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*A Subversive Version of Noah's Ark: A History of the
World in 10 ½ Chapters*

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ABSTRACT

Barnes' *A History of the World in ½ Chapters* constructs an unconventional approach to history from the very beginning. The non-traditional narrative structure differs from the chronological narrative typical of history books, since this novelist's account exposes different historical world events without following a definite timeline. Moreover, the novel has many different narrative voices which convey a different perception and experience of same events. This use of form indicates an unorthodox view of history.

A History of the World in 10½ Chapters is structured as a collection of short stories intertexting different remarkable world events but I am particularly interested in Chapter One since it discontinues past facts into another story and establishes an ironic dialogue with the traditional biblical text. Therefore, I will focus on that particular chapter, "The stowaway", and I will examine how Barnes uses intertextuality and parody to relate history and fictional worlds and how, within the frame of religion, he criticizes Christianity and its dogmas.

I am starting this study with a theoretical introduction by making reference to the concepts of intertextuality, parody and frame reference within postmodernism. Then, I follow with the analysis of the text which is divided into three main aspects: the particular use of rhetorical strategies, linguistic strategies, and the thematic contents. For this purpose, I analyze the use of personal pronouns and the associated meanings, the use of rhetorical figures such as personification, hyperbole, the appropriation of lexicon from other semantic fields and the different themes which parody and ridicule both the Christian dogmas and the human condition such as beliefs, criticism of God, criticism of Noah, human behaviour, unfairness and divisiveness of human society, discrimination and exclusion, wealth, infidelity, the use of symbolism and the division within the Catholic Church.

Finally, I conclude the study by referring to the way Barnes establishes a critical dialogue between the traditional account of the biblical myth and the non-traditional presentation of the deluge. Thus, the past account is told from another perspective which suggests that history is what we are told and that there is a plurality of truths not just only one.

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1.INTRODUCTION

1.A. PRELIMINARIES

Barnes's *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* contrasts the past in line with postmodern theories of representation. Its ten chapters, each *a tour de force*, describe a succession of critical moments from our culture and history where nothing less is at stake than human survival itself.

A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters is structured as a collection of short stories in different styles; however, they echo each other and have subtle connection points. It represents a vague connection between religion, beliefs and history. My objective is focused on Chapter 1. This reading of the Chapter will be mainly centered from the perspective of linguistic and rhetorical strategies, textual operations and thematic contents. The analysis will include the use of personal pronouns and their meaning, the use of personification, hyperbole, the appropriation of lexicon from other fields, intertextuality, irony, parody, frame analysis, the analysis of discourse and the exploration of different themes such as beliefs, criticism of God, criticism of Noah, human behavior, unfairness and divisiveness of human society, discrimination and exclusion, wealth, infidelity, the use of symbolism and division within the Catholic Church.

1.B.THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1.B.1 Intertextuality

Intertextuality is the mechanism of incorporating previous texts into other texts. It can include an author's borrowing and transformation of a prior text into his own text. Although intertextuality practices have existed since the beginning of the writing procedures, the term 'intertextuality' emerges within post structuralism and it gets to be used exclusively in the postmodernist poetics. According to scholars, Saussure and his sign-system paved the way towards the appearance of the term. However, as neither Saussure nor Bakhtin, another noted predecessor, actually employ the term, most people regard Julia Kristeva as the founder of intertextuality (Allen 11). Kristeva shows the influence of Saussure and Bakhtin's models and intends to combine both theories.

1.B.2.Intertextuality and Postmodernism

Charles Jencks, a postmodernist architect, coined the following term, which was afterwards applied to literature: Double code. Double code is a deliberate strategy for disguising opposition and dissent within a text. Double-coding implies the relation between elite and popular, accommodating and subversive, and new and old. Sometimes the dominant discourses find it necessary to hide differences rather than to exploit them. (Jencks, *The language of Postmodern Architecture*, 340) The postmodern fiction inscribes itself within conventional discourses in order to subvert them. So novels, like *A History of the World in 10 ½ chapters*, combine history, tradition, and humour, and exploit the multiple meanings of words and ideas. According to Jencks the mixture of tradition and past that represent postmodernism leads to double-coded and ironic texts as it is explained in the next quote:

Post-Modernism is fundamentally the eclectic mixture of any tradition with that of the immediate past: it is both the continuation of Modernism and its transcendence. Its best works are characteristically double-coded and ironic, because this heterogeneity most clearly captures our pluralism. Its hybrid style is opposed to the minimalism of Late-Modern ideology and all revivals that are based on an exclusive dogma or taste. (Jencks, *What is postmodernism?*, 7)

Since postmodernism states that individual works are not self-contained texts, much of the focus in the study of postmodern literary productions is on intertextuality. Critics point to this as an indication of the lack of originality and reliance on clichés of postmodernism. In postmodernist literature, intertextuality can be a reference to another past event, an extended discussion of a work or the adoption of a style.

As Allen expresses it, Fredric Jameson, the American literary critic and Marxist political theorist, best known for his analysis of contemporary cultural trends, once described postmodernism as the spatialization of culture under the pressure of organized capitalism. In his opinion, the parody of dominant norms gives way to what he calls 'pastiche'. Jameson argues that a play of images and styles with no attachment to cultural norms pervade the way people speak and consequently the art they produce or consume. And this 'Make it new' postmodernism trend, together with simulacrum, representation or parody, is clearly reflected in many literary works. In such a world of pastiche, we lose our connection with history, which becomes a series of styles and simulacra. Fredric Jameson's concept of "pastiche" is usefully contrasted to Linda Hutcheon's understanding of postmodern parody, which leads to the next point: the connection between intertextuality and parody (Allen 182-184).

1.B.3 Intertextuality and Parody

Parody is generally defined as an imitation of a work of art, literature or music for the purpose of making playful fun or joke of the original work within a postmodern poetics. Parody as well as intertextuality is a device used by authors to narrate different past events establishing an ironic discontinuity with the original past narration. When in *The Poetics of Postmodernism* Hutcheon refers to the connection between intertextuality and parody she expresses:

Parody is a perfect postmodern form, in some sense, for it paradoxically both incorporates and challenges that which it parodies. It also forces a reconsideration of origin or originality that is compatible with other postmodern interrogations of liberal humanist assumptions. (11)

Juxtaposing the nostalgia Hutcheon perceives in modernist intertextual use of past forms with the irony often used in postmodern works she notes:

When Eliot recalled Dante or Virgil in *The Waste Land*, one sensed a kind of wishful call to continuity beneath the fragmented echoing. It is precisely this that is contested in postmodern parody where it is often ironic discontinuity that is revealed at the heart of continuity, difference at the heart of similarity... (11).

Hutcheon points that Roland Barthes once defined the intertext as “the impossibility of living outside the infinite text” (36), thereby it makes intertextuality the very condition of textuality. Hutcheon mentions Umberto Eco, who in his novel *The Name of the Rose* expressed that books speak of other books and that every story tells and retells previously written stories. This is the paradoxical double discourse of postmodernist intertextuality (128). The term ‘postmodernism’, when used in fiction, should, by analogy, be best reserved to describe fiction that is at once metafictional and historical in its echoes of the texts and contexts of the past. To distinguish this paradoxical form from traditional historical fiction, Hutcheon has coined the term ‘historiographic metafiction’. According to Hutcheon, historiographic metafiction appears willing to draw upon any signifying practices that it can find operative in a society, for it wants to challenge those discourses and yet to use them to exploit for all they are worth. She argues that historiographic metafictions use parody not only to restore history and memory but also to question the authority of any act of writing by locating the discourses of both history and fiction within a wider intertextual network that mocks any notion of either single origin or simple causality (129).

Hutcheon expresses that the contradictory attraction/repulsion to structure and pattern explains the predominant use of parody in certain familiar and overtly conventional plotted forms in American fiction, for instance that of the Western. But the ironic textual use of the Western is a coming to terms with traditional historical and literary articulations of Americanness. As such, it can be obviously used for satiric ends (133). In contemporary British fiction, the works of John Fowles, Peter Ackroyd and Julian Barnes, among others, are worth mentioning. In literature, intertextual parody crosses genre boundaries without reserve (Hutcheon 139).

Postmodernism clearly attempts to combat what has come to be seen as modernism’s potential for hermetic, elitist isolationism that separated art from the world, literature from

history. But it often does so by using the very techniques of modernist aesthetics against themselves. Through seemingly introverted intertextuality, however, another dimension is added by the use of the ironic inversions of parody: the critical relation of art to the “world” of discourse, and through that, to society and politics (Hutcheon 140).

1.B.4 Frame Analysis

According to Patricia Waugh in *The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious*, modernism and postmodernism view both the historical world and works of art as organized and perceived through the structure of frames (28). Two leading ideas in the field of sociology lead to the notion that fiction/reality is constructed through the concept of “framing”. According to Ortega y Gasset, everything is framed, whether in life or in novels (qtd in Waugh 28). Contemporary metafiction examines frame procedures in the construction of the real world and of novels. A frame may be defined as a “construction, constitution, build, established order, plan, and system underlying support or essential substructure of anything” (*Oxford English Dictionary* qtd in Waugh 28). Frames are essential in all fiction. Contemporary metafiction draws attention to the fact that life, as well as novels, is constructed through frames, and because of that, it is finally impossible to know where one frame ends and another begins:

Analysis of frames is the analysis, in the above terms, of the organization of experience. Applied to fiction it involves analysis of the formal conventional organization of novels... (Waugh 30).

Frame analysis is important to situate the reader within the boundaries of the real world “while problematizing his or her sense of reality from a conceptual or philosophical view” (Waugh 28). Thus, frames limit both, the world of experience and the world of fiction situating the reader within a specific field of thought. This leads the reader to consider that there could exist other realities and perspectives constructed from common sense and experience different from the world that he or she assumes to be the real one. As stated by Waugh, frames function as bridges between the historical and the fictional worlds (32). It suggests that one is the continuation of the other. Framing limits and orders the reader’s knowledge of experience.

2. "THE STOWAWAY" IN THE FRAME OF HISTORY AND RELIGION

Frames are used by writers to construct a point of view, which leads the reader to interpret a given situation in a particular manner. Therefore, Barnes borrows an event from the frame of history and religion to construct the first Chapter of his novel. On one hand the particular religious frame is related to churchly special meanings and significations in the western tradition. It refers to elevated and exemplary and didactic religious and moral teachings for man to go straight. On the other hand the historical frame positions the reader within the scope of verifiable facts because it refers to the Great Deluge, which actually happened. This event is appropriated by the religious discourse to explain the history of the relationship of man with God. Barnes takes these frames of history and religion but he breaks them by challenging conventional ideas about their history and what has been conveyed to human beings in the course of centuries. In this way he shows how history constructs the past¹. In this sense Barnes renders an artificial, biased and subjective construction of history as can be seen in the following quote

History isn't what happened. History is just what historians tell us. One good story leads to another... The history of the world? Just voices echoing in the dark images that burn for a few centuries and then fade; stories, old stories that sometimes seem to overlap, strange links, impertinent connections. (*A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*,.241)

In *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* Barnes strongly reaffirms this concept that history is what we are told. Resorting to different hypotexts that refer to historical events and which he transforms into hypertexts², he presents past events from an ironic point of view thus he makes it clear that there exists another angle from which to narrate events. This discontinuity of the traditional history and structure contrasts with Sir Walter Raleigh's former chronological history of the world. This conventional history of the

¹ This view that history is not static but a discursive construction is made clear when Hutcheon expresses the difference between facts and events. In this case, the Great Deluge, the natural disaster, is the real event and the religious discourse constructs it as a fact when it explains God's system of punishment and rewards based on this event. In this sense, Munz states that events are "configured into facts by being related to conceptual matrices within which they have to be imbedded if they are to count as facts" (qtd in (122) *A Poetics of Postmodernism*).

² According to Genette, the hypotext, or inter-text as termed by other critics, is the text which can be definitively located as the major source of signification for a second text which is called hypertext (Genette qtd in Allen 107/108).

world is written in five books. Thus Barnes retells the history of the world in the manner of what Hutcheon calls *historiographic metafiction*¹

In “The Stowaway”, Barnes retells the past classical story of the Great Deluge in a satirical narrative constructing it from a different perspective. This reflects what Hutcheon mentions about Umberto Eco as regards the fact that books or texts talk about other texts or retell previous stories. “The Stowaway” is a hypertext governed by a double-code discourse which, as Hutcheon expresses, induces the reader to think that traditional history is not always right and correct but there is another way of viewing it. Barnes deals with almost the same characters, the same situation, the same background and the same relevant topics of the biblical text; yet the original story is given a turn. The author deconstructs the Genesis and constructs a new story based upon differences, adhering to his concept of what history is. Barnes distances himself from the original text to construct a masked criticism of Christianity. The elements in both texts, the biblical story or hypotext and the fictional one or hypertext are slightly different but quite similar in its base: Noah and his family, the ark, the background story of the Flood and the land they reach, the pure and the impure selection practice and the pairs of animals.

¹ According to Linda Hutcheon: " Historiographic metafiction shows fiction to be historically conditioned and history to be discursively structured" (*A Poetics of Postmodernism*, 120).

Barnes' hypertext is constructed from differences. The main difference between the hypotext and the hypertext in a novel refers precisely to the authority of the past and the parodic narration. There is a change of narrator from the hypotext to the hypertext. Let us pose some questions as regards who narrates the Bible. Some authors consider that there is not just one author but also several authors. It is believed that in times of King Salomon, an unknown writer called the Yahvist wrote a first part. Afterwards, another unknown writer, called the Eloist, wrote some memories about the patriarchs and Moses. From that we gather that the author of

the Holy Bible is undefined and vague. Therefore, we have, on the one hand, the Bible with an undefined, vague narrator and, on the other hand, “The stowaway”, the story told by a woodworm, one of the most insignificant species on earth, which is chosen by Barnes to satirize the Genesis since he gives the woodworm the same level of authority as the Bible’s narrator. The woodworm is a stowaway, an intruder, and a mordant cynic. The woodworm’s tale of the voyage is one of the brutality, lust and selfishness of Noah and his family, who butcher beasts and humans alike, as they feel fit, quite differently from the didactic narrative of the Bible.

As it has been mentioned, Barnes situates the reader within the frame of religion as well. Yet, the author uses parody as a frame-breaking strategy thus changing the frame from a religious one to a fictional account as a way of criticism to Christianity and its dogmas using the historical biblical text together with the story he constructs.

3. THE SUBVERSIVE VERSION

In order to retell the historical and religious story of the Great Deluge in a non-conventional way, apart from breaking the linear temporal structure, its continuity and linearity, Barnes resorts to a particular use of rhetorical strategies, linguistic operations, thematic contents and symbolism. By resorting to the latter, he challenges the established position as regards absolute truth and dogmas and shows his firm criticism of Christianity and its norms and conventions. I will first analyse the effects produced by his use of nouns the distribution of roles in the communicative chain(speaker, narrator, narrate)

3.1. Language in “The Stowaway”

Pronouns are among the most frequent lexical items in the English language. They have long been described as cohesive elements of discourse. The presence of these elements in discourse represents an important contribution to meaning in narration. They establish narrators, set speakers, hearers or readers and create a kind of community with specific roles between narrator and hearers. Pronouns determine who knows events accurately and who ignores them.

With a strategical use of the pronouns “You” and “We”, the author, through the woodworm, describes a fictional story of what could have been the never told life in the ark. The woodworm addresses the reader as “You”, just to generate a feeling of union, gossip and intimacy: “...and you can’t imagine what richness of wildlife...” (Barnes, *A History...* 7); also in: “...one of those pairs no longer exists- but you know the sort I mean...” (Barnes, *A History...7*). This closeness between the woodworm and the reader is clearly expressed when the stowaway addresses the reader in: “you know that”, “I warn you this is happening”.

The reader is permanently surprised with these expressions of gossiping throughout the whole chapter. The narrator expresses a feeling of uncertainty as to what we may have believed in everything we have been told before. Indeed, he questions mankind for believing everything that history tells without applying a logical reasoning to facts. In the following comments, the author uses “You” to address to human beings claiming we already know the bad sides of history but we pretend to forget them as if they have never existed. The pronoun allows the author to establish a kind of secret talk with the reader by revealing the concealed true. He tries to make mankind be aware that norms and conventions are written, it is not an invention, and we should reason about them: “...but what do your archives say?” (Barnes, *A History*, 21); or “...You’ve always been led to believe that Noah was sage...” (Barnes, *A History*, 12). But the image mankind has of Noah could be not true because, as the woodworm expresses, to ignore the bad side of things does not mean they do not exist: “...For instance, you won’t even admit the true nature of Noah. (Barnes, *A History*, 34). Pronouns serve as a window on the speaker’s mind, albeit in somewhat subtle ways, which he tries to deliver to the reader.

By means of the repeated use of the pronoun “I”, the author uses the voice of the woodworm to present another perspective of history and to express his criticism of Christianity. It can be assumed that in the ridiculing of the Deluge usually taken as part of the sacred account of Christianity, Barnes reveals his own feeling towards Christianity and the traditional norms and conventions. The woodworm’s words could be said to represent Barnes’ own marginality from religion. But, at the same time, he feels that by not accepting to follow the predetermined conventions he could save himself and remains off the blind religious crowd of unreasonable

people: "...I was never chosen... I was specifically not chosen. I was a stowaway; I too survived: I escaped... and I have flourished. I am a little set apart from the rest of animal society... I feel no sense of obligation..." (Barnes, *A History*, 8).

The author uses the inclusive "we" to refer to the woodworm and other similarly not chosen species, involving the part of society that is discriminated by Christianity. "We" functions as a change of perspective from which events are told. Within a normal parameter, "we" may be used to include the whole mankind, but in this new recounting mankind is left out aside from the story while the animals are included. The pronoun "we" allows to consider the story from the side of the community of the weak and of the marginalized ones, that is to say the animals, here, and those traditionally left outside in the history of the world: "... that was the case with us; that's why we had to stow away..." (Barnes, *A History*, 11).

Therefore the use of pronouns in the narrative serves as a connection, a communicative tie up between readers and narrator. The pronouns construct a fluid dialogue with the reader who sees everything through the eyes of the narrator.

3.2. Rhetorical Devices in "The Stowaway"

The mysticism of the traditional narration of Noah's voyage is then parodically and ironically undone by this game of continuity and discontinuity of a conventional recounting of the history of the voyage. To achieve this demystifying operation the author resorts to rhetorical devices using different figures of speech, such as personification and hyperbole as well as borrowing words from other lexical fields. The aim of these rhetorical strategies is to emphasize a point, to create an effect or to amplify reality by showing a different dimension.

3.2.1. Personification

As it is mentioned above, one of the figures of speech used by the author is personification which humanizes animals and objects. It is a very strong instrument for the parodic effect and it plays an important role in this game of deconstructing the conventional

human thought to present events from other perspectives. With this figure of speech, the author involves the reader in this dialogue with the ones that are on the other side of history and denounces, in a way, the behaviour, attitude and dogmas of Christianity.

Personification humanizes animals to make the reader get identified with them. It creates sympathy on behalf of the side of the weak community and identification from the human beings. The major personification is the woodworm itself. Barnes expresses himself through the voice of animals. He refers to the animals with the personal pronoun “I”, and “We”. Barnes’ stowaway woodworm ironically describes what happened and was never told in the Ark.

Barnes makes the woodworm speak in the first person as if it were a human being, expressing ideas that are only appropriate to a person. This strategy is expressly used to highlight human beings’ irrationality and morality. It is clearly seen when the woodworm, being an animal, shows himself to be more rational than human beings because he is able to question and analyse certain beliefs which mankind strongly adhere without reasoning. Through this mechanism, the author states his own perspective that people believe what they want to believe and at the same time blames human beings for forgetting things or pretending to forget as if bad or unwanted events never happened. This idea is expressed by the woodworm when he refers to human species: “I hope you don’t mind my saying this- is so hopelessly dogmatic. You believe what you want to believe and you go on believing it...” or “But ignoring the bad things makes you end up believing that bad things never happen” (*A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, 34).

3.2.2. Hyperbole

The breaking away from the conventional narration of a past fact is clearly constructed in the hypertext when the author demystifies the taken-from-granted truth. One of the figures of speech that helps to bring about this perspective is hyperbole. Barnes uses hyperbole for the sake of creating a humorous effect and exaggeration.

In the beginning, the Ark consisted of eight vessels: Noah's galleon, which towed the stores ship, then four slightly smaller boats, each captained by one of Noah's sons and behind them at a safe distance (the family being superstitious about illness) the hospital ship. The eighth vessel provided a brief mystery: a darting little sloop with filigree decorations in sandalwood... (9).

Barnes takes out the event from the frame of religion and situates it in an almost hilarious situation when he refers to the convoy of eight vessels, instead of one ark, which started the journey and just only one kept afloat due to Noah's mismanagement. The fate of human beings was in the hands of an incompetent Noah, the savior of the whole mankind, who was not able to handle the mission entrusted by God. In addition to the humorous angle, exaggeration helps the author to condemn the abuses and excesses committed by Christianity. Fear is one of the ways used by Christians to manipulate mankind and situations. It permitted members of the Church to carry out any act of injustice in the name of God as it is reflected in the following quote:

He was a monster, a puffed-up patriarch who spent half his day grovelling to his God and the other half taking it out on us. He had a gopher-wood stave with which... well, some of the animals carry the stripes to this day. It's amazing what fear can do. I'm told that among your species a severe shock may cause the hair to turn white in a matter of hours; on the Ark the effects of fear were even more dramatic... (16).

3.3. The choice of lexical items in "The stowaway"

In general the whole text is organized through the use of a careful choice of lexicon which contributes to the demystification of the sacred and reverent view of Noah and his voyage. Each word bears an important semantic burden that enriches and adds to the humorous and satirical effect Barnes wants to create. The author chooses caustic words to speak of the leader who is considered almost a saint. The pious leader is depicted as an ignorant, despotic, authoritarian tyrannical bad person. The vocabulary that refers to Noah's "problem" is rather hard and it serves to the purpose of demystifying the hero mankind assumes Noah to be. In addition exaggeration is also employed to satirize the moment the Patriarch awoke from his drunkenness: "...How could a drunkard possibly be chosen by God? I've told you- because all the other candidates were a damn sight worse..." (Barnes, *A History...* 35).

The expressions used by Barnes to talk about Noah, as the chosen one by God, are as hard and negative as the word drunkard is. The linguistic construction of this degrading view of the patriarch is another sign of the author's sarcastic criticism of the beliefs of Christianity.

Besides, in "The stowaway" Barnes appropriates lexical items of the semantic field of certain artefacts related to modern times and inserts them in a historical context in which these did not exist, that is to say, he uses anachronisms. The novelist expresses his thoughts through the choice of words which precisely create this tension. For instance vessel, a relative modern word, instead of a wooden boat or Ark, which clearly represent the period alluded to in the Bible; the use of the words 'flotilla' and 'convoy' also represent terminology associated to contemporary means of transport, although its use is ironical, since none of these terms have existed in the past. The inclusion of vocabulary referring to modern drugs and illnesses such as 'metallic -naphthenates', 'para-dichlor-benzenes' or common elements in scientific or farfetched references like 'mite Pediculoides or parasitic wasps' among others, reflects this mistiming. By means of these appropriations, the tension within intertexts allows for doublecodedness in the sense that it causes the collusion of past and modern times in a contiguity that is artificial. The final effect is that of the demystification of the biblical event and the sacred characters.

3.4. Topics and Motifs

Double-codedness permits the author to express his point of view about the attitude of Christianity towards the different aspects of life. He refers to certain negative issues related to Christianity, which are characterized by different themes reported through irony, mockery and satire. It is also used by Barnes to question the dogmas of Christianity and its unquestionable influence on people's life.

The first issue worth mentioning is related to beliefs. On the one hand, Barnes sets out what is true or believed according to the hypotext and, on the other hand, through the mechanism of encoding this part of the past event in a different way he plants the seed of doubt in the reader as regards the dogmas of Christianity related to beliefs, for instance the story of the Eden, the serpent and Adam, just to mention some

“We weren’t in any way to blame (you don’t believe that story about the serpent, do you?” - it was just Adam’s black propaganda...” (Barnes 10).

In the quote, “We” refers to animals in general. Barnes, through the voice of the woodworm, expresses his point that as there is no one to blame for the sins committed by mankind, members of the Church invented the tale of Adam being tempted by the serpent to justify men’s wicked and sinful behaviour. Catholics take refuge in this belief to overcome the religious punishment which came afterwards. It is easier to cling to a belief instead of a logical reasoning.

One of the author’s purposes is to make us aware of the fact that Catholics blindly believe in every dogma, whether true or not, as I mention before in this paper. Thus, he parodies Noah’s lack of mind flexibility and establishes a parallelism with mankind’s blindness. During centuries nothing or too little has been done to change the dogmatic myopia to make dogmas keep pace with the times being.

I you think I am being contentious, it is probably because your species -I hope you don’t mind my saying this- is so hopelessly dogmatic. You believe what you want to believe, and you go on believing it. But then, of course, you all have Noah’s genes ... (30).

Barnes sees little hope in mankind’s advance, taking into account we all descend from this fallible Noah. It is time for us Catholics to start questioning dogmas and find the truth.

Second, this idea of depicting an image of a terrifying God is consistent with the conventional beliefs of the time underlying the hypotext and is clearly reflected in the description of Noah. The author brings about correspondence between God and Noah. If Noah is a frightening man is because God is fear-inspiring. That is why Barnes makes the woodworm name “Noah and his God” or “Noah and God”. Thus the novelist draws the similarity between God and Noah when the woodworm remarks that God is Noah and Noah is God and in this way the author intends to portray a profound image of fear and respect both for Noah and God and consequently for the dogmas of Christianity.

Noah would pause as he passed their stall, wondering briefly why it was empty, then stroll on, and as his footsteps faded the terrified lizards would slowly revert to their normal colour... (17).

Fear and terror is the strategy Noah used in the Ark, to impose his unquestionable authority. His only presence paralyzed every creature, even the harmless lizard. Therefore as the representative of God in the earth, Noah also carries the same methodology of apprehension and fright Christian dogmas use to control mankind.

The most remarkable information the woodworm includes in the story involves the character of Noah himself. In “The stowaway”, Julian Barnes depicts Noah as a depraved individual. The author questions the wisdom of appointing Noah as God’s representative thus challenging God’s authority. Not always the chosen ones are the best ones, the most responsible ones: “...You've always been led to believe that Noah was sage, righteous and God fearing...? (12).

Throughout the whole text, a clear criticism of God is uncovered. Barnes satirizes Noah as an exemplary Christian chosen by God and the lack of knowledge he actually has in order to lead mankind to its new destination while comparing him with the animals:

... It has been said that Noah, rain or shine, wasn't much of a sailor... He isn't any good in a storm... I am reporting what the birds said- the birds that can stay in the air for weeks at a time, the birds that can find their way from one end of the planet to the other by navigational systems... And the birds said Noah didn't know what he was doing... (24)

What is more, the author openly criticizes God through Noah’s description. Noah is depicted as a cruel, brutal, inhuman, heartless, bad man always clearly associated with God – the woodworm always mentions him as the supreme authority– and this association reflects the author’s condemnation of Christianity. The author uses an aggressive and negative lexicon to fully depict Noah: Holy Knight of the Tempest, Grand Commander of the Squalls, The Admiral. He also describes Noah as an ignorant, authoritarian man and that nothing stops him from doing whatever he wants to: “...but Noah was not a nice man... He was a monster...! (16)...He was an ignorant man... (18).

The third point to be considered is the criticism of Noah. The author refers to Noah as an arrogant, haughty person who would not think about anything else but himself, who talks to the others in a smug way and who, despite his age, has not learned anything. According to the

story told by the woodworm God is presented as the one who makes convenient agreements just like any other human being¹, or what is worse, he is proclaimed as the role model to follow.¹ And Noah follows his role model with a blind mind. Barnes again conveys the conventional concept about God which was usual in the past times portraying the image of sinister God who again leads his believers in a demanding, inflexible way. This is a clear sharp criticism of Christianity and the purpose is to open the reader's mind to another interpretation of reality as regards God. Over years and years Christianity has had the opportunity to evolve according to the world evolution, but this lack of flexibility in its dogmas and rituals makes it static and old-fashioned.

The fourth issue opened to criticism is that of human behaviour. The author also satirizes it by belittling the biblical figures of Noah and his wife, his sons and their wives: "...There were times when Noah and his sons got quite hysterical...Noah was pretty bad, but *you should have seen the others...*" (12).

All human species are hardly criticized by Barnes. Human behaviour is described by the author as cruel and wicked as a result of being the descendants of Noah and his family, whereas he sarcastically expresses his perspective that, despite being more intelligent than animals, the human race is not capable of saving itself. It seems that the human species always need a leader, somebody who easily shepherds them no matter where they go. To be a human being is not synonymous with being free. Men and women are stuck to their beliefs and dogmas, which can be true or not, but are not questionable. It seems that human race needs to have a herd instinct to survive and up to a certain extent, this gregarious feature could be easily fulfilled by faith. There are many references to the matter of beliefs, as in the next quotes: "...*We weren't in any way to blame (you don't really believe that story about the serpent, do you?- it was just Adam's black propaganda)...* (10) and in "...*You believe what you want to believe, and you go on believing it... No doubt this also accounts for the fact that you are often strangely incurious...*" (30).

¹ My own translation." Las huellas del viaje en la posmodernidad: *Una historia del mundo en 10 capítulos y medio* (J. Barnes)". Mirian Carballo(47)

Even though the Voyage is an exemplary teaching to make mankind change its position in relation to different religious aspects, men have not evolved and still take refuge and blindly cling to beliefs. This is not because human race is not clever enough to do it but because it is easier to live without accepting the cruel reality than try to change it.

The fifth issue to analyze is that of unfairness and the divisiveness of human society. In re-telling the past events into the hypertext, there is an element that is always present in Barnes' novel, that is, the unfair fragmentation of society. This theme is satirized in the animal selection God commanded Noah to make. He ordered the patriarch to choose two groups of animals: the clean and the unclean or the pure and impure. God Almighty's policy of division and discrimination is questionable. This unfair situation does not sound too merciful. As regards animals, the Bible expresses: "Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and its mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean..." (Oremus Bible, Genesis 2, 7).

Therefore, Barnes' comments focus on the division of animals:

...There was, as you can imagine, deep resentment at the divisiveness of God's animal policy. Indeed, at first even the clean animals themselves were embarrassed by the whole thing... Though being 'clean, as they rapidly realized, was a mixed blessing. Being 'clean' meant that they could be eaten..." (15)

Satirizing the division between clean and unclean, the author makes evident and denounces the discrimination and unfairness encouraged by Christianity.

Sixth, discrimination and exclusion are another issue subjected to criticism. The author finishes the story by making explicit this denouncement of discrimination and exclusion: "And with the hindsight of a new millennia, this exclusion seems even harsher than it did at the time..." (36). The cruelty and discrimination used by Christians are a form of destruction of human beings, which evidently opposes the norms and conventions of Christian dogmas.

In spite of this supposed division between clean and unclean, good and bad, it seems that the human race has suffered a regression instead of a progression. It conveys the feeling that the medicine was worse than the illness. That is what Barnes satirizes, and seeing Noah and his family behaviour, the result is obvious:

...they were all crossbreeds. We think it was Shem – though it could have been Noah himself- who has this thing about the purity of the species. Cock-eyed, of course; and as we used to say to one another, you only had to look at Noah and his wife, or at their three sons and their three wives, to realize what a genetically messy lot the human race would turn out to be... (20).

As a consequence of this division, the author, through the voice of the woodworm, poses a series of claims that undoubtedly questions Christianity. The woodworm's rebellion clearly expresses the rebellion of believers against the rules of Christianity and, at the same time, it states the need for a clear departure from old dogmas:

...among the species that took themselves seriously there arose all sorts of complicate jealousies... but some of the other animals regarded the notion of uncleanliness as a personal slight. And it must be said that the system- at least, the system as Noah understood it -made very little sense. What was so special...Why should the camel and the rabbit be given second-class status? Why should a division be introduced by the fish that had scales and fish that did not...? Why round on the mouse and the lizard...” (15).

The eighth issue criticized is the sins members of the Church commit contrary to the doctrine of Christianity. And one of them is the sin of wealth. Through irony, he criticizes the frivolity of Noah's family and exposes that Christianity took and still takes without contemplation all the wealth they want. They use whatever means they have to do it. Furthermore, the men of the Church carry out acts of cruelty, assassination and so forth to seize other people's property in the name of God, as they always did. The sickness of money gives rise to evil feelings such as envy, strife, corruption and absence of truth, just to mention some:

The carbuncle went as well, all because of some ridiculous story Ham's wife had heard about it having a precious jewel inside its skull. She was always a dressy one, that Ham's wife. So they took one of the carbuncles and chopped its head off; split the skull and found nothing at all. Maybe the jewel is only found in the female's head, Ham's wife suggested. So they opened up the other one as well, with the same negative result... (19).

The message that the aforementioned quote tries to deliver is that although aspiration is good for achieving a particular aim and helps in striving for its attainment, excessive ambition ruins the human condition and leads men and women to commit any criminal act on its behalf.

Ninth, infidelity is another delicate and controversial issue to be considered. He denounces infidelity occurring in Christian's behaviour, and this is reflected in the description of the supposed infidelity of one of Noah's daughter-in-law. The author refers to an intruder in

the Ark whom Noah's daughter-in-law has committed adultery with, and as a result of this relationship, a child was born:

...And all the children of Shem and Varadi and the one whose name began with J had dark hair and brown eyes. And so did Cush, and Mizraim, and Canaan. But Phut, the one born on the Ark, had red hair. Red hair and green eyes. Those are the facts... (28).

Infidelity is the subjective feeling that one's partner has violated a set of rules or relationship norms. Most of the time violation is expressed through a sexual representation. The author, in this quote, refers to the act of infidelity of the Church rules by the believers, the other partner of the relationship.

The fidelity position, in a broader sense, also involves the loyalty that Christians should have to their own beliefs. It is implied that human beings are weak and violate all rules, being unfaithful to all established and accepted rules.

3.5. Symbolism in "The Stowaway"

When Barnes relates the biblical hypertext in the account of the hypertext he selects important symbolical concepts as a way of criticizing Christian dogmas. This leads us to the next issue of analysis. The purpose of symbols is to enrich meanings, to expand fields of understanding and to associate complex ideas with simple signs. This becomes apparent when the woodworm talks about the Tree of Knowledge:

You would, I think, have enjoyed the simurgh, with its silver head and peacock's tail; but the bird that nested in the Tree of Knowledge was no more proof against the waves than the brindled vole... (10).

The bird that nested in the Tree of Knowledge could be interpreted as the Phoenix Bird, half eagle and half peacock, which, the legend says, lived in the Garden of Eden and could represent the figure of the Pope. To attack the Christian dogmas is to attack the Supreme Authority, the Pope. The Phoenix Bird is present in the Pope's old tiara. Pride, vanity and strutting arrogance are the qualities that defined the Peacock with its gold and scarlet colours. Gold and scarlet are the colours of the Pope. These characteristics may represent the negative

attributes concerning the Church since pride and arrogance distances from humility which is one of the cornerstones of religion.

Birds signify the presence of God, whether in the form of the dove that signalled the presence of the Holy Spirit at the time of Christ's baptism, the mother eagle that cares for its young, or the sparrow that signifies God's concern for the most insignificant living things. In general, birds have long symbolized the soul's ascent to God above material things. Some birds are used as examples of specific virtues or attributes of the Christian soul (or their opposite: the vices), whereas others represent Our Lord, Our Lady, and the saints. The birds are used by the author to express his idea of the sense of abandonment by God to his people when the birds fly away.

Through the reference to specific birds as the dove and the raven, the author express his opinion about the plurality of realities and his own reflection that history is what we want to believe. Manipulation governs human condition for the sake of pursuing one's own convenience. In this aspect members of the Church give us, the believers, the best version of things and events as appropriately as they consider. Let us analyze the moment when Noah sent the dove and the raven to check if waters were dried up from the earth. The version that comes to us is the one in that the dove comes back with the olive branch. It is clearly meaningful that the narrator of the Bible symbolically uses the dove as a positive component for salvation. Salvation is good and pure and this is precisely brought by the dove. Meanwhile, the raven is symbolically related to negativeness. The version of the raven bringing the olive branch could have been more believable because the raven is a stronger bird. Apparently, this version was not considered appropriate by the Bible's writer who, must have indeed been influenced by the thoughts of those times which were related to the good with white and peace, on the one hand, and the bad with black and destruction, on the other. Taking into account the dove and the raven version, Barnes clearly expresses his criticism of manipulation through the woodworm's voice:

...Noah sent out a raven and a dove to see if the waters had retreated... Now in the version that has come down to you, the raven has a very small part: it merely flutters hither and thither. The dove's three journeys are made a matter of heroism. You have elevated this bird, I understand, into something of symbolic value... (30) ... the raven always maintained that he found the olive

tree; ...but that Noah decided it was 'more appropriate' to say the dove had discovered it... (30).

An animal that was proverbial for its untameable nature is the unicorn, which is supposed to have existed only in Biblical times. It is mentioned in many sections of the Bible: in Numbers, Deuteronomy and Psalms: "God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of a unicorn". (Numbers 22-23)

The author uses this figure as a symbolic way to express that Noah was so cruel, so bad-tempered, that even an untameable, fearless animal as the unicorn also received Noah's cruelty: "The unicorn that had deck privileges as a result of popular lobbying... Fine thanks he got for his valour; that Noah had him casserole one Embarkation Sunday..." (21).

This questioning related to both versions of the dove and the raven leads us to the last topic subjected to study and it is the division within the Church.

The dove, the sign of peace and good, and the raven, the symbol of wickedness, could easily mean the Church division. The dove is a symbol of innocence, purity, gentleness, and affection. It is the sign of the Holy Spirit. The raven is a picture of the ignorant thought of those who have had no opportunity to learn, or of those who prefer ignorance. It represents darkness, destructiveness and evil. It is said that both, witches and the Devil, are able to take the shape of a raven. This ironic representation of the dove and the raven is clearly a sign of division: the good and the evil. We can establish a parallelism between those who continue believing what is being told and the thinking ones, who rebel against the rigid precepts of the Church. This division of concepts among the followers could pave the way towards a split in the Church.

The rainbow is stated as a sign of the Covenant made between God and Noah and God's promise to Noah that never again would the World be purified by a Great Flood. This covenant was demonstrated by a rainbow appearing in the sky as a sign that He had kept His promise. The Rainbow, a Christian Symbol, therefore represents God's faithfulness and pardon. Barnes ironically refers to the rainbow as if it was God's retribution for the behaviour of human being in obeying God's orders:

...He promised not to send another Flood and that as a sign of His intention. He was creating for us the rainbow. The rainbow! Ha! It wasn't much of a deal.

And was it legally enforceable? Try getting a rainbow to stand up in court ... 31-32). ...He said that God, by giving us the rainbow, was in effect promising to keep the world's supply of miracles topped up... (32).

The author ends the story by inviting mankind to a deep reflection as regards a change of attitudes, open ways of thinking in order to reach a better world. One of the clear attitudes that should be changed is that of people, in general, always being prone to blame others and if there is no one to blame then the problem does not exist This called for reflection is also addressed to the Catholic Church and its members. The lack of capacity to adapt to the changes seems to be one of the weaknesses of Catholicism:

...Blame someone else, that's always your first instinct. And if you can't blame someone else, then start claiming the problem isn't a problem anyway. Rewrite the rules, shift the goalposts... (35).

4. CONCLUSION

Randall Stevenson, Scottish professor and researcher on 20th century literature and postmodernist fiction, expresses his firm belief in the capacity of British fiction to absorb foreign influences in order to maintain its freshness, complexity and leading position in contemporary fiction (Sibişan 85). Julian Barnes, as a contemporary writer, and a postmodern one in many essential aspects of his work reflects Stevenson's perspective about British fiction.

Barnes's *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters* relates history with postmodern theories of representation to produce one of the most successful of his novels. Its ten chapters describe a succession of critical moments from our culture and history. Throughout the novel Barnes ironically reconstructs salient world history characters and textual accounts confronting traditional historical novels. Stories in *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters* echo each other and have subtle connection points including recurrent patterns and motifs. Moreover, intertextuality and parody can be found in every short story.

According to Hutcheon, the intertextual use of the past is often shown in postmodern works. Barnes resorts to parody to mock, comment on, or make fun of an original work, its subject, author, style, or some other target, by means of humorous, satiric or ironic imitation. Hutcheon's views on parody fit what Barnes does in this text. Barnes "does not destroy the past"; in fact, enshrines the past while questioning it. This is what Hutcheon refers to as the "postmodern paradox" (126).

It was the objective of this work to demonstrate that Julian Barnes focused on intertextuality and parody to express his disagreement with religion while revealing a covered attack on and mockery at Christianity.

In Chapter One, "The stowaway", the author discontinues the conventional representation of the Deluge as such into another story establishing a dialogue with the traditional biblical text. He takes characters and events of the sacred text and reproduces them in a fictional account but deprived of the biblical text sanctification. In this way he creates a story with a different effect.

The text was analysed considering how Barnes uses intertextuality to relate history and fictional worlds and how, within the frame of religion, he criticizes Christianity and its dogmas.

The whole chapter functions as a reflection on the possibilities of manipulation of the historical discourse and transformation of events into facts by the stowaway's upsetting distortion of the biblical myth.

In general, it is made evident how textual operations such as intertextuality, parody and frame-breaking used by Barnes allow for meaning construction.

Construction of meaning is processed through the different resources already analysed which creates, by means of irony, humour and exaggeration, a critical stance towards the central ideas of the Christian dogma. To this effect, Barnes employs different textual mechanisms such as the peculiar distribution of agents through personal pronouns, rhetorical figures (personification and hyperbole) and the borrowing of lexicon from other semantic domains. This exposition also includes the analysis of certain motifs as beliefs, criticism of God, criticism of Noah, human behavior, unfairness and divisiveness of human society, discrimination and exclusion, wealth, infidelity, the use of symbolism, and division within the Catholic Church.

After analysing "The stowaway" the conclusion is that Barnes reconstructs the past from a critical standpoint. In this chapter, Barnes chooses a woodworm, one of the least noticeable species on earth, to retell the history of the Flood and Noah's Ark, that is to say, to be the author's voice throughout the whole chapter.

In my point of view, mocking at Christianity is the main point in "The stowaway". Barnes criticizes religion as a whole. He refers to excesses, corrupt practices and absurdities as a result of the abuse of authority. Some of the issues the author develops to convey dissatisfaction and disapproval towards religion are reaction against the dogmas, unfairness and divisiveness of human society, unfairness and divisiveness of human society, discrimination and exclusion, wealth, infidelity, the use of symbolism and the division within the Catholic Church, far from an observant acceptance to Catholic history and dogmas. Religion as an important totalising dogma is under judgement. In this way Barnes affirms his viewpoint that history could be told from another approach.

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