An Approach to Transtextuality in Kate Morton's *The Forgotten Garden*: Traces of Victorian Novels, Gothic Fiction, Fairy Tales, and Classical Myths

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Abstract: Drawing on Gérard Genette's inclusive notion of transtextuality—which comprises typologies like intertextuality, architextuality, metatextuality, and hypertextuality—this article approaches Kate Morton's novel *The Forgotten Garden* (2008) as illustrative of different instances of these textual connections. In particular, as an author, Morton has acknowledged that Victorian novels and Gothic narratives, along with fairy tales and classical myths, have exerted significant influence on her works. Insofar as Morton's novels display postmodern features as neo-Victorian Gothic textualities, which aim to revisit and portray the past from a contemporary perspective, this article will identify and analyse instances of transtextuality and its different variants in Morton's novel with regard to the aforementioned four genres in order to prove how the author often resorts to them to create her novels, which become paradigmatic of the notion of transtextuality.

Keywords: transtextuality, postmodernism, neo-Victorianism, comparative literature, metafiction.

Una aproximación a la transtextualidad en *El jardín olvidado* de Kate Morton: rastros de novelas victorianas, ficción gótica, cuentos de hadas y mitos clásicos

Resumen: En base a la noción inclusiva de transtextualidad de Gérard Genette—que comprende tipologías como intertextualidad, architextualidad, metatextualidad e hipertextualidad—este artículo se aproxima a la novela *El jardín olvidado* (2008) de Kate Morton como ilustrativa de diferentes muestras de estas conexiones textuales. En concreto, como autora, Morton ha reconocido que la novela victoriana y las narraciones góticas, junto con los cuentos infantiles y los mitos clásicos, han ejercido una influencia significativa en su obra. Puesto que las novelas de Morton muestran características posmodernas como textualidades góticas neovictorianas, que pretenden revisitar y transformar el pasado desde una perspectiva contemporánea, este artículo identificará y analizará muestras de transtextualidad y sus diferentes variantes en la novela de Morton con relación a los cuatro géneros mencionados, para probar que la autora a menudo recurre a ellos para crear sus obras, las cuales resultan paradigmáticas de la noción de transtextualidad.

Palabras clave: transtextualidad, posmodernismo, neovictorianismo, literatura comparada, metaficción.

1. Introduction

Upon the publication of her second novel *The Forgotten Garden* (2008), Kate Morton already put forward some of the influences that

inspired her to write the book. In an interview, she unveiled that one of the main female characters in the narrative is a Victorian woman writer of fairy tales, that the plot is suffused with dark secrets and uncanny mysteries, and that it is a story that conveys the origins of identity through a journey of self-discovery, thus evoking classical myths (Book Browsers, n.p.). Besides, when she refers to the kind of novels that she usually writes, in the same interview, Morton acknowledges that her books "have similarities to Victorian novels," she reveals her fondness for collecting "illustrations from children's picture books," she admits the fact that she has "always loved Gothic novels," and she also refers to her "long, multilayered novels […] set partly […] in the past, with secrets and mysteries at their core," which often acquire mythical dimensions. As a result of these diverse influences, Morton finally claims that she resorts to such an "eclectic mix of ideas" that she is not exactly sure what genre she writes. In this respect, Ana-Maria Parasca aptly argues that "Morton's writings play on circularity, blanks and fragmentation, in such a way that assembling all pieces together will not only reveal some secrets but will also find the way out of the labyrinth" (245). As a case in point, Morton's novel *The Forgotten Garden* is illustrative of an amalgamation of textual references which is also reflected in its multifaceted narratives involving three main female characters within the same family.

As its plot unfolds, Morton's novel revolves around Nell, an older woman from Brisbane, Australia, who was adopted in 1913, when she was four years of age. In 1975, following her father's death, Nell discovers that her origins are related to a fairytale book written by the Victorian author Eliza Makepeace, which urges Nell to travel to Tregenna, in Cornwall, although her quest is interrupted when she must take care of her granddaughter Cassandra. In 2005, after Nell's death, Cassandra decides to follow in her grandmother's footsteps and travel to Cornwall to unravel her family origins. Accordingly, Morton's novel evokes the Victorian past, since, on her grandmother's death, Cassandra comes into an unexpected inheritance, Cliff Cottage, which is located on the Cornish coast and leads her to retrieve her family origins, discovering ultimately that they are deeply rooted in Victorian England. Cassandra's inheritance also comprises her great-grandmother Eliza Makepeace's book of fairy tales, as she became a renowned writer of children's stories. Besides, as Nell and Cassandra retrace their past, they

must recollect the dark secrets befalling Eliza's relatives, involving the doomed Mountrachet family, who dwelled in the Blackhurst Manor, thus disentangling a Gothic narrative full of uncanny mysteries. Finally, as Cassandra discovers that her grandmother Nell had been abandoned on a ship heading for Australia and that her true origins were revealed to her on her twenty-first birthday, Nell's journey of self-discovery is also evocative of passages in classical myths. It can thus be argued that Morton's novel *The Forgotten Garden* arises as a transtextual novel, since it presents different degrees of transtextuality or textual transcendence, to use Gérard Genette's term, with Victorian novels, Gothic fiction, fairy tales, and classical myths.

Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's notions of dialogism, Julia Kristeva considers the concept of intertextuality as "a mosaic of quotations," claiming that "any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (37). Subsequently, Genette draws on Kristeva's notion of intertextuality to envision it within the more inclusive concept of transtextuality, and instead, he focuses on intertextuality to refer to allusions from one text to another. In comparison, drawing on Genette's broad notion of transtextuality—which involves "all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts" (*The Architext* 83)—Morton's novel presents pervasive transtextual analogies concerning narratological features with diverse narratives. In relation to some Victorian textualities, Morton's novel displays a series of intertextualities, which consist of echoes, quotations, allusions, and parallelisms with Victorian texts. Besides, drawing on Genette's notion of architextuality, which involves the presence of features that lead to the designation of a text as belonging to a particular genre, Morton's novel encompasses as series of traits that typify it as a Gothic narrative. Genette's categorisation of transtextuality also comprises the notion of metatextuality, which involves making critical commentaries on previous textualities and displaying self-reflexive qualities, as also happens in Morton's novel, in which one of the protagonists is a teller of fairy tales whose plots find reflection in her life and reveal evocative parallelisms with classic children's stories. Additionally, Genette also refers to the concept of hypertextuality in his classification of different variants of transtextuality, stating that hypertextuality may be defined as "any relationship uniting a text" known as hypertext "to an earlier text" identified as hypotext (*Palimpsests* 5). In Morton's

novel, given its multilayered plots and journeys of self-discovery, there are also passages that bear resemblance with classical myths, which are hypertextually transformed in the novel. More recently, in relation to Genette's categorisation of transtextuality, within the framework of postmodernism, Linda Hutcheon refers to the concept of adaptation in its different meanings, which involve "an acknowledged transposition of a recognisable other work," "a creative and interpretive act of appropriation," or "an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work" (8). In analogy with Genette's classification, this gradation from a more faithful to a less obvious adaptation of a previous work, thus from intertextuality or direct reference to hypertextuality or transformation, finds correlation in Morton's novel as including examples of these categories in the different influences that it reveals throughout its pages.

Drawing on Genette's broad notion of transtextuality—and given its different typologies comprising intertextuality, architextuality, metatextuality, and hypertextuality—this article aims to approach Morton's novel *The Forgotten Garden* in order to retrace the influences that Victorian novels, Gothic fiction, fairy tales and classical myths exert on the different narratives comprised in its plotlines involving the three main female characters. This transtextual analysis will pave the way to claim that Morton's novel can be described as a contemporary text that contains influences from these four literary genres as sources that allow the author to revisit past narratives and transform them in her novels. Besides, it will be argued that these four genre typologies are evoked in Morton's novel through instances that respond to different degrees of transtextuality, ranging from explicit reference to subtle transformation. Finally, this analysis will also prove that Morton's novel arises as a self-reflexive text that acknowledges the textualities that have influenced the author to write historical fiction with Victorian references, gothic tropes, fairy-tale narratological components, and imagery pertaining to classical myths.

2. Retracing Victorian novels: intertextual references

Although Morton's *The Forgotten Garden* is a contemporary novel, its pervasive interest in reviving the Victorian period evinces that it presents traits pertaining to neo-Victorian fiction, which concerns itself with the

paradox of resurrecting a historical period from a present perspective. Dana Shiller was one of the first theorists to refer to the neo-Victorian novel as emerging in the context of postmodernism, since it casts doubt on actual knowledge about the past, thus resulting in nostalgia and the blurring between historical referents and self-reflexive textualities (538). In Morton's novel, given the fact that Nell and Cassandra own an antiques shop, after her grandmother's death, Cassandra recollects that Nell loved "books written at the end of the nineteenth-century—late Victorian with glorious printed texts and black and white illustrations" (89), hence revealing Nell's fascination with the Victorian past, which inevitably connects her with her mother Eliza and exerts a haunting influence on her and, later on, on her granddaughter Cassandra as well.

Regarding the nostalgic revival of Victorianism, Christine Krueger envisions the Victorian legacy as both "an intrinsic part of who we are and an alien other […] from which we still may have much to learn" (xii). Conversely, Simon Joyce argues that we never really encounter the Victorians, but a mediated image in resemblance with the reflection in a rearview mirror (3). This paradox is explicitly tackled in Morton's novel, since the Victorian past emerges and impinges on the present of Nell and Cassandra as they try to shed light on their respective fragmented identities. Nell's biological mother, Eliza Makepeace, lived during the Victorian period in England and Cornwall and, as Cassandra reads Nell's notebooks about Eliza, the youngest member in the family becomes acquainted with Victorian times. Theorists Rosario Arias and Patricia Pulham have resorted to tropes that metaphorically regard the Victorian past as a spectre that haunts us, in the same way as John Kucich and Dianne Sadoff also consider neo-Victorian textualities as "ghostly forms of the past in fictional pastiche" (xxiv). In this respect, as Cassandra moves to London following in Nell's footsteps, and by extension, Eliza's, she discovers that London is a city with "mist-filled streets and looming horses, glowing lamps that materialised, then vanished again into the fog-laden haze" (157), hence bringing back the haunting Victorian past in contemporary times.

Additionally, Cora Kaplan underscores the aesthetic pleasure involved in invoking the Victorian past, which is often tinged with a feeling of unease that recalls the dilemma between familiarity and strangeness (11). As a symbolic trope of perpetuation through time,

before Cassandra eventually finds Eliza's Victorian mourning brooch buried in the cottage garden in Cornwall, it is unveiled that Eliza's mother, Georgiana, gave it to her daughter as a valuable symbolic gift that "reminds us of those we've lost" and "those who came before and made us who we are" (147), thus blurring the boundaries between past and present. As Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn claim, postmodern novels that seek to evoke Victorian texts offer "a revival of previous literature repackaged and rebranded for a contemporary audience to provide them with an alternate view of the original literature" (3-5). As a case in point, in Morton's novel, it is stated that "Rose Mountrachet at 18 was fair indeed: white skin, a cloud of dark hair swept back in a loose braid, and the full bosom so fashionable in the period," which contrasts with Cassandra's contemporary perspective of the Victorian ideal of womanhood, as she imagines Rose as a "a girl who'd spent her entire childhood imprisoned by ill-health" (318). Nonetheless, a series of intertextual references to Victorian works give further emphasis to a pervasive sense of nostalgia that seeks to retrieve the Victorian past.

In Morton's novel, through her childhood memories, Nell recollects an early passage in which she pictures herself clutching a tiny white suitcase while waiting for a woman at a harbour, and during one of her visits to her grandmother's house, Cassandra discovers this same suitcase hidden under a quilt. As Cassandra eventually unveils, when Nell was a child, her mother Eliza took her to a harbour in England and told Nell to wait for her, but Eliza never came back. This passage in Morton's novel brings to mind Oscar Wilde's play *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), particularly in relation to Lady Bracknell's eventual discovery about the family nursemaid, Miss Prism, who left the manuscript of her novel in a pram, and misplaced the baby in a handbag, which she eventually forgot at Victoria Station. Years later, as happens with Nell in Morton's novel, Jack identifies the handbag which evinces that he is the lost son of Lady Bracknell's late sister and that his real name is Ernest. Correspondingly, in Morton's novel, it is also owing to her subsequently found luggage that it is unveiled that, as a child, Nell got lost in a harbour where Eliza had left her along with a suitcase containing her collection of stories, thus causing Nell's adoption and final discovery that her original name was Ivory. This starting point paves the way for a series of intertextualities with different displays of Victorian fiction and art throughout Morton's novel.

The hazardous life that Eliza and her twin brother Sammy lead as children in the city of London is remindful of many of the orphans in Charles Dickens's novels. When their mother, Georgiana, is rejected by her family owing to her elopement with a sailor, following her death, Eliza and Sammy, are hosted in the house of the Swindells, where Mr Swindell often threatens Eliza, exclaiming that "if she didn't find a way to earn the coins of two, she'd find herself in the workhouse" (207), thus exposing their bleak and despondent childhood as orphans in Victorian England, which was often portrayed in Dickens's novels. Analogously, in *Oliver Twist* (1838), its bereaved protagonist moves to London, where he meets a gang of juvenile pickpockets led by an elderly criminal named Fagin until Oliver discovers the secrets of his parentage and reestablishes ties with his family. In Morton's novel, Eliza and Sammy are also obliged to work for the Swindells and even take part in some unlawful errands, until Eliza is taken back to Blackhurst Manor to live with her uncle Linus and his wife Adeline.

The portrayal of Eliza's youth also presents intertextualities with the heroines in some of the novels of the Brontë sisters. When Eliza moves to Blackhurst Manor, where she lives with her uncle Linus, her aunt Adeline and her cousin Rose, her arrival calls to mind several passages in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* (1847). At Blackhurst Manor, Eliza catches sight of "a door, thick with glistening red paint" (226), which evokes the red room where Jane is locked by Aunt Reed in Gateshead Hall and triggers her fears as a child. Similarly, Adeline treats her niece Eliza with detachment and never considers her an actual family member, in the same manner as Mrs Reed treats Jane in Brontë's novel, as she excludes her from taking part in the family activities. In addition, as young girls in Blackhurst Manor, Eliza and Rose fantasise about their other cousin, whose existence is kept secret, stating that "they keep her locked upstairs" (312), in a manifest intertextual reference that evokes the presence of Bertha Mason in the attic of Thornfield Hall.

Besides, the relationship established between Rose and Eliza as cousins is highly remindful of that of Cathy and Heathcliff in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), particularly insofar as when Rose meets Eliza for the first time, she is initially dressed as a boy, thus stating that Rose's femininity and exquisite manners contrast with Eliza's tomboyish demeanour and unorthodox views in resemblance with the

respective portrayals of Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff. Likewise, although Eliza and Rose develop a close relationship, particularly in their youth, they grow gradually apart when Rose becomes engaged to Nathaniel Walker, a wealthy American artist whom she meets in New York, in the same way as, after Heathcliff runs away, Cathy marries Edgar Linton and grows detached from the beloved friend in her youth.

In Morton's novel, the different personalities of Eliza and Rose are often symbolised through artistic manifestations. When the character of William Martin, who knew Eliza in her lifetime, describes her to her daughter Nell, his portrayal of Eliza is closely evocative of Miranda in John William Waterhouse's Pre-Raphaelite painting (1916), since Martin describes Eliza sitting on "that black rock in the cove, looking out to the sea" and with her "red hair […] all the way to her waist" (421). Conversely, in the scrapbook journals that Rose keeps in her youth, she reflects upon the confined condition to which she feels subjected by means of establishing an explicit intertextuality with the central character in Alfred Lord Tennyson's ballad "The Lady of Shalott" (1842), since Rose also feels "cursed to spend eternity in her chamber, forced always to experience the world at one remove" (326). In analogy with the Lady of Shalott—who suffers from a mysterious curse which prevents her from looking directly at the world and must apprehend it instead through its shadows reflected in a mirror—Rose is prevented from leaving her enclosure in her family manor, which turns her into an enfeebled young Victorian woman.

As Rose comes of age, after her betrothal, she feels wary about sexuality because she is mostly unaware of even the basic notions, given the reserve and prudery assigned to women in Victorian times. Rose thus resorts explicitly to Thomas Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), stating that she consulted this novel "in the hopes that he [Hardy] might offer some insight into what I might expect when Nathaniel and I are wed" (414). At the time of its publication, Hardy's novel challenged the sexual morals in Victorian England, as it dealt with women's sexuality and motherhood out of wedlock. Rose soon becomes obsessed with becoming a mother, despite her useless efforts, which lead Doctor Matthews to diagnose, from a Victorian mindset, that Rose cannot become pregnant owing to "an unhealthy tendency towards physicality" (479). As Maureen Moran claims, as regards Victorian sexuality, female

passivity was strictly reinforced through religious convictions and medical theories alike (35), which categorised women into either angels of the house or fallen women. When Rose realizes that she cannot bear children, it is her cousin, Eliza, who is asked to lie with Nathaniel and conceive a child out of wedlock, thus turning into a fallen woman according to Victorian prescriptions of sexuality assigned to women.

As shown in Morton's novel, the process of coming of age of young girls in Victorian times often acquired some gothic undertones in relation to sexuality and motherhood. Hence, according to Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben, neo-Victorianism and neo-Gothicism were doomed to converge, given their common revivalist purposes (2), thus revealing a shared generic and ontological kinship (4), which categorises Morton's novel not only as neo-Victorian, but also as pertaining to the genre of the neo-Gothic.

3. Architextual traces of the Gothic: female Gothic, family secrets, doubles

In the context of neo-Gothic narratives, Fred Botting wonders whether an assimilated contemporary version of the Gothic would eclipse the notions of difference and otherness that remain so intrinsic to the Gothic genre (200). Nonetheless, as Julian Wolfreys argues, in neo-Victorian and neo-Gothic texts, "what returns is never simply a repetition," but "a repetition with a difference" (19). Morton's novel is pervasively endowed with instances of architextuality in terms of the literary Gothic tradition. In fact, it complies with representative features often attached to Gothic narratives, as David Stevens puts forward, such as the fascination for the past, the exploration of psychological insights, the stimulation of fear, the portrayal of exotic locations, and the introduction of plots within plots. Particularly, though, Morton's novel, as a postmodern Gothic narrative, mostly focuses on narratives pertaining to the female Gothic, the family as a source of abjection, and the uncanny archetype of the double from a neo-Gothic perspective.

The genre of the female Gothic usually portrays heroines who must face their fears in order to come of age and resolve the mysteries surrounding their identities. As Diana Wallace argues, Ellen Moers coined the term female Gothic to refer to "the work that women writers

have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic" (90). Besides, Moers identifies two different stages of development in the female Gothic, which involve a first phase addressing female concerns in relation to courtship and marriage—finding in Ann Radcliffe's novels its most paradigmatic exponent, in which a young woman is both a persecuted victim and a courageous heroine (91)—and a second phase exploring horrors related to maternity— as is the case of Mary Shelley's seminal novel *Frankenstein* (1818), which Moers defines as a birth myth (92). In narratives illustrative of the female Gothic at its first stage of development, young heroines are threatened with imprisonment in a castle by a male tyrant and must escape through labyrinthine passages and sublime landscapes to find their lost mother. In Morton's novel, *The Forgotten Garden*, the three heroines—Nell, Eliza, and Cassandra— share the absence of a mother figure, which triggers them to initiate a symbolic journey in search for her. In particular, it is Eliza's story which mostly complies with Tania Modleski's depiction of the classic female Gothic (1990), stating that the heroine's progress involves a separation from home, a series of oedipal conflicts, and the primal fear of identifying with the lost mother. In Eliza's story, as a result of the death of her parents, she must leave her parental house and this separation revives oedipal conflicts which find correlation in the appearance of substitute parental figures, who are embodied by the Mountrachets, since, for Eliza, her uncle Linus and her aunt Adelina become her respective wicked father and evil mother. As a Gothic heroine, Eliza symbolically fears that she will face the same fate that befell her mother, Georgiana, until she finds a kind substitute father figure, her lover Nathaniel, who allows her to reconciliate with her father and sever her symbolic ties with her mother, which will allow her to sanction her symbolic process of coming of age.

As regards the second stage of development of the female Gothic, which mostly explores female fears of motherhood, in Morton's novel, it is unveiled that Eliza's cousin, Rose, is unable to bear children as a result of the severe medical treatment that she was prescribed to treat her ill-health when she was a child. Determined to bear a child of her own at all costs, Rose approaches her cousin Eliza and concedes, "my body fails me as it has always done, but yours, Cousin, is strong—I need you to have a child for me, Nathaniel's child" (606). Having crossed the established ethics of morality, as she must lie with Rose's husband, Nathaniel, Eliza

gives birth to Ivory, who will eventually be left to face her own fate as a child, and her identity will remain unknown even for herself, as Nell will not learn about her true origins, and her original name as Ivory, until much later in her life. As a result of an unorthodox way of conceiving a child, Ivory's birth brings disgrace to the Mountrachet family, as also happens with Victor Frankenstein's progeny, who unleashes a curse on his family.

As a Gothic text, *The Forgotten Garden* also tackles female fears about the family, since women pertaining to different generations gradually unravel family secrets, incestuous relationships, and ancient curses which condition their female identities. In resemblance with the Gothic tradition and the decadent genealogies of its narratives, as is the case of Edgar Allan Poe's tale "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), in Morton's novel, the Mountrachet family is also haunted by events that conjure the Kristevan notion of abjection, which disturbs the established boundaries of the self, mainly through incest. As Kristeva contends, the source of abjection is "what disturbs identity, system, order" along with "what does not respect borders, positions, rules," hence it consists of "the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (4). Linus displays an incestuous infatuation with his sister Georgiana, and when Georgiana's daughter, Eliza, comes to live at Blackhurst Manor, Linus resumes his fantasies of recovering his Georgiana by means of his niece, stating that, "he'd been too late to recover his Georgiana, but through this girl she would be returned" (530). In the Gothic tradition, narratives often refer to a curse, befalling family lineages, resulting from the sins committed by their ancestors.

In Morton's novel, Adeline dies with her "face all contorted so that she looked to be grinning like a ghoul" (588), and Linus "went queer by all accounts" (588), thus bringing to the fore the motif of the house haunted by repressed family secrets. In Gothic fiction, the house becomes an extension of the family, while its locked rooms suggest the secrets of their dwellers, thus involving a symbiotic relationship between the building and the family, as is the case with Roderick and Madeline Usher in Poe's seminal tale about their manor, which also bears the family name. Analogously, when Eliza arrives at Blackhurst Manor for the first time, she notices that the building is "shrouded in dark mist, with tall trees and branches laced together behind it" (222-3), thus displaying a

symbolically discomforting atmosphere as nature holds dominion over the house. Inasmuch as Blackhurst Manor is deeply associated with the Mountrachet family, it also reflects the curse haunting its dwellers. Rose's husband, Nathaniel Walker, who is a reputed painter, describes the family manor as "the house of the dead" (473) owing to the synergetic relationship between the decadent abode and its tormented residents. There are also forbidden places that are associated with certain family members and their alleged sins. Adeline gives orders to build a wall that separates the manor from the cottage where Eliza is confined so that her pregnancy is never disclosed. All these forbidden places, particularly Eliza's cottage and the garden surrounding it, are considered haunted by ghosts years later, even though they are truly haunted by secrets from the past that await to be divulged.

In addition to the female Gothic and family secrets, the narratives involving the three main female characters in the novel also engage in architextuality with the archetype of the double, which often pervades Gothic narratives. According to Otto Rank, the terror of the double lies in "a wish-defence against a dreaded external destruction" (86), which involves protection against impending death, but also evinces the individual's approaching dissolution. As children, Eliza and Sammy roam along the streets of London at night playing a game in which each of them is assigned a role, thus reinforcing the dual identities between them as doubles. Besides, Eliza and Sammy are recurrently portrayed as double figures, stating that, "they were twins, it was little surprise that they should look so similar" (171), and in an uncanny scene, which brings to the fore Eliza's repressed self, following Sammy's tragic death, Eliza looks at herself disguised as a boy in the mirror, and it is stated that, "she smiled very slightly, and Sammy smiled back at her," while she touches "the cold glass of the mirror no longer alone" (171). In the following generation, when Eliza is summoned to the family manor, she finds in her cousin Rose her missing double to the extent that the symbolic bonds established between both female characters are elicited through their reflections in window glasses. After Sammy's tragic death, Rose arises as Eliza's missing double, hence developing a strong bond between them, since, drawing on Freudian premises, "the uncanny proceeds from something familiar which has been repressed" (247). Upon her arrival, Eliza notices someone is looking at her from above, as is described that, "Eliza moved closer to the window to get a better

look, but when she did the face was gone" (223), thus establishing a close bond between them from the start. Correspondingly, in the following generation, Nell admits that "a peculiar sense of duality, not unwelcome, followed her all the way" (304), particularly as she retraces her origins, and her past blends in the present. Nonetheless, Nell mostly feels a sense of doubleness in relation to her granddaughter Cassandra, since, despite their age difference, it is often conceded that Nell acts younger, whereas Cassandra acts older, thus establishing a symbolic connection between them in terms of age.

Morton's novel thus reverts to the Gothic tradition through the inclusion of narratological elements pertaining to the female Gothic, the pivotal role of the family as embodied by the manor house and its abject secrets, and the archetype of the double as indicative of the uncanny and repressed selves. According to Sarah Maier and Brenda Ayres, neo-Gothic narratives, which evoke past textualities, have the purpose of appeasing a sense of nostalgia, but also of correcting the past through retrieving suppressed stories, and of deconstructing as well as relocating readers in their postmodern alienation (6). Given the fact that it presents gothic undertones and evinces diverse instances of the strange as a modality of the fantastic, some passages of Morton's novel also bring to the fore references to classic fairy tales and children's stories through resorting to metatextuality.

4. Metatextual traces of children's stories and fairy tales

Passages from Morton's novel also reveal instances of metatextuality with children's stories, insofar as Eliza as a narrator, but also Morton's own writing persona, bring to the fore the self-reflexive quality of texts within texts and the craft of literary creativity. In particular, the trope of Eliza's garden acquires metatextual references, since it is there that Eliza becomes a writer of fairy tales, establishing recurrent correlations between her everyday experiences and the magic events taking place in her narratives. As an evident display of metatextuality, in Morton's novel, the writer of children's stories Frances Hodgson Burnett makes her appearance as a character, as she is invited to a party held in the gardens of Blackhurst Manor, and before making her acquaintance, Rose's husband, Nathaniel, is browsing through the pages of her novel *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1886). Nonetheless, for the most part, as its title

evinces, Morton's novel mainly looks back to Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911), whose plot revolves around Mary Lennox, who is sent to England with her uncle Archibald Craven and her aunt Lilias Craven, and discovers her aunt's private walled garden, which her uncle had locked following the tragic death of his wife, and so, along with her cousin Colin, Mary determines to restore the garden to its former splendour. In a display of metatextuality, inasmuch as Eliza is also a Victorian writer of fairy tales, Morton's novel evokes Hodgson Burnett's classic Victorian children's story, since Eliza is also summoned to live with uncle Linus and aunt Adeline in Blackhurst Manor, where she discovers a neglected garden that she restores to its full bloom with her cousin Rose's help. Nonetheless, in addition to metatextual references to Hodgson Burnett's narratives, other children's stories are also evoked in Morton's novel. When Cassandra first travels to London and visits "destinations like Kensington," she feels "like being dropped into a story book from her childhood" (172). Cassandra imagines the city of London in which Eliza lived as a child, which bears resemblance with the city portrayed in J.M. Barrie's play *Peter Pan* (1904). Like Wendy, who is introduced into a world of magic by Peter Pan and acts like a mother to the lost children, Eliza also attempts to extricate herself from her bleak existence, turning into a mother figure for her brother Sammy, while, like Wendy, who is shielded by the pendant she wears around her neck, Eliza also finds strength in her mother's mourning brooch, until both Wendy and Eliza are respectively kidnapped by wicked patriarchs like Captain Hook and Linus Mountrachet.

In addition to children's stories ranging from Hodgson Burnett's to Barrie's play, since Eliza is an author of fairy tales, the presence of characters, tropes and imagery pertaining to folklore becomes pervasive all through her narrative. Drawing on seminal volumes—like Vladimir Propp's syntagmatic analysis of folk tales, Stith Thompson's comprehensive index of folk narratives, and Claude Lévi-Strauss paradigmatic analysis—which contributed to systematising the recurrent elements comprised in folk tales, more recently, from a contemporary perspective, Marina Warner has synthesised the basic components of the fairy tale. As Warner claims, a fairy tale involves a familiar story which has been passed on down from generation to generation, in which the presence of the past becomes pervasive through the combination of recognizable plots, and which elicits wonder by

means of the intervention of the supernatural, while it also resorts to the narratological convention of a happy ending. Morton's novel comprises metatextual references to fairy tales, both classic and original, which contribute to fictionalising emblematic biographical events, but also to establishing connections between family members from generation to generation, and to accentuating a child's imaginative mind that will later give way to the writer's creativity.

Eliza's book of fairy tales acquires significance among the different family generations because it is bequeathed to the next generations as part of her personal legacy. Initially, Eliza becomes acquainted with storytelling on behalf of her mother, Georgiana, who used to tell her fairy tales when she was a child. In due course, Eliza would tell her twin brother the first tales that ever came to her mind, and in her youth, when Eliza's collection of fairy tales is published, she gives it to her daughter as a present and puts it in the tiny suitcase that Nell takes on her journey to Australia. As a young child herself, Cassandra discovers Eliza's collection of fairy tales in Nell's house and begins to read it, thus establishing connections among the different family generations.

Passages from fairy tales are evoked metatextually throughout the novel to underline particular dramatic events. Some events are strongly reminiscent of those in Brothers Grimm's "Snow White" (1812), especially in relation to the characterisation of Adeline and her treatment of her niece Eliza. Adeline gazes at her reflected image in the mirror and ponders about the cruelty of age, which contrasts with the vivacity and strength of her niece Eliza. Besides, during her stay in the cottage, Cassandra plucks an apple from the tree and bites it, as she realises that "her lids were heavy and she closed her eyes" (364), thus suddenly falling asleep until Christian wakes her up. This event in Morton's novel also bears strong resemblance with the passage in the classic tale "Snow White," in which its young female protagonist is visited by an elderly woman, who is actually her wicked stepmother in disguise and gives her a poisoned apple that will cause her to fall into deep sleep until she is finally awakened by the prince.

Other dramatic events in the novel are also evocative of Brothers Grimm's tale "Hansel and Gretel" (1812). When Eliza dies upon attempting to jump off the carriage which takes her back to the manor, Adeline cunningly intends to bury Eliza's body in an unmarked grave at

the other end of the maze. To that purpose, Adeline asks the gardener, Davies, to take her through the maze, while, along her path, Adeline has "one hand in the pocket of her dress, fingertips emerging at regular intervals to drop tiny white pebbles from Ivory's collection" (634) to ensure that she will be able to retrace her steps on her own. This passage brings to mind the one in "Hansel and Gretel," in which a woodcutter's wicked second wife urges him to abandon his two children in the woods, and Hansel sneaks out of the house and gathers as many white pebbles as he can in order to lay a guiding trail that will shine at night and will enable them to go back home.

Additionally, other events in the novel recall passages from Charles Perrault's story "Sleeping Beauty" (1697). When her friend Ruby visits Cassandra in the cottage that she has inherited from her grandmother, she pays attention to the antique spinning wheel, which remains from the time when Eliza lived in the cottage. As Cassandra warns her friend not to prick her finger, Ruby replies, "I don't want to be responsible for putting us both to sleep for a hundred years" (501). Ruby's ironic reference alludes to Perrault's tale, in which seven good fairies are invited to be godmothers at the christening of the infant princess, although an old fairy, who is uninvited, curses the princess so that one day she will prick her finger on a spinning wheel and fall asleep.

If passages in the novel are evocative of fairy tales, the stories in Eliza's collection arise as a fictional interpretation of actual events that she translates into her world of fantasy, thus engaging once more in metatextuality. When Eliza talks to the gardener, Davies, about her intention of compiling fairy tales as Brothers Grimm had done, he retorts, "why you'd want to be like your pair of grim German fellows is beyond me," advising her, "you should be writing your own stories" (337). Three of the stories in Eliza's collection of fairy tales are inserted as metafictional displays that echo significant events in the respective narratives pertaining to the three female protagonists.

Eliza's fairy tale "The Changeling" revolves around a sad queen and an absent king who have a baby girl, but the queen is always concerned about her child, because the fairy queen has told her that the princess will be taken from her on her eighteenth birthday. By means of this tale, Eliza expresses her concerns about the way her cousin Rose is treated in Blackhurst Manor, as, like the queen in the tale, her mother

Adeline is constantly wary that her daughter may fall ill. In "The Golden Egg," a young princess suffers from poor health and, when her mother resorts to her magic looking glass to find a cure for her daughter, she has the vision of a young maiden in a cottage who is the guardian of the golden egg that will ensure the princess's happiness. Through this story, Eliza allegorically refers to the fact that, given Rose's inability to have children, it is Eliza who is chosen to give birth to a child, Ivory—who is later called Nell—in order to fulfil Rose's wish to be a mother. Finally, in "The Crone's Eyes," a young princess, who has no parents, is hosted by a blind crone who narrates that her father removed her eyes so that she would not see the evil things in the world. To repay the crone's kindness, when the young princess comes of age, she determines to cross the sea and find the crone's eyes. By means of this story, Eliza anticipates events that will befall her daughter Nell and her granddaughter Cassandra. This tale reflects Nell's symbolic blindness as regards her true origins, and following Nell's death, Cassandra decides to travel across the sea to England to disentangle the mystery of her grandmother's parentage. Given the fact that identity issues acquire particular significance in Morton's novel, journeys of self-discovery, genealogies and heroines attain mythical dimensions through hypertextual links to classical myths.

5. Hypertextual echoes of classical myths: female triads, journeys, and goddesses

The three main female characters in Morton's novel call to mind Robert Graves's myth of the triple goddess. According to Graves, the figure of the triple goddess consists of the Goddess of the Sky, who encompasses the three phases of the moon, namely the new moon, the full moon, and the waning moon; the Goddess of the Earth, who comprises the three seasons of spring, summer, and winter; and, the Goddess of the Underworld, who is concerned with the three life phases of birth, procreation, and death (378). In terms of aging, the stages that the triple goddess represents correspond with a girl who symbolises youth and enthusiasm, a woman who personifies ripeness and fertility, and a hag who embodies wisdom and rest. Nonetheless, given the link between the three stages that each goddess comprises, the identities of the three goddesses become obliterated, which ultimately suggests

the blurring of identities among the life stages of youth, maturity, and old age. Accordingly, the narratives revolving around the three female protagonists in the novel—Eliza, Nell, and Cassandra—acquire a mythical quality, because, in analogy with the figure of the triple goddess, their narratives establish hypertextual links with characters and tropes from classical myths, which transform them from their original narrative into contemporary adaptations. As the plot unfolds, the three main characters in the novel face long journeys to foreign lands, they personify female lineages in relation to nature, they embody mythical triads, and they are evocative of certain mythical goddesses.

As regards mythical journeys of self-discovery, the voyages that the female protagonists in the novel must make bring to mind passages from the myths of Odysseus, Oedipus, and Daedalus. As an older woman, Nell makes a journey that acquires particular significance, as it is stated that, "after all this time, a lifetime, she was finally going home" (71). The symbolic journey of going back home recalls Odysseus's myth, as the Greek king of Ithaca eventually returns home twenty years after his departure, when he left his homeland to take part in the Trojan War. Besides, Cassandra resumes Nell's mission, and making it the purpose of her life, her actions bring to mind Oedipus's act of coming to terms with his fate after consulting the Delphic Oracle. Along her journey, Cassandra discerns Nell's mistaken parentage, which ends up with the respective sudden deaths of her biological parents, as happens in Oedipus's classical myth. Likewise, Eliza's narrative portrays the existence of an intricate maze that leads from the cottage to the manor house. The presence of the maze is evocative of Daedalus's labyrinth, which concealed the Minotaur, which Theseus destroys with the help of Ariadne's thread. In Eliza's narrative, Rose's secret about her child finds correlation in Pasiphaë's secret in relation to the Minotaur. Besides, in resemblance with Theseus, Nathaniel is guided across the maze by Eliza, as a counterpart to Ariadne, to symbolically slay the Minotaur that signals the terrible secret about Rose's child.

As she retraces Nell's origins, Cassandra realises there are recurrent cases in her family in which mothers and daughters have been separated from each other. After Nell passes away, her foster sisters cynically tell her granddaughter Cassandra that, "Nell came from a tradition of bad mothers, the sort who could abandon their children with ease" (77). The

different narratives that make up Morton's novel mainly relate to each other since they all comprise a search for a missing mother figure and a bereaved child, as happens to Eliza with her daughter, to Nell with her mother Eliza, and to Cassandra with her grandmother Nell. The close bonds, but also tragic separations, between mothers and daughters evoke the Eleusinian Mysteries and the classical myth of Demeter, the goddess of agriculture, and her daughter Persephone, who was seized by Hades, the god of the underworld, thus obliging Demeter to look for her, until Zeus allowed Persephone to return to her mother. This myth explains the cycle of seasons, as when Demeter and Persephone are reunited, the earth returns to prosperity in spring, whereas, when Persephone is separated from her mother, the earth is deprived of its splendour during winter. In Morton's novel, the union between female relatives also acquires mythical dimensions as is reflected in the blooming of Eliza's garden when her daughter is with her. Given its mythical qualities, the garden, where Eliza and Rose play as children, also evokes the Garden of the Hesperides, as these nymphs were responsible for tending Hera's orchard after Gaia had given the goddess a tree with golden apples as a wedding gift. It is also at the Garden of Hesperides that Eris, the goddess of discord, drops the golden apple that unleashes the dispute among Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite. As a counterpart to the goddess of discord, Adeline is also responsible for causing the estrangement between Eliza and her cousin Rose.

Theorist James Ellen Harrison refers to the existence of mythical female trinities as chronological symbols representing different life stages. In Morton's novel, as Eliza, Nell and Cassandra visit the cottage in their respective lifetimes, the three of them catch sight of the antique spinning wheel which symbolically connects the genealogical threads of the three characters. Accordingly, this imagery calls up the mythical female triad of the Moirai as goddesses who shaped the destiny of mortals by means of controlling the threads of life. In particular, Clotho spins the threads of life in the womb, Lachesis determines the length of life allotted to each mortal, and Atropos cuts off the threads of life. In Morton's novel, although each of the female protagonists belongs to a different generation and is portrayed as a woman of a particular age—Nell in her old age, Eliza in her maturity, and Cassandra in her childhood—their ages are recurrently blurred along with their identities as an embodiment of their trinity.

Finally, the three main female characters in Morton's novel present traits that are remindful of a series of heroines in classical myths, like Penelope, Pandora, and Cassandra. As Odysseus's wife, Penelope waits twenty years for her husband's return, and analogously, the three female protagonists in Morton's novel spend their lives waiting to be reunited with those who are absent, particularly Nell who must wait a lifetime to resume her former life. Besides, in Pandora's myth, after humans receive the stolen gift of fire from Prometheus, Zeus decides to punish them by commanding Hephaestus to cast from earth the first woman, Pandora, who brings a jar containing countless evils. In Morton's novel, Eliza possesses a pot with "three items inside: a leather pouch, a swatch of red-gold hair and a brooch" (638), which she conceals as a child and will eventually bring disgrace to the whole family, as, when she intends to retrieve the pot, Eliza is kidnapped and separated from her daughter forever. Finally, in some versions of Cassandra's myth, it is described that, upon falling asleep, some snakes whispered into her ears and endowed her with the gift of prophecy. In Morton's novel, Cassandra has a recurrent dream in which "she was looking for someone," noticing that "if she were only to walk in the right direction, she would find them" (108), thus resembling Cassandra and her intuition in the classical myth.

As has been evinced, by means of hypertextual connections, classical myths involving self-discovery, female genealogies, and mythical heroines are evoked and transformed into different narratives related to the three female protagonists, who arise as a mythical triad that joins and blurs the respective identities of the characters.

6. Conclusion

Morton's novel *The Forgotten Garden* presents manifold instances of transtextuality, to use Genette's term, in relation to Victorian novels, Gothic fiction, fairy tales, and classical myths. In addition, though, this amalgamation of textualities contributes to fictionalising an actual narrative by means of which the author of the novel aimed to come to terms with a traumatic episode involving her own family lineage. Through a display of metafiction, in an appended final note in her novel *The Forgotten Garden*, Morton confesses that, "my own grandmother's secret first inspired the story" (647), since, when Morton's grandmother

turned twenty-one years of age, her father told her that he was not her biological parent. According to Morton, as an author, this event urged her to approach identity as a "mutable creation we all rely upon as we make our way into the world" (647), taking into consideration that narratives of identity are susceptible to suffer changes and modifications through time. Inasmuch as Morton approaches identity as a permanently changeable text, made up of different transtextual influences, her novel *The Forgotten Garden* reflects her ideas by means of resorting to transtextuality in all its different manifestations.

In relation to Victorian fiction, Morton's novel presents instances of intertextuality with novels by Charles Dickens, the Brontës, and Thomas Hardy, in addition to the play by Oscar Wilde, and poetry by Alfred Lord Tennyson. Explicit and subtle references to these Victorian works give evidence of the influence that Victorian literature has exerted on Morton as a writer and as a Victorian scholar. Besides, Morton's novel presents architextual connections with Gothic fiction, particularly in relation to narratives pertaining to the female Gothic, the role of the family in gothic tales, and the gothic archetype of the double. Morton's novel is mostly related to Gothic fiction owing to narratological conventions in terms of plot development, tropes and archetypes, hence presenting architextual connections with Gothic narratives like novels by Ann Radcliffe and Mary Shelley as well as Edgar Allan Poe's tales. Additionally, since one of the protagonists, Eliza, is a writer of fairy tales, Morton's novel presents metatextual links with children's stories like Frances Hodgson Burnett's book, which is suggested in the title of the novel itself, but also with James Matthew Barrie's narratives of Peter Pan, alongside some of the folktales of the Brothers Grimm and Charles Perrault. Hence, as Morton's novel evokes passages from classic fairy tales, Eliza's own original stories fulfil a metatextual function, as they make a critical commentary as well as underline turning points in the plot of the novel itself. Finally, by means of resorting to journeys of self-discovery, female triads and the portrayal of mythical heroines, Morton's novel also presents hypertextual connections with classical myths which are evoked and transformed. The pervasive presence of instances of transtextuality throughout the novel gives evidence of the self-conscious quality of the text as reflective of the way Morton envisions identity, that is, as an amalgamation of different textualities joined together through transtextuality.

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Received / Recibido: 8/4/2024 *Accepted / Aceptado: 4/7/2024*