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The intercultural *Bildungsroman* as a platform for a hybrid feminist epistemology in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* (1990): The (im)possibility of a unified feminist movement

ABSTRACT. This article analyzes *Lucy* (1990) by Jamaica Kincaid in terms of the intercultural *Bildungsroman* basing on Mikhail Bakhtin's characterization of the coming-of-age genre. Focusing on the relationship between the characters, it highlights the tension between contrasting feminist views. Seeking to emphasize how an intercultural vision contributes innovative perspectives on society, this paper argues that the eponymous protagonist of the novel has to find a way to reconcile the American culture with her Antiguan culture in her own feminist and postcolonial terms -an intercultural perspective. On the one hand, the relationship between Lucy and Mariah—her employer—reflects a tension between second-wave and third-wave feminism, which, the heroine eventually reconciles opening up the path for a unified vision of the feminist movement. Lucy's postcolonial vision, in particular, is similar to that articulated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. On the other hand, the strain between Lucy and her mother is related to the heroine's endorsement of second-wave feminist views as articulated by Betty Friedan and other feminist theorists of the 1960s and 1970s. In general, this novel develops an important vision for the global feminist movement.

KEYWORDS: Interculturalism, Bildungsroman, Feminist waves, Postcolonialism, Caribbean literature

Introduction

This article analyzes Kincaid's third novel *Lucy* (1990) in terms of the intercultural *Bildungsroman* offering a novel perspective on the book. From the perspective of the coming-of-age genre, it focuses on Mikhail's Bakhtin's characterization of this genre in his writing "The Bildungsroman". This paper argues that published in 1994, at the height of the third-wave feminist movement, *Lucy* also reflects earlier feminist per-

spectives. Focusing on a postcolonial and feminist interpretation of the novel, this paper propounds that the novel presents an intercultural perspective, which is based on reconciling a post-colonial feminist perspective with a Western/American feminist point of view. Such reconciliation allows the eponymous protagonist to find her way in American society. Although this book is well-known, through a critical intercultural reading of the text, this article contributes an innovative perspective to existing scholarship on this work. It shows that *Lucy* offers a hybrid perspective, which revisits the American literary canon traditionally grounded on an "essentialist" viewpoint if articulated by minority writers or on an "exclusionist" one if conceptualized by Anglo-Saxon authors (D'haen 1997). Furthermore, it suggests that the text opens up a new path for the feminist movement. The aim of this paper is not to discuss the plot of *Lucy*, something that has been at length by numerous scholars, but rather to suggest a novel ground to reflect on this book. This objective is accomplished through a structural and post-structural analysis of *Lucy*.

Whilst there is a consensus that this text is a *Bildungsroman*, there are diverging interpretations on the type of coming of age narrative that it represents. For example, the protagonist's maturation as a woman and her development as a "resistant postcolonial subject" have been considered characteristics of the diasporic *Bildungsroman* by Ferguson (Ferguson, 1994, p. 164). In contrast to Ferguson, Tolchin focuses on emotions in the novel. She contends that it does not describe any "hysterical moments or manic episodes" but it presents passages "saturated with the protagonist's great dissatisfaction and dramatic emotions" (Tolchin, 2007, p. 92). Although they categorize this *Bildungsroman* in different ways, critics generally agree that *Lucy* shows a post-colonial perspective in her dialectical relationship with the various social contexts in the United States or Antigua. There is also a general agreement among scholars that the protagonist seeks to gain independence as a woman from circumstances that oppress her because of her gender—it is often mentioned as a "female" (see for example, Ferguson, 1994, p. 164) since a feminist perspective on the book is not always clearly articulated by these critics.

Even though it agrees with the above-mentioned perspectives on Kincaid's novel, this article seeks to emphasize that, in the book, there is a tension between a post-colonial and an American feminist perspective, which, however, is reconciled by the protagonist through a critical intercultural vision. We contend that, on the one hand, Lucy employs a third-

world feminism point of view to deconstruct Mariah and her friends' narrow feminist standpoint from which she feels excluded. This perspective, we argue, is akin to Spivak's critique of second-wave French feminism. Although apparently Lucy assesses her situation in the United States through a postcolonial feminist perspective, on the other hand, we note that in order to eventually conquer her own place in American society as a feminist woman and as a post-colonial subject Lucy, however, has to analyze her culture through a critical lens and find a balance between her own culture and the American culture. In other words, we observe that Lucy constructs her identity in the United States around a hybrid perspective that combines a critical perception of both the American Society and her own culture using both postcolonial and second-wave feminism.

1. *Lucy* (1994) as an intercultural *Bildungsroman*

Kincaid was born on May 25, 1949, in St John, Antigua in the Caribbean. At the age of sixteen, she moved from Antigua to New York City to work as an au-pair. Later, she won a scholarship to study in New Hampshire but within two years she returned to New York City. In 1983, her first book was published, which was entitled *At the bottom of the river*. It was followed by *Annie John* in 1984 and *A Small place* in 1988. *Lucy* was published in 1990. In 1996 Kincaid published *The autobiography of my mother* and *My brother* in 1997. The book *Talk stories* (2001) collects her "Talk of the Town" columns for "The New Yorker". In the same year came out *My garden book*. In 2005 the book *Among flowers: A walk in the Himalaya was printed. Her latest novel is entitled See Now Then* was published in 2013. Kincaid is well-known for her provocative and critical voice, however, the importance of her criticism has probably not been fully assessed.

Kincaid's fourth literary work entitled *Lucy* (1990) describes the migration of the eponymous character from Antigua to the United States to work as an au-pair for an American family—the husband is called Lewis and the wife is called Mariah. Her journey starts in a position of servitude within the household where she works; however, this position is a privileged one. The room which has been assigned to Lucy is the maid's room, just off the kitchen. Her position, however, is beneficial because the family is kind to her. She recognizes her privilege when she

considers "How nice everyone was to me, though, saying that I should regard them as my family and make myself at home (Kincaid, 1990, p. 7). She then adds: "I believed them to be sincere for I knew that such a thing would not be said to a member of their real family. After all, aren't family the people who become the millstone around your life's neck?" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 8). What Lucy implies with these words is that sometimes there is enmity within family members but we can choose to make strangers we like part of our family.

Furthermore, this book portrays the idyllic life led by the American family where Lucy is employed. The heroine recognizes the privileged position, in which this family lives, for instance, when she wonders: "Couldn't human beings in their position—wealthy, comfortable, beautiful, with the best the world had to offer at their fingertips—be safe and secure and never suffer so much as a broken fingernail?" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 85). The quoted words reveal the extent to which the couple Lucy works for is privileged. Because this couple is affluent but also kind, Lucy's staying with them could be perfect. Lucy, in fact, dreams about Mariah and Lewis and she relates this dream to them. After making the duo part of her dream, she reflects: "I had meant by telling them my dream that I had taken them in because only people who were important to me had ever shown up in my dream. I did not know if they understood that" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 15). With these words, Lucy admits that she has made the pair part of herself and that she feels the three of them belong together.

Although time spent as an au-pair in New York City could be idyllic for the main character, the protagonist has to endure a very tense relationship with her employer, Mariah, and also with her own mother. The tension between Lucy and Mariah can be explained in terms of a contrast between second-wave and third-wave feminism, which, however, Lucy reconciles. On the one hand, Lucy's relationship with Mariah throughout the novel suggests a tension between a postcolonial feminist interpretation (third-wave) and Western second-wave-feminism; on the other hand, it illustrates the view that Lucy does not reject second-wave feminism altogether. Moreover, Lucy has to deal with a difficult relationship with her mother, which ultimately causes a breakup in their relationship. This breakage between mother and daughter is due to Lucy's endorsement of theories elaborated by second-wave feminism.

To understand these tensions we need to analyze the novel from the perspective of the *Bildungsroman*. *Lucy* is a *Bildungsroman* because Lucy

"*emerges along with the world*" (Bakhtin, 2007, p. 23 cited in Steinby, 2014, p. 113) in the sense that the development of the protagonist throughout the novel reflects the rise of the anti-colonial struggles in the Caribbean region. As Steinby notes, the emergence of the protagonist along with the world as a reflection of the historical emergence of the world is a characteristic that Bakhtin ascribes to the *Bildungsroman* (Steinby, 2014, p. 113). This view is consistent with Bakhtin's understanding of the "chronotope" as "the right moment of time and place for human action but the action itself 'makes use' of time to become reality" (Steinby, 2014, p. 113). In the context of the *Bildungsroman* specifically, "time appears to be the medium for performing human action" (Steinby, 2014, p. 113).

What is central to Lucy's *Bildung* is the heroine's struggle in the socio-cultural environment, an aspect which, according to Bakhtin, characterizes the novel of development (Golban, 2018, p. 74). In her work *The myth of the heroine: The female bildungsroman in the twentieth century: Dorothy Richardson, Simone De Beauvoir, Doris Lessing, Christa Wolf* (1986) Labovitz argues that "the heroines of the female Bildungsroman challenge the very structure of society, raising questions of equality not only of class but of sexes, as well" (Labovitz, 1986, p. 35, cited in Japtok, 2003, p. 27). According to Japtok, however, the protagonists of the ethnic *Bildungsroman* "negotiate both ethnicity and gender" (Japtok, 2003, p. 27). This view finds validation in *Lucy*, where the protagonist negotiates gender and, to an extent, ethnicity. Another important reflection on the ethnic *Bildungsroman* is offered by Braendlin, who argues that the ethnic *Bildungsroman* "[p]ortrays the particular identity and adjustments problem of people whose sex or color renders them unacceptable to the dominant society; it expresses their struggle for individuation and a part in the American dream, which society simultaneously offers and denies to them" (Braendlin, 1983, p. 78, cited in Japtok, 2003, p. 27).

Braendlin mentions that the heroines of the ethnic *Bildungsroman* want to be defined by their own culture and not by an outside culture. In line with Braendlin's view on the ethnic *Bildungsroman*, we can observe that Lucy wants to be free not only physically but also psychologically and to define her subjectivity in terms of her own culture. Lucy's desire to define her subjectivity in her own terms is evident especially in her relationship with Mariah. Mariah is described as "kind, warm, generous and well-disposed towards Lucy" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 19). However, Lucy interprets every word that Mariah utters through her colonial exper-

ience and, as a result, Lucy understands Mariah's words in a different way than they are intended. For example, the daffodils that Mariah wants Lucy to see remind Lucy of a poem she had to learn when she was ten years old. This flower is not native to Antigua but Lucy had to learn this poem as a result of the British occupation of her country. Thus this poem reminds Lucy "of conquered and conquests" "of brutes masquerading as angels and angels portrayed as brutes" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 30). Based on her experience as a colonized woman, Lucy subverts the colonial discourse and refers to the British as brutes and the Antiguan people as angels (who, in colonized Antigua, were traditionally portrayed as brutes by the British colonial forces). Equally, Lucy takes with contempt Mariah's attempt to establish a closer bond between them by asserting that she has Indian blood. Lucy considers "My grandmother is a Carib Indian. That makes me one quarter Carib Indian. But I don't go around saying that I have some Indian blood in me" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 40). The quoted sentence exemplifies Lucy's inability to establish a common bond with Mariah due to her employer's inability to recognize the heroine's colonial experience.

Concerning Lucy's point of view, Schultermandl argues that Lucy is not a "naive third-world immigrant at the threshold of a benevolent motherland" (Schultermandl, 2013, p. 46). Instead, in Schultermandl's view, Lucy displays an unsympathetic perspective through which she "expresses her hopes and dreams as well as her disappointments and misconceptions" (Schultermandl, 2013, p. 46). Schultermandl's view agrees with the vision of the ethnic female—feminist *Bildungsroman* proposed by Braendlin and they both suggest that despite living in a privileged environment the protagonist increasingly refuses to conform to the American Culture. She makes this choice because she comes from a different culture, she has a different point of view from the American one (according to O'Callaghan "Lucy observes her new home through the filter of the cultural values of the old" (O'Callaghan, 2001, p. 86) and she misses home (what O'Callaghan defines as "not simple immigrant nostalgia" (O'Callaghan, 2001, p. 86). In addition, as observed by Braendlin and Schultermandl, she wants to retain her own critical perspective. These circumstances induce the protagonist to be judgmental towards American society.

Whilst Braendlin and Schultermandl understanding of the heroine places this book in a critical context, it is necessary to emphasize that, as Schultermandl also argues, Lucy's reception of Mariah's words and her

attitude towards the United States can be read in terms of a transnational memory. A transnational memory is a "transgression of the geopolitical boundaries that contain Lucy's memories in two national contexts: an American and Antiguan one" (Schultermadl, 2013, p. 49). In Schultermandl's view, even though Lucy was initially determined to forget her past and to create a new one, ultimately she decides to neither "reinvent herself in purely American terms" neither "to excavate an identity that is purely Antiguan" (Schultermadl, 2013, p. 49). According to the line of analysis suggested in this article, Schultermadl illustrates a seminal aspect of Lucy's *Bildungsroman*; namely, how memory works in reconciling the culture of the past (the native culture) and the culture of the present (the culture of immigration) as it shapes Lucy's identity and growth.

While in agreement with Schultermadl' s understanding of the heroine as an intercultural character, in what follows we emphasize, however, another aspect of her intercultural *Bildung*; namely, her feminism. Specifically, we point out that the heroine seeks to reconcile a radical third world feminist perspective with a critical American/ western feminist perspective. Confirming the importance of a feminist reading of *Lucy*, in several interviews, Kincaid stresses the feminist aspect of this book. Emphasizing the similarities between her own mother Annie Drew and the mother described in the novel, Kincaid remarks that "My mother […] was a betrayer of her sex" (Listfield, 1990, cited in Bouson, 2005, p. 67). She also contends that *Lucy* is full of "thick female stuff" (Listfield, Perry, 1990, p. 506, cited in Bouson, 2005, p. 67). The author furthermore asserts that *Lucy* is not about "race and class" but rather it deals with "a person trying to figure out how to be an artist, an artist of herself and of things" (Kennedy, 1990, p. 85, cited in Bouson, 2005, p. 67).

An analogous line of analysis to the one we are following has been shortly developed by Paravisini-Gebert (1999). Paravisini-Gebert emphasizes how *Lucy* reflects traditional feminist values and an African--American, postcolonial/third world feminist exegesis. Paravisini-Gebert also maintains that Lucy "fits the traditional description of the feminist heroine" who is "conscious of the unfairness of traditional gender relationship, aware of the exploitative nature of sexual practices" vows "to make a life for herself that does not include submission to a man" and search for equal power relationships (Paravisini-Gebert, 1999, p. 141). However, she is also aware of the movement limitations in terms of

"class and race differences" (Paravisini-Gebert, 1999, p. 141). According to Paravisini-Gebert, Lucy, "a feminist in the accepted sense of the term, is also a character whose thoughts and actions are oriented toward a critique of feminism's slowness to incorporate class and race differences in its approach" (Paravisini-Gebert, 1999, p. 141).

Focusing like Paravisini-Gebert on the topic of feminism in this novel, in her discussion of third-wave feminism, DeCaires Narain posits that *Lucy* provides "a comprehensive catalogue of the ways in which expansive gestures, however, 'well-meaning' are often complicit with oppressive structures" (DeCaires Narain, 2004, p. 248). As such, the novel can be viewed "as a stark exposition of the ways" in which liberal feminism "fails unless it interrogates its motives with scrupulous rigour" (DeCaires Narain, 2004, p. 248). This liberal feminism—American second-wave feminism—in *Lucy* is represented by Mariah, who seeks to establish a sisterhood bond with the main character but fails to acknowledge Lucy's colonial background and in general, does not recognize the presence of racism in American society. Lucy, instead, seeks to make Mariah aware of her limitations.

In agreement with *both* Paravisini-Gebert and DeCaires Narain's perspectives on *Lucy* which offer diverging interpretations of her feminism, in what follows we argue that the heroine employs a *hybrid* feminist perspective, which combines both second-wave and third-wave feminism. On the one hand, her point of view is grounded in postcolonial thinking, as it offers a similar perspective to the one offered by Gayatri Spivak in her critical interpretation of French feminism but it is framed within the Caribbean context. On the other hand, it reflects a second--wave feminism perspective akin to that elaborated by Betty Friedan and others.

2. Lucy and Gayatri Spivak's postcolonial feminist vision

According to Abdalkafor (2015), Spivak read second-wave French feminists, among others Kristeva, and "wrote for two American journals, Critical inquiry and Yale French Studies," which demonstrated an interest in French feminism (Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 38). However, she subsequently refused to continue writing for these two journals any longer. Her dilemma during the 1980s was consequent to "her being a Bengali woman who realizes that the 'native subaltern female' did not have

a position to speak from and could not participate in the feminist struggle (Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 39). Spivak concluded that there is a discontinuity between "the struggle of the feminist" and that "of the racial other" that she read "in Kant's third critique" (Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 39). Spivak's realization that French feminism failed "to embrace" the "'native subaltern female'" cause her to shift her interests and to write "French feminism in an international frame," as well as translating "Devi's short story "Draupadi" in 1981" (Spivak, 1990, p. 167–168, cited in Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 39). In "French Feminism in an International Frame," Spivak criticizes French feminism "for its complicity" with imperialist discourses "in that it excludes "'the native subaltern'" woman from "the feminist passage to freedom" (Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 39). As a result, according to Spivak, French feminists' involvement of "the 'Third-World' woman" in the feminist struggle does not entail a "genuine other-directed politics" because the true aim is the consolidation of "the self" (Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 40).

As Abdalkafor observes, by "highlighting the heterogeneity of women's struggles in her readings of literature" Spivak places herself among third-wave feminists. In *Politics and Feminism* (1999), in fact, Arneil describes third-wave feminism as encompassing "the diversity and differences in perspectives among 'women' (Arneil, 1999, p. 186 cited in Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 44). Shelley Budgeon defines third-wave feminism as a "deconstructive impulse" "to start from multiple differences among women" rather than dealing with the categories 'man' and 'woman'" (Budgeon, 2011, p. 4 cited in Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 44). Spivak does indeed utilize "deMan tropological deconstruction" to demonstrate "the complicity between Anglo-American feminism and imperialism in foreclosing 'the native subaltern female'" (Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 40). According to DeCaires Nairein, Spivak highlights the ways in which "second-wave feminist scholarship has often compounded the distortions and misrepresentations of dominant discourses, constructing 'the' Third World woman as homogeneously victimized by (traditional) patriarchal culture and in need of rescue by Western feminism" (DeCaires Narain, 2004, p. 242). In alerting feminist women "of the danger of *speaking for* 'the other woman', Gayatri Spivak and Chandra Mohanty have generated "productive anxieties and produced a welcome degree of self-consciousness about how feminist research should be defined and conducted" (DeCaires Narain, 2004, p. 242). The challenges made by "black/postcolonial feminists have been one of several powerful forces"

that "have fractured 'the women's movement' and generated the desire for other forms of feminism including 'third wave'" (DeCaires Narain, 2004, p. 242).

One can reasonably posit that—in a similar vein to Spivak—Lucy (aka Kincaid) deconstructs Mariah's argumentations using a postcolonial feminist perspective. While Spivak's analysis is based on her background as a Bengali woman, Lucy's criticism is grounded in her experience in Antigua. It can be argued that employing a postcolonial feminist perspective similar to Spivak's, Lucy deconstructs Mariah's Eurocentric "logos" from a post-colonial and feminist perspective to challenge Mariah's narrow Western perspective, which does not acknowledge racial disparities in the United States, as well as Lucy's different cultural background. Lucy operates such criticism by emphasizing the connection between Mariah's words and her colonized background to offer Mariah a more inclusive perspective on the world, which grants recognition to the female colonized and subaltern subject. Kamada (2010) observes that talking about her first published collection *At the Bottom of the River* (1983), Kincaid comments: "I can see that At the Bottom of the River was […] a very unangry, decent, civilized book and it represents sort of this successful attempt by English people to make their version of a human being […] out of me" (Kamada, 2010, p. 22; Perry, 1993, p. 698–699). Mentioning this quote, Ferguson contends that "by her own admission, Jamaica Kincaid views her first publication […] as the text of a repressed, indoctrinated subaltern subject" (Kamada, 2010, p. 22; Ferguson, 1994, p. 7). While Kincaid may appear as a "repressed subaltern" writer in her first publication in her subsequent work she certainly changed her gaze. Lucy is a subaltern subject, but she is neither "repressed" nor "indoctrinated", rather she is antagonistic because of her intercultural perspective.

3. Lucy and Betty Friedan's feminist thinking

Although, as we have previously stated, Lucy seeks recognition of her Caribbean colonized background from Mariah and she resists marginalization to the position of the repressed subject in need of liberation by Western feminism, on the other hand, we highlight that, as suggested by the intercultural *Bildungsroman*, which recognizes the immigrant's need to harmonize the culture of origin with the culture of immigration, that Lucy, has to reconcile herself to some problematic aspects of her

cultural background. These aspects pertain to her mother's Annie patriarchal and colonial views on women, which have encouraged her to relegate Lucy to a subordinate position within the household throughout her childhood. Because Annie has marginalized Lucy throughout her upbringing in favour of her brothers, this *Bildung* would not evolve to its ultimate end and Lucy would not gain her independence unless she cuts ties with her mother since Lucy's final pursuance is freedom (Brown-Guillory, 2008, p. 137).

As an illustration of this argument we note that in the novel the heroine laments that her mother knew her "as well as she knew herself" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 130)—Lucy even thought of the two of them as "identical" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 130); yet her mother did not have the same aspirations for Lucy that she had for her brothers. For Lucy, her relationship with her mother had been a "love affair," "the only true love affair" in her "whole life," which was interrupted by the birth of her younger brothers and her mother's subsequent complete devotion to them (Kincaid, 1990, p. 132). Furthermore, Lucy deplores that her mother wants to control her psychologically and inform her future according to traditional visions of women—she comments to Lucy: "Oh, I can just see you in your nurse's uniform" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 92). However, Lucy rebels against her mother by not replying to her letters, thus ending any contact with her (Kincaid, 1990, p. 90–91) until she receives news of her father's death (Kincaid, 1990, p. 122).

According to DeCaires Narain (2004), Lucy's relationship with her mother and with Mariah can be regarded as a third-wave feminist battle "with her mother figures and the second-wave feminism they represent" (DeCaires Narain, 2004, p. 248). While DeCaires Narrain's interpretation of Lucy is illuminating and applies to Lucy's relationship with Mariah, this analysis suggests that Lucy's dealing with her mother follows the patterns of second-wave feminism. Third-wave feminism was, in fact, born as a daughter's reaction to the second-wave feminism of her mother—the term was in fact coined by Rebecca Walker to take distances from her the feminism of her mother (Alice Walker) (Higgins, 2016, p. 9, 28; Miller, 2017, p. xiii); hence; it was a confrontation between different generations of feminist women. As Lucy emphasizes in the novel, however, her mother Annie is not feminist but she is rather partial towards her brothers. For this reason, it would seem more appropriate to frame this mother—daughter relation within the context of second-wave feminism, when *Lucy* is actually set. In the 1960s—1970s women

were in fact, rebelling against traditional roles assigned to women, for example, as suggested by Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963).

If, as we have just maintained, the relationship between the main character and her mother reflects ideas developed by second-wave feminism, so does, in some respects, the heroine's relationship with Mariah. Although there is a contrast between Mariah and Lucy, the latter regards Mariah as a substitute motherly figure, as DeCaires Narain contends. In the novel, in fact, Lucy remarks: "Mariah was superior to my mother for my mother would never come to see that perhaps my needs were more important than her wishes" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 64–65) and also states that "the time I loved Mariah it was because she reminded me of my mother. The times that I did not love her it was because she reminded me of my mother" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 58). Personal dynamics between Lucy and Mariah reflect important concepts articulated in the 1970s by second-wave feminists. For instance, Hirsch observes that "throughout the 1970s, the metaphor of sisterhood, of friendship or of surrogate motherhood has been the dominant model for female and feminist relationships" (Hirsch, 1989, p. 164). Hirsch also adds that during the 1970s "the prototypical feminist voice was, to a large degree, the voice of the daughter" trying "to separate from an overly connected or rejecting mother, in order to bond with her sisters in a relationship of mutual nurturance and support among equals" (Hirsch, 1989, p. 164). Furthermore, she comments that in "functioning as mutual surrogate mothers, sisters can replace mothers" (Hirsch, 1989, p. 164). Hirsch very importantly also observes that "in the feminist movement sisterhood has served not only as a fantasy, but also as an ideal of relation and as an actual practice" sometimes arising as a consequence of difficult relations "feminists had had with their actual and their professional mothers" (Hirsch, 1989, p. 164). In other words, it can be noticed that at the same time that Lucy seeks to make Mariah aware of the limitations of her narrow second-wave feminist point of view using third-wave feminism, she recognizes the worth of some of the perspectives elaborated by second-wave feminism.

5. Final remarks: The road that lies ahead

In light of the analysis elaborated so far in this article, which sought to emphasize the tension between second-wave and third-wave feminism as well as Lucy's ultimate reconciliation of these two perspectives,

one can reasonably argue that "as commentators such as Lisa Jervis" ("founding editor and publisher of "Bitch" magazine [a popular magazine created in the 1990s]" (Higgins, 2016, p. 29) have emphasized—that the distinction between the different waves of feminism is not altogether clear. As *Lucy* suggests, it is possible to envision a unified feminist movement, which involve "white", as well as "black" and "brown" women (to use a widely employed terminology in the United States) but to be successful such movement has to adopt an intercultural and "intersectional" (Crenshaw, 1989) perspective and to challenge multicultural propositions (*Lucy* suggests that view that "the assertion of differences multiculturalism proposes re-instates at a meta-level, the same unitary consciousness it claims to undo" (D'Haen, 1996, p. 4). On the one hand, this book invites all women to recognize the need to adopt an intersectional perspective within the feminist movement, on the other hand, it reflects the importance of embracing an intercultural perspective by women of *all* colors when communicating with one another and seeking to establish a common bond. An intercultural position entails to "no longer symbolize the otherness in a mythological, religious" political "or metaphysical elsewhere" but to view it "as a structure and sufficient reason for" her "existence" (Kagha, 2018, p. 9). The suggested definition invites reflection on the possibility to establish a common alliance among women of different colors, social, and cultural backgrounds on the bases of intercultural discourse. This task is not something that one should take for granted but it is rather something that has not yet been achieved. Groups of women who consider themselves feminist are still working on it (see for, example, Bernacchi, 2012).

6. Conclusion

In this article, we have analysed *Lucy* (1990) by Kincaid from the point of the view of the intercultural feminist *Bildungsroman*. We have postulated out that throughout the novel Lucy develops a hybrid perspective, which reflects her cultural background but also the culture of the place where she migrated—the United States. At first feeling alienated in the new environment she gradually manages to reconcile her culture of origins with the new culture. Following a struggle in the sociocultural environment because of her culture, gender, and class status the protagonist breaks up with restrictive ties and gains personal and emo-

tional independence. The heroine's vision is characterized by a radical feminist initiative that combines a postcolonial feminist point of view and a second-wave feminist outlook. In other words, throughout her journey, Lucy foregrounds the notion of 'third space': a vision, "which can neither be reduced to the *self* nor to the *other*, neither to the First nor to the Third World […] (Bhabha, 1994, p. 36, cited in Wolf, 2000, p. 135)

We can conclude that *Lucy* serves as a platform for social protest in line with the female/feminist Ethnic *Bildungsroman.* However, citing Härting (2011) we observe that this novel shows that as "both a literary trope and material experience, migration challenges notions of cultural authenticity, foregrounding the ways in which identities emerge instead through the complex politics of representation" (Härting, 2011, p. 1224). This perspective agrees specifically with the canons of the intercultural *Bildung*, which identifies an emerging perspective in migrant literature created by combining multiple cultures and point of view while fighting against alienation and marginalization and which offers innovative visions on several topics discussed in contemporary societies, such as "race" and feminism. In general, *Lucy* anticipates the limits of a multicultural perspective and the importance of an intercultural alternative, which have been mostly debated since the beginning of the twenty-first century.

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