

Sycorax and Serafine: community building in Marina Warner's *Indigo* (1992)

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ABSTRACT. During the last four decades the postcoloniality in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* has been investigated and discussed. Marina Warner's novel *Indigo*, published in 1992, is a reworking of the play in which feminine roles are enhanced and analysed in a multiple narrative comprehending the 17th century invasion of a Caribbean island and the fortune of the invaders' descendents in the 20th century. In contrast to the English colonizers stance of empire building, the two female characters of the novel, Sycorax and Serafine, endeavour to build communities. In this feminine version of *The Tempest*, Warner shows an alternative way to replace patriarchy and establish the basic tenets of a more-enduring and equalitarian society.

Key words: rewriting, feminism, inclusion, empire building, community-building.

RESUMO. *Sícorax e Serafine: a construção da comunidade no romance Índigo, de Marina Warner.* Durante os últimos quarenta anos, investigou-se e discutiu-se o aspecto pós-colonial da peça *A tempestade*, de Shakespeare. O romance *Índigo*, de Marina Warner, publicado em 1992, é a reescrita da peça, na qual os papéis femininos são realçados e analisados numa narrativa múltipla que compreende a invasão de uma ilha caribenha no século XVII e a fortuna dos descendentes desses invasores no século XX. Enquanto a ideologia dos colonizadores ingleses se baseava na construção de império, as duas personagens femininas, Sícorax e Serafine, se esforçam na construção de comunidades. Nessa versão feminina de *A tempestade*, Warner apresenta uma alternativa para suplantar o patriarcalismo e fundar princípios básicos para uma sociedade mais duradoura e mais igualitária.

Palavras-chave: reescrita, feminismo, inclusão, construção de império, construção de comunidade.

Rewriting as a post-colonial practice

The current rewriting strategy of a canonical text by an author hailing from a British ex-colony is undoubtedly valid. The rewriting of *Jane Eyre* (1847) in *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1968) and of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) in *Foe* (1986) are well-known examples. Such appropriation implodes not merely the novel's ideological contents but also problematizes and de-absolutizes the language of the colonizer used by the native writer. The reinterpretation and the codification of the canonical text involve the use of characters and structure, such as the "metaphor" of the metropolis-colony relationship (Dorsinville, 1974) or the characterization of peculiar aspects of post-colonial reality. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is perhaps the most rewritten work in the last four decades (Nixon, 1987). When analysing this theme with regard to Canadian literature, Brydon (1984) distinguishes between representations of *The Tempest* in "British" Canada, which involve Miranda (mother/England-daughter/Canada) and French

Canada, with its emphasis on colonial power exercised by Prospero and Caliban. Besides the classical re-workings by George Lamming (*Natives of My Person* and *Water with Berries*), and by Aimé Césaire (*Une tempête: d'après 'La Tempête' de Shakespeare - Adaptation pour un théâtre nègre*, 1974) (Zabus, 1985), there is too the differentiated political discourse on Prospero as the prototype of the protagonist in classical U.S. literature and on the appropriation and the rejection of the colonizer's language (Greenblatt, 1976).

In our research, we have focused on the novel *Indigo or, Mapping the Waters*, by Marina Warner (1992), as a rewriting of *The Tempest* (1611), precisely with regard to the Sycorax-Serafine complex. Influenced by Peter Hulme's *Colonial Encounters*, the author reworks the general contents of the Shakespearean play and constructs an interlink between two narratives, a 17th century adventure and colonialist story and another one commuting between the same Caribbean island and London in the 20th century. Our research will

concern the transformation that Warner works out in the construction of Sycorax (the witch in Shakespeare) and Warner's Amerindian indigo manufacturer and Serafine (the Caribbean maid), a kind of *Sycorax rediviva*. The methodology involves a short biography of Warner, a summary of the novel, a discussion on the rewriting parody, a list of similarities and differences between Sycorax in *The Tempest* and Sycorax/Serafine in the two narratives found in *Indigo*. The discussion will place them at opposite poles, the former within the colonialist project and the latter at the front of community building.

Marina Warner and her literary work

Marina Warner, born in England in 1946, is a novelist and literary critic, with books ranging from fairy tales and popular culture to cinema and hagiography. *Alone of all her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (1976) examines the religious and social meaning of Mary in different historical periods. Other works include *The Dragon Empress* (1972), *Queen Victoria Sketchbook* (1980), *Joan of Arc: the Image of Female Heroism* (1981) *Monuments and Maidens* (1985); *Managing Monsters* (1994) and *From the Beast to the Blond: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (1994). Her latest critical work (her eighth) is *No Go the Bogeyman: Scaring, Lulling and Making Mock* (1998) on the exploitation of terror and the different strategies employed by people to cope with it. Warner wrote seven novels, namely, *In a Dark Wood* (1977), *The Skating Party* (1982), *The Lost Father* (1988), *Mermaids in the Basement* (1993), *Wonder Tales* (1994, editor), *Indigo, or Mapping the Waters* (1992) and *The Leto Bundle* (2001). The novel *The Lost Father* won the Regional Commonwealth Writers Prize and the Macmillan Silver Pen Award. Warner was Visiting Fellow at Getty Center, the British Film Institute, and Cambridge University. Warner taught at the Erasmus University, Rotterdam, University of Ulster, and is currently Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Department of English, Stanford University. She read the Reith Lectures on BBC which have since been published in the United States as *Six Myths of Our Time: Little Angels, Little Monsters, Beautiful Beasts, and More...* (1994). The Brazilian Companhia das Letras published *Da fera à loira: sobre contos de fadas e seus narradores* in 1999.

The fabula of *Indigo*

When the young (second) wife of Sir Anthony Everard gave birth to the pretty Xanthe, Miranda, his young granddaughter listens to Serafine, an old

Caribbean maid, advising her not to be conspicuous, but to remain always a secret princess. After describing Xanthe's birth, christening and upbringing in London by Serafine, the narrator takes the reader back to the 17th century, precisely to a Caribbean island where the Everard family made fortune in the plantation of indigo and sugar cane. On the island of Liamuiga, the Amerindian Sycorax miraculously saves a child by ripping open the belly of an African woman thrown ashore by a slave ship. She retires with her adopted son Dulé to a remote part of the island, cultivates indigo, prepares the product for cloth dyeing and dedicates herself to counselling the natives in need of help. The Negro boy Dulé soon has a companion. An Arawak Indian girl, Ariel, brought on the island by Europeans from the American mainland, is also abandoned and adopted by Sycorax. Tormented by his African roots, Dulé retires to another small island called Oualie and leaves Ariel with her adopted mother in Liamuiga. On the tragic arrival of English colonizers, Ariel is seduced by the colonizer Kit Everard, who secures the island in the name of the English king. Since the erstwhile peaceful environment of the island is disrupted, the islanders prepare themselves for a revolt against the English invaders. Due to superior strategy and arms, the revolt is subdued, Dulé is taken prisoner and Everard and his companions could proceed with the exploitation of the island and its manpower. However, Sycorax dies and is buried at the foot of an ancient tree, which becomes a sort of refuge place for overburdened islanders who become slaves and thus excluded from all the benefits of the English colony. The narrator then goes back to the 20th century and tells the reader how Xanthe and Miranda, now two young women with different temperament and experience, are invited to celebrate the anniversary of the first landing on the island by their ancestors. Shortly afterwards Xanthe marries an entrepreneur and begins to rebuild the family fortune by fomenting the tourist trade to Liamuiga. The islanders turn rebellious and in the ensuing battle Xanthe suffers an accident and is killed. Miranda returns to England, marries a Negro actor and finds her fulfilment. Serafine still stands by the excluded members of the Everard family, especially the alcoholic Astride, interned in a clinic.

Sycorax in *The Tempest* (1623)

The only information on Caliban's mother may be found in the text of *The Tempest* (1611). Sycorax is not a character and does not have any voice to tell her own story. In the Shakespearean play, the spirit

Ariel implores Prospero to free him from his prison to where he was restricted by the witch Sycorax before the arrival of the magician on the island. Twenty-four years before the Argier-born witch had confined Ariel to a tree and forgot to free him before she died. Prospero frees Ariel and the latter becomes his faithful and obedient servant. Further, from Ariel's alleged narrative Prospero fabricates the Sycorax story: the old pregnant witch had been exiled on the island where she gave birth to a hybrid son called Caliban. On her death Caliban becomes the sole owner of the island. Prospero's arrival brings freedom to Ariel and slavery to Caliban.

Prospero characterizes Sycorax as an *incubus*, or rather, a female inseminated by the devil (I ii 321-2). The result is Caliban, described as "hag-seed" (I ii 367) and "a freckled whelp hag-born - not honour'd with a human shape". Prospero's version of the story places Sycorax as the other and enhances the diversity between the European and the native. The adjectives and adjectival phrases used ("foul witch", "grown into a hoop", "damned witch", "blue-eyed hag", "her most unmitigable rage", "litter", "age and envy") show the employment of binarism introduced by Prospero so that Sycorax could be hierarchised and colonized. Moreover, Prospero underlines Sycorax's ugliness, the product of her position of a very old woman and to physical deformities ("grown into a hoop"). Sycorax's lack of beauty is also acknowledged by Caliban who, admitting his limitations in front of the female, contrasts her to the beautiful Miranda (III ii 99-101). It is worth noting that physical ugliness and the moral degradation in Caliban and Sycorax reveal a latent racism since these characteristics are attributed to the vile race of their owners (I ii 359) and to their inability in changing their vicious nature by any educational process (IV i 188-9).

The witch's death before the arrival of the Europeans favours her lack of reaction against Prospero's invasion. In the case of Caliban it is another matter. From the native's point of view Prospero is considered an usurper and insists on the inheritance left by his mother: "The island's mine, by Sycorax my mother, / Which thou tak'st from me" (I ii 333-4).

Caliban's slave condition provokes invectives and curses proper to his mother: "All the charms/Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!" (I ii 341-2). He knows, however, that the magic of the European is stronger than Sycorax's and its sources, the Patagonian god Setebos (I ii 374-6), also mentioned in V i 261. On the other hand, Prospero does not underrate the magical power of Sycorax

and admits that the witch's "black magic" is also powerful and capable of controlling the moon's movements (V i 268-271).

Many authors state that the word Sycorax (perhaps from σῦς, pig, and from κοράξ, crow) is very similar to Κίρκη or Circe, the witch mentioned in the *Odyssey*. In mythology Circe is expelled from her husband's kingdom and exiled to a Mediterranean island. In literary allegories Circe also represents seduction and instincts, very close to the allegations brought forth by Prospero on Sycorax and Caliban. As Prospero contrasts education (*nurture*) and instinct (*nature*), he also distinguishes between his "white magic" and Sycorax's "black magic". There is too a great similarity between Sycorax and the witch Medea, represented in one of Euripides' tragedies and in the seventh book of *Metamorphoses*, by Ovid.

Shakespeare probably had a knowledge of the adventures and attempts at colonization in the New World and may have been influenced by incipient British trading interests in those parts. The Bard doesn't place Sycorax's power in the classical context but in the god Setebos of the Patagonians, mentioned in the *History of Travel* (1577), by Robert Eden, in his description on the circumnavigation of the earth by Magalhães. "[The Patagonians] roared like bulls and cried to their great demon Setebos for help" (in Kermode, 1990, p. xxxii). Besides, Caliban's hybridism derives from his status as *incubus*, one of the rooted ideas in the European imaginary even before the appearance of the *Malleus Malleficarum* (1486) and with extensive expansion and virility in the last decades of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th (Trevor-Roper, 1988; Belsey, 1985).

Since Sycorax doesn't have any voice in the Shakespearean play, Prospero's story on the witch is surely a reproduction of Ariel's. In fact, it is highly advantageous for the two male characters to other the female Sycorax. While the latter endeavours to be seen as a victim of her persecution, the former insists on the cultural diversity so that, through moral depreciation, he could legitimise the usurpation of the island and the slavery of the native. Consequently, silence, hierarchisation and subalternity are contemporary with colonization. Like Medea's, Sycorax's curse which controls the moon is still inoffensive to disrupt the power of the European. To the very last Prospero is master of the situation, of the island and of Caliban.

Sycorax's rewriting

Although *The Tempest* is perhaps the most rewritten text from a postcolonial point of view, the

appropriation of Sycorax by Warner (1992) is highly singular and demonstrates counterpoint effects on the feminine condition. As Warner's narrative alternates between events on the island of Liamuiga in the 17th century and in 20th century London, the novel structure is composed of six parts introduced by three discourses by Serafine, or rather, *Sycorax rediviva*, which are used as *cardines* (at the beginning, before Part 4 and at the end) of the narrative. The 17th century Sycorax and the 20th century Serafine pervade the novel and qualify it in its process of feminine subjectification.

The narrator reveals that Serafine Killebree was born in Liamuiga (or *Enfant-Béate*, its name after the Discovery; actually Saint Kitts and Nevis) in the Caribbean, and since 1933 lives in London with her employer Sir Anthony Everard, also born in the Caribbean. Although the first six chapters place Serafine on the level of the subaltern female, a servant of the extended Everard family, the narrator's feminine voice, teller of tales, with free access through all the corners of the family, indicates Serafine's subjectivity. When the narrator narrates the story of the herb collector Sycorax in the seventh chapter, characterized by events in 17th century Liamuiga, the reader perceives an intimate, albeit invisible link between that character and Serafine.

Sycorax's story begins at a pre-colonial time when the tide spilt twenty bodies of Negro slaves on the beach. Although the bodies are immediately buried by the islanders, the unselfish Sycorax imagines herself listening to a dialogue between the slaves on their middle passage. She instinctively perceives that there is life in one the bodies buried in the sand. The exhumation of the corpse brings forth the "first African to arrive in the islands... and Sycorax gave him the name Dulé, meaning grief, after his birth as an orphan from the sea" (Warner, 1992, p. 85). In spite of the fact that many attribute this feat to witchcraft, Sycorax takes the boy under her care till the day when he is defeated in the 1620 revolt against the English invaders, and becomes the slave of the first colonizers.

When Warner describes the pre-colonial feminine situation in Liamuiga, the mythical prelapsarian policy of social roles and equality between male and female is enhanced. It seems that the absence of metal instruments and tools on the island represent a non-phallogocentric society. Although the marriage dowry exists and the marrying woman leaves her father's house to live with her husband, there are no clues as to absolute masculine hegemony and feminine exclusion. The agency that Sycorax shows when she rises during the

night, exhumes the corpse, gives birth to the Negro child, gives him a name and adopts him as her own is emblematic. The lack of masculine complaints (of the nameless husband and of Tiguary, her brother) and the airing of several different opinions with regard to the event, the acceptance of Sycorax and Dulé in the hamlet of origin and later the displacement of the two to the south-western region of the island corroborate female independence and the assertion of subjectivity. It seems that in precisely this Caribbean mythical society there exists a negation of the restricting qualities of phallogocentrism and the phallic stance is disrupted. Since "the talking subjects are conceived as the owners of their speech" (Kristeva, 1986, p. 165), Sycorax subjectifies herself before her society. However, one cannot state that certain clues of patriarchy do not exist. There is no absolute state of innocence for the female since she is already inserted within the patriarchy context and "we did not begin our existence in the state of innocence... we began life under patriarchy; from the very first we have been in a vicious state" (Daly, 1978). In fact, as soon as he recognized the "miracle" produced by his wife, the husband walks out of the house. When the Arawak girl Ariel is abandoned by Europeans on the island, Tiguary merely informs Sycorax that the decision of the elders has been to give the child to Sycorax for adoption. Such ambivalence reveals that, albeit born in an Edenic environment, the female is born within patriarchy and with a post-lapsarian status.

No man's land

From this very moment Sycorax builds a semiotic world, or rather, a pre-lapsarian world, prior to the fall of women into patriarchy. Kristeva defines the semiotic as a pre-language that precedes the gender differentiation (Kristeva, 1986). The female constructs "matricial space, unnamed, prior to the One, to Deus and, consequently, a challenger of metaphysics" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 34), or rather, a substitution of the patriarchal regime "in which the phallus functions as a guarantee of the signifier" (Irigaray, 1985, p. 44). Her displacement favours more and more her self-sufficiency which is demonstrated by the building of a house, food preparation, and in the manufacture of indigo. The construction of one's own house is a metonymy of the feminine environment she would like to develop to defend herself from colonization and the patriarchal hegemony that becomes closer and closer as time presses on. The bodies of useless slaves thrown in the sea are a premonition on the

triangular commercial activities between the metropolis, the slave ports on the African coast and the American colonies. Although absent, the immediate presence of the white male colonizer may be easily foreseen:

There was nothing on the island that Sycorax feared; but more incomers were expected from the sea. The strangers were passing more frequently; some drifted in on the spars of burst vessels, others sailed by in whole ships. They were also plying the local waterways in greater numbers than before – and nowadays when they landed, they were more often alive than they had been in the past, at the time of Dulé's birth (Warner, 1992, p. 92).

During a period of ten years during which no colonial encounters occur, Sycorax develops an environment without any traces of patriarchy. If we intertextualize this idea beneath the expression “a room of one's own” by Virginia Woolf, the solitary horse rides by Annette Mason in *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys, and the retirement of Susan Barton on the hill slopes of Cruso's island in *Foe* by J. M. Coetzee, we perceive that Sycorax feels the need of independence. “When she wanted a clear head to look back into the past and forward into the future, she needed to abandon the continual commitment to the task of survival that it demanded” (Warner, 1992, p. 93).

The building of houses, towers and castles is classically attributed to the male. Sycorax does not appropriate this strategy either to dominate or to found an empire. She builds a house on a tree so that it could be easily perceived as “no man's land”, or rather, as a feminine refuge and to dedicate herself to the building of a community. Counselling and curing people who seek her is neither a domination nor a hegemonic task, but a construction of a community. This fact may be corroborated by her refusal not to be overbearing on Dulé and Ariel. In the case of the former, Sycorax feels that he, a displaced man, needs to recover, without any mediation, the history of his past life. Later, the house, a metonymy for community and nurture, will be assaulted and destroyed by the colonizer. Patriarchy will not brook any deviation from its rules.

Ariel's arrival introduces *female bonding*, already foreseen in Sycorax's feeling on the existence of the foetus in the dead Negro slave. Although Sycorax's displacement is of a different nature, Ariel's status is that of *unheimlichkeit*. The five-year old girl lacks a homeland, a home and a house. Tiguary remarks: “She's a solitary, a dreamer, she doesn't fit in” (Warner, 1992, p. 97). Sycorax, the community builder, comes to her help and gives her a home.

“I'm considered a famous witch... We'll give each other support, you'll see. You have been sent to me, as a gift. And what a gift! ... I'll show you where we're going to be safe” (Warner, 1992, p. 101). Such a discourse of mutual help keeps close the tiny community within the semiotic discourse. The relationship between Ariel and Sycorax, surrounded by animals and tropical flowers, the ecological living together, the medicinal use of plants without any harm to nature and the discovery of the female body evidence the existence of the Garden of Eden still uninformed by patriarchy. On the other hand, Ariel “showed her mother the enclave she had built herself, with a spliced fence, a cabin of palm fronds and a hammock slung from one trunk of a shady tree to another” (Warner, 1992, p. 119).

The collapse of such a community, or rather, the loss of innocence, occurs when Sycorax fails to perceive the almost tiptoe-like incursion of the symbolic discourse. When news of Europeans and colonizers reach her, she says: “I change my mind about it all the time... Never see clearly what way we should take. We make our offerings, as usual. But the exchanges wither, then we begin to begrudge what we have given...” (Warner, 1992, p. 98). Hesitation favours the underrating of danger. “Its mirror concealed a menace she could not quite decipher” (Warner, 1992, p. 101). Sycorax is not aware that the symbolic discourse has already been installed: the colonizers have already given names to the geographic contours and heights of the islands, they have already qualified the islanders as “savages” (Warner, 1992, p. 122) and proclaimed the king of their metropolis as the legitimate owner of the invaded territory.

The invasion of patriarchy/colonialism

It is highly intriguing to observe that the more Sycorax reinforces community links with members of the female sex, the more news arrive on the arrival of European colonizers and their imminent encounter. She has already been warned by Tiguary with regard to these empire builders that already colonized the northern part of the island and are now seen by Dulé to be attempting to find a safe haven close to Sycorax's small community. At last the English colonizer and invader Kit and his men arrive at the Edenic world of Sycorax and usher her to the symbolic world and to patriarchy by the use of language. “She heard the tone of command in his voice and turned to confront him” (Warner, 1992, p. 129). Followed by the foreign invaders, she takes refuge in her tree-built house and is burnt alive. In the wake of the persecution by Europeans that set

fire to her house, Sycorax soon perceives that her entry into the symbolical world is definite and irreversible. Ariel also hears “the sounds were raw to her ears, incoherent, unlike the cries of animals... that she could understand, but merely noisy” (Warner, 1992, p. 130) and soon perceives that she is up to her neck in patriarchy. “The revolving of the world came to an end, space and time collapsed into a point” (Warner, 1992, p. 131).

It may not be said that their entry into patriarchy is accomplished without a fight. Although Sycorax and Ariel’s reactions consist of curses and weapons respectively, both know that an escape from the symbolic world is impossible. Such a situation becomes worse when Kit manifests his sexual attraction towards the young Ariel. Her immediate reaction is to put him down. To his credit it may be said that Kit Everard tries to keep himself free from the sensual that begins to take hold of him firmly while on the island. It is the temptation in the shape of a woman who, when othered, is “the emblem of dirty materiality, committed to its own ends... an accident of nature, a deformity that should be repelled, but the holder of pathological, powerful and dangerous energies” (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979, p. 29). It is extremely easy for Kit to transform Ariel first into a tempter, then into a prostitute and, still later, after his solemn marriage to an English wife, into a lover. Further, he had already demonised the native women, linking them to cannibalism, to treason and witchcraft.

The “peaceful” agreement between the natives and the English invaders heralds the felling of the forest, the building of a European town, the planting of maize, tobacco, indigo and cotton for export to the mother country. For precaution Kit had ordered that Sycorax and Ariel should be kept as hostages. The old woman, experienced in medicinal herbs, can no more affirm her existence as a subject. Her silence is complete in her captivity since natives are forbidden to consult her in their needs. However, the dominion of patriarchy is complete when she is labelled a witch by the colonizers. Since they are the bearers of the European imaginary with regard to witch attributes, particularly to subversive discourse that disrupts the masculine norm, Kit and his men silence and hierarchise the community builder Sycorax and place her in the othered status.

On the other hand, Ariel has different plans. She learns English, reveals the secret of the island to the invaders, teaches them how to cultivate indigo and has a son by Kit. Sycorax, however, fails to perceive Ariel’s sly civility against patriarchy. She appropriates herself with the tools of the enemy and

begins to “taste a certain feeling of triumph in his weakness” (Warner, 1992, p. 167) through her refusal to have sex, her sexual frigidity and the presentation of the hybrid child loathed by the father. Through mimicry Ariel reveals the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. In the context of patriarchy Ariel implodes his authority when she reveals his weakness and puts him to ridicule.

The long drawn stay of the colonizer on Liamuiga turns out to be a terrible concern to the natives. With Tiguary and Dulé at their head, they prepare themselves for combat against the English. Warned by Dulé that an attack against the invaders is imminent, Ariel allures Kit and tries to kill him by poison. She is, however, unsuccessful (Warner, 1992, p.183). The unusual sexual interest shown by Ariel makes Kit suspicious of something fishy and the Englishman and his group start to make preparations for the worse. Ariel together with Sycorax and Roukoubé try to flee during the night and reunite themselves with the rebellious natives. At that very moment Sycorax perceives Ariel’s true intention, gets down her daughter’s back and by shouts and cries distracts the guard. The latter fires and kills her, but Ariel and her son escape. During the battle of January 1620 both sides fight bravely. Nevertheless, the natives are defeated, Dulé is captured and kept as a slave. Sycorax’s body is buried at the foot of the saman tree: it has been her haven for so many years and soon it will become a shrine and a place of pilgrimage. Ariel and Roukoubé take refuge in the other island of Oualie, resisting colonialism. In the wake of the absolute penetration into the symbolic world, Ariel becomes mute forever. Phallocentrism is now so extensive that it became a dogma in the history of the conquerors that the battle has been won because of Ariel’s treason against her people. The symbolic is thus enhanced by a set of stereotypes which are employed to other and objectify the female sex.

The after-death status of Sycorax may be understood through several factors. On account of the establishment of colonialism and patriarchy on the island, Sycorax and, by extension, Ariel, are labelled “witches”, a phenomenon frequently attributed to social rebels, mainly intelligent women feared for their power and discourse. On the other hand, Sycorax is proclaimed to be a wise woman by a marginalized, excluded and displaced society that inhabits the island. After the battle Sycorax’s tomb at the foot of the saman tree becomes a place of prayer. All excluded persons bring their burdens to Sycorax. Although she is physically transformed into a heap of

bones, the myth now makes her a powerful women and, much more in death than in life, she has a centripetal, albeit non-centralizing, force. Later this primitive overburdened population is joined by a nominally Christian society and by a slave community who fervently pray and forward their dire needs against European hegemony. "And Sycorax hears them, her teeth chatter and through her wasted lips there comes a sigh" (Warner, 1992, p. 212). She prays to their god Adesangé so that history would be rewound and prelapsarian time returned. Although she is impotent in managing a reversal of events, she knows that people themselves should react against injustice, become agents and establish an independent and autonomous society. Contrary to what happens to Everard, the conqueror, patented chief of the island by the king of a distant land and destined to establish a clan of conquerors, the motionless Sycorax continues to shape a community without any hegemony or pretensions.

Serafine

Warner's tale does not end at this point. Sir Anthony Everard, a descendent of Kit, was born in 1897 on Liamuiga, married Estelle Desjours, widowed in 1934, and left for England with his thirteen-year old son Kit and his forty-two year old Caribbean maid Serafine Killebree immediately afterwards. Serafine became a sort of institution in the Everard household, taking care of Miranda, the only daughter of Kit and Astrid and, later on, of Xanthe, the daughter of Sir Anthony's second marriage with Gillian. In the 1980s Serafine, now in her nineties, is still in England taking care of the survivors of the Everard family.

The intertwining of Warner's two tales shows a "link" between Sycorax and Serafine. It seems that Sycorax's shrine is not merely the meeting place of overburdened people petitioning graces and favours from a dead, albeit "saintly", person. The text reveals a still "living" Sycorax who hears the living, feels their needs and understands their ailments.

But the soft messages in the air come to her and flick around the bones of her long-vanished ears, for she cannot set limits on her powers, neither then nor now. Only the faithful who pray to her and draw on her strength can do that. She cannot abjure, give up, control the force by which she is possessed. ... She and the island have become one (Warner, 1992, p. 212-3).

Sycorax and Serafine seem to be very similar. Both are non-European; they live in exile, the 17th century woman in a secluded spot on the Caribbean island and Serafine in London; they are characterized by undeniable racial physical features; since their memory

is a depositary of tradition, they are prominent in telling folk tales to younger people and have a great capacity of imagining real things that are currently absent from their vision. "For Serafine could still conjure *Enfant-Béate* when she wanted, even for those who had never been there, like *Miranda*" (Warner, 1992, p. 51). They have forcedly been involved with dominating European males to whom they had to serve for long periods of time, even though Sycorax and Serafine have kept to a certain extent their own autonomy and selfhood. However, during their lives they are not contaminated by the European male obsession of empire building. They stick to their chief characteristic of community building.

Empire and community building

When ethnographic and fictional texts are analysed according to post-colonial theory, they abound in empire building and fail in community building. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) and Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* (1902), just to mention a few of the most conspicuous, are a treat to the objectification of the native, in the worlding of non-European places and peoples, in the exclusion of the "barbarians" and in the obsession of "civilizing" the other according to the philosophical and religious tenets of the Western world. The other, especially the Negro and the female other, is entirely debased and ridiculed with attributes of laziness, dirtiness, paganism and intellectual inability. For clearness sake we will list certain attributes inherent to empire building and their opposite in community building, according to Auerbach (1978), Carter (1991), Chodorow (1978), Cixous (1991), Gallop (1992), Gilligan (1982), Hirsch (1989), Kuznets (1982), Millett (1977), Nicholls (1981), Rich (1976), Showalter (1985), Styles (1990), Wolf (1982).

Empire building	Community building
1. formation of kingdom	1. formation of community
2. marginalisation tactics	2. inclusion tactics
3. honour tactics	3. survival tactics
4. procreation	4. pro creation
5. conformation to social order	5. emphasis on support
6. object of desire	6. desiring subject
7. patriarchal power	7. philanthropic power
8. self-disciplined male	8. gathering of community
9. male heroism	9. effort for building a community
10. heroic quest	10. new order of freedom
11. either/or attitude	11. both/and attitude
12. unicity	12. multiplicity
13. self-valued	13. relationship/affection valued
14. adventure, power, success	14. welcoming domestic voice
15. dominant discourse	15. peripheral discourse
16. hegemony	16. primitive underdog
17. ruining environment for profit	17. eco-ethics
18. adult	18. subject-in-formation
19. exalted	19. self-effacing
20. duty	20. "jouissance"

Empire-building attitudes are based on the assumption, formulated in theory and in practice during the period between the 16th and 19th centuries, that the white, male-ruled, Christian society in Europe has the best civilization and is “burdened” with the mission of “civilizing” the rest of the world accordingly (Said, 1995). The real aim, however, is conquest, land, markets and enrichment. A process of debasing and othering the native for an easy and deep conquest by the European has ensued and resulted in a division between a hegemonic world, allegedly the guardian of “truth” and “civilization”, and another section that forcedly and quickly has to comply with the former. In the development of such binarism, deep human attitudes of conquered peoples are not merely ignored but erased. An orally based culture is substituted by European written literature and lore; a Christian morality replaces different deity-centred religious attitudes; war, rife, discord, slave-labour are enhanced while the foundations of tribal community forfeited.

The representation of colonial encounters in literature reveals basic quest attitudes coupled to a silencing of native, especially female, voices, to marginalisation, suppression, resignation and deculturing of the conquered. However, the birth of post-colonial literature in the 1960s with its theory based on a re-reading of metropolitan classics and on a re-writing of history and literature has produced a reversal in writers’ attitudes and underlying themes. For instance, when Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea* was published in 1966, the theme of the madwoman in the attic, with her silence and recuperation of voice, in Brontë’s classic *Jane Eyre* (1847) was a sort of heralding not only of the literary side of Second Wave Feminism but also of new political attitudes of othered native. However, revelation and denunciation of European conquering politics are not enough and authors begin to insist on the highly positive themes that characterise “primitive” peoples. Needless to say, in the course of the conquest these themes have been totally suppressed and are never mentioned in literature. The question is not a returning to pre-colonial times; in fact, the solution concentrates on privileging customs and attitudes that give priority to agency, subject-subject relationship, being as a contrast to having, and cultural diversity. Perhaps the great merit of Warner’s *Indigo* lies in the fact that a positive attitude is enhanced and community-building themes have emerged from the narrative. The “everlasting” Serafine, actually the embodiment and continuation of Sycorax, shows the preference of community to

empire building, and its superior status in the context of considering non-European peoples as subjects and agents.

Serafine as story-teller

As has already been mentioned above, Warner’s *Indigo* is hinged on three narratives told by Serafine; between Serafine I and II the preliminary tale of the modern Everards, culminating in the christening of Xanthe, and the saga of the pirate Everard and his gang, with its climax in Dulé’s rebellion, are told. Between Serafine II and Serafine III the new colonialism of contemporary Everards and their kin is narrated, culminating in the fatal upheaval of modern Liamuigan rebels against the exploitation of the island by tourists. These three narratives by Serafine seem to show that the time of howling voices by European pirates and colonizers is past and that the native (and female) voice is at present more conspicuous and important in the formation of people’s attitude.

The first story: Midas

The date and place of Serafine’s first story is post-war England, prior to mid-century, “when Miranda was still the only little Everard” (Warner, 1992, p. 3). Serafine is sitting at leisure with the five-year old Miranda on the grass in the square in front of Sir Anthony Everard’s London house and tells a rough version of the story of Midas, the fabled king of Phrygia to whom Dionysus gave the power of turning to gold all that he touched. One of the most important features in the act of narrating is that Serafine does not merely narrate the story; she mimics the deeds and antics of the characters. Dabbing behind the ears, wriggling her long neck, moving her hands, puffing her chest and cheeks, swaggering, poking her neck, snapping her teeth, pouting, huffing, puffing are Serafine’s highlighted acts accompanying her story telling. Coupled to the fascination felt by Miranda, these physical acts are part and parcel of orature, the traditional pre-colonial story telling. In non-writing, colonized communities it is the equivalent to European literature (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998; Walder, 1998). In Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, story telling is one of the essential characteristics of cultural signs in a community. “The art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten” (Achebe, 1986, p. 5). In the same novel, the author narrates more than two-dozen stories in which the audience is focussed as a community bound together by ties of friendship,

kinship and companionhood. The intimacy that storyteller and audience reveal in the Midas-story is so deep that the conviction of the female as a community builder immediately surfaces to the reader's mind. This fact may be contrasted with the 17th century Kit Everard who narrates his conquest story to his future father-in-law in a letter sent on the 15th March 1620. The male conqueror's story is rife with destruction, degradation, torture, lack of consideration for native people's life and opinion, self-praise, trade-minded, self-justifying arguments. The fact that the letter-story is silent with regard to continuous political rebellions and family disruptions (Ariel is Kit's lover on the island) corroborates with the underlying sentiments of hate, bias and othering, and are inversely proportional to the community attitudes of Serafine.

Although the narrator of *Indigo* states that the story was long after remembered by Miranda, it is Serafine who tells it to her. The Midas story at the start of the novel is Serafine's overall vision and version of the Everard narrative. The fat man is Dionysus, the god of revelling and feasting, who, in a hypodiegetic stance, tells the pre-European story of the island of *Enfant-Béate*. He describes the islanders as fine, generous and brave; how they lived in a natural and not artificial, way; praised their linguistic effusiveness; exalted the natural surrounding with their forests and fruits. Suddenly Dionysus's master, Silenus, arrives and would like to hear the king's wish, which would be granted immediately. Selfish as he is, Midas desires to have its weight in gold of everything he touches. The bad master grants it and everything that the king touches, even his daughter, is turned into lifeless gold. The curse maddens the king who prays for its dissolution. The prayer is heeded and the girl turns into a living creature once more.

Serafine's old story becomes a parable on the colonization issue. Dionysus and his friends represent the islanders, living in utmost innocence; the Phrygian king is represented either by pirate and colonizer Christopher Everard, or by plantation-owner Sir Anthony Everard, or by hotel-owner Simon Nebris; the king's daughter (Hawthorne's Marygold) is the modern Xanthe "Goldie", a tourist-manager on the Caribbean island. A hindsight perception of the story that starts the narrative reveals the tragic outcome of colonial encounters. Serafine seems to tell Miranda to be wary of taking part in the events since they would all culminate in frustration, humiliation, revolt, disaster and death. In a nutshell Serafine adapts the Midas story to the effect that all those who leave their homeland to

seek "gold", and thus commit *hamartia*, trigger the *hybris* factor of classical tragedy and become the victims of *Moirai*. It is very similar to Camoens's giant Adamastor who predicts tragedy to the Portuguese who dare depart from their country and conquer other places. Serafine's story is not merely a warning on colonialism with its obsession on wealth and greed, but a revelation of the similarity between current, albeit subtler, incursions of Europeans for exploitation, and all the colonial greed registered in history with its great repartitions of world into have and have-nots.

Conversely, Serafine's role is reconciliatory and community-minded. She endeavours to instil in Miranda's mind a humane attitude towards human beings. "Don't you let anyone know what you are, or notice you too much. Always be a secret princess, sweetheart" (Warner, 1992, p. 12). It is in a moment of distress when ideology-minded native children from Liamuiga, stirred by their parents, attack Miranda and Xanthe, that one may see the community building attitude of Serafine's "disciple": although injured, Miranda reacts with comprehension ("she was struck by ... repentance. She and Xanthe were trespassing"), manners ("Stop, it's too much now") and good breeding ("Come on, don't be unkind, you know you are being unkind" (Warner, 1992, 331-332). Comprehension becomes the hallmark of Miranda, as it is Serafine's, and it is perhaps this virtue that makes Miranda grieve over Xanthe and strike a liaison with the black actor George Felix. Serafine's transmission of community mores is in contrast with the tenets of the contemporary "world, ... the real world of the end of the century, [in which] breakage and disconnection were the only possible outcome" (Warner, 1992, p. 391).

The second story: Manjiku

Although told many times before by Serafine, the Manjiku story is reported in *Indigo* while the nine-year-old Miranda and the three-year-old Xanthe are taking their evening bath and preparing themselves to go to bed. It is supposed to be a horror story, originally from the Caribbean island of *Enfant-Béate*, but has been adapted for the benefit of well bred English children. The islanders Amadou and Amadé, his wife, lived by fishing on a small island dominated by a crocodile-like monster called Manjiku. Embodying a female attitude, the male Manjiku is obsessed with the idea of giving birth to little Manjikus. The sea dragon spreads sea emeralds in the hope that they allure women, who, in their turn, will rush to the sea to grab them, get

drowned and are eaten by the monster. The monster believes that by eating women, especially pregnant ones, he will finally give birth to an offspring.

One day Amadou catches a beautiful silver starfish in his trap. This white starwoman, hailing from afar, seduces him, and he keeps her for himself, without telling his wife anything about his capture. The experienced, loving Amadé perceives the difference, discovers his secret, but lets it be. After a short while, the starwoman dies but is resuscitated by Amadé through the power of the red flower of Adesangé, the natives' god of fire and life. During a full-moon night Amadé purposely ventures into the sea and is swallowed by Manjiku who, tossing and rearing, casts her up ashore. This breaks the spell and the curse is undone.

It is important to note that Serafine concludes that "only a woman who knew what real love is could undo its power" (Warner, 1992, p. 224). If Amadé and Manjiku represent the binary poles of the colonized native and the European invader respectively, then the riddle of the community building process becomes clear. If we take Sycorax as Serafine's predecessor, we may perceive the character's importance in community building from the time she accepts the Negro boy Caliban and the Arawak girl Ariel till her tomb becomes a shrine for all burdened islanders through the centuries. Sycorax's ability to comprehend others and help them is so great that she may be perceived as someone who always apprehends the presence of the other's being-as-subject, and refuses to consider the other as a subaltern being-as-object (Sartre, 1957). Similarly, Serafine deals with all the members of the Everard family, old and young alike, and comprehends them as subjects. It seems that Serafine's love cancels the tense environment in which most characters live. Actually this characteristic informs the colonized subject. "Serafine Killebree loved Anthony Everard, Kit's father, even more than she loved Kit himself, and could find nothing to reproach him with, not even her own long exile in the cold maze of the Old Country" (Warner, 1992, p. 50). In the flashbacks that the novel brings forth it is clear that the refined manner with which Serafine treats Miranda and Xanthe makes them feel as agents and subjects. Even with status-minded Gillian, Sir Anthony's second wife, she is polite, reasonable and convincing. During the party given after Xanthe's christening Serafine changes the baby's dress so that she could be fed without spoiling it. Gillian reproaches her and asserts her rights as a mother. "I wish you could have had her instead of me, and fed her, it was such

a pain! But she's my baby, worse luck. I know you know best, you're an absolute treasure, but I do get vexed, Feeny old thing, when you go your own way with Baby without asking me". However, Serafine replies "I don't need to ask you, Miss Gillian, ma'am ... I've cared for more than you've ever seen ... Since when is the blind man going to teach the sighted what they see" (Warner, 1992, p. 52).

Could Serafine's attitudes be interpreted as servile, proper to a black maidservant, brought from the colonies to serve? Serafine's physical description hints servility: "She was a tall woman who stooped her shoulders and poked her neck forward" (Warner, 1992, p. 35). Even the child Miranda wondered whether Serafine could be described as a "golliwog". "What did it mean, Miranda wondered. Was Feeny a golliwog? Or couldn't a woman be one? She wasn't round-faced and red-lipped and she never stood with her legs apart like him" (Warner, 1992, p. 49). In Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette Cosway is called a marionette; the "colonized" woman is called a manikin in many novels, or a prostitute (Nancy in *Oliver Twist*) in others. Or rather, Serafine may be said to be trapped in conventional feminine roles (baby caring, child story teller) and position (maid, the colonizer's companion on returning home), accepting passively her lot as a well-behaved, invisible non-entity. Serafine's subject role seems to be deeper than what appears on the surface. Her agency power is in her discourse. The fidelity of a dog is not interpreted as servile but at a higher stance of intellectual and sensitive acuity. "Dogs are so filled with love, they lay down their own cleverness to serve us" (Warner, 1992, p. 36). There is a special kind of active cleverness in Serafine when she administers Sir Anthony's house and takes care of the extended family. On the surface she may be seen as a "dog", but the insistence on the word "love" characterizes her role as cancelling the imperial stance and as gathering all on a subject-subject basis. In fact, underlining Sycorax's role, she defines her own qualifications when in front of the garbage chute at the flat. "My struggle against the darkness down below... My tree of life. What goes down, must come up. One way or the other, Miranda, no thing on this earth ever do die. Nor goes to waste neither" (Warner, 1992, p. 50). Living in the metropolis with her community and subject attitude, Serafine seems to be a beneficent horse of Troy: a welcoming domestic, affectionate voice which explodes the pretensions of power-minded adventurers.

Returning to the Manjiku story, the happy ending that Serafine introduces does not exist in the

original. In fact, the real tale has no happy ending. It seems that the mythical story is an endeavour to explain frequent death by drowning of so many people, natives in the main, among whom is Estelle Desjours, Sir Anthony Everard's first wife.

Serafine's handling of the myth opens the door so that the narrator may tell the manipulated version of Ariel's supposed treason in the story of Dulé's rebellion against Kit Everard and the other English invaders. It comes very close to Retamar's interpretation of Ariel as a reactionary collaborator (Retamar, 1989). The authenticity of the story is vouchsafed by history books on the Everard tradition and by the 18th century French missionary Père Labat who meets the hundred-year-old Ariel, now dumb. The 17th century native revolt has been told in chapters 15 and 16: Ariel is not a traitor since she does not tell on the natives' plan to attack the English settlers; on the contrary, she picks up Sycorax and Roukoubé and flees to Oualic, Dulé's headquarters. It is Kit's insight that makes him suspect the whole plot (Warner, 1992, p. 186-7). However, in the wake of a degrading policy used by all colonizers, Kit's version of the whole story to his father-in-law mentioned the fact that the English settlers "were adverted in due time withal and haply able to forestall the deadly peril" (Warner, 1992, p. 199). Coupled to the fact that Ariel is his lover, by whom he has a child, the subdued inhabitants are given this corrupt version of the "facts" which they transmit to posterity. Ariel's treason becomes official, uncritical, history. It is the version that Labat narrates, as he gets it from the islanders, and not from Ariel herself who has long been mute when he meets her during his stay on the island. It is the only version known, and thus transformed into "the truth" for the convenience of the colonizers. The tragic story of the islanders and their exploited island is given a "happy ending". From the exclusive point of view of the colonizers, the commercial highlights are there for all to see, spanning the centuries, since the colony "flourished and sugar was ... shipped in quantities of menhir-shaped loaves to the storerooms and the kitchens and the taverns and the parlours of the capitals of Europe" (Warner, 1992, p. 225), enriching the colonizers and their metropolis through the hard work of natives and Negroes on the Everard lands.

Does Serafine approve of this distortion? She certainly approves of the change in the ending of the Manjiku story. "This savage story [the myth of Manjiku's devouring women or frequent death by drowning] isn't seemly for the little English girls, so Serafine has adapted it, as storytellers do" (Warner,

1992, p. 224). The phrase "as storytellers do" may suggest that a born storyteller, as Serafine, is liable to fabricate parts of a story according to his/her needs or according to those of the audience. In *Things Fall Apart* Achebe makes the interpreter of the missionary Mr Smith give a different version of the story so that its "damaging" section could be either blunted, or turned harmless or, worse still, benefiting somebody else. The disturbed story of Ariel's "treason" and the providential way the 17th century pirate wins the day has been already narrated by Serafine. "There's another story with a happy ending they know, not just from Serafine ... From first-hand sources, authenticated. Serafine knows it; all her family, working on the Everard lands, knew it; they passed it on" (Warner, 1992, 224-5). It does seem that Serafine has been one of the sources in the perpetuation of the lie and thus helped in the stereotyping of the inhabitants of Liamuiga islanders as "marionettes" and even "traitors" and "cunning friends".

Isn't there a contradiction between Serafine's role as community-builder and her servility towards the representatives of colonialism? Even though her subject-subject ideology and thus her community-building stance are at the very core of the Serafine enigma, there is no overt rebellion against the Everard family, against the very origin of their wealth, or against the haughtiness of their "slave"-based social status. The parable of the dog may also be used to confirm the conclusion that Serafine has accepted to be moulded according to the needs of the colonial family but has not been contaminated by the imperial contagion of imposition and objectification. It seems that her role consists in gathering together the dispersed and psychologically distant Everard members and make them, once more, closer and more intimate. Her presence as community-builder denounces in the Everard's house and homeland the crimes of community destruction they have and are still perpetuating against Caribbean natives.

It may still be possible that by Serafine's story Warner wanted to represent the subaltern woman. Women are subaltern *and* mute since they have been so immersed in patriarchy and so much objectified by phallogocentrism, that there is little chance of recovering a political position and a voice. The use of the male's tools, or logocentric language, to demolish man's house, or patriarchy, is a contradiction in terms. Since women have no voice or language other than the male's and no space other than that conceded by the male, they live in exile in a foreign land. In their struggle for identity

formation and construction of subjectivity, they have used language for subverting patriarchal and imperial power. Through language they have tried to disarticulate an inherited language and recover linguistic authenticity by a primal feminine tongue. This is what seems to be Serafine's role: born and bred in the Everard's household in Caribbean Liamuiga, Serafine is immersed not only in the network of colonialism but also of patriarchy. There is no escape from man's sphere, especially when she has been exiled for so many decades. In fact, her physical exile in London represents the female exile within the bastions of patriarchy, very far from a pre-lapsarian condition. Her only escape is to be different. While the 17th century Kit disrupts the islanders' natural community, Sir Anthony still maintains the island's subjugation with the plantation system and the competitive Game of Flinders; while his descendants provoke the islanders with modern tourism, congruent with a renewed exploitation, Serafine has found subjectification and the formation of a community as her specific appropriation to subvert the above signifying practices of patriarchy.

Isn't Atala Seacole's revolutionary position more sequential to Sycorax's than to Serafine's? Contrastingly to that of Serafine's, the position of Atala Seacole, Liamuiga parliament's only woman, opposition leader, and Serafine's granddaughter, is politically more risky. Seacole herself, harking Jamaica Kincaid (1988), is in the battle fry against interference in the island's independence. Similar to Ariel, she is not only a community-builder with two adopted children, albeit unmarried, but also politically active. Her opposition to her uncle Sir Berkeley Seacole lies between neo-colonial continuity after Independence and authentic Independence of the Caribbean island. She knows that Sir Berkeley has sold the islands "to the money-men behind the hotels and the casino and all the rest of the tricks the Westerners turned, without appearing to do anything but provide a bit of fun and a few jobs" (Warner, 1992, p. 352). When she comes to power after the attempted terrorist act by Jimmy Dunn-Abdul Malik of the Shining Purity, she reinforces authentic independence and control from foreign influence. Descendent from Sycorax and Serafine she overcomes the patriarchal voice of colonialism and takes the positive stance of independence. The male Berkeley refuses to sever liaisons with imperialism and colonialism; the female Atala boasts of an independent island and blackness as the badge of pride. The long-dead Sycorax "hears Atala crying out, in a higher voice

that comes through like interference on the waves... Sycorax would have liked to call back, 'You must not fail! You will not fail!'" (Warner, 1992, p. 376). Even as Atala's criticism reaches her grandmother "who went to England as a servant, serving that family, where her grandmother before her and others before that had all been slaves" (Warner, 1992, p. 376). Through Atala's criticism of Serafine, Warner, with typical multiplicity stance and both/and attitude, seems to show different types of community-building: Serafine's domestic gathering of people, with the terrible disadvantage of a politically domesticated stance, very similar to the colonial one; and Atala's political reuniting of the nation coupled to politically free and independent attitudes against neo-colonialism and globalisation.

The third story: the tiger

The last section of *Indigo* reveals a hospital ward in which Sir Anthony Everard's daughter-in-law, the alcoholic Astrid, is hospitalised. Abandoned by all, even temporarily by her daughter because of fear of hospital infection, Astrid is attended by the over 90-year-old Serafine who tells her the story of a tigress. "I heard a story these days going around about love that would break your heart, Miss Astrid" (Warner, 1992, p. 400). On the surface it seems to be a male narrated, big-game story in which a tigress is captured by wily tricks, as may be read in Rider Haggard's and Hemmingway's novels or short stories. The hunters put a ball-like mirror in the tigress's path; while the big animal marvels and entertains herself with her own miniature image, the net falls down and she is captured.

The mirror stage is prominent in Lacanian psychology (Lacan, 1977) and in feminist theory. It represents the transition from the Imaginary to the Symbolic in which subjectivity, language and awareness of differentiation are acquired. All infants are born in the Imaginary (Kristeva's Semiotic), a mass of drives, the operation of the psyche, with no awareness of physical boundaries. This non-differentiation is disrupted by the patriarchal law or *nom de père* - an authoritative intervention by which the child is placed into society with its laws, fixed meanings, identity and normalisation. Once the child loses the Imaginary stage, there is no way back. Although Desire is an urge to return to the utopian stage of the Imaginary, this is impossible, and the establishment in the realm of the Symbolic is a fact. The Symbolic is the realm of language and representation and self-recognition in the mirror is an analogy for the process of reaching subjectivity. In literature reflection in the mirror and the

representation of the mirror is a textual turning point in the character. The reflection of the self, mirrored by the Other, is much more important, since subjecthood is dependent on the definition provided by the Other. In Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, the mad Bertha Mason represents the psychotic side of womanhood, or rather, what Jane would be if she becomes intemperate and unchaste as Bertha.

The tigress story is interpreted by Astrid from a tragic stance, as a fixed, close-ending, relief-less story. She reads the tiger as herself and the image in the mirror as her offspring, Miranda and the latter's newborn daughter, also called Serafine. Psychologically and physically imprisoned by alcohol and delirium tremens respectively, Astrid sees herself completely de-characterized both in the mirror and in the photo, without "any smell or fur", and "ugly as sin" (Warner, 1992, 401-2). The old Serafine, however, tries to bring Astrid once more to subjecthood by being the positive Other: she tries to justify Miranda and her husband's objection in not visiting her, she insists in telling her that she has not been abandoned by her family and endeavours to enrapture her with the image of her young granddaughter. Above all, Serafine wants to show her that, even if all abandon her, she will not do so. "I'll come again, if they decide to keep you in" (Warner, 1992, p. 402). The old nurse from the Caribbean once more shuns the exclusion in which the problematic Astrid finds herself and tries to include her in the context of a community. If the pathetic Astrid has been objectified by her family and society, Serafine is the only one who still visits her and treats her on a subject-subject stance. The pro creation and life attitude really belongs to Serafine in spite of her exile and her treatment as a permanent servant of the Everard family.

Discussion

Many discussions have been held on the possible existence of a certain remote historical period in which harmony between the sexes was the rule and on the later introduction of male hegemony and the subsequent disruption of equality (Sanday, 1993). It seems that the following opinion prevails:

Current anthropological opinion is based on the fact that most and probably all contemporary societies ... are characterized by a certain degree of male domination. While some anthropologists argue that there exist or have existed true equalitarian societies and all agree that societies exist in which females have reached social acknowledgement and considerable power, no one has yet reported a society in which the female has had power and authority publicly

acknowledged that went beyond the male's (Rosaldo; Lamphere, 1974, p. 2-3).

At another instance the anthropologist Rosaldo states: "I would like to make it clear that, contrary to the opinion of many anthropologists who raise the problem whether there has been a privileged place for the female here or there, my understanding of anthropological registers makes me conclude that all human cultural and social forms have always been dominated by the male" (Rosaldo, 1980, p. 393). This really confirms de Beauvoir's opinion that society has always been male and that political power has always been entrusted to males (Beauvoir, 1980). Keeping apart the archaeological discussion, when feminists report a prelapsarian period they are implying the equality utopia in male-female relationships which includes the non-absorption of the feminine and the non-legitimation of male superiority. However, the construction of a utopia is not in itself something impossible or unreachable. Further, independently of the existence or not of matriarchy or of a matrifocal society, the struggle to make illegitimate male hegemony and to organize an equalitarian society is congruent. Although Shakespearian Sycorax has already experienced expulsion by men and remains alive only in the vile and degrading remembrance of the colonizers, she stands firm at the basis of an invasion-less and non-hegemonic community. Warner's rewriting on Sycorax is a record of the existence of the female under patriarchy, even a mild one, and enhances her purpose in building a feminine society or an equalitarian one.

The subjectification of Sycorax occurs because she posits herself not as a hierarchizing person but as a community builder (Kuznets 1982). Kit Everard and the other English colonizers are subjects because they inscribe their presence by usurpation, violence and exclusion. When she accepts the African Dulé and the Arawak Ariel, when she listens to the laments and to the problems of the islanders who earn their living without any agency, Sycorax subjectifies herself by community building. Further, she becomes a "witch" owing to the fact that she is not subservient to Everard's colonial projects. In fact, the English invader qualifies her as "dangerous to our cause, and we cannot brook their contumelious conspiracies against us" (Warner, 1992, p. 201). Nevertheless, it is Everard and the other colonizers, and not Sycorax, who are othered. While Sycorax, after so many years, still has a name, lives in people's memory and continues to build a community, the colonizers lack a true hold on the place. Her house (and her tomb) is not destroyed as

has been supposed but remain at the foot of the saman tree. Sycorax's last cry ("Oh airs and winds...", Warner, 1992, p. 212) is definite. She forfeits from Everard what is really important and characteristic in the colonizer, or rather, his authority. Thus Warner disrupts the limitations imposed by mutism and by death. Mutism transforms itself into the language of struggle against exclusion and in favour of the construction of an equalitarian community.

Conclusion

The representation of postcolonial relationships and situations has been in the foreground during the last four decades and has produced a wide range of theoretical issues that favoured the rewriting of certain classics of English literature. While certain problems were dealt with by denouncing the denigration of the colonized and the strategies used by the colonizer to exploit the wealth and the peoples of these countries, others tried to concentrate on a positive stance. The case of Marina Warner's *Indigo* is actually conspicuous since it fictionally comprehends practically all the fundamental issues that have been theoretically analysed in the classical books on post-colonialism by Ashcroft (1989), Loomba (1998), Young (2001), and others.

Warner's hit is really worthwhile studying since the community-building aspect has not been sufficiently underlined. The density and complexity of Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the various interpretations, rife with denouncements, of *The Tempest* and the problems forwarded by the African and Caribbean modern novels, including Gordimer's latest *The pick-up* (2001) have depicted and emphasized the fragmentation of relationships within the colonial individual and society, whereas the native's potentiality for community, unselfishness, reconciliation and inclusion has been somewhat placed second. This fact has also been detected in children's literature in English published in Brazil (Bonnici, 2001). Few in fact deal with community values, while most concentrate on kingdom values of adventure and success.

Although Warner's *Indigo* has been taken as a postcolonial rewriting of *The Tempest*, it may also be seen as a clear instance of the type of novel focussing on the primitive positive elements of a community that had been deeply torn asunder by colonialism. In spite of the fact that the colonial phase can never be erased and the postcolonial change of mind will develop gradually, the representation of the community and community building in the novel is

the best antidote for the exclusion- and kingdom-minded worldview that colonialism, neo-colonialism and globalisation have even installed in many literary models.

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