ABSTRACT

This paper revisits Emily Brontë's legacy in Caryl Phillips's postcolonial adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* (1847). *The Lost Child* (2015) is a modern tale of migration and unbelonging offering an intertextual dialogue with Brontë's masterpiece by re-imagining Heathcliff's pre-history and connecting his outcastness with the multicultural realities of post-Windrush Britain. Through his conjuring of Brontë's "unquiet slumbers", Phillips addresses the melancholic subjectivities of both the Victorian text and pre-text and relates them to those of the modern text (Monica Johnson's and her interracial family's). To analyse them I will draw on the postcolonial expansion of the notion of melancholia as theorized by Gilroy (2005), Cheng (1997) and Smith (2016). The paper eventually explores how the novel's emphasis on orphanhood and lostness is counteracted by Phillips's appeal to literary "maternity", since, against other patrilineal models of (af)filiation, it is mainly through female precursors that he confronts an intricate literary inheritance.

Key words: Caryl Phillips; Emily Brontë; melancholy; intertextuality; migration

Introduction

2018 Bicentenary of Emily Brontë's birth offered a good opportunity to revisit her legacy in Caryl Phillips's postcolonial adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* (1847). *The Lost Child* (2015), his ninth novel, is a modern tale of migration, displacement and unbelonging that offers an intertextual dialogue with Brontë's masterpiece by re-imagining Heathcliff's pre-history and connecting his experience of outcastness with the multicultural intricacies of contemporary Britain. Emily Brontë's novel had already been rewritten from a postcolonial viewpoint by the Guadeloupian author Maryse Condé, who, in *Winward Heights* (1999), relocates the original story of ill-fated romance and personal vengeance within the social and racial conflicts that were blowing across the Antilles at the turn-of-the-century; but apart from its Caribbean recontextualization and its emphasis on patterns of racial meaning that were tenuously

hinted in the Victorian source-text, Condé's novel does not elaborate a postmodern intertextual dialogue with Brontë's narrative in the complex way Phillips's text does.

In choosing *Wuthering Heights*, Phillips undergoes a deconstructive reading of what Gayatri Spivak might term "an imperial narrative"; one that can be contested and resisted from within if the silenced voices are addressed and the blind spots illuminated.[1] If both Charlotte Brontë and Jean Rhys chose the figure of Bertha Mason or Antoinette, the creole wife confined in the attic of Thornfield Hall to speak out about unacknowledged colonial atrocities, Phillips, who had previously delved into the background of slavery and colonialism in *Cambridge* (1991), *Crossing the River* (1994) and *Distant Shore* (2003), casts now an English born white woman and her mix-race offspring as the embodiments of postcolonial hostility against the children and grandchildren of the Empire. This hostility had already been envisioned by Emily Brontë when she characterized Heathcliff as the racial Other threatening British white bourgeois domesticity.

On madness and melancholia

Wuthering Heights works as a narrative frame that opens and closes Phillips's novel with a re-fashioning of Heathcliff's childhood that would serve as a prequel to Brontë's text. The prologue, significantly titled "Separation", introduces the reader to the musings of a former Congolese slave woman employed in the West Indies plantations and now surviving precariously with her child in the streets of Liverpool. Her memories of the liaison with a married white man that produced the now seven-year-old boy address one of the major gaps in Brontë's masterpiece that has elicited

[1] Through her theorization of subalternity, Gayatri Spivak proposes a critique and resistance (from within) to the imperial narratives where the presence of the native Other disrupts the coherence of the hegemonic discourse. After the postcolonial reading of such canonical texts as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*(1818), Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), or Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), she highlights the "continuing success of the imperialist project, displaced and dispersed into more modern forms." (2016, 243)

abundant scholarly speculation and has even inspired Andrea Arnold's 2011 film adaptation of the novel[2]: the possibility that Heathcliff was the bastard son of Mr. Earnshaw and mix-race by-product of his involvement in Liverpool's prolific slave trade. A brutal sense of abandonment and alienation that connects her with other characters of the novel across its different layers is made explicit in the words describing the extreme vulnerability of this "Crazy Woman" (as the narrator stigmatizes her): "Mother and child were now little more than a burdensome secret, and although her benefactor continued to press money upon her, it was manifest that he was going progressively detached." (Phillips 2015, 11)

The "burdensome secret" of the illegitimate son invokes the guilty truth of Britain's complicity and profit with the horrors of slavery, an uncomfortable secret conveniently locked away in the attics of Victorian respectability. After all, as Maja Von Sneidern very aptly sums up, "[a]lthough slavery put sugar in their tea, coffee in their cups, cotton shirts on their backs, and pounds sterling in their bank accounts, the institution made English blood run cold and warmed an Anglo-Saxon passion for appropriating the concept of liberty as its own." (1995, 173) In this light, the sense of secrecy and illegitimacy permeating this opening chapter conjures up the colonial guilt that Emily Brontë and her readers were so sensitive about.[3]

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[2] Determined to emphasise the racial otherness of Brontë's "dark-skinned gypsy", film director Andrea Arnold chose to cast black actors in the role of Heathcliff, both as a boy (Solomon Glave) and as an adult man (James Howson), thus challenging the dominant "whiteness" of Brontë's villain, heretofore interpreted by, among others, Laurence Olivier (Dir. William Wyler 1939), Timothy Dalton (Dir. Robert Fuest 1970), or Ralph Fiennes (Dir. Peter Kosminsky 1992).

[3] Slavery is also a powerful trope in *Jane Eyre* (1848) where Charlotte Brontë relies on its figurative representation to address different forms of female oppression in England. But her metaphoric use of the institution is not unproblematic if we consider that, throughout the text, Jane conjures up images of oriental slavery (through the iconography of sultans, bazaars and seraglios), conveniently avoiding any mention of Caribbean slavery even with the specific connection the story has with Jamaica. Susan Meyer argues that Jane appropriates the discourse of slavery partially and only to her own advantage because, through her "silent revolt", she primarily tries to secure her middle class status, "closing out both the working class and those from whom the figure of 'slavery' has been appropriated in the first place." (1999, 159)

The story then moves ahead to the mid 1950's at Oxford where talented Monica Johnson is disowned by her father after her marriage to Julius Wilson, a graduate student from the West Indies, a part of the world, where, according to Ronald Johnson, "decent standards of behaviour and respect for people's families were obviously alien concepts." (Phillips 2015, 22) These racial prejudices are the backdrop against which Monica's sanity deteriorates after having been left to bring up their two mixed-race sons as a single mother in a working class Northern district; a mental decline that would start as a "flingy state of mind and proclivity to wander in her head" (Phillips 2015, 27-28) and would culminate in her psychiatric hospitalization.

The third strand of the novel focuses on the last days of Emily Brontë who "continued to wander in her mind out onto the moors" (Phillips 2015, 105), as she deliriously confused her own family life at the Haworth parsonage with the details of her novel. In her deathbed she is haunted by the ghosts of the characters her tormented imagination has created, one of whom is Catherine Earnshaw, who, by contemporary medical standards, could have been diagnosed of anorexia nervosa, chronic depression, hallucinatory behaviour, and even multiple personality disorder in her famous pronouncement "Nelly, I am Heathcliff." (Brontë [1847] 1985, 122)

It seems that through the intertextual connection of these female figures –the anonymous crazy woman at Liverpool docks, Monica Jonson, Emily Brontë, Bertha Mason and Catherine Earnshaw—Phillips tries to reconstruct a genealogy of madwomen symbolizing, as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar did in their pioneering text (1979), the patriarchal stigmatization of any form of female deviancy and the embodiment of gender-specific frustration of so many fictional and real-life women.[4]

[4] *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (S. Gilbert and S. Gubar 1979) is decidedly a hallmark of Anglo-American feminist criticism. Their authors

But if madness is the malady that otherizes and outcasts women across temporal and spatial dimensions in the novel, melancholia is the symptom that troubles most of its male characters, trapped in their unrequited mourning for a lost object (that is always some form of imperial and/or patriarchal power). At this point it is important to draw on some postcolonial reworkings of psychological melancholia.

For Paul Gilroy (2005) the nation's melancholic mood has to do with its failure to confront the loss of an empire which had vertebrated its political institutions and legitimized its self-proclaimed cultural and racial supremacy. Rather than getting over this traumatic loss, Albion (as he refers to the United Kingdom) resorts to the "racist violence [that] provides an easy means to 'purify' and rehomogenise the nation." (Gilroy 2005, 102) Such a failure to digest the brutalities of its colonial past and to assume "the loss of a fantasy of omnipotence" reproduces in the present an imperial impulse whose target is the immigrant (Gilroy 2005, 100). Monica's father's nationalist discourse to discourage her daughter from marrying a Caribbean immigrant is constricted by the moral landscape of his times and is thus haunted by the imperialist fantasy of returning to family values, national character and colonial glory. Anne Anlin Cheng agrees with Gilroy that racial minorities are "the object of white melancholia", but at the same time sees them as "melancholic subjects" themselves, inasmuch as their nostalgia for their land, culture and values turns them into lost souls haunted by the loss of home and self (1997, 51). Using psychoanalytic theories on mourning, assimilation and grief, Cheng describes racial melancholia as a complex process that affects its subjects and objects reciprocally and simultaneously: "Melancholia can be quite contagious. After all, it designates a condition of identity disorder where subject and object become

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discuss the angel/monster dichotomy in novels written by women (from Jane Austen or Mary Shelley to George Eliot, Emily Dickinson, and the Brontës) and their rage about the misogynistic attitudes they had to go through when trying to enter a predominantly male literary tradition. They claim that this gender-specific frustration influenced these writers' creative output and invite contemporary readers to celebrate the rebelliousness of those female novelists and of their heroines.

indistinguishable from one another. The melancholic object, made neither dead nor fully alive, must experience its own subjectivity as suspension, as excess and denigration—and in this way, replicates the melancholic subject." (1997, 51) A very clear example of these intricate psychosocial mechanisms can be found in Julius Wilson, Monica's West Indian husband, who, unable to emotionally or culturally fit into British life, is drawn back into his own country's struggle for independence and eventually returns there leaving two outcasted children behind. In-betweenness and un-belonging represent a characteristic tragedy of Phillips's black male Caribbean immigrants who, according to Craig A. Smith, "suffer from melancholia, forever attempting to reconnect to an idealized past that can never be reclaimed." (2016, 37) In their not assuming loss (be it the loss of a family, a nation or a culture), its trace is incorporated in their egos in such an overwhelming way that the process of mourning is never successfully terminated nor its traumatic injuries ever healed.

The third of the male characters affected by this metanarrative of postcolonial melancholia as they revolve around the female protagonist—Monica Johnson—is her own son, Ben. The descendant of postcolonial melancholic subjects (his English grandfather craving for the ethnic absolutism of the lost Empire, and his father as the displaced and emotionally alienated West Indian), Ben evidences that immigration is a dynamic process in that the people who come are as changed by it as the people they come to, and becomes a living metaphor of these two-directional changes and traumas. As an adult, after his mother's death and in a move that, according to Bénédicte Ledent and Evelyn O'Callaghan (2017, 234), resembles the elimination of the colonial archive[5],

[5] Between the 1950s and 1970s within the so-called "Operation Legacy" Britain systematically destroyed or removed sensitive documents in colonies that were about to gain independence. The general idea underlying such politics of erasure was to save the Empire's honour, protect its collaborators and prevent any 'wrong' use by incoming national authorities. By getting rid of inconvenient or embarrassing records, British administrators built an official narrative about imperialism that efficiently obscured the

he tries to erase his traumatic past by getting rid of all the letters and postcards written to him together with the newspaper clippings about his brother's tragic disappearance. But in the section "Childhood" he seems to have resisted the temptation to amnesia when he invokes the bitter memories of his infancy, evidencing that, Kai Erikson claims, "trauma has both centripetal and centrifugal tendencies", as it draws the individual away from its site while at the same time drawing him/her back to it (1995, 186). In this part of the novel, Ben reconstructs his early life and each episode is catalogued under the title of a song that might have been significant for him and that, contesting the racialist realities he experienced, composes a hybrid and multicultural soundtrack of Jamaican, British and American singers, thus suggesting the possibility of atonement and reconciliation. Just as, in the wake of slavery, music was an invaluable instrument to express the unsayable, Ben is eventually able to revisit his childhood traumas with the help of the interracial repertoire of Plutto Shervington, David Bowie, Fredda Payne or Millie Small. One of the most important aspects in Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) is precisely his focus on music, not only because of its popular status but also because it contests the preeminent position of language and textuality as "expressions of human consciousness." (74) For him (as for Ben in Phillips's novel) black music defies categorization and symbolizes a hybrid and antiessentialist notion of race and identity.

Racial anxieties

In line with the novel's rhetoric of orphanhood, Gilroy complains in the introduction to his volume that "[m]ulticultural society seems to have been abandoned at birth" (2005, 1). He argues that the traumas of Britain's colonial past "can only be

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truth of its brutality, and in this vein, Shoei Sato points out, "the name 'Operation Legacy' aptly reflects the British intention to shape the legacy of the empire at the moment of decolonisation." (2017, 699)

denied at a considerable moral and psychological cost" (2005, 94) and are very active in shaping the hostile responses to strangers and settlers. In this light, it is not a coincidence that Phillips chose to publish this novel in 2015, the year the British Conservative party started their anti-immigration, anti-European Union campaign, and that he sets the stories in different historical moments where British imperial power is self-legitimized:

The first of these chronologies is the end of the 18th century, the peak of the slave trade, which, together with the millions who went through the Middle Passage experience, took Heathcliff's mother from Congo to the West Indies and then brought her back to Liverpool carrying with her the aforementioned "burdensome secret". The next narrated period is the late 1840's, the time of Emily Brontë's exile in the Yorkshire moors some fifteen years after the official abolition of slavery in the colonies, but the institution still troubling Victorian morality and economy to such an extent that Prime Minister Disraeli made this unambiguous pronouncement about the fundamental inequality on which it was sustained: "All is race; there is no other truth."[6] The story would finally leap into the late 1950s, featuring the post-Windrush generation of Caribbean immigrants settling in the mother country and reactivating the mechanisms of racial hierarchy and the ideology of white supremacy that had sustained the imperial structure for centuries. Actually, taboos and anxieties about miscegenation and different forms of colour discrimination always underlie the tragic childhood of Monica's sons in a narrow-minded Northern location reminiscent of a Dickensian Coketown with its

[6] Benjamin Disraeli made this and other more extreme pronouncements about the supremacy of white Anglo-Saxon race in *Tancred, Or The New Crusade* (ch. XX) published in 1847, the same year Emily Brontë published *Wuthering Heights*.
https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/disraeli/benjamin/tancred/chapter20.html

overtones of stultifying conformity and routine[7] : "They all know that the church is at the top of the hill, and the butcher, the baker, and the post-office are at the foot of the hill, and the pub is somewhere in between, and it's blatantly obvious to each of them that this Tommy Wilson is most definitely a stranger." (Phillips 2015, 117) The middle section "Brothers" recalls the racist apprehensions about their curly hair, their not being baptized or even their origin, as when on his first schoolday, Tommy, Monica's youngest mulatto son, is interrogated by the headteacher:

> "'And where are you from, Thomas?'
>
> 'I'm from England'
>
> His fellow pupils release a volley of scornful cackling that threatens to swell into hysteria.
>
> 'All right, all right, I'm not sure what you all find so amusing.'
>
> Mr. Hedges scans the room before once again turning his attention to the new boy. 'Well, Thomas, we were hoping for something a little more specific, but for now *England* will suffice.'" (Phillips 2015, 117)[8]

The "scornful cackling threatening to swell into hysteria" exposes an anxious reaction to the postcolonial immigrant shaped by the geographical separation between imperial territories and metropolis, and by the racial belief that Black and Asian people, although British subjects, belonged in empire, not Britain (Webster 2011, 159). In the same vein,

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[7] Charles Dickens sets *Hard Times* (1854) in the fictional landscape of Coketown to illustrate the boring and repetitive ordinariness of industrial lifestyle: "The jail might have been the infirmary, the infirmary might have been the jail, the town-hall might have been either, or both, or anything else, for anything that appeared to the contrary in the graces of their construction." ([1854]2003, 28)

[8]This episode has a clear autobiographical dimension considering Phillips's own experience of outcastness as a black child in Leeds: "We've grown up feeling strange, feeling like the strangers in the classroom, feeling like the odd one out" (Goldman 2009, 87). He recalls being asked "where are you from?" and admits that his writing has always been "an attempt to answer that question." (Goldman 2009, 87)

this “something a little more specific” for which England condescendingly suffices reveals precisely a realm of hostility and abhorrence that the miscegenated children of Empire inhabit though they cannot even verbalize, as Ben recalls: “The idea of talking about family in general was completely off the agenda.” (Phillips 2015, 196) At this point it is important to remember that the fears and anxieties about miscegenation in post-war Britain triggered governmental policies to control and discipline the cohabitation with black bodies and to avoid specific encounters between black men and white women. As Hazel Carby recalls, and Caryl Phillips together with other Black British writers like Sam Selvon (*The Lonely Londoners* 1956), Bernardine Evaristo (*Lara* 1997), Zadie Smith (*White Teeth* 2000) or Andrea Levy (*Small Island* 2004) pick up in their novels, “many of these encounters flourished into sexual relationships and, despite overwhelming opposition from friends, family, strangers and society at large, some culminated in marriage and increased the number of what authorities regarded as the ‘problem’ of ‘half-caste children.’” (Carby 2009, 641)

But the ‘problem’ of ‘half-caste children’ and the moral panic about racial contamination in post-war Britain is only a 20th century reactivation of the mid-Victorian anxieties subtly articulated by Emily Brontë as the backstage of *Wuthering Heights*. That is probably why Caryl Phillips made these two historical moments interact in his novel.

In unravelling the colonial intertext of *Wuthering Heights*, Maja Von Sneidern argues that “Brontë locates her plantation colony not on the margins of the empire, some exotic island half way around the world, but in the heart of Yorkshire,” (1996, 174) and she affirms that the descriptions of Heathcliff, the dark Other, resonate with the racialist discourses of the period, emphasizing not only his colour but also his savage nature and moral depravity. When trying to warn Isabella about her husband-to-

be, Catherine describes him as "[a]n unreclaimed creature, without refinement — without cultivation; an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone... a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man." (Brontë [1847]1985, 141) But at the same time, the way he is brutalized and abused by both the Earnshaws and Lintons, deprived of company, education or affection and forced to hard labour invokes the abolitionists' accusations of cruelty and inhumanity within the plantation system. Anxieties about racial contamination are also reflected in the characterization of his son Linton Heathcliff, who bears the stigmas of mixed blood as described in pseudo-scientific tracts and moral writing of the period: disease, viciousness, treason, cowardice, duplicity, unmerited power, and effeminacy (Von Sneidern 1996, 184). The taboos about miscegenation were actually so powerful that Linton Heathcliff is only a narrative possibility that is conveniently terminated by Brontë through the character's early death, thus preventing moral and racial contagion.

But Phillips's novel presents monsters that are far more terrible than crossbreeding when he makes race interact with other figurations of "difference" like class and gender. The idea of female precarity leading to prostitution is implied in the two female characters as embodiments of extreme vulnerability and destitution. Heathcliff's mother –the unnamed "Crazy Woman"—is depicted as a miserable victim of social, racial and sexual exploitation in the streets of Liverpool, and when "meetings with the gentleman ceased, [other] assignations commenced as the curse of destitution began to pollute her life (No, please, no! No!) These scowling men revelled in improper conduct and were prepared to pay to have brisk knowledge, and once their joyless noises were at an end they dropped a coin on the way out as they stepped over the pile of tatters that was her child." (Phillips 2015, 11) Phillips reproduces this scenario some two hundred years later when he casts Monica Jonson in a similarly mercenary relationship with Derek Evans. The terrible irony of their liaison is that, initially, she

feels puzzled about its nature and extent—"He'd left money for her, which meant that either he'd got the wrong idea about her or he really cared…she didn't know what to think" (Phillips 2015, 92)—and when Derek's motivations are made clear, it is already too late: "He was using her to get at Tommy, for he liked nothing more than to impress kids."(Phillips 2015, 162) When, years later, Ben tries to assimilate the traumatic truth about his brother's abuse by their mother's lover, he justifies Tommy's exposure on his social and racial defencelessness: "As a family we had nothing, so of course it was straightforward enough for somebody to turn our Tommy's head. It's easy to turn a kiddie's head when he has nothing." (Phillips 2015, 189)

After all, the racial anxieties of *Wuthering Heights* and its postcolonial rewritings like Maryse Condé's *Winward Heights* and Caryl Phillips's *The Lost Child* suggest that race is inseparable from other categories of alterity like class and gender. Because racism, patriarchy and capitalism collectively shape the social positioning of Heathcliff and that of his postcolonial successors, any analysis of these characters has to necessarily consider the interconnectedness of different forms of oppression and replace normative configurations of difference with alternative models of relational identity. In this light, I agree with Carine M. Mardorossian in her view of Heathcliff's and Catherine's racial identities as unstable and fluctuating along their transgressions of socially prescribed roles, "revealing that it was often through *racial hybridity* that the Victorian middle class configured and reconfigured the crossings of class, gender and religious boundaries that they both feared and fetishized." (2005, 92)[9] Therefore, it is not surprising that Heathcliff's mid-narrative disappearance into the external world as a racial and social outcast, and his return, just three years later, as an immensely wealthy

[9] Phillips aligns himself with this intersectional approach when, in an interview with Stephen Clingman, he admits the interdependence of class and race in his own upbringing: "I learnt very early on not to see the world through a racialized lens, not to see myself through that lens, and to try to see something else." (2017, 596)

gentleman to claim property of the novel's fortunes, places and persons, renews his otherness –this time across economic lines—, his wealth being also of uncertain origin.

But just as the practices and dilemmas of slavery did not finish with the Emancipation Act (1833), *Wuthering Heights* does not provide a tidy closure, and consequently the protagonists' ghosts wandering in the moors, their coffins left deliberately half-open and the "unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth" (Brontë 1985, 367) can be interpreted as a promise of the novel's afterlife. Caryl Phillips, who, along his career has chosen to explore the voids and gaps between cultures and races, accepts Brontë's challenge, and in his attempt to readdress the unresolved traumas of colonialism under the skin of British history, tries to shed light on literary pasts too.

Ghostly (af)filiations

The novel's emphasis on orphanhood and lostness and the actions of negligent fathers–Mr. Earnshaw, Patrick Brontë, Ronald Johnson, Julius Wilson—are clearly counteracted by Phillips's appeal to literary "maternity", since, against other patrilineal models of affiliation, it is mainly through female precursors (Brontë, Rhys, Condé) that he confronts an intricate literary inheritance. As Ledent and O'Callaghan suggest, the trope of the lost child bears an implicit plea for the narrative adoption of orphan and illegitimate stories, the unacknowledged accounts of the bastard children of the Empire who are missing from official records (2017, 229). In *Wide Sargasso Sea* Jean Rhys gives Bertha Mason her own name–Antoinette Cosway–and has her declare: "There is always the other side" ([1966] 2011, 99), a metafictional pronouncement that invites the readers to explore the "other side" of all our easy assumptions about race, culture, sex, history, sanity and madness by making this outcasted and abominable creature a

powerful story-teller.[10] In this respect, Rhys could be anticipating Phillips's aim "to look at that history from a different angle –through the prism of people who have nominally been written out of it, or have been viewed as the losers or victims in a particular historical storm. You take something which people presume they know about … and you make them look again from the point of view of people who have been written out." (Jaggy 2004, 115)

Helène Cixous used the image of the woman-as-zombie coming back from the dead to disrupt sediments of male civilization (1986, 65); in this vein, Emily Brontë could be the spectre that haunts Phillips's narrative to illuminate modern Britain's patriarchal and colonial legacy, both texts operating in a complex palimpsest. Within a post-mortem account of her own funeral, Phillips's Emily contemplates the bereaved Brontës' mourning of her corpse: "She hears the noise of the debris thundering against the wooden box." (Phillips 2015, 112) At this lugubrious point in the novel, it is important to remember that death is an inescapable reality in the Brontë family: to the early death of the mother, Maria, there followed those of ten-year-old Elizabeth and eleven-year-old Maria Brontë of consumption, and subsequently the deaths of Branwell, Emily, and Anne within a year of each other, leaving Charlotte, at thirty-three, as the only survivor of the six siblings. The Brontës' tragedy is nothing extraordinary considering their existence in a world where illness and precariousness were to such an extent part of everyday life that human losses cannot be regarded as simply individual experiences, but as social and cultural constructions shaping 19th century ideologies. Within this Victorian imaginary, there existed a special fascination with female corpses

[10] Her story-telling power is conveniently suppressed by Rochester who transforms his creole wife from a speaking subject into a silent object (articulate only through animal shrieks, howls and laughs), a confined madwoman and ultimately a historical lie: "Very soon she'll join all the others who know the secret and will not tell it. Or cannot. Or try and fail because they do not know enough. […] I too can wait –for the day when she is only a memory to be avoided, locked away, and like all memories a legend. Or a lie." (Rhys 2011, 137)

which can be attested in much of the poetry and painting of the period where woman's death is strongly eroticised and fetishized. Artists like Robert Browning, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Alfred Tennyson, John Everett Millais and George Frederic Watts among others seemed to relish on the contemplation of confined, sickly and suicidal females, thus epitomizing patriarchal attempts at objectifying and disempowering real women. Although elaborately mourned through the sophisticated 19th century funeral practices, these female revenants, immortalized in a painted or written portrait, a lock of hair or an ivory cameo, became objects of sexual lust and were positioned in an ambiguous ontological space.

Emily Brontë, like her two other literary sisters, exploits illness as an artistic *topos* in order to address the constraints of patriarchal power, but in *Wuthering Heights* she takes a step further by presenting female death as the extreme annihilation of the "unruly" feminine and the result of male endeavours to neutralize the dangers of female sexuality: "Terror made me cruel" (Brontë [1847]1985, 67), Lockwood admits to justify his brutality against Catherine's ghost. Although it is upon Catherine that Heathcliff's necrophiliac drives are more explicitly exerted (by desecrating her grave on at least two particular occasions and by recurrently invoking her otherworldly return), other female characters in the novel are similarly deprived of their life energies, like young Cathy, Isabella and Frances. By emphasizing this interaction between death and femininity, Emily Brontë seems to render Victorian patriarchy as a system which predates on the life of those caught within, especially women, affected by what Beth Torgerson has termed "the disease of dispossession." (2005)

But contrary to his Victorian male predecessors, Phillips is more interested in the ghost than in the corpse.[11] Through the iconography of the zombie or the living dead, which is such a powerful trope in postcolonial literature, he tries to compensate colonial crimes of territorial and cultural *dispossession* with an exercise of literary (ghostly) *possession*. His fictional Emily, who admits that "she lives now in two worlds" (Phillips 2015, 112), is not only raised from the dead (the source-text), but made to survive in the new text, in a move that invokes Adrienne Rich's famous notion of "writing as re-vision." In her all-too-quoted essay "When We Dead Awaken", Rich claims that "[r]evision –the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction–is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival." (1972, 18) By both looking back and looking ahead, Emily vindicates her liminal and transitional status together with the experiences of those who move from past to present, between England, Africa and the Caribbean in order to contest the linear and dominant narratives of imperial discourse. Their testimonies overlap and switch back and forth between temporal and spatial dimensions, thus appealing to non-essentialist approaches to the interracial relationships across the Atlantic.

Through his emphasis on ghostly and alienated characters, Phillips might be invoking Zygmunt Bauman's notion of the *stranger* as an unplaceable being, always outside space and time, who thus threatens the social order and reveals the fragility of those normative identities that modernity created and privileged (1991). Just as Heathcliff was perceived from the start "almost as if he came from the devil" (Brontë [1847] 1985, 77), and Tommy Wilson, Monica's mulatto son, is stigmatized as "most

[11] To explore the meaning and function of spectrality in Phillips's novel see Svetlana Stefanova (2017) for whom "ghosts inhabiting the in-betweens of time and space haunt the text, de-historicizing the past and producing a space of anxiety fueled by unrepresentable secrets." (42)

definitely a stranger" (Phillips 2015, 117), the postcolonial rewriting operates in a similarly unsettling fashion as it disturbs the imperial certainties of the Victorian text. According to Bauman, the stranger occupies an uncertain position inasmuch as he/she can either be assimilated or disrupt society; an ambivalence through which it can be compared to the double function of the intertext. Its ghostly presence challenges the "purity" of the literary canon by opening a new space of plural meanings, while at the same time being a homage to these canonical texts. In a similar fashion, Homi Bhabha argues that by confronting the voices of the past and the present, of home and abroad, postcolonial authors create something new and disturbing; an uncanny space that can very accurately define Phillips's novels:

> The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with newness that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent in-between space that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. (2004, 10)

For Phillips, this "chronotope" –to put it in Mikhail Bakhtin's terms[12]—where past and present "thicken" and merge in a narrative whole is the moors. In his rewriting of the Brontës' time, the geography of the moors juxtaposes two temporal and spatial environments where a feverish and deranged Emily confuses her bleak reality at the parsonage with the fictional universe of her novel, as "she dreams of the boy who came

[12] Bakhtin defined the chronotope as the interaction of space and time that is intrinsic to narrative. The closest he comes to formulate some sort of a definition of a rather ambivalent and slippery term reads as follows: "In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. The intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope." (2002, 15)

from the moors." (Phillips 2015, 109). In the Victorian text, Catherine's dying wish to be released onto the moors reinforces this notion of the region as a supernatural, liberating and unbounded space beyond the domestic confines of Trushcross Grange: "I wish I were out of doors! I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free …I'm sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills. Open the window again wide: fasten it open!" (Brontë [1847] 1985, 163) Likewise, in the Wilsons' and Johnsons' present-day story, the moors are the site of a terrible family tragedy inspired by the real-life sexual abuse and murder of five children between 1963 and 1964[13], but also a place of fraternal atonement that Ben describes in purely Brontë-resque style: "I made up my mind to stay put on the moors. Hours passed as I walked for mile after mile, and as the daylight eventually started to fade in the sky, I could feel the moors closing in on me, and for the first time in ages I began to feel close to my brother." (Phillips 2015, 189) As these examples illustrate, the moors chronotope is a powerful generator of meaning beyond its purely geographical dimension. It is the symbolic territory where both Emily Brontë and Caryl Phillips make trauma and resilience, home and homelessness, memory and oblivion interact in a carefully designed spatio-temporal configuration.

Conclusion

As racism remains a largely unresolved problem in Britain, Phillips's work evidences that it also functions as a shameful social taboo supported by a culture of denial and amnesia, as "the unspoken discourse below the transparent surface of neo-

[13] The crimes committed by Myra Hindley and Ian Brady in the 1960s, known as the Moors murders, have become imprinted on the British collective imagination for their sadistic brutality. After fifty years, the body of one of the victims, 12-years-old Keith Bennett, has still never been found despite the belief that Brady knew the location and buried him on the Saddleworth Moors, where he buried three others. (https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-manchester-46017370) Phillips admits having been deeply affected by the story of this "lost child" which might have influenced much of the novel's *noir* mood and characterization. (Clingman 2017, 591)

liberal hegemonic respectability." (Palmer 2010, 97) By revisiting two particularly racist moments in British history –mid-Victorian and post-Windrush generations—*The Lost Child* sets itself against the imperial dogma of linear time and, as a product of its postcolonial and diasporic environment, its fragmentary and multivocal mode can be interpreted both as a response to the breakdown of the West's grand narratives of progress, and as a postmodern articulation of colonial trauma. In his theorisation on how diaspora problematizes cultural identity and representation, Stuart Hall claims that we should "think of black Caribbean identities as 'framed' by two axes or vectors, simultaneously operative: the vector of similarity and continuity; and the vector of difference and rupture." (1993, 226) It is precisely at the crossroads of these two axes, in between belonging and unbelonging, that we should understand Phillips's cast of nomads, misfits, expatriates and zombie-like figures wandering in his narrative geography of displacement.

When, upon his arrival at Wuthering Heights, Lockwood refers in his speculative travelogue to invisible objects "lurking in the shade" and creatures "haunt[ing] other recesses," (Brontë [1847]1985, 47) he is soon characterized as an unreliable and short-sighted narrator whose guesswork is constantly proven wrong, but he effectively serves Emily Brontë's metafictional aim to explore the limits of memory and storytelling. In reaching back imaginatively to Britain's colonial past and in appropriating the literary authority of one of its master texts, Phillips's rewriting is also a re-righting exercise as it illuminates those areas of obscurity in Brontë's original and, through the motif of the lost child, readdresses transhistorical modes of exclusion and violence, of healing and forgiveness.

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