THE NEXT STEP: DARWIN, BRONTË, FOWLES*

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The present article proposes Heathcliff and Sarah Woodruff as monstrous beings who reclaim their desire to be agent subjects in a society and a narrative which deny such a possibility. It would be possible to argue, however, that their monstrosity might be that of the unique specimen, the potential first stage towards the improvement of species through natural selection as theorized by Charles Darwin in 1859. The multiple references to Darwin's study in the novel by John Fowles demonstrate that such a theory could clarify what Sarah represents in the novel. In a retroactive manner, Darwinian theory might be used to understand what Heathcliff is, who Heathcliff is, and why he is the object of general animosity. It might be concluded that what is really monstrous about these two characters is that both are new specimens, *avant la lèttre*, and they occupy a space to which language has no access.

Key words: *Monstruosity, desire, Darwin, Heathcliff, abjection*.

El presente artículo propone a Heathcliff y Sarah Woodruff como seres monstruosos que reclaman su deseo de ser sujetos agentes en una sociedad y una narrativa que niegan tal posibilidad. Sería posible argumentar que su monstruosidad sea la del espécimen único, el potencial primer estadio hacia la mejora de la especie a través de la selección natural tal y como la teorizó Charles Darwin en 1859. Las referencias al estudio de Darwin en la novela de John Fowles demuestran que esta teoría clarificaría lo que Sarah

representa en la novela. De manera retroactiva, la teoría Darwiniana podría usarse para entender qué es Heathcliff, quién es Heathcliff, por qué es objeto de tanta animadversión. Podría concluirse que lo que es realmente monstruoso de estos dos seres es que ambos son especímenes nuevos, *avant la lèttre*, y ocupan un espacio al que no tiene acceso el lenguaje.

Palabras clave: *Monstruosidad, deseo, Darwin, Heathcliff, abyección.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Heathcliff and Sarah Woodruff could be described as creatures who reclaim their desire; the desire to be agent subjects in a society and a narrative which deny their subjectivity. There is no contradiction here; both Heathcliff's and Sarah's situations may be possible if one takes into account the words of French philosopher Catherine Clément. In "The Guilty One," Clément reminds us that "[s]omewhere every culture has an imaginary zone for what it excludes" (36). This is true. Every culture constitutes a universe in itself. The same could be argued about any narrative, which rules itself through certain dynamics which are established as the narration follows its natural progress. Each and every of the characters, images, symbols, and scenes are minutely limited and controlled by narrative dynamics. Nevertheless, maybe ironically, every narrative –like every culture- contains an imaginary zone where the material which has been excluded can reside. Such material might be called abject, but also monstrous. It has been created by narrative itself.

I will propose Heathcliff and Sarah as inhabitants of that imaginary zone of their narratives and, by extension, of their cultures. I will demonstrate that these two abject and monstrous beings constitute desire –Otherness- to each and every other character of the novels they inhabit. In other words, I will argue that Heathcliff and Sarah are inhabitants of the space of desire, the faultline which every text allows, the twilight zone which every text constructs.

I will begin by examining the dynamics established by desire, theorizing upon the subject, language, and the concept of otherness. I will try to delimit the place (or, rather, the non-place) which desire occupies in culture/narrative. It is more than possible that this may be a failed attempt, since we (instinctively?) know aforehand that desire is limitless and, thus, it has no preestablished place within what we traditionally call 'culture'. Thereafter, I will propose the character of Heathcliff as an object of (narrative) desire and, therefore, non-character. Finally, the character of Sarah (whom I will describe as a female Heathcliff) will be used to cast light upon the phenomenon which Heathcliff represents in the narrative dynamics established by Emily Brontë. That is to say, I will try to explain Heathcliff –and what he represents- through a theory in retrospective: the Darwinian theory of the origin of species. I will conclude that what is truly monstrous about these two characters is that they are *avant la lèttre*, inhabiting a space to which language, and thus definitions, have no access.

2. DESIRE, SUBJECTIVITY, LANGUAGE, OTHERNESS, VOIDS

"Desire is what is not said, what cannot be said" (Belsey 1994: 76).

Desire is what is not said because it cannot be said. It is obvious that the word 'desire' can be articulated; we may even find a definition in any valuable dictionary. No definition, however, will prove completely satisfactory. Desire, its dynamics, its consequences, prove elusive terms. Let us take as an example British theorist Catherine Belsey who, in 1994, writes a whole volume of desire which is entitled, precisely, *Desire: Love Stories in Western Culture*. Every time Belsey tries to define desire, she stumbles upon the same problem: she only makes matters more convoluted. Here is an instance:

> [Desire is] a kind of madness, an enchantment, exaltation, anguishes … perhaps the foundation of a lifetime of happiness. […] The commonest and yet the most singular condition we know. At once shared with a whole culture, but intimate and personal, hopelessly banal and yet unique (Belsey 1994: 3).

What is interesting about this definition is, precisely, that it fails to define its object. Belsey's tentative language powerfully calls the attention of the reader: "a kind of", "perhaps", "at once ... but", "hopelessly ... yet". The elusiveness of these terms promotes a void of meaning which the reader must actively fill, the author has proved unable to fix the definition, to put it bluntly, Belsey has not been able to find what Flaubert used to call *le mot just*. It is also interesting to observe the amount of contradictions Belsey incurs into in her four-line definition: desire is "The commonest and yet the most singular condition we know. At once shared with a whole culture, but intimate and personal, hopelessly banal and yet unique" (Belsey 1994: 3). In short, readers do not really know exactly what to think: is desire common or singular? Is it intimate and personal or is it shared with a whole culture? I would like to point out that my assessment of Belsey's (non)definition here is far from negative. To the contrary, tentative language, voids of signification, even multiple contradictions, indicate that Belsey has offered an excellent proposal and her definition of desire is, ironically, most accurate, basically because it is not possible to offer a complete and satisfactory definition of what desire actually is. To try and give a name to what is inherently unnameable is an enterprise which we know is doomed to fail even before we embark upon it.

Maybe, instead of trying to define desire, we should ask ourselves which is the place that desire occupies within what is known as culture. But this also proves unsafe terrain since the terms "desire" and "culture" are antithetical. If the definition of desire is elusive is precisely because it does not occupy a solid, fixed position within culture; therefore, it cannot be articulated, defined, locked within linguistic limits. Far from frustrating us, such an elusiveness promotes the compulsion to keep on writing about desire, in a banal attempt to fix it (and also because speaking about what cannot be defined may prove an interesting game). We may try hard to fix desire to a definition, but we will continue to fail irremediably. This is due to desire itself. But also due to language.

Language, the realm of the subject. Let us recover Jacques Lacan's words: we are born as organisms (that is, we belong in nature) and we transform into subjects as we interiorize culture. This

interiorization of culture starts when we begin to learn language, obviously, since the transformation into subjects involves language use; the capacity to give meaning –to define- what is around us. But this comes with some baggage. Language becomes Other because it belongs to culture, not to nature (it is not organic, the way we are when we are born). Language precedes us, it is there before we are born, it exists beyond the subject and, as such, it does not belong to it. But, on the other hand, it is the only mechanism which we have (to this day) in order to define, in order to communicate with others and with ourselves. In short, we are born in complete connection with the organic world, but we become separated from it through multiple castrations, all of which mimic the primordial castration from the maternal body upon which psychoanalytic theory is based. In this process, we are left with only one alternative: we have to formulate our needs through a tool which is alien, but it is the only tool we have at hand.

We might speak, then, of a void that stands between us and the separation (as in any symbolic castration process). It might be a residue of our experience as organic beings, something beyond all definitions that language might propose. Lacan calls this "the real". Obviously, the real is not reality (since reality is culture); on the contrary, the real is that which is organic and beyond all definitions, but also something that we cannot name because it simply does not exist with the proposal of significations that language offers. We may find it in any arena regulated by the unconscious: dreams, slips of language, multiplicity of meaning… Each and every of these are related to a certain dissatisfaction which we are not able to specify. It is a void between the organism and the subject of language. This void promotes the appearance of desire; the desire for something which is unnameable (since desire itself is also unnameable) and, as such, unconscious. From this moment on, we will try to fill in this void with a succession of objects of desire which might take the most extraordinary of forms. It is an attempt to feel whole again, to heal the wound which has opened between the subject and the lost real. Desire is, then, constant metonymy, that which searches obsessively for substitution, permutation, translation. It will never become completely present. Desire is always absent and, in its absence, it is always present:

Desire is that which is manifested in the interval that demand hollows within itself, in as much as the subject, in articulating the signifying chain, brings to light the want-to-be, together with the appeal to receive the complement from the Other, the Other the locus of speech, is also the locus of want, or lack.

That which is thus given to the Other to fill, and which is strictly that which it does not have, since it, too, lacks being, is what is called love, but it is also hate and ignorance (Lacan 1977: 263).

Lacan explains it very well: desire manifests itself in an "interval that demand hollows within itself." Such a demand promotes that the subject should articulate the signifying chain (it speaks, it asks for something), while it discovers its lack, its need to open to the Other (through that other Other which is language). This is the reason why the Other is the location of language: we, subjects of language, create the Other through the words we use. But the Other is also the location of lack which has brought us to use language and demands that the hole be filled. Now comes tragedy. We demand from the Other that it fill the gap, but the Other is unable to do so, since it too is empty. That is to say, we project our desire upon the Other and construct it, in the knowledge that the process will construct us too.

Would it be possible, then, to speak about the desire of the Other? Can we say that the Other has desire? No. The dynamics of desire has proved that when the Other desires, it is not the Other anymore, it achieves the position of the subject. Then, we become the Other.

3. "L'ENFER C'EST LES AUTRES": HEATHCLIFF

'Why, about *you*!' Tweedledee exclaimed, clapping his hands triumphantly. 'And if he left off dreaming about you, where do you suppose you'd be?' 'Where I am now, of course,' said Alice. 'Not you!' Tweedledee retorted contemptuously. 'You'd be nowhere. Why, you're only a sort of thing in his dream!' 'If that there king was to wake,'

added Tweedledum, 'you'd go out –bang!- just like a candle!' 'I shouldn't!' Alice exclaimed indignantly (Carroll 1963: 238).

The twins Tweedledee and Tweedledum try to make Alice understand that she is only an image –a character- within the dynamics of the dream that the king is immersed in. Within such dynamics, if the king woke up, Alice would go out ("bang!"), just like a candle. According to the twins, Alice is not "real". What is interesting about this quote is the clarity of the twins' views on the dynamics of dreams, unconscious, narrative (oniric, in this case) and its capacity to construct and deconstruct the characters which inhabit it, who have no autonomy beyond these dynamics. On the other hand, it is also shocking to see the violence with which Alice rejects to see herself as a projection which may effectively go out –vanish- once the dream – the narrative- is over. Alice does not want to be a dreamed object, she wants to have an autonomous identity beyond what narrative parameters establish. In other words, Alice is positioning herself in that liminal space of the Other which desires (to become an agent subject), just like Heathcliff.

This quote is useful to establish what happens to the character of Heathcliff within the narrative imagined –dreamed?- by Emily Brontë. Heathcliff is the object –the Other- who strives to become a subject, even when narrative dynamics transform his strive into a banal enterprise. From the very beginning of Brontë's novel, Heathcliff is situate within the linguistic parameters of the foreigner, thus establishing solid links with Dracula, Satan, and all those alienated figures which appear to destabilise the presumed solidity of what we know, culture. In the words of Heiland, "[Heathcliff] does not so much tear things apart as show us how fragile they were to begin with" (Heiland 2004: 117). Although it is true that Heathcliff is presented as montrous and diabolical as Satan himself, what really unites him to the figure of the foreigner is its tragic ingredient. What is Heathcliff's tragedy? The tragedy of loneliness. When I refer to loneliness here I do not mean that he is on his own in a physical sense, but I am rather making a point about the metaphysical loneliness of the character who sees the world from a perspective that is completely unique: the loneliness of the monster, to put it another way. Heathcliff's reasons for his metaphysical and monstrous

loneliness are multiple: the mystery of his provenance, his presumed orphanhood, his absolute dispossession from Victorian culture, his social class, his ethnic origin… All of these elements converge in one: Heathcliff is a new specimen and, as such, he is unique in his species. That is the reason why he is so lonely.

And that is the reason why he is also beyond language, in a symbolic ambiguity which confers his most monstrous aspect. Who is Heathcliff? What is Heathcliff? Throughout the novel, many characters try to provide answers to these questions; they all fail irremediably, since Heathcliff –the object of desire- precedes the language with which he could be defined. Heathcliff stands beyond linguistic, narrative, and cultural dynamics. Enrique Gil Calvo, the author of *Máscaras masculinas: héroes, patriarcas y monstruos*, argues that:

> el monstruo puede ser una representación simbólica del Prójimo: del Otro y los otros, nuestros semejantes más ajenos, lejanos o socialmente distantes de nosotros. Si el Extraño parece un ser de otra especie (un monstruo) es porque se sitúa fuera de nuestro alcance ... [...] Esto explica el temor que infunde el forastero (Gil Calvo 2006: 84).

Heathcliff inhabits, then, the space of desire. For this reason, he acquires the status of character (dreamed, projected) not only for the reader of Bontë, but also for the rest of the characters of the novel. Gil Calvo, again, argues that "podría pensarse que el monstruo no actúa por sí mismo como sujeto agente, sino que se limita a servir de objeto" (Gil Calvo 2006: 85), but nothing further from the truth. The monstrous Other has the capacity of destroying the subject or, even worse, "como señaló Nietzsche, el que lucha con monstruos debe tener cuidado de no convertirse él mismo en monstruo" (Gil Calvo 2006: 85), since the monster is nothing but "una invención imaginaria del propio sujeto agente, causada por el temor a sí mismo" (Gil Calvo 2006: 86). As Sartre rightly said, "l'enfer c'est les autres" (Sartre 1944: XX).

Let us recover the idea that Heathcliff is not a character just for the reader but also for the rest of the characters who inhabit

Brontë's text. The dynamics established from the very beginning of the novel feature a narrator (Lockwood) who positions himself as a subject who narrates (through his diary entries) his object (Heathcliff). This has immediate repercussions upon our own way to imagine the character. In his total ignorance of the main character, Lockwood decides to fill in the voids of information which Heathcliff's taciturnity creates. Hence, he presents his object as a "dark-skinned gipsy in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman", "an erect and handsome figure; and rather morose" (Brontë 2005: 4). The beginning of the narrative, then, marks also the inauguration of Heathcliff as a dreamed object, the projection of whatever Lockwood wants to see. Later, Nelly Dean, the novel's second main narrator, will end up reaffirming Lockwood's projection: in response to her query as to what he thinks of Heathcliff, Lockwood replies that he deems him a "rough fellow", to which Nelly hurriedly replies: "Rough as a saw-edge, and hard as a whinstone!", and adds: "The less you meddle with him the better" (Brontë 2005: 37), assuring with her words that Heathcliff is positioned not just as the Other, but as the dangerous, monstrous Other.

There is very little Heathcliff may do to escape such a narrativization of his persona. His identity is created both through Lockwood's projections and Nelly's story of his arrival to Wuthering Heights, when he is between six and eight years of age and adopted by Mr. Earnshaw. Far from being able to tell the family about his provenance, Heathcliff is only able to repeat "some gibberish" which nobody can understand (Brontë 2005: 39), thus placing himself beyond language and what is intelligible. No doubt this is the reason why the Earnshaws decide to give him a name, thus cutting him off from his potential genealogy and reaffirming the mystery of his origins. Such a mystery is both unfathomable and ominous: "from the very beginning, he bred bad feeling in the house", according to Nelly Dean's story (Brontë 2005: 40). The enigma of Heathcliff's origins is the source of his non-identity, the lack of a family history promotes the ambiguity of this character and his presumed alliances with what is obscure and unknown, particularly in the nineteenth century, when ancestry marked fate. Nelly believes that "it appeared as if the lad *were* possessed of something diabolical" (Brontë 2005: 70), but she also falls prey to fantasy when she imagines a past for

Heathcliff, one which could easily have been taken out of a fairy tale:

> You're fit for a prince in disguise. Who knows, but your father was Emperor of China, and your mother an Indian queen, each of them able to buy up, with one week's income, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange together? And you were kidnapped by wicked sailors and brought to England (Brontë 2005: 60-61).

Inadvertently, Nelly is writing not just the past but also the future of Heathcliff. He will, indeed, transform into the owner of two houses becoming, in the process, the sort of capitalist monster which is particularly terrifying in the hierarchical nineteenth century: the bourgois who acceeds to power through money as opposed to lineage. The monstrous intruder is most dangerous when he dispossesses us from what we believe is ours by birth right.

After a while in an unknown place, Heathcliff comes back to prove that transformation is possible:

> Now, fully revealed by the fire and candlelight, I was amazed, more than ever, to behold the transformation of Heathcliff. He had grown a tall, athletic, well-formed man; beside whom my master seemed quite slender and youth-like. His upright carriage suggested the idea of his having been in the army. His countenance was much older in expression and decision of feature than Mr. Linton's; it looked intelligent, and retained no marks of former degradation. A half-civilised ferocity lurked yet in the depressed brows and eyes full of black fire, but it was subdued; and his manner was even dignified: quite divested of roughness, though stern for grace (Brontë 2005: 104).

This transformation clearly positions Heathcliff within the symbolic economy of culture; in spite of this, the quote proves how Nelly is still intent on describing Heathcliff as a liminal being. His nature, she claims, is still visible through the eyes which prove his

"half-civilised" ferocity. A new stage opens for Heathcliff, one in which, in spite of his financial and social progress, each and every character speaking of him will continue to make disturbing references to his presumed connections with the diabolical, the unexplainable, the obscure, the dangerous. In short, each and every character will continue to project upon Heathcliff his/her own fears and desires. This is Catherine describing Heathcliff to naïve Isabella who claims she has fallen in love with him:

> 'I wouldn't be you for a kingdom, then!'
> Catherine declared, emphatically: and she seemed to
> speak sincerely. 'Nelly, help me to convince her of her
> madness. Tell her what Heathcliff is: an unreclaimed
> creature, without refinement, without cultivation; an
> arid wilderness of furze and whinstone. I'd as soon put
> that little canary into the park on a winter's day, as
> recommend you to bestow your heart on him! It is
> deplorable ignorance of his character, child, and nothing
> else, which makes that dream enter your head. Pray,
> don't imagine that he conceals depths of benevolence
> and affection beneath a stern exterior! He's not a rough
> diamond - a pearl-containing oyster of a rustic: he's a
> fierce, pitiless, wolfish man. I never say to him, "Let this
> or that enemy alone, because it would be ungenerous or
> cruel to harm them;" I say, "Let them alone, because I
> should hate them to be wronged:" and he'd crush you
> like a sparrow's egg, Isabella, if he found you a
> troublesome charge. I know he couldn't love a Linton;
> and yet he'd be quite capable of marrying your fortune
> and expectations: avarice is growing with him a besetting
> sin. There's my picture: and I'm his friend - so much so,
> that had he thought seriously to catch you, I should,
> perhaps, have held my tongue, and let you fall into his
> trap' (Brontë 2005: 111).

There is no bourgeois in the above description; we only read about an ambiguous creature, a hybrid between the human and the animal which reveals itself as monstrous as ever. Isabella herself, later, will also define Heathcliff as "a lying fiend, a monster, and not a human

being" (Brontë 2005: 164). Young Cathy –Catherine and Edgar's daughter- assures Heathcliff that he is as lonely as the devil and nobody will cry for him after his death (Brontë 2005: 298). As the narrative progression advances, Heathcliff's dark origins become increasingly ominous to the point that, near narrative closure, Nelly Dean still continues to wonder: "Is he a ghoul or a vampire? [...] where did he come from, the little dark thing?" (Brontë 2005: 341-342). Heathcliff is an unresolved mystery from beginning to end. It is only logical that, after his death, country folks assure that they can see his ghost walking on the moors. We still do not know who or what Heathcliff is, but we do have the feeling that he is the Other who desires.

4. "THE HOPEFUL MONSTER": SARAH WOODRUFF

Although *The French Lieutenant's Woman* was written in 1969, it is a text which takes us to the past, effecting a marvellous revision of the Victorian period through a 20th century innovative narrator who offers comments and critical judgement throughout the narration. From a very simplistic point of view, this is the story of Charles Smithson, an aristocrat who finds himself in a difficult situation after meeting a mysterious woman, Sarah Woodruff. Such a meeting will compromise Charles's engagement with Ernestina, a young woman who is very much a product of her age and, as such, completely opposed to the extremely advanced character that Sarah is. The story is permeated with references to Charles Darwin's famous study *On the Origin of Species*, a text which Tony E. Jackson considers paramount in order to try and give meaning to the character of Sarah.

Who is Sarah? What is Sarah? These questions are familiar to us. Indeed, they are the same questions we posed when tackling the character of Heathcliff. Sarah and Heathcliff have a lot in common: both represent Otherness with the narrative dynamics established by the text, both inhabit the dark space that desire establishes beyond culture. The text itelf poses this question in an obsessive manner: "Who is Sarah? Out of what shadows does she come?" (Fowles 1969: 95-96). Sarah can indeed be defined: she is an intelligent woman (Fowles 1969: 57) who assumes intellectual equality with Charles (Fowles 1969: 140) and, for this reason, she is outside the strict

parameters established by fierce Victorianism. However, the character of Sarah always remains aloof, perhaps positioned beyond anything that language can define, at all times displaying a behaviour which becomes incomprehensible to Charles, to the reader, to the narrator, to the author himself. Let us take the following extract as an instance of the above. Sarah and Charles have met in the Underwood; they suddenly feel the menace of being discovered:

> Charles felt pierced with a new embarrassment: he glanced at Sarah to see if she knew who the intruders were. But she stared at the hart's-tongue ferns at her feet, as if they were merely sheltering from some shower of rain. Two minutes, then three passed. Embarrassment gave way to a degree of relief –it was clear that the two servants were far more interested in exploring each other than their surroundings. He glanced again at Sarah. Now she too was watching, from round her tree-trunk. She turned back, her eyes cast down. But then without warning she looked up at him.
> A moment.
> The she did something as strange, as shocking, as if she had thrown off her clothes.
> She smiled (Fowles 1969: 180).

The above extract shows some ingredients which conform the character of Sarah: for a start, her elusiveness; Charles looks at her but she is looking elsewhere, in a dynamics that repeats itself in each of their encounters. Her face is always half-hidden, her regard is somewhere else, her personality cannot be, therefore, completely dilucidated. Secondly, her autonomy in relation to her own context. Whilst Charles is honestly ashamed and worried about what might happen if he is discovered in this situation, Sarah does not seem to allow shame or guilt. Finally, her connections with desire, her ambiguity. Sarah casts down her eyes but, suddenly, she looks up at Charles. Her smile speaks volumes and tells us that all this is really a funny game for her. The simile that the narrator uses is interesting, to say the least: Sarah's smile is as scandalous as if she had taken all her clothes off. Her smile, therefore, is a sexual smile not in the sense of an invitation to copulation, but in the sense of sexual liberation in

an age which represses female (and, hence, male) sexuality. Some
pages later, when Charles holds Sarah and is about to kiss her, the
narrator points consciously to this same idea:

> [Charles] slowly reached out his hands and raised
> her. Their eyes remained on each other's, as if they were
> both hypnotized. She seemed to him –or those wide,
> those drowning eyes seemed- the most ravishingly
> beautiful he had ever seen. What lay behind them did
> not matter. The moment overcame the age (Fowles
> 1969: 243).

What lies behind Sarah's eyes –her identity?- does not matter.
She is a character far more advanced than the age, because she is an
autonomous woman who decides upon her own identity, the Other
who desires to transform into a subject. The writings of scientist
Charles Darwin also outstripped his own age and that was the reason
why both the writings and their author became the object of fierce
criticism (the caricature of Darwin with the body of a monkey might
come to mind here). However, *On the Origin of Species* (1859) is a text
which constantly appears in John Fowles's novel, maybe becoming a
clue which we should take into account in order to cast light upon
Sarah's behaviour. As noted before, this is what Tony E. Jackson
proposes in his article "Charles and the Hopeful Monster" (1997).

Jackson argues that we need to recover the most modern
aspects of Darwin in order to understand John Fowles's use of the
Origin, since understanding the theory of evolution means
understanding ourselves as live beings. In *The French Lieutenant's Woman*,
the meeting between Charles and Sarah allows Charles to go through
a kind of mental evolution –the change from the notion of Victorian
subject to that of the modern subject. This is an evolution which is
produced due to the effects of manipulation to which Sarah submits
Charles (Jackson 1997: 226). But what does this tell us about Sarah
herself?

Throughout the novel, Sarah is presented as a kind of superior
being with a more solid self-consciousness, who teaches Charles in the
knowledge of Existentialism, a doctrine she is already proficient in

(Jackson 1997: 227). Fowles and his conscious narrator, however, deny all access to the character's psychology. There is a possibility that this may be due to the fact that the linguistic parameters of the 19th century do not allow a definition of what Sarah is. According to Jackson, Sarah can be described as "the hopeful monster of change"; i.e. a completely new specimen in the evolution of the species, one for whom there is no definition as yet. Within Darwinism, we may only understand newness in retrospective; that is, we are unable to narrate what is happening while it is happening, we can only name it once it has happened. Only in retrospect will we be able to understand it (Jackson 1997: 227). In the words of Darwin:

> It may be said that natural selection is daily and hourly scrutinising, throughout the world, every variation, even the slightest; rejecting that which is bad, preserving and adding up all that is good; silently and insensibly working, whenever and wherever opportunity offers, at the improvement of each organic being in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions of life. We see nothing of these slow changes in progress, until the hand of time has marked the long lapse of ages… (Darwin 1985: 125).

Just as newness in the evolution of the species can only be described in the future, the monster itself (the new being) does not know what it is, because it also needs to define itself via temporality. It lacks the experience of the passage from old to new, therefore it is unaware that it is a new being. This would explain why Sarah is elusive not only for Charles but also for the narrator, the author, and the reader. The descriptions of this character always follow ambiguous paths: "as if", "seems", "almost"… Sarah is Charles's desire but, as a new being, as a monster, she also has her own desire which alienates her and forces her to describe herself through the vocabulary of desire: "nothing", "hardly human", "Do not ask me to explain what I have done. I cannot explain it. It is not to be explained", "I am not to be understood even by myself". Sarah cannot be described because she is ahistorical. In other words, there does not exist, as yet, the vocabulary which will allow us to categorize Sarah's condition. Like Heathcliff, she is a character *avant la lèttre*.

5. CONCLUSIONS: HISTORICAL SUBJECTS

Narrative dynamics positions the characters of Heathcliff and Sarah Woodruff as elusive and undefinable in a clear link with desire ("what cannot be said"). We have also seen that in their narrative position as the Other, as inhabitants of the dark area which the text's progression allows, both are transformed as characters for the rest of the characters, who project onto them their desires, wishes, and fears. Nonetheless, the placement of these two figures within the space of otherness would unauthorize the possibility that they also felt desire. This seems to be the case. As the two texts advance, Heathcliff and Sarah prove that they are objects who strive to transform into subjects. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution has provided a clue to understand why this is the case.

Both Heathcliff and Sarah appear on scene as mutations, as hopeful monsters, to follow Jackson's terminology, as new beings in the evolution of the species and, as such, as objects of fear and rejection simply because of their incapacity to be catalogued. Neither one nor the other fits into any of the roles of the age: Heathcliff is and is not a gift of God and a demon, a prince in disguise kidnapped by wicked soldiers, the owner of two houses, a usurper, a hero, a villain, a ghost; Sarah is and is not a Victorian governess, a fallen woman, a lost woman, a reject of society, a prostitute. Darwin tells us that "In social animals [natural selection] will adapt the structure of each individual for the benefit of the community: *if each in consequence profits by the selected change*" (Darwin 1985: 129, italics added).

As new entities, their identities cannot be constructed through specularization and/or identification, since there exists neither mirror nor identification object for them. The newer they are, the more alienated, the more abject, the more monstrous. Every step they take in narrative is another step towards their construction as unique creatures: the bourgeois and the new woman of the twentieth century. The problem is that both they and those around them and the narrative lack the vocabulary to define them. Thus, both are relegated to that space beyond language, to the zone for what culture excludes, to the realm of desire: "what is not said, what cannot be said".

I would like to finish with a quote from *On the Origin of Species* which will allow me to provide a note on a future line of debate. What is the effect that the hopeful monster of change has on the rest of the species? Darwin has the answer:

> … as new species in the course of time are formed through natural selection, others will become rarer and rarer and finally extinct. The forms which stand in closest competition with those undergoing modification and improvement, will naturally suffer most. [...]Consequently, each new variety or species, during the progress of its formation, will generally press hardest on its nearest kindred, and tend to exterminate them (Darwin 1985: 159).

The monster has repercussions on its environment. As new species are formed through natural selection, the rest become increasingly strange until they are finally extinguished. But those forms which are in direct competition with those improved ones are the ones which will suffer more. Inevitably, all those who cross the paths of Heathcliff and Sarah Woodruff are doomed to their own extinction.

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