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Abstract:

This paper provides a new-historicist analysis of the emergence of matriarchal theories and what is known as the New Woman, related to the women's public role and status during the late 19th century, present in Henry Rider Haggard's *She* published in between 1886-1887. Taking into account that the novel had been influenced by the historical context of the late Victorian period, the purpose has been to comprehend how Haggard reconstructs these two historical events previously mentioned in order to reaffirm the supremacy of patriarchy, to remain male hegemony and to perpetuate sexist attitudes through the novel. The analysis of this paper will be divided into two parts; each part will have two sections. The first part will develop the matriarchal theory of the late 19th century; the next section, will cover the matriarchal society of the novel. The second part of this paper will examine the emergence of what is known as the New Woman during the late 19th century and the following section will cover the New Woman in *She*.

Keywords: Matriarchy, New Woman, equality, knowledge, power.

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The Matriarchal Society and the New Woman in *She* by H. Rider Haggard

0. Introduction

The main aim of the present paper is to provide a new-historicist analysis of the emergence of matriarchal theories and what is known as the New Woman, related to the women's public role and status during the late 19th century, present in Henry

Rider Haggard's *She*. This novel was written from February to October in 1886. The first publication of *She* was in 1886 in the *Telegraph Magazine*, but after subtle modifications, it was published as a novel in 1887; even though it is elaborated in a short period of time, it contains a high degree of intensity because of its Victorian attitudes toward patriarchy and gender. *She* may be seen as the product of the historical context of the late Victorian Era due to the fact that the main themes of Haggard's work are related to the actual British history such as the expansion of the British Empire, the Matriarchal Theory, the Woman Question as well as the emergence of what came to be known as the New Womanⁱ (Haggard 2006, 9-11).

H. Rider Haggard has constructed a powerful and popular novel by creating a white queen who governs a community of black people in Kôr, an imaginary place in Africa. Perhaps, Haggard was influenced by the African landscape, after having participated in the English Imperial Administration in South Africa approximately from 1875 to 1881 during the Zulu and Boer Wars (Ibid.). This is probably the reason why Africa is the central scenario of the novel. To what extent, the subtitle of the original version of the novel for the magazine *A History of Adventures* anticipates readers that the novel will contain historical records, memories and narratives.

This novel may be seen as a historical romance due to its historical reconstruction and emphasis on specific past events. Moreover, Haggard can make readers believe that the history is a real recording rather than a fictional construction through a detailed description of the African landscape, characters' feelings and perceptions, the narrative in first person, the narrator of the novel (Holly) and the fictional editor of the novel who is Haggard himself.

My motive for writing this Degree final paper is to provide a new-historicist analysis of two historical events the emergence of matriarchal theories and what is known as the New Woman, which are reconstructed by the author, in order to reaffirm the supremacy of patriarchy, to remain male hegemony and to perpetuate sexist attitudes. For the purpose of this new-historicist analysis, the novel will be studied as a product of the late Victorian period that reflects the historical cultural and intellectual context of that time. My objectives are to expand the knowledge of the novel and its historical context and to motivate future analyses on this theme. *She: A history of Adventure* makes up a significant field of study for English literature because of its history, because of its cultural implication and because of its literary prestige. This contribution expects to encourage further studies of this extraordinary novel.

This paper will begin with the theory of the matriarchal society on the basis of the major matriarchal theorists Johann Jakob Bachofen, John Ferguson McLennan, Henry Morgan as well as Julia Reid and feminist writers such as Julia Kristeva, Ann Heilman and Mona Caird. Their works are primarily focused on gender and historical anxieties of the Victorian society at the end of 19th century. The next section of this paper will be focused on the matriarchal society of the novel. The second part of this paper will take into account concepts of the figure of the New Woman in the late Victorian period of feminist writers such as Patricia Murphy, Angélique Richardson, Gail Cunningham, Mona Caird, Susan Hamilton, Eliza Lynn Linton, Ann Heilmann and Barbara Onslow. Then, the following section will examine Ayesha, the main character, as the New Woman and Haggard's attitude toward women's power. Finally, there will be a conclusion with a summary of the main ideas used in the analysis, an explanatory list of notes and a final section that will present the bibliography and references consulted for this study.

1. The Matriarchal Society

To begin with the analysis, we will cover the major matriarchal theorists such as Johann Jakob Bachofen and his work *Myth, Religion and Mother Right* (1861), John Ferguson McLennan's ideas in *Primitive Marriage* (1865), the Henry Morgan's study of the matriarchal society in *Ancient society* (1877), Julia Reid's "'She-who-must-be-obeyed': Anthropology and Matriarchy in H. Rider Haggard's *She*." (2015) and

feminist works such as Mona Caird's *The Morality of Marriage* (1897), Julia Kristina's "Women's Time" (1981) and Ann Heilman's *New Woman Strategies: Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, and Mona Caird* (2004), in order to analyse their influence on Henry Rider Haggard's novel.

1.1. The Matriarchal Theory

The Swiss and anthropological writer Johann Jakob Bachofen published *Myth, Religion and Mother Right* in Stuttgart (Germany) in 1861. Bachofen analyses ancient matriarchal societies in *Das Mutterrecht*¹ which is regarded as an extremely essential contribution to anthropology². According to Bachofen the ancient Lycians, Cretans, Athenians, Lemnians, Egyptians, Orchomenians, Locrians, Lesbians, Mantineans and among Easter Asiatic nations lived under a matrilineal³ descent "in their genealogical records they deal entirely with the maternal line, and the status of children was defined solely in accordance with the mother" (70). Moreover, the Jewish historian and philosopher Nicolaus of Damascus adds that the "right of inheritance" solely belongs to "daughters" in order to support Bachofen's research (qtd. in Bachofen 70).

Bachofen's aim is to indicate that the theory of matriarchy also known as "mother right" is part of the history and morality; furthermore, its origin might come from a biological relationship between a mother and their children (qtd. in Bamberger 263-64). However, as Bachofen notes, "mother right" does not involve matriarchy, but "mother right" prompts it, which emerges from woman's unconformity with "man's abuse" (Bachofen 143). Consequently, matriarchy means that men are under women rule "women now rule over the family and state" (ibid.).

However, Bachofen also states that "every principle leads to the victory of its opposite", hence, matriarchy is merely the first stage which has to be beaten in order for patriarchal societies to succeed (93). In other words, the obliteration of matriarchy turns out the triumph of patriarchy; this destruction signifies the evolution of society from "the lowest position to the highest" (ibid.). Additionally, he basically associates the "mother right" with the "matter" and the "life of the body" while the "father right" is connected to the "spirit" (Bachofen 129). This association is used by Bachofen to highlight men's position in the world by explaining that the body will die and return to the Earth, as it once was, so long as the spirit is immortal and divine (ibid.).

On the other hand, the Scottish lawyer and ethnologist John Ferguson McLennan claims that kinship is based just on mother's line because of "blood-relationship" (154-55). Due to the fact that children and their mothers share the same blood, it is easy to recognize other members of the family. Therefore, all those children who have a mother in common will share the same blood ties as well (McLennan 155). There is no doubt about matrilineal descent, but the decent and kinship traced by males can create uncertainties about children's paternity (McLennan 158).

Moreover, the American anthropologist and social theorist Lewis Henry Morgan studies the Iroquois⁴, a matriarchal society. Morgan observes that the American aborigines believed that "decent in the female line presupposes the gens to distinguish the lineage" (352). Furthermore, Morgan demonstrates her sympathy for matriarchy by asserting that the gradual transformation of a matrilineal society into patrilineal⁵ society affects social women's position unfavorably (qtd. in Reid 11). Furthermore, Friedrich Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884), which is a popular affliction to "world historical defeat of female sex" (Engels qtd. in Reid 11), is mainly based on Morgan's research.

Despite Morgan's sympathy for matriarchal societies, he contends that the evolution is "linear" in order to associate matriarchy with a primitive period (Morgan qtd. in Reid 11). As Julia Kristeva explains in "Women's Time", there are two types of "temporal dimension"; the first one is the "time of the linear history" and the

second one is "the time of another history" (14). The linear time is associated with men's time depicted as an ordered "departure, progression, and arrival", meanwhile, the second one or women's time is "cyclical" linked to "repetition and eternity" (Kristeva 16-17). Given that the linear temporality, which is associated with men, is inherent to logic and values of any civilization, European people were obsessed with time during the 19th century. This obsession is known as the "obsessional time" (Kristeva 17).

Similarly, Bachofen uses the term "progress" in a linear time, as does Kristeva, to refer to the evolution from matriarchy to a higher patriarchal system (93). Besides, Bachofen dismays his readers by suggesting that "exclusivity of the marriage" or monogamy is not part of matriarchal system, but it is a recent fact which makes people rise to a higher social position because sexual relations between people will be strictly regulated by marriage (ibid.).

Not only did Anthropologists' ideas influence literature and politics, but they were also used to justify Victorian male hegemony in the 19th century (Coward qtd. in Reid 11). To illustrate this point, the journalist and writer Rosalind Coward, who places the "matriliny" in ancient times, pinpoints that the objectives of "matriliny" are three: establishing the family through biological relations, ensuring monogamy and reaffirming men's power over family (ibid.).

In 1897, the British and feminist thinker Mona Caird published her book *The Morality of Marriage* based on matriarchal theories, mentioned above, in order to challenge the patriarchy of that time and to support new improvements on woman's rights such as "contraception, unwanted pregnancy, single motherhood, (...), and free love" (Caird qtd. in Heilman 158). To these means, Caird contends that from one generation to another one, female oppression is gradually increasing (as Morgan also notes, the progress is linear) and motherhood is used as a repressive institution by patriarchy (ibid.). Conversely, subsequently, the feminists Sarah Grand and Olive Schreiner disagree with Caird's opinion, suggesting that women "innate" motherhood is a sign of "moral superiority" (Grand and Schreiner qtd. in Heilman 158). Assuming that motherhood provides women with supremacy within a matriarchy, Bachofen suggests that it just occurs owing to "love mother⁶" (79). All these ideas of matriarchal theory mentioned above played an important role in Great Britain and in *She* at *fin de siècle*⁷.

1.2. *The Matriarchal Society in H. Rider Haggard's novel*

Matriarchal theories influenced British literature, politics and gender roles. Novelists wrote about an imaginary return of matriarchy such as Edward Bulwer Lytton's *The Coming Race* (1871), Walter Besant's *The Revolt of man* (1882), Elizabeth Burgoyne Corbett's *New Amazonia* (1889), and Florence Dixie's *Gloriana; Or, The Revolution of 1900* (1890). The most popular novel about a matriarchal society was and still is *She* by H. Rider Haggard.

In the heart of Africa, the matriarchal theory is applied within the Amahagger's community. Offsprings are belong to the mother's line ; that is, their "descent is traced only through the line of the mother" (Haggard 79). What is more, Holly (the narrator of the novel) mentions that their pride comes from women, since Amahagger's people are "proud of a long and superior female ancestry⁸" (ibid.). Hence, women are the central core of the African families because of their reproductive function or "generative power of matter" (Bachofen 98). Women have a privileged position within the African hierarchy; mothers establish the prestige between members of the Amahagger society, and therefore, lineage does not depend on men any longer. As Grand and Schreiner note "motherhood" provides women with a higher social standing (qtd. in Heilman 158). Their assumption argues against Bachofen's concept of "maternity" because he considers it as a "lower, purely natural stage" which just defines biological relationships between the members of a community (Bachofen 98).

On the one hand, according to McLennan, in *Primitive Marriage* (1865), matriarchal societies are based just on mothers' line because of "blood-

relationship", that is, the descent is marked by women because paternity is unknown and "uncertain" (155); since, the biological relationship between mothers and their children is unquestionable. On the other hand, Amahagger natives support matriliney⁹, even though there is no doubt about paternity. It is noticeable in Holly's description of the African offspring that is ruled by mothers "even when their male parentage is perfectly well known" (Haggard 79). Consequently, African men trace neither the history nor the direction of their evolution in the Amahagger community.

Nonetheless, a society cannot be defined as matriarchal just basing on matriliney, but it is also required female "emancipation" from men and their dominance (Bachofen 143). Should we take emancipation into account to identify a matriarchy, in the imaginary Kôr, the African society is actually a matriarchal one because female Amahaggers are independent to make their own decisions as free subjects "In this country the women do what they please. We worship them, and give them their way, because without them world could not go on" (Haggard 107). Similarly, Bachofen contends that "freedom and equality" are the most relevant principles of matriarchal societies (80). Even though they are considered a "savage race" by the British men (Haggard 79), equality is an inherent characteristic of the Amahagger's coexistence. They live "upon perfect equality" and there are no "binding ties" that establish relations of power between female and male Amahaggers (ibid.). The main reason for this balance is likely the motherhood, since the continuity of life depends on women.

Consequently, Haggard also mirrors British's anxiety about the degeneration of their "imperial race", located between 1880 and 1890 (Brantlinger 22), After the British Empire settled their colonies in Australia, Ireland and Southern Africa (ibid.). In particular, after the British conquest, the Irish people were blamed for "cannibalism" due to the famine in that place (ibid.). Therefore, the British notion of "savage race" appeared in order to define savage and cannibal people. This is the reason why Haggard employs "savage race" to define Amahagger people, not because they are a matriarchal society (Haggard 79).

On the whole, decisions upon women's lives are not overseen by male authorities, but men respect and encourage them to follow their own desires. Accordingly, neither subjection nor submission control relationships between both sexes in the imaginary community of Africa. Similarly, women acquire a significant authority owing to her function of breathing life. The women's "reproductive capacity", within matriarchy, allows them to have a much say as do men as well as independence to take choices ("Three Dreams" qtd. in Heilman 18). What is more, the Amahagger matriarchy appreciates them because motherhood is seen as a virtue; they "worship" them because their offspring will prevail throughout the time since "they are the source of life" (Haggard 107).

Apart from that, Bachofen asserts that people within a matriarchal system reject "restrictions of all sorts" (80). The Amahagger population lives under no "laws¹⁰", but "customs¹¹" (Haggard 87). However, in spite of the fact that a "custom" is merely a traditional behavior which is not as strict as a "law", the punishment for offending any Amahagger custom is of "death" (Haggard 87). Hence, to some extent, customs limit both men and women's behavior through the fear of being killed under the order of their queen.

Moreover, although Bachofen declares that marriage does not belong to a matriarchal stage because it takes place at the same time as the emergence of patriarchy (93), marriage is a current tradition to the African matriarchal society in the book "according to our custom, (Ustane) wed to him (Leo), and has a right to go where he goes"; clearly if she wants to (Haggard 108). Furthermore, Holly explains how they get married "When a woman took a fancy to a man she signified her preference by advancing and embracing him publicly" (Haggard 79), and the man's kiss in return is the acceptance to the engagement. Therefore, Bachofen's assumption that marriage takes place only in patriarchal societies is dismissed, because marriage happens in matriarchal communities such as in the imaginary Kôr

in Africa. In this case, the differences between the British marriage (in a patriarchal system) and Amahagger marriage (in a matriarchy) are that the former is based on dominance in which the husband is the owner of his wife (Smith qtd. in Marcus 221); furthermore, the British marriage implies "male initiative" and "female passivity" (Marcus 97). While in the latter women freely decide what they really want to do as we mentioned above and also they take the first step in courtship:

It is very curious how custom of mankind on this matter vary in different countries, (...). It must, however, be understood that, as all civilized nations appear to accept it as an axiom that ceremony is the touchstone of morality, there is even according to our canons, nothing immoral about this Amahagger custom, seeing that the interchange of embrace answered to our ceremony of marriage, which, as we know; justifies most things. (Haggard 79-80)

Holly's explanation partly supports Bachofen's viewpoint on marriage by associating marriage with his patriarchal "cannons" which defend marriage owing to the British values and morality. In this manner, Holly accepts marriage as a "proper" act because it forms part of his patriarchal principles (Haggard 80). However, he also demonstrates his rejection to the African traditions owing to female selection in engagement.

Beyond that, Bachofen asserts that mother's right paves the way for matriarchy which is a "lower" stage that precedes patriarchy that is the highest stage (Bachofen 98). Additionally, the linear time is linked to the patriarchy which embodies progression, order and triumph, meanwhile, matriarchy is related to a past period (Bachofen 98; Morgan qtd. in Reid 11; Kristeva 16-17). Consequently, in the novel, matriarchy also is established as a lower stage or "primitive" past overtaken by patriarchy when Ayesha decides to go to Britain, even though Leo informs her that the British Empire is also governed by a woman as well "we (Britain) have a queen already" (225). However, Ayesha does not want to govern Britain, but what she really desires is to put Leo in charge by "destroy(ing) these tyrants and Kallikrates shall rule the land" because she thinks Leo is Kallikrate's reincarnation (ibid.). Therefore, patriarchy triumphs over matriarchy through the destruction of the British queen and Ayesha's submission in favor of Leo's supremacy.

As a result, despite creating a matriarchal society governed by a woman and traced by mother's lines, H. Rider Haggard sustains the patriarchal supremacy; in the same manner as the theorists of matriarchal societies mentioned above.

2. The Emergence of the New Woman

The second part of the analysis will examine the New Woman who is represented by the main character of the novel *She* also known as Hiya or Ayesha "who must be obeyed" in order to explore the New Woman, her emergence and different concepts of this new prototype.

2.1. The New Woman

The "societal and cultural" New Woman appears as the figure of the cultural movement the Woman Question established in the 19th century and strengthened at the *fin de siècle*; the New Woman's aims are to obliterate the conception of "separated spheres" of the private and public life and to advocate women's rights (Murphy, "The Gendering of History in *She*" 747). The New Woman emerges from several contradictions of the Victorian Era in their attempt of defining the "feminine" (Pykett 142). Consequently, this new prototype is questioned by the "gender and the legitimacy of the bourgeois social order" because of her new aims previously mentioned (Smith-Rosenberg qtd. in Pykett 142). According to Ann Ardis

in *New Woman, New Novels Feminisms and Early Modernism* (1990) the New Woman is the replacement of the "Victorian angel in the house"¹² (qtd. in Richardson 7).

To Ardis, the New Woman is a woman who lives her sexuality freely without being married or a woman who decides to live in celibacy because of her own political objections rather than moral ones (qtd. in Richardson 7). The New Woman fights against domesticity and social norms in order to advocate the "female emancipation" (Cunningham 11). She also is the symbol of intelligence, individualism and principles; she is likewise associated with the "middle class" women (Cunningham 11). Similarly, Patricia Murphy contends in *Time is of the Essence* (2001) that the New Woman "tended to come from the same rank- that is the middle class" (28).

There are some images or versions of the New Woman, but the most accurate one defines the New Woman as a woman who acts in concordance with her own principles, being guided by her "individual circumstance or interest" (Cunningham 11). To the feminist and journalist Mona Caird the New Woman embodies "many versions of female possibility" in a world where she represents herself (500); in other words, the New Woman has different "versions" that emerge according to each situation.

Lyn Pykett, a professor of the University of Wales, states in *The Improper Feminine* (1992) that the New Woman is a "representation" (137). According to Griselda Pollock, a visual theorist and cultural analyst, the representations are different and there are new definitions to refer to women "in the historical process of redefinition of woman as image, as visibly different" (qtd. in Pykett 100). In the case of the New Woman, she is constructed as the image of "disorder and rebellion" (Smith Rosenberg qtd. in Pykett 137); this new woman, surrounded by "moral panic", was copied and "reproduced" in novels and newspapers of the late Victorian era (Pykett 138). As a result of the reproduction of a new female archetype in books and on the press, "femininity" was on the spotlight in Great Britain at the end of 19th century (ibid).

Interestingly enough, as Patricia Murphy notes, the Victorian journals only focused on the New Woman's failures rather than in their qualities (*Time is of the Essence* 5). For instance, the *Cornhill* magazine; although H. S. Scott and E. Hall, journalists of the *Cornhill* magazine, describe the New Woman's attitude as "strong and independent" and also depict her with other terms like aggressive and intelligent (Scott and Hall qtd. in Pykett 138-39); they focus on that the New woman's aim "has failed" (ibid.): she cannot be involved in other duties apart from motherhood and children's care since the New Woman represents just a "body and a fashion system" that transgresses the appropriate image of women (ibid.).

Furthermore, the New Woman's detractors are focused on "physiological truths" to restrict intellectual women's growth and to preserve the Victorian patriarchal stability (Murphy 6). Thus, Anthropologies, sociologists, psychologists and physicians work on researching "objective" results that would demonstrate that women's function is merely that of reproduction (ibid.). Some Doctors go as far as to suggest that the "development of woman's brain" provokes infertility (Pykett 140). What is more, Charles Harper asserts that "nature, which never contemplated the production of a learned or muscular woman, will be revenged upon her offspring", so the New Woman will be punished through illness on her descent such as "hydrocephalic children" or "the extinction of the race" (qtd in Murphy, *Time is of the Essence* 6). Thus, Not only does the New Woman constitute a "threat" to male hegemony, but also she is a danger to the "natural order" of things (Pykett 140).

Nevertheless, Mona Caird utilizes a strong language in *Dauther of Danaus* (1894) so as to question if motherhood is the main goal of woman's life. She says: "A woman with a child in her arms is to me, the symbol of an abasement, and indignity, more complete, more disfiguring and terrible, than any form of humiliation that the world has ever seen" (341), that is, seeing women just as

mothers is to degrade their capability to achieve other aims. Thus, Caird thinks that motherhood should not be the principal duty or the core of women's lives (ibid). Moreover, Caird introduces the "concern" of the New Woman declaring that women's instincts are restrained by social arrangements (Caird qtd. in Heilmann 67). In consequence, Caird's feminist thoughts served as the basis of the New Woman's novels like Gissing's *The Odd Woman* (1893) and in 1898 Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (Grand 500).

Similarly, according to the writer Hugh Edward Millington Stutfield in "The psychology of the Feminism" (1897) the New Woman embodies the desire of "new experiences, new sensations, new objects in life" (qtd. in Pykett 138). Elizabeth Miller also adds that the New Woman makes herself a public and political subject and her "self" represents "modernity, democracy and feminism" (187).

On the one hand, Sarah Grand asserts that the New Woman is an "elevated creature" who is not placed in the same level of a "scum" woman, because she deserves to be in a better social standing and because she is a religious and devoted woman (qtd. in Pykett 139). Furthermore, the New Woman's tranquility allows her to identify silently the issue in her home because "Home-is-the-Woman's- Sphere" and to resolve it (Grand qtd. in Pykett 139). To Grand, the New woman seeks social and political status, remaining spiritual and feminine (Heilmann 14). On the other hand, Caird sees the New Woman as a soundly critique to patriarchy that "exploit(s)" women in public and private sphere by utilizing the religion, morality, politics and economy in order to preserve "male power" (qtd. in Heilmann 70).

Alternatively, there is another version of the New Woman as a "cultural demon" known as the "Wild Woman" (Pykett 139). The novelist and journalist Eliza Lynn Linton introduced for the first time the term "Wild Woman" in her articles published between 1891 and 1892 (qtd. in Hamilton 43). The concept of the Wild Woman is developed in three of her articles "Wild woman as politicians", "Wild Woman as social insurgents" published in 1891 and "The partisans of the Wild Woman", in 1892 (ibid.). The articles were a critique to the New Woman, considering her as a "national degradation" (ibid.); because she tries to resemble men by copying "men in all things and a great mistake is it" (Lynton qtd. in Murphy, *Time is of the Essence* 5). In her works, Linton defines the Wild Women as "creatures impatient of restraint, bound by no law, insurgents to their finger-tips, desirous of making all other woman as restless and disoriented as themselves" (425), furthermore, Wild Women are associated with the ignorance and senselessness (Linton 425).

However, Mona Caird provided a new feminist perception of "Wild Woman" in "A Defence of the So-Called Wild Woman" published in 1892 (qtd. in Hamilton 48). Caird argues against Linton "absurdities" (qtd. in Onslow 1). Since Caird believes that women deserve to enjoy the same independence as men; furthermore, their boundaries should not be just based on the motherhood and self-sacrifice (qtd. in Onslow 1). Additionally, Caird affirms the New Woman and her alternative version the Wild Women are being guided by a "new faith" which encourages them to gain self-confidence (ibid.). Similarly, Edward Carpenter thinks that women's powers emerge from their "primitive" instincts (qtd. in Gates 26). In the same manner, Carpenter emphasizes that wildness is the lack of fears; consequently, Wild Women are "fearless" (qtd. in Gates 26).

The New Woman differs slightly from the Wild Woman because the latter takes an active role in the public sphere (Pykett 140). Moreover, the Wild Woman pursues the "social change", showing her unconformity with the "existing order of the things" (Stutfield qtd. in Pykett 140). Meanwhile, the New Woman rejects her biological function of becoming mother in order to break limitations of gender (ibid.).

Finally, H. E. Millington points out that the New Woman, apart from her version as "Wild Woman", has another one as "Emancipated Woman", a woman who enjoys showing her "independence" (qtd. in Pykett 140). Indeed, the New

Woman and her alternative versions in the Wild Woman and the Emancipated Woman represent the same woman, the main difference between them is her approach. In other words, the New Woman generally objects her biological function or "motherhood", the Wild Woman pursues public role in society and the Emancipated Woman presumes her freedom (Stutfield; Millington qtd. in Pykett 139-140). Therefore, to the New Woman, the emancipation disjoins women from the "ignorance" and submission (Gissing qtd. in Cunningham 119). By the same token, the New Woman as a preventive figure warns other ones against women's "natural" function of being "mothers and wives", because they are not obliged to accomplish these functions (Pykett 141).

2.2. *The New Woman in H. Rider Haggard's novel*

In the 19th century, women are the centre of novels such as *Jane Eyre* (1847) *She: A History of Adventure* (1887) and *Almayer's Folly* (1895). As Nina Auerbach notes female characters appear as a product of the English anxieties (qtd. in Murphy, "The Gendering of History in She" 747). The Victorian contradictions gradually modeled the image of the New Woman that is noticeable in novels like Tennyson's *The Princess* (1847) and Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm* (1883), Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) and *She* (1887). In this context, Haggard and George McDonald elaborate novels on "ruling womanhood" such as *She* and *Lilith* (1895).

In the novel *She*, there might be ambiguity in Mr. Vincey's depiction of Ayesha in the letter that he has left to his son Leo Vincey. In the letter, he describes her as a "beautiful white woman who is seldom seen by them (the Amahagger people), but who is reported to have power over all things living and dead." (Haggard 34). In addition to Amahagger's description, "she was lovely like no other woman was lovely, (...). It was rumored also that she was immortal and had power over all things" (ibid. 87). On the one hand, her lovely physical appearance may be associated with the traditional women of the British Empire by emphasizing her whiteness and beauty which are traditionally inherent to women's qualities of the 19th century in Britain (Murphy, "The Gendering of History in She" 767). Consequently, she might appear to be the "angel out the heaven"; in other words, a devoted woman (ibid. 748). On the other hand, Ayesha might be seen as the New Woman and her "many versions" such as the Wild Woman and the Emancipated Woman (Caird 500). Firstly, as the New Woman, Ayesha has no limits and she is not depicted as a submissive mother, but as a powerful woman because she has authority over the whole African community. Secondly, she may also represent the Wild Woman because she plays a public role in Kôr and her domains are not restricted to home, as we have mentioned before, the Wild Woman pursues a better social position in society. Finally, she can symbolize the Emancipated woman as well, by showing off her power and autonomy over "all things" (Haggard 34); due to the fact that the Emancipated Woman wants to demonstrate her independence from male hegemony.

To Gilbert and Susan Gubar Ayesha embodies the New Woman, defining her as the "all knowing, all powerful" woman (qtd. in Murphy, "The Gendering of History in She" 747). Ayesha is the most powerful character in the African community and the absolute authority belongs to her because of her wisdom, furthermore, there is even a comparison between Ayesha and the king "Salomon the wise" (Haggard 139). Not only does knowledge mean intelligence and wisdom, but also it signifies power and independence. Thus, there is a close connection between knowledge and power. As Foucault notes in her strategy of *pouvoir-savoir* or "power/knowledge", knowledge is used as an instrument in "the domination of people" because of its ability to determine "empirical¹³ truth" (qtd. in Gordon 237). Thus, she is able to create truths and make other people believe them because of her wisdom; for example, Holly says she has "two thousand years of experience, besides all manner of knowledge" (Haggard 175). Thus, it is more probably that she has the power to change his thinking rather than Holly persuades her to believe in

his philosophy, in Holly's words, she is able to "convert him", but there is not likelihood that Holly can convert her (ibid.).

By the same token, Gail Cunningham thinks that intelligence forms part of the New Woman's qualities, objecting to Linton and journals of late Victorian Era such as the *Cornhill Magazine*. Since Linton points out that the alternative version of the New Woman, the Wild Woman, is inherent to ignorance and unreason (qtd. in Pykett 139; Linton 425). Meanwhile, the *Cornhill* suggest that the New Woman cannot be separated from the house and motherhood (qtd. in Pykett 138-139). On the contrary, and supporting Cunningham's idea, Ayesha is endowed with wisdom of "two thousand years" (Haggard 146) thus becoming the wisest woman of Kôr because of her knowledge "the secrets of the world" (Haggard 139). On the whole of that, knowledge provides her with confidence; she seems to irradiate such self-confidence that Holly describes her as "the wisest, the loveliest, the proudest" woman of the universe (Haggard 261).

Furthermore, Cunningham believes that the New Woman acts depending on her circumstance and her interest, as does Ayesha (11); moreover, she behaves under her own principles and beliefs. In Ayesha's words, an act may be good or bad depends on how it is seen "all things are needful. Therefore doth it not become us to say this thing is evil and this good, or the dark is hateful and the light lovely; for to other eyes than ours the evil may be the good and the darkness more beautiful than the day, or all alike be fair" (Haggard 184). In this part, Ayesha is justifying Ustane's murder on the basis that the end justifies the means. The reason why Ayesha kills Ustane is Leo because both of them fall in love with him. Ayesha merely behaves according to her individual situation and in favor of her own benefits; for this reason, Ustane's death, seen from her perspective, is not an evil act.

Similarly, M. Caird, Pykett, H. E. Millington Stutfield and E. Miller agree that the New Woman pursues independence. Firstly, she has no boundaries such as motherhood and housework; secondly, she has new objectives in life and finally she wants a public life (Caird 341; Miller 187). As a result, it is undeniable that Ayesha is the New Woman, since she has no limits, but she is the rule 'I am above the law' (Haggard 225). Even the law, created by the British men, does not have influence on her power. On the contrary, laws are as weak as the wind to her "north wind to a mountain" (ibid.). Thus, she is not subjected to obey any authority because she embodies the authority herself "She was obeyed throughout the length and breadth of the land" (Haggard 87). Moreover, she breaks the sphere of the house and she also makes herself a public subject.

However, the New Woman's detractors argued that activities that require intelligence are not suited for women; due to their biology they are targeted to be mothers and wives (Murphy, *Time is of the Essence* 6). Moreover, Charles Harper asserts that Women are not supposed to be intelligent or strong because if they become New Women, their decent will suffer the punishment owing to their improper behaviour (qtd in Murphy, *Time is of the Essence* 6). This thought appears for Victorian men's fear, since should women reject their function, the boundaries that keep them oppressed in the house will break. It was thought that Victorian men separate woman from knowledge in order to maintain male hegemony (Pykett 140).

For this reason, even though Haggard creates a powerful queen, he also shows the decadence of her people and her empire in Holly's description of Kôr, where there "were miles upon miles of ruins" (Haggard 229). Hence, the decadence of Kôr goes hand in hand with women's power and intelligence "the roof of these buildings fallen into decay and vanished" (ibid.). What is more, Kôr and its people do not disappear because of a natural disaster, but because of a "plague" provoked by the emergence of the New Woman (Haggard 229). By the same token, Harper warns that an intelligent woman will only bring "the extinction of the race" (qtd in Murphy, *Time is of the Essence* 6). Seen that from a religious view, the plague might be associated with the Holly Bible and The Ten Plagues of Egypt, the plagues

were sent by God to punish people because of their bad behavior. Perhaps, what Haggard tries to transmit is that woman's knowledge and power are improper and as Harper states, the New Woman's decent will pay the consequences.

To some extent, the religion of the Victorian period is introduced in the novel. For instance, Ayesha accuses the God's Son and his followers of making people fear her, the New Woman. "They broke my heart", she says, "those Jews, and made me look with evil eyes across the world" (Haggard 161). Consequently, Caird contends that Victorian society utilizes the religion and morality to instill ideologies about women's role in society, hence, the woman who breaks the boundaries is not welcome in Britain at the end of the 19th century (qtd. in Heilmann70).

At the end of the novel, Ayesha dies, after entering in the "the flame of the Life" (Haggard 255). Since she wants to make Leo immortal as he proceeds to bath him in the flame of immortality. Nevertheless, he has doubts: "how know I(Leo) that it will no (...) destroy me" (253). Thus, she offers to bath her body again in order to show him that he will not die, but "she fell down herself and died" (258). In this manner, Haggard demonstrates his anxiety and the anxiety of the British people guided by deep-rooted beliefs of the Victorian ideology. Ayesha must be destroyed in order to remain the stability of male hegemony and not to be seen as an example for other women who probably wanted to follow her footsteps during the late Victorian period. Similarly, as Pykett notes, the New Woman might be the figure that makes women separate from their functions of "mothers and wives" (141).

3. Conclusion

The study of this novel has been extremely elaborate. The purpose of this paper has been to provide a new-historicist analysis of how the novel reconstructs historical events of the late Victorian period: the emergence of matriarchal theories and what is known as the New Woman, associated to woman social standing, in order to reaffirm the supremacy of patriarchy, male power and sexist attitudes at the *fin the siècle*. For the purpose of this paper, the book has been analyzed through its historical and cultural context so as to comprehend how H. Rider Haggard creates *She*, supporting the male power through the influence of the British history and ideology related to women's duties and status at that time.

As we have seen, the appearance of matriarchal theories shocked the late Victorian society. Victorian theorists such as Johann Jakob Bachofen, John Ferguson McLennan, Lewis Henry Morgan, the Victorian feminist writer Mona Caird, the modern writer Julia Kristeva and contemporary writers such as Ann Heilman, Julia Reid developed several ideas about mother's line and matriarchy. Firstly, matriarchy is seen as the "primitive" origin while patriarchy represents the progress of a society, even though there is evidence to suggest that mothers represent the power and the pride of the descent. The main idea is that matriarchy merely paves the way for patriarchy. In the same manner, the novel reflects those ideas of matriarchal societies through the Amahagger community where the decent and pride is marked by mothers, despite knowing the identity of the father. Thus, women have power and independence to do what they please. Moreover, due to women's biological function, they are really valued by the imaginary African society.

However, at the end of the novel, Ayesha, the queen of Kôr, decides to go to Britain to destroy the British queen and allowing Leo to govern and take over her new empire. With this, Haggard reaffirms that matriarchy, as a lower phase, is part of the past and suggests that patriarchy embodies evolution; furthermore, even the most powerful and intelligent woman, Ayesha, supports the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy.

By the same token, the appearance of the New Woman stereotype becomes a popular debate during at the end of the 19th century. Feminist writers such as Patricia Murphy, Lyn Pykett, Gail Cunningham, Mona Caird, Barbara Onslow and Eliza Lynn Linton have several definitions and representations of the figure of the

New Woman. The majority of female writers of that period such as Patricia Murphy, Lyn Pykett, G. Cunningham, Mona Caird, and Barbara Onslow hold positive views on the New Woman; other academics such as Eliza Lynn Linton and Charles Harper seem to be skeptical to the New Woman in the public sphere due to their concept of women's role and function and due to their deep-rooted religious beliefs. It is undeniable that the different viewpoints on the New Woman are a considerable influence on Haggard. It would appear that Ayesha, who is gifted with power, knowledge and authority over Kôr, represents the New Woman. As we have seen, Ayesha utilizes knowledge as a tool of power in order to govern the African community. Nevertheless, H. Rider Haggard utilizes the New Woman stereotype to perpetuate sexist attitudes and the male hierarchy by depicting the extinction of the Amahagger community because of an intelligent and powerful woman and by destroying Ayesha who represents the New Woman and her two alternative versions The Wild Woman and the Emancipated Woman. Nevertheless, Ayesha has to be defeated due to the fact that her existence was a threat to the stability of male power.

Notes

¹ The original German title of the book is *Das Mutterrecht*, the transition of the title into English is *Myth, Religion and Mother Right*.

² According to the Cambridge definition Anthropology: the study of the human race, its culture and society, and its physical development.

³ According to the oxford dictionary matrilineal: (adjective) of or based on kinship with the mother or the female line.

⁴ Iroquois were in American, they were Indian aborigines, their partially depended on horticultural to survive. See more in Morgan, Lewis Henry. *Ancient society; or, researches in the lines of human progress from savagery, through barbarism to civilization*. H. Holt, 1877, p. 151.

⁵ According to the Oxford dictionary patrilineal: relating to or based on relationship to the father or descent through the male line.

⁶ According to Bachofen "mother love" means love between mother and her offspring. See more in *Bachofen*. Trad. Joseph Campbell, Vol. 128. Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 79.

⁷ According to Longman Dictionary *fin de siècle*: typical of the end of the 19th century, especially its art, literature, and attitudes

⁸ According to Cambridge Dictionary, ancestry: your ancestors who lived a long time ago, or the origin of your family.

⁹ According to the Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology, matriliney: *matriliney is a way of reckoning kinship descent and belonging through the female line. This entry discusses some of the forms matrilineal kinship may take in practice before considering how anthropologists have understood matriliney since the mid-twentieth century.*

¹⁰ The oxford dictionary defines law as the system of rules which a particular country or community recognizes as regulating the actions of its members and which it may enforce by the imposition of penalties.

¹¹ The oxford dictionary defines custom as a traditional and widely accepted way of behaving or doing something that is specific to a particular society, place, or time.

¹² The angel in the House: The Victorian women, whose duties were "to be found at home", based their lives on motherhood, morality and Christianity (Ellis qtd. in Bradstock 8). The place of women was the "private domestic sphere"; angels in the house had to serve other's needs, forgetting even their own wishes (Pykett 12). Hence, this stereotype represented to the devoted and angelic women motivated to please her husband and to take care of their children. Victorian society used the morality and religion in order to rule women's behavior (ibid.). See more in and Bradstock, Andrew. *Women of Faith in Victorian Culture: Reassessing the 'Angel in the House'*. Springer, 2016. and Pykett, Lyn. *The 'Improper' Feminine: The*

Women's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing, Routledge, 1992, docID=167885.

¹³According to the Collins Dictionary empirical:derived from or relating to experiment and observation rather than theory.

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