



SOCIAL CLASSES IN KHUSHWANT SINGH'S *I SHALL NOT HEAR THE NIGHTINGALE*: A COLONIZER-COLONIZED STRUGGLE?

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DEDICATION

To Nicolás, Ana Laura and Lucas, my children.

WHEN I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me:
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree:
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet;
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.
I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on, as if in pain;
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

Christina Rossetti

Abstract

This research paper explores Khushwant Singh's novel *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* focusing on the struggle between the colonized and the colonizer, as well as the various roles that the different social classes seem to play in their respective contexts. To achieve this aim, a well-defined corpus was selected, which comprises some fictional conversations and narrative pieces from the novel, analysed from a critical and literary perspective. The result of the present study should be interpreted as one of the multiple plausible readings that may arise in the process of understanding Khushwant Singh's historical piece that involves the reader in the realm of India's mysticism, and faces him/her with the challenge of deciphering the complexity and ambiguity of the social struggle beyond the binary opposition colonizer/colonized.

Key words: colonizer, colonized, social struggle, social classes, binary opposition.

Introduction

The dominance/subordination issue has been the backbone to the framework of postcolonial theory. The colonizer/colonized relationship has been extensively analyzed from the perspective of the exercise of power through subjugation and, to that aim, the role of discourse has become the medium to attempt an interpretation and understanding of the 'other' question. However, the dominance/subordination relationship might be studied beyond the binary equation thus confronting colonizer and colonized. The present dissertation seeks to critically address the interaction between pre-existing social classes in both the 'colonizer' and the 'colonized' communities, as well as explore the establishment and maintenance of the colonial venture in terms of social class and status of the people involved in the colonization process. The present study constitutes an attempt to 'de-construct' and problematize the colonizer/colonized dichotomy interpreted as a one-dimensional relationship of dominance/subordination.

The colonized and the colonizer—as conceptual categories—will be primarily re-examined in terms of social classes, that is, with a view to the hierarchical socio-economic standing of certain members of either group and their subjective perception of such condition. The so-called 'colonized' people and 'the colonizers' and their class structure will be analyzed both separately, prioritizing the relations and interactions among the members of either group independently, and in conjunction, examining the colonizer/colonized encounter and its effects. Furthermore, the analysis of power relations from a social class perspective may serve the purpose of expanding the study of post-colonial literature beyond the binary opposition colonizer/ colonized and considering the interaction among pre-existing social classes in both the colonizer and the colonized communities. Finally, social stratification and social class consciousness are central tenets in defining a group's self-perception and social identity within a larger community, especially in the context of the displacements and readjustments involved in a colonization process. Specifically, the core of the present analysis will be

the study of class-based power relations as evidenced in discourse and social interchanges among the characters in the novel under study, considering the particular historical background, and based on supportive literary sources.

Derived from the aforementioned relations the question of discourse as a means for the exercise of power emerges in the context of Khushwant Singh's novel though not limited to the colonizer/colonized relationship as a binary opposition but tainted with ambivalence and internal inconsistencies within the colonized community that go beyond the presence of the colonizer. The colonized-subjugator and colonized-subjugated common characterizations (Césaire, 1972) are challenged as well as the voiced-dominant-male as a counterpart to the voiceless-dominated-female.

From this perspective, the present study aims at analyzing the characters' behaviour in *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* through the close study of discourse interchanges as literary creations of conversation. Surprisingly, characters such as the servants are of core importance for the analysis of class relations. To that aim, a combination of discourse and literary analysis will provide the framework for this research paper in an attempt to answer the following research question:

To what extent are social classes circumscribed to the colonizer-colonized binary opposition in the struggle portrayed in Khushwant Singh's *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale*?

First, I will provide an account of the author's background and career to clarify the selection of his work. The following information has been retrieved from the Library of Congress New Delhi Office website (see Reference List):

Khushwant Singh, one of the best-known Indian writers of all times, was born in 1915 in Hadali (now in Pakistan). He was educated at the Government College, Lahore and at King's College, Cambridge University, and the Inner Temple in London. He practiced law at the Lahore High Court for several years before joining the Indian Ministry of External Affairs in 1947. He began a distinguished career as a journalist with the All India Radio in 1951. Since then he has been founder-editor of *Yojana* (1951-1953), editor of the *Illustrated weekly of India* (1979-1980), chief editor of *New Delhi* (1979-1980), and editor of the *Hindustan times* (1980-1983). His Saturday column "With Malice Towards One and All" in the *Hindustan times* is by far one of the most popular columns of the day.

Khushwant Singh's name is bound to go down in Indian literary history as one of the finest historians and novelists, a forthright political commentator, and an outstanding observer and social critic. In July 2000, he was conferred the 'Honest Man of the Year Award' by the Sulabh International Social Service Organization for his courage and honesty in his 'brilliant incisive writing.' [...]

Among the several works he published are a classic two-volume history of the Sikhs, several novels (the best known of which are *Delhi*, *Train to Pakistan*, and *The company of women*), and a numbers of translations and non-fiction books on Delhi, nature and current affairs. The Library of Congress has ninety-nine works on and by Khushwant Singh.

Khushwant Singh was a member of the upper house of the Indian Parliament from 1980 to 1986. Among other honors, he was awarded the Padma Brushan in 1974 by the President of India (he returned the decoration in 1984 in protest against the Union Government's siege of the Golden Temple in Amritsar) (The Library of Congress Delhi Office, 2010).

According to the previous biographical data, *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* is not considered of great relevance when discussing the broad corpus of literature produced by Khushwant Singh. However, the novel offers the appropriate setting and group of characters to analyze the cultural clash derived from the colonial encounter and the social characteristics of the colonizer and colonized communities in British India before Independence, and even the cultural traces of Indians that precede colonization.

Collected Novels is a volume that includes Singh's three novels: *Train to Pakistan*, *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale*, and *Delhi*. Penguin Books, India, first published the volume in 1996 in Delhi. A second edition was published in 1999, as well.

I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale is a novel that comprises thirteen chapters, four of which- first, fourth, ninth and twelfth- include historical information about the absence of privacy, the monsoon, population, the Himalayas and death. At the beginning, there is a prefatory note that includes elementary data on the history of the Sikhs as well as Sikh and Hindu salutation forms.

It is worth highlighting that even though the novel has been analyzed at full length only a few dialogue instances have been selected to illustrate the concepts developed in the present thesis. The selection criteria have been determined by relevance, adequacy and richness of expressions, as well as characters' involvement in paramount events.

Despite the fact that the main Indian characters in *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* are circumscribed to the emergent middle-class, the British characters bear certain particularities that make them unique for the present analysis. The relationship established between the British and the Sikh family offers an ideal scenario to adopt an alternative stand to the long-discussed oppressor / oppressed bond that has been the cornerstone of postcolonial studies.

1. Setting the scene: Historical Context

Khushwant Singh's novel *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* is a historical novel geographically located in Amritsar, Punjab, India and the series of events in it portrayed occur before the Independence of India -between April 1942 and April 1943. April in Punjab or "the land of the five rivers" is a time of flowers and festivals (Read & Fisher, 1999, p.2): Ram Naumi and Baisakhi Day when the solar New Year starts. On Baisakhi Day, "Sikhs and Hindus bathe in sacred rivers and tanks and worship at their temples or *gurdwaras* [emphasis added]." The Sikhs' holy of holies is the Golden Temple, around which Amritsar was founded in the sixteenth century AD (ibid). The *gurdwaras* are temples where the Sikhs' Sacred Book, the *Adi Granth*, is read and worshipped (Singh, 1996, p.161).

Between 1942 and 1943, India was immersed in a multiple-interest political situation. On the one hand, the Quit India Liberation Movement was gaining terrain amongst youngsters and Gandhi followers were spreading their word all over the subcontinent. At the same time, the Indian Muslims were making their voices heard by claiming a territory for themselves. On the other hand, the Second World War was demanding the British to maintain a peaceful relationship with their Indian subjects who -particularly the Sikhs- were fighting for Britain against Germany. Moreover, the menace

of Japan occupying Indian eastern borders was an issue of concern for some Indians too, who, fearing Japanese invasion, supported the British and assumed that being a British subject would be more beneficial than becoming Japanese servants would (Walsh, 2006, pp.199-200).

This multiplicity of political matters and particularly the fact that the British government “completely opposed to any concessions to Indian independence [...] opened a new disobedience campaign: ‘Quit India.’” The government reacted to this liberation movement by imprisoning Congress leaders, a fact which provoked a massive uprising throughout the country between 1942 and 1943. In response to protests, sporadic violence and attacks, the British police responded with “shootings, public floggings,” and multiple arrests (ibid.).

Within this context, we find all the characters of the novel. The Indian characters belong to the old ‘high caste’ or modern middle-class families, who are depicted by Judith Walsh (2006) as follows:

The Indian middle-class [...] lived professional lives structured by employment within the British Raj and had lifestyles broadly adapted to the ideas and practices of British colonial modernity. The men of such families were invariably literate, usually in English and at least one vernacular language. Family backgrounds were generally those of high-caste Hindu or *ashraf* Muslim, and often these families had traditions of service within the courts and provincial centers or earlier Muslim rulers. In income, members could range from the wealthiest descendants of zamindars to impoverished office clerks. (Walsh, 2006, p.133)

This depiction may contribute to the analysis aimed at in the present work since two of the characters in the novel, Buta Singh and Wazir Chand, are Magistrates and as such they inform to the Deputy Commissioner of the District- Mr. Taylor- who is British; they both enjoy the aforementioned privileges and lead a life of comfort and abundance.

In brief, the novel is about the conflict of interests in the bosom of a middle-class Sikh family, where the father -a Magistrate for the Raj- is supportive of the British in India, while his son is the leader of a terrorist gang eager to fight for the independence of Mother India. Besides, there is evidence of the clash among social classes in India including religious groups such as Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims, and the ancient caste system as well. Furthermore, the British Commissioner holds a somewhat ambiguous position that permits to assess social classes in Britain as well. Several literary themes and symbols, as well as the historical accounts introduced in several chapters of the novel, are important supportive elements to background and deepen the analysis. At the same time, gender can be analyzed in relation to agency to find the reader surprised by recurrent ambiguity.

The story reaches its climax when the Indian father -loyal to the British- decides not to support his son’s enterprise but to reinforce his long-standing loyalty to the Raj. Hence, some characters’ roles are enhanced or changed completely; the voiced become voiceless and the voiceless make their voice heard.

Since the Sikh family is the centre to the story, it might be necessary to further expand what being a Sikh means. Guru Nanak founded the Sikh community in the 15th century in an attempt to unite the Hindus and the Muslims. Other eight Gurus or teachers, being Govind Singh the last of them and the one who turned the Sikhs into a military brotherhood called Khalsa -an army of the pure- followed Nanak. As signs of membership in this army, male Sikhs left their beards and hair uncut, always carried a comb and a sword, and wore steel bracelets on the right wrist and knee and knee-length martial shorts (Walsh, 2006, p.81). Due to their valour and courage, the Sikhs were recognized by the British as the best warriors and most trusted soldiers of the Indian army. They fought for the British in Africa, Europe, and Asia during the First and Second World Wars:

The Punjab had provided almost a third of the [...] Indians who had enlisted to fight for the British in the First World War, and its men had suffered heavy casualties [...]. They had brought back to their towns and villages not only tales of war but expectations of a better life, and a share of the democracy for which they had been told they were fighting. (Read & Fisher, 1997, p.2)

1.1. The Evolution of Social Classes in Punjab

Anshu Malhotra (2002) examines how ‘high caste’ developed and transformed during the colonial period in Punjab contributing to the formation of a *middle-class* [emphasis added] among the Hindus and the Sikhs. This transformation seems to have influenced the organization of middle-class life, which “had a significant impact on gender relations’ and women’s role and place in society” (Malhotra, 2002, p.2).

Even though the Sikhs had “an intellectual tradition that denied caste among them” and despite the fact that some Hindus intellectually reconceptualized caste, the idea of caste as a marker of status and as a principle of everyday organization persisted. Nevertheless, caste remained an aspect of the ‘hidden self’, a construction of a self-identity in the private, placing emphasis on the regulation of women’s conduct as part of the covert domain:

Despite almost two centuries of British colonial administration and the efforts of western influenced Hindu reformers in the nineteenth century, the Hindu caste system entered the twentieth century almost unchanged. At its apex were the Vedic Brahmins...at the bottom were the Untouchables. (Malhotra, 2002, p.16)

The operation of the caste system enabled the exercise of power through social control and spiritual notions of the sacred and the profane as interpreted by the Brahmins who dispensed power and patronage (Singh, 2001, Prologue). In other countries, a worker or the offspring of a worker may cross class boundaries through education, industry and financial success, but lower-caste Indians could not cross the line that divided them from other castes by birth (ibid.).

The urban middle classes of the Punjab -Hindus and Sikhs- depended economically on the “bureaucratic structures of the Raj.” Contest over public spaces and ideological battles in the public sphere permitted claims to dominance among the Indian elites or challenged the power of the colonial state. However, the material, ideological and social structures of middle class life “were provided by the practice of caste” and the desire for dominance was delineated by the coalescence of caste and class in Punjab (Malhotra, 2002. p. 35).

The colonial state first saw the Punjabis as a people divided by religion: Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. However, there was trouble in defining who the Sikhs were. The colonial state preferred viewing Khalsa Sikhs as the true

followers of Sikhism and created “administrative chaos” with no clear place for the non-Khalsa Sikhs. Besides, the dividing line between Sikhs and Hindus was blurred: “Not only is the true Sikh generally called a Hindu in commonplace parlance, but many of those who are spoken of as Sikhs are not true Sikhs but Hindus” (Malhotra, 2000, pp. 41-44).

This imperial perception of Punjabi society tainted people’s own perception of themselves. Official opinion saw the Muslims and the Sikhs as powerful and manly races as they had absorbed the essence of their religions and tasted political power in the past. Therefore, the Hindus, who were forced to survive under different rulers, were seen as “weak and effeminate” as well as cunning and manipulative (ibid.).

1.2. Position of Women

Women occupied an ambiguous position in terms of identity due to their relationship to caste, to a “pure” religiosity and to their own sexuality. The idea of *pativrata* -reinvented by the modernist new middle class- established women in new role expectations. The role of the *pativrata* permitted men “to deal with not only wives, but also widows, daughters, sisters, and mothers”: “Indeed the idea of the *pativrata* grew into an ideology based on the basis of which a familial life giving due deference to the hierarchies of gender and age could be organized in changed circumstances” (Malhotra, 2002, p.117).

The *pativrata* wife used to be the ideal, being the subservience of the wife to the husband the central ingredient. As a counterpart, the non-ideal woman was a quarrelsome one described as “willful, obstinate and a sexually aggressive *kupatti*.” It is worth mentioning that the concept of *pativrata* was used by the high castes in colonial Punjab to suit it to middle class life.

Furthermore, the daughter-in-law was allotted many and onerous duties. The father-in-law, described as the master of the house, was responsible for the welfare of the household. This was due to the fact that boys and girls married at an early age; “men were often still studying in Lahore or Amritsar while they had wives at home” (Malhotra, 2002, p. 119).

A daughter-in-law was feared since she could dissolve the economic base of a middle class patriarchy due to her outsider status. As a consequence, the *nun*- daughter-in-law-was expected to respect her mother-in-law and serve in her old age. As long as the mother-in-law was alive, she was the mistress of the house; the nun had to conceive herself as a servant, whose duty was to serve her parents-in-law. The ideal daughter-in-law should regard her in-laws as parents, and their home as her own rather than her natal home.

Lazy women who spent many hours sleeping were talked against: “A woman who deserved the epithet of a *lakshmi* [emphasis added] was one who woke before the sun rose and thought of cleaning the house after purifying her body”:

Wake up before sun rise and sleep late
Never get into the habit of sleeping in the afternoon
Do not get your body be diseased with laziness
Make home a heaven, daughter
(Singh, Bhai Amar as cited in Malhotra, 2002, p.121)

The aforementioned facts are some examples of the ancient Indian conception of the role of women. Basically, “women and the management of their sexuality were the hallmarks of caste status” (Malhotra, 2002, p.3). Middle class men were devoted to organize women’s lives, norms of correct behavior and their relationship with public spaces and with ‘low’classes. Themes such as “women’s dubious relationship to caste, their intense sexuality, the cunning inherent in their being, and the possible ways of taming their sexuality” agitated minds and seemed timeless (Malhotra, 2002, p.4). However, women unhappy relationship to caste resided only in the imagination of men (ibid.).

1.3. Main Characters’ Depiction

1.3.1. Indian Characters

Buta Singh and Wazir Chand were Magistrates and as such they informed to the British Deputy Commissioner of the District; they both enjoyed the privileges of professionals whose lives were “structured by employment within the British Raj and had lifestyles broadly adapted to the ideas and practices of British colonial modernity” (Walsh, 2006, p.133).

Buta Singh’s father and grandfather had served in the army and had been loyal to the Raj as Buta did. However, in recent years Buta Singh had started thinking of “bargaining” with the British. He was convinced that the British treated the Indians better than their own kings had done in the past and even better than Germans, Italians or Japanese would do if they conquered India. Therefore, he assumed that in the Second World War British and Indian interests were identical: “If they lose, we lose [...] if we help them to win, they will certainly give us something more than we have now” (Singh, 1999, p. 181). He was against the Partition of India and, as a consequence, against Muslim conditions for independence. Buta Singh and Wazir Chand’s sons graduated from English colleges and so they were members of -what contemporaries called- the English-educated elite. They were both married at an early age even before finishing their studies. Sher Singh and Madan shared political interests though they were not equally committed to the liberation movement. Sher Singh was an eloquent orator who became the leader of the Student Volunteer Corps (SVC). Madan and some other Hindu boys were part of a terrorist gang led by Sher Singh but the members of the gang did not involve themselves in public manifestations as much as Sher Singh did.

Sher Singh was a young man convinced that he had a responsibility towards his country, Mother India. Even though he was “getting the best of two worlds- the one of security provided by his father [...] and the other full of applause that would come to him as the heroic leader of a band of terrorists” (Singh, 1999, p. 174)-Sher was becoming aware of the incompatible nature of these two worlds. He found himself muddling through this ambiguous situation. He organized the

Student Volunteer Corps at university and he was one of Gandhi's supporters of the Quit India Movement though his plans to liberate India were not the same as Gandhi's. He disagreed with his father, Buta Singh, as regards the British presence in India and most - if not all- discussions related to this topic. Politics seemed to be the core of Sher's interests; he felt a strong passion with reference to political militancy and college leadership. However, Sher could not lead yet with his weak side; he was unable to reject Mr. Taylor's invitation to the office and his own weakness in that respect made him feel angry. The narrator depicts this situation as follows:

[...] He was angry with his father for having sent him and angry with himself for having come. He felt angrier with his wife- he always felt angry with her when he could not find reasons for his temper- for not having stopped him from coming. And of course he felt angry with Taylor for having suggested his calling on a Tuesday belittling him by keeping him waiting with the crowd of sycophants. (Singh, 1999, p.241)

This depiction of Sher's anger may prove the ambiguity of his position; on the one hand he wanted to fight the British out of India and was brave about it, on the other, he was still trapped by the benefits he enjoyed because of his father's position as a Magistrate.

Madan was a well-known cricketer admired all over the country and, having become a national icon, his picture was published on national newspapers. He supported Sher Singh's leadership though he was both "his chief supporter and rival." Madan was married and had a son, and his wife was expecting their second child. He had not obtained his degree yet but he had been captain of the University cricket eleven for three years and played against the English, which made him a legend in the Punjab. Madan was very keen on seducing women no matter who they were. He seduced Beena and had sexual intercourse with Champak, Sher's wife.

Madan was very determined and showed no insecurity or fear at the time of expressing his views. Once, at the Gables Hotel in Simla, he got angry because his group was the last to be served. Hence, he told the bearer: "You serve Indians after the English people have finished! Is their money better than ours?" (Singh, 1999, p.253).

Sher Singh was married to Champak, who did not comply with the duties of a *pativrata* [emphasis added] in any aspect. She led a life of comfort and had scarce participation in daily chores as well as conversations. She was reluctant to share her marital life with the rest of the family but preferred privacy that was not so common not even for her husband. Champak pretended to be at the height of the circumstances that her position required but she did not behave as a Sikh *nunh* should. Shunno, the maidservant, described Champak as follows: "our queen, our daughter-in-law, is idle all day [...] it is not good to be idle all day [...] she reads stories and listens to film songs over the radio" (Singh, 1999, p.224).

The magistrates' respective daughters-Beena and Sita- were students at the same school and spent long hours together studying for their school examinations. Beena admired Sita and felt great attachment to the Wazir Chands in general though she showed devotion to Madan in particular.

Even though the Buta Singhs and the Wazir Chands were members of different religious groups-Sikh and Hindu respectively-they seemed to manage religious differences successfully by concentrating on their commonalities. The time and interests their siblings shared, and the fact that Buta Singh had "triumphed over his colleague both in the eyes of the bureaucracy and in the estimation of the populace" (Singh, 1999, p.230) facilitated a patronizing attitude from the Singhs towards the Chands.

Shabrai, Buta Singh's wife, complied with all the duties assigned to a *pativrata*; she was a devoted wife and mother; and, even though she did not perform the house chores herself, she had complete dominion over the servants and managed the household on her own. Her son, who sometimes found it difficult to address his mother and to maintain a fluent conversation about certain topics with her, considered her illiterate. Shabrai was a religious Sikh wife obedient to the Guru's word, and faithful and compliant with the reading of the Granth Sahib. She was careful about expressing her views in front of her husband but determined enough when supporting an argument of which she was convinced. Most of the times, she prioritized her husband's position in an argument to her children's and her own. After a discussion between her husband and son, she asked her son "Why do you have to contradict your father in everything he says? [...] It is not nice to argue with one's elders; you should listen to what they have to say" (Singh, 1999, pp. 226-227).

Shunno, the maidservant, was a fat healthy woman in her fifties who had become a widow before she was twenty. She had a strong character and made the task of sharing the household chores difficult to other servants. She was a God-fearing woman who worshipped Sikh, Hindu and Muslim religions equally. The narrator described her as a woman who "[...] loved to talk, like most women of her age and frustrations [...] her sexual instincts had been sublimated in hard work, religion, and gossip" (Singh, 1999, p. 209).

All the major conflicts, arguments and debates in the novel arose in the Sikh family bosom particularly between father and son whose "academic discussions" usually turned into "unpleasant personal arguments [...]" (Singh, 1999, p. 239) which were commonly mediated and softened by Shabrai's intervention.

1.3.2. British Characters

The British characters in the novel were the Deputy Commissioner of the District, John Taylor -an English member of the Indian Civil Service- and his wife Joyce. Taylor was a "new brand Englishman"-unlike other English officers who "had kept their distance from Indians and set up the pattern of the rulers and the ruled" (Singh, 1999, p.182). Taylor attempted to meet Indians as equals and make friends with his subordinates and he openly expressed his sympathies with Gandhi and Nehru as well. He did not share the views of the English community about the role of Englishmen in India.

As regards Taylor's background, being only twenty-eight years old, he had become Deputy Commissioner and "virtual ruler of an area larger than two English countries" (Singh, 1999, p.213). He did not belong to the social class that had built the Empire since he was the son of a schoolmaster.

His wife, Joyce, had been a nurse who he met when "he had been sent for a medical check-up before joining the service" (ibid.). She had also attempted to make friends with Indians but since she was not successful- as Indians refused

to be treated as equals and sometimes tried “to exploit their association”-, Mrs. Taylor restricted her social activities and devoted herself to household chores.

Besides, both Taylor and his wife disliked people invading the privacy of their home and found the snobbery of English officials tedious. Hence, Mr. Taylor was very strict about visitors calling on a specific day in order to preserve himself and his wife from intrusion.

2. Methodology Section

In order to achieve the goal of the present investigation a multidisciplinary approach has been adopted. Overall, Critical Discourse Analysis, which envisages discourse “as an element of social practices”, will frame the “question of power in social class, gender and race relations” (Chouliarki & Fairclough, 1999, Preface). In particular, Fairclough’s approach to Critical Discourse Analysis which is ‘fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language’ (as cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2001) will provide the stand-point for the present reading of *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale*, considering that social actors are subject to constraints that do not arise from the discursive level but from structural relations of dependency, such class, ethnicity and gender (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p.125).

The identity function relates to the ways in which social identities are set up in discourse, the relational function to how social relationships between discourse participants are enacted and negotiated, the ideational function to ways in which texts signify the world and its processes, entities and relations. (Fairclough, 1992, p. 64)

[...] Apparently, paradoxical properties of being socially determined, and yet capable of individual creativity; obliged to act discursively in pre-constituted subject positions, yet capable of creatively transforming discourse conventions [...]. (Fairclough, 1989, p. 140)

Furthermore, Barthes’ post-structuralist conception of literary language as “a language without bottom, something like a pure ambiguity supported by an empty meaning” (as cited in Eagleton, 1982) will also raise consciousness on the inexhaustible range of signifiers and ‘texts’ that can be derived from any critical reading. Homi Bhabha’s post-colonial theory will support the understanding and/or interpretation of the particular characteristics of colonial discourse such as hybridity, otherness, mimicry and ambivalence thus accompanying our exploration and grounding our assumptions.

The content analysis method that, as Krippendorff (2004) suggests, “entails a systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter, not necessarily from an author’s or user’s perspective” will guide our reading, aware that every act of reading performed at different times and by different readers may produce different texts.

2.1 Corpus selection

The novel has been analyzed at full length although just some dialogue instances have been selected to illustrate the concepts developed in the present thesis. The selection criteria have been determined by relevance, adequacy and richness of expressions, as well as characters’ involvement in paramount events.

Literary creations of conversations among the characters, their attitudes, and behaviours will be compared and contrasted in an attempt to ‘disentangle’ the various characters’ social standing in their respective communities, the different ways in which social structure merges and intertwines -smoothly or discordantly- into the alleged colonizer/colonized opposition and in the colonizer and colonized independent social contexts. This analysis of the sociocultural aspects may reveal the way female and male, ‘colonized’ and ‘colonizer’ characters exercise their class roles as voiced or voiceless agents.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Defining the Colonizer and the Colonized

In *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Albert Memmi (1965) describes the colonial situation as ‘unclear’. He narrates how his experience as a student in France helped him discover that few aspects of his personality had been untouched by the fact that he was a colonized from Tunisia:

I was Tunisian, therefore colonized. I discovered that few aspects of my life and my personality were untouched by this fact. Not only my own thoughts, my passions and my conduct but also the conduct of the others towards me was affected. (Memmi, 1965, p.viii)

Furthermore, he adds that “all colonized peoples have much in common” which leads to consider his claim applicable to any former colony (Memmi, 1965, p. ix).

In order to construct a whole idea of the colonizer and the colonized -as well as the circumstances under which they came into being- it might be necessary to define ‘colonization.’ Césaire (1972) answers the question to what colonization is by stating what it is *not*:

[...] neither evangelization, nor a philanthropic enterprise, nor a desire to push back the frontiers of ignorance, disease and tyranny, nor a project undertaken for the greater glory of God, nor an attempt to extend the rule of law [...]. (Césaire, 1972, p. 32)

Even though he admits that placing civilizations in contact is “an excellent thing to blend different worlds” to exchange ideas, philosophies and sentiments; and that such exchange is “oxygen” that would consequently prevent ‘atrophy’, Césaire sees the colonizer and the colonized encounter as follows:

[...] wherever there are colonizers and colonized face to face, I see force, brutality, cruelty, sadism, conflict, and, in a parody of education, the hasty manufacture of a few, thousand subordinate functionaries, “boys”, artisans, office clerks, and interpreters necessary for the smooth operation of business [...]. (Césaire, 1972, p.42)

He emphasizes that beyond human contact, there are relations of “domination and submission” consequently turning the colonized -the Arabs of Algeria, the ‘coolies’ of India, and the ‘niggers’ of Africa - into an instrument of

production, thus enabling the equation: “colonization=thingification” by which the colonizer deliberately destructs the past of the colonized and reinvents him (Césaire, 1972, p. 42).

As a result, colonization degrades the colonizer, ‘decivilizes’ and ‘brutalizes’ [emphasis added] him by awakening violence and race hatred; in Césaire words: “[...] colonization...dehumanizes even the most civilized man” (Césaire, 1972, p. 41).

3.2. The Colonizer Class

“I am convinced that we cannot understand class unless we see it as a social and cultural formation arising from processes which can only be studied as they work themselves out over a considerable historical period” (Thompson, 1963, Preface)

According to Hobsbawm (1989), the period between 1875 and 1914 “developed a new kind of imperialism” since capitalism required “to turn into a world in which the *advanced* dominated the *backward* [emphasis added]” resulting in “a new type of empire, the colonial” (Hobsbawm, 1989, pp.56-57).

This was a period which constituted not only an economic and political but also a cultural phenomenon. Imperialism brought ‘westernization’ to the elites or the colonized elites: “they had to westernize to go under” (Hobsbawm, 1989, pp.76-77): “Elite resistance to the west remained westernizing even when it opposed wholesale westernization on grounds of religion, morality, ideology or political pragmatism” (ibid.). Furthermore, and in reference to India in particular, Wolpert asserts that the “British Civil Servants [...] emerged as the super-Brahman ‘Sahib’ class of rulers by the late nineteenth century” (Wolpert, 1991, p.125).

In Britain, classes of social strata below and outside the political system mobilized and formed alliances, coalitions or popular fronts; the working class mobilized in parties but always on a class basis: the proletariat (Hobsbawm, 1989, p.124).

At the same time, there existed a tertiary sector composed by men and women who worked “without getting their hands dirty.” They comprised the new lower-middle classes separating labour from bourgeoisie. This tertiary sector was employed in public and private offices, holding remunerated wages based on formal education qualifications and carried out by people who aspired –often at great material sacrifice- to the lifestyle of middle-class respectability (Hobsbawm, 1989, p.172).

Against this European backdrop briefly sketched above, Memmi’s (1965) *Portrait of the Colonizer* would suitably complete the notion of the colonizer under study. Memmi maintains that the colonizer who decided to leave for a colony is simply in search of “an easier life” in a place where his own language is spoken. He explains why the colonizer’s life in the colony is easier and provides a definition of a colony: “a place where one earns more and spends less. You go to a colony because jobs are guaranteed, wages high, careers more rapid and business more profitable” (Memmi, 1965, p.4). Despite the fact that the European settler may be repelled by the climate in the colony, the changing odours, the crowds and noise, he manages to overcome them for the advantages of the colony. He organizes his daily activities the way he did in his country, he follows the cadence of his traditional holidays, the weekly day of rest is the same as in his country, his nation’s flag flies over the monuments and buildings and his mother tongue allows him to communicate with the natives (Memmi, 1965, pp.12-13).

Moreover, the colonizer “enjoys the preference and respect of the colonized themselves, who grant him more than those who are the best of their own people, who, for example, have more faith in his word than that of their own population” (Memmi, 1965, p.12).

However, it is not possible for the colonizer to be unaware of the illegitimacy of his status, in fact, a double illegitimacy. He is a foreigner in a land where he created a place for himself, where he enjoys privileges to the detriment of the native inhabitants; he is a usurper. What is more, he accepts that there are privileges among the bourgeois colonized, but he knows that “the most favoured colonized will never be anything but a colonized people” (Memmi, 1965, p.9).

After having spent a time in the colony, the colonizer settler realizes that the colony “is not an extension of the home” and he understands “that he has only changed his province; he has another civilization before him [...] men whose reactions often surprise him, with whom he does not feel deep affinity” (Memmi, 1965, pp.24). Then he admits to the fundamental difference between the colonized and himself (ibid.).

However, always adhering to Memmi’s classification, sometimes the colonizer discovers the colonized, their existential character and suffering, and he “refuses to participate in their suppression and decides to come to their assistance” (ibid.).

The aforementioned characterization of the colonizer class will be considered in detail when analysing the colonizer characters under study.

3.3. The Colonized Class

As regards the colonized, defined as the oppressed and usurped, Memmi mentions a portion of the population that he depicts as:

The representative of the authorities, cadres, policemen, etc., recruited from among the colonized, form a category of the colonized which attempts to escape from its political and social condition. But in so doing, by choosing to place themselves in the colonizer’s service to protect his interests exclusively, they end up by adopting his ideology, even with regard to their own values and their own lives. (Memmi, 1965, p. 16)

In India, this portion of the colonized peoples constituted the *new elites* [emphasis added] or middle classes of Punjabi society, which included caste Hindus and Sikhs (Malhotra, 2002, p.1) since ‘high caste’ developed and transformed during the colonial period in Punjab and contributed to the formation of the middle class among Hindus

and Sikhs. In an economic sense, this middle class came to depend heavily on the bureaucratic structures of the Raj. Therefore, a redefinition of what was meant by 'high' and 'low' social classes in India becomes necessary since "in very significant ways the material, ideological and social structures" on which the middle class was built, were provided by the practice of caste (Malhotra, 2002, p.35).

In this respect, Partha Chatterjee (2010) discusses Asok Sen's (1977) views about the emergence of the middle-class in colonial India and asserts that "the new middle-class was a product of English education" in an economy under direct colonial control (Chatterjee, 2010, p.24). The development of this new class in a colonial country was ambiguous. Chatterjee asserts that "the dialectics of loyalty and opposition did not permit a clear division among the native bourgeoisie or the entire middle class into two exclusive categories of collaborators and opponents of imperialism." Citing Sen once more, "In India, bourgeois opposition to imperialism was always ambiguous" (as cited in Chatterjee, 2010, p.25); the 19th century intelligentsia sought to modernize social customs and attitudes though the fundamental forces of transformation were not present in colonial society. Liberalism stood on fragile foundations since individual self-gratification was prioritized to social responsibility creating an atmosphere of half-heartedness and ambiguity which would persist along the 20th century (Chatterjee, 2010, p.27).

To understand the ambiguity of bourgeois opposition to imperialism, Gramsci (as cited in Chatterjee, 2010) provides the concept of *passive revolution* [emphasis added]:

[...] in situations where an emergent bourgeoisie lacks the social conditions for establishing complete hegemony over the new nation, it resorts to a 'passive revolution', by attempting a 'molecular transformation' of the old dominant classes into partners in a new historical bloc and only a partial appropriation of the popular masses, in order first to create a state as the necessary precondition for the establishment of capitalism as the dominant mode of production. (Chatterjee, 2010, p.30)

According to a whole generation of Marxist historians of India (Chatterjee, 2010, p.23), the history of India in the 19th and 20th centuries was that of "the struggle between the forces of reaction and those of progress." This gave rise to 'reactionary' and 'progressive' classes stating the issue of the national democratic struggle against colonial domination and leading to contradictory results. Indian historical 'renaissance' questioned the categories of tradition versus modernity creating a gulf rather than bonds between "a modernized, western-educated, urban elite" and the rest of the nation. Westernizers produced a positive assessment of British rule and English education minimizing the "grosser facts of imperialist political and economic exploitation" (ibid.).

Modernity supposed the insertion of the western-alien- framework of thought into an eastern colonized community and its structure. This led directly to the problem of power, that is to say, "subjection of a colonial country and the question of loyalty or opposition to the imperial power" (Chatterjee, 2010, p.26-27). Furthermore, the aforementioned power issue may give rise to "changing relations of power *within* the society under colonial domination" (ibid.).

3.4. Caste System and Social Classes in Punjab, India

Wolpert's (1991) draws a distinction between caste and class: India's word for caste is *jati*, which means "birth." Jatis are kinship groups much larger than families, although not as self-sustaining as tribes or as unrelated as classes [...] The Portuguese, who first used the word "caste", really meant Indian's ancient "class"(varna)-system [...] (Wolpert, 1991, pp. 118-119)

The classical four-fold division of castes- Varna -the Vedic Brahmans on top and the Untouchables at the bottom, organized around the Brahmin central axiom of purity and pollution (Malhotra, 2002, pp.17-18).

In Punjab, caste system showed certain mobility and, despite the fact that Sikhs repudiated the practice of the caste system, they remained tolerant to it even after the arrival of the British.

The colonial officials viewed the Indian caste system as a "retrograde institution that caused the decline of India's ancient *Aryan* [emphasis added] civilization with its superstitions and restriction" (Walsh, 2006, p.115). However, the British changed and politicized the way caste functioned and turned them into a fixed ethnographic category. Thus, Hindus and Sikhs -once considered a backward element of society, sticking to abominable caste practices moreover nursing political ambitions- were traditionally literate and administrative classes securing job opportunities under the colonial regime.

Hence, boys learnt the "Blessings of the English Rule" (Malhotra, 2000, p.35) in government schools and held an experiential meaning in the lives of their fathers. Students memorized the rights given by the Magna Carta as well as science, the benefits of technology and the prosperity that the British had brought to India (Walsh, 2006, p.133). Schoolbooks aimed students' "to acculturate, to become Anglicized or Westernized" and to leave behind their decadent indigenous pasts (ibid.). Apart from centring the message on acculturation, the textbooks taught about India's degenerate past and weak nature:

Caste, idolatry, the treatment of women, India's debilitating climate, and vegetarianism were [...] responsible for India's backward and superstitious culture and its puny and small citizenry. (Walsh, 2006, p.134)

This educated high caste eventually turned into the modern middle class that took to service with the British government.

The English-educated elite were a wealthy and select community frequently referred to as "Indian middle-class" (Walsh, 2006, p.133). The members of this class came from the upper castes but not from an identifiable caste or 'varna.' They were not aristocrats or peasants but lived professional lives employed within the British Raj and their lifestyles were mostly adapted to British colonial modernity (ibid.). Middle class men of such families were literate usually in English and one vernacular language.

3.4.1. *The Emergence of the Middle Class during the Colonial Period in Punjab*

The urban middle classes of Punjab -among Hindus and Sikhs- depended economically on the structures of the Raj although the ideological and social structures of middle class “were provided by the practice of caste” (Malhotra, 2002, p.3). Thus, caste and class coalesced in the functioning of everyday life in spite of the *progressive* [emphasis added] presence of the British in India and the western-influenced reformers. Therefore, “the politics of caste came to play an important role in defining identity in the late nineteenth century along with that of marking out religious differences” (Malhotra, 2002, p.19).

Although the situation in Punjab reflected social fluidity and the boundaries that defined caste and religion were blurred, the colonial forms of knowledge and administration introduced rigidity to the notion of caste (Malhotra, 2002, p.24). This fact, enhanced by the survey of Punjab in 1881, created confusion among people who felt the need to define their identity unambiguously (ibid.).

Punjabis were seen to be divided by religion: Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. However, the division between Sikhs and Hindus was not always clear and sometimes provoked administrative chaos. As a consequence, the people of Punjab, an elsewhere in India, continued to be divided by caste (Malhotra, 2002, p.30).

That is how ‘caste’ Hindus and Sikhs became the new elites or middle classes of Punjabi society. “Caste was based upon the preservation of artificial rules that were significant to maintain their social position” (ibid.). These rules led the new elites to enhance their identities through the adoption of certain postures towards women and the restructuring of upper caste, middle class patriarchy (Malhotra, 2002, p.31).

Colonial officials viewed ‘caste’ Hindus and Sikhs as a ‘backward element of society’ that bore political ambitions. In fact, caste Hindus and Sikhs were literate and administrative classes that held positions for the British Raj.

However, after the Pax Britannica, high-caste sons of Indian elites started attending English language colleges where they were introduced to the ideas of Western modernity (Walsh, 2006, p.125). This “English-educated elite formed literary clubs, debating societies, and religious and social reform groups in which they debated the merits of India’s past and their own and their country’s future” (ibid.). With time, “English-language education became a required credential for elite employment throughout British India” (Walsh, 2006, p.131).

In conclusion, it may be stated that education replaced birth as the marker of class status and, as Wolpert defines it: A new elite class emerged and quickly acquired many of the characteristics commonly associated with India’s caste system: endogamy, commensality, occupational or professional identity, and shared tastes in clothes, habitation, furnishings, amusements, vacations and entertainment. (Wolpert, 1991, pp.125-126)

3.4.2. *Defining the Middle Class in Punjab*

The English-educated elite were a select community referred to as Indian middle class for a couple of reasons. First, it was supposed to be “an analogy between the respectable educated classes of Indian society and the bourgeoisie of various European countries” (Walsh, 2006, p.133). Secondly, the educated elite “came from upper castes linked with the Brahman, Kshatriya or Vaisha *varnas*” (ibid.).

The Indian middle class, as defined in the 19th century, were employed within the British Raj and “were broadly adapted to the ideas and practices of British colonial modernity” (ibid.).

3.5. *The ‘other’, the ‘Other’, Identity and the Notion of Social Class*

Even though several authors dealing with postcolonial studies may use the terms ‘other’ and ‘Other’ interchangeably, it might be necessary to make a distinction between them.

Lacan (1949) refers to the ‘other’-not capitalized- when he designates the other who resembles the self, which the child discovers when it looks in the mirror and becomes aware of itself as a separate ‘being’; a fact described by Lacan as one of paramount relevance in defining the identity of the subject. However, when he refers to the ‘Other’ -with the capital ‘O’- he intends to address “the great ‘Other’”, in whose gaze the subject gains ‘identity.’ The Symbolic Other (such as Mead’s ‘generalized other’) is “a transcendent or absolute pole of address” and it is crucial to the subject since the subject exists in its gaze and because the first desire of the subject is the desire to exist in the gaze of the ‘Other’ (Lacan, 1937, Chapter1 & Lacan, 1964, p.203).

On the one hand, the colonized peoples would frame their identity as ‘other’ dependent in relation to the imperial centre and, on the other hand, the Empire becomes the “absolute pole of address” or “the Great Other” (*le grand-autre*) under whose gaze the colonized may interpret the world and eventually gain identity (Lacan, 1949).

Consequently, it may be implied that the Other is crucial to the subject since the subject exists in its gaze and, as Lacan asserts, “all desire is the metonym of the desire to be” and “the first desire of the subject is to exist in the gaze of the Other” (Ashcroft et al., 1998, pp. 169-173).

Anthony Smith (1991, Chapters 1-2) holds that individual identity is made up of social roles and cultural categories. According to him, the self is composed by multiple identities and roles such as familial, territorial, class, religious, ethnic and gender. The first and most obvious role of the self is that of gender role since it stands for differences and subordination since “the universality and all-encompassing nature of gender differentiation makes it a less cohesive and potent base for collective identification and mobilization” (ibid.).

Smith attributes the second category to space or territory bearing the characteristic of cohesiveness that gender differentiation appears to lack. Moreover, the third type of collective identity is socio-economic, that of the social class. “According to Marx’s sociology class is the supreme, indeed the only relevant, collective identity and the sole motor of history. He defines *class* as a relationship to the means of production, while Weber defines it ‘as an aggregate of those with identical life-chances in the market’ (ibid.). Either definition provides clear limits to the use of ‘class’ as basis for a sense of identity and community (Smith, 1991, pp. 4-7).

3.6. Class, Religious and Ethnic Identities

Resuming the notion of 'class identity' developed above, and limiting the definition of 'class' to social relationship, we may imply that there are two or more classes in a given social formation in conflict. This fact may help to sharpen the differences and hence wider collective identities might challenge more restricted class identities.

Consequently, religious and ethnic identities may serve the purpose of our further understanding of restricted class identities since: "Whereas class identities emerge from the sphere of production and exchange, religious identities derive from the spheres of communication and socialization" (Smith, 1991, Chapter1). Religious identities originate on culture and its elements such as values, symbols, myths and traditions codify in custom and ritual. Moreover, within a class characterized by common social relationships and even means of production, we may find different religious identities or classes divided by dissimilar religious beliefs.

Furthermore, religious communities closely relate to ethnic identities. "Ethnic minorities retain strong religious bonds and emblems such as the Sikhs [...] who are among the many ethnic communities whose identity is based on religious criteria of differentiation" (Smith, 1991, p.6). From this view, the similarities between religious and ethnic identities are to be stressed as both stem from similar cultural criteria of classification; they frequently overlap and reinforce one another; and they can mobilize and sustain strong communities.

3.6.1. On National Identity

We may find different conceptions as well as elements that comprise national identity. According to Anthony D. Smith (1991), national identity should be understood as a collective phenomenon closely related to ethnic nationalism, historical sociology and religion. Nationalism, as a narrower term, includes ideology, language and sentiment, emphasizing the symbols, ceremonies and customs of national identity and distinguishing territorial from ethnic varieties of nationalism.

From a Western perspective, we may find certain elements that provide us with the concept of what a nation is. First, the 'historic land' or 'homeland' - the 'cradle' of (our) people where people have exerted mutual and beneficial influence over several generations - becomes the repository of historic memories and associations where sages, saints and heroes lived worked, prayed and fought. This concept makes of homeland a unique and sacred common place (Smith, 1991, p.9).

Then, the concept of 'patria', embedding legal and political rights and duties, and socio-economic rights, implies a minimum of reciprocal rights and obligations among members as well as the correlative exclusion of outsiders from those duties. Both homeland and patria imply that a nation must have a measure of common culture and civic ideology, a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideas that bind the population together in their homeland (Smith, 1991, pp.10-11).

On the other hand, Smith provides us with a non-Western model which he terms an ethnic conception of the nation, whose distinguishing feature places emphasis on a community by birth and on native culture. He adds: Whether you stayed in your community or emigrated to another, you remained ineluctably, organically, a member of the community of your birth and were forever stamped by it. A nation, in other words, was first and foremost a community of common descent. (Smith, 1991, p.11)

With respect to colonization, Smith refers to the creation of territorial political communities out of former Empires and colonies, and the way in which intelligentsias helped to create *civic nations by design* [emphasis added] (Smith, 1991, p. ix). However, before and after the Second World War, ethnic communities mobilized against alien intrusion or imposition in defence of "their submerged or neglected cultural values, threatened with extinction by the forces of modernization" (Smith, 1991, p. 124).

As regards ethnic identity, Smith refers to the "need to reconstitute the notion of collective cultural identity in historical, subjective and symbolic terms." He places emphasis on the sense of continuity of cultural elements on successive generations, to shared memories of historical events and to the "notions entertained by each generation about the collective destiny of that unit and its culture" (Smith, 1993, p.25). He poses a question related to how far cultural developments "disrupt or alter the fundamental patterns of symbol, memory and value" that bind generations together. Besides, "while demarcating them from 'outsiders', they trace lines of cultural differentiation that serve as 'cultural markers'" (ibid.). War, conquest, exile, and enslavement, immigration and religious conversion may be considered instances that generate profound changes in the cultural content of an identity (Smith, 1993, p. 26).

What remains clear is the non-fixity if not malleability of the cultural contents that make up an ethnic identity and the way historical or generational developments may affect the shared patterns that used to bind a community together.

3.6.2. Identity and Dignity in the Context of the National Liberation Struggle An Interpretation of Amílcar Cabral's Speech

This section will be almost entirely devoted to a speech delivered by Amílcar Cabral in 1972, a year before his assassination by Portuguese agents (Martin Alcoff et al., 2003, Chapter7). The practice of imperialist rule demanded accurate knowledge of the society to be ruled and its historical reality in contrast with the reality of the colonizer and his historical background. This resulted in the confrontation of two identities, which were "totally dissimilar in their historical elements and contradictory in their different functions." Concepts such as caste, ethnicity, tribe, nation, culture, identity, dignity and many others acquire particular relevance in the context of the liberation struggle by "returning to the source" (ibid.).

Cabral addresses identity in the framework of the pre-independence movement and places emphasis upon its dialectical characteristics as well as its uneven aspect:

The definition of an identity, individual or collective, is at the same time the affirmation and denial of certain number of characteristics which define the individuals or groups, through historical (biological

and sociological) factors at a moment of their development. In fact, identity is not a constant, precisely because the biological and sociological factors which define it are in constant change. (Martin Alcoff et.al, 2003, p.58)

Independence movements are generally marked by a “cultural renaissance” of the subject people, suggesting that culture is both a means of collecting a group together, and a weapon in the struggle for independence. Because the oppressed people keep their culture alive, they continue to resist culturally, denying the supremacy of the culture of the dominant power. The “effectiveness of cultural resistance of the people once subjected to political domination and economic exploitation find that their own culture acts as a bulwark in preserving their *identity*” (Martin Alcoff et.al, 2003, p.58).

At this point, it might be relevant to make a distinction between the masses of the subjected people and the ruling classes assimilated by the colonial power such as traditional chiefs, noble families, and religious authorities. The masses preserve their culture while the social groups “who are assimilated or partially so” are culturally alienated. They usually “live materially and spiritually according to the foreign rule seeking increasingly to identify themselves with this culture, both in their social behaviours and in their appreciation of its values” (ibid.).

The assimilated class such as civil servants, people employed in commerce or professional people come to constitute a ‘petite bourgeoisie’ emerged from foreign domination and indispensable to colonial exploitation. This class stands midway between the working class and the foreign ruling class:

[...] they aspire to a way of life which is similar if not identical with that of the foreign minority. [...] while they restrict their dealings with the masses, they try to become integrated into this minority, often at the cost of family or ethnic ties and always at great personal cost. (Martin Alcoff et.al, 2003, p.57)

However, the bourgeoisie cannot escape from this condition of ‘marginalized’ class, and this same marginality gives rise to a *frustration complex* [emphasis added] that creates the need to question their marginal status and to rediscover an identity. Thus they turn to the people around them in need to ‘return to the source’ that does not mean a return to traditions but a denial by the petite bourgeoisie of the supremacy of the culture of the dominant power over that of the oppressed with whom the bourgeoisie must identify itself.

3.7. Discourse

Michel Foucault defines ‘discourse’ in most of his works from a general domain to particular ones, such as the discourse of femininity. However, in *History of Sexuality* he provides a more complete if not specific definition: Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, it renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. (Foucault, 1978, pp.100-101 as cited in Mills, S. 2003, p.55)

3.7.1. Colonial Discourse

“*Colonialism (like its counterpart, racism), [...] is an operation of discourse, and as an operation of discourse it interrelates colonial subjects by incorporating them in a system of representation*” (Tiffin et al, 1994).

Bhabha (1993) defines colonial discourse as “an apparatus of power [...] that turns on the recognition and disavowal of racial/cultural/historical differences” and that creates “a space for the ‘subject peoples’ by producing knowledge in terms of which surveillance is exercised and a complex form of pleasure/unpleasure is incited” (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 100-101). In so doing, colonial discourse produces stereotypes of the colonizer and the colonized that are antithetically evaluated:

The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction (ibid.).

Furthermore, Bhabha provides his interpretation of a specific passage in Said’s *Orientalism* from which he establishes a functional link between Said’s “median category” and the Freudian fable of fetishism. The fetish or stereotype entangles in a “vacillation between the archaic affirmation of wholeness/similarity and the anxiety of lack and difference.” In colonial discourse, this gives rise to a significant conflict of pleasure/unpleasure, mastery/defence, knowledge/disavowal, absence/presence. Hence, the stereotype is a simplification, a fixated form of representation that denies the play of difference (Bhabha, 1994, pp.105-107).

Considering the fact that the stereotype is a “primary point of subjectification in colonial discourse” (ibid.), and that it creates an ‘identity’ that is as interrelated with mastery as with pleasure, the stereotype becomes a false representation of a stated reality. At the same time, it is a “fixated form of representation” giving rise to a problem for the colonial subject- both as colonizer and colonized. The fixated form of representation deprives the colonized subject of the possibility of recognizing difference and, in so doing; of liberating the signifier that enslaves him to the sign of “negative difference.” To express it in Fanon’s own words: “Wherever he goes, the Negro remains a Negro” (Fanon, 1967).

3.7.2. Ambivalence and Stereotyping

Bhabha’s association between the fable of fetishism and the fixated and false representation that troubles the colonial subject leads us to a further understanding of the concept of ambivalence. He explores everyday colonial scenes and explains the recurrent recognition/disavowal duality present in the colonized subject’s “total identification with the positivity of whiteness which is at once colour and no colour.” The author expands this concept as follows:

The ambivalence of this form of 'consent' in objectification- real as mythical- is the *ambivalence* on which the stereotype turns and illustrates that crucial bind of pleasure and power [...]. (Bhabha, 1994, p.109)

The stereotype, then, "as a fetishistic mode of representation within its field of identification" is further determined by "the Lacanian schema of the Imaginary" which takes place in the subject at the "formative mirror phase" and lets the subject assume a series of equivalences, *samenesses* [emphasis added] and identities between the objects of the world. However, the subject recognizes himself and originates two forms of identification attached to the Imaginary: narcissism and *aggressivity* [emphasis added] since his image as identity is jeopardized by 'lack.' Consequently, the adoption of any one position is thus always problematic since it comprises both 'fixity' and 'fantasy' derived from the construction of colonial discourse on the basis of the "fetishism- metaphor and metonymy- and the forms of narcissistic and aggressive identification available to the Imaginary":

Stereotyping is not the setting up of a false image which becomes the scapegoat of discriminatory practices. It is a much more ambivalent text of projection and introjections, metaphoric and metonymic strategies, displacement, over-determination, guilt, aggressivity; the masking and splitting of 'official' and phantasmatic knowledges to construct the positionalities and oppositionalities of racist discourse. (Bhabha, 1994, p.117)

The colonial subject then is immersed in a complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized; complicity and resistance coexist within the colonial subject. This ambivalent link constitutes a threat for the colonizer who, instead of producing compliant subjects who reproduce or 'mimic' the colonizer's assumptions, habits and values, gives rise to a colonized subject "whose mimicry is never far from mockery" as it appears to parody whatever it mimics (Bhabha, 1994, pp.127-129).

3.7.3. Mimicry

"[...] almost the same, but not quite." (Hommi Bhabha)

As previously explored, colonial discourse constitutes a field of ambivalence where some colonized subjects are 'complicit' and some 'resistant.' This situation produces disturbance of the authority of the colonial discourse, which is 'decentred' from its position of power. In this context, colonial mimicry arises as "the desire for a reformed, recognizable 'Other', "as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha, 1994, p.122).

Mimicry as a mode of colonial discourse emerges as the representation of a difference and as a process of disavowal; it is at once resemblance and menace since the copying of the colonizer's culture, behaviour, manners and values by the colonized is also potential mockery. This process thus uncovers the limitation in the authority of the colonial discourse: "Mimicry conceals no presence or identity behind its mask [...]. The menace of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" (Bhabha, 1994, pp.123-126). Mimicry is a form of colonial discourse always produced "at the site of interdiction"; a discourse uttered between the lines, both against and within the rules. The desire of colonial mimicry has strategic objectives, which Bhabha calls the "metonymy of presence." Inappropriate signifiers of colonial discourse such as discriminatory identities- constructed based on traditional cultural norms and classifications -are "metonymies of presence" (Bhabha, 1994, p.128).

Bhabha further asserts that "[...] mimicry conceals no presence or identity behind its mask [...]." Its double vision results in the partial representation or recognition of the colonial object. The repetition of the "*partial presence*" constitutes the basis of mimicry since "mimicry repeats rather than re-presents" (ibid.).

Lacan defines mimicry as a camouflage, a form of resemblance that differs or defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically. In Bhabha's own words, "mimicry- as the metonymy of presence"- is:

[...] an erratic, eccentric strategy of authority in colonial discourse [...]; a question of authority that goes beyond the subject's lack of priority (castration) to a historical crisis in the conceptuality of the colonial man as an *object* of regulatory power, as the subject of racial, cultural, national representation. (Bhabha, 1994, pp.128-129)

Mimicry, as camouflage or fetish, apprises the hegemonic knowledge of the priority of race, mimes the forms of authority at the point of deauthorizing it, and furnishes presence in virtue of its *otherness* [emphasis added].

3.7.4. Hybridity

"a zone of occult instability" (Frantz Fanon)

For Bakhtin, hybridization is a process which involves linguistic and cultural aspects as well, and which emerges when different linguistic codes meet with each other (as cited in Kuortti, 2007, p.6). This process implies a double-voicedness, a mixture of two languages, and an encounter between two different linguistic consciousnesses.

Moreover, Featherstone (2005) argues that that cultural hybridity is not just a question of "combining different ingredients together" but analyzing different migrations and mobilities to problematize the histories of contemporary identities. In this respect, Bhabha's intercultural space and hybrid identity formed in a space of in-betweenness and liminality, become a major contribution (as cited in Kuortti, 2007, p.8).

Consequently, in the context of colonization, the cultural encounter may constitute an initial opening where the constitution of 'self' and 'other' cannot be separated and provokes a mutual *contamination* [emphasis added] by each other and produces what Bhabha (1994) names *colonial cultural hybridity* [emphasis added] defined as follows:

The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, presents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial

passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy [...]. (Bhabha, 1994, p.5)

Hence, this idea of intercultural space, in-betweenness or liminality expands into what Bhabha calls the “Third Space of enunciation” where the colonizer and the colonized go through a process that recasts their fixed sense of identity. The reconstruction of identity may be positive and empowering though its location within the liminal space of borders poses dangers and generates new subjectivity. Therefore, the construction of a hybrid identity is an “estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world-the unhomeliness- that is the condition of extraterritorial and cross-cultural imitations” (Bhabha cited in Kuortti, 2007, p.8).

3.8. The Gender Question: Male Power and Female Subsistence?

“He is the Subject, he is the Absolute- She is the Other.”

Simone de Beauvoir

Judith Butler (1990) asserts that gender “is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts” thus gender would be shaped by racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional aspects or characteristics of identities constituted through discourse, which implies cultural and political influence (Butler, 1990, p.3).

For the purpose of the present research, Beauvoir’s perspective for which women are designated as the ‘Other’, is going to be adopted. For Beauvoir, “women are the negative of men, the lack against which masculine identity differentiates itself” (as cited in Butler, 1990, p. 10).

There are antagonistic positions as regards the role of a universalistic discourse that would shape the feminine and the masculine. On the one hand, Beauvoir sustains that the “female sex is marked while the male is not” and her followers argue that, “the universal person and the masculine gender are conflated.” Following this trend Beauvoir asserts that women are ‘the Other’, the negative of men, “the lack within which masculine identity differentiates itself.” Butler (1990) refers to the position of women citing Lacan’s work as follows:

For women to ‘be’ the Phallus means [...] to reflect the power of the Phallus, to signify that power, to ‘embody’ the Phallus, to supply the site to which it penetrates, and to signify the Phallus through ‘being’ its Other, its absence, its lack, the dialectical confirmation of its identity. By claiming that the Other that lacks the Phallus is the one who *is* the Phallus, Lacan clearly suggests that power is wielded by this feminine position of not-having, that the masculine subject who ‘has’ the Phallus requires this Other to confirm and, hence, be the Phallus in its ‘extended’ sense. (Butler, 1990, pp.43-47)

The context in which the colonizer and the colonized encounter bears specific characteristics which define the way in which subjects relate to each other and construct their individuality, agency and identity. As a result, personhood and gender- under the colonizer/colonized gaze- may be determined by specific contextual interactions or because of the constructions of relations conditioned by particular discourses.

As it has been exposed in previous sections, the society in India was basically patriarchal. The authorized ‘voice’ was that of the man/male/husband/son while the women/female/wife/daughter performed an apparent ‘passive’ role, being obedient and subservient. This patriarchal society was mainly based on ethnic and religious mandates that determined the appropriate roles to be performed within the family. The concept of the pativrata is a concrete example. It is not a specific purpose of this study to address the gender question in a colonial setting in depth. However, an analysis of the female characters in the novel –belonging both to the ‘colonizer’ and ‘colonized’ worlds- will reveal that gender is also, for one thing, a class-dependent concept that transcends Beauvoir’s static polarization male/female, closely associated to the oppressor and the oppressed.

4. Analysis of the Novel

4.1. Characters and class

In this section, the main characters’ social class affiliation will be explored, as well as the way they relate to other members of the ‘ingroup’ or the ‘outgroup’. As stated in the introduction, the aim is to go beyond the colonizer/colonized binary opposition by drawing attention to the notion of ‘class’ as a factor that conditions and influences the characters’ personalities and conducts, and the ways in which they interrelate with others (those termed ‘colonized’ and colonizers’), the differential positions they hold in the social fabric of the Punjab and the ways in which individual and social identities and allegiances are forged, maintained and/or contested.

On considering colonial India, it is always necessary to bear in mind the multiple religious worships that divided the population in Punjab as well as the still prevalent caste division. The opposition between Sikhs and Hindus on the one hand and the Muslims on the other, created an atmosphere of permanent distrust and uneasiness. The instances in the novel reveal the previous depiction as well as the hatred generated by religious differences within the colonized class. In fact, the events and dialogues portrayed in the story may be considered a fictional representation of the overlapping allegiances and ethnicities in Punjab.

4.1.1. The Taylors and Class

John Taylor, the Deputy Commissioner, “did not belong to the class which had produced the builders of the Empire” (Singh, 1999, p. 213) as he was the son of a schoolmaster. His wife used to be a nurse and they encountered when Taylor went for a medical check-up in order to join the service.

Both felt isolated from the English community in India, as they did not share the views of most English as regards the subcontinent. Despite the fact that Mr. Taylor was the President of the European Club, the Taylors never went there or spent time with other British in India. The narrator illustrates this fact as follows:

Other English officers had kept their distance from Indians and set up the pattern of the rulers and the ruled. Taylor, on the other hand, not only met Indians as equals, made friends with his subordinates, but also openly expressed his sympathies with Gandhi and Nehru. (Singh, 1999, p. 182)

Taylor's wife attempted to make acquaintances in Indian circles unsuccessfully. Hence, the Taylors abandoned the idea of making Indian friends and simply led a life of privacy in their home where they were reticent to receive visitors without previous notice (Singh, 1999, p.213).

Consequently, it may be inferred that the Taylors were placed in what Bhabha calls "liminal space", a "third space" where neither the British elite stood nor the Indian classes did. They were a sort of a hybrid class that found no definite place in colonial India and as such, they lived isolated from society as if they were outcasts.

However, Taylor created a special bond to Buta Singh and his family. Without being careless of his responsibility as a Deputy Commissioner, he showed concern-though maybe camouflaged- for Sher Singh's participation in politics. It might be said that he anticipated Buta Singh about the forthcoming events and the police investigations around Sher and his friends' terrorist activities. Likewise, he took special precautions to prevent Buta Singh from suffering humiliation when Sher Singh was arrested after the disappearance of Jhimma Singh, the police informer.

Furthermore, when Shabrai-Buta Singh's wife- fell ill, Taylor's wife visited her periodically and supported Buta Singh emotionally. The family was devastated by the fact that the son was in jail and the mother could not stand it for long. Here again, Mrs. Taylor influenced her husband to prompt Sher's liberation. She showed herself sensitive to "the Indian mother suffering."

These events may evidence that the Taylor's place in Indian society was undetermined. They were not active members of the British elite or part of the Indian society although they established certain kind of attachment to the Indians and participated in their affairs to the extent they were allowed to.

As stated before, the Taylors developed a kind of attachment to the Indian community, an attachment that evolved in time particularly towards Buta Singh's family. The evolution of this affective link materialized through Taylor's commitment in Sher Singh's arrest. Taylor personally dealt with the issue and protected Buta Singh at the very time of the arrest. Besides, the Commissioner used his influence to grant Sher's liberation for Christmas and the nullity of the legal cause against the young revolutionary.

On her side, Mrs. Taylor actively participated in this same affair. She welcomed Shabrai and Beena at the train station when they were coming back from Simla because of Sher's arrest. Mrs. Taylor also took care of Shabrai's illness visiting the family regularly and giving advice about medical care, diet, and hygiene measures due to her nursing past. She was surprised that "in an educated Indian home elementary hygiene rules were disregarded" (Singh, 1999, p.336).

Although Mrs. Taylor found it difficult to understand Buta Singh- to whom he referred to as "the old walrus"-, she accepted the present the Magistrate sent her for Christmas although it was not an ordinary thing to do. There existed certain protocols between the ruling class and the subordinates, but in the case of the Taylors and the Singhs-especially in difficult times- the Taylors stood by the Indians.

Joyce Taylor did not hesitate to share with her husband her own concerns about Shabrai's illness and lack of will to live while her son was in jail. She persisted questioning the Commissioner about the state of affairs and led their conversation to the point of achieving her goal. The way she showed interest in the matter and the series of expressions she used resulted in her husband's acting as she expected. Once again, a woman who seemed to have played a passive role for long demonstrated a strong determination in critical times.

Therefore, after Shabrai's death, she presented her respects to Buta Singh in a polite but moving way:

I was so sorry to hear about the Sardarini; I really was. I couldn't have felt the loss of any relation of my own more keenly. She had that something about her that makes people think of their own mother. She reminded me of mine. (Singh, 1999, p.357)

At the end of the story, Buta Singh and Mrs. Taylor seemed to understand or accept each other. Buta confided the memorial for her late wife to Mrs. Taylor, to which Joyce reacted positively and promised to think about the best way to honour Shabrai's memory.

4.1.2. Buta Singh and Class

"One should bargain with knowledge of one's weakness" (Singh, 1999, p.181)

Buta Singh's father and grandfather had served in the army before him and had been loyal to the British Raj. All of them "had mentioned the English king or queen in [their] evening prayers to the Guru." They were part of the new Indian middle class, the ones who held positions as officials of the British administration. When the Deputy Commissioner asked him about his family's connection to the British Government, Buta Singh answered in detail:

[...] Sir [...] we can almost go back to the days of Sikh rule. On the annexation of the Punjab and the disbanding of the Sikh forces my great grandfather, who was a sidebar and had fought against the British in the Anglo-Sikh wars, joined the British army. [...] He also fought under Nicholson in the Mutiny of 1857 and was awarded a medal for the capture of Delhi [...] My grandfather was also in the British army [...] My father did not join the army, but he recruited many soldiers in the 1914-18 war and our family was given lands in the Canal Colonies. I have kept up the tradition of loyalty to the British Crown and will do so till the day I die. (Singh, 1999, p. 307)

However, after Gandhi "made loyalty to the British appear like disloyalty to one's country and traditions" (Singh, 1999, p.182), Buta Singh adopted a two-sided position; [...] When he was with Englishmen he protested his loyalty to the Raj [...] When he was amongst his own countrymen he would like to be critical of English ways [...] (Singh, 1999, p. 182).

Although his criteria might be understood as a strategy, when debating political matters and the situation of the British in relation to the Second World War with his son-Sher Singh-, his position was fixed on supporting the British in India:

[...] The English have ruled us for over a hundred years, and I don't care what you say, I believe they have treated us better than our own kings did in the past; or the Germans, the Italians, or Japanese will do if they win and take over [...]. (Singh, 1999, p.181)

At the same time, Buta Singh appeared to enjoy mocking the English when referring to the British lack of knowledge about Indian customs:

[...] These English, they don't know anything about our customs. Yesterday the Deputy Commissioner offered me a cigarette. I said, 'Sahib, today you have done this and I do not mind because we are old friends, but don't do it again. Then he started apologizing [...]. (Singh, 1999, p. 205)

However, Buta Singh showed conviction when he asserted "We Indians have no character [...] we have still a lot to learn from the English [...]" (Singh, 1999, p.224) although he excluded himself from the group and stood as an example to be followed by the rest of the Indian population.

Once more, when Buta Singh learned about the crime that Sher Singh was charged with, he turned against his son and expressed his shame by saying: "My nose has been cut; I can no longer show my face to anyone" (Singh, 1999, p.315).

At this point, it would be interesting to analyze Buta's expression: "my nose has been cut." H.H.Risley, named president of the (British) Royal Anthropological Institute in 1910, used a "nasal index" to divide Indians into two races: a dark-skinned Dravidian race and a fair-skinned Indo-Aryan race. Through this method, he proved the existence of seven-caste racial hierarchies in India, with Dravidians at the "primitive" bottom and the Indo-Aryans at the "civilized" top (Walsh, 2006, p.158). When Guru Nanak founded the Sikh religion in the 16th century, he accepted Hindu ideas of reincarnation and karma but rejected caste (Walsh, 2006, p. 81). Hence, the Sikh religion was derived from Hinduism, a topic that led to controversy:

While the Sanatan Sikhs defended both close Sikh association with Hinduism, and adherence to the caste system, the Tat Khalsa [...] not only denied Sikhism's relationship with Hinduism, but also condemned the caste system, at least theoretically. (Malhotra, 2002, p. 41)

Following the same controversy, Bhai Kahn Singh (cited in Malhotra, 2002) "acknowledged that the Sikhs had been a part of Hindus [...] just as the Christians were formerly Jews" but "as Christianity is recognized as a separate religion so should Sikhism be granted such status" (Malhotra, 2002, p.41).

However, Buta's concern with "his nose being cut" derived from the fact that Northerners have considered themselves descendants of the Aryan race while Southerners have been believed to have descended from Dravidians" (Tyagi, 1996, p.48).

Buta Singh was trapped between his alleged loyalty to the British, his own son's revolutionary tendencies and the Deputy Commissioner's support to Gandhi and Nehru. Buta could not understand why Taylor wanted the British to leave India and leave her to be ruled by her people. What is more, when he told his wife-Shabrai- about the events that had led Sher to prison, Buta never stopped telling about the Taylor's kindness: "If the Deputy Commissioner had not been so kind to me, the police would have beaten him straight. Even now, he has promised that if Sher tells them about the crime, he will grant him the King's pardon" (Singh, 1999, p.316).

Hence, Buta Singh's denial to meet his son, disobeying Taylor's request to do it, was a "prove of his loyalty to the Government and disapproval of his disloyal son" (Singh, 1999, p.322).

Apart from his marked allegiance to the British Raj, Buta expressed discomfort about his son being in touch with people of other social classes.

When the village headman visited Sher at home, Buta cried to the servant "Haven't I told you a hundred times not to allow peasants in the house! Tell him to see me at the courts." He sustained the only place for business was the office; otherwise, "fellows not worth the price of a broken shell could destroy the peace of the home" (Singh, 1999, p.260). He advised his son not to encourage "these people too much [...] they always try to take advantage" (Singh, 1999, p.261).

In contrast, on a particular discussion with his son about the British, hospitality and tolerance, Buta disagreed with Sher about the British having to learn tolerance from the Indian people: "Ask the eighty million untouchables what they think of the tolerance of caste Hindus. Ask the Hindus and Sikhs about the tolerance of the Muslims [...]" (Singh, 1999, p.226).

Clearly enough, Buta expressed his disapproval of the caste system by mentioning the disadvantageous condition of the Untouchables, as well as the rivalry between Muslims and Sikhs and Hindus. However, in this exposition, he gathered Sikhs and Hindus on a single group.

All along the story, Buta Singh was immersed in an ambiguous atmosphere. Once and again, he stood for the British though sometimes he favoured the unprotected Indians as well. However, in his position, he recognized that the presence of the British had meant more profitability for India than any other rulers had done before them.

Buta's ambiguity may be the result of his historical past, his allegiance to family bonds, and his eagerness to follow the same path as his ancestors. At the same time, his self-pride did not permit him to assess Sher's perspective, Gandhi's proposal, or even Taylor's position- whom he admired and respected.

By the same token, Buta's concern with being part of the Honor List thus surpassing his colleagues -including Wazir Chand- would enable him to show the superiority of the Sikhs over the Hindus.

Buta was standing 'in-between.' On one extreme, he found his ancestral mandate of allegiance to the British; on the other, the new situation held in India because of the Second War and the Nationalist movements. Up to the end of the

story, he maintained his 'double-faced' attitude though prioritizing his allegiance to the Crown that permitted him to maintain the high status he defended so much and separated him from the low classes' lifestyle.

4.1.3. Sher Singh and Class

"Spring will come to our barren land once more...once more the nightingales will sing" (Singh, 1999, p.227).

Sher Singh had developed fear and hatred towards the Anglo-Indians who, according to him, did the "Englishman's dirty work" (Singh, 1999, p.318), and envied and hated "Punjabi *Mussulmans*" [emphasis added] because they were physically stronger and more virile than he was. Besides, his encounter with Jhimma Singh showed us that he also despised Sikh peasants.

However, when he was determined to force the British out of India and sustained arguments to support his position, Sher's behaviour seemed ambiguous. Several signs in his speech may lead us to this conclusion.

First, he had an Alsatian dog called Dyer. Brigadier-General Dyer was the commander of the Jullundur Brigade in 1919. He was in charge of military control over Amritsar after the Deputy Commissioner Irving authorised him to do so. Dyer prohibited Baisakhi celebrations that year and issued pamphlets warning the population that noncompliant ones would be "dispersed by force of arms if necessary" (Read & Fisher, 1997, pp.3-4). However, that day a great crowd had gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh- 250 yards southeast of the Golden Temple. Many of the people were Hindu and Sikh peasants who had come to celebrate Baisakhi and were camping there unable to afford accommodation. There were approximately 5000 people in the field, who were massacred at Dyer's order of fire. "In ten minutes Dyer had destroyed the trust in British justice and fair play that had been built over one and a half centuries" (ibid.).

Secondly, Sher could never overcome shooting the Sarus crane the day he met Jhimma Singh-the lambardar. Conflicting emotions of guilt and pride invaded him as he had mortally wounded a harmless bird but at the same time, he had made his first attempt to take a life and he had succeeded. This incident was going to torture Sher's mind all along the novel together with the images of Madan, the headman, his father and Mr. Taylor. These facts may be interpreted as a symptom of a weak spirit or lack of conviction, but also as the result of a young nationalist who-being eager to fight for Mother India, and to see the British out of India- was not clear about the position he should hold.

Sher was under great pressure. On the one hand, he was the son of a Magistrate who strongly supported the Raj; on the other, he lived in the shadow of his father's career and ideals. Besides, he needed others' recognition and approval- which he obtained by being elected leader of the Students Volunteer Corps and President of the Students Union. As far as he was concerned, these two recognitions of his capabilities seemed not to suffice.

However, when the police informant stopped the group of terrorists led by Sher, he did not show respect for the lambardar. In fact, he supported Madan's bribing and abuse of authority when telling Jhimma Singh -the lambardar- that Sher was the son of Buta Singh and thus achieving the lambardar's allowance to leave without any punishment. Once the lambardar had left them on their own, the group made a sort of toast disregarding the man's authority and mocking him by standing in a row and peeing on the ground as they cried: "On the headman, all informers, and all Englishmen" (Singh, 1999, p. 173).

In contrast, when Champak told him about the young servant- Mundoo- and his behaviour, Sher declared himself in favour of exploited classes:

He is just a poor, underpaid boy. The condition of domestic servants is one of the most pressing problems of urban society. We work them twenty-four hours of the day, underpay, underfeed, and underclothe them. Their living quarters are filthy. They are abused and beaten at will. They are dismissed without notice after a disgraceful search of their belongings. It is scandalous. It must stop. I will stop it. (Singh, 1999, p.201)

Therefore, the speech he delivered on Baisakhi day celebration was carefully uttered and he was cautious not to provoke the armed forces that at the time were empowered to make arrests without limitation. His words were ambiguous; they could be interpreted in different ways. Here is an account of his speech:

Comrades, we meet at a critical time. The enemy is at our gates [...] We not only have the enemy at our doorstep, we have enemies within our own house [...] Those who sacrifice the interests of the motherland for foreign countries are our enemy No.1.They have been rightly named as the *Kaum nashts*- destroyers of the race [...] There are also people who want to cut off the limbs of Mother India and make another state of Pakistan. They too are our enemies [...] But we are Sikhs who do not fear any enemies. We shall destroy all those who stand in our way. (Singh, 1999, pp.194-195)

The British may be the enemy or not. When he referred to the "enemy at our gates" he might have been referring to the Japanese, for example. Furthermore, the ones who demanded the Partition of India and wanted an independent Pakistan were the Muslims, so it was not directly stated that the British were 'the enemy.' He mentioned the Sikhs and their determination to fight 'the enemy' who not necessarily were the British. The ideological differences between the Sikhs and other groups in India existed before the British arrival in the subcontinent, and had stood for long even after. Consequently, Sher's strategy might be inferred from his speech; he showed political commitment and nationalistic views through the cautious choice of words and forms of expression. He sounded mature and determined, and he evidenced he was a leader supported by the people. He mimicked well-known leaders of the time, imitating their performance, mannerisms and propaganda such as that of Hitler, who he seemed to admire because of his charisma as a politician.

However, he displayed a different aspect of his personality when performing his ritual in front of the mirror. He speculated on the effect his image might have on other people. His performance of stretching his hand sideways like Hitler and clutching his belt with his left hand was highly suggestive and might lead to a variety of interpretations. Did Sher admire Hitler? If so, did Sher admire Hitler just because Hitler opposed the British and the Communists? Was Sher mocking Hitler?

Sher needed to share his political views with his wife though she did not show any interest or knowledge to that respect. Sher expressed his disagreement with the Communists:

For the Communists, one day it is an imperialist war, the next it becomes the People's War. One day they call the Muslim League a tool of British imperialism, the next day they describe it as the only true representative of the Muslims. One day they decry the demand for Pakistan, the next day they support it. They say what Moscow tells them to say. It is always Russia this and Russia that. They never think of India [...]. (Singh, 1999, pp. 220-221)

From his speech against Russia, it might be inferred that Sher admired Hitler for opposing the way the Communist regime was being implemented and as an enemy of Russia as well.

Sher Singh was determined when he discussed about the British in India with his father. Buta criticized Hindu magistrates for their lack of resolution when they had to face the Commissioner-Mr. Taylor. In this respect, Sher attributed their behaviour to "centuries of slavery." He added "[...] our country has never been free and we have developed a servile mentality. We are frightened of power." He also added that it was not by accident that the British were sitting on half of the world as rulers. He declared not to be against the British but for his own country: "If they stayed in England, I would have nothing against them" (Singh, 1999, p.225).

His scepticism about the British was also present when his father communicated Mr. Taylor's will to see him. Buta stated that "Englishmen take a lot of interest in other people" while Sher sustained the British had "learnt from Americans." They "have reduced human relationships to a set of rules" in order to create a good impression about themselves which does not mean they are "concerned with the affairs of the person they happen to be talking to" (Singh, 1999, p.239).

In spite of his determined position against the British, Sher found it difficult to keep his stand in front of Mr. Taylor. Instead, he could not believe his ears when he uttered:

[...] It is all the kindness of people like you. The students were being led astray by these Communists and other political groups. At a time like this, when the enemy is at our gates, we should be united and strong. The way the English are standing up for their adversities should be a lesson to us. (Singh, 1999, p.242)

Sher had developed both hatred and fear for Mr. Taylor, but the Commissioner's remark to Sher's leadership as President of the Students Union won him completely. What is more, Taylor's reference to non-conformists and his playing with the empty cartridges were more than a warning for Sher. After that interview, a blend of feelings trapped him. The narrator refers to Sher's feelings as follows:

He was angry, humiliated, and frightened. He wanted to cry but no tears would come into his eyes. He sat like that for a long time till the anger and humiliation receded to the background and only fear remained. Fear of what Taylor might do to him, fear of what the whole family would have to say for the way he had disgraced his father. (Singh, 1999, p.243)

The meeting with Taylor added more confusion to Sher's mind. His father and his convenient dual morality headed Sher's position between the two extremes-led by the terrorists on the one side, and Taylor on the other. His father would disown him and throw him out the house if he knew that he had mixed up with the terrorists. Sher was not wrong and the situation was so polarized that Sher evaded it by visualizing "scenes where his Nationalist and terrorist colleagues honoured him as their beloved leader, where Taylor read an address of welcome, and his father proudly looked on" (Singh, 1999, p.258).

That same fear and confusion took hold of Sher when the headman called for him at home. When Sher offered the man more buttermilk, he wanted to show respect and praise but the interchange resulted in a lesson to him:

Sher: "[...] Tell me what service I can do for you. More buttermilk or tea? Our buttermilk is not as good as yours. You get the best milk, butter and yogurt."

Headman: "Sardarji, there is no *ours* and *yours*; it is all given by the Great Guru, the True Emperor [...]." (Singh, 1999, p. 261)

Despite the deliberate use of possessive pronouns pretending to disregard class differences, the lambardar was clear about the place he occupied in Sher's life and home.

The headman expressed he only wanted Sher's kindness and that he kept the empty cartridges to "remind [him] of the lucky day when he [had] met Sher." Sher knew he was trapped and gave the headman some money before his departure. The lambardar welcomed the gift with expressions of praise and left Buta Singh's home leaving behind Sher Singh's smashed hopes.

In his second visit to the Singh's, the headman gave the empty cartridges to Sher but asked him if he knew how to make bombs and made reference to the incident in the canal bridge and the money he had spent to have it repaired. Once more, the peasant got Sher Singh in his hands.

During the two interviews with the headman, Sher wanted to cry and insult the man but he refrained from doing so. He was cornered by "a slovenly Sikh peasant with a shaggy, unkempt beard; a rustic whose clothes were full of grease, whose skin had layers of dirt on it and whose head was undoubtedly full of lice" (Singh, 1999, p.262).

Even though he was responsible for having carried guns without a license, and for attempting to destroy the canal bridge in a terrorist attack, Sher showed no respect for the headman but despised him as well as the class he represented. Sher had his own ideas about other groups and members of society. He had always feared and hated Anglo-Indians for doing the Englishmen's dirty work, particularly when he was in jail. He also envied and hated Punjabi Muslims since they were "physically stronger and more virile than his type of Sikh" (Singh, 1999, p.318).

Although since his arrest Sher's anger and hate drained, and only his fear remained, he successfully overcame threats and torture until his liberation day. When he learnt about Mr. Taylor's orders to release him on Christmas Day as a present for his family, and because of his mother's illness, Sher seemed to have recovered his temper declaring

“Christmas for the Christians.” He was then interested in his case and the conditions for his liberation. As he was informed that the case against him was closed due to lack of evidence, he wrote a letter to Maidan explaining the situation and suggesting “[...] we should exploit this little service I have done to our best advantage” (Sing, 1999, p.342).

His followers were waiting for him and gave him back the sense of recognition he had always needed. He delivered a speech of the same tenor as the words uttered on Baisakhi Day:

Comrades, I will cherish the honour you have done me today for the rest of my life. I am proud that I was called upon to do a small duty to my country and I did it. I have been a guest of the King Emperor. You all know how well the King Emperor may peace be upon him- looks after his guests...But they could not break the spirit of this son of India and God willing they never will. (Singh, 1999, p.343)

In conclusion, Sher Singh, who sometimes appeared to be weak and indecisive, turned into a strong leader whenever his followers supported him. His need for recognition was the source of his strength. However, his temper was not clearly or steadily defined as-for example-when he met Taylor or faced his father and let him have the last word in political discussions. Although this last fact may be considered a cultural influence or respect owed to elders-as his mother always reminded him of-, towards the end of the story Buta insisted on making Sher a member of the Civil Service.

4.1.4. Shabrai and Class

“The True, The True. The Great Guru”

Shabrai was the ideal of a pativrata. She was the kind of wife who “never ate before her husband had been served” (Singh, 1999, p.175), and the one who prompted her family to read the Granth Sahib and praise the Guru. She also mediated whenever discussions between father and son turned to politics grounds and insisted on the fact that elders were not to be questioned but to be heard and respected.

As regards political discussions, she apparently accepted the position of the British in India as, for example, when she asked Sher:

[...] why are you so much against the English? What have they done to you? [...] Do you tell the British to go back to England? [...] Well, don't say (them) in this house. We eat their salt, and as long as we eat it, we will remain loyal. (Singh, 1999, p.227)

She showed tolerance towards others' views but always highlighting her husband's authority over her son's in a way or the other: “This is no way to talk [...] You are welcome to your views, but do not say things which you know may embarrass your father [...]” (Singh, 1999, p.227).

At the same time, she seemed not to understand the reasons why her son was so much against the British in India:

- “Tell me son [...] what will you get if the English leave this country?”
- “I? Nothing. But we will be free.”
- “Then what will happen? What sweetmeats will we get?”
- “Spring will come to our barren land once more...once more the nightingales will sing” (Singh, 1999, page 227).

Sher found it difficult to find an answer to the questions his mother posed since he considered she was illiterate. However, this last metaphorical response seemed to have sufficed. The theme of ‘illiteracy’ will be developed further on. Not only did Shabrai manage to mediate discussions between father and son but proudly expressed her feelings towards the Sikhs: “Sikhs have always had to help the Hindus. That is nothing new” (Singh, 1999, page 225).

Therefore, Shabrai's family believed she was endowed with a sixth sense, which “often goes with people of deep religious convictions” and her family had learned to accept her intuitions without questioning. She felt uneasy when the family members were not around her but always found refuge in the reading of the Holy Granth. Shabrai found all the answers in the words of the Great Guru, and in times of concern and uneasiness, she devoted herself to praying and reading the scriptures and sermons.

One example of Shabrai's sixth sense was when she dreamt about her daughter being pursued by a band of hooligans wanting to ravish her and she was frantically calling for help. At the time, Beena was in Simla for the summer with her sister in law, Madan and Sita Chand. Shabrai felt uneasy about her daughter being unprotected and spent several days thinking about that matter. In the end, the nightmare made her decide to go to Simla and there she found Beena feverish and in need of assistance.

Shabrai's religious convictions and deep feelings seemed to go beyond reality. The visions in her dreams were enough for her to *read* [emphasis added] a message and act consequently. Nobody ever tried to stop her, not even her husband. Her strong faith and mysticism made her a special being.

In Simla, Madan invited Shabrai and the girls out for tea to a fashionable restaurant where the “air was thick with cigar smoke, perfume and the smell of whiskey” (Singh, 1999, p.269). Madan turned the conversation towards the war issue and exposed his views to that respect. Madan's ideas were much like Sher's and, although Shabrai did not want to be rude to Madan, she expressed her views gently: “Son, your father and uncle would not like to hear you talk like this”; and replied “I am an old woman” to Madan's comment about her having “old-fashioned ideas” (ibid.).

Her tolerance towards people holding different points of view was evident by the affection she showed to Madan. The young boy had won her devotion with his attentions. Every morning, he read out the news and translated it to her into Punjabi. He devoted time to explain political matters to the Sardarini, something her own family had hardly ever done for her considering all political discussions were maintained exclusively in English (Singh, 1999, p.277-278).

She depicted herself as “an old woman” who did not like being rude but expressed her views gently. Even though she respected her husband and obediently followed the traditions of her class and religion, she did not hesitate to stand by her son-for example-when her husband decided not to visit Sher Singh in jail. She showed strong resolution when she addressed the inspector herself: “Tell your senior officer I will come to the police station four days from now. I will

come, not my husband. I would also like to bring my son's dog with me. He has missed his master very much" (Singh, 1999, p.323).

Her son's arrest and risk of death made Shabrai change from apparent passivity to active agency. Her husband's position as regards this fact seemed to have awakened a hidden determination in her, at least, a conviction that became overtly evident. Once more, she found comfort and refuge in the Guru's words and managed to overcome her husband's absentmindedness, the officials, his son in jail and a full night praying at the Golden Temple.

Her faith and the Great Guru's advice were commanding for her and without betraying her religion, she advised her son according to her beliefs:

-“Mother, what do you want me to do?”

-“Son, I spent last night at the Golden Temple asking the Guru for guidance. I do not know whether I got it right. In any case His orders were for me; not for you.”

-“What did He say, Mother?”

-“He said that my son had done wrong. But if he named the people who were with him he would be doing a greater wrong. He was no longer to be regarded as a Sikh and I was not to see his face again. May the Guru be with you in body and spirit.” (Singh, 1999, p.330-331)

Her spiritual strength helped her to compensate her physical weakness and, once again, she succeeded in gathering her family together during her illness and after her death. Shabrai demonstrated that beyond an apparent subservient and illiterate pativrata, there existed a strong-spirited and determined woman who did not hesitate at the time of making paramount decisions. When she knew her time was coming, she summoned Shunno: “Send for my family. My time has come.” She also requested her to read the passage for the month and, when all the family had already gathered around her bed, she tried to comfort them by saying: “I don't need a doctor. Let me go with my Guru with your blessings.” Moreover, when she addressed her son she uttered “I shall not hear the nightingales, my son. May the Guru give you a long life.” Lastly, she recited the Granth Sahib with the rest of her family until her lips stopped moving (Singh, 1999, p.351).

The previous description of Shabrai's personality and the narrative of some specific events and her reaction to them may serve the purpose of concluding that her faith did not permit her to make difference as regards social class. At least, she did not evidence repulsion or rejection for a particular class overtly, not even for the British. The exception is her comment about the Sikhs historically assisting the Hindus in every matter. Another show of resistance to mix with other 'classes' could be the fact that she only read and spoke Punjabi- which was distinctive of the Sikh religion- having found impossible to learn English although her husband had hired teachers for that purpose. This last fact may be understood as a means of resistance.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that although Shabrai was a pativrata- an ideal wife- and as such she was supposed to be a husband-fearing and obedient woman, she never hesitated to make her voice heard or refrained herself from doing so. She was wise enough to comply with a pativrata duties and maintaining a discrete though emphatic voice. Fairclough (1999) would provide an adequate framework for this conclusion:

[...] dialogue involves both a space for voicing difference [...] and a search without guarantees for alliances across difference – for a voice that does not suppress difference in the name of essential identities (be they gender, ethnic or class identities) but emerges as a voice in common on specific issues. (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p.6)

4.1.5. *Champak and Class*

Champak was the Singh's daughter-in-law. She showed respect and obedience to her in-laws, as an ideal 'nunh' should. She often received orders from her mother-in-law and submissively complied to them as, for example, when Sher arrived home after going hunting with his friends, Shabrai addressed her by saying: “Champak, press his head, he will sleep better”; to which Champak answered: “I will” (Singh, 1999, pp. 175-176).

Champak enjoyed solitude; she spent as much time as she could in her own room listening to the radio, singing, reading film magazines or having a bath and-when she was alone in the house-walking about the courtyard in her dressing gown with her hair loose about her shoulders.

Her attitude towards Mundoo, the young male servant, was provocative. As an example, on Baisakhi day, Shabrai ordered Mundoo to heat the water for Champak's bath and so the servant did. Champak considered Mundoo “just a servant and a grubby little boy” so she decided to ignore his presence and acted as if she were alone. Therefore, she left the door unbolted and when Mundoo brought the water, Champak exposed him to her nudity. She reprimanded the boy for not knocking before coming in, although she could have kept her clothes on up to the time the water was ready for her bath.

Later, she narrated the episode to her husband unsuccessfully hoping he would blame the servant for attempting abuse. Champak created a situation that might have a double joy for her: on the one hand, she made the servant feel uncomfortable and ashamed; on the other, she might incite her husband's jealousy or motivate him to have sex with her. She succeeded in molesting the boy but she could not get the desired effects on her husband. She could not irritate Sher even when she spoke about the way Madan had looked at her when she had visited the Chands' household.

There were some aspects in Champak's life that seemed unfulfilled. She needed frequent sexual intercourse, which her husband did not notice or eluded. That fact may have maximized the effect of Madan's seduction strategies the day she accompanied Beena to the Chands' (Singh, 1999, p.225). Besides, Champak was curious since the Chands had become an everyday topic of conversation at the Singhs' home, and Madan was the main supporter of Sher's political career.

Champak developed a particular interest in Madan whom he had a relationship that started during their stay in Simla-the summer resort. Their mutual sexual attraction led them to be unfaithful to their respective husband and wife

although they overcame the affair in the short term leaving everybody unharmed. However, Champak seemed to have enjoyed seducing Madan and facilitating their private encounters. She did not resist or give a second thought to the situation between them up to the time Shabrai went to Simla and Champak felt her mother-in-law could be suspicious.

However, when the national crisis and the subsequent arrests started in Punjab, Champak expressed her desire to go back to Amritsar by her husband, and said to Shabrai as it was customary: "If you give me permission, I will leave tomorrow" (Singh, 1999, p.279). Thus, she did in the company of Madan since times were harsh for a woman to travel alone.

When Buta Singh summoned Shabrai after Sher's arrest, Champak received her mother-in-law "like a widow in mourning." She could not face such a situation, especially after Buta expressed his suspicion about her being aware of Sher's terrorist practices. As a result, Champak's parents came over and took her back home up to the time Sher was released from jail.

Champak was a young married woman who was not satisfied with her marriage and enjoyed private sessions of reading and listening to material that was not Indian. She was 'acculturated', though she pretended to comply with all the duties of a woman of her status. She was double-faced, as Buta was; and easily adapted to the behaviour the circumstances required from her.

However, at the end of the story, and in full compliance with a good nun's duties, Champak and Sita Chand organized the feeding and comfort of the dozens of relatives that turned up after Shabrai's death.

4.1.6. Madan and Class

Madan was Wazir Chand's son, a strong man from the University who played cricket for his province and had become a legend in the Punjab. He was also Sher's companion in the struggle for the Independence of India and supporter of his political career. He was married, had a son and his wife was waiting for their second child, although Madan had not finished his studies yet. Madan was the backbone of the terrorist gang although Sher was the leader.

He was daring and indiscrete as he showed when the Lambardar-Jhimma Singh-stopped the gang because they were hunting when the shooting season had closed. He seemed not to think twice before running risks and did not calculate the risks of involving others in his enterprise as when he mentioned Buta Singh to convince the headman to let them go.

Furthermore, as Madan was very popular and had admirers all over the city, he took advantage and enjoyed the privilege that go with power. As an example, he accepted a V.I.P. box when he took Beena and Sita to the cinema, and enjoyed being invited beverages and food without charge. Similarly, he bribed the collector at the train station to obtain a second-class *coupé* (Singh, 1999, p.281). Besides, he used his popularity to seduce women-no matter who they were-as he did with Beena first and Champak secondly. However, his reputation in relation to women was well known.

In spite of this reputation, Madan was very respectful of the elders. He gained Shabrai's fondness while in Simla since he patiently explained political matters to the Sardarini and took the trouble of translating newspaper articles into Punjabi for her. We may say he was good at seduction or that he knew how to treat others to make them feel important.

Madan supported Sher Singh's ideas about the English leaving India but when summer holidays came, he left to Simla with Sita, Beena and Champak. At this stage, he appeared not to be so interested in fighting for independence. Indeed, he left Sher alone dealing with the lambardar and the shooting guns affair. However, when the political crisis started, he offered to accompany Champak back to Amritsar and to support Sher in this challenging enterprise.

Madan was a very important referent to Sher Singh and that became clearer when Sher sent a letter to him immediately after learning about his release from jail. Madan remained loyal to Sher and worked to gather students, a brass band made up of retired Sikh soldiers and an open car to take Sher Singh back home in procession.

Once again, Madan was immersed in an apparent ambiguous situation - as well as Sher and Buta Singh. However, in his personal case, it could be interpreted as though he was living a double life: one as a natural leader and the pride of his family and admirers, and the other of lust and incongruence towards the standards of his Hindu community.

He disregarded the lower classes and powerless people by taking advantage of his position as a former well-known cricketer and the fact that his father was a Hindu Magistrate to the Raj. An account of such behaviour was provided when he bribed the collector at the railway station at Kalka (Singh, 1999, pp. 280-281). Madaan had been informed that the first and second class accommodations were reserved for officers and soldiers, so he went to the platform and took the youngest collector by the hand and said: "Brother, I have to have a second class *coupé* at any cost and you have to find it for me." At the same time he slipped a ten-rupee note into the young collector's hand. First, the young man accepted the money but then he recognized Madan and said to him: "Keep this. Put your luggage in this second class *coupé* and I will put a reservation slip in your name." But Madan put the note back into the collector's pocket and flattered: "What I give once I never take back. After all, getting British soldiers out of a train in these times is not easy. It needs a man of courage to do that" (ibid.).

4.1.7. Shunno and Class

Shunno had worked for the Singhs for more than thirty years. She was a peasant woman who had been a widow since her early twenties and, from then on, she had devoted her life to working as a maidservant. She was a strong, healthy and determined woman who took charge of the household even when her Sardarini was not at home. She was a God-fearing woman and worshipped Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam equally. Though the Singhs did not welcome this fact, they respected her and never mentioned the topic. The only issue about her was that she used to treat other servants as slaves and so far, she had succeeded in having them dismissed until Mundoo was hired.

Shunno followed the same ritual every morning. She was the first one in getting up, doing her personal hygiene and preparing everything for the rest of the family even the *pershad* and gurdwara for the prayers. She was devoted to Shabrai and was always ready to provide her mistress with whatever she demanded. Sometimes, because of her talkative nature, she exceeded the limits of Shabrai's tolerance.

However, an incident prompted Shunno to make a gesture or movement that may carry a meaningful message as regards class and social roles. After the procession on Baisakhi day, Shabrai and Shunno had to walk back home since there were no tongas available. Along their way, they went through the prostitutes' quarter where they could see heavily made-up women wearing artificial jewellery. Shabrai made no comments but Shunno drew her veil across her nose, came alongside her mistress and whispered an angry comment on the profession of street women. Was the veil a way of protecting herself or distancing from prostitutes? Shabrai ignored the comment and started mumbling her prayers. Were Shabrai's prayers prompted by the presence of prostitutes? (Singh, 1999, p.203).

Once at home, Shunno offered to press her mistress a little and could not avoid making a comment about Beena visiting the Chands so frequently:

-“One shouldn't say such things, but...if you don't take it ill, this house our Bibi Beena has started going to, the one with those hairless Hindus, is not a very good one.”

-“[...] You know nothing about them.”

-“I am just telling you what I have heard, it is my duty. If something happens don't blame me for not telling you what people say.”

-“What do they say?”

-“The son is said to have bad habits. One hear he spends his time playing cricket and going to cinemas. He has other habits too...One hears his wife is very unhappy.” (Singh, 1999, p.205)

Shunno always found a way to express her views and this time she managed, at least, to leave her mistress thinking about the Chands.

One day Shunno felt ill and ordered Mundoo to do the chores for her but at night she went to her mistress for her pressing. Then she found the occasion to comment Shabrai about certain affairs including the Chands, Beena, and Champak. About the last one, she seemed to be particularly interested and proceeded by saying:

-“Our queen, our daughter-in-law, is idle all day.”

-“What shall I do? Beat her?”

-“It is not good to be idle all day. She reads stories and listens to film songs over the radio. How long has she been married? Isn't this the second year? There are no signs of a child appearing!”

-“You ask her to have one.”

-“I? She doesn't ever talk to me; as if I was an enemy. She won't let me press her when she is tired. She is always asking Mundoo.” (Singh, 1999, p.224)

Shunno seemed to be aware of everything that took place in the house and she happened to be very perceptive. What remains unclear is if there was a special aim in her telling Shabrai about all these events or if they were just the consequence of her talkative nature.

When her ailment continued, Shunno decided to consult the Peer Sahib since she did not believe in “Western-trained doctors and their bitter medicines” (Singh, 1999, p.272). She only trusted Holy Men guided by God and she would do whatever they ordered without questioning as, for instance, when the Peer Sahib's *scrutiny* [emphasis added] was not only confined to clinical ends and led to sexual intercourse. To this, Shunno responded with subsequent visits that improved her mood in such a way that she started bringing sweets to Mundoo instead of nagging or beating him (Singh, 1999, p.277).

Shunno continued faithful and committed to her Sardarini until the last minute of Shabrai's life. When Shabrai fell ill after spending a full night at the Golden Temple, “Shunno showed great endurance in keeping the house going and also being with her mistress at all hours; pressing her tired limbs, talking to her when she mumbled in her delirium, comforting her with words in baby language and with prayer” (Singh, 1999, p.345).

Shunno stayed all day by her side. If Shabrai wanted anything, she would raise her hand for Shunno and whisper instructions in her years. The same she did that morning when she felt her feet were going icy cold and called out Shunno as loud as she could “Send for my family, my time has come.” Therefore, Shunno summoned the whole family, and stayed by Shabrai's bed chanting “The True, The True. The Great Guru” and reciting from the prayer book at Shabrai's will.

The most remarkable reference to Shunno's reaction to class was her rejection to the Chands, since they were Hindu, something that is ambiguous since she worshipped the three religions without distinction. Maybe the disqualifying comment was enhanced in order to raise Shabrai's awareness about the disadvantages of Beena visiting the Chands and being seduced by Madan.

4.1.8. Mundoo and Class

Mundoo was the thirteen-year-old boy servant. He was the solution to the series of inconveniences and disputes Shunno had gone through with the previous older male servants. However, Shunno kept nagging and beating the boy regularly sustaining he was a “good-for-nothing.” Nevertheless, she could not get rid of him through the same accusations she had used against the latter male servants.

Mundoo seemed to be Champak's favourite servant at the time of having her limbs pressed. She preferred him to Shunno and took advantage of the young inexperienced boy in several occasions. She mistreated him and later accused him with her husband though unsuccessfully. However, the only license the boy had incurred to was listening to music behind Champak's bedroom door.

To Shunno's abuses, Mundoo found a kind of punishment. He took recourse to bottles of gum and red ink he poured in Shunno's jar of water. Thus, the maidservant thought she was ill at finding red sticky stains between her thighs. This ailment led Shunno to visit the Peer Sahib and, after several sessions, improved her mood.

Mundoo used to play with the children and the dogs in the verandah or the garden while the family gathered at the gurdwara. He complied with the minor duties he was assigned but he did not play a significant role in the story except for

the consequences of his presence in one episode or the other. He neither had privileges nor was assigned important duties as Shunno was. Besides, he had no private room but slept on the kitchen floor.

4.1.9. *Jhimma Singh and Class*

He was a Sikh peasant who introduced himself to the gang of young terrorists when they were hunting after the shooting season. He asked the boys for their arms licenses arguing he was “the headman of the village beyond the swamp” (Singh, 1999, p.170).

When he learned that Sher was Buta Singh’s son, he apologized to Sher and said, “I am your slave, the slave of your slaves.” However, he informed the police about the incident and subsequently he blackmailed Sher Singh in his first visit to Buta’s home. Even though Sher went to the point and tried to overcome the situation as wittily as he could, the headman accepted a bribe and kept up a flow of flattery until he left the house.

After Sher and his gang blew the bridge near the place where Sher had shot the Sarus crane, the lambardar rendered Sher a second visit. Once more, the headman carefully selected his words and succeeded in making Sher feel guilty. Sher offered the lambardar some money to repair the supposed holes made to the bridge. However, the lambardar reacted as follows:

-“No brother, not you. If I take anything from you, may I be cursed as if I had eaten the flesh of the sacred cow. But these Babus, are they relations of ours? If you tell me who they are, I could get the money from them myself.”

-“No, I will get it for you. This evening at seven o’clock at the bridge.” (Singh, 1999, pp.260-263)

The lambardar managed to corner Sher Singh who considered Jhimma Singh an illiterate, uncouth, peasant informer. Then Sher and his friends met the lambardar by the bridge and discovered the man was just eager to get money from them since the bridge was intact. After interchanging a few words with the headman, the whole gang shot the man to death (Singh, 1999, p.299).

4.2. *Themes*

4.2.1. *Privacy*

This theme is addressed by different characters and because of apparent different reasons. The Taylors preserved the privacy of their home by receiving callers only on visitors’ day; Buta Singh was strict about visitors to his home and particularly to the kind of visitors allowed in; and Champak expressed concern about the lack of privacy in relation to her marital affairs. However, privacy seemed not to be common in Indian society. Tradition was against those who live in society and wish to be alone. As an example, rooms were unlikely to have doors and those who had them were rarely bolted from the inside. For the poor, privacy has always been a luxury due to the shortage of living space.

However, in the “westernized well-to-do class”, separated bedrooms and bathrooms were provided although the feeling about privacy remained the same: to want to be alone was to be queer. Despite this fact, Buta Singh’s home had made concessions to Western notions in matters of privacy. There were separate rooms and the married couple had a room and a bathroom of their own.

Stanley Wolpert (1991) explores society in India and asserts: “The typical Indian family live together under a single roof [...]. There is very little privacy in an Indian household, nor does it seem to be missed or much desired” (Wolpert, 1991, p.134).

Unlike Wolpert’s assertion, Champak enjoyed privacy and the lack of it made her feel uncomfortable. In times of hot weather, Indians used to sleep on their charpoys on the roof but Champak preferred staying in the marital private room sleeping under the ceiling fan. When her husband complained about that and suggested sleeping on the roof with the rest of the family, she commented: “You have a bath and let the breeze of the fan dry you. That is the advantage of having a room of one’s own” (Singh, 1999, p.176).

Besides, whenever the family decided to go to the gurdwara, for example, Champak stayed at home since that was her opportunity to enjoy complete solitude. She devoted a long time to bathing and looking at herself in front of the mirror. Furthermore, she enjoyed listening to films music and singing, things that were not well seen by Sikhs and, consequently, she only did when in private.

Similarly, the Taylors disliked people invading their privacy and their home. To avoid it, Taylor stated a fixed visitor day and devised a ritual for those ones who called for him at home without previous notice. For the British, Indian lifestyle as regards privacy resulted in a complete awkwardness to which they had to adapt.

Buta Singh was strict about visitors to his household. When the lambardar visited Sher for the first time, Buta shouted at Mundoo: “Haven’t I told you a hundred times not to allow peasants in the house! Tell him to meet me at the courts” (Singh, 1999, p.260). Buta had strong views about unimportant people coming to see him in his house; he sustained that the only place for business was the office since the home was for rest and the family. In this respect, he shared views with Mr. Taylor.

Notwithstanding his attitude at home, Buta did not hesitate to turn up the Chands without previous notice to talk about renting a vacation house in Simla. The Singhs trooped in without waiting to be announced, went through the sitting room into the courtyard to find Wazir Chand lying on his belly and being massaged by a servant, and Madan shaving himself in front of a mirror placed on a stool. When Sita fled to her room utterly embarrassed, Buta said “Don’t disturb yourselves. This is like our own home. We are always this way” (Singh, 1999, p. 231).

4.2.2. *Marriage*

“On all social levels, a marriage is a test of a family’s status” (Mandelbaum, 1970, p.98). In Hindu tradition, and as classical Hindu culture evolved, an arranged marriage became the best method “for perpetuating the caste system and the Indian species” (Wolpert, 1991, p.122). The commonest form of marriage in Punjab high class was that of ‘isogamy

marriage' which meant marrying within the same status group. However, parents looking for a suitable match for their daughters might adopt 'hypergamy' as a way to enhance their own status (Malhotra, 2002, p.53).

Marriage involved gift giving before and during the ceremony—an important obligation to be fulfilled by the family of the bride. These presents included those given to the groom and his relatives, the conjugal household of the new couple, a joint one shared with the groom's parents and siblings, and to the bride herself, with the term 'dowry.' Thus for those ones who were incapable of affording these expenses, favourable loans were for the nuptials of daughters and sisters (ibid.).

All these requirements meant high expenses for the bride family, and that was exactly what the peasant woman in Simla referred to when she was talking to Beena. The day Madan, Champak, Sita and Beena went out to a picnic on an isolated spot above the roads, Beena heard a woman singing in a plaintive voice. Since the others were having a nap, Beena approached the woman but the latter stopped singing at her presence. They started talking and the woman said she sang to "while away the time" (Singh, 1999, p.250) because she was poor and could not afford going to the cinema and learn new songs, to what Beena answered her singing was better than the songs in the films.

Later on, Beena learned that the woman had five daughters: "it was written on my forehead; I cannot grumble" (Singh, 1999, p.250). The girl did not understand and asked what was wrong about having five daughters. Then, their dialogue turned into the following:

- "One has got to get them married; that costs money. We can't pay our debts and now we have to borrow more because the eldest is thirteen. We are marrying her off next month. You can't keep a young girl in the house, can you? You *must* be married."

- "No, I am single."

- "You rich people have no worries. It's us poor folk who can't get enough to fill our bellies. Five daughters and nothing to give to any one of them." (ibid.)

Moved by this account, Beena gave one of her gold bangles to the old woman for her daughter's dowry. At first, the women rejected the gift but, as Beena insisted, the woman accepted and thanked by singing a blessing song: "Bibi, may all your wishes be fulfilled! May you get a handsome bridegroom; may you be a mother of seven sons [...]" (Singh, 1991, p.251).

Besides, the topic of Beena's marriage was addressed by Shabrai in her prayers. She had infinite faith in the Guru and had no doubt the Guru would find a nice husband for Beena. Similarly, Shunno mentioned the affair one night while she was pressing her mistress:

- "Our Beena is growing up fast."

- "It is not good to keep a young girl at home. It is time we thought of her marriage. If you find a nice Sikh boy..." (Singh, 1999, p. 224)

The presence of a "pubescent daughter in a household, unwed and unclaimed, is uncomfortable even ritually dangerous for the other members of the family [...] because her untethered sexuality may bring social disgrace, perhaps supernatural retribution on the whole family unless she is promptly bound into marriage" (Kapadia, 1958, as cited in Mandelbaum, 1970, p.97). Once again, women's sexuality appears as a menace to family welfare unless it could be sublimated through marriage.

By the time of Shabrai's death, the topic of marriage arose once more. There is a reference made to people dying in India; an old person's death is a matter of rejoicing though a young person's one is a matter of sorrow. Shabrai was neither too old nor too young though she had died before her time because she had left a daughter unmarried (Singh, 1999, p.352).

The matter of leaving an unmarried daughter appeared of no great concern to Shabrai. Even when Shunno talked about finding "a nice Sikh boy" for her, Shabrai disregarded the comment. However, according to Indian customs, Beena was at the right age to be married or at least engaged. The fact that no member of the family—except the maidservant—raised the topic may suggest that they were not strict about complying with Indian marriage rituals—at least for the daughter. This is particularly surprising given that Sher was married at an early age and "marrying off a grown son is not quite so urgently felt as marrying a daughter" (Mandelbaum, 1970, p.97).

Since no other reference is made in relation to marriage in the novel, the mere mentioning of the topic in these couple of instances and the unresolved situation of Beena's marriage at her mother's death may lead to conclude that 'the marriage issue' was not being regarded by the Singh's as one of utmost importance. That might be the consequence of their 'covered acculturation'; the state of political affairs, which had become of paramount importance at the times; or Sher's going to jail dragging the family into shame. Subsequently, Shabrai's illness left no spare time to deal with the subject either.

Consequently, for one of the mentioned reasons or the other, the fact is that the Singhs, had an unmarried pubescent daughter living at home despite the Indian belief that "marriage is a sacrament, ordained and imperative, which every normal man and woman should undergo" (Mandelbaum, 1970, p.98).

4.2.3. Loyalty

Loyalty is a theme that characterized several characters in the novel though to different ends. Buta Singh declared himself loyal to the British Raj as his father and grandfather before him. His family had been given land in the Canal Colonies because Buta's father had recruited many soldiers in the First World War. However, Sher held nationalist thoughts and wanted the British out of India, an issue that was not minor for his father who commented to Mr. Taylor: "He may hobnob with the Nationalists but he will have to be loyal to the British as long as Buta Singh lives. Otherwise, I will disown him. After I am dead, he can do what he likes" (Singh, 1999, p.307).

When Taylor shared his ideas about the British leaving India and letting Indians constitute self-government, Buta was puzzled: “[...] I am for the British Raj. If it goes, there will be chaos in this country as there was chaos before the British came” (Singh, 1999, p.308).

He maintained his position even when Taylor talked about a conflict of loyalties as Sher was mixed up not only with Nationalists but also with terrorists: “I will disown him. I would throw him out of the house” (ibid.). On his side, Sher kept loyal to his beliefs in an independent India. Even when the officers who made his arrest humiliated him as never before, and he had to overcome torture when in jail, he sustained his position of not talking about his terrorist activities or involving his accomplices in the terrorist affairs. Furthermore, when he learned about his liberation, the first thing he did was to write a letter to Madan asking him to contact the Nationalists and he wrote: “Long live the Revolution” (Singh, 1999, p.342).

Likewise, although he went to Simla for a while leaving Sher to deal with the guns affair on his own, Madan maintained his loyalty to Sher Singh and the Nationalist principles once he learned about the 1942 riots and the arrests. In the same tenor, he organized Sher’s welcome out of prison and he supported Sher’s leadership all along. However, Madan’s loyalty was limited to political affairs. In relation to friendship or moral values, he ignored the mandates of his religion and customs by having an affair with Champak and flirting with Beena.

Out of politics, it might be said, Shabrai was also loyal to her beliefs. In her case, he never involved directly in political discussions though she found the way to express her position when required. Shabrai was a religious woman and devoted wife and mother. She posed her confidence on the Guru and prayed faithfully on a daily basis as well as when her beloved ones were in trouble. She was faithful to her traditions in every sense, defender of the Sikh religion and customs, and preserving her language as the only tongue she spoke. This might be understood as a way of resistance as well, resistance to learn English and to get involved in political affairs. Although she supported her husband’s position towards the British, as when she said “We eat their salt, and as long as we eat it we will remain loyal” (Singh, 1999, p.227), she preferred to devote herself to the reading of the Adi Granth. Thus, she remained up to the time of her death. She died as she lived, reciting the daily prayer surrounded by her family.

Shunno was loyal to her mistress and her family as well. She cared for all the Singhs but for Shabrai specially. Even when she was ill, Shunno pressed her mistress’ limbs at night to help her rest better. Equally, when Shabrai fell ill before her death, she stayed by her side day and night attentive to Shabrai’s needs and demands.

4.2.4. Illiteracy

Illiteracy is recurrently addressed in the story, and most of the times, directly linked to social class, formal instruction, the learning of English and assimilation or the lack of it. It would be interesting to question firstly how illiteracy was considered in the postcolonial field. Different characters were described as illiterate but for different reasons. Consequently, a particular analysis of each case ought to be performed. However, the character to be extensively analyzed in this case will be Shabrai.

Since several references to illiteracy seemed to be associated to *literacy in English* [emphasis added], it would be important to know that:

[...] by the late 1920s in Punjab the Sikhs came to appropriate the Punjabi language as theirs, the Hindu leaders struggled to unlearn Urdu (the ‘official language as also the medium of teaching in government schools) and pick up the rudiments of Hindi and then initiate its sanskritization, and the Muslims identified themselves with Urdu [...].(Malhotra, 2002, p.7)

Although the language use differentiation by religion is not as evident in the story under analysis, it may serve the purpose to understand or read some characters’ attitudes towards ‘not’ learning English from a more complex perspective that may go beyond the fact of opposing colonization.

At the beginning of the story, Sher and the boys were driving along the canal road. An officer stopped them and asked Sher to enter his name and the car plate number on a logbook. Sher entered a name and a wrong plate number. The officer realized the incongruence of plate numbers and commented “Sardar Sahib, I do not know English but I am not illiterate. You have put in a wrong number for the car. I will have to report it to the canal officer” (Singh, 1999, p.172). From the officer’s comment, we may imply that illiteracy was linked to speaking and understanding English or not. In his case, he emphasized that even he did not “know English” he could recognize wrong numbers on a plate.

Along the story, Shabrai was depicted as “an illiterate mother.” At first, it was not easy to figure out why it was so. Beena, for example, was worried about her parents learning she had been to the pictures with Madan and Sita since pictures were improper for the Sikh faith. However, according to the narrator, Beena-who was seventeen-, “was not going to be bullied by her illiterate mother anymore” (Singh, 1999, p.190). Here, we may interpret that Beena considered her mother illiterate because she prioritized religious beliefs to any *modern* [emphasis added] cultural expression. Beena thought that pictures could be instructive and have religious themes but she suspected her mother would not agree with this view due to her supposed illiteracy or backwardness.

When at the cinema, the narrator offered a description of the proceedings and people’s behaviour to help the reader visualize the atmosphere: “First came a series of coloured slides advertising soaps, hair oils, and films that were to follow. The literate members of the audience read their names loudly in chorus” (Singh, 1999, p.191). Once more, the association of literacy and the English language is inseparable. Those able to read English could repeat the names displayed on the slides.

Furthermore, Sher and his father’s frequent discussions on the British in India were difficult-if not impossible-for Shabrai to follow. She expressed her bewilderment at Sher’s insistent opposition to the British. Hence, she asked her son what they would get if the British left the country. Again, Sher could not find an answer to her mother’s simple question “at least not in words his illiterate mother could understand” to which he decided to answer “lyrically” and uttered: “Spring will come to our barren land once more...once more the nightingales will sing” (Singh, 1999, p.227). It may be

interpreted that the poetic style Sher resorted to in this opportunity was associated to the kind of texts he knew her mother was used to reading and understanding such as the *Adi Granth*. Therefore, her literacy seemed to be constrained by religion, that is to say, to the exclusive reading and interpretation of religious texts.

Shabrai's illiteracy thus seemed evident because she did not speak English and her interaction with written texts was limited to religious ones. Therefore, her family concluded she was illiterate. No member of the family made an effort to keep her updated by translating into Punjabi the usual issues of family discussions such as politics or even maintaining discussions in Punjabi. In contrast, Madan Chand patiently explained the political situation and translated newspaper articles to her during their stay in Simla. This showed respect towards his elders and interest in Shabrai's opinions about the nationalist uprisings and riots. Although Madan was aware of her auntie's point of view about the state of affairs, he elicited Shabrai's opinions and cultivated her knowledge on political matters for the first time in the story.

Interestingly, Shabrai referred to herself as "an old woman", which may have meant she supported old ways of thinking in relation to political affairs or maybe the fact that old women's opinion did not use to be considered relevant. However, she did not demonstrate passivity or submissiveness for this fact or for not speaking English. After visiting Sher in jail, she sent a letter to the Taylors-as she considered her duty- to thank them for their preoccupation and assistance of her family in their difficult times. She wrote the letter in Punjabi, which started as follows: "Dear Taylor Memsahib. I am an uneducated Punjabi woman who cannot write nice words of thanks in English [...] ask one of your clerks to read this to you [...]" (Singh, 1999, p.332). Undeniably, illiteracy in English, backwardness or extreme religiosity did not prevent this *pativrata* from making her voice heard.

Moreover, the narrator suggests that illiterate people were 'inferior' when Sher found himself cornered by the headman while they were dealing with the bullets and the bridge explosion affairs: "It was humiliating for a well-to-do, educated, rising politician like him to be put on the spot by an illiterate, uncouth, peasant informer" (Singh, 1999, p.296). Clearly, in this example, illiteracy, peasantry and class differentiation are signs of inferiority when contrasted with educated politicians.

What remains uncertain is the intention of narrative voice. As suggested above, the reader may wonder if the narrator is being ironical or giving voice to Sher Singh's inner thoughts. It may also be considered an emphatic resource on the part of the narrator in that particular passage and state of affairs.

Another reference to illiteracy in the novel occurs in a discussion held between Sher and his father about democracy, elections and the right to vote for everyone. Both Sher and his father agreed that not everyone should vote in India. Buta Singh's remark was the following:

Absolutely right! What does a vote mean to illiterate semi-savage people! It may be all right in England, but not in India. What is the point of creating a jungle of committees and rules so that no one can see the way out? [...]. (Singh, 1999, p. 347)

Here, illiteracy equalled to savagery and marked a sharp difference between England and India. Buta's statement compared literate England and savage India although he was an Indian. Moreover, Buta's statement poses the question of who the savage Indians he referred to were, as he evidently excluded himself from the group. Here we ought to remember that Buta was a middle-class Sikh magistrate working for the British Raj, and apparently, there was a part of himself that seemed to have completely adopted the Imperialist perspective towards Indians. What is more, he even appeared to be convinced of the superiority of the British over his own community. This two-sided personality, which was consciously accepted by him at the beginning of the story as part of a strategy, seems to be unconsciously playing a double game on him to the extent he lost track of his own place and appears to be 'lost in liminality' [emphasis added]. Lastly, after Shabrai's death, when Buta was thinking about the five important matters to negotiate with the Taylors, he referred to her wife as "such a good wife [...] illiterate, but with some sort of charm that attracted sophisticated Europeans like Mrs. Taylor" (Singh, 1999, p.357). Indeed, when he asked Mrs. Taylor for advice to erect a memorial for Shabrai, he repeated: "You see she was illiterate. If I had asked her, she would have said, 'anything you like'" (Singh, 1999, p.359). Buta showed himself as a committed husband up to the end of the story, but just in this stance, it would be interesting to highlight his comment about his wife's alleged illiteracy: "She was old-fashioned and would not learn English [...] I got her many teachers, but she absolutely failed to learn *the language* [emphasis added]. She was a very religious woman-she prayed all the time" (Singh, 1999, p.358).

Why would Shabrai never learn *the language* [emphasis added]? That remained unanswered. Both Sher and Buta assumed that Shabrai's devotion to religious reading was the cause of her illiteracy. However, neither of them obtained a concrete answer from Shabrai. We may understand, as they did, that Shabrai was not 'interested' in learning English or that she might have found it 'difficult' or even 'useless.' Nevertheless, we may also infer that Shabrai, as a religious woman, was not inclined to learn any other language different from her own as a means of resistance. However, resistance not only to the British-to whom she never professed explicit rejection-but also to the other local communities' languages, notably, Urdu and Hindi that were not part of her Sikh identity. As Malhotra (2002) stated, the Sikhs adopted Punjabi as their language, and Shabrai was an old woman with strong religious faith and convictions. Hence, Shabrai "impossibility"-as stated by Buta-to learn English may have several interpretations that go beyond her alleged illiteracy. As previously explored, high-middle class Indians had access to Western education and that fact permitted them to hold positions for the British Raj. Learning the English language was, admittedly, the first step to become part of the new modern society. What is more, the main newspapers were printed in English and, as indicated, most if not all the conversations related to political matters were held in English as well.

In relation to the voiced and voiceless agents, Shabrai's denial to learn the English language-though it implied a constraint in her communication at times-did not represent her as a voiceless female. On the contrary, her decision paradoxically demonstrates that she actually was a voiced female agent. She developed a capacity to make her voice heard without even uttering a word but by displaying a marked 'silent' allegiance to her Sikh origin and tradition.

The notion of illiteracy in the novel is only referred to by the colonized class, who defines it as ‘the inability to communicate in the English Language’ [emphasis added]. In the colonized world, the illiterate colonized people were discriminated against by the literate ones. Consequently, among the colonized, two main distinctive social groups are clearly identified: the illiterate colonized people and the literate ones who, because of their proficiency in the English language, play the role of the colonizer in their own domestic context. However, the so-called illiterate are capable of understanding the intention behind the colonizer’s discourse, that is to say, the lack of knowledge of the English language will not fully affect the colonized’s perception of their devastating reality.

4.3. Symbols

4.3.1. Birds

“[...] images from birds form by far the largest section drawn from any single class of objects [...]” (Caroline Spurgeon)

Birds have always been closed to humankind because “their life can be observed and appreciated and because their flight and song make them noticeable in every sort of environment” (Lutwack, 1994, p.162). They have also been symbols in innumerable literary pieces from poetry to narrative. Seemingly, several species of birds are mentioned in *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale*. However, the present analysis will focus on the cranes and the nightingales due to their significance in relation to the concepts under study.

Among the mentioned species, we find nightingales, crows, ducks, egrets, bitterns, cranes, sparrows, and falcons. The episode when Sher shot the crane may be analyzed from several perspectives. A couple of cranes were flying together when one of them was shot to death. The reaction of its mate was to cry lamenting the departure of its partner and to fly lower and lower over its mate’s killers. The narrator described this episode as follows: “[...] the anguished cry of the flying crane was almost human” (Singh, 1999, p.168).

The crane’s grief might be understood as an almost human reaction at the loss of a partner; as well as the sort of revenge and chasing of the hunters who had taken the life of its ‘beloved’ forever. This behaviour may also denote love, loyalty and persistence in pursuing a goal.

Therefore, a question may arise: why cranes in particular? “Every land where they appear has tales and myths about the cranes, which since ancient times have represented longevity and good fortune, harmony and fidelity” (Matthiessen, 2001, p. 4). However, when the boys suggested Sher to shoot a crane he uttered “who kills cranes? They are not use to anyone. And I am told if one is killed, the other dies of grief” (Singh, 1999, p.167).

In a feature article, Mg. Alok Kumar Mishra, (2009) states, “the Sarus crane has always had a privileged social status in India” for its immense cultural contribution. Cranes are a symbol of unconditional love, devotion and good fortune. Hence, Indians believe that if one bird of the pair dies, the other follows the path by refusing food or water. In spite of this fact, Sher shot the crane. One possible interpretation may be he needed to gain the gang’s respect as a leader. From another perspective, the fact could be interpreted as an omen of his future disloyal behaviour towards his father’s beliefs. The birds are also a symbol of devotion, and we know that Sher was not devoted to Sikhism- religiously speaking. Killing the crane could have also meant Sher’s future misfortune when he was arrested and an anticipation of her mother’s death. Besides, killing a crane was a sin against nature, particularly when cranes are not dangerous birds or a species to be eaten. As Shabrai expressed when Sher confessed he had not got any prey “I am glad [...] I don’t like this business of killing poor, harmless birds” (Singh, 1999, p. 175). Whatever the interpretation, all the supplied ones are charged with the mysticism of Indian cultural beliefs.

Nightingales have been attached to a variety of meanings along the history of Western literature. As an example, the song of nightingales has been related to the sad state of a human being (Lutwack, 1994, Chapter1). However, in the novel, Sher used a metaphor making reference to nightingales in a particular context in an attempt to explain to her mother the relevance of the British leaving India: “[...] once more the nightingales will sing” (Singh, 1999, p.227). In this case, the song of a nightingale should not be related to sadness but joy as the merry nightingale of the native English tradition described by H.W.Garrod (as cited in Lutwack, 1994, p.12). If the full phrase uttered by Sher Singh were analyzed, we might achieve a more accurate interpretation supporting the idea of the nightingale’s merry song: “Spring will come to our barren land once more...once more the nightingales will sing” (Singh, 1999, p.227). Hence, “springtime is the season of heightened sexuality, and the universal tokens of spring are renewed vegetation and the return of bird song” (Lutwack, 1994, p. 187). Here, the interpretation could be similar to Medieval Latin and Provençal poetry where the nightingale was featured as singing joyously in springtime; to the poetry of clerics whose nightingale sang joyful praises of God; or to the nightingales in *The Arabian Nights Entertainments* that did the same for Allah (Lutwack, 1994, p.13).

Moreover, the context in which Sher Singh uttered “Spring will come to our barren land once more...once more the nightingales will sing” denotes a joyful atmosphere; he meant that the Independence of India would resemble the coming of spring with all its revitalizing force, including the song of the nightingales. Besides, his mother stopped asking questions on the topic which may be understood as her awareness of his son’s reasons or the abandonment of the discussion on the matter of Independence.

Despite the fact that nightingales-unlike Sarus cranes-bear no particular significance in Indian culture, it may be said that their mentioning in the novel cannot but be symbolic. Nightingales, as previously explored, have had a long history and varied meanings in Western literature. However, the relevance of these birds in the story may imply certain acculturation. At this point it would be important to remember that Sher Singh had been educated at a British school like all the young boys of his generations. The instruction he had received was based on British perspectives, including of course the English language. Consequently, it is not surprising that he had resorted to ‘the nightingales’ metaphor’ to provide his illiterate mother with an explanation.

This fact, as many others already explored, result in an ambiguity that is characteristic of the social class Sher belonged to as an Indian, and to the education he had had access to as well. However, it is contradictory since he was an Independence supporter and appeared to reject whatever made reference to the Empire. This recurrent ambiguity is inescapable for the colonized high-middle class.

Consequently, the birds selected as symbols bear a double significance. The Sarus crane is a representative of the colonized culture itself and the nightingale is a sort of icon of Western tradition unconsciously adopted by the new educated elite.

4.3.2. Cricket

“[...] in cricket the end justifies the means [...]” (C.B.Fry)

Ashis Nandy (2000) thinks that “cricket in India could be a handy trope for having [my] say on the tragicomic spectacle of an ancient society running breathlessly to become a developed, modern nation-state” (Nandy, 2000, p. xiii). He views cricket as a medium of self-expression from four perspectives: traditional English cricket, modern cricket, imported cricket and new cricket. India’s intellectual and media elite seemed to love cricket “perspiring race and eager to pay the price of deculturation” that often goes with it (Nandy, 2000, p. xi).

However, towards the end of the Victorian period, the issue of colonial expansion favoured “sane Imperialism” where sport came to play an important role. Holt (1989) notes that sport was “thought to help create a climate of relations that would bind the Empire together” (Holt, 1989, p.212); it served to provide a cultural bond between colonizing and colonized peoples. Thus, J. A. Mangan (as cited in Hughson, 2009) sustains that cricket emerged “as the symbol *par excellence* of imperial solidarity and superiority epitomizing a set of consolidatory moral imperatives that both exemplified and explained imperial ambition and achievement.”

On the other hand, Ramachandra Guha (as cited in Hughson, 2009) states that cricket was initially brought to India to provide “a source of much comfort to the expatriate Englishman” thus suggesting that cricket was originally kept by the British for themselves. Subsequently, the *Parsi* traders started playing by observing the British soldiers.

Resuming Ashis Nandy’s view of cricket, the current analysis of cricket as a symbol will focus on ‘modern’ cricket- “an endorsement of an hegemonic, urban-industrial managerial culture”-and ‘imported’ cricket-“cricket imported to non-western societies as a criticism of native life-styles from the point of view of the industrializing West” (Nandy, 2000, p. viii). The reason for the selection bears the ambiguity present in the society under study as well as the characters’ behaviours and attitudes as agents of transition, both resistant and assimilated.

Madan, the cricketer hero in the novel, seems to fit the definition of a hero provided by Nandi. He compares the heroes of cinema and politics and decides that cricketers are like heroes of politics who are “doomed to betray the hopes and ambitions of their fans.” He adds that heroes in cricket are permanently in a limbo since they play with luck or fate beyond their training or capacities.

The Victorian model of a cricketer was that of a masculine player who “had control over his impulsive self and symbolized the superiority of [...] mind over body, culture over nature” (Nandy, 2000, p. xx).

It is exactly to this respect that cricket might be interpreted as a symbol of ambiguous heroism, masculinity and control over nature in the current analysis. On the one hand, the cricketer hero happens to represent what Victorians held as a stereotype: a symbol of virility, self-control and culture. However, what was the culture Victorians had in mind? A game that, according to the perspective adopted, was introduced “as a criticism of native lifestyles”, aiming at constructing eastern heroes from a western stereotype? Consequently, the result may be the creation of hybrid heroes, half of the hero pseudo representing a western stereotype, and half representing its native culture. It might be said ‘pseudo representing’ since the position of the native cannot be other than that of a native, as Fanon (1967) stated “Wherever he goes, the Negro remains a Negro.”

As a consequence, the aforementioned savagery of the natives, in contrast with the high culture of the British, is utterly discordant and bewildering for the natives playing cricket. On the one hand, the natives are not the stereotype cricketer and cannot adjust to it naturally. They may have adopted the sport and added certain characteristics to it, but the mere adoption of the sport of the Empire also denotes acculturation. Furthermore, it could be said that the natives occupy a double space- the space of the colonized and the space of the colonizer. The latter is technically implausible. To find an explanation to this phenomenon it would be useful to appeal to what Hommi Bhabha names Third Space, the liminal space where the colonized, as such, stands as a consequence of the influence of colonization. This Third Space, or liminal space, is beyond the place the colonized and the colonizer used to occupy before colonization. What is more, the liminal space is a consequence of colonization; it implies not being ‘here’ or ‘there’; it is a place of transition; it is the in-between that separates ‘here’ from ‘there.’

Therefore, as well as the nightingale, the adoption of cricket in India and the widespread acceptance of the *outsider* [my emphasis] game, is another sign of acculturation. However, there is a difference between the kind of acculturation in the case of cricket. Cricket was largely accepted by all social classes but the access to education –and, specifically, western literary tradition- was limited to the upper-middle class.

4.3.3. The verandah

According to the Longman dictionary (1999), a verandah is an open area with a floor and a roof at the side of a house, which is most common in hot countries-totally applicable to Indian climate. In the novel, the verandah was often used to refer to the place where visitors waited to be announced to the household owner before being invited to come in. When summoned by Mr. Taylor, the magistrates waited on the verandah, sometimes sitting in a circle-until the servant called them in one by one. Mundoo, the young male servant, used to spend time on the verandah when bullying children from neighbouring houses. Madan was sitting in the verandah the morning Shabrai accompanied Beena and Champak to

the Chands because Beena had to study for the exams with Sita. Similarly, the day the Hindu merchants visited Buta to talk about Hindu celebrations, they waited sitting cross-legged on the chairs in the verandah.

The verandah then, even a material part of a house, might be thought of as a space 'in-between', as Bhabha's 'liminal space', which in this case is not completely outside nor inside the house. Metaphorically speaking, the verandah might be the place where the characters in the novel stand at a time or the other; they are neither inside the house nor outside of it. The verandah thus becomes an undefined place.

This undefined place, as the liminal space referred to by Hommi Bhabha, might be a sort of limbo or hybrid space where the characters found themselves after the colonial encounter or because of the interaction between different social classes in their own community. The Indian magistrates waited on the verandah at Mr. Taylor's place; the Hindu merchants waited on the verandah at Buta's place; Mundoo, the servant, spent time on the verandah at his master's place. Thus, the verandah may be understood as symbol of the 'in-between' sometimes applicable to the colonizer and the colonized, and sometimes -as we claim in this study- to the different classes or religious groups within the colonized community.

Consequently, the concept of in-betweenness, liminality, Third Space or space of transition might be applied not only to the colonizer-colonized encounter, but to the different social classes within the colonized community. The concept of transition entails a re-construction of an identity that has been challenged by the new types of social interaction that arose and which create the necessity to re-assess, re-build or mould the previous place the agent occupied. Therefore, the colonial encounter produces a kind of colonized peoples that are called to rethink their previous social roles. The emergence of the new-educated elites enhanced the pre-existent social differences before the arrival of the colonizer. As a consequence, the verandah -as a place of transition- symbolises the colonized people as whole, which is the sum of different parts. The whole colonized community is not homogeneous but is subdivided in uneven and sometimes overlapping social classes, some of which-namely, the upper-middle ones-strive to emulate or reproduce the privileges and culture of the colonizers by subduing other disadvantaged members of their own community.

4.3.4. The monsoon

"[...] it has the fullness of summer and the fulfilment of autumn all in one." (Singh, 1999, p.244)

The monsoon in India is considered one of the greatest gifts of nature. It carries with it "the outburst of greenery after the scorching heat, the thunder and lightning, the wandering of clouds, the mango season, the swings, the songs, the singing of the birds [...]" (Qasim, 1998, p. 130). The rainy season comes over Punjab in early July and anticipates the preparations that go with ploughing the fields. However, the blessing is granted only if the distribution of rain is even in various climatic zones because if it rains too much at one place or too little at another, the result might be either "floods in certain parts or droughts and famine in other regions" (ibid.)

That is why in the novel, due to the beneficial consequences of the monsoon season in 1942, the monsoon may be interpreted as a symbol of prosperity and achievement. Prosperity because that year brought blessings to the Singh's family, except for Sher's arrest and the loss of Shabrai: Sher was elected President of the University Union, Beena succeeded in her examinations and Buta was given the C.I.E. in the New Year's Honours List.

Zimmerman (1987) asserts that in India the monsoon symbolizes radical disorder, followed by drastic reordering. Towards the end of the season, it represents the time of cosmic reversals and commencements afresh (Zimmerman, 1987, pp. 53-58).

The monsoon seemed to have sealed a period that had been troublesome for the Singhs and for the Independentists as well. The season renewal with the winds and heavy rains it brought, seemed to have metaphorically turned the page of misfortune and led to the path to freedom.

4.3.5. Sexual Behaviour

Both Hindus and Sikhs considered that "control over women's sexuality and reproductivity was central to maintaining social privilege" (Malhotra, 2000, p.43). To that aim, they enhanced the figure of the pativrata, chastity and domestic labour as well as "the glowing love of pativrata wives for their dead husbands" (Malhotra, 2000, p.117). One way of controlling women's sexuality was "resorting to early marriage, avoiding mismatched marriages as for instance when the groom was much older than the bride" (Malhotra, 2000, p.72).

Young girls never spoke of their sexuality in the company of elders. However, there existed a sort of verses called *jhagrras* through which Punjab reformers exhorted the desired practices and parodied awkward situations that portrayed their way of thinking. These *jhagrras* reflected the society's view of women intense sexuality and the need to control it; they also exposed that "unsuited marriages led to women losing all sense of proportion in an effort to gratify their sexuality" (Malhotra, 2000, p.75).

Equally important, while there was little interest in the widow as a person, she was a powerful symbol of patriarchal imagination. As a widow's sexuality was considered potentially dangerous, widows were not allowed to go on pilgrimages, read the scriptures unsupervised, or seek the mediation of holy men because "holy men were visualized as violators of widows' chastity, with perhaps the tacit consent of the widow" (Malhotra, 2000, p.92).

There are three examples of characters and their sexual behaviour in the novel. First, Beena and her awakening desire for Madan that she could not share with her mother, Sita, or her sister-in-law; Champak's unsatisfied sexuality that she sublimated with Madan in an outside-of-marriage sexual relationship; and Shunno's regular visits to the holy man with whom she rediscovered the pleasures of sexual life.

These three examples seemed to be back-grounded by the previously explored data with reference to the dangers that women's sexual behaviour implied to class hierarchy. Both Beena and Champak are middle-class women though Shunno is a servant to the Singhs. Although we are not sure to which caste or class Shunno had belonged before

becoming a widow, we may assume that a highbred woman would not worship different religions as she did; she equally prayed the gurus, Allah, and the Hindu gods and goddesses.

5. Conclusions

“Anyone who thinks we are close to final answers, or that we know how to find them, must surely be mistaken.” (Wallace Chafe, Discourse, Consciousness and Time)

In this research paper, the focus was placed on social classes in a colonial setting in an attempt to go beyond the binary opposition colonizer/colonized, which has become a theoretical cornerstone in postcolonial discourse. The aim was the analysis of social classes within the colonizer and the colonized respective communities and the ways in which such class identities intersected transversally, thereby ‘de-constructing’ the unyielding polarization “colonizer-colonized.”

It is worth mentioning that the analysis performed in this paper represents just a minuscule portion of the abundant instances provided in the novel; the selection has been made considering its richness and relevance to illustrate the concepts under study.

To start with, British characters were depicted as “not belonging to the class that built the Empire.” That assertion may sound superfluous but at a time when the emergence of the working class in Britain was acting as a hinge that marked harsh social differences, it cannot pass unnoticed. The ones who voluntarily applied to work in the colonies were in search of an improved standard of living that they could not access by staying in England. In the case of the Taylors, the conclusion is very easy to reach, since Mr. Taylor was not a member of aristocracy -being the son of a schoolmaster- and his wife used to be a nurse. These characteristics of their social class -the class which decided to live as expatriates in order to improve their lifestyles- may serve the purpose of understanding why the Taylors felt no attachment to the British elite despite the fact that Mr. Taylor -as Deputy Commissioner- was the President of the English Club.

The Taylors’ affinity -if it were appropriate to be called so- with Buta Singh’s family may also be understood as a sort of connivance. Even though the distance /difference of origin and rank was clear for both, an affective bond strengthened since they shared a common stance: neither the Taylors nor the Singhs were potential agents of power in their respective homelands. They were the product of the circumstances they were living and adapted to their reality as they could. In their ‘adapting to reality’, they seemed to be immersed in a permanent search, linked to what Hommi Bhabha names hybridity, liminality, or Third Space. They are standing ‘in between’, ambiguously attempting to define what their place was. They are re-defining themselves because of the changes that the colonial encounter demanded.

Naturally, if Buta Singh’s position were analyzed individually, he was the character who better depicted ambiguity and ambivalence. He remained loyal to the Raj, and insisted on his two-faced position up to the end of the story. However, this fact is not to be condemned or criticized but to be considered one of the richest details for analysis.

Can it be possible for a colonized people to desire being colonized? Is that loyalty to the colonizer a natural reaction in a human being? What factors may urge a colonized people to prefer being ruled by a colonizer/outsider? In a couple of discussions, Buta expressed that under the British rule, India was better than under her own rulers and he wondered what India would be like if -for example- the Japanese won the war. He referred to the Canal lands his ancestors were given by the British due to their loyalty to the Raj. He permanently emphasised how much Indians had to learn from the English and highlighted Mr. Taylor’s generosity towards him and his family. Besides, in subsequent discussions with his son, he criticized the caste system in India and mentioned the situation of the Untouchables and the confrontation of Sikhs and Hindus with the Muslims as well. At any rate he was an Indian. He was a Sikh Magistrate working for the Raj as two generations had done before him. These facts may lead to conclude that to some extent Buta was prioritizing a personal situation to the common good. He was not an Indian peasant but a member of the new middle class that -as previously stated- had been formed by high caste Hindus and Sikhs. He criticized caste system when he was part of the high caste. It seems he found himself in front of a mirror where the image he saw was not the one he desired. The image in the mirror was that of an Indian belonging to a social class to which he did not want to belong, or that did not exist anymore. When he said Indians were savage and should not vote, he was not including himself in the group. However, was he an Indian? He was, indeed. Nevertheless, as Memmi sustains, Buta was part of the “colonized which attempts to escape from its political and social condition. But in so doing, by choosing to place themselves in the colonizer’s service to protect his interests exclusively, they end up by adopting his ideology, even with regard to their own values and their own lives” (Memmi, 1965, p.16).

Buta was split in two: the Indian he was and the one he wanted to be. In his eagerness to separate from what he rejected, he idealized the characteristics of the British he would like to possess. As Chatterjee asserts “[...] the dialectics of loyalty and opposition did not permit a clear division among the native bourgeoisie or the entire middle class into two exclusive categories of collaborators and opponents of imperialism. In India, bourgeois opposition to imperialism was always ambiguous” (Chatterjee, 2010, p.97).

His desire to “exist in the gaze of the ‘Other’” -as Lacan states and Spivak after him- seemed to haunt Buta all the time, seeking recognition of Mr. Taylor, the other magistrates, and ultimately desiring to be part of the Honour List. His desire to exist in the gaze of the British made him separate himself from the rest of the members of the Indian community. His Sikh identity was clear to him as well as his disapproval of caste division. However, Buta managed to place emphasis on the difference between his and other social classes; he seemed to have assimilated the discourse of the colonial power, although -as Amílcar Cabral suggests- “without avoiding the frustration complex the situation entailed.”

Although Taylor was previously described as amiable to the Singhs, it is worth remembering the “ritual” he performed in front of Buta with his cigar and beer. This ritualistic behaviour may be read as a courteous way of distancing himself from the colonized; similarly, the way he adapted to Indian weather by keeping his office dark and fresh may be understood beyond a simple way of refrigerating or self-protecting from heat but isolating from a complete strange community to which he did not belong.

The ambiguity that has been explored so far is equally applicable to other characters such as Madan and Sher though from a different perspective. Both named themselves 'Nationalists' but enjoyed the benefits of a comfortable life provided by their parents. Neither of them were peasants though they professed equality for all Indians.

Sher, in particular, was entangled in a polarized situation. As his father, he needed recognition but from peers. He was clear about wanting an independent India and questioned the role of the British in the subcontinent. Furthermore, he mimicked western representatives such as Hitler since he 'repeated' his manners and speech strategies and 're-presented' them in his own performances as a University leader. It may be understood that Sher was a product of a 'modernized' education system which implied the acceptance of new ways of production and that may be a reason why he differed from Gandhi's ways of resistance. Therefore, as a stereotype, Sher made evident, unlike his father, certain characteristics mentioned by Hommi Bhabha "guilt, aggressivity, masking and splitting."

Class hatred, fear, and discomfort also haunted Sher. He did not like Muslims and strongly rejected the lambardar, particularly because of the bribing incident. He considered himself an educated member of society that could not accept being cheated on by "a slovenly Sikh peasant with a shaggy, unkempt beard; a rustic whose clothes were full of grease, whose skin had layers of dirt on it and whose head was undoubtedly full of lice."

On the other hand, Shabrai, did not overtly show disregard to other social classes. She was a devoted Sikh pativrata and, as such, she could not permit herself certain behaviours. However, -and referring to Foucault's definition of 'discourse'- the issue of her alleged 'illiteracy' may be understood as a form of resistance to difference. She seems to be fixed in her religious beliefs and her Sikh identity of which she is proud and, as such, she may be not willing to 'mix' with outsiders of any kind, being the British or any other religious groups within India. She is an example to analyze the 'importance of the unsaid' in discourse.

Champak and Shunno, though dissimilar characters, both mock Mundoo, considering him an unimportant being who seems to exist for them to satiate their inner dissatisfactions in a way or the other. Shunno mistreated the boy permanently as if he were her slave. Champak provoked the boy only to find an excuse to stimulate her husband's jealousy or sexual desire- which she never achieved. Both Champak and Shunno disregarded the class to which Mundoo belonged.

Shunno on her side also disregarded Hindus and the prostitutes as it was shown in the Analysis of the Novel section.

Lastly, the lambardar, Jhimma Singh, was a character that gave rise to controversy. He was a Sikh peasant but a police informer. Although his rank was deeply below that of the Magistrates, he strove to reach a position of power over the other members of his community. He proudly introduced himself as the lambardar of the region where the boys had gone hunting. However, he showed extreme humility at learning about who the boys were and when referring to Sardar Buta Singh. The same exaggerated humility he showed, when visiting Sher at home to deal with the bullets and the bridge affairs.

The class struggle portrayed in *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* cannot-and should not- be circumscribed to the fixed antinomy 'colonizer / colonized' consecrated by the postcolonial discourse, as was suggested in our research question. The colonizers were divided between the "builders of the Empire" and the rest of the population, particularly with the emergence of the working class in Britain. The colonized Indians were divided by different motives. Caste remained a system of differentiation; the emergence of the new elite or middle class also marked a distance between those working for the Raj and the common peasants. Furthermore, religious identities were sharply separated from one another: Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims, who in due time reclaimed a territory for themselves having as a consequence the Partition of India together with her Independence in 1947.

Finally, the present research provides the reader with just one of the multiple valid readings that the novel might offer. As Barthes claims:

[...] whenever a person picks up a text and begins to read it, a complex multiplicity that constitutes the human subject confronts a network of signifiers that is replete with intertextual references, allusions and quotations that are intricately woven into the fabric of culture. (Barthes as cited in Payne, 1997, p.7)

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