, but not the idea of form associated with anything in life, but simply form, separated from life. As a matter of fact we do first feel the emotion and then look at the picture, that is to say, look at it from the point of view of seeing its tertiary form – at least I do. The reason I think that artists paint life and not patterns is that certain qualities of life, what I call movement, mass, weight have aesthetic value. (Goldman, 1998, 146)

Elizabeth Bowen, too, struggles between the necessity of realist description and the generative value of aesthetic impression,

Blurs and important wrong shapes, ridgy lights, crater darkness making the face unhuman as a map of the moon, Mrs Michaelis, like the camera of her day, denied. She saw what she knew was there. Like the classic camera, she was blind to those accidents that make a face that face, a scene that scene, and float the object, alive, in your desire and ignorance. (*HP*, 118)

To Bowen words, symbols used between lovers are also used for 'their ring' not only their meaning. Literalness is deadly to love, art and life itself. Still, we grow up into the male discourse of action and "talk between different races" (*HP*, 157) that is serious, where "that tender stillness lovers employ falls flat" (*HP*, 157). If only we "had learnt to dread that kind of talk" (*HP*, 157) – and Bowen does believe that our gender practices are learned and not innate – we "would have suffered more" (*HP*, 157).

If Bell considers that life in art has an aesthetic value she does not advocate art as pure *mimesis* but underlines its ability to give an extra quality or value to what we

find as something purely tertiary. She takes concepts from nature and reality and separates them from life. Similarly, Bowen draws from reality and social order and aesthetises concepts by either overdoing them in a grotesque way or creating characters that totally contradict the accepted order. Here, in the first group we may find her examples of dominant elderly femmes or children trying to imitate adults in their social behaviour. The second group brings Bowen's examples of motherhood or teenagehood at a conflict with reality. Vanessa Bell regards 'flat patterns' as unconnected with movements inspiring artists. She sees life in circular modes, just as her sister Virginia who ascribes circular logic to that of orality and women's narratives (to be found in Montaigne¹⁶). One could easily impose order on such linear movements rather than move with their 'pulse'. Furthermore linear logic, the one that either moves vertically or horizontally, admits binary oppositions and all these Bell, Woolf and Bowen wanted to escape. To Bell form and content are not exclusive of one another and add up to the aesthetic emotions drawn from art and fiction. To Elizabeth Bowen, the old values and the new concepts are not exclusive of one another, showing the tension between them may be productive. Bowen's writing exposes the importance of subject and the subject matter over form, not creating purely an impressionistic fiction but fiction of significant

¹⁶ Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592), 'the father of anti-conformist French spirit', is known as one of the most influential writers of French Renaissance and a direct influence on writers such as Descartes, William Shakespeare, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nietzsche and Virginia Woolf. His *Essays* (Montaigne, 2004) are interplay between sceptical philosophical divagations and personal stories and anecdotes, which was later summed up by Montaigne in a statement 'I am myself a matter of my book'. His 'What do I know?' question gave origins to his surprisingly modern dialectics of the self, later taken up by many philosophers among them Nietzsche. Montaigne was educated along a minutely tailored educational plan authored by his father. As such, Montaigne spent the first three years of his life among peasants to comprehend the simple people, whom he was to help thanks to his education. After tutorials with a professional teacher, Latin soon became Montaigne's first language resulting in Montaigne's reasonably late introduction to French and his curious attitude towards it. The purpose of education was to offer Montaigne a possibility of learning at the highest standards of his time but at the same time to make it his own choice, so that even as a young boy he would attend to books out of his free will – otherwise he was allowed to play freely. Montaigne was offered constant intellectual and spiritual stimulation in most modern ways of play, exercise and solitary meditation and was sent to prestigious schools. He read law at university and entered a legal career. He also was an essayist and a translator. Montaigne's relation to the spoken, vernacular language, as well as, his informal style was of utmost interest to Virginia Woolf and her ideas on women's discourse.

sense of subject matter. In Bowen technique is related to the subject matter and in that she remains faithful to the illusion of a realist novel. Within this form one discovers the spuriousness of reality and the importance of the subject matter which add up to the overall meditation on subjectivity. The theme of passivity is connected to darkness and night according to Simone de Beauvoir.

The theme of art as the preserve where the signifiers can be filled with new meaning has led us back to the motif of art and artist in Virginia Woolf, which she reinforced in her *To the Lighthouse* and *A Sketch of the Past*. Similarly, if we choose to believe that Karen's husband – Ray in *The House in Paris* stands up to his decision of giving Leopold a home – and “his first lesson in spatial liberation” (Kristeva, 1980, 248) Leopold may become a subject that through the language of the father posits itself in the space where the mother could have been, ‘semiotizing’ itself into the economy of dominant heterosexuality, safeguarding that way an apparent happiness. That said we may cite Kristeva on paternity as necessary to compensate and belittle “the archaic impact of the maternal body on man” (Kristeva, 1980, 263)¹⁷,

The maternal figure increasingly appears as a module, a process, present only to justify this cleaved space; she is again the ergasterion, privileged space and living area. Moreover, the very human, that is, psychological passion between adult and child seems to be displaced from woman toward a man. (Kristeva, 1980, 264)

We see Ray as occupying the paternal space, empty and to be filled, “And there had been his father. He [Leopold] expected her account of what is really (...)” (*HP*, 67)

Without any doubt, if male autonomy stands for integration and steadfastness, mothering and begetting of a child disrupts the subject's unity in a new and lengthy subject constitution process. According to Nancy J. Hirshman before agreeing upon the concept of autonomy, women must first decode the concept of freedom. Hirshman says that ‘in order to determine what that might be, women must be freed from the multiple, intersecting and overarching, barriers that pervade patriarchal society’ (Hirshman, 2003, 39). In order to do that, women must become aware of the masculine discourses underlying culture and society as well they must define the term of freedom according

¹⁷ Kristeva believes that the paternal figure enters to curb the overpowering jouissance but also its ‘terrorizing aggressivity’ when a man needs to admit his fear of the maternal body but also the trauma he experiences at separating from it – ‘a threat that he immediately returns to that body’ (Kristeva 1980, 263)

to feminism. Khan, however, decides to continue her analysis of autonomy that she understands as “self-governance and self-determination” (Khan, 2006). That said however, “when thinking about changing gender identities, it seems to me that an account of autonomy may be extremely valuable” (Khan, 2006) maternity seems to be a more complicated matter. Relational autonomy appears as the key concept reinforced in the writing by Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar that offers some insight on the matter in their co-edited work entitled *Relational Autonomy. Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*¹⁸. Furthermore, developing the idea of relational autonomy in society, Elizabeth Sperry writes on relational autonomy in her “Foucauldian Power, Relational Autonomy, and Resisting through Friendship”:

Relational autonomy theorists contend that autonomy is fundamentally social in nature. Far from requiring a complete independence from others, autonomy is made possible only thanks to forms of dependence and interaction with others. First, in our society potentially autonomous agents are constructed as such only through extended periods of dependency on others, usually in family settings. Indeed, insufficient or ineffective nurturing during childhood makes more difficult the attainment of autonomy in adulthood. Certainly others must provide food and shelter in order for young children to be able to attain autonomous adulthood. But young children are not merely physically dependent on others; they must be taught language, various behaviours, the rudiments of self-control, the concept of values, the resources of their culture, and the possibility of relations with others. The development of autonomy is thus not possible in the absence of social relations, including relations of dependency. (Sperry, 2005¹⁹)

She insists that to become autonomous we need to engage into relations with others – autonomy is thus developed against the other but from the close relationship with the other. In her paper on human dialogue Sperry continues that:

Second, adult autonomy is maintained in relationships with others. It is difficult to imagine a would-be autonomous agent successfully maintaining her sense of self in the absence of all human interaction, not only because the psychological costs of absolute loneliness would be immense, but because an agent continues to work out her sense of self through social interaction. Linda Barclay notes that “our ongoing success as an autonomous agent is

¹⁸ See, *Relational Autonomy. Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self* at International Society for Universal Dialogue Sixth World Congress: *Humanity at the Turning Point: Rethinking Nature, Culture and Freedom*. Helsinki, Finland, 2005)

¹⁹ Retrieved May 13, 2007 from website: <http://isud.org/Sperry.DOC.2005>

affected by our ability to share our ideas, our aspirations, and our beliefs in conversation with others. It is unlikely that any vision or aspiration is sustained in isolation from others. (Sperry, 2005)

To Elizabeth Sperry, also the concepts of temporality and consequently narrativity are important:

We rely on others for emotional support, for intellectual interchange, and to supply the context in which many of our own projects can be pursued. Autonomous agents have various goals and desires—to publish a book, to maintain a healthy marriage, to invest wisely for retirement, and so on—which require cooperation from others. Additionally, each of us continues to alter our sense of self and our life plan in response the input and actions of agents around us. (Sperry, 2005)

Social practices are highlighted too – again discursive only thanks to contextualization:

Finally, the self's own concepts and values are made possible through social organization. This differs from the developmental point that we learn our culture's language, concepts, values, and available life plans in early childhood socialization; the claim here is that these elements themselves are culturally created and sustained. The very words and meanings we use to reflect on our preferred path of individual self-development are “constituted by social practices,” as is the value of reflecting on our own self-development. Social practices are necessary for autonomy in that they produce its raw matter. (Sperry, 2005)

It is through the relation to the other that we are able to create our narrative self-constitution. As Bowen writes in *The Last September*, we “further penetrate each other mutually in the discovery of lack” (Bowen, 1929/1998c, 166). Yet the question of re-identification remains the same – ‘what makes someone the same person over a period of time, or more adequately during their lifetime’?

An analysis of one's ongoing narrative of embodied subjectivity is necessary to encompass one's claim to identity. One can choose the so-called ‘longer route’ in engaging into the three models of relating oneself with the other that is translation, narrative hospitality and forgiveness. This too corresponds to experience, description and abstraction. Autonomy is necessary in the process of reinterpreting the stories of the other as one's stories, even through undergoing and suffering.

Autonomy again takes us back to the aporia of selfhood and otherness as well as problems of defining the boundary between the self and the other. This owes itself to the statement that one's personal discourse constantly merges with the discourse of the other and that we are all subjects in each other's stories. By no means is it possible to

define that which belongs to the preserve of the selfhood and that which belongs to the preserve of otherness. Like in translation, it is impossible to draw a fine line between the source and target languages but rather it is necessary to acknowledge the idea of approximation over time. One may even ask whether there is such a thing as selfhood and otherness – consequently what is that we call natural for a category and what is that we call an imitation of a category, based on the constant interaction of oneself with otherness. Elizabeth Bowen too seems preoccupied with the problem of imitation in the context of war-time experience responsible for “the dislocation and the dispossession of a whole society” (Lee, 1999, 228). “All we can do is to imitate love or sorrow” writes Bowen in her short story “The Happy Autumn Fields”. Hermione Lee finds it to be a “the language of wartime London” (Lee, 1999, 154) that is “disjoined and ugly” (*Ibid*, 1953) and about “displacement and alienation” (*Ibid*, 152), as well as “the thin inadequateness of the present” (Lee, 1999, 153) Similar mood can be felt in Bowen’s radio play of 1946, where a young soldier finds himself conversing with Trollope about his adoration for fiction. “We’re homesick (...)” (Bowen in Lee, 1999, 180); selfhood needs the other, a point of reference –we long for imitation, for a stable narrative – otherwise our lives become imitations. The lack of the other amounts to a failure in certainties – there is no translation of feelings between the receiver and the sender. The discovery of alterity-within in Bowen’s fiction prepares characters to relate to the other as other.

In her text “Word, Dialogue and Novel” Kristeva pronounces herself on the concept of intertextuality that considers any text to be “a mosaic of quotations (...) the absorption and transformation of another.” (Kristeva, 1987, in Moi, 1985, 37) Discourse production is, according to Kristeva, a rewriting, a quoting of the other – it is an active process of interaction/adaptation with/to the other, bargaining the meaning of words and concepts. Within this process of adaptation Kristeva points to a discursive change from diachrony into synchrony. The binary discursive schema of diachrony/synchrony is replaced by a synergic flow of information – equal for the dialoguing sender and receiver. The flow can, however, be disrupted by what Bakhtin referred to as a plethora of additional meanings outside of the dialogue – “between the word and its object, between the word and the speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about the same object, the same theme” (Bakhtin, 1981, 276).

The process of enacting, translating and interacting with the other can symbolically be represented in the imagery of holding hands. The symbol of many hands intertwined may take on a deeper meaning if we understand it to be of similar nature to performative speech in J. L. Austin, or further, performative words, phrases and sentences as described by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick that extend the existing significations into new directions. Performative symbols can be ‘transformative’, creating an instant change of personal or environmental status, or ‘promisory’ describing the world as it might be in the future. And since selfhood stumbles upon different others their momentary meeting may result in, to use the linguistic terms, a happy or unhappy (felicitous/infelicitous) meaning, which cannot be described in qualitative terms of true and untrue. Felicitous and infelicitous escapes binary meaning of simplistic either/or because it does not imply immediately and externally regulated ethical paradigm.

If we look closely at the paintings analysed by Julia Kristeva in her “Motherhood According to Bellini” (1980), what strikes us at first glance is the recurring motif of hands as a symbol of positive motherly love as well as negative want of subjugation and power. Elizabeth Bowen’s fascination with hands too seems to be embedded with different narratives in her longer fiction. In *The Death of the Heart* (1938) Irene, dying of cancer in a cheap unheated hotel is portrayed hand in hand with her daughter Portia. Despised and ridiculed by everyone, she transmits great dignity, the family she and Portia form is more “holy” than the supposedly “holy family” (Bowen, 1938/1998a, 88) Major Brutt sees in the Quaines. Earlier in the novel, Portia is described sleeping in the same bed with her mother “overcoming, as far as might be, the separation of birth” (Bowen, 1938/1998a, 88). When the imagery of hands is brought again into the text by Anna Quaine it is in a pejorative sense to demean late Irene, stripping her of any dignity. In a particularly cruel manner Anna is describing Irene as a small creature with little wet hands. The trope of a desire of union between the *I* and the other symbolised by the motif of hands appears in the narrative many times. The satirical description of Seale on Sea, the house of Anna Quaine’s former governess and the step mother to Daphne and Dicky too has a turning moment of holding hands between Daphne and Eddy. Portia is sent to Seale on Sea when the Quaines decide to spend a holiday alone in Capri exhausted with Portia’s burdensome otherness. We also find out that Anna herself had been orphaned at an age yet tenderer than that of Portia’s

as we are given an opportunity to learn about Anna's photograph with a little kitten – holding it tight in a strangling manner. In *The House in Paris* the motif of hands appears again. Leopold stays with his hands tucked into his pockets in a moment of emotional breakdown. Hands are joined in the moments of passion, and they leave imprints on grass where lovers reveal their sentiments, they are scalded in foreshadowing conflict and they are described as gloved and fidgety in the case of secretive Naomi. The motif of joined hands, however, is the most obvious symbol of dialogism, since it metaphorically stands for a capacity to interact with the other – the capacity to embrace the other.

Touching, holding hands etc are metaphors for relationships, consummation of love and male/female rite of enlivening their roles as such. In the middle part of *The House in Paris*, much of narrator's attention is given to Max's and Karen's hands and touching. Hands are central to the emotional landscape Bowen presents us with – hands are the revelation of everything that is beyond, something which is invariably remote and hidden. "Karen's empty white gloves lay on the table between them; he turned one over, intently looking at it. Nerves in her fingertips began burning (...)." (*HP*, 136) Now, "(...) he drew the cigarette from between her fingers (...) and with his fingers began to explore her hand" (*HP*, 145)

It is not in vain that the imagery of hands gains ground over any other imagery in *The House in Paris*, for if we argue that the novel is a narrative of childhood and parenthood, it inevitably transforms itself into the narrative of self and other. In using the imagery of hands, Bowen does not only highlight the message of a possible union between oppositions, but also permits her characters to touch – touch and delimitate borders. Julia Kristeva writes about the concept of the abject disturbing borders in *The Powers of Horror*,

How can I be without border (...) in that compelling, raw, insolent thing in the morgue's full sunlight, in that thing that no longer matches and therefore no longer signifies anything I behold the breaking down of a world that has erased its borders. (Kristeva, 1982, 11)

Kristeva relates the lack of borders to the mother/child dyad, to the most originary opposition between *I* and other. This corroborates the imagery of holding hands in Bowen's *The Death of the Heart* and casts some interesting light on the importance that *The House in Paris* devotes to hands as both a positive and negative

symbol. Hands elicit both disgust and horror precisely because they explore the boundaries of the body, the boundaries of the self and the other - the notion of the border as a site of demarcation and undecideability between the self and the other.

Furthermore, modern feminist criticism has spoken extensively about the prominence and power of the male gaze (Rosie Braidotti, Judith Butler) as well as the masculine hierarchy of the senses giving advantage to the sight over the touch as rendered in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological account of a man becoming immune to all sexual stimuli supplied to him via the sense of sight. Of the five senses, touch is the most physical, tangible, and intrusive – it draws the attention to the ancient divide between the feminine soma and masculine psyche. It also points towards female sexuality as more sensitive to touch rather than sight. However, a deliberate use of the imagery of hands and touch can become a ground for a contradiction to the hierarchical relations within the binary system of patriarchal thought. Women, traditionally the passive receptors of masculine action, can become the agent of action in space – a space demarcated by female aesthetics. This contradicts the idea that women can only exist in a state of arrested suspension or stasis – it contradicts patriarchal gender differentiation between female passivity and masculine activity.

In Bowen hands will not be reduced to offering a maternal support, nurturing life tenderly - they are given engendering powers, they are given an equal status in the dialogue between the *I* and the other. They will be masterful in the sense that they will become the vehicle for transgressing the abjectable where leaving the mark on the grass is both the privilege of Karen's and Max's to create performative neologisms in a new discourse.

2. Feminism.

Rubin Gayle, in her “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex” (1975) engages in an extensive analysis of female oppression as perpetuated throughout the centuries by the phallogentric hegemony. She bases her analysis on the idea that the founding sex/gender dyad that divides men and women into centres and peripheries respectively is a limiting mode of production enmeshed into discourses in all societies and clearly aimed at subordinating and objectifying women. Through the concepts of gender and compulsory heterosexuality women, according to Gayle, are consigned to a secondary position in the father’s *parole*, where the marginalized and peripheral discourse is that of the mother. Another influential feminist theorist Nancy Chodorow approximates herself to Gayle’s theory admitting that it is through women and their role as mothers that the social organization of gender is centralized and defined. The child forms its *ego* in reaction to the dominating figure of the mother. It is also through the mother that the Oedipal and pre-Oedipal stages are enacted however with different results on men and women, where the former transit to take command of the symbolic, and the later are subjugated as the symbolic’s passive elements. As Rubin continues, power distribution between the feminine and the masculine “is implicated in the construction and reproduction of male dominance itself” (Gayle, 1975, 9) through subjugating of women into state defined roles of mothers and wives.

Rubin Gayle starts her study of symbolic engenderment with an analysis of Freud and Levi-Strauss where she argues that neither of these men managed to resolve the issue of female oppression through their analyses of the unconsciously developing psyche. Instead both of the scholars used the category of woman as raw and discartable material in their analysis of phallogentric world. Gayle pursues the work of Engels, paraphrasing his ideas on social organization. On the materialist level, this explains how the society is divided into the public and private spheres. Any social organization, under which the people of a particular historical epoch and a particular country live, is determined by both kinds of production: the stage of development of labour on the one hand, and of the family on the other. Based on that, Rubin develops her argument of the kinship systems as well as the gift theory as founding of the dominant male discourse.

Kinship becomes a key term in Gayle's work and will be used here in the thesis as the propelling force behind the distribution of power in both *The House in Paris* and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* with the inclusion of the incest taboo and the Foucauldian capitalist family cell. In his founding study *The Elementary Structure of Kinship* Levi-Strauss writes that exchanging women as a gift is an elementary and crucial element of forming social structures into kinship systems where male individuals with no biological affinities are bound together. Gift transactions are basic in all societies and marriage is seen as the most valuable of all. With a gift of a woman kinship and blood ties are established which is far greater than other simple gifts of reciprocity. The exchange or traffic of women further creates a distinction between the gift and the giver. Traditionally it has been the male who gives and receives women, thus immediately creating the power distinction between the active giving/receiving party and the passive circulating one. In most societies, the women receive no benefit from the exchange and thus they are seen only as a conduit creating relationships between men.

I would argue that feminist assertions of the commonality of women as a group as represented in kinship unwittingly contribute to the regulation of gender relations. And yet, membership of the class of women is not the inescapable consequence of biological femininity. As has been said in the previous section, gender identities are not expressions of an essential core but performances built from citations and imitations specific to a given context. In this way, performances that subvert, confuse, or ironize gender norms have the power to unsettle or even unseat those norms, as will be shown in the following chapters of this thesis.

Furthermore, interestingly, the kinship systems were tightly related to Anglo-Irish culture, which saw English Christianity try to erase the original patterns of social existence among the Irish (Backus, 1999). Similar to that, it is also within the paradigm of kinship systems that society functions in Bowen's fiction – the kinship of adults and the kinship of children, the kinship of women and that of men. Between these structures a practice of trafficking goes on. The kinship systems in Bowen's fiction construct their incest taboos and gift exchange patterns. Rubin understands incest taboos as

the sexes into two mutually exclusive categories, a taboo which exacerbates the biological differences between the sexes and thereby creates gender (...) thereby enjoining heterosexual marriage. (Gayle, 1975, 178)

And yet, in her last novel, *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*, Bowen raises the issue of inheritance from the father to the daughter, and to which extent the daughter can control the inheritance. Bowen finds in kinship systems obstacles constraining to women. Among them there are the asymmetrical theory of gift, giver and exchange, obligatory heterosexuality and the paradigm of empowerment of women. But controversial as it may seem, Bowen sees a possibility of empowerment and dissemination of male hegemony thanks to kinship inheritance and the power acquisition it implies. Without economic power, the Woolfian room of one's own and in case of Bowen the inheritance of one's own, Bowen's early writing shows a world where women are denied prestige, and more important, they have less control over such basic matters as their fertility patterns, their marriages (if, when and with whom), their premarital sex, their access to extramarital sex, their household activities, their levels and types of education, and their freedom to move about and pursue diverse interests. Thus, according to Bowen, economic power has important consequences for what women can, or cannot do in a society. This however remains safeguarded only with the category of man constructed under a prerogative that it should remain stable and centred. Should it become decentred by the issues of homosexuality, withdrawal from language or poverty, as in *The House in Paris* for example, the idea of stable exchange changes its character. A woman, according to the phallogentric discourse, lives as a foreigner; a man can never become one. With the apparition of the idea of foreignness, the category of male power is easily deconstructed as it too is enacted in performativity and may be 'derailed' from its path of normative engenderment, through the operations of narcissism as will be postulated for both of the novels analysed here.

The idea of de-masculinization of kinship systems and the male category in general through non-normative sexualities among men and narcissistic conflicts has been quite popular in theory. What should be noted is that the very prototype of male to male exchange has led critics to accuse the dominant hegemony of *homosociality*. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes about this phenomenon extensively in her *Between Men. English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, which has been considered the founding tenet of Queer Studies. Sedgwick argues in her work that "concomitant changes in the structure of male 'homosocial desire' were tightly, often causally bound up with the other more visible changes" (in Chodorow, 1999, xiii). Kosofsky Sedgwick

postulates that the universally accepted and advocated patterns of male affinity, “mentorship, entitlement, rivalry, and hetero- and homosexuality” (in Chodorow, 1999, xiii) were directly related to class and social divisions and when dissolved could not be analysed without connection to women and gender structures. Feminist discourse in literature does not change theory or becomes feminist only by “slotting mothering person, friend, or infant” (Lloyd, 2005, 113) into the places traditionally occupied by men. Bowen would certainly agree with the remark that “what must come next is the challenge of thinking through what is involved in relations of interdependence” (Lloyd, 2005, 113) building “the desired re-conceptualization of the self” (Lloyd, 2005, 113). Ideally, a new discourse on identification, power and even violence distribution must be created to avoid a similar auto-destruction of the feminine subject.

It follows that an attempt can be made in applying to Bowen’s fictional discourse informative competence theory that has been used in feminist studies on women’s autonomy. According to this theory mostly postulated by Paul Benson²⁰, autonomy is an ability to perceive critically courses of action competently by relevant normative standards. Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professionals and enables the system, agency, or professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations

In her conscious analysis, an agent must feel in control of the normative language but she may not necessarily identify with it. As a result, an autonomous agent should be able to structure a critique of norms and see through their falsity. Relational and conscious autonomy of discursive literacy will be again key terms of this work that will encompass their textual consequences on the idea of motherhood, femininity and family. It is with Gayle’s analysis of Freud, that our attention is shifted to children. During the Oedipal stage children are engraved with the conventions of sex and gender, psychoanalysis and its descriptions of sexuality are nothing more than the dominant discourses of social structures based on the theory of kinship systems. Since Levi-Strauss’ understanding of subject relies on the definition of its gender- “the divergent

²⁰ Based on Paul Benson’s theories the self-determination that distinguishes autonomous choice and action consists in the reflective expression of the agent’s deep and pervasive wants and values, where the agent has reflectively reaffirmed them. What the agent cares about deeply, on reflection, comprises her ‘perspectival identity’. Autonomous actions are those that arise, in appropriate ways, from reflective consideration of relevant elements of that identity.

social destinies of the two sexes can therefore be traced” (Gayle, 1975, 83). We have already said that the kinship system, on which a society bases itself according to Levi-Straus, functions via the exchange of women between male subjects, creating therefore an oppressive system for female subject. Gayle’s sex/gender systems rely strongly on the idea of children within kinship systems and their education in favour of obligatory patterns of sexuality. This idea goes parallel to Foucault’s understanding of sexuality as an effect of the discursive operations of power and institutional indoctrination as well. In her conclusion on normative sexuality and kin Gayle therefore rejects psychoanalytical views defending the idea that human sexuality is of biological/libidinal origin. She, in her part, prefers to favour sexuality’s social stratification – Bowenesque interest in social consequences and not the private ones. This analysis allows Gayle shift her attention from biology and dominant discourses on sexuality and move towards a broader understanding of gender discourses as expression of all aspects of human life and not simply the +/- phallic paradigm.

The above analysis will help us go back to the earlier introduction on dialogical identification. In this work we will be able to move from self-referential Cartesian selfhood towards a dialogical understanding of identity as constructed within the self/other dyad. Sexuality, according to Gayle, is not merely derivation of gender, as noted earlier. Therefore, in the comparison of Rubin’s and Ricoeur’s studies we can see some similarities. In his *Wonder, Eroticism and Enigma*, Ricoeur distinguished three cyclical layers in the general understanding of sexuality. The first layer enclosed sexuality within religious myth and ritual. The second layer saw the separation of the sacred and the sexual during the rise of the great world religions – sexuality was restrained and pushed into a family cell to serve procreation of human kind. In recent years that are encompassed in the third layer according to Ricoeur, there was a move towards a transcendental and more spiritual understanding of sexuality, and yet it continues to be separated from the sacred. In psychology, sexuality rises to have great importance in forming a person and it has been argued that a mature subject recedes in his or her sexual relationships with others to achieve the wholeness similar to that of a mother-child dyad. Similarly Chodorow postulates that motherhood reproduces itself cyclically so that the relationships towards the maternal too have a cyclical character. That said if in anthropology founding kinship systems rely on sex/gender oppositions, it is of urgent necessity to take advantage of this characteristic. Hence, what Chodorow

may in fact postulate is not putting an emphasis of binary cyclical oppositionism, but rather, on the cyclical characteristics of female relational kinship visible in the operation of motherhood. Similarly, what we will find in Bowen is a cyclical iterability of a subject that in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* will gain a name of concatenation, where all discourses are interdependent and interconnected.

As mentioned earlier, Margot Gayle Backus devotes her studies to the Anglo-Irish context, writing a detailed analysis of literature beginning in nineteenth century and encompassing the modern times. In her work, Backus argues that the Anglo-Irish tradition perpetuates a myth of a national other through the operations of gender, sexuality and maturation. The Anglo-Irish tradition posits a “seamless coherence between intrapsychic and national subjectivities, extending and replicating settler colonialist symbolic relations” (Backus, 1999, 19). What Backus notices as most prominent, however, is not continuity in the settler hegemony but rather a breakdown of the system, the cyclical Bowenesque concatenation. This she believes originates in the growingly appearing marginal discourses created by people of homosexual orientation, women and children, whose “victimization is nowhere forbidden; what is forbidden is to (talk) about it” (Backus, 1999, 19). What permits the coming out of their voices is the breakdown synthesized by many internal tensions in creating “an abstract national identity above local cooperation and identification” (Backus, 1999, 19). It originates at the breakdown of selfhood and otherness. This, in her study, Backus shifts to the creation of new gothic aesthetics. In this sense the gothic becomes associated with the metaphor of “unauthorized margins of modernity’s mutating dominant order” (Backus, 1999, 15) returning into Irish literature through the Gaelic revival. Backus stance is corroborated in writings by scholars such as Judith Halberstam (*Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*, 1995), Anne Williams (*Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic*, 1995), and Maggie Kilgour (*Communion to Cannibalism* 1990; *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, 1995). Elizabeth Bowen’s work too is informed by the aesthetics of the Anglo-Irish tradition, which Backus is prompt to use as material for her study. In her work Backus poses a more general question about the nature and hermeneutics of a family and its constituting units, namely the mother and the child by analyzing the reinforcingly emerging patterns of the nuclear family’s discourse, consolidated and politicized over two centuries in Anglo-Irish literature. This study, however, takes the Anglo-Irish influences further, seeking their reflection in the new

aesthetics of writing about gender, time and maternity in Bowen's longer fiction, with a clear emphasis on *The House in Paris* and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*. Furthermore, the discussion on motherhood, the family cell and children is also of great interest to feminism in general and certainly makes for one of the most important parts in my study of Bowen and Bowen's feminism.

If the patriarchal discourse relies on the formation of the nuclear family, the family relies on the creation of the myth of motherhood and the idea that motherhood increases women's worthiness. According to this philosophy motherhood is described as the only fulfilling role an adult woman can take on²¹. Within the patriarchal discourse the idea of fulfilling motherhood is juxtaposed against that of childlessness, especially by choice. That said, as much as the patriarchal discourse Bowen's work is too underpinned by the idea of childlessness, and later lone mothering. The hegemonic discourse is based on this apparently binary opposition of mother/non-mother created solely in relation to the woman's biological generative powers. Similarly, Adrienne Rich says in her *Of Woman Born* that,

the gulf between mothers and non-mothers (even the term is pure negation, like 'widow', meaning without) will be closed only as we come to understand how both childbearing and childlessness have been manipulated to make women into negative quantities, or bearers of evil. (Rich, 1995, 249)

Within the matrix of language, Rich points to the linguistic shackles that have been imposed on the concept of childlessness defined as 'unchilded', 'childless', 'child-free'. And yet there is "no familiar, ready-made name for a woman who defines herself, by choice, neither in relation to children nor to men" (Rich, 1995, 249). The words that the English vocabulary possesses are synonymous of a lack – they encumber the category of a woman with negative quality, since she is 'less' something/ she is somebody less a child – somebody less the other²². The category of woman is

²¹ It is by no means puzzling that in Irish society the myth of glorious and fulfilling maternity has always been juxtaposed against deterring women from having children through male disclamation from any responsibility over the mate's welfare and the offspring well-being, which has been documented in Patricia Kennedy's *Maternity in Ireland: A Woman - Centered Perspective* (2002).

²² This idea of femininity as a lack is obviously constructed on the more general and ubiquitous binary division of the woman lacking the penis and the man having the penis.

constructed by 'relatedness' as Rich notices, relatedness towards a centre outside of herself. Even, as Rich explains "the ancient meaning of the word 'virgin' (she-who-is-unto-herself) is obscured" (Rich, 1995, 249). Women merely exist in a context, in relation to, as the Virgin Mary exists in relation to God, as an Amazon exists in relation to procreation. Therefore, since the category of a woman is constructed by relatedness – a binary opposition, it has been entrenched by various polarities such as woman-man, woman-mother, mother-amazon, "matriarchal clan or guerillers" (Rich, 1995, 250). As Rich points out, in primitive societies recognizing matriarchy all women were mothers, what had no direct relation to their age, social status or function – even little girls were called mothers. That said, Rich argues that "the 'childless woman' and the 'mother' are a false polarity, which has served the institutions both of motherhood and heterosexuality" (Rich, 1995, 250). "There are no simple categories" (Rich, 1995, 250) and this statement seems to lie behind Elizabeth Bowen's work. One of the arguments is that Elizabeth Bowen pursues the intricacies and implications of a statement that motherhood and childlessness are a false polarity. As we will see in this thesis, Bowen endeavours to signal this problem in *The House in Paris* and works on it more extensively in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*. Consequently, if motherhood and childlessness are false binary oppositions, what is their implication? What are the implications of this statement to daughters, to a child within ourselves, to a daughter as we, half of the population, are? Would we be able to move away from defining motherhood as a biological function and childhood as a transitory stage in life?

We are, none of us, 'either' mothers or daughters; to our amazement, confusion, and greater complexity, we are both. Women, mothers or not, we feel committed to other women, are increasingly giving each other a quality of caring filled with the diffuse kinds of identification that exist between actual mothers and daughters. (...) Mothering and nonmothering have been such charged concepts for us, precisely because whichever we did has been turned against us. To accept and integrate and strengthen both the mother and the daughter in ourselves is no easy matter, because patriarchal attitudes have encouraged us to split, to polarize, these images, and to project all unwanted guilt, anger, shame, power, freedom, onto the 'other' woman. But any radical vision of sisterhood demands that we reintegrate them. (Rich, 1995, 253)

So rather than by binary opposition and partial gaze, a male gaze, we need to re-construct the category of a woman/daughter/mother from the perspective of a

mutual gaze. The mutual gaze is what Rich describes to ‘fasten’ a child to a mother: “the depth, calm, passion, of that dark blue, maturely focused look” (Rich, 1995, 31). As postulated in *The Reproduction of Mothering* “psychic differentiation and structuralization arise (...) out of a child’s experience of relationship” (Chodorow, 1999, 43-44) and it is the relationship to the mother that is crucial here. As a result, Chodorow defends *mapping* of the spaces of motherhood for every woman so that “core psychological and interpersonal experiences for women can be understood in terms of (...) internal mother-daughter lineage” (Chodorow, 1999, viii) since “mothers, by virtue of their gender, experience daughters as (...) like them.” (Chodorow, 1999, viii) If according to Chodorow girls undergo the pro-Oedipal and Oedipal phases in a different, incomplete and more prolonged way than boys owing to their more prolonged and deeper relationship with the mother – the mother becomes here more of a conceptual category. That said, if we read closely Bowen’s passage in *The Last September* referring to its main character Lois seeing a crack in the washbasin full of water every time she attempts to clean herself, we see the eternal divide between the mother and daughter in the semiotic space symbolized by water – the eternal divide between the known and the unknown, and the self and the other.

She lifted her water jug and banged it down in the basin: she kicked the slop-pail and pushed the washstand about. ... It was victory. Later on, she noticed a crack in the basin, running between the sheaf and a cornucopia: a harvest richness to which she each day bent down her face, Every time, the water clouded, she would see the crack: every time she would wonder: what Lois *was* – She would never know. (Bowen, 1929/1998c, 60)

The relationship of otherness and selfhood becomes even more prominent when one tries to ‘see’ oneself and wash off/object the mother as in Kristeva’s theme of matricide, an operation that will be analysed here in this chapter. Seeing oneself clearly is, then, impossible to according to Bowen for the question of identity is left many times unanswered in her fiction. What may be more fruitful for the subject is rather performing oneself – moving on and becoming. If one cannot ‘kill’ the mother as exemplified in matricide, one may seek to take the mask of motherhood off following the idea that motherhood, as ‘womanliness’, is a masquerade and that it is easy to debunk most of its myths. This manifesto has been much defended by Susan

Maushart who based her *The Mask of Motherhood*²³ on the very much influential essay by Joan Riviere²⁴ – “Womanliness as Masquerade”. Both of this text will be used in my work to defend the idea of greater fluidity of motherhood as well as subjectification as such. Multiplicity of women is nowhere else more visible than in the figure of a mother. This implies again that we use the ideas of Kristeva and among them the idea of semiotic *chora*, as Bowen’s back-to-the-wombishness, which will be elaborated on in both of the chapters about *The House in Paris* and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*. The growing necessity of going back-to-the-wombishness may be a reminder that, in fact, subjectivity requires the Lacanian third term, this being – a woman, and a mother. The third term will be analysed in the thesis as underlying personal relationships of both of the novels analysed here. The third term will then encompass the ideas of the archaic and the buried mother, the dialogical triad of mother-child-father, as well as non-binary dyad of self and other gathered together under the gaze of Deleuzian little girl.

The renunciation of the mother and daughter-within will take us back to Paul Ricoeur and his notion of selfhood and otherness, lived through attentiveness, translation, and forgiveness. Indirectly, motherhood, womanhood and otherness are yoked together in Chodorow’s statement that “many women feel intuitively connected to others” (Chodorow, 1999, viii) and both draw and translate this ability from/onto mothering. Chodorow writes that “both daughter and mother experience this relationship intensely, such that it contributes in profound ways to the creation and experience of self” (Chodorow, 1999, xii) as well as the other.

The problematic of motherhood too resonates with Ricoeur’s understanding of dialogical subject at its most in the founding concepts of being, that is in enduring and suffering – just as motherhood is often described as embedded in enduring and suffering and experienced as such. Adrienne Rich comments on the implications of suffering during motherhood so that,

²³ See Susan Maushart, *The Mask of Motherhood: How Becoming a Mother Changes Our Lives and Why We Never Talk About It*. (2000)

²⁴ Retrieved October 13, 2008 from website: <http://www.mariabuszek.com/kcai/DadaSurrealism/DadaSurrReadings/RiviereMask.pdf>

the suffering of the mother, the primary identification of woman as the mother – were so necessary to the emotional grounding of human society that the mitigations, or removal of that suffering, that identification must be fought at every level, including the level to question it at all. (Rich, 1995, 30)

One may argue that what this doctoral thesis will aim at is to understand the category of a ‘natural’ woman and mother, who is denied any further identity by the phallogocentric discourse but who, at the same time, resists cultural determinism. Even though, mothering abides “structurally induced psychological processes” (Chodorow, 1999, 7) its practices are extremely difficult to be generalized and divided into natural and unnatural, in spite of the fact that the masculine discourse strives to enclose the idea of (un)natural into easily measurable categories. Since Bowen’s discourse remains both innovatory and engaged dialogically with the phallic order it is the role of the reader to decode the meaning and implications of the category ‘unnatural’ which Bowen seems to be actively challenging. Henceforth a question arises: does Elizabeth Bowen present us with the category of ‘un-natural’ woman and mother and what are the practices to make one think so?

Along with the reading of Adrienne Rich the idea that children and mothers are the causes of each other’s suffering makes us reconsider Ricoeur’s argument of anger, suffering- “the suffering of ambivalence” (Rich, 1995, 21) - and enduring in the relationship oneself constructs with another.

Suffering and enduring are indiscartable elements of motherhood, and they are so in a construction of any dialogical identity. During pregnancy and breastfeeding “women are urged (...) to imitate the serenity of madonnas” (Rich, 1995, 35). The imagery of the Madonna is nowhere more evident than in the writing by Julia Kristeva. Kristeva wrote about the theme of Madonna and the Child in relation to the theme of motherhood in general. However she also wrote about the clichéd concepts that the category of woman was to fill in – the virgin, mother and whore. Chodorow writes that “the biological experiences involved in pregnancy and mothering, and unconscious as well as conscious fantasies about these, are deeply central to many women’s sense of self and one of the central meaning for women of motherhood” (Chodorow, 1999, xiii).

In her *Of Woman Born* Adrienne Rich raved against the stigma of impurity of female body connected to pregnancy in patriarchal discourse.²⁵

Recently Kristeva has come back to her idea of motherhood as metaphorical of the self/other dyad. In *Le génie féminine* Kristeva links the theme of motherhood with the Christian concept of Agape. She writes,

When the female subject has succeed in negotiating the complex manoeuvre, imposed on her by the primary and secondary Oedipal complexes, she has the opportunity of acquiring this strange maturity that the male so often lacks, torn as he is between the macho phallic pose and regression to the infantile state. Equipped with this maturity, the mother can welcome the child, not as phallic or narcissistic prosthesis (as he so often is), but as the real presence of the Other: perhaps the first, or even the only possible, and which inaugurates the nation as a network of connections, based no longer on Eros but on its sublimation in Agape. (Kristeva in Ingman, 2007, 556)

After all, as it must be mentioned, the concept of Agape corresponds with the idea of a-sexual love, which may be a means for Kristeva to escape the biological +/- penis binary opposition contested by many feminists.

²⁵ In *Sorties* Helene Cixous proposes a re-working of the concept of bisexuality, which in a centre organized world came to signify neutral, neither feminine-only nor masculine-only. Cixous, however, ventured to unveil bisexuality's positive meaning. The first meaning for bisexuality Cixous came up with was that of bisexuality as a fantasy of a complete being, a unity between two elements merging into one whole. The second meaning for bisexuality was that of ability to find within oneself the two sexes: "Evident and insistent in different ways according to the individual, the non-exclusion of difference or of a sex, and starting with this 'permission' one gives oneself, the multiplication of the effects of desire's inscription on every part of the body and the other body." (Cixous, 1998, 582) What the two sexes came to signify is not merely the relation of the masculine and the feminine but the relation of self, the subject with the other: "(...) the passageway, the entrance, the exit, the dwelling place of the other in me – the other that I am and am not, that I don't know how to be, but that I feel passing, that makes me live – that tears me apart, disturbs me, changes me, who? – a feminine one, a masculine one some? – several, some unknown, which is indeed what gives me the desire to know and from which all life soars. This peopling gives neither rest nor security, always disturbs the relationship to 'reality', produces an uncertainty that gets in the way of the subject's socialization. It is distressing; it wears you out; and for men, this permeability, this nonexclusion is a threat, something intolerable." (Cixous, 1998, 582)

Kristevan *Herethics*, which operates outside the Law of the father, is motherhood and as Ingman writes it “is a relational, dialogic practice of love in which recognition of alterity takes precedence over identity” (Ingman, 2007, 30).

The call for the symbolic mother does not remain unanswered in Bowen’s fiction that reproduces relationships women foster towards each other. If we look closer at Bowenesque mothers, they are rarely (with the exception of Eva Trout) represented as in the process of bringing up their young offspring. The younger characters in Bowen’s fiction are usually orphaned. Most of the time Bowen reinforces a motif of a young woman and her usually older and ambiguous female friend for whom the young woman develops an infatuated admiration. While the biological mothers tragically disappear from narrative, Bowen’s discourse comes to rely on the construction of symbolic mothers who very often fluctuate from the centre to the margins. The symbolic mother in Bowen is able to be extra-narrative since the culturally constructed mother has died. As Kristeva notices culture is based on the process of exclusion. However, what is interesting in Bowen is that she makes an attempt at separating maternity as “symbol or ideal and motherhood as institution” (Hansen, 1997, 32), a move for which Adrienne Rich in her *Of Woman Born* has been given much feminist acclaim. Since childbearing is synonymous with distant past for mothers in Bowen, they seem to perpetuate the feminist message found in *These Our Mothers, or: Disintegrating Chapter* written by a French critic Nicole Brossard. Bowenesque mothers are symbolic mothers since they “have killed the womb” (Brossard in Hansen, 1997, 33). Brossard claims in *These Our Mothers* that,

Each woman can profit only to the extent that she becomes a symbolic mother. That is when she stopped bearing children. (. ...) If she wants to survive, a woman must assert herself in reality and become recognized as a symbolic mother: incestuous in power but inaccessible sexually for reproduction. She then completely fills the space of desire and so can appropriate for herself the work of the other. Strategic inversion: the symbolic woman-mother has lost her womb. (Brossard in Hansen, 1997, 33)

The conceptualisation of mother/daughter dyad reinforces the idea of multiplicity and open-endedness in constructing a narrative of identity. Such deconstructive/constructive dyads are many in Bowen’s fiction, and they too can be found in other examples of modernist fiction such as Virginia Woolf’s writing. Looking

for a literary parallel for Bowenesque surrogate mother/daughter dyad as in *The Hotel*, *Last September*, *The House in Paris* etc one finds a similar narrative in that of Mrs Ramsay and Lily in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. *To the Lighthouse* sets to explore the figure of the mother – the beautiful and mysterious Mrs Ramsay.

Repeated, rephrased, reformulated thought out the text, the questions about Mrs Ramsay, her life, and the lives of those who surround her are not answered but are confronted with a series of oppositions. Male and female, father and mother, life and death, light and darkness, affirmation and destruction, enclosure and separation – lighthouse and window - all appear to find in the text a third term of resolution. (Hirsh, 1989, 109)

Motherhood is characterized by constant ebbs to and fro like those of semiotic and liquid pulsations in Kristeva – gradual separation and reunification, where the movement outside is positive, and the movement inside is negative. To exemplify that critics point to the gradual spatial progression of encounter between Lily and Mrs Ramsay, which can be juxtaposed to the movement inside as in Bowen's *The Hotel* or Woolf's *The Voyage Out*. The movement in *To the Lighthouse* is from the indoors towards outdoors, “from the bedroom, to the dining room and finally to the beach, which occasions a return to the steps and Lily's vision” (Hirsh, 1989, 111), whereas in *The Hotel* even if the characters venture outdoors, “from this improbable place” (Bowen, 1927/2003b, 168) – the hotel – the more improbable it becomes to fit into the inconceivable discourse outside of the safe harbour of their enclosed habitat.

And yet Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* describes Lily as negatively emotionally dependent on Mrs Ramsay and seeking to understand and learn the world filtered through Mrs Ramsay. This has been read as “indicatory of Lily's immature and self-annihilating desire for fusion with the mother, a desire she must outgrow, resolve and reframe so as to separate from Mrs Ramsay and finish the painting” (Hirsh, 1989, 112). What if the desire for fusion with the mother underlying one's subjectivity is never to be outgrown from – what if its proliferation marks a subject's passage towards adulthood? True enough, Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* is a narrative of a daughter – the mother is only mediated. In Elizabeth Bowen's fiction, what begins as a narrative of a daughter turns to be a narrative of a mother. As in Kristeva, “The child's arrival extracts woman out of her oneness and gives her the possibility (...) of reaching

out to the other, the ethical” (Kristeva, 1997 in Ingamn, 2007, 382) – of becoming a child herself.

Following feminist psychoanalysis, especially if we remember Chodorow’s object-relational account of identity, “women experience a sense of self-in-relation” (Chodorow, 1999, iii) during the process of their identification. The idea of self-in-relation is “in contrast to men’s creation of a self that wishes to deny relation and connection” (Chodorow, 1999, iii). Within psychoanalysis a prominent thematicization of the masculine and the feminine has been based on the negative construction of gender that is a negative paradigm of identity construction. A theory has been constructed that ‘the individual emerges from constraint’ or negative binary opposition reworked by the statement ‘I am oneself because I am not the other’. It has been argued that such understanding does not offer a sufficient insight into “the dynamics of subjectification and, as a consequence, offers an etiolated understanding of agency” (McNay, 2000). It follows that feminism has been widely influenced by two tenet theories of psychoanalysis, namely Jacques Lacan and Michel Foucault. In the first place as has been just noted, for Lacan, meaning results from a negative relation between signified and signifiers. Women, it is widely argued, are the result of double negativity – no phallus and no maternal affiliation within the language of the father. And yet many have argued that this description lacks the socio-historical specificity – if women are double lack and if original identity is receding as it undergoes *aphanasis*, how is it that certain individuals manage to exercise a great amount of agency and autonomy, maintaining strong identity traits. Nancy Chodorow corroborates this idea in saying that “culture... does not determine the personal meaning of gender” (Chodorow, 1999, xii). What is more, linguistics offers another set of obstacles to Lacanian theories. A further difficulty arises in translating Lacan into feminist discourse as a result of meaning being constructed based on the sexual difference, vertical difference (Barat, 2007²⁶).

In the second place, Foucault too seems to be wrought with theoretical traps since he fails to give a full account of subject’s agency. The first part of his larger oeuvre until the 1st volume of *The History of Sexuality* reduces subjects to docile bodies of no determined internal agency. The second part of Foucault’s work focuses on his notion of aesthetics of existence and seems not sufficiently detailed and too random.

²⁶ Retrieved March 13, 2009 from website: <http://americanajournal.hu/vol3no1/barat>

Faced with the difficulties arising from the available theory on identification and engenderment, feminism has chosen to invest into the problematic of agency. That said, it has focused greatly on analyzing women's productive and autonomous actions in the face of cultural constraints and within environment that limits women's right to act and choose. In feminist thought, the above has gained a label of relational accounts of agency and autonomy and has been worked through by Habermasian feminism. Relational accounts of agency and autonomy "tend to emphasize the constitutive role of intersubjective dynamic in the establishment of gender identity" (McNay, 2000, 11). Interestingly for this thesis, McNay maintains after Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan "the intersubjective dynamic is paradigmatically expressed in the mother-child dyad which, as has been widely pointed out, has the effect of naturalizing the process through which gender identity is assumed" (McNay, 2000, 12).²⁷

On the opposite pole situate themselves accounts of discursive construction of subject, which give primacy to embodiment that "replaces dichotomous formulations of the relation between mind and body with monistic and more dialogical conceptions." (McNay, 2000, 13) Discursive or narrative construction of subject is said to respond to historical and relational dynamic within sex-gender systems, which have been considered in this theory historical and material. As a proponent of this theory Nancy Frazer has accused Foucauldian symbolism of having led to underemphasise of "underlying issues of economic disadvantage." (McNay, 2000, 15) McNay explains that for Frazer it is crucial to recognize that gender is simultaneously constructed along symbolic and material dimensions in order to undo the false antithesis between a politics of recognition and one of redistribution" (McNay, 2000, 15). It should be insightful for this work to compare Frazer's preoccupations with socio-economic operations within the process of identity formation with that of Bowen's emphasis on economic and class origins.

Above emphasis on within-place-ness or *Dasein* takes theories of identification to recognize the *habitus* and prominence of temporalization of narrative. The notion of

²⁷ Criticism of these theories highlights their reliance on sexual difference in identity construction as well as overt emphasis on maternal accounts of agency, which are insufficient to explain changes within patterns of gendered behavior catalyzed by tensions arising from the expansion of women's role beyond that of mothering. In my opinion, however, this criticism does not take into account the fact of the category of mother being a fluid category nowadays not only referring to biological mothering.

habitus is more directly linked with that of Pierre Bourdieu in feminist thought. McNay argues that “Bourdieu’s understanding of *habitus* as a generative rather than a denoting structure is expressed in a dialogical temporality denoting both the ways in which norms are inculcated upon the body and also the moment of praxis (...)” (McNay, 2000, 32). The notion of *habitus* not only highlights the idea of symbolic violence or the operations of domination fueled by the phallogocentric discourse – it emphasizes the subject’s complicity with the system “that enables the institution to attain full realization” (Bourdieu, 1990, 57). According to this logic, gender differences are somatized “within the bodies of individuals” (McNay, 2000, 37), within feminine bodies that perpetuate “the circular logic where the cultural arbitrary is imposed upon the body in a naturalized form whose cognitive effects (*doxa*) result in the further naturalization of arbitrary social differences” (McNay, 2000, 37). It is of extreme importance for this study to analyze the processes of somatization or naturalization of negative identity practices carried out by many women in Bowen’s fiction, even after, as Bourdieu points out, “the objective conditions of its emergence have been dislodged” (Bourdieu, 1990 in McNay, 2000, 42).

Habitus as a set of individual patterns of behaviour will highlight in the thesis certain solitude of every subject that prompts it to become a foreigner within itself. As such women will be placed at the margins and will be seen as belonging to the obscure spaces of alterity – they will be foreigners to language and text. Search for female autonomous *habitus* will be of great necessity, *habitus* that, on one hand, will encapsulate the idea of the semiotic place of plenty common to all, and, on the other hand, will respond to the female need for autonomous and relational recognition.

The notion of temporalization of narrative corroborates the notion of identity as a set of bodily practices rather than externally imposed norms. According to Elizabeth Grosz, the body is a transitional entity. According to Judith Butler it needs to be perceived through “temporalized regulation of socio-symbolic norms and practices” (McNay, 2000, 33). The subject is constructed in “the process of materialization” (McNay, 2000, 34). Teresa de Lauretis claims that “narrativity over-determines identification.” (Lauretis, 1984, 9) As such, narrativity is a process that allows identity to be mediated between the pseudo-alternative of pure change and absolute identity. Even though Ricoeur gives priority to narrativity as his main analyzing tool, feminism has been too aware of the pitfalls narrativity may hide. McNay explains that

The positioning of the female subject in narration involves a potentially conflictual double identification with, on the one hand, the masculine gaze of the spectator and, on the other, the female object of the gaze. (. ...)The narrativizing of marginal experiences, whilst essential to the establishment of submerged female identities, never takes place in isolation from pre-given ideological forms. For a narrative to be meaningful and to acquire some degree of social authority, it must draw to some extent on culturally dominant discourses of truth-telling (...). (McNay, 2000, 84, 98)

That said the problem of dominant discourses in narrativity undercuts the ideas of agency and autonomy. And yet, the concept of hermeneutical iterability seems to offer a way out of this entanglement in this use of the concept of hermeneutics, which captures the active role the subject plays in the process of identity construction. In hermeneutics, despite the existence of compulsory dominant discourses, their implications are distorted and re-worked by the subject in practice that by the means of “transfer from the Same to the Other, in empathy and imagination” (Kearney, 2004a, 100) brings the Other “that is foreign” (Kearney, 2004a, 100) closer. This issue is taken up Bowen’s use of the concept of a foreigner that, on one hand is debilitating and self-perpetuating, yet on the other hand offers a way out of the debilitating circles of hegemonic homophonism and narcissistic egoism as corroborated in both *The House in Paris* and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*. Hermeneutics stands against the very ideas of Lacanian *aphanasis* and double negativity, which have not taken into account the socio-historical context of the subject’s existence, as well as his or her active role in “sedimentation and inauguration of meaning” (Kearney, 2004a, 57). Henceforth, confrontation with inherited signification implies that,

With regard to gender identity, the hermeneutic idea of the pre-interpreted nature of experience provides the way of considering how the ambiguities of the process through which the individual appropriates gender norms are worked through at the level of self-identity. How it may be, for example, that, despite the compulsory nature of heterosexual norms, there seems to be a lack of correspondence between these norms and individual practices. (McNay, 2000, 77)

On the whole the transfer from otherness seems to be possible thanks to the marginal place of women within discourse and their constant necessity to translate everything from the father’s *parole* into ‘the mother tongue’. In *Nations without*

Nationalism, Kristeva sees women as particularly capable of translating between the known and the strange, between selfhood and otherness. As such, women are capable of trespassing the delimitating line of the hegemonic hermeneutical circle of norms. In Bowen the outsider character of some of her female subjects safeguards their position as possible translators of the new, the strange and the other into the discourses of selfhood. There seems to be an underlying presupposition that ‘there is something rather than nothing’, where the new and counter “the effort to live – the desire to exist” (Changeux and Ricoeur, 2002, 229) feminine seems to be the driving factor behind Bowen-esque plots.

Furthermore, women must likewise look into the future for the wise child in a leap inwards “that produces prolific in-between space and other, alternative ways of knowing” (Braidotti, 2006, 6). Teresa Casal notes that this “challenge (...) is outlined in the opening lines of Hugo Hamilton’s second volume of memoirs *The Sailor in the Wardrobe* (2006).” (Casal, 2008, 5):

People say you’re born innocent, but it’s not true. (. ...) You inherit your identity, your history, like a birthmark that you can’t wash off. (. ...) We are born with our heads turned back, but my mother says we have to face into the future now. You have to earn your own innocence, she says. You have to grow up and become innocent. (Hamilton, 2006, 1)

This “transitional paradigm” (Kearney, 2006, xvi) contributes to Bowen’s understanding of the child’s surfacing violence as a surplus of inter-subjective struggle as “allegoriz[ing] the conflicts and abuses that characterize the modern world (Attridge, 2004, 32). To Bowen it is only through piecing up together the cracked and violent memory of childhood that a subject may find itself at peace within the discourse of adulthood. Otherwise, the experience of un-signified selfhood may become disabling, in that one may paraphrase Ricoeur’s explanation of the interdependence between the private and the public of which destruction is bilateral – “the suppression of the private entails the destruction of the public” (Ricoeur, 2004, 13) – the suppression of the child entails the destruction of the adulthood through the operations of infancy inherited violence. It is the cyclical coming together of the child and the adult that renders liveable the life of a fully developed subject. “Narrative serves as a necessary (...) condition for ethical resistance to evil” (Kearney, 2003, 104).

What is then the new feminine discourse that this thesis defends? It is the narrativization of the cyclical experience of otherness as best rendered through the symbolic categories of the mother and the child. This new hermeneutical discourse of female and further maternal creativity presupposes relationships of relational kind, where each approximation of the self and the other does not merely replicate the hegemonic culture but creates new meanings and new trajectories for every self, e-naturalizing what has become habitual and naturalising what still dwells on the margins. Personal narrativization is a means of recovering agency according to Bowen, even if it is enacted on the post private plane of one's memory of childhood and the present of adulthood. Narrativization is a means to remain visible against the philosophy that demands self-erasure from women. It compels us to listen and look even at the traumatic experiences that have long seemed to resist textuality. It is a means of reasserting the female voice after "coming to terms with the complexities of life and art." (Casal, 2008, 207)

3. Matricide.

The advocates of psychoanalysis often defend the process of matricide an infant needs to undergo in its quest for maturity. Yet, the idea of matricide, abjection of the mother needs to be correlated with the idea of finding the buried mother and purging her. It has been pointed out (Kristeva, Nikolchina) that matricide is “the silent engine” (Nikolchina, 2004, 1) driving the female subject towards identification. Similarly to the narrative of Melanie Klein, “the loss of the mother – which for the imaginary is tantamount to the death of the mother – becomes the organizing principle for the subject’s symbolic capacity” (Kristeva, in Nikolchina, 2004, 129-130) for identification. Abjection of the mother and matricide are core operations of identification according to phallocentrism and psychoanalytical interdisciplinary studies, which Kristeva evolved from her studies of Melanie Klein. The fantasy of killing the mother represents a double risk for women. On the one hand, it may be absorbed by the phallogentric discourse as depletion of the mother, which may result in “perennial optimism” and “forgetfulness” (Nikolchina, 2004, 2). In doing so the phallogentric discourse is able to implant a divide between the pre-symbolic existence of the subject connected with the mother and the symbolic existence of the subject immersed now in the language of the father, where a new meaning for the term mother can be constructed. On the other hand, the matricide fantasy, constituting the first image, on the subject’s-to-be quest for subjectivity and language, becomes a source of life-long conflict between the child and the mother. Furthermore, the matricide fantasy is far more negative a symbol than Freud’s Oedipus complex, where the latter, while producing a temporary trauma, has as its goal a peaceful transition from a boy’s infatuation with the mother to a male adult’s corroboration with the father. In a situation where there is not a male parent, a boy’s inclusion into the phallogentric discourse is safeguarded by a network of kinship systems between adult males. In a similar situation, where there is no female parent to set one’s maturation against, a girl’s identity development is daunted with her having no ‘history’ to relay upon, no female tradition to ease her introduction into the language. The lack of female tradition has already been noted by many female authors of reference, among them Virginia Woolf, who admitted to having found no “tradition of

the mothers” (Woolf, in Nikolchina, 2004, 2) or Elizabeth Barrett Browning who looked “everywhere for grandmothers and found none” (Browning in Nikolchina, 2004, 2). In *Women and Fiction*, Susan Cahil notes Virginia Woolf’s interest in aesthetising as in her “strange spaces of silence” (Woolf, in Cahil, 2002, 77) that stretch between solitary female pronouncements, which could count for the female tradition, alternative to that represented by the angel in the house and perpetuating the phallogocentric discourse. That said, in killing the angel in the house, Woolf too commits a matricide, that is “realized as rejecting or even ‘vomiting’ the maternal body” (Nikolchina, 2004, 3). And yet, “the extreme nature of matricide is emphasized by the impossibility of incorporation or integration of the murdered mother” (Nikolchina, 2004, 3). One surprising conclusion, after pondering the texts by Woolf, may be that the angel in the house is after all the archaic mother, whose body needs to be abjected, but whose history needs to be translated and embraced by feminism. Kristeva says that “fear of the archaic mother” (Kristeva, 1982, 77) translates itself into the “fear of her generative powers” (Kristeva, 1982, 77) - so that, as Adrienne Rich concludes in her *Of Woman Born*, a girl wants to live her life ‘her own way’. The fantasy of matricide establishes the first boundary between selfhood and otherness, which may be bridged not only in the process of giving birth to a daughter’s daughter but also in a series of relationships women can have with each other – relationships of discursive sisterhood, non-generative motherhood, relationships between the self and the other, oneself and one’s mother, oneself and the child within.

Since the category of motherhood stretches from the subject’s personal experience of having a mother and living a relationship with her to mothering the subject’s own children, or engaging in the relationships of mother-daughter character – matricide takes on a more ambiguous meaning let alone that of killing one’s own mother. It may mean rejecting motherhood or suffering from female affiliation complex. Julia Kristeva writes in her *Tales of Love* that

we live in a civilization where the consecrated (...) representation of femininity is absorbed by motherhood. (. ...) that is a fantasy that is nurtured by the adult (...) of a lost territory (...) [and] a representation of primary narcissism . (Kristeva, 1987, 160)

As such feminism tends to “identify motherhood with that idealized misconception” (Kristeva, 1987, 161). Consequently, “it rejects the image and its misuse.” (Kristeva, 1987, 161)

The female affiliation (complex) may be found in French and American feminist writing. The relationship between the self and the other will lead towards a feeling of anxiety, whose origins are rooted in the anxiety of authorship Gilbert and Gubar described as a founding tenet for female authorship (*The Madwoman in the Attic* 1984). They later re-worked the theme in *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century* (1987) as anxiety felt by many women towards other women where “rivalry between women is fostered both by a need for (exclusive) male approval and, more importantly, by an anxiety about the contamination associated with a shared oppression”²⁸ (Gilbert and Gubar, 1990).

²⁸ See, Helen Vendler, (1990). “Feminism and Literature” Vol. 27(9), *The New York Review of Books*. and Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar “Feminism and Literature: An Exchange” <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/3531>

4. Desire and Becoming.

The capitalist society, according to Gilles Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (2004a), tricks people into believing that desire is a natural response to lack, so that the process of consumption is boosted and perpetuated. To quench desire subjects move from its life-giving fantasy towards the real-life fulfilment or substitution, that is fetishization. To contradict this belief, however, Deleuze argues that it is the desire that produces the ever-fleeing idea of lack. Desire is constructive and dwells outside of the preserve of fantasy, as Freud suggests. One of the major critiques made by Deleuze on Freud is that of the Oedipal complex underlying the desire and lack dyad. Deleuze takes it out of the private sphere of the subject and stretches it outside into the world, making a basis of all production. Desire is, then, not confined to the family cell, but undermines all modes of production and interaction within society.

To better understand identification processes Deleuze proposes in his *Anti-Oedipus* co-written with Felix Guattari that all life should be perceived as a machine and functions literally like a machine. Life is, in the first place, a conjunction of mechanisms that only gain concrete 'intentions' or take up diverse functions on being joined with other systems in different contexts. This understanding of life places a great emphasis on the existence of the other that brings meaning to the subject but itself is meaningless. It also points to the existence of different dominant ideologies which impose themselves on systems making uniformed ready-made definitions to sustain those very systems. Namely, patriarchy has its own ideological discourse or apparatus²⁹ defining categories of a woman, mother and family that only functions when joined with a predefined set of apparatuses. As a result Deleuze proposes existence of pre-defined dominant discourses contradicts uniqueness of life. In *A Thousand Plateaux* (2004b) Deleuze develops his principle of life as based on the idea of lines of flight

²⁹ Louis Althusser writes that the Ideological State Apparatuses are a number of realities which present themselves as specialized institutions and have their proper discourses of ideology and repression. As such they are part of both the public and the private domains. See, Louis Althusser. (1989). "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*. London: New Left Books pp 170-86.

“where mutations and differences produce not just the progression of history but disruptions, breaks, new beginnings and ‘monstrous’ births” (Colebrook, 2002, 57). To Deleuze, every concept is an open ended idea with its plethora of lines of flight. On the level of concrete examples there may exist a number of situations that fall under the category of motherhood or womanhood that escape the path carved for them by the dominant discourse. The before inevitably encapsulates the now “before there is a ‘child’ who relates to a ‘mother’ – before there are these social selves – there is a pre-personal perception” that is perpetuated by “ideas, sense or the imagination” (Colebrook, 2002, 82). Similarly, Deleuze describes this process as molecular experiences taking on a shape of molar formations. In other words, in the process of schizoanalysis that occurs during the molecular formation, one is able to distinguish between separate schizzes, which represent mobile fragments or impersonal parts assembled into “randomly gathered affects” (Colebrook, 2002, 83). Subjectivities are myriad of anonymous voices in that discursive “characters are diverse events and histories (...) contracted habits and contemplations (...) events of life (...) a life that is nothing outside of this singular expressions” (Colebrook, 2002, 83). As a creator of open-ended characters Bowen writes about imagination and fiction in books that were “power-testing athletics for my imagination” (Bowen, 1946/1976, 51). She writes in her “Out of a Book”, “The characters in the books gave prototypes, under which, for evermore, to assemble all living people” (Bowen, 1946/1976, 51). Fiction gave Bowen imaginative powers to assemble identities from the affects and percepts, as well as molecular units the characters “always moved in a blur of potentialities” (Bowen, 1946/1976, 51).

Since the other is a myriad of possible differences, one’s personal other points towards the enormous diversity of one’s self. In concepts of womanhood, motherhood or any other, the analysis should not centre on their primacy or given immanence, but rather on their legitimacy or illegitimacy within different cultural contexts. Norms are not immanently constant and given – what may not agree with the concept of womanhood in a patriarchal discourse is not necessarily in conflict with the concept of womanhood in any other discourse. Similarly, if we take the concept of motherhood we see that different periods in history understood motherhood in different ways through the lenses of diverse kinship systems, religious tenets, biology and legal laws and common social standards. What analysis should procure to discover are the hegemonies

underlying discourses and their variations, and at the same time it should recognize different histories and events, which have constructed subjectivities. In deciphering the intricacies of assembled schizzes common binary oppositions should be discarded. Human machines are structural only to the extent of their assembly like nature and yet the conjunctions of elements are random and ever-changing. Similar to this analysis, Julia Kristeva suggests a new approach to discourse through her idea of a revolution in the poetic language. It relies on disentangling subjects and their signs, signified from their signifiers and becoming strangers to language altogether. The body without organs, Deleuze describes as an open ended desiring machine has something in quality with Kristeva's melancholic, "collapsing either into blank asymbolia or into an overflowing chaos of ideas that he fails to put in order" (Kristeva, 1989, 45). The melancholic's speech impairment is paradoxically triggered by a highly efficient cognitive processing and Kristeva admits that

such hyperactivity with signifiers is displayed in the melancholic's capacity to connect distant semantic fields in a way that recalls the puns of hypomanics. This is aligned with his outstanding cognitive insight as well as the manic depressive's inability to make a choice or a decision. (Kristeva, 1989, 70)

Only matricide seems to represent a viable alternative to asymbolia³⁰ and it can be substituted by the art of fetishist representation contradicting the idea of existence of a lack as in Leonardo da Vinci's painting that Kristeva analyzes thoroughly. Kristeva writes in her *Black Sun* that

If loss, bereavement and absence trigger the work of imagination, persistently fostering it as much as they jeopardize and mar it, it is also to be noted that the work of art as fetish is issued as a way of revoking engrossing sorrow. The artist consumed by melancholia is also the most relentless in his determination to repel the symbolic abdication which anaesthetizes him. (Kristeva, 1989, 18)

³⁰ Nikolchina writes (2004) that, "Strangeness to language does entail the forlornness of the melancholic who is fused in the maternal Thing because of an *unaccomplished separation from the mother*. Asymbolia is the insufficiently lost maternal continent, the invisible centre of gravity, the hidden image of *Narcissus*, whose silent call threatens with *dissolution*." (Nicolchina, 2004, 26 emphasis mine)

Australian scholar Catriona Mackenzie manages in her work to develop the theories of selfhood, autonomy, self-conception and imagination. Theories of otherness are of great importance in the process of gaining autonomy where the subject strives to gain a greater knowledge of itself or achieve pleasure in various situations stretching from imagining, decision-making, etc. Through the concepts of intersectional identity, freedom of expression, constructing a social self, the philosophical concept of autonomy surfaces and it takes on a new meaning when applied to femininity. Throughout the centuries autonomy has been constructed in philosophy as relying on four tenets – self-understanding, self-realization, authenticity and self-governance. As Diana Tietjens Meyers writes in her “Intersectional Autonomy and the Social Self”:

Self-understanding has been taken to presuppose a transparent self; congruence of self and action has been taken to presuppose a unitary, homogenous self; self-governance has been taken to presuppose unfettered independence from other individuals, as well as from the larger society. (Meyers in Mackenzie and Stoljar, 2005, 152)

It follows that autonomy has been encumbered with masculine definitions and became an ‘andro-centric phantasm’ (Meyer in Mackenzie and Stoljar, 2005, 152). As seeing, autonomy should now be understood through the re-conceptualisation of female body – the *distencio* of the body into eternity or timeless time. Feminists have long been divided in their either favourable or unfavourable treatment of autonomy, voices ranging from discrediting the concept as inhospitable and “antithetical to the project of revaluing interpersonal capacities” (Meyer in Mackenzie and Stoljar, 2005, 152), Teresa de Lauretis being a strong example to feminists procuring to re-evaluate autonomy as a concept capable of bringing social change. In this analysis autonomy poses some interesting doubts on the construction and enactment of identity. More specifically, criticism of autonomy can be divided into five groups, of which the first one refers to autonomy as a symbol of Western civilization that gave rise to the myth of self-sufficient man. The second group focuses on metaphysical entrenchment of the problem since to say that someone is autonomous signifies to see them as atomistic and isolated in the universe, which completely contradicts the dialogical understanding of the world. The third group of criticism centres on the care criticism and is straightforwardly connected to ideas such as female kinship systems, problematic of sisterhood as well as female affiliation complex. It postulates that autonomy contradicts traditional

conceptions of womanhood such as nurturing, loving and caring. Postmodern critique as the fourth group draws on psychoanalysis and has in focus the “complex and shifting configurations of power” (Mackenzie and Stoljar, 2005, 10-11). Diversity critique centres on the idea that an individual identity is intersectional and thus cannot be autonomous.

Even though the link between autonomy and men seems to be univocal, “the gender paradigms of autonomy” are not stagnant. Moreover, the masculine attributes of autonomy have always been exaggerated in a way that independence and self-sufficiency became discursive stereotypes ascribed to masculinity. Marilyn Friedman writes that “some feminists worry that (...) autonomy has been (...) contaminated by this atomistic approach, which neglects the social relationships” (Friedman, 1993, 39). Autonomy does not implicate self-conception *ex nihilo* – on the contrary it is a theory of agency where the other comes to play a founding role in the construction of the self. That said, the idea of relational autonomy has been put forward assenting on the problems of intersectional identity and undeniable social context in which a subject is inserted. Mackenzie writes that,

The term ‘relational autonomy’, as we understand it, does not refer to a single minded conception of autonomy but is rather an umbrella term, designating a range of related perspectives. These perspectives are premised on a shared conviction, the conviction that persons are socially embedded and that agents’ identities are formed within the context of social relationships and shaped by a complex of intersecting social determinants, such as race, class, gender, and ethnicity. Thus the focus of relational approaches is to analyze the implications of the intersubjective and social dimensions of selfhood and identity for conceptions of individual autonomy and moral and political agency. (Mackenzie, Stoljar, 2005, 4)

Relational autonomy requires a contextual construction of the subject, which on its part implicate a temporal analysis. The temporal element does not only refer to the subject but also to its other as well as the dynamic relationship it has been fostering with the outside. As long as the autonomy is relational the subject is understood not as opposing interdependence and obligation but as embracing and transforming it. The problematics of autonomy – individual or relational overlap with the concepts of motherhood and womanhood. Relational autonomy implicates favourable evaluation of

centre-discursive feminine attributes such as nurturance and care. The ‘philosophical anthropology’ of being and time

is organized on the basis of a thematic concept, Care (Sorge), that (...) allows (...) to overthrow the primacy of knowledge of objects and (...) uncover[s] the structure of being-in-the-world that is more fundamental than any relation of a subject to an object. (Ricoeur, 1984, 61)

Feminine care contributes to the understanding and construction of temporality as in St. Augustine’s *distentio animi* that is synonymous with dispersal, multiplicity and consequently dialogism. Since *distentio animi* originally refers to the soul’s capacity to experience eternity it undoubtedly gains a quality of perfection, trying to grasp the nature of God’s invention of time. *Distentio animi* refers in St Augustine to temporality but, in my opinion, it can be translated into women’s experience of pregnancy, maternity, and within this the experience of selfhood and otherness. One may well reach back to the symbolic of the Virgin Mary as the Western-Latin signifier for femininity which was so overtly used by Julia Kristeva in a series of her writing on maternity as in Kristeva’s “Stabat Mater”. In becoming pregnant through the Holy Spirit, Virgin Mary experiences a somewhat similar event to that of the beginning of the world in Christian tradition – a miracle that has no beginning, simply an extension of God’s out-of-temporal existence. In pregnancy, human experience of time distends from the past, present and future it is consciously aware of in the present of the whole pregnancy. It is not only that *distentio animi* refers to temporality in pregnancy – it may also refer to the more complex and in-depth understanding of selfhood and otherness, where the self is distended literally and metaphorically from one to being two. Analysing femininity through the aporia of temporality, and within this temporality studying the aporia of selfhood and otherness is for this study of crucial importance and, as has been noted earlier, is rendered to be a form of narrativization of the personal in order to recover the public.

Consciousness of different time frames takes the subject from exercising autonomy to exercising agency. This implies a conscious relationship towards being in time, and being in place. In ‘consciously’ being a subject uses its right to autonomy by maintaining a “close kinship between motivation and the ability to mobilize in the present experience inherited from the past” (Ricoeur, 1984, 60). Ricoeur admits that “I

can', 'I do,' and 'I suffer' manifestly contribute to the sense we spontaneously give to the present" (Ricoeur, 1984, 60). In "Stabat Mater" Kristeva corroborates the idea of describing maternity as suffering: "My body is no longer mine, it doubles up, suffers, bleeds" (Kristeva, 1987, 167). In reaching towards the other, Ricoeur specifies two instances of suffering that need to be worked upon, namely the wounds that one associates with the 'terror of history', that he calls evil as suffering and the suffering one inflicts on others, that he calls evil as wrongdoing. The first category finds its discursive response in lament, the second one in blame. What is more "the two categories are almost always intertwined" (Kearney, 2004, 91). In general, the memory of suffering needs to be exchanged in the third model, not according to the contractual rules of reciprocal obligations, but according to an economy of the gift that exceeds reciprocity so that one would "proceed from the suffering of others (...) before imagining one's own" (Kearney, 1996, 9), which then is expressed as empathy towards the other without which there is no communication. It is clear that a spiritual economy is invoked in Ricoeur's discussion, involving a non-forgetful forgiveness that does not confuse forgiveness with forgetting, for one must keep the memory of the debt owed to those who have suffered. This means that "... the work of forgiveness must be grafted on to the work of memory in the language of narration" (Kearney, 1996, 10). "It follows that the effort of telling differently involved in refiguring identities requires the work of anamnesis, thus of mourning (in relation to loss and suffering) and of the revision of the past as narrated in 'traditionality' (for instance, in relation to the recovery of the traces that onto-theology and monotheism erase, and in relation to a justice called for by a suffering caused)" (Venn, 2005, 285). In Ricoeur's deeply Christian treatise on identity that responds to the ethical summons of embracing the other, the concept of forgiveness blends with St Augustine's concept of Care.

The autonomous 'I' constructs a three-fold temporal dimension of its own present, since it commits to doing something – 'doing that tomorrow' -the present of the future'. It commits itself to doing something because it 'just realised that' - the present of the past and it ventures on doing something "because now (...) [it] can do it" (Ricoeur, 1984, 60). – the present of the present. The spatial and temporal frame of the subject's being is "constituted through (...) [the subject's] (...) capacity of posing the question of Being or the meaning of Being" (Ricoeur, 1984, 60-61) and is tantamount to what has been called in philosophy 'within-time-ness' (*Innerzeitigkeit*). In this dialectic

“time is entirely desubstantialized” (Ricoeur, 1984, 61) receding from the emphasis on the words ‘future’, ‘past’, ‘present’ to the emphasis on agency or temporality of action. Interestingly enough, Ricoeur notices that such “philosophical anthropology” is similar to that of the concept of Care (as in Heidegger) and its capacities of ‘making-present’, ‘awaiting’ and ‘retaining’. That said the concept of Care has been associated and embraced by feminism. In the feminist ethics of care relationality and responsibility are the privileged adjectives. The concepts of Care and ‘within-time-ness’ are directly associated with being-in-the-world through Heideggerian *Dasein*. Being-in-the-world according to narrativity is a being-in-the-world already marked by the linguistic (*langagiére*) practice, as much as the concepts of femininity are already marked by the phallogocentric practice. For this reason feminine autonomy has been considered best enacted if relational. Much of the feminist discourse has encountered in relational autonomy a tool for better understanding of the relationships women engage or are traditionally expected to engage in. As an example, citing again from Adrienne Rich’s *Of Woman Born*: “We are, none of us, ‘either’ mothers or daughters; to our amazement, confusion, and greater complexity, we are both” (Rich, 1995, 253). And it should be of our autonomous decision to what extent we choose to engage with these roles and in what way we choose to enact and live them. The decision, on its part, is a consequence of our intersectional construction of identity, contextualized by the place (*Dasein*) and the temporal frames (within-time-ness). As far as the element of contextualization is included – any social practice only becomes a discourse if contextualized. And yet it becomes an autonomous discourse if we are able to exercise some kind of agency in its production. It follows that discursive autonomy and agency are necessary tools for a better impersonation of *ipseity* and *idem*-identity. *Idem* gives the self spatio-temporal sameness and *ipse* is responsible for its individuality – its *haecceity*. What is more, it is through our autonomy and agency that we can shape our attitudes towards sameness and selfhood, as well as sameness and otherness.

Bearing the above in mind, relational accounts of autonomy need to recognize the importance of female individuality should they make claim to validity. Above all, it is vital that femininity conquers its right to agency and autonomy but it needs to be highlighted that traditionally the lives of women have been devoted to the care of others. Relative to this context, the concepts of agency and autonomy need to be rethought and remade. What is more, a greater focus needs to be given to personal

relations with the other in general. Linda Barclay writes in her essay “Autonomy and the Social Self” that “what emerges (...) is the need to acknowledge that our autonomy competency is a debt we owe to others (...) (particular others (...) fictional or historic interlocutors)” (Barclay in Mackenzie and Stoljar, 2005, 58). Similarly, Annette Baier writes that being a person signifies being

seen as one who was long enough dependent upon other persons to acquire the essential parts of personhood. Persons essentially are second persons, who grow up with other persons. The fact that a person has a life history, and that a people collectively have a history, depends upon the humbler fact that each person has a childhood in which a cultural heritage is transmitted, ready for adolescent rejection and adult discrimination selection and contribution. Persons come after and before other persons. (Baier in Mackenzie and Stoljar, 2005, 58)

Linda Barclay extends the argument of reciprocal heritage writing that apart from being aware of the personal influences of the past we “must live (...) with other persons” (Barclay, Barclay in Mackenzie and Stoljar, 2005, 58). In short, the concepts of autonomy should not be conflated to substantive independence as Marilyn Friedman has postulated in “Autonomy and Social Relationships” but rather distended to relational interdependence and intertextuality whose important elements are those of ongoing creativity underlying identification in order to fill in the overwhelming sense of vacancy – “the vacancy, more than negative (...) [that] made the natural claims of a life (...)” (Bowen, 1942/1976, 161)

5. The Bowenesque Turn.

Elizabeth Bowen defies the relentless manifestations of intra-subjective realities within very immanent and constraining spatial and temporal realities. In her dialogical and teleological manifestations of corporeal subjective time she strives to explore the overwhelming and maze-like geographies of the self to which the maps lie behind the idea of hermeneutical becoming rather than sediment being. Central to this is both subjects' constant awareness of the body's excavation by temporality that serves as metaphor of the overwhelming incapacity to live alone and an impending necessity to recover agency. Everyday struggle to become oneself in Bowen - "the daily attitude is what puts the before and after into the body, time into the body", and that this "attitude of the body relates thought to time (...)." (Deleuze, 2004b, 189) Within twentieth century modernism's general crisis of forms, the idea of external and internal temporality as perhaps the *only* omnipresent form (one that has heterogeneous, non-teleological modes and affects) may cause troubled reactions ultimately because it positions the subject itself as both epistemologically and ontologically vertiginous. As a result, the tiredness of the affected body forces the brain to a new and difficult thought, reminding the subject of its own "embodied" time within that of the world. As Bowen writes in her "Notes on Writing a Novel" at the end of each narrative a character that pre-exists in "the mass of matter" (Bowen, 1945/1976, 37) becomes "like the silk worm at work on the cocoon" (Bowen, 1945/1976, 46) and spins itself out. The time-image of the world is "no longer a motor extension which is established" (Deleuze, 2004b, 4) between subject and real world "but rather a dreamlike connection through the intermediary of the liberated sense organs. It is as if action floats in the situation, rather than bringing it to a conclusion or strengthening it" (Deleuze, 2004b, 4). Since, as we have said, narrativity is cyclical the assertive performance of becoming elevates the subject to the position of being able to constantly question and filter actively the pre-established discourses on the body and its actions.

Time becomes space. Movement does not lead towards a conclusion but multiplication within the bodily space, an almost Italian neorealist technique to which I relate myself in the chapter devoted to Bowen's last novel *Eva Trout, or Changing*

Scenes. It should be emphasized that not so much the political content of Italian neo-realism is of great importance here but rather a new time-image contradicting dominant, in cinema and thinking, action-image where the part and the whole of both movement and perception were intricately conjoined into an organic unity. In time image the part and the whole become dispersive but more productive where the character must labour to comprehend the image, and this very event of labour becomes the embedding time space. What is more in time-image the character cannot absorb the situation or synthesize total understanding but rather expel laborious continuity of being without reaching climax or conclusion but rather constant becoming. As Deleuze admits the relationship between the part and the whole (object and subject) in time image is *serial*. In *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* does Eva not relate more to space? Does she not laboriously struggle towards a better comprehension of reality through her own participation in time? However, is her world not a series of disjointed events that amount to becoming rather than final being – defining rather than final definition? Time image implies the philosophy of becoming.

Here a question of Eva's body enveloping time should be raised – this is a new way of showing perception and becoming and thus the authority/autonomy dyad, through one's bodily time – the female body for the purpose of this thesis - as the omnipresent time. Eva is her own enclosing space. Eva embodies a specific weight of time operating inside and excavating identity from within. The fact that Eva's body is hermaphrodite dismantles, like the Italian neorealism, the traditional gendered protagonist and opens up Bowen's discourse to a different type of politics. Of much importance is also the introduction of the male-child to replace and represent the humiliated males (both in *The House in Paris* and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*) and refigure the traditional masculine action image as well as femininity as less than subjectivity in general.

It may be argued that the musings on the agency of the gaze and the exchange from the doer to seer are futile for the feminist discourse. After all both seer and doer are properties of masculine subject according to the phallogocentric discourse. Little changes if the centre remains in hands of the male subject, where the female ceases to constitute the source of desire. This floating action is often in the form of characters being forced into simply looking and thinking, the evolution of the subject Deleuze saw in Italian neorealism from *doer* to *seer*. Deleuze discusses how this epistemologically

impoverished but very open gaze is both directed outwards upon the world, and internalized as characters attempt to reconcile the difficult thought which this new seeing generates with the tired emotional investments of lived bodies. As a result both the seen and the unseen gaze seek the lost “self” rather than the maternal or erotic “other”. It has been suggested that the deserted space from which the characters have been emptied “refers back again to the lost gaze of the being who is absent from the world as much as from himself” (Deleuze, 2004b, 9). The gaze searches for the *modus operandi* imprinted on the body rather than the completing other. So even though the action remains traditionally masculine, as gaze has always been the masculine preserve, the element of autonomy and self-discovery remains unsexed. For what one discovers can be either male or female, and situates oneself rather on the unsexed threshold of the subject especially if we believe that sexualization or rather engenderment happens in reiteration outside. The discovery of the self happens through the external other, when the other becomes allocated within the self. I become estranged from the world and from my body. What happens when woman ceases to represent the source of desire? She is no more the complementing element, the marginalized other and lack but rather another assemblage.

External time destabilizes the subject’s ability to master space, both in the way he or she looks at the world outside and in the way he or she interacts with the strange diageitic home Alienated, the subject is lost to its own gaze. Since the cultivation of subjectivity is indebted to the operations of otherness only a detailed analysis of this detour from selfhood to otherness should take into consideration its spatio-temporal fluctuating reality. There is a particular temporality in the gaze of the other and at the other which inevitably must coincide with the subject’s lines of flight that is lines of creation. We watch the people in their desperate acting out of the erotic impulse, seeking to avert their eyes and minds from both the abyss of their presumed essence and the grasping of their brains’ difficult future potentiality, while the temporal and spatial de-centeredness they seem to experience also induces vertigo in the viewer.

Yet how is Eva gazing? Her gaze is not tantalizingly external for she is dumb and commits many mistakes – her gaze can only be cast inwards, seeking the lost self. When it is, in fact, cast outwards in the National Portrait Gallery, it penetrates the gaze of the other from the portrait and finds nothing. Eva’s gaze is prompted by the floating space propelled by her moving and travelling. Yet it must remained centred within the

body spreading sheet of boundary-less time – the three-fold present. It may be a new concept of feminine since women are not connected to the gaze, but rather these are the men who are thought to exercise the culture of an oppressive male gaze. But if the male gaze seems to be external hence excitable by the external world, the female gaze may be internal, and outwardly static.

Since external time destabilizes the subject's ability to master space it becomes crucial to elevate one's body into the status of 'space'. The time of the subject becomes the personal bodily time as in three-fold present, and the space of the subject becomes the body of the subject and the relation of the subject to the external world through the body. The body fills in the deserted space from which the subject is emptied, being absent from the world as much as from herself/himself. Such internalized gaze marks the shift from the subject as doer to the subject as seer. As such however it is not a male gaze at other but rather a female gaze arising as a consequence of the mirror stage – a female gaze at oneself or the other within oneself. This leads us towards a comprehension of personal fantasies as signs of internal life, lived externally and marked on the body.

The basic theoretical argument here is that identities are fantasized in the recesses of the mind. In order to express these fantasies, and thus flesh out our social identity, we cite, to a certain extent, from others' narratives. After all even Elizabeth Bowen made her own way of life a fantasy. What she saw and was made to believe in was a lie immediately after her mother's onset of cancer. As a child she sensed that the endless plans and musings about the future made by her parents were false. Instead of hope she felt betrayal and guilt along with a growing sense of security. If her childhood life was a lie she set on making her adulthood thanks to a lie - she decided to establish her grown-up identity by writing

However based on the idea of cyclicity of narrativity we may argue that the narratives of others are made available to us in external contexts that seem to be already internalized. Hence, the narratives we reproduce are never exact copies of the narratives of the others. Rather they are a sum total of fantasies we have about others, generative responses whose meaning changes inevitably with the passing of the clock's hand. In this way, on the theoretical ground, we move from the external iterability that is that of the subject crossing the boundary of the self towards the external. We hence arrive at the internal iterability that is the iterability of the subject crossing the boundaries

of/within its own body. The common denominator of the two theories is the dynamic character of subjectification and the emphasis on its agency.

The body has always been associated with the feminine and the mind with the masculine- while one should not defend erasing these phallogentric alignments since they will be substituted by other similar dichotomies, one should challenge their logic making the body and mind interconnected and equal. Bodies are engenderment of fantasies – bodies are multiple and different. The body must be preconceived “not in opposition to the culture but as its preeminent object” (Grosz, 1995b, 33) – one should try to erase difference into variation. This way the theory arrives at what can be called the inscriptive body, which

is more concerned with the processes by which the subject is marked, scarred, transformed, and written upon or constructed by the various regimes of institutional, discursive, and non-discursive power as a particular kind of body. (Grosz, 1995b, 33)

Elizabeth Bowen presents the inscriptive body – inscriptive subjectivity that focuses more on the external process that becomes later internalized. Judith Butler uses in her *Gender Trouble* a citation from Roy Schaffer’s “A New Language of Psychoanalysis” “when identifications are understood as internalizations they imply a trope of inner psychic space that is ontologically insupportable” (Butler, 1990, 333). Internalization is not a real process but a fantasy where rather than identifying oneself as an individual with certain attributes one fantasizes that one is that individual. Agency is not born in constructing a solid self but rather out of interpolating others, while always having an intention of influencing the other in some way. This also stands as the definition of the deitic, iterable model – if narrative influences the other it is iterable – deitic and based on exercising some sort of agency, even if by the female subject. As Bowen writes in “Notes on Writing the Novel” thanks to the combustion of a character it moves on from magnetizing the reader as it has magnetized the author, where “through out the novel the character is expending potentiality” (Bowen, 1999k, 47) to safeguard freshness “by means of ever-differing presentation” (Bowen, 1999k, 47). And here I refer myself to the other outside and within the subject. The ideas of both the deitic and iterable models are corroborated in Butler’s writing. The former is confirmed by inversion when Butler admits that one of the basic qualities of the body is its

vulnerability to the influence of the other – “through our bodies we always remain exposed to others” (Butler, 2004, 22) thus body escaping ontological foundation still serves as matter. The latter idea partially results from the body’s vulnerability and flexibility and is also supported in Butler’s argument of materialization of the body through discourse – that is the body’s dynamic character. Speaking about the contemporary theories of identity, Linda McDowell argues that,

Identities are a fluid amalgam of memories and places of origin, constructed by and through fragments and nuances, journeys and rests, of movements in between. Thus, the ‘in-between’ is itself a process or dynamic, not just a stage on the way to a more final identity. (McDowell, 215, 1999)

As in Nietzsche, civilization does not educate and enlighten peoples but rather “ensures cohesion through coercion and cruelty” (Grosz, 1995b, 34). The body reworks the very norms that constrain it through discourse. If sex is a product of gender, so is the body a product of discourse – as such one should not concentrate on the symbols that themselves are material but on the dynamic processes which change them. Matter is not created but materialized through discourse; moreover it is the effect of dynamic powers. Bowen writes in her “Notes on Writing the Novel” that characters must “materialize – i.e., must have a palpable physical reality” (Bowen, 1999k, 38). In patriarchal order the outside of the symbolic conceived as the locus of subversion is in fact “a construction within the terms of that constructive discourse (Butler, 1990, 77). Grosz writes that “As a receptive surface, the body’s boundaries and zones are constituted in conjunctions and through linkages with other surfaces and planes” (Grosz, 1995b, 34-36). The character of Eva Trout is such a product and she continues to produce herself. The unthinkable is thus fully within culture as much as the carnivalized fantasies of the others’ discourses are imprinted on bodies. That said, reiteration of the iterable model leads to its re-contextualization and carnivalization – carnivalization of the other’s discourse – the paternal discourse in female narratives.

Carnivalization does not only refer to the other but to myriads of ways in which one worships the image or the fantasy of one’s body rather than the body itself. Carnivalization is the dynamic change of a fantasy. Bodies are textualised through fantasies and deciphered as mirror images of the subject’s psychic – yet they should be

read as cultural affects. Grosz writes that “Knowledge is the consequence of bodies, and in turn enables bodies to act or prevents bodies from acting, expanding themselves, overcoming-themselves, becoming” (Grosz, 1995b, 214). Carnivalization in itself is a fluid process – its outcome cannot be predicted since its force lies in its unexpectedness and concealment of the known. Subjects, as Bowen writes, are an “assemblage of traits” of many bodies, where no one body could “supply everything (physical) necessary for the character (...)” (Bowen, 1999k, 39). As in Deleuze, Boweneseque characters multiply and ‘magnetize’ “perceptions, sense-impressions, desires” (Bowen, 1999k, 39). It has been written that Bowen’s female characters evolve into “Kristevan subjects-in-process” (Ingman, 2007, 37) whose future is made of many possibilities and the idea of unified self questionable. As we have said earlier Bowen writes in *The Last September* that the novel’s main character Lois sees a blurring crack at the bottom of her washbasin every time she washes. Undoubtedly, it is conventionally accepted that what one sees in the reflection of water is the exact image of oneself as visible to others. What Lois sees is the true nature of identity – always divided between the idea of selfhood and otherness. Bowen writes again in *The Last September*,

But when Mrs Monmorency came to: ‘Lois is very’ – she was afraid suddenly. She had a panic. She didn’t want to know what she was, she couldn’t bear to: knowledge of this would stop, seal, finish one. Was she now to be clapped down under an adjective, to crawl around lifelong inside some quality like a fly in a tumbler? Mrs Montmorency should not!
(Bowen, 1929/1998c, 60)

Only those who accept the hegemonic discourse on identity “allow [themselves] to be moulded” (Bowen, 1929/1998c, 129) by the society’s idea of them. There is, however, a great difference between fluidity and sedimentation both resulting from the other’s cracking of the self. Fluidity has long been considered the female paradigm partially because of the female connotations with the water principle and partly because of the female obligatory flexibility of the translator from the dominant discourse to the marginal one. Above all, fluidity signifies retention and multiplication of desire. Desire should urgently be rescued from the rhetoric of lack since it has its origins in surplus. Female bodies are the rallying points against marginalization of desire and inevitably pleasure. In Bowen the female body serves as a circuit breaker and a desiring machine

that consequently produces a flow of its own desire. Desire is a condition that allows Bowen to postulate a de-essentialized female subjectivity that can be considered extra-centric or ‘e[x]ccentric’, as in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*. Such femininity, seen in Bowen’s writing, is capable of difference through multiplication rather than dualism. It is capable of producing lines of flight that can be considered progression – a flight from – rather than regression to the essential self that according to phallic discourse solely conceals lack and gap. Bowen writes that finding a subject of desire is similar to obsession that originates a “search for language” (Bowen, 1999k, 63). Desire is childlike – “The childishness is necessary, fundamental – it involves a perpetual, errant state of desire, wonder and unexpected reflex” (Bowen, 1999k, 63). Furthermore, desire is understood as multiplication when “the writer find[s] the subject – *his* subject, (...) [then it] germinates into play or story, poem or novel” (Bowen, 1999k, 63) – a new narrative.

Luce Irigaray uses the idea of fluidity in her treatment of the feminine and doing so she deconstructs the phallogocentric solidity of philosophy and theory. Not only does Luce Irigaray argue for fluid forms of feminine subjectivity, but she also articulates that this sex, the feminine, which is not one, has not become, yet. To Irigaray, bringing into play new and fluid forms means inviting ‘her/me’ for a journey of opening up new textual territories and rethinking ‘our’ practices. As such there is no longer stable me/other dyad but a fluid parallel flow of elements. As in Irigaray, Bowen’s way of constructing femininity is that of penetrating and careful irony directed at strategic essentialism. Bowen shows that *mimesis*, as postulated by the dominant discourse is never faithful and always illogical. As in Irigaray, Bowen speaks logically about the apparent lack of logic in women using masculine economy that values identity and unity. And yet, such Bowen-esque wit transcribed onto the narrative ground does not resign from drawing on the carnivalesque and the ironic. The conflict between *mimesis* and femininity takes Bowen to consider the idea of natural in her texts too.

The idea of the ruins of representation is one of the straightforward results of the failure of *mimesis*. Theorists have offered some valuable critique of the structure of representation to produce the idea of the ruin of representation – the ruin of hierarchically ordered time and space. As well known, the two obvious elements of representation are self explicatory. It follows that, in the first place, representation can only happen dynamically in change, and that changeability is its own picture. Static

structures of time and space have come to be considered dissembled. It goes against the oppression of women, as well as oppression and dominance as ontologically viable. Instead a search has begun for abstract and fluid ontology of this and now, and this very woman. In the “Preface” to *The Demon Lover* collection Bowen writes about the particular:

This is how I am, how I feel, whether in war or in peacetime; and only as I am and feel can I write. As I said at the start, though I criticize these stories now, afterwards, intellectually, I cannot criticize their content. They are the particular. But through the particular, in wartime, I felt the high-voltage current of the general pass. (Bowen, 1999k, 99)

In *Space, Time and Perversion* Elizabeth Grosz writes that the body becomes a threshold between one’s fantasized identity and socio-political demands. The body,

is placed between a psychic or lived interiority and a more socio-political exteriority that produces interiority through the inscription of the body’s outer surface. Where psychoanalysis and phenomenology focus on the body as it is experienced and rendered meaningful, the inscriptive model is more concerned with the process by which the subject is marked, scared, transformed and written upon or constructed by the various regimes of institutional, discursive, and non-discursive power as particular kind of body. (Grosz, 1995b, 33)

Bearing this in mind, one sees how the body becomes the only viable site and temporal frame of identification – it cannot be represented by any other image than itself and, at the same time, it draws from the examples of the other. Fantasies are too inscribed on the body’s surface. Temporality of the self draws on the body’s development from infantile to adult.

When psychoanalysis shows that a fantasy is constituted on the basis of at least two stages, one infantile and pre-genital, the other genital and post pubescent, it is clear that the series succeed one another in time from the point of view of the solipsistic unconscious of the subject in question. Precisely the body has all the temporal tools to mark the subject’s change and it becomes its spatial and temporal canvas.

What is of great curiosity here is the issue of delay concerning the influence the infantile stage exercises over the adult stage. Deleuze claims that the crucial part of this explanation lies in the distance that separates the infantile stage from the adult one and that, in fact, they “are not distributed within the same subject” (Deleuze, 2004d, 151). The childhood event – the fantasy – does not belong to the infantile series but rather constitutes a link between the stages of “adults we knew as a child” and that of “the adult we are among other adults and other children” (Deleuze, 2004d, 152). In psychoanalysis this has been called deferred action, where in analyzing the subject’s discourse we do not know whether we are confronted with a case of childhood influencing adulthood or adulthood giving sense to childhood trauma. Not surprisingly, the theme of deferred action has already been used in the criticism of Elizabeth Bowen. Doryjane A. Birrer develops this argument in her essay entitled “Time, Memory, and the Uncertain I: Transtemporal Subjectivity in Elizabeth Bowen’s Fiction”. Birrer believes that crucial to understanding Bowen’s short fiction is the idea of ‘transtemporal subjectivity’ assimilating itself to a destabilized I that exists in “a fluid realm comprised simultaneously of past (memory), present (experience) and future (expectation).” (Birrer, 2008) The simultaneous existence I choose to call the three-fold present imprinted on the body to render possible a resolution of the problem of temporality as already described in Henry James in “The Art of Fiction” as being “the measure of reality (...) very difficult to fix” (Hoffman, 2005, 15). Birrer argues that “Bowen’s psychological realism and representations of transtemporal subjectivity comprise a vision of the human subject that, though not necessarily comfortable, offers increased scope for human agency in a radically destabilised social world” (Birrer, 2008). Again in her Preface to *The Demon Lover* collection Bowen writes that “The past, in all these cases, discharges its load of feeling into the anaesthetized and bewildered present” (Bowen, 1999k, 98). The present seemingly being a body anesthetized by the dislocation of reality is an imprint of what memories and expectations. From there, like from a manuscript the *I* can be read – “It is the ‘I’ that is sought—and retrieved at the cost of no little pain” (Bowen, 1999k, 98). Bowen’s narrative stretches between, what Birrer describes as “physical/somatic/*lived* experience and the vicissitudes of the mind as it moves both consciously and unconsciously through time” (Birrer, 2008). Contrary to what Birrer writes the *I* is not lost in Bowen’s fiction, and the “I-saving strategies” (Bowen, 1999k, 98) are imprinted on the material, germinating into “received

impressions of happening things; impressions that stored themselves up and acquired force without being analyzed and considered” (Bowen, 1999k, 99). One of the greatest wounds to the self that dissipation of reality brings with the Second World War is the “claustrophobia of not being able to move about freely” (Bowen, 1999k, 98) resulting in a levelled-down time of a corpse-only the “impulsive movements of fantasy” (Bowen, 1999k, 98) remain. To Bowen feeling and suffering is carnal for how she feels is through “spot-light faces or cutting out gestures” (Bowen, 1999k, 99).

On the whole the theory of fantasy puts a considerable emphasis on our dialogical existence as a child and as an adult, making us open to transference from the outside. The fantasy becomes the ultimate reality and a manifestation of a child as a dark precursor. Since it is impossible to establish the primacy of any stage, we should see the series as overlapping and seek the meaning in the difference between the stages. However childhood should not be understood as imaginary or unreal as much as the body one possesses is neither imaginary nor unreal.

The emphasis on the negative paradigm in identification is the fruit of the post structural emphasis on the subject as discursive effect and an act of constraint both visible in Foucault and Lacan. For the purpose of this thesis I prefer to venture a new understanding of subjectification not as subjection but as multiplication, as liberation of various selves and the body.

In such definition and time space dyad as kaleidoscopic, the idea of female multiplicity and plenty takes on a new meaning. Women in their plurality can strive towards a more complete construction of identity. According to Bowen, the novelist must allot his or her characters “psychological space” (Bowen, 1999k, 38). Otherwise the character becomes passive and so called flat - “What E.M. Forster has called the flat character has no alternatives at all” (Bowen, 1999k, 38). Subject is entitled to multiplicity and as such “for the portrayal of their alternatives, to time and space” (Bowen, 1999k, 38). It is a new female gaze through the omnipresent temporality of the body.

Kaleidoscopic definition comes to argue against what can be perceived as negative understanding of subject formation. Lois McNay writes in her *Gender and Agency* that

The process of subjectification is understood as dialectic of freedom and constraint (...) then it is the negative moment of subjection that has been accorded the theoretical privilege in much work on identity construction. (McNay, 2000, 2)

The conclusions that we arrive at are that women fantasise thus creating and recreating their subjectivities, women consciously make their bodies assemblages of power and connection with others.

Bowen offers us a feminist theory of time, the bodily/dynamic time. Elizabeth Grosz elucidates on this idea. She explores the Darwinian account of natural selection as a dynamic principle with random chance operating as a central force in the evolution of a species. As such, evolution must also be understood as being a force toward the future. It can be said that the forces of evolution can encompass both the biological and the cultural. Culture is not separate from nature, nor is it the end of evolution; rather, it is also the product of species survival. Any viable feminist discourse must examine the potential for feminist theorizing of this. As such feminism can argue that politics can be seen as cultural evolution that has practical and theoretical consequences. According to this statement, even the concept of feminist struggle itself—a struggle for survival under oppression—is the force that produces self-transformation. Like the survival of the species, this feminist self-transformation is directed toward an unknowable, multiple possible future of political change. Bowen offers us expansion of future conceptual possibilities since she is unable to pin down identity but rather see it in a reciprocal operation of sameness and otherness in oneself.

To understand better the post-modern feminist claim, Grosz argues for a discussion of sexual difference as the organization of materiality and what she calls messy biology, even though these concepts have been seen with hostility, or even as counterproductive. Grosz argues that even the concept of sexual difference is a form of an unknowable future. Time must be recognized as a force, rather than conceptualized as the passive result of the causal effects of the present. Time is, in a sense, within objects and is the force that directs their becoming towards more satisfactory self-denomination.

In general Elizabeth Grosz offers an alternative to the socially constructed identity and sexualities of the subject by calling for an examination of how inhuman forces constitute these concepts. For Grosz, the feminist goal of the removal of the oppression of women must involve a necessary re-conceptualization of women as

subjects: as evolving multiple subjects that are produced by these forces. This way we must capture the body in change and relation with a affirmation that, to a certain degree, they can be autonomous.

In her last novel entitled *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* Bowen approximates herself to the central claim for a new feminist discourse in fiction at the expense of the law of the father. Bowen writes about Eva's self-transformation from a perspective of corporeal feminism where the focus falls on the body as the propeller and sum total of subjectivity. Eva Trout is an active force in Nietzschean division between active and reactive forces – she “moves in its directions without regard for anything other than its own free expansion, mindless of others” (Grosz, 1995b, 215). Not only is she affirmative but she is “guileless, open, perhaps even naïve in its openness to what befalls it” (Grosz, 1995b, 215). In the patriarchal discourse one submits “one's pleasures and desires to enumeration and definitive articulation” (Grosz, 1995b, 223). This however results in yielding the

processes and becomings to entities, locations, and boundaries, to become welded to (...) control, and the tying of the new to models of what is already known, the production of endless repetition, endless variations of the same. (Grosz, 1995b, 223)

It is for this reason that Eva cannot stop or still herself and mould her discourse to the abiding rules of the society; this is why Karen flees away.

Only the revolutionary subject can progress in a discourse. Only those subjects that are able to sustain their “epic rages” (Bowen, 1929/1998c, 107) within the accepted cultural context, and who can chaff against social restrictions are able to support alternative dialectical ways of belonging together. Kristeva says that “rebellion is a condition necessary for the life of the mind and society” (Kristeva, 2002 in Ingman, 2007, 31). In her “The Sense and the Non-sense of Revolt”, Kristeva acknowledges that

permanent revolution is vital both in the life of an individual and in the life of a nation for, without it, values become frozen and humans are in danger of resembling automata (Kristeva, 2000 in Ingman, 2007, 31)

Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes is Bowen's exercise in freedom, for it is in this novel that she allows her revolutionary character to linger and live accordingly to her

affirmative discourse. As such eponymous Eva Trout becomes a non-secretive rebel who has a living presence with other characters as well as a power of influencing memories out of which the characters try to constitute their identities. Eva is a rebel against the gendered role she is expected to perform. It is not the consciousness of restrictions that induces on her a feeling of being an outsider – her disregard of norms makes her a symbol of rebellion. She has little inner uncertainty. The vacancy Eva perceives in herself is similar to the vacancy she sees in the outside world. Bowen wrote about the Big House that it imposed a performance of routinized life. The common Anglo-Irish belief was that it “ought to be lived in a certain way” (Bowen, 1999b, 32). In *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* Bowen shows that life should not be lived in a standardized way but be embraced as full of differences and open-ended possibilities. Eponymous Eva Trout cannot be contained within a form or a pattern of norms, so she remains the outside and un-theorisable by the centre. She herself becomes the centre since she centres everybody’s attention on her. Her last words before she dies after being shot by her adoptive son Jeremy are a question about what is concatenation? Concatenation means things linked together in a series or chains – Eva herself links all the narratives, but since her death leaves all the possibilities open she says “There is invariably more, nothing is final I suppose” (*ET*, 296). There is no stronger message than the one spoken out at the moment of death in a way that laughs at order, nothingness and meaning. What then opens up Bowen’s fiction to diversity of discourses is her idea of humour. Bowen uses her sense of humour to ridicule, to deconstruct, and to rebuild. Eva Trout is a giant literally and figuratively – she is herself a satire on what is usually considered feminine and gracious. Regina Barreca writes in her *Untamed and Unabashed: Essays on Women and Humor in British Literature* that “Bowen’s prose is emblematic of the way women’s humour questions, mocks and demystifies the world of inherited and institutionalized power.” (Barreca, 2004, 109) She continues to say that

Satire created by Bowen does not have a corrective action; indeed, her work remains fascinatingly problematic because while she mimics the accents of the ruling class, she mirrors power only to ridicule it (...) she mocks the certainties of the authoritative discourse. (Barreca, 2004, 111)

Humour in Bowen proves the point that we all, we women live under artificial boundaries that in the end prove meaningless in the cafe of death. As a matter for

conclusion it should seem right to shift the analysis of Bowenesque sense of humour and her sensibility for irony to the post-modern theory of consumerism. The theory as such was described in Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, which appeared in the 1984 in its English translation, but was influenced by the nineteenth century Neo-liberal and Marxist ages of social and cultural revolutions. What Cartau postulates in his book is an acquisition of cleverness and irony on the part of the subject, which he calls strategy, in entering the new territory of the high-tech capitalism. The clever subject is then a materialisation of the affirmative way of being of the modern subject and not merely non-producing user. However, the roots of the active and ironic subject grow even deeper. As Certeau promptly adds, the ironic subject has already been postulated in the writings of Friedrich Schlegel, as well as has been the propeller of the Marxist theory of historical forces. Its central function was to fill the gap between philistine everyday life and the insatiable longing for spiritual infinity.

As a result, ironic consumption of the ironic subject has maintained the interest of scholars until present times, and most importantly for us has become to be known in the 1960's as – 'camp', of which Susan Sontag wrote in her "Notes on Camp": "It's good, *because* it's awful" (Sontag 1964, §58). Camp, which stands for turning around of attitudes, may be well used in the analysis of Bowen's character Eva Trout who marks a turn in Bowen's interests from the natural in her earlier novels, towards the unnatural, artifice and exaggeration, as will be defended in "*Eva Trout – a Journey towards new Discourse*". Irony in Bowen helps the subject to move around between the countless countermeasures and counter-morals, where there,

are no guarantees. (. ...) Here figures cast unknown shadows; passion knows no crime, only its own movement; steel and the cord go with the kiss. Innocence walks with violence; violence is innocent, cold as fate; between the mistress's kiss and the blade's is a hair's breadth only, and no disparity... but who is to say that this is not so? (Bowen, 1999k, 193)

Bowen's evolution of irony starts with her constation in *The Death of the Heart* as expressed by 'lunatic' Eddie in his conversation with Lois – "You know I'm not a cad, and I know you're not batty. But, my God, we've got to live in the world (Bowen, 1998a, 302). With *The Last September* the irony-in- subject moves towards Lois' statement - "I feel it's time something happened. (...) I should like it to happen in

spite of me” (Bowen, 1929/1998c, 82). It evolves into a deconstructing irony of illusion as the only real power, where Eva Trout ponders the idea of ‘real life’ – “there was no ‘real life’; no life was more real than this. This she had long suspected. She now was certain.” (Bowen, 1929/1998c, 216)

Bowen strives consistently to deploy humour as her strategy of subversion, writing in her *Collected Impressions* of her wish to use irony “which is seldom gentle, and is in the long run deadly to what it attacks” (Bowen, 1950, in Lee, 1999, 124). Bowen’s irony shows experience as arbitrary and subjective. Barreca writes in her *Untamed and Unabashed* that Bowen’s female characters are

the Laughing Medusas described by Cixous; they are the women described by Judith Wilt as (...) ‘Laughing at the edge, withholding fertility, humility, community’. (Barreca, 2004, 120)

Irony becomes the only tool to tackle the moral dispossession depicted as normal, as simple “what is there is there” (Bowen, 1963/1991, 166). Irony and hope merge in a subversive and heretical laughter of women in Bowen’s fiction whose belief in revolution is taunted by the belief in the exclusion of change – “people must hope so much when they tear streets up and fight its barricades” (*HP*, 150), writes Bowen in *The House in Paris*. However, there still rests some hope in the subject as *Dasein* and as the ever-changing subject-in-process.

But, whoever wins, the streets are laid again and the trams start running again. One hopes too much of destroying things. If revolutions do not fail, they fail you. (*HP*, 151)

6. At the Crossroads of the Dialogue and the Difference.

While writing about narrativity, remembering, suffering and forgiving seem to be recurring motives. As has been noted earlier in this chapter, in his “The Repetition of Violence: Dialogue, the Exchange of Memory, and the Question of Convivial Socialities.” Couze Venn goes back to Ricoeur’s idea of suffering in discussing the conditions for the kind of dialogue and exchanges that would reduce or eliminate antagonisms by altering the relation to the ‘other’ regarded as stranger or alien. He writes that

It follows that the effort of telling differently involved in refiguring identities requires the work of anamnesis, thus of mourning (in relation to loss and suffering) and of the revision of the past as narrated in ‘traditionality’ (for instance, in relation to the recovery of the traces that onto-theology and monotheism erase, and in relation to a justice called for by a suffering caused). (Venn, 2005, 291)

In Benedict Anderson’s phrase each society, each political identity is an ‘imagined community’ (in Kearney, 2000, 104). Each individual identity is “qua narrative construction (...) reinvented and reconstructed” (Kearney, 2000, 194). It also means that it is open ended and indeterminate, so that the self and other are bound to go on exchanging narrative memories. An ability to live in a dignified way means showing willingness to exchange stories with the other, the stories from the past and the stories of the present and future. For feminism, this means re-encountering the multiple stories of its past. In his *On Paul Ricoeur: The Owl of Minerva*, Kearney writes that memory in Ricoeur’s *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2000) constitutes the only successful way of “releas(ing) into a different, freer future” (Kearney, 2000, 105). Following Ricoeur, Kearney argues that

For genuine amnesty does not and cannot come from blind forgetfulness (amnesia), but only from a remembering which is prepared to forgive the past by emancipating it from the deterministic stranglehold of violent obsession and revenge. Genuine pardon, as Ricoeur observes, involves not a forgetting of the events themselves but a different way of signifying the debt to the dead which paralyzes memory – and, by implication, our capacity to recreate ourselves in a new future. (Kearney, 2000, 105)

Narrativity is not bound to literature – every identity, every self is made up of different stories and histories that “exercise a formative influence on our modes of action and behavior” (Kearney, 2000, 57). If used as an analytical tool it evokes a series of themes such as memory and reenactment, the self and its other, the female/male binary opposition, the mother and child, childhood and trauma, as well as forgiveness.

The ideas of suffering, forgiving and confronting the other are underlying Bowen’s two novels that will be discussed in this thesis as primary bibliography, and her fiction in general. The concepts are always implicit to Bowen’s text and I argue that they need to be re-examined in order to uncover Bowen’s innovative discourse on feminist rhetoric. It is within this rhetoric that I wish to give greater deliberation to Bowen’s construction of the mother/child dyad – giving special attention to the mother/daughter dyad. I suggest that the focus of analysis needs to fall on the construction of temporality (as in Eva Trout’s travelling or changing locations implicit for *Dasein* and her being-in-the-world), autonomy and agency of both male and female subjects. Therefore, this work traces Elizabeth Bowen’s use of different temporal frames tantamount to one feminist present and looks at the ways Bowen posits her characters in relation to different events.

Topics to consider in this thesis include contextualization of action and characters’ awareness of social systems, as not merely constraining but allowing inter-subjectivity and dialogical construction. The work ventures to analyse autonomy (as in autonomy to act within social sphere or Karen’s decision of abandoning her son) as problematic in phallogentric social context. It ventures to analyze dialectics of selfhood and otherness as being undeniably the most important operation of identity formation. It has been widely claimed that to autonomy, otherness is essential in a similar way that constituting one’s ‘identity’ requires a process of abjection. Therefore, I would like to remain diligent towards notions such as motherhood (as in Karen’s denial of motherhood or Eva Trout’s decision to ‘mother’ by adoption), daughterhood, abjection, matricide, abandonment and orphanhood (as the founding plot of all three novels analysed here). What is more this work focuses on the re-definition of Bowen’s literary aesthetics, which I would call the aesthetics of attestation and dialogical contestation. Henceforth, since Elizabeth Bowen gives so much attention to social interdependence and relational interconnections between people in the private and public sphere I argue that awareness and sensitivity of the social context in Elizabeth Bowen’s writing, that

can be described as the personal topography of selfhood, have a more important meaning than sole complying with formal literary norms. The immediate and long-term implications of gender/class matrix and economic background constitute Bowen's hermeneutic of identity.

Above all, this thesis has as its goal an analysis of identification, subjectification and engenderment in what I consider Bowen's innovative counter-discourses of femininity enveloped in both traditionality and change and at the crossroads of the dialogue and the difference. In doing so many philosophical and theoretical texts are implicit and prerequisite for this study so that it becomes a 'longer route' in many hermeneutical detours (Kearney, 2000) towards the truth. This, I hope, contributes to the philosophical depth of my study and attests to my interest in dialogism, since the thesis itself relies on a dialogue between many theoretical giants and the greatness and profoundness of Elizabeth Bowen's work.

PART II

The Counter-Discourses of Femininity:

The House in Paris. (M)Other and Child's Boundary Crossing.

1. Time and Narrativity.

Narrativity as presented here stands for the journey towards the unknown home or enhancement and enrichment of selfhood through inter-subjectivity and finding otherness within and outside. Within this narrative framework the mind temporarily produces unstable syntheses between immediate sense data and reason: thus, reason is in the image. Movement is related to the time which conditions it, and consequently it is hinged upon the subject.

In his *Time and Narrative* (1984, 1984, 1985) Paul Ricoeur labours through the ideas of time and narrativity. He analyses St Augustine's *Confessions* and his development of time as three-fold presence that does not strive to encapsulate movement but the constant presence of God and eternity. Ricoeur writes about Augustine's lamentation on the distension between eternity and time. Against the backdrop of the stillness of eternity, the lamentation unashamedly displays the author's feelings:

What is that light whose gentle beams (*percutit*) to my heart, causing me to shudder in awe yet firing me with their warmth (*et inhorresco et inardesco*)? I shudder to feel how different I am from it: yet in so far as I am like it, I am aglow with its fire" (9:11).³¹ (in Ricoeur, 1984, 27)

In Elizabeth Bowen's *The House in Paris* this time-imagery is deployed to understand better all the sense data that percolate the mind of the narrator of St Augustine's *Confessions*. The lamentation apart from the similarity to the temporal aspect of the scene, is revisited in the night scene when Karen experiences a series of epiphanies on the notion of life and time. Karen too witnesses a flickering light whose fluorescent signals speak to her heart. She sees the lights outside the window "the street lamp" that "still lit up the chestnut tree." (*HP*, 151) She sees the hours on the

³¹ The fragment bears some similarity to what Paul Ricoeur later described in his *Oneself as Another* (1992) as his ideas on selfhood and sameness – *idem* and *ipse*; the idea of being different from and yet similar to the other.

frightening 'luminous watch' because "the eye of time never stops watching you" (*HP*, 151). In this transient experience she comes to understand how different and yet how similar she will be to the other she encounters in the future idea of her yet unborn son Leopold. It is her lamentation on the distension between the miracle of life and the moral imprisonment imposed by the society. It should also be understood as an extension and distension of selfhood into and through otherness, which will be developed later in this chapter. She sees the distension between herself and her lover Max, and she laments the distension between the celebration of her selfhood in her brave decision to love and give herself to Max and the immanent emulation of her selfhood by becoming a mother. St. Augustine's lamentation ends strikingly, "And I discovered that I was far from you in the region of dissimilarity (*in regione dissimilitudinis*)" (in Ricoeur, 1984, 27).

It must be mentioned that originally, the idea of falling into the region of dissimilarity had been taken from Plato and then was "transported into the Christian milieu through the intermediary of Plotinus" (Ricoeur, 1984, 27). However, it no longer refers to the human fall into Godless dark, deprived of any mimetic qualities, but to the experience of journey through darkness (*distentio animi*) in which the human soul discovers the mightiness of God, "returning to its source and by its very effort to know its origin" (Ricoeur, 1984, 27) in St Augustine cited by Ricoeur.

Transposed on subjectification, the moment of darkness becomes synonymous with intentio (fusion) of the child with the mother, and of the mother with the archaic mother within her. The narrative frame as presented in *The House in Paris* merges the two myths of living as travelling – hence travelling to and from Paris – namely that of Plato's myth of travelling towards the known home/paradise and that of St Augustine of travelling towards an unknown home. According to various philosophers, the rub of human existence lies in its everlasting travelling – it actually is travelling, be it literal, as in Albert Camus or imaginary as in Dante, Aristotle and Herman Cohen. What should then remain within the cognitive capacities of recognition in a subject – i. e. concepts of home or the mother is a great unknown in Bowen's *The House in Paris* – it remains as in St Augustine, a journey towards strangeness and otherness. And yet it turns out to be a journey of self discovery through the recognition of binary differences of here and now, you and me, selfhood and otherness. Whereas in many of Bowen's texts we are carried away thanks to the unloving things to which Bowen imputes action more

willingly, here the plot takes us on a quest towards self-perception. When we are carried away by the three separate chapters of *The House in Paris* that disrupt the temporal sequence of yesterday, today and tomorrow, we learn the importance of desire and iterability. We travel towards something that remains unchangeable, just like being somebody's child or parent. We travel through a constant temporal frame best described by the concept of the afore-mentioned three-fold present, whose constancy is maintained by the iterability of the subject, its nature of *homo viator* as written in 1951 by Gabriel Marcel in his *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope* (1985). In travelling through life we are prompted by the two concepts of desire and need as Pascal rightly describes to explain the difference between Odysseus's and Abraham's journeys. To be precise a need can be fulfilled and it is as Odysseus coming back home. Desire, on the other hand, can never be quenched and is as Abraham's dissatisfaction with anything he saw and encountered on his way. The more we try to satisfy desire the larger it grows. And if we try to transpose this onto the question of subjectivity, we may say that there are certain needs such as a need for home, food, shelter, mother-figure, whose fulfilment leads to a growing desire for something entirely ungraspable – the integrity of the self. We travel in the darkness of our desire punctuated by separate beams of light just like the Paris characters of Bowen's novel come to find unhelpful and unrevealing.

In the darkness, Karen suddenly has the idea of a son which will be begotten with Max. "This made her lean over, trying to see Max's face." (*HP*, 152) For a moment darkness bares presence of any other human. "But there was not enough light and his face was turned away from her in the cleft of the pillow." (*HP*, 152) Karen finds herself alone- she finds herself entrenched by the stillness of the present, the barred cold and dull light which extend into nothingness-

They had both come a long way, without consulting each other, to sleep under the ceiling with this barred light. Between the tamarisks passing the rainy window and this lamp-invaded darkness, nothing remained (*HP*, 152).

Stanislas Boros wrote in an important essay on St Augustine, "Les Categories de la temporalité chez saint Augustine", about four synthetic images that correlate with Ricoeur's 'sorrow of the finite with the celebration of the absolute' (Boros, 1958,

Ricoeur, 1984, 29). These images refer to temporality as malleable mass, plurality and multiplicity as in female paradigm and symbolism.

The first image of temporality represents dissolution symbolised by “ages of devastation, of swooning, of gradually sinking, of unfulfilled aim, of dispersal, of alteration, and of extreme indigence;” (Boros, 1958, in Ricoeur, 1984, 28). The second image is that of “temporality as agony” (Boros, 1958, in Ricoeur, 1984, 28); the third image stands for “temporality as banishment (...) exile, vulnerability, wandering, nostalgia” (Boros, 1958, in Ricoeur, 1984, 28), the fourth image correlates with “images of (...) darkness and opacity” (Boros, 1958, in Ricoeur, 1984, 28). If the above four images underline the dialectic of the finite and absolute or the time and eternity, they may too shed some light on the textual weather of *distentio animi* in dialogism between the *I* and the other, the child and the mother, which extends the subject from now to the past and from now to eternity. On finding herself banished from ‘home’ and entrenched in darkness, Karen experiences *distentio animi* of her identity in an epiphanic *reverie*. Her *distentio animi* is embedded in the images of swooning, alteration, banishment, exile, nostalgia for home, as well as darkness and opacity. As such subjectivity revolves in hermeneutical circles rather than as absolute intuition of self-consciousness.

Hermeneutics debunks the claims of the transcendental ego; it demonstrates that understanding always labours within the historical horizon of an intersubjective communication (with) meanings (...) distantiated from subjective consciousness (Kearney, 2006, 31).

Distantiation as in being away from ‘home’ is the dialectical opposition of belonging and they both form the two major tenets of the hermeneutic bridge. As such, subjectivity remains split and in darkness between the unknown home it both travels towards and belongs to.

Furthermore, time analysis parallels that found in St Augustine’s writing on psalms. Whatever may happen this morning, it will be part of afterwards may be explained in the passage from St Augustine.

What is true of the whole psalm is also true of all its parts and each syllable. It is true of any longer action (in *action longiore*) in which I may be engaged and of which the recitation of the psalm may only be a small part. It is true of a man’s whole life, of which all his actions

(actions) are parts. It is true of the whole history of mankind, of which each man's life is a part (in Ricoeur, 1984, 229).

Presenting her ideas on temporality, Bowen writes in *The House in Paris*,

While it is still Before, Afterwards has no power, but afterwards it is the kingdom, the power and the glory. You do not ask yourself, what am I doing? You know. What you do ask yourself, what have I done? you will never know (. ...) What they never know will soon never have been. They will never know. (. ...) This seemed to have to be, when nothing had ever had to be, so I thought it would be all. It looked like the end. I did not see it would have an end. These hours are only hours (*HP*, 152-153).

Karen's mind "performs three functions, those of expectation (*expectat*), attention (*adattendit*: this verb recalls the intention *presens*), and memory '*meminit*'." (Ricoeur, 1984, 18) Temporality hinges upon Karen but remains out of joint in terms of its relation to the cosmic time. The result is that "the future which it expects passes through '*transeat*' the present, to which attends, into the past, which it remembers." (Ricoeur, 1984, 18)

Perception of time is a recurring trope in *The House in Paris*. Time seems a controllable thing in the narrative, so that Leopold's mother is to arrive "at half-past two" (*HP*, 60) exactly when Henrietta is "going out" (*HP*, 60), hence Leopold looks "at the clock with masterful confidence, as though its hands moved faster the more he looked" (*HP*, 61). "Grown ups" like to control time since they "seem to be busy by clockwork: even if someone is not ill, when there has been no telegram, they run their unswerving course from object to object, directed by some mysterious inner needle that points all the time to what they must do next" (*HP*, 198). To control time in Bowen means to control reality, just like the schedule of trains arriving to Gare du Nord and leaving from Gare de Lyon. However, Bowen's conception of time as three-fold present goes against the idea of time control. According to the two contradictory ideas of time, that of ancient mythology and that of Judaeo-Christian tradition, controlling time is an illusion. We are either unable to tie the end with the beginning of it, as in Alkmeon and ancient Greek thinking or we are never to see it end, as in Abraham's journey home.

Bowen's conception of time as three-fold presence not only disrupts the temporality of Karen's dream in the hotel with Max – it finds its parallel in the temporality of the whole book, divided into three parts of equal importance. During

Karen's *reverie*, "The present of past things is memory [Naomi also sitting on Karen's bed that night]." (Ricoeur, 1984, 11) Consequently along with this temporal model "the present of present things is direct perception (*contuitus*; later the term will be attention, which better denotes the contrast with *distentio*)." (Ricoeur, 1984, 11) And in the end "(...) the present of future things is expectation [Karen already speaking to her child Leopold]". (Ricoeur, 1984, 11) The novel *The House in Paris* is itself divided into *the present, the past, the present* changing into future. Both the first and final parts are hinged dialogically in the middle part- the past. Temporality dissolves, so that a question arises, "how can time exist if the past is no longer, if the future is not yet, and if the present is not always?" (Ricoeur, 1984, 7) What is the role of perfect tenses then, where death "would not have been for nothing" (*HP*, 154) and Leopold "would have been then and then and then" (*HP*, 154)?

We may take it, as the original presupposition, that the realist plot has already been marked as male³² since it procreates in a linear male manner – from an event to an event. Elizabeth Bowen devotes her essay entitled "Notes on Writing a Novel" to the process of 'designing' a good novel. She starts with pointing out the essential and non-essential predicates of a satisfactory plot- "something the novelist is driven to." (Bowen, 1999k, 35) Plot stands for "knowing of destination. (. ...) Action of language, language of action. (... .) story. (. ...) = lie." (Bowen, 1999k, 35) It must "(...) further the novel towards its object. (. ...) The non-poetic statement of the poetic truth." (Bowen, 1999k, 36) Bowen writes that "Novelists must always have one foot, sheer circumstantiality, to stand on, whatever the other foot may be doing." (Bowen, 1999k, 36) However, the role of the novelist is also to recognize the character that "(...) exists *outside* the action being contributed to the plot" (Bowen, 1999k, 37), and not to create them. Therefore, the role of the novelist, or else the author of a narrative, is not to resort to simple *mimesis* but

³² For the relationship of feminism, masculinism and narratology, see Marianne Hirsh, *The Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism*. (1989), or further, Susan Snaider Lanser, "Towards a Feminist Narratology," *Style* 20, 3(Fall 1986); The argument develops the notion that there is a metaleptic nature in masculine textuality, where "the first scene" is always followed by a sequential "second scene", and so on. Furthermore, realism, as a text, belongs in the realm of the symbolic order, and Lacanian phallic economy. It may, then, be argued that it offers a stable positioning of the 'I', a fixed meaning and a move towards closure.

rather to multiplication in favour of the new: enrichment and direct transposition of different voices into the narrative.

If characters pre-exist the plot and if they are the object of its narrative quest, the novel itself comes to resemble, according to Gilles Deleuze, a *Body – without - Organs*, whose continuous desire pre-exists the object of the desire where action is the simplification (for story-purposes) of complexity. The plot does not procreate new events, it moves in a circular manner from the already existing ideas. For each one act, there are an x number of rejected alternatives. And yet Bowen does defend certain Cartesian purposefulness. It is worth saying that Cartesian clarity and *mimesis* in art is representative of the empirically grounded unity of abstraction: it is imbued with a pure disinterestedness, a promise of autonomy, an absolute purposefulness. Still, Bowen rejects simple binary oppositions and normative essentialism in favour of multiplicity, “It is in being seen to be capable of alternatives that the character becomes, for the reader, valid” (Bowen, 1999k, 38). She does highlight the necessity of dialogism, which on one hand furthers the plot and on the other one expresses the characters. Bowen writes, “Dialogue provides means for the psychological materialization of characters” (Bowen, 1999k, 41). Dialogue is performance too as “each piece of dialogue must be ‘something happening’” (Bowen, 1999k, 42), since it is a means of doing “things with words” (this idea of J. L. Austin³³ is recurring in the thesis and I make a more extended reference to it in the “Discussion: The Dialogue and the Difference”) to the other – speech being “what the characters do to each other” (Bowen, 1999k, 41). It is also in agreement with J. L. Austin that there are no true and untrue statements in Bowen’s fiction – they are only happy or unhappy in relation to their validity to the truth the novel tries to present. Truth is “virtuous” by the ruling of “the inherent truth that the novel states” (Bowen, 1999k, 44).

What can be seen as an example of disruption in the linear narrativity in *The House in Paris* is above all the division of the novel into three even parts of present, past and again present. Such construction proves what Bowen advises as a good novelistic practice – a dialogue between unpredictability and being inevitable.

³³ J. L. Austin’s ideas on the generative nature of language and dialogism are collected in his *How to Do Things with Words*. (1975).

Roughly, the action of a character should be unpredictable (the first part of *The House in Paris*) before it has been shown, inevitable (the second part of *The House in Paris*) when it has been shown. In the first half of the novel, the unpredictability should be the more striking. In the second half, the inevitability should be the more striking (Bowen, 1999k, 38).

The idea of past that Bowen gives us is significant of two predicaments that what passes away is the present and what we measure is not the present but the past and the future - hence hours ticking away from what is “tomorrow night – no, tonight. Her sleep of an hour had let tomorrow in” (*HP*, 152). Pregnancy is also the measurement of the months that remain and that which have past, and the present that, although still, remains fleetingly imperceptible.

Tonight would be more than hours and the lamp. It would have been the hour of my death. I should have to do what I dread, see them know. There would still be something to dread. I should see the hour in the child. I should not have rushed on to nothing. He would be the mark our hands did not leave on the grass, he would be the tamarisks we only half saw. (*HP*, 153)

The teachings of St. Augustine of Hippo introduce us to the motives of the miraculously immaculate conception of Jesus Christ, of Virgin Mary as Christ’s mother and of the idea of Virgin Mary being the second Eve purifying femininity of its original sin. St Augustine says in his *Sermons*, “the parents who generated us to death are Adam and Eve: The parents who generated us to life are Christ and the Church.” (Augustine, 1991, 22:10 PL XXXVIII, 54) Furthermore, in *The Christian Combat* he announces “There is a great mystery here: that just as death comes to us through a woman, so Life is born to us through a woman”. (Augustine, 1998, §22:24)

Motherhood³⁴ as in begetting is a metaphor and embodiment of the relational character of subjectivity, where the *I* encounters with the other. Motherhood appears to be closest to what the Franco-Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas stated to be the

³⁴ The idea of motherhood as well as the relationship between the daughter and the mother as originary of female subjective will be further developed in the fourth (“Motherhood”) and fifth (“Motherhood and Masks – Fantasy and Sacrificial Mothering”) section of this chapter.

only guideline for those who survived or lived after the atrocities of Auschwitz. For Levinas the rub of moral love is the experience of the encounter with the other through the phenomenon of proximity and distance it exercises. Levinas's idea of ethical duty to the other finds a strong parallel in motherly love towards the child that is believed to be capable of emulating itself for the child. As in Levinas grade of proximity, first a mother offers tenderness and care to the child, then it also gives her time, and finally the mother is ready to make any sacrifice, even the sacrifice of death. And even if not all mothers can climb this ladder of Levinas's ethics, they certainly embody the most exact picture of the encounter of the *I* with the other – the stranger.

If the time is *breachable* through hermeneutics and intersubjective construction of the self, or different – through the relationship of the self with the other/the stranger, Bowen rightly notices that characters may substitute one another. In her letter to A. E. C., dating 31st August 1935, Bowen wrote that she had tried to reinforce the idea that Leopold is the double of Max. In the letter Bowen explains,

It's funny about people being hard to visualize – I find I visualize the people I'm writing about in the same terms, with the same blanks and qualifications, as I remember people who have impressed me but that I cannot always see in entirety. I can see all Henrietta except her features; Karen's figure, movements and ways but I don't know what kind of nose she had. Max is a portrait of someone I knew quite passingly and superficially once, so of course I do see him; Max (read Leopold) is the same man as a little boy. But if I can't get this across there's something wrong. (Bowen, 1999k, 199)

If Leopold is Max and Max is Leopold, according to Bowen's authorial election, then we can read into the narratives of both of the characters as constructed within the economy of narcissism. As should be noted, both characters betray porous selfhood, and they both fail to find an external totalized object of desire. Apparently, they are unable to forego their want of a strong mother figure and a desire for maternal love. In *The House in Paris* Bowen links the development of narcissism with childhood as well as with emotional bereavement of estrangement and otherness. Narcissism has been considered in psychology a result of a childhood trauma, a loss of a love-object, loss of maternal love and affect or parental rejection. It originates excess of self-hatred which the subject masks with exaggerated self-love. What happens is that these destructive drives are misdirected at the subject's own *ego*, whereas in a normal situation the subject directs or should direct its abjectable drives against the maternal. Narcissism is a

scream against rejection but it also constitutes a form of self-defence. In her *In the Beginning Was Love: Psychoanalysis and Faith* Julia Kristeva says that narcissism is a “defence against the emptiness of separation” (Kristeva, 1988, 42). She admits that “in being narcissistic one has already throttled the suffering of emptiness” (Kristeva, 1988, 42-43). We clearly see narcissistic traits in Leopold and we have proof of their existence in Max’s behaviour as well. Miglena Nikolchina writes in her *Matricide in Language. Writing Theory in Kristeva and Woolf* (2004) that,

Strangeness to language does entail the forlornness of the melancholic who is fused in the maternal Thing because of an *unaccomplished separation from the mother*. Asymbolia is the insufficiently lost maternal continent, the invisible centre of gravity, the hidden image of *Narcissus*, whose silent call threatens with *dissolution*. (Kristeva, 1987, 26) [Emphasis mine]

If we turn towards Max’s narrative in *The House in Paris*, we see that what consecutively follows from his *narcissistic subjectivity* heightened by his relationship to Mme Fisher is his *silent suicide* – “His attack on himself had been, however, so quiet that when it happened she did not understand” (*HP*, 184). What is more, the suicide, when Max “struck myself (Mme Fisher), himself and my knowledge of him” (*HP*, 184), is also a *matricide and dissolution* of the maternal from which as *Narcissus* he cannot free himself.

In fact, one might say that Elizabeth Bowen herself has devoted much of her attention to narcissism, as one of the frequent topoi of her writing. Bowen wrote about narcissism, as an almost social problem, in her descriptions of boarding schools and dormitories for girls. Her essay entitled “The Mulberry Tree” gives a fine example of emotional emptiness similar to the feelings of loneliness at the school she attended during the years of the First World War. Self-loathing for emotional desiccation was magnified in excessive fetishism and self-adoration. *The American Psychiatric Association* (2000) has described narcissism as a malignant grandiose sense of self-importance, preoccupation with unrealistic fantasies, exhibitionism, cool indifference or feelings of rage, inferiority, shame, humiliation, or emptiness in response to criticism. A subject who succumbs to this personality disorder shows at least two of the following interpersonal disturbances: entitlement, exploitativeness, alternation between over-

idealization and devaluation, lack of empathy. (*American Psychiatric Association APA: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – DSM-IV-TR*).

Another facet of intrasubjectivity can be seen in the concept of boundary crossing as described by Jurij Lotman. In Aristotle, “nature is a source or cause of being moved and being at rest in that to which it belongs primarily, in virtue of a concomitant attribute.” (Ricoeur, 1994, 91) The internal tendency to change distinguishes nature from art. If we look at characters in *The House in Paris*, we are able to divide them into the static/passive characters and the active ones. As an example, Karen’s travelling to and from England, as well as her “escape into the world of dream, crossing the impenetrable border between two different realities” (Kardela, 2002, 178), are examples of boundary crossing only applicable to exceptional characters. Karen is not a static subject. According to Jurij Lotman, boundary-crossing is the characters’ “movement which takes place across the basic topographical border in the spatial structure of a cultural text” (Kardela, 2002, 179), which is “the most abstract model of reality from the position of a given culture” (Kardela, 2002, 178). Anna Kedra-Kardela writes in her “Boundary-Crossing in Elizabeth Bowen’s Short Story ‘The Happy Autumn Fields’” that Lotman’s division of cultural texts into static and dynamic, a division that

parallels [his] division of characters into mobile and immobile ones. In contrast to the immobile characters, the mobile characters can cross the topographical boundary in the internal structure of texts; they can cross change the environment or move from one environment to another. (Kardela, 2002, 179)

As has been mentioned, the exceptional characters, most often main characters, are mobile, which takes us back to the exceptionality of *homo viator*. Similarly, exceptional characters in Bowen are usually exceptionally mobile as the eponymous Eva Trout, or as Portia in *The Death of the Heart*. The characters that fix themselves to one place are usually ‘bad’ characters, as in Mme Fisher confined to her bed in the *upstairs* of the house in Paris – who has “not been alive for nearly ten years” (*HP*, 203), as well as Karen’s mother and aunt, fixing themselves with “unconscious things – the doors, the curtains” (*HP*, 173). Opposed to that are the boundary-crossing characters: Karen, Max, who however makes a mistake of fixing himself to the house in Paris, to Naomi, who is “like *furniture*” (*HP*, 155). Since, however, the plot of *The House in Paris* takes place mostly in one household, how can the characters involved be considered mobile? In my

opinion, Bowen's boundary crossing is not merely of a spatial kind – first it is temporal, as in crossing from present to past and *back* to present again, also analysed by Kardela in her text on two realities in “The Happy Autumn Fields”. Temporal boundary crossing is executed by the reader and by the dialogical construction of the characters – that is the *I* fixed within the other, the child fixed within the parent. In this sense we can read Max as Leopold, as Bowen wished in her design, and Henrietta as Karen. What is more, the boundary crossing involves crossing the gender binary oppositions, so that the characters can be yoked in various oppositions. Temporal boundary crossing does trigger identity boundary crossing as just noted. Bowen's writing is therefore an event – an event of creating a counter-discourse on femininity.

Austin's speech acts in discourse – perlocutionary and illocutionary acts are a form of boundary crossing – crossing the boundary of the other. Karen's speech act of addressing the other in her monologue, leads her to construction of the other within herself and parallelly the night she spends with Max leads to her pregnancy with Leopold. As has been noted earlier, speech acts consists of “doing things with words” as in J. L. Austin's work on the generative discourse. Both perlocutionary and illocutionary acts require the other – the other that listens and understands.

According to Ricoeur and J. L. Austin, personal identity can only be understood in temporal terms. When one speaks of oneself, they immediately have available two modes of permanence in time: the first mode is described as character and the other mode is referred to as keeping's one's word. Both modes are descriptive and emblematic. Both are also referred to as dialogical modes of being. Hence, Karen's *reverie* about the other is transposed onto three temporal frames: that of her past, present and future. These are yoked into one unified temporal frame through the iterability of Karen's character and “keeping the word”, which again points to a certain faithfulness to a unified image of oneself.

Utterance of such character evokes interlocution, speech not only creates and confirms the self but it also unveils the other.

Facing the speaker in the first person is the listener in the second person to whom the former addresses himself or herself – this fact belongs to the situation of interlocution. So, there is not illocution without allocation and, by implication, without someone to whom the message is addressed.” (Ricoeur, 1994, 43)

It is a double phenomenon that signals the “I” that speaks and the “you” to which the speech is addressed. It should be signalled here that the aporia of discursive dialogism in *The House in Paris* does not only highlight the importance of the other, but it also develops the aporia of consequential strangeness. That said, dialogues are “solitary experiences in another solitary experiences”. (Ricoeur, 1985, 83) Constructing a strong character means that this character is not only capable of co-existence with the other, it is also capable of being faithful to oneself, which may disrupt the engendered notions of strong masculine and weak feminine. The greatest battles for integrity are fought between the evanescent idea of self-knowledge and persistent shadow of strangeness, as well as the unknown within oneself – Kristevan porousness of the self.

Personal identity develops from mundane practices in which people find a reference in actions and performances or reiteration of the subject. This concept is closely linked to iterability of subjectivity – a term drawing from Judith Butler’s and Jacques Derrida’s writing. In the development of identity there is a process of reiteration of subjectivity in performances. Life is seen as performance emplotted into temporality – a work in progress of an uncompleted subject. Reading along this line, a subject appears as a being-in-time, dispersed between the remembered past, the experienced present and the anticipation of the future. As has been written at the beginning of this chapter, temporality of past and future is grasped in the temporality of present, so that a three-layered present unfolds in a narrative of a subject. Past, present and future mingle in one, undividable whole that can only be understood transcribed into an emplotted narrative. In narrativity that gives the title to this part of the chapter, emplotment is essentially a link to the separate histories and events in which the subject is involved voluntarily or involuntarily. Narrative identity, which develops in relation to the assumptions of narrativity, is closely linked to action/performance and suffering of a subject. Different from the cosmic time and phenomenological time, it permits a better understanding of the so-called ‘human time’ of emplotment. The process of narrative of identity asks the question of ‘who’ is acting and suffering – who is doing and enduring. Each narrative is a story of somebody who is ‘enduring’ one’s commitments, character and practices. The identity of the ‘who’ unfolds as the story unfolds. This takes on new light in the writing of Elizabeth Bowen concerned with the devaluation, desiccation of reality during the Second World War. It corroborates her interest in memory and past as

constantly unfolding over the present. Randall Stevenson notes in his *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction*,

the war's enormous violence not only swept away a style of life, a sense of integration in the flow of time. (...) A sense of security within history, and a belief in the attractive qualities of the future to which it probably led, had sustained a good deal of thinking – and fiction – at least since the latter part of the Victorian period. (Stevenson, 1992, 140)

Since temporality is so strongly anchored in suffering, which prompts a character to develop and tell his/her story, this may find its parallel in what Simon Critchley calls in one of his interviews for *The Believer* the philosophy that begins with experiences of disappointment,

Political disappointment flows from the fact that there is injustice—that we live in a world that is radically unjust and violent, where might seems to equal right, where the poor are exploited by the rich, etc. So for me philosophy begins with these experiences of disappointment: a disappointment at the level of what I would think of as “meaning,” namely that, given that there is no God, what is the meaning of life? ... But if there is a feature that dominates the present, I would say there's the fact of war and the horror and cruelty of war. (Critchley, 2003³⁵)

In my opinion, unsurprisingly bearing in mind the plot of the novel, a similar feeling of disenchantment with reality prevails in Bowen's *The House in Paris*. The novel is divided in three parts; its plot is supported by three crucial moments, which are the conversation scene between Leopold and Henrietta, the night that Karen spends with Max, and the revelation of bad news to Leopold that his mother would not be coming. The three moments are embedded in the overwhelming feeling of disappointment that the characters experience. From these three points a number of less significant moments of revelation spreads, forming what Slavoj Žižek called a network of resistant points within the demagogical dominant discourses – here one can undoubtedly call it the plot. Critchley argues for a cultivation of the low, the common and the near—the everyday—as that in relationship to which we can make a meaning out of the meaninglessness of

³⁵ Retrieved August, 13, 2008 from website: http://www.believmag.com/issues/200308/?read=interview_critchley

our existence, Bowen chooses to write about cultivation of the material – the house, the furniture. From the experience of profound disappointment with having one’s childhood kept “sunny and beautiful” (*HP*, 41) and then finding oneself looking back at “(...) humiliations, ridiculousness and self-deceptions, and dread[ing] others” (*HP*, 161), from this moral nihilism Bowen threads her work on the self and other, where the dyad find themselves set against the necessity of self-creation and self-definition. Her ‘luminous spaces’ emerge from the vulgar, from the hypothetical motherlessness and strangeness, similar to what Julia Kristeva describes in her text “Motherhood According to Giovanni Bellini” (1980).

From these resistant points the narrative races forward – taxis swerve, trains run from north to south, ships sail from a country to another country. In Bowen, we are literally moved from one event to another one within the emplotment of narrated time. And yet, the highly strung emotional moments are equally oppressive and haunting as the dynamics of movement itself. Even though the resistant points seem to be frozen in oppressive stillness, there is a dynamic quality in them – the feeling of the monumental time and the internal time closing in on the character. In this sense, the narrated time undergoes significant changes thanks to those emotive moments of stillness. The narrated temporality is delayed or thrust forward, amplifying the stillness – the non-existence of now, demeaning its hegemony and at the same time amplifying the internal conflicts of characters – the internal time, the internal life merges with what Nietzsche would call the monumental history.

The entanglement of the narrated past, present and future gives the character not only a psychological depth, but shows the spuriousness of the dominant ideology. Thanks to the moments of great intensity, Bowen creates an experience of *dejà-vu* – we seem to be seeing the same character in different situations, whereas in fact we see different characters undergoing deep internal changes and conflicts. The narrator guides us through various consciousnesses, so that we gain a sense of participating in a dramatic representation. We witness the performance of characters and become their other. The textual time merges with monumental time; the internal time of the characters is emplotted into our own time of experience. Complying with the literary

weather of her times, Bowen gives us her own idea of Auerbach's multi-personal representation of consciousness.³⁶

During the night Karen spends with Max, the chronological time is quite clearly represented by the luminous watch and the passing hours. In Bowen's play with prolepses and analepses, the present is oppressive – it has barely any quality in itself let alone that of passing. It is burdensome, lacking – similarly it is not sufficient to do certain things – just like visiting Paris in the case of Henrietta. What happens now, gains quality only if it is converted to either memories or expectations. The present is less palpable than the past or the future. In this sense Bowen tries to answer the question of whether time is irrevocable. And following Marcel Proust whom she cites on various occasions, she presents time not as irrevocable but rather to be regained in memory and expectation. Hers is the idea of consciousness similar to Auerbach and his symbolic omni temporality of the remembering consciousness. To Auerbach, omni-temporality means coexistence within single subject's experience of different time frames equal to multiplicity in voices. By merging past and future into present Bowen gives in to the idea, also shared by Virginia Woolf that consciousness has no absolute linear existence. In her often quoted essay Woolf writes,

Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? (Woolf, 1986, vol II, 106-107)

Bowen tries to find the answer to what Woolf deemed as impossible – realist fiction representing human experience and consciousness. Woolf believed that realist writers fail to represent human consciousness convincingly because they ignore the fact that as in the “Mr Bennet and Mrs Brown”: “in or about December, 1910, human character changed” (Woolf, 1986, vol I, 320). So even though Bowen strives not to dispense with

³⁶ Eric Auerbach spoke about the idea of multipersonal voices in his commentary to Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* in one of his most influential essays “The Brown Stocking” (1946). In the text Auerbach analyzed the internal monologue of Mrs Ramsay. His idea of multi-personal representation of consciousness referred to a consciousness containing many voices that is a mirror image of author's attitude toward the reality of the world.

the idea of time and chronology, she disrupts the linearity of past, present and future – as well as the hegemony of the present. The time presented by Bowen in the present moment is complex and multi-layered and it is her effort to present the characters' internal struggle with the outer frame of time and events. The idea of movement that Bowen deploys refers not so much to the measurement of cosmological time, but rather deconstructs the internal and external time of every subject's consciousness. As such Bowen complicates Deleuze's idea of the time image constructed within Kantian thinking of Adorno's post Second World War thinking, who remarked that writing poetry after Auschwitz was obscene (1949)³⁷. The subject in Bowen may not be motionless and restrained and yet it seems to be surprisingly passive and reluctant towards action, an idea, which is signalled by Bowen in her deployment of passive syntax.

³⁷ Theodor Adorno wrote in 1949 that "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (Adorno, 1949, Guyer, 2007)

2. The Self and the Other

He would be the mark our hands did not leave on the grass, he would be the tamarisks we only half saw. And he would be the I whose bed Naomi sat on, the Max whose sleeve I brushed rain: tender and guardable. He would be the Max I heard talking when I stood outside the salon, the I Max rang up: that other we were both looking for. I could bear us both lying tire and cast-off if it were for him, if we were his purpose... these would not have been for nothing: He would have been there then and then and then. (*HP*, 155)

The approach to subjectification and the development of identity is notoriously divided in two ‘schools’. The first one takes into account the sex of the subject and consequently its sexual practices. This approach very often refers itself to different erogenous practices or zones of our political, social and economic lives. The second approach chooses to focus on different aspects of being as independent of sexual practices. In such light a subject can become gendered in this or that way not necessarily having engaged in sexual practices typical of that gender. Still from another angle a subject may acquire the attributes of a given sexual orientation without engaging in sexual practices of the given group. The most salient argument is that our daily lives or the category of being is more a verb, a practice rather than a predefined noun. Bowen writes in one of her essays that speech is a “physical act”, just like “a fight, murder, love making – dialogue is the most vigorous and visible inter-action of which characters in a novel are capable” (Bowen, 1999k, 41). This idea has been widely used in modern research on the construction of feminism, patriarchy and hierarchy producing dominant discourses, hate speech, gate-keeping policies as well as all dichotomist thinking on gender and sex. Erzsebet Barat says,

In other words, signifiers come to be meaningful ‘within the available frames of intelligibility’¹ that are effects of particular relations of hegemonic power. These frames of intelligibility can be captured then through the practices of categorization and the assumptions about “ordinary” that can go without explicit explanation simply assumed to be known by a given collective of speakers. (Barat, 2007³⁸)

³⁸ Retrieved March 13, 2009 from website: <http://americanajournal.hu/vol3no1/barat>

Barat admits that inter-textuality, emerging at the boundary of text/context, needs

to acknowledge above all the materiality of discourse and define it as an ideological social practice where categories or concepts 'never assert their meaningfulness in and of themselves' but function 'as a particular way of making sense of (the signified)' and thereby bring about or 'define a particular set of social arrangements. (Barat, 2007)

The practices of intelligibility of a discourse are best exemplified in operations of categorization, as well as admitting ordinariness of a given concept in a collective understanding of speakers. And it is questions of categorization and supposed ordinariness that Bowen resolves to exhaust. Her world view hinges on the exploration of the ideological investments of the sense making practices in a given cultural and historic moment.

As follows, what is of utmost importance is to analyze why individuals/characters choose to use a particular discourse or take a particular action, which they do on a regular basis thus enacting the process of reiteration. One should try and understand the ideological investments that parallel one way of behaving rather than another. And by doing this, we may try to sketch at least two conclusions. The first one will refer itself to the construction of the dominant discourse with the discourse's presuppositions that go without verbalizations but without which no statement can be enunciated. The other conclusion will explore the potential consequences, the direction where the dominant logic that informs a particular statement should pull the trajectory of the propositions; these propositions that make for an essential element of Bowen's longer fiction.

Since this work chooses to problematize subjectification as strongly enframed in gender operations, we shall give a great emphasis to the categories of woman and man. Here, we should work under the premise that the categories of woman or man are not enclosed in a predefined set of qualities but become themselves a work in progress, a Deleuzian becoming, just as much as the Deleuzian *Body - without - Organs*. A verb rather than a noun gender categorization allows construction of verbs such as to man and to woman. Furthermore, it is important to notice that the sole practice of being a woman, a man, a mother or a father does not become a social discourse until it receives a reaction, thus before it gains dynamic momentum of being exchanged between the

addresser and addressee. Whatever the social practice of a subject becomes a discourse only when it is contextualized. The approach of contextualization can be divided into two separate approaches, one being more radical than the other one. The more radical approach would only have a given practice as a discourse juxtaposed against an external other. Whatever one says or does needs to be performed in front of an audience, which on its part needs to react to that given statement.

As has been mentioned in the previous part of this chapter, this approach finds its parallel in J. L. Austin's idea of language as a set of speech acts and performative utterances. In an intellectually intriguing way Bowen's ideas precede that of J. L. Austin's so that in her "Notes on Writing a Novel" she writes that "speech is what the characters do to each other" (Bowen, 1999k, 41). Discourse has a deeply productive and generative power, of which interpellation and verbal violence are just few facets. What is more, language has plausibly physical consequences.

Contextualization can also be seen from a different angle – that which escapes the existence of external other, so that acts have their meaning even if no one receives them, especially in the case of perlocutionary acts, performed/enlivened by saying something. Thus, the human mind continues to invest into rituals. It can be argued therefore that, for example, Karen's night *reverie* is a perlocutionary act, that by sole linguistic performance 'begets' Leopold and inserts Karen within the maternal dichotomy of the child and the mother – the self and the other. The imagery of holding hands, leaving marks on the grass, endless coming and going of two lovers with their attempts at making the relationship as normative as possible, are among other reasons (to be taken up later in this study) an example of the importance of ritualization and contextualization. The effect of a symbol is far more important than the realistic image itself, even though it requires being performed. And, what is more important, it does not function within the true/false binary opposition but within the premise whether the utterance is happy or felicitous, which takes away the repressive and impeding ethics, as has been mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis.

However, this doing away with the hegemony of the other points to the spuriousness in the construction of this very other as well as to the fact of the other being a partially external and internal construct. The other makes part of both 'myself' and 'yourself', so that it needs to be taken into account within the temporal frame of the subject's existence. "One cannot simply act" (*HP*, 152) says Max to Karen when they

are in Boulogne – one is not a solitary agent but a dialogical construct. This reading of the concept of selfhood is worked on in Paul Ricoeur’s idea of individual as both myself and another based on the division between sameness and selfhood.

In her introduction to *The House in Paris* A. S. Byatt elects three sentences that she believes best describe the ‘emotional weather’ of the novel. The fragments are typical of a certain Bowenesque intellectual ubiquitousness and, irritating for many readers as they are, they highlight very important tropes in *The House of Paris* – emphasis on dialogism between selfhood and sameness as well as selfhood and otherness respectively. However, it often strikes one that Bowen can be too prompt to use categorization and then, within this taxonomy - hierachization. To give an example, the three fragments from Bowen’s novelected by A.S. Byatt need to be quoted. The first quote refers to innocence: “Years before sex had power to touch his feeling it had forced itself into view as an awkward tangle of motives”. (*HP*, 34)

The second quote is about the plasticity of a child’s mind: “The mystery about sex comes from confusion and terror: to a mind on which these have not yet settled there is nothing you cannot tell.” (*HP*, 78) Similarly, Kristeva believes the time of childhood and early adolescence to be that of total belief in oneself; a time blatantly called a syndrome of ideality. This again conjugates with a certain polymorphous perversity of a small child whose spectre of interests is broad and diverse.

The third quote sees the adult world peeking through the child’s voice: “There is no end to the violations committed by children on children, quietly talking alone.” (*HP*, 31) Theoretically, it may refer to the idea that there is a child within every adult subject that needs to be re-discovered and returned to as in Gilles Deleuze. This child, as the other or the foreigner, dwells deep within the structures of every individual psyche, so that his or her existence does not solely threaten the borders of the self from the outside, as one would imagine, but rather it destabilizes the subject from the inside.

Categorization in Bowen is a deliberate technique revealing the dominant divide into exclusionary dichotomies. This is followed by the illusion of giving certain social practices the status of ‘ordinary’. The second technique reveals itself in Bowen as a typical Bowenesque style of writing in style of aphorisms and general truths that are supposedly to resonate deep with the reader’s understanding of reality and his/her experience of life. A. S. Byatt comments on the trickiness of such style –

I began the book, a compulsive reader, having already worked my way through most of Scott and much of Dickens, expecting to find a powerful plot, another world to inhabit, love, danger. I found instead my first experience of a 'wrought', formalized 'modern' novel, a novel which played tricks with time and point of view. (Byatt, 1976, 7)

That said, however, Byatt seems to be unable to see through this clichéd Bowenesque style as she goes on to admit

A novel, also (and this I remember clearly as being supremely important), which clarified, or would have clarified if I had been clever enough to focus it, the obscure, complex and alarming relationships between children, sex and love. There were powerful phrases which lodged in my mind and stayed there. (Byatt, 1976, 7)

Socratic dialogue is characterised by opposing itself to any monological ontology 'claiming to possess a readymade truth' (Kristeva, 1980, 81). Socratic truth is a by-product of 'dialogical relations between speakers' (Kristeva, 1980, 81) and it verges on the category of a noun and a verb at the same time. Its craft can be seen in articulation of fantasy, correlation of signs – it also means a questioning of truth by discourse and by the very effect this discourse will have once it has been produced. Narrative threaded as in Socratic dialogue is externalized and 'dialogized'. Emphasis is given to the other and his or her truth. Meaning is a dialogical product between the self and other. And if we decide to treat the other as an equally important subject we must take into consideration the sum total of his or her existence – their narrative, origins, social sphere. Bowen constructs her own discourse using these textual land marks. And yet even though we encounter a plethora of social contexts in Bowen, her "subjects of discourse are nonpersons, anonyms, hidden by the discourse constituting them" (Kristeva, 1980, 81). Narrative in Bowen continually makes use of the social detail so that one can easily fall into the trap of denying Bowen any originality and genuine talent. However, her exaggerated use of the social detail is somehow pessimistic, there is an undercutting sense of grotesque and Bowen's use of the leading motives of failed maternity and difficult childhood sets the atmosphere against an apparent simplicity of plot. What is more, if using the social detail may seem common and cliché, introducing themes of orphanhood and failed motherhood opposes the apparent plainness. To read better into the uniqueness of such choice, let us remember Kristeva's words from her

Desire in Language. “The exclusive situation liberates the word from any univocal objectivity, from any representative function, opening up to the symbolic sphere” (Kristeva, 1980, 81), so that by definition the ideas of maternity, adolescence and childhood in Bowen need to be singled out from the dominant definition for the discourse be able to shift it outside the dominant ideology. And if these themes, stripped of any sentimentalism in *The House in Paris*, are deeply tragic and moving in their stagnant cruelty, Bowen’s last novel *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* introduces a Dionysian ‘Bowen-ism’ that is defiant and carnivalesque, as will eventually be shown in the next chapter.

To gain a better view of how deep the discursive cracks of the dominant discourse are, Bowen plays with stable signifiers and signified widening the sphere of their interconnectedness. She moves a step further liberating the self and other from their dichotomised relationships, so that a character does not have an obvious opposition but in an overview of the plot we may see his/her oppositional relationships with different others. What differentiates Bowen from the traditional construction of Socratic truth is her denial of relativisms triggered by the observers’ autonomous point of view. And since subjects are not autonomous but coherent in reiterating certain discourses, we read about mothers who choose to mother well or badly. The play of signifiers and signified, that is various characters, is not free and uncontrolled to give them greater freedom of being, but it is deliberate. As such in constructing an unhappy mother without a child, Bowen does not give us a happy one with a child, but a happy one without her child. In Bowen there is Menippean, blatant and open exploration of ‘body, dreams and language’ (Kristeva, 1980, 83) that answer to the unattainable object of ultimate desire. Narrative in Bowen is carnivalesque for it is like “the residue of a cosmogony that ignored substance, causality, or identity outside of its link to the whole, which exists only in or through relationship” (Kristeva, 1980, 78). What surfaces in this particular interest in dialogism, is Bowen’s emphasis on multiplicity and relationality of dependence as an ongoing process the self and the other maintain. Multiplicity and relationality are inseparable elements of autonomy feminism strives to achieve through its particular enactment of agency.

In a Menippean gesture Bowen laughs at the concept of family though a happy marriage – those relationships, which fit into the society’s discourse on matrimony usually are the most fraught with problems. Apparently, *The House in Paris* plot lacks

in stable, fulfilling unions let alone the curious and problematic marriage of Karen's aunt, who dies before Karen gets married. It is during the visit to the aunt's house in Ireland, now installed on a mount after the Troubles, that Karen realizes the futility and shallowness of her possible union with Ray. Yet the concept of family that Bowen laughs at is the one presented by Foucault in *The History of Sexuality* as the family cell, as opposed to the eighteenth century concept of family as alliance. It is what Nancy Armstrong reads in *Desire and Domestic Fiction*³⁹ as evaporation into discourse – women giving up their corporeality for the introduction into discourse, so that they no longer are corporeal but textual constructs easily manipulated by men. Armstrong had written much in her book about the idea of desire as inseparable from its representation. She followed Foucault in saying that repression is a rhetorical figure and a means of producing desire in the middle class, bourgeois logic. Its repressive hypothesis ensures that we always think about freedom in terms of repression and the myth of progressive enlightenment, whereas desire should be liberated from these encumbering notions so that we should “abandon the practice of putting knowledge in a domain of nature outside of and prior to representation” (Armstrong, 1999, 13). Only by doing so “we stand a chance of avoiding the tautology inherent in the notion of repression”. (Armstrong, 1999, 13) As such we may be able to understand desire as part of political history and different hegemonies as well as contest the reigning systems of phallogocentrism manipulating both corporeality and textuality of women.

Paul Ricoeur writes in his *Oneself as Another* that the self floats between the preserve physicality and intentionality, which posits the aporia of self against the strict deployment of the Cartesian *cogito* and the extreme anti Cartesian-ism. Instead, Ricoeur presents the self as a product of an impersonal system. The aporia of the self, as he then endeavours to prove, is an epistemological construct, occupying an ontological place between the *cogito* and its extreme anti-*cogito*. To be precise, Ricoeur writes about the

³⁹ Nancy Armstrong focuses in her book *Desire and Domestic Fiction* on the causal relationships between the rise of the domestic fiction and the domestic woman along with the ascent of the middle-class in 18th and 19th century England. She writes extensively on the introduction of the new political power through disentanglement of sexuality from the discourse of politics. Armstrong, using the writings of Foucault, Gilbert and Gubar, and Watt, ventures on a redefinition of desire, the feminine and the domestic, processes that had been occurring in England since eighteenth century and that led to the contestation of the reigning kinship systems, a notion crucial in the understanding of both Anglo-Irish and Irish literature and history.

situation of “Exalted subject and humiliated subject” (Ricoeur, 1994a, 16), so that to him “it seems that this is always through complete reversal of this sort that one approaches subject”. One of its grammatical categories is pinpointed in the division of identity between selfhood and sameness – Latin *Ipseity* and *Idem*-identity (*Ipsa/Idem*). *Idem* gives the self spatio-temporal sameness and *ipse* is responsible for its individuality – its haecceity. On the other hand, the self is constructed by three hermeneutical categories. The first one is achieved by a detour of reflection by analysis. The second category refers itself to the dialectics of selfhood and sameness, and the third category is that of dialectics between selfhood and otherness. Ricoeur’s theories are that of preoccupation with the binary oppositions, which results in positing of the ‘I’ as *atopos* without any fixed place in the discourse. As such it is easily manipulated by different discourse practices.

Two very important ways of individualization are identifying reference and self-designation, yet they are only possible in a situation of interlocution, which highlights the importance of the other as an addressee. Paul Ricoeur says that as such the idea of identity generates itself within the idea of sameness, what matters is that the interlocutors agree on the same discourse and find themselves within the same language. Consequently, we may read more into Bowen’s analysis of common language in *The House in Paris*. Since Karen and Max lack a common *parole* they are obliged to talk about the history of the place where they meet, so that Bowen ironically is able to demystify the couple’s belief in neutrality of history. After all, it is Henrietta who contradicts this naïve belief, when she considers the amount of blood shed in Paris. It is also Bowen’s statement on how much our public discourses merge with our private discourses or that after all there exists only one discourse altogether and it is public. (Ricoeur, 1994a, 31)

According to Ricoeur (1994a) it is better to use the term individualization rather than individual since “language contains specific connecting units that allow us to designate individuals” dynamically (Ricoeur, 1994a, 27) and “the ascription of individualities can be based, depending on the various lexical resources of natural languages, on widely varying degrees of specification” (Ricoeur, 1994a, 27) – thus the process of individualization can vary from subject to subject. In other words, one should focus on concrete practices of individualization, contextualization of gender practices in a pragmatic way. Individualization theory also attracts attention to the problem of

discourse working specifically towards designation of which individuals one wants to speak. As such discursive operations of designation are examples of state apparatuses that assign gender attributes and denote cultural behaviour. The relationship between the self and other becomes the relationship between language use and ideology, in the ideological investments of any sign to acquire meaning. Individualization through discourse becomes a dominant practice of meaning making and political practice of wide repercussions, its extreme form being hate speech. By denominating the other one not only exercises influence over oneself and one's discourses but also creates the other's discourse. The consequences for feminist scholarship are far reaching from the dominant practice of categorization in exclusionary dichotomies towards the privilege of assuming the status of 'ordinary' – ordinary motherhood, womanhood or childhood.

One short fragment of *The House in Paris* takes us to the narrator's statement that Karen "had outgrown years ago any girlish naturalness, without having learnt how even to imitate any other" (*HP*, 98). Now, Karen recognizes learnt discourses operating through her friend Naomi, whom "she could feel (...) setting in a smile like her mother's – a too kind, controlled smile" (*HP*, 99). As has been said, normative gender and sexuality problematizes motherhood/parenthood and femininity/masculinity into political and social practices, little dependent on any simplistic generative approach to discourse dividing humankind into binary oppositions of plus and minus. The first group is known to have the penis the second one is known to lack the penis. Bearing in mind the above, the importance of Bowen's emphasis on the social and class issues takes on a different light, drastically differing from that of extreme criticism of her preoccupation with social and class detail.

The central thesis of Ricoeur's theories of selfhood is that the *I* and other cease to be understood as an inseparable binary opposition with a relationship of meaning operating merely internally within the binary. It is now a triad whose meaning operates both internally and externally. It should be perceived through the interdependence between the *I*, the other within the *I* and the third person that "acquires its complete signification of person only if the attribution of mental predicates is accompanied (...) by the capacity for self-designation, transferred from the first to the third person" (Ricoeur, 1994a, 52). The third person is the other and pronounces any given statement in the first person: "I affirm that", "I promise that", etc, "The *I* is extracted from the prefix of an action verb and posited for itself as a person, that is as a basic particular

amid all off the things of which one speaks” (Ricoeur, 1994a, 52). In the case of a lack of action verbs the dynamics of the discourse are supplemented by the narrativity of the discourse that takes on a temporal frame into attention. Ricoeur goes on to write about the triad of selfhood: “This assimilation between the ‘I’ who is speaking to ‘you’ and the ‘him/her’ of whom one is speaking functions in an opposite direction to the assigning of the power of self-designation to ‘him’ or ‘her’” (Ricoeur, 1994a, 52). This is a process of assimilation between the subject of the utterance and the irreducible basic particular – the person producing the utterance.

The ‘I’ of the utterance has its designating power on being performed in front of the ‘you’, as an utterance about him or her (the you being either external or internal, as in an performative practice). In such manner, what Karen says about Leopold, in Max’s presence, is both self designating for Leopold and Karen. The ‘I’ of Karen’s utterance is the ‘I’ that Leopold takes up in the first and third part of *The House in Paris*. The fact of Max being asleep points to the irrelevance of active participation of the other. The ‘I’ fluctuates between the three subjects – the ‘political’ statement Karen makes when talking to Leopold can also belong to Max or Leopold, as Karen’s statement is the expression of the dominant discourse. It is extremely difficult to break away from the dominant discourse and it may only be possible by making oneself misunderstood, by stepping outside of the language – Karen gives up the opportunity to escape entrenchment in the dominant discourse – she stops painting, she rejects maternity and other, and consequently leaves Leopold⁴⁰, who to her “was the enemy” (*HP*, 215). As such, she remains ‘passive’, barren and sexless, which according to Kristeva is the way of controlling the motherly jouissance making her a desirable object. “It was understood that their childlessness, though an infinite pity, kept their companionship uninterrupted and close” (*HP*, 218). Being “right to make any sacrifice”, Karen becomes entangled by the myth of the sacrificial Madonnas, virginal in her barrenness, who devoted their life to “the plain man” (*HP*, 219), who gave up a son for a greater good. The imagery of Madonna is recalled in the description of Karen shuddering in “the Versailles bed, with the gloves she had put on to go to Paris, then pulled off, dropped on the floor, and the violets she had pinned on for Leopold pressed dead between her breast and the bed” (*HP*, 215). The symbolism of the nurturing breast,

⁴⁰ I strongly believe that a certain hostility and consequent abandoning of children is visible in twentieth century fiction by Irish women writers, as in Mary Morissy and Mary Rose Callaghan.

the bed as on the night of Leopold's conception heighten the symbolism of the violets that in Christian imagery are the sign of the Virgin Mary's humility and her son's future sacrifice. Violets can be seen in Leonardo da Vinci's paintings of *Madonna Litta* (1490) and *Madonna and Child with Flowers/The Benois Madonna* (1478). Irreversibly, the past hunts Karen with the burden of being a whore and a mother too. Violet is also the name of Karen's terminally ill aunt living the final moments of her Anglo-Irish fantasy in Mount Iris in County Cork. Aunt Violet is told to die "wondering what else there was" (*HP*, 152), sometimes "wishing one had done more" (*HP*, 83) out of love "Couldn't love be a reason?" (*HP*, 85) to give more meaning to life

Ricoeur says in his work that we are subjects in 'the other's' stories, 'the others' are subjects in our stories and consequently we are authors of 'the other's' stories and 'the others' are authors of our stories. This may explain why human subjects are easily manipulated by various ideological apparatuses as noted by Althusser and Zizek. The triad of selfhood corresponds to three modes of exchange in which the self participates. These are: exchange as translation of the other into our discourse as an example of 'linguistic hospitality', which makes possible a common participation in the present. In exchange as translation the self makes a charitable attempt at including the mystery of the other into the self's consciousness. Translation defends the idea that there is no unconditioned free speech as such, which would inevitably be regulated by those who voice the *status quo*. The condition is that speech needs translation from one individual to another through the third person acquiring complete signification of person by the capacity of self-designation and not violation into hostile discourse.

The second mode translates itself into exchange of memories by sharing stories crucial to our self-recognition, but of which we have been unaware – as in childhood stories told to adults. Here, I situate my understanding of dialogical relations between the characters in *The House in Paris*. They include the dialogical/reciprocal relationship Leopold and Henrietta have, which corroborates the process of their self-recognition and self-understanding. The situations of dialogue between characters are also included in the mode of linguistic hospitality.

The third mode of exchange is that of forgiveness, since evoking memories could mean recalling guilt and debt. The mode of forgiveness does not free the present from the effects of the past but from its debt and guilt, and as such it makes the future possible. Therefore, the third mode translates itself in *The House in Paris* into the

central conflict of the self and other, the self and society, the self and discourse. It builds on the dialogical dependence between Leopold and Karen, Karen and Naomi, Henrietta and her guardians. It underpins one of the central relationships of the narrative – that of the parent and the child.

The problematic of guilt recalls the Kristevan concept of transference plasticity that describes transference of guilt from one individual to another as a means of self defence and preservation. In *Intimate Revolt*, Kristeva reveals that the analytical experience of transference and counter-transference are processes that the subject uses to vindicate freedom. It is not freedom in Sartre's sense of condemnation to choice and responsibility but freedom from the guilt of being as such (Heidegger) and from the vicissitudes of consciousness whose attraction to interiorizing the collective realism of sin in individual responsibility is unquenchable as in Freud. Here Kristeva's interpretive elaboration of the concept of forgiveness as rebirth, as suspension of judgment, and generally as "the unconscious coming to consciousness in transference" (Kristeva, 2003, 19) might prove helpful. However, it may contradict, to a certain degree, Levinas's concept of forgiveness, used here in the thesis, referring to forgiveness in order to remember. While the idea of being is linked to time, the idea of drive – the death drive in particular - is linked to timelessness. It is in "The Scandal of the Timeless," chapter three of *Intimate Revolt*, that Kristeva delivers a sustained and compelling philosophical argument on the concept of the timeless (l'hors-temps/Zeitlos), on its role and importance *vis-à-vis* the transference experience of analysis.

In *The House in Paris*, Karen and Leopold occupy the central place in the discourse on motherhood and infancy, highlighting the overt tension, insight and self-recognition they provoke in the subject. We may recall the aforementioned passage from Karen's *reverie* about Leopold.

I should see the hour in the child. I should not have rushed onto nothing. He would be the mark our hands did not leave on the grass, he would be the tamarisks we only half saw. And he would be the I whose bed Naomi sat on, the Max whose sleeve I brushed rain off: tender and guardable. He would be (...) that other we were both looking for. (*HP*, 153)

The central question is whether Leopold as the embodied consequence of the past, embodied past, the tangible other, will be able to escape the operations of guilt

persecuting Karen. What would be the central role of motherhood, and whether will its practices be sustained? Will the verdict of the other voice in Karen's *reverie* be confirmed – so that Leopold "(...) would be disaster" (*HP*, 154)

The final pages of *The House in Paris* blatantly speak out against Leopold, "this little brittle Jewish boy with the thin neck, putting a hand at once wherever you looked" (*HP*, 215). Leopold, "who is more than a little boy" and of whom only Karen knows "what he is" shadows everyone's present reaching after people like the shadow of the past. Leopold's imaginary self "had used [Ray's] his inner energy, without letting, all these years, any picture form" (*HP*, 215). That very moment when Karen's husband Ray begins to fear Leopold he comes into the room announcing that Mme Fisher will not be seeing any guests and after that he adds promptly – "She dreads the past" (*HP*, 215). As much as Mme Fisher dreads the past, Karen dreads Leopold who is the past. "While he is a dread of yours, he is everywhere" says Ray to Karen in their "unspoken dialogue" (*HP*, 217) whose mode is circular and not plain or linear, just like the unspoken discourse of Montaigne or Virginia Woolf.

No one could be less merely impish than Leopold. Behind the childish *méchanceté* Ray saw grown-up avengingness pick up what arms it could... Karen's unalarmed smile appeared in Leopold's lips when he had said this, but his deliberate look was from someone else's eyes. Ray saw for the moment what he was up against: the force of a foreign cold personality (*HP*, 220-221).

The statement that can be read from *The House in Paris* is that the past needs to be faced, lived with because one "is never alone" (*HP*, 217) and apart from the other; otherwise Karen and Ray are "never alone, while you're dreading him (Leopold). It is you who remembers. If he were here with us, he'd be simply a child, either in or out of the room" (*HP*, 217).

The above passage from *The House in Paris*, not only pictures the circularity or iterability of identity that is propelled from the mother towards the father, it too makes visible the conflicting operations of the symbolic and semiotic within the developing subject. As Nancy Chodorow writes in her *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*, the Oedipal processes in girls and boys, the process towards the father's masculinity becomes and remains problematic for boys in the sense that the boy has to differentiate himself from the (M)other. Identification with the father does not usually develop in the

context of an affective relationship, because it results from internalizing and learning components of immediately apprehensible role of the father. As such the body defines masculinity in negative terms, as “the force of foreign cold personality” (*HP*, 201) – the phallus, which in case of developed narcissism will be abjected as normatively the (M)Other should be rejected, as is revealed in Max’s case. The development of a girl’s identity is different from that of a boy’s, since “the femininity and female role activities are the immediately apprehensible in the world of her daily life” (Chodorow, 1989, 52). The female Oedipal crisis is not resolved in the same way. A girl cannot completely reject her mother in favor of her father, but keeps her close relationship with her mother. However, a girl too “wavers in a bisexual triangle” (Chodorow, 1989, 53).

It is true that *The House in Paris* describes, to a larger extent, the trauma of what is parentlessness and childlessness. However, on a more general plane, it is a story of the self (re)encountering the other through the continuous feeling of lack it experiences in constructing its narrative. This lack means that the subject is filled in by the operations of otherness, but it also refers to the subject’s autonomy and agency in its relationship with the other – a concept that will underlie the feminist claim to subjective agency through dialogism. As Neil Corcoran writes in his *Elizabeth Bowen: The Enforced Return* (2004), the novel offers a moral extension on reciprocity towards the other. In the story Henrietta, the eleven year old who is on the passage to her grandmother in Mentone, learns the implications and meaning of the word empathy and discovers “a self previously unknown to her” (Corcoran, 2004, 83). Still a child she is cast into performing an act of selfless emotional charity towards a boy called Leopold who happens to stay in the same house in Paris. The children’s meeting marks Henrietta’s entrance into the dominant discourse casting her into the role of a guardian angel. Corcoran writes that “the Gospel ‘Except ye... become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven’ (Matthew, 18:3, in Corcoran, 2004)⁴¹ may lie behind this astonishing narrative” (Corcoran, 2004, 87) referring to the plot, and most particularly the dialogue between Leopold and his mother Karen set in the imaginary heaven before the boy has been born. As in the fragment of the gospel, Henrietta and Leopold the only children in the book, are capable of compassion and direct emotional communion – they are capable of the touch that leaves a visible mark on the other. In

⁴¹ Other Biblical reference takes the reader to the idea of grass in *The House in Paris*.

the Kristevan language Henrietta learns to become 'disembodied' so that she is able to feel the pain and despair of other thanks to her momentary emulation. To paraphrase Kristeva Henrietta's body becomes no longer hers⁴², it doubles up and suffers. In the following fragment Henrietta joins Leopold in his mourning, shedding tears for him so that his exasperated breathing can steady up,

Leopold's solitary despair made Henrietta no more than the walls or table. This was not contempt for her presence: no one was there. Being not there disembodied her, so she fearlessly crossed the parquet to stand beside him. She watched his head, the back of his thin neck, the square blue collar shaken between his shoulders, wondering without diffidence where to put her hand. Finally, she leant her body against his, pressing her ribs to his elbows so that his sobs began to go through her too. (*HP*, 197)

What is surprising in this fragment is the importance Bowen gives to the sense of embodiment in one's relation to the other. Henrietta feels disembodied when ignored, feels an urgent need to mark her bodily presence in the room to avoid experiencing the feeling of contempt. And yet, to become present or embodied for the other invites a further disembodiment that happens during the act of selfless charity. To be there for the other means not to be there for oneself. Henrietta becomes disembodied for Leopold; she becomes a refuge for him so that his cry penetrates her and becomes audible thanks to her presence. In no time Leopold's look drifts away but his body remains with Henrietta:

Leopold rolled his face further away from her, so that one cheek and temple now pressed the marble, but did not withdraw his body from her touch. After a minute like this, his elbow undoubled itself against her and his left arm went round her with unfeeling tightness, as though he were gripping the bole of a tree. Held close like this to the mantelpiece he leant on, Henrietta let her forehead rest on the marble too: her face bent forward, so that the tears she began shedding fell on the front of her dress. (*HP*, 196)

⁴² Similar ideas can be found in Kristeva's "The Maternal Body" (295-6, 303) which constitutes part of *Desire in Language*, especially when we are told that Henrietta's body no longer belonged to her when consoling Leopold. We are shown that this kind of embrace can be stronger than any embrace that may unite lovers. Kristeva writes that no one is present within this - within the maternal body - simultaneously dual and alien space.

Consequently, it is not surprising that Bowen turns to the Victorian image of an angel, a symbol of feminine care and guard. And while Leopold becomes more placid his look shifts into the focalizing position at the end of the fragment. It is not only that Leopold's and Henrietta's bodies become united in this fleeting moment of despair – it is also the masculine predicament that is empowered thanks to feminine sacrifice, moving away from the look of the mother to the look of the father. Now Henrietta's eyes cover with tears of her previously unknown self,

An angel stood up inside her with its hands to its lips, and Henrietta did not attempt to speak.

Now that she cried, he could rest. His cheek no longer hurt itself on the marble. Reposing between two friends, the mantelpiece and her body, Leopold, she could feel, was looking out of the window, seeing the courtyard and the one bare tree swim into view again and patiently stand. His breathing steadied itself; each breath came sooner and was less painfully deep. Henrietta, meanwhile, felt tears, from her own eyes but not from the self she knew of, rain on to the serge dress, each side of the buttons that were pulled a little crooked by Leopold's hand. They stayed like this some time. (*HP*, 197)

At a first glance and rightly so the above fragment is a fragment describing transformation within the self, but it is also a fragment of transformation within the feminine. It illustrates a shift within the categories of the Whore, the Virgin and the Mother clustered now to the dominant understanding of the category of woman. It unveils a passage into adulthood embedded in the discourse of 'normative femininity' as seen from the 'father's' perspective, thus "like a grown-up hand coming between their bodies, something outside" (*HP*, 198). The entrance into the symbolic puts Leopold and Henrietta apart, so it is also in this very moment that Leopold learns to keep life "outside himself, more happy in having intellect" (*HP*, 198). It is now Leopold who possesses the faculty of seeing outside, as men are centre-ocular in dominant discourse. Henrietta's eyes now solely serve as instruments through which emotions are expressed.

In "Stabat Mater" Kristeva writes that the only language the silent Virgin Mary is allowed are the tears she sheds over her son's death – tears which are "metaphors of non-speech, of a 'semiotics' which ordinary linguistic communication cannot account for" (Kristeva, 1987, 312). Here, Bowen too highlights what becomes the book's recurring motif: the Virgin and her sacrifice. For Bowen, Henrietta comes to resemble

the figure of the Virgin holding to Christ's body after he has been taken off the cross, since the tears shed by Mary on Christ's death are the only language given to women in the dominant discourse.

The ritual passage from semiotic to symbolic for Henrietta and Leopold takes place at the marble mantelpiece. The marble is like a sacrificial altar, identity and selfhood are both at stake. Not surprisingly enough, the very same mantelpiece has served as the place of a ritual sacrifice/suicide of Leopold's father, Max who cuts his wrists there, while talking to Mme Fisher. In her writing, Kristeva says that a subject crosses the border of the symbolic and reaches the semiotic *chora* in a ritual of abjection, whose ultimate version is a ritual of death. In so doing Max and Leopold reach the maternal space, the semiotic, retrieving from the symbolic. For Leopold it is the last glimpse of the maternal he awaits and yet does not know, for Max it is the glimpse of what he too lacks and what he chooses over life. Again a ritual, according to Kristeva, makes it possible to access the trans-symbolic *jouissance* connected with the maternal- the maternal of phallic mother. It is a means of overwhelming what's maternal without abjecting it. Max reaches Mme Fisher who witnesses his suicide, Leopold gains access to Henrietta's tears. A ritual triggers the eruption of the semiotic motility threatening the unity of the social realm and the subject, as in Max's 'breaking free' from under Mme Fisher's control, her "commendation he could not bear" (*HP*, 184) because "he needed so much to escape" (*HP*, 184), and as in Leopold's forcing Henrietta into the role of angelic virgin. As such it is doomed to momentariness and inevitable death of the subject. The only salvation for the subject lies in its acceptance of the symbolic order and abjection of the mother – a process that has led it to this very symbolic order.

In the scene, which could be called a scene of trans-symbolic exchange, Bowen compares Henrietta to an angel. Neil Corcoran writes in his book on Bowen about the strength of the passage: "Part of the tremendous force of this derives from its merging of two elements: intense physical specificity; and large moral generalization" (Corcoran, 2004, 83), generalization which stretches onto the categories of selfhood and otherness. However, the tremendous force here owes its strength to the transformation within the feminine, too. As much as Henrietta "is being morally extended" (Corcoran, 2004, 83), her femininity is being extended too and the change is mediated through the body. Henrietta, Leopold and the external world are yoked together in reciprocity

between the subject and object, between the I-for-myself and I-for-others. It is now femininity of ‘blood and tears’ as described by Kristeva. Henrietta becomes a participant in the world and her participation is more than one of mere anguish or overprotectiveness, she becomes the secular version of the ‘Mater dolorosa’. Henrietta’s becoming Leopold’s looking-glass, her knowing that “I’m [Leopold] there” (*HP*, 202), gives Leopold access to exercising “a vulgar power, simply” (*HP*, 202), as Mme Fisher points out to Leopold at the end of the book.

Looking at this event from the cognitive perspective, we remember that Mark Johnson and George Lakoff in *Metaphors We Live By* part from the premise that reason is dependent on the soma. The book purports to be about our awareness and interaction with other bodies as the source of knowledge about the world. It purports to be about human mind having its roots in the experience of embodiment. *Metaphors We Live By* presents the pattern of how we reason about our environment and understand the reality we live in. This is supported by various examples from our daily life and more blatantly by the language codes of metaphors we use. And to use cognitive science in analysing literature means to decode the cultural *parole* from which any given literature draws, and which remains imprinted on our bodies. For it is true that cognitive sciences place understanding of the mind in a historical context so that one can analyze how the mind shapes every literary act and how in turn literature shapes cognition. Cognitive science can support claims to understanding perception, metaphor, concept formation, and categorization – it can offer support in understanding gender division and construction within any cultural framework.

Embodiment of cognitive science leads one to the questions of maternity, agency, objectification and subjectification to name just a few. Simone de Beauvoir says that “He is the Subject, he is the Absolute — she is the other”⁴³, to be the other is to be the non-subject, the non-person, the non-agent, to be solely: the body. In Kantian definition of the ethical subject⁴⁴ as free, rational chooser, this subject is further

⁴³ Simone de Beauvoir develops this idea of the woman as other in her *The Second Sex* (1989); (Originally published in 1949).

⁴⁴ The problem of disembodied subjectivity finds its logical development in the post war conception of time, as expressed in Deleuzian notion of time-image, the time out of joint, and its further in Italian neorealism. There, the active part of embodied subjectivity is returned to the construction of identity since it now controls time movement and change that become subordinate to the bodily perceptive horizons.

presented as an autonomous agent. As such, these above conceptions of the self isolate the individual from personal relationships and larger social forces; they isolate the subject from its bodily experience; in a disembodied mind, the body is peripheral. This leads to creating de-contextualized individualism. Dependency on corporeality is considered a defective form of selfhood. For Kristeva too, the self is a subject of enunciation — a speaker who can use the pronoun ‘I’. But speakers are not unitary, nor are they fully in control of what they say because their discourse is bifurcated. The symbolic dimension of language, which is characterized by referential signs and linear logic, corresponds to consciousness and control. The clear, dry prose of scientific research reports epitomizes symbolic discourse. The semiotic dimension of language, which is characterized by figurative language, cadences, and intonations, corresponds to the unruly, passion-fueled unconscious. Since discourse is made of both registers, the masculine symbolic and the feminine semiotic are equally indispensable to the speaking subject. Whereas Kristeva understands the self as a dynamic interplay between the feminine semiotic and the masculine symbolic, other critics like Nancy Chodorow understand the self as fundamentally relational and thus linked to cultural norms of feminine interpersonal responsiveness. Subjectivity is neither homogenous nor autonomous, but, more so, remains opaque to itself, remaining dependent on the emotional and bodily relation to the other. However, any corporeality is already emplotted into the reality as we read from Merleau-Ponty’s insight that any corporeality is always and already a ‘body-in-the-world’ that differentiates the body’s becomings. We may say that ultimately every performance of a subject is accompanied by its other, which is constructed on the subject’s primary relation with the other as lived in the archaic mother (parent)/child dyad. That said, we may ask who is this archaic mother, who becomes an essential part of the archaic ‘parent’ possessing both female and male attributes. Kristeva writes in *Tales of Love* (1987),

But what is this primal mother, inexhaustible source of excitement at the same time as an impossible object, unnamable secret, absolute taboo? One will again keep in mind primary identification, dawn of identity and idealization, where the future speaking being grasps his own image only on the basis of the ideal apperception of a form that is external to his needs

The ideas of time imagery and new temporality are developed further in the chapter of Elizabeth Bowen’s novel *Eva Trout*.

and desires, one that is not libidinally cathected but has the qualities of both parents. If Freud called this first ideality a ‘father of individual prehistory,’ this should not make us forget that it possesses characteristics of both parents. (...) “ideal” should be understood here in the sense of impossible, other, inaccessible through libidinal cathexis. (Kristeva, 1987, 202)

Freud’s famous “What does a woman want?”⁴⁵ (Jones, 1981, Vol. 2, Pt. 3, Ch. 16)⁴⁶ is perhaps only the echo of the more fundamental “What does a mother want?” It runs up against the same impossibility, bordered on one side by the imaginary father, on the other by a ‘not I’. And it is out of this ‘not I’ that an Ego painfully attempts to come into being.

In narcissism what remains at play is less the relationship towards the archaic mother than the idealization of the relationship itself⁴⁷. The subject not only imagines motherhood as the lost territory but it also idealizes the way towards it. The sublimation of this fantasy is what allows artistic accomplishment; the denial of it assures the entrance into the language of the father. This process can be traced early in the meeting between Henrietta and Leopold. In the body of Henrietta Leopold sees a promise to help him assuage the lack he experiences as an orphan by reencountering the body of the mother – Karen’s body. As Freud says in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* “There are thus good reasons why a child sucking at its mother’s breast has become a prototype of every relation of love. The finding of an object is in fact a re-finding of it.”⁴⁸ (Freud, in Horner and Keane, 2000, 111)

⁴⁵ This is a question that in the light of aforementioned theories on desire presented by Foucault and later elaborated by Nancy Armstrong would be an example of bourgeois oppressive discourse on sexuality that led the female subject to justify why she believes she is repressed in desiring.

⁴⁶ Freud’s writing on the split female subject, as well as other fundamental texts are collected in Ernest Jones’s anthology *Sigmund Freud: Life and Work*.

⁴⁷ In the first chapter of this thesis I have mentioned that women have been originally thought to be capable of solely faulty desire based on lack of and gap from the complementing masculine principle. Now, in the light of the philosophy of maternal femininity women are now a category based on surplus since they carry within them the possibilities and generative powers of the archaic mother.

⁴⁸ Elizabeth Bowen might have clearly been influenced by the psychology of *Quislingism* as studied by Ernest Jones in the post second world war period, which Jones gathered in his text “The Psychology of Quislingism” (1941). Jones was well known to relate adult psychology to infantile sexuality as its primary source of patterns and adult traumas. Bowen, as postulated in this chapter, relates adult behaviour to

Looking at this problem from a different angle, in recognition of displacement, when the fantasmatic *mise-en-scène* becomes unfamiliar, it is also the maternal body as the point of reference that becomes lost. The notion of the obligatory other leads us towards the notion of emptiness, which is at the root of the human psyche. In this respect, the arbitrariness of the Saussurian sign of the structural object/subject dyad has placed us in front of a *bar*, or even an *emptiness*, that constitutes the referent/signified/signifier relationship developed in the gaping hole of the mirror stage. Saussure's *arbitrariness* of the sign and Lacan's *gaping hole* both readily point to what might be understood from the standpoint of representation the uneasy uncertainty, ubiquity, and inconsistency of narcissism. Narcissism protects the subject from an *Ego* and what is not yet an object, giving predominance/eroticising to the mother-child bond since a narcissus, as Kristeva writes in her *Tales of Love* (1987), remains fascinated with the mother's phallus. Such thinking translates itself into the relationship lived by Max with Mme Fisher as his protector and probable lover, as well as his faulty relationship with Naomi Fisher and Karen, whom he failed to sexualize as objects. Narcissism is the defence against the emptiness of transference from the law of the father to the mother as abjected.

Psychotic persons, however, remind us, in case we had forgotten, that the representational contrivances that cause us to speak, elaborate, or believe rest upon emptiness. Possibly the most radical atheists are those who, not knowing what the ability to represent owes to a Third Party, remain prisoners of the archaic mother, for whom they mourn in the suffering of emptiness. (Kristeva, 1987, 42)

In a close relationship to the archaic other, we may expect a subject to re-live the life of his or her parent, trying to re-discover them in the quest for confirmation of their own subjectivity. In *The House in Paris*, we find out that Leopold and Henrietta are re-living the emotionally devastating relationships of their parents. Leopold is believed to resemble his father and mother in attitude,

childhood trauma and abandonment, making the infantile stage the most crucial stage in a subject's development.

We feel, that apart from the circumstances of his birth, Leopold's heredity (instability on the father's side, lack of control on the mother's) may make conduct difficult for him (...) (HP, 41),

Mrs Grant Moody writes to Naomi Fisher. In short we also learn that it was Leopold's father – Max - who believed he needed Naomi for a wife since she resembled a Virgin Mary. A stranger, Max is an orphan, who seeks a mother-figure and female object, and so he becomes split between the urge for the archaic mother (Mme Fisher) and a female object of desire - Naomi Fisher, who becomes for him the symbolic Virgin Mary. As such he becomes the psychotic figure in the book, ultimately committing suicide in front of Mme Fisher,

Narcissus is not located in the objectal or sexual dimension. He does not love youths of either sex, he loves neither men nor women. He Loves, he loves Himself—active and passive, subject and object. *The object of Narcissus is psychic space; it is representation itself, fantasy.* But he does not know it, and he dies. (Kristeva, 1987, 116)

As we read from Kristeva, all strangers are motherless according to what she writes in her *Strangers to Ourselves*. In a short explanation given to Karen, Max says “I am not English; you know I am nervous the whole time” (HP, 146). Since “I am at home with her, she reposes me and I need her. (...) Naomi is like furniture or the dark” (HP, 146) - Naomi's femininity is that of traditional unchanginess/ static/ passivity. “I should pity myself if I did not marry her.” (HP, 146), says Max in his momentary recognition that he needs a reference that he would be able to displace into the periphery and as a narcissistic subject that loves only itself. “I could not endure being always conscious of anyone” (HP, 146), says Max as a subject who's longing is self gratification but also as a masculine subject who's work it is to displace the woman to its symbolic place of female belonging: the dark, just like a piece of furniture. A second later, the symbolic discourse is established when Karen admits, “That's what my mother said” (HP, 146) What is more important, however, it is restored in a statement uttered by a woman, since the symbolic discourse requires it to be uttered by a female subject. The language of the father needs a confirmation from the mother, as well as its subsequent 'motherly' translation for the child. The child, on its part, requires drawing from the mother's discourse, namely from the mother's desire for the father's penis – the discourse of his authority. As such, Bowen's text is intensely a mother/child

narrative, for the One the subject identifies with its both masculine and feminine ‘father of individual prehistory’. At the stage where the consequences of the narrative are cast, there is no differentiation of the sexual.

Transposing this problem onto the dialogical context, a subject constructs his or her identity from the constant readjustments to the ‘heteroglossia’ of its embedding reality. In psychoanalysis again the subject should try to readjust to its new *Ego Ideal*. Self awareness that the subject gains means realizing one’s incompleteness and hence avoiding the misconception that it does not need the *Ego Ideal* since it is already ideal. The only way to bridge the gap between the incomplete consciousness and the world is what Mikhail Bakhtin calls ‘answerability’, that is, giving meaning to the empty reality by the means of meaningful deeds. Answerability, as in Bakhtin or Levinas, means that the subject can retain agency in its actions. Answerability means embracing and translating the other, as in Miss Fisher’s “Often when she spoke she seemed to be translating (...). (HP, 19)

Dialogism is an essential process in the development of characters’ narratives in *The House in Paris* and it “provides means for the psychological materialization of the character” (Lee, 1986, 41). The subject’s self is represented through the other since Elizabeth Bowen intertwines the *I-for-others* with the *I-for-myself*, problematizing it into what may be called the *I-in-others* and the *I-in-myself*. That said Leopold learns about his mother/child relationship from others, which Bowen exposes in his questioning of Henrietta. “What did Miss Fisher say about my mother and me?” (HP, 30) he asks the little girl in an off-hand manner since a woman’s narrative should be informal and spurious. Julia Kristeva writes in her work that the only discourse able to contradict the father’s *parole* is, in fact, the poetic language based on off-hand connotations and interplay of signifiers with signified. Kristeva claims that poetic language—the semiotic—is a surfacing of the maternal body in writing, uncontrolled by the paternal *logos*. Poetic language is a dialogue, a patchwork of various texts, loosely appropriated by the new author. Here, Bowen’s use of letters in the text gains the quality of poetic language in use, so far as they tell and re-tell stories building new identities.

What is more, at some point Bowen prompts us to see Leopold in the rickety monkey Charles Henrietta carries around. It should also not be inappropriate here to mention that the monkey Charles can be understood as the third mediating term in

Deleuzian becoming, as exemplified in concepts of becoming-animal and becoming-woman. In *The House in Paris* Henrietta is advised by Miss Fisher to play with Leopold just as she were to play with her toy. In the early morning conversation between Leopold and Henrietta, Leopold inspects the monkey just as he is analyzing his own emotions to recognize the feelings he bears towards the imaginary mother. The mother holds the key to Leopold's identity as well as to who he is and what made him be. Still, later Leopold explores Henrietta's unrealised grief for having lost her mother and finds out much about his own emotions.

I don't see what you mean," said Henrietta, distracted – in fact in quite a new kind of pain. She saw only too well that this inquisition had no bearing on Henrietta at all, that Leopold was not even interested in hurting, and was only tweaking her petals of or her wings off with the intention of exploring himself. (Bowen 1935 31)

Bowen writes in the novel, "The disengaged Henrietta had been his [Leopold's] first looking-glass" (*HP*, 35). Virginia Woolf notices in *A Room of One's Own*, "Women have served all these centuries as the looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size" (Woolf, 2005a, 585). Whether being a woman stands for a lack according to Simone de Beauvoir or a masquerade according to Joan Riviere - women's sole role is to reflect the masculine I. This leads us to the idea of construction of masculinity solely within the "female paradigm that exists to authenticate the male subject in his identity. A woman sees a man in order for the man to be capable of seeing himself." (Hoogland, 1994, 174) When Karen talks to Naomi in an aloof manner about Max's possible fear of women she rebukes Naomi, "You mustn't encourage him to be touchy, Naomi; you make him sound like a man who cannot pass a looking glass" (*HP*, 100). If one considers using the concepts of looking-glass and its reflection of the other, one may see them as dialogical tools. In dialogical construction of the Self its identity depends on its difference from the other with a premise that there is no originary category of self and other, but, instead, an ever-changing flux of performative differences. In the feminine/masculine opposition, the male subject has been traditionally displacing the female subject to the margins in order to install its order. It may be for this reason that while writing about the beginning of identity construction in that first part of *The House in Paris*, Bowen has Leopold underline his difference from Henrietta: "You see, you and I are just

opposites (...). He watched Henrietta closely, to see, as though on himself, the effect of this. (*HP*, 32) Leopold is, in Teresa de Laureatis words, “cross(ing) the boundary (of the closed space) and penetrate(ing) the other space” (in Hoogland, 1994, 148). He is constructing himself as the centre. As A. S. Byatt notices there is much importance given to the idea of language and intelligence as the attributes of the symbolic: “Leopold, and still more Henrietta, are children equipped with the language of the secret thoughts of intelligent children” (Lee, 1981, 95). Hermione Lee points out that *The House in Paris* “explores the behaviour of children with a social ‘place’ and children without one” (Lee, 1981, 95). We may extend her thinking onto the premise that it explores the lives of children deprived of the place within the language of the father.

What these children are equipped with is the fantasy of the language of the archaic mother. It is not the language of the maternal that propels the child towards creating the *Ego Ideal*, it is the language given by the substitute mothers, as created in the symbolic discourse. It is not the language of the maternal, it is the language given by the substitute guardians. The children are violent – “Intelligent children are not kind” (Lee, 1986, 95) – but could they have become somebody else if they were raised by their mothers? Leopold and Henrietta are in fact estranged from a child’s language, the language of the semiotic of impressions, colours and pulsions, as writes Kristeva. So that when Leopold finds out he has no pre-learned discourse to decipher the content of *The Strand Magazine*, its “trafficky cover and glazed smell” turns out to be “richer than its contents”. (*HP*, 38) That said, the children are forcefully raised in the language of adults. They speak the violent language of their guardians, and they speak the language of the Father – a language at its best in the content part of *The Strand Magazine* that Leopold finds so puzzling.

His passionate lack of humour was native and untutored; no one had taught him that curates, chars, duchesses, spinsters are enough, in England, to make anyone smile. The magazine perplexed Leopold with its rigid symbolism, Martian ideology. A veil of foreign sentiment hung over every image, making it unclear. Once, at a figure of an admiral saluting, something went up in him like a firework. But he did not know what the magazine was about. Hoping for something concrete, he went through the advertisements. (*HP*, 39)

What is more, the fragment is exemplary of the processes of cultural interpellation working over any subject of the English society of Bowen’s times, where “almost all

English humour shows social (sometimes now, backed by political) pre-assumptions. (Extreme cases- that the lower, or employed classes are quaint or funny – that aristocrats, served by butlers, are absurd)” (Lee, 1986, 45). People’s values, desires and cultural habits are inculcated in them by ideological practices. Here, the central idea of sense of humour is a product of ideological apparatuses, to borrow from Marxist vocabulary. Interestingly, the ideology here is that of dominant phallic discourse – with an exception of a curate, who was a representative of lower clergy responsible for the parish, all other names: char, duchess and spinster refer to women. Even the curate’s job was that of a female kind – he was responsible for the pettiest tasks involved in attending to the vicar – he was a male version of a female char working in a household. It is only when looking at the photograph of an admiral saluting – a masculine symbol – that something fires up in Leopold - a phallic symbol – but he still lack the discourse to decipher the message behind the visual sign. However, Bowen argues, a subject does not possess an ability to be a self-conscious agent, awareness of selfhood is not innate but acquired within a structure of established social rituals and practices.

The concept of operating ideology is also taken up in the conversation Karen has with the Irish girl – The Yellow Hat – on the ship taking her home after a visit to Aunt Violet’s house in County Cork, Ireland.

Over here for a bit of fun?” says the Yellow Hat – “I guess you think we’re all mad?” “Well we are,” she said. ‘Mad as hares. Reckless and mad and bad – that’s what they say, you know: there’s no harm in us. There’s no holding us once we’re off, though... You ought to see the way all of us go on at home” (HP, 91).

Foucault wrote about these material rituals as used by disciplinary institutions in his *Discipline and Punish* (1975), which may refer us to Bowen’s underlying criticism of the Anglo-Irish myth of colonial power and plenty perpetuated against all odds by the impoverished Anglo-Irish gentry. Foucault’s twin concept of ‘family cell’, as the source from which the subject draws on material ideologies, can shift our attention to the problematic of family, parenthood and motherhood discussed later in this chapter. We may also compare the rituals to Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* that is a set of patterns of thought, behaviour and dispositions acquired both voluntarily and involuntarily. *Habitus* refers us to Leopold’s foreignness – his literal foreignness as non-Englishness and his foreignness to the dominant discourse as in his not speaking

French – “They have clipped your wings for you nicely” (*HP*, 203). The foreigner, according to Kristeva speaks another language and that is why he differs from someone he is not, especially because Leopold speaks the language of “childish children” (*HP*, 34). He may speak the language of the host but he inevitably is recognized as foreigner – a foreigner who “is, in fact, full of the bastard’s pride” (*HP*, 34). During the luncheon on the grass Max tells Karen: “But we are a couple of foreigners”, to which Karen, trying to make space for the foreign within herself, responds “Foreigners though belong somewhere else, and you and Naomi don’t”. (*HP*, 109-110) And yet, in her *reverie* on being pregnant with Leopold/the other Karen not only gains insight into herself but recognizes the negative economy of otherness-within,

He [Leopold] would be a disaster. They would not know where to turn to save me for themselves. They would have to see me as someone poisoned⁴⁹. Only poisons act on you. If a thing does act on you, it can only be poison, some foreign thing. (*HP*, 154)

In the end, we are all foreigners to ourselves, just as Max and Leopold through their Jewishness, as well as the Fishers in their undecipherable language – “peculiar idiom” (*HP*, 19) - of a mixture of French and English – “No phrase she [Karen] used was what anyone could quite mean; they were doubtful, as though she hoped they would do: Her state of mind seemed to be foreign also.” (*HP*, 19)

Karen, becoming pregnant, experiences a state of bearing the other of oneself and another. In her pregnancy with Max’s son – Max who as French/English Jew is a foreigner and outsider, Karen becomes the foreigner, the poison, the sinner- just like Naomi “Fisher”/the poison/the sinner. Again, Bowen writes in “Notes on Writing a Novel” that “national pre-assumptions show in treatment of foreigners” (Bowen, 1950, Lee, 1999, 45) so that the narrative of Max’s foreignness shifts from his literal immigrant outsidership to outsidership towards the dominant discourse of gender and identity construction.

⁴⁹ Here Bowen plays with words disclosing yet again the negative influence of Mme Fisher and her daughter Miss Fisher on all Max, Karen and Leopold – the word fisher, bearing in mind the Fishers French origins, relates us to the idea of French language *pêcheur* as in ‘sinner’ and *pêcheur* as in ‘fisherman’.

The House in Paris therefore may be read as a treatise on foreignness and otherness – otherness as in the non-normative narratives of Max, Leopold and Naomi, which penetrate apparently stable and normative discourses, i.e., Karen. After all while studying art in Paris, Karen was herself a stranger in the Fisher household “In Paris she had been subject to Mme Fisher and her own tongue-tied silence” (*HP*, 101). In fact, otherness does not mean outsidership since there always dwells an other within oneself, who prompts us to solitude, absence, pride and feelings of oddness. Strangeness signifies inner strangeness in Kristevan theory, where the other is embedded in our subjectivity. So there is some hope in the category of strangeness. “Kristeva insists on the necessity for us to become strangers to language” (Nikolchina, 2004, 26) and situate ourselves within the maternal language, she insists on our addressing the orphaned strangers, even though they are always in motion and changing places.

The important question is whether it is sufficient, to recognize the stranger within oneself as postulated by Kristeva? After all, her theories have already been found politically unsatisfactory and repetitive. Elizabeth Grosz has written that Kristeva’s transgressive subjectivity fails to escape phallogentrism by presenting a myth of men taking up women’s discourse women cannot speak. The discourse is that of men penetrating the space of women to mimic women who reproduce men. It is for this reason that the stranger one dialogues with needs to be the stranger as child/the little girl. In the process of mothering it is not the dialogue with the archaic mother that should be addressed but rather the event of finding the little child within oneself.

During their meeting at Miss Fisher’s house, Leopold attempts at penetrating Henrietta’s space, it being an example of male symbolism of desire and action. Their conversation starts when Henrietta is still lying on the sofa, Leopold is standing next to her having spent some time watching her sleep defencelessly. During their epiphanic moment at the mantelpiece, Leopold succeeds in transmitting Henrietta his feelings of despair and grief so that she awakens in her role of a serving angel – Virgin Mother. The imagery of the first sin is brought back when Leopold commits the crime of stealing and reading letters from his guardians and his mother – he snatches the letters from Miss Fisher’s bag that stands near to one of the apples that had fallen from Henrietta’s travelling box. Again he learns about himself from others, tempted into this discourse by the other. Not surprisingly he finds the envelope addressed by his mother

empty – the lack of real mother, replaced by a fetishist imaginary mother, enliven in his own imaginary discourse on her.

However, it is also Henrietta who manages to cross the boundary to sample the unknown feeling of dialoguing with the maternal. She stands near the marble mantelpiece just to “feel as nearly as possible how he felt (...) She looked at his ear, unconvinced, touched her own. But Leopold’s mother swept brilliantly through one’ fancy (...) leaving Henrietta forgotten, luckless, cold.” (*HP*, 61) And when Naomi Fisher announces to Leopold that his mother would not be coming Henrietta “waiting breathed on the table and absorbedly wrote an H in the mist” (*HP*, 66) – she seems to be fitting herself into the dominant discourse.

That said, if the real mother is replaced by the imaginary mother, the real home which, mother stands for becomes nothing more than imaginary. The H, Henrietta writes, may therefore stand for the idea of home or hope for home that Karen had long conveyed for Leopold and that disappeared like mist on finding out that Karen was not coming. After all, it is Karen who dreams about home in her *reverie* –

Today is showing; I shall be home tonight. (. ...) ‘Home?’ was always downstairs (and it is downstairs in Miss Fisher’s house that this scene takes place). Upstairs is crazy with dreams or love (so if you do not dream or love you are safe home, idea that casts shadows of critique on the idea of maternal love). Once ‘home’ you are safe; (*HP*, 155)

Home is the semiotic *chora* ‘in’ which one can hide, encapsulated as inside the mother’s womb – language can only be like the symbolic furniture in the dark ‘behind’ which one can stay, but only momentarily.

Kristeva believes that introduction into language equals loss of the motherland and a loss of home. “It is emptiness that produces signification and subjectivity.” (Nikolchina, 2004, 48) It is only as orphans that we live “creators, creators but forsaken” (Kristeva, 1989, 181). Nikolchina writes that “Exile is the eternal destiny of the speaking being. S/he can’t go back home. The initial expulsion that constituted the leap into language and subjectivity can only be repeated, never undone, if we are to continue to speak” (Nikolchina, 2004, 48). It is on being exiled from home, being an orphan, that Leopold and Henrietta are introduced into the ‘house’ in Paris – the world of the father, where they are ushered into the father’s language.

3. Aesthetics of Dialogism.

Jane Goldman in *The Feminist Aesthetics*⁵⁰ of Virginia Woolf writes about “Woolf’s handling of the basic vocabulary (...) of subjectivity – light, shade and colour.” (Goldman, 2002, 10) In her book Goldman says:

I identify two interrelated spheres of colourism informing Woolf’s aesthetics: suffrage art and English post-Impressionism. (...) Darkness it seems is not to be celebrated – except as a foil against which to revel in the re-emergence of light and colour. Re-inscribed here is a traditional hierarchical binary opposition: light/dark (where light is positive, dark negative) (Goldman, 2002, 10, 14).

This Goldman reinforces with Jacques Derrida’s statement in *Writing and Difference* of light and darkness being the founding binary opposition of the Western philosophy and the metaphor for “self-revelation and self-concealment” (Goldman, 2002, 14).

Light, and particularly its first source, the sun, is traditionally the province of the masculine, never the feminine. Freud held the view that the sun is a symbol of the father, so much so that ‘symbolism overrides the grammatical gender – at least as far as German goes, for in most other languages the sun is masculine. (Goldman, 2002, 15)

Elizabeth Bowen ascribes darkness to Karen in the miracle of begetting Leopold. Still another modernist text states that “It is not in the illuminated zone that the darkest plots are woven” (Hirsh, 1989, 98). The sentence is uttered by Colette making an obvious reference to Freud’s images of femininity that of weaving and archaeology.

⁵¹ Hermione Lee writes in her *Elizabeth Bowen* “ At Folkstone, and then in the hotel in

⁵⁰ Bowen’s Celtic imagination was above all surrealist, influenced by the concept of a dialogue of writing and art through a mutual use of the marvelous, the gothic and the sublime and expressed through psychic automatism verbally in writing or in any other form of expression, here art.

⁵¹ In 1920 Freud revises his ideas on the development of female sexuality giving greater importance to the pre-oedipal bond between the mother and daughter (Hirsh, 1989, 98). According to Freud the mother/daughter relationship needs to be deleted and replaced by subsequent adoration of the father, then

Hythe where Leopold is conceived, the dank sombre Kentish scene (described with the passionate exactness of childhood recollection) puts their emotions at risk in a different way: they feel abandoned by the sun” (Lee, 1991, 91). The metaphor of light and darkness is played out surprisingly. It is not Max who overcomes Karen, as the light of the masculine I would overcome feminine subjectivity. It is not the darkness of Karen’s femininity that embeds Max. For that night when Leopold is begotten the binary oppositions take on their different interplay, as if of equality. And when the night ends Karen wakes up to see Max as light again standing at the window so luminous that she is momentarily blinded again by his masculine presence. There is a play of colours, light penetrating the dark and dark overcoming the light. Here Bowen’s desire to cast away the dichotomy of light and dark is visible. The envisaging of the lighthouse – to the lighthouse marks a special moment is the couple’s walk. Goldman writes that

In order fully to appreciate the ‘comfort... of plenty of light and colour’ Woolf suggests we need to experience its contrary – the darkness. Here the world ‘relief’ takes on its special meaning of ‘distinctness by contrast’ as well as its more usual one of a ‘removal of burden’. Against darkness ‘all that was in one’s mind’ might be examined. (Goldman, 2002, 38)

Similar to the enunciation of truth, as well as living on the margins of knowledge, darkness interplays with light in the second part of *The House in Paris*.

Mind, m’m,’ said the maid, ahead in a dark arch. This unlit floor was all steps, two dull square glass panes only in one door. ‘Mind m’m; it’s dark here when you don’t know.’ ‘I can see that.’ It had to be dark, built in between the hill and the tight street. The maid said: ‘Number nine’, ahead, opening a door. Karen saw the chestnut over the white blind. She looked round and put her hat on the bed. (...)

Rain made the day dark for the day, but till late the light did not change. Saturday stayed late, reflected on wet roofs and straight wet paths uphill. The west broke, the grey went white, lightening across the rain that did not stop but still veiled the darkening houses and trees. (*HP*, 150)

the male partner and finally the male child. One of the advocates of matriarchy underlying patriarchy “positing matriarchal prehistory to patriarchy” (Hirsh, 1989, 98) was Jane Ellen Harrison, whom Virginia Woolf immortalized in a quick reference in her “A Room of One’s Own” (1927), as “a bent figure, formidable yet humble, with her great forehead and her shabby dress – could it be the famous scholar, could it be the great J-----H----- herself?” (Woolf, 1927/2005, 17)

Even if there is light, it is cold and unwelcoming. It is the light of Gare du Nord, the train station in Paris towards which all characters seem to be going; the light of the north: cold, weak and pale. Jane Goldman's analysis of colour and feminist aesthetics devotes much of its attention to Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. Goldman writes that "when blackness is reached instead of nothingness or amorphous obscurity, a trumpet call heralds a new landscape, in which is discerned a 'dark spot'; and as eyes adjust, darkness becomes 'pierced with lights' (Goldman, 2002, 110). The male figure who later becomes a woman puts in the limelight a vision of "liberated femininity" (Goldman, 2002, 110). The passage from overwhelming darkness to a fanfare of colours 'in shades of red', pierced with light – an illuminated darkness is a "celebration of feminine pleasure culminating, after the attentions of various servile men have been noted, in a coded and playful attention of orgasm" (Ibid., 110) and yet it is still darkness that permits the engendered illumination. Bowen too emphasises the importance of darkness and light in her passage on Karen's *reverie*. This emphasis is reinforced many times by references to "lamp-invaded darkness" (*HP*, 152), "a room with a lamp and a tree outside, with tomorrow eating into them" (*HP*, 153), "a barred light on a ceiling, a lamp, a tree outside" (*HP*, 153), tomorrow "more than the hours and that lamp" (*HP*, 153), Naomi as "barred light" (*HP*, 155), putting lamps out, paler sky, lighthouse, and the question uttered by Karen– "Did I dream the sky was lighter or is it lighter" (*HP*, 155), as well as "Max standing in daylight by the window" so that Karen puts "her hand to her forehead to shield her eyes" (*HP*, 155). Bowen envisages the trajectory through darkness to light, so that Karen experiences a journey. Darkness can be read as symbolizing the semiotic of maternity, brought upon the narrative by Karen's imminent pregnancy with Leopold. But it is also associated with the occult side of femininity represented in the figure of Naomi,

who is like the furniture or the dark. (. ...) [who is the daughter of] (...) a woman who sells girls; [daughter of a woman who] is a witch. She is here; she is that barred light, (*HP*, 155)

that serves as the necessary other for masculinity originally associated with light – Max "was hers [Naomi's] tonight when we saw the lighthouse," (*HP*, 155) In *The House in Paris*, having a child is described as "being caught" (*HP*, 154) as if in "playing hide and seek", where "the seekers go by just the other side of the curtain or. (. ...) come into the

room where” (*HP*, 154) one hides. “The curtain would fall, the light would discover her [Karen] before she could slip out to bolt for ‘home’” (*HP*, 154). And yet darkness does offer some refuge and a meeting point with the other/the child – it is in darkness where one discovers the child. Light can be terrifying, blinding and even though “the sky is paler; (...) [when] Today is showing;” (*HP*, 155) Karen needs to “put her hand to her forehead to shield her eyes” (*HP*, 155) – since it is the ‘home’ of the ‘father’.

The meeting later on perpetuated in Leopold’s imagination takes place in Heaven – the maternal place of plenitude, the Semiotic – “where to speak would have been impossible” (*HP*, 69) (since the Semiotic is outside of language, where the arbitrariness of senses is random, as during Karen’s *reverie* – “I cannot see him only touch him [Max]. (...) At Boulogne, to touch was to see, to see was to touch” (*HP*, 153), or art, where the light and shades are combined harmoniously to create an image of illumination and plenty; this having been described as a different, better place by Virginia Woolf - see Jane Goldman⁵²,

Actually, the meeting he had projected could take place only in Heaven – call it Heaven; on the plane of potential not merely likely behaviour. Or call it art, with truth and imagination informing every word. Only there - in heaven or art, in that nowhere, on that plane – could Karen have told Leopold what had really been (*HP*, 67).

Not surprisingly, the final question Leopold asks Ray, when they have left the house of the Fisher family in they journey to ‘possibly’ meet Karen, is “Is it illuminated?” (*HP*, 239)

⁵² For the concept of aesthetics and writing see, Jane Goldman, *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism, and the Politics of the Visual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). and *Modernism , 1910-1945: Image to Apocalypse* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004).

3. Motherhood.

April is the cruellest month breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
(T. S. Eliot, "The Waste Land"
Part I: The Burial of the Dead)

"(. . .) a girl has got to be a daughter
first. She have to learn that. And
if she never learns how to be a
daughter she can't learn how to
be a woman."
(Toni Morrison, *Tar Baby*, 281)

When a curious reader sets on a time stopping journey of reading *The House in Paris* one of the few guarantees he or she takes along with them is that its reading will be "continuous and shifting" (Byatt, 1976, 7). A. S. Byatt has called *The House in Paris* "a very elegant and a very melodramatic novel" (Byatt, 1976, 15), since all "Characters, Scene, Dialogue" are relevant to the Plot, there is no nuance that could be omitted, no detail that could be discarded. What is more, Byatt admits that there is a trap of struggling with a feeling of claustrophobia and narrowing, "detracting from our sense of reality and importance" (Byatt, 1976, 15). Even though the abundance of elegant discourse is undeniable in the book, I do believe that the key word to reading of *The House in Paris* or any of Bowen's novels is not the elegance of plot but rather continuity/ (recurrence) shifting towards the new and unpredictable. Simple reading for plot is not sufficient - preoccupation with the poetic truth should be diminishing, as Bowen neatly weaves her original discourse.

In my opinion, reading of any of Bowen's texts needs to be dialogical, responsive and multiple – there are different levels of narratives to be deciphered and

the doing of it requires a truly “roving eye”. Reading of Bowen is like taking away the subsequent layers if “cracked crust over the surface of life”. In reading Bowen, one should be (but may choose not to) equipped with many tools that will drill through the text and then shift it away from its “elegantly” woven plot. In the first place, I wish to refer myself to three elected critics who will form the critical *corpus* for this chapter. Many textual references that have already appeared in the thesis belong to Marianne Hirsh, Elaine Hansen and Ellen Moers – all three scholars who have been contributing to the feminist studies for some time now. All three scholars develop their theories based on the assumption that any female subject is propelled “back-to-the-wombishness”, in which the danger, despair and passion expressed on the more visible level of identity confirm a daughterly desire to both abject and engulf the mother figure. Bearing this in mind we may infer that Bowen’s idea of identification develops from the either/or situation – either a mother or not – towards the hermaphrodite dual mode of both – both a mother and a daughter, as in her last novel *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*.

In her *Mother/Daughter Plot*, Marianne Hirsh, who has written extensively on motherhood and femininity, says that,

The multiplicity of “women” is nowhere more obvious than for the figure of the mother, who is always both mother and daughter. Her representation is controlled by her object status, but her discourse, when it is voiced, moves her from object to subject. But as long as she speaks as mother, she must always remain the object in her child’s process of subject-formation; she is never fully a subject. (Hirsh, 1989, 12)

It should be added that, in the post-modern world the dyad mother-child seems to be the only non-cyborg dyad of dialogue between the self and the other. There is nothing about being female that naturally binds women together into a unified category, least it should be maternity, which, on its own, binds women not solely into femininity but humanity and identity. To go further, according to Donna Haraway, there is not even such a state as being female, itself a highly complex category constructed in contested sexual scientific discourses and other social practices. A cyborg does not require a stable, essentialist identity, argues Haraway, and feminists should consider creating coalitions based on “affinity” instead of identity. Fundamental contradictions in feminist theory

and identity should be conjoined, rather than resolved, similar to the fusion of machine and organism in cyborgs according to Haraway.

The figure of the mother herself is a figure of cyborg femininity, constructed by the maternity narratives that all have origins in the hegemonic discourse and women's very often contradictory personal experience of them. Motherhood, as such, ceases to be solely an essentialist and natural concept, there no longer is one way of mothering, but rather a myriad of subjective responses based on the concepts of care, nurturance and translation.

Furthermore, the strength and weakness of female relationships to her mother and father points to the fact that the girl "wavers in a bisexual triangle" (Chodorow, 1989, 53) throughout her childhood so that the "thoroughness with which female realist writers eliminate mothers from their fictions" (Hirsh, 1989, 14) may, to a certain extent be an aftermath of "hostility, resentment and disappointment on the part of these writers themselves, as well as with their total self-identification as daughters" (Hirsh, 1989, 50).

Elizabeth Bowen devotes the greater part of her fiction to adolescent girls growing up orphaned, coming of age through the painful experience of disillusionment with society. Just as for Elizabeth Bowen, disillusionment "was a condition of the [their] life, in which reality revisited continually corrected memory, limiting the power of illusion, even as illusion was often necessary to prevent the overwhelming impact of reality."⁵³ (Egleson, 1983) In Bowenesque fiction, even though the daughters persist as subjects and objects of her narrative, mothers on their part are either done away in unfortunate accidents or dead of illnesses. If they do linger on, they are described as inhibiting, dominant and perverse in their manipulation of others. Maternity in Bowen is subject to society's whims and judgements, and so is womanhood in general. Rightly so, Bowen writes in *The House in Paris* that " (...) in Mrs Michaelis's view a woman's real life only began with marriage, that girlhood amounts to no more than a privileged looking on" (*HP*, 69) which echoes Hoogland's aforementioned comment "female

⁵³ This insightful article written by Janet Egleson Dunleavy and entitled "The Subtle Satire of Elizabeth Bowen and Mary Lavin" reiterates the idea that humour, satire, irony and pun – all very Bakhtinian concepts – have all been of utmost importance in Irish literature. According to Egleson Dunleavy whereas Samuel Beckett practiced reduction ad absurdum, Elizabeth Bowen "mock[ed] with mirrors and metaphors" (Egleson, 1983, 69).

paradigm that exists to authenticate the male subject in his identity. A woman sees a man in order for the man to be capable of seeing himself.” (Hoogland, 1994, 174)

Elaine Hansen, another critic I wish to evoke here, gives a compilation of different analyses of the maternity theme in her *Mother Without Child*, where she decides to search for a pattern that underlies mother/daughter literary relationships and plots. As an example, Hansen postulates that “nineteenth-century plots, (...) are controlled by the family romance and depend on the heroine’s dis-identification from the fate of other women, especially mother.” (Hansen, 1997, 7) At the same time, Hansen highlights the absenteeism of women, and mothers in fiction of such important writers as Jane Austen, Mary Shelley, George Sand, the Brontë sisters, George Eliot, and Kate Chopin. In modern fiction the lack of women in the narratives is substituted gradually with the seduction by a female character, very often of mother-like type.

Similar to that, in her *Literary Women*, Ellen Moers defines an important shift of emphasis in modern fiction from the heterosexual plot of courtship, marriage, and adultery to the story of what she calls ‘maternal seduction’. For Moers, this movement of the novel “beyond the courtship to a fictional world where boy never meets girl” (Moers, 1977, in Hirsh, 1989, 98) is confirmed by the literary and narrative interests of the women writers in the 1920’s. Hirsh develops this argument further, writing that “all modern narratives recount the female artist’s story in relation not to a father or male-lover, but to a powerful, seductive, traditionally female mother-goddess”⁵⁴ (Hirsh, 1989, 96). This shift is the shift towards female *Kunstlerromane* featuring a young woman in the process of responding to the challenge of artistic calling and who, then, renounces the calling to endorse a possible female affiliation. It is a narrative of a need of connection and disconnection at the same time, abjection and embracement of the other – the female other. As a result, the literary reference for a female subject evolves from her dis-identification with the mother, towards the total abjection of her and in the end infatuation with the archaic mother-goddess. In general, all three of these psychological

⁵⁴ The concept of female artist is developed in DuPlessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending*; Susan Gubar, “The Birth of the Artist as Heroine: (Re)production, the *Kunstlerroman* Tradition, and the Fiction of Katherine Mansfield,” in *The Representation of Women in Fiction*, ed. Carolyn G. Heilbrun and Margaret R. Higonnet (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983), and Jane Goldman, *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

trends inform Bowen's narrative that also assents on the total self-identification with the daughter - the child. The strong maternal types abide in Bowenesque fiction, both in her short stories and novels.

That said, in *The House in Paris*, Karen goes back to painting after having given Leopold away. Even though we do not see Karen turn to be a fully-acknowledged artist, she elects to lead the sterile life of an aspiring artist and barren wife, instead of becoming a mother. And yet, in frantic attempts to erase Leopold from her memory, instead of devoting herself to artistic life, Karen fails the challenge of balancing the personal experience or history and the identification with a newly elected discourse. The experience of birth places Karen both inside and outside of the dominant discourse. It tears Karen away from the child and still makes her vulnerable identity grow through personal enrichment and subsequent loss. Karen enters the dominant discourse and consequently rejects the symbolic role it ascribes.

A controversial black feminist and author, Alice Walker rightly writes in her *In Search of Our Mother's Garden* (1983) that the negative experience of her mother's maternity prompted her towards her own independence and fastened her self-growth. What a daughter owes the mother, in Walker's opinion, is to regain the freedom the mother lost on giving birth – such is the daughter's almost sacred duty. Similarly to Virginia Woolf, Walker gives importance to all the lost creative and artistic potential in women, which in her opinion, finds vent in various unconventional forms such as storytelling, singing, cooking or even gardening and sewing that would normally be ascribed as chores of a woman's daily life. Walker admits in her later essay "One Child of One's Own: A Meaningful Digression within the Work(s)" that "I began to see that her birth and the difficulties it provided us joined me to a body of experience and a depth of commitment to my own life hard to comprehend otherwise" (Walker in Hirsh, 1989, 194). The experience of motherhood lays the ground for autonomous attempts at authoring and agency drawing from a broadly defined female heritage. Agency is important because, as numerous feminists have pointed out, the mother in Western culture has traditionally been conceived as passive and mute. Even though relational the struggles of authoring the mother/child dyad empower the child and the mother in equal ways. This puts forward an idea of maternal performativity. *The House in Paris* is one of the novels where Bowen develops her project of maternal performativity. As such, it undergoes three stages – in the first place, mothers are depicted as utterly abject; in the

second place, the idea of maternal agency is approached but ultimately jettisoned in favour of a resigned kind of essentialism; in the third place, the mother is active and performative, but is still shown as hampered by traditional structures. Sociologist Christine Everingham's *Motherhood and Modernity: An Investigation into the Rational Dimension of Mothering* (1994) rejects the idea that in constructing the mother/child relationship both mother and the child are powerless. More, they seem to be active agents of the construction of the identities of the self and other within the mother/child dyad. Even further Everingham claims in her "Lacan's Gap: Sexual Identity and the Problem of 'Connectedness'" (1996)⁵⁵ that in setting and later following the patterns of subjectification one needs to be capable of locating the agency of the (m)other and the significance of her potentially critical and reflective efforts to 'read' the discourse of the child.

Elizabeth Bowen started writing at the apex of modernism and yet her eclectic literary technique had been informed by various literary traditions. She was deeply immersed in realism but also drew from modernist aesthetics. She was growing up harvesting from the cultural achievements of Gaelic Revival (*An tAthbheochan Gaelach*) and of the Irish Literary Renaissance. To understand better the multiplicity of such literary heritage, some enlightening criticism comes from Marianne Hirsch in her *Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism* (1989), who ventures to capture the spirit of the different traditions. Hirsh writes that "The conventions of realism, resting on structures of consent and containment, shut out various forms of indeterminacy, instability, and social fragmentation" (Hirsh, 1989, 14). Bowen follows this trend to a certain extent with her eye for mannerism and ear for nuance of expression since realism as Egleson (1983) claims constituted the condition of Bowen's life. It has been noted that priority and temporality "are constitutive of the relationship between familial and narrative structure" (Hirsh, 1989, 51) in nineteenth century realist fiction. Recent narrative theories have also focused on the psychological origins of plot constructions, yet as Marianne Hirsh notes in the *Mother/Daughter Plot* "they obscure the relation of plot and gender." (Hirsh, 1989, 51) Patricia Drechsel Tobin, inspired by Roland Barthes's *The Pleasure of the Text*, structures her argument around the linear

⁵⁵ "Jigs – the Journal of Interdisciplinary Gender Studies." The University of Newcastle, Australia, Vol 1, n° 2. The journal publishes texts on topics across a wide range of academic disciplines that raise gender issues in historical and contemporary contexts

development of a realist plot, where the causality of events is based on their cause/result relationship – the causality has a deeply genealogical character. The genealogy, the idea of linear begetting and subordinates causes Drechsel Tobin to state in her *Time and the Novel. The Genealogical Imperative* that the realist plots have a paternal structure where even the smallest sentence fathers “a progeny of words sustains them throughout in orderly descent and filial obedience” (Drechsel Tobin, 1978, 18). In this sense plots, argues Drechsel Tobin, are gendered into masculine discourse leaving little space for feminine presence. In his *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, Edward Said writes that the novel “makes, procreates, a certain secondary and alternative life possible for heroes who are otherwise lost in society” (Said, 1975, in Hirsh, 1989, 51). To Said the very potential of narrativity to unfold and sustains itself lies in its ability to relate itself to paternity. Surprisingly enough Said states that,

The narrative represents the generative process – literally in its mimetic representation of men and women in time, metaphorically in that by itself it generates succession and multiplication of events after the manner of human procreation. (Said, 1975, in Hirsh, 1989, 52)

In *The House in Paris*, however, on the level of chapters, this paternal sequence is disrupted into a maternal cyclical pattern. Every chapter of Bowen’s novel prompts us back towards the beginning, having the allegorical chapter of pregnancy with Leopold at the very centre.

On a general plane, the situation changes to some extent with the appearance of proto- and modernist plots, which are ‘supplemented’, according to Hirsch, by the heroine's artistic ambitions and desire for affiliation with other women, so that “for women writers contradiction and oscillation, rather than repetition, bind the modernist plot” (Hirsh, 1989, 15). Bowen’s heroines show too an ambition for a better repetition of models as well as want of ‘oscillation’. Finally, in what Hirsch calls “postmodern” plots, “more multiple relational identities emerge.” (Hirsh, 1989, 10) That said the mother remains the one “who did succumb to convention” - a negative model from which the daughter must detach herself (Hirsh, 1989, 10). In the texts Hirsh analyzes we find works by Margaret Atwood, Marguerite Duras, and Christa Wolf. Although the mothers are prominent in those narratives, the perspective, as explained earlier, remains “daughterly”. Only in recent fiction—especially, in Hirsch’s view, in Toni Morrison's

Beloved (2007) - do “mothers begin to appear as subjects” (Hirsh, 1989, 11). Other recent critics consider the impact of dominant myths of phallogocentrism on later women writers support Hirsh’s view. In her study of H.D. and Jean Rhys entitled *The Unspeakable Mother*, Deborah Kelly Kloepfer supports the view that earlier in the twentieth century established women writers tended to assume the role of daughters, not mothers since the mother function was merely operational, in the sense to carry the female subject through the necessary change from the fragile and spurious semiotic to fully literate and phallogocentric symbolic – the mother figure was considered both a vehicle and an obstacle.

What for some critics is strength in motherhood for others endangers the development of the child. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar postulate in their *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1984), that motherlessness is equalled with powerlessness in nineteenth century fiction. As has been mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, according to Gilbert and Gubar orphaned heroines lack the discursive power to adapt to the phallogocentric order. Still, Adrienne Rich sees motherlessness as the condition necessary for full and free development of feminine subject. She supports her theories with her analyses of *Jane Eyre*⁵⁶. Even Marianne Hirsh goes as far to quote in her *Mother/Daughter Plot* Margaret Homans (1986) arguing in favour of orphanhood. What Homans does in her *Bearing the Word. Language and Female Experience in Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing* is to explain to us the conjunction of the maternal with silence by invoking what she calls a ‘myth of language’ prevalent during the Victorian period. The myth of language was theorised by Freud and Lacan who postulated, as Marianne Hirsh reminds us, that “language and culture depend on the death or absence of the mother and on the quest for substitutes for her. (. . .) Women are identified with the literal, the absent referent.” (Hirsh, 1989, 45)

Whatever the empowering or castrating powers of maternity we still see it from the perspective of the child perpetuating the myth or a prerequisite of sacrificial

⁵⁶ Adrienne Rich’s criticism of *Jane Eyre* entitled “The Temptations of a Motherless Woman” appeared in *On Lies, Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose, 1966- 1978*, (1979). The core argument of it lies in the young heroine’s quest for a substitute mother in order to avoid the traditional female discourse of self-emulation, sacrifice and enslavement to the masculine. The young heroine is therefore to find “the image of a nurturing or spirited woman on whom she can model herself, or to whom she can look for support”. (in Hirsh, 1989, 46)

mother, who makes herself the object of the phallogocentric discourse and the object of her child's discourse. What if the mother decides she cannot exist in the same narrative with the child?

In *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel* Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle undertake a deconstructive reading of Bowen's longer oeuvre and even though their preoccupation is that of presenting a modern analysis of Bowen's text, they do not seem to be able to escape the dichotomised divide between the male centre and the female periphery. Writing about the symbolism of marks left on the grass by Karen and Max holding hands, Bennett and Royle shift their attention to event-making and narrativity. They write,

The invisible trace, the unknowable consequence of the vent of holding hands, traverses *The House in Paris* (...). The invisible trace on the grass can only become visible in a displaced representation of the vent. An event – holding hands – can only become known by the consequences of another event. (...) An event can produce consequences – traces – through other events. (Bennett and Royle, 2005, 59)

In this sense Bennett and Royle defend a linear progression of knowledge-making and event-plotting. By insisting on the motif of 'leaving a mark' they engage in a male economy of discourse, which is endangered by vocabulary of destruction, a vocabulary unfit to be read. "Indeed, to 'slave' or 'redeem' itself, language would have to be 'read'. But 'read' is itself figured within dread, contained by the gashed logic of 'dead' and 'dread'" (Bennett and Royle, 2005, 61), conclude Bennett and Royle, when writing about the *leitmotif* of words such as dread, read and dead in *The House in Paris*. Bennett and Royle associate these words with femininity and by doing so highlight their irreducible excess and ability to destroy as comprehended by the masculinist hegemony. The politics of making the feminine the monstrous other of which the male logic needs to be afraid appears to be summed up in the following statement.

Dread may be conceived as at once immobilizing and displacing every traditional notion of the event, even or especially when that event is figured as a cut or gush - a momentary, violent, destructive and irreversible cut in time (...) Dread adumbrates the very temporality of the event. (Bennett and Royle, 2005, 61)

Dread is stagnant – makes the past, present and future “pregnant with fear” to borrow the expression from Hans Gumbrecht – therefore, dread is feminine. Dread, according to the authors of *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel* is linked by ‘a near homophony’ to the word dead – ‘dread’ resonates and results in ‘dead’. To this problem a solution ‘resonating’ with the male economy of knowledge making is produced: one can still procreate. “This dread knowledge would be a kind of death, the time of Karen’s death, but the gash of knowledge – Leopold – would also be a future, a posthumous other life for Karen living on in Leopold” (Bennett and Royle, 2005, 59). The politics of procreation, begetting, linear progression in distribution of power, as well as necessary matricide corroborate the idea of the secondary role of women within the dominant discourse.

If one goes back to Said’s thinking of paternal/filial dependence between characters, events and plots, the woman presents herself as the only element left out from this dichotomy. She is ascribed a less than secondary role of redistribution of power between the male protagonists. In Said’s understanding the internal conflicts within plots can be reduced to exploration of origin and narrative by an exaggerated emphasis on paternity and an oedipal scenario of conflict between father and son. The conflict between authority and molestation does not lead us to the conflict between the masculine and the feminine but between the father and the son. Nineteenth century plots offers its society a means of covering up and justifying its disorders within stories structured about itself. The stories however do not cease to refer themselves to the dissatisfaction and unfulfillment at the heart of which lies the very fact of absence of the mother. According to Lacan, language springs from the intersection of linguistic ability and the absence of the maternal. The ability to sustain and enact any narrative is surprisingly spurred not by the paternal/filial conflict but the desire for the mother⁵⁷. Peter Brooks says in *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* that a plot is a form of desire but also a move from passivity to mastery in which the subject “learns how to cope with lack, namely the lack of the mother” (Brooks, 1984, in Hirsh, 1989, 53). Since Brooks studies do not offer any examples of female authors his paternalistic language is easily adapted to his exclusively male dynamic of narrative.

⁵⁷ This maternal presence will also be a source of language complications if met with opposition from the buried mother that works upon the narcissistic inclinations of the subject – an idea that will be worked upon in the later section of this chapter.

With the language of male sexuality, illness and death, Brooks focuses on the conflict between the father and the son leaving the experiences of the mother and the daughter out of his agenda. Here however looms a problem with Brooks' dialectics. The narrative accommodating the struggles of male characters, the immanence of death brings the female plot closer as seen by the blind spot in the economy of male desire where the woman must be the other but never the different. And if apparently narrative relies on repetition "based on the *fort/da* game in which the subject learns to cope with lack, namely the lack of the mother" (Brooks, 1984, in Hirsh, 1989, 53), the repetition refers itself to a circular mode originally associated with femininity and orality. In this sense even if there is no mother according to Brooks and, consequently for the purpose of the thesis, if there is no non-dominant discursive mother in most of Bowen's fiction, the very lack creates a necessity and an expectation for a maternal discourse into which one needs to read. The very lack constructs a gap that inevitably is filled in by maternal language. Marianne Hirsh writes that,

If the ultimate goal of narrative is the act of transmission, the process of reading and understanding, the moment of contact without which no narrative can exist, that act depends on death. (Hirsh, 1989, 53)

This death may well refer itself to the father/son dyad so that the act of transmission and the act of redistributing life depends on the woman – the mother. However, it can also refer to the death of the subject in the face of embracing the other, and in this case, the death of the daughter paradigm in the face of the mother as well as the death of the mother paradigm in the face of the daughter – a truly cyclical and hermeneutical process.

5. Motherhood and Masks – Fantasy and Sacrificial Mothering.

Gilles Deleuze devotes much of his writing in *Difference and Repetition* (2004d) to the idea of a mask. To him beyond the mask there is no space for subjecthood and truth but only the existence of further masks. Deleuze writes that masks behind which we hide in our lives are the proof of repetition, “which constitutes itself by disguising itself” (Deleuze, 2004d, 19). The information is not behind the mask but constructs itself from one mask to another. There is nothing primary behind the mask, and even the fantasies of our relationships with the mother repeat and multiply our adult relationships. At the same time, psychoanalysis owes much of his debt in the development of theories of repetition to Freud. It was Freud who first concluded that repetition cannot be eradicated by simple reliving of an event in the abstract, or forming a “concept in general, not even to represent the repressed event in all its particularity.” (Deleuze, 2004d, 21) rather it should be embraced as a primary process in identification.

Motherhood as a mask has been a frequent theme in recent feminist writing interested in the construction of the term as artificial. As Judith Butler reminds us mimicry and masquerade are the core of identity structure. Susan Maushart, nationally syndicated columnist in Australia and the mother of three children, has written a compelling book on attitudes towards motherhood fostered by both men and women over the last thirty years. The book, entitled *The Mask of Motherhood: How Becoming a Mother Changes Our Lives and Why We Never Talk About It* (2000), talks about many masks mothers and mothers-to-be are compelled to wear by the dominant culture. In fact, according to Maushart, mothering has been changed into a series of masks that hide the discourse that is not in accordance with the masculine myths of achievement, control, and autonomy. Motherhood/mothering is a dynamic process, according to Maushart, it is rather ‘doing it’ than ‘having it’. It is described as the invisible transition. Mothering is multiple, constructed by both men and women – therefore can be ascribed to both men and women, and either disruptive or complacent with the hegemonic discourses. The way it is presented in the dominant culture requires it being repeated – the repetition forms its essence. It is for this reason that there has been a shift in modern criticism to talk of mothering rather than simply of motherhood. The discourse becomes

politicised as available for other subjects than only biological mothers. There is no base or origin but a signification of repetition. Deleuze writes about repetition in his *Difference and Repetition*, “I do not repeat because I repress. I repress because I repeat, I forget because I repeat” (Deleuze, 2004d, 20). Therefore, according to Deleuze, there are two major challenges that repetition and here mothering pose– the first one is being aware of mothering’s fluid character and deconstructiveness, the second one is engaging in repetition, by simply ‘doing it’ as Susan Maushart writes in her book. Here, ‘doing it’ means actively participating in the discourse of mothering as a unique opportunity for disrupting hegemonies. *The House in Paris*, in this sense, deconstructs mothering as a product of society’s *parole*, and by doing so shows its spuriousness.

The only viable solution to trauma is in the process of transference that is a process of careful choosing the masks and the roles, so that the process achieves stability, linking the consciousness to the death instinct. Julia Kristeva finds an archaic process of repetition in identity formation in the mother/daughter dyad. Kristeva describes motherhood as the process when a daughter rejoins her mother’s body in the act of becoming a mother herself. In a similar manner, Maushart talks about becoming a mother and having a child as a re-birth rather than birth. Such discourse on mothering becomes both deconstructive of stories told and tales heard, as well as constructive of the new subject. In a circular manner it leads the subject from the Semiotic through the symbolic and back to the semiotic. It is dynamic and represents becoming rather than being. And here too the theories agree - above all Gilles Deleuze insists on the vitality of the idea of becoming in constructing a subject: becoming an animal, becoming a woman or becoming a child, becoming a mother. Deleuze writes in his *Difference and Repetition* about our ‘subject-hood’ and the idea of transformation or becoming:

The paternal characters are not the ultimate terms of individual subject-hood but the middle terms of an intersubjectivity, forms of communication and disguise from one series to another for different subjects, to the extent that these forms are determined by the displacement of the virtual subject. (Deleuze, 2004d, 130)

Becoming an animal, a woman or a child are cornerstones in the process of doing away with Platonic hegemony of being over becoming – they are our means of disposing of subjectivism, allowing us to think “without models, axioms or grounds” (Colebrook, 2002, 126), without prejudice. This does not necessarily mean that we

should turn into one of these categories, but we should try and experiment the effects that either living – “the flow of becoming life” (Colebrook, 2002, 125) or the other have on them. To better explain his idea Deleuze gives us the metaphor of a swimmer who in learning to swim does not need to repeat exactly all the moves of his swimming instructor. He should however try to experience what it feels like, how the water feels like if moving one’s arms just like the swimming instructor does. Fruitful repetition is a creative response and not a self-contained action. Experience therefore is something extremely personal and surprisingly so is repetition, since “to repeat something is to begin again, to renew, to question, and to refuse remaining the same” (Colebrook, 2002, 8). Becoming an agent in the language of the father is to experiment with an “exercise of a vulgar power, simply” (*HP*, 202). To repeat means to create *new lines of flight* of temporality and live life as drama not as destiny.

Such thinking means also that motherhood is a process and not a stagnant state. It means that one becomes a mother rather than is a mother. This idea is taken up in *The House in Paris* in its presentation of motherhood as an ongoing process and transformation of the subject – from rejection to possible reunification. Motherhood here should rather be replaced by the term mothering retaining the character of transference plasticity. And if in particular mothering in *The House in Paris* (that of Karen’s and Mme Fisher’s) is a process, mothering as discourse in general is fluid too. This idea is rendered in Bowen through the development of the internal conflict from a mother to the child. We recognize the same conflict of the private and public sphere, the displacement caused by the desiccation of the private realm, the thread of actual and emotional orphan-hood and bereavement. Yet we recognize that each character takes the problem a step further or rather experiments with it a step further. Motherhood and orphan-hood seem to occupy a special place. The problem presents itself from different angles but it essentially remains the same – motherhood/maternal paradigm is a “fantasy of a lost territory” (Kristeva, 1987, 234). *The House in Paris* analyzes the mask of mothering as the sacrificial mother/ the virgin/the whore, who abandons the child. It creates a narrative of fantasy of subjectification compulsively embedded into the fantasy of family, mother and mothering.

The idea of the family romance theme as a psychoanalytical tool used as theorization of narrative structures finds its origins in an essay written by Freud in 1908 entitled “Family Romances”. “Family Romances” is a founding text describing a

subject's identity development based on his rather than hers fantasy of escaping from the paternal authority. Many novels in which the family romance theme is used also include literal fantastic elements and supernatural forms in either the plot or theme, and these include vampires and ghosts. Other novels that revolve around this theme use fantasy in a more psychoanalytical context. The theme of family romance is based on a fantasy constructed in the process of subjectification within the father's *parole* and undergoes double modification. The version of family romance offers a fantasy of being a step child as a consequence of realising the faultiness of the parents and living strenuous sibling conflicts. A child confronted with the desire to free itself from the progenitors replaces the biological parents with other nobler ones. What is important to note here is that it is the male child who is the protagonist of the family romance as a result of his ability to feel hostile towards the progenitors, more likely the father than the mother. The second variation of the family romance theme introduces the element of desire. The mother is understood to be inalterable. This second version of family romance has been given the name of *a bastard plot* founded on two elements – the erotic element and the ambition element. The male child would “place the father alone into the realm of fantasy, while the mother remains firmly and certainly planted in reality” (Hirsh, 1989, 54), banned from fictionalization⁵⁸. “While imagination can alter her status and explore her sexuality, it cannot replace her identity” (Hirsh, 1989, 55) – the mother is always pictured as passive. Strangely enough, the mother's sexuality is estranged from her identity or else her sexuality as her discourse has no bearing on her fixed identity within the father's *parole* – the identity of a mother/virgin. Consequently, the replaced fantasy father can be elevated to the highest positions of the society, while the mother remains incompatibly low in status. Her sole role is to remain lower on the social scale so that the male son has the space to move upwards and redeem himself from her, equalling the status of the father. The woman moves only in an enclosed circular model between the category of the whore, the fantasy angelic wife and the silent biological mother.

⁵⁸ Marthe Robert devotes her *Origins of the Novel* (1972) to the problem of Family Romance classifying various narratives as representative of this genre. On her list there can be found writers such as Balzac, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoi, Proust, Faulkner, Dickens, Melville and Kafka (the two last names consequently belonging to the first stage of family Romance, while the former names come to occupy the place in the second stage bastard plots).

My argument here is that Elizabeth Bowen's fiction struggles to reverse the fantasy of family romance and uses it as a means to analyze the mother's subjectivity. She introduces us to the idea of non-normative motherhood and the concept of mothering fostering the link between the maternal and the socio cultural. Doing so Bowen does owe much to the element of fantasy – many of her mothers are absent thus imaginary, she does write much about dreams, unknown countries, motif of estrangement, travelling to unknown destinations and visiting unknown houses. In Bowen the mother either dies when her child, most often a female child is still very young or the mother gives up the child, both as in *The House in Paris*. The family romance explores the tropes of fantasy and very often uses gothic elements such as “forbidden liaison or secret pacts that subvert the normative social values” (Backus, 1999, 1). Most of all it uses the trope of the return of the repressed, which not only refers to the threat of retributive violence within the nuclear family, but also depicts the trope of the (archaic) mother as the abjectable and yet lingering figure. Through the interplay with this trope depicted as both fantasy and a lost territory, “the theme of family romance helps explore the systems of appropriation of children and women into patterns of loyalty and animosity” (Backus, 1999, 2). The paradigm “that emphasises the transmission of misleading and destructive narratives” (Backus, 1999, 3) is broken by the reappearance of the mother theme.

Another interesting version of the family romance motif is the female family romance described by Marianne Hirsh in her *Mother/Daughter Plot*. In the book Hirsh writes extensively on the idea of matricide committed by the female child. Hirsh believes this an implication of the female child being confronted with the static narrative of the mother. Since the mother is in Freud's words always *certissima*, she stands on the way for a young girl's individuation and needs to be done away with. Hirsh writes that “The Freudian family romance pattern clearly implies that women need to kill or eliminate their mothers from their lives, if they are not to resign themselves to a weak imagination” (Hirsh, 1989, 56). It is also of great interest if not subject for another study to note, following Hirsh, that the predicate of *certissima* is only applicable to certain cultures, in this case Germanic and Anglo-Saxon cultures. It has been proven that for example, “Slave mothers were separated from their children and often unknown to them” (Hirsh, 1989, 56) and some further insight into this

problem may be found in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* in the introduction and chapter five of the novel.

However if we focus on the cultures where the *certissima* model does function we should note that as opposition the father presents himself as *semper incertus*, thus opening an easy path for his elimination at the hand of his son and gaining a certain flexibility in his identity. This very concept does no more than victimize women on various levels. First, women are likely victims of matricide. Second, their discursive position is weakened so that they become mere tools in the plot's development. Third, they fall prey to gender asymmetry, which replaces the supposedly binary opposition between the masculine and the feminine.⁵⁹ And forth, women are victims in an unequal treatment of what they do and how they conduct their lives, so that the man, being the *incertus* one and thus more given to incest, always escapes the deserved punishment. To a certain extent femininity is again given responsibility of providing meaning and power to masculinity, since once in the centre of discourse women's subjectivity is once more allocated in the margins.

As a result, the punishment circumvented by the male subject is usually ascribed to women so that a discourse of original female guilt is perpetuated. Whenever and however a man falls it is because of the female mistake - because of the female sin - the first sin committed by Eve that resulted in the banishment of mankind from Paradise. On the whole female family romance plot represents a narrative trap for women, that is, their imprisonment in the dominant male discourse. On killing the mother a woman can only find safe harbour within the male economics of power. She can associate herself with the father or the brother. This will either originate in an incestuous relationship within the nuclear family or usher the woman to find a male substitute for the mother, which will offer nothing more than mere "alternative to patriarchal power and dominance" (Hirsh, 1989, 57) within the male hegemony.

⁵⁹ This seems to be the core argument of feminism not interested in perpetuating a sexually grounded dichotomy between the feminine and the masculine. According to women who reject psychoanalysis, originally founded on human sexual development, the dichotomy is always of unequal distribution, giving the masculine a more central role over the female part. A similar ontological move can be found in Queer theory which refuses to be seen as solely oppositional to normative sexuality, and strives to be something outside of the binary definition.

Adrienne Rich calls this process the fantasy of ‘the-man-who-would-understand’ whose origins can be found as early as the classical heroic tradition of Electra and Antigone.

The House in Paris finds its apparent similitude with the female family romance on three levels and then quickly diverges from its discourse on femininity. First, *The House in Paris* is also a story of adopted children whose mothers remain distant or die when the child is still very young. Second, *The House in Paris* is a fantasy on motherhood, on parent/child relations. Third, the novel is a quest for the man-who-would-understand. Above all, the three levels function thanks to a certain tension between desire, repression and conflict – *tension* which was advocated by Nancy Locke in her study on Manet⁶⁰’s painting, and which constitutes one of the key concepts of female family romance. However, this tension is a disruptive force operating through the subject that can hardly attain stability or “certitude”. Since in classic female family romance the father is *semper incertus*, the mother in Bowen’s female family romance – here mother family romance – is *semper incertus* (Karen) as well. The threat of retributive violence is connected with the relationship the subject bears with the reappearing mother. The relationship based on the reciprocal tension is one of: incestuous character (Max and Mme Fisher), return of the repressed (Karen, Naomi Fisher Max), appropriation of children (Henrietta and Leopold). It also underlines the quest of the female subject to gain identity through the process of mothering that reconnects her with her own semiotic co-existence with the mother – the female subject becomes a little girl again in a Deleuzian search for identity.

⁶⁰ Edouard Manet was the key figure in the transition from Realism to Impressionism. In his work he was inspired by Raphael, Giorgione, Titian and Velazquez. He is the author of many famous paintings among which are *The Luncheon on the Grass* and *Olympia*. Manet was posthumously chosen to be one of the key artists for the “Manet and the Post-Impressionists” exhibition organized by Roger Fry in London, 1910. The exhibition was a total fiasco and caused a public outrage within the London society. In her essay “Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown”, Virginia Woolf wrote “On or about December 1910 human character changed”, remembering the public reacting with rage and laughter. Apart from Manet, the exhibition was presenting Seurat, Van Gogh, Gauguin and Cézanne. Even though Fry was wrong in his belief in the one hundred paintings to be the work that could infuse British art and culture with new and potent ideas, and give it new direction – there were many artists who saw Impressionism as deeply influential. It is in my belief that Karen’s, Max’s and Naomi’s scene of tea-drinking on the grass bears much resemblance on the scene presented in Manet’s *The Luncheon on the Grass*.

Margot Gayle Backus' *The Gothic Family Romance* is a fairly detailed study of 'paranoid' Anglo-Irish gothic that the author sees as "a hybrid mixture of Anglo-Irish antiquarianism and English anti-Catholic Gothicism" (Backus, 1999, 109). According to Backus, Anglo-Irish gothic with all its subversive conventions aims at deconstructing the "autophagous dynamics of settler colonial reproduction" (Backus, 1999, 109). It serves as a tool to "reincorporate denied feelings, perceptions, and experiences" (Backus, 1999, 109) into narratives that "simultaneously rationalize[s] them and categorically denie[s] their relationship to the family" (Backus, 1999, 109).

The autophagous nature of British and Anglo-Irish social and governmental systems, writes Backus, was an empowering factor in the English speaking rule. It empowered those hegemonies to secure the power by interpolating every generation of children. The destructive control of children runs on many different levels⁶¹ and reached Ireland's social, political and economic systems, on which the Anglo-Irish relied. The motif of child control, according to Backus, is well represented in both literature and culture and it is visible in many different literary and cultural motives. As an example, Backus sees the Anglo-Irish hegemonic discursive model in an overt use of irony by Anglo-Irish authors – something Bowen is much known for and appreciated. However, the two most overt elements fostered by the Anglo-Irish dominion Backus identifies as the foregrounding of heterosexuality as the social norm along with lessening of kinship ties, which gave the parents the means to control their children's sexuality and allowed commodification of children in social relationships. For an additional factor shaping the Anglo-Irish discourse Backus elects the emergence of 'the capitalist family cell' based on Marx's identification of the social contract underlying capitalism and Foucault's theories of the enclosed, nuclear family. As Bowen notes in her *Seven Winters: Memories of a Dublin Childhood* disorientation was the founding stone in the development of identity of the young Anglo-Irish, whose "dispossession at the level of group identity" (Backus, 1999, 75) paralleled the confusion of their sexual identity. To put in blankly, social interaction of the Anglo-Irish was, as Bowen writes,

⁶¹ Margot Backus comes to identify two earlier stages in Irish economic, social and political development. The first one refers itself to the rise of a narrow Protestant English nationalism which subsequently cast the Catholic Irish as the denigrated, vilified other against which the Anglo-Irish social order emerged. The second thread exemplifies a shift within Irish society away from matriarchal, communal social relationships toward patriarchal, restrictive, atomized structures.

“a mixture of showing-off and suspicion, worse than sex” (Bowen, 1942, in Foster, 1993, 31).

On the aesthetic level, *The House in Paris* uses some gothic conventions, something that Bowen did more openly in many of her short stories. However, this time the eeriness of the ‘emotional weather’ draws well from the gothic. There is still space for an almost ritualistic blood shed and the idea of a foreign, vampire-like visitor who feeds on the emulating women. In *The House in Paris*, the night Karen spends with Max at the murky hotel serves as a *petit* attempt at recreating the gothic family romance atmosphere. With its “labyrinthine interior space” (Backus, 1999, 1), claustrophobic atmosphere, overcoming darkness, as well as a witch-like maid who tells Karen the future fortune, all corroborate the aesthetic of the genre. Indeed, the house in Paris, where the plots of the first and the third chapters develop is of gothic kind. And if we choose to re-read the mellow scene of tea drinking outside of Naomi’s late aunt’s house, we are confronted with the eerie feeling of having to face the spectre of the aunt stepping outside of the house on any minute and interrupting the merry encounter. We can hardly reconcile this overcast emotional weather with the sexual tension of the scene between the two future lovers: Karen and Max.

Margot Backus refers herself to Elizabeth Bowen on a number of different occasions. In her in *The Gothic Family Romance. Heterosexuality, Child Sacrifice and the Anglo-Irish Colonial Order* she takes Bowen’s short story “The Demon Lover” as an example of gothic family romance narrative accompanying social changes in the narratives of the First World War in Ireland⁶². Backus analyzes the gothic tropes such as the demon lover character, and the motives of the devil’s bargain as well as the living dead. Then she deconstructs the marks of a shift towards realism in Anglo-Irish fiction similar to that exemplified in Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with its Gothic realism. What Gothic realism does, according to Backus, is render the typically secret machination explicit. Later on, Backus devotes space to other texts such as Yeats’ “A

⁶² It is also important to see the Celtic imagination that influenced Bowen’s fiction with its surrealist content. That said, Bowen was not the only writer in Ireland to be under some influence of the Celtic modernism, this having affected W.B. Yeats and his experiments with automatic writing and Celtic mythology, as well as James Joyce’s exploration of the hallucinatory nighttime in “Circe” section of *Ulysses* and later in *Finnegan’s Wake*. Celtic imagination appealed to many writers through its concepts of collective magic imaginary, the marvelous, and above all the new and modernized Gothic.

Rose of Shadow”, McGuinness’s *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching toward the Somme*, and Johnston’s *How Many Miles to Babylon?* These texts serve to prove Backus’ theory on parallels between the contested social spaces for British male homosexual and Anglo-Irish identities. In the following chapters of *Gothic Family Romance* Anglo-Irish gothic realism is examined with the basis of McGuinness’ *Baglady* and Johnston’s *The Invisible Worm*. The motif of incest survivor develops the idea of Anglo-Irish femininity intertwined with the social and cultural systems and perpetuating them by producing children. Baglady and Laura, the novels’ heroines, openly reject the previously desired familial relationships on suffering incest on their behalf and put an end to the discursive economies of the gothic family romance. Backus recalls the imagery of Virgin Mary and Yeats’ sick rose. On a more general level Bowen too sees children as involved in perpetuating the hegemonic systems. She too ventures to write an alternative narrative to the hegemony oppressing women and children, mainly in her treatment of femininity as autonomously relational, and mothering as iterable and political.

Yet one more time does Backus go back to Bowen in an entire chapter analyzing the *Big House* narratives. Backus finds an obvious reference to the Anglo-Irish *Big House* in Bowen’s *Bowen’s Court*⁶³ and *The Seven Winters* as well as its recurring motif in many other novels by Bowen, among them *The House in Paris*. According to Backus, the burning of the *Big Houses* “represents the only possible end to integrational cycles of exploitation and abuse, perpetuated by the integrational denial of colonial appropriation within the settler colonialist order” (Backus, 1999, 213). Backus finds consoling hope in Bowen’s big house narrative since destroying of the *Big House*

⁶³ *Bowen’s Court and Seven Winters* is an autobiographical history of the Bowen family – Protestant Irish gentry - in Ireland from the Cromwellian settlement until 1959. It describes “the spasms of *folie de grandeur*” (*Bowens Court*, 1999, 458), “the life of fanatical commitment to property, lawsuits over land, formidable matriarchs, violent conflicts between fathers and sons, hunting, drinking and breeding, self-destructive and self-sustaining fantasies” (V. S. Pritchett in *Bowens Court*). Not merely an account of the existence of the Bowen house, the book is a testimony of and Elizabeth Bowen’s tractatus philosophicus on livingness, tradition and self-deceiving nature of any dominant discourse. “Knowing as you now do, that the house is no longer there, you may wonder why I have left the opening chapter, the room-to-room description of Bowen’s Court, in the present tense. I can only say that I saw no reason to transpose it into the past. There is a sort of perpetuity about livingness, and it is part of the character of *Bowen’s Court* to be, in sometimes its silent way, very much alive.” (Bowen, 1999, 459)

and its Anglo-Irish domestic space may result in producing alternative and liberating possibilities to women. If that be the case, the secondary plot of Karen's aunt living in Ireland takes on a more problematic meaning.

The ongoing dialogue between *The House in Paris* and female family romance is illustrated on many other levels above those of emotional weather and interpolation of children. It can be seen in the 'brotherly' relationship Karen continues with Ray after she has given up Leopold for 'adoption' in Italy. In such relationships, Backus writes, the male object of desire takes the form of brother-object as a result of an incestuous subplot. Here the subplot is that of Karen's former relationship with Max and her motherhood of Leopold. The narrative of brotherly object of desire is exemplified in Karen's platonic marriage to Ray. As such Karen lives the most sterile and friend-like life with Ray, accompanying him on business, traveling with him but choosing not to have any more children. From the grief after Leopold Karen turns emotionally unstable passing most of her days in bed – she becomes an Undine-like creature whose survival is perpetuated by imaginary visits of a male stranger into the couple's household – the idea of Leopold.

It is worth remembering here that there is a constant exchange between the forms that the objects of desire take on in family romance. (Examples of the female family romances are many in nineteenth and twentieth century women's fiction such as Jane Austen's *Emma* and *Mansfield Park* to name just two.) They can be as different as desire for the penis, for a male child or sterile brotherly love. In his treatment of 'mature' femininity Freud asserts that there not only happens an exchange of the object of desire from the mother to the father, but the replacement of "the wish for the penis with a wish for a child" (Hirsh, 1989, 58). In the female family romance the wish for the child is very often replaced by the wish for a brotherly object of desire because this represents a shift from the oppressor to the-man-who-would-understand in Adrienne Rich's words. As much as the differentiation in object of desire changes the focus of the narrative, the plot of female dependency and subservience to the male order is perpetuated. However, on reading Bowen one realizes that irrelevant of the closure marriage or motherhood entail there still remains space for a new discourse. The construction of adolescent and orphan narratives as well as non-normative motherhood has a certain purpose, namely that of keeping the child away from the father's discourse and the hegemony of the father's *parole*. Bowen's writing represents vestiges of the

Anglo-Irish child ambivalent quest for identification. At the same time, Bowen believes 'her children' to be in an advantageous position of being still submerged into the mother's semiotic but already exposed to the father's law. Family romance convention used in Bowen collapses the mother-child narrative into an autonomous female subject narrative. It presents mothering not so much as a biological kinship but rather an intellectual one. Mothering in Bowen not only depends on the convention of social recognition but it is shifted towards a private understanding that a child is a spectator of the mother. And as such the concept of devouring mother, also present in *The House in Paris*, develops into the concept of devouring child – a somewhat inversion of the Anglo-Irish colonial order that privileged male over female, parent over child, and state order over individual desire. Even though Bowen pictures the children as sexually and ideologically appropriated, she does hint at the sexual and ideological appropriation of mothers too. Usually, in Bowen's texts children grow up away from the dominion of the father since the father is either absent (Leopold's father) or incapable of any discursive action (Henrietta's father). Through the ideological promise and the instability of the mother's body, the spuriousness of childhood is shown. In general in Bowen, devouring children, denying children's childishness disrupts the traditional *Big House* order and the concept of traditional family. However as opposed to the narrative operations of female/gothic family romance, it is the child who comes to embody a monster – it is the child who is the site of uncanny and the other – “the child commands, I have acted on his scale” (*HP*, 239) says Ray in panic when traveling with Leopold to meet Karen. In Bowen, the child consumes the adult and this pattern is exacerbated in much of Bowen's longer fiction (and deserves a due attention in Bowen's shorter fiction). It is the child who becomes the subject and mothering - the way towards its subjectification. Especially when we recall Kristeva writing “I feel like vomiting the mother” (Kristeva, 1982, 47), we begin to wonder whether this is the mother one consumed as a child. The monstrous child or the abject implies a category that devours adults from the inside of discourse in their quest for the little girl/the other, and from the outside of discourse on encountering the other in both Leopold and Henrietta, in the case of *The House in Paris*. As such, to state that the child or the other is my proper unconscious is to rightly paraphrase Kristeva here. The monstrosity and otherness of the child shifts our attention to the principal argument in Elizabeth Bowen's fiction – that of incapacity to embrace the other and perpetuate the dominant discourses rotten inside. Most obviously the adult

is unable to embrace the child, the self is unable to embrace the other since it has been propelled into discourse/adulthood from the position of an orphan or a stranger, as the narratives of Naomi, Max and Karen imply. The body of the buried child is the source of terror in Bowenesque fiction – it is the child who does not extol the innocence of becoming as in Nietzsche’s “Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks”, who “builds towers of sand (...) at the seashore, piles them up and tramples them down (...) in innocent caprice” (Nietzsche, in Pearson, 2006, 111) – the child is the transcendental signified of the incapacity of the dominant discourse to accommodate the hermeneutics of the self and other split between the totality and essence of this very discourse.

The emphasis on including the theme of family romance into *The House in Paris* is of Foucauldian nature. The formation of self is closely related to social structures operating through discourses leading to a paradoxical position of women of inequality or total exclusion. *The House in Paris*, similarly to the female family romance embeds what Louis Althusser called ‘the ideology of the family’. In the term Althusser envisaged the impossibility of psychological factors in the construction of a family to exist without historical materialism. *The House in Paris* represents Bowen’s attempt at moving from a fantasy/distortion of female discourse towards reality through emphasis on materialism – materialisation of women’s discourses. Materialism in feminism has been used to highlight the key role of production, including domestic production. Bowen shows mothering as a means of production, politicising it into a all women’s discourse. On examining the conditions and narratives of mothering Bowen avoids seeing this as an effect of singular patriarchy – and instead “traces a network of social and psychic relations that make up a material, historical moment” (Wicke, 1994, 751) as writes Jennifer Wicke in her “Celebrity Material: Materialist Feminism and the Culture of Celebrity.” In general materialism as a trend in feminism argues that material conditions of a different kind play a major role in the social production of gender and Bowen “assays the different ways in which women collaborate and participate in these productions.” (Wicke, 1994, 758-759) We could chose, here, to paraphrase Marx’s quotation on social conditions – “It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence but their social existence that determines their consciousness”. Bearing this in mind if mothering be a mode of production in our social existence, both literal and political, it does certainly have a determining role in shaping our consciousness, both individual and general. Bowen wrote in “On Writing a Novel” that “characters

must materialize- i.e., must have a palpable physical reality (...) the unmaterialized character represents an enemy pocket in the area that has been otherwise cleared” (Bowen, 1999k, 38-39). Perhaps the palpable physical reality not only refers to the social conditions but also to the dialogue with mothering discourses that have shaped one’s consciousness. It is mothers who materialise us into the discourse.

In *The House in Paris* Bowen extends an argument of materialist feminism into other situations where hegemonic discourses are created. In the case of marriage, which Bowen sees as an expression of urgent need for a form of protection and legitimacy, the reader is presented with the fragility of this institution affecting both the male and the female parties. From the failed engagement between Max and Naomi we can read a critique of any legitimate union of which the sole purpose is to accommodate the weaker party in the dominant discourse. After all, we are told, Max seeks in Naomi a protector, a stable point of reference, a symbolic signified – “the furniture in the dark” (*HP*, 155), bearing in mind his unsyable signifier quality that Mrs Fisher links to his Jewish origins and effeminate character. It is also an argument for Bowen that women should seek their identity not in possible unions with men but in their regress to mothering – in their dealing with the discourse of mothering.

The fact that Max admits not having a family, which according to the narrative of the novel is disastrous in Paris, reinforces his position of an orphan seeking help from powerful women. It has been suggested that Max is himself an orphan, “Like Leopold, he is illegitimate, and has been abandoned by a mother.” (Corcoran, 2004, 93) This initially prompts him to continue an affair with Mme Fisher, Naomi’s mother. We can only be aware of the fact of how disadvantaged his original position would be if he is of less value than women in social hierarchy. Bowen makes us aware too of how the dominant order perpetuates itself outside of male hegemony, a historical fact of the internal politics within households and colonies, where women were as much eager implementers of Western/Capitalist/Dominant civilizations. What is more, Max seems to be the character identified by Margot Gayle Backus as “the man that enters my sister’s bedroom at night” and who “cannot be my father, because that man is Transylvanian, homosexual, and a vampire⁶⁴” (Backus, 1999, 109) as opposed to the

⁶⁴ Vampirism and circulation of children is noted in *The House in Paris* on several occasions, among which there is Karen’s belief that Mme Fisher sells girls. It is signaled in the novel’s motif of the Fisher’s drawing blood (and money) from Max, Karen and other inhabitants of the house. The money drawn to an

man who must be my father because he is “rich, handsome, and powerful” (Backus, 1999, 109). The rich and handsome man could apparently be Ray in *The House in Paris*, but Bowen clearly exposes his fragility in the final pages of the novel when Ray is to deliver Leopold to his mother Karen. “The obverse of this, however, is Leopold’s radical refusal to accept his lot; and in *The House in Paris* the subjected or subjugated child insists on his release.” (Corcoran, 2004, 94) The final manifesto remains – go and search for the mother.

The situation of having the female characters fail to act outside the dominant plot can be understood on different levels. They have already been signalled earlier and span from the necessity of matricide, impossibility to function within the male plot, as well as women’s ‘dependency and subservience’ as the plot-controlling factor. In this sense the death of those who are situated on the margins and sometimes bleak and predictable turns within the plot signal the hegemony of the dominant order over the plot.

In the middle part of the novel Max and Karen meet and beget a son - Leopold, whose new life will both be empty of and filled by the narratives of his parents. However, when the child is born Max and Karen are already absent from its discourse: Max slits his wrists after a conversation with Mme Fisher so that his blood is metaphorically spilt in a ritual on the marble mantelpiece at Mme Fisher’s house. Indeed, it is, as we have seen, the very same mantelpiece on which Leopold hurts his head learning that his mother “is not coming.” (*HP*, 66) Karen gives Leopold away to a couple of adoptive American parents, the Grant-Moodies. In Kristevan terms Karen is trapped between the two paths a woman may elect in face of the phallic discourse, the first path being that of asymbolic singularity (Karen’s strongest position within the plot is signalled in the second part of the novel, before she becomes a mother). The second path is that of life in disguise, when the female subject pretends to observe the paternal law that neither sees nor signifies her (this happens in the third part of the book with Karen’s continuous withdrawal from the narrative).

Kristeva’s “My body is no longer mine, it doubles up, suffers, bleeds” (Kristeva, 1980, 167) is a prophecy behind Karen’s imaginary conversation with

end and used up leaves Mme Fisher in the state of dying. When at her death bed she is described more as a skin-dried skull whose final days are accompanied by her daughter’s stabbing of knitting needles when drawing confession/words from Henrietta on her visit to Paris.

Leopold during the sleepless night of his conception⁶⁵. Similar to Kristeva's striking image, Karen's body too doubles up and suffers bringing to mind the idea of pregnancy and bearing a child. As such Leopold continues to insist that he remains an integral part of his mother's being – a flesh from flesh,

When he said: 'We shall understand each other', he had not boasted. He and she had shared experience once: to his pre-adolescent⁶⁶ mind his having been born of her did not shut a gate between them. (*HP*, 67)

The relationship one has with one's mother is one of the most constructive relationships ever to be had. Maternity, being a complex process, is not merely a biological fact occupying the realm of the private sphere but a project, a work in progress, in theory and in practice, stretching over the public and the private spheres. It is the space where our selfhood is created on encountering with the other and the place where we create notions of the other that remains dwelling within and outside of ourselves.

Julia Kristeva's idea of maternity is described in her *Desire in Language*, although her interest in the subject surfaces in more of her studies, among them *The New Maladies of the Soul* and *The Powers of Horror*. Kristeva advocates a new discourse on maternity that acknowledges the importance of maternal function in the development of subjectivity and culture. To her we are subjects in process. But most of all she makes an attempt at analyzing the idea of maternity itself posing a question of "what is there (...) that reduces social anguish and gratifies a male being; what is there

⁶⁵ However, if we understand Kristevan parenting as open to both the masculine and the feminine, we will too understand Max's death as gruesome yet symbolic and necessary sacrifice in favour of Leopold's life. In the first place, Kristeva sees the post-partum love for the child as originating in the so-called father-mother conglomerate with which the infant identifies. In the second place, in Kristeva's opinion, the concept of *herethics* (self/other relationship based on the idea of maternity) is an open concept for both men and women since it relies more on the idea of *Agape* – "(...) a sort of gift, it comes to you from outside, you don't need to merit it, it's a sort of profusion, it's the love of parents for their children (...)." (Kristeva, 1984, 342) Ray's meeting with Leopold in the house in Paris perpetuates the male subject's development from love as *Eros* – an ascendant movement "(...) compared to erection" (Kristeva, 1984, 342) that aspires to power – towards love as *Agape* as love for the other that now reveals itself as an instance of the self.

⁶⁶ It is important to notice that Kristeva considers pre-adolescence as still the preserve of the semiotic, that is the space operating with the maternal rhythms, flows and energies; a space close to the maternal.

that also satisfies a woman so that a commonality of the sexes is set up (...)?" (Kristeva, 1980, 236) Kristeva understands motherhood as the experience of split subjectivity. This connects to the myth of the Madonna – her fluidity in assuming various roles of the mother, the wife and the Virgin. A woman, going through the experience of motherhood, is “like a strange fold in the human fabric that tightly pulls on the connections between nature and culture, inside and outside, the semiotic and the symbolic, the self and other” (Kristeva, 1980, 182). When a woman becomes a mother, she identifies with many elements at the same time that ultimately lead her back to herself – she identifies with her own mother’s love, the love for the child’s father and a growing self-love. Elizabeth Bowen describes in her fiction women split between the challenges of culture and nature, the public and the private scenes. She describes a split within subjectivity between narcissism and idealization, otherness as an instance of the self and the space of alterity. She problematizes the stereotype of a woman as either virgin or whore. In her novel *The House in Paris*⁶⁷, Karen who to us is directly present only in the second middle part of the book, gives birth to Leopold, a fruit of her affair with a French Jew – Max. She later on gives Leopold up to be raised by an American couple the Grant –Moodies. Leopold goes on to live in Italy until the age of nine when Karen finally makes an attempt to get the boy back and plans to meet him in Paris. This, however, does turn out to be an idea forced by Karen’s husband Ray. The place of their arranged encounter is the house inhabited by the mother and daughter Fisher, who both live a tremulous relationship of enslavement and destruction. Naomi Fisher, the daughter, remains steadfast in her servitude to her mother, who happened to have destroyed her life by manipulating her former and long dead fiancé and a father of Leopold. Karen, who as it turns out still rejects Leopold, fails to appear on the agreed day sending an apologetic telegram. In the end Leopold is picked up by Karen’s husband, Ray Forrestier, and they leave to begin a new life for Leopold. In picking Leopold, Ray believes he can compensate for his own childlessness - motherhood becomes a neutral function which both men and women are capable of and procure for their own fulfilment. This, on its part, correlates with Kristeva’s theory of heretics, at

⁶⁷ The house that stands at Rue Sylvestre Bonnard is named after the eponymous hero of a novel written by Anatole France and entitled *Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard* (1890). *Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard*’s eponymous character - scholar Sylvestre Bonnard, who was involved with a young girl living in a boarding school, was based on the life of Anatole France.

the conclusion of “Stabat Mater” (*Tales of Love*), that constitute a promise for a new beginning for both men and women through a new kind of ethics and morality, which is to be derived from the (un)engendered experience of motherhood/parenthood. Motherhood is to provide the basis for the new ethics from their experience of split subjectivity. This means that if motherhood serves as a model for a subject-in-process, this very subject is always an ethical subject. Rather than utopian⁶⁸, her vision is of possibility and love. She writes: “Herethics, is perhaps no more than that which in life makes bonds, thoughts, and therefore the thought of death, bearable: herethics is undeath (a-mort), love” (Kristeva, 1987, 185). “Stabat Mater” is a study of the cult of the Virgin Mary and so it combines the religious dogmas and study with Kristeva’s own experience of maternity. The text reads divided into two parts that ‘coexist’ on the same page. The personal recollections are written in bold and penetrate the text always beginning with the word ‘FLASH’ as a reminiscent of birth. There is not a neat dichotomy between the theoretical part and the personal part. As one reads into the text, the separate parts form a unified whole – practice needs tradition and rightful discourse. The underlying message of this strange textual union is, as Toril Moi states, a concern that today, due to the demise of the cult of the Virgin, and of religion in general, we are left without a satisfactory discourse on motherhood. “(...) There is, then, an urgent need for a “post-virginal” discourse on maternity one which ultimately would provide both women and men with a new ethics: a “(her)ethics.” (Kristeva, 1987, 160-61) Here the word “her/ethics” stands for a strange cluster between femininity and masculinity. Femininity, as represented by the idea of child-bearing and maternity, is combined with masculinity, as the basis and origin for law and ethics – the dominant discourse on morality and conduct. They would form a new non religious union⁶⁹ of semiotic and symbolic – the bodily maternal flow with the rule of the language. In “Stabat Mater” both the autobiographical and historical parts, along with the making of new ethics, overstep constantly the imaginary boundaries and merge like the columns of textual paragraphs – the idea of what should be the ideal future be like is never clear and it is blurred. Kristeva’s attempts at dealing with the challenges that motherhood represents, for her, are no more conclusive than, for example, Adrienne Rich’s text - *Of Woman*

⁶⁸ For further development of utopian mothering see, Adrienne Rich (1995).

⁶⁹ Non-religious since Julia Kristeva considers the religious idea of motherhood as connected to blood and tears, obliterating women as the subject.

Born - on the same subject. There surfaces a problematic ambivalence in both texts. Kristeva voices this feeling in one of the passages: “My body is no longer mine, it doubles up, suffers, bleeds” (Kristeva, 1987, 167); “(T)he dark area (aut) that motherhood constitutes for a woman” (Kristeva, 1987,179);

Let us call ‘maternal’ the *ambivalent principle* (aut) that is bound to the species, on the one hand, and on the other stems from an identity catastrophe that causes the Name to topple over into the unnameable that one imagines as femininity, nonlanguage, or body. (Kristeva, 1987, 234-235)

This very passage seems to be an exact description of the mood found in the second part of Bowen’s *The House in Paris*. In that very part Karen dialogues with her yet unborn child Leopold on the reasons for his conception. “FLASH – instant of time or of dream without time (...) Epiphanies” (Kristeva, 1987, 234) goes the text written by Kristeva, which seems to be the exact background for Karen’s epiphany about her unborn son. And FLASH may have its parallel in the lighthouse which Karen and Max see flashing its lights towards darkness – they both turn away from it. At the same time the textual weather of the setting corresponds to the occasion of the clandestine meeting. The darkness of rooms, confinement, rain and sleepless night mirror the difficult situation in which the two lovers – Karen and Max- encounter themselves. They are both engaged to other people and in their short, emotionally unsatisfying affair they break the constraints society imposes on them. Karen and Max both know that their relationship is impossible to continue, yet they are unable to escape the way it develops into a stereotypical/unpondered night of almost painful passion. Their encounter freezes in timelessness⁷⁰ of which there is no NOW and only the certainty of future – new life. To

⁷⁰ It is interesting to see the different pace of action which Bowen attributes to certain events. We find that fast events such as taxi driving, train travel are presented with an emphasis on their fastness. Taxis ‘dart’, ‘pump’, ‘crash’ and ‘swerve’, trains ‘impale’ and ‘crash’. In *Pictures and Conversations*, Bowen comments on her characters, “Bowen characters are in transit consciously. Sensationalists (...) when they extend their environment (...) what goes on in them is magnified and enhanced: impacts are sharper, there is more objectivity (...) Speed is exciting to have grown up with. It alerts vision (...) By contrast, it accentuates the absoluteness of stillness. Permanence (...) stands out the more strongly in an otherwise ephemeral world. Permanence is an attribute of recalled places.” (Bowen, 1999g, 286) Travelling, moving are some of a few tenets one has in life, since life according to Bowen is made up of ambivalence. Life is made of change since even writers “seldom prey to regret (...) seldom look back, for they are usually engaged upon something else.” (Bowen, 1999g, 287)

Leopold Karen remains “his contemporary, a past as plain as the present, simply a present elsewhere” (*HP*, 67). Similarly to Giovanni Bellini’s paintings, described in detail by Kristeva in her *Desire in Language*, what in life “remains multihued and compact figuration inevitably floats in empty space” (Kristeva, 1980, 262) – everything floats in timelessness.

Casting a glimpse at Irish writing of the seventies in the twentieth century, one is stricken by a curious statement made by Edna O’Brien’s in her “A Scandalous Woman” (1972)⁷¹, which says that Ireland is “a land of strange, sacrificial women” (O’Brien, 1972, 33). By the statement, O’Brien points towards the two-fold meaning that womanhood implies. On one hand it stands for complying with the dominant order, perpetuating the constraining myth of Virgin Mary. On the other hand, it highlights the otherness and difference that women embody in their strangeness. In *Strangers to Ourselves* Kristeva describes the foreigner as the ‘cold orphan’, motherless, a ‘devotee of solitude’, a ‘fanatic of absence’, alone even in a crowd, arrogant, rejected, yet oddly happy (Kristeva, 1991, 4-5). The stranger is always in motion, doesn’t belong anywhere, to ‘any time, any love’ (Kristeva, 1991, 7).

The foreigner, thus, has lost his mother. Camus understood it well: his Stranger reveals himself at the time of his mother's death. One has not much noticed that this cold orphan, whose indifference can become criminal, is a fanatic of absence. He is a devotee of solitude, even in the midst of a crowd, because he is faithful to a shadow: bewitching secret, paternal ideal, inaccessible ambition. (Kristeva, 1991, 5)

A foreigner, according to Kristeva, understands that being sentenced to death after years of wandering, is the only meaningful state within the symbolic discourse – the death of a child in becoming an adult, the death of the semiotic on entering the symbolic, the

⁷¹ Surprisingly enough 1969 is the year of publication Bowen’s last novel *Eva Trout*, her most curious and difficult piece of fiction, which juxtaposes itself against the ideas presented in Bowen’s earlier novels. Not only does it seem to be marking a turning point in Bowen’s beliefs about society, but it reveals itself as contradicting all supposedly stable and patriarchal tenets of the mid twentieth century society and its discourse on women, motherhood, love and difference. It seems then that Bowen’s ideas correlate with what was, at that very time, growing to be the core of Irish fiction by women writers – the problem of a motherless child, as well as childless mother, the motif of single motherhood, as well as the conflicting concepts of female agency, maternity and femininity itself.

death of the I in favour of the other – processes that do not only take place in *The House in Paris*, but, as we will see, in *Eva Trout*, or *Changing Scenes* too.

Foreigner: a choked up rage deep down in my throat, a black angel clouding transparency, opaque, unfathomable spur. The image of hatred and of the other, a foreigner is neither the romantic victim of our clannish indolence nor the intruder responsible for all the ills of the polis. Neither the apocalypse on the move nor the instant adversary to be eliminated for the sake of appeasing the group. Strangely, the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder. By recognizing him within ourselves, we are spared detesting him in himself. (Kristeva, 1991, 5)

A hidden wound makes the orphan wonder, an occult wound accounts for their excessive mobility. An orphan is not a static character; they may feel an unexplainable interior inquietude. The inquietude translates itself directly into dislocation - a key word in Elizabeth Bowen's fiction. By dislocation I do not only refer to 'stative' or 'dynamic' texts that embrace a certain textual quality based on episodes and with a 'what-happened-next' structure. By dislocation I wish to address the problems of internal/emotional mobility or immobility of characters. I would like to analyze their implications on what, in relation to the spatial structure of a text, Jurij Lotman calls 'boundary crossing'.

For Lotman the division into mobile vs. immobile characters (in spatial terms) underlines another opposition: namely that between texts with a plot and texts without a plot. According to Lotman, plotless texts (...) affirm a particular world and its ordering. They are organized according to the principle of binary oppositions which establish fixed frontiers. Texts with a plot, on the other hand, involve what has already been referred to as boundary crossing, i.e. movement across the forbidden border which has been established by the plotless structure. (...) Movement within the character's own space is not considered an event. Kardela, 2002, 178-179)

If we apply this theory to psychoanalysis it opens up a series of implications on characters' internal evolution. Above all it reveals the ingenuity of Bowen's fiction since, as Lotman admits: "(...) only exceptional characters can go across the impenetrable boundary of their environment, others are confined to one environment and thus remain immobile" (in Kardela, 2002, 179). The female characters in Bowen's

fiction do transgress the centre/periphery boundaries and what seems to be the engine of their mobility has originally been described as the leitmotif of Bowen's fiction – the motif of orphanhood. And the concept of orphanhood seems to be reversible in Bowen – it is either orphaned children or childless mothers – solitude perpetuates our social relations. The assemblage of orphanhood “has neither base nor superstructure... it flattens all of its dimensions onto a single plane of consistency upon which reciprocal presuppositions and mutual insertions play themselves out” (Grosz, 1994, 167).

Jeanette Shumaker⁷² explains the sacrificial position of women in long and short fiction by evoking the religious myth of the Virgin Mary. She writes that the distressing martyrdoms of the fictional heroines result from the overspread Catholic notions of the Madonna. As Shumaker points out, scholars such as Julia Kristeva in “Stabat Mater” (1977) and Marina Warner in “Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary” (1976) in part, help scrutinize the impact of the Madonna myth on western European women. Their feminist scholarship illuminates short stories such as Mary Lavin's “A Nun's Mother” (1944) and “Sarah” (1943), as well as O'Brien's “Sister Imelda” (1981) and “A Scandalous Woman.” According to Shumaker many short stories by both Lavin and O'Brien work the concept of female martyrdom (en)gendered by the Madonna myth. As such the myth can be found hidden in various motives, from becoming a nun to becoming a wife, a mother, or a ‘fallen woman’.

Julia Kristeva, as already pointed out in Jeanette Shumaker's writing, talks about a certain fluidity of the Madonna role as well as her plasticity and heterogeneousness. As such the Madonna role encompasses diverse female roles and takes on different masks – as in Riviere's femininity as masquerade⁷³. In this sense what is important about the Madonna myth is that it overlaps with many public and private roles ascribed to women, which are all consequently cast into the periphery. By setting up an impossible ideal, the cult of the Virgin does drive the adherent into a position of

⁷² Jeanette Shumaker has worked extensively on Edna O'Brien and Mary Lavin, publishing articles such as “Mother-Daughter Rivalries in Short Stories by Edna O'Brien, Helen Lucy Burke, Mary Beckett, and Elizabeth Bowen” (2001), or “The Madonna Ideal in Mary Lavin's Short Stories: A Kristevan Perspective,” (1993),

⁷³ The notion of femininity as masquerade is explicated in Joan Riviere's now well-known psychoanalytic essay, “Womanliness as a Masquerade” (1929). Furthermore, Riviere's notion of masquerade along with Kristevan fluid asymbolia contribute to the desirable ideal cut out for women in the postcolonial texts.

acknowledged and hopeless yearning and inferiority that is refigured both in the centre and on the margins.

The Madonna myth is drawn upon in *The House in Paris* many times both directly and indirectly. Max compares Mme Fisher to a stone Madonna in his understanding a Madonna that cannot give birth. Naomi Fisher's devotion to her mother is too selfless like that of the Virgin Mary's. The role of Naomi Fisher as sacrificing her right to maternity and identity - Kristeva might call this "A suffering lined with jubilation" (Kristeva, 1987) is characteristic of the woman who lives suffused by the image of the sacrificial Madonna. "Uniqueness is attained only through an exacerbated masochism". (Kristeva, 1987, 258) The idea of Naomi Fisher as virginal and pure is obliterated in her very last name also reinforced by Mrs Arbuthnot, Henrietta's grandmother. By calling her Kingfisher, she repeats the play on words in French, since the word fisher, pronounced 'pêcheur' is almost indistinguishable in pronunciation from the word signifying sinner that is 'pécheur'. Since we do not know the character of the relationship between Mrs Arbuthnot and Naomi Fisher, we may only infer that she follows the steps of Mrs Arbuthnot, one of the many examples of dominant and manipulative women in Bowen's fiction. 'Pécheur' directs our attention to what Bowen thought about the myth of the Madonna, suggesting that it could be as sinful a life as the one against the myth. After all, one may believe Karen to be an anti Madonna, who chooses a different path than that of emulating motherhood.

Bowen's often recurring piece of criticism on society, with its stress on omnipresent negative influence on young people, is that it changes anyone irreversibly when he or she enters its dominant discourse. In "Out of a Book", her essay on literary influences, Bowen writes that once we grow up we cannot feast in the Garden of Eden, we are banished from the place of plenty, and "The young person is then thrown out of Eden. (. ...) Appreciation of *literature* is the end of magic." (Bowen, 1999k, 51) - the paradise is lost forever. It is interesting to look at the origins of the word paradise that has its roots in two Persian words: 'pairi', which means around and 'diz', which means to shape or mould. According to Bowen as we gain our access to society we become resistant to change and set in our characters - we lose our virginity and ingenuity. This idea goes parallel with Julia Kristeva's notion of transference plasticity, which she describes in her *Powers of Horror* and which, according to her, characterizes the youth period and is lost on entering into the symbolic. Surprisingly enough if we go back to

the context of Bowen's citation that is our loss of innocence in our treatment of literary fiction, we may as well remember the origins of the word fiction. The word fiction has its roots in the Latin word '*fingere*', which means to form or to mould thus to create narratives, just as the word paradise. The question here concerns the role the obligatory, Madonna-like virginity may play in women's lives – whether it may compensate female loss of plasticity with its surprising fluidity of roles. It may be here that we could find the reasons for the obsession with the Madonna like function that is commonly ascribed to women.

Furthermore Neil Corcoran clearly highlights Elizabeth Bowen's fascination and obsession with the Roman Catholic image of the Mother and Child. And it is the very Mother and Child analyzed by Julia Kristeva in her "Motherhood According to Giovanni Bellini", which makes part of *Desire in Language*. About sacrificial motherhood Neil Corcoran writes that,

The feelings of selfless compassion and resigning from one's own body for the sake of the other can only find their resemblance in the feeling a mother has towards her child. (Corcoran, 2004, 84)

And the intensity of reciprocity, "the buttons pulled a little crooked", as in the scene between Leopold and Henrietta - the expression of emotional exchange with the other can only come from a child being comforted by the mother. In there, Henrietta's ability to understand Leopold comes from her own traumatic experience of orphanhood. However, the novel has Henrietta overcome these feelings of reciprocity in placing her in the dominant discourse, making the reader wonder whether she will follow into the footsteps of her manipulative female ancestors. After all she carries with her a bagful of symbolically-charged apples – she may be the tempting Eve taking the meaning away from Paradise thanks to her carnal sin. And if the reader does wonder what 'comes of the children' Neil Corcoran offers little consolation to the blatant truth writing that "in various ways we are encouraged to read Leopold as a second Max" (Corcoran, 2004, 95). The reader should not be reluctant to believe that Leopold will suffer from the same weakness of nature as his father. Again, an apple does not fall far from the tree. There, however, remains hope in his rebirth into a new family life promised by Karen's husband, who is willing to exercise a maternal/paternal role for Leopold. As we find out in Kristeva maternity should not be solely ascribed to femininity and it can also be a

male function, especially if we bear in mind the concept of the imaginary father – “the phantasm of a father who can love like a mother” (Nikolchina, 2004, 3).

The imaginary – maternal – father thus (...) is the guarantee of a ludic entry into the oedipal triangle and provides a theatrical setting for the becoming of the subject: of the subject as a game of I-s (jeu de jes), as a gambling of the I-s. (Nikolchina, 2004, 64)

However when reading from Kristeva’ study of the revolutionary “herethics”, we are reminded that the development of subjectivity is ascribed mainly to the mother/child (daughter) dyad, and to a greater extent it resembles the Demeter-Persephone myth. It is too only through exploration of the maternal presence in the first place that the concept of the imaginary, loving father arises. Kristeva begins her treatise on motherhood by analyzing Bellini’s paintings of Madonna and Child in an essay entitled “Motherhood According to Giovanni Bellini” written after the birth of her son in 1976. According to Kristeva Bellini’s Madonnas are governed by interplay between feelings of distance from and anguish to poses(ing) as experienced within the mother and the child dyad. Similar exchange can be found in *The House in Paris*, especially in Karen’s attitude towards Leopold, as well as in Henrietta’s meeting with Leopold. It is an interplay of abjection and possessiveness. It is “the theorizing of the mother both in terms of losing her (exile), and of surrogating her, acquiring her in sublime joy where she is not.” (Nikolchina, 2004, 58) *The House in Paris* is speaking “of darkness through luminosity, of silence through polyglotism, and of hidden face through mask” (Nikolchina, 2004, 61), and of exile, strangeness and geography through creating spaces, places and movement.

The maternal body is the subject that splits and where “nature confronts culture” (Kristeva, 1980, 238). It is also embedded with a fantasy of so called Phallic Mother since we are made to believe in her power steaming from some religious mystification of the paternal function. Motherhood helps a woman to reunite with her own mother “By giving birth, the woman enters into contact with her mother; she becomes, she is her own mother; they are the same continuity differentiating itself” (Kristeva, 1980, 239). Pregnancy and childbirth can be experienced as a reunion with one’s own mother – in a primal regression the woman –mother reunites with the body of her mother. The reunion, however, needs not be peaceful. The woman reacquires what she has been deprived of or castrated of by her phallic mother.

The language of art, too, follows (but differently and more closely) the other aspect of maternal jouissance, the sublimation taking place at the very moment of primal repression within the mother's body, arising perhaps unwittingly out of her marginal position. At the intersection of sign and rhythm, of representation and light, of the symbolic and the semiotic, the artist speaks from a place where she is not, where she knows not. (Kristeva, 1980, 242)

According to Kristeva attitudes towards the maternal body can be divided into two groups. The first group sees the maternal body as fetish. It develops into worship of the figurable and representable person. The speaker sees the meaning only in the fetishist representation of the mother/child relationship. The second group perceives the maternal body as its predominance of luminous, chromatic differences beyond and despite corporeal representation – the body is the image of the represent-able. The speaker sees the meaning beyond the imagery of motherhood, projecting the discovery of his own jouissance onto the image. I do believe that we may find a transcription of these theories in the characters of Leopold and Max in *The House in Paris*. Information about Max's life is scarce. We do know, however, that he had befriended Mme Fisher as a young man, and immediately fell prey to her seductive and castrating powers – “He [Max] could do nothing that she had not expected; my mother was at the root of him” (*HP*, 183) This then constituted for him a turning point in his emotional development – a prisoner to Mme Fisher's whims, he felt lost in the world when attempting to free himself. The ‘friendship’ represented to Max a precocious seduction⁷⁴ suffered at the hands of his ‘substitute/adoptive’ mother.

Persuaded by precocious seduction and double motherhood of the existence of a maternal phallus, (he) never stopped looking for fetish equivalents in the bodies, (...) objects and money. (Kristeva, 1980, 245)

⁷⁴ Max explains the incestuous nature of his relationship with Mme Fisher and says: “She was ready for me when I was not ready for her. She had waited years for what I had not had time to miss. We met in her house, in all senses. Women I knew were as she made me see them: they were not much. Any loves I enjoyed stayed inside her scope; she knew of them all. She mocked and played upon my sensuality. She always had time to see me;” (*HP*, 139)

The bodies were those of girls that Mme Fisher put up in her house in Paris, though the desire for them was nothing more than platonic, since the house had its strict rules and Max was forbidden from talking to the girls. Furthermore, Max's performances as a subject were strictly controlled by and embedded into Mme Fisher's discourse. The objects and money that Max never possessed enough, were there to curb his amorous adventures, yet it was a given that if he married a girl it would also be for her material goods. If we see Max's life structured around the trauma of maternal castration, we may better understand his narcissistic exploration of fantasies for a better life – the fantasies he pursues in vain until he falls in love with Karen, and unable to stand up to the 'reality' of love, he commits suicide. The fantasies that the sheltered and dominated Narcissus explores “incite pleasure, but (...) dramatically affect(s) desire that is impossible to satisfy by an abundance of objects, bodies, or behaviours, which ceaselessly excite and disappoint.” (Kristeva, 1980, 245) Max himself says that what goes on in his mind is “Only images and desire.” (*HP*, 140)⁷⁵ It was Freud who first “noticed in the subject the failure of a desire for the signifier to achieve objective value” (Kristeva, 1980, 117) and when the objective value comes to be represented in love for the other - when the desire ceased to be solely that of a subject, it became unbearable causing the subject to disintegrate. “First, there is a fetishism of the body and an extreme refinement of the technique of representation by resemblance. Next comes the staging of psychological episodes centred in the desire for a body – his, a child's, or another” (Kristeva, 1980, 245) writes Kristeva on the development of the narcissistic quest for fulfilment. I believe Max's fetishism finds its vent in the imagery of the stone Madonna, that he first sees in Mme Fisher and then finds in Naomi Fisher. The desire to subordinate Naomi makes itself visible in the image of Naomi silently pricking her finger with a needle while sowing that Max witnesses.

Though I saw her, I only felt her there when her mother had gone out and all the energy went out of the room. Seeing how gently Naomi picked up her scissors from the floor, I remembered she was a woman. I said something, and she started and pricked her finger. I saw from the pitying way she sucked the bead of blood from her finger how much she

⁷⁵ As has been mentioned, the other, once in the world, becomes an instance of the self and one's own mother feelings towards whom are sustained through desire that seeks the lost part of the self. The love for the other becomes expressed by the love for the self, of which narcissism and idealization are inseparable elements.

pitied me, and saw at the same time that hers was the only pity I did not resent. (. ...)
When I see how the stony lines of her dress and her entirely unsurprised face moved me, I
see now that it was the Madonna trick – my nerves tricking my senses with the idea of
peace, making someone to make for me an unattackable safe place. (*HP*, 162)

Max invests his fantasies in the gratifying image of stone Madonna that Naomi comes to represent and which Kristeva traces in the religious understanding of maternity as that of blood and tears, as well as resigning from one's own I for the sake of the other. Similar images of Madonna lamenting are given when Naomi Fisher is to share the news of Karen's decision not to come with Leopold. She breaks on her knees- she "held her arms out to him, dropped on her knees, and advanced on her knees arms out" (*HP*, 66). This then stirs in Leopold feelings of disdain as Naomi Fisher persists "dumb again, knelt there in the patch of weak sun" (*HP*, 66). Leopold "haughtily, touched the tie of his blouse. His small dark figure, one arm up in the act, flattened against the mantle piece like a specimen" (*HP*, 66). At the very mantelpiece where Max had committed suicide, primal narcissism is awakening in Leopold, which pushes him into the centre, as accordingly with the dominant discourse, he abjects Naomi Fisher in her servitude-like position. Max's narcissism develops itself into his overt womanish-ness, which Mrs Michaelis traces to his Jewish origins. "He looks sensitive, and might easily be touchy. (...) And there is always that touch – Jewish perhaps – of womanish-ness about him that a woman would have to ignore and yet deal with the whole time" (*HP*, 117).

That said, to a certain degree a character's failure in moral development may stem from his or her emotional lag in the attitudes towards the mother; there remains a niche that has been filled either by a possessive or hostile mother. This then pushes the character away from the experience of jouissance, which may be the case of psychotic characters with suicidal tendencies. Suicide in *The House in Paris* is the fate Leopold's father chooses for himself. We also may try to find parallels for suicide in the description of blood/tears virginity that characterises the textual stone Madonnas who resign from their private for the public's sake, who give up their selves, as is the case of Naomi Fisher.

If we look closely at Leopold, we find that he stands in contrast to Max in his attitudes to the maternal. For him the mother has been lost, she remains absent since he was abandoned by her shortly after being born. We do know that his adoptive mother or

mothers, since there are two women involved: Mrs Grant-Moodie and her sister, tried to replace the ‘real’ but absent mother in an insensitive and rough manner, as we learn from Mrs Grant-Moodie’s letter to Miss Fisher about Leopold’s education. To Leopold “maternal space is there, nevertheless – fascinating, attracting, and puzzling. But we have no direct access to it.” (Kristeva, 1980, 247)

As if there were a maternal *function* that, unlike the mother’s solicitude in Leonardo’s [da Vinci] paintings toward the baby-object of all desire, was merely ineffable jouissance, beyond discourse, beyond narrative, beyond psychology, beyond lived experience and biography – in short, beyond figuration. (Kristeva, 1980, 247)

“The faces (...) are turned away , intent on something else that draws their gaze to the side, up above, or nowhere in particular, (...)” (Kristeva, 1980, 247) – the way Leopold’s face is turned away during his embrace with Henrietta.

Leopold rolled his face further away from her, so that one cheek and temple now pressed the marble, but did not withdraw his body from her touch. (...)Reposing between two friends, the mantelpiece and her body, Leopold, she could feel, was looking out of the window, seeing the courtyard and the one bare tree swim into view again and patiently stand. (*HP*, 196-197)

And even though Leopold learns that his mother would not be visiting him after all, he experiences jubilation where “she is not” (Kristeva, 1980, 247) and her absence produces a serene joy - Leopold is reclaimed by Karen’s husband, “So the mother who did not come to meet Leopold that afternoon remained his creature, able to speak the truth” (*HP*, 67). Like in Colette’s modernist text “Sido” – the mother- is absent (she says in her letters that she will not come and later she dies) but she is also perpetually present via the texts of letters Leopold steals from Miss Fisher’s bag, as well as the one he invents as possible content of the allegorical empty yet addressed envelope. In the first and second parts of *The House in Paris* Karen is absent at one and present thanks to the narratives of others of her and the letter she sends even though it is also hidden from Leopold since he only finds an empty envelope. Here, Karen’s absence/presence is yet more highlighted. What constructs the narrative is the “simultaneity of loss and gain, separation and closeness, difference and similarity” (Hirsh, 1989, 106). The empty envelope contains no narrative directed at Leopold but an image he must transcribe into

his own life – he must become both the “receiver and the sender” (Hirsh, 1989, 106) he “must project himself into the very text/nontext of the letter” (Hirsh, 1989, 106) - the child fills in the mother, impregnates its signifier with her signifying. Leopold’s fascination with the mother function (the mother beyond the law) splits itself between the primary and obvious need for a mother that any child possesses and a desire or curiosity not so much for a woman ‘body’/woman ‘subject’ but the “very *function* of jouissance” (Kristeva, 1980, 248). The maternal function becomes the luminous background in the quest for understanding of one’s origins, “evoking an ‘inner experience’ rather than a referential ‘object’” (Kristeva, 1980, 249). As I have written earlier in this chapter, “(...) the meeting he had projected could take place only in Heaven – call it Heaven; (...) or call it art” (*HP*, 67) so Leopold projected his mother onto reality just like Giovanni Bellini, whom Kristeva describes in her “Motherhood according to Giovanni Bellini”, projected his idea of motherhood onto his painted ‘Madonnas’ embedded in the illuminated background. “Is it illuminated?” (*HP*, 239) asks Leopold, when he is to meet his mother – when he is to return to his Garden of Eden of which Bowen, herself orphaned early, wrote so extensively in her essays. The indirect study of human psyche and the character as subject in discourse leads both Kristeva and Bowen to enhance their interest in art, echoed in Theodor Adorno’s ‘aesthetic mode of existence’⁷⁶. This corroborates the use of the painting motif in the fictional creation of Karen, who intermittently tries her luck as a painter and whose activity as such is breached by society’s pressure. As such art prefigures and releases a perspective on the subject. The thin line between art and life is “a double movement in which the oeuvre is analytically destabilised into artistic practice and the subject’s coming into being is delivered as an aesthetic occurrence” (Nikolchina, 2004, 65) – art is not a symptom but it “sets the subject up in the first place” (Nikolchina, 2004, 65). And if the interest in art lead Kristeva to the analysis of the ludic I – *the je de jeu*, it too took Bowen to treating the I as work in progress, especially the feminine I (for both of the writers) that thanks to its “as if” condition in the phallic order became a universal, unsexed necessity. Hence, the potential for developing feminine subjectivity became a “potential infinity of masks” (Nikolchina, 2004, 66). Art, like in Adorno’s giving form

⁷⁶ For the elucidation of this concept, see Theodor Adorno’s *Aesthetic Theory* (1970).

to contingent material, made Bowen see the subject as dialogical and fluid subject-in-process⁷⁷.

I wish to devote an entire section to the body of the buried mother in the next paragraphs, since I do believe that *The House in Paris* yields some labouring through this concept. As much as one finds the idea of motherhood the principal theme of *The House in Paris* there is no denying that a greater part of Bowen's fiction seems to be discarding the mother in many but obvious ways. *The House in Paris* has the mother abandon her child. It seems it cannot support the existence of the child and the mother in the same narrative. Mothers are at once absent in Bowen's fiction but, in my opinion, remain very present. This can be compared to the parallel absence and presence in a modernist text by Michel Beaujour's *Break of Day*, where the story of love between mother and daughter revises the concept of what is narratable and what is not. The narrative of mother and daughter will always remain a narrative of renunciation.

Julia Kristeva has emphasized not mere matricide as place for mothers after and in order to initiate us into language. She describes the mother's seductive psychosomatic intrusion into her infant being incorporated by the child to form the inner world. To better analyse this we need to go back to Kristeva's writing on Giovanni Bellini's stone Madonnas contrasted with some painting by Leonardo da Vinci. Kristeva starts with her analysis of Giovanni Bellini's style claiming that it is a "synthesis of Flemish landscape painting, iconography, and Mediterranean architectural manner" (Kristeva 1980, 243). She highlights Bellini's introduction of luminous density of colour that "introduced volume into the body and into the painting" (Kristeva, 1980, 244). To that there is an argument of luminosity emerging from the concept of loss – loss of a country, territory, the mother, the theme of exile and stranger, which are notorious not only in Bellini's vision but also in Dante's writing, whose doubling in Kristeva "has remained unnoticed" (Nikolchina, 2004, 58). As such, Dante, who was notorious for descriptions of mother-son incest, was an exile in the times when many writers and scholars sought travelling as mind-enriching. Max too remains an exile entrapped in his incestuous relationship with Mrs Fisher – the archaic mother to his

⁷⁷ Bowen admitted in one of her interviews that she perceived her literary work in terms of forms that were primary to the invention of characters and plot. Bowen confessed that "The idea for a book comes to me in the shape of an abstract pattern" (Bowen, 1942, in Ellmann, 2001, 67), all else is secondary and depends on the aesthetics of the pattern.

unhealed orphanhood. All this falls far away from the day light and luminosity of Paris, and remains enclosed in Mrs Fisher dark and sombre house. Nikolchina writes in her *Matricide in Language*, that

the luminosity itself is related in Kristeva (1980), among other things, to the pagan-matriarchal Orientalism and the revealing Orthodox conception of the Virgin as privileged space: ergasterion. (Nikolchina, 2004, 58)

The House in Paris is a surrogating of the other's story, the story about the mother and the daughter, the mother and the child, the *I* and the other – oneself and the stranger. After all, to Bowen herself, fiction was a means of surrogating her mother's unfinished story due to her mother precocious death of cancer. What also seems of crucial importance is Bellini's overt discretion resulting in a lack of biographical information and writing, in contrast to "the profusion of information and biographical notes left behind by his younger contemporary, Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)" (Kristeva, 1980, 244) who supposedly experienced "maternal seduction", along with "double motherhood", as well as "the impressive authority of an office holding father" (Kristeva, 1980, 244). His, according to Kristeva, is the typical narrative of a homosexual structure. The story is representative of a painter who finally triumphs over the phallic mother and turns towards excessive fetishism of the masculine body along with a total denial of the feminine body. To prove her point, Kristeva gives us an analysis of da Vinci's *Madonna with the Carnation* and *Virgin and Child with St. Anne*, highlighting the furtively masculine features of the Madonnas' physique, as well as the total absorption into the masculine body of her baby Jesus. Leonardo's fetishism is supported by the phallic scientific discourse and a humanist realism, so that certain fundamental traits of Renaissance emerge, "supported by the story of Leonardo's life that was brought out by Freud" (Kristeva, 1980, 245). In contrast to Leonardo da Vinci's work Kristeva places that of Giovanni Bellini's. It is the imaginary mother the painter who is presented as the site of jouissance and mediated by the language of the present, ever-loving father. Similarly in *The House in Paris*, Leopold is to be introduced into the dominant discourse thanks to Ray's access to it,

You will notice, we talk where I can talk. You will not quote Mme Fisher, you will not kick me in taxis, you will not shout in houses where they are ill. You will wear a civilian cap, not

snub little girls and not get under my feet. There will be many things that you will not like. There are many things that I do not like about you. (*HP*, 238)

According to Kristeva, Bellini positions himself in the place of the mother and while depriving her of the right to any real existence, he gives her a certain symbolic status, so that the experience of motherhood becomes an inner experience “rather than a referential object” (Kristeva, 1980, 249). The category of mother is thus shifted onto the category of the child. Bearing this in mind, Kristeva writes that “The point is to reach the threshold of repression by means of the identification with motherhood (...), to reach this threshold where maternal jouissance, alone impassable, is arrayed” (Kristeva, 1980, 249). The subject depends on the mother in the process of identification, even though the mother is symbolised via the language of the father. The converse, in my opinion, holds true, so that motherhood can be rendered “passable”/“translatable”, thanks to the child’s investments into the maternal. Even though it is thanks to the eclipsing (operations of the father’s discourse) that the colour of the figures produces volume, it still awards some primacy to the maternal figure. Later in the text, Kristeva gives an account of changing imagery of Madonna’s hands. Bellini’s Madonnas from between 1450 to 1460 are portrayed as distant and impassive. Yet when the motif of Madonna enters back into Bellini’s work in early 1455, the focus shifts towards the maternal hands whose caress is already “more threatening than comforting” (Kristeva, 1980, 254). From 1460 onwards the hands shift towards “the child’s buttocks” and then “prod the stomach and penis of the frightened baby”. And yet, Madonna’s “characterless gaze fleeting under her downcast eyelids, her nonetheless definite pleasure, unshakable in its intimacy, and her cheeks radiating peace, all constitute a strange modesty” (Kristeva, 1980, 254). Here we can see the beginning of what would become the imagery of stone Madonna –distant, servile and yet taking pleasure in her maternal role. With *Madonna with Two Trees* (1487), the possessive mother changes into the hostile mother, distance-pleasure changes into distance-anguish and yet “the myth of the maternal figure is nothing but a screen, a foreground, or an obstruction to be broken through” (Kristeva, 1980, 260) as in *Madonna and Child* (1487). It is “a mother who is projected from the painting, but does not dominate” (Kristeva, 1980, 262). It is a mother as module functioning according to the language of the father “capable of capturing her specific imaginary jouissance, the jouissance on the border of primal

repression, beyond, although always coexistent with, the imagery of full, mimetic, and true signs” (Kristeva, 1980, 263).

6. Corporeality - The Body of the Buried Madonna.

I have written in one of my published papers entitled “Mark Johnson and the Body Metaphor” that “the somatic manifestations can be viewed as body metaphors, which are very often impossible to be expressed verbally” (Sanches, 2006, 285). The idea of a buried mother brings us back to the notion of multiplicity of womanhood, which translates itself into Auerbach’s multipersonal subjectivity, as in mother/child dyad, and certain androgyny (in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* it will be extended to the concept of hermaphroditism), The body of the buried mother belongs to the phallic discourse, that is, the phallic discourse is constructed upon the fear of its generative and castrating power that can only be done away by strengthening the mother/child dyad. As much as a mother becomes pregnant and carries her child inside her body, in psychoanalysis drawing on the concept of the buried mother, she also becomes pregnant with her own mother as the experience of motherhood brings her back to the body of her own mother. After the period of pregnancy, what remains as an unhealed wound is the body of the buried mother. And yet the body of the buried mother can be found not only in women but in men too. It may be so since a necessary stage in identity’s development, as according to Deleuze, includes the stage of becoming-woman for both the feminine and the masculine. The buried mother exercises power within the realm of languages, the verbal one and the non-verbal/bodily one. “There was nothing he [Leopold] could say: he stood there unmeaningly” (*HP*, 35). The unmeaning language of the body is yet another discourse tarrying with the negative body of the buried mother.

As may be concluded, “bodily movement is responsible for the distribution of knowledge we possess.” (Sanches, 2006, 288) Similarly, in *The House in Paris* characters lie and sit during their conversations and this spatial frame perpetuates the binary systematic and structural distribution of knowledge in either vertical or horizontal manner. Dead, living, moving or carried forward in a taxi characters in *The House in Paris* gain new space for knowing oneself and the other, so that we read in the novel: “But sense of space is emotional, *this* taxi, bursting, seemed to groan on its springs. What was inconvenient could, now, only be said” (*HP*, 234).

Among many somatic representations of traumas and unsuccessful relationships with mothers are so-called ‘obsessive neurotic disturbances’ mostly visible in language complications, as well as violent behaviour. Bowen in her description of Naomi Fisher from *The House in Paris* writes,

Miss Fisher’s mother was French (...): this accounted perhaps, for Miss Fisher’s peculiar idiom, which made Henrietta giddy. Often when she spoke she seemed to be translating, and translating rustily. No phrase she used was what anyone could quite mean; they were doubtful, as though she hoped they would do. Her state of mind seemed to be foreign also, not able to be explained however much English you had (...). (*HP*, 19)

Language difficulties characterize the unsatisfactory social relationships Max fosters in Paris, being a ‘social orphan’ and having no family and no connections. His strangeness is perpetrated by his ambiguous relationship to his surrogate mother, Mme Fisher. The motif of incomprehensible language is situated in the context of Leopold trying to understand the content of *The Strand Magazine*. His inability to comprehend the hidden discursive messages owes itself to the fact of Leopold not having been introduced to the intricacies of English society of the twentieth century. It is Karen, who being English, should have equipped Leopold with necessary tools for discursive and cultural proficiency, but on giving Leopold for adoption, she fails to do so. The narratives of Max and Leopold share, therefore, a common assumption of motherhood being directly connected with language proficiency, which comes to contradict the dominant theory of language being the preserve of the phallic discourse, the domain of the father. The language of the father belongs to the obsolete world that Mme Fisher occupies, so that on finding that Leopold does not speak French, she exclaims, “They have clipped your wings for you nicely, then” (*HP*, 203). And the idea of language as the maternal domain does not only centre on the Semiotic language of harmony and plenty originally associated with the mother, it defends all linguistic capacity being of the mother’s responsibility. After all it is *The Strand Magazine* that Henrietta uses as her guidebook or dictionary into the world of adults and which she eventually forgets enriched, now, with a new kind of knowledge, so that the old “Henrietta is gone, importantly silent, for ever” (*HP*, 237).

To shed more light on the question of language let us focus on Bowen’s war novel and one of her most famous pieces of writing - *The Heat of the Day*. The novel

The Heat of the Day dates back to 1949 but it had been written and re-written over five consecutive years starting in 1936. One of its secondary characters is manipulative Mrs. Kelway, mother to the traitor Robert Kelway. Mrs Kelway spreads her iron rule within the domain of the middle-class housewife. Her negative influence on her children is so devastating that they themselves undergo a series of internal conflicts. Mrs Kelway “venting her frustration on the system by which her subjective authority is categorically curbed, she nurtures a contempt for language and reigns through silence, repression and concealment” (Hoogland, 1994, 145). Mrs Kelway and her children are told to “communicate with great difficulty” (Bowen, 1998b, 258).

The fiction of dominance is preserved by Mr Kelway’s widow and his daughters. Mrs Kelway is the buried mother that Robert carries inside him and whose silent violence translates itself into the treason of his home country. Obsessive neuroticism rarely leads the subject to analysis of their infantile relationship with the mother so that the tensions are vented in other ways.

However they (subjects) do not escape willingly from talking about their experiences with other women (...) – least to say - a veritable ‘buried mother’ resides at the core of their psyche. (Kristeva, 1995, 53)

‘A buried mother’ provokes in child violence, and later in adult life violent libido, which escapes all symbolization, and which is either tactile or visual and speechless. A buried mother stands for the fear of the generative power of femininity that men carry with them which “acts like acid on a plate” (*HP*, 138). An obsessive neurotic possesses two languages of which the first one:

is secretive and nonverbal ‘speech’, a tomb or a screen of the satisfaction that he had received following a precocious demand that he directed toward his mother, who was all the more accommodating because her feminine desires have been left unsatisfied. The other language appears to be a neutralized language and thought that are dead, freed from the chains of this voracious demand, thought consequently divested, superfluous, reversible, unconvincing, and uncreative. (Kristeva, 1995, 53)

That is to say a child grows up embedded in the mother’s emotional output and eventually the lack of maternal response for infantile needs engraves itself on the nonverbal language the child possesses. The ‘buried mother’ which has never been there

results in emotional weakness, scarring, self infliction of wounds, as if the child on entering the language order/the symbolic tried to abject the mothers body and in the face of its absence it abjects its own body instead. Hence the scarring Henrietta notices on Leopold's body. "We notice, among other things, that separating oneself from the mother, rejecting her, and abjecting her, to define oneself according to her, and to rebuild her, constitutes an essential movement" (Kristeva, 1995, 118). The extreme example of an absence of language surfaces in the character of Jeremy from Bowen's *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*. Soon after Eva 'acquires' Jeremy we learn that he is deaf and dumb.

The buried mother is often a woman who is simply depressive, sometimes depressed, but who masks her malady in an exaggerated activity level (...) she has broken off two bonds: the erotic bond with the father and the bond with language. (Kristeva, 1995, 53)

Eva, herself, an orphan, suffers from bouts of depression, yet she remains abnormally active in the novel. She moves from hotel to hotel, as if fleeing away from the recognition of her own emotional displacement. She moves from country to country. Her language problems are common; she has difficulty entering into verbal relationships with people, and often seems rude as in her buying a house or not being able to decipher other people's language. On the whole, she has never had a relationship with Jeremy's father and her new marriage seems to be entirely platonic – hence Jeremy's variation in his mother/child relationship and probably the gesture of his final abjection in shooting Eva. There seems to exist a violent breach between what is called meaning and signification. We may say that Bowenese characters suffer from a lack of recognition of what is meaning and then what it signifies/implies in the society. As we find out in Kristeva, the maternal function makes possible the child's entrance into signification, or a passage from meaning into signification. We may say that "Mothers give us meaning (...) so that the signifier of everyday communication can cease to be a lifeless and foreign membrane for the child" (Kristeva, 1995, 109).

In the letter written to Naomi Fisher, Mrs Arbuthnot calls her Kingfisher. It may be an allusion to the myth of Fisher King who wounded in the legs or groin lost his fertile abilities and endangered his kingdom. The fact of Naomi being castrated leads us to the role of castrating mother – the phallic mother. This motif of a slightly different female castration leads one to believe that the castrated daughter, the victim of her own

mother, needs to make up for her wound, not only having a male child but also entering into the role of mother/guardian to a man. “The Virgin especially agrees with the repudiation of the other woman (which doubtless amounts basically to a repudiation of the woman’s mother (...))” (Kristeva, 1980, 258)

Elizabeth Bowen has been criticised for giving too much attention to the superficial detail. At first glance her novels invest too much time into describing failed relationships, petty intrigue and romance. However, as much as there is a need for a rejection of shallow writing on love there is a need for acknowledgment that love and relationships play an utmost important role in the development of the mind. Relationships, especially those of a sexual nature, can open up a well of anxiety issues or castration fears as postulated by Freud. All those sources of feminine depression can lead to consequent frigidity since they are directly linked with female sexual organs, metaphorically responsible for receiving and storing of the negative emotions. We may refer to Helen Deutsch⁷⁸ who became intrigued by this particularity of female physiology, while studying depression⁷⁹ as an undercurrent of many neuroses. Deutsch devoted much of her investigation to the study of female anatomy and physiology, while studying female suffering and melancholy as sources of pleasure or its lack. She concluded her study associating female depression with frigidity stemming from the fact of female reproductive/sexual organs being the receivers of death anxiety (vagina) and castration fears (clitoris).

Whatever the viability of this theory, it seems reasonable to state that female sexuality is more engaged with her life experience, and that her reproductive organs bear a direct connection with the other, mainly through the experience of maternity.

⁷⁸ Further development of crossroads of eighteenth-century studies and disability studies, with particular emphases on questions of authorship, originality, and embodiment across a variety of genres can be found in Helen Deutsch co-ed with Felicity Nussbaum, “*Defects*”: *Engendering the Modern Body* (2000).

⁷⁹ Melancholy and depression were studied by Kristeva in her *Black Sun* (1989) with an emphasis on the imagery of light and darkness, taken up in this chapter as part of Bowen’s projection of femininity and masculinity. In *Black Sun* Kristeva analyses melancholia in the context of art, literature, philosophy, history of religion, culture and psychoanalysis. She explains that the love of a lost identity of attachment is the main problem of melancholia as expressed in the failure to acquire the language of the father. *Black Sun* takes as its main focus Hans Holbein’s controversial painting *The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb* (1552). (see Mme Fisher’s comparison of identification and triumph of the language of the father to a tree breaking from inside a tomb)

What has also been postulated by Julia Kristeva is that in her anatomy and via maternity a woman is directly attached to the ghost of her own mother, as if her sexual organs were storage for the negative or positive memories of her. Kristeva postulates that frigidity results from storing up a 'bad mother'.

I would say that regardless of the anatomical bases for this process (frigidity and death anxiety), a woman uses fantasy to enclose an inaccessible object inside her body. In a phantasmatic sense, this interior ends up being the vagina or, as Lou Salomé would say, the 'vagina is rented to the anus'. The object in question is the 'bad mother' whom the woman imprisons to prevent losing her, to dominate her, to put her to death, or even kill herself inside this melancholic embrace between two women. This phantasmatic of the frigid woman with a bad mother espouses the dynamics of depression, in which the depression subject incorporates the man or woman she hates in order to keep from losing him (or her). And by killing him (or her), she kills herself. (Kristeva, 1995, 198)

In other words there exists transference from the need of rejection towards compulsory attraction and forward interiorized abjection. If we look closely at Bowenese female characters we may notice a pattern of a compulsory heterosexuality, an unaccountable attraction towards the destructive relationship, as a result of deep wound from the unsatisfactory relationship mother/child – unsatisfactory in its duration. However, what Bowen seems to be ingenuous at is the way she makes use of the society that, in her opinion, plays a crucial role in this process. The imaginary 'bad mother' is not, or rather, was not a bad mother at all. It is the society that requires of her to present herself as unstable emotionally and unfitting for the redemption and continuation of the dominant order. It is the centre that requires the existence of the periphery to continue to be periphery so that the centre may continue to exist. There is a hint; however, at the fact that such a 'bad mother' may have had a 'bad mother' herself and that there is a history of conflict within the mother/child relationship. We see that Karen, Leopold's mother from *The House in Paris* lives a frustrating relationship with her own mother. We see Portia in *The Death of the Heart* accused of having an emotionally weak and unstable mother, but we also see Anna, who is the source of this insensitive judgement, to have been orphaned very early. We read about Lois in *The Last September* as the daughter of the depressive mother.

As a result we see that the imprisonment of the 'bad mother' leads to various problems when dealing with relationships, especially love relationships. Yet it is of

utmost importance to add that the ‘bad mother’ problem draws women towards other woman which introduces a trope of a feminine trinity. Feminine trinity, as in the da Vinci paintings, in *The House in Paris*, *Eva Trout*, or *Changing Scenes*, *Friends and Relations*, *Last September*, *The Death of the Heart*, *To the North*. The life of the heroine and her lover or child always involves a third party, and that third party is understood to be a violent and manipulative woman, chaperone etc. Why do we always encounter triangles in Bowen’s fiction?

Still, ‘bad mother’ bears its mark on the sexual relationship a woman has and makes possible the two forms of Kristevan jouissance.

On the one hand, phallic jouissance – competition or identification with her partner’s symbolic partner – mobilizes the clitoris. On the other hand, there is another jouissance that the fantasy imagines and puts into action by focusing on the core of psychic and corporeal space. This other jouissance requires that someone literally ‘dissolve’ the melancholic object that blocks psychic and corporeal interiority. Who might be able to do this? A partner who is believed to be capable of being a more-than-mother, who could dissolve the mother imprisoned inside me, by giving me what she was or was not able to give me. (Kristeva, 1995, 198)

Such partner is believed to give a new life by deleting the bad mother without being a phallic mother but by inflicting a phallic violence on a woman – sexual act. Hence, such union can easily reiterate the position of female subjection to the other. It is as if the relationship a woman lives with her bad mother and the relationship a woman lives with her sexual partner were a reproduction, an illusion of the image of the Virgin/Mother - hence the subsequent imagery of the woman as the Madonna and/or the Madonna and the Child (and the quasi sacred value given to the *jouissance* produced in the male/female union). Much of this has its roots in adolescence and its open structure character.

There is then an attempt at explaining the character of relationships women have with men in Elizabeth Bowen’s fiction. Why do women remain or pursue so called ‘toxic’ relationships with men? A closer look at the relationships in *The Last September*, *The Death of the Heart*, *Eva Trout*, or *Changing Scenes*, *Friends and Relationships*, *The House in Paris*, *To the North* sheds more light on this problem. In *To the North* Cecilia is described not to have a passionate bond with Henry Summers at first nor is she told to like Markie, yet she is drawn to them and ends up in a relationship. In *The Last*

September Lois is disinterested in boys yet she is obliged to invest herself into the relationship with Gerald. Other relationships are similar. In the end in *The House in Paris* Karen loses herself in the relationship with Max and then is reinserted into the symbolic in the relationship with Ray.

The body of the buried mother becomes a metaphor through which women may re-connect with their dislocated semiotic identity. If phallic mothers who abide by the phallic order are discarded there is an urgent need for discovering the buried mother anew. Aunt Violet, who has long lived in neutral Ireland, may be considered a prototype of Karen's new mother, whom she is able to cry over. In fact, now dead and buried, Aunt Violet remains Karen's textual reference whose reminiscence she finds in the violet pinned into the lapel of her dress on the day when she imagines to meet Leopold.

In the body of the buried mother, Bowen re-discovers female murky past and the spaces of alterity women inhabit, so that she digs for the meaning of maternity deep into the characters of *The House in Paris*. She then makes her own these places in the last novel *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*. As we will see in the next chapter *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* becomes a manifesto for the new woman – the new mother.

7. Mapping out the New Paths.

To better clarify the concepts of motherhood and childhood according to Bowen we must turn towards Julia Kristeva again. In her work, Kristeva speaks about adolescence as an open structure⁸⁰ whose polymorphism is a metaphor for the subject's existence as the subject-in-process. This means to Kristeva that adolescence stands for trying on different roles when an adolescent is able to transgress many boundaries without incurring punishment. Adolescence, being an open structure, finds its parallel in writing, which is an open structured form of expression as well, and may be said to be closely related to adolescence through the same phase it starts – the budding of the symbolic order. Adolescence to Kristeva is an ideal model for writing because through the practice of writing one is able to explore the possibilities of identity without encountering judgment, so that she writes “adolescent drive is structured not only as a language but as an ideality” (Kristeva, 2007, 719). Even if art of the word stands for conscious sublimation on the part of the author, and for what otherwise would be considered transgressive, art of the word easily escapes judgement. Similarly, a young person is⁸¹ able to transgress discourse boundaries without any apparent punishment and to experiment different identities. Adolescence is a period when approaching the atops of subjectivity as work in progress is socially acceptable. Writing too, especially if we bear in mind Cixous' manifesto for *l'écriture féminine*, draws on multiplicity, amorphousness and dissolution. However disrupting and problematic, plasticity is not alien to Gilles Deleuze in whose theoretical oeuvre it finds its parallel in the idea of

⁸⁰ For further elucidation of the concept of adolescence as an open structure, see Julia Kristeva's *The New Maladies of the Soul* (1995).

⁸¹ It is of great interest here to mention that Bowen's last novel *Eva Trout* not only refers itself to Eva's troubled adolescent period (a period which Henrietta in *The House in Paris* is about to enter) but it too makes a direct reference to it in Henry's vision of a trapped bird during his father's sermon in the church, where “A thrush had got into the church. It was adolescent;” (*ET*, 295). Henry, Eva, as well as Leopold and Henrietta are such trapped birds for whom “they have clipped your wings for you nicely, then” (*HP*, 203).

becoming over being – changing instead of sedimenting. As such Gilles Deleuze bases his analysis of subjectivity formation on the notion of the plasticity of becoming – plasticity that is not solely progressive but regressive too.

While becoming-animal is a major theme of identity construction to Deleuze, becoming-woman is clearly a privileged mode of constructing a fulfilling identity as well. According to Deleuze, all subjects pass through the stage of becoming-woman – to him a universal notion- on their journey towards becoming a *Body - without - Organs*, the ideal and ultimate stage in a human development – a multifaceted network of production and desire. Further on, Deleuze is interested in other forms of becoming: in becoming-child or becoming-little girl one gains the capacity just like that of Leopold's to “commandeer, to make her [Karen], every desire, not only his own. He was a person whose passion makes its object exist.” (*HP*, 62)

Requiring a third term⁸² and therefore not being a literal process, becoming-woman is similar to becoming-animal. Becoming-animal involves a third term, which would not be “based on *mimesis* of or resemblance to the animal or, conversely, on the animal's ability to symbolically represent and act as a vehicle for the subject's fantasies and psychical investments” (Grosz, 1994, 173). We have already mentioned that most of Bowen's love investments require a third party, and we should highlight again, after Maud Ellmann in her *The Shadow Across the Page* - Bowen is clearly not interested in what her characters do in the privacy of their sex life, rather she is focused on numbers, that is, how many people the love affair involves and affects. Hers is the search for the third party, meaning that every dialogical relationship is only propelled forward if it includes the third party. All life affairs to Bowen are triangles rather than binary dyads; all identities assents on the triangle of three signifiers rather than simple *I/other* division.

Going back to the question of becoming-animal, in his writings Deleuze provides a detailed description of how to become-animal:

⁸² Emmanuel Levinas, whom this thesis uses to argue for the mutual responsibility between the self and the other, develops his own theory of the third term. The third term, according to Levinas, is the force that separates the self from the other selves. The third term, being nothing but the self's double, makes possible the differentiation of the other from the self. Levinas writes “I do not exist solely with my neighbouring other, but with a multiplicity of others” (Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre Nous/On thinking-of-the-other*. (2006), trans. Michael Bradley Smith and Barbara Harshav, London: Athlone Press. 1998, p. 202)

An example: Do not imitate a dog, but make sure your organism enters into composition with something else in such a way, that the particles emitted from the aggregate thus composed will be canine as a function of the relations of movement and rest, or of molecular proximity, into which they enter. Clearly this something else can be quite varied, and be more or less directly related to the animal in question: it can be the animal's natural food (dirt and worm), or its exterior relations with other animals (you can become-dog with cats, or become-monkey with a horse), or an apparatus or prosthesis to which a person subjects the animal (muzzle or reindeer, etc.), or something that does not have a localizable relation to the animal in question (...) we have seen how Slepian bases his attempts to become dog on the idea of tying shoes to his hands using his mouth muzzle. (Grosz, 1994, 174)

Since becoming-woman functions in a similar way to becoming-animal it functions, as we have concluded, thanks to incorporating the third term which encloses in itself the *haecceity* of the object and subject. This *haecceity* translates itself into an arrangement or ensemble of bodies produced by the movement of desire on the plane of immanence and it is described by Deleuze in *A Thousand Plateauxs* co-written with Felix Guatarri

There is a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing or substance. We reserve the name haecceity for it. A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject. They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected. A degree of heat can combine with an intensity of white, as in certain white skies of a hot summer. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b, 261)

So while using the above description we may try to understand a subject's imaginable itinerary in becoming-woman. Following the advice Deleuze leaves us in the form of a recipe for becoming, it is necessary to understand the nature of the middle term of becoming-woman – the third term. The third term, this very 'figure of resistance' Deleuze proposes, is the idea of little girl. For Deleuze and Guattari, the girl is a privileged figure, linked with openness, possibility and 'becoming'. They write that the girl is "defined by a relation of movement and rest, (...) haecceity. She never ceases to roam upon a body without organs. She is an abstract line, or a line of flight"

(Deleuze, Guattari, 2004b, 276). Elizabeth Grosz, who has found Deleuze inspiring for her *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*, explains to what extent the little girl is a metaphor,

Not the little girl as vehicle for (pederastic) fantasy or the little girl as pure innocence, or indeed the girl as a romantic or representative figure, but rather the girl as the site of a culture's most intensified disinvestments and recasting of the body. (Grosz, 1994, 175)

The little girl can appear at any stage of life, producing activity that Deleuze associates with becoming. She represents the molecular energy that refers to the dispersed libidinal energies and opposes molar energies - those which strive to aggregate into totalities, standing for the 'majoritarian' consciousness. Of crucial importance to Deleuze is Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1998).

The question is fundamentally that of the body – the body they steal from us in order to fabricate opposable organisms. The body is stolen first from the girl: Stop behaving like that, you're not a little girl anymore; you're not a tomboy, etc. The girl's becoming is stolen first, in order to impose a history, or prehistory upon her. The boy's turn comes next, but it is by using the girl as an example, by pointing to the girl as the object of his desire, that an opposed organism, a dominant history is fabricated for him too. The girl is the first victim, but she must also serve as an example and a trap. That is why, conversely, the reconstruction of the body as a Body without organs, the anorganism of the body, is inseparable from becoming-woman, or the production of a molecular woman. (Deleuze, 1990, in Grosz, 1994, 175)

In so far as Deleuze tries to do away with the notion of the binary opposition and the centre, he does shift the category of the little girl as the focus of his discourse on becoming. He shifts the centre of the dominant discourse from the masculine to the feminine, trying to disperse it into subsequent and more secondary categories that of a child and an adult. The little girl in the limelight becomes the reference point to the process of identity formation, being a continuous reference from which subjects part and to which subjects return in a necessary process of becoming a *Body- without - Organs*.

Elizabeth Bowen's fiction is an example of how ideological practices start to mould femininity into its dominant frame where girls are inserted into dominant

discourse very early. In the narratives of Henrietta, of Karen and of Naomi we see the discourses of femininity being developed and bent into their standardized form – the discourse of femininity as subjugated to masculinity. As postulated earlier in this text, narratives of motherhood take shape in infancy, so that for Bowen in order to become-woman it is necessary to analyze one's becoming-little girl. Becoming-woman happens in becoming a little girl. And by saying that, I not only advocate the idea of early development of certain modes of behaviour in infancy later perpetuated into adulthood. By saying that motherhood begins in infancy, I want to highlight the appearance of surface and deep structures operating within the dialectic of the *I* and other, which later serve as a reference point to which the self goes back in becoming a *Body - without - Organs*. In this sense what Bowen does is disrupt the hegemonic relationship of adulthood and infancy, making the world of children the signifier and the world of adults the signified. Becoming-woman means embracing one's other – the little girl captured within the three modes of expectation towards the other – the present with the other, the future and the past. It seems to me that in her fiction Bowen finds herself searching for the little girl in her characters, while trying to make more understandable their passage into adulthood and their subsequent existence within the dominant discourse. Again, Bowen works through the above-mentioned triangles: Freud's Oedipal triangles⁸³, be it in love life, be it in parenting or identitarian quest. Truly, even a momentary feeling of affection towards a man may be mistaken for the love received from the mother, as demonstrated in the plot of *The Last September*⁸⁴, which brings back the motif of a little girl that readily dwells within each of us. In *The House in Paris*, Henrietta/Alice, sitting on stairs just like Karen's son, shows Leopold what is there 'on the other side of the mirror', so that he too is able to ask the same questions of who he is. The motif of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is of as great importance to Bowen as to Deleuze since she writes

⁸³ Oedipal triangles are mother/child relationships inevitably disrupted by the third party of the father.

⁸⁴ Lois Farquar in *The Last September* experiences "a quiet beyond experience, as though for many nights he had been sleeping beside her" (Bowen, 1929/1989c, 89) when kissed by fiancé Gerald Lesworth. This, however, does not stand for her passion towards the man but her yearning for the long-deceased mother with whom, as a child, she spent many similar nights banished in foreign hotel rooms. This, again, signals Bowen's interest in 'the little girl' whose primal want is to go 'back-to-the-wombishness', as worked further in this and the following chapters. Similarly, in *The House in Paris*, Karen claims that "To be with Ray will be like being with mother;" (*HP*, 153)

But now she [Henrietta] woke, her manner at once took on a touch of clear-sighted, over-riding good sense, like Alice's throughout Wonderland. She might marvel, but nothing, thought Leopold, would ever really happen to her. (*HP*, 26)

In *The House in Paris*, Henrietta is presented as having Alice-like qualities, as the one who can tamper with other people's lives – just the way she plays with her monkey Charles – and leave untouched, “with her *face* up to be kissed” (*HP*, 231)⁸⁵. This leaves the critic wondering about the importance of Henrietta, in the sense of to what extent she is a theoretical tool, a narrative spectre for Bowen to disrupt the identitarian binaries and dyads – to what extent is Henrietta Bowen's manifesto for ‘the little girl’ inside – someone who will be capable to ask questions “Who am I? Who is Henrietta? as in: “Today was to do much to disintegrate Henrietta's character, which, built up by herself, for herself, out of admonitions and axioms (under the growing stress of: If I am Henrietta, then what is Henrietta?)” (*HP*, 25) What is more, Henrietta may be Bowen's budding idea of a hermaphrodite self – both a girl and a boy in one self – further explored in her last novel *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* and analysed here in the thesis.

Deleuze writes about (de)corporalized becoming-a-girl as becoming a universal movement.

The girl is certainly not defined by virginity [but] (...) haecceity. (. ...) Thus girls do not belong to an age, group, sex, order or kingdom: they slip in everywhere, between orders, acts, ages, sexes: they produce n molecular sexes on the line of flight in relation to the dualism machines they cross right through. The only way to get outside the dualisms is to be-between, to pass between, the intermezzo. (. ...) The girl is like the block of becoming that remains contemporaneous to each opposable term, man, woman, child, adult. It is not the girl who becomes woman; it is becoming-woman that produces universal girl. (Deleuze, 1990 in Grosz, 1994, 175)

⁸⁵ However, Henrietta undergoes an almost religious transformation during her encounter with Leopold and his incident of crying in the living room of Mme Fisher's house. In a Deleuzian sense a subject is only capable of bodily reaction when prompted towards becoming through another body – Henrietta crying over Leopold's misery, and furthermore in *Eva Trout*, Eva crying after Henry has accepted her marriage proposal.

We have already said that the woman is defined by the concept of becoming the Madonna, by the role of virginal selfhood she needs to embrace as expressed in her servitude to the other. And yet instead of the Madonna, it is the little girl, as yet unspoilt by the dominant discourse and close to the maternal semiotic that women need to take as their signifier. The little girl becomes the other of the woman- the *haecceity* of becoming and the *haecceity* of femininity. Many Bowenesque female characters such as Karen, Henrietta, Portia or Maud rove restlessly among the other characters, hold to no gender identity, ‘knock other people about’ and yet have ‘a high look of candour’. The plot tries to bend them into sedimented ‘molar’ femininity, into “women as defined by her form, endowed with organs and functions and assigned as a subject” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b, 275) as written by Deleuze.

The last pages of *The House in Paris* are devoted to the unspoken dialogue Karen has with Ray, a similar one to that which she had with Leopold in the novel’s *Part II*. In the dialogue Karen accuses Ray of an unexplainable and egoistic desire for Leopold as a son (in his becoming ‘husband-turned-mother’ – Kristeva’s archaic object of the child’s affection), rather than wanting a child of their own. She accuses him of wanting a child, wanting to devour the child’s narrative in order to translate it into his own narrative of being. As such the existence of the abjectable other in Leopold makes him a desirable object for Ray’s becoming – becoming-animal in preying on Leopold’s imagery, becoming-woman in parenting Leopold, becoming-patriarch are both instances of subjugating the other in Leopold and Karen. Echoing Karen’s flight away from motherhood to escape masculine subjugation, Luce Irigaray’s concern for the absence of mother’s discourse in our society leads her to state that it is men’s desire to give birth to themselves, depriving women of the only empowering discourse – the mother as the site of origin. According to Grosz in her *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* Luce Irigaray writes that,

in order to become men, they continue to consume (...) [the mother], draw on her resources and, at the same time, they deny her or disclaim her in their identification with and their belonging to the masculine world. They owed their existence, their body, their life and they forget or misrecognise this debt in order to set themselves up as powerful men, adults busying themselves with public affairs. (Irigaray in Grosz, 1991, 121)

Similarly, Backus, whom we have quoted on cyclical vampirism and devouring of children in Bowen's fiction, writes in her *Gothic Family Romance* that in order to become male subjects, men devour children. Within the discourse between the phallic mother who satisfies all desires and the castrated mother who immolates herself (thus autophagy), Bowen finds her own narrative mother, a being of spurious identity and an eternal orphan – the mother who becomes her own daughter and who struggles against her own child, who is too much aware of the child's lack of autonomy – “The mother knows better than to think of the Other as autonomous” (Baraitser, 91, 2009), and thus hers, as well as his or her future fate in the symbolic order. Such mother, as Karen in *The House in Paris*, chooses to abject the child. The conflicts within the category of woman are artificial discourses of the phallic mother or the castrated mother women do not find compatible with their semiotic femininity. Becoming-woman being a universal practice and a stage in masculine development means that men too cast their development against a wrongly perceived other, a wrongly perceived femininity. In Bowen too, the distorted image of femininity does not permit a construction of viable selfhood. The problem becomes visible in three dialectical situations: first, the unspoken dialogue and at the same time an unsatisfactory relationship to the other (Karen either dialoguing with unborn Leopold or denying a verbally expressed conversation with Ray); second, women's rejection of motherhood; third, women's distorted motherhood and femininity in practice, that is the narratives of phallic and servile mothers. And especially in conferring the maternal status to a woman, the most tangible dialectics between the *I* and other, means installing her within the dominant discourse. In Bowen's fiction, becoming-woman as mother is not presented by the love of children but by a conflict with the children and many a times the *I* and other – the mother and the child are unable to exist in the same narrative. It is Bowen's conscious choice to get rid of the mothers since by doing this she eliminates the necessary link within the mother/child dyad – the adult/little girl opposition – and disables the hegemonic operations of the dominant discourse.

The primacy of the gratifying mother/child dyad is momentary in *The House in Paris* and takes place during Karen's *reverie*. That very night the phallic domain of the father, the symbolic, is spurned, so that we see Max sound asleep while Karen's fantasy is unveiling. The domain of the archaic mother, the semiotic, and the pre-Oedipal (or as Kristeva calls it Oedipus One), are conceptualized. This is visually enhanced through

the use of water imagery (rain), the invigoration of the maternal as in Karen's memories of going back to the safe retreat of home "the cavernous receptivity of Oedipus One" (Nikolchina, 2004, 33), and the primacy given to the mother-child bond as in the creation of Leopold in an object-subject relation to Karen. Nikolchina writes in her *Matricide in Language* that,

If the Freudian child springs from the death of the father's father 'the father is dead, long live the father that I am' and if this child, born into the world with 'compound drives, erogenous zones, and even genital desires', acquires its form within the oedipal triangle, the Kristevan infant emerges in the recovery of the body of the mother's mother. (Nikolchina, 2004, 33)

"It is in this atopia [the triangle of mother-child-archaic mother] (...) that the earliest dramas of the future speaking being take place" (Nikolchina, 2004, 33); it is where "the idea of you, Leopold, began to be present with her [Karen]" (*HP*, 152). Therefore, motherhood is not a simple exchange of the object of desire from that of the father to that of the child – it is rather "amplification" of the mother and of her archaic generative power, where she "attains the infinite body of her death-proof mother. The mother lives, long live the mother that I am" (Nikolchina, 2004, 33). It is not an escape from dependence on archaic mother to subjecthood – "Had this not been escape?" (*HP*, 152) Karen asks herself after she had slept with Max: "She was washed back ashore again. Further out than you dare go, where she had been is the outgoing current not strong enough not to let you back." (*HP*, 152) – The waters (female symbolism) of archaic motherhood entrench one's identity even when there is a child, especially if there is a child.

The process of *Einfühlung*, that is the process of identification in the child/parent dyad are mobilized by the female libido anchored in the Oedipal, and more precisely in Oedipus One. And yet, since the female libido is "an amorous space approachable from any gender position" (Nikolchina, 2004, 32), penetrating "to a typology of loves and not to a typology of bodies" (Nikolchina, 2004, 32) the parent/child dyad is extended to a parent-child-archaic mother triangle, that is parenthood problematizes the relationship of the male subject to the archaic mother too.

But just as Karen's clothes are to get wet – just as she is immersed in her discourse – Max wakes up to move the things away from near the window. "I thought

your things would get wet; I got up to move them” says Max to which Karen responds “Are they wet?” To this Max answers: “No the rain did not come so far. The things on the table are wet, though”. The discourse of the father is awakened to wail its power over the feminine. And since the rain did not come as far to wet all, that is not all have been marked by the discourse of the other, Karen can comfortably go back to sleep – she needs not to wake up. It is only The Salvation Army Band’s martial tune that “will get wet⁸⁶” (*HP*, 156) if the band is out of doors.

On being reclaimed by Ray Forrestier Leopold becomes a subject. He gains a father figure to introduce him into the discourse, so that he can “cross the sea” (*HP*, 64) conquer the feminine. His existence is extended dialogically – the other knows now - since before that no one knew of his having been born- “Because no one knows I am born” (*HP*, 59) Leopold tells Henrietta. Mme Fisher, the archaic mother “the restless water” (*HP*, 202) explains to Leopold that “in one thing you have the advantage of him, Leopold: you know it is necessary to have a father, he did not know it was necessary to have a son” (*HP*, 201).

In *Jacques Lacan: A feminist introduction* Grosz writes that the “child becomes a subject only with reference to the name-of-the-father and the sacrificed, absent body of the mother.” (Grosz, 1990, 71) Grosz adds that the burial of women under the phallogentric reduction to maternity is crippling for both mother and daughter, so that a woman becomes obscured by maternity and an ‘object of desire’. *The House in Paris* certainly endeavours to escape this process, even though some female characters are consciously constructed within the desire economy suffice to say, characters such as Naomi Fisher⁸⁷ are there to be desired into the hegemonic and phallogentric system of power. However, *The House in Paris* makes a claim that the process of women becoming mothers within the dominant discourse is not an advantageous situation for the dominant discourse itself. It may be postulated that Bowen’s fiction can be read as the discourse of mother-as-woman rather than idealised woman-as-mother.

⁸⁶ However, one can also ‘get wet’ or hurt indoors where, in the novel, obvious disasters of unwanted pregnancy and an affair with Max await Karen.

⁸⁷ Max speaks about Naomi Fisher: “She has thought of our coming marriage for weeks; she is more than stone; she desires to be desired.” (*HP*, 163) As a result, what ‘goes on’ in Max’s head is “only images, and desire” (*HP*, 141)

According to Luce Irigaray, to subvert the traditional Lacanian and Freudian psychoanalytical theory, which have entrenched the woman in the maternal for decades, is to give up the mother, despite the painful sacrifice of nurturing, to allow her validity as woman. The daughter in return is able to ‘speak *to*, rather than *at* her mother’ (Grosz, 1990, 183). This new relationship would be able to disrupt the ‘socio-sexual exchange’ demanded of patriarchy, whereby the daughter could replace the mother – the daughters therefore must make their own “sexual, political, and economic exchange” outside the maternal order (Grosz, 1990, 183).

Giving up the mother is a multifaceted process in Bowen, based on the theory of abjection of that which threatens the borders. It is not castrating (see reproductive abilities of a child⁸⁸) but endangers the subject’s stability. Mme Fisher talks about the responsibility Leopold has to assert himself as a subject, “To find oneself like a young tree inside a tomb is to discover the power to crack the tomb and grow up to a height” (*HP*, 203) – tombs, death being the ultimate images of the abject triggering a response in Kristeva.

The child needs to give up the mother to enter the discourse, the narrative must give up the mother to make space for the adolescent narrative and the mother must become a little girl again to give up maternity.

It is certain the molecular politics proceeds via the girl and the child. But it is also certain that girls and children (they must mean boys) draw their strength (...) from the becoming-molecular they cause to pass between sexes and ages, the becoming-child of the adult as well as the child, the becoming-woman of the man as well as the woman. The girl and the child do not become; it is becoming itself that is a child or a girls. The child does not become an adult anymore than the girl becomes a woman; the girl is the becoming-woman

⁸⁸ Kristeva has called this notion the polymorphous perversity of the child capable of acquiring new skills and satisfying many drives. Kristeva writes in “Adolescence, a Syndrome of Ideality” that “Polymorphous perversity is dominated by instinctual drives that are inevitably polymorphous hence dependent on the satisfaction of erotogenic zones, on the primary incestuous relationship (maternal seduction or the *mère-version*) and on the ultra-precocious oedipal challenge (*père-version*). The drives’ agitation is satisfied and perlaborated by *denial-Verneinung* (« I don’t want mother » = « I want mother ») type fantasies. (. . .) In short, polymorphism is at the crossroads of the auto-erotic drive and the quest for an object relation – the object of desire becomes an object of language and thought; the polymorphous perverse child is a subject of epistemophilic curiosity; *the polymorphous perverse child is a seeker of knowledge, a little researcher, we could say.*” (Kristeva, 2007, 715-725)

of each sex, just as the child is the becoming young of every age. (Deleuze, Guattari, 2004b, 305)

Claire Hanson writes in her “Little Girls and Large Women: Representations of the Female Body in Elizabeth Bowen’s Later Fiction” that in her literary oeuvre Bowen floats between the concepts of a little girl and a grown woman. As for Deleuze and Guattari, as well as Kristeva, the little girl is about becoming, polymorphousness and openness. The little girl is molecular⁸⁹ and the grown-up woman is molar, each one is the result of the other. Inside every molar woman sediment in time and desire there is the little girl whose role is not to “make sense” (Bowen, 1963/1991, 33) but to be “a child at heart” (*ET*, 249).

Knowing how to age does not mean remaining young, it means extracting from one’s age the particles, the speeds and slownesses, the flows that constitutes the young of that age. Knowing how to love does not mean remaining a man or a woman; it means extracting from one’s sex the particles, the speeds and slowness, the flows, the n sexes that constitute the girl of that sexuality. It is Age itself that is a becoming-child, just as Sexuality, any sexuality, is a becoming woman, in other worlds, a girl. (Grosz, 1994, 176)

Grosz comments in her *Volatile Bodies* “Not only must men become-woman (...) but so too must women” (Grosz, 1994, 176). This thought seems to be the reworking of Simone de Beauvoir’s idea of transcendence and immanence which she took from Sartre. In her *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir postulates that transcendence is the natural preserve of men; it is what distinguishes human from animal and culture from nature and stands for activity, creativity and production. Opposed to transcendence Simone de Beauvoir situates female immanence which translates itself into passivity, darkness, imprisonment and stagnation, for which she is ardently criticised by Judith Butler in her *Gender Trouble*,

It appears that Beauvoir maintains the mind/body dualism, even as she proposes a synthesis of those terms. The preservation of that very distinction can be read as symptomatic of the very phallogocentrism that Beauvoir underestimates. In the

⁸⁹ Deleuze and Guattari write in *A Thousand Plateaus* that youthhood are connected to the concept of dispersed and libidinal energies, whereas adulthood is understood to be about energies aggregating into totalities.

philosophical tradition that begins with Plato and continues through Descartes, Husserl and Sartre, the ontological distinction between soul (consciousness, mind) and body invariably supports relations of political and psychic subordination and hierarchy. (...) The cultural associations of mind with masculinity and body with femininity are well documented within the field of philosophy and feminism. (Butler, 1990, 17)

The immanence of becoming-woman or becoming little girl runs parallel with the immanence of femininity. The notion of becoming-woman or re-discovering the little girl is a meeting point of transcendence and immanence of femininity; women must be like the sea and like “lava flowing as fast as it can” (*HP*, 65).

Paraphrasing Grosz from her *Volatile Bodies*, physical and textual embodiment are achieved in the long process of becoming the other. According to Bowen, becoming-woman is constituted in a process of embracing the other, embracing the little girl and the process of transmission of motherhood from subject to object, from the mother to the child. It means coming to terms with the imagery of two separate mothers that arise in the child’s unconscious according to Melanie Klein that is the imagery of a nurturing mother and the phallic/archaic mother. This process involves abjection – a necessary matricide on the part of the child, narrative matricide and the abjection of the child by the mother.

For Julia Kristeva the mother/child dyad is best characterized by the process of abjection. The woman and mother are implicated in abjection as the entities against which the child must develop subjectively. But, thanks to the transferential plasticity, the mother too must develop against the child, re-find her own childhood through the love towards (or lack of it) her own mother. In this way, Karen must define herself against Leopold as well as against Henrietta who plays an important role in Leopold’s self-discovery. Dialogism in Bowen is therefore not based on binary oppositions but on the endless connections and disconnection between the self and the other, when the self and the other fluctuate from subject to object positions. Grosz believes that the boundaries of the self are blurred in the mother/child dyad/dynamic – the relationship incurs transferential plasticity of object/subject relation. Grosz admits that the abject being a space of resistance against the mother also signals an attempt to do away with the identity boundaries between the child and the mother.

In Bowen, the mother becomes her own child, the autophagous dialectic between the archaic mother and the sacrificial Madonna where the self merges with the

other in the process of bargaining over identity. The discourses of the child and the adult are blurred. At once, Leopold becomes the messenger of the past, as well as its embodiment (and according to Ricoeur's three-fold conception of present the past happens in the present), a sage. He is all that Karen was and was not – the tamarisks, the eternal mark of hands on the grass, as in “Max put his hand on Karen's, pressing it into the grass” (*HP*, 120)⁹⁰, Naomi who sat on her bed, and Max whose sleeve she dried of rain.

If the world of children could ever be called a world of adults in miniature, the world of adults is a mirror reflection of the world of children, “like doll's house (...) magnified” (*HP*, 26). Henrietta, too, in becoming-woman, becomes the little girl of the narrative, the little girl of all the characters' becoming.

Contemporary Toni Morrison writes in her *Tar Baby* “(...) a girl has got to be a daughter first. She has to learn that. And if she never learns how to be a daughter, she can't learn how to be a woman” (Morrison, 1987, 281). In Bowen, the characters usually do not have a chance to live their childhood fully first and this cripples them as adults. Innocent childhood is a fallacy created by the dominant discourse of which main purpose is to hide dominant discourses in order to perpetuate them⁹¹ as in Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*. The concept of motherhood in Bowen does not strengthen the structures of privilege of the adult over the child but rather dissolves them.

Elaine Hansen writes about the concept of synthetic maternity in her *Mother Without Child* as first used in Queer fiction in Jane Rule's *Desert of the Heart*. First,

⁹⁰ One is prompted to remember Biblical reference to the ephemeral quality of grass. Also, we may see in this part of *The House in Paris*, the way Karen is somehow drawn towards grass and drowned in the grass, first with “her hand with Ray's ring into the grass” (*HP*, 114), then “digging the heel of one shoe into the grass” (*HP*, 115). This may be reminiscent of Karen's Aunt Violet's death and her “dug-up daises on the lawn (...) [where] the death had been then” (*HP*, 127) – meaning Karen, too, is steadily dying on entering into the realm of the paternal law and love life so that she admits “I still am, left to die like Aunt Violet after mother has died like her” (*HP*, 153).

⁹¹ Foucault maintained in *The History of Sexuality* (1977) that the innocent child is a myth of the modern era created to better police individual lives. Modern sexuality is a construct articulated within relations of power. As such individuals can be defined through their sexuality rather than by any other aspect of their lives. As such the idea of innocence in childhood clears away all the problematic disruptions of identity this concept implies. This, again, may parallel Bowen's interest in the infantile stage of the subject's development similar to what Ernest Jones postulated in his psychology of Quislingism, which has been noted earlier in this chapter.

synthetic maternity does not include procreative relations “traditionally assumed to be normal, right, and natural for women” (Hansen, 1997, 48). Second, it does not mean that women can only be defined by their maternal function, as would be understood in a cause-effect/general-particular thinking. Third, synthetic maternity goes against the belief that

Whole woman’s identity or subjectivity (should such thing exist) can be constructed out of her maternal parts, nor are her maternal feelings necessarily unifying, unitary and constructive. Elizabeth Bowen shares a similar understanding of maternity as synthetic, which to Hansen translates itself into “characterized by a combination of simple words or elements into compound or complex words; expressing a complex notion by a single compounded or complex word instead of by a number of distinct words. (Hansen, 1997, 49)

To Bowen, synthetic maternity implies a complex structure of public and private relations – relations between the *I* and the other, the mother and the child, as well as a complex dialogue of sameness and selfhood within the bounding *I*. What the synthetic nature of maternity incurs to Bowen and Hansen, is that “perceived as unifying rubrics (it) may dangerously suppress distinctions and reduce a variety of stories to a single prescribed narrative.” (Hansen, 1997, 49) Rule’s *Desert of the Heart* frames a narrative of a complex lesbian affair that develops between two main characters, Evelyn and Ann, whose love is based on a mother/daughter relationship. The relationship marks Evelyn and Ann’s passage into developing a ‘genuine’ enjoyment of female selfhood,

Oh, at moments Ann sleeping was a child, her child. And sometimes, when she saw the thin, vicious scars on Ann’s wrists, she had to fight down an animal rage which was protective. But these emotions were occasional. Now (...) Evelyn wanted to be charming, provocative, desirable, attributes she had never aspired to before out of pride, perhaps, or fear of failure. Now they seemed almost instinctive. She was finding, in the miracle of her particular fall, that she was by nature a woman. And what a lovely thing it was to be, a woman. (Rule, Hansen, 1997, 160)

At the centre of *Desert of the Heart* lies a metaphor of non-procreative motherhood, symbolized in the making of a cartoon Ann attempts to sketch, “Childbirth without pain, Motherhood without guilt, Mother without child.’ (. . .) ‘I wonder if I could get that: ‘Mother without Child.’ If I got it, I couldn’t sell it.” (Hansen, 1997,

1997) The reader never finds out if the cartoon is finished, but it exemplifies a discourse where “women (...) resist either conscription into reproduction or exile out of womanhood” (Hansen, 1997, 51). If compared to Grosz criticism of Kristevan ‘men mimicking women who reproduce men’, *Desert of the Heart* postulates a different kind of *mimesis*. It is *mimesis* of women not reproducing men and this way reproducing themselves.

If Bowen were to draw a similar cartoon of such motherhood, this would certainly be an image of every woman, since motherhood becomes one even without a child, since there always dwells a child within us and since this should be a universal state. Motherhood as such would represent a state of blissful coexistence and communion with the other, surrogated as both the child and the mother. Deleuze argued that while psychoanalysis privileged the subject whose desire was founded on lack, desire in fact did not lack anything: it is rather the subject which is missing in desire—the illusion of a fixed subject only comes about through the repressive law of Oedipus. Deleuze suggested, accordingly, that we should dismantle the whole cultural edifice of Oedipus, focusing instead on the impersonal but generative and productive force of (positive) desire. In a similar manner we should try and dismantle the concept of motherhood into a more generative and productive force both for the subject and the object.

In *Desert of the Heart* “it is the missing child, not the missing mother that seems to structure female desire; what unites women may be, as Evelyn says, the (often frustrated) wanting of the child, not the having of one” (Hansen, 1997, 52). Not necessarily should the child be ‘found’ according to *Desert of the Heart*, which makes it resonate with Deleuzian ever-existing desire, preceding its object and escaping its fulfillment, since if fulfilled, the desire dwindles. Therefore, when Ray meets Leopold – his object of desire – “He was here, that was all. The world had come to an end” (*HP*, 211).

In Bowen what unites not only women but men too is not only a missing mother or the missing child but rather *the missing relationship to the child* within, to Deleuzian little girl, the third party in *becoming*. It may be for this reason that Bowen has Ray mistake Henrietta for Leopold after he had nervously crossed the hall to meet with Karen’s son –

Expectation of this had been so knit up with walking behind the fat French maid down the hall that when the salon door opened – ‘When the pie was opened, the birds began to sing’ - and Henrietta had started up, staring at him inside her falling fair hair, he thought they had all been mad: Leopold was a girl. (*HP*, 211)

Bowen’s idea is that to find the other within, the missing link to the child, is to find the stranger who makes “objects clash meaningfully upon those broken senses one has abroad” (*HP*, 219). In this sense, if the child “were with us, he’d be simply a child, either in or out of the room.” (*HP*, 217) In her essay “The Roving Eye”, Bowen writes that “Childishness is necessary, fundamental – it involves a perpetual, errant state of desire, wonder, and unexpected reflex” (Bowen, 1999k, 63) – desire which is a “state of open susceptibility” (Bowen, 1999k, 63). “The child dithers somewhere round the margin” (Bowen, 1999k, 67) which gives it an equal status of a stranger. “While he is a dread of yours, he is everywhere” (*HP*, 217).

It may be impossible to construct womanhood defying patriarchal motherhood but it may be viable to have “another kind of mothering” (Hansen, 1997, 52), that of mothering of oneself, oneself as another, oneself as a child “without giving in to wanting Leopold [a child]” (*HP*, 220). This, in Deleuzian terms, is the self-contradictory character of becoming: little Alice in Wonderland does not grow without shrinking. It may be possible to write the “natural mother” (*HP*, 217) if she found the natural child – Bowen writes in “On Not Rising to the Occasion”,

children in my Edwardian childhood, were decidedly played down rather than played up. ‘Just be natural’- they used to say, before the occasion; ‘nobody wants you to show off.’ What a blow to ambition – what a slap in the face! ‘Be natural’; really, what a demand! (Bowen, 1999k, 65)

Elizabeth Bowen does devote much of her writing energy to writing about childhood, usually her own, since she did not have children herself. Her almost autobiographical writing on children may be understood as a way of self-analysis, a closing-off the chapter which was traumatic and left Bowen with literal and metaphorical stammer as a way of retrieving “my mother, my mother, always my mother” (*HP*, 223).

Yes, I think as a child I did better with my back to the wall – in extreme situations, among strangers. Whatever strangers could do to me, they could not bite, and there was the hope I might never meet them again. It was my near ones, my dear ones, the found, the anxious, the proud-of-me, who set up the inhibition. I could not endure their hopes; I could not bear to fail under loving eyes. I detested causing a disappointment. Perhaps I exaggerated the disappointment? Perhaps I did less badly than I imagined? You see, it mattered too much. I shall never know. For how does one rise – fully, ever – to an occasion? (Bowen, 1999k, 69)

PART III

The Counter-Discourses of Femininity:

Eva Trout – a Journey towards New Discourse.

1. Otherness, Strangeness, and Utopia.

To identify something is to be able to make apparent to others, amid the range of particular things of the same type, of which one we intend to speak. It is along this path of identifying reference that we encounter the person for the first time, considering this term in an equally modest sense as globally distinguishing this entity from physical bodies. (Ricoeur, 1994, 27)

Personal identity can only be understood in temporal and dialogical terms. Both personal identity and meaning in general are a text that requires interpretation by two exclusive practices. The first practice refers to the original condition of inscription that is the world of the author. The second inscription refers to the subsequent conditions of reception, namely the world of the addressee. As a consequence, as Richard Kearney writes in his *The Owl of Minerva*, “interpretation can no longer be constructed as the exclusive activity of the reflexive philosopher” (Kearney, 2004, 30). Interpretation and extension of being is no longer the fruit of *Cogito*. Instead interpretation becomes the primordial condition of our being. We exist within language which we need to constantly translate just like Eva Trout exists within her own syntax. Moreover, interpretation distantiates us from subjective consciousness and is a dialogical counterpart of belonging. A character that is mobile and constantly swept away from any stable positioning within discourse faces a need to re-interpret itself and re-invent itself anew. In doing so it is invited to extend its actual horizons of experience to otherness and remains torn between the desirable and the potential within the inherited meaning. In this analysis, the subject is involved in a constant process of de-codification and semantic detour.

Self-recognition can be achieved in dealing with the other. The other is the source of information for the self. Various modern theorists have based their teachings on the relation between the *I* and the other, where the other influences both the I-for-myself and the I-for-other. Mikhail Bakhtin has written about obligatory dialogism and the necessity to know the other so as to know oneself. Julia Kristeva has found the other to threaten the borders of the self and to be necessarily expelled through the process of abjection. Slavoj Zizek wrote about the difficult relationship with the other, constructed on the borders of the fantasy of the real and the symbolic, as well as, the source of

abjectable enjoyment. His analysis of identity was based on the other's fluctuating influence from the real to the symbolic and back to the real. Žižek devoted much of his theories to the subject's relation with the language – an event that brings to life the distinction between the subject of enunciation and the subject of the enunciated – the *I* and the other within same consciousness. Paul Ricoeur spoke about oneself as 'an' other in his studies of identity formation – the self stands for a cluster of sameness and selfhood. Ricoeur's personal identity took into full account the temporal character of being, which by existing with others in the course of history is transformed. One found his/her identity in the process of becoming oneself - a notion similar to that of Deleuzian becoming and at the same time ontologically different from Deleuzian impersonality.

The self has been involved in the uncanny relationship with the other - a relationship of ambiguous character that is antagonistic and pacifistic at the same time. According to Samuel Huntington, "For people seeking identity (...) enemies are essential." (Huntington, 2002, 20) According to Julia Kristeva writing on uncanny "(...) we know that we are foreigners to ourselves, and it is with the help of that sole support that we can attempt to live with others." (Kristeva, 1991, 170)

The processes of semantic detour as well as the relationship between the self and the other are at the core of what one finds in feminist studies on metaphor and feminist utopianism as its offspring. In general semantics of feminist metaphors acknowledges the non-allness of language. This is of importance to feminism since it strives to acknowledge the secondary details of metaphors as they refer to the unheard and invisible female experience. The metaphor, as Ricoeur acknowledges, gives shape to the language and invokes something else, something beyond the language – a surplus. The paradox of the metaphor lies in the tension between *is* and *is not*. The metaphor is evocative, its function is to evoke an absent, or *metaphysical truth* or *us*, which paradoxically *is not*. Feminism, and then more narrowly utopian feminism, suggests alternative truths, realities and values. Through alternative metaphors and myths feminism creates questions, disjointed narrative of counter-discourses.

If one reads *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* directly through the dialogical paradigm of selfhood and otherness the reading of the novel through the paradigm of feminist utopianism is of equal value and in fact adds up to the hermeneutics of the self and the other. Many of Bowen's metaphors in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* are far-

fetched, setting and timing seem unreal, and Eva herself seems grotesque. What Eva strives for is utopian but there is a latent message in her carnivalesque. Eva herself can be perceived as a transgression of the spirit /matter connection as well as body and mind dichotomy. She forms to a certain extent a new position of enunciation in favour of respect towards diversity. Eva carries within herself both the spirit, originally associated with masculinity, as well as matter, as related to her strongly embodied presence. The later can be further seen in Eva/Eve's overflowing carnality/materiality – Eve equals evil and absence of spirit, as well as abundant sexuality. What Eva Trout is and desires can be considered experience and expression of utopian thought. She herself can be considered an engagement of utopian dreaming. However, a distinction should be made between feminist utopian desire and utopianism as it has been considered in the masculine discourse as “a place, state or condition ideally perfect in respect of politics, laws, customs and conditions” (Sargisson, 1996, 2).

If one surveyed the examples of feminist utopianism the most salient idea is that it resists the idea of perfection. Sargisson writes in her *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism* that

The absence, though, of a detailed plan for a perfect society is a characteristic of many of the texts that I have studied. Some writers treat such a plan as synonymous with death (Cixous and Clement, 1986; Slonczewski, 1987). Others satirize the concepts of perfection (Carter, 1969: p.19). Most simply avoid closure of their utopian vision and leave it openended. (Sargisson, 1996, 3)

Somehow feminist utopianism is an expression of fear of perfection-seeking, and as such it creates alternative images of the desirable. Furthermore, as Sargisson argues, a new approach to utopianism and understanding of feminist utopianism needs to be “contextualised within these debates on how meaning is constructed” (Sargisson, 1996, 3).

Debates concerning equality and difference, the construction of meaning through language, and the construction of subjectivity, it is argued, provide a backdrop to this new approach to utopianism. It is suggested that current concerns about essentialism and female subjectivity create a tension which threatens the coherence and existence of feminism itself. (Sargisson, 1996, 3-4)

It is in and through language that we gain a heightened awareness of the interplay between selfhood and otherness. In a language where the narrative technique is disjointed and *convoluted* it functions, according to Sargisson, as means of *remetaphorization*. In remetaphorization, as Drucilla Cornell writes in *Beyond Accomodation: Ethical Feminism, Deconstruction and the Law* the “as if of the imagination is implicated in the very act of ‘seeing’ the real” (Cornell, 1991, 168). Cornell writes further that,

The necessary utopian moment in feminism lies precisely in our opening up to the possible through the metaphoric transformation. (. ...) Here, I am using utopia in a (...) traditional way, but not in the sense of the establishment of a blueprint of an ideal society. Utopian thinking demonstrates the continual exploration and re-exploration of the possible and yet also the unrepresentable. Without utopian thinking, however, feminism is inevitably ensnared in the system of gender identity that devalues the feminine. (Cornell, 1991, 168-169)

Metaphors encompass what Ricoeur found the basis of dialogical narrativity - detour of reflection by analysis, dialectic of selfhood and sameness, and dialectic of selfhood and otherness. Elizabeth Bowen’s attestation of difference lies in her awareness of a three-fold structure of the subject divided between sameness, otherness, and selfhood.

The attestation of time too depends on the three-fold structure of the present of a subject’s life. St Augustine’s suggestion, later corroborated and used by Heidegger, has been that the present should not be understood as a singular notion, but rather a three-fold structure that includes the idea of expectation for the future events, memory of the past events, and attention to the present events. Time is constituted by this three-fold structure embedded in human experience, so that time soon becomes just one aspect of human experience, others being the notions of dialogism, selfhood and otherness. Time is, at times, a discordant experience. When we think of the past with regret or nostalgia we automatically create a present that is unchangeable or cannot be returned to. By the same token, the future may appear to us as fearful or too hopeful, while the present becomes frail, fleeting and unsatisfactory. Such dissatisfaction with the present may steer us towards an embracement of utopia, and against being-in-time, as well as being-in-the-world.

However, there is no hope in bringing back the past or calling forth for the future. As Mark Currie writes in his *About Time*,

Remembering is never real, in the sense of making present again the former present of the past. In the act of remembering we transform the former present, and this is particularly clear in the memory of forgetting, which is identified as forgetting only by becoming what it was not. (...)

When narrated time catches up with the time of the narrative, there is nothing left to remember but memory itself, and nothing left to write about but the act of writing. (Currie, 2007, 64)

Temporality is nothing more than a three-fold present, aimed at giving more value and importance to the now and here, rather than then and there, where all past and future is transformed into the present. Still, we can only make sense of the three-fold present if we relate it to some external, objective point of reference, for example, the cosmological time or the bodily time, that is a human body in a transformatory process of aging, or else the somatic memory. The fact that, in the cosmological sense Eva Trout's body remains the same throughout the narrative – i.e. it remains giant, monstrous, out of proportion – carries the message of the novel out of time, making it universally true and omnipresent. Eva's instantaneous bodily reactions translate memory into direct, first-hand experience, the static three-fold present. Eva's travelling translates the three-fold present into the cosmological extension of time – “the lack of extension of the present is compensated for by the distension of the three-fold present” (Currie, 2007, 71). The body is eternal and finite at the same time, and thus serves as temporal frame for action. Oppression, as Deleuze argues, is not only a violation of our eternal values, but also a restriction of our movements – the bodily movements.

Ricoeur believes that an exploration of narrativity of time, that is the process of fulfilling the three-fold present, can provide a deeper understanding of human experience. For that reason, he goes back to Heidegger and his division of experience into multiple thematic centres, which all inevitably lead the subject towards a better embracement and understanding of the other. The first Heideggerian thematic centre stands for human presence among the world of goals – how much time is needed to meet someone or do something – and is understood as the subject's relation to someone. The second centre – historicity – is that of awareness of oneself as a being with a past and dependable on that past, as well as all relations to the other that have been created

over time. The third centre – temporality is understood as personal finitude. This means that human life experience is a unity with a marked beginning and an end, therefore the subject has responsibility over its life, and the others that are part of it, which again takes us to what Levinas had to say about the *I* and the other.⁹²

This multiple and collective within-time-ness, gives one a sense that ‘living’ is a shared experience to which others are connected. There exists interaction between the subject on the public and the private scenes, and the actions of others can be both a source of success and failure of our being and *vice versa*. There too exists an audience within us at which our narratives are aimed. In short, self is a narrative, as according to Nietzsche, the self is not a unity but something that one becomes and constructs. The self does not know itself directly but only through de-codification of signs and symbols that are projected onto the self and the other. As in Nietzsche, a person worthy of admiration is that whose desires, thoughts and actions are not haphazard but interconnected into a distinct style. Since the stories of one’s life could be read from different perspectives of different others, Nietzsche’s fear was a subject might adopt the dominant, hegemonic and culturally given plot.⁹³ However, any alteration of our perception of time leads to an incorrect re-metaphorisation of selfhood and otherness, as well as, re-invention of reality, and poses a threat to narrativity.

In re-metaphorization and re-invention of reality, utopian transgression of the barriers between fiction and reality is fairly potent. It is connected with the use of legends, myths and fairy tales to legitimate the new reality. In this way it argues for the deconstruction of any given world view as myths and legends do make bigger art of the hegemonic reality. As such it denaturalizes and what is more denies the desirability of

⁹² The question of the other challenges the tradition of transcendental philosophy. According to Levinas, (*Nine Talmudic Readings* 1994; *Totality and Infinity* 1961) the presence of the other evokes responsibility, where the single I is incapable of either self-reflection or intentionality of consciousness. The *I* feels responsible for the other confronted with him or her face-to-face. In its turn the other grounds both subjectivity and objectivity of the *I*. Without the other, the *I* is incapable of assuring the independent reality of the other or the social world.

⁹³ According to Nietzsche (*Twilight of the Idols*, 1888/2006; *Beyond Good and Evil*, 1886/2006), the self is not a constant and stable entity, but rather a plot one constructs and becomes. An admirable self, in Nietzsche’s opinion, consists of a myriad of conflicting tendencies – a person of admiration gives the tendencies their own harmony and style of coherence, refraining from adopting a weak culturally given plot (like i.e. Christianity).

the reality constructed through the operations of myths and legends. The process of re-invention and re-installation of the fantastic or unreal is very often inverted. Similarly, Bowenesque transgression is that it begins as a fairy-tale, if we take Eva to be a fantastic character, and ends as brutally realist and gratuitous with the shooting of Eva on her wedding day. That said, Margaret Whitford argues in *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* that,

A genuinely different future cannot be entirely foreseen, certainly not predicted in any detail; it can only be the product of freeing our genuine creative abilities. However, at the same time, this view itself is subject to uncertainty, in its belief in the possibility of a radically different future. (. ...) Feminist utopian visions, then, are mostly of the dynamic, rather than the programmatic kind; they do not seek to offer blueprints, of the ideal future, still less of the steps towards attaining it. (Whitford, 1991, 20)

Joan Scott writes in an influential article “Deconstructing Equality- versus – Difference” (1992) that,

When equality and difference are paired dichotomously, they structure an impossible choice. If one opts for equality, one is forced to accept the notion that difference is antithetical to it. If one opts for difference, one admits that equality is unattainable. (Scott, 1992, 260 in Sargisson, 1996, 73)

Scott’s rejection of the double dichotomy between equality and difference is echoed in many other thinkers to whom the relationship of equality to difference is intertwined rather than based on exclusion. Contrary to that, in patriarchal understanding of difference its philosophy leads to dissemination of distrust and fear of the other. As Sargisson writes, “the patriarchal conceptualization of difference produces the concept of difference as deviance: difference as inferiority” (Sargisson, 1996, 74).

Elizabeth Grosz is one of the philosophers who manage to reconsider difference to be a positive state that leads the subject towards a more plentiful embracement of identity designated as sameness with oneself. Grosz writes in *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction* that,

For patriarchy, difference is understood in terms of inequality, distinction, or opposition, a sexual difference modeled on negative, binary or oppositional structures within which only

one of the two terms has any autonomy; the other is defined only by the negation of the first. Only sameness or identity can ensure equality.

In the case of feminists of difference, however, difference is not seen as different *from* a pre-given norm, but as *pure difference*, difference in itself, difference with no identity. This kind of difference implies the autonomy of the terms between which the difference may be drawn and thus their radical incommensurability. Difference viewed as distinction implies the pre-evaluation of one of the terms, from which the difference of the other is drawn; pure difference refuses to privilege either term. (Grosz, 1990, 339-340)

As such Grosz sees difference for women as “transformable and thus potentially emancipatory” (Sargisson, 1996, 75). It is no more a deviancy from a norm but rather interplay of sameness and otherness that is organized neither symmetrically nor hierarchically, but is lived in its full multiplicity. There rather, the difference becomes multiple and the woman is no longer defined as “other than non-man” (Braidotti, 1989, in Sargisson, 1996, 76) in Braidotti’s “The Politics of Ontological Difference”. In feminist thought, it is potentially harmful for women to be considered *less than* or within the patriarchal dichotomy of power.

Luce Irigaray is an author of an even more refined theory of femininity and difference, where she makes an attempt at separating women from men not based on mutually exclusive categories but as belonging to two separate discourses. As such she creates her own feminist symbolic, where man remains a subject with the phallus, and a woman is now symbolized as the two lips of her external sexual organs. According to such thinking, social difference should be considered based on the theory of gender as sexed separately with all its social rights and obligations. To illustrate this approach Luce Irigaray uses the metaphor of touching lips to highlight the fact that the difference should not be grounded in dualistic understanding, but as pure and exclusive.

Based on that, it can be argued that any attempt to transgress the binary difference of male/female is to a certain extent an expression of feminist utopia. From Irigaray to Grosz women strive towards a better understanding of their subjectivity, as well as dissemination of equality, and yet they still face discourse that is full of bias, misunderstanding and cruelty.

Patriarchal discourse on difference feeds the fear of the other and installs the idea of essentialism that all women are different from men and possess common qualities as a natural category. Whereas it can be argued that women form a social class, an economic group etc, an essentialist idea of common qualities is considered wrong and

demeaning. The differentiation of other/otherness derives from an a priori assumption of the same, since the other the *I* must become the other minus certain attributes whose paradigm is morphological. In masculine order the female subject is the other minus the possibility of representing oneself as the other normal person. This is the +/- logic, where “what makes a woman is a specific relation to a man” (Witting in Sargisson, 1996, 172).

Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes shows that people are different and not gendered symmetrically within their sexual difference, and that these processes are not direct. Eponymous Eva Trout becomes the other in the novel both in the social context and the sexual context, where otherness is something no one can escape. However, Eva’s otherness is perpetuated by otherness that surrounds her. Otherness is elevated to the main theme of the book – all characters are sources of difference, all are ‘otherness’ or to their inner-law that opposes the idea of morality-for-all. The question is which characters remain faithful to their perpetuating difference, where being different is perceived as being same/similar to oneself.

Positive understanding of difference stands for not being different as such but for constantly becoming different thus forging a pattern, performing one’s identity as in Butler. Like the fish trout, Eva is not considered ‘of her species’ for being similar to the rest of the species, in as much as trouts vary in colour and size. She is considered trout for constant moving from one place to another, from salt to fresh waters, moving upstream and upriver.

In feminist fiction, the concepts of otherness and the other mingle, whereas traditionally the other, as in Adorno, stands for the utopia and otherness stands for God. In Bowen the term ‘otherness’ floats somewhere in between. The tragic nature of feminist utopia is similar to Adorno’s utopia in that it is a kingdom of God without God, and here respectively, a kingdom of women without women – a kingdom where the other is omnipresent and otherness is forbidden and banned. What marks either a utopian or dystopian feminist text is its manifesto of otherness. This means that otherness can be perceived as essentially positive encapsulating all that is positive in multiplicity of the other. What marks a feminist text and here *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* is its manifesto for otherness and the other, that in the end have a place to be – can co-exist in an encumbering reality. *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* as a feminist manifesto encompasses the relationship of the other/otherness in one text, and the

eponymous character is both the other and otherness – both femininity and other than feminine. It is worth remembering that Eva comes from Eden, past Christian utopia and cannot transgress any further, and yet is promised to return to Earth on the judgment day to close the temporal frame of the embedding present.

Having said that, what can be considered a utopian subject is the one that in keeping same with oneself lives plentifully the states of other and otherness within oneself. Utopian thinking or rather utopian imaginary is a process of hermeneutical character. It vacillates within the gap between memory and projection. It is dialectic between innovation and sedimentation, between the effects of history on us expressed as suffering and our active response to this process, where we refuse to synchronize past and present. Our personal utopia centres on the discourses of the past and present, opening symbolically towards the future, and yet remaining faithful to the power of ‘elsewhere’. Phenomenological hermeneutics hinges at two extreme poles of attachment and detachment - attachment and detachment from the other, as well as attachment and detachment from otherness. However, the utopian imaginary is only liberating when its utopian forward look “critically reappropriates its archeological backward look, in such a way that history itself may be creatively transformed” (Kearney, 2004, 87). Utopia focuses on the aspirations opened by symbols – “Utopian symbols (...) tend to be inclusive rather than exclusive modes of representation; they free us from the narrow security of conservatism” (Kearney, 2004, 85).

Hermeneutics is concerned with the permanent spirit of language (...) not as some decorative excess or effusion of subjectivity, but as the creative capacity of language to open up new worlds. Poetic and mythic symbols (for example) do not just express nostalgia for some forgotten world. They constitute a disclosure of unprecedented worlds, an opening onto other possible meanings which transcend the established meanings of our actualworld (...) and (function as) a recreation of language (Ricoeur, 1982 in Kearney, 2004, 85-86)

And according to Ricoeur the philosophy of being is an appropriation of our existence effort and our desire of being despite of the ways that witness this effort and desire. And all in all, this is a utopian manifesto of being against all odds. Ideology and utopia are reconceptualized by Ricoeur as integration/identity and rupture/critique, and this corroborates the idea of selfhood being conceptualized as other/otherness within oneself. This utopian philosophy bears in itself the existentialist pangs expressed by

Camus. According to Camus, solidary identification with the other results from the process of assimilation of the other's otherness, through the other who is becoming increasingly oneself (myself). As such we acknowledge as constitutive of existence the interplay between my and the other's otherness. The utopian tension in these processes may result from the difference between Levinasian reading of Camus's *Les Justes* or "L'Hôte", where the self perceives the extent of the other's otherness and wishes to protect him in his vulnerability and strictly authorial and solely Camusian reading of *L'Etranger* as the Arab's strangeness is seen as intolerable for unjustifiable at the same time.⁹⁴

Utopian feminist thought approximates itself to the early idea of the Absurd in Camus. And this can only be mediated through what Camus believed a safety door to our situation where the absurd universe erases all meaning through death- after all meaning can be created, however provisionally, through our decisions and interpretations.

The absurd, the strange, and the other are as much present in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* as in Camus' *L'Etranger*. Both Eva and Meursault show a stunning incapability to lie that threatens thinning social structures. They are not punished by their otherness but rather for the failure to embrace the other as same in society. Meursault embraces the gentle indifference of the world and Eva lives it, making hers the claim for action, mobility and the fight against "the plague", which eventually leads to her death. And according to Bakhtin something exists only if it means, meaning being a social event happening between selfhood and otherness. The meaning that Bakhtin describes necessitates lived social relations that are then allocated within a *Janus-faced* sign that is representative of the multiplicity of those social relations. Bakhtin strongly believed that the sense of self is constituted in its inevitable relationship with the other and any aesthetic activity is an expression of the relationship the self fosters with the other – all meaning has phenomenological intersubjective quality.

⁹⁴ In the short story "L'Hôte" and the novel *Les Justes* we grapple with the notion of subjectivity and otherness, as well as identity re-figuring itself through alterity. In *L'Etranger* human kind is seen as deeply murderous and altericidal. According to Levinas, and primarily to that in Camus, the proximity of the other makes impossible the killing of the other, even when a permissible killing must achieve the status of the greatest of all exceptions.

As in the writing of Emmanuel Levinas, embracing the other derives the primacy of his ethics from the experience of the encounter with the other. As such it is a privileged epiphany, the irreducible relation that the subject can live. The revelation of the other makes a demand for the responsibility of the other. One's responsibility for the other is not a derivative feature of our subjectivity; instead it is an obligation derived from our subjective being-in-the-world. Responsibility gives a meaningful direction and orientation to the subject's life according to discourse. This is connected to motherhood. For Levinas, the *I* lives out its embodied existence according to modalities⁹⁵, but no other modality excites the *I* and prompts it to dialogue more than the encounter with the other. For Levinas, to escape deontology and utility, ethics must find its ground in an experience that cannot be integrated into logic of control, prediction, or manipulation, and ideally such ethics is to be found in the operations of motherhood, whereas all else belongs to the patriarchal hegemonic discourse of power and slavery. As in motherhood, the face-to-face encounter inflects the *I* towards the possibility of responsibility and of hospitality.

Levinas's idea of identification does not only refer to actions but to dialogue and discourse as well. It demands from the subject that it takes responsibility for the language it produces and thus the subject it creates. In fact, what Levinas prompts us to leave behind is the negative paradigm of agency that presupposes that the subject is solely an effect of discursive structures. This negative tendency overlooks ideas of self-interpretation that introduce more active dimensions into understandings of subject formation and agency. Ultimately, structural accounts of subject formation need to be integrated more closely with hermeneutic perspectives of the self that contradict indeterminacy as the founding tenet in subjectification.

Hermeneutics of selfhood takes us back to Lois McNay's theory of feminist narrative identity⁹⁶, as well as her development of the concepts of personal identity,

⁹⁵ Levinas introduces the concept of non-reciprocal relation of responsibility where the *I* is approached by the other from different perspectives (contrary to Husserl who lacked the idea of inresubjective life). According to Levinas no other modality of human life (building shelter, consuming the gifts of the earth, enjoying life) excites the *I* as much as the encounter with the other. Responsibility is the affective, immediate experience of transcendence and fraternity in response to a silent call of the other that immediately originates language and dialogue.

⁹⁶ Lois McNay's work (2000; 2005) is committed to understanding female subjectivity and subjectification in relation to the place of individuals in creating change. McNay deploys critical work of

materialist and symbolic feminism. Thanks to McNay's writing it becomes possible to account for either larger social change or individual spontaneity and resistance while trying to understand female subjectivity and subjectification.

Judith Butler and Pierre Bourdieu. She highlights Pierre Bourdieu's idea of *habitus*, though criticizes his failure to see its gendered character. She speaks about performative practices and symbolic production in both Judith Butler and Pierre Bourdieu, making an attempt to escape Butlerian idea of performance as sedimentation in time in favour of Paul Ricoeur's fluctuation of personal narratives to better account for the plurality of subject identifications. In the end of the book, Lois McNay states that autonomy is an active-passive relation with the other.

2. Eva Trout's Eternal Journey as a Subject.

According to the German idealist conception of subjectivity reflexivity is the essential feature of subjectivity. What is more, reflexivity is solely the property of the subject – if the subject does not possess an ability to be self-reflexive, it is not a subject. Reflexivity of the subject is apparent for the first time in the moment of recognition in the Lacanian myth of the mirror stage. It is the moment of coming-into-being of the self – “the body image reflected by the mirror strikes(s) the child as being something exceptional, as different in kind compared with the array of other objects in his or her visual field” (Johnston, 2008, 12). In a sweeping criticism of Lacan, Manfred Frank writes in his work, (among many in *What is Neostructuralism?* 1989) that:

the Lacanian distinction between the Symbolic *je* (i.e. the subject as subject of the signifier and of the unconscious) and the Imaginary *moi* (i.e. the reflected, specular ego tied to circumscribed conscious awareness), like so many other structuralist-inspired theoretical devices, is an inadequate, unsatisfying substitute for the German idealist conception of the self-reflexive I. (Frank, 1989 in Johnston, 2008, 11)

According to Frank the Lacanian *I* is not reflexive, and to say more, it is “a mere permutation of functions forming part of the trans-subjective symbolic linguistic network in which the individual is embedded.” (Frank, 1989 in Johnston, 2008, 12) And since it is not reflexive it cannot gain consciousness *ex nihilo* since “nothing comes out of nothing” (Frank 1989, in Johnston 2008). To this accusation Zizek answers with a rebuke for Frank for not noticing the distinction between the Lacanian *moi* and *je*.

To this, however, one can answer by looking for clues in the conception of the mother in the child's eyes and its relation to her as pre-symbolic plenty. To a certain extent it is the mother who is the source of subjectivity and therefore the self does not arise *ex nihilo* but draws from the image of the other – the mother. And one may argue that Eva's apparent and ridiculed inability to become a subject – her overt fluidity and uncertainty as an individual stems from her trauma of having lost the mother. Already her son Jeremy is the reflection of this problem not being able to enter into symbolic as a deaf and dumb child. The order of the language likes to divide the dream of *ego ideal* into third person pronoun *moi*, first person pronoun *je* and second person pronoun *tu*. In

discourse *je* presents itself as autonomous and its certainties and affinities try to convey so. *Je* has the knowledge that the other's desire and fiction are embedded in one, a process which decentralises the control over one's discourse. As in Aristotle the society was not constructed for the sake of life, but from defect, from death and the flight from death, from fear of separation and fear of individuality. By problematizing the difference between *I* and me, one sees the unclear division between subject and object, inside and outside, self and the other. The space between *moi* and the other that is thus created is the space of intrasubjective desire. Desire has no final resolution.

In discourse "what the *je* does not understand is that it is only a cultural signifier controlled both from within and without" (Regland-Sullivan, 1986, 64). As for awareness of cultural hegemony and control Bowen switches often into the third person one, making it a distinctive trait of Eva's guardian Constantine. This idea of being entangled within the dialectic between *moi* and other: "hypothetizes language as a discontinuous system, because language contains both conscious and unconscious meaning systems in a double inscription" (Regland-Sullivan, 1986, 64).

Thus, the mirror stage never goes away but continues to repeat in adult life in the spatial lures of identification with perceived likenesses. All that is external to the subject becomes *moi*'s object in its narcissistic quest for fulfilment. The primordial pre-mirror *moi* is a scaffolding of individuality formed through a primary identification with images, objects and others as a strategy of defence. The secondary, mirror stage identification brings an intimation of unity and continuity via the human *Gestalt*: when the other (the image, the mother) supports one's *moi* identification, when it recognises one's being, it establishes for the self that moment of desired unity upon the ground of a fundamental discord. The narcissistic *moi* always depends on the other since it does not yet have self-signification, which only happens with the signifier *je*. And at the same time *je* too depends on the other to fulfil its meaning ascribing function.

In motherhood, similar to language acquisition, we see an unveiling linguistic structure of the self breaking through the unconscious in a vertical manner resembling that of metaphor in language. In the first place, the child is part of the mother and sees itself as such until the mirror stage. The subjectivity of the mother is therefore displaced in a metonymical way and horizontally – the child stands for my unconscious as a prolonging element of my self. When the child separates from the mother it becomes a metaphor for her subjectivity, even more in the child's process of abjection of the

mother, as has been explained to in the “Discussion. The Dialogue and the Difference,” – the introductory chapter of the thesis making vast reference the writings of Julia Kristeva.

In Kristeva the mother becomes both the agent of culture who induces in the child the ability to differentiate between the abjectable and not abjectable – she also remains one of the bodies that needs to be abjected to enter the dominant discourse. As Kristeva puts it “maternal authority is the trustee of mapping of the self’s clean and proper body” (Kristeva, 1982, 72). In separating from the mother’s body a child banishes the imagery of the comforting body of the mother and child’s and creates a substitute imaginary anatomy. This imaginary anatomy stands for a totalized object of desire but is never attainable, which leads to playing with successive substitutes. As such, Kristeva rightly stresses the porousness and inefficiency of the process of abjection that results in something I would call “abject androgyny”⁹⁷. Nevertheless, the child remains always dependent on the mother, replicating the narcissistic drive for the other’s recognition, the recognition on the part of the mother. The mother enables *moi* to reconstitute itself continually since it is the mother who becomes the mirror. These others hold the human subject together by their recognition and reflection. The imaginary as *parole* (the way in which I make meaning mine, voice my desires, going beyond the “content” of what is said to what is unsaid in the utterance as well). In conscious life *moi* reappears as this narcissistic and aggressive intentionality, repeatedly constructing the self via such successive identifications, each like the layer of an onion. It is thus the nexus of unifying and moralising tendencies, of ethical judgements (this is good because I like it). Lacan's point is that *moi* or *ego* is not something that is in reality integrative, holding the person together, a core that one has from the very outset. If it functions as this (if it appears in this fashion) it is because it is others in Real situation that enable *moi* to reconstitute itself continually. One can never get rid of the narcissistic *moi* since this is the source of identity, and thus the real object of love or desire is not

⁹⁷ According to Kristeva, “In women’s writing, language seems to be seen from a foreign land; it is seen from the point of view of asymbolic body” (Kristeva in Nikolchina, 2004, 166). Androgyny may stand for a deprivation of citizenship within language, and women must try to escape the topology of androgynous voice as foreign land and must search for a female voice. Abject androgyny points to a difference between abjection as obligation of the dominant discourse and abjection as a natural identificatory process.

the person or object desired but the identification with the object or person of love, that is, to be recognised, to be loved by another, to put oneself in the place of the one who is desired. It marks always therefore a sense of lack, of one's dependence upon others to be oneself, the dependence upon specular recognition for its own existence and perpetuation.

In psychoanalysis a need is purely physical and aims at immediate satisfaction and survival; Desire replaces the Freudian wish and is rooted in the unconscious as a referential content for desire as libidinal function, which is displaced into conscious life. Demand or appeal to the other reveals the presence of unconscious Desire and narcissism in conscious life as an intentional pressure within language. Fort/Da: (1) replaying and mastering absence (2) object a, the bit of the real to which Desire gets attached as its object (3) repression of mirror stage identification (desire for mother's recognition of self - primary unconscious) and the entrance of language, an alienation of self into words (secondary unconscious).

The focus on the mouth may be synonymous with the oral stage fixation dominating within the plot of *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*. In psychoanalysis the oral stage is the earliest phase in the child's development and stands for drawing pleasure and a sense of fulfilment from stimulating the mouth. If undeveloped into the anal stage and then further on, oral stage can develop into mouth/oral fixation, that is an excessive fixation on the mouth, speech, the idea of devouring etc. Oral fixation can too be linked with madness and narcissism as self-devouring love. Also if oral fixation is representative of child's discourse it leads to unresolved trauma from the mother or of not having a mother.

The idea of devouring takes us back to the Anglo-Irish concept of devouring children in literature. The taboo of a vampire, now mostly homosexual, an un-dead who devours children has been widely argued for by Margot Gayle Backus⁹⁸ (1999). In the plot of *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* the un-living characters import living characters export. Whether *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* draws on the idea of systematic of *a priori* perpetuation of children into loyalty and animosity is, in my opinion, a complex

⁹⁸ As has been referred in the introductory chapter "Discussion. The Dialogue and the Difference." Margot Gayle Backus focuses in her book *The Gothic Family Romance: Heterosexuality, Child Sacrifice, and the Anglo-Irish Colonial Order* on child sacrifice, demon lovers, and incestual relationships among Protestant English settlers in Ireland.

matter. It also is a treatise on maternity and otherness via a parallel trope of retributive violence and the gothic return of the repressed. It also questions the idea of voluntary and involuntary.

As Mladen Dolar, a co-founder with Slavoj Žižek of Ljubljana School of Psychoanalysis and an expert on phenomenology, as well as structuralism, wittily postulates it in “Cogito as the Subject of the Unconscious” written as part of *Cogito and the Unconscious* and edited by Slavoj Žižek, “the subject is precisely the failure to become the subject” (Dolar, 1998, 77-78). In *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*, Eva is no less the subject because of her de-centeredness, but more so the subject of the novel thanks to her final discursive annihilation – the final trickery of the text and of the discourse. The subject is always ‘subject’ to death in dynamic processes of textualization.

As Adrian Johnston, who has fostered many interesting discussions with Žižek’s ontology and subjectivity, writes in *Žižek’s Ontology: a Transcendentalist Material Theory of Subjectivity*

The sujet, as a dynamic negativity standing apart from the standard visual and linguistic mediators of selfhood, is forever attaining a perfect sense of ipseity vis-à-vis some adequate and satisfactory reflective equivalence. Given Lacanian conception of subjectivity, any form of self acquaintance alienates the subject from itself, derailing this emptiness into the fleshed –out fullness of the ego and its embodied avatars. (Johnston, 2008, 9)

This would mean that the principal subject is split, resembles a split, failing character and yet remains strongest in his or her quest for identification. Eva Trout, seemingly a failed subject, remains the strongest character in the novel. According to Žižek death is the ultimate moment when subject attains fullness, which to a great extent means that Eva’s death is her strongest figuratively moment within discourse, when all *concatenation* becomes legible and signified. This, therefore, may point to the necessity of Eva’s death by the hand of her adoptive child. The original subject is nothing more than a failure in symbolization. The death of Eva is inscribed in the apparition of Jeremy, since he fulfils a role of a prophet appointed to reveal the sins of the people and the coming consequences resulting in the fall of Jerusalem. Jeremy, like Jeremiah, is the child prophet, summoned in his youth to prophecy and initially refusing

the burden on the grounds of not knowing how to speak to people. In a similar manner, Jeremy too has no words to utter since he is dumb and deaf, and yet his presence speaks louder than words. Jeremiah is appointed over nations and kingdoms: to uproot and pull down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant. When Eve/Eva loses her childlike innocence and acquires the knowledge of things - cultural knowledge. In this way, it is argued, Eve/Eva wrests knowledge from the realm of the divine, takes the first step toward culture, and transforms human existence. Eve/Eva changes the rules of the garden and becomes, if only momentarily, as God - the arbiter of right and wrong. Not satisfied with the role of servant of the law, she aspires to be its master and maker. By becoming maker of the rules, divine authority is displaced by her own. She is an originator of a counter-discourse to God's own, and as such needs to be sacrificed at the end. Eva is the thinking subject for even before she takes the forbidden fruit she is able to discuss the rules and the covenant humankind has with God. Therefore her sin does not come from being herself but rather from becoming – gaining autonomy from God.

Even Descartes, who is so well known as the father of the much influential concept of *cogito*, is wary of the completeness of such thinking subject. “The nature of the ‘I’ has yet to be determined” (Johnston, 2008, 12).

Slavoy Zizek depicts Descartes' subject as a monster, borrowing a “tarrying with the negative” phrase from Hegel, who on his part associates the phrase with the negative, death, devastation and utter dismemberment (Johnston, 2008, 21). Zizek associates this negativity and spuriousness with the lack of annihilation, meaning that it's only in death that we achieve completeness.

This insight is corroborated by Mladen Dolar in “Cogito as the Subject of the Unconscious,” which examines the two Lacanian readings of the *cogito*, the standard account of Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, and the other, less known, account of “La Logique du Phantasme” (“The Logic of Fantasy”). In the first, *cogito* is founded on the primary repression of being: *cogito ergo sum* chooses thought over being. The subject has disappeared as being and the signs of this disappearance have been transferred to the other. Modifying Descartes for whom God remains the ultimate guarantor of knowledge, Lacan bars the other, making the other's desire inscrutable. Thus, if the disappearance of being sends the subject in search of an object inside him/her that might be on a level with the other's desire, this search resolves in alienation in the signifier, the stand-in for something inaccessible that the other lacks. In

the second reading, Lacan rejects the dialectics of desire. Having inverted Descartes's terms (*sum, ergo cogito*), he posits a primary alienation. This alienation before the alienation in the signifier (and the intervention of the unconscious) rejects the other because it covers the foundation of signification in being. Parallel to this, the significance of the story of Eve's original sin resorts to the idea of sin being shifted from the reserve of possibility for the unspecified subject within the set of rules towards specification of the agent of desire, ascribing it to the subject's autonomous search within oneself for the object of desire.

Dolar's point is that Lacan's return to Descartes reverses the succession of the two phases of the subject. In the phase of primary alienation there is the espousal of an imaginary being (false being) of an 'I' sustained by the grammar of the drives as similar to the espousal of the other through drives – an espousal that takes place when Eva stays in her chambers with Elsinore and shifting the thought originally ascribed to the other to the self.

What made Eva visualize this as a marriage chamber? As its climate intensified all grew tender. To repose a hand on the blanket covering Elsinore was to know in the palm of the hand a primitive tremor – imagining the beating of that other heart, she had a passionately solicitous of this other presence. Nothing forbade love. This deathly yet living stillness, together, of two beings this unapartness, came to be the requital of all longing. (*ET*, 56)

Dolar speculates that having rejected thought, this false "I" still experiences itself as the subject of thought – having been snatched away from Elsinore, having been orphaned Eva still experiences the fundamental doubts of a subject – that there is nothing beyond it and nothing beyond thought. Clearly, the revised succession is instrumental to Lacan's theorization of a subjective position before enunciation. The pre-enunciative position - as this position might be termed - testifies to the non-transcendental nature of the subject as it has everything to do with a "stain of sum" prior to enunciation. Without neglecting the extremely informative trio of essays on the critics of *cogito* (Robert Pfaller on Althusser, Marc de Kessel on Bataille, and Žižek on cognitive sciences' dismissal of the philosophical subject), Dolar's piece remains crucial to the thesis of the reverse. At a time when the philosophical subject is under all sorts of attacks, psychoanalysis makes visible the traces of traumatic passage from the abyss of self-withdrawal (formerly misunderstood as Descartes's spectral vanishing point) to the open of rationality. However, if, according to Lacan, a woman does not exist, how is the

female subject to proceed from self to otherness and from inward withdrawal towards open rationality?

When writing ‘all sorts of attacks’ one is reminded that both feminism in Adriana Cavarero’s “the monstrosity of the universal subject simultaneously male and neuter” (Cavarero, 1987, 47) and linguistics in Kristeva have been critical of the monstrous universal *cogito*.

This problem of the inconsistency of universality was first posed by Kant⁹⁹, in terms of its antinomies. Kant, in specifying two types of antinomies, was the first philosopher to articulate sexual difference insofar as the mathematical antinomies of “not-all” parallel the feminine relation to the symbolic order, while the dynamical antinomies of universality parallel the masculine relation to the said symbolic order. Lacan’s famous maxim, ‘woman does not exist’ helps clarify the different impossible structures of masculine and feminine processes of subjectification. It is precisely insofar as women are necessary objects for the fabrication of a symbolic order as in Levi-Strauss’ ‘exchange of women’ that the symbolic order cannot account for the category of woman. The particulars exclude totalization according to a logic of “not-all” just as the individual phenomenal existence of objects of experience exclude judgement about the universe as a whole (according to the structure of the mathematical antinomies). Man, contrarily, can enter the symbolic order categorically, but only under the condition that he has no particular existence, but simply enacts the phallic function. As such, a woman functions in a discourse as a disabled male subject within the paradigm of +/-, that is as the one that lacks the penis. She is represented as mere functional link between two other males in a triangle of exchange. This idea finds its problematization in Eva Trout as much as we perceive Eva/Eve as a link between evil/snake and Adam, the first man and the discursive father of mankind. Eve/Eva is a link that leads human subject towards the symbolic and on her rests the whole patriarchal discourse laid on the covenant between man and God. However, Eve/Eva is an active agent and in the text of

⁹⁹ Kant’s four major antinomies included: the limitation of universe in relation to time and space; whole as invisible atoms; free will against universal causality, and the existence of a necessary being – these four, divided in mathematical and dynamical antinomies, Kant believed to be obstacles to logical reasoning. Dynamical antinomies concern an object that does not belong to experiential reality, but dealt with as if it could be conceived of as part of such a reality, and here women were perceived as such dynamical antinomies.

the novel she creates many ‘Deleuzian’ mechanisms. It can be said that in the novel desire coincides with the living of femininity. The final allegorical concatenation can be well referred to as mutual coordination, where there is no advancement without mutual balanced understanding and cooperation.

Originally, Levi-Strauss’s model of exchange of women attempted to offer a single explanation for cross-cousin marriage, sister-exchange, dual organization and rules of exogamy. Over time marriage rules have created social structures, as marriages have been primarily forged between groups and not two individuals involved. When groups were exchanging women on a regular basis, each marriage created a debtor/creditor relationship was established to balance the repayment of wives, either directly or in the next generation. Levi-Strauss proposed that the initial motivation for the exchange of women was the incest taboo¹⁰⁰, which he deemed to be a beginning and essence of culture, as this was the first rule to curb a palimpsest of natural drives; and secondarily a sexual division of labour. The former, by prescribing exogamy, created a distinction between ‘marriageable and non marriageable’ women and thus ordered to search for women outside of one’s kin system. The latter created a need for women to carry out women’s chores. According to Levi-Strauss, by necessitating wife exchange arrangements, exogamy came to promote inter-group alliances and served to form structures of social networks. It must be said, however, that kinship systems were one of the founding tenets of the Anglo-Irish society, and to certain extent of Irish society in general logic contradictory to the also present claustrophobia and close-knitness of the Anglo-Irish). To exemplify this, Bowen has Lady Naylor from *The Last September* exclaim to an English soldier Gerald Lesworth in her attempt to bring his engagement with Lois to a halt: “We must seem ridiculous to you, over here, the way we are all related” (Bowen, 1929/1998c, 178). Within this logic, some feminists postulate that marriage can be seen as an eternal triangle, where according to Sedgwick women are just links, and where Gayle Rubin interrogates herself over the idea that these are only men who distribute value and never women.

¹⁰⁰ Levi-Strauss wrote on incest taboo in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. (1949), *The Savage Mind*. (1962), and *The Raw and the Cooked*. (1964). His concepts of social exogamy and alliance theory claimed that those groups of society that wish to flourish must force their members to marry outside to create new kinship systems. The exchange of women, thus, served as a uniting force in strengthening families and consequently hegemonies.

In much of feminist writing the triangle is dissolved by men's limited influence over the exchange of women. In much of Bowen's literary oeuvre, both long and short fiction, men's participation in the exchange of women is either curbed or delineated by other women¹⁰¹. In *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* this message is taken a step further. Life is said to be an endless stream of events joined together through concatenation. Concatenation occurs everywhere, it is creative of new forms of life. The weakest form of concatenation is that of exchange of women and is doomed to demise. Similarly to that Eva is killed by Jeremy in the event of her marrying Henry. According to Elizabeth Bowen, as according to Levi-Strauss, women do not only represent value but signs too, and are capable of begetting other signs; women's circulation is comparable to the circulation of language. As such, Eva 'mothers' a son – Jeremy, who is more of a textual/narrative invention rather than a biological fruit of Eva's womb. Jeremy is a narrative. He is fatherless so that Eva becomes symbolically a prophet of a demise of an old patriarchal structure (this also bears some similarities to the situation the Anglo-Irish found themselves in late nineteenth century and early twentieth century as a culture depending on the *parole* of the father and kinship awaiting its demise). If we borrow from Descartes, women function within the logic 'I am thought therefore I exist'. If, now they begin to exist within the logic '*I think therefore ...*' or rather '*I beget narratively, therefore... they may cease to exist*', but the *you* will do so as well. What will be strengthened is the discursive kinship women might start.

Mothering in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* can also be viewed as one of the first attempts in Irish writing at writing about single mothering, a leading motif of Irish modern feminist writing in response to a social taboo in Irish society. Single mothering can only be an aftermath of a long literary distance Bowen had covered until the publication of her last novel – a path that was paved by her first two novels *The Hotel* and *The Last September*, where the two young heroines Lois and Sydney are unwilling

¹⁰¹ In much of her fiction Elizabeth Bowen uses the character of the archaic mother or other femme-fatallic strong female character, whose influence other characters fear or are under the spell of. To name the few, this idea is exemplified in Bowen's *The Hotel* and its Mrs Kerr, and *The House in Paris* and Max's relationship with Mrs Fisher, in *The Heat of the Day* and Robert Kelway's relation to his mother, in *The Death of the Heart* and Eddie's relationship with Anna Quayne and Mrs Heccomb, in *The Last September* with Hugo Montmorency's inability to act against most of female characters in the plot or Gerald Lesworth's devotion to 'mother country'. Most of the male characters who qualify as future husbands are killed away by Bowen as in *The House in Paris*, *The Hotel*, *The Heat of the Day*.

to imitate their mothers but unable to fulfil other destinies. In *The Hotel* Ronald Kerr, whom Mauld Ellmann calls “a convinced feminist” (Ellmann, 2003, 82), says: “‘There is nothing now to prevent women being different’, said Ronald despondently, ‘and yet they seem to go on being just the same. What is the good of a new world if nobody can be got to come and live in it’” (Bowen, 1927/2003b, 94).

This logic of causal thinking has been used in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* under the name of concatenation that appears to bind the very end of the novel into meaningful whole. Concatenation is a word that has been used in Gilles Deleuze’s writing. In fact, many translators of his work have argued that this is the most fitting term for his *ré-enchaînement* rather than already suggested linking. The task of redefining discourse runs through re-concatenation of already used images and representations, as much as Rosi Braidotti (1994) writes that

the task of redefining female subjectivity requires as its preliminary method the working through the stock of culminated images, concepts, and representations of women and of female identity, such as they have been codified by the culture we are in. (Braidotti, 1994, 123)

In actuality the empirical produces something new and unforeseeable through the concatenation of forces. It is then through a specific genealogical account that differences and singularities can be grasped in their uniqueness and positivity. And the specific genealogical account includes the narratives and histories of women, in our case the narrative of Eva Trout so neatly divided in the novel into two parts of her ‘upbringing’ (*Bildungsroman*) and its consequences. As Eibhear Walshe writes, “Bowen structures the novel in two parts, and in the first part she explores Eva’s derelict upbringing. The second part of the novel deals with Eva’s adult life, where the consequences of this upbringing are ultimately tragic” (Walshe, 2009, 157).

Why is it, then, that Eva Trout retains her integrity? An answer can be found in the idea of feminine concatenation that should be based on Irigaray’s notion of the feminine sea. Tamsin Lorraine writes in *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy* that: “Just as at each moment the Dionysian subject can affirm the being of becoming as the unity of multiplicity, so can the feminine subject experience each moment as a whole with nothing lacking” (Lorraine, 1999, 160). The integrity of women is preserved because they have been used to dissect it into separate experiences

that do not strive towards masculine totality but rather towards feminine multiplicity. And as Lorraine writes Irigaray remains very close to the Nietzschean idea of “the differentiating synthesis of the groundless form of time” (Lorraine, 1999, 160) that corroborates Bowen’s creation of timeless spaces of alterity in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*.

The feminine sea of experiences forms in the process of concatenation a feminine psyche/feminine subject. However, it is not subordinated to any orderly chain of events. Similar to that, when Deleuze writes about his being of becoming he does not mean a linear stimuli-response-based becoming but believes that the conception of a creature forever in transformation is based on becoming active rather than becoming reactive. Following this logic, Irigaray’s feminine sea escapes the idea of a ‘fusional abyss’ to become “an elemental differentiating movement which flows according to cosmic rhythms rather than adhering to any logic of the same” (Lorraine, 1999, 161). A fulfilled feminine subject strives towards becoming active and destroying reactivity through repetition that affirms difference (iterability of the different) rather than the same. This interplay of moments is well illustrated in Bowen’s text “The Dancing Mistress” where “the character of Peelle (...) shows both equivocal gendering and desire finding its object without discrimination as to gender, indeed in implicit though concealed defiance of conventional social regulations” (Coughlan, 2008, 52). However Coughlan’s argument (and its negative implications) that Bowen is tarrying with “a limit-case of extreme femininity: the dancer who must subdue and distort her whole bodily and emotional being to the performance of a quintessence or apotheosis of feminine beauty and grace, and as a result becomes ‘not like a person at all’” (Coughlan, 2008, 52-53) can too have its positive implications. Each dance takes the dancer out of herself towards a new momentary experience of selfhood and femininity, contradicting the idea of becoming *same as* in the year of 1920’s of “fashionable and partly permitted transgression” (Coughlan, 2008, 53). Each dance represents plenty in symbolic ambiguity of performance.

It is of importance to return here to Descartes who is very much present in the novel. Not surprisingly he is the unfortunate field of study of Prof Portman C. Holman’s; who is mysteriously delayed in his research by his subsequent illnesses of bowels. This leads to Prof. Holman’s later leave from the university and fortunate meeting of Eva Trout on the plane and his consequent struggle to translate the event into

his discourse. This logic of ‘sexualization’ is duplicated in the contradictory options given in the Cartesian *cogito*. According to Lacan’s analysis, the *cogito* creates a rupture between the pure form of the “I think” and the *res cogitans*, the substantial entity thought. What the Cartesian deduction actually performs is not to create equivalence between a substanceless act of thought and the contentless thinking substance, but rather to posit a choice between the two. The two possible choices force the differentiation of sexual identities: the masculine choice is the choice of being, at the price of thinking; the feminine choice is the choice of thinking/acting, at the price of existence. Moreover, according to Žižek, the exclusive masculine and feminine choices are that of being and that of thought, but neither allows for a thinking-being within the symbolic. The choices that await the Deleuzian subject are that of having to engage in a process of becoming imperceptible, instead of locating itself *vis-à-vis* the subject matter. The subject must follow the lines of flight that penetrate its being as well as the multiplications it is part of. This process involves betraying any recognizable positioning and ignoring conventional boundaries. As such the subject becomes a nomadic subject ready to inhabit both masculine and feminine positions and its survival depends on its faithfulness to the idea: ‘I change therefore I am’ – ‘I become therefore I am what I cannot remain to be’. Such should be a nomadic or rather travelling subject. What Bowen wishes for Eva is to map the terrain of such nomadic travelling subjectivity with her amoeba-like self. Such subjects are not tenets of history, they cannot be captured through a process of representation that would anchor them in one specific moment of the chronological time but rather a series of lines of flights happening “behind one’s back” (Lorraine, 1999, 129). For Rosi Braidotti, in her *Nomadic Subjects*, a nomadic subject strives against dominant narratives and it has given up all longing for stability, fixity. It desires transitions and change. Nomadism entails for Braidotti a constant state of “in-process” or “becoming”, which she chooses to designate as the states of ‘as if’. The practice of “as-if” is a “technique of strategic re-location in order to rescue what we need of the past in order to trace paths of transformation of our lives here and now” (Braidotti, 1994, 6). Braidotti also understands ‘as if’ as “the affirmation of fluid boundaries, a practice of the intervals, of the interfaces, and the interstices” (Braidotti, 1994, 6). Deleuze and Guattari write in their *Anti-Oedipus* that a nomadic subject is,

A strange subject, without fixed identity, wandering over the body without organs, always alongside the desiring machines, defined by the portion it takes of what is produced, gathering everywhere the reward of a becoming or an avatar, born of the states it consumes, and reborn with each new state (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a, 23).

What is more the nomadic subject is born within the formation of a compound machine that is the celibate machine that is “a new alliance between the desiring machines and the body without organs that gives birth to a new humanity or a glorious organism” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a, 24). To what extent one can call Eva Trout a glorious organism¹⁰² is arbitrary yet her nomadism bears traces of all: the celibate machine, the wanderer and the consumer. In short, an analysis of Eva’s nomadism could fall within the above three categories. The first term is indicative of the effect of the opposite sex on Eva throughout the novel as well as her unconsummated relationships with Elsinore and Iseult. The wanderer is Eva’s eternal status of a child and then an adult living her life under the roofs of countless hotels in different countries. The consumer is a term that best describes her allocation of identity within the material, and her endless use of the material goods, as exchanging what she came deprived of – the other, the maternal – for possessions. According to Deleuze, complex subject can only arise between contradictory forces of repulsion and attraction and prompts such reactions on other similarly to Eva whose monstrosity both attracts and repulses.

¹⁰² The idea of becoming a glorious organism – Deleuzian compound of molecular energies – parallels the idea in which bodies are inscribed as sociocultural artefacts consequently projecting their bodily practices onto the sociocultural environments they inhabit. Bodies become cities, machine-like specimens as in Eva and her bicycle or the discursive practice of *The House in Paris* and travelling by car (a taxi in the novel) penetrating the foreign cities – the bodies of the other. Such post-modern compound bodies become simulacra of women, according to Sue Best, in opposition to nineteenth century bosomy and vaginal feminine flesh, and twentieth century clitoral and appendage-like female harbours. The new simulacrum of woman is, according to Best: “just a stretch of white skin, a surface without openings or depth.... An erotic encounter with this (...) [woman] is an arid affair, mediated, of course, by the car. The car becomes a hand seeking out the remaining erogenous zones of this vast, stitched, patchwork body: ‘The blindness of the car in the labyrinth of (...) [woman] is none other than the blindness of the palm as it traverses the length of the thighs, the span of shoulder, of groins.’” (Best, 1995, in McDowell, 1999, 67) Moreover, the idea of a penetrating hand of a car understood as a bodily machine through those who are driving inside reminds us of the concept of desire in Deleuze, as in his desiring machine. Hence, the relationship between selfhood and otherness becomes based on the idea of mutual desire that percolates discourses and precedes objects, delineating, for the first time, Bowen’s implementation of the idea of *de’siring*’ of language.

According to Lacan, such multifarious subject can be a site of contradictions, as so is Eva. Being split between the opposing forces creates certain de-centeredness of the self, so that “while the perception of Eva’s body is central to this text, she is rarely herself presented as one who is ‘centered’ in her own body, to the extent that in some episodes she does not appear to be at home within a human body at all” (O’Toole, 2009, 168). For rightly so, Eva becomes a nomad venturing out of and within her corporeality in a simultaneous movement to and fro – the semiotic ebb of femininity. The inquiry for the human sciences is the realm of human experience, both present and hidden from a subject’s awareness, and then manifest in somatic and mental production. Human experience means not only the narrative of the word, but also the narrative of the body from an angel to a monster. Experience does not produce control over and prediction of human life; it produces, instead, knowledge that may deepen or enlarge the understanding of human experience, as well as participation in life. Experience does not pave a unique path for the body – rather it opens it up onto a myriad of possible outcomes and meanings. Experience does not centre but rather de-centers personal narrative. It is the logic behind the concatenation processes that ultimately lead Eva to transcend herself and die. As Maud Ellmann writes about *The Last September* in *Elizabeth Bowen: The Shadow Across the Page*, “The price of gaining flesh and blood however, is mortality.” (Ellmann, 2003, 63)

More so, Eva Trout’s ambiguous embodiment of a monstrous, formless substance bears great influence on the realizations of embodiment of those whose life-paths she crosses.

In short, the opposition of the forces of attraction and repulsion produces an open series of intensive elements, all positive, which never express the final equilibrium of a system, but an unlimited number of stationary metastable states through which a subject passes. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a, 26)

Whether or not one agrees with Lacan’s notion of subject position as a place of contradiction, one can always take away two of his ideas of subjectivity. The first idea is related to the strategy of positing the reader and author as a site of differences. The second idea refers to the process constructing the *I* as a negotiation amongst discursive subject positions, which the *I* may or may not choose to fulfil, as in relative autonomy. We may also infer from this that subject positions are a matter of assignation, and in

fact, following Gayatri Spivak¹⁰³, they can be understood as culturally modelled I-slots that is, in short institutional positions. Elizabeth Bowen's struggle is understood here as being torn between relative autonomy and social vacancies. As in structural subject positioning it is of less importance what the subject is saying or doing than that it is saying or doing something, meaning that Bowen too is torn between social discourse and the call for authenticity of each subject.

Eva Trout is an ironic subject that does not leave anyone indifferent and un-stirred. She passes by along people's lives as a dynamic destructive force, and yet sets a pattern of behaviour. The greater trickery or irony, however, is posed in the fact that Eva passes too – that is the subject of the text, as in Zizek, she is erased from the discourse *passing*, namely dying. Eva's friend Henry compares the heroine to the eponymous Pippa of Robert Browning's poem "Pippa Passes" from a series of dramatic texts devoted to more disreputable characters. Henry proposes that Eva buys a house and turns it into a social venue which will promote her talent to impress.

It is Proust's paradox that states that the most intense art comes out of the bits of life least responded to at the time, out of sorrows of inaction and inexperience. Eva is both work of art and new discourse made out of her clumsiness and inexperience. She goes through life like an unstoppable wave with her innocence and naivety very often stretched to retardedness. Eva experiences de-territorialization and dislocation; she is uprooted from place, time and the maternal but yet again fulfils as such the pre-requisites for being a nomadic subject.

De-territorialization or dislocation are terms used to name the processes by which sediment social practices and meanings are disrupted so that their historical contingency and that of the identities which they ground becomes apparent, and it is a process explicitly associated with the transformatory power of capitalism of the modern era (Laclau, 1997, 41-60) - these are understood as preconditions of any positive political developments. They designate certain deconstructive processes which destabilize established configurations of power, meanings, materiality and practice.

"Your lengthy and unencumbered physique with its harboured energy seemed to me, and not at the first glance only, that of the dedicated discus thrower" (*ET*, 123). At first glance, Eva did not seem a mother or capable of having offspring. And yet she

¹⁰³ This is specially highlighted in Spivak's *A Critique of Post-Colonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. (1999)

occasioned things to happen. She was a bundle of energy that passed through people's lives and 'gave birth'. Her "gaze gives size to what is contained within it" – other people become. She too incites to sin: "after the take-off, when you lost an apple. Escaping from others in the bag was on and symbolically bounded towards me across the aisle" (*ET*, 123). If we posit Eva as the subject of the contorted syntax she becomes an apple. Eva not only loses an apple, she is herself the fruit of sin that rolls unstoppable. The apple becomes a symbol for knowledge, immortality, temptation, the fall of man into sin, and sin itself.

Henry whose wish is to fulfill the paternal position in the discourse (giving such impression in his treatment of his elderly and ridiculed father) wants to do so with use of Eva. He incites her to start a social life, buy a house in London where they could both be able to throw luxurious parties and live a lively life. Henry says to Eva: "You're a trend setter" (*ET*, 179) and she, on her behalf, worries that she may not be able to fulfill the feminine role: "I don't sing. No, and you don't have an improving effect" (*ET*, 179). At this time, Jeremy makes possessively for Eva, leaning against her.

The most obvious reference to Eva's poetics of sin lies in the symbolic of her name. Biblical Eva was responsible for the expulsion of human kind from Paradise – the place of plenty. It was Eva who tempted Adam with the forbidden fruit and led him to sin. However, whereas in the Bible, Eva's behavior is judged in terms of good and bad here in the novel her acts can be judged in terms of being felicitous and un-felicitous.

If Eva is the symbolic apple, a fruit that popular culture has associated with the original sin, she too becomes a well of knowledge that thrives on the tree of knowledge as in Greek mythology. However, as a symbol of spreading sin, Eva gains autonomy and agency in the discourse. Bowen's discourse is that of feminine transcendence. It is about the enabling of "feminine transcendence" in order to wrest women from their place in the phallogentric imaginary- earth, womb, matrix - as the condition of the male transcendent and speculating subject. Women's transcendence requires a feminine divine, effectively a "She" to whom the "I/she" can relate. This idea can be found in the writing of Luce Irigaray. Irigaray's *Je, tu, nous* and *Elemental Passions* undo such binaries as discursive/material and sex/gender, partly by rendering the gendered or sexed subject in a continual process of becoming, oriented toward an uncertain future rather than toward a fixed past as in Freud and Lacan's theories. Margaret Whitford speaks about Irigaray's masculine/feminine binary:

The elements allow Irigaray to speak of the female body ... while avoiding the dominant sexual metaphoricity which is scopical and organised around the male gaze. She can speak of it instead in terms of space and thresholds and fluids, fire and water, air and earth, without objectifying, hypostatizing, or essentializing it. These terms are not so easily reduced to the body of one sex or the other (Whitford, 1991, 62).

It is not the subject that needs to transcend the pre-symbolic fusion of the mother and child, which had already taken place, but rather it is the placental role of the mother that needs to transcend the subject. Irigaray writes in her *The Sex which is not One*

It clearly cannot be a matter of substituting feminine power for masculine power. Because this reversal would still be caught up in the economy of the same, in the same economy—in which, of course, what I am trying to designate as “feminine” would not emerge. There would be a phallic “seizure of power” (Irigaray, 1985a, 130).

For a woman it is neither a matter of installing herself within this lack, this negative gap, even by denouncing it, nor a case of reversing the sexual economy of sameness - demands Irigaray. For what can be *of self* more than sameness and selfhood over time. The discourse that will accomplish this, Irigaray continues, will not be held down by the demands of “oneness.” On the contrary, it will work towards a proliferation of multiplication. In a realm of multiplicities, one formulation cannot take precedence over another and each can coexist without demanding its own legitimation over all other discourses. This almost exactly reflects the conceptualization of postmodern society as defined by Lyotard. As Postmodernism desires to reflect the multiple, subjective nature of existence, so Irigaray’s feminism recognizes the need for multiple discourses. The mirroring of the postmodern desire for multiplicity does not stop merely with the desire for multiple discourses. Female sexuality, like the feminine, cannot be defined. It is *the sex which is not one*.

For Spinoza an individual will be considered weak or bad if cut off from its power of acting and if in a state of slavery with regard to the subject’s passions. For Deleuze this is the moment of convergence and new discovery that points towards a dynamic subject that is not judged in terms of proximity to external values but rather the intensity of modes of behaviour. These modes of behaviour are productive of active

affections. The proper question of morality becomes the one of what one can do or is capable of. Ethics of immanence will criticize anything that separates modes of existence from their power of acting. However, such understanding of morality takes us away from the concept of transcendence and the idea of desire for transcendence that people possess. For if the character of Eva Trout represents what may be called a power to act and affect, she does so within the paradigm of longing for the other, some transcendental truth of desiring Nietzschean servitude and slavery. This is represented in her longing for a child, in her affective relationships with Iseult Smith and her husband, Elsinore, Jeremy and then Henry. Deleuze's way of dealing with this problem lies in his interest in drives that precede our conscious desiring. To Deleuze our conscious will and preconscious interest are both subsequent to our unconscious drives that never exist in a free and unbound state. Our desire, according to Deleuze, is what Nietzsche would call individual drives in which momentarily we invest our morality and weaker drives. And as such we arrive at the concept of Idea that is nothing other than the problematic multiplicity of drives and multiplications – Deleuze replaces the power of judgment with the force of decision. He replaces the power of considering within non-autonomous matrix of knowledge with no autonomous force of choice. In *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* it is signaled that the heroin might have a limited power of judgment and yet a truly resourceful power to act and take on decisions such as leaving the Larkins, leaving Constantine, becoming a mother. When a possible obstacle appears against her autonomous force to decide misguided as power to judge (Henry) Eva is killed. Since our permanent state is that of investing in social systems that repress us, autonomy lies in the intensity and multiplications of such investments. Making out what is a product of infrastructures. The difference between interests and desires lies within the distinction between real and unreal, where interests are ascribed to the paradigm of the real and desires to the paradigm of the unreal. The hub of Eva Trout lies within creating spaces of alterity, hybrid identities, hermafroditism. As Deleuze writes in “On Capitalism and Desire”:

Reason is always a reason carved out of the irrational – it is not sheltered from the irrational at all, but traversed by it and only defined by a particular kind of relationship among irrational factors. Underneath all reason lies delirium and drift. (Deleuze, 2003, 157)

What lies at the site of individuality is psychosis and delirium which is symbolization of the Real. The autonomy of every subject lies in freedom of desiring even if this means symbolization of delirium. *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* may be Bowen's novel where she fully develops her notion of a desiring subject since in her earlier fiction she "questions the very possibility of desiring subject" (Ellmann, 2003, 71). In fact it has been claimed that Bowen's first two novels lack a *subject* of desire" (Ellmann, 2003, 74) at all, when this attribute is only imputed to the unloving things in her novels – "the gate that throngs, the car that slides, the door that welcomes its destroyers, and the silence that flows over the stairs. The syntax mocks the notion that human beings can command their destiny" (Ellmann, 2003, 67). Symbolization of delirium may be one of Bowen's key words as well. There circulates an old Anglo-Irish joke that time is always mid-afternoon after a heavy Sunday meal, and torpor does predominate in most of Bowen's fiction.

In *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* the idea of active desiring underlies the entire plot of the novel; it ventures to establish to what extent Eva possesses freedom to live her otherness, the otherness of her femininity without demanding empowerment over other discourses but rather an equal legitimation of her narrative. Notwithstanding the fact that this idea remains within the realm of utopian discourse that in one strives to enclose the traditionality of the past and hope for a better future. This idea, takes after Leibniz, as far as the creation of textual Eva bathes in her unconsciousness, her unconscious drives, motives and inclinations, which contain the differentials of what appears in consciousness.

At the core of narrative identity lies the idea of temporal discontinuity that suggests that change and exchange between genders is uneven "arising from the increasingly dysfunctional effects of the dominant economy of clock time for both women and men" (McNay, 2000, 112). *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* is a novel devoted to narrativity of drives.

Narrative identity in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* refers to what Alya Khan has described as conscious living "to engage in self-transformatory practices of the self" (Khan, 2006). It means journeying through life, weaving very often contradictory plots, and re-inventing oneself in an ongoing narrative of the self. Narrative identity calls upon female adjectives such as multiple, ongoing and generative allowing one a "generative understanding of subjectification" (McNay, 2000, 164). Ricoeurian processes of

subjectification such as 'identifying reference' and 'self-designation' (Ricoeur 1995, (1994), 31) point the female subject a new way of becoming, a way of intersection and interaction on multiple levels in society. As much as the subject's notion of belonging to the dominant narrative may vary in intensity, his or her consistent idea of the self may change over any period of time. Moreover, the concept of *intersectionality* problematizes the idea of the outsider within, which further complicates the idea of otherness and the other within oneself. Intersectionality is too an aftermath of the idea of multiplicity within human experience and consequent de-centeredness of human body, as in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*'s line "The Evas exchanged a nod, then stayed rapt in mutual contemplation" (*ET*, 105).

Intersectionality in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* undercuts well the idea of the wealthy heiress, who even though rich continues to feel an outsider to the hegemonic order. It means that Eva is both the outsider and an insider, to language, to society, to gender, to motherhood. She is both the angel and the monster of the text, just like all women remain mothers, whores and angels. Intersectionality stands for belonging to different decentred groups – "'Negative,' mourned Constantine, 'after negative'" (*ET*, 104). , and yet making a claim for a unified narrative, a consistent pattern of performance.

Intersectionality is a concept that can also be found to underlie the idea of feminist rogue, who not only finds herself decentred as a woman, but also dwells on the periphery as a female *picara*. Similar to the female *picara* Eva occupies middle ground, to a certain extent she's both a whore and a virgin, both a monster and an angel- the emphasis being not on the negative construction neither/nor but the positive construction *both*. As such, the construction of female *picara* moves from that of exclusion to that of inclusion. It moves from the desire to escape towards the desire for recognition. It is the Hegelian tradition that links desire with recognition, claiming that it is only through recognition that one becomes a socially accepted subject. As Judith Butler postulates: "This means that to the extent that desire is implicated in social norms, it is bound up with the question of power and with the problem who qualifies as the recognizably human and who does not" (Butler, 2004, 2). Such thinking, in its turn, has widely informed the New Gender Politics, of which Judith Butler writes in her *Undoing Gender*, that it should be of new discourse to be able to return the social recognition to those who do not fit the orthodox, phallic thinking of gender. The New

Gender Politics has emerged in recent years adding to the debate on transgender, intersex and the complex relations these terms foster with feminist and Queer theory. The problematic of intersectionality and hybridity of a subject thus becomes the problematic of intersex, intergender, and transsex. As such the subject continues to desire 'identifying reference' and 'self-designation', but these cannot be hegemonically imposed. The performance of the subject should be free of dogmatically established norms – being 'negative after negative' (*ET*, 104) should not signify confinement to decenteredness and periphery. As Butler writes in her *Excitable Speech*: "the question of performativity is bound up with the question of transivity." (Butler, 1997, 42) Performativity should be perceived as a process with a new sensibility of discourse. The discourse, in its turn, should be able to accommodate to J.L. Austin's eponymous question 'How to do things with words?' There is no necessity to erect a totem pole of importance of various aspects of autonomy. However, there is a need to see how different aspects of the performative contribute to continuously thinking identity anew.

This, in Elizabeth Bowen, is visible in her awareness of growing social, moral and psychological dislocations of the twentieth century, as well as the experience of decline that inform her disruptive satirical mode. In an almost catastrophic vision of the world, it is the little steps further that count.

3. Maternal and Abjection.

The novel *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* describes what in psychoanalysis can be called early mother/infant symbiosis. This, in fact, remains both in the book and in theory an oral phase. Infancy is the best described as oral incorporative libidinal attitude. Between infancy and mature object relationship all object relationships, both internal and external, are primarily based on oral incorporative (Chodorow, 1999, 67). Primary narcissism is eventually transformed into some object relationship. Eva's ventures into maternity can be seen from the daughter's perspective in search of the archetypal, symbolic mother. Her maternal narrative is encompassed by her undercurrent filial narrative, as somebody uprooted from the maternal. Nancy Chodorow claims that mothering is a repeating pattern. The danger posed by an extended mother-daughter or mother-child relationship is of insufficient separateness, the loss of the self for the other, lack of autonomy, etc. It stands for an over-feeding with the mother.

In the novel the relation of Eva's motherly narcissism engulfs her childhood narcissism, as in her appropriation of Jeremy whose dumbness and deafness Eva struggles to fill in with her orality/discourse. As such she only serves her own narcissistic oral cravings.

"This accountability then entails that we open up the arguably self-contained boundaries of this us/them distinction and draw on the non-complicit assumption that the practice of analysis itself shapes the meaning of "outlaw" sexuality or "woman"."

(Barat, 2007) My analysis will always remain biased.

Since my analysis emerges at the intersection of text/context boundary, they should be able to reveal the spurious, discontinuous and 'often contradictory logic' of discourses on gender and sexuality both formed by us and the writer. "It is an often troubled yet necessary intersection that I see as the ontological condition for any change for a less exclusionary discourse of sexuality and gender to emerge as the result of our analytical practices." (Barat, 2007)

However, the research should not be obsessed with the origin of constituent plots and events. It is not of academic value to my project to focus on the identification

of the mediated discourses since that would stand for the enactment of the dominant ideology, which tries to determine ‘the real’ category of a woman, of a woman’s discourse, etc.

The maternal, the abjection and the matricide are undeniably keywords essential to dissecting *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*’s narrative as well as to uncovering the structural dimensions of what is the study of the mother, the maternal and the subject. These concepts inevitably uncover the ideas of anxiety of authorship, female affiliation conflict, the fear of generative powers of the archaic mother leading towards the organizing principle for the subject’s symbolic capacity. The strength and harshness of the relationship a subject lives with the mother is best described in Kristeva’s famous phrase – “I feel like vomiting the mother” (Kristeva, 1982, 47). The apparently irrevocable loss of the mother that is “tantamount to the death of the mother” (Kristeva, 2001, 129) in imaginary dimension of the discourse is clearly symbolised in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* first with the tragic death of Eva’s mother, and second with the killing of Eva herself. The extreme nature of matricide is emphasised by the impossibility of incorporation or integration of the murdered mother, which in Eva is heightened by the society’s conditioning against the maternal as necessary to plentiful individuation. Abjection being closely knitted with the maternal, in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* it keeps coming back as the structuring element of narrative focus on the eponymous Eva Trout. Abjection as such poses again a signifying problem since it is never fully achieved but rather exists as a term in process. What does rather present itself in the discourse is a process of abolishing the mother that in itself is not as violent and irreversible as abjection, and can lead to further recovering of the mother. Like the maternal body, every subject is what can be called a subject-in-process. As subjects-in-process we are always negotiating the other within, that is to say, we negotiate between the other’s influence and our own otherness. Like the maternal body, we are never completely the subjects of our own experience, but rather, in case of the female subject, we are eternally enclosed in a triangle relationship on a level of a psychic structure¹⁰⁴. This, according to Nancy Chodorow, is symbolized in a woman’s relation to a man signified only through the appearance of the child, as well as, and here more

¹⁰⁴ This idea is worked upon in Nancy Chodorow’s *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1999) and most of her later writing, where she takes on the teachings of Freud and above all Melanie Klein and her more theoretical psychoanalytic feminism.

importantly, through the appearance of the archaic mother. As such, the latter triangle gains a somewhat meaningful expression in mother-child-mother positioning of the subjects. In mothering, as Nancy Chodorow (1999) writes “The mother-child relationship also recreates an even more basic relational constellation. The exclusive symbiotic mother-child relationship of a mother’s own infancy reappears (...).” (Chodorow, 1999, 201) In creating the close-knit symbiosis with the child, a woman reaches back to her close-knit symbiosis with the mother lived in pre-language oral phase, as well as described by Kristeva as the *chora*. *Chora* is to Kristeva a place of abundance, the semiotic associated with the rhythms, tones, and movement of signifying practices naturally bound with the rhythms, tones, and movements of the body, here the maternal body. In much of Bowen’s fiction love for the other is mistaken for “*back-to-the-wombishness*” (Glendenning, 1977, 222) – Bowen’s term to describe her longing for a return to Hythe, her childhood summer home, and a place of plenty, as described in a letter to the lover Charles Ritchie and quoted by Victoria Glendinning in her *Elizabeth Bowen: Portrait of a Writer*.

The novel *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* encloses eponymous Eva and her son Jeremy in the semiotic *chora*, where their movements are directly a result of Eva’s corporeality, and where the language of the father has no place since Jeremy is fatherless, as well as deaf and dumb. Referring to compatible corporealities, Bowen writes that

Each of their interchanges was marked by this sort of gravity, which they had in common. (...) His features were to an extent in the trout cast, having an openness which had been Willy’s and was Eva’s; yet his likeness to her, at moments striking, had about it something more underlying, being of the kind which is brought about by close, almost ceaseless companionship and constant, pensive, mutual contemplation (*ET*, 147).

Even though Jeremy seems perfectly interwoven into the text against his disability, the symbolic seems to be catching up with him over the course of the narrative. Even at the very beginning of his first visit to England and the Dancey’s household, Mr Dancey thinks it abominable of Eva not to have tried everything to insert Jeremy within language. “... But surely, Eva,’ he said most earnestly, ‘in these days, and in that progressive country you’ve been in, something could have been done, has been done: what *is* being done?” ““Everything! – that is to say, very, very much”” (*ET*, 155)

responds Eva pointing out Jeremy's reluctance to enter the symbolic and his fear of it. "But Jeremy doesn't like it; he doesn't want to. He not only doesn't co-operate, they all tell me, he puts a resistance up. He is angered at what they attempt to do to him. It upsets him. He would like to stay happy the way he is." (ET, 155)

After her conversation with Father Clavering-Haight, Eva ponders her life with Jeremy – a life that, to her, stretches from a semiotic, womb-like, chotraic existence in America towards their obligatory return to England, the land of the fathers.

Did this make her traitorous to the years with Jeremy? – the inaudible years? His and her cinematographic existence, with no sound-track, in successive American cities made still more similar by their continuous manner of being in them, had had a sufficiency which was perfect. Sublimated monotony had cocooned the two of them, making them near as twins in a womb. (ET, 188)

Jeremy's return was brought on by the onset of his eminent manhood – "She had been brought to it by sighting premonitions of manhood in his changeable eyes" (ET, 189). However, Eva was unaware of the costs that were involved in bringing Jeremy into the symbolic, even after dwelling within the maternal for so many years – something that was taken away from Eva – "She had not computed the cost for him of entry into another dimension. What he had been thrust in the middle of was the inconceivable; and the worst was its not being so for her. He was alone in it." (ET, 189)

Apparently, however, it is not a matter of personal choice whether one is allowed to stay in the *chora*, close to the maternal. It is a society's obligation and a necessity a subject is encumbered with to enter the father's *parole*. For as Mr Dancey says many of us would like to linger within the semiotic – "Many of us would; but that's not the thing. – Oh come, Eva, who would not wish to speak?" (ET, 155) And here the thread of the uselessness of language is brought back forth, towards which Eva bears eternal anxiety, once expressed in her school days conversation with Iseult Smith – the ever present fear of having nothing to say, of not being able to fit into the discourse not as an object but rather a subject. Here in the "Visits" chapter Eva responds to Mr Dancey that she has never seen a point in using the language: 'I have never wished to. What is the object? What is the good?'" (ET, 156) Or rather, what is the object of a language with a narrowly pre-defined subject out of which women are excluded as Rosi Braidotti's nomadic subjects: women, monsters and mothers in her

Nomadic Subjects (1994b)? However, these fears are invalid for Mr Dancey, himself not much of a patriarch, whose speech is most of the time 'doomed' by endless bouts of allergic fevers, constant coughing and nose-blowing. Having his capacity of speaking impaired by his allergic condition, Mr Dancey continues to hold the position of local vicar, and is a father to five children, of which he is most defied by his son Henry, Eva's future husband yet her junior of twelve years. In Henry's constant accusation of his father there is no mistrust of the patriarchal, but rather disdain Henry feels towards his father's weaknesses. Henry believes that he would do better in the paternal role, with his male gaze on matters, and he accuses Mr Dancey of feeling guilt for not being able to hold the paternal position in the society and within the family – "What you are suffering from,' diagnosed Henry, blinking at his reflection in the glaze of the teapot, 'is guilt, not penitence.'" (ET, 159)

Mr Dancey believes that Jeremy is doomed if kept away from audible discourse.

No, this child has come into your life, however he did, and you must *not* doom him. I do mean "doom"; you doom if you acquiesce. You dare not,' he added, abating the verb a little by his compassion. 'There cannot – somewhere? – be someone who cannot help, cannot handle him. I cannot believe you have yet tried everything: try everything! Search Europe.' He looked at her sadly and said: 'You're a rich woman.' (ET, 156)

Or else, Eva is a rich woman because of the wealth her father accumulated – she carries with her certain responsibilities of *the Father's order*. Furthermore Mr Dancey's words have a deeper meaning for what it means to be a female subject capable solely of a quiet and tacit compliance, a voiceless existence – hence Jeremy is said to be of the same kind that Eva is: their both being strangers in language who can only be empowered through the father's heritage. If the *status quo* of the semiotic *chora* remains unchanged this will lead Jeremy to doom, that is in Christian terms Eva/Eve will lead the child prophet Jeremy, who in the Bible did not refuse the gift of the *Word*, to doom, that is precisely to The Last Judgement. In Biblical understanding it was Eve's original sin that led humankind to abandoning Paradise that is to return at the end of the world when the good will be separated from the bad. Eva in Bowen's novel meets her doom, her Judgement Day from Jeremy's hands.

Henry's belief in the father's power and omnipotence can be a false dream after all- as the Ivory Tower in Virgil that permits the false dreams to ascend to the

upper air. Far more truth can be found in the sermons of St Paul's whom Mr Dancey cites – “Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things...” (ET, 159) Mr Dancey highlights that St Paul wrote like an angel – Eva too is a demon and an angel - similar to Iseult Smith, whose metamorphosis and *Janus-like* femininity is described in the Metaphysical poem in the “Genesis” chapter of the novel.

For the most part of *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*'s narrative Jeremy remains immersed within the maternal *chora*, where he is kept away from the father's language. There all experiences are pleasurable, and no boundaries are set. To Kristeva in *Desire in Language* *chora* reveals “heterogenousness to meaning and signification... detected genetically in the first echolalias of infants as rhythms and intonations anterior to the first phonemes, morphemes, lexemes and sentences” (Kristeva, 1980, 133) and later “reactivated as rhythms, intonations, glossalias” (Kristeva, 1980, 133) in poetic language.

Chora is a place of plenty. This can be expressed in Jeremy's accumulation of toys, sweets, singing birds, and other ‘material goods’ so much cherished by children. The pleasurable moments that have place away from home, in constant journey from one hotel to another, are safeguarded by a plethora of things that Eva buys Jeremy and which he then stacks up in their hostile hotel rooms. *Chora* is the place when there is no father, no lover “There is not such person” to “communicate with” (ET, 199), and yet there is understanding and cooperation. It seems so intense that Mr Dancey asks Eva if she is “quite sure Jeremy cannot lip-read?” (ET, 158) “Only mine” – Eva answers – “Extra sensory” applauds Henry, in awe of Eva and Jeremy's extra-verbal communication, as in maternal *chora*.

Jeremy's presence, since they had sat down to the table, was never to be felt. Eva, habituated, was least aware of it. There he sat, enthroned on a cushion brought from the drawing-room, on a level in every sense with the rest of the company. His manner of eating and drinking conveyed a pleasure which was in itself good-mannered – he was not greedy. This did not, though, occupy him entirely: at intervals, he turned his candid attention from face to face, from speaker to speaker. (...) The boy, handicapped, one was at pains to remember, imposed on others a sense that *they* were, that it was *they* who were lacking in some faculty (ET, 158).

All in all, Jeremy does possess knowledge, that all learning and ‘knowledge’ as presented is speech is false – “What Eva's little boy knew, what he always had

known, and, still more, what he was now in the course of learning, there was no knowing. There was a continuous leakage and no stopping it” (*ET*, 158).

The knowledge Jeremy possesses is a threat to the symbolic knowledge of the master narrative, so that everybody present at the table with Jeremy fear the place has been ‘bugged’, which gives “an increasing hold on the father and son” (Bowen 158) disseminating the hold on narrative so that “it increased their recklessness with regard to each other” (*ET*, 158). The knowledge that proper schooling could offer him poses a threat to his semiotic existence, and extra-sensory understanding – “What are you going to do about that boy?” (...) ‘No. His future, his schooling. His disability. (...) ‘He might understand you,’ said Eva. ‘Please do not, Constantine.’” (*ET*, 173)

However, it should be noted here that the phase of *chora*, although peaceful and directed at drawing pleasure, is a phase of basic drives operating throughout. This refers itself not only to the life drive but to the death drive too. The *chora* is a place of planet but it also is a place of semiotic fuzziness and wandering into language, which is “from a synchronic point of view, a mark of the working of drives... and, from a diachronic point of view, stems from the archaisms of the semiotic body” (Kristeva, 1980, 136). The semiotic tries to reclaim and appropriate the “archaic, instinctual and maternal power embodied in husbands, politicians, empire builders, and oily-eyed professional men” (Little, 1998, 189).

Jeremy’s assassination of Eva can be thus understood in a three-fold intersectional manner, where all interpretations can be valid. First, Jeremy’s killing of Eva can be seen as his consensual entrance to the paternal – the little pistol Jeremy carries around is his symbolic passage to the paternal law. Second, Jeremy’s assassination of Eva can be result of his growing revolt against the paternal steadily infiltrating his world through Eva’s subsequent marriage to Henry, the natural ‘concatenation’ of events that inevitably lead towards obligatory entrance into the father’s *parole*. This understanding can be corroborated by the idea that not all subjects are able to enter the symbolic, and it is not a viable and natural process that universally encompasses all processes of identification. After all, Jeremy will not be able to learn to speak or hear, as much as his mother/guardian Eva was unable to do so – her marriage being an incorrect and unfortunate concatenation that led to her death as subject. After all, a male child cannot linger within the *chora*.

Third, Jeremy's assassination of Eva can be a natural result of the *choraic* drive towards death that the child misinterprets as a source of pleasure.

Who knows, however, whether the little gun Eva is killed with was not destined for Henry, having appeared in the narrative after Henry's encounters with Eva.

She had locked behind her the room in which lay Jeremy, still asleep – the metal-tabbed key rattled in her pocket, knocking a miniature alloy revolver which had fallen from Jeremy's when she shook out his jacket. (How had he come by it?) (ET, 206)

In the end, Henry is snatched by “a woman bystander to whom nothing was anything (...) before he could fall over the dead body” (ET, 268). Who is standing behind Eva is no one else but Henry who gives “a great cry of terror” (ET, 268). The assassination of Eva might have been an unfortunate concatenation, of which apparently Constantine is so much afraid of:

I do not say there is no method of human madness. Our affections could not, I suppose survive – as they do - were they entirely divorced from reason, though a tie is rather a tenuous one. Well, bless you, Eva; and bless you Henry! I regret the wholly secular nature of this occasion, but father Clavering – Haigh could not be with us. Let this sunshine we stand in be a good omen! Things may break well for you: that has been known to happen. Er – life stretches ahead. May a favourable concatenation of circumstance... (ET, 268)

Death does embed narrative, and so do guns. Miss Smith is said to have given up her typewriter – symbolically language – to her former husband Eric, and instead she takes his revolver with her. Eva suspects her of being strangely dead “Had this *been* Miss Smith, or was she dead and somebody impersonating her?” (ET, 192)

Kristeva locates on the margins of male symbolic discourse an alternative feminine mode of signification understood as preoedipal *chora*. There the eruptions of the semiotic are most visible from Eva's spontaneous speech to “the things people don't say” (Woolf, 2001, 220) in Jeremy's and Elsinore's silences. A heterogeneous, assymbolic, asymmetrical discourse is connected to Eva's enigmatic speech, even to Constantine's very often undecipherable discourse punctuated strongly with verbs in passive tense. The apparent unity of his speech gives way to the carnivalesque impulse of Mennipean satire. Disguised as a male master narrative, Constantine's discourse is perpetually subverted by semiotic elements of heterogeneity, chaos, and

imperceptibility. Constantine is a parody of patriarchal world, yet he too is an outsider to it with his ambiguous sexuality, material possessions and money that are not his – as Iseult tells Eva, Constantine “... is not a bloodhound” (*ET*, 192). Even more, one may say that in his paranoid existence Constantine mimics the paralogical discourse of the female hysteric, since the maternal functions are sexually denied to him.

When Miss Smith leaves her husband and goes back to her Lumleigh, unmarried, maiden state, her language and manner of speaking seem to change too, which Eva too ponders to be a distortedness provoked by the phone wire.

Something – who was to say what, exactly? - had not rung true. The voice’s inflections, even, had been, if not quite parodied exaggerated, over-stretched, harshened; more than once a hallow ring had been given them. The Lumleigh intonations had been winners, give X that! (*ET*, 193)

Miss Smith is now told to live an almost angelic, volatile life, “giving an “impression of dissolution” (*ET*, 193), as Bennet and Royle agree- -the dissolution of language, discourse, syntax. “An impression of upborne, gas-filled flight, cable cut, ballast cast overboard. Miss Smith was tied to ordinary earth no longer; in some ways she eluded the law of gravity” (*ET*, 193). Most importantly the changes in Miss Smith lead Eva to her epiphanic moment on identity, where she says “Anyhow, what a slippery fish is identity; and what *is* it, besides a slippery fish? (...) What *is* a person? Is it true, there is not more than one of each?” (*ET*, 193) This can too be a moment of semiotic jouissance as in Clarissa’s love for Sally in Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* “It was a sudden revelation... Then, for a moment, she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus; an inner meaning almost expressed” (Woolf, 1992, 47). However, such moments of jouissance, assymbolic and anti-phallic pleasure cannot be articulated or sustained within normative narrative. As such it only offers pleasure if remained unanswered – “The great pleasure my letters to you gave me was bound up with the impossibility of your answering” (*ET*, 206) writes Miss Smith after her telephone conversation with Eva.

After that event, Eva decides to look into possible multiplicity within every human nature – its singularity in encompassing many points of view – the many I’s that change over time. Identity is an enigma where sameness and otherness play the bigger parts – sameness with oneself and otherness within oneself. Eva decides to see to the

matter and “see by examining many. She telephoned for the Jaguar and drove it to the National Portrait Gallery, of which she had heard” (*ET*, 194), and where she resolved to find what ‘real life’ was. In the National Portrait Gallery Eva is struck by the meaninglessness of symbols. Hermetically sealed in the microcosm of a dream-like self sufficiency Eva “mirrors the fragmented turbulence of the lives of those around her” (Henke, 1992, 333) yet seems unable to see true life in the portraits of people that she sees. Eva herself occupies any subject position the world encumbers her with. The child Eva has serves as a link between the archaic maternal unconscious she craves and the castrated inscription into the symbolic. Eva’s fragmented position as a subject keeps her away from fulfilling the Heideggerian plentiful existence of being – *being-there*, where, on the contrary, to Eva and Iseult “All had been nothing. Life is an anti-novel” (*ET*, 206). Life had no hegemonic narrative structure but rather was a detour from selfhood to otherness, and it was a discovery of layers of personalities embedding the non-existent centre as in Slavoy Zizek’s onion-like structure of identity. As a woman she may only be becoming. Iseult has long served Eva as (M)other, offering her a womb-like shelter at Lumleigh, where both were bound in a pre-oedipal attachment. Now, Eva is reminded of the multiplicity she has lived with Iseult – ‘a non-relationship’ that was stable and unimpaired, just as the relationship between mother and child.

That relationship was guarded safely by Iseult, since she believes herself to suffer from Hedda Gabler’s complex¹⁰⁵ – an early feminist accused of vindictiveness towards men. The character of Hedda Gabler is considered by many a female Hamlet, who ends up shooting herself in the head and provoking other calamities. In the plot of the play Hedda is the one who burns the word – the manuscript of Ejlert Lovborg’s masterpiece – a sequel to his recently published work.

Language does not work with Miss Applethwaite, the sculptress with whom Jeremy is left while Eva is crossing the rooms of the National Portrait Gallery. For Miss Applethwaite may not offer Jeremy lessons in verbal discourse, yet she teaches him the art of sculpting – art of imitation and looking at the image of the other, which Father Clavering-Haigh: “The road to narcissism” (*ET*, 183). For during the struggle to become

¹⁰⁵ Henrik Ibsen’s play *Hedda Gabler* (1990) has been considered to present one of the best dramatic female roles in theatre. The eponymous Hedda is believed in her multiplicity that constantly invites interpretation to be the female version of Hamlet, a feminist fighting for the society, as well as a cunning villain.

subject within the symbolic realm, the abjection becomes a precondition of narcissism according to Kristeva.

From Miss Applethwaite's house Jeremy is taken away by a mysterious woman, whom Eva suspects to be Iseult Smith. Eva is visibly shaken by the possibility of Jeremy's disappearance, yet finds it difficult to talk to Miss Applethwaite, who seems to her more a witch - "Are *you* human, Miss Applethwaite? At such moment as this - you must be infernal" (*ET*, 200). "'Words', said Eva, do *not* seem to disconnect from you, Miss Applethwaite.'" To that Miss Mapplethwaite responds: "'It is simply that I cannot describe people.'" (*ET*, 201)

Eva sees Miss Applethwaite as incomplete, just like the rooms she inhabits. Miss Applethwaite herself is conscious of her insignificance, where her art has taken her nowhere into the symbolic world - "Applethwaite" would have been a name to have made. I have sometimes thought, just the *kind* of name; but no one has ever heard it. No one has heard of me. My work means nothing to the world" (*ET*, 200). Art, the semiotic expression of femininity seems to be condemned to doom in the father's gaze - "Why has nothing put a stop to the blindness, their blindness that I am right in the middle of?" (*ET*, 200) Again, curiously for women the only means of circulating wealth, money is having children, if not giving birth to them, then sheltering them - ? I have nothing on but rich children (...)" (*ET*, 200), admits Miss Applethwaite.

It is also true that *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* is yet another of Bowen's novels that seeks for the dissection of the question: what it means to be a mother? Is there anything as synthetic motherhood, structures of privilege in mother-child relationships, or else motherly inborn empathy? In *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* Bowen poses the ever feminist question, whether adult identity is constructed on the basis of desire for the missing child - Mother without Child - or the missing mother. As Elaine Hansen writes in her *Mother without Child*, "Mother without Child' may (...) suggest, in another spirit, the impossible figure of the woman who defies patriarchal motherhood but celebrates another kind of mothering" (Hansen, 1997, 52). *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* is Bowen's exploration of the idea of nonprocreative motherhood: hence, Bowen repeatedly works the concept from different possible angles, of nonexclusive and sometimes overlaid variants of the mother without child: the unbiological mother Eva; the surrogate emotional mother Iseult, the biological mother (sleeping mother) who loses one of her children and is a patriarchal representation of a

mother withdrawn from the society, and to a certain extent withdrawn from the family itself - Mrs Dancey and Elsinore's mother. Miss Applethwaite is also a woman involved with other's children though remaining childless. Eva's narrative is also overshadowed by the figure of her long-dead mother, whom Constantine blames for all the inadequacies of Eva's character – she is the woman who should have not had any children. Like so many of Bowen's protagonists, the female characters in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* go on living entangled within the maternal dependence and affinities that order their lives. Motherly love, motherly presence, and craving for a mother are particularly strong motives in Bowen, though they are never represented as affective or emulating as in their traditionally patriarchal representation. However, the presence of these motives does lead to a certain self-discovery, even when this presence is expressed by a lack since many of Bowen's characters are orphaned explicitly or their mothers are simply never mentioned. Motherhood in Bowen constantly wavers and it is not a fixed point that any woman reaches as given reference in discourse – it is yet another becoming in life. It may be said that not only is Bowen interested in redefining female desire and its inscription into the official discourse, she, too, aims at redetermining the concepts of motherhood and its consequences for firstly the female subject and secondly the male subject.

In her monstrosity, Miss Applethwaite, whose name reminds one of the symbols of sin – the apple, which, as we have seen, has many times figured in Bowen's fiction and in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* itself, seems to bear some resemblance with Mrs Betterley, the she-werewolf and exorcist from Bowen's short story "The Apple Tree". Miss Applethwaite, like Eva seems to be an outcast of the narrative – a stranger to language – and the abject. There is, however, a difference between Eva and the sculptress, whose sole occupation is imitation of life, and who envies Eva her freedom and generative powers – "I have no future, for reasons which I have told you; but you have, and yours might take any course – yes, really any, I should imagine." (*ET*, 200) Both women search for the archaic powers of a mother – the sculptress, however, only manages to achieve some sort of existence through 'feeding' on the other's children, and Eva strives towards the maternal in possessing Jeremy. For both the women there is no future without children – "If he *is* in the past, there is no future. He was to be everything I shall not be." (*ET*, 199) The mother must retain a hold on the

child for it serves as a link to authenticate her existence- an existence that needs validation from the symbolic order.

The want for children reveals itself to be a primary one, as in the want for reunification with the archaic mother – being a mother, getting back to the mother one has never had. Miss Applethwaite tells Eva: “I am sorry, but it is a known fact that people most dread what they subconsciously desire, or, if not desire, could assent to with little trouble” (*ET*, 201). And what people subconsciously desire, according to much of theoretical psychoanalysis, is the abjection of the mother, literal, and secondary through the devouring of the child. In theory this idea has led critics to write extensively on the idea of autophagy of self and discourse in narrative identity. This means not only feeding on the child within – the Kristevan transference - but also feeding on one’s own post-symbolic idea of the self to produce a discourse for the consumption of the other. Autophagy becomes a means of “assertive action that symbolically recapitulates the infant’s original break with the nursing mother” (Backus, 1999, 52) - the abjection of the maternal that both dynamically threatens and delineates the borders of the self – while the consumption of the other becomes a mode of being within the symbolic discourse.

As Kristeva writes in her *Powers of Horror*,

There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated. It beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire, which nevertheless, does not let itself be seduced. Apprehensive, desire turns aside; sickened, it rejects. A certainty protects it from the shameful – a certainty of which it is proud holds on to it. But simultaneously, just the same, that impetus, that spasm, that leap is drawn toward an elsewhere as tempting as it is condemned. Unflinching, like an inescapable boomerang, a vortex of summons and repulsion places the one haunted by it literally beside himself. When I am beset by abjection, the twisted braid of affects and thoughts I call by such a name does not have, properly speaking a definable object. The object is not an ob-ject facing me, which I name or imagine. Nor is it an ob-ject, an otherness ceaselessly fleeing in a systematic quest of desire. What is object is not my correlative, which, providing me with someone or something else as support, would allow me to be more or less detached or autonomous. The object has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to I. (...). (Kristeva, 1982, 4)

Both the desires for regaining the child and for regaining the mother are at the same time embedded in the process of abjection of that which the subject cannot embrace. Is not the process of subjectification based on the triangle of subjects both fascinating and repelling to each other? Toril Moi writes about positionality of subjects,

We can view this repression of the feminine in terms of positionality rather than of essences. What is perceived as marginal at any given time depends on the position one occupies. (...): if patriarchy sees women as occupying a marginal position within the symbolic order, then it can construe them as the limit or borderline of that order. From a phallogocentric point of view, women will then come to represent the necessary frontier between man and chaos; but because of their very marginality they will also always seem to recede into and merge with the chaos of the outside. (...) It is this position that has enabled male culture sometimes to vilify women as representing darkness and chaos, to view them as Lilith or Whore of Babylon, and sometimes to elevate them as the representatives of a higher and purer nature, to venerate them as Virgins and Mothers of God (Moi, 1985, 165-166).

According to Kristeva, the occluded generative power that reveals itself under concepts of the phallus, the name of the father, the phallic mother, and of the dead father inscribes into the signifying patterns layers of uncertainty and complementarities. “If there is a texture of a sort that might seem as underlying this fundamental uncertainty, it is a texture of nothingness: the death drive” (Nikolchina, 2004, 41), where the subject is deconstructed by various, simultaneously operating discourses. Life, the ethical life implies as Žižek writes tarrying with the negative (Žižek, 1993), instead of succumbing to the demand of the other – and this may ultimately take us to death. Doing so, and abandoning the neutral position, subjects engage in the death drive’s reiteration, from the abjection of the mother, through the death of the father towards the death of the subject. As such subjects are eternally implicated in a death process that paradoxically makes death produce life and signification – the signification of concatenation. Nothingness and death are the ultimate sources of knowledge, since symbolically they are represented in Žižek as a skull facing inwards through the hollowness of empty eye sockets – something Eva too is allowed to see in the sculpture of her head Jeremy prepares for her during a day spent at Miss Applethwaite:

It was a large knob, barely representational – only, he had gouged with his two thumbs deep, deep into the slimed clay, making eye-sockets go, almost, right through the cranium. Out of their dark had exuded such non-humanity that Eva had not know where to turn. (*ET* 190)

For Kristeva *chora* is a “non-expressive totality formed by the drives and their states in a totality that is as full of movements as it is regulated. This regulation is defined by Kristeva as a mediation of social symbolic law, which is assumed through the mother’s body (Kristeva, 1984, 93). Eva mediates the symbolic to Jeremy – *chora* empowers women to mediate the symbolic.

According to Kristeva in *Powers of Horror* the semiotic life is accompanied by the processes of sublimation, just as the “sublimated monotony” (*ET*, 188) that ‘cocoon’ Jeremy and Eva in a ‘womb’-like state,

Sublimation, on the contrary, is nothing else than the possibility of naming the pre-nominal, the pre-objectal, which are in fact only a trans-nominal, a trans-objectal. In the symptom, the object permeates me, I become object. Through sublimation, I keep it under control. The object is edged with the sublime. It is not the same moment on the journey, but the same subject and speech bring them into being (Kristeva, 1982, 11).

Through sublimation, the object is transferred to an object able to exist in the symbolic. On the other hand, Žižek says the sublime object can paradoxically only exist in shadow “as something latent, implicit, evoked” (Žižek, 1992, 54) because it is impossible, it is a nonentity. On both levels, above-mentioned happiness is impossible *per se* and even if it does exist as a result of a conscious choice it is indefinable. The death of Eva is her sublimation into an angelic state pre-mentioned in the narrative. The semiotic life with Jeremy obeys the rules of certain sublimating rites, of which harmony is only occasionally broken by the discourse of strangers – “Their repetitive doings became rites. Harmony had been broken in upon only by the tussles with ear-and-speech men, or women, to whom she faithfully took him.” (*ET*, 189)

In *Powers of Horror* Kristeva writes that, “Abjection preserves what existed in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be” (Kristeva, 1982, 10). Jeremy’s abjection of Eva can be seen as a preservation of the maternal within him – sublimation of the maternal, and possible entrance into the symbolic – the rituals. And if we have

inferred that abjection is the founding tenet of excluding the maternal on entering into the symbolic, it is also a palpable sign (since it occurs throughout one's life) of the continuous indefferable presence of the maternal. Even the concept of autophagy – self-consummation- that has been mentioned in this chapter, points towards the inseparability of the child/self from the (m)other. Thus, if in phalocentrism abjection, which reveals itself in the concepts of ritual cannibalism and autophagy, should be directed at excluding the mother, in feminist theory, it points to her overt and undeniable presence within the matrix of the subject.

Raymond Hilliard's describes ritual cannibalism in his text entitled "Clarissa and Ritual Cannibalism" (Hilliard, 1999). Hilliard reminds us of Pierre Fauchery's delineation of ritual sacrifice of women as a *topos* central to the representation of women in the eighteenth century European novel. It is not merely a ritual sacrifice, according to Hilliard, but ritual cannibalism that depicts the discourse on femininity starting with eighteenth century novel. And as we have mentioned earlier, as an aftermath of suffering, subjects auto-consume themselves. Parallel to that, they engage in consummation of the other, resulting from partaking with the other, which brings suffering.

Barbara Creed writes in her *The Monstrous Feminine* that a "ritual is a means by which societies both renew their initial contact with the abject element and that exclude that element. Through ritual, the demarcation lines between human and non-human are drawn up anew and presumably made all the stronger for that process" (Creed, 1993, 8). The fully ritualised symbolic body must bear no indication of its debt to nature, it can therefore abide within the world of fantasy – cinema, just like Eva and Jeremy did in America, or else it should shed its affiliation to the semiotic and enter the symbolic. Communal rituals, as well as the religious ones serve as prohibitions against contact with the mother, warding off the fear of one's own identity sinking irrevocably into the mother – Eva's wedding seems to be one of such rituals. Eva becomes the beginning and the end – the parthenogenetic mother, the archaic mother, the point of origin and of end, of which apparently all children dream according to Freud.

In his "Fetishism in the Horror Film" Roger Dadoun describes such an archaic mother in detail,

A mother-thing situated beyond good and evil, beyond all organized forms and all events. This is a totalizing and oceanic mother, a shadowy and deep unity, evoking in the subject

the anxiety of fusion and of dissolution; a mother who comes before the discovery of the essential *béance*, that of the phallus. This mother is nothing but a fantasy inasmuch as she is only ever established as an omnipresent and all-powerful totality, an absolute being, by the very intuition – she has no phallus – that deposes her (...). (Dadoun, 1989, 53-4)

Eva Trout passes to exist as ‘a non-presence’ which can be understood as a very archaic form of presence. Her dead rigid body will now be a substitute for the archaic mother’s phallus that has managed to transform the child into her desire – annihilation of the dominant order. Instead, in the course of the narrative, her still living body served as a mesmerising fetish for the other in the novel.

If we look back at feminist theories, according to Elizabeth Grosz, in psychoanalytical theory there are three possibilities for female fetishism. In the first place, femininity itself can be seen to be a fetish, the substitution of material signs on the woman’s own body for the “missing” phallus, thereby remaking the entire body into the phallus through narcissistic self-investment. In the second place, the hysteric offers an externalized version of fetishism and invests a part of her own body with displaced sexuality. Finally, Freud’s “masculinity complex” in women most closely illustrates the disavowal proper to fetishism through the substitution of an object outside of the woman (another woman’s body), rather than her own or part of her own. Differently from Elizabeth Grosz, Butler’s ‘lesbian phallus’ illustrates the potential detachability of the phallus as an idealized signifier of desire in Freudian and Lacanian theory; thus it can be transferred to and re-appropriated by other kinds of bodies and subjects. Teresa De Lauretis definitively liberates fetishism from its anchorage in phallogocentric theories (the positing of the fetish as penis or phallus substitute, the explanation of fetishism as related to horror at the sight of female genitals) by arguing that the fetish is not the substitution for a “real” lack but constitutes the fetish of a fetish, the material sign of a desiring fantasy that marks both matter and its absence, and draws from both the subject and the object. As Sarah Kofman¹⁰⁶ noted in *The Enigma of Woman* a fetish is a positive

¹⁰⁶ Sarah Kofman wrote extensively on Lacan, Freud and Nietzsche and started her academic career under Gilles Deleuze and Jean Hyppolite. She has written in *The Enigma of Woman: Woman in Freud’s Writings* (1985) that fetishism belongs to masculine economy and it is Freud himself who has castrated women. Fetishism for women means the discovery that there is no symmetry between the masculine and the feminine. The theory of penis envy conceals Freud’s exclusion of the possibility of representing sexual difference.

example of multiplicity of femininity that conforms to the idea that there is no original truth in disavowal/acknowledgement of sexual difference. Thus what is fetishized in lesbian desire, De Lauretis argues, is the female body itself or something that is metonymically related to it. These revisions allow feminist theorists to theorize forms of feminine desire—and especially lesbian desire—that do not correspond to heteronormative and phallogocentric theories of sexuality. They allow one to see the intricacies of the archaic mother's fetishism, as a latent sign of an inseparable union between the child and the mother, as well as the mother as a child, and her own mother.

The idea of fetish in feminism accompanies the complex theoretical intricacies of concepts such as a mother-without-child, consuming motherhood, and child as a fetish. Fetishism is closely connected to the subject's dwelling within a pre-oedipal level, where infantile aggression, splitting of the *ego*, and the need for a transitional object to manage separation from the mother inform the subject's relation to fetishism. A mother, who uses her child as a fetish, lives a compulsive relationship with either her own mother or the father, or any external other that she elects as necessary for her own subjectification. Fetish grants us leverage on the absolute strangeness of otherness. Fetish is compounded by a particular fascination and revulsion (abjection) with the images of otherness that occupy a special place in the alien system of values of that very other. Fetishism stands for a sublimation of otherness, be it motherhood itself, childhood, the archaic mother, womanhood or the phallus. It stands, as in Freud, for the sublimation of death through the sublimation of mother. Every narrative asks for a textual fetish and this seems to partially answer J. L. Austin's question – How to do things with words? - Through fetishism. A fetish is a story masquerading as an object, whereas, in fact, it is rather a subject of our subject. A fetish is a universal part of motherhood, as well as selfhood in general, when we mourn the separation from the mother, from the child, from completeness before the symbolic order.

And since fetish is a masquerade of an object, and in fact a subject of the subject, masquerade itself is a fetishistic process necessary for identificatory processes and equally valid within discourses of femininity. As has been mentioned Joan Riviere talked about feminism as masquerade – a notion that has shed much light. Fetishism becomes a universal process for both genders pointing not towards a lack but rather multiplicity and production of different signifiers.

Another argument for fetishism and masquerade being both mutually entangled and constitutive processes of female discourse is represented in the fact that, according to Freud, maternal pedagogy is always visual pedagogy. Sublimation of the (m)other, re-finding of the mother-within, happens through masquerade of femininity by an explicit visual sublimation. And it is no mere coincidence that culturally women engage often in highlighting the visible in femininity, be it masquerade or not, these became equally valid discourses in the making of femininity, or rather: femininities.

In *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* Bowen sublimates monstrosity of her eponymous character through fetishizing her body in the narrative. Eva becomes part of Jeremy's material world, Eva's recollections of her mother are no more than objects collected during her lifetime with which she surrounds herself. To discover what is the riddle of female sexuality would be to discover the mother – to commit incest, as Kofman writes. Within phallic economy fetishism, matricide, and castration are the only alternatives. Fetishism means having it both ways. Fetishism is a riddle, therefore a masquerade.

4. Going Back to the Gothic and the Spaces of Alterity.

In Anglo-Irish gothic family romance the locus of action is situated within the space of alterity. In this sense the narrative construction of *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* relies on operations of constructing alternative spaces out of the traditional time/space paradigm. Action takes place in various alternate sites. The chapter entitled “Interim”, which gives us a chance to look at Eva from a perspective of another character/focalizer takes place in the air, that is during the journey made by plane by both Prof Holman and Eva Trout herself. In the air, as Portman C. Holman explains there comes time of experiencing “the no-hour: the ever to me enormity of an airborne post-noon” (*ET*, 125). At the time when a “terrible onus is on the plane, elongated the longer one looks along it to an all but hypothetical vanishing point” (*ET*, 125-126). This time of horror “an unreal torpor fills the pressurized air; bodies abandon themselves to daylight slumber in contorted attitudes to death. Awake or asleep, Mrs Trout, who is not afraid?” (*ET*, 125) To this, Bowen adds the monstrosity Eva herself represents as the one who deals apples from her possession, the fruit of sin. She herself is so heavy and out of proportion that she is having trouble “finding room for her big feet in the space accorded by Economy” (*ET*, 124). Before Eva’s attention falls on Holman he retains the sense of time to an acute extent of counting minutes to his conversation with Eva as forty five minutes. Then the time is blurred.

Another example of the space of alterity is represented in the castle that Willy Trout buys for his friend Constantine and where the peculiar boarding school is constructed. There Eva becomes “one of the twenty guinea-pigs” (*ET*, 48). The castle at the lakeside is a place where people who dwell there “are reborn” (*ET*, 51). There the children play gruesome tricks on each other, they do the “Dracula up” from balcony to balcony and set up pre-Oedipal traps for the teachers. The most curious element of the castle is hidden in the presence of near-albino Elsinore “Ophelia’s illegit” (*ET*, 56) who is supposedly snatched away from a Japanese butler’s son. She then develops a nervous breakdown. Elsinore makes an attempt at drowning herself in the lake but is saved. However, she does enter an inexplicable comma after the accident and is put up in Eva’s ‘octagonal’ room since there is no ‘sickroom’ in the castle. There

the watch began. No longer the mornings transform the room, a perpetual makeshift curtain having been thumb-tacked over the window, to hide lake – now, only a lightening of the fabric on which stood out a cabalistic pattern spoke of the duration of the short spaces, too like one another to be days, between night and night: whatever the hour by the clock (*ET*, 55-56).

The octagonal room becomes the space of self-discovery for Eva, a space out of time and reality where she tends to Elsinore, as we have already seen, where “to repose a hand on the blanket covering Elsinore was to know in the palm of the hand a primitive tremor – imagining the beating of that other heart, she had a passionately solicitous sense of that other presence (*ET*, 56). In a room that in its shape resembled a Dracula coffin, Eva recognizes her own source of desire for otherness. After all symbolically octagonal shape brings to mind concepts of transition, totality, regeneration and rebirth, as much as infinity. Bowen writes about the moments Eva spends with Elsinore when

Nothing forbid love. This deathly yet living stillness, together, of two beings, this unapartness, came to be the requital of all longing. An endless feeling of destiny filled the room. (*ET*, 56)

Maybe, as Eva says Elsinore “wants her mother. But nobody heard” (*ET*, 55). The same way, in the earlier section entitled “Two Schools”, Eva muses on her life with the Larkins where she finds herself lying with a heavy cold. While in bed Eva is overcome by “the enormous sadness which had no origin that she knew of” (*ET*, 47). She there muses on the emptiness of the motherly chair by the fire that is rejoicing in having “no motherly occupant” (*ET*, 47). Eva is lying in the dark – “What are you doing, Eva, lying in the dark? Lying in the dark” (*ET*, 47).

‘How is my darling?’ – but when? where? Some other child had been present, a very sick one: ‘Darling.’ Eva searched through her store of broken pieces of time, each one cut out more sharply by fever, looking for an answer. The voice had come in as a door opened – but what door? where? (*ET*, 47-48).

Here we can again recall what we have said about Deleuzian desire as prior to need. Deleuze reconfigures the concept of desire: what we desire; what we invest our

desire in, is a social formation, and in this sense desire is always positive. Lack appears only at the level of interests, because the social formation- the infrastructure – in which we have already invested our desire has in turn produced that lack. The true object of the immanent ethics is the drives. Bowen shows us both how much Eva is a product of alterity and how her world views produces these very same places of alterity.

Spaces of alterity do not only require a most common spatial understanding but are also hidden within speech practices in the novel. Metaphorical gaps within speech and lacunae not only appear within the ‘father’s *parole*’ as spoken by Constantine, for example. The convulted and contorted language is spoken by Eva whereas actual gaps within speech, that is lack of speech in particular, is shown in Jeremy’s deafness and dumbness and his different grasp of communication. Whereas, in many novels that perpetuate the Anglo-Irish gothic theme of vampirism and the living dead¹⁰⁷ is being inflicted on children¹⁰⁸, here the children already seem to have been infected. They now seem to suffer from a general disorientation, which Bowen believed to be a fundamental concept of any Anglo-Irish child’s self concept, as she expressed in her *Seven Winters: Memories of a Dublin Childhood*. As such, Jeremy is a metaphorical offspring of earlier victims of the devouring Anglo-Irish system. He is an offspring of characteristic unspeakability within the Anglo-Irish family, and a product of Anglo-Irish history. That said the liminal spaces are embedding not only territories but discourse as well. As Backus writes in her *The Gothic Family Romance*, “The Anglo-Irish devil’s compact and the figure of the living dead, the gothic literary tropes (...), emblemize the capitalist symbolic contract as it has played out within Ireland under and in the wake of British colonial rule” (Backus, 1999, 33) and literature in Ireland has been steadily interpolated by these transhistorical demonic forces.

To a certain degree Bowen’s Irish novel *The Last September* is treated as a return of the Anglo-Irish feminism and continues as a dominant trait in *Eva Trout*, or

¹⁰⁷ The concepts of vampirism, infected children, and the undead in Irish and Anglo-Irish literature can, for example, be traced as far back as the Irish legendary figure of Devorgilla brought back by Yeats’ “The Dreaming of the Bones”. They are present in the wirings of Jonathan Swift (in *Gulliver’s Travels* and “A Modest Proposal” as an example); in Edmund Burke’s *A Vindication*; in Maria Edgeworth’s *Castle Rackrent*; and in Sheridan Le Fanu’s “Carmilla”. In the present day writing the above themes can be seen in Glen Patterson’s *Burning Your On* (1988).

¹⁰⁸ As described in Margot Gayle Backus’s *The Gothic Family Romance*.

Changing Scenes, developing from the importance that women had within the settlers' philosophy. The death of Eva Trout is therefore a result, to a certain degree, of the increasing hybridity of Anglo-Irish women. Anglo-Irish women are victims and testimonies of a culture confronting its own demise.

Alterity, for the last part is represented in monstrosity, hybridity and hermaphroditism of eponymous Eva Trout. Eva destabilizes the system by which male and female – and hence masculine and feminine – are set off from each other, rendered mutually exclusive as well as categorically opposed. The argument that Bowen poses here is comparable with a growing need for a counter-discourse on subjectivity and specifically on femininity. Donna Haraway would call for a new discourse on cyborg subjectivity following Deleuzian idea of machine-like connection “molded together into a monstrous mechanism” (O’Toole, 2009, 168) and well presented in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* itself: “(...) no further sort or kind of any further communication has been had from you since; though sallies into Broadstairs, in incomplete control of a powerful bicycle, have been reported” (*ET*, 118). Hence Bowen does call for a new hybrid discourse since as Jennifer Gonzalez remarks in her “Envisioning Cyborg Bodies: Notes from Current Research”:

The image of the cyborg has historically recurred at moments of radical and cultural change... In other words, when the current ontological model of human beings does not fit a new paradigm, a hybrid model of existence is required to encompass a new, complex and contradictory lived experience. (Gonzalez 61, in Walshe, 2009, 169)

Hermaphroditism and monstrosity take us back to Mikhail Bakhtin and his concept of the grotesque body of the carnival that serves us to revitalize the notions of masculinity and femininity. This contributes to a liberated sense of a multiple subject which comprises elements of fantasy, openness and play. It is worth remembering that Elizabeth Bowen showed an “innocent taste for incognito” (Ellman, 2003, 74) and grotesque since her very first novel *The Hotel*, as noted in Ellman’s *The Shadow Across the Page*.

In keeping with the grim textual weather of the castle, the very monstrosity of eponymous Eva is highlighted in the question she is asked by her friends while still studying at the private school – “Trout, are you a hermaphrodite?” (*ET*, 51) Eva, apparently, does not know, yet we are told that “At fourteen Eva was showing no signs of puberty, which discouraged the matron or house mother” (*ET*, 49). What is more, one

of Eva's friends remembers the story of Joan of Arc, as an example of hermaphroditism, which corresponds to the intersexual and ambiguous character of Eva. And consequently, what the figure of Joan of Arc highlights is the mythology of female heroism and autonomy, as well as an ideal personification of virtue. It too signals that the life of Eva will end in a sacrificial death. To us Eva maps the emergence of intersex activism within a woman's discourse. Like Joan of Arc she is the hermaphrodite progeny of Virgin Mary and the Undine witch, because she is both chaste and murderous. Eva combines in her nature two archetypal women, she raises a child though she acquires it in an unconventional manner in a clandestine market of unwanted children, hence she does not give birth to Jeremy and remains virginal, yet she spreads destruction and tempts people to sin. Eva Trout's monstrosity corroborates the Anglo-Irish fascination with and treatment of monsters, and the monstrous. She is told to be allowed latitude "on the grounds of her being partly foreign (this no one queried) and partly handicapped" (*ET*, 62-63) mysteriously since "in what particular or what reason she was to be taken to be the latter was not gone into" (*ET*, 63). She bears a double meaning of hermaphroditism: a doubly sexed body, and a veiled figure of corporeal ambiguity – she can be all things to all readers since as Lidia Curti writes in her *Female Stories, Female Bodies*: "The accumulation and overflow of bodies and languages, the elements of proliferation and giantism, seem oneiric fantasies off compensation for the vanishing of stable singular identities" (Curti, 1998, 107). Jane Gallop while writing on monstrosity and otherness refers to Nancy Chodorow's and Luce Irigaray's ideas on inseparability of the daughter and mother – where the one does not move without the other (the mother does not move without the child). To her the term 'monstrous' -

refers to a 'continuous multiple being' (...) a being whose multiple parts are neither totally merged nor totally separate (...) whose boundaries are inadequately differentiated, thus calling into question the fundamental opposition of self and other. Such being is terrifying because of the stake any self as self has in its own autonomy, in its individuation, in its integrity. (Gallop, 1989, 90)

However, since monsters have always been associated with the sign from God, the figuration of monsters requires perceiving them as such. In fact the word monster derives from words *monstrate*: to show and *monere*: to warn. Monstrous hermaphroditism has envisioned the possibility of engendered wholeness. It

reconnected identity with the wholeness of desire, as object of desire and as dealing desire autonomously. Monsters are active and dynamic and this contradicts the idea of fixity of female existence that actually reaches back to the myth of Penelope imagined as static and ever journeying Ulysses. The monster does not move without its other, or rather the self does not move without its monstrous overshadowing other. In a similar manner Eva does not move without her son Jeremy in whom she finally allocates her longing for belonging. This is not without saying that Eva has not thrived to allocate herself within otherness for a long time. In fact, one of the epiphanic moments happens to Eva when she realises that Iseult Smith cares for her: “But – you care for me?’ As much as I can.’ Then that is enough.” (*ET*, 66) It is enough for Eva’s narrative when such a creature as Iseult with “a face already becoming unearthly” (*ET*, 78) notices her and becomes her guardian angel: “...But thou art Light...” (*ET*, 65), as well as the maternal figure since light is connected to the idea of conception and now used by Bowen in the novel’s chapter entitled “Genesis”. It is of far more interest within the text when Eva becomes a sort of monstrous fallen angel of annunciation in the novel abused by many and yet this having little impact on her inside, a trope that again follows the poetry of the ‘metaphysicals’ favoured by Iseult Smith: “- But thou art Light, and Darkness both together:” (*ET*, 65).

Eric got hold of Eva by the pouchy front of her anorak and shook her. The easy articulations of her joints made this rewarding – her head rolled on her shoulders, her arms swung from them. Her teeth did not rattle, being firm in her gums, but coins and keys all over her clinked and jingled. Her hair flumped all ways like a fiddled-about-with mop. The crisis became an experiment: he ended by keeping her rocking, at slowing tempo, left-right, left-right, off one heel on to the other, meanwhile pursing his lips, as though whistling, and frowning speculatively. The experiment interested Eva also. Did it gratify her too much? – he let go abruptly. ‘That’s all’ he told her. ‘But mind your own business next time. (*ET*, 101)

This idea of finding otherness for selfhood repeatedly is overwhelming for “the monstrous heiress” (*ET*, 63) who is unable to speak – talk, be understood, converse and yet possesses a panoply of bodily languages which Iseult Smith teaches her to order “rightly or wrongly” (*ET*, 62) – “And then what? – then you begin again” (*ET*, 62).

Thanks to Iseult Smith's attention granted to Eva the whole school is shaken – “how far could compassion go?” (*ET*, 63) As Nietzsche would ask, how deep is our longing for servitude and slavery? Yet slowly, credulity overtakes Eva:

Then, through one after another midsummer night, daylight never quite gone from the firmament, cubicle curtains round her like white pillars, she was kept amazed and awake by joy. She saw (she thought) the aurora borealis. Love, like a great moth circled her bed, then settled. Air came to her pillow from hayfields where, not alone, she had walked in trance, or the smell, of the rushy and minty and earthy wetness of moments at the fringe of the stream returned. The silence of buildings and of garden was now and then distributed by a sigh. (*ET*, 63)

This, I believe, is the most erotically charged fragment in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*, if not one of the most erotically charged pieces in the whole of Bowen's literary oeuvre. It all happens during midsummer at night, where words such as white pillars wrapping around Eva in trance and amazed smelling of rushy and minty and earthy wetness bring out sighs penetrating silence – Eva thinks she comes to see *aurora borealis*. This is Eva's second experience of otherness since the first one that involved tender Elsinore too happened within her octagonal chambers at night. Then, however, Elsinore is snatched away from Eva's bedside after having lied still and in a coma for weeks. Now, this encounter with otherness is new to Eva and reveals almost “too much for her” (*ET*, 63) so that she goes about “haggardly” (*ET*, 63). It stands for a metaphor of transgression. At Lumleigh school it is thought that Eva “had seen a ghost” (*ET*, 64) but in fact it is only Ms Smith that realises the transformatory character of the experiences Eva is having. “Are you coming nearer the surface, I wonder?” (*ET*, 64) she asks Eva and adds “I want you to. Yes, I am. Yet there are sometimes times when I think you would rather go on being submerged. Sometimes you cling to being in deep water. What are you afraid of?” (*ET*, 64) To this Eva responds “That at the end of it all you'll find out that I have nothing to declare” (*ET*, 64). She has yet to learn that the truth of meaning lies in things beginning over and over again as Iseult Smith puts it, where meaning is found in ever-changing and overlapping connections between singular drives and desires. Mary Shelley writes in her introduction to *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus* “Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist in creating out of void, but out of chaos; the materials must, in the first place, be afforded: it can give form to dark, shapeless substances, but cannot bring into being the substance

itself” (Shelley, 2001, xii). This is not only a renunciation for creative powers ‘in making’, this is too a renunciation of power that women possess to create and contradict. The joy of being is accompanied by the terrors of creation, terrors of otherness and the very terrors of the new creature. In writing about Eva what Bowen highlights is the possibility of female agency that may be a site of female *unheimlich*, and which is then symbolised by the destruction of Eva just like the destruction of female monster performed by the doctor in *Frankenstein*.

But as we have said, Eva comprises in herself the heroism of Joan of Arc and monstrosity of a witch (Bowen very often referred to writing as witchcraft and was herself referred to as a witch by her long-standing lover, and Canadian diplomat, Charles Ritchie). What Eva Trout can be called then is an angel of renunciation of truth – renunciation of a new discourse: a counter-discourse for women.

If we go back to the citation where Eva is abused physically by Eric we may see it as a dance macabre from a carnivalesque scene by Mikhail Bakhtin. The above fragment takes us back to the already mentioned “The Dancing Mistress” where both scenes represent a construction of something anew, through going out of one’s body. According to Bakhtin, it is only the classical bourgeois body whose boundaries are meticulously regulated. This is a body that appears perfectly finished and unchanging. Contrary to that the carnivalesque and grotesque foreground protuberances and orifices: the teeth that rattle, “coins and keys (...)” – that – “clinked and jingled” (*ET*, 101). Carnavalesque highlights activities such as eating, drinking, defecating, love-making and giving birth that reveal the permeability of bodily boundaries. It also draws from the medieval idea of *dance macabre* where death joins hands with the living and where apparent binaries are done away with – the image of death being itself a grotesque monstrosity. The *dance macabre* is the dance of Carnival that oversteps the boundaries of a body, laughs at hegemonies and thus creates new discourses on power and hegemony. Bakhtin calls the *dance macabre* ‘the dialogic open form’, in which conventions and expectations are routinely undone and overthrown. Here in Bowen the dance is a darkly funny force that mutates forms – it subsumes individuality to an emerging gestalt so that the new voices can be heard.

Carnival is an immaterial force that embodies difference and relations between subjects. It too draws attention to multiplicity of roles and acts that are culturally produced rather than naturally ordained. On an individual subject’s level acts can be

performed and reiterated freely in opposition to hegemonic values and in relation to the subject's iterability. Subjects are therefore intercorporeal and intertextual. In carnival the body becomes a body in mutation and is described in Bakhtin's *Rabelais and his World* as

a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed: it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body. Moreover, the body swallows the world and is itself swallowed by the world (...) Eating, drinking, defecation and other elimination (sweating blowing of the nose, sneezing), as well as copulation, pregnancy, dismemberment, swallowing up by another body – all these acts are performed on the confines of the body and the outer world, or on the confines of the old and new body. In all these events, the beginning and end of life are closely interwoven.” (Bakhtin, 1984, 317)

In the *dance macabre* performed by Eric and Eva – the scientist and Frankenstein become one another's visions. Even though it is obvious that it is Eric who abuses Eva, we do not know who subjects the performance of drawing satisfaction – as in carnival “it is precisely each other that they share” (Holquist, 1990, 91). The illusion of closed-off bodies is shattered and concepts of “isolated psyche in bourgeois individualism” (Holquist, 1990, 90) are erased. There is no static, closed-off identity. When Eric finds out that “the experiment interested Eva also” (*ET*, 101), he is swept by the lack of the uniqueness in his vision and closeness of the other he so much wishes to abject – so he let's go abruptly. According to Bowen Eva is the monster, Frankenstein, the creator, the Modern Prometheus and the fallen angel – when she yawns, “so dismissive a yawn” (*ET*, 109), the yawn distends “her rib cage to cracking-point, just not dislocating her jaw by the grace of heaven” (*ET*, 109). The removal of Eva's autonomy can only be temporary since sexual slavery provides sexual adventures for the *picara* that Eva personifies in the masculine discourse.

As such, Eva becomes a distorted version of an angel in the house, who may well be banished by the father's *parole* but welcomed by a feminist attempt at discourse. Even though originally the angel in the house referred to women taking care of the home, it was a purely masculine invention. Like angels she is of ambiguous sexual nature or rather asexual since theologically they are neither male nor female. As such the angelic Eva can be identified with the third sex.

Sexual ambiguity has been at the centre of feminist debates where one of the pivotal points was Virginia Woolf's novel *Orlando*. One of the cinematic re-visitations

of Woolf's *Orlando* made by Sally Potter in 1992 gives the viewers a new angle on sexual ambiguity in the creation of the asexual angel singing at the beginning and the end of the film – an image which has already been linked to Benjamin's angel of history “to the black and white angels that inhabit the fragmentary, dream-like cinema of Isaac Julien” (Curti, 1998, 87). To this Iain Chambers presents his short theory on angels as such in his *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* writing that:

The angels condense past, present and future. Under their gaze we find ourselves caught between the apparent ineluctability of time and its continual crisis (...) For the angels announce history as a perpetual becoming, an inexhaustible emerging, an eternal provocation, a desire that defies and transgresses the linear flow of historicist reason with the insistent now, the Jetzt, of the permanent time of the possible (Chambers, 1994, 134-135).

Eva Trout becomes such an ambiguous angel. Not surprisingly Bowen writes in the novel that,

Not far off, in one of those chance islands of space she stood tall as a candle, some accident of the light rendering her luminous from top to toe – in a pale suit, elongated by the elegance of its narrowness, and turned-back little hat of the same no-colour; no flowers, but on the lapel of the jacket a spraying-out subcontinent of diamonds; a great brooch (*ET*, 309-310).

5. Autonomy and Irony.

“In the commodity a relation between people takes on the character of a thing and thus acquires a 'phantom objectivity', an autonomy that seems so strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relation between people” (Lukács, 1971, 83). To Lukács commodity stands for an expression of alienated sociability, where “the definite social relations between men themselves assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things” (Lukács, 1971, 165). Commodities have come to signify emblems of identity and articulations of difference. The relationship towards commodities has become an embodiment of suspended, obfuscated or arrested sociability. Eva’s relationship towards her commodities can, among many things, be understood as Bowen's signal in favour of liberty and freedom. Nowadays, one of the post-feminist claims seems to be the reinvention of the youthful womanhood myth for whom freedom has now been won, and who partakes freely in the global market of commercial goods. If this “popular feminist appropriation permits more subtle modalities of gender re-inscription and re-subordination to be pursued” (McRobbie, 2005, 533) its claims may coincide with Bowen's pursuing of new female discourse in directions contrary to those of hegemonic male narratives. Pleasurable participation in the dominant culture can “mark out moments of (...) empowerment and subversive identity formation” (McRobbie, 2005, 534). As postulated by the 1990's feminism, Bowen too in her last novel had already ventured on carving a path towards a more independent and individualized girl with her ironizing of romantic narratives and use of consumerist guise. This she did juxtapose against elements of patriarchal power or the heterosexual matrix, which included female anxieties about the body, the need for male approval and search for a husband. However these can be understood as nothing more than endless masquerade of the cloying girly infantilism (looking into the mirror, trying on dresses, taking teeth out - as Livvy, from *The Last September*, after getting engaged as if she has been put/sublimated into masculine discourse and had her 'vagina teeth taken out' bleeding from a wound as if deflowered, blushing¹⁰⁹) that offer many critical possibilities for analysis for more

¹⁰⁹ Blood, deflowering, *vagina dentata* etc are here signaled as inhibiting attributes of masculine symbolic. Women need to be sublimated through the process of marriage from the danger they pose as

feminist and Queer readings. Irony and feminine performativity is by no means deliberately deployed by Bowen. As McRobbie admits after Butler “femininity is always a doing (...) femininity is indeed a kind of drag” (McRobbie, 2005, 542) and so is Bowen’s *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*. In patriarchal discourse the category of child finds itself replaced by the category of girl, which misleadingly permits the quest for identity within the *parole* of the father.

Relational autonomy does not exclude actions parallel with the dominant order which at the same time claim a new identity in their discourse. As Judith Butler admits, any “regime of truths sets the invariable framework for recognition: it means only that it is in relation to this framework that recognition takes place or the norms that govern recognition are challenged or transformed” (Butler 2005 in McRobbie, 2005, 532).

Constantine epitomizes Foucault's resonant ideas of hegemonic power that works not only through the restriction of liberty or freedom, but positively, by enabling certain sorts of action by subjects. Thus Constantine representing Eva Trout's father financial empire and enabling Eva's life style is nothing more than a representative of the male hegemony. Tactics, agility and irony are essentially individual categories ascribed to autonomous subjects. Initially action was only imputed to unliving things in Bowen's fiction but in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* this characteristic has been shifted back to some of the characters. Making individuals agile is a means of making them able to move within a framework of contradictions where irony is absolutely crucial. Bowen's claim may be also that this individual movement between contradictions is opened up to other movements - feminism and the course of history.

If there is a claim to consumerism in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* it by no means escapes the ideology of what has been called ironic consumerism by an ironic subject¹¹⁰. Irony is historically that which dialectics strives to be in the consciousness of the fragmented individual. Eva Trout may ironically be called a prototype of a modern

overtly sexualized and carnal figures, as believed in the phallic system. An example of both masculine fear of and fascination with women can be *The Last September's* character Marda, who infatuates all men in the plot of the novel, but whose main attributes are proneness to forgetfulness and bleeding, and whose name is an anagram of the word drama.

¹¹⁰ This, in pragmatics, assents on the idea of nihilistic and ludic mischief maker that invites an ability to decode a realm of irony and textual bliss. Since romanticism an ironic subject exempts himself or herself from making ethical judgments and postpones the determination of the self.

trickster/outsider who no longer wishes to be an outsider in the neo-liberal age. The outsider operates here as an insider who shows the tendency of turning everybody into outsiders. This is visible when Bowen highlights Eva's dislocating character that has power of exercising a mesmerizing and shaking effect on people.

Eva Trout's agility is ironically limited and uneven. The hegemonic discourse stops her from developing in the discourse attentively to her individuality. As Thomas Barfus notes in his essay entitled "Active Subjects, Passive Revolution. Agility, Cleverness and Irony in Contemporary Society" fascism was one of the hegemonic discourses that earned the label passive. Taking as an example Gramsci's notion of passive revolution, Barfus writes "Fascism keeps the people who move forward into new and more complex forms in production and the division of labour from moving into a corresponding role in society" (Barfus, 2000, 845). To what extent, then, is male hegemonic power a propeller and a supporter of passive revolutions?

Much attention in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* is devoted to the form rather than thinking. Expressions of Eva's stature and pose are highlighted in opposition to her mental clumsiness and lack of reflection. Apparently form can be a purified expression of identity, and certainly it is so in Gilles Deleuze's and Feliz Guattari's *Thousand Plateaux* (1987). In *Thousand Plateaux* (1987) we are constantly warned against becoming too obsessed with our humanity and potential supremacy thanks to Cartesian *Cogito*. Clumsiness has generally been associated with Elizabeth Bowen notably if one thinks of her syntax and choice of vocabulary. Maud Ellman writes that Bowen's "(...) syntax – with its double negatives, inversions, and obliquities; its attribution of the passive mood to human agents, and of the active mood to lifeless objects – constantly ambushes our ontological security." (Ellmann, 2003, 7) Susan Osborn, in her introduction to *Elizabeth Bowen: The New Critical Perspectives*, repeats an already recurring question "How else can we account for the often apparently arbitrary use of punctuation; the odd seemingly rash and indiscriminate word choices; the convoluted and at times insensible syntax- the whole ungainly thing?" (Osborn, 2009, 39) Is Bowen's style a "blatant disregard for the accepted norms of intellectual decorum" (Osborn, 2009, 39)? Or is it rather the result of inexperience? Certainly it is not a matter of lack of artistic discipline but rather a study in transgressions and irregularities within apparently neat form. Applying of unfamiliar tropes and unintelligible signifiers Bowen disrupts "the traditional hegemonic compact between the reader and the text by

interrupting what Frank Kermode refers to (...) generically determined ‘probability system’ (...) (Osborn, 2009, 41). The probability system bears in itself a nucleus of literary *mimesis*. However, one may wish not to refer to the probability system here but rather to the conjunction of three different stages of *mimesis* as described by Paul Ricoeur. The meaning of narrative and its transformative effect on the reader are dynamic processes. These corroborate the idea of fusing of horizons between the text and the reader. How does the ungainly and the ugly refer to this idea? The ungainly contains potentially a narrative structure of a three-fold present that intersects itself between the world of the reader and the world of the text. It is grounded as Ricoeur writes in *Time and Narrative* (Ricoeur, 1984, (1983), 45) “in a pre-understanding of the world of action, its meaningful structures, its symbolic resources and its temporal character” (Ricoeur, 1984, (1983), 45). And the pre-understanding itself is not straightforward but rather as *mimesis two*: ‘as if’. The understanding of the concept of deformation is mediation between pre-understanding of action and post-understanding of text within a ‘as if’ paradigm. Our reaction to the text endows it with meaning. The conflict between the text as discourse and the text as story reveals the polyglossic and normative nature of discourse. Distracting proliferation of detail is another Bowenesque technique of disruption. The concept of Ricoeurian *mimesis* is important to highlight the idea of circularity of discourse. To Ricoeur *mimesis* does not merely represent a set of signs, but an unfolding circular narrative. The circular mode however can be associated with the feminine. *Mimesis* in Bowen does not merely work “to infer the unfolding of causal sequences that allow us to recognize the represented objects as the same again” (Osborn, 2009, 53). It tries “to grasp the laws underlying reality and history, putatively revealing the world in its innermost principles” of unintelligibility (Osborn, 2009, 53). Bowen’s *mimesis* images invite the reader “to decode them, to make meaning of them, and yet that meaning often eludes recognition” (Osborn, 2009, 53). The task before us is to see through *mimesis* reconciling the feminine and the masculine through their particular embodiment. One should promote the original Plato’s *mimesis*, reinstalled by Luce Irigaray, where *mimesis* is productive and not enclosed in a set of reproductive imitations. Feminine *mimesis* is that of translations and adjustments and masculine *mimesis* is that of systematic copies. Feminine *mimesis* is interplay between the interpreters. Even the text does not have total dominion over signifiers. Luce Irigaray follows this idea which is originally Plato’s idea.

Deleuze prefers to look outside the proliferation of humankind as the supreme-being in favour of the study of geology that marks the beginning of non-human expressivity and identity.

The first change in expressivity¹¹¹, also known as the specialisation of language in linguistics, took place, according to Deleuze, when the three-dimensional expressivity of crystals and atoms was perceived as one-dimensional and this concept was relocated into areas of linguistics and philosophy.¹¹² The one-dimensionality has been known to take as an example the DNA representation of identity. Human thinking acquired such cogitation and pattern-setting abilities that they inevitably led to a rise in hegemonies in human thinking, behaviour and expression. And yet, apart from the call for certain unification, the creation of one-dimensional code for DNA made textual and artistic production possible, thanks to the interweaving and interrelating of multiple elements. With that, two more elements of expressivity become of great importance in the differentiation of human production – sensitivity towards the external and internal elements (excitability and self-awareness) as well as territoriality, when the code becomes a signature. Both sensitivity and territoriality resulted in the elevation of the other. DNA-like understanding of personality highlighted enhanced multiplicity and plasticity of the so-called (Bowenesque) slippery-like identity. The plasticity, now transferential has been directed not only at the other but at the self too. It heightened self-awareness. Identity became known as an assemblage.

On the horizontal axis, an assemblage comprises two segments, one of content, other of expression. It is a mechanic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passions, and intermingling of bodies reacting to one another, as in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* when one bodily reaction lead to a chain of others – from a look to a word, from eating to abjecting. Then, it is also a collective assemblage of enunciation of acts and statements of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies – on the action-reaction pattern.

¹¹¹ This idea has been widely used by the Mexican writer and philosopher of the so-called 'new-materialism' Manuel DeLanda, mainly in his *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* (1997), and *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* (2002)

¹¹² Deleuze and Guattari write about DNA in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. (2004b)

On the vertical axis, the assemblage has both territorial sides, which stabilize it, and cutting edges of de-territorialisation, which carry it away. De-territorialisation stands for oppression as it restricts random movements proving once more the importance of a personal space and territory through which subjects connect with each other freely.

According to Deleuze becoming animal means learning to identify with all the non-human expressions, among which there is sensibility and territoriality. Truly enough, humans too have their own expressions of affirmation of life. Among them there are solidarity and legitimacy. However, Deleuze warns us that those cannot be limited to words. On the contrary, talk is cheap and actions speak louder than words. Expressivity of what we do or what we perform on a regular basis is far more transcendental than speech. In becoming an animal, Deleuze prompts us to one more important aspect of animal-like capacity, that is, towards the concept of “affordance”. Affordance is a neo-logism coined by James Gibson who devoted himself to the study of animal behaviour. According to the concept of affordance¹¹³ environment expresses its capacities to affect us in our daily life and behaviour. It steers us towards our ways of being, influences our daily choices and strides. Architecture, as an example is a form of human work of art that stands for lay-outs that grant humans possibilities to live. That said we may now look into how becoming an animal makes of an important facet in Eva Trout’s behaviour. Eva Trout sees her environment that supplies her with potentials for action. She sees affordances directly. To her talk is cheap, so that her inability to speak fluently in the symbolic code allows her capacity to see and act beyond the words – the words that stand for the dominant order. In yet another Deleuzian concept of becoming-woman, it is not expected of anyone to become woman literally, but rather to see into women-like expressivity, animalesque answer to the call of nature in nurturing the other, into the place of plenty, Kristevan maternal *chora*. It follows that one is pushed towards understanding how our actions are adapted to the non-human expressivity, as well as how female actions are adapted to the environment and affordances by the means of what has come to be known as relational autonomy.

¹¹³ James Gibson developed an interactionist view of perception and action that focused on information that is available in the environment, of which the key concept is the idea of affordance – a quality of an object that affords the subject to perform an action and is latent in the environment. Gibson’s ideas on the subject can be found in his *Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. (1986)

If, like Eva, we wish to go beyond language, we need to see into the elements that inject the obsolete, every-day language with expressivity. As such we need to concentrate more on the face, capable of hundreds of muscular spasms reflecting our thoughts. We need to focus on the face-to-face interaction with the other, as writes Levinas¹¹⁴. Affordance of such intersubjectivity and dialogism will be understood as relational and not merely subjective or intrinsic. The encounter with the other, in such affordable circumstances, will constitute the epiphany of the face-to-face irreducible relation of selfhood with otherness.

The face-to-face interaction is inevitably a source of antagonistic anguish and over protectiveness, as depicted in Leonardo da Vinci's Madonnas, and already described in the chapter referring to Bowen's *The House of Paris*. On one hand, anguish is what makes the primal condition of our lives, as in Heidegger. On the other hand, over protectiveness is what in mother-child relationships originates overaccentuated narcissism. Narcissism is what Julia Kristeva found to underscore the artistic production of Leonardo da Vinci. Over-protectiveness and anguish are the key themes that underlie the mother-child relationship in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* of the eponymous character and her son Jeremy. This, generating an internal conflict leads partially towards the abjection of the mother at the end of the novel and her death – the exclusive feelings create a background of affordability of death. Jeremy, having access to Eva's body, experiences the triggering of the processes of matricide similar to the triggering of his gun.

In yet another of her novels, *The Death of the Heart*, Bowen too uses the themes of face-to-face interaction and affordance to do so. The moment of epiphanic disembodiment takes place in *The Death of the Heart* when Thomas Quaine speaks to Portia, his recently orphaned step sister, an image of abjectable motherhood is unveiled. Portia tries to explain the financial difficulty of living with her now deceased mother. During their conversation Thomas realizes that Portia no longer sees him and then we are presented with Portia's hallucination on the final days she spent with her mother. It is an image of a fugitive mother, visiting churches and drawn to Catholicism. However, the image here is neither of overprotectiveness nor anguished distance provoking abjection– it is an image of a profound emotional communion between mother and child

¹¹⁴ As mentioned in previous parts of this chapter. Further reading can be found in Emmanuel Levinas' *Totality and Infinity* (1961),

as between the equal *I* and other that does not fit the normative discourse on maternity. And yet, Kristeva admits that both versions of the myth –the Virgin and the Mother are equally submissive – hence the weakness and difficulty they present within the phallogocentric discourse. However, the motif of maternity-in-performance as shown in the relationship Irene and Portia foster juxtaposes the negative image of Irene we are given in Anna’s witty remarks.

As Julia Kristeva notes matricide can only occur in the case of male child/mother dyad since the relation of daughters and the maternal body is different. The motif of abjection appears in a reverse way in the case of Karen and Leopold, since it is Leopold who is the other – a child who “will never be born to be my [Karen’s] enemy” (*HP*, 155), thus he is the child to be abjected.

In the case of the female subject the concepts of intersectionality, affordance and autonomy gain even a further ground. A female subject is destined to live in affordance, as in James Gibson, with the narrowing territory, and limited possibilities. It perceives the world as composed of opportunities, and threats, and affordable situations. The mother or the female subject in general is epistemologically well-connected to the affordances that surround her, because she is engaged in meaningful, face-to-face, otherness promoting activities. The alleged chasm between subject and object does not seem very deep or wide to the female subject. It is also true that the latest feminist philosophy that has widely used the idea of affordances is cyberfeminism that addresses the new and complex conditions created by global technologies. Cyberfeminism¹¹⁵ means theorizing the impact of new technologies on the lives of women, employing the traditional strategies of feminist resistance and social and political activism, and when appropriate, shifting feminist practice to employ subversive “cybertechniques” within the new global communication order. Cyberfeminism, drawing on the work of H  l  ne Cixous and *l’  criture feminine* movement, proposes that hypertext in particular might allow for an embodied writing process and experience, a feminist practice that affords women the opportunity to claim agency amid a history of phallogocentric language and

¹¹⁵ Cyberfeminism sprang as an offshoot of Donna Haraway’s influential essay “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the late Twentieth Century” in “Simians, Cyborgs and Women” (1991). Contradicting masculinist nature of techno-science, cyberfeminism has been known to be interested in the interactions between feminism and cyberspace – internet, digital art, and further computer crime since the 1990’s.

writing practices. In using affordance of cyberspaces women may become subjects rather than objects, and act as cultural agents disrupting the *status quo*. Certainly, there is not much of cyber space in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*. However, the novelties of the mid-twentieth century are embraced thoughtfully by Bowen, who makes use of all the technological novelties in her novel. For it is a fact, that Eva surrounds herself with objects of material and technological value, such as cars, radios etc, and we may infer from the text that if translocated to the twenty-first century she would certainly make use of cyber-spaces.

Peter Blos in his classic psychoanalytic study of adolescence claims that the main process of adolescence is ‘object relinquishment and object finding’¹¹⁶. As such a child of either gender must give up the incestuous love for one object and move on to another one from non-familiar relational world. A girl’s transition from her Oedipal situation is not as easy as a boy’s because the moment she manages to escape her familial relationships she must confront her new familial and conflicting entanglements again. In adolescence and in adulthood, identity can be described as a dynamic process somewhere beyond stasis and change. Already Ricoeurian dialectic of *ipse-idem* has important ramification for a social and theoretical understanding of identity that yields the conception of the self somewhere between the pseudo-alternative of pure change and absolute dominant identity. In a sense identity is so dynamic that it becomes our own temporal frame. In understanding the processes of identification, Butler presents a dynamic where the internalization of historically variable norms is formative of the psyche. It is an uneven process whose dynamics are shaped by prevailing social and historical relations – the instability of identity, both corporeal and psychic arises from this complex dynamic process of mediating between what is socially accepted and what is not, what is socially normative and what is not, and consequently what is ‘affordable’ and what is not ‘affordable’.

Elizabeth Bowen in her *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* tries to overcome the foreclosure on the normative identity by making it a changeable dynamic process, where agency remains primarily a strategy of displacement of constraining symbolic

¹¹⁶ This idea can be found in Peter Blos’s theory of adolescent developmental processes in his *On Adolescence: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation*. (1966). It refers to the idea of negotiations between teenagers and parents the process of separation and further regression. According to Blos teenagers are split between wanting to separate themselves from the parents and to remain dependant.

norms. Bowen ventures to overcome the foreclosure that in other words may be called the melancholia over a loss of subjective attachments that cannot be openly grieved for as repudiated identifications. “To give expression to that grief is to acknowledge a loss which is denied” (McNay, 2000, 131) to turn it into humouring narrative is to voice an anger, which can be understood as an act of resistance.

The humour, the hybrid, and the drag in Bowen are the changes which emerge, not as opposition or externality “but as dislocation arising from the reinscription of the tools and symbols of the dominant into the space of the colonized” (McNay, 2000, 58), the space of women, even if this identity politics means a fetishization of the other. Not to turn these manifestos into a self-identical principle that effaces the specificity of the feminist struggle, Bowen’s notion of the hybrid, ideas of performative resignification, parody and masquerade are emplotted into the narrative of *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* using a somewhat grotesque and Bakhtinian concept (see also Bourdieu “On the Family as a Realized Category”, 1996¹¹⁷) of *the lucidity of the excluded*. The perpetuated exclusion of the feminine by the masculine adds up to its ability to gain a certain critical insight. However when subordinate position to such order means that women remain complicit with the dominion, the insubordinate and disruptive attitude means a chance of a new counter-discourse in identification.

¹¹⁷ In his “On the Family as a Realized Category.” (1996) Bourdieu dissolves the category of a family to better analyze how people form the representations of what people refer to as a family – operations formed on the idea of exclusion and translation. A family is created as a classificatory term subject to a process of naturalization, the term family being both descriptive and prescriptive encompassing fields such as juridical, residential, alliance.

6. From Timelessness and Laughter towards Subjectivity.

There is no intelligence that can come out of the mind that is considered mad. There are no words, no coherent speech, but rather a mass of being expelled.

Feminists were once accused of having no sense of humour, a charge they have long managed to overcome against the patriarchal restraints. In feminism humour is not resigned but rebellious and liberating. Julia Kristeva writes in her “World, Dialogue and Novel” that feminist laughter has much to do with the genre of Menippean satire in its multiplicity, fluidity and polifony. Kristeva writes,

Menippean discourse is both comic and tragic, or rather, it is serious in the same sense as it is carnivalesque. Through the status of its words, it is politically and socially disturbing. It frees speech from historical constraints and this entails a thorough boldness in philosophical and imaginative inventiveness. (Kristeva in Booker, 1991, 9)

As follows, *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* bears traits of a Menippean satire to the extent that its comic moments in discourse are very often tragic and serious at the same time. The seriousness of Eva’s life plot is juxtaposed against blatant comedy stemming from her awkwardness, monstrosity and stupor. The tragic is intertwined with the comic disturbing what is political and social within the narrative of the novel as well as the narrative that the reader brings with himself or herself in the act of reading. In Bowen’s fiction, the laughter comes from the complex reversals that are neither against dominant discourses nor are total parodies of them – instead the reversals become something new – *another* discourse, or the discourse of the other that does not come from the mutually exclusive binary of male and female. Bowen’s humour is carnivalesque as it constructs through constant deconstruction. Again, Kristeva writes about carnival that,

The laughter of the carnival is not simply parodic; it is no more comic than tragic; it is both at once, one might say that it is *serious*. (...) Modern writing offers several striking examples of this omnified scene that is both *law* and *others* – where *laughter* is silence because it is not parody but *murder* and *revolution*. (Kristeva in Booker, 1991, 8)

In *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*, Bowen's humorous style does lead to a murder, both of Eva and of the phallic discourse. And to admit in a Freudian manner – humour is liberating – means to laugh at the end of the book, to laugh at Eva's awkward death that is humour's roar of invulnerability – the invulnerability of a new feminine discourse.

Within the plot of the novel *Eva Trout* is a giant literally and figuratively – she is herself a satire on what is usually considered feminine and gracious. She cannot be contained within a form or a pattern of norms, so she remains the outside and untheorisable by the centre. She is a slippery fish and yet abides within the female paradigm of water. She herself becomes the centre since she centres everybody's attention on her. Eva's last words before she dies, after being shot by her adoptive son Jeremy, seek for the meaning of the noun concatenation, as used in post-nuptial speech delivered by Constantine. Concatenation means things linked together in a series or chains – the way Eva herself links all the narratives in the novel's plot. However, since her death leaves all the possibilities open, Eva says "There is invariably more, nothing is final I suppose." (*ET*, 296) For since it is Constantine who explains to Eva the meaning of concatenation and injects it into her discourse it can only endure in a masculine dictionary. Feminine dictionary has its own definition of discourse, and Eva's death confirms it and invites further interpretation.

Regina Barreca writes in her *Untamed and Unabashed* (2004) that "Bowen's prose is emblematic of the way women's humour questions, mocks and demystifies the world of inherited and institutionalized power." (Barreca, 2004, 109) She continues to say that "Satire created by Bowen does not have a corrective action; indeed, her work remains fascinatingly problematic because while she mimics the accents of the ruling class, she mirrors power only to ridicule it (...) she mocks the certainties of the authoritative discourse" (Barreca, 2004, 111). Humour in Bowen proves the point that women live under artificial boundaries.

A verb rather than a noun gender categorization allows construction of verbs such as to man and to woman. Furthermore, it is important to notice that the sole practice of being a woman, a man, a mother or a father does not become a social discourse until it receives a reaction, thus before it gains dynamic momentum of being exchanged between the addresser and addressee. Whatever social practice of a subject it only becomes a discourse when it is contextualized. As such we may want to understand

how humour works and what is the purpose of using it. We will be unable to find the answer without analyzing how humour works with and without external other, for if there is any kind of speech act that requires audience, this will certainly be humour.

Elizabeth Bowen does make humour of her subsequent chapters making parody at her earlier literary oeuvre. In the part entitled “Saturday Afternoon” Eva visits Henry and his family to reveal her secret plans of escape, which in the end may be nothing more than ‘macaroons out of her head’. If we go back to the short story “Sunday Afternoon” (1941) we remember the subtext of this short text ingeniously replicating the retardendness, torpor and yet a repressed idylism of the enclosed Irish life to which a visitor brings news from the war-time London.

Bowen makes the serious matters laughable and carnivalesque. In the fragment where Constantine visits sick Eva at the Arbles, and once again violates her integrity and the right of choice, Eva’s bodily frame, though visibly shaken, reacts in a surprisingly self-protective manner. Eva is pictured as a guarding fortress or a castle, in which many locks can be used for self-protection. When Bowen speaks about the house Eva inhabits, she may, in fact, be understood to be speaking about Eva’s bodily self – the mysterious ‘*she*’.

She now yawned: so dismissive a yawn that it distended her rib-cage to cracking-point, just not dislocating her jaw by the grace of heaven. She checked on the silence, waiting another minute before going out to make fast the porch door. She then double-locked, grinding the key round twice. She waggled bolts into long-forgotten sockets, wheedled the ball end of the door-chain along its groove. Surveying her work as an absolute, she was not content yet – a barricade should have been added, had that been possible. (*ET*, 109)

Female humour serves to transform frustration into action. As such it can be considered an inflammatory device. As comedy may become violent, destructive and murderous, there is a strong connection of humour and anger. In fact, a nervous bout may easily be misinterpreted for an attack of laughter or else manifest itself as such. For women laughter may easily be interpreted as the destructive laughter of the medusa for which the pleasure is drawn from both jouissance and terror. As Regina Barreca writes “For women, therefore, there is a different set of endings, or non-endings, leading to pleasure” (Barreca, 2004, 19); hence the traditional humoristic narrative does not hold for for the female subject. As Cixous and Clement speculate, from a woman’s “own

anarchic point of view, it is pleasure in breaking apart; but from the other's point of view, it is suffering, because to break apart is to aggress. The suffering is not originally hers: it is the other's which is returned to her, by projection" (Cixous and Clement, 1996, 34). The experience of such painful laughter sets the subject on an entirely different path of destruction not catharsis towards the continuation of *status quo*. There is no hope in continuing as before, thus the pleasure is drawn from the destruction of the familiar and the dominant. These, for women, include the destruction of the father's *parole*, the idea of marriage, or motherhood as they are presented in the dominant discourse. Somehow, the laugh of the Medusa is final and tragic, as the laugh of Bowenesque Medusa in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* that is tragic, consuming and more representative of a laugh from the abyss of the Bakhtinian and grotesque *vagina dentata*, consuming all that is on its way. According to Barecca, female pleasure depends on "surprises, disruptions, reversals, disunity and disharmony. The experience cannot be absorbed into the prefabricated cultural structures; it doubles on itself, not purged but strengthened." (Barreca, 2004, 19)

In writing humour, a woman writer must be prepared to embrace madness as natural aftermath of the humoristic experience and as one of its tools. As Annette Kolodny writes, a woman writer must be able to,

depend on a fund of shared recognitions and potential inference. For their intended impact to take hold in the reader's imagination, the author simply must (...) be able to call upon a shared context with her audience. When she cannot, or dare not, she may revert to silence, to the imitation of male forms or (...) madness (Kolodny, 1980, 256).

According to Juliet Mitchell the laughing woman must become a hysteric. As such, a woman writer may have to resort to silence – as Eva's silent semiotic observations of the outside; to drag – which may be similar to Eva Trout's hermaphroditism; or to madness- as literary Eva's madness pointed out to her by Constantine. Therefore, a woman writer needs to realize that she progresses from one rhetorical illusion to another, from one drag to another, from one utopia to another.

In contrast to male comedy, female comedy takes as its aim the powerful and the dominant rather than the pitiful, and is written from the point of view of the outsider rather than the insider. It easily targets hypocrisies, affectations, thoughtless following of social structures.

Writing about the dangerous quality of female humour, Barreca says that,

Directing the comedic vision in all its forms – irony, puns, repartee, irreverence and sarcasm – towards those arrogantly occupying positions of power is a hallmark of women’s humour. And it probably accounts for why women who publicly exhibit their mocking response have always been considered dangerous. (Barreca, 2004, 22)

It has been said, that women’s writing is very often apocalyptic. As such, the *jouissance* it brings is accompanied by the experience of pain, of unhappiness and of feeling disgust. As a result it is a writing that depends rather on the process than resolution – the plot rather than the ending; becoming rather than being. In women’s writing linear, masculinist progression paves the way for the circular and feminine progression, along with the recognition of multiplicity, diversion and rebellion. As Kate Clinton writes in a somewhat poetic but unnerving way - women’s humour has

the potential of splitting the world apart. Light shines through the whys cracks we make and illuminates all aspects of our oppression. Consider feminist humour and consider the lichen. Growing low and lowly on enormous rocks, secreting tiny amounts of acid, year after year, eating into the rock. Making places for water to gather, to freeze and crack the rock a bit. Making soil, making way for grasses to grow. Making way for rosehips and sea oats, for aspen and cedar. It is the lichen which begins the splitting apart of the rocks, the changing of the shore line, the shape of the earth. Feminist humour is serious, and it is about the changing of this world. (Clinton, 1981, 39)

There is nothing more powerful than, as Mary Daly writes in her *GynEcology*, “the sound of women really laughing. The roaring laughter of women is like the roaring of the eternal sea” (Daly, 1990, 17) of semiotic pulsions and ebbs. It carries within, as has just been said, a roar of female invulnerability. Like the eternal sea the laughter seems eternal and lacks closure and resolution.

As noted earlier, not only can female humour be considered madness, it too can be connected to the monstrous (see Cixous’s *The Newly Born Woman*) since women have long been considered to inhabit the liminal spaces. There is no denying then that Eva Trout is the monster in the book who laughs the louder and whose laugh is apocalyptic, final and yet open-ended. Hers is the germinating laughter of no comparison to belittling titter of Henry and Constantine – their giggling along with the patriarchal laugh. In fact, it is their laugh that is profoundless and soundless, and it is

Juliet Mitchell's final laughter in her *Women: The Longest Revolution*, that might be other women's and might have been Eva's:

I, too, overflow; my desires have invented new desires, my body knows unheard-of songs (...) And I, too, said nothing, showed nothing, I didn't open my mouth, I didn't repaint my half of the world. I was ashamed. I was afraid, and I swallowed my shame and my fear. I said to myself: You are mad! What's the meaning of these waves, these floods, these outbursts? Where is the ebullient, infinite woman who (...) hasn't accused herself of being a monster? Who, feeling a funny desire stirring inside her (to sing, to write, to dare to speak, in short, to bring out something new), hasn't thought she was sick? Well, her shameful sickness is that she resists death, that she makes trouble. (Mitchell, 1984, 226)

Bowen's renegade humour is therefore far more complex than it has been thought when Bowen was enclosed within the cliché of light feminine comedy of class and manners. As Eva concludes during her visit to the National Portrait Gallery - "there was no real life" (*ET*, 216) in *mimesis* and thus imitation but there is real life in the subject's own way of life – the Nietzschean forging of personal pattern. The preservation of the real life reiterates and safeguards autonomous selfhood (via performances of subjectivity), of which sense of humour constitutes inseparable part. Humour, and rightly so, can be judged in either felicitous or infelicitous terms, however this depends on the idea of the subject included or excluded from the group laughed at. What is more, the idea of felicitous humour is very often utopian. Humour creates concepts anew and disrupts the old order. Mimicry, similarity and resembling are slippery ground, though taken out of context they can be used as dislocating ingredients of discourse, as, for instance, in drag. Furthermore the drama of hegemonic order is that most of it relies on continuous simulated representation.

Mimesis in feminism, as described in Luce Irigaray, has been called *strategic essentialism*¹¹⁸ (originally coined by Gayatri Spivak), where women imitate imperfectly the traditional roles that have been imposed on them. Strategic essentialism, although

¹¹⁸ Strategic essentialism refers to temporary solidarity among women and denial of the heterogeneity of female discourse for the purpose of enactment of social causes. It refers to a positivist essence or core of femininity, which all women have in common. See, Spivak's *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. (1987)

abandoned in ‘austere’ theory, initially from Spivak’s own initiative has, in my opinion, been transformed into carnivalesque drag and grotesque performance.

If we were to research back for the trickster of strategic essentialism in the history of literature, our gaze would certainly fall on the concept of female *picara*, whose exaggerated feminine attributes served as deadly means of annihilation and mischievousness towards men. These included conversational wit and ingenious behaviour, physical attractiveness, duplicity and ingenuity – all that the dominant discourse postulated to be the abyss of female madness, trickster and *vagina dentata*. Although, *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* as a novel does not present us with a straightforward case of female *picara* we may argue the idea of her as such as distributed between some of the female characters, namely the eponymous Eva and her Lumleigh teacher Iseult Smith. In Eva there may be no blatant beauty but rather a way of influencing men, as already signaled in her similarities to Browning’s *Pippa Passes*. To a degree Eva does not crave success but does seem to want a certain social position in the society, which is to be prepared for her by her future husband Henry. And even though Eva’s reasons for wanting a lady-like status and a home are extremely complex and related to the maternal, it does seem, in a Bakhtinian carnivalesque way, that Eva as a monster craves a safe refuge to lay her discursively poisonous seed – her child Jeremy. Living in the middle ground, between centred and de-centred positions, Eva does retain certain *picara* attributes. Being neither a whore nor a virgin, she enjoys a social and economic freedom. Her certain tomboism and hermaphroditism do signal picaresque attributes too. Fitting partially in the category of the New Woman, she gains more and more mobility against social constraints, her confinement being now more of a discursive kind. She also is a typical city girl, moving from hotel to hotel, city to city, country to country. Although she does not engage in practices considered typical of a *picara*¹¹⁹, for example prostitution, she is seen as ‘distributing apples’ from her bag – that is dealing the sin, even though there is a difference between an archetypal sacred prostitute and a common one. Eva, as the *picara*¹²⁰ undergoing literary development

¹¹⁹ As described in Anne K. Kaler’s *The Picara: from Hera to Fantasy Heroine*. (1991)

¹²⁰ *Picara* or the female rogue seeks her identity through a masculine quest of the anti-hero and is prompted on her journey through abandonment as a child or later as a wife. She openly uses her wit and sexuality. In the later development of the literary concept of *picara* her wanderings have a sequential

towards the autobiographical and moral point of view, moves in the direction of moral thinking and of recognizing the hypocrisy of the society. At the same time she has trouble escaping it. And yet Eva acts as an autonomous *entrepreneur*, one who circumvents the social codes of ethics when justice is denied her – she does escape the tantalizing powers of Constantine, and seems to be carving an autonomous way of life for herself. She may not beg for money, as some original *picaras* did, yet she skillfully extracts it from Constantine before the lawful inheritance opens after her twenty-fifth birthday. She even deploys disguise to a certain degree – being *a Mrs Trout* in the States, and weaves carefully plans for escape, both from Britain, the Danceys and in the first place – the space of ignorance and abandonment managing to be placed in school out of her own will. Unfortunately, Eva’s deception extends beyond mere disguise, since she must manipulate and deceive in order to preserve her life. Yet such controlling of her own destiny is not a consequence of her trickster-like nature but of the operations of oppressive dominant discourse. As a female pilgrim, a wandering saint, or a mystic, ever-journeying Eva is suspected of hysteria and deception, paralleling the accusations of witchcraft attached to the *picara*. And yet, to a certain degree, the *picara* tries to reform her original world and make it better as a result of increased integrity and knowledge, even though it means allowing the final trickstery of the text – the death of the *picara*, and here the death of Eva Trout. As Kaler writes in her *The Picara: from Hera to Fantasy Heroine*,

What each fantasy the *picara* considers to be her worst crime depends on her created world: to the sorceress, the misuse of her power; to the political *picara*, the corruption of a government; to the wanderer, the imprisonment of other; to the sexual being, the dehumanization of the individual. (Kaler, 1991, 147)

As mentioned earlier, Iseult Smith approximates herself to the ‘ideal’ of a *picara* in her narrative, as well. As a deceiver, the *picara* is used to masking her emotions, and as a slave her autonomy must be hidden if she is to survive. If not married, the *picara* is left with less nobilitating roles the society ascribes women, namely joining the nunnery, boarding school, or prostitution. When outside the bonds of

mode towards a greater self-reflection. Although *picara* refrains from motherhood, the creativity symbolized by being a mother can be found in her ‘self-mothering’.

marriage, the *picara* receives as much pleasure from discourse, as she gives, similar to Iseult Smith receiving a great amount of pleasure in writing the letters of autobiographical kind to Eva that she never sends in the end. She too remains outside of law – and as Iseult is ready to play with her similarities with Hedda Gabler and stealing Eric’s gun. As in Iseult’s narrative, the nature of the *picara* is to remain emotionally unstable since all of her relationships seem to be based on an instant pleasure rather than long-term emotional engagements. What does however, distance Iseult Smith from her role as the narrative *picara* is her lack of success and cunning in living her life, so that she becomes yet another ‘silent’ victim of the dominant discourse.

The new discourse on the dislocated, the apocalyptic, does not only underlie the idea of humour in Bowen, but the way it is expressed, in a dry, renegade manner – the Italian neo-realism in cinema. The idea of cinematographic art is very present in the text of *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*. Time is kaleidoscopic in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*’s narrative similar to the kaleidoscopic time if Gilles Deleuze writing. As such we are given different facets of Eva, her action when taken away having no core. Also we are given female multiplicity as related to kaleidoscopic notion of time. Bowen writes that “Time, inside Eva’s mind lay about like various pieces of a fragmented picture” (*ET*, 46).

She remembered, that is to say, disjunctedly. To resemble the picture was impossible; too many of the pieces were lost, lacking. Yet, some of the pieces there were would group into colour, and each probably *had* meaning, though that she did not seek. Occupationally, this pattern-arriving-at was absorbing, as is a kindergarten game, and, like such a game, made sense in a way. (*ET*, 46)

This description parallels the conversation Eva has with the Danceys in the episode entitled ‘Saturday Afternoon’. There as a matter of momentarily misunderstanding and interposition of utterances, Eva starts to believe that these are macaroons that come out of her head rather than thinking. And macaroons are a well-known type of pastry known for its sweetness and a long history in British and Italian and Jewish cuisines for being edible during the observation of Passover. Macaroons come to resemble Proust’s Magdaleines in the novel for standing for re-lived memories and celebration of human imagination for its power to reach hidden truth. Eva’s memories however felt at the sensory level are ironically child-like, meaningless ‘food for thought’. Food is a strong

image in feminist criticism as it conveys, as well as deconstructs social conventions, ideological and gender hegemonies. In literature food has been known as a means of exploring women's strategies to develop alternative discourses. According to Sarah Sceats, "Food is a currency of love and desire, a medium of expression and communication" (Sceats, 2000, 11). Food is ambiguously linked with female body as the educator and nurturer, and the hunger for the mother and the motherly love is one of the most recurring motives in literature dealing with mother-child relationships. In this light, the novel *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* can be an allegory of an almost ecstatic hunger for the mother, and 'the macaroons in her head' are a symbol of a discursive emptiness and linguistic 'pulp', which are results of a lack of a nurturing relationship with the other. Through the allegory of 'macaroons in Eva's head' mothering in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* is invariably portrayed as monstrously absent and ineffectual. This, acting upon Eva's adult appetites and her own capacity to nurture, reveals itself in the protagonist over-nurturing of Jeremy with tempting though low quality foods such as chocolate and sweets. Jeremy is *hooked upon* these, as he is *hooked upon* Eva's narrative and remains under control and apparent safety of the *choraic jouissance*, suckling at its breast like a small child –

Jeremy, losing his way on the dark staircase, battered and banged on the door – the third he had tried – before getting a grip on the handle. Having let himself in, he defiantly out-stared Henry (though so far, everything between them had gone swimmingly) before making possessively for Eva, whom he leaned up against. A residuum of panic was about him; his hair was in rats' tails, at every angle, after the towel-scrubbing given it on the return from the rainy river. He extracted from Eva's pocket a blackcurrant jujube, which he went on to suck. 'That should do him good,' she observed, 'if he has caught cold.' (*ET*, 189)

And when visiting strangers' homes what clearly draws Jeremy's attention is the "pots and pans" (*ET*, 156) at which he looks with "admiring attention" (*ET*, 156).

In relation to food, as Susan Bordo writes in her *Unbearable Weight. Feminism, Western Culture and the Body*, the body is like a monstrous huge bear, "capable of random, chaotic violence and aggression" (Bordo, 2003, 2). It is a creature of instincts and of primitive needs, "ruled by orality, by hunger, blindly 'mouthing' experience, seeking honey and sugar (...)" (Bordo, 2003, 2). The bear's body is the female body as caretaker of the other – it is too a monstrous body – like Eva Trout's. The body is a site of non-teleological reality informed by the history of nature and nurture. We deduce

time from non-time, or rather bodily manifestations of aging process and hunger. The non-time apparently does not seem to flow (being geographical rather than temporal), and is enclosed in a three-fold temporal present.

It is the *manifestations* of relentless, non-teleological time that are seen and felt, not through expressionistic images or dialogue, but through the eye's observing of subjects in the geographical reality of their exterior life within a very immanent spatial and temporal real. An example of it can be found in the fragment when Eva, sick with flu, is lying in bed and thinking, where the emphasis is given to the heavy materiality of space and temporality as embedding the solitary subjects. There time almost stops, or rather, is dragged by the embodiment of it through the imagery of Eva's bulky body and her material possessions.

Central to this is both on- and off- screen subjects' constant awareness of the body's excavation by temporality. Deleuze says "the daily attitude is what puts the before and after into the body, time into the body", and that this "attitude of the body relates thought to time (...)." (Deleuze, 2004b, 189) Within twentieth century modernism's general crisis of forms, the idea of temporality as perhaps the *only* omnipresent form (one that has heterogeneous, non-teleological modes and affects) may cause troubled reactions ultimately because it positions the subject itself as both epistemologically and ontologically vertiginous. According to Deleuze, the tiredness of the affected body forces the brain to a new and difficult thought, reminding the subject of its own "embodied" time within that of the world. The time-image world is "no longer a motor extension which is established" between subject and real world "but rather a dreamlike connection through the intermediary of the liberated sense organs. It is as if action floats in the situation, rather than bringing it to a conclusion or strengthening it" (Deleuze, 2004b, 4). And does Eva not relate more to space? Here, a question of Eva's hermaphrodite body 'embodying' time is raised – this being a new way of showing the authority/autonomy dyad through one's bodily time (here female body) as the omnipresent time. Eva is her own enclosing space.

This floating action is often in the form of characters being forced into simply looking and thinking, the evolution of the subject Deleuze saw in Italian neorealism¹²¹

¹²¹ According to Deleuze in *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (2004b) Italian neorealism introduces the time-image cinema innovative in its social context and cinematic language. Italian neorealism makes unstable

from *doer* to *seer*. Deleuze discusses how in Italian neorealism, this epistemologically impoverished but very open gaze is both directed outwards upon the world, and internalized as characters attempt to reconcile the difficult thought which this new seeing generates with the tired emotional investments of their bodies. Here both the seen and the unseen gaze seek the lost “self” rather than the maternal or erotic “other”, Deleuze, suggesting the deserted space from which the characters have been emptied, refers back again to the lost gaze of the being who is absent from the world as much as from himself.

The cosmological understanding of time destabilizes the subject’s ability to master space, both in the way we look at the world on-screen and in the way the people interact with their strange diegetic home, as lost subjects under their own gaze. We watch the people in their desperate acting out of the erotic impulse, seeking to avert their eyes and minds from both the abyss of their presumed essence and the grasping of their brains’ difficult future potentiality, while the temporal and spatial decentredness they seem to experience also induces vertigo in the viewer. Yet how is Eva gazing? Her gaze is not surely external for she is dumb and commits many mistakes – her gaze can only be inwards, seeking the lost self. Her gaze is prompted by the floating space propelled by her moving and travelling. It may be a new concept of feminine since women are not connected to gaze, but rather the man are thought to exercise the culture of an oppressive male gaze. But if the male gaze seems to be external hence excitable by the external world, the female gaze may be internal, and outwardly static.

According to Deleuze¹²², the subordination of time to movement has been reversed, so that time became out of joint (Hamlet¹²³). This resulted in movement being extracted from time, and time being subordinated to the subject. This may be seen in dream-like fantasies and ghost short stories Bowen wrote – where the action was

the distinction between the subject and the object of the narrative field. The mental and physical spaces overlay one another rather than merely correspond to one another.

¹²² Deleuze’s notion of time-image (2004b) together with his search for its real and necessary conditions consists of liberating the experience from its external limitative conditioning. As such, a new kind of subjectivity is constructed within new temporality that is ‘out of joint’. This means that the time is subordinated to the *seer* rather than *doer* – time becomes subordinated to the subject and the space it covers with his or her gaze and discourse.

¹²³ Here I paraphrase the famous quote from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* “Time is out of joint – O cursed spite” (*Hamlet*, Act1, scene 5, 186 – 190).

subordinated to the other time of the day, the other time of unseen. In *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*, moving has been subordinated to the eponymous subject. In *Cinema 2* Deleuze implies, then, with his concept of time-image that there is another time within the subject constituting a kind of propelling power to delineate reality. Time is indeterminate and multiple as the subject upon which it hinges. As such Hamlet becomes the hero of this other time, and so does Eva. Time is out of 'joints' – cyclical or linear joints – time is now subjective. Also, it might be said that there is another time within feminist discourse that will propel itself forward; a time that does not end with death, but continues with the death's laughter. The feminist time-image, not hinged at cardinal numbers of its ancient measure that stand for the masculine and symbolic discourse, will now condition movement of bodies, thoughts and narratives.

The post-war period created spaces, which no one knows how to react to; we have become dislocated, as Bowen liked to write. We, too, form now surprising machines with the inanimate world a substitute for life's lost vivacity and dynamics – hence the emphasis on the car, and on the bicycle¹²⁴, like in Vittorio de Sica's film *Bicycle Thieves* (1948).

Even the body has become no longer exactly what undergoes movement, but rather it has become a 'developer' of time that shows through its tiredness, loneliness and waitings.

The narrative image itself has become a system of relationships between its elements, "a set of relationships of time from which the variable present only flows" (Deleuze, 2004b, xii). A narrative image has become a tool to show the multiple relations of time underlying it that cannot be seen in the present. In such image the real is no longer represented but aimed at, and it is said to be elliptical, wavering, dispersive, and ambiguous. When deciphered it should produce an additional reality.

The subject of such imagery may not be mad but rather his or her actions obey the rules of slackening of sensory-motor connections. The external world is filtered through the subject, accumulated in disjointed images and then purged out again. One is prey to a vision; one records rather than reacts, so that even the present is heavily dependent on odd memories and fantasies.

¹²⁴ This idea takes us back to what Sue Best (1995) wrote about the simulacrum of a female body and the penetrating hand of a car that, again, I have compared to the idea of Deleuzian desiring machines in the section of this chapter entitled "Eva Trout's Eternal Journey as a Subject."

The subject that reveals itself to be the most fitting into the above schemata is the child. The child reveals itself in visual and sound nakedness where sensory-motor schemata are no longer pre-established and automatic - as in the world of adults. The world that the child inhabits now give in to the pace of a nightmare or a dream and may become unbearable leading to crisis. The imagery that the child constructs embeds the sensory-motor descriptions that now are controlled by the optical and sound ones, but almost undecipherable. Deleuze writes in his *Cinema 2* about the child and its place within such discourses,

In neo-realism the sensory-motor connections are now valid only by virtue of the upsets that affect, loosen, unbalance, or uncouple them: the crisis of an action-image. No longer being induced by an action, any more than it is extended into one, the optical and sound situation is, therefore, neither an index nor an synsign. (...) And clearly these new signs refer to very varied images – sometimes everyday banality, sometimes exceptional or limit-circumstances – but, above all, subjective images, memories of childhood, sound and visual dreams or fantasies, (...). (Deleuze, 2004b, 6)

Even though *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* is neither politically committed nor bears witness to the desiccation of reality after the Second World War, it does seem to constitute ground for possible transference from Italian neorealism onto the text, along with the intersection of the verbal, non-verbal and the visual. *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* was published long after the rise of the neo-realist trend, not having accompanied its rise as much as Bowen's war-time novel *The Heat of the Day* that was published in 1949, only a year after Vittorio de Sica's famous film *Bicycle Thieves* (1948). *Bicycle Thieves* was a film that gained de Sica instant critical acclaim and worldwide recognition introducing a full palate of neo-realist changes into the cinema spanning from the idea of the new time-imagery, involvement of the liminal, the passive, the sensory and the child's point of view. Again, as Deleuze wrote in his *Cinema 2* in the new neo-realist art

Time ceases to be derived from the movement, it appears in itself and itself gives rise to false movements. Hence the importance of false continuity in modern cinema: the images are no longer linked by rational cuts and continuity, but are relinked by means of false continuity and irrational cuts. Even the body is no longer exactly what moves; subject of movement or the instrument of action, it becomes rather the developer (révélateur) of time, it shows time through its tirednesses and waitings. (Deleuze, 2004b, xi)

Bearing the above in mind, there seem to be some uncanny resemblances to the neo-realist art in cinema and the narrative of *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*. The figure that belongs to the liminal – Eva Trout – is capable, like *Bicycle Thieves* Ricci, of bringing different worlds together in her hermaphrodite, intersectional form. She coaxes together the world of men and women, the outcast and the insiders, the angels and the monsters, the active and the passive. Eva moves constantly from stability to instability. She stays out of the ordinary routine every day, which enables her to visit different spaces and places.

In the course of the narrative from Eva's schooling to her flee, freedom and return, all the events seem both visually distinct and yet logical for her narrative development. The plot embeds the two ideas: the first one being of search for the language, the meaning, the child and the mother; the second being that of escape from the father, the guardian, the mother, and the possible snatcher of Jeremy. However, much of the movement seems overtly passive in character, taking Eva from one liminal space to another, from one hotel to another. Even Eva's grasp of memories and time is 'disjected', possibly linear but lacking many pieces- like the neo-realist paratactic text it is impoverished but not essentially dis-ordered and illogical.

Time is, therefore, derived simultaneously from the strange movement and the lack of it. At the end of the novel, Eva passes from the passive observer to the role of agent and dies, which in Italian neorealism is metaphorical of the idea of the futility of life and the wasted time. Life itself is meaningless in Italian neo-realism, and utopian in feminist understanding, and yet, even though there is no felicitous resolution, there is a stronger manifesto of a process undergone by a female subject towards a fulfillment of her life.

Eva's narrative, even though ending in her death, retains the idea of open-endedness, which invites the readers into a more active participation. The above is also true thanks to *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*'s portrayal of a more diageitic world – known hotels, streets and places, even though it may be a world not accessible to those who were deprived of the jet travel. Still, the setting brings the reader closer to the unresolved and ambiguous events.

Eva herself is not a common person, an untrained actor, as would be the case of Italian neo-realism. In fact she is an untrained speaker of the father's *parole* and a subject from the periphery of discourse – a woman.

As in the plots of Italian neorealism, which obviously are difficult to transfer onto the literary, the stories are finite and still their message continues to germinate into the unconscious of the audience. The story/the telling in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* seems concluded, yet the told is not resolved – the proposed problems lack any form of resolution. Similar to finitude of life expressed by St Augustine and Heidegger, Eva's narrative has a clear-cut beginning and an end, and yet the message of the text, the battle between the hegemonic and the revolutionary remains unresolved. Again, it may end up untold, since Jeremy will certainly not master the father's *parole*, but it will certainly be re-lived in the lives of those whom Eva encompassed with her narrative.

7. Eva Trout's New *Habitus*.

What makes and is there anything as monstrous Eva Trout's 'feel for the game' that could be understood as her narrative gendered *habitus*? Food, eating, ridicule and humour are all Bakhtinian concepts serving the disruption of hegemonic discourses. Bowen takes into account the notions of Kristeva's abjection and Grosz's volatility to understand how the preconscious and unknowable elements of incorporated experience might control the ethics of the self, especially if we take into consideration masculine control over feminine identity. To Bowen it is of great interest to see Eva's feel for the game that is her acute sense of discourse sustainability and self and social recognition based on her disruptive idea of autonomy and intersectionality. A special emphasis is given to Eva's corporeality as subjectivity's chronotope, the boundary between selfhood and Otherness, the site of identitarian disruptions and operations of motherhood, the semiotic and the symbolic, and the alternative as surfacing in laughter and monstrosity.

In general, the concept of embodiment is of great interest to feminism because it "mediates the antinomic moments of determinism and voluntarism" (McNay, 2008, 3). Gender is deeply inscribed in our bodies, and yet because of the cultural necessity of its reiteration, it appears fragile and spurious. Reflective awareness is predicated on a distancing of the subject from the dominant order and this process of distancing and proximity usually takes place within the body. Our deepest moral and ethical judgments are not rational or cognitive but based on emotional and intuitive responses to the world. Being a woman or a mother, as in *Eva Trout or Changing Scenes*, is an emotional and intuitive process though the hegemonic discourse works towards enclosing it within linguistic and pre-established paradigms. Being a mother or simply a woman is directed at reaching understanding with the other as well as the self.

Reflexive awareness through approximation and distancing from the other: 'the changing of scenes' – the subject's eternal journey – is a means of action. Action cannot be grasped only from an abstract account of structural contradiction or linguistic indeterminacy but must also be understood through ideas of intention, aim and commitment "that can also be refused" (McNay, 2008, 5). This intention of action

should include in itself a paradigm of relationality and autonomy. It is not enough for the subject to maintain itself with the to and fro flux in relation to the other – this action needs to be intentional and conscious, calling for a constancy of the self and interpellation that underlies the concept of identitarian becoming. Recognition is generated through embodied practice – as de Beauvoir famously said: one is not born but becomes a woman. Recognition of femininity is an ongoing process and needs to be accomplished in relation to two different standpoints; the first one being the gaze of the other, the second one's own recognition of one's continuously performed gender. As such subjectivity and identity are neither fully willed nor fully determined.

The idea of self-recognition expresses the notion that individuality is an intersubjective phenomenon formed through pragmatic interactions with others. By highlighting the intersubjective features of individuality, the idea of recognition has both descriptive and normative content and it has important implications for a feminist account of gender identity. The idea of recognition too is neither willed nor determined.

Furthermore, Žižek sees in Hegel's struggle for recognition a paradigm of the ideological double interpellation of the subject. Interpellation in itself is a form of recognition. Interpellation is fully achieved when the subject perceives itself as too complex a person to be encapsulated in one set of ideological identifications – intersectional femininity equals self-recognition that follows the pattern of: one is *not only* that, but *...also* that. Women, as Nancy Fraser writes, are not a homogenous group redistributed along the logic of *either/or* but they are *both* status and class. Interpellation works to logic of a double disavowal – one disavows that one is a product of ideological interpellations and one disavows that one's autonomy is an illusion. The more one acts autonomously the more one misrecognizes the illusory nature of autonomy. However, the interpellation of autonomy is in itself a courageous act of self-definition, as in Eva Trout's setting of standards similar to Browning's Pippa and as a way of voicing a new discourse. As in Sartre, from an intersectional point of view, a woman must transcend the hegemonic definition of the body that weighs her down and go beyond it towards objects or truths subject to reason as in Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of Etiology of Hate*. She must go beyond the time that hinges on the external and move towards the three-fold present of her subjective time.

Subjectivity cannot be understood from the point of view of abstract social structures but from the perspective of lived reality of embodied social relations. As such

one cannot fail to consider the gendered *habitus*. One needs to understand that while gender cannot ever be thought to stand alone, separate from socio-economic status, ethnicity, race, and historical location, it is a mistake to think that those larger classificatory systems somehow produce a thoroughly limited, finite and unified field in which, therefore, all male subjectivity and all female subjectivity are self-same and mutually exclusive.

Habitus understands emotions as engendered through the complex of embodied tendencies, intentional relations with the world and social structures. This disrupts the tendency to explain agency through a naturalized set of emotional dispositions (recognition) or a single dimension of embodied identity (sexuality). (McNay, 2008, 16)

Gender *habitus* is an affective *habitus* – a *habitus* charged with physicality as well as autonomous relationality. It has even been termed a new feminist materialism – affects have interest and interests have matter. *Habitus* combines both a phenomenological and a structural anthropological understanding of embodiment, yet at the same time it avoids naturalization, leaving this way spaces for operations of alterity that come to be known as the familiar.

In general, *habitus* is a narrative, not only a personal one, as in Butler, but dialogical too as in Ricoeur. *Habitus* escapes the notion that subjectivity is a process of sedimentation in time. It is, rather, a pattern of changing scenes within a subjective temporal and narrative frame. For feminism, it is of utmost importance that women develop dispositions in response to the objective conditions they encounter: and they must do so through their everyday intersectional discourses and bodily practices as in gendered *habitus* to counterfeit androcentrism of social, ideological and narrative state apparatuses.

As Nancy Fraser writes on the unjust binary division between the masculine and the feminine in “Feminist Politics in the Age of Recognition: A Two-Dimensional Approach to Gender Justice,”

Thus, a major feature of gender injustice is androcentrism: an institutionalized pattern of cultural value that privileges traits associated with masculinity, while devaluing everything coded as ‘feminine,’ paradigmatically—but not only—women. (Fraser, 2004, 4¹²⁵)

¹²⁵ In her article Fraser proposes a broad understanding of social justice capable of addressing the non-

The injustice is deeply rooted in our cultural consciousness, not being merely superstructural but intrinsic to any culture.

Androcentric value patterns also pervade popular culture and everyday interaction. As a result, women suffer gender-specific forms of *status subordination*, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and domestic violence; trivializing, objectifying, and demeaning stereotypical depictions in the media; disparagement in everyday life; exclusion or marginalization in public spheres and deliberative bodies; and denial of the full rights and equal protections of citizenship. These harms are injustices of misrecognition. They are relatively independent of political economy and are not merely “superstructural”. Thus, they cannot be overcome by redistribution alone but require additional, independent remedies of recognition. (Fraser, 2004, 4)

The above needs to be overcome by re-introduction of the feminine, even if that equals re-appearance of the spaces of alterity that is dissolution of what has been familiarized into its myriad of discourses originating within the margins.

Recognition is not only what women must achieve but also what should, in general, be conferred to women on their passage from the strictly private to the public sphere as engendered and embodied subjects.

From the standard perspective, what requires recognition is feminine gender identity. Misrecognition consists in the depreciation of such identity by a patriarchal culture and the consequent damage to women’s sense of self. Redressing this harm requires engaging in a feminist politics of recognition. Such a politics aims to repair internal self dislocation by contesting demeaning androcentric pictures of femininity. (Fraser, 2004, 4)

The outcome of successful recognition is a positive relation to oneself.

Subjectivity is not an abstract phenomenon but the outcome of an ongoing process of subject’s engagement with the world and the other. Through reiteration of interpellation processes new kinds of identities are produced. Both our minds and bodies are constructed through this discursive power. According to Butler, discourses live within our bodies, entering our bloodstreams and propelling the life forward.

identitarian account of recognition capable of being intertwined with redistribution, and yet counterposing gender maldistribution and misunderstanding.

However, as much as these discourses of interpellation are socially and hegemonically constructed (Althusser) they carry within them principles of autonomy and self-narrativity. Psychology constitutes an object in the process of knowing it; self constitutes its subject in the process of knowing it as well. Interpellation, self-narratives are both cause and effect happening simultaneously. *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* problematizes “repression of crude material techniques of surveillance and physical coercion” (Backus, 1999, 49) that “correspond to Foucault’s earlier emphasis on discipline and punish” (Backus, 1999, 49), where mothers are abjected and children are consumed retroactively by an internalized family romance. In *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* the powerful techniques of action/discourse and silence reflect powerful forces where physical and mental repression stimulates discourse, which then inevitably stimulates further violence and repression, nevertheless setting up in motion the processes of active subjectification. The figure that consequently emerges blurs the constitutive boundaries between the internal and the external, the present and the past, the living and the dead, victim and persecutor, and very often the female and the male.

What is then the Bowenesque *habitus* in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*? Eva Trout represents a performance of the form of feminist and sexual agency. Being must coincide with doing, the way in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* the eponymous character not only is but too “occasions” (*ET*, 123) things. Eva’s body harbours the new kind of *habitus* that diverges “you are to know how widely, from mother-image hitherto entertained by me: Your lengthy and unencumbered physique with its harboured energy more seemed (...), and not at the first glance only, that of the dedicated discus thrower.” (*ET*, 123)

Female desire must coincide with female practice, the living of femininity. Bowen’s concern is how not normative but ‘*habitus*’ womanhood – the sum total of the private and the public practice – can be negotiated and lived – “and what the living of it might do to the self” (Coughlan, 2009, in Walshe, 2009, 52) as for instance to Lois, Karen, Stella and Eva, in four of Bowen’s major novels. Patricia Coughlan writes in her text entitled “Not like a person at all’: Bowen, the 1920’s and the ‘Dancing Mistress” that women are like “the dancer who must subdue and distort her whole bodily and emotional being to the performance of a quintessence or apotheosis of feminine beauty and grace, and as a result becomes ‘not like a person at all’” (Coughlan, 2009, in Walshe, 53). Living a *habitus* womanhood means becoming as a person, a woman but it

also means entering “a process of mental disintegration” (Coughlan, 2009, in Walshe, 2009, 54). As Slavoy Zizek postulates the meaning of life is only revealed in death. According to Bourdieu, our social identities are neither imposed upon us, nor voluntarily chosen, but rather acquired as a result of the experiment of living, an experiment that is not consciously undertaken.

Bowen works from different angles “to trouble the category of the feminine and to interrogate feminine (...)” (Coughlan, 2009, in Walshe, 54) in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* so that her discourse can multiply through concatenation – influence the reader and to see that this new kind of femininity “ha[s]ve offspring (ET, 123). If not troubled women run the risk of discursive and symbolic madness that will not even be granted the symbolic of madness, like the ancestors of Stella from *The Heat of the Day*: “Ladies had gone not quite mad, not even that, from in vain listening for meaning in the loudening ticking of the clock” (Bowen, 1949/1998b, 174).

Still what for some critics madness is a form of falling prey to an illness, in psychoanalysis it is a way women have for survival – it is a means of averting the crushing threats of dominant symbolic order (see Barbara Rigney¹²⁶). Madness is figure does not exclusively symbolize the restrictions of feminist theory through dominant discourses but that it aids postmodern authors such as Luce Irigaray in the creation of an excessive politics of enunciation, which destabilizes and reconfigures the conditions of representation.

To some critics madness is a way of withdrawing from the artificially constructed self, in search for the mother figure, towards a female signified, very often a female *Doppelgänger*, and then towards a new sanity. If madness is a form of female speech, then depriving women of that means continuous, double deprivation of women of language, and their double disavowal.

As can be colloquially said there is a method in Eva Trout’s madness that is a direct response to Bourdieu’s violence, a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition, recognition, or even feeling. As in Bourdieu Eva Trout is an example of the way in which symbolic violence, of which the words are verdicts, redounds on those who initially benefit from it, those who are in Marx’s phrase,

¹²⁶ See Barbara H. Rigney, *Madness and Sexual Politics in the Feminist Novel: Studies in Bronte, Woolf, Lessing and Atwood*. (1980).

dominated by their domination, who are granted the double-edged privilege of indulging in the games of domination. Exposed to violence and violated into death, Eva Trout gives a reader an alternative voice, a testimony of love and life that endures.

The Counter - Discourses of Femininity:

Conclusion.

Conclusion.

Until recently Elizabeth Bowen's work had been relatively neglected by a vast group of critics and academics. This has created an atmosphere of "inapproachability, a sort of endlessly repeated preliminary throat-clearing" (Corcoran, 2009, xi). It has been written that the lack of a more profound and theoretically oriented reading of Bowen has amounted to insufficiency of "comparative focusing and judgment of a kind which can only develop within a sustained critical continuum" (Corcoran, 2009, xi). That such deficiency originated in little attention to Bowen, it too, in my opinion, has been a result of a lack in theoretical, philosophical and cultural tools that needed certain maturing to be able to dissect Bowen's writing. After many, quite successful, attempts at reading Elizabeth Bowen from different and yet solitary angles of Queer theories, deconstruction theories, as well as biographical point of view, the time has come to conjugate all of the above and still more to read Bowen as a profoundly complex writer devoted to the idea of subjectification, identification and engenderment as fundamental voices in literary creation and beyond. A new understanding of Elizabeth Bowen's discourse would establish her more firmly in the preserve of twentieth century writing, as much as within the new twentieth first century perspective. It should then be postulated that such reading of Bowen would be a sufficient reason to re-thinking her life and consequently re-write her biography without fear of exposing anew the conflicting discourses of history, nationality, gender, vocation, and identity. What this would contribute to would be an exposure of Elizabeth Bowen's life – her real life devoted to better understanding of the complexities of selfhood and otherness.

This thesis has had no intentions of constructing Bowen's new biography, however, an attempt has been made at exposing Bowenesque labyrinthine discourses of selfhood and otherness, above all of selfhood and otherness in the feminine.

So far, it has been shown to what extent Elizabeth Bowen's style undergoes not so much a change in style and interest but rather how it is intensified in "formidable structural and thematic daring and risk" (Corcoran, 2009, xiii). There is in Bowen's writing, starting with her first novel *The Hotel* through *The Heat of the Day* and *The Little Girls* but above all in *The House in Paris* and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*,

unquenched commitment to the task of exposing the operations of the symbolic, hegemonic discourses of power and cultural apparatuses. There is an effort to expose “love’s inherent principles of disorder and pain” (Bowen, 1945 in Walshe, 2009, 96) and the breach between “interior selfhood and societal modes of identity” (Walshe, 2009, 96), which Bowen believed to be one of the tenet ideas of the ‘European novel’ as opposed to the textual investments of the ‘English novel’. As Neil Corcoran writes “In Bowen’s prose the normative structures of fictional coherence, and sometimes of linguistic coherence too, are exposed in the most radically unsettling ways to a potential writerly incoherence” (Corcoran, 2009, xiii). Truly enough, Elizabeth Bowen’s syntax is as arresting and complex as her ‘intellectual’ style¹²⁷ and convictions as much as are her “hard writers[’s]” (Compton-Burnett, 1941 in Walshe, 2009, 95) identities.

One of the most important conclusions of the thesis is that Elizabeth Bowen contradicts the idea of essentialism and fixity of female existence, a theme that reaches back to the myth of passive/static Penelope and dynamic/ever-journeying Ulysses, as already signaled in this text. For example, Eva Trout’s corporeality is a reflection of her mobility; Eva wallows not so much in her abject embodiment, but in dynamic, somewhat ruthless autonomy that originates in her body. Much profound is Eva’s rejection of corporeality for corporeality’s sake, of entertaining its needs and of corporeality as sole reflection of identity – to her corporeality is a means and a vehicle. As stated in this work, the mesmerizing force of the body of the modern *picara* is Eva’s tool and weapon used to achieve her goals. It is a body whose attributes are not steadily exhausted through a series of relationships and tricks but a body that serves as a propeller and chronotope of subjectivity. However, the very idea of goals should be put

¹²⁷ In *The Heat of the Day*, the wartime novel she dedicated to Charles Ritchie who shared her burden of a fractious nature, Bowen writes, “In the street below, not so much a step as the semi-stumble of someone after long standing shifting his position could be, for the first time by her, heard.” (Bowen, 1998b, 290) Would an editor today let that pass? Bowen’s editor at Cape was Daniel George, and he wrote four pages of notes on *The Heat of the Day*, which he admired for many good reasons. One of the Bowenisms in the novel that he questioned was this sentence: “‘Absolutely,” he said with fervour, “not.” (Bowen, 1998b, 221) George’s comment on this particular Bowenism is witty, and Glendinning rightly immortalizes him for it in her biography. He wrote, “Far, I diffidently suggest, fetched.” (George in Christensen, 2001, 82) In her innate stubbornness and accordingly Irish insubmissiveness, Bowen did not consider the editorial remark necessary and did not change the line.

under scrutiny as well if by goals one means arriving at a concrete moment of symbolic revelation. Instead, to Bowen the idea of goals lies in motility and becoming; it can only be understood through the concept of work-in-progress and not through finitude.

Against dominant understanding of femininity, female desire must coincide with female practice - with the living of femininity and the performance of femininity. The realizations of desire, power, and inner compulsion must coincide with female practice, while reaching as far beyond as the dominant systems of interpellation.

As I have said in this thesis, cultural, hegemonic interpellations work against the logic of double disavowal. They work parallel to the logic that creates a subject that is, in fact, there already refusing the dominant discourses. Interpellation becomes an active means of questioning the world, a tool curiously borrowed from the hegemony. Interpellation may be considered a frequent trope in Bowen's writing who gives well informed and deeply meaningful opinions about the world, reality and the nature of human conduct indirectly prompting the reader towards a more conscious participation in the world. If these judgments seem too many and ubiquitous we may infer from this fact how many unanswered questions and unrested doubts Elizabeth Bowen fosters about the world. As has been shown here, Bowen's interpellation of the feminine masquerade exposes the processes opposing the development of a potential person.

Above all, interpellation works as a dialogue between the reader, the narrator, the characters, and the author – it is both internal and external. It makes visible how the truth refuses to be moulded to the general, hegemonic and phallogocentric metaphysics.

In the end it should be concluded that Bowen deliberately uses her art of words to serve the construction of and “adequate maintenance of femininity” (Coughlan, 2009, 55) in its natural multiplicity and complexity. Furthermore, one of Bowen's achievements is the ascription of self-empowerment to women through the use of materials other than their flesh – material goods, money – along with their maternal and regenerative powers “against the odds and all rules of polite, that is still rigidly hierarchical, society” (Coughlan, 2009, 55), as well as her unique and deliberate exposure of the subjects to the internal and external sources of suffering.

If the interpellation is conducted through the authorial participation, it is also revealed in an acute understanding of history, memory and tradition. This conjugated with a tripartite character of structural nostalgia takes the female discourse into a new dimension. The concept of Bowenesque nostalgia refers to the consumption and

personal deployment of historically produced definitions. It works on the constant assumptions of better times gone with the past and common values for all. As such Bowen's ideas fall short from Pierre Bourdieu's ideas on structuralism in anthropology that prove how anthropology of feeling can incorporate cognition and emotion without a mind/body dualism. Female emotional knowledge and memory should be incorporated into discourse.

After reading of *The House in Paris* and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* it can be concluded that while feelings may be physiologically similar their interpretations vary. These interpretations are closely linked to the bodily movement and body praxis: bodily participation in culture production and re-production. We may have to go back to Bourdieu's concept of *hysteresis* where there is no harmony between *habitus* and structure as exemplified in both the novels analyzed here. *Hysteresis* stands for a retardation of the effect when the forces acting upon a body are changed and this again means that history and discourse depend on physical systems. *Hysteresis* is also related to the outsider/insider theory applicable in feminist studies. It may appear in discourses of outsider and insider groups in more moderate version, often called persistence. *Hysteresis* with its reactional time lag can be referred to hysteria in women as described by Freud. All above concepts can be, and should be shifted towards present and future understanding of female discourse in Elizabeth Bowen's literary oeuvre.

As much as in Elizabeth Bowen's writing the discourse is a reiterated performance, her narrative is a spectacle, where identities are continuously re-assembled and re-montaged. This only happens if one bears in mind that the term identity does not only refer to the plots of Bowen's works but also to the identity of the reader who chooses to embark on the adventure of being 'changed' in the process of responding to Elizabeth Bowen's discourse. Here, I defend that the operations of assembling identities and discourses are Deleuzian. The role of such re-assembling narratives is to allow the subject "to engage in self-transformatory practices of the self" (Khan, 2006)

As often mentioned in this study, the idea of assembled identities sheds new light on the theories of feminism. To feminism Deleuzian thinking offers a chance of theorising the difference and becoming a category free from its previous patriarchal encumbrances. It points to motility and iterability of the/any subject, especially to the female subject that has been historically considered stative. The later idea of iterability refers to the trope of narrativity of the self – the *ipse*-dynamic self, "where the subject

becomes, to borrow a Proustian formula, both reader and writer of its own life. Selfhood is a cloth woven of stories told” (Ricoeur in Kearney, 2004, 108-109). This notion includes the elements of mutability and change too; however, it does retain a special kind of moral compromise towards the self. As such it has a compromise of

enduring identity of a person, presupposed by the designation of a proper name (...) provided by the narrative conviction that it is the same subject who perdures through its diverse acts and words between birth and death. (Kearney, 2004, 108)

In narrativity of identity that constitutes a part of Bowen-esque style “Speech is what the characters do to each other” (Bowen, 1999, 41). Narrativity is a way of reaching out to incomplete identity. Speech embeds the change that characters inflict like a wound on one another; it is also what the plot does to the reader as an effect of open-ended narratives that fit the neo-realist, Bazinian notion of the spectator’s active participation arising from portraying of a more open diageitic world. This form of portraying of reality goes against the false argument that assumes salvation can be achieved only as the result of the exclusive cult of the real. Even if the world is not an objective reality, the objective truth that originates from open-ended point of view remains that presentation and discourse cannot manipulate reality – reality manipulates itself in creating its hegemonic narrative. However, the subject can achieve relative autonomy through being conscious of the *status quo*. The real or reality here is a complex structure and functions as a magical incantation: as long as there is submission to the effect of the real, there is freedom, where freedom cannot be found within a rigid structure. Similarly, the truth that is created through narratives of *Eva Trout*, *or Changing Scenes* and *The House in Paris* may as well be an effect, a fetish but also the only palpable and productive truth. It may also be a tool for gaining relational agency, as defended here in the thesis, agency that paves its own path within the hostile reality.

Should we remain conscious of the fact that according to Levi-Strauss women are value we can follow Elizabeth Bowen’s belief in femininity as signs too – signs capable of giving life to other signs. Women are signs in the processes of concatenation or begetting – two processes that are able to connect the Deleuzian idea of rhizomes and the feminist idea of maternity. This work concludes that both of the processes (especially if we bear in mind Deleuzian becoming-woman) have feminine qualities that underlie mother-child relationship, the idea of *care* for the other, as well as Levinas’s

idea of *responsibility* for the other. Language has, in fact, a female quality, which is not solely female-essential but engulfs both genders. As in Cixous, women are less fixed in the symbolic than men, women - and their language - are more fluid, more flowing – as in maternal *chora*, more unstable than men. The instability of female *language* allows it to take on different Deleuzian combinations that together form an identity–in-process. *L'écriture feminine* means rupture and reconfiguration of meaning, instability of the *I* and yet fixity in the process of becoming. Seen by various critics, female discourse is believed to comprise two elements of patriarchal discourse – the female and male elements, making female discourse truly bisexual discourse. Nina Baym in “The Madwoman and her Language” (1984) argues that the idea of female language as open, nonlinear, unfinished, fluid, exploded, fragmented, and polysemic - and of female discourse as silent, unconscious, and disoriented - are not compatible because it is evidential that women are obliged to use and many times do not avoid using the rational sequential discourse of men. She states that such an idea seems to be congruent with the idea of irrational, weak women. According to her, women are competent both in male and female discourse and can speak in public life as organizers and rulers of social unions. The linguistic theory of gender difference and the misogynistic theory of female difference are both discriminatory and incomplete and should be replaced by the idea of rhizomatic *Body – without - Organs*.

Again, it is also the idea of rhizomatic connections that points to Bowen’s interest in the transition of the concepts of tradition and historical truth¹²⁸. Very likely it may be that families and homes are undone, and yet there should always remain - and so it does - a vital force of transition of knowledge and systems of truth that can function, as in rhizomatic connections, on a vertical plane. This vital force no longer obeys the vertical way of transmitting codes and knowledge, something that scientists believed in for a very long time, and something whose uniqueness came to be challenged with the

¹²⁸ This proves how ingeniously Bowen anticipates Irish feminist scholarship whose expression can be found in the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing: Irish Women’s Writing and Traditions*. (Bourke *et al* Eds.) The study’s many volumes are proposed by its editors to follow the style of rhizomatic connections. The authors gathered in the book follow multifarious and multi-directional connections and are ordained by their ‘concrete assemblages’ and ‘abstract machines. The work has met with great critical acclaim and is thought to be an entirely “new kind of anthology” (Kelleher, 2003, 89) in its profoundly “new scale, ambition and structure.” (Kelleher, 2003, 89)

revelation of viral and organic transition. The later idea had been picked up by Deleuze who used the idea of horizontal transmission in his studies on culture and literature. Undeniably, Bowen would too admit that now the horizontal way of transmitting knowledge becomes a vital form of the proliferation of cultures and discourses. And horizontal transmission requires other ideas to be acknowledged – relationality, randomness, destiny, activity and dynamic, generative power. The horizontal transmission erases the necessity for binary oppositions, the begetting signified and signifiers without which there can be no meaning.

In “*Eva Trout – a Journey towards new Discourse*” I consequently remember scholar Joan Scott’s work who in her essays manages to undo the dangerous binary dichotomy of difference. Scott writes in her influential article “Deconstructing Equality-versus – Difference (1996) that,

When equality and difference are paired dichotomously, they structure an impossible choice. If one opts for equality, one is forced to accept the notion that difference is antithetical to it. If one opts for difference, one admits that equality is unattainable. (Scott in Sargisson, 1996, 73)

With the horizontal understanding of dissemination of life the above negative dichotomy is undone. This way, the relationship of equality to difference becomes of an intertwined nature rather than based on exclusion. As stated in this thesis, for the patriarchal hegemony, difference is understood in terms of inequality, distinction, or opposition, a sexual difference modeled on negative, binary or oppositional structures within which only one of the two terms has any autonomy- this way life strives for greater unification and solidification of pre-given ideas, where the other is defined only by the negation of the first – a man is defined through the negation of a woman and a woman is defined through lacking what is male. However, only sameness of identity can ensure equality, where this sameness signifies sameness with oneself, one’s own pattern of becoming and not sameness with the hegemonic culture. Sameness may curiously signify difference.

In the case of feminists of difference, however, difference is not seen as simply different from pre-given schemata, but as pure difference, difference in itself, difference with no identity that contributes to a greater possibility of multiplication. This, again, as has been mentioned in “*Eva Trout – a Journey towards new Discourse*” includes the

systems of *affordances* and hermeneutical re-reading of linguistic and non-linguistic signs. The system of signs offers a means of the articulation of different interpersonal affordances, and thus possibilities. The systems of signs in female discourses do not only include language, but a myriad of other non-linguistic possibilities, namely the body, the food and eating, begetting, birth as well as sexual practice.

It may be reasoned that psychoanalysis and theoretical insight were not absent from Bowen's intellectual horizons and must have informed, if indirectly, her realizations in fiction. Thus, there is, in her literary oeuvre, a connection between female desire, performance and female language, seen not from the essentialist angle, but quasi psychoanalytical standpoint.

To rediscover the intonations, scansion, and jubilant rhythms preceding the signifier's position as language's position is to discover the voiced breath that fastens us to an undifferentiated mother, to a mother who later, at the mirror stage, is altered into a *maternal language*. It is also to grasp this maternal language as well as to be free of it thanks to the subsequently rediscovered mother, who is at a *stroke* (a linguistic and logical *stroke*, mediated by the subject's position), pierced, stripped, signified, uncovered, castrated, and carried away into the symbolic. (Kristeva, 1980, 195)

It is through ideas of motherhood, autonomy and female discourse that Bowen touches upon subjects such as female desire. Parallely, Bowen borders with the idea of MacKinnon's radical feminism where women are solely a product of men's desire. Early womanhood buds in the confrontation with the masculine just as in Henrietta's epiphany of the other in her contact with Leopold and in Eva's epiphany of the self in her encounter with Eric. On the whole, in Bowen desire is productive.

If we may want to disagree with part of what Helene Cixous writes about the characteristics of *l'écriture féminine*, a key term that has been used in describing her feminist manifesto remains of great utility and refers to *ambiguity* of female language as well as of female position in discourse. The key-term ambiguous has concrete consequences for both the self and the other as spectators of dialogical narratives, as it stands for a subject as a nomadic entity in constant flow between discourses. As mentioned in "*Eva Trout – a Journey towards new Discourse*" nomadism entails a constant state of 'in-process' or 'becoming'. This Rosi Braidotti, one of the major feminist critics used in the dissertation, chooses to designate as the states of 'as if'. The practice of "as-if" is a "technique of strategic re-location in order to rescue what we

need of the past in order to trace paths of transformation of our lives here and now” (Braidotti, 1994, 6). Braidotti also understands ‘as if’ as “the affirmation of fluid boundaries, a practice of the intervals, of the interfaces, and the interstices.” (Braidotti, 1994, 6)

Female discourse and femininity as such have already been described as performances rather than palimpsests of essences. Joan Riviere, drawing on the highly influential Melanie Klein and her “Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict” (1928), observes women’s reluctance in accepting what has been given to them as complete feminine development. She then admits that what women perform as femininity is a masquerade “a mere guise which is assumed more or less pragmatically but devoid of inner assent” (Coughlan, 2009, 58). In her “Womanliness as Masquerade” Riviere writes that

Womanliness therefore could be assumed and worn as a mask, both to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert the reprisals expected if she was found to possess it - much as a thief will turn out his pockets and ask to be searched to prove that he has not the stolen goods. (Riviere, 1929, 3)

In her article Riviere gives various examples of women whom she considers to guard latent homosexuality and who engage in performing femininity as a mask to compensate for unsatisfactory relationships with their mothers and fathers. Riviere highlights the fact that it is impossible to decide which way of being a woman is the true way, because, in her opinion, the very character of gender lies in its performativity. This performativity, however, is very often prompted by negative drives such as fear of castration, want of possessing authority (penis) etc. In so doing the desire for manliness in performance hides a desire for another woman, very often the one that figures from a maternal viewpoint that speaks in two voices – omnipotent, all-powerful mother and nurturing friend. As such what Riviere shows is not pathological femininity, but femininity as it is – performative, constructed and fluid. This again proves that female discourse is based on ideas of motherhood, if we take motherhood to be not a merely biological instance but a carrier of various and often contradictory symbols closely connected to motility, fluidity and the performative.

Interested in operations of adolescence, Bowen shows in both *The House in Paris* and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* the reactivating experience of childhood, and

re-living of the relationship between the child and the mother, to have utmost importance in an identity's development. Following Kristeva, this can be called the Dionisiac birth – the birth into the life-death opposition, and laughter as an expression of identitarian development and a symbolic counter-discourse:

Perhaps what is involved is the possibility of reactivating the experience of early childhood (the Oedipal stage), after the period of latency, into puberty, and undergoing the crisis of this particular reactivation in the midst of language, with no delayed action, directly onto the body “proper,” and with the already ripe symbolic-logical system that the subject will have at its disposal in his future experience. This second birth – the Dionysiac birth – probably comes at the moment of puberty: then the subject and the Oedipal, maternal body come together again, her power collides with the *symbolic* (which the mature subject-body has already mastered during the period of latency), and the subject experiences the trauma of this collision. (Kristeva, 1980, 195)

The subject is reunited with the maternal again and is put together and pulled apart. The maternal allows the subject reconnection with his or her own oral, anal and phallic stages, the language now can break “successfully through everything but the mother” (Kristeva, 1980, 196).

The Dionisiac birth, as described in Kristeva, takes Bowen towards the preserve of laughter and the hysterical woman in both of the analyzed novels. Kristeva writes that “Every hysterical woman, as symptom of symbolic weakness in relation to the overflowing instinctual drive, index a poorly controlled phallus, and drama of the word/body (...)” (Kristeva, 1980, 196). As postulated in “*Eva Trout – a Journey towards new Discourse*” feminine concatenation is based on Irigaray's notion of the feminine sea, the *choraic* place of plenty. Tamsin Lorraine writes in *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy* that:

Just as at each moment the Dionysian subject can affirm the being of becoming as the unity of multiplicity, so can the feminine subject experience each moment as a whole with nothing lacking. (Lorraine, 1999, 160)

Plato had already connected *chora* to the mother category, as an amorphous and generative power. Bowen now connects the processes of identification with maternity whose fluidity allows the subject to switch between monster and angel, as in both *The House in Paris* and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*. We are given a way back

home from the imprisoning symbol of the shapeless Medusa head as substituting the fear of female genitals and female reproductive powers that in the beginning of the twentieth century Freud ascribed to women. The maternal, abjection and matricide are undeniably part of *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*'s narrative as well as uncover the structural dimensions of what is the study of the mother, of the maternal and of the subject. Semiotic *chora* is what Bowen's narratives construct for the characters and the readers.

In both novels analysed here, the desiccation of identity is closely linked to the idea of suffering. Suffering is a means of consummation and translation of the other and of the self, as well as way of narrativization of one's life, and exposure. Mental violence and repression stimulate forms of bodily performance and this perpetuates the operations of further repression directly resulting from the search of the perpetrator inside oneself. The bodily *chronotope* changes into that of living dead – escaping Butlerian sedimentation of living, but also marking bodily desiccation. Bowen's work dramatizes the stilling of the body through her narrative description of failure to reach the other. This process may be called the Bowenian "burgeoning discourse" (Backus, 1999, 49) that reflects the subject's most concentrated expressions of the psychological and emotional wounding such as parentlessness and otherness. Bowen's novels problematize "repression of crude material techniques of surveillance and physical coercion" which "correspond to Foucault's earlier emphasis on discipline and punish" (Backus, 1999, 49). Violence is one of the key-terms that should be applied to Bowen's writing, where we encounter malevolence re-directed and reversed so that identity becomes "traversed by the endless mobilities of desire" (Corcoran, 2003, 128). And if so, mobility of desire marks the subject's passage into maturity, whereas the maintenance of the mobility of desire safeguards the subject's signification within discourse.

Both *The House in Paris* and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* picture male and female passages to the symbolic. They picture this travel not as merely *towards* but as most importantly *from* – from the maternal and the *choraic*. Leopold's passage into maturity symbolizes hope whereas Jeremy's passage results in tragedy. This goes parallel with what Nancy Chodorow writes about difficulties in learning masculinity by boys which is, on the whole, not an effect of an affective relationship with the father but

of an abrupt attempt at ending of the mother/son dichotomy. Very often, it results in a psychological depression as Chodorow writes in *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*.

To girls a close affective and more prolonged relationship to the (M)other is too of utmost importance, since as Chodorow writes about the female subject:

Her later identification with her mother is embedded in and influenced by their on-going relationship of primary identification, which are mediated by and depend upon real affective relations. Identification with her mother is not positional--but rather a personal identification with her mother's general traits of character and values. Feminine identification is put on the gradual learning of a way of being familiar in everyday life, and exemplified by the person with whom she has been most involved. (Chodorow, 1989, 52)

Chodorow postulates that feminine identity is ascribed, and masculine identity is achieved, whereas for Bowen's dynamic subject both masculine and feminine identities are achieved. Rather, in fact, they are to be acquired but never to be achieved as such, thanks to the malleability of identity – identity being *a slippery fish*. In the end, Elizabeth Bowen's writing envisages the production of a female symbolic which should exist in a co-operative and dialogical relationship with a necessarily transformed male symbolic. In Bowen multiple and heterogeneous relationships can exist and be symbolized between a multiplicity of 'women-selves'. This multiplicity inevitably offsprings from a new understanding of the mother-daughter relationship that strives towards not merely Irigarayan erasure of biological reproduction ascribed to mothering but its multiplication onto different planes – a new panoply of symbols.

Hence, it must be stated here that this thesis has been clearly inspired by the idea of female identity and female discourse as open-ended. Similarly, Dale Bauer writes in "Gender in Bakhtin's Carnival" (1996):

To open another's discourse is to make it vulnerable to change (...). (T)he feminine voices (...) draw out the others' codes by which their authority is formulated. These resisting voices violate the codes, and with those linguistic impulses, their views come into view (...) (I)dentify is always tested and altered (...) (A) feminist dialogic is a new paradigm which acknowledges an experience of others and challenges powers which force us to restrict the otherness. (Bauer, 1996, 673)

Despite the critical attention based on feminist theory that values individualism and multiplicity, it must be reiterated here that Bowen situates herself within the masculinist tradition¹²⁹. Bowen constructs *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*'s eponymous character "as an outsider in a gender-divided and heteronormative environment, who struggles to understand the dominant culture as evinced in the ways, manners and views of its people around her" (O'Toole, 2009, 163). In *Pictures and Conversations* Bowen writes about the early fragmentation of her budding identity through her dislocation from one country to another, from one world to another. She writes that,

At an early, though conscious age, I was transplanted. I arrived, young, into a different mythology – in fact, into one totally alien... Submerged, the mythology of this "other" land could be felt at work in the ways, manners and views of its people around me. (Bowen, 1999k, 23-24)

As much as this transplantation caused pain, it was necessary, as any transplantation should be in order to live. For, according to Bowen, identity is cracked and dislocated; such is its eternal nature which should be pursued through operations of transplanting and translating the other. Like any mythology, identity is a system of signs, symbols, narratives and performances – identity is a mythology that "cause(s) the girl to express herself like a displaced person" (*ET*, 18). Dinah in *The Little Girls* complains about the hollowness of contemporary mythologies

There's a tremendous market for prefabricated feelings... and I'll tell you one great centre of the pre-fabricated-feeling racket, and that is, anything to do anything between two people: love or even sex... So many of these fanciful ways people have of keeping themselves going, at such endless expense of time and money, seem not only unnecessary but dated. (Bowen, 1963/1991, 193)

Identity, being a dynamic process, cannot come into stasis let alone at the moment of death as a revelation. As Slavoy Zizek postulates, the subject is an empty space filled in by the operations of different discourses. Yet to reach this final revelation

¹²⁹ This has been noted to persist "at least within Ireland, within cultural, academic, and literary practice and institutions at all levels, and visibly within the practices of reading and writing, both more generally and in the academy." (Coughlan, 2008, 1)

the subject must face its death, as Žižek's skull of the subject needs to face inwards for the better comprehension of its 'inside'. It is as in Bowen's *The Little Girls*, and their box of eternal treasures – "It was there. It was empty. It had been found." (Bowen, 1963/1991, 182) And the emptiness of the box/life in *The Little Girls* leads Clare to announcing "And now nothing. There being nothing was what you were frightened of all the time, eh? Yes. Yes it was terrible looking down into that empty box" (Bowen, 1963/1991, 277). And yet the idea of the box was to receive and carry recollections that would otherwise reveal themselves useless in the future – just as the portraits Eva studies at The National Gallery of Art.

Eibhear Walshe writes that *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* is a "fruitless search for a selfhood, a home, and a child." (Walshe, 2009, 156) whereas, I believe, that the bottom line in all Bowen's narratives is that the reward is in the searching. Life is about expecting to move forward, travelling out of oneself, just like travelling in a swaying taxi in search of a continuous future similar to what happens in the final part of *The House in Paris*. Life irrevocably leads to death; time is distended into the over-enveloping present like in St Augustine's theories of a three-fold present and the divine eternity. Only this way does a subject arrive at meaningful nothingness.

Both novels, *The House in Paris* and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* depict a journey towards strangeness and otherness. They constitute a journey towards both death and change. Against the more traditional notion of stative femininity, identification gains a more masculine dynamic and Odyssean character. As previously mentioned in the thesis, this takes on a different meaning if analysed accordingly to Jurij Lotman's theories of exceptional characters, whose exceptionality is expressed through their mobility and motility above boundaries. In Bowen, the journeys are not only extra-identitarian but they are journeys *to* and *from* the metaphorical house whose emptiness depends on how deep and rooted are the processes of desiccation of identity, Bowenesque processes of ubiquitous and metaphorical 'parentlessness'.

Life, on its part, is a creation of such personal mythology that is not one and unified, but consists of various stories and narratives. In life, the others one encounters, the strange alienating places are what dislocates or rather re-locates identity, of which in Bowen we have had examples of her textual Paris, the United States, Rome, as well as various local British and Irish sites such as different towns, tourist sites and hotels, etc.

In relation to ‘changing places’, the theory of locality is of utmost importance to feminism since “one of the similarities between women is their experience of an anatomically female body, but the meaning of this experience is patently different depending on women’s (...) locational identities.” (Hanson in Coughlan, 2009, 70) As such “a locational feminism makes it possible to view identity as transitory, only ever temporarily fixed” (Hanson in Coughlan, 2009, 70) and non-essentialist.

As much as one believes that feelings cannot be artificial, they may be transplanted and re-organized. In this context, selfhood becomes a modern *cyborg* as Donna Haraway would certainly agree in her “A Cyborg Manifesto” (1991). Thus, identity is *cyborg*-like and made up of various selves and various others. Such is the condition of life that identity must be spoken of in various discourses. This explanation clearly locates Bowen’s writing within the discourse-oriented tradition. The articulate female subject becomes a figure on which depends the outcome of the struggle among competing ideologies. Bowen sees the value of ideology associated primarily with the freedom and proliferation of speech. What Bowen is most afraid of in her fiction is “a future without language” (Lee, 1999, 197) and thus she defends the proliferation and maintenance of the new discourses of femininity – the new discourse of words and signs.

Central to the discussion on multiplicity is the aforementioned idea of motherhood. Modern motherhood too has been analyzed with the tools of cyborg theories as in Farquhar’s *The Other Machine* (1996) and Corea’s *The Mother Machine*, or Irigaray’s *The Speculum of the Other Woman* (1985b). All of the above discuss the incorporation of the material with technoscience and its representation arguing for the potential of reproductive technologies for women. Technoscience can challenge and disrupt the understanding of difference. The idea of cyborg may take away the category of motherhood as signifier of difference between male and female, and yet it may add up to the discussion of motherhood, or more broadly parenthood as symptomatic of our basic need for coexistence of selfhood and otherness.

In Irigaray’s book *The Speculum of the Other Woman*, a doctor’s examining tool – the speculum is used as a metaphor for better understanding of women, where the mirror of analysis has to be the one that can mirror what dwells inside. And since Irigaray refers to the mother figure as the paradigm for femininity, the new discourses

use and see the mother category to look inside the female subject, through the metaphors of cavities, holes and the womb,

The idea (of) Truth-like, and unlike, the cave – is the room womb (of/for) the speculum. Like and unlike the soul, a place of pivoting, and reversal – turning inside out and back to front – where representations are collated and bilocated: place of meeting and mingling. (Irigaray, 1985a, 291)

Where the father-figure denies ‘specula(riza)tion’, “the mother-matter” (Irigaray, 1985a, 301) actively gives birth to images, it not only reproduces like a looking-glass but distorts as one too. Specularization or speculation itself stands for active theorization of identity, that is, narrativization of identity as proposed by Ricoeur (1984, 1985a, 1985b, 1992). Making sense of or understanding identity through motherhood appears almost irrefutable in understanding Bowen’s literary oeuvre and her authorship.

In the thesis, I devote much attention to the intricate relations between the concepts of the adult and the child that have grown to be understood as mutually exclusive and inclusive. In relation to the adult and the child dyad, the category that, as already mentioned, gains more importance is that of mother and the child. Since, as has been written on various occasions in this study, Deleuze prompts us to become-a-child on our way towards fully fledged identitarian becoming on

Bowen’s intense interest in childhood and its formation of the adult self is one of the most characteristic aspects of her vision, and potentially aligns her with Klein’s pioneering work in child analysis. (Coughlan, 2009, 57)

All of Bowen’s child figures for which she is so well known as a writer, are sentimentally imagined, as already pointed out by A. S. Byatt in her Introduction to *The House in Paris*, where she elect some of her favourite moments in the novel – “there is no end to the violations committed by children on children (...)” (Byatt, 1976, 7). Similarly, there is no appeasement for the fact that it is child Jeremy who kills Eva at the end of *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*. As Patricia Coughlan writes about Bowen’s psychoanalytical side “Bowen’s fiction is nevertheless deeply akin and congenial to psychoanalytic theory, not least in the brilliance and modernity of its insight into the significance of childhood experience” (Coughlan, 2009, 58).

In writing about children, we may infer, Bowen writes about adults (*super-ego* is present from birth according to Klein) since it is *the child-within* that forms the basis of our adult behavior through many symbolic operations, among them: object relations theory and its derivative projective identification theory. Both are formed during early interactions with primary caregivers. The patterns the child creates for his or her interactions with the other in adult life stem from his or her childhood experiences of the others, especially the primary caregivers – the mother, and are usually inalterable. The mother teaches the child to tolerate ambiguity and difference, and if this process of learning does not take place the child's future dialogical being in the world may be at stake. His or her unconscious *phantasy* production can be altered, a process where the other is pre-projected in the *ego* defense mechanism projection. The whole self-fulfilling prophecy can be altered and this process involves not only the subject but the object too. There aggression is an important force as in paranoid-schizoid position. Also, the depressive position is of utmost importance in adult/child development.

By inducing the projected experience in another, one is more able to avoid the reality that the projected content is part of one's own experience – male discourse interpolates female discourse, but it too can happen vice versa. In “Discussion. The Dialogue and the Difference” as well as in “*Eva Trout* – a Journey towards new Discourse” I touch upon the problematic of Italian neo-realism and its introduction of the philosophy of becoming. In neo-realism the experience is not synthesized but continuously projected. The neo-realist technique of time-image makes all relationships serial. It refigures, as has been said in earlier chapters, the traditional masculine-action image and femininity as marginal through the introduction of children into observational roles – children become observers of the difficulties, and as such, hold the key to the future, as well as to the interior of the self, where the boundary between the child and the adult becomes blurred. Similarly, it has been said in the introductory chapter to the thesis: “Discussion. The Dialogue and the Difference” that Bowen too admits that if she “could read (...) [her] way back, analytically, through the books of (...) [her] childhood, the clues to everything could be found” (Bowen, 1999, 51).

Neil Corcoran writes in his “Forward” to the latest critical collection on Bowen's fiction that,

Prominently in *Eva Trout*, but in other novels and in short stories too, Bowen is a writer capable of formidable structural and thematic daring and risk; and what she is always

willing to risk is that her books might not find the absolutely alert, concentrated and attentive readers they need (...). In Bowen's prose the normative structures of fictional coherence, and sometimes of linguistic coherence too, are exposed in the most radically unsettling ways to a potential writerly incoherence (Corcoran, 2009, xii).

By fiction written to follow in its "own footsteps" (Corcoran, 2009, xii), Bowen makes her writing a kind of interpellation to the reader's moral, ethical and intellectual background.

Alterity is also a key-term to Bowen's writing when thought of as a result of searching for different locations, discourses and selves. It is represented in monstrosity, hybridity and hermaphroditism of the eponymous Eva Trout, as well as springs to life in the diabolic house in Paris belonging to its equally diabolic inhabitants. Mme Fisher consumes the masculine and feeds on the foreign essences of life, metaphorically understood as feeding on blood. Eva Trout destabilizes the system by which male and female – and hence masculine and feminine – are set off from each other, rendered mutually exclusive as well as categorically opposed. As a result of those textual operations, the argument that Bowen poses in her work is comparable with the call for a growing need for a counter-discourse on subjectivity and specifically on femininity. As mentioned earlier, Donna Haraway would respond with a call for a new discourse of *cyborg* subjectivity. It could copy the Deleuzian idea of machine-like connection "molded together into a monstrous mechanism" (O'Toole, 2009, 168). This monstrous mechanism is well presented in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* where Eva is thought to be part of her bicycle "(...) no further sort or kind of any further communication has been had from you since; though sallies into Broadstairs, in incomplete control of a powerful bicycle, have been reported" (*ET*, 118). On many occasions have I postulated that Bowen does call for a new hybrid discourse since as Jennifer Gonzalez remarks in her "Envisioning Cyborg Bodies: Notes from Current Research":

The image of the cyborg has historically recurred at moments of radical and cultural change. (. ...) In other words, when the current ontological model of human beings does not fit a new paradigm, a hybrid model of existence is required to encompass a new, complex and contradictory lived experience. (Gonzalez in Kirkup, 2000, 61)

In writing about Eva what Bowen highlights is the possibility of female agency that may be a site of female *unheimlich*, and which is then symbolised by the

destruction of Eva just like the destruction of female monster performed by the doctor in *Frankenstein*.

As mentioned in the thesis, the idea of *unheimlich* has been linked to the figure of archaic mother and fetishism. One of the first authors to do so was Roger Dadoun in his influential essay “Fetishism in the Horror Film”. This article was later used as the theoretical backdrop for feminist Barbara Creed in her *The Monstrous-feminine: Film, Fetishism, Psychoanalysis* cited on various occasions in this study. The fetishist mother figure, which Creed describes, is what we may stumble upon in Bowen more as a symbol and discourse omnipresent in every self. It is, then,

a mother thing, situated beyond good and evil, beyond all organized forms and all events. This is a totalizing and oceanic mother, a ‘shadowy and deep unity’, evoking in the subject the anxiety of fusion and of dissolution. (. ...) This mother is nothing but a fantasy inasmuch as she is only ever established as an omnipresent and all-powerful totality. (Dadoun, 1989, in Creed, 1993, 20)

Akin to that, Bowen rejects simple binary oppositions and normative essentialism in favour of multiplicity, “It is in being seen to be capable of alternatives that the character becomes, for the reader, valid” (Bowen, 1999k, 38). She does want to go beyond the attributes of good and evil in order to exhaust the neutral mother function that can be believed to be hidden within any subjectivity.

The important question that arises when contemplating the studies on alterity is whether it is sufficient to recognize the stranger – whether it is sufficient to welcome and accept the stranger within oneself as postulated by Kristeva? After all, her theories have already been found politically unsatisfactory and repetitive on various occasions. As an example, Elizabeth Grosz has written that Kristeva’s transgressive subjectivity fails to escape phallogentrism by presenting a myth of men taking up women’s discourse women cannot speak. Kristeva’s discourse has been considered that of men penetrating the space of women to mimic women who reproduce men.

It is for this reason that the thesis postulates a greater focus on the becoming-little-girl function in identification. The stranger one dialogues with needs to be the stranger represented as the child or the little girl. In the process of reconfiguring the mother function it is not the dialogue with the archaic mother that should be highlighted but rather attention should be given to the event of finding the little child within oneself.

In the light of all theoretical implications this study reveals the constituent parts of Elizabeth Bowen's terrain. Elizabeth Bowen writes in her posthumously published article "Autobiography": "How shall I write "*The End*" to a book which is about the essence of a beginning" (Bowen, 1999k, 512)

"After tea, the piano candles were lit, and before my going to bed we sang hymns around the piano. "Shall we gather at the River?" was always the last, because it was my favourite hymn." (Bowen, 1999k, 512)

How can we connect Bowen's contradictory ideas on femininity, gender, the making of and experiencing literature? Some common concepts have already been described; concepts and theoretical tools that have helped us bind together the vast Bowen terrain that the study aims at delineating. On one hand, Bowen writes "Characters operating *in vacuo* are for me bodiless. Were I to meet a writer, living or dead, whose work has so percolated into my own experience as to become part of it, his places would be what I should first want to discuss." (Bowen, 1999k, 282) On the other hand Bowen admits that

The Bowen terrain cannot be demarcated on any existing map; it is unspecific. Ireland and England, between them, contain my stories, with occasional outgoings into France or Italy: within the boundaries of those countries there is no particular locality I have staked a claim on or identified with. Given the size of the world, the scenes of the stories are scattered over only a small area: but they *are* scattered. Nothing (at least on the surface) connects them, or gives them generic character of the kind to claim or merit consideration. (Bowen, 1999k, 282)

What, therefore, is Bowen's topography? It stretches from the public to the private scene, escapes being generic and homogenous, and yet it seems to be relational – relational in the sense that it relates both to the subject and object and the concrete discourses they produce.

Failing to throw a collective light on my art, my places tend to thought of as its accessories, engaging enough to read of but not 'meaningful'. Wherefore, Bowen topography has so far, so far as I know, been untouched by research. Should anyone give it a thought after I am dead, that will be too late. To it, only I hold the key. (Bowen, 1999k, 282)

Bowen topography oscillates somewhere between amorphousness and a concrete material detail, her idea being that however fluid and alternative identity it still requires estimation. Bowen writes:

For a main trait of human nature is its amorphousness, the amorphousness of the drifting and flopping jellyfish in a cloudy tide, and secret fears (such as fear of nonentity), discouragement and demoralizing misgivings prey upon individuals made aware of this. (Bowen, 1999k, 295)

She further writes: “Shape – shape is the desideratum” (Bowen, 1999k, 295). To give shape to amorphousness may be a fallacy, yet to try to embrace it is an obligation. In the intrauterine symbolic, Bowen returns to the mother that had been taken away from her far too early. She returns to her through her text, in this thesis through *The House in Paris* and *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*.

The amorphousness and tenuousness of identity are in Bowen generative elements of plots, and in general, generative elements of subjectivity. The experience of war, otherness and culture poses a threat to a subject of obliterating the self that constantly runs the risk of becoming “the uncertain *I*”, as Bowen writes in the postscript to *The Demon Lover* collection of stories. In Bowen characters live in the reality of losing identity or being lied to about other’s identity. The amorphousness never disappears but it can be made sense of by narrating identity who does not give the self an overt shape but a subjective momentum. Similar to that Stella in *The Heat of the Day* admits: “Whoever’s the story had been, I let it be mine (...) it came to be my story, and stuck to it. Or rather, first I stick to it, then it went on sticking to me: it took my shape and equally I took its.” (Bowen, 1949/1998b, 224)

On discontinuity of identity Bowen writes in *The Heat of the Day*

By the rules of fiction, with which the life to be credible must comply, he was [Robert] as a character “impossible”- each time they met [Stella and Robert], for instance, he showed no shred or trace of having been continuous since they last met. (Bowen, 1949/1998b, 140)

If we are not shape, we are shreds – Deleuzian lines of flight, and semiotic amorphous beings. We may say that we are *unchilded* mothers through our ongoing relationships with the other.

In the end the interest in identity, personal isolation and denial of love, as well as anesthetized morality prefigure works of many other feminist writers, even though Bowen herself tried to escape the *cliché* of feminist. After all, she had *The Hotel's* female character Mrs Kerr exclaim: "I'm not a Feminist¹³⁰ but I do like being a woman" (Bowen, 1927/2003b, 11) in an abrupt response to the inadequacies of the phallogentric discourse on femininity and motherhood. In Mrs Kerr's case dismissing her alternative way of being and of mothering may mean as much as denying her right to selfhood.

Through the theme of dispossession, especially the dispossession of children, Bowen says something very profound about the complexities of our identities that overlap with the infantile and maternal voices of otherness. Neil Corcoran writes that "The world becomes a place, into which you can never comfortably fit, a place, in which, because you are permanently missing something, you are also missing yourself" (Corcoran, 2004, 85). However, on the contrary, as I have suggested in this work, the idea of plenty can only be encountered in the idea of a lack, as in Deleuzian desire that, as we have mentioned, is productive. It is productive of new rhizomatic identities that are multiple and fluctuant resulting in blurring the boundaries between individuals. In Bowen to desire to persevere in one's own being is to desire one's own desire. As in Deleuze life in Bowen is desire's variable immanence of being, that is, life is about *striving* and becoming, and not simply residual being.

Bowen writes against reading her *Pictures and Conversations* as an autobiography, explaining that "The book is *not* to be an autobiography. It will differ from an autobiography (in the accepted sense) in two ways. (I) It will not follow a time sequence. (II) It will be anything but all-inclusive." (Bowen, 1999k, 297) However, the book as any identity solidifies after following the above prerequisites; it is random, multiple, polyphonic and overtly non-sequential. The underlying theme of this new counter-identity is the relationship between living and writing, that is, living and constructing texts, engaging in discursive practices of the self that percolate the themes already "written - and published." (Bowen, 1999k, 297): themes such as childhood,

¹³⁰ Bowen also reiterated in 1936 and subsequently in 1961 that she was neither a feminist nor believed in the longevity of the feminist cause. In 1936 she stated that "broadly, the woman's movement has accomplished itself" (Bowen, 1936 in Barbeito, 2001, 65) and in 1961 admitted that "I'm not, and shall never be, a feminist." (Bowen, 1961 in Barbeito, 2001, 65)

motherhood and femininity. As in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* and *The House in Paris*,

The underlying theme – to which the book will owe what it is necessary that a book *should* have, continuity – will be the relationship (so far as that can be traceable, and perhaps it is most interesting when it is not apparently not traceable) between living and writing. Dislike of pomposity inhibits me from saying, ‘the relationship between life and art’ (meaning my own). (Bowen, 1999k, 297)

Hopefully, the new, counter-discourses of femininity capture the dynamics of identification through its resemblance to Bowen’s fascination with *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* that has been taken up in this thesis. As in Deleuze, this will inevitably incorporate the ideas of multiplicity and dialogue, but especially the ideas of ‘becoming-homeless’, ‘becoming-little-girl’, and ‘becoming-woman’, which will inevitably contribute to a new understanding of the transformative power and desire of the female and male subjects. This will help pinpoint Bowenesque ‘lines of flight and escape’ which will constitute her way of understanding the *identitarian nomadology* from the self to the other, from the outside to the inside. As such the key term of the new Bowenesque discourse will be among many others ‘travel’ as has been discussed in *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* and *The House in Paris* – travelling as means of looking through the glass to better understand the self and the other – travelling as Bowen’s definite means of encapsulating her private and public topography.

“It is not easy to make a synopsis of this (projected book) [projected identity] – of which the title is drawn from page 1 of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*.” (Bowen, 1999k, 296) but the results should be “a fairly good or at least an engaging book.” (Bowen, 1999k, 297)

Above all our reading should be hermeneutical, as in Ricoeur who has been extensively used in this thesis. This means that hegemonies tend to reiterate in everyday discourses, but it also means that they do not escape (re)interpretation, translation and new readings. It can be said that hermeneutics is a study in interpretation which is a way of escaping domination. In the travelling *to* and *from* hermeneutical symbols of Bowenesque topography, a point of departure needs and has been established – the idea of suffering – the suffering child, the suffering mother, and the suffering orphan. Bowen not only exposes the structures of suffering of women she exposes suffering in general

through her use of discourses inevitably linked with femininity, making the symbolism of femininity her analytical tool. Reading Bowen stands for reading of the pattern that ascribes value to any individual who manages to give meaning to suffering.

The careful investigation of Bowen's texts can open up a path towards a new discourse that will assent on the ideas recent to feminism of restlessness, namely, the idea of restlessness, of desire and openness to cinematic ellipsis of which Bowen was so fond of. In what relates to restlessness this concept maintains the discourse 'restless' and unquenched, as well as non-linear and ambiguous. The second concept of ellipsis gives narrativisation a possibility of imagetic, subjective and, again, non-linear presentation of "The non-poetic statement of the poetic truth." (Bowen, 1950, Lee, 1999, 36) Ellipsis corroborates the idea of performance and making a pattern of a subject. As such new narrativization of discourse is hinged upon the *I* of the subject. The role for the reader is to pursue, follow and respond to these 'lines of flight' of subjectivity, so that links between discourses, authors and addresses are established based on the idea of care: moral and ethical responsibility for the other. The interaction between the *I* and the other becomes based on the idea of an endless interplay of desire, where one constantly seduces the other, constituting the way to "de-sire¹³¹" the language.

De'siring' the language stands for creating a new discourse and investing in creating identity narratively through hermeneutical understanding of the past, the present and the future within one's habitat and geographical self. This, for a female subject, may reveal itself a very powerful means of escaping the constraints of the encumbering, hegemonic and phallic society, and it, nevertheless, indicates other key concepts used in this thesis such as relational autonomy and agency. Writing, any means of narrativization, as Kristeva explains in her *Tales of Love*, can be considered "semblance of willpower" (Kristeva, 1987, 308) that enables one "to hold fast to renunciation. Such *holding* confers authority to the Self, which can claim 'emptiness' provided it simultaneously proceeds with a true work of pinpointing and reconstruction by means of a text" (Kristeva, 1987, 308). Such willpower, Augustine's *enduring/perduring* and Ricoeur's holding fast is "a writing of phantasmatic consumption and destruction amounts[ing] to something like associative speech set

¹³¹ This idea has been postulated by Hilde Staels during her talk "Restless Border Crossings in Aritha van Herk's Writing." at 'From Sea to Sea: Canadian Literature and Culture in Lisbon, November 20, 2009.

adrift...” (Kristeva, 1987, 308) Such speech looks for the pre-Oedipal link with the semiotic through the insufficiency of the maternal figure, as in Bowen, expressed through the idea of pre-Oedipal elusive mother and child, apparently retarded, but in constant search for a new language, through the visual, elliptical and subjective operations of the roving eye towards the “fantasy love [that] does not seek out satisfaction, but feeds on obstacles that are challenged by the eyes” (Kristeva, 1987, 349).

Bowen’s preoccupation with language stems from her belief that there are too many people caught in the process of (re)-negotiating their individual and group identities, while running the risk of becoming ‘place-less’ or ‘displaced’. As a result too many “placeless, ‘dis-placed’ peoples of the world, [are] condemned to the limbo of not belonging, whether to a nation with a national territorial base, to a class or to a religion” (McDowell, 1999, 2).

Thus Bowen’s discourse on femininity and identity encompasses her interest in territory as a metaphorical space, to which, rightly so, a key can be found in the subject’s dynamic becoming until its demise in nothingness. The problematic of language and its *placeness* or *displaceness* for the subject, which stands for mapping of the identity, may involve no actual bodily or geographic movement, even though, in Bowen, it does so very often. Instead, the displacement results in challenging circumstances, renegotiating gender divisions through venturing, as Bowen proposes, into our private, pre-Oedipal self constructed upon the ideas of the roving eye, subjective ellipsis, otherness, trans-temporal transition, hybridity, and above all – ungendered maternal function.

In her quasi revolutionary thinking Bowen envisages many problems with identification in modern times. Hers is the belief in non-placeness of the post-modern subject even though it continues to be propelled to and from various and concrete geographical destinations. Through non-placeness there appears a growing gap between people, who lose interest in each other far too easily and become stripped of all symbols of social and private identity. As Linda McDowell writes in her *Gender, Identity and Place* (1999)

The focus of feminist scholars, (...), has also changed, from a dominant emphasis on the material inequalities between men and women in different parts of the world to a new convergence of interest on language, symbolism, representations and meaning in the

definition of gender, and on questions about subjectivity, identity and the sexed body.
(McDowell, 1999, 6-7)

These being the ideas popular only in the eighties and nineties of twentieth century feminist scholarship, they nevertheless prove one more time the revolutionary character of the Bowenesque counter-discourses as early as first decades of the past century. Any analysis of feminine identity should include, according to Bowen, a prolonged discussion of what it means to be a woman through the varying categories of “space and time, and how those understandings relate. (... .) [to] the concept of gender and gender relations” (McDowell, 1999, 7). Similar to post-modern feminist scholarship, Bowen belief is that gender can be seen as “either (...) a symbolic construction or as a social relationship” (Moore, 1988, in McDowell, 1999, 7). All accepted standards of femininity change over space and time, yet it is of utmost importance to define hermeneutically the stories, origins and traditions that underlie these processes in their private and public expressions.

For any future investigation a more profound and broader insight should be given to changing economic, social, and cultural circumstances that will inevitably remind us of Bowen’s new concept of discourses of identity, especially feminine identity.

Hopefully, this thesis will stimulate further research and critical enquiry into the feminist aims and possibilities of English and Irish literatures

in order to stimulate theoretical and ideological diversity and to redress the structure dividing ‘writing’ (i.e. mainstream, men’s, work) from ‘women’s writing’ (received as a kind of supplement) (Coughlan, 2008, 1-2)

- so as to return to the female subject its equal position within a new discourse of identity – new discourses of femininity.

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