The Academic-Industrial Duality in David Lodge's *Nice Work*

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Abstract: *The following paper is an attempt to read David Lodge's Nice Work with a particular reference to the position of the academic critic in the present world and its challenges. It comprises two sections: the first is preliminary, covering the various misconceptions held about critics and their field. The second gives a detailed analysis of how Robyn Penrose shows a firm faith in her cultural and critical enterprise and at the same time reaches a reconciliation with the real working life.*

The campus novels of modern British writers like Malcolm Bradbury and David Lodge and the occasional works of C.P. Snow and Kingsley Amis choose the academic life, interests and preoccupations engaging the scholar's attention and time. Such writers pay much attention to the academic life as representing "an eccentric microcosm of society per se with the routine menu of human characteristics and idiosyncrasies" (Bradford, 2007:35). The treatment of this topic varies from one writer to another, according to the degree of seriousness or humor with which it is presented and the perspective adopted. Any passing look at novels like C.P.Snow's *The Masters* (1951), *The Corridors of Power* (1964), Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* (1954), Malcolm Bradbury's *The History Man* (1975) and David Lodge's own *Changing Places* (1975) testifies to the validity of these views about the university fiction. Many of these revolve around the process of teaching and theorizing about literature and art and the different concerns pertaining to the academic world. David Lodge's *Nice Work* (1988) is not different from this trend in its contrasting between the intellectual and academic on the one hand and the practical or pragmatic on the other. Throughout the whole book, Lodge sheds some illuminating light on the nature of the critical enterprise as viewed by both its own practitioners and those not involved in it and pursue their own concerns away from the academic circles. Lodge seeks here to give a glimpse of an activity (criticism) that has been his lifetime preoccupation. This runs in contrast to the "almost comprehensive silence" (Barry, 1993: 249), that has often permeated the attitude of critics-writers concerning their dual activity. Lodge is quoted to be referring to the indivisible relationship in his work between fiction and criticism of the novel "I certainly think that my criticism of fiction gains from my experience of writing it"(Bergonzi, 1986:544). The relationship between the academic Penrose and the engineer Vic is highly suggestive of the polarization and sharp contrasts between two worlds that remain wide apart. It is the ever-present dichotomy between two

levels of experience and their priorities and consequences that constitutes the main issue of Lodge's novel. This unusual confrontation between the worlds of industry and academy or, to be more precise, one particular field of the academic activity - feminism and cultural criticism, is the outcome of the growing realization in the academe that such activities have to " be located in a wider context in order to assess its validity or merit in comparison with other human disciplines"(Tejera,1995:135).In addition, there is another level that needs to be stated in advance: an explicitly satirical view concerning the presumptions of academic critics and their inflated egos. In other words, Lodge's attitude towards academic criticism, as will be shown in due course, is ambivalent in that he keenly perceives both its merits and demerits or even extravagancies. As Allan Massie rightly points out, Lodge's fiction in general "reveals him to be skeptical of the validity of theory as he is contemptuous of its absence" (1990: 68). It is this half-way between coping with such trends in modern literary theory and looking askance at their basic premises and practices that gives this novel its special flavor and pungent humor..

As a novel, *Nice Work* provides its author with a vantage point to speculate about his own field in the academic circles with a reasonable degree of detachment and ease. Dr. Robyn Penrose works as a temporary lecturer in English and she is a devotee of semiotic materialism. Thus choosing a woman involved in the process of teaching and analyzing texts enables Lodge to mix the creative and critical in such a way as to seem plausible and justifiable if we perceive its appropriate context. This kind of fictional treatment inevitably brings Lodge's line of writing with that of "the French nouveau roman"(Ford, 1983: 482) in its deliberate reminding the reader of the fictionality of its world. A further level in *Nice Work* draws upon the parallels between the present text and Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1855) where the differences between the two environments are sharply highlighted. In that classic, Gaskell portrays Margaret's Margaret Hale's life in the south (Helstone) and how that peaceful mode of living is suddenly disrupted when the family departs for the industrial north. In contrast to the polluted Milton (Manchester), we find that Helstone looms in Margaret's mind as a lost Eden, an idyllic haven which she can only recall with a great nostalgia. Such is the fascination of the place and its intimacy that her fiancé, (John Thornton) finds it indispensable to bring Margaret roses from Helstone (Ch. 52), as a relic of a past she cherishes most.

The thematic objective behind using this technique of doubling is to indicate the cultural change as Lodge himself is, to quote Philip Tew's statement "a precursor of change in that he configures culture, using the idea of the condition of England that is implicit in the theme of Victorian literature' (Tew,2007:76). The abundant quotations and allusions to Gaskell's novel do not sound obtrusive or forced if we bear in mind that Dr. Robyn is an academic whose interest is semiotics, feminism, and the industrial novel. If this Wordsworthian evoking of those memories of Helstone has sustained her soul in those moments of spiritual estrangement and distress, Robyn has to cling forcibly to her critical convictions as the sole bulwark against the temptations and

challenges of those outside the academic corridors. Accordingly the challenges and frustrations of two different environments represent the elements in common between these two novels. One might infer that as Lodge's own novel is about another novel and its diversifications, it is logical that the whole book is an actual representation of what Lodge calls 'Beyond Fiction', i.e., when the novel investigates itself and its own field and strategies , or , as Wells it," the frame getting into the picture" (Bergonzi,1970:247). As expected this type of fiction is marked by a great extent of wit, verbal jokes, parodies and a sense of "identification and skepticism to what we know" (Wormald, 2003:187). The main line of action in *Nice Work*, however, is the successful representation of the duality or strict demarcation between culture and intellectual life or criticism and industry and finance. His fellow academic critic and novelist, Malcolm Bradbury, quotes Lodge's labeling of his own narrative art as simply that of "aesthetics of compromise", which began to diminish the distinction between "realism" and "experiment" (1994:378). The reason for Bradbury's categorization of Lodge's fiction as such can be felt in Lodge's conscious attempt to blend the critical postulates with his concept of fiction as simply a tale that presents figments of reality colored with a certain amount of imagination. That he focuses on the position of an academic critic beset by all types of daily and intellectual demands and cares enables Lodge to view his own work in this field. As he puts it in his comment on the Russian critic Bakhtin, Lodge virtually uses the assumptions of this critic as a means of explaining "how I can write carnivalisque novels about academics while contributing to be one myself"(1990:24). He elaborates this issue further when he states that "When I began the twin careers of novelist and academic critic some thirty years ago, the relation between fiction and criticism was not problematical"(p.11). It is, then, this problematic relation between these two contesting genres that his *Nice Work* tackles and seeks to investigate. As it concentrates on issues which are at the core of the critical theory such as author and reality that Lodge's fiction is seen as carrying the characteristics of "metafiction" (Currie,1995:145).

Robyn's university, Rummidge (Lodge's Birmingham) decides to choose this feminist as a shadow for the industrial engineer, Vic Wilcox of Pringle's engineering firm. The encounter between the two individuals implies a whole set of preconceived ideas, misgiving and antipathy towards the practices of the other. Industry as visualized by many philosophers, thinkers, poets and artists appears as the anathema of anything natural, spontaneous and beautiful. Matthew Arnold's 'Dover Beach' epitomizes the issue in the following:

> ...for the world which seems
> To lie before us like a land of dreams,
> So various, so beautiful, so new,
> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude nor peace, nor help for pain;
> And here we are as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
> When ignorant armies clash by night.

This 'darkling' place Arnold suggests here is no more than the by-product of the industrial revolution and its brutal and dehumanizing effects. In his *Culture and Anarchy* he elaborates this issue further when he states that' Faith in machinery is, as I said, one besetting danger…What is freedom but machinery? What is population but machinery? What is coal but machinery? (1965:234). This firm stand which seeks, as Trilling points out, to "forbid the sterile, atomic view of the individual"(1939:261) will be reaffirmed by the literary texts of D.H. Lawrence, H.G.Wells, Aldous Huxley,and F.R.Leavis. Robyn finds herself affiliated to such a world which is irreconcilable with her disposition and intellectual concerns. However, Lodge's book hints at the possibility of a compromise between the two as seen in the mutual interest and affection they betray in their short-termed affair and its practical consequences.

Apart from accentuating the academe-industry and finance duality, Lodge's novel delves deep in the critical process, its validity or invalidity in life and thought and the nature of the critical discourse. Above all it investigates the role assigned to criticism at a time where such activities become questionable and controversial. It is a tautology to state that Lodge has already tackled this issue in his critical books such as *Language of Fiction* (1966), *The Novelist at the Crossroads* (1971) and *Working with Structuralism* (1981).This side of the critical process and the deliberate or unintentional misconception besetting criticism is pretty central in *Nice Work*. The rationale behind all this is the fact that the critical activity is always viewed with some extent of bias and misgiving, even by those working in the same or adjoining intellectual and literary fields such as poets, novelists, dramatists and philosophers. Such men of letters often express their own reservations concerning criticism's practices and judgments. Most of their arguments tend to slight and downgrade the critical achievement and conclude that such secondary activities are mostly needless, and, at worst, harmful. D. H. Lawrence, for example, finds that criticism should be confined to the individual sensibility and appreciation. If criticism does not abide by such underlying criteria as he recommends and tries to achieve objectivity and methodology, it turns into mere impertinence and most dull jargon' (Lodge, 1981: 3).The Canadian critic Northrop Frye comments on its lack of a systematic quality as actually dictated by the very nature of its topic: literature itself has no such reliable quality (1957: 170). The Yale critic, Geoffrey Hartman , chooses a highly expressive image for one of his influential books, *Criticism in the Wilderness* and explains the implication of Arnold's phrase as being indicative of the crisis of "the generation that was destined to perish in the Sinais desert" (1980: 15). Fortunately this prophecy has not come true thoroughly although there are hints about criticism's dwindling and egotistic role. Indeed this turn in the critical orientation impels Ezra Pound to air his verdict quoted by Malcolm Bradbury" criticism shd. consume itself and disappear"(1970:11).

If we turn to the academic criticism which is in vogue nowadays, the circle gets narrower and more esoteric. That such critics are elitist is unquestionable. This self-consciousness is keenly felt by those involved in the critical process and its mystifying strategies. Lodge in this novel chooses some maxims and sayings

to poke his satire and jokes at. *Nice Work* presents an example from Lacan's argument where the meaning (if there is such a term) gets muddled and enters a vicious circle from which there is no egress" I think where I am not, therefore I am where I think not…I am not, wherever I am. I think of what I am wherever I don't think I am thinking" (p.178). Apart from the Cartesian Cogito and the deliberate and ironic freeplay on it, the arguments keep revolving around themselves without giving anything conclusive and final. Rather they tend to destabilize concepts and mental constructs that have been taken for granted since times immemorial. Indeed the arguments in the corpus of the novel highlight this striking lack of certainty as the word ' truth' itself appears from this perspective as a bourgeois illusion, "There is no "truth" in the absolute sense, and no transcendental signified. Truth is a just a rhetorical illusion, a tissue of metonymies and metaphors" (pp.117-8). It is this kind of hairsplitting, the disquieting and even unjustified sophistication that drives the Marxist critic Eagleton to assert that "academic critics have largely abandoned the broadly civilizing function of criticism"(1984:107).

If criticism in general suffers from innate drawbacks, feminist criticism has further limitations and drawbacks as it confines its activity to the question of gender especially, "the marginal and buried sides of man-woman relationship"(Waugh,1989:5).This move is ostensibly justified since it is a reaction against the Freudian claim that feminism is simply motivated by penis-envy. Hence the sense of being "jealous and neurotic"(Belsey, 1989:4).Its readings of literary works and their assessment do not transcend this relatively narrow side of literature. Subsequently the adoption of this type of criticism is simply a bulwark against the biases and malpractices of a patriarchal world. Such a rational foundation of feminist argument gradually begins to give way when we notice in *Nice Work* or, for that matter, any feminist work, the sliding or shift from literature and art into blunt sexuality and ideology. Chris Baldick reminds us of the attitude of one of the many feminists in this field, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, whose article "Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl' is sufficient to prove that "the Western civilization had come to an end" (1996: 205). All these arguments lead to one inescapable conclusion: in contrast to other literary and artistic modes or genres, criticism remains a very controversial topic among the people who practise it and its recipients or those who have nothing to do with its activities. Given this murky views of criticism ,it is natural that such outsiders like Vic Wilcox stick to many stereotyped attitudes towards it and its advocates.

As already indicated in the first section of this essay, *Nice Work* hinges on the possibility/impossibility of establishing a rapprochement between the worlds of the academe and industry and finance. In the novel's epigraphs, quotations, and different elements of intertexuality and doubling, this becomes evident even in the first chapter. The initial epigraph refers to the widening gap between the incompatible interests of people working in totally different fields. It is from Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil; or, the Two Nations*, "Two nations between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's

habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones or inhabitants of different planets" (p.11).This holds true to the interests and dispositions and priorities of the two characters in Lodge's novel and how they react to the demands of their totally different environments. The structure of the book goes in line with its theme: a series of successive and expressive shots representing Wilcox's family and the sense of monotony and boredom enveloping it. This is followed by Robyn Penrose's limited but exhilarating world of fiction, teaching, criticism and uneasy relation with her boyfriend, the academic Charles. It is through the alternation between these two incongruous worlds that the reader perceives the striking differences between their two modes of life and thinking. However, the two main characters have something in common: Dr. Penrose is endlessly haunted by the possibility of becoming redundant due to the policy of cuts applied in the universities in Margaret Thatcher's time. Wilcox at the end appears to be sharing her lot in the academe as he finds himself searching for a job after he has been fired. Besides he is far from happy if we recall his depressing relationship with his elderly and sickly wife, two delinquent young sons and a freewheeling daughter. As in the case of Gaskell's fiction which Penrose keeps teaching and analyzing, the bleak industrial setting has nothing to offer except dismay and pollution, "The people slipping and sliding on the pavements, spattered with slush by the passing traffic, look stoically wretched, as if they expect no better from life" (p.98). Inside the walls of industry, human relations are equally contaminated and blighted. Vic's seventeen year-old daughter plans to show herself semi-nude in one of the adverts of the factory for the sake of money. The mother encourages her in such indecent plans. Seen from within, the world of industry seems to be a place of mechanical, utilitarian and short-termed relationships that depend entirely on personal and selfish interests and gains. Actually what the reader detects in Lodge's novel is already there in Robyn's tutorials and speculations about industrial life and its terrifying impact on human beings (therein lies the quintessence of criticism's sustaining and enlightening role in life),"By the fifth decade of the nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution had completely dislocated the traditional structure of English society, bringing riches to a few and misery to the many"(p.73).It is worthwhile to note that Penrose's short experience in the industrial field as a shadow has only intensified her views about this world and its striking differences from her own. Moreover it has confirmed her self-confidence and that she should not regret her mode of life for all its modest rewards.

In contrast, Penrose's presence in the factory and her continuous invitations to Vic to attend her seminars at the university succeed in removing much of his discontent and misconception pertaining to her field and what sort of activities she is involved in. When the university chooses Robyn as a shadow for Vic, it has its own reasons and justifications as many people (Vic being at the forefront) have wrong views and many doubts about the academe and its ostensibly impractical activities. There is a wide-spread feeling in the industry that "universities are 'ivory tower' institutions, whose staff is ignorant of the realities

of the modern world"(p.85). So this move is meant to reconcile two polar views concerning the activities of the other. It turns out that such ambitious programs can dispel many of the illusions and biases raised against criticism and its objectives. Before embarking upon the precarious task of shadowing a man entirely different from her; Robyn has participated in a strike due to the cut policy. This shows her revolutionary spirit and readiness to put in practice what she teaches or publishes. In the factory she notices all types of maltreatment and injustice, but people there seem totally resigned and submissive. When asking about this unusual phenomenon, the answer comes in a way that has nothing to do with her theoretical insights and speculations,

> "A strike would plunge us deep into the red. The division could close us down. They own us. The Engineering and Foundry Division of Midland Amalgamated. They own us" (Lodge, 1988:113).

This is a down-to-earth discourse that states this horrible fact unequivocally. If the practical life is not much preoccupied with the academic nuances and subtle shades of meaning or types of linguistic or semantic ambiguity, it is fully steeped in actual tricks and serious deception. Indeed this transcends the verbal level and takes on a precarious turn. At the same time, the industrial world underlies a great extent of intrigue, cliquism, maliciousness as seen in the case of the Indian worker Danny Brown. This poor Asian worker is not aware that the administration is trying to pull his legs and eventually fire him. Yet the guileless feminist (Penrose) sternly warns him about what awaits him, ending her defence by the self-evident phrase "Forewarned is Forearmed". Unlike the generally smooth, homogenous and easygoing relations in Rummidge, the industry is replete with secrecy, intrigue and mystery,

> "Stuart Baxter was protective towards Brian Everthorpe. Perhaps they were Masons. Vic himself wasn't—he had been approached once, but he wouldn't bring himself to go through all the mumbo-jumbo of initiation" (Lodge, 1988:212).

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On the intellectual level, Vic appears to be much inferior to Robyn and his awareness does not move beyond the physical and obvious. This is not surprising, given his field of interest where the factual scientific discourse prevails and things have only one invariable denotation. He is, in short, quite alien to the twaddle of critical discourses and their mystifying and intentional difficulties. By involving the two in various situations and conversations, the reader begins to notice the unmistakable gap in their thinking and perception of things around them. Thus their discourses and ruminations are indicative of the different ranges of their minds,

> "A lecturer in English was bad enough, but a woman lecturer in English literature! It was a ludicrous mistake, or else a calculated insult, to send such a person to shadow him" (Lodge, 1988:107).

As a typical practitioner of contemporary literary theory and feminism, her field of interest is too abstract and hard to explain to a man of Wilcox's type as there is no lingua franca between them. Here is one of the representative examples,

> "'Why aren't they studying something useful, then?'
> 'Because they more interested in ideas, in feelings
> than in the way machines work.'
> 'Won't pay the rent, though, will they—ideas, feelings?'
> 'Is money the only criterion?'
> 'I don't know a better one'" (Lodge, 1998:115).

Even without mentioning the identity of the speaker in this dialogue, it is quite easy for the reader to attribute every line to the critic or the engineer because of the vivid linguistic traits characterizing each of them. Here what she offers in return is a new type of productivity: it is something that has never crossed Vic's mind, "reading is work. Reading is production. And what we produce is meaning" (p.334). Derrida's critical and philosophical views represent the matrix of her own perceptions and speculations,

> "What Robyn likes to do is to deconstruct the texts, to probe the gaps and absences in them, to uncover what they are not saying, to expose their ideological bad faith" (Lodge, 1998:60).

If one turns to Robyn's point of reference, the French deconstructionist, Jacques Derrida, such arguments that Lodge's novel draws upon show his essentially sceptic spirit concerning these activities, if not their validity. In his book, *Writing and Difference*, Derrida quotes Montaigne's maxim that the criticism should turn into a meta-critical discourse where the critic's interest centers on exploring its own field and does not go beyond this limited level "We need to interpret interpretations than to interpret things" (2001:351). Derrida himself stresses the fact the linguistic construct is far from reliable in presenting what lies beyond the verbal plane. As he argues in his often-quoted article,' Structure, Sign and Play', "If one erases the radical difference between signifier and signified, it is the word "signifier" itself which must be abandoned"(2001:355).Indeed Lodge's novel abounds with verbal allusions, witty comments, jokes and parodies of the critical theory and its representatives such as Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida, to choose only a few. As a typical follower of semiotic criticism, Robyn finds much aesthetic and linguistic pleasure in differentiating between metaphor and metonymy in her interpretation of the brand of cigarettes (Silk Cut).In her view, this label underlies an encroachment on the female organs, "The shimmering silk with its voluptuous curves and sensuous texture, obviously symbolized the female body […].The advert thus appealed to both sensual and sadistic impulses, the desire to mutilate as well as penetrate the female body" (p.220). But it is not so for Vic Wilcox who sees the whole matter as simply any sort of cut like hair cut or things like that. The abstraction and sophistication on the part of the feminist can only be faced with Vic's content with the denotation and even literal sense of words and objects. He has no predilection to problematize things and search for what is embedded or understatements. This is a roundabout way of

saying that the two stand in a kind of symbiotic relation that completes each other although the academic critic in the novel is too proud to acknowledge such self-evident facts. In his trip to Frankfurt to attend an industrial fair, Vic takes his shadow with him. The whole affair is marked by a passionate or ' romantic' pursuit on Vic's part while Robyn sees the matter as nothing beyond the merely physical. For the practical man of science and industry, it is only one inseparable whole. Vic's relation with her is marked by genuine passion and insatiable thirst for love. He is the man of action and practical decisions while the feminist is content with theorizing about such affairs without getting seriously involved in them. In other words, the relation between the two is suggestive of how they react when they are exposed to daily situations. If she is reluctant to respond emotionally to Vic's advances, this is because (or at least that is how she contends) she finds that it is not right for her to interfere in the life of a married man with a number of kids. Apart from this moral perspective, she feels that she and the industrial man are different in many fields and interests. Thus the best thing for her is keep the question of emotions at bay. Her cool and discouraging reactions to Vic's spontaneous, if not ardent, feelings have their own counterpart in the cool academic, Charles, who is content with giving her 'massages'. In this carry on with Vic, she practises her pedagogical role with him as simply the freeplay of the signifiers and signifieds. Needless to say, this is Lodge's most ironic judgment and satire of many of his fellow critics whose actual life situations appear to be secondary when compared to the priority given to their theoretical studies, abstractions, and critical speculations. A glaring picture of these extravagancies can be seen in William Golding's *The Paper Men* (1984) where the critical and creative are put in polar opposition. However, for all the sharp dichotomies in their thinking and perceptions, the two gradually realize that there are some common points between them. It is for this reason that Robyn is ready to help Vic by offering a great part of her inheritance for investment. The whole relation does not pose a real threat to Robyn's psychological build and intellectual preferences simply because he is not her peer like Charles. In addition, she maintains her condescending attitude towards him in all her affairs with him. However it opens her mind to other realms of experience she has been unaware of, particularly the daily practices of people, their priorities and criteria in dealing with their circumstances.

The second corresponding line in the novel is more serious and intimidating, although it does not engage the same space of the first line. In the middle of the novel or so, Robyn's self-complacency is exposed to a more formidable challenge when her brother Basil and his girlfriend, Debbie, appear. Their arguments about the fabulous financial gains and privileges confound the two, particularly Charles,

> '"How much do you get for doing that?' Basil asked.
> 'Twelve thousand a year approximately'.
> 'Good God, is that all?'
> 'I don't do it for the money.'
> 'No I can see that.'

> 'Debbie gambles with a take of ten to twenty million pounds everyday of the week, don' you ,my sweet?'
> 'Straight', said Debbie.'Couse, it's not like having a flutter on a horse.
> 'You couldn't see the money, and it's not yours, anyway, it's the bank's'.
> 'But twenty million? ,said Charles, visibly shaken'.
> 'That's nearly the annual budget of my university!' (Lodge, 1988:185-6).

This dazzling prospectus of life with its incredible potentialities is totally new for a woman who has hitherto spent her time exclusively in the pursuit of views of Marxism, feminism, semiotics, structuralism and post-structuralism. As expected, Penrose's disillusioned colleague, Charles, succumbs to these irresistible lures and succeeds in winning Debbie to his side, much to the rage and jealousy of Basil. Charles's final letter to Robyn shows his full disillusionment with criticism and teaching as a mode of living. As he puts it, "I have had my doubts for sometime about the pedagogic application of poststructuralist theory…hiding them one by one until one day there is no space left" (p.313). Robyn's final conclusion shows that, unlike him, she has 'weathered the storm' as Pound cogently and proudly argues in his 'The Rest'. She rejects flatly the paths suggested by Vic, Debbie, and Charles and asserts her sturdy faith in criticism and its constructive and positive message in life. Moreover she is ready to put up with the consequences of her choice, "There are lots of things I wouldn't do. I wouldn't work in a factory. I wouldn't work in a bank. I would n't be a housewife"(p.238). In other words she maintains her personal and intellectual freedom, integrity, and disinterestedness by opposing all manifestations or forms of hegemony and subjection. It in this principled and adamant stand towards her field of interest that the implications of the title of the novel unfurl. It is, then, Penrose's work that is referred to as "nice" in the title. She will not be entrapped by the mechanical, financial and biological snares that life sets in her way and will keep on pursuing the critical field in the energy and disinterestedness that Stephen Dedalus has revealed in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* The author gives her a happy ending: a permanent job in England and a potential one in America in addition to an inheritance of a good amount of money. But if she opts for a working relationship with Vic rather than semiotic and interpersonal struggles, this can be taken as indicative of "a state of reconciliation between industry and academe" (Womack, 2005: 336). She will always be in pursuit of aesthetic and ideological interests to fulfill the promise of her surname (Penrose).The rose of her writing will permanently be blossoming for those(in particular women) who look forward to support and assistance in their craving for a better and less biased world.

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