



Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

Corso di Laurea magistrale (*ordinamento ex D.M.*
270/2004)
in Lingue e Letterature europee, americane e
postcoloniali

Tesi di Laurea

Joan Baez: Poetry, Music and Activism

Relatore

Marco Fazzini

Correlatore

Shaul Bassi

Laureando/a

Alessia Maltese

Matricola

844448

Anno Accademico

2013 / 2014

Joan Baez: Poetry, Music and Activism

Index

Introduction	6
Chapter I	8
<i>1960s Folk Music and the sense of community</i>	8
1.1 Folk Music during the 1960s	8
1.2 Joan Baez and Music: <i>We Shall Overcome</i>	14
1.3 What does Folk mean in Literature: Francis James Child and William Wordsworth.....	16
Bibliography I	19
Chapter II	21
<i>A long Struggle for Freedom and Human Rights</i>	21
2.1 Joan Baez and Martin Luther King: a long friendship	22
2.2 Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement	24
2.3 Martin Luther King in Birmingham, Alabama.....	27
2.4 Martin Luther King and the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom ..	29
2.5 White Poetry and the topic of Race	31
2.6 Black poet Dudley Randall and the Quaker John G. Whittier	33
2.7 Joan Baez and the issue of Civil Disobedience	36
2.8 Henry David Thoreau's On the duty of Civil Disobedience	39
13.9 Barbara Deming's <i>Prison Notes</i>	40
Bibliography II	43
Chapter III	46
<i>Joan Baez: a folksinger and poetess</i>	46
3.1 Her life and her attitude toward existence.....	47
3.2 Her mother and her Father	50
3.3 Joan Baez's vision of America	53
3.4 Her Music and Her Political Activism.....	55
3.5 Joan Baez, not only a folksinger	60
Bibliography III	62
<i>Baptism: A Journey Through our Time</i>	63

4.1 Music through Poetry and Poetry Through Music	64
Bibliography IV	69
Chapter V	71
<i>How War influences the lives of human beings</i>	71
5.1 War through Poetry	72
5.2 Joan Baez and The Vietnam War: <i>Where are you now, my son?</i>	75
<i>Joan Baez the activist</i>	75
<i>Joan Baez the folksinger and poetess</i>	78
5.3 Henry Treece: <i>Elegy</i>	83
5.4 Septimus Smith: a victim of War in <i>Mrs Dalloway</i>	85
5.5 Joan Baez's <i>Baptism</i> and the issue of War	88
5.6 <i>Once</i> , a dance against War	93
Bibliography V	95
Chapter VI	99
<i>Mothers and Children: What does it mean to be a Mother and a Woman</i>	99
6.1 Lullabies, Mothers and their Children	100
6.2 Mothers and Children in Literature	103
6.3 Joan Baez, Francis James Child and the topic of Motherhood	105
6.4 Women and Feminism: a window into Marilyn French's <i>The Women's Room</i>	107
Bibliography VI	112
Chapter VII	114
<i>Fathers and sons, a close relationship</i>	114
7.1 Fatherhood in James Joyce's <i>Of the Dark Past</i> and other early poems	115
7.2 Fatherhood in Henry Treece's <i>Old Welsh Song</i> and <i>The Magic Wood</i>	116
7.3 Ballads and the topic of fatherhood: further literary voices	118
Bibliography VII	121
<i>Mankind, Death and Sorrow</i>	122
8.1 Joan Baez's vision of Death and Sorrow	123
8.2 Federico Garcia Lorca: <i>Gacela of the dark death and Casida of the Lament</i>	124
8.3 William Blake: <i>London</i>	127
Bibliography VIII	129

Chapter IX.....	131
<i>Men fell on the centre of the Universe: in between Meditation and lyrical moments</i>	131
9.1 <i>No Man is an Island: John Donne's Devotions upon Emergent Occasions</i>	132
9.2 <i>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: young Stephen Dedalus' meditations</i>	135
9.3 <i>Meditation and Loneliness in Arthur Rimbaud's Illuminations</i>	138
Bibliography IX.....	139
Chapter X.....	141
<i>Love and Poetry: oh sad, sad Love!</i>	141
10.1 Joan Baez and Love.....	141
10.2 Wholeness and Order in E. E. Cummings' <i>Tulips and Chimneys</i>	146
10.3 <i>All in Green Went My Love Riding: E. E. Cummings' love poems</i>	147
10.4 <i>When the Shy Star Goes Forth in Heaven: James Joyce's love poems</i>	150
Chapter XI.....	153
<i>Humankind and God</i>	153
11.1 Joan Baez and Quakerism.....	153
11.2 Quakerism in Literature.....	155
<i>The Quaker Influence in American Literature</i>	157
11.3 Sinners and God.....	159
11.4 Black Gospel and Religion: some notions.....	163
Bibliography XI.....	165
Conclusion.....	168

*To CONCETTA,
who loved books
and died so soon.*

Introduction

This dissertation attempts to give an overview on the half American and half Mexican folksinger Joan Baez during the 1960s and 1970s in America. In particular, I have decided to highlight her life through three main aspects: Poetry, Music and Activism. Moreover, her 1968 album of poetry and music entitled *Baptism: A Journey Through Our Time* will be the focus of my study. As a result, I have decided to explore those poems which have been selected, chosen and edited by Joan Baez in the above cited album. Specifically, I will limit my analysis on these poems and their authors although they, as a matter of fact, do not belong to the same historical periods. For this reason, then, I will be quoting the American poet Walt Whitman, the Irish-English poet Henry Treece, the Irish poet James Joyce, the English poets William Blake, John Donne and Wilfred Owen and the French poet Arthur Rimbaud. In particular, these poems have offered me the possibility to link some autobiographical elements of Joan Baez's life and their main topics. Nevertheless, I have decided to introduce, firstly, the social and political context in which Joan Baez lived and acted during the American 1960s and also 1970s. As a matter of fact, I will above all stress my attention on the 1960s Folk Music Movement in America. Secondly, I will discuss about Martin Luther King's close friendship with Joan Baez and the Civil Rights Movement of the American 1960s. At this point, then, I will analyse the importance of freedom for human beings in poetry, music and social activism. Having introduced the historical, social and political background of the 1960s in America, I will later on turn my attention on Joan Baez's life. Indeed, in the third chapter I will explore some important events of Joan Baez's life especially during her youth. Specifically, I have decided to stress my attention on some of those moments which seem to have shaped important values and beliefs in her. As a consequence, I will explore these values by quoting some crucial moments of her life where she used poetry, music and activism in order to communicate a message. Furthermore, I will demonstrate the way in which a folksinger in action could be altogether turned into a suggestive literary figure. In the following

chapter, then, I will introduce her 1968 album of poetry *Baptism: A Journey Through Our Time*, the ballad-song *Where are you now, my son?* written and edited by Joan Baez during the 1970s in Hanoi and some ballads which have been borrowed and sung by Joan Baez from the *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* edited by Francis James Child. Finally, the reader will become aware of the way in which Joan Baez *Baptism's* poem-songs have offered me the possibility to deal with several topics such as the relationships between men and *War, Motherhood, Fatherhood, Death and Sorrow, Meditation, Love* and *God*. In that very occasion, the audience will notice how these topics cannot fully be separated from Joan Baez's life. Indeed, I will try to demonstrate the continuity among poetry, music, social activism and Joan Baez's existence.

Chapter I

1960s Folk Music and the sense of community

These three in the evening, harmonica and fiddle and guitar. Playing a reel and tapping out the tune, and big deep strings of the guitar beating like a heart, and the harmonica's sharp chords and the skirl and squeal of the fiddle. People have to move close. [John Steinbeck]

The first chapter of this dissertation aims to furnish some notions about the social, cultural and political background of America during the 1960s. In particular, I will focus my attention on the idea of folk and of social movements. First of all, then, I will try to define the issue and the importance of shaping a social movement in order to achieve something. Specifically, I will analyse the 1960s Folk movement in America and I will, above all, take into consideration the Folk Music Revival of this era. As a consequence, I will also dedicate a sub-chapter to Joan Baez and to those times in which she used music in order to say something. Moreover, I will try to revisit the idea of Folk in literature and, specifically, I will explore the sense of community and folk in William Wordsworth's *Preface* to his *Lyrical Ballads* and in Francis James Child's *Introduction* to his *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. Finally, I will be ending by quoting some poems in which several references to music appear to have been made.

1.1 Folk Music during the 1960s

Music has always been harmonizing the souls of human beings. It has enchanted the Gods' ears, it has smothered the hearts of millions and millions of lovers and it has been echoing through the walls of churches and cemeteries. To bid farewell, to promise goodbye and to sing, Music cannot totally be separated from human lives. Nevertheless, Music has not always enchanted Mankind. It has also been fierce, especially when meant to say something. As a consequence, this sub-chapter attempts to discuss about the role of Music during the American 1960s and 1970s. In particular, I will be

dealing also with the social, political and cultural phenomena in which, during this era, Music was able to install and shape a new way of thinking. Moreover, I will also observe the way in which the American 1960s and 1970s seem to have influenced literature.

Let us begin by considering the political and social background in which the 1960s Folk Music Revival took place in America. First of all, the political background in which this movement took place saw the birth of the American New Left. Although it has been several times opposed to the American Old Left, I will demonstrate how, as a matter of fact, these two political forces have both been characterized by a series of similar protests held in order to obtain something. Indeed, while the Old Left centralized its protest on the demonstrations of “unemployed and poor people” attacking the social system, the New Left centralized its main activities on “anti-bureaucratic, spontaneous and anti-authoritarian” individuals meant to dismantle hierarchical values in society and politics (Neustadter, 1992: 40). For instance, one of the most important goals of the New Left was the idea of rising social consciousness through theatres, anti-war demonstrations, expositions of the absurdity of the system and “discursive rather than persuasive” music (Neustadter, 1992: 49). Hence, it is as if the need to declare something aloud has brought human beings to analyse their positions through social activism aimed to put them face to face with the outside world.

Moreover, it appears as if Music covered an important role during the American 1960s especially because it could not be fully separated from those political aspects. Specifically, the impetuosity of the American 1960s was majorly by young popular musicians who generated from youth movements meant to arise the political problems of their own society (Eyerman, 1995: 453). War, in particular, was at the centre of such protests. Indeed, it is possible to affirm that the greatest part of the social movements held during the 1960s was above all “massive phenomena against the military system” in American life (Eyerman, 1995: 454). For example, the 1964 Free Speech Movement, which originated among young students at the

University of California at Berkeley, could be considered as an important anecdote. Indeed, a group of young students decided for the first time to use music in order to protest against the American system and in order to create a kind of “collective memory” among young protesters (Eyerman, 1995: 458). In Joan Baez’s second memoir *And a Voice to Sing With*, then, there is a passage in which the American folksinger has spent some words about the Free Speech Movement which she has with cooperated several times during the 1960s. Indeed, she has observed that “these young protesters needed to feel fresh power at a time like that” (Baez, 1987: 118). Moreover, Joan Baez has remembered the day in which she took part in an “enormous march” with the organizers of the movement from the famous Sproul Hall of the University in Berkeley to the opposite building. As a result, she has affirmed: “The organizers of the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley got hold of me, and I went up to sing and speak. Ira and I raised the subject of nonviolence” (Baez, 1987: 118). Furthermore, she has finally observed: “I was there when they went into the hall. Up in front of thousands of kids [...] I told them to go into the building with “*as much love as they could muster*” and then I sang of them. Inside, the halls and rooms were filled with students holding seminars on everything and a seminar of civil disobedience led by Ira and me” (Baez, 1987: 119). As a consequence, it is possible to affirm that Music became during the 1960s both as a mean to be united in protest and a mean to communicate. Nonetheless, the impact of the Civil Rights Movement and a long series of black “sit-ins and bus boycotts” aimed to dismantle racial discrimination should be considered as an integral part of the 1960s American Folk Movement (Gonczy, 2008: 19). Thus, the American Folk Music Revival of the 1960s began to take place in such a background. As a result, united individuals either devoted to civil rights and freedom or devoted to the magical power of music, began to peacefully protest against racism, war and injustice.

Having explored the political and social background in which the 1960s Folk Music Revival took place in America, let us move on to discuss about

its main characteristics. Firstly, according to some scholars the beginning of the Folk Music Revival should be conducted to the performance of a song by The Kingston Trio entitled *Tom Dooley*. Indeed, this song chanting the “impending execution” of a man who had killed his beloved, would have developed in the audiences “an ear for the topical songs”. The expression “topical songs”, then, referred to some songs which told a story or expressed personal emotions in some lyrics (Gonczy, 2008: 15). As a consequence, a series of young folksingers followed The Kingston Trio. Among them there were especially Joan Baez, “rising from the coffee house crowd” and young Bob Dylan (Gonczy, 2008: 20). In particular, it appears as if these two young musicians and activists have raised the anti-war human consciousness of the 1960s by using their voices and music. Indeed, they not only sang, rather, became radicalized among the New Left (Gonczy, 2008: 23). In a chapter of her second memoir, then, Joan Baez seems to exemplify the issue above. Indeed, in remembering her 1960s with the already electric Bob Dylan she has affirmed: “When the war began, I, along with thousands of others, would go battle against it. We would lose Bob to other things, but before the first official bullet was fired, *he had filled our arsenals with song: “Hard Rain”, “Masters of War”, “The Times They Are A-Changin”, “With God on Our Side”* and finally *“Blowing in the Wind”*, the best known anthem of social conscience throughout the world” (Baez, 1987: 92). For instance, Joan Baez seems to have always believed in the importance of social movements. According to her, then, a movement “describes the people and the groups which are continuing to organize” against nuclear, wars, torture and especially armaments (Baez, 1987: 333). Music, moreover, has meant to her above all unity. As a result, her expression: “Every word of the *songs* was once again alive and vital, and nothing mattered except for that moment of song and union” (Baez, 1987: 339) appears to clarify the issue above. Moreover, when Paul Zollo interviewed Joan Baez in 1987, and he asked her whether, during her youth, folk music meant to her something more special rather than any other kind of music, she simply told him: “I had a lot of sadness in there, and I would sing these ballads until five

in the morning, making myself more miserable, I suppose, but it comforted me. It absolutely spoke to my heart. Beauty and Death” (Zollo, 2003: 173). Especially ballads, then, should be considered as the main agents of the whole American 1960s and 1970s Folk Music era. Thus, Music can be considered as one of the most important aspects of the 1960s in America especially for young individuals.

As a direct consequence of this, Folk Music began to be taken to “union meeting, coffee houses, night clubs, concerts both large and small and rent parties” as a way to tune several important and powerful messages (Roy, 2010: 91). In addition, it is also possible to say that Folk Music aimed to create a new audience able to face the new problems of the 1960s in America. The centre, then, of the Folk Music Movement was established at Greenwich Village where the famous *Young’s Folklore Centre* was held and young folksingers met in order to discuss about the dynamics of the new folk scene (Eyerman, 1996: 528). Nonetheless, another important phenomenon of the 1960s Folk Music Revival was also the *Woodstock Music and Art Fair*. Woodstock, then, can be considered as the counter-cultural space in which thousands and thousands of young students, protesters, activists and folksingers became united to tune in their protests through the power of music. In particular, the Woodstock Music Festival held in 1969 could be seen as an iconic moment for an angry young generation to exploit its most intimate feelings (Michael, 2012: 238). Indeed, there is a chapter in Joan Baez’s *And a Voice to Sing With*, in which the folksinger has offered the reader an account on that very occasion. “Woodstock was drugs and sex and rock and roll. Woodstock, in all its mud and glory, belonged to the sixties” (Baez, 1987: 163), she has pointed out. Nevertheless, she goes on to claim: “But Woodstock was also me, Joan Baez, endlessly proselytizing about the war [...] I had my place there. I was of the sixties, and I was a survivor” (Baez, 1987: 164). Finally, the famous *Newport Folk Festival* cannot be separated from the 1960s American scene. For instance, Joan Baez has offered an account of the very first edition of the Newport Folk Festival in her second memoir. As if the reader had the

impression of being splashed on to a burst of colours, chaos and harmony, Joan Baez has depicted this event in a very original way. As a consequence, she has stated: “There were tents full of folksingers, banjo pickers, fiddle players [...] The kids who flocked to the festival were trim and had short hair [...] there were black blues singers with broken-down guitars and white kids trying to sound like them” (Baez, 1987: 60). Hence, it is possible to consider Music as an integral part of the 1960s especially because young generations began to see it as a kind of suffocating throat by which they could have chanted everything they had been hiding in their hearts.

Another important aspect, then, can also be the way in which the spirit of the American 1960s has influenced both art and literature. For instance, I have already noted how the New Left began to address theatres as means of propagandas. In addition, either art became prominent in the idea of communicating some important messages. I would, for example, name “the striking photographs of college students placing flowers in the guns of police officers”, the 1968 graffiti of May, the visual flyers, the political cartoons held during this era and so on (Everhart, 2014: 270). Moreover, in literature especially Poetry seems to have been influenced by the new spirit of the American 1960s. For instance, I have decided to focus my analysis on the poetical and also political voice of Allen Ginsberg who, for the first time, announced in his poems: “Yes, I am willing to march out against the war” (Watten, 2002: 144). In particular, Ginsberg became interested in finding an alternative to the rationality of the Western World through his meditative moods. Indeed, he went abroad and found in nature and isolation his becoming a radical outsider, a model for his young generation. “Self-Consciousness”, then, became his most prominent characteristic (Watten, 2002: 157). Hence, it is possible to affirm that Poetry became also a mean to express the fervour of a fresh and new poetical voice aimed to oppose to the ordinary countenance around. In addition, it is also important to make some reflections upon Music and Literature. For example, during the 1960s Harry Smith’s *Anthology of American Folk-Music* became a real icon. Indeed, it appears to be composed by six CDs documentary in which

especially the songs of working-class Americans of the past have been collected (Rosenberg, 1998: 327). The main idea, then, was to collect some songs from the oral traditions and write them into “books as folksongs” able to revisit the essence of past people (Rosenberg, 1998: 329). As a consequence of this, indeed, during the American 1960s the myth of the common man appeared to be reinforced as if it wanted to symbolize that the *folk* era belonged to the people and that they were part of a single overarching “over-soul” (Dunlap, 2006: 552). Thus, it is possible to end this subchapter by saying that not only music, nevertheless, also literature and art have been influenced by the new American way of the 1960s. In particular, I have quoted these examples in order to become aware of how human beings have behaved as real folk agents in their long struggles against war, racism, oppression and violence during the 1960s.

1.2 Joan Baez and Music: *We Shall Overcome*

Having discussed about the importance of Music in order to say something, let us move on to analyse a specific song: *We Shall Overcome*. Specifically, I will be dealing with its performance by Joan Baez during the 1963 March in Washington. Indeed, *We Shall Overcome* has also been associated, several times, with the career of Joan Baez and it has also become “a cornerstone for the Folk Music Revival” (Jager, 2010: 90) during the American 1960s. Nevertheless, something about its roots needs a deeper analysis.

To begin with, Music has always been possessing several aims. For example, it has been able to transmit religious, political, moral and spiritual values. It has also been aimed to regulate behaviours, to stand for social actions or simply to give a definition to the emotions of human creatures (Alperson, 2008: 10). Nevertheless, the idea of *deconstruction* applied to Music seems to profoundly change its meaning. According to such an idea, then, it is possible to recognize Music as a solely transcendent experience able to “suspend the limits of consciousness and our ordinary human experience” (Hadreas, 1999: 9). As a consequence, it seems as if Music would finally become able to express something which ordinary words will

not be able to fulfil. A sudden emotion, a joy, a chaotic burst of intimate feelings would be experienced, then, because of the power of Music. Nonetheless, it appears that the song *We Shall Overcome* is able to reflect this issue above. For instance, the scholar Katherine Everhart has recognized in this song the power to “communicate emotions of confidence” and the ability to “convince individuals of becoming part of a social movement” (Everhart, 2014: 274). Moreover, in her *Prison Notes*, Barbara Deming seems either to underline the incredible capacity of this song to create a sort of communal space, being love among fellow men its main topic. Indeed, Deming recognizes this anthem to be the hymn of the freedom and the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Moreover, according to her, those who have always believed in the “beloved community”, would have finally achieved the real meaning of this anthem (Deming, 1966: 77). The idea of living in peace, the idea of walking hand in hand and the vision of black and white together, then, would have been clearly understood even by harsh individuals according to Barbara Deming (Deming, 1966: 77). Hence, it is as if this anthem has been able to sign a whole movement and its long lasting struggles. In particular, it has altogether been able to unite once again Music to people’s needs.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that *We Shall Overcome* has been sung especially by white folksingers, such as Joan Baez and Pete Seeger, this song has been borrowed from the old black gospel. Indeed, according to the scholar Daniel J. Goczy, *We Shall Overcome* should be seen as a “reworking of a Baptist hymn first sung by black tobacco workers in the 1940s” (Goczy, 2008: 25). At this point, the scholar Michael Castellini has also argued about the idea that several black hymns and spirituals have been revisited during the Civil Rights Movement. In particular, he refers to the so called ‘sorrow songs’ which were also sung by black slaves and unhappy creatures who found in black spiritual songs a way to exploit their own sufferings (Castellini, 2013: 4). Moreover, he goes on to name also the so called ‘freedom songs’ which directly came from the religious black tradition and were sung by local African American communities against

racial discrimination (Castellini, 2013: 9). As a direct consequence of this, *We Shall Overcome* should be considered as one of these *freedom songs* and it has also been the title of a solo album published in 1962 by the SNCC Freedom Singers who arranged some black spirituals and “sang freedom songs to raise awareness for the Southern struggle during the civil rights movement” (Castellini, 2013: 51). For instance, Joan Baez has more than once recurred to this anthem during her concerts, as if it signed those important values she cared the most. Indeed, she solemnly sang it during the 1963 March For Jobs and Freedom and twice during her civil rights protests in Southern America. For instance, in her memoir, then, there is a scene in which the folksinger describes the final part of one of the concerts she held in the South of America. Indeed, she has noted: “The concert was beautiful. It ended with *We Shall Overcome* and the audience rose and held hands, swaying back and forth while they sang” (Baez, 1987: 106). As a result, it seems as if this song has created a sort of space in which several individuals would have recognized their unity and power. Thus, this sub-chapter has showed music as a way to transcend human experience and touch the most intimate sides of it. Specifically, the song *We Shall Overcome* has become the anthem of the civil rights experience. Nevertheless, being this song rooted in the history of black people, it has been also able to highlight how much did black individuals care for their freedom and civil rights.

1.3 What does Folk mean in Literature: Francis James Child and William Wordsworth

I have, until now, explored the idea of Folk in Music. Nevertheless, I will now turn the attention on the way in which the issue of Folk has been perceived in literature. Precisely, I will take into consideration two ballads’ makers: Francis James Child and William Wordsworth. Furthermore, the reader will become aware of how folk cannot be fully separated from these writers’ ideas of community.

First of all, let us begin by making a reflection upon the position of the poet both in William Wordsworth and in Francis James Child. However, since the image of the poet appears to cover a specific role for both these authors,

I would like to introduce this topic by quoting a poem by William Blake. This poem, entitled *The Voice of The Ancient Bard*, appears to be the final chant of an ancient poet who is reflecting upon his past youth. Indeed, the poem opens with the main voice's expression: "Youth of delight! Come hither and see the opening morn" (Blake, 2005: 54). As a consequence, the same nostalgic feeling of a poet who has lost his youth seems to be represented also by the Romantic poet Wordsworth. In his *Preface* to his *Lyrical Ballads*, indeed, the English poet discusses about his idea of poets. According to him, a poet is a man who has got "a greater knowledge of human nature" and who possesses either a "disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things" (Wordsworth, 1798: 78). Moreover, he continues to declare: "The Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of men. Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men" (Wordsworth, 1798: 82). Conversely, in Francis James Child's *Introduction* to his *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, the writer appears to deny the importance of any poet or narrator involved into a work of art. Indeed, since he is dealing with "ballads, stories which exist for their own sake", in his own opinion any author or writer is merely irrelevant (Child, 1904: 2). "The author is of no account. He is not even present" (Child, 1904: 1), Child goes on to affirm. Thus, it is possible to affirm that Wordsworth and Child seem to differ in their opinion about the role of the poet in their ballads' making. Notwithstanding this, I will demonstrate how close Child and Wordsworth could be in several aspects.

In fact, it looks as if these poets agree on their combination between folk and the sense of community. Firstly, both William Wordsworth and Francis J. Child are balladeers. The former has written his famous *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. The latter has collected some of the most famous ballads in England and Scotland during the 19th century. In particular, he searched for authentic texts and manuscripts in which some ballads would have already been collected in order to publish "a genuine Ballad Book under an able Editor" (Brown, 2006: 98). Secondly, these writers seem to have similarly linked the idea of folk and community in their ideas of ballads. For instance, some

of the most important goals which William Wordsworth appears to propose himself in his preface are: “To choose incidents and situation from common life, to regulate and to describe them in a selection of language really used by men” (Wordsworth, 1798: 71). In addition, he goes on to point out: “Low and rustic life was generally chosen; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist; because the manners of rural life germinate from these elementary feelings” (Wordsworth, 1798: 71). At the same time, in his *Introduction* Francis Child replies: “In studying ballads, then, we are studying the *poetry of the folk*, and the poetry of the folk is different from the poetry of art” (Child, 1904: 2). Furthermore, Wordsworth’s ideas on the authentic language of the folks, appear to be mentioned also by Child’s expression: “To this oral literature belong the popular ballads [...] They belong to the whole people, at a time when there were no formal divisions of literate and illiterate. They belong to the folk” (Child, 1904: 3). Moreover, as well as the Romantic poet makes us aware that his poems have the purpose to illustrate the manner in which the feelings of us all can be measured by in our common relationships with death, love, solitude and society (Wordsworth, 1798: 72); Francis Child replies that the subject matter of the ballads must be of popular origins and it may also be “pseudo-historical, must deal with heroic sentiment, that the author must be of the folk and the material derived from popular sources” (James, 1933: 56). Thirdly, the last comparison between Child and Wordsworth could be given by their intentions to connect popular Poetry to the sense of community. Indeed, in William Wordsworth’s opinion popular poetry appears to refer to the idea of imitating and adopting the very language of men. In addition, according to the English poet popular poetry should have portrayed the very nature of men, their spirits, their pleasures and their daily life feelings (Wordsworth, 1798: 80). Similarly, in Child’s opinion “popular poetry is distinct and very important species of poetry. It is, then, the poetry of a whole community which knows, wants and values the same things in the same ways and the poetry which expresses itself in popular ballads” (Bell, 1988: 289-290). Finally, this sub-chapter has attempted to give an overview

on the ideas of folk and community in William Wordsworth and Francis James Child's ballads. Although they differ in their idea of the author, I have demonstrated how similarly these authors have explored the importance of the people and their tradition. In a sense, it is possible to be reminded of the entire spirit of the American 1960s where people became the real agents of a new era.

Bibliography I

- Alperson, P. (2008) "Music, Mind and Morality: Arousing the Body Politic" *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 42/1: p. 10.
- Baez, J. (1987) *And a Voice to Sing With* New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks.
- Bell, M. J. (1988) "No Borders to the Ballad Maker's Art": Francis James Child and the Politics of People *Western Folklore* 47/4: pp. 285-307.
- Blake, W. (2005) *Songs of Innocence and Of Experience* Boston: Digireads Publishing.
- Brown, M. E. (2006) "Child's Gallant Army of Auxiliaries" *Journal of Folklore Research* 43/2: pp. 89-108.
- Castellini, M. (2013) "Sit In, Stand Up, and Sing Out!: Black Gospel Music and the Civil Rights Movement" *History Theses* Atlanta: Georgia State University.
- Child, F. J. (1904) *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* Wellesley: The Cambridge Edition for Poets.
- Deming, B. (1966) *Prison Notes* New York: Grossmann Publishers.
- Dunlap, J. (2006) "Through the Eyes of Tom Joad: Patterns of American Idealism, Bob Dylan and the Folk Protest Movement" *Popular Music and Society* 29/5: pp. 549-573.
- Everhart, K. (2014) "Capitan America and Thriller. How artistic expressions shape mobilization process in Social Movements" *Sociology Compass* 8/3: pp. 268-281.
- Eyerman, R. (1996) "From the 30s to the 60s: The Folk Music Revival in the United States" *Theory and Society* 25: pp. 501-543.

- Eyerman, R. Jamison, A. (1995) "Popular music in the 1960s" *Media Culture Society* 17: pp. 449- 468.
- Gonczy, D. J. (2008) "The folk music movement of the 1960s: Its rise and fall" *Popular Music and Society* 10/1: pp. 15-31.
- Hadreas, P. (1999) "Deconstruction and the Meaning of Music" *Perspectives of New Music* 37/2: p. 9.
- Jager, M. (2010) *Popular is not Enough: The political Voice of Joan Baez* Stuttgart: Verlag.
- James, T. (1933) "The English and Scottish Popular Ballads of Francis J. Child" *The Journal of American Folklore* 46/179: pp. 51-68.
- Michael, S. (2012) "Woodstock: How the Media Missed The Historic Angle of the Breaking story" *Journalism History* 37/4: p. 238.
- Neustadter, R. (1992) "Political Generations and Protest: The Old Left and the New Left" *Crit Sociol* 19/37: pp. 37-54.
- Rosenberg, N. (1998) "The Anthology of American Folk-Music" and Working-Class Music" *Labour* 42: pp. 327-332.
- Roy, W. (2010) "How Social Movements Do Culture" *Political Cultural Society* 23/85: p. 91.
- See Preface and Appendix to *Lyrical Ballads in Wordsworth's Literary Criticism* (Edited by Owen W. J. B.) London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Watten, B. (2002) "The Turn to Language and the 1960s" *Critical Inquiry* 29/1: pp. 139-183.
- Wordsworth, W. (2003) *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems* Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd.
- Zollo, P. (2003) *Songwriters on Song writing* Cambridge: Da Capo Press.

Chapter II

A long Struggle for Freedom and Human Rights

At home we have freedom of speech, but fewer and fewer words with any meaning are ever spoken. We have freedom of thought, but nothing pushes us toward creative thinking. We have freedom of choice, and a diminishing quality of moral and spiritual values characterizing our choices. And here, where you have to fight for it, a spirit is created. The people sing, cherish their children, love their church, and care for their neighbours. This is not a commentary on the East and West, I said, it is a commentary on struggle. [Joan Baez]

The previous chapter of this dissertation has analysed the social, cultural and musical background of America during the 1960s. As a result, in the second chapter I will focus my attention on some important events related to that era. In particular, I will focus my analysis on some aspects of the 1960s long struggle for freedom by black individuals. Hence, I will first of all discuss about Joan Baez and her friend Martin Luther King. In particular, I will take into consideration two important events held by Martin Luther King in Birmingham during the Civil Rights Movement and his famous *March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom* which was held in Washington in 1963. Moreover, the reader will become aware of the idea that Joan Baez has all the same experienced these crucial events together with Martin Luther King. Secondly, I will be dealing with Poetry. Specifically, I will analyse some examples of black Poetry together with other writers who have discussed about freedom and democracy in their works. Thirdly, I will take a look into the idea of “civil disobedience” which has been explored by the scholar Henry David Thoreau. Finally, some notions about Barbara Deming’s *Prison Notes* will be also investigated.

2.1 Joan Baez and Martin Luther King: a long friendship

Joan Baez and Martin Luther King are linked by an inseparable knot. They have been friends and confidants. They both have believed in the idea of race equality and human liberty. They both have believed in the importance of freedom and civil rights for human beings. They both have believed in the idea of nonviolence. As a result of this, in her second memoir *And A Voice To Sing With*, Joan Baez gives a brief description of herself in such terms: “I am not a saint. I am a *noise*. I spend a good deal of my time singing, dancing, *acting*” (Baez, 1987: 33). Consequently, it is just her idea of action which I would like to highlight in this first sub-chapter. In particular, I will try to make a comparison between Joan Baez’s beliefs and Martin Luther King’s declarations in his famous speech *I have a dream*.

First of all, the importance which Martin Luther King has covered for Joan Baez seems to be expressed by her own statement: “King was giving a shape and a name to my passionate but ill-articulated beliefs” (Baez, 1987: 40). As a consequence, the incredible knot which has occurred between the half American and half Mexican folksinger and “the twenty-seven-year-old black preacher from Alabama” (Baez, 1987: 40) appears to be exemplified by the idea that they both had something to believe in. For instance, in his long 1963 speech *I have a dream*, there is a passage in which Martin Luther King appears to refer to the notion of race equality. Indeed, he clearly affirms: “Now it is time to rise from the desolate valley of segregation to the sunlight path of racial justice” (King, 1963: 2). Similarly, in her activism against war Joan Baez has several times noted: “I think one of the saddest and stupidest things in our world is the segregation and discrimination of different races” (Baez, 1987: 38). Moreover, when Joan Baez has declared that “no man has the right to take another man’s life” (Baez, 1987: 120), it looks as if she is echoing the famous Martin Luther King’s exclamation: “All men would be guaranteed the inalienable right of life and liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (King, 1963: 1). In another occasion, furthermore, it is possible to make a parallelism between Joan Baez and Martin Luther King’s hard reproaches to America. Indeed, in protesting against America

because of the Vietnam War, Joan Baez has pointed out: “People are starving to death in some places of the world. They look to this country with all its wealth and all its power. They look at our national budget. They despise us. That is impractical and stupid” (Baez, 1987: 120). Similarly, in his long struggle for black liberty Martin Luther King has told America: “One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity [...] the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society” (King, 1963: 1). In another occasion, Joan Baez’s disappointment about the idea that America has lost “billions of dollars a year on weapons” (Baez, 1987: 120) and on military men, seems to appear also in Martin Luther King’s disbelief in the issue that “there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of America” (King, 1963: 2) able to help black individuals improving their own deprived conditions.

Another comparison between Joan Baez and Martin Luther King’s speech could be exemplified also by the open letter which Joan Baez wrote to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam after the Vietnam war during the 1970s. As she herself has pointed out, Joan Baez has written several times to Hanoi politicians in order to incite them to mend the deprived condition of North Vietnam and its citizens after the war. As a consequence, Joan Baez has declared to Vietnamese politicians: “Thousands of innocent Vietnamese are being arrested, detained and tortured in prisons [...] Your government has created a painful nightmare” (Baez, 1987: 276). Similarly, in his speech *I have a dream* Martin Luther King seems to recall the attention of America on black people in such terms: “The life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination” (King, 1963: 2). Additionally, King refers to his people by telling them: “Some of you have come from areas of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering” (King, 1963: 3). In another passage, then, as well as Joan Baez re-affirms to Vietnamese politicians: “We appeal to you to end the imprisonment and torture [...] We urge you to follow the tenets of the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights, your country is pledged to uphold” (Baez, 1987: 277), Martin Luther King replies: “There will be neither rest nor tranquillity in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights [...] We are not satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream” (King, 1963: 3). Finally, it is also Joan Baez’s last assessment which appear to remind the reader of the concept of freedom. Indeed, she concludes her letter by exhorting the Vietnamese Socialist Republic “to reaffirm his stated commitment to the basic principles of freedom and human dignity and to establish real peace in Vietnam” (Baez, 1987: 278). At the same time Martin Luther King notes: “We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created *equal* [...] I have the dream that even one day the State of Mississippi will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice [...] this will be the day when God’s children will be able to sing with a new meaning “My country, it is for thee, sweet land of liberty” [...] Let freedom ring (King, 1963: 5).

2.2 Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement

The second sub-chapter attempts to give an overview on those events held by Martin Luther King and many other activists during the Civil Rights Movement in order to stop black racial discrimination and inequality. In particular, I will demonstrate the importance of such a social movement which has been able to shape an entire culture in America. Nevertheless, I will especially try to depict the importance of men as the real agents of this movement.

First of all, according to the scholar Larry Isaac, a social movement should be considered as a non-institutional challenge to authorities and political powers, held in order to obtain something (Isaac, 2008: 34). Moreover, he goes on to argue that social movements take place, in particular, when several individuals are able to develop an awareness that they are fighting for the same purpose (Isaac, 2008: 35). Nevertheless, this idea of self-awareness had reminded me of two important English writers from Victorian England: John Ruskin and Harriet Martineau. According to John

Ruskin, for instance, in his masterpiece *The Nature Of Gothic*, a workman whom had been trained by discipline so rigid (Ruskin, 1892: 13) would not have been free until his awareness of being a tool, a machine and a slave had come to light (Ruskin, 1892: 17). Similarly, Harriet Martineau has discussed about the position of women in her three volumes work *Society in America*. The English writer, indeed, has made a comparison between women and slaves, who lacking of self-awareness would have hardly recognized their own condition of slavery¹. As a result, it appears as if the idea of self-awareness covers a fundamental role for human individuals. Thus, despite the historical background of the Civil Rights Movement, I have decided to discuss about the concept of self-awareness as an important tool for men to be the main agents of an entire social movement.

As a direct consequence of all this, it is possible to say that during the 1960s Martin Luther King was able to arise the self-consciousness of black people in order to make them become aware of their own situation. According to the scholar Judge Keith, then, it has been just this black preacher who for the first time “gave black Americans the determination to make that day a new day” (Keith, 1984: 491). Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that the rise of black consciousness in America had already begun during the 1950s especially in the South of America. For example, a black nonviolent student and activist named Jim Lawson had already begun running protests on nonviolent action in 1958 (Isaac, 2008: 42). In particular, he had been able to make black people, for the first time, grow into the idea of nonviolence (Isaac, 2008: 45). In addition, it is just this idea of nonviolence which Martin Luther King had also emphasized in his *I have a dream* discourse, especially, when he had claimed: “We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence” (King, 1963: 4). Moreover, in his famous speech, then, Martin Luther King had opened his discourse by making a reference to Abraham Lincoln. Indeed, he refers to him in such terms: “Five score years ago, a great American signed the Emancipation Proclamation” (Paris, 2008: 18) by liberating black people

¹ O'Brien, J. (2009) *Encyclopaedia of Gender Studies* London: SAGE Publications Lid, p. 511.

from years and years of cruel enslavement. At this point, since the black preacher has cited Abraham Lincoln, it is possible to make a reference to a man who has loved him in all his heart and mind: Walt Whitman. Specifically, I will explore Whitman's ideas of Democracy and racial equality in his book *Leaves of Grass*. For instance, as well as Martin Luther King affirms: "I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream that one day [...] we hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal" (Paris, 2008: 22); Similarly, the opening image of Walt Whitman's hopes for freedom and unity in America are expressed by his observation: "The diverse shall be no less diverse, but they shall flow and unite... *they unite now*" (Whitman, 2007: 90). Furthermore, when the black Minister declares: "I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama [...] little black boys and black girls will be united to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers" (Paris, 2008: 22), Walt Whitman replies: "They flow hand in hand over the whole earth, from east to west they lie unclothed; The Asiatic and African are hand in hand... the European and American are hand in hand" (Whitman, 2007: 90). Moreover, Walt Whitman appears to recall also the image of slavery in his book. Indeed, by recognizing the suppression of slavery and the unity among several human beings, the American poet imagines that one day "the call of the slave is one with the master's call.. and the master salutes the slave" (Whitman, 2007: 91). Finally, in a very similar way there is a passage in Martin Luther King's speech where the black preacher seems to depict this same idea. Indeed, he declares: "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood" (King, 1963: 7). Hence, it is possible to notice how both figures have been able to express, in a very similar way, their desire for freedom, equality and Democracy.

2.3 Martin Luther King in Birmingham, Alabama

In his long struggle for freedom and race equality, reverend Martin Luther King has been able to involve his followers into direct demonstrations and revolts. Being Gandhi and nonviolence his main mentors, this young man has been able to relieve his people from years and years of sorrow. Indeed, in this brief sub-chapter I have decided to spend some words on two crucial mass phenomena held by the black preacher during the American 1960s: his 1963 Birmingham March and his 1963 Birmingham Image Campaign. In particular, I will stress my attention on the idea that Joan Baez in person experienced both these events.

First of all, in 1963 Martin Luther King decided to organize a mass event in Alabama in which black children and several students should have marched and protested against black oppression and racial segregation². In particular, I will try to describe this event through Joan Baez's own memories of it. As a result, in her memoir *And A Voice To Sing With*, Joan Baez offers the reader a closer description of this mass event. Indeed, being invited to sing for the folks around, Joan Baez exemplifies her emotions by saying: "I sang with the soul I was adopting right there and heads began to nod in approval" (Baez, 1987: 104). Despite the fact that a great number of young protesters were arrested, Joan Baez is able to describe such an event in a very poetical way. In particular, it is just the importance that equality and freedom meant for black people in that very occasion which will be highlighted through Joan Baez's words. For instance, at a certain point the folksinger offers us the description of "a long trail of a junior high school blacks marching across the lawn" (Baez, 1987: 105). Moreover, the excitement of black individuals appears to be exemplified by Joan Baez's observation: "They danced, and clapped as they stepped, pushing each other playfully" (Baez, 1987: 105). In another scene, then, Joan Baez renders the idyllic image of "kids marching up and down the aisles, filling the pews, clapping, singing, chanting" (Baez, 1987: 105). "Images of kids gave me courage" (Baez,

² Swan, E. *Civil Rights Era and the African American Experience: Investigating American History through Literary Lens* Anna Howard Shaw Middle School.

1987: 106), she goes on to say, and it was in that very occasion that Joan Baez had the opportunity to share also her voice with them. Indeed, she declares: “I sang and talked and no one seemed bored” (Baez, 1987: 106). Thus, Joan Baez’s description of the 1963 Birmingham March has been able to transform this event especially into an hilarious momentum. Moreover, she has also proved evidence on the great power which human beings hide in their heart especially when struggling for freedom and racial equality.

However, although Joan Baez has harmoniously depicted the 1963 March in Birmingham, there is a ballad by the black poet Dudley Randall in which, conversely, it is possible to perceive the darkest side of this mass event. Consequently, Randall’s *Ballad of Birmingham* was published in 1963 and it is about the desperation of a black mother who lost her little boy soon after the arrival of the police and the fire hoses. The ballad, indeed, opens by a young child who asks his mother: “Mother, dear, may I go downtown/
And march the streets of Birmingham/
In the *Freedom March today?*”. The worried mother, then, replies: “No, baby, no, you may not go,
For the dogs are fierce and wild,
And clubs and hoses, guns and jails/
Aren’t good for a little child” (Boyd, 2009 : 6). Nevertheless, at a certain point the black poet makes the reader aware that the boy decides to leave and march with other black children. Suddenly, a terrible explosion outside appears to capture the attention of the wretched mother whose eyes “grew wet and wild when she raced through the streets of Birmingham/
calling for her child” (Boyd, 2009: 6). Nevertheless, in vain the mother appears to find her son outside. For her boy has disappeared and suddenly she claims: “O, here’s a shoe, but where’s the foot, and, baby, where are you?” (Boyd, 2009 : 33). Hence, although Joan Baez has offered the reader the description of an hilarious march, Randall’s *Ballad of Birmingham* has appeared to describe some of the awful aspects of the 1963 March in Birmingham.

Finally, Martin Luther King organized another important event in Alabama that very same year. Indeed, he held the 1963 Birmingham Campaign, which event has been organized as an *Image Event*, an ocular rather than verbal event. It, consequently, has aimed to show some photos and several

images in which “uniformed police officers”, led by Eugene Connor, began to throw “fire hoses and snarling dogs to those black students and children who were marching in Birmingham” (Johnson, 2007: 5). There is, moreover, a passage in which Joan Baez offers a description of such a violent and vehement police attack during the march. Indeed, she points out: “The police chief, Bull Connor was giving orders to prepare for the fire hoses, tear gas, attack dogs and arrests” (Baez, 1987: 105). Additionally, she goes on to point out that “kids were at that very moment being arrested and filling paddy wagons” (Baez, 1987: 105). In particular, Martin Luther King decided to show some photos taken by the pacifist photographer Charles Moore who had also been arrested several times because of his civil rights protests. The first photograph, then, showed the image of firemen violently addressing “high-powered jets of water to civil rights demonstrators” scattered on the sidewalk (Johnson, 2007: 9). In the second photograph, furthermore, three black protesters attempted to embrace themselves while a violent fire hose obliged them to push against a window pane (Johnson, 2007: 11). Finally, the last photograph showed police dogs attempting to attack and bite black civil rights demonstrators on the street (Johnson, 2007: 13). Thus, this sub-chapter has made evidence especially on the idea that in the long struggle for freedom and equality, human beings have not always been allowed to reclaim their civil rights. In particular, I have made some considerations about Martin Luther King’s two important events held in Alabama during the 1960s.

2.4 Martin Luther King and the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom

One of the most impressive events in the world could be considered the *March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom*. Held in 1963 in Washington and organized by several young activists, this huge event has proved evidence on the inner power of human beings. For instance, in the second volume of her autobiography Joan Baez has furnished her personal considerations about this important event. As a result of this, she has observed: “I was in Washington in 1963 when King gave his most famous

speech. It was a mighty day” (Baez, 1987: 103). Indeed, such a great importance has this event covered for black individuals that, according to many scholars, it has opened a series of *Civil Rights Acts* meant to prohibit racial discrimination for blacks in some places of America during the late 1960s. For instance, in 1964 the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* was announced in order to enable blacks to access for the first time to hotels, motels and restaurants (Keith, 1984: 470). In 1971, moreover, The Supreme Court ordered that all schools should have been desegregated (Keith, 1984: 478) and, in particular, for the first time young blacks would have been admitted both to institutions of higher levels and to fields which had always been denied to them (Keith, 1984: 481). Nevertheless, the most important right which has ever been recognized to black individuals was the *1965 Civil Rights Voting Act*, according to which, blacks should have freely participated in the political process on every level (Keith, 1984: 494). Hence, it is possible to affirm that the late 1960s have begun to recognize blacks as an integral part of a whole.

Despite this, let us take a look into some aspects of the *March on Washington For Jobs and Freedom*. First of all, this huge event appears to have had its origins among black young activists who, being tired of discrimination, have decided to organize a great communal event. Indeed, among these activists there were especially A. Philip Randolph, Rustin, James Lawson, Martin Luther King, James Lewis and even more. Specifically, they demanded: “voting rights, economic justice, jobs and freedom” (Le Blanc, 2013: 35). Nevertheless, they most of all reclaimed the prohibition of the terrifying *Jim Crow system*, having denied democracy and political and economic justice to blacks for a long time (Le Blanc, 2013: 35). Secondly, the great March was organized around the Lincoln Memorial. Moreover, the main goal being the achievement of civil rights by black individuals, it counted the presence of over two thousand human beings singing and praying together (Pauley, 1998: 320). For instance, among the protesters there were also “hundreds of black doctors, nurses and health professionals” who reclaimed the recognition of the first *Medical Committee*

for Civil Rights being made up only by black people (Brown, 2002: 195). Hence, the 1963 *March for Jobs and Freedom* could be considered as an important event which allowed several individuals to express in peace their need for freedom and civil rights.

2.5 White Poetry and the topic of Race

Thus, let us move on to look at two white poets who have explored the topic of race in their poems. Specifically, I will concentrate my analysis on those cases in which the concept of race appears to become a load for human individuals.

To begin with, the first poet I would like to focus my attention on is Derek Walcott. In particular, I will analyse a passage of his poem *The Schooner Flight*. Indeed, the pilgrim Shabine, who had been forced to leave his native soil, seems to make a reference to those moments in which his race has lived the experience of slavery and racism. As a result, there is a passage in which on the eve of his departure, the protagonist declares: “If loving these islands must be my load/ out of corruption my soul takes wings [...] I’m just a red nigger who love the sea/ I had a sound colonial education/ I have a Dutch, nigger, English in me/ and either I’m nobody or I’m a nation” (Walcott, 1986: 346). As a consequence, it is as if the protagonist is both referring to his race and his being nobody because of slavery. In addition, in another passage he goes on to affirm: “Next we pass slave ships./ Flags of all nations, our fathers below deck too deep, I suppose, to hear us shouting” and “They kill them by millions, some in wars,/ some by forced labour dying in the mines/ looking for silver, after that niggers;/ more progress” (Walcott, 1986: 356). Indeed, Shabine looks as if he is recalling also the memories of his fathers who had already known the load of slavery before him. By the end of the poem, then, the poet makes him say: “Proud with despair, we sang how our race/ survive the sea’s maw, our history, our peril” (Walcott, 1986: 359). Hence, it is possible to affirm that Walcott’s creole protagonist has not only reflected upon his race, rather, he has also linked his race to the load of slavery.

The second poet, then, whom I would like to analyse is the half Irish and English poet Henry Treece. One of his poems, indeed, seems to recall Shabine's thoughts. In particular, the poet appears to recall the previous character's will of making colonial individuals reflect upon the issue of race. Consequently, the poem which I am analysing has been entitled *Oh Little Child* and it has also been included by Joan Baez in her 1968 album of Poetry *Baptism*. The first stanza, then, opens with an image of blood. Indeed, it seems as if the poet is referring to a child by making him notice the image of a flower bleeding. As a result, the poet tells him: "Oh little child, see how the flower/ You plucked bleeds on the iron ground;/ (Treece, 1952: 19). Moreover, the poet invites him to reflect upon his action and, indeed, he points out: "Bend down, your ears may catch its voice,/ A passionless low sobbing sound" (Treece, 1952: 19). Hence, it is as if the image of the flower bleeding on the ground and mourning in a soundless voice could remind the reader of the brutal consequences of human actions upon other individuals. Furthermore, in the second stanza the poet seems to give a shape to those human actions. Indeed, he affirms: "Oh man, put up your sword and see/ the brother that you did to death;/ there is no hatred in his eye,/ no curses crackle in his breath" (Treece, 1952: 19). In so doing, then, it seems that Henry Treece is reminding the reader of the idea that human beings have always been fighting against each other probably because of their differences. Moreover, it is possible to create a parallelism between Treece and Derek Walcott's creole character especially when they both appear to call the attention of their fathers and brothers as if they wanted to relieve their sorrows. Indeed, the last two lines by Henry Treece declare: "Oh, *brothers*, fear not these great beasts/ who are but God's own testing-hounds" (Treece, 1952: 19). Thus, it is possible to affirm that Walcott and Treece have similarly reflected upon the concept of race especially when it has been able to underline the differences among human beings.

2.6 Black poet Dudley Randall and the Quaker John G. Whittier

I have, until now, explored the issue of freedom, race and equality in “white” poems. Nevertheless, I will now shift my attention on the African American poet Dudley Randall and the American Quaker John G. Whittier. In particular, I have decided to open a parenthesis on the American Quaker Whittier because, as the reader will become aware of it in the following chapters, Joan Baez has approached to Quakerism especially during her youth.

Let us begin by giving some biographical notions about the two poets. Dudley Randall is the name of a black poet who lived during the 20th century in America. In his own opinion, Poetry was essential because of its ability to make evidence on the whole human experience. In particular, he wrote war, love and civil rights poems related especially to freedom and racial equality also because of his parents’ beliefs in racial equality³. Similarly, John G. Whittier is the name of a Quaker poet who lived in America during the 19th century and who dedicated his entire life to equalitarianism, humanitarianism, free speech and human freedom (Hintz, 1940: 78). Moreover, he also believed in the idea that each man was permeated by the holy spirit of God and, according to him, especially “the negro slave, the oppressed, labourer” and social outcast should have been enabled to share the divine spirit of freedom and democracy and become part of the whole (Hintz, 1940: 79). Specifically, I will be dealing with some poems borrowed from his 1846 collection of poems *Voices of Freedom*.

Having furnished some notions about these two poets, let us move on to compare two of their poems. For instance, it is possible to make a comparison between Randall’s love and war poem *Roses and Revolutions* and Whittier’s *Toussaint L’Ouverture*. Indeed, both these poets seem that they are describing a dark situation of slavery. As well as John G. Whittier states: “It was night. The tranquil moonlight/ [...] An inland waste of rock and wood,/ In searching sunshine, wild and rude,/ Rose, mellowed through

³ See Introduction by Boyd Melba Joyce “Roses and Revolutions” viewed 13 June 2014 <<http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9780814335307> >

the silver gleam/ Soft as the landscape of a dream [...] Crossing the nightshade's solemn gloom/" (Whittier, 1846: 12); Dudley Randall replies: "I saw night close down on earth like a great dark wing,/ and the lighted cities were like tapers in the night" (Boyd, 2009 : 33). In addition, the two poets go on to say that they both make a reflection upon the condition of enslavement for black individuals. In particular, they appear to directly see two black slaves carrying their load. Indeed, when Whittier declares: "The toiling negro sighed, that/ Time/ No faster sped his hours./ For, by the dewy moonlight still,/ He fed the weary-turning mill/ [...] and hear above his scar-worn back/ The heavy slave-whip's frequent crack:/ While in his heart one evil thought/ In solitary madness wrought" (Whittier, 1846: 13); Similarly, Randall states: "And I heard the lamentations of a million hearts/ regretting life and crying for the grave,/ and I saw the Negro lying in the swamp with his face/ blown off [...] And I saw men working and taking no joy in their work" (Boyd, 2009 : 33). Thus, it looks as if the two poets have recalled black slavery and its wretched sufferings in a very similar way. Notwithstanding this, despite their dark visions, it appears that by the end of their poems something suddenly changes. Indeed, it looks as if a sudden hope or joy is invading the suffered condition of black slaves especially through the image of light. As a consequence, John Whittier affirms: "Hark to that cry! [...] Around, beneath, above; [...] Nor fear, nor joy, nor agony/ Were mingled in that midnight cry; [...] The shame and hate/ Had found in Nature's self a tongue [...] That voice which rises unto God,/ Solemn and stern – the cry of blood!" (Whittier, 1846: 14). At the same way, then, Randall replies: "And as I groped in darkness/ and felt the pain of millions,/ gradually, like day driving night across the continent,/ I saw upon them like the sun a vision/ of a time when all men walk proudly through the earth [...] Then washed in the brightness of this vision,/ I saw how in its radiance would grow and be nourished/ the blood-red flower of revolution" (Boyd, 2009: 33). Hence, I have stressed my analysis on how the two poems seem to explore the same feelings especially in terms of race equality, freedom, peace and justice for black individuals.

Especially Whittier, finally, seems to be able to recognize the inner values of black oppressed people deprived of freedom and human rights. Freedom, indeed, seems to be the main topic of his poems. Espoused with Democracy, the abolishment of slavery and the recognition of the Holy spirit in human creatures, freedom was considered by him as the most gloomy value in Mankind. For instance, in *Song of The Free*, John Whittier appears to remind the reader of the insuperable values of freedom for Humankind. Indeed, he affirms: “Free as our rivers are/ Ocean-ward going/- Free as the breezes are/ Over us blowing! [...] Freedom for ever!/ Truce with Oppression,/ Never, oh! Never!/ Freedom for heart and lip/ Be the pledge given!” (Whittier, 1846: 31). Furthermore, in *The Hunters of Men*, the poet looks as if he is stressing his attention on the idea that no man has any right to oppress his or her fellows. As a consequence, he cries: “What right have they here in the home of the white,/ Shadowed over by our banner of Freedom and Right?” (Whittier, 1846: 33). Similarly, in the poem *Lines*, the American poet seems to imagine a sort of utopian valley in which slavery is not supposed to exist. According to him, indeed, when “the trumpet call of Freedom has gone forth,/ with joy and life to all the bondmen of the earth, the sun would finally shine upon no slave” (Whittier, 1846: 40). Whereas, it is just in his poems *The Slave Ships* and *The Farewell* in which the poet makes the audience aware of the absurdity of slavery. For instance, in the former poem John Whittier describes a slave ship transporting black men, women and children. The violence of slavery and its absurdity, then, are exemplified by the poet’s moan: “Corpse after corpse came up-/ Death had been busy there [...] Hark! From the ship’s dark bosom,/ the very sounds of Hell! [...] The starving infant’s moan/ – The horror of a breaking heart/ Poured through a mother’s groan/ [...] Voices of agony and blood/ [...] For, amidst a world of beauty/ The slaver went abroad” (Whittier, 1846: 48). Similarly, the mother’s groan above appears to be described also in the latter poem, which, as a matter of fact, embodies the farewell of a slave mother to her enslaved daughters. Once again the vehemence of slavery, freedom denial and violation of human rights appears exemplified by the woman’s

crying: “Woe is me, my stolen daughters!/ There no mother’s eye is near them!/ [...] from fields at night they go,/ Faint with toil and racked with pain/ [...] toiling through the weary day/ And at night the Spoiler’s prey” (Whittier, 1846: 84). Thus, John G. Whittier’s poems should be seen as important and solemn tools through which an insuperable lover of freedom has given shape to his believes in human care, brotherhood, race equality and human rights.

2.7 Joan Baez and the issue of Civil Disobedience

Having discussed about Poetry, let us turn the page on another important topic. In this sub-chapter, indeed, it has been considered useful to analyse the concept of *civil disobedience*. In particular, I will be entertaining with two of Joan Baez’s famous acts of civil disobedience which she made in order to support human freedom and social justice. In addition, I will also furnish some notions about Joan Baez’s relationships with school systems during her youth. Finally, I will try to define her two civil actions by also citing some passages from Barbara Deming’s *Prison notes* and Henry David Thoreau’s *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* because Joan Baez appear to share something in common with them.

Let us begin by analysing Joan Baez’s first act of civil disobedience. First of all, her first act of civil disobedience took place in the 1950s during the Cold War, when Joan Baez was still sixteen years old. In her second autobiography she has given a detailed description of this event. According to her testimony, indeed, one day she and her schoolmates were told to leave quietly their classroom once an air-raid drill would have rung three times in sharp succession. As she herself has declared: “The point was to get home and sit in our cellars and pretend we were surviving a communist atomic blast” (Baez, 1987: 41). Nevertheless, becoming aware that “the time it took a missile to get from Moscow to her school was not enough time to walk home” (Baez, 1987: 41) and survive, young Joan Baez’s first act of civil disobedience took place. For this reason, once the bells rang, she decided not to leave her classroom. In her own words: “I’m protesting this stupid air

raid drill because it is false and misleading” (Baez, 1987: 42). Notwithstanding the fact that she was accused to be a communist infiltrator, it is possible to consider this event as the very beginning of a long list of other political activities to which Joan Baez has devoted to with all her heart and mind (Jager, 2010: 76).

At this point, let us move on to look at her second act of civil disobedience. In opposition to her first act, her second act of civil disobedience took place during the 1960s. In that very occasion, then, she decided to become an anti-draft protester. As a consequence, she refused to pay her war taxes which would have been used by the American government to buy weapons destined to the Vietnam War. In her first autobiography, then, there is a chapter in which Joan Baez has discussed about the anti-draft movement. According to her, it directly originated from the idea of organized nonviolence: “I’ll take Gandhi’s nonviolent resistance” (Baez, 1969: 164), she has claimed. Additionally, in refusing to increase the “national budget destined to build weapons which everyone agreed were too destructive ever to be used” (Baez, 1969: 179), the folksinger appeared to become for the first time aware of the nonsense of war. In particular, her motto was: “No to the nation-state, *no to war taxes*, ‘NO’ to killing in general, ‘YES’ to the brotherhood of men” (Baez, 1969: 165). Nonetheless, because of her refusal to support the Vietnam War, Joan Baez was also arrested twice and convicted to the Santa Rita Rehabilitation Centre. Despite this, her second act of civil disobedience has proved evidence on her being attached to important values, such as love, brotherhood and human freedom.

Finally, the last section of this sub-chapter will furnish some notions about young Joan Baez’s personal ideas of school. As a matter of fact, then, it appears as if Joan Baez had hated her school years because of several reasons. For instance, during her fifth grade in Southern California, she became for the first time victim of racial discrimination. Indeed, in her first autobiography she has claimed: “I wasn’t very popular because I was a new kid again and because I was a Mexican. I was skinny and very brown” (Baez, 1969: 20). Moreover, Joan Baez makes the reader also aware that at

school she “badly wanted to have friends” (Baez, 1969: 27). Nevertheless, it seems just because of these main issues that Joan Baez began to see school as a totally isolated space from real human experience. Whereas, by spending lonely hours in meditation and radicalizing her protests at school, Joan Baez seems to have turned school into a new dimensional arena in which, sometimes, important values such as human freedom would have been shared. For instance, there is a passage in her book *Daybreak* in which Joan Baez tells something about the day she invited her friend Ira Sandperl to school. “He came to an English class with me, and the teacher was late, so Ira got up and began to answer questions [...] We were talking about life and war and love and nonviolence” (Baez, 1969: 72), she has observed in her autobiography. In so doing, then, it is as if she wanted to turn school into a kind of radical place in which human beings would have freely shared their most intimate feelings. Nevertheless, the vice-principal’s denial and sudden expulsion of Ira “out the door” (Baez, 1969: 73) could be considered as the only possible reactions of a school system which did not want to accept any novelty. As a direct consequence of this, Joan Baez’s personal ideas of school has allowed me to open a brief parenthesis on Ivan Illich and David Bramhall’s ideas about “radical school systems” during the 1960s and 1970s.

As a result, according to Ivan Illich, the 1960s and 1970s school systems were not aimed to human welfare and freedom, rather, to the survival of the capital and industrial systems which they served (Routray, 2012: 86). For this reason, Ivan Illich’s ideas about institutional school systems appear to be very radical. In particular, it seems as if he had applied Gandhi’s nonviolent ideas about human freedom and welfare on his own perception of modern school systems. Indeed, according to him, school systems should have not separated learning from experience. Whereas, they should have assured the communal sharing of fundamental beliefs and experiences among several individuals (Routray, 2012: 91). Similarly, in his article *Toward A Theory and Practise of the Radical Classroom*, teacher David Bramhall seems to list the main characteristics of a proper radical school

system. First of all, according to him “knowing is the focus of attention, not knowledge” (Bramhall, 1975: 57). Moreover, as well as Ivan Illich wanted school systems to be freed from modern capitalistic and industrial societies, David Bramhall believed in the idea that school systems and especially individuals should have been freed from “death-seeking capitalism and imposed roles” (Bramhall, 1975: 64). Finally, he goes on to argue that the main aspects of an appropriate school system should have been essentially: “freedom, communal care about each other, wholeness, non-social distinction and sharing of human feelings or experiences” (Bramhall, 1975: 61). Hence, this sub-chapter has attempted to give an overview on how Joan Baez’s personal ideas of school could be conducted to important scholars who have for the first time discussed about the need of school systems to be freed from imposed social standards.

2.8 Henry David Thoreau’s On the duty of Civil Disobedience

Human beings have always paid with life their needs of liberty and truth. Indeed, being involved with war, hunger, anger, violence and denial, they have merely become tools in the hands of ill-seeking governments and well-dressed politicians. Obligated to jails, suicide and silence, they have finally grown in a world in which human experience has no more values. As a consequence of this, I will try to reflect upon these issues by the help of the writer Henry David Thoreau.

Let us begin by considering Henry David Thoreau’s essay *On the duty of Civil Disobedience*. For the first time published in 1849, this essay appears to be a long assessment on the wrong modalities in which a sick government controls its people. For instance, the opening lines of this essay appear to prove evidence on the issue above. Indeed, the author immediately points out: “I heartily accept the motto – That government is best which governs least” (Thoreau, 1849: 3). Moreover, he goes on to declare that, in his own opinion: “The American government is a sort of wooden gun to the people themselves” (Thoreau, 1849: 3). In so declaring, then, the writer appears to put into evidence the inadequacy of a mechanical institutional force to take

care of its people. Indeed, as being forced to make the government's will, individuals are, according to Thoreau, told to obliterate their rights of freedom and justice. For instance, there is a passage in which Thoreau makes a reference to war as one of the main causes of this condition. As a consequence, he points out: "What are they? Men at all? [...] The mass of men serve the State, thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies" (Thoreau, 1849: 5). For human beings have become tools in the hands of wrong Nations, Henry David Thoreau seems to offer, then, a solution to this on the idea of civil disobedience. By this expression, indeed, the essayist appears to indicate individuals' non-will of being part of a mechanical and vehement government. Moreover, among the main aspects of civil disobedience, the American essayist names essentially: "the right of revolution, actions, resistance to injustice and self-awareness" (Thoreau, 1849: 12). In particular, it appears to be just this awareness of the self which Henry Thoreau highlights as the main source of civil disobedience. In his own belief: "I came into this world not chiefly to make this a good place to live in, but to live in it, be it good or bad" (Thoreau, 1849: 13). In addition, he also suggests human creatures: "You must live within yourself, and depend upon yourself" (Thoreau, 1849: 17). According to him, thus, a good government should have guaranteed human individuals the precious gifts of individuality and freedom especially because "if a man is thought-free, fancy-free, imagination-free, unwise rulers or reformers cannot fatally interrupt him" (Thoreau, 1849: 25).

13.9 Barbara Deming's *Prison Notes*

How much humans care for freedom and civil rights? I will try to offer some plausible answers, in particular, through Barbara Deming's *Prison Notes*. Specifically, I will first of all highlight the way in which she has supported human freedom and human rights during the Civil Rights Movement. Secondly, I will make a comparison between her and Henry David Thoreau's ideas about jails and convictions.

Let us begin by considering Barbara Deming's peaceful walks for human freedom during the Civil Rights Movement. She, indeed, has been a great nonviolent activist who, as a matter of fact, has been arrested several times because of the causes she has devoted her entire life to. In particular, *Prison Notes* is the title of a diary which she wrote during her confinement into a jail in Albany, Georgia in the 1960s. Moreover, her nonviolent temperament toward the black civil rights cause has also been quoted by Joan Baez in her second memoir. During the 1963 March in Birmingham, then, Joan Baez makes the reader aware that among her fellow men there was also "one other white, brave Barbara Deming, who did march that day" (Baez, 1987: 105). However, Barbara Deming makes also a reference to that very day in her diary. Indeed, she has pointed out: "May 1963, this was my first imprisonment [...] My crime in Birmingham was walking half a block, a sign around my neck: *All Men Are Brothers*" (Deming, 1966: 12). As a direct consequence of this, her being devoted to values such as brotherhood, human freedom and racial equality appears to have become her main characteristics. *Prison Notes*, then, has allowed me to explore some of her most intimate feelings. Among them, self-awareness should be considered as her most important aspect. In becoming aware of herself, then, there is a passage in which she has written: "I am human; treat me as though I were – and has succeeded in making the other do just that" (Deming, 1966: 58). Specifically, it looks as if her self-awareness has guided her through her long struggles for human rights. For example, another important aspect of Barbara Deming seems to be her conscious devotion to nonviolence. Indeed, she has firmly declared: "We believe in the power of nonviolent acts to speak louder than words. We have put our faith in it from the beginning" (Deming, 1966: 62). Furthermore, she goes on to state: "Nonviolence is, to be sure, a kind of force; but we are not trying with it to force those opposing us to their knees; we are trying to force them to look at a situation in a new way" (Deming, 1966: 72). Faith, finally, does not seem to be ever separated from her human causes. Indeed, it is just in faith that Barbara Deming appears to radicalize her "love for fellowmen, goodwill, devotion to

constitutional rights, freedom, peace and friendliness” (Deming, 1966: 75). As a consequence, her own words: “If we can hope to win something in the struggle in which we are engaged, it is perhaps above all with love-for-more-than-one” (Deming, 1966: 121), appear to make evidence on the issue above. Thus, Barbara Deming could be considered as an example of those human creatures who, according to Henry Thoreau, should have been able to recognize themselves as humans rather than tools in the hands of their enemies.

Nevertheless, although Barbara Deming has devoted herself to such human causes, she has been several times imprisoned because of them. Being locked in jails, confined for having non-violently fought in supporting human rights, there are some passages in her diary in which Barbara Deming reflects upon her confinements. In particular, she appears to reflect upon the role of prisons and, in so doing, it is possible to make a comparison between her and Henry D. Thoreau. First of all, according to Barbara Deming, prisons could be compared to Hell. Indeed, in her own opinion, prisons are places in which human beings do not exist. Moreover, she goes on to argue that prisons have “not enough space, no real time” (Deming, 1966: 7) and that, as a matter of fact, “punishment can almost convince a man that he doesn’t exist” (Deming, 1966: 14). Whereas, according to Henry Thoreau prisons could be compared to the only safe places in which just human beings could ever be destined. Indeed, in his own opinion “under a government which imprisons unjustly any, the true place for a just man, who has refused allegiance, is a prison” (Thoreau, 1849: 14). “Probably this is the only house in the town where verses are composed, but not published” (Thoreau, 1849: 20), he goes on to state. Nonetheless, despite the fact that they seem to differ about this aspect, there are other aspects in which they seem to be similar. For instance, they have both been imprisoned different times. In his *On duty of civil disobedience*, then, Thoreau makes the reader aware of having been arrested because of his refusal of paying his poll-taxes. Indeed, some of his reflections could be conducted to Barbara Deming. In particular, as well as Thoreau has pointed out: “I was put into a

jail for one night; and, as I stood considering the walls of solid stone, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated me as if I were mere flesh and blood and bones, to be locked up” (Thoreau, 1849: 18); Deming has replied: “I feel a queer stirring in me, and it is as though my heart first bursts the bars that are my ribs, then bursts the bars of this cell, and then travels with great lightness and freedom down the corridor and into each stinking cell, acknowledging: Yes, we are all of us one flesh” (Deming, 1966: 22). In addition, it is just in prisons where this female writer strictly believes that human beings will be cast out of the whole world (Deming, 1966: 45). Finally, when Henry Thoreau makes a reflection upon the State’s inadequacy to care for “a man’s sense, intellectual and moral”, rather, to put just men into jails, (Thoreau, 1849: 19), Barbara Deming appears to make the same reflection. Indeed, she affirms: “They throw us into jail – with the gesture of throwing us away” (Deming, 1966: 68). Hence, I have observed how these authors have considered prisons. In particular, they appear to be similar in their defence of freedom, civil rights and of the insuperable values of human life.

Bibliography II

Baez, J. (1969) *Daybreak* New York: Avon Books.

Baez, J. (1987) *And A Voice To Sing With* New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks.

Blake, W. (2005) *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* Boston: Digireads Publishing.

Bramhall, D. (1975) “Toward A Theory and Practise of the Radical Classroom” *Review of Radical Political Economics* 6/55: p. 57.

Brown, E. (2002) “March on Washington, 1963” *American Journal for Public Health* 92/2: p. 195.

Child, F. J. (1904) *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* Wellesley: The Cambridge Edition for Poets.

- Deming, B. (1966) *Prison Notes* New York: Grossmann Publishers.
- Donne, J. (1999) *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions and Death's duel* New York: Vintage Book.
- Hintz, H. (1940) *The Quaker Influence in American Literature* New York: Fleming H. Revel Company.
- Isaac, L. (2008) "Movement of Movements: Culture Moves in The Long Civil Rights Struggle" *Social Forces* 87/1: pp. 33-63.
- Jager, M. (2010) *Popular is not Enough: The Political Voice of Joan Baez* Stuttgart: Verlag.
- Johnson, D. (2007) "Martin Luther King Jr.' S 1963 Birmingham Campaign as Image Event" *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10/1: pp. 1-25.
- Keith, J. D. (1984) "What happens to a dream deferred: an assessment of Civil Rights Law Twenty Years After the 1963 March on Washington" *Hein-Online*: p. 491.
- King, M. L. (1963) "I have a dream" viewed 26 July 2014 <<http://www.archives.gov/press/exhibits/dream-speech.pdf>>
- Le Blanc, P. (2013) "Revolutionary Road, Partial Victory: The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom" *Monthly Review* 65/4: p. 35.
- O'Brien, J. (2009) *Encyclopaedia of Gender Studies* London: SAGE Publications Ltd, p. 511.
- Paris, P. I. (2008) "Martin Luther King Jr. 's Vision of America: An Ethical Assessment" *Theology Today* 65/17: pp. 17-24.
- Pauley, G. (1998) "John Lewis's "serious revolution": Rhetoric, resistance and revision at the march on Washington" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84/3: pp. 320-340.
- Routray, S. (2012) "'Deschooling Society': The Strange Legacy of Ivan Illich" *Contemporary Education Dialogues* 9/85: p. 86.
- Ruskin, J. (1892) *The Nature of Gothic* London: Kelmscott Press.
- See Introduction by Boyd Melba Joyce "Roses and Revolutions" viewed 13 June 2014 <<http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9780814335307> >

- Swan, E. *Civil Rights Era and the African American Experience: Investigating American History through Literary Lens* Anna Howard Shaw Middle School.
- Thoreau, H. (1849) "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" *Constitution Society* viewed 17 Sept 2014 <
<http://www.constitution.org/civ/civildis.htm>>
- Treece, H. (1952) *Invitation and Warning* London: Faber and Faber Limited.
- Walcott, D. (1986) *Collected Poems 1948-1984* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Whitman, Walt (2007) *Leaves of Grass* New York: Dover Publications INC.
- Whittier, J. G. (1846) *Voices of Freedom* New York: William Harned.

Chapter III

Joan Baez: a folksinger and poetess

Yet it is in our idleness, in our dreams, that the submerged truth sometimes comes to top. [Virginia Woolf]

When I listened to Joan Baez's voice, for the first time, I thought she sang in a very wonderful vibrato. Nevertheless, my love for her began to increase some months ago, when I began to read her autobiographies. I found out, indeed, that her life was such full of poetry, love, activism and courage that I felt myself miserable in my own existence as compared to her. As a consequence, I have decided to link Joan Baez to poetry and, eventually, to try to study her as a literary figure. Moreover, I will also link Joan Baez to music and political activism. Indeed, the purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate the way in which the life of a folksinger, as a matter of fact, can have a strong influence both on me and a whole generation. It is, thanks to Joan Baez's humble feelings of love for the others, her strength in favour of men's liberty, her early loneliness, her attraction to death, her repulsive position against war and her care for the rights of human beings, that I have been inspired in my own search for literary poets such as John Donne, Cummings, Blake, Whitman or Wordsworth and so on. In these poets, then, I would certainly find those features. Although these literary figures do not appear to be constant presences in Joan Baez's life, it is possible to affirm that there are some issues which they have in common. For instance, themes such as war, death, love, music, human freedom, folk, meditation and isolation should be considered as some of the key linking elements between poetry and Joan Baez. Thus, this chapter aims, first of all, to give an overview on Joan Baez's life. Furthermore, I will be analysing those moments in her life which appear to have shaped most her mind, heart and soul. Secondly, I will be discussing about two constant figures in her life, her mother and her father. Specifically, I will be dealing with the way in which in her early life the feelings of maternity and paternity were

perceived by her during her youth. Thirdly, I will demonstrate how especially during the 1960s and 1970s she became aware of the importance of music as a means to say something. In addition, I will also examine her political and cultural activism through the help of the Austrian scholar Markus Jager, who has been studying Joan Baez and her political power through biographical methods. In conclusion, I will try to turn Joan Baez into a literary figure through some poetical passages of her first autobiography *Daybreak*.

3.1 Her life and her attitude toward existence

Before I begin to discuss Joan Baez's life, I would like to introduce her by quoting some lines by the poet Tennyson, whose lines have been also quoted by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*. In such words, the English poet sings: "My heart is like a singing bird, whose nest is in a watered shoot;/ My heart is like an apple tree, whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit;/ My heart is like a rainbow shell, that paddles in a halcyon sea./ My heart is gladder than all this, because my love is come to me" (Woolf, 2000: 14). The feeling of melancholy, which it is possible to derive from these expressions, seems able to anticipate some of the most intimate and humble characteristics of Joan Baez's soul. It is just because Joan Baez can be considered as a singing bird, a strong apple tree and a multi-coloured rainbow shell, that it has been decided to introduce her through poetry.

Let us begin by introducing her. Joan Baez was born on January 9th in 1941 and since she was a child, she seemed to be usually attracted by solitude. Like a rainbow shell, closed in her stillness but altogether bright and coloured, Joan Baez's childhood appears to have been spent in pure loneliness. For instance, in her first autobiography, which was published in 1969 when she was almost thirty, Joan Baez appears to think of her lonely childhood by writing: "One day I found a treasure. It was a silver keychain, about one foot long. [...] I stayed after school by myself and threw the chain up in the air over and over, watching it flash and glisten in the sun [...] Ecstasy" (Baez, 1969: 15). In another passage, then, Joan Baez has also

stated: “Badly I wanted to have friends” (Baez, 1969: 27). However, although in that very occasion loneliness could have meant ecstasy and delight to her, there have been moments in her life in which loneliness has seemed to mean especially fear of the outside world. For example, it is possible to prove evidence on this issue when in *Daybreak* young Joan Baez confesses that she had been victim of racism: “In the fifth grade we were in Southern California [...] A bunch of Mexican girls said they were going to beat me up on the way home from school [...] I wasn’t very popular because I was a new kid again and I was Mexican. I was skinny and very brown” (Baez, 1969: 20). Despite this, it was when she and her family moved to Baghdad when her feeling of compassion seemed to be increased. Indeed, when in Baghdad she saw “an old beggar beaten and poked by the police” or women who “came to eat out of the garbage can” or, once more, when she saw “dogs beaten to death”, her first feelings of pity for other people appeared to come to light (Baez, 1969: 22-23). Nevertheless, it was during her eighth grade at school when she seemed to put an end on “the sorrow that came with seeing herself as a skinny brown friendly knock-kneed and bold black-haired outcast with a million-dollar smile” (Baez, 1969: 28). Since that moment on, another great feeling seemed to grow inside Joan Baez’s heart. She looked as if love became a kind of synonym of strength and union among fellow men and she appeared to hate the issue of violence. Probably because she was a Quaker, and thus accustomed to silence and obedience, that her youth was spent in the radiance of peace and love. At this point, there is a passage in *Daybreak*, when Joan Baez refers to some literary figures who changed her life: T. S. Eliot and Gandhi. It is, moreover, possible to say that the former has introduced her into the importance of action. To quote Joan Baez citing T. S. Eliot: “For us there is only the trying. The rest is not our business” (Baez, 1969: 78). Instead, Gandhi seemed to have touched her heart because of his “involvement with humankind” and both his beliefs that no one had a right to take another man’s life for his idea of Truth and that, moreover, nonviolence means changing the assumptions that it is not OK to kill” (Baez, 1969: 79). Thus, I

have mentioned some passages of Joan Baez's *Daybreak* in order to explore some of her important characteristics. Indeed, it is possible to say that she became radicalized in her beliefs of freedom, love, compassion and nonviolence since her childhood and early youth.

Another important characteristic of Joan Baez seems to be, as it has been already announced, silence. Silence, according to Joan Baez, was a synonym of nonviolence and meditation. Indeed, according to Joan Baez meditation was important especially when she took part to some Quaker meetings: "The Quaker way of worship consists of silence. Anyone in the meeting house may speak if the spirit moves him, but there is no minister. There is "that of God in every man." We thought that the silences might have to do with their insight into nonviolence" (Baez, 1969: 140). Also, meditation seemed to be an essential activity according to Joan Baez who loved it since Gandhi had observed that "meditation is as essential to a nonviolent soldier as drill practise is to a conventional soldier" (Baez, 1969: 141). Moreover, in a recent interview given in 2000 to Scott Iwasaki, Joan Baez has named some of her favourite readings and among them she, above all, has made a reference especially to active meditation guides. Among them, she has mentioned *Path with Heart* written by a monk called Jack Kornfield, who lived in India and Tibet and Maurice Sendak's *Where the wild things are*⁴. At the same time, Joan Baez's early consideration of war cannot be fully separated from her consideration of human nature. Even though she was told that it was human nature to kill, Joan Baez continued to believe in the glory and the importance of peace for human beings. Indeed, according to her "there's violence in human nature, but there's also decency, love, kindness" (Baez, 1969: 163). Finally, Joan Baez's relationship with God seems to be very curious. Indeed, in her second autobiography *And a Voice to Sing With*, Joan Baez declares: "I don't know what to believe. I would like to be able to believe everything straight out of the Bible [...] I do believe this. There is a supreme power that makes us do the good we do.

⁴ Iwasaki, Scott. Interview. Joan Baez. 30 Oct 2000.

<<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/790429/Favorite-books-Joan-Baez.html?pg=all>>

Scientists go back to say that the earth was once a big round blob floating around in nothingness. But no one can ever prove how that blob got put there. Some power got it started. That same power, I think, is God” (Baez, 1987: 39). Thus, nonviolence, silence, meditation and love can be seen as further fundamental aspects of Joan Baez’s life.

This is what has suggested me that Joan Baez could not be considered apart from poetry. Indeed, despite the fact that she is a folksinger, it is possible to say that poetry is a constant presence in her life. However, I will close this sub-chapter by mentioning a poem which Joan Baez read during her conviction in Santa Rita in order to prove evidence on the issue expressed above. Particularly able to remind the reader of Tennyson’s initial sonnet, this poem goes on to affirm: “My little star that shine so bright in the sky at night./ My little heart that wanders through the night./ I wonder if you ever think to yourself what the world would be like if there was no love./ If there was only evil among the stars and hate among hearts./ Is this just a thought, or a wonder that shine so bright in the stars at night” (Baez, 1969: 170).

3.2 Her mother and her Father

Joan Baez’s parents seem to have covered an important role in her life. Indeed, in this sub-chapter I will be mentioning the relationship between a daughter and a mother and father. Since motherhood and fatherhood have been, as I will be dealing with them later on, two of the main aspects of this dissertation, I have decided to set this little section up. Despite this, before discussing about Joan Baez as a daughter, I would like to quote a passage from her second autobiography *And a Voice to Sing with* in which, conversely, she is acting as a mother figure. Indeed, in the chapter entitled *Honest Lullaby*, Joan Baez appears to make a reflection on her relationship to her son Gabriel: “How can I explain the feelings of this pacifist mother? I love my son more than anything or anyone on earth” (Baez, 1987: 327). Moreover, in a letter written to her son, Joan Baez tells him: “Honey, you’ve got a mother who sings to you... dances on the strings for you” (Baez, 1987: 297). In an interview which she released in the 1970s to James

Day, when the interviewer asked her something about her activism, she replied: “I am a nonviolent fighter. But if something terrible would have happened in this Country, I feel that if it were easier to stay here and fight or skip the Country without my child, I would stay here and fight whatever that means. And the boy until he is in an age when he feels right on his own, I will take him somewhere, so he will be safe and I will be his Mum”⁵. Hence, Joan Baez’s words are able to prove evidence on how fundamental the feeling of maternity was and still is for her.

Having seen Joan Baez as a mother-figure, let us move on to look at her mother. Her mother’s name was Joan Baez, Sir and she died last year at the age of a hundred. There is a whole chapter in *Daybreak*, in which Joan Baez argues about her maternal figure. Moreover, in the following chapters I will be dealing either with a prison memoir written by Joan Baez’s mother, entitled *Inside Santa Rita*. Nevertheless, notwithstanding this, let us move on the main topic of this section. Since her early descriptions of her mother, Joan Baez appears to have scrutinized her maternal figure deep inside. Indeed, in her words: “She can’t stand anything phony. She refuses to go to teas, she prefers young people to older. She works in the garden, making flowers come up out of the dirt [...] Her back is strong and her hands are gnarly and full of veins” (Baez, 1969: 30). Moreover, Joan Baez goes on to describe a photo in which her mother’s sublime countenance seems to appear to her. Indeed, she claims: “She is standing on a beach in the wind with the ocean in back of her, her arms outstretched in youthful grace [...] the wind blowing her hair across her face, across an exquisite smile” (Baez, 1969: 31). Hence, Joan Baez appears to describe her mother in a very poetical way and, in so doing, she is able to fill her with absolute reverence. In another passage, furthermore, the folksinger points out: “Mother knows nothing of the theories of mysticism, but it seems as if God moves about her more freely than he does most people [...] She came to the window in the form of a ghastly angel, and leaned in over the bed and flapped her wings”

⁵ Day, J. Video Interview. Joan Baez: Day At Night 20 Apr. 1974
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=norR2Q7NmdA>>

(Baez, 1969: 35). In other words, then, the almost idyllic relationship between a mother and her daughter is altogether summarized by Joan Baez's expression: "Mother and me. Tea and Vivaldi and Mozart singing Puccini" (Baez, 1969: 36). It seems clear that Joan Baez has loved her mother in an immeasurable way. Indeed, when she states: "There were times when I felt that if I wasn't in Mother's hands, I would float off toward the vicinity of death" (Baez, 1969: 38) and "I would grip her hand with all my strength, and imagine that her blood was flowing into my veins and giving me energy" (Baez, 1969: 40), she is proving evidence on the issue above. Thus, these instances have proved evidence on a sort of idyllic relationship between Joan Baez and her mother. In particular, it is possible to affirm that probably Joan Baez has inherited love, compassion and grace from her maternal figure.

While her relationship with her mother appears to be intense and almost idyllic, I will demonstrate how, on the other hand, her relationship to her father seems to be more authoritative and altogether ordinary. Her father, a Mexican physicist and professor named Albert Baez, is immediately presented as a good man, and a "compulsive worker". Moreover, he is described by Joan Baez as a man of God, who was going to "be a minister, but whom the hypocrisy of the church bothered and he became a scientist instead" (Baez, 1969: 48). Furthermore, as Joan Baez goes on arguing, her father was "the saint of the family", who taught her children to respect human life (Baez, 1969: 49). Hence, Joan Baez's father looks as if he had transmitted to her those principles, which will have been guiding her through all her life. Moreover, her father loved teaching and he was loved not only by his three daughters but also by his students. Indeed, his precision at work has been explained by Joan Baez in such words: "He held classes for his students at home. They loved him. I know they loved him, because the room smelled so awful from burnt flesh and Middle East medication that I felt sick every time I passed his door" (Baez, 1969: 51). It was, additionally, her father to initiate her into the power of silence through Quakerism: "My father was in the grown-up room, the room where they

observe silence for a whole hour, and he was having a fight with his conscience” (Baez, 1969: 52). In a sense, it is possible to affirm that Joan Baez has inherited by his paternal figure her approach to meditation, religion, silence and nonviolence. Finally, notwithstanding the issue that probably the relationship between Joan Baez and her father could seem less intense than her approach to her mother, there is a final passage in *Daybreak* in which the folksinger describes her father in a very poetical and suggestive way. Her words: “He looked very brown and Mexican in that moment, and I watched his profile against the valley hills as he struggled with himself. [...] then he looked up and gave me a smile of such a combination of things. “Yes, honey” he said, “I think I can enjoy it... If I keep myself busy enough” (Baez, 1969: 64), appear to highlight the main issue above. Thus, it is possible to affirm that Joan Baez’s father, although authoritative, has initiated the folksinger into a series of reflections which have been bringing her especially into fundamental issues about human life.

3.3 Joan Baez’s vision of America

In 3.2 I have discussed about the relationship between young Joan Baez and her parents. In this sub-chapter, then, I will try to depict Joan Baez’s early vision of America. In particular, I will be dealing with the meaning of music in her life especially when she used her voice in order to protest against the American system. As a result of this, I would like to introduce this topic by mentioning a passage borrowed from Joan Baez’s first autobiography *Daybreak* in which she is dealing with a strange dream. In such a dream, then, two women are searching for “a bag of tonsils” in her house and when Joan Baez is told that, she surprisingly exclaims: “I didn’t think there was a bag of tonsils anywhere in the house” (Baez, 1969: 47). Thus, these words are probably meant to underline her most important characteristics: a pair of tonsils and a voice to sing with. Indeed, Joan Baez’s nonviolent weapon against the American system appears, as a matter of fact, to be her own voice. For instance, in her memoir *And a voice to sing with*, she begins her story with these words: “I was born gifted [...] My greatest gift was a voice

to sing with” (Baez, 1987: xxvi). A voice could have meant to sing with it or, simply, to protest with it. As a consequence, her voice will be considered as the starting point of her relationship with a hard and probably unchangeable America during the 20th century. Hence, I will be trying to link Joan Baez to America by highlighting those moments in which she has given her voice and her music to speak to the American system.

As a result, Joan Baez has used her voice especially during social protests. Indeed, singing has not and does not nowadays appear to mean a simple verb to her, rather a proper way of living. For instance, she probably used her voice in order to smother that obscure vision of America which she probably kept in her heart especially during her youth. Moreover, there is a passage in *Daybreak* where Joan Baez appears to poetically describe the importance of singing to her: “To sing is to love and to affirm, to fly and soar, to coast into the hearts of the people who listen, to tell them that life is to live, that love is there, that nothing is a promise, but that beauty exists [...] To sing is to praise God and the daffodils [...] and every colour in the tones of my voice to thank him. Thank God for giving me a voice to laugh with, to sing with... to sing to you and the daffodils, which are you” (Baez, 1969: 94). Thus, it seems that singing to men could have altogether, in her own opinion, smothered the harshness of their hearts. In addition, another important characteristic of Joan Baez seems to be exemplified by her intention to change the 20th century American system. Especially war, then, has been several times criticized by Joan Baez. Indeed, there is another passage in *Daybreak* which is entitled *Flag-Bearer* and which has been probably written by Joan Baez in order to criticize America and its decision of bombing the North of Vietnam. In this passage, “a blue grey mood”, which is so far from yellow like fire, red like blood and brown like cold mud, has made Joan Baez fall into a sad mood. Her sadness, indeed, has been caused by the “colours of all the damned flags of a hundred bright nations of the rainbow” (Baez, 1969: 146). Furthermore, a sort of Joan Baez’s vision of America could be given by such an exclamation: “The sadness only brightens my vision of the stupidity of the everlasting, multi-

coloured battlefield...” (Baez, 1969: 147). Hence, there is a series of events in which Joan Baez seems to have attempted to change firstly the souls of men and, secondly, the image of America during the 20th century.

3.4 Her Music and Her Political Activism

The historical period, which I will be considering about Joan Baez’s musical activities and activism will be the American 1960s and the 1970s. In this concise background, the half American and half Mexican folksinger proved both her talent in music and her talent in action. Although she rarely considered herself as a folksinger in protest, as a matter of fact, singing and playing the guitar have always been symbolic activities of her life. Indeed, to Joan Baez “singing was a good outlet”⁶ especially when she was young. Her debut came in 1969, when she appeared at the Newport Folk Festival for the first time. At that time, as she herself has affirmed in her second memoir, Bob Gibson invited her to appear as his guest in that August 1969 at the Newport Folk Festival. In that very occasion, then, her reactions humbly manifested in “the speeding of her heart” while everything around stood noiseless, because she would have sung in front of the biggest crowd ever assembled in the history of the world (Baez, 1987: 60). Indeed, the Newport Folk Festival was an important event held during the American 1960s which gave the opportunity to several folksingers to express everything which they brought in their hearts. Among them, there were the famous Kingston Trio, the black singer Odetta and, obviously, Bob Dylan. According to John Dean, in his article *The Importance of the Folk Singer in the American Sixties*: “The artists, old and new folksingers were really the privates in a very big army” (Dean, 2011: 344). Moreover, this scholar goes on to argue that especially Joan Baez went body and soul in her combination of music and activism. Although in the late 1960s she became also known in America through Al Capp’s ‘*Joanie Phoeanie*’ caricatures of a poor little girl protesting, Joan Baez revealed as one of the most essential symbols in the American 1960s and also 1970s (Dean, 2011: 345). For instance, during the

⁶ Baez, J. (1987) *And a Voice To Sing with* New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks

1960s and 1970s Joan Baez seemed to be very humble also in her look. In so doing, it is possible to affirm that she clearly belonged to those years. As a result of this, as she more than one time has described herself in her second memoir, she never considered herself as an intellectual. Rather, she has pointed out: “My mere existence as a rebellious, barefooted, anti-establishment young girl functioning almost totally out of the context of commercial music [...] designated me a counterculture heroine” (Baez, 1987: 72). At this point, it is just her rebellious but simple look, which I will be analysing in the following paragraph.

As a direct consequence of this, there is an article entitled *The Natural Look: American Style in the 1970s* by Linda Welters which appears suitable to mention in order to make evidence on the topic above. Indeed, Joan Baez looked very natural during her youth: long and straight hair, no make-up and her simple looking. For instance, in her first autobiography Joan Baez tells something about her father’s consideration of her: “He told me that I was not ordinary pretty, but beautiful. [...] I said yeah, but what about the rings under my eyes, and he said they were very fashionable, that women paid money to make their eyes dark like that. He said I was beautiful (Baez, 1969: 28). Moreover, she goes on to describe her as a friendly black-haired outcast with a million dollar smile (Baez, 1969: 28). Indeed, according to Linda Welters, natural styles and behaviours were prerogatives of the American Seventies, because “natural was one of the several paths that fashion took after the social and cultural upheavals of the 1960s” (Welters, 2008: 498). There is, moreover, a passage in this article in which the description of the female natural look of the 1970s made me think of Joan Baez. In this passage Linda Welters comments that the natural look was specifically a characteristic of the mid-60s hippies. And in a sense her words: “Women did not wear confining clothes such as girdles or high heels. [...] The clothes expressed an affinity with nature; the browns, the greens and blues are nature’s colours, earth’s colours” (Welters, 2008: 495), have made me imagine the simplicity of Joan Baez. Especially nudity appeared to be one of her most prominent characteristics, when every time

she went onstage and she was barefooted. Indeed, in her second autobiography she declares: “In 1963 I continued to appear in bare feet, usually wearing a simple dress and necklace” (Baez, 1987: 115) and “My public image was clear: a girl, a guitar, her songs and a message” (Baez, 1987: 167). Furthermore, in the American 1960s in particular young people seemed to become the voices of the discontent of a whole Nation. Among them, as Linda Welters still reminds the reader of, there were the voices of Allen Ginsberg and the Beat poets, who sceptical of industrialization, promoted the simple values of nature (Welters, 2008: 491). In addition, perhaps Joan Baez’s feelings of love for other people could have been caused by the 1970s American trend to live in communion with other individuals. For instance, in 1972 Joan Baez flew to North Vietnam and shared a shelter together with other people, especially Vietnamese. In such an occasion, although outside her Nation was bombing Hanoi, she remembers with joy those moments of communal living. Her words, indeed, seem to prove evidence on this main idea: “At dinner there were fifteen to twenty people [...] the level of gaiety rose to new height with the telling of jokes [...] I dedicated a song to all the Vietnamese and the Americans who had died in the war, and then to all men who had refused to fight [...] We joked and sang for a little while longer, until it was time for bed” (Baez, 1987: 198). Hence, all these issues have made evidence on the way in which Joan Baez well espoused the natural look and style of the American 1960s and 1970s. Her natural look appeared to relate either to the tendency of hippies: natural body, straight or naturally curly hairstyles, no cosmetics, earth tones in clothes, cotton canvas, wool and patchwork (Welters, 2008: 500-507). And all in all, specifically, to symbolize the relationship with natural beauty and the earth.

At this point, let us move on to look the way in which she has been able to combine music and political Activism. In the work *Popular is not Enough: the Political Voice of Joan Baez*, the Austrian scholar Markus Jager offers the audience a long detailed study on Joan Baez’s “reputation to publicly speak, act and sing out against war and other kinds of organized violence”

(Jager, 2010: 11). Indeed, as I have observed before Joan Baez's attitude against violence was one of her most important characteristics. In her approach to nonviolence, moreover, Joan Baez seemed not only to have been influenced by Gandhi and Quakerism, rather by her long friendship with the Jewish Ira Sandperl and Martin Luther King, Jr. Nevertheless, I will analyse their relationships in the following chapters. Thus, in the final section of this sub-chapter I will be focusing my attention on some of those events in which the folksinger united music and political activism.

For instance, in 1977 Joan Baez went to Spain after the death of the dictator Franco. In that very occasion, she was so incredibly able to touch the souls of millions of Spanish who went to see her sing that it is not possible to ignore the real purpose of her music during that moment of action. Indeed, in that occasion she sang the Spanish song *No nos moveran*, which had been one of those Spanish anthems of resistance forbidden by the totalitarian Franco during his dictatorship. By singing that song with the Spanish crowd, Joan Baez appears to have linked the history of a Nation to her music and action. Her music, indeed, was able to cause a "wild celebration, hugging, kissing, weeping, and toasting in the living rooms and bars of Spain" and her act, furthermore, was able to "lent the ghostly memories of the armies of the poor of a Nation" (Baez, 1987: 257). Thus, the centre of my analysis will be focused on this knot between history, music and action through the figure of Joan Baez. For example, in the book by Markus Jager, Joan Baez appears to be depicted as a popular singer who, even though she never declared her political tendency, was able to represent "the intersection between the lives of people and the history of their society" (Jager, 2010: 23). As a consequence, it is possible to affirm that history could be seen as an integral part of Joan Baez's activism and music, as if to say that probably she used music both to act and to awake the history of a Nation. Moreover, according to the scholar Jager, Joan Baez put "her most famous and most important songs (and performances of the same) into a specific cultural context which transformed her artistic work into the continuing tenor of a unified political message" (Baez, 2010: 29). Notwithstanding this, I will be

dealing with those events in which Joan Baez looks as if she has linked History to Music and Action.

Having said that, let us list some of these most important events. For instance, in 1963 Joan Baez took part to the famous *March for Jobs and Freedom*, together with Martin Luther King, “her black angel of Memphis” (Baez, 1987: 101). In that occasion she sang the religious and black anthem *We shall Overcome*, and in so doing she supported the Civil Rights Movement for the equalization of the negroes in America. As a direct consequence of this, since *We shall Overcome* is a song rooted in the black spiritual song *I’ll overcome some day* (Jager, 2010: 90), it appears that in such an occasion once again, Joan Baez was able to link the History of the tortured and oppressed negroes to the History of a Nation which appeared to disdain them, through Music and Action. In another occasion, in 1973 Joan Baez and Amnesty International decided to publish a Spanish album entitled *Gracias a la vida / Thanks to life*, with the attempt to draw attention on the dictatorship which was consuming the Chilean Nation (Jager, 2010: 118). Consequently, Joan Baez seems to have realized a Spanish album in order to highlight once again the history of a Nation, in which children, women, men and political prisoners were everyday killed under the dictatorship of Pinochet, through her voice and her action. In addition, in 1980s Joan Baez moved also to Argentina, where she met the Mothers of the Disappeared, a congregation of women and mothers demanding support in order to find their missing sons, daughters, spouses and friends who had probably been killed during the suppression of human rights (Jager, 2010: 147). In that occasion too, Joan Baez remembers that she held a concert in which *Gracias a la vida* was performed and “everyone in the packed house sang with her” (Baez, 1987: 269). Finally, during the 1980s Joan Baez moved also to Poland and to Czechoslovakia. In Poland, she met the democratic and non-violent Lech Walesa, who had founded a worker’s movement named *Solidarnosc* which provided for the protection of Czech workers and their liberty. In that very occasion, then, Joan Baez lent her voice to one of the most important mass and non-violent movements in the history of the world

(Jager, 2010: 150). As a result, in Czechoslovakia, she attempted to sing at the *Folk Festival Lyra* where she meant to stand for the freedom and independence of Czech individuals oppressed by the URSS. Some years later, then, Joan Baez still remembers this experience by these words: “The congregation answered in song. This is what church should be, I thought, the strength of people, their meeting place, their constant spiritual sustenance and their political home” (Baez, 1987: 345). Hence, all these instances have demonstrated the idea that Joan Baez, probably, has used music and political activism in order to re-call the history of oppressed Nations and to capture the attention of several systems required to mend to the problems of their people.

3.5 Joan Baez, not only a folksinger

I have, until now, analysed Joan Baez as a folksinger. Nevertheless, Joan Baez, I may say, seems to be also a very talented writer and poetess. Indeed, her autobiographies appear to be well written and poetically structured. Moreover, they both consist of some passages in which, as if she were a Romantic writer, Joan Baez accurately describes her thoughts and reflections. The first thing, which has been noticed while reading, is that Joan Baez looks as if she has always been attracted by the beauty of nature and also imagination. As a consequence, the last sub-chapter of this chapter will be focusing its attention on some of her solitary thoughts and feelings. However, it could be suitable to introduce Joan Baez as a poet and a writer by observing what she herself expressed in the preface of *And a voice to sing with*: “I have loved writing, especially in the winter, early in the morning, sitting with my back to the fireplace at a card table bearing my word processor” (Baez, 1987: 15). As a result, nature can be seen as a constant element of her writings, especially, because it seems to offer her idyllic moments of pleasure. A sky blazing, an “ocean reflected back like a mirror”, a sky which would “split with the sound of the thunder” in letting an angel “come and gather her up and bathe her forehead in cool water and sang her to sleep” (Baez, 1987: 73), could be considered as some of these

examples. Further evidence on her poetical involvement with nature can be given, then, also by the last line of her second autobiography. In this scene, Joan Baez imagines to become a Spanish princess, “telling Mom how the sun rose, piercing through the mist over the lake and how there was peace all around as the castle finally slept” (Baez, 1987: 378). Finally, there is also a passage in *Daybreak*, entitled *Orange Poppies* where the writer seems to be involved within a delicate reflection upon nature and the feelings she may derive from it: “That’s nice, when a five year old comes in off the hill in the morning, before the sun has burned away the mist, and she’s carrying a jagged fistful of orange poppies...” (Baez, 1969: 128). Hence, these examples have proved evidence on the idea that nature can be considered as a constant aspect of Joan Baez’s writings.

Nevertheless, another topic I will be dealing with is how much suggestive Joan Baez the poetess could be in using her imagination to describe herself. In particular, I will be stressing my attention on how some of her most important beliefs have altogether been described by Joan Baez in a very poetical way. As a consequence, it has been decided to take into consideration her first autobiography *Daybreak*. In this book Joan Baez appears to be involved with strange dreams and unreal thoughts, which are altogether mixed up with the whole ordinary sections of her memoir. Such passages have been most of all, indeed, entitled *Dream*. In the first dream, Joan Baez is measuring herself with a picturesque scene in order to introduce her childhood. In such a scene, she is, indeed, watching “thousands of coloured balloons floating upwards while there was a child hanging from each big balloon”, who began to float away toward the ocean (Baez, 1969: 13). In another dream, instead, she appears to introduce her fears, her loneliness and her youth by this image: “Tenth grade and I am still fighting my sunless morning devils. Ice forms in my bones and something vile erupts in my stomach [...] because I am on a different planet, and not a single one of you understands” (Baez, 1969: 65). Moreover, in the chapter *The Dada King*, Joan Baez looks as she is announcing her disdain for whatever king, government and policy would have wanted to deny human

freedom and its rights. Indeed, in this passage Joan Baez seems to criticize a dada king, “a bizarre liar, screaming into the electric microphones while she is hearing the words, the pleadings, the nonsense, the denials of this fragile man” (Baez, 1969: 101). Finally, it is possible to conclude this chapter by assessing that Joan Baez has been and still is not only a folksinger in action, rather also a very impressive poet and writer. Incredibly inclined to simple and humble values, I have given an overview on how she has been able to transmit them not only through direct actions but also through idyllic poetical images of Nature, kindness and love.

Bibliography III

Baez, J. (1969) *Daybreak* New York: Avon Books.

Baez, J. (1987) *And a Voice to Sing With* New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks.

Day, J. Video Interview. Joan Baez: Day At Night 20 Apr. 1974
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=norR2Q7NmdA>>

Dean, J. (2011) 'The importance of the folksinger in the American Sixties'
Etudes Anglaises 64/3: pp. 344-390.

Iwasaki, Scott. Interview. Joan Baez. 30 Oct 2000.
<<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/790429/Favorite-books-Joan-Baez.html?pg=all>>

Jager, M. (2011) *Popular is not Enough: The Political Voice of Joan Baez*
Stuttgart: Verlag.

Welters, L. (2008) 'The Natural Look: American Style in the 1970s'
Fashion Theory 12/4: pp. 489-510.

Woolf, V. (2000) *A Room of One's Own* London: Penguin Books.

Chapter IV

Baptism: A Journey Through our Time

He sings in the hollow:

Come follow, come follow,

All you that love.

Leave dreams to the dreamers

That will not after,

That song and laughter

Do nothing move.

[James Joyce]

When John Donne wrote *The Good-Morrow*, he imagined the waking souls of two lovers being cherished by the awakening morrow, while the power of Love was able to “make one little room, an everywhere”⁷ (Donne, 2001: 8). What did stupefy me was the possibility that a simple poetical “stanza” could have become an everywhere, as if to say that poetry could contain anything, in time and in space. As a consequence, it has been decided to create a connection between music and poetry, especially because my dissertation on Joan Baez has allowed me to become aware of this possible connection. Indeed, as I have noticed in the previous chapter, the knot between poetry and music could absolutely exist. In particular, I have proved evidence on this issue through Joan Baez as both a folksinger and a very talented writer. Thus, this brief chapter will focus its attention on both this possible link between poetry and music and it will altogether introduce the main topics which I will be later on dealing with. However, it is important to underline that the main issue I will focus my attention on will be the way in which poetry has been, since ever long, able to put men and their feelings at the centre of a world in which they hardly recognize

⁷ Donne, J. (2011) *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne* New York: The Modern Library.

themselves. Moreover, since I will investigate upon this topic, I will show how much music could become meaningful united with poetry. Hence, I will first of all introduce the 1968 Joan Baez's album entitled *Baptism: A Journey Through Our Time*. Secondly, I will be introducing Joan Baez and the relationship between her and some of the English and Scottish popular ballads which have been collected in a big volume by the scholar Francis James Child. Thirdly, I will pay my attention on the introduction of a poem written by Joan Baez in person, when she was in Hanoi during the 1970s in the middle of the Vietnam War. The poem, entitled *Where are you now, my son?*, is a twenty minutes song in which the folksinger both tells and sings the horrors of the Vietnam War. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that this chapter intends to give a general and concise overview on those themes, poets, and poems or ballads, which I will, on the other hand, analyse in the following chapters in a very detailed way. However, even though the above cited poets do not seem to belong to the same historical periods, I have decided to group them by themes and meanings especially because some of Joan Baez's choices have influenced my study.

4.1 Music through Poetry and Poetry Through Music

Poetry is made up by words, music is made up by notes and if united, they could become powerful. In particular, it appears that poetry and music cannot be totally separated rather, according to several scholars poetry and music are the same. For instance, in his book entitled *Poesia per musica e musica per poesia*, there are several passages in which the Italian writer Stefano La Via seems to make some evidences on the bound between poetry and music. In particular, his definition of "pure poetry in music"⁸ and his definition of "poetry for music"⁹ look as if they proved evidence on the continuity between the two parts. According to this scholar, then, a pure poetical text could not only exist for its own sake, rather it could become

⁸ Original Text: "poesia pura in musica", cit., La Via, S. (2014) *Poesia per musica e musica per poesia* Roma: Carocci Editore.

⁹ Cit., "poesia per musica".

also fitted for music, whenever and wherever in time and space¹⁰ (La Via, 2014: 136). Moreover, a poetical text for music is, according to this Italian scholar, conceived to be destined for music since its birth¹¹ (La Via, 2014: 136). Even the Italian writer Dante Alighieri, for example, seemed to believe that poetry was not separated from music because of several issues such as rhythms, rhymes and timbers which they had in common (La Via, 2014: 143). In the relationship, moreover, between poetry and music it seems that also the word “voice” has covered an interesting role especially because able to combine the two elements. Indeed, in his study entitled *La presenza della voce: Introduzione alla poesia orale*, the scholar Paul Zumthor appears to deeply investigate upon the role of the voice in such terms. Firstly, according to his point of view a voice could be able to communicate something like a “noise, a perpetual sound without which human beings could become sterile and afraid”¹² (Zumthor, 1984: 33). In particular, it looks as if Zumthor would mark the importance of the voice as if it were able to revitalize both poetry and music. In the case of poetry, for example, it is just through a voice that a poetical text seems to come to life and to survive according to this scholar because, as he himself has suggested in his book, a poetical text, whether animated by a voice, could be able to identify itself with the same order of perceptions and emotions which it itself endures¹³ (Zumthor, 1984: 330). In the case of music, the scholar Zumthor seems to concentrate his attention also on the relationship between music and poetry where voices appear capable of giving place to songs. Indeed, a poem, if sung, could become powerful and music could give strength and weight to the same poetical text (Zumthor, 1984: 226). Moreover, he goes on to point out that songs have been several times used as weapons by human beings especially in order to remember some events

¹⁰ Original Text: “una poesia pura che nasce più liberamente in funzione di se stessa [...] non esclude affatto la possibilità di essere ripresa successivamente, anche a distanza di secoli, come base poetico-testuale di un’intonazione musicale”.

¹¹ Cit., “una poesia concepita sin dal primissimo atto creativo per essere posta in musica”.

¹² Original Text: “le nostre voci risuonano, in onde vicine o lontane, come un rumore di fondo, uno stimolo sonoro perpetuo senza il quale resteremmo paralizzati dalla paura”.

¹³ Original Text: “Il testo poetico, animato dalla voce, si identifica con ciò che esso fa esistere nell’ordine delle percezioni, delle emozioni, dell’intelligenza [...]”

or in order to cry out their hatred for war, Orders, Institutions or submissions (Zumthor, 1984: 338). At this point, Paul Zumthor has altogether made a reference on the 1960s American “protest songs” and on the American folksinger Joan Baez, whom he defined as “the voice of the voiceless”¹⁴ (Zumthor, 1984: 339). It seems to be just music, then, which could “save words through songs” according to Paul Zumthor (Zumthor, 1984: 237) and in this sense he seems to echo the incipit of *Canto un mondo libero* by the scholar Marco Fazzini, in which he appears to insist upon the importance of memory as a message of justice and peace, and as a means to make music and poetry survive against oblivion¹⁵ (Fazzini, 2012: 21). Hence, I will now introduce three albums of poetry and music in which Joan Baez appears to take into consideration the possibility for human beings to express their ideas in a sort of liberty. As a consequence, I will be dealing with her album *Baptism: A journey through our time*, her recording *Where are you now, my son?* and, finally, with some of the *Child ballads* Joan Baez has been singing and which are included in her album *Trilogy* or *Joan Baez in Concert Part 2*.

Let us begin by considering the first album. Indeed, by the title *Baptism*, I mean an album of poetry, both sung and spoken, which was published by Joan Baez in 1968 when she worked with Maynard Solomon at Vanguard Record. In this album, then, it appears that Joan Baez’s voice were the linking element between her poem-songs and music. In her second autobiography, she has herself introduced this album by quoting some of the poets who have been included in it. Among them, she quotes: “Rimbaud, Lorca, Treece, Blake, Joyce and others”¹⁶ (Baez, 1987: 166). Furthermore, it is important to precise that it was the same Joan Baez who chose, selected and edited these spoken-sung poems. Attracted by poetry because, according to her, it was able to “most closely express her own thoughts and

¹⁴ Original Text: “la voce dei senza-voce incrollabilmente coerente”.

¹⁵ Fazzini, M. (2012) *Canto un mondo libero: Poesia-canzone per la libertà* Pisa: Edizioni ETS.

¹⁶ Baez, J. (1987) *And a Voice to Sing With* New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, p. 166.

feelings” and was also able to tell the *History* of Humankind, Joan Baez has decided to publish this unique work of music and poetry. As a direct consequence of this, it is possible to affirm that this album seems to have been conceived by Joan Baez in order to say “something which it was no longer easy to say in song alone”¹⁷. Indeed, this album is made up by twenty-three poem-songs, in which the main topics appear to be the horrors of war, death, anger, the relationship between God and human beings, Mankind’s intercourse with sadness, love, the safety of childhood and, sometimes, the feeling of solitude. All themes, then, which can be easily conducted to Joan Baez’s life. Moreover, all these topics appear to have influenced my research on the way in which human beings have been able to express their thoughts and feelings through the art of poetry. For instance, the American poet Walt Whitman and the Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca have offered me the possibility to explore Men in relationship with war, liberty and death. The Irish poet James Joyce seems to have, furthermore, put men in relationship with love and God especially in some of his early poems. John Donne appears to have put human creatures in relationship with meditation and, most of all, with a sort of acceptance of death. The apocalyptic poet Henry Treece has, then, offered me the possibility of referring to the topic of childhood and of revisiting the importance of the paternal figure in poetry. Specifically, I will make the reader become aware of how the figure of the father seems to be a constant presence in his poems even though childhood does not always seem to mean happiness for him. Furthermore, I will explore the topic of maternity through some instances of white and black lullabies addressed to analyse the relationship between mothers and their children. Thus, this brief window into *Baptism* has introduced not only the names of some of the greatest and most famous poets in the world, nevertheless, it has altogether introduced me into the idea that poetry and music together could be able to express human beings’ thoughts and feelings in a very original way. Nevertheless, it

¹⁷ See the original liner notes included by 1968 *Vanguard Records Original Edition* New York: Fennario Music Publishers.

is important to underline that I will limit my analysis on those poems which have been included by Joan Baez in her above cited album. In particular, I have decided to group these poems according to a precise order given by their main topics. Moreover, in the following chapters I will often focus my attention also on further poems written by the same poets whom Joan Baez has performed in her album of poetry.

Having argued about *Baptism*, let us move on to spend some words upon Joan Baez's *Where are you now, my son?* and on some of her *Child ballads*. The former album was published in 1972, after those days which Joan Baez spent in the North of Vietnam during the bombing of America on Hanoi in the 1970s. There is, furthermore, a whole chapter in *A Voice to Sing With* where Joan Baez has offered the reader some information about this album. As a matter of fact, *Where are you now, my son?* is a long ballad written and edited by Joan Baez, which lasts almost twenty-two minutes and in which Music is accompanied by live war-noises. Among these noises, then, as Joan Baez has noted there are: "children laughing, sirens blaring, bombs falling, women singing and some moments shared inside the hotel bomb shelter with Indians, Poles, Cubans, French and Vietnamese" (Baez, 1987: 94). The main narrative voice, then, belongs to Mike Allen, an Episcopal minister who brought with him a tape recording with which he recorded "much of the loud bomb and jet sounds" from the third floor of the hotel. Together with him, Joan Baez looks as if she embodied the main singing voice of the entire poem¹⁸. Nevertheless, before listing the main themes of this poem, let us introduce it by explaining the choice of its title. In her long memoir, Joan Baez seems to justify the choice of this title because of something she directly saw. Indeed, it appears that she assisted to the view of a desperate Vietnamese mother in search for her child among all the debris and the dead corpses outside caused by a previous huge blast. In such expressions, indeed, Joan Baez has described this tragic scene: "On the other side of a thirty-foot abyss I saw a woman bending low to the ground *singing* a strange little song as she hobbled back and forth over an area of

¹⁸ Audio Source *Joan Baez The Complete and A&M Recordings* 2003 New York.

ten or twelve feet of ground. At first I thought she was singing a song of joy that she was all right and her family had been spared. But as we got closer her song grew strange to my ears. She was alone. The interpreter listened closely for a few seconds and said me, “She says ‘My son, my son. Where are you now, my son?’ (Baez, 1987: 218). Thus, it is possible to affirm that *Where are you now, my son?* should be considered as a long-playing of despair, horror, sickness, weakness, fear, sorrow and pain because of war and death which comes to light especially through the combination between Music and Poetry. Specifically, in the following chapters I will try to analyse some of its most relevant characteristics.

Finally, as I have stated above Joan Baez has been involved also with some of the tragic ballads collected by Francis James Child in his volume *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. I will above all analyse the relationship between Joan Baez and some tragic ballads in which once more themes such as love, death or war seem to be the main topics. As a consequence, I will also try to create a parallelism between Child’s literary texts and Joan Baez’s songs in order to prove, once again, the continuation between Poetry and Music. For instance, among these ballads, I will be dealing with the tragic lives of Henry Martin, Geordie, Barbara Allen, Mary Hamilton and the modalities in which they appear to survive to the difficulties of life. Finally, I will also dedicate the last chapter to Joan Baez’s fourth album *Joan Baez in Concert Part Two* and see how several ballads have been used in theatre and dance.

Bibliography IV

Fazzini, M. (2012) *Canto un mondo libero: Poesia-canzone per la libertà* Pisa: Edizioni ETS.

La Via, S. (2014) *Poesia per musica e musica per poesia* Roma: Carocci Editore.

Zumthor, P. (1984) *La presenza della voce: Introduzione alla poesia orale* Bologna: il Mulino.

Audio Sources

Baez, J. (1987) *And a Voice To sing with* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Baptism: A Journey Through our Time 1968 New York: Vanguard Record.

Joan Baez: The Complete A&M Recordings 2003 New York: A&M Records.

Chapter V

How War influences the lives of human beings

How can the bird that is born for joy, sit in a cage and sing? How can a child, when fears annoy, but droop his tender wing, and forget his youthful spring? [William Blake]

“His wife Florence burned herself to death, in front of the New Federal Building in Los Angeles. She poured gasoline on her clothes and lit a match to herself, to illuminate the dull fact that children, little children are being burned to death in yellow fire”(Baez, 1969: 176). By these few lines, Joan Baez seems to introduce the reader into the dark topic of war. War has changed human life. It has become the wife of Evil and the widow of Nonsense. War has cut the wings of all caged birds, as far as William Blake has suggested. Nevertheless, war has also cut the wings of thousands and thousands of young soldiers, forbidden to live and commissioned to die. It is just this main idea, which will be discussed in this chapter. In particular, I will demonstrate how war has influenced the heart, the mind and the soul of all those human creatures and especially soldiers who have lost their lives in a battlefield. Moreover, I will discuss about this topic through important literary examples both in poetry and in prose. First of all, I will introduce the topic of war by quoting some poems written by several poets in order to become aware of the way in which war has been perceived in poetry. Above all, I will concentrate my attention on the psychological crisis and disorders which war could cause in human beings. Secondly, I will shift my attention to the Vietnam War and, specifically, I will discuss about it through the help of the poet Allen Ginsberg and the folksinger Joan Baez. In this section, furthermore, I will analyse the way in which Joan Baez has behaved because of war and its horror in her poem-song *Where are you now, my son?*. Thirdly, I will be dealing with prose by quoting the case of Septimus Smith in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*. In particular, through the character of Smith I will demonstrate once again how fiercely war could contaminate the

mind of a man who has fought and has also seen his friends die in a battlefield. Thirdly, I will go deeply inside six poems borrowed from Joan Baez's *Baptism: A Journey Through Our Time*, which poems appear to focus their main attention on the effects of war especially on soldiers. To quote them, I will be dealing with Walt Whitman's *I saw the vision of armies*, Arthur Waley's *Minister of War*, Lawrence Ferlinghetti's *Song in the blood*, Arthur Rimbaud's *Evil* and Henry Treece's *Who Murdered The Minutes* and *Elegy*. Finally, I will move on to look at the relationship between music, dance and theatre by the help of Joan Baez's ballads in *Joan Baez in Concert part two*.

5.1 War through Poetry

War has gifted men with weapons and bombs. Despite this, war has gifted men with loss, anger, hunger, despair and pain. It is, in particular, this condition of disorder which I would like to underline through the help of some poets especially because the issue of war looks as if it were the main subject of Joan Baez's poem-songs in *Baptism*. Although lyrical, I will demonstrate how, as a matter of fact, the way in which these poets have discussed about war could be altogether fierce and violent. Indeed, there are several instances of the 19th and the 20th century poetry which appear to prove evidence on this issue. Nevertheless, before entering the main topic, it has been chosen to introduce it by quoting another passage from the poem *The Schooner Flight* by Derek Walcott. There is, indeed, a passage in which the protagonist of this poem appears to link the atrocity of war to the issue of slavery, as if to say that they both have caused horrors on his race. Indeed, his thoughts: "Next we pass slave ships. Flags of all nations,/ our fathers below deck too deep, I suppose,/ to hear us shouting" (Walcott, 1986: 353) seem to clarify this main idea. In another passage, then, the main character goes on to observe: "Until I see definite signs/ that mankind change [...] I heard the screams of my burning children,/ I ate the brains of mushrooms [...] and when I heard noise/ of the soldiers' progress through the thick leaves,/ though my heart was bursting, I got up and ran/ through

the blades [...] with the blood of my race” (Walcott, 1986: 356), appear to make evidence on the brutality of colonization. Moreover, it is just through the main protagonist’s reflections that the reader can become aware of the dark feelings war could be able to provoke on the heart of human beings.

Having underlined the main aims of this sub-chapter, let us move on to look at some examples of poetry which appear to refer to the relationship between human beings and war. As a consequence of this, I have decided to quote some of those poets who have been quoted by Joan Baez in her 1968 album of poetry. Moreover, although these poets do not seem to belong to the same historical period, I will try to demonstrate the way in which they could be also similar. For example, the English poet William Blake does not seem to avoid the topic of war in some of his poems. As a result of this, it is just in his song entitled *Holy Thursday* in which the poet is describing a situation of misery, probably caused by the impetuosity of war. Indeed, his words: “Is this a holy thing to see/ In a rich and fruitful land./ Babes reduced to misery/ Fed with cold and usurious hand?/ Is that trembling cry a song?/ And so many children poor?/ It is a land of poverty/ [...] And their fields are bleak and bare/ And their ways are filled with thorns: It is eternal winter there” (Blake, 2005: 29), appear to underline how both misery and war could invade the lives of human beings. In another poem, moreover, by the contemporary poet Mark Haddon the consequences of war seem to manifest themselves on nature. Indeed, the poet seems to resume this possible situation by stating: “Mountains explode, bleeding black smoke downwind./ Tide pulse on the coast/ [...] Forests burn. Fields. Pipelines./ Roads. The brief nights blaze like lava./ [...] Green takes it all black” (Haddon, 2005: 31). Furthermore, in *Whispers of Immortality* also the poet T. S. Eliot appears to describe a kind of relationship between a man and death through the image of war. In this poem, indeed, the poet is quoting the English dramatist John Webster imagining that he “saw the skull beneath the skin;/ And breast-less creatures underground,/ leaned backward with a lipless grin” (Eliot, 2005: 53), and in a sense, through these horrific images of scattered bodies, it is possible to evoke the horrible consequences which war

could cause on human creatures. To quote another famous poet, there are also some early poems written by James Joyce in which the poet looks as if he were involved in some miserable reflections because of war. For instance, in *I Hear an Army Charging Upon the Land*, the poet seems to make the reader aware of how violently war has troubled his heart. Indeed, he is able to express his feelings by saying: “I hear an army charging upon the land/ And the thunder of horses plunging/ [...] The charioteers,/ they cry unto the night their battle-name:/ I moan in sleep when I hear afar their whirling laughter./ They cleave the gloom of dreams, as blinding flame,/ clanging, clanging upon the heart as upon an anvil/ [...] They come out of the sea and run shouting by the shore./ My heart, have you no wisdom thus to despair?” (Joyce, 2004: 29). In addition, also the French poet Arthur Rimbaud seems to echo Joyce’s feelings of pain because of war in his poem *Mystic*. Indeed, his thoughts: “Meadows of flame leap up to the summit of the little hill./ At the left, the mould of the ridge is trampled by all the homicides/ and all the battles, and all the disastrous noises describe their curve” (Rimbaud, 1957: 79). Hence, both these poems seem to prove evidence on the main idea that war could be able to produce violent, sad and fierce feelings upon the heart of men.

Finally, there are some examples among the *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth in which it is also possible to recognize the same feelings of despair given by war. For example, in the ballad *The Female Vagrant*, the violence of war appears to influence a woman and her family in a very tragic way. In this ballad, then, the poet is dealing with a poor woman who has decided to sail away to the Western world after she had lost her husband and her children because of a “ravenous plague”. As a result, reaching the West the woman finally meets for the first time war. War, then, seems to provoke such feelings and impressions in her heart: “Remote from man, and storms of mortal care./ A heavenly silence did the waves invest;/ I looked and looked along the silent air./ Until it seemed to bring a joy to my despair/ [...] The shriek that from the distant battle broke/ [...] While like a sea the storming army came,/ and Fire from Hell reared his gigantic shape/ [...] and

the pallid host/ driven by the bomb's incessant thunder stroke/ [...] I seemed transported to another world:/ A thought resigned with pain" (Wordsworth, 2003: 33). Thus, all these literary examples have attempted to give an overview on how war could contaminate both poetry and human life. Specifically, they have proved evidence on the main idea that war is able to cause only tragic, and altogether, painful feelings to whoever or whatever it touches.

5.2 Joan Baez and The Vietnam War: *Where are you now, my son?*

"I do not believe in war. I do not believe in the weapons of war. Weapons and wars have murdered, burned, distorted, crippled, and caused endless varieties of pain to men, women and children for too long" (Baez, 1987: 120). By these words, Joan Baez has declared herself against the whole immoral actions of war. Hence, this sub-chapter intends to be divided into two small sections. I will, firstly, deal with Joan Baez the activist and her acts of civil disobedience against the Vietnam War. Lastly, I will deal with Joan Baez the folksinger and poetess who transferred both heart and body to the experience she spent in Hanoi together with American and Vietnamese individuals during the 1970s in the middle of the American war.

Joan Baez the activist

Let us begin by considering Joan Baez the activist. Nevertheless, before starting, a few words about the 1970s American movements against the Vietnam War will be spent. Indeed, among the several activities and social actions which took place in America to protest against the American occupation of Cambodia and especially the Vietnamese soil, I will pay my attention on one important event among the others: the 1971 *Mayday*. Moreover, it has been decided to take this movement into consideration because it appeared to be based on those principles of nonviolence which the same Joan Baez believed in. There is an article, then, written by the scholar L. A. Kauffman in which the *Mayday* movement has been described as "the most audacious civil disobedience action in American history" (Kauffman, 2002: 29). The *Mayday* was, indeed, an action of protest which

took place in 1971 especially among the youngsters. Although this action meant to stop the governmental improper occupation of the Vietnamese soil, it seemed to be based on the principles of nonviolence left by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. As a consequence, the main idea of this movement seemed to be conditioned by Gandhi's belief that "nonviolence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering" (Kauffman, 2002: 33). It was just for this reason that, as a matter of fact, thousands of young students became consciously united in their protest against the Vietnam War. Furthermore, the principles of nonviolence which seemed to belong to this civil action of disobedience were also promoted by the Quaker Project on Community Conflict in transmitting values of peace and nonviolence too (Kauffman, 2002: 34). In addition, the Mayday radicals decided also to organize themselves into "affinity groups" made up by those who shared "individual trust, friendship, background and history and all together protested against War" (Kauffman, 2002: 36). The idea, then, that such a fundamental event was sponsored by the Quaker Project and that it was also based on the issue of communal living and sharing can clearly be conducted to Joan Baez, as I have already demonstrated in my third chapter. Hence, attempting to free human beings especially from War, these protesters appeared to non-violently fight above all for men's liberty and their civil rights.

Nevertheless, beyond these young protesters, there is also a series of important literary figures who measured themselves with the Vietnam War. Among them, I will focus my analysis on the American poet Allen Ginsberg. In particular, I will take into consideration his famous auto-poems. In his article *Back! Back! Back! Central Mind-Machine Pentagon: Allen Ginsberg and the Vietnam War*, the scholar Alex Houen has suggested a detailed description of Ginsberg's auto poems. According to him, Ginsberg's tactics consisted on recording, by the help of a cutting-edge 1000R tape recorder, some "lyrical flights of autobiography" while, during the 1960s, he began a series of road trips around the world (Houen, 2008: 351-355). As dealing with the topic of war, Ginsberg was also against the

Vietnam War. He, indeed, believed in the idea that America should have found a way to pull out Vietnam and in the early 1970s he announced, together with Joan Baez, “the formation of a War Tax Resistance organization for citizens” which intended not to pay those taxes aimed to support the Vietnam War (Houen, 2008: 368). It was then, in 1972, when the poet Ginsberg declared against the bombing on the Vietnamese land: “Is this the Country of God?/ Are we the Nation under Christ?/ Automated Electronic Bombing in the name of the Holy Ghost/ [...] America Make up your mind./ Don’t vote Nixon to continue War murder” (Houen, 2008: 369). In another poem, moreover, Allen Ginsberg seems also to deal with the Vietnam War in a more personal way. Indeed, in his auto poem *Wichita Vortex Sutra*, the American poet does not appear to call the attention on his Nation, rather, he appears to concentrate his reflections on himself: “What if I opened my soul to sing to my absolute self?/ What if I sang, and loosed the chords of fear brow?/ [...] I am the Universe tonight/ [...] What if I sang till Students knew I was free of Vietnam/ [...] free of my own meat, free to die in my thoughtful shivering Throne?/ Freer than America” (Houen, 2008: 356). Finally, it is possible to conclude that the Vietnam War was such an important event which not only awakened the moral consciousness of radical students and also important literary figures, but which helped them to reflect upon the vehement topic of war.

As a direct consequence of all this, I will now move on to underline the main stages of Joan Baez’s activism against the Vietnam War. First of all, it is possible to affirm that the Mayday belief in nonviolence and Allen Ginsberg’s acts of civil disobedience are both constant features of Joan Baez’s behaviour against the Vietnam War. In particular, Markus Jager’s study entitled *Joan Baez and the Issue of Vietnam* will help the reader to reconstruct the history of the anti-Vietnam-War movement in America. As this scholar has affirmed, the American protest movement began in between 1964 and 1965 when the Students for a Democratic Society began to radicalize in favour of their human rights. In particular, their protest against the illegal bombing of the North of Vietnam began under the presidency of

Lyndon Johnson especially when he affirmed that: “America fights because we must fight if we are to live in a world where every country can shape its own destiny” (Jager, 2003: 22). To Lyndon Johnson, furthermore, in 1963 Joan Baez told that he should have stayed out of Vietnam. Nevertheless, although the President did not appear to approve her proposal, Joan Baez inaugurated her nonviolent campaign against the Vietnam War for the first time in 1965. As I have said before, her protest seemed always to be consumed in silence and absolutely in peace: she, indeed, refused to pay her military taxes, in 1965 she founded the Institute for the Study of Non-Violence against the violence of war and held several concerts to protest against the nuclear age (Jager, 2003: 35-40). Moreover, in 1972 she also held an anti-war demonstration which took place in Washington where together with several “women and children in a symbolic act of solidarity with the women and children of Vietnam”, she demanded that “no more funds go to continue the war” (Baez, 1987: 184). Finally, it is possible to say that Joan Baez has been an important and active figure of the American protest against the Vietnam War. She has been, moreover, able to turn a protest into a nonviolent action held to create a popular experience against the insistence of war because, as she has stated: “The modern war is one horrible machine upon another until a button will be pushed and our world or a good portion of it will be blown into pieces” (Baez, 1987: 120).

Joan Baez the folksinger and poetess

In the previous sub-chapter I have analysed Joan Baez and her social activism against the Vietnam War. Nevertheless, now I will verge my attention on Joan Baez and her role as a folksinger and poetess. As a result, I will take into consideration her poem *Where are you now, my son?*. Furthermore, there is a whole chapter in Joan Baez’s *And a Voice to sing with* in which the folksinger gives to the reader some information about the Christmas week she spent in the North of Vietnam in 1972. “This is the story of my thirteen-day stay in Hanoi, eleven of the days of the Christmas bombing” (Baez, 1987: 193), she has declared in her memoir. Indeed, there

is a passage in her poem where Joan Baez appears to depict this very condition. As a consequence, she declares: “We gathered in the lobby celebrating Christmas Eve./ The French, the Poles, the Indians, Cubans and the Vietnamese/ The tiny tree our host had fixed sweetened familiar psalms/ But the most sacred of Christmas prayers was shattered by the bombs”¹⁹. Notwithstanding this, despite the dynamics of her sojourn in Hanoi during the 1970s, I would like to comment some lyrical passages of her poem-song *Where are you now, my son?* which she wrote as a result of her being welcomed and unwelcomed by the Vietnamese people during the American bombing. In particular, I have decided to analyse those passages in which Joan Baez seems to refer to war as an endless cause of desperation for human beings. Very poetically written, then, mingled with real noises of war, this poem-song by Joan Baez should be considered as one of her masterpieces especially because of its originality. Indeed, as well as the poet Allen Ginsberg recorded his lyrical pieces of autobiography by using several recording tapes, *Where are you now, my son?* has been recorded by a tape recorder during Joan Baez’s sojourn in Hanoi by her and some of her friends. In addition, live voices, sirens, chants, people running, prayers, laughs, cries, blasts and whispers do appear to make company to the main speaking-singing voices of the whole ballad. Hence, I will be stressing my attention on how once again Joan Baez’s long poem seems to prove evidence on how terribly war could affect human life.

Let us begin by analysing the first stanza of this ballad. In particular, I will be paying my attention on the way in which Joan Baez has described the consequences of war on the landscape around. First of all, the poem opens with the dead image of a small district in Hanoi destroyed because of a previous nuclear blast. Indeed, as Joan Baez herself has commented in her second memoir: “A district called Kan Thiem had been devastated by carpet bombing [...] [...] We came to what looked like a large expensive movie of a piece of the moon. Men were standing atop craters banked with mud and

¹⁹ See *Joan Baez Lyrics* in Metro-Lyrics (an online website)
<<http://www.metrolyrics.com/where-are-you-now-my-son-lyrics-joan-baez.html>>

trash, shouting out the number of the dead” (Baez, 1987: 218). Furthermore, the vision of the destroyed ground has altogether been recalled in the poem by the voice of Mike Allen, an Episcopal Minister who left to Hanoi with Joan Baez and other four Americans. Mike Allen’s voice, then, followed by the incessant sound of a siren, opens the whole ballad with the following consideration: “[...] I can hear some bombs in the distance./ The sky is lighting up so, someone is going on somewhere./ [...] It’s Thursday morning and I am going to see 9/10 district/ where the bombing was extremely heavy”²⁰.

Secondly, it seems that the destroyed condition of the ground because of the arrival of war is able to immobilize several individuals, especially women, children and adults. For instance, Joan Baez’s negative reactions because of the atomic blast seem, then, to be exemplified by her own words: “Cry, I wanted to say” (Baez, 1987: 218). Moreover, Joan Baez goes on to affirm: “It’s walking to the battleground that always makes me cry/ [...] Dawn bleeds with the people here and morning skies are red./ As young girls load up bicycles with flowers for the dead”²¹. In addition, the conditions of the dead landscape around look as if they had immobilized also an old man whom has been described by Joan Baez in these terms: “An old man with unsteady gait and beard of/ ancient white/ Bent to the ground with arms outstretched/ faltering his plight/ I took his hand to steady him, he stood and did/ not turn”²². Nevertheless, in Joan Baez’s ballad the brutal consequences of war do not appear to spare also the lives of young and innocent Vietnamese children. Indeed, it looks as if Joan Baez perceived that war had altogether deprived children from their childhoods especially because they were constantly involved with war. As a result, Joan Baez’s words: “The children on the roadsides of the villages and/ towns/ Would stand around us laughing as we stood like/ giant clowns/ [...] And they spoke their only words in English,/ “Johnson, Nixon, Kissinger”. In another stanza, moreover, Joan Baez seems to insist on this very idea: “The siren gives a

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

running to those who live/ in town/ Take the children and the blankets to the concrete/ underground”²³.

Furthermore, the second stanza of Joan Baez’s ballad seems to prove once again evidence on the issue above. Indeed, it opens with the suggestive description of a Vietnamese woman among the debris who, in despair, is searching for her disappeared son. As a result, this very maternal load appears to be echoed by Joan Baez’s female figure in her following observation: “An aging woman picks the craters and the rubble,/ a piece of cloth, a bit of shoe, a whole lifetime of trouble./ A sobbing chant comes from her throat and splits the morning air./ The single son she had last night is buried under her”²⁴. Moreover, the mother’s sudden desperation seems to be increased by her becoming aware of the death of her darling son because of war: “They say that the war is done,/ but Where are you now, my son?”²⁵. At this point, then, there is a poem by the poet Norman Rosten entitled *In Guernica* which has been included in Joan Baez’s *Baptism* and looks as if it reminded the reader of this very maternal feeling above. Indeed, in Rosten’s poem the image of dead children “laid out in order upon the sidewalk” with “little holes on their foreheads and breasts” because of the Spanish civil war, appear to have disturbed the harmony of their mothers. The final stanza, as a result, seems to let the reader imagine the pains of these female figures. For this reason, by the end of the poem the poet appears to comfort them by telling: “Do not weep for them, Madre./ They are gone forever, the little ones,/ Straight to heaven to the saints,/ And God will fill the bullet holes with candy”²⁶. Thus, the suggestive image of dead children because of war and the probable pain felt by their mothers seem to remind the reader of Joan Baez’s will of underling the nonsense of war in her long poem *Where are you now, my son?*.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., *Joan Baez Lyrics* in Metro-Lyrics (an online website)

<<http://www.metrolyrics.com/where-are-you-now-my-son-lyrics-joan-baez.html>>

²⁶ See *In Guernica Joan Baez* in Anti-War Songs (an online website)

<<http://www.antiwarsongs.org/canzone.php?id=2909&lang=it>>

Furthermore, Joan Baez's ballad seems also to depict further negative feelings which war is able to cause to the hearts of human beings. For example, the following description seems to clarify this very idea. The stasis, then, of “the helmetless defiant ones, who sit on the curb and stare at tracers flashing through the sky and planes bursting in air”, looks as if it insisted on the issue above. In another passage, conversely, although it seems that war has immobilized human beings, the following description appears to give a kind of hope and relief to the entire situation. Indeed, Joan Baez goes on to affirm: “So back into the shelter where two lovely women rose/ And with a brilliance and a fierceness and a gentleness which froze/ The rest of us to silence, as their voices soared with joy/ outshining every bomb that fell that night upon Hanoi”²⁷ and, in so doing, the American folksinger is once again proving evidence on her spirit of communal living despite the condition of war. Nonetheless, despite this kind of joy, Joan Baez seems to remind the reader of the idea that outside war had continued to disturb everyone. For instance, the following stanza appears to exemplify this idea: “From the distant cabins in the sky,/ where no man hears the sound of death on earth from his own bombs,/ six pilots were shot down”²⁸. Finally, the tension caused by war appears to slowly vain, instead, in one of the last stanzas of the poem in which Joan Baez thanks those Vietnamese people to whom this poem has been addressed as if the agony of war were all in all able to offer her something to remember with joy. As a result, her words follow:

“Oh people of the shelters, what a gift you’ve given me

To smile at me and quietly let me share your agony

And I can only bow in utter humbleness and ask

Forgiveness and forgiveness for the things we’ve brought to pass”²⁹.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

5.3 Henry Treece: *Elegy*

This sub-chapter attempts to give an overview on a poem whose title is *Elegy* and which has been written by the poet Henry Treece. Its main topic appears to be War and I have decided to quote this poet because he has been cited by Joan Baez several times in her album *Baptism*. In particular, this poem appears to describe in a very profound way the psychological consequences of war in the minds and hearts of soldiers during the 20th century. Indeed, the poem was composed soon after World War II, specifically, on March 1947. The whole poem, then, appears to deal with a nocturnal vision with which the poet seems to be involved. This vision is altogether able to give shape to a series of poetical wanderings upon the issue of war and also death. The first stanza, then, opens with a very dark situation. Indeed, Henry Treece points out: “In my troubled garden the violet vies with vetch,/ And lilac is entwined with sly convolvulus”³⁰. As a result, the garden in which the poet is dwelling appears to have been influenced by the dark impetuosity of war. Moreover, this very idea looks as if it were majored by further poetical observations of the surrounding landscape: “Grass grows coarse across the tortured earth,/ Covering alike the corpse and bridal strawberry./ Playground of birds by day, and prairie for the cats/ That come by night, savouring the moon;/ Relic of five long years of war -/ That is my garden./ [...] Gardens smelling in the rain, and flowers/ That had no eyes, no gaping mouths to feed” (Treece, 1947: 299-302). Thus, it seems as if the image of the garden around is reflecting the imagery of war which has turned the whole world into a relic. The birds, indeed, have become food for cats and the red strawberries have become all united with the dead covering grass. Nevertheless, according to the poet war has above all affected the lives of young soldiers deprived from their youth because of it. As a consequence, Henry Treece observes: “The air is colder now and birds have flown;/ Under the hill the church clock strikes the hour,/ and I hear them calling again,/ the lads who will come no more [...] Death came with no white skull and gleaming scythe./ [...] They are all mine, the

³⁰ Treece, H. (1947) ‘Elegy’ *Poetry Foundation* 69/6: 299-308.

pleasures and the pains,/ Those little things lost in a monster world/ [...] We who marched at their word now move no more,/ Though hills should shriek in torture to high heaven./ We feel no pain now [...] We have no tears to shed who know the worm./ [...] And the lads,/ The lads who knew delight/ Are silent as the pipe,/ Dry as the drum,/ Nor shall they dance again,/ No not again;/ Not even though the pole/ Should spring to life and dress in leaves again!” (Treece, 1947: 301-305). Thus, it seems as if according to the poet war has even silenced the life and breath of innocent soldiers died because of it. War, then, has turned the world into a monster which is only able to displace death and numb its music. The only musical instruments, indeed, which according to the poet are able to sound are the instruments of war: among them there are pipes, horns, drums and even trumpets. Moreover, it is also possible to say that the poet is not separated from this very condition of sorrow and pain. Indeed, as I have already observed, the death of young soldiers is able to cause both pleasures and pains to him. In addition, Henry Treece looks as if he has nothing positive to leave us because war has destroyed human life. As a consequence, there is a passage in which he notes: “True we are sad, who loved the summer rain,/ Who sigh that shall not see Spring again,/ And sad that love, like any wistful wraith,/ Is powerless against the tomb’s locked door” (Treece, 1947: 303). In so doing, then, it is as if the poet is describing the consequences of war both in soldiers and Mankind who will neither cherish spring nor taste the power of love. Furthermore, the poet goes on to affirm that according to him there could not be any remedy to human sorrow because of war. Indeed, he points out: “Hope but never hold,/ Reaching towards some unknown home of peace,/ But never knowing when peace has been found./ So moves the heart of man among the trees,/ Where ancient sorrows wail between the aisles/ [...] Gone are all the songs/ [...] The drum is broken and it will speak no more/ [...] Are the years lost for ever now?/ Like pages torn from a book by another hand/ and blown away on a feckless wind/ [...] May we not wake again to a world of Spring/ [...] Now at the end of a day, we find the road,/ Winds without purpose over dank fields,/ Over the dreary slag-heaps of

despair/ To nowhere” (Treece, 1947: 307-308). Hence, according to the poet all years are lost because of war. Indeed, as if they were yellow pages of books, these years are altogether moved by purposeless winds flowing over drain fields. Finally, even the house appears to become an horrific place because of war. There is a scene, indeed, where the poet is recalling the emptiness of those houses and families to which young soldiers will no more return. In particular, in such a scene the poet is referring to a young lover by telling her: “Not to stand at night by the gate/ because he will not come again,/ And there are eyes that laugh to see/ The flowering pain,/ Not lay him a place, dear,/ For you will eat alone,/ [...] Just go into your room, lass,/ And make yourself a prayer,/ For that will be your strength now,/ This many and many year” (Treece, 1947: 303). A prayer, then, and a strong sense of solitude seem to have become the only possible comfort of someone who has lost everything because of war. In conclusion, this poem by Henry Treece seems to have proved evidence on, once again, the brutal consequences of war in the lives of human beings. In particular, this very nocturnal poem has rendered these consequences especially in young soldiers commissioned to death and, for this reason, it is altogether able to introduce the reader into the following section.

5.4 Septimus Smith: a victim of War in *Mrs Dalloway*

Boys in uniform, carrying guns... and on their faces an expression like the letters of a legend written round the base of a statue praising duty [Virginia Woolf].

Having discussed about Poetry, let us move on to look at prose. In particular, I will be trying to demonstrate the way in which war has affected a young soldier named Smith in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*. As a matter of fact, when I read this novel for the first time, I thought Virginia Woolf much more interesting in her relationship to young Smith, rather than to Clarissa Dalloway. Although at the end of the novel the death of Septimus Smith has been reduced into a rumour, it has been decided to analyse this character not only because of the writer’s affinity to him,

nevertheless, because of his psychological breakdown caused by war. Indeed, I will demonstrate how, even though sometimes young Smith seems to find joy in his depression, the negative effects of war and also death have visibly tortured both his body and mind.

Let us begin by considering the effects of war in his own body and mind. His physical description, indeed, appears to give the impression of a tortured military corpse which at the same time has been spared by war. Virginia Woolf, indeed, describes him as a “pale-faced, beak-nosed man, wearing brown shoes and shabby overcoat, with hazel eyes which had that look of apprehension in them which makes complete strangers apprehensive too” (Woolf, 2003: 11). Moreover, his physical paralysis has been reinforced also by the violent explosion of a motor engine which reminded him of war, as if “some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst in flames” (Woolf, 2003: 12). Hence, it is possible to begin to see what war appears to mean for young Smith, a load perhaps, which he should have carried for the rest of his life. As a consequence of this, it is important to underline that the historical background in which the whole novel takes place is World War I and, indeed, Septimus Smith has been a soldier coming back from the horrific shelters of war to the horrific shelters of a deadly life. At this point, there is an article entitled *Virginia Woolf and the Case of Septimus Smith* in which the author Jean Thomson deeply analyses this character. In her own study Septimus Smith is an *Unknown Soldier*, who thinks that “to die himself is his only option” (Thomson, 2004: 54). The idea of dying, indeed, appears to be immediately highlighted by the soldier when at the beginning of the novel Virginia Woolf makes him affirm: “I will kill myself” (Woolf, 2003: 12), as if to underline the tremendous psychological crisis which war has caused to him. In addition, the psychological and physical stasis of the character seem to appear in his spending his days at Regent’s Park. The park appears to become a world on its own in which Septimus, “the eternal sufferer” would have stayed “away from people, right away over there, where there were chairs beneath a tree” (Woolf, 2003: 19). Consequently, it is possible to see that war has also left

to him a strong sense of solitude. Moreover, as the scholar Thomson goes on to argue, Septimus' illness is continuously active in him because at night "he has panics and awful dreams" (Thomson, 2004: 59). Hence, all these instances have proved evidence on how war seems to have terribly changed the life of a man, firstly, and a soldier later on. In addition, according to Thomson war in Mrs Dalloway does not only mean conflict, rather it also contributes to major changes "in apparently unchangeable rules of English life" (Thomson, 2004: 66). And, indeed, the major change which it is possible to derive from war appears to become visible in the character of Septimus because: "The War had taught him. It was sublime. He had gone through the whole show, friendship, European War, death, had won premonition, was still under thirty and was bound to survive" (Woolf, 2003: 64). Hence, these issues seem to have clarified the idea that Septimus Smith has been profoundly affected by war.

Moreover, despite the fact that in more than one occasion young Smith seems to modulate his illness with moments of joy, however, he appears to be destined to the feeling of solitude because of war. Indeed, war seems to have majored this sort of feeling in him. Moreover, his loneliness appears to be caused also by the loss of his friend Evans, whom he has seen dying in the battlefield. According to Erwin Steinberg, the issue that young Smith has lost his friend at war could remind us of the poet T. S. Eliot who, although he had never fought, had lost his best friend in the battlefield (Steinberg, 1983: 4). T. S. Eliot was a friend of Virginia Woolf and her husband and according to many scholars, Septimus could be seen as the image of the English American poet. For instance, they both suffered because of a psychological breakdown given by war. Moreover, the scholar Steinberg goes on to argue that as well as Eliot was a bank clerk and a poet, Septimus was a clerk and a poet; Eliot believed in the idea that artistic and literary composition could have given relief to some forms of illness, such as Septimus loved reading and drawing pictures and diagrams (Steinberg, 1983: 12). Furthermore, as well as the scholar Steinberg appears to have found some relationships between T. S. Eliot and Septimus Smith, I would

like to prove evidence on how Smith's relationship with Time and Death has made me think of a passage from John Donne's *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*. In particular, the scene in which Clarissa Dalloway appears to be reminded of her desire to take her life after the death of the young soldier who "had killed himself; with the clock striking the hour, one, two, three" (Woolf, 2003: 135), reminded me of Chapter seventeen in John Donne's *Devotions* where the poet has affirmed: "when one man dies [...] as therefore the bell that rings to a sermon calls not upon the preacher only, but upon the congregation to come, so this bell calls us all" (Donne, 1999: 102). For this reason, then, the image of the clock's reminding of Smith's suicide in *Mrs Dalloway* and the bell's reminding of death in *Devotions* seem to create a visible parallelism. Thus, the character of Septimus Smith in Virginia Woolf's novel has helped the reader to understand especially the way in which war could be able to cause solely vehement feelings on human beings.

5.5 Joan Baez's *Baptism* and the issue of War

Having discussed about the issue of war both in poetry and in prose, let us move on to look at how does this topic seem to be expressed in Joan Baez's *Baptism: A Journey Through Our Time*. Specifically, she has decided to include Walt Whitman's *I saw the vision of armies*, Arthur Waley's *Minister of War*, Arthur Rimbaud's *Evil*, Henry Treece's *Who murdered the minutes*, William Blake's *The Angel* and Lawrence Ferlinghetti's *Song in the blood*. All poems, then, which seem to be linked by the nonsense of war. First of all, let us begin by considering the way in which war could influence the lives of soldiers. For instance, the poem *Minister of War*, which has been translated from the Chinese by the poet Arthur Waley seem to clarify this very idea. Indeed, the whole poem is made up by four stanzas in which it appears that young soldiers are directly referring to their Minister of War by telling him: "Minister of war, we are the king's claws and fangs./ Why should you roll us from misery to misery,/ Giving us no place to stop in or take rest?/ Minister of war, surely you are not wise./ Why

should you roll us from misery to misery?/ We have mothers who lack food”³¹. In so doing, it looks as if the young soldiers are not only linking the image of war to the image of misery, rather, they are also proving evidence on their being sorts tools in the hands of a Nation. Moreover, both Arthur Waley’s feeling of maternity and the condition of soldiers implied with war appear to be the leading topic of Arthur Rimbaud’s *Evil* which poem has also been included in Joan Baez’s *Baptism*. Firstly, in this poem, the image of war seems to be exemplified by some sorts of “red-stained mouths of machine guns” which “ring across the infinite expanse of day” and make “the massed battalions break and melt away”, as if war has not only destroyed war battalions but also the calmness of a morning day. Secondly, it looks as if war has been turned by the French poet into a “monstrous frenzy which makes of a thousand men a smoking pile- Poor fools!/ – dead, in summer, in the grass, /” meanwhile God, who smiles upon human misery “through the gleam of gold”, “only wakes when weeping mothers bow/ Themselves in anguish, wrapped in old black shawls”³². Thus, the poet Rimbaud seems able to prove evidence on the way in which war has reduced human life into pieces. Indeed, it is as if war became a mechanical gun able to reduce men and soldiers into dead smokes and their mothers into weeping figures dressed in black. Furthermore, in Walt Whitman’s *I saw the vision of armies* soldiers appear to become passive figures, as if they were the actors of a murderous battlefield. At the beginning of the poem, indeed, an unknown speaking voice, which probably belongs to a soldier, points out: “I saw the vision of armies [...] born through the smoke of the battles/ and pierced with missiles/ [...] I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,/ and the white skeletons of young men, I saw them;/ I saw the debris and debris of all dead soldiers./ But I saw they were not as was thought”³³. The unknown

³¹ See *Music Song Lyrics* ‘Joan Baez Lyrics: Minister of War (translated from the Chinese by Arthur Waley) viewed 19 June 2014 <<http://www.musicsonglyrics.com/minister-of-war-translated-from-the-chinese-by-arthur-waley-lyrics-joan-baez.html>>

³² See ‘Arthur Rimbaud Biography (1854-1891) *Poetry Foundation* viewed 20 June 2014 <<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/arthur-rimbaud>>

³³ See ‘Joan Baez-I saw the Vision of Armies’ *Lyrics Mode* viewed 20 June 2014 <http://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/j/joan_baez/i_saw_the_vision_of_armies.html?utm_expId=7079856>

figure, then, seems to strengthen his vision of war also by the image of “hundreds of battle-flags” which altogether originate “through the smoke of the battles and are perceived with missiles”. In so doing, then, either Walt Whitman appears to insist upon the tragic consequences of war upon the lives of soldiers especially in relationship with their impending deaths. Debris, battle-corpses, blasts, smokes and flags, as a consequence, appear to be described by the poet in order to underline the only possible companions of war. Moreover, as well as I have already observed in Waley and Rimbaud’s previous poems, Walt Whitman’s poem appears to displace also the image of mothers suffering for their lost boys. Indeed, it goes on to declare: “The living remained and suffered, the mother suffered,/ and the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffered,/ and the armies that remained suffered”³⁴.

Having discussed about the relationship among war and soldiers, let us move on to look at the relationship between war and human life. Indeed, the last poem-songs which I will be dealing with are Henry Treece’s *Who murdered the minutes*, William Blake’s *The Angel* and Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s *Song in the blood*. Firstly, I will be considering the poem *Who murdered the minutes* by Henry Treece. In his collection of essays, then, entitled *How I see Apocalypse*, Henry Treece has declared: “We have seen that the State as a machine can lead men to but let the small men, the individuals, have a say in the matter now” (Sylvester, 1948: 104). In so doing, it seems that the poet has criticized the modalities in which a State can exercise its power on human beings. Indeed, the poet has belonged to a famous literary group named *The Apocalypse* which was founded in 1938. Being War become the dominant topic of the 1930s and 1940s English poetry, the main idea of this group was that of standing for individual freedom against a too mechanical age whose human beings had become the early victims (Daiches, 1943: 157). As a consequence, during the 1940s poetry began to be seen as the only possible vehicle able to express the needs of men: “Every man has poetry within him. Poetry is the awareness of

³⁴ *Ibid.*

the mind of the universe. It embraces everything in the world. Poetry is the connection between matter and mind. Poetry is universal” (Daiches, 1943: 154). Indeed, it is just through poetry that Henry Treece has been able to exploit the needs of human individuals. Again in Daiches’ words, Henry Treece should be seen as a sort of prophet, full of “esoteric personal symbolism” (Daiches, 1943: 160). For example, especially the first stanza of his poem *Who murdered the minutes* appears to enclose these issues above. For instance, in the previous stanza the poet is paying attention on the loss of youth by young soldiers commissioned to war. Indeed, the first stanza opens with a dialogue between an unknown voice and a young soldier: “Who murdered the minutes,/ The bright golden minutes,/ The minutes of youth? I, said the soldier, dressed in his red coat./ I with my trumpet, my sword and my flag./ I murdered the minutes, the minutes of youth”³⁵. Thus, it is possible to affirm that the poet Henry Treece has turned war into a sort of machine able to destroy, murder and exploit the shining minutes of youth by the lives of young soldiers. Moreover, William Blake’s *The Angel* appears to refer also to this very idea of losing youth. The poem, which was included in *Songs of Experience*, seems to tell the tragic story of a man who had lost his guardian Angel. The second stanza, indeed, opens with the main speaking voice’s words: “And I wept both night and day./ And he wiped my tears away” (Blake, 2005: 38). Nevertheless, in the following stanza the man states: “So he took his wings and fled;/ then the morn blushed rosy red/ [...] Soon my Angel came again;/ I was armed, he came in vain;/ For my time of youth was fled;/ And grey hairs were on my head” (Blake, 2005: 38). In so doing, then, it is possible to remind the reader of Treece’s previous poem on the idea of losing youth because of war. Indeed, it is as if William Blake’s protagonist has lost his youth especially because of his being “armed”. Finally, in Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s *Song in the blood*, the effects of war seem to be visible on the image of the either drunk or thirsty earth around. At this point, I will try to analyse this poem by making a

³⁵ See ‘Joan Baez: Who Murdered the Minutes’ *Oldie Lyrics* viewed 18 June 2014
 <http://www.ouldielyrics.com/lyrics/joan_baez/who_murdered_the_minutes.html>

comparison between it and John Donne's *A Nocturnal Upon St Lucy's Day* because there are some images which both these poets seem to share. First of all, both John Donne and Lawrence Ferlinghetti are describing a nocturnal, painful and dark situation. The former is dealing with the 'death' of the earth because of the decease of a woman named Lucy and the latter is dealing with the 'death' of the earth because of the blood of war. Indeed, as well as John Donne describes the world's expiry in these terms: "The Sun is spent, and now his flasks / Send forth light squibs, no constant rays;/ The worlds whole sap is sunk:/ The general balm the hydroptique earth has drunk/ Whither, as to the beds-feet, life is shrunk, dead"(Donne, 2001: 34); Ferlinghetti replies: "There are great puddles of blood on the world./ Where is it all going? All this spilled blood?/ Is it the earth that drinks it and gets drunk?/ No, the earth doesn't get drunk./ The earth doesn't turn askew./ [...] it's with difficulty it permits itself from time to time an unhappy volcano./ [...] it turns the earth, it turns with its great pools of blood/ and all living things turn with it and bleed"³⁶. Furthermore, as well as in John Donne's poem "all others, from all things, draw all that's good, life, soul, form, spirit" and, in so doing, seem to be indifferent to the poet who has become "a quintessence of nothingness and the grave of all that's nothing" (Donne, 2001: 34), in Ferlinghetti's poem it is the earth which seems to be indifferent to the sorrowful condition of all other things. Indeed, the American poet states: "It doesn't give a damn the earth./ It turns and all living things set up a howl./ It doesn't give a damn the earth./ It turns, it doesn't stop turning/ and the blood doesn't stop running"³⁷. Finally, as well as in *Nocturnal upon St Lucy's day*, the poet affirms to have become her death and of the "first nothing, the Elixir grown" (Donne, 2001: 35); Ferlinghetti appears to make war's blood become the death of all: "The blood that comes and flows/ and gushes with the new-born,/ the mother cries,/ the baby cries,/ the blood flows. The earth turns,/ the earth doesn't stop turning,/ the blood doesn't stop flowing/ [...] in the street a living being

³⁶ See 'Song in the blood- Jacques Prevert, translated by Lawrence Ferlinghetti' viewed 22 June 2014 <<http://witchesblood.blogspot.it/2004/08/song-in-blood-jacques-prevert.html>>

³⁷ Ibid.

goes by with his blood inside,/ suddenly there he is, dead/ [...], while in the meantime, the earth turns with its milk, its cows,/ with its living, with its dead,/ its burials...with its great streams of blood”³⁸. Hence, through John Donne I have tried to analyse Ferlinghetti’s *Song in the blood*, where once again it is possible to become aware of such a load war could be for human creatures. Blood, indeed, which could be caused by war has not only made the earth become drunk, rather, it has also made war become part of human life, sorrow and pain.

5.6 *Once, a dance against War*

Having discussed about war in poetry, let us move on to give a final look at war in dance and theatre. Indeed, I have decided to explore *Once*, a performance which was held in 2005 in New York by the choreographer Anne Teresa de Keermaeker through the 1962 album of ballads *Joan Baez in Concert Part two*. In her brief and concise article entitled *Dancing Against War*, the scholar Deborah Garwood has furnished some important notions about this event. According to this writer, then, wearing “a dark blue knit tunic that clung to her torso in loose layers”³⁹, Anne Teresa de Keermaeker would have walked alone onstage in an attempt to dance in front of her audience. However, it seemed that her performance could not be considered as solitary and lonesome because, as Deborah Garwood has gone on arguing: “She stretched out an arm to the people on the left and on the right [...] as if to say ‘You too are part of the performance’” (Garwood, 2006: 78). Moreover, as I have already stated above, it appears that the whole performance was performed on the notes of *John Baez in Concert Part two*, a live album which was recorded in 1962 on the Vanguard label. The whole album, then, was recorded during the 1960s, when Joan Baez was involved body and heart in favour of the Civil Rights Movement and against the Vietnam war. “The folksongs’ lyrics were projected upstage, so that the audience sang along” (Garwood, 2006: 78), the scholar Garwood has affirmed as if music and dance would become one. However, before going

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Garwood, D. (2006) ‘Dancing Against War’ *Journal of Performance and Art* 28: 76.

to analyse the main issues of these songs, it is important to note that during her youth Joan Baez seemed to be particularly attracted by tragic ballads because they were traditionally sung by women and argued about death, love, sorrow, war, misery and heartbreak together with joy and loss⁴⁰. For instance, in the ballad *Jack A-Roe*, a young woman in love decides to convey herself away on a vessel because her only true lover had gone to war, far from her. In this ballad, the tragedy of her love seems to be exemplified by the following passage: “The war soon being over/ She hunted all around/ And among the dead and dying/ Her darling boy she found/ Oh her darling boy she found”⁴¹. Another tragic ballad is *Portland Town*, where the feeling of maternity seems to meet war for the first time. In this short, nevertheless intense song, a mother cries because her sons had been called to war. Moreover, the tragic and painful condition of this female figure appears to be given also by her almost obsessive and continuous exclamations: “I was born in Portland Town”, as if she would like to silence her sorrows because “one, two, three children [...] They sent away to war”⁴². On the other hand, the sense of a quiet and peaceful relationship between a mother and a child appears to be given by the lullaby *Hush Little Baby*, even though a sort of melancholy may be altogether caught. In this song, a mother promises her little creature all the pretty things it might ever desire: a mockingbird, a diamond ring, a looking glass, a goat, a dog or a horse and cart⁴³. Whereas, in the traditional song *Queen of Hearts*, it is once again a woman who is involved with her true love’s departure. Indeed, in this song the girl declares that to her and to all the queen of hearts does belong the ace of sorrow. Nonetheless, although she loves her parents, her brothers and her

⁴⁰ Bloch, A. (2005) *Impossible to Hold: Women and Culture in the 60s* New York: Universal Press, p. 129.

⁴¹ See *British Ballads and Folk Songs from the Joan Baez Songbook* New York: Ryerson Music Publishers, INC.

⁴² See “Portland Town Lyrics”. *MetroLyrics* viewed 6 May 2014

<<http://www.metrolyrics.com/portland-town-lyrics-joan-baez.html>>

⁴³ *Ibid.* “Hush Little Baby” viewed 2 July 2014 <<http://www.metrolyrics.com/hush-little-baby-lyrics-joan-baez.html>>

relatives, at the end of the song she decides to leave them and follow him⁴⁴. Furthermore, death appears to be also another recurrent aspect of this album. For instance, death seems to be the main topic of both the ballads *Long Black Veil* and *Three Fishers*. The former tells about the death of a man, who has been accused of murder and who, notwithstanding his innocence, decides to be executed because his alibi was that, during the murder, he was sleeping with the wife of his best friend. After his death, however, his painful condition seems to be strengthened by the image of his sad lover when: “She walks these hills in a long black veil/ Visits my grave when the night winds wail/ Nobody knows, Nobody sees/ Nobody knows but me [...] The scaffold is high/ Eternity near/ She stands in the crowd, she sheds not a tear/ But sometimes at night, when the cold winds moan/ In a long black veil she cries over my bones”⁴⁵. Finally, in *Three Fishers* it is said of three fishers while they are moving out of town, leaving behind their families till: “Through storms be sudden and the waters be deep, the harbour bar be moaning/ Three corpses lay out on the shining sand/ In the morning gleam as the tide went down/ And the women were weeping and wringing their hands/ For these who would never come back to the town”⁴⁶. Thus, all these examples have proved evidence on a sort of continuity between dance and music. United by these two conditions, folksinger Joan Baez and choreographer Anne Teresa Keermaeker appear to have finally turned theatre into a suggestive place in which the nonsense of war has been once again displaced with pain and horror.

Bibliography V

“Classic Poetry Series James Joyce Poems” *Conscious Living Foundation* 2004, viewed 10 Aug. 2014

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* “Queen of Hearts” viewed 4 July 2014 <<http://www.metrolyrics.com/queen-of-hearts-lyrics-joan-baez.html>>

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* “Long Black Veil” viewed 6 July 2014 <<http://www.metrolyrics.com/long-black-veil-lyrics-joan-baez.html>>

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* “Three Fishers” viewed 7 July 2014 <<http://www.metrolyrics.com/three-fishers-lyrics-joan-baez.html>>

<http://www.consciouslivingfoundation.org/ebooks/new7/james_joyce_Poems-2004_9.pdf>.

Baez, J. (1969) *Daybreak* New York: Avon Books.

Baez, J. (1987) *And a Voice to Sing With* New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks.

Blake, W. (2005) *Songs of Innocence and Experience* Boston: Digireads Publishing, p. 29.

Bloch, A. (2005) *Impossible to Hold: Women and Culture in the 60s* New York: Universal Press.

British Ballads and Folk Songs from the Joan Baez Songbook New York: Ryerson Music Publishers, INC.

Daiches, D. (1943) 'Contemporary Poetry in Britain' *Poetry* 62/3: pp. 150-164.

Donne, J. (1999) *Devotions upon emergent occasions and Death's Duel* New York: Vintage Books.

Donne, J. (2001) *The complete Poetry and selected prose of John Donne* New York: The Modern Library.

Eliot, T. S. (2005) *The Waste Land and Other Poems* New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, p. 53.

Garwood, D. (2006) 'Dancing Against War' *Journal of Performance and Art* 28: p. 76.

Haddon, M. (2005) *The Talking Horse and the Sad Girl and the Village Under the Sea* New York: Vintage Books, p. 31.

Houen, A. (2008) 'Back! Back! Back! Central Mind-Machine Pentagon: Allen Ginsberg and the Vietnam War' *Cultural Politics* 4/3: pp. 351-374.

Ibid., *Joan Baez Lyrics* in Metro-Lyrics (an online website)

<<http://www.metrolyrics.com/where-are-you-now-my-son-lyrics-joan-baez.html>>

Jager, M. (2003) *Joan Baez and the Issue of Vietnam* Stuttgart: Verlag.

Kauffman, L. A. (2002) 'Ending a War: Inventing a Movement' *Radical Society Pro-quest Research Library* 29/4: p. 29.

Rimbaud, A. (1957) *Rimbaud Illuminations and Other Prose Poems* translated by Louise Varese New York: New Directions Paperbacks.

See 'Arthur Rimbaud Biography (1854-1891) *Poetry Foundation* viewed 20 June 2014 <<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/arthur-rimbaud>>

See 'Joan Baez: Who Murdered the Minutes' *Oldie Lyrics* viewed 18 June 2014
<http://www.oldielyrics.com/lyrics/joan_baez/who_murdered_the_minutes.html>

See 'Joan Baez-I saw the Vision of Armies' *Lyrics Mode* viewed 20 June 2014
<http://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/j/joan_baez/i_saw_the_vision_of_armies.html?utm_exp=7079856>

See 'Song in the blood- Jacques Prevert, translated by Lawrence Ferlinghetti' viewed 22 June 2014
<<http://witchesblood.blogspot.it/2004/08/song-in-blood-jacques-prevert.html>>

See *Joan Baez Lyrics* in Metro-Lyrics (an online website)
<<http://www.metrolyrics.com/where-are-you-now-my-son-lyrics-joan-baez.html>>

See *Music Song Lyrics* 'Joan Baez Lyrics: Minister of War (translated from the Chinese by Arthur Waley) viewed 19 June 2014
<<http://www.musicsonglyrics.com/minister-of-war-translated-from-the-chinese-by-arthur-waley-lyrics-joan-baez.html>>

Steinberg, E. (1983) 'Mrs Dalloway and T. S. Eliot's Personal Waste Land' *Journal of Modern Literature* 10/1: pp. 3-25.

Sylvester, W. (1948) 'How I see Apocalypse by Henry Treece' *Poetry* 72/2: pp. 103-104.

Thomson, J. (2004) 'Virginia Woolf and the Case of Septimus Smith' *The San Francisco Jung Institute Library Journal* 23/3: pp. 54-71.

Treece, H. (1947) 'Elegy' *Poetry Foundation* 69/6: pp. 299-308.

Walcott, D. (1986) *Collected Poems 1948-1984* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Woolf, V. (2003) *Mrs Dalloway* Ware: Wordsworth Classics.

Wordsworth, W. (2003) *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems* Ware:

Wordsworth Editions Ltd.

Chapter VI

Mothers and Children: What does it mean to be a Mother and a Woman

It is she, the little girl, dead behind the rosebushes. The young mother, deceased, comes down the stoop. [Arthur Rimbaud]

Can a mother sit and hear an infant groan, an infant fear? No, no! Never can it be! [William Blake]

Tortured, victimized, denied of all their rights, forbidden to write and to read, women have always been the forgotten side of the world. Nevertheless, this chapter aims to depict them, firstly, as mothers and secondly as women in order to analyse their positions in both cases. I will, as a consequence, explore some important literary examples in which a strong issue of Motherhood has been captured. Furthermore, more than once obliged to mourn or rejoice in silence, I will demonstrate how women have been able to afford this condition by hiding in their maternity. In particular, it appears that their children have been able to help them to soothe their own situation. At this point, indeed, I will be dealing with the topic of *lullabies* both in American society and also in African culture. Specifically, I will try to link both American and African mothers by discussing about Joan Baez's choice to put the negro lullaby *All the Pretty Little Horses* in her album *Baptism*. Furthermore, I will also furnish some literary examples in which it is possible to see the relationship between a mother and her child. In particular, it has been decided to exemplify this issue by the help of William Wordsworth, William Blake, Arthur Rimbaud and Francis James Child. Later on, moreover, I will be attempting to portray women involved with some events concerning their struggle for emancipation during the 20th century especially in the 1960s in America.

6.1 Lullabies, Mothers and their Children

Lullabies should be considered as a way to keep preserved the sweet sound of life. They should, moreover, be seen as an attempt to make the dark and violent noises of the world deaf. Being a kind of intimacy between a mother and a child, lullabies often appear to envelope several topics. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the message which they would like to communicate, I will turn my attention especially on the way in which a mother behaves in relationship to her child when she is lulling it. There is a passage in Joan Baez's *And a Voice to Sing With* where the folksinger's close relationship to her child Gabriel could be considered as the starting point of my analysis. To quote Joan Baez: "Alone, with him in my arms, I sat down and wrote him a lullaby. Way up there on Struggle Mountain, peering up into the oaks, waiting for the sun to hit the top branches of the eucalyptus trees, I escaped with Gabe on a silent, wingless, flying horse. The grey quiet horse wears the reins of dawn... and nobody knows what mountain he's from... in his mouth he carries the golden key... and nobody knows him but Gabriel and me, Gabriel and me" (Baez, 1987: 159). I have, as a consequence, decided to quote this passage because Joan Baez has been once again able to initiate the topic of maternity. Specifically, her close relationship to her son, as if they were the only two human creatures in the world has been able to exemplify that strong intimacy between a mother and her child, which intimacy I would like to depict in this chapter. Safety, protection from the outside world and altogether a feeling of melancholy could be considered as the main characteristics of the human relationship between a mother figure and her creature especially in lullabies. Indeed, it is as if Joan Baez had created an unordinary space in which, flying on a winged horse, she would have protected her son from the dangers of the world.

As a direct consequence of this, lullabies look as if they are able to demonstrate the issues above. As it has been pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, Joan Baez has decided to put the negro lullaby *All the pretty little horses* in her 1968 album of Poetry *Baptism*. This lullaby, originally entitled *Hush-a-bye*, is supposed to have its origins in Africa and, according

to some scholars, it was originally sung by a black female slave to her master's child. In remembering her own child, whom was denied to her, the black woman seemed obliged to forget him and, on the other hand, to comfort the child of her master by promising him some pretty little horses, once he was awake⁴⁷. In addition, the probable negro origin of this lullaby could be exemplified by an important anecdote which appears to have existed in the oral African tradition. For instance, among the African tribe named *Ngoni*, women used to give their children to other women and also nurses in order to delight and comfort them with lullabies (Finnegan, 2012: 291). This lullaby, furthermore, appears to remind the reader of Joan Baez's lullaby for her child because of the images of animals and vegetation which seem to give comfort and protection to the child. Indeed, in *All the Pretty Little Horses*, the woman forbids the child to cry by telling it: "When you wake he shall have all the pretty little horses" and, in addition, it looks as if she is moving the child to another dimension. Indeed, she recommends him: "Way down yonder/ in the meadow/ lies a poor little lamb,/ bees and butterflies,/ picking round its eyes./ Poor little thing's crying 'Mami'"⁴⁸. Thus, it seems just that the presence of a mother is able to communicate not only her intimacy with a childish figure, rather, especially its comfort and protection from the outside world. In particular, I have noticed how the images of the lamb, the bees and the butterflies have been cited in order to smother the fears of the child. The cruelty of the outside world, then, which probably is making the infant cry, is often turned into natural images of vegetation and animals. At this point, indeed, in her article *Folksongs and Function: Some Thoughts on the American Lullaby*, Bess Lomax Hawes proves some evidences on the importance of the relationship between a maternal figure and her child through lullabies. Firstly, she makes the readers aware that the folklore archives of the University of California at Berkeley contain several lullabies and "miscellaneous children's songs

⁴⁷ "All the pretty little horses (lullaby)." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopaedia*. Viewed 10 Aug. 2014 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_the_Pretty_Horses_%28lullaby%29>

⁴⁸ See "All the pretty little horses from Lullabies Vol. 1 by Steve Millikan" *Baby Lullaby Music*. Viewed 10 Aug. 2014 <<http://babylullabymusic.bandcamp.com/track/all-the-pretty-little-horses>>

about animals and birds⁴⁹ such as *All the pretty little horses*. Furthermore, according to her analysis the real aim of the caretaker should be to “lull”, to reassure and to harmonize the child to sleep. For instance, as well as in the previous negro lullaby the female figure appears to make the child aware of her presence and of all beautiful things which stand around him, according to Bess Lomax Hawes “lullabies, say in great part ‘go to sleep, mother is here, you are safe’” and, sometimes, “the peacefulness of the surroundings may be described”⁵⁰ in order to guarantee protection to the child. Finally, another important role of the maternal figure is also to isolate the child from all earthly things. This issue is, according to Lomax, one of the characteristics of *All the pretty little horses* because it is possible to have the impression of a mother who is calling her infant to a sort of dreamland where birds, bees, butterflies and especially horses and, sometimes, angelical figures are waiting for him/her⁵¹. For instance, there is a song composed by the poet William Blake which appears to contain such topics. The song which I am going to analyse, then, is entitled *A Cradle Song* and belongs to Blake’s *Songs of Innocence*. In this poem, indeed, a mother is lulling her child to “sweet dreams” by echoing an angelic figure to protect her child (Blake, 2005: 15). Indeed, in her attempt to protect and separate the child from the ordinary world, the woman sings to him: “Sweet dreams, form a shade/ Over my lovely infant’s head!/ Sweet sleep, angel mild,/ Hover over my happy child!/ Sweet moans, dovelike sighs,/ Chase not slumber from thine eyes!/ Sleep, sleep happy child!/ All creation slept and smiled./ Sweet babe, in thy face holy image I can trace” (Blake, 2005: 15). Hence, all these issues appeared to have proved evidence on how important could be the relationship between a mother and a son in terms of protection, safety and love for the little creature especially through lullabies.

⁴⁹ Lomax, H. (1974) ‘Folksongs and Function: Some Thought on the American Lullaby’ *The Journal of American Folklore* 87/344: pp. 140-148.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

6.2 Mothers and Children in Literature

Having discussed about the relationship between a mother and a child in the case of some lullabies, let us move on to look how the relationship between a mother and a child has been represented in literature. In particular, I will be stressing my attention on the female drama of being a mother whose only possible relief appears to be given by her relationship to her infant. Moreover, I have decided to focus my attention on some of Wordsworth's ballads because they seem to remind the reader of the same issues which have been explored in the previous sub-chapter in connection with Joan Baez. For instance, in William Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* there are some examples about this issue. In the ballad *The Thorn*, it is said the story of a miserable wife and mother who every day goes visiting a thorn on the mountain top, which thorn appears enclosed by a "heap of earth overgrown with moss" which is "like an infant's grave in size" (Wordsworth, 2003: 53). Indeed, in such a ballad the poet appears to link the mother's relief from pain in her visiting her dead child. This mother, indeed, who is "a woman in a scarlet cloak" and who "to herself she cries 'Oh misery! Oh misery!'"⁵², appears to be comforted by her child who, as a matter of fact, is dead. Additionally, this obsessive relationship to her child seems to be given also by the continual visits paid by the woman to her child's womb. Indeed, the poet goes on to observe that: "By all day and in the silent night/ A woman seated on the ground" (Wordsworth, 2003: 59). The infant, moreover, seems to remediate to her misery and pain also because every time "she sits beside the thorn,/ when the blue daylight's in the sky,/ or when the whirlwind's on the hill,/ and frosty air is keen and still" (Wordsworth, 2003: 57), the woman looks as if she is avoiding her sorrows even for a while. Furthermore, being her husband gone with another maid, her dead child and "the scarlet moss with drops of that infant's blood" (Wordsworth, 2003: 58) seem once again to be the only possible remedies of her pain.

⁵² Ibid.

On the contrary, even more detailed the relationship between a maternal figure and a child seems to be visible in the ballad *The Mad Mother*. Indeed, not only this ballad is able to remind the reader of the close relation between a protective female figure and an infant, rather, it offers the possibility to become aware of how a little creature could relieve the pains of a mad mother. First of all, the profound sense of protection which a mother could give to her son seems to be exemplified by these expressions: “She has a baby on her arm,/ or else she were alone/ [...] She talked and sung woods among;/ And it was in the English song./ [...] And I am happy when I sing,/ Full many a sad and doleful thing:/ Then, lovely baby, do not fear!/ I pray thee have no fear of me,/ but, safe as in a cradle, here,/ My lovely baby! I cannot work thee any woe./ [...] I will always be your guide/ [...] My pretty thing! Then thou shall sing as merry as the birds in spring! [...] Oh! Smile on me, my little lamb,/ for I thy own dear mother am./ My love for thee has well been tried/ (Wordsworth, 2003: 65). Hence, it is as if this ballad reminded the reader of that very same issue of protection which I have underline when dealing with lullabies. Secondly, the idea that a child could be able to relieve his or her mother’s pain appears to be expressed also by these lines: “There came a sight of joy/ [...] I waked, and saw my little boy./ My little boy of flesh and blood./ Oh joy for me that sight to see!/ For he was here, and only he./ [...] thy lips I feel them, baby!/ They draw from my heart the pain away/ [...] Thou are thy mother’s only joy./ The babe I carry on my arm,/ he saves for me my precious soul (Wordsworth, 2003: 65). Finally, since a child is supposed to comfort his/her mother’s pain, I will demonstrate what would happen in case a mother were separated from her creature. For instance, in Wordsworth’s *The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman*, the separation of a mother and her child seems to be fatal for the female figure. Having lost her child because “they gave thee to another,/ a woman who was not thy mother, the woman tells her creature: “I’ll follow you across the snow,/ in spite of all my weary pain,/ I’ll look upon your tents again... for ever left alone am I/ [...] my poor forsaken child!/ If I for once could have thee close to me,/ with happy heart I then would die”

(Wordsworth, 2003: 87). As a consequence, there is a passage in the famous novel by Mark Haddon *The curious incident of the dog in the night time*, of which I have been reminded through Wordsworth's thoughts. In such a passage, the tragic separation between a mother and a child is, as a matter of fact, suggested by the young protagonist Christopher. Being aware of the death of his mother, he exclaims: "Mother was cremated. I do not know what happens to the ash and I couldn't ask at the crematorium because I didn't go to the funeral. But the smoke goes out of the chimney and into the air and sometimes I look up into the sky and I think that there are the molecules of Mother up there, or in clouds" (Haddon, 2004: 44). Hence, these instances have shown the reader the importance of a mother-child relationship. Specifically, I had the opportunity to see how this relationship has been perceived in Poetry where the image of the infant caretaker is able to demonstrate how much a mother can rejoice or suffer because of her child.

6.3 Joan Baez, Francis James Child and the topic of Motherhood

Another important issue I will be dealing with is the way in which music and poetry have discussed about the topic of maternity. In particular, I will analyse some ballads which have been included in the huge volume *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* by the scholar Francis James Child. Moreover, I will take into consideration the *British Ballads & Folk Songs*, from the *Joan Baez songbook* in which these ballads have been altogether collected and sung by the American folksinger. Specifically, these chosen ballads will guide the reader to the awareness of how much, sometimes, maternity appears to be spent in silence, in solitude and in sadness. For example, in the ballad *Geordie*, which has been several times performed by Joan Baez, a mother and wife is attempting to free her lover from death because he had stolen some deer from the king's royal court. Moreover, the pain of a woman who has lost her lover is altogether strengthened by her being a mother. Indeed, she claims in despair: "Two little babies have I born,/ The third lies in my body./ I'd freely part with them everyone,/ If

you'd spare the life of Geordie"⁵³. Furthermore, in the ballad of *Mary Hamilton* sung by Joan Baez a woman has been accused to have drown her little child. Although the reader is not able to find out if she's truly guilty or not, her desperation appears to transpire from her own words. Indeed, she cries: "I put him in a tiny boat,/ And cast him out to sea,/ That he might sink or he might swim,/ But he'd never come back to me". Additionally, she continues to justify herself by saying: "You need not weep for me.../ For has I not slain my own wee babe"⁵⁴. On the contrary, in *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* there are two versions of this same ballad. In the former version, Mary Hamilton is once again accused to have killed her little babe. Nevertheless, the core of this version appears to be embodied by the last words which Mary Hamilton declares before her death. Her words, indeed, seem to echo a nostalgic memory of her mother. Indeed, she affirms: "Oh little did my mother think,/ The day she cradled me,/ What lands I was to travel through,/ What death I was to die" (Child, 1904: 172). Despite this, in the latter version Mary Hamilton has, conversely, admitted her being guilty for having killed her little child. She, indeed, affirms: "I put it in a pinner-pig and set it on the sea;/ I bade it sink, or it might swim,/ It should never come home to me" (Child, 1904: 173). Finally, before dying Mary Hamilton thinks once again of her mother: "Let did my mother think,/ First time she tied my head,/ What land I was to tread upon/ Or where I would win my bread" (Child, 1904: 174). Nevertheless, shifting again to Joan Baez's folk ballads it is possible to notice that there is another ballad sung by the American folksinger entitled *Lady Gay* in which a mother is crying for her dead children. As a result, in this ballad the maternal figure seems to beg *the Kings of Heaven* by telling him to: "Send back, send back my three little babes/ because death, cruel death, came harkening along/ and stole those babes away"⁵⁵ because she had lost them in sickness. Moreover, the woman's tragic loss appears also to have driven her mad. Indeed, imagining

⁵³ See Vanguard Records *British Ballads & Folk Songs from the Joan Baez songbook* (1967) New York: Ryerson Music Publishers, INC, p. 11.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁵⁵ See Vanguard Records *British Ballads & Folk Songs from the Joan Baez songbook* (1967) New York: Ryerson Music Publishers, INC, p. 27.

that her children would have come back home, the woman decides to make “a bed in the uppermost room” where she would altogether put a “white sheet, and over the top a golden spread” so that her children “much better must sleep” once they had returned home. Nevertheless, in the following scene her children appear to relieve their mother’s pain by telling her: “We want none of your bread, mother/ [...] For yonder stands our Saviour dear,/ To Him we must resign./ Green grass is over our heads, mother./ Cold clay is over our feet./ And every tear you shed for us,/ it wets our winding-sheet”⁵⁶. Hence, these ballads have helped the audience to become aware of the way in which maternity, although sad and painful, has been represented as if it were a central point especially in the relationship between mothers and sons.

6.4 Women and Feminism: a window into Marilyn French’s The Women’s Room

*I’ve got the children to tend
The clothes to mend
The floor to mop
The food to shop
Then the chicken to fry
The baby to dry
The garden to weed
Sun, rain, curving sky
Mountain, oceans, leaf and stone
Star shine, moon glow
You’re all that I can call my own*⁵⁷.

This poem, entitled *Woman at work* and written by the black poetess Maya Angelou appears to be suitable in order to introduce the reader into another section of this chapter. In the previous section I have dealt with the topic of

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ “Classic Poetry Series Maya Angelou Poems” *Poem Hunter – The World’s Poetry Archive* 2012, viewed 26 Sept. 2014.
<http://www.poemhunter.com/i/ebooks/pdf/maya_angelou_2012_6.pdf>

women and their roles as mothers. Conversely, I will now turn my attention on another aspect. Specifically, I will be using the 20th century society as the main historical background of my analysis. Moreover, being the American 1960s and 1970s the main historical background of this dissertation together with Joan Baez, I will especially be dealing with the role of women in such an age.

First of all, let us begin by considering the historical background of my analysis. In particular, I have decided to give an overview on the American 1960s and also 1970s both through Marilyn French's *The Women's Room* and through the observation of some cultural events which took shape during that period. Nevertheless, I would like to introduce this topic by quoting Joan Baez's *Daybreak*. In this early autobiography, although the folksinger has never declared of being a feminist, there are some brief chapters in which she appears to make the reader aware of her close attention to women during the 1960s. For instance, in the chapter entitled *Marisa*, Joan Baez is mysteriously describing the delicacy and the innocence of a girl while she is picking wildflowers in the valley. Hence, Joan Baez describes her in such terms: "her sweater was as pink as the sunset, and her little red shoes of patent leather slipped on the grassy hill" (Baez, 1969: 29). In another passage, then, entitled *Dream* Joan Baez is dealing with a "crazy and drunk woman". In such a case, a woman seems to be depicted in an unusual way. Joan Baez, as a result, points out: "She began screaming for Peggy, over and over at the top of her lungs. [...] She has a bottle of bourbon in her hand [...] I patted her on the back and tried to hold her around her waist, but she was huge, very strong" (Baez, 1969: 113). In doing so, it is as if Joan Baez described women in a freer way. Thus, such images have been considered suitable in order to introduce that sort of fresh air which women would have breathed for their own sake during the American 1960s and 1970s.

As a consequence of this, the second wave of feminism took place during the 1960s and 1970s and it attempted to achieve equality and freedom for women. Especially black women searching for emancipation, have been the

real protagonists of this second wave of feminism. Although it is not my intention to enter the issue of the second wave of feminism, it could be interesting to underline the way in which some women have, as a matter of fact, changed their positions in the 1960s and 1970s social context. For example, in 1968 Joan Baez wrote a note in which she appeared to capture the attention of young ladies against the Vietnam war and the draft-age of both the 1960s and 1970s in America. Indeed, she pointed out: “And if You Young Ladies think it is wrong to kill, & war is wrong, you can say Yes to the young men who say no to the Draft. Because it is not the leaders & the dictators, it is not God who is going to get us out of the bloody mess we are in. It is only you and me”⁵⁸. That very same year, then, the American folksinger posed with her two sisters for a photograph in which behind them these words were displaced: GIRLS SAY YES TO WHAT MEN SAY NO. As a consequence, it looks as if Joan Baez wanted to capture the attention of women on new issues. Furthermore, in the article *What’s Love Got to Do with it? White Women, Black Women, and Feminism in the Movement Years*, the scholar Breines appears to suggest some of these new ideals. According to him, “by the late sixties and early seventies women, African Americans, gays and lesbians” began to organize themselves in groups in order to recognize their marginalization and subordination (Breines, 2002: 1099). In addition, it seems that in their long struggle for liberation during the 1960s, women fought also against “sexist and male music” whose songs had been being used to portray women merely as the “love objects, mothers, wives, sweethearts of men” (Rodnitzky, 1975: 78). Nonetheless, going back to Breines’ article, this scholar goes on to argue that white women had begun to discuss about their subordination in 1967 while in 1969 they began to talk about the development of a national and autonomous women’s movement. As a consequence, the first national women’s movement was held in 1969 in Boston by the name of *Bread and Roses* and it was, above all, based on the liberation, exploitation and emancipation of women, “who

⁵⁸ “And a Voice to sing with – A Memoir” *American Buddha*. Viewed 28 Jan. 2015
<<http://www.american-buddha.com/lit.voicesingwith.pix4.htm>>

were also involved in anti-war activities and draft counselling” (Breines, 2002: 1101). Almost five years later, additionally, another small group of African American women founded in Boston a new group of feminists by the name of *The Combahee River Collective* which group as well as the former not only seemed to be involved into cultural activities and socialism, nevertheless, it was founded especially to free black women both from the bigotry of a male society and from slavery (Breines, 2002: 1110). Notwithstanding this, despite the fact that both white and black feminists appeared to be united by almost the same beliefs, in 1970 something else happened. Indeed, the term “lesbian feminist” appeared for the first time and it was coined by those lesbians who wanted to separate themselves from the other feminists. Excluding men from their world, in particular, lesbians used the women’s music movement of the 1970s in order to assess their rights, to share their experiences and laughter only among lesbians and also to “recognize their own self sufficiency as individuals” (Dougher, 2010: 35-38). Thus, it is possible to become aware of how during the American 1960s and 1970s something new has appeared to happen to the lives and consciousness of several women.

For instance, I will try to make evidence on this issue by quoting some passages from Marilyn French’s novel *The Women’s Room*. In particular, I will be paying my attention on two of her female characters: the main character Mira and her friend Val. As a matter of fact, especially the second section of this novel appears to depict women as if they were freer and more emancipated than before. The writer, indeed, begins to make the reader aware of having being transported in 1968. As a result of this: “Martin Luther King was killed. Bobby Kennedy was killed. And one morning in August 1968, Mira packed her suitcases in her car to drive to Boston” (French, 2009: 215), Marilyn French has pointed out. As a consequence, Marilyn French’s intention to locate the second half of her novel in the capital of feminism does not appear to be random. In Boston, indeed, Mira seems to become more emancipated especially in her relationship with her husband. “I want a divorce” (French, 2009: 227), Mira declares to her

husband and in this attempt she seems to be for the first time strong in her relationship with him. “The past had placed her here, still alive, more alive than she had been since the days long ago. There was no justice, there was only life. And life she had” (French, 2009: 228), the narrator goes on to affirm. Thus, these new elements appear to portray Mira in a very new way. Nevertheless, despite Mira’s new countenance, I would like to move my attention on another of French’s character: the female character Val. Val seems to be more emancipated than Mira. She is an almost forty years old mother, interested in social activism, in the integration of women in society and in the opposition to war. For this reason, then, it seems as if this character had reminded me of Joan Baez and her beliefs. For example, both Joan Baez and Val appear to share a very same position against the Vietnam War. The American 1960s and 1970s, then, were involved into the issue of the Vietnam War and a result of this, in the second part of her novel Marilyn French makes the reader aware that the Vietnam War became also the centre of her women’s conversations. Indeed, at a certain point she argues: “Conversation returned to the war. Iso was talking about Vietnam, which, it appeared, she has visited several years before” (French, 2009: 235). Consequently, her women’s interest in such topics should be seen as an attempt to show how much women have finally changed their positions in the new American era. Indeed, it is as if women had begun to enlarge their perspectives to new social aspects and actions. For instance, Val could be considered as a perfect emblem of this very idea. Indeed, Marilyn French observes that: “Val belonged to a great many political action groups”⁵⁹. Moreover, while Mira used to perceive her being a mother as if it were a kind of prison, Val appears to perceive it as a blessing. For this reason, she points out: “Taking care of Chris, problem that it was, somehow kept me human” (French, 2009: 368). Finally, it is just the way in which Val dies at the end of the novel which looks as if it made the reader aware of her being different from other women. In particular, the American 1960s and 1970s struggles for peace, for female emancipations and for justice appear to have

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

offered her the best ground to walk onto. Indeed, her death, although tragic, has been able to demonstrate especially the strength of her ideals. As a result, she dies during a feminist protest held in order to commemorate a woman who was supposed to die because she had killed the man who tried to rape her. “The women arrived singly, dressed in jeans or skirts, disguised as just women. Then suddenly they mobilized in a circle, pulling guns out of skirts and coats. But the authorities expected them and policemen came out with gun” (French, 2009: 457), Marilyn French observes in her description of this feminist manifestation. Then, she also adds: “Two pedestrians were wounded, the six women were all dead. The police had sent so many bullets into two of the bodies that as they were lying there dead, they exploded [...] Val’s was one of the exploded bodies” (French, 2009: 457). Thus, by stressing my attention on French’s character Val it is possible to see how women have changed their way of thinking especially during the 1960s and 1970s in the American soil.

Bibliography VI

- “All the pretty little horses (lullaby).” *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopaedia*.
Viewed 10 Aug. 2014
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_the_Pretty_Horses_%28lullaby%29>
- “Classic Poetry Series Maya Angelou Poems” *Poem Hunter – The World’s Poetry Archive* 2012, viewed 26 Sept. 2014.
<http://www.poemhunter.com/i/ebooks/pdf/maya_angelou_2012_6.pdf>
- Baez, J. (1969) *Daybreak* New York: Avon Books.
- Blake, W. (2005) *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* Boston: Digireads Publishers.
- Breines, W. (2002) “What’s Love Got to do with it? White Women, Black Women, and the Feminism in the Movement Years” *Signs* 27/4: pp. 1095-1133.
- Child, F. J. (1904) *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* Wellesley: The Cambridge Edition for Poets.

Dougher, S. (2010) "Sex and Laughter in Women's Music, 1970-1977"
Current Musicology 90: pp. 35-55.

Finnegan, R. (2012) *Oral Literature in Africa* Cambridge: Open Book Publishers.

French, M. (2009) *The Women's Room* London: Penguin Books.

Haddon, M. (2004) *The curious incident of the dog in the night-time* London: Future Classics Vintage.

Lomax, H. (1974) 'Folksongs and Function: Some Thought on the American Lullaby' *The Journal of American Folklore* 87/344: pp. 140-148.

Rodnitzky, J. (1975) "Songs of Sisterhood: The music of women's liberation" *Popular Music and Society* 4/2: pp. 77-85.

See "All the pretty little horses from Lullabies Vol. 1 by Steve Millikan"
Baby Lullaby Music. Viewed 10 Aug. 2014
<<http://babylullabymusic.bandcamp.com/track/all-the-pretty-little-horses>>

See Vanguard Records *British Ballads & Folk Songs from the Joan Baez songbook* (1967) New York: Ryerson Music Publishers, INC.

See Vanguard Records *British Ballads & Folk Songs from the Joan Baez songbook* (1967) New York: Ryerson Music Publishers, INC.

Wordsworth, W. (2003) *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems* Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd.

Chapter VII

Fathers and sons, a close relationship

I remember a grass hut on a rainy night. Dreaming of the past, my tears starting at the cry of a mountain cuckoo [Kenneth Rexroth]

Can I see a falling tear, and not feel my sorrow's share? Can a father see his child weep, nor be with sorrow filled? [William Blake]

Fatherhood could be considered as the male animus of Motherhood. Not in words, rather in actions a father behaves. Children, sons and daughters all standing for such an important guide a father could be for them. Hence, this chapter aims to give shape to the relationships between fathers and their sons, especially during their young and old age. Indeed, having discussed about mothers guiding their children while they are still in their cradles, I will now turn my attention on the importance of fathers for almost mature sons. Additionally, I will also make the reader become aware of the way in which a father could become the symbol of the security of home and of the past for their sons or daughters. I will, first of all, analyse the relationship between fathers and sons by the help of the Irish poet James Joyce and his early poems. In particular, the starting point of my analysis will be his poem *Ecce Puer* which has been also included in Joan Baez's *Baptism* with the title of *Of the Dark Past*. Secondly, I will move on to analyse Henry Treece's *Old Welsh Song* which was also published by Joan Baez in her 1968 album of poetry. In such an occasion, furthermore, I will also try to revisit the topic of fatherhood in other poems and songs written by the poet Henry Treece. For instance, this topic will be also explored in his curious poem entitled *The Magic Wood*. The latter poem, then, has also been included in Joan Baez's *Baptism*. Especially dealing with Joyce and Treece, I will demonstrate how both the presence and the absence of paternal figures could cause pain, agony and nostalgia to their heirs. Finally, I will furnish

other interesting literary instances dealing with the topic of fatherhood and its main characteristics.

7.1 Fatherhood in James Joyce's *Of the Dark Past* and other early poems

This sub-chapter attempts to discuss about the relationship between fathers and sons in James Joyce's early poems. In particular, it is just a sort of feeling of uncertainty, of not being a good example for his children which can clearly introduce James Joyce. In his poems, indeed, the figure of the father does not seem to be stiff, nevertheless, frail and uncertain. For example, his poem *Ecce Puer* appears to be suitable to prove evidence on this issue above. Indeed, the poem opens with the figure of a tormented father who claims: "Of the dark past,/ A child is born;/ With joy and grief/ My heart is torn" (Joyce, 2004: 23). Despite the fact that his heart is torn, the presence of a loving father is then testified by the second stanza in which he points out: "May love and mercy unclothe his eyes"⁶⁰. Nevertheless, it is just by the last two stanzas where the reader could become aware of two important things. The first thing is that the father figure seems to be worried by the passing of time for his son. Indeed, as if he were not able to protect his child from the passing of life, the father states: "Young life is breathed on the glass;/ The world that was not comes to pass" (Joyce, 2004: 23). Moreover, these lines could make the reader think of a kind of fear and self-reproach which a frail father could feel for his child. Whereas, the second thing which it is possible to notice is that, as a matter of fact, the main speaking voice of the poem does not only belong to a father, rather, to a man who once had been either a son. Indeed, the last stanza goes on saying: "A child is sleeping:/ An old man gone./ O, father forsaken, forgive your son!" (Joyce, 2004: 23). Hence, this poem has demonstrated tormented paternal feelings and fathers' relationships with their heirs above all spent in agony and frailty.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Furthermore, in James Joyce's *A Flower Given to My Daughter*, the reader will assist once again to a scene in which a fragile father is giving a white rose to his daughter. Indeed, the poem begins by a father who affirms: "Frail the white rose and frail are/ Her hands that gave [...] A wonder wild/ In gentle eyes thou veil,/ My blue-veined child" (Joyce, 2004: 11) and in so doing he appears to have transmitted his insecurity both to the frail rose given to his daughter and to the girl itself. Finally, these few instances of poetry have been in a way able to portray some examples of relationships between fathers and children in case these relationships seem to mirror only paternal frailty, insecurity, torment and fear of not being able to be good father figures.

7.2 Fatherhood in Henry Treece's *Old Welsh Song* and *The Magic Wood*

Having discussed about James Joyce, let us move on to look at how the Irish-English poet Henry Treece has perceived the topic of fatherhood in his poems. In particular, I will be dealing with his collection of poems entitled *Invitation and Warning* and with his illustrated poem for children entitled *The Magic Wood*. By the help of James Joyce I have analysed the difficulty of being a good father, whereas, by the help of Henry Treece I will be dealing with the difficulty of being a good son in relationship with a father figure. Indeed, in Henry Treece's poems it seems that being a firm son does not seem to be easy. For this reason, the reader could have the impression of dealing with an insecure son who revisits his past and the paternal figure to find some psychological support. For example, in the poem *Old Welsh Song*, which is both the opening and the ending song-poem in Joan Baez's *Baptism*, it is possible to become aware of this very idea. This song, indeed, opens with a wretched speaking voice which affirms: "I take with me where I go a pen and a golden bowl;/ Poet and beggar step in my shoes,/ Or a prince in a purple shawl" (Treece, 1952: 17). At this point, I would like to focus my attention on the two words "poet" and "beggar" because, according to my analysis, they appear to represent the frailty and the insecurity of a son who simultaneously turns himself into a beggar and a

poet. Moreover, the main speaking voice continues to claim: “I bring with me when I return to the house/ That my father’s hands made,/ A crooning bird on a crystal bough,/ and O, a sad sad word!” (Treece, 1952: 17). As a consequence, it is as if the audience had the impression of a fragile son who would like to recall with gratitude the memories of a father who had built his house with love. As a result, it seems just his father’s house which could relieve his sorrows, even if his sadness were altogether increased by a stuck wingless bird on a dead and frozen bough.

In addition, the presence of the father’s house as a symbol of comfort is also represented in the poet’s poem *The Magic Wood* which has been sung by Joan Baez in her album *Baptism*. First of all, in its illustrated edition by Barry Moser, this poem presents itself through a series of dark and obscure images of a mysterious wood in which a little child is spending its time. Secondly, although its imagery appears to be tormented and obscure, it is important to notice that the poem has been written for children. As a result, its protagonist is a young boy and a son who enters a mysterious forest because he has been invited by an unknown presence. Moreover, the mysteries of the creeping wood appear to be majored by the insistent refrain which notes: “The wood is full of shining eyes,/ The wood is full of creeping feet,/ The wood is full of *tiny* cries:/ You must not go to the wood at night!” (Treece, 1992: 4). In so doing, then, it is as if the boy were terrified by the magic wood. Notwithstanding this, even if the boy makes the reader aware that he has met “a man with eyes of glass/ And a finger as curled as the wriggling worm” who sang him “a song in backwards words and drew him a dragon in the air” (Treece, 1992: 7-9) it is just at the end of the poem when his fears seem to fade away. Indeed, the little boy declares: “I saw that his eyes were turning fire;/ I watched the nails grow on his wriggling hand;/ And I said my prayers, all out in a rush,/ And found myself safe in my father’s land (Treece, 1992: 11). Thus, it looks as if it is impossible to separate the security of a son from his paternal figure supposed to be an important symbol of safety in Henry Treece’s poems. For example, in another composition entitled *Poem* Henry Treece is once again

dealing with this topic. Indeed, his probable fear of sins and his being solitary with his pain make him state: “And with this cloak about me,/ Over streams that led to Heaven’s hills,/ I ran, crying aloud my father’s name/ and, finally, I saw my father, nailed across the world (Treece, 1952: 28), as if his father were still his symbol of safety and self-reassurance. To conclude, this sub-chapter should be considered as the reversal shot of the previous. Indeed, while in the previous one I have been dealing with the insecurity of paternal figures, I have then turned my attention on the insecurity of sons in search for safety in their fathers’ arms.

7.3 Ballads and the topic of fatherhood: further literary voices

Since Joan Baez has sung some of those ballads which have been collected by the scholar Child and which appear to make a reference on the relationship between fathers and sons, I have decided to make a reflection upon some ballads by William Wordsworth in which the English poet seems to deal with the same topics. “I have a boy of five years old./ His face is fair and fresh to see./ His limbs are cast in beauty’s mould and dearly he loves me” (Wordsworth, 2003: 47). With these words, the English poet William Wordsworth begins his ballad *Anecdote for Fathers*. As a result, this English ballad will introduce the last part of this chapter. In particular, I will be dealing with further literary examples in which father figures appear to perceive their paternal feelings in a very different way.

For instance, William Wordsworth’s ballad *Anecdote for Fathers* is about a father who, being obliged to move to “the green sea at Kilve’s shore” from his old farm, has decided to bring his five years old son with him. Nevertheless, the apparent non satisfaction of his child makes the old man wonder about his son’s constant careless mood. Consequently, as soon as the child tells his father that “at Kilve there was no weather-cock” which, whereas, was at the top of their old farm, at the end of the ballad the old father affirms: “Oh dearest, dearest boy!/ Could I but teach the hundred part of what from thee I learn”(Wordsworth, 2003: 47). Hence, Wordsworth’s ballad not only appears to remind the reader of the feeling of non-safety

which a child could feel away from home, rather it altogether shows how much a father could learn from his creature. In addition, going deeply into the *Lyrical Ballads*, there is another short ballad in which the poet is telling the story of an old man conveying himself away to take a last leave of his son. The ballad, indeed, looks as if it wanted to demonstrate how much powerful could be a father's care for his son. As a consequence, the poet describes this father figure as "a man who does not move with pain,/ But moves with thought" while searching for his son. In addition, the old man's exclamation: "I am going many miles to take a last leave of my son,/ a mariner, who from a sea-fight has been brought to Falmouth/ And there is dying in an hospital" (Wordsworth, 2003: 84) appear to prove further evidence on the issue above. Finally, also in Wordsworth's ballad *Michael (a pastoral poem)*, another scene of a father-son relationship seems to be resumed. In this ballad, indeed, an old father's apprehension for his dear son can be exemplified by these expressions: "A father had rocked his cradle with a woman's gentle hand/ until in his Father's sight the Boy grew up" (Wordsworth, 2003: 158). In addition, the paternal love for a son appears to be proved also by such reflections: a son was now the dearest object that his father knew on earth/ and exceeding was the love he bare to him, His heart and his Heart's joy (Wordsworth, 2003: 157). Thus, these ballads by the English poet William Wordsworth have proved further evidence on the strong intimacy which could exist between fathers and sons.

At this point, Wordsworth's insistence on the importance of a paternal feeling for a son can altogether remind the audience of another famous ballad. The ballad which I am referring to, then, is entitled *Silkie* and it has been collected both in the English and Scottish Popular Ballads by Francis James Child and the British Ballads and Folk songs from the Joan Baez's songbook. In the latter, it is said that Silkie is the name of a sea-folk living in the sea depths who occasionally doffs his seal skin in order to come to the surface as a mortal man⁶¹. Indeed, in Child's ballad this strange figure is

⁶¹ See Vanguard Record *British Ballads and Folk songs* from the Joan Baez songbook New York: Ryerson Music Publishers, p. 18.

described by its own words: "I am a man up to the land and I am a Silkie in the sea" (Child, 1904: 114). Moreover, Silkie is the story of a father in search for his son among mortal men. As a result, one night by his son's bed, Silkie tells the man's wife: "I will take my little young son,/ And teach him for to swim the foam"⁶². As a result, it is as if this ballad proved evidence on the apparent strong attachment between a father and a son. Furthermore, in Child's ballad *Henry Martin*, which has also been sung by Joan Baez, it is possible to deal with another kind of paternal feeling. This ballad is, indeed, about Henry Martin who was "the youngest of three" brothers and who "should go rob on the salt, salt sea/ To maintain his brothers and he" (Child, 1904: 553). The tragic story of Henry Martin appears to remind the reader especially of a different kind of paternal feeling especially when meant to substitute fatherless conditions. Indeed, the youngest brother appears to have lost his life while robbing the salt sea in order to feed his brothers. The tragedy, then, of his death appears to be exemplified by the final words of the ballad: "Bad news, bad news through London street,/ Bad news has come to the king,/ For all the brave lives of the mariners lost,/ That are sunk in the watery main" (Child, 1904: 553). Notwithstanding this, in another Child's ballad the relationship between fathers and children does not seem to be always so strong. Indeed, the last Child ballad which I will be citing is *James Harris (the Daemon Lover)* especially because it has been thought to be suitable in order to show the issue above. The protagonist of this ballad is described by these words: "a comely proper youth he was, James Harris called by name" (Child, 1904: 543). Despite this and the solemn vow that he and his wife should have ever been faithful to each other, as a matter of fact, his misfortune appears to be given just by his wife's adultery. This adultery, however, seems to be such a load for him that James Harris almost forgets his being a father. Indeed, in the ballad it is stated that: "In this sad distracted case/ He hanged himself for woe/ Upon a tree near to the place;/ The children now are fatherless,/ And left without a guide" (Child, 1904: 544). Hence, these ballads have

⁶² Ibid.

demonstrated further ways in which paternal feelings have been perceived in literature. Despite the fact that, sometimes, father figures have denied their role, I have altogether proved evidence on their profound sense of apprehension and love for their sons.

Bibliography VII

“Classic Poetry Series James Joyce Poems” *Conscious Living Foundation* 2004, viewed 10 Aug. 2014

<http://www.consciouslivingfoundation.org/ebooks/new7/james_joyce_Poems-2004_9.pdf>.

Child, F. J. (1904) *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* Wellesley: The Cambridge Edition for Poets.

See Vanguard Record *British Ballads and Folk songs* from the Joan Baez songbook New York: Ryerson Music Publishers.

Treece, H. (1952) *Invitation and Warning* London: Faber and Faber Limited.

Treece, H. (1992) *The Magic Wood* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Wordsworth, W. (2003) *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems* Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd.

Chapter VIII

Mankind, Death and Sorrow

I looked upon the rotting sea

And drew my eyes away;

I looked upon the rotting deck,

And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;

But or ever a prayer had gushed,

A wicked whisper came, and made

My heart as dry as dust. [Samuel Taylor Coleridge]

The wonderful and poetical image above, which has been borrowed from S. T. Coleridge's *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner* has been considered suitable in order to open another chapter. The vision of death depicted in the first stanza, indeed, seems to have caused torment and hurt to the heart of the ancient mariner being remained alone. Death, the end of all human pains, looks as if it could not be entirely separated from human life. A chain, perhaps, in between birth and what men still do not know or a parenthesis able to contain the equation of human lives. Nevertheless, I will discuss about how being involved with death could mean sorrow and hurt to the souls of human creatures trying to solve its mysteries. For instance, in Joan Baez's *Baptism* the topic of death appears several times. In particular, it is as if the reader had the impression of being involved into the intimate relationship between men who will never avoid death and the feeling of sorrows which they are able to derive from it. Thus, the eighth chapter of this dissertation attempts to make a reflection upon the meaning of death for human creatures. Specifically, I will analyse this reflection through a series of literary examples in which men have expressed their feelings about death in a very original way. First of all, I will be dealing with Joan Baez's

relationships to death and sorrow. In particular, I will analyse her young approach to them. Secondly, I will discuss about the Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca's reflections upon death and sorrow. Finally, I will take a look into William Blake's perception of death and misery in his song *London* which has also been chosen by Joan Baez to be performed in her album of Poetry.

8.1 Joan Baez's vision of Death and Sorrow

Joan Baez's attraction to death should be seen as the leading topic of this sub-chapter. The delicacy of her thoughts, the metaphors which she uses in order to express her feelings and her meditations appear to have helped me in giving shape to her tendency to death. In particular, it seems to be just young Joan Baez to have become the most important ground of my analysis here. For instance, there are two chapters in her first autobiography in which the folksinger appears to give voice to her most intimate thoughts. In *Hour Alone*, for example, Joan Baez portrays a sublime image from which the reader could derive a symbol of death. In such an image, being altogether involved into her monologue with God, the writer seems to deny the idea that death could invade the power of eternity. All in all, moreover, Joan Baez looks as if she were perfectly aware that "her body is no more than a breakable twig and will not last for every long" (Baez, 1969: 145). Nevertheless, she is also aware that "something of her, belongs to the always present, always present, always fleeting minute-by-minute process which is eternity"⁶³. Eternity, indeed, in Joan Baez's meditation appears to challenge and to win death and it is also possible to derive the idea that probably, in her consideration of death, Joan Baez is not afraid of it. Furthermore, it is just her sitting under "an oak tree during her hour alone", the same tree through which the wind flows, which seems to be the background of her meditation about death. In addition, the issue of eternity seems to reappear in the chapter entitled *The House*. In this chapter, Joan Baez is once again involved into a sublime meditation. In particular, the

⁶³ Ibid.

aura of her room, in which she has “read and typed, meditated and prayed, listened to music, wept, danced”, looks as if it had become the only place in the world where her “eternity” would have taken place (Baez, 1969: 187). Indeed, while the “sweet smell of its flowers hangs heavily and the morning sun streams through the high window” (Baez, 1969: 188), the writer declares: “And my spirit is so troubled and my mind so hindered as I try, in constant conflict, to live with myself. And yet I remain so eternally attached” (Baez, 1969: 189). Hence, it is as if death not only offers Joan Baez a possibility to meditate about it, nevertheless, it does not seem to make her afraid. Notwithstanding this, in the following chapter entitled *Dream*, the writer is describing a wretched scene of death. Indeed, the chapter begins by this exclamation: “Such a sad dream on the night of August 17” (Baez, 1969: 156). In this very occasion, then, Dick Farina, who has been an important American poet and also musician, seems to invade Joan Baez’s strange dream after his death. Being married to her sister, the poet has been also a close friend of the folksinger. However, his death does not seem to give to her the same meditative feeling which I had previously analysed, rather, death looks as if it terrified her. As a consequence, the vision of Dick “sitting alone because no one knew how to treat him since he’d returned like that, only for a day... it was deadly sad”, and the idea that Joan Baez “woke up crying” (Baez, 1969: 157) appear to prove evidence on the issue above. Finally, this first sub-chapter has given an overview on Joan Baez’s approach to death during her youth. Being the main topic of this section human beings in relationship with death, it has been decided to introduce this topic by Joan Baez’s reflections.

8.2 Federico Garcia Lorca: *Gacela of the dark death and Casida of the Lament*

Death and its consequences cannot be fully separated from the Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca’s poems. Nostalgic, depressive and also profound, this poet has reflected upon several topics which are linked to human existence. He came, moreover, from an humble family and according to him the land in which he was born spoke to “the senses and to the soul, to life

and to death” (Taylor, 1950: 33). Death appears to be as a constant feature of his thoughts. Indeed, the starting points of my analysis will be two poems written by him which have been chosen by Joan Baez to be included in her 1968 album of poetry. Consequently, the titles of these two poems are *Gacela of the dark death* and *Casida of the lament*. Specifically, the topic of death and sorrow will be explored in the former poem, whereas, the topic of death and annihilation will be analyzed in the latter poem. In addition, the reader will see how both these two elements appear to be linked in the thought of the Spanish poet.

Nevertheless, Derek Walcott’s poem *The Schooner Flight* will once again help me to introduce this great poet. As a direct consequence of this, I will be citing the ending part of Walcott’s poem and the last wretched feelings of Shabine. His last exclamations, indeed, are: “I try to forget what happiness was,/ and when that don’t work, I study the stars./ Sometimes is just me, and the soft foam/ as the deck turn white and the moon open/ a cloud like a door, and the light over me/ is a road in white moonlight taking me home” (Walcott, 1986: 361). In so doing, then, it is as if the creole protagonist is reflecting upon his lost happiness and his solitude even if the moon had already opened a kind of hope to his eyes. As a result, it is just Shabine’s considerations upon his own condition which will introduce the reader into the first poem of Federico Garcia Lorca: *Casida of the Lament*. In this poem, then, it seems as if the Spanish poet is reflecting upon the issue of death and its influences. Nevertheless, as it has been stated above, death and sorrow does not appear to separate each other from some of the Spanish poet’s poems. For instance, in *Casida of the lament*, death’s violent arrival to the balcony of the poet is able to endure a painful feeling to his soul. Death, which has been turned into a weeping, seems also to disturb the poet. As a result, the poet’s refusal of hearing the weeping outside appears to have made him say: “I have shut the balcony/ Because I do not want to hear the weeping”⁶⁴. Nevertheless, the lament outside becoming “an immense

⁶⁴ See *Casida of the lament by Federico Garcia Lorca* Los Angeles Times 15 July 2011 viewed 18 Oct. 2014 <<http://articles.latimes.com/2001/jul/15/books/bk-22383>>

angel” and “an immense violin” does not seem to stop even if the poet had already shut his balcony. Rather, it is just the insistence of this weeping which in a way is able to even quake and pass through the grey walls of his house by making him afraid. In addition, when the poet observes that outside: “There are very few angels that sing/ And there are very few dogs that bark”⁶⁵, look as if only few joyous sounds were heard by him. Indeed, the poet goes on to say that outside, as a matter of fact, “nothing else is heard but the weeping”⁶⁶. As a consequence, death and all these elements, look as if they caused a sort of undeniable pain to the poet. Hence, this first poem appears to prove evidence on the idea that probably death and sorrow are not separated in some of Federico Garcia Lorca’s poems. As a result, his poem *Casida of the lament* has demonstrated how the vicinity of death is able to make the poet painful.

Finally, the other poem by Federico Garcia Lorca, entitled *Gacela of the Dark Death*, seems to exemplify another kind of relationship between the Spanish poet and death. Indeed, as the scholar Taylor has stated in her brief essay about this Spanish poet, death was considered by Lorca as “a tragic woman altogether attractive who comes in order to annihilate the poet forever” (Taylor, 1950: 34). Indeed, it is as if in *Gacela of the Dark Death* the poet had been annihilated into a meditative spiral because of death. At this point, then, I will compare this very condition to a passage from Joan Baez’s first autobiography in order to assess the similarity between the American folksinger and the Spanish poet. As a result of this, in Joan Baez’s *Daybreak*, specifically in its last chapter, the writer begins by affirming that her “life is a crystal teardrop” (Baez, 1969: 190). The metaphor of a crystal teardrop made by Joan Baez, as a consequence, could be linked to a line of *Gacela of the Dark Death* in which the poet makes the whole world aware that he has become “the intense shadows of his tears” (Lorca, 2012: 27). As a result, it seems that death has turned the poet into an almost invisible thing. Nevertheless, the Spanish poet does not look like someone who is

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

afraid of death. On the contrary, death looks as if it had forced the poet not to mingle with it. For instance, in the second stanza the poet points out: “I don’t want to hear again the dead do not lose their blood./ [...] I don’t want to learn of the tortures of the grass”⁶⁷. For this reason, the poet appears to separate himself from death. The distance between him and death, moreover, seems to be evident in the following stanza when he poet points out: “I want to sleep the dream of the apples,/ To withdraw from the tumult of the cemeteries” and “I want to sleep the dream of apples,/ To learn a lament that will cleanse me to earth”. In addition, the third stanza of this poem seems to echo Joan Baez’s belief in eternity. Indeed, the poet states: “I want to sleep awhile,/ Awhile, a minute, a century;/ But all must know that I have not died;/ that there is a stable of gold in my lips” (Lorca, 2012: 27). In so doing, then, it seems as if the poet challenged the arrival of death. Notwithstanding this, the last two lines of this poem appear to make evidence on the idea that, as a matter of fact, the poet cannot totally deny his annihilation because of death. As a result, when he states: I want to live with that dark child/ Who wanted to cut his heart on the high seas”⁶⁸, it is as if the poet wanted to prove evidence on the consequences of death on himself. Thus, this poem by the Spanish poet Lorca has appeared to prove evidence on how death could altogether influence and annihilate an human being.

8.3 William Blake: *London*

In the previous sub-chapter I have opened a window into some of Lorca’s poems about death. Nevertheless, having said that, let us move on to look at other literary examples upon the topic of death. For instance, the English poet William Blake has been considered useful to inaugurate this section by the help of his collection of poems *Songs of Experience*. Indeed, William Blake does not seem to avoid the topic of death in some of his poems. In particular, some of his poems are able to transform mortality into something which obviously belongs to the experiences of human beings. For instance, the topic of death appears to be analyzed in the song *The Chimney Sweeper*.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 27.

This song, which is altogether tragic, is about a young sweeper doomed to the darkness of death. Death, which makes him “a little black thing in the snow”, looks as if it were embodied by the black ashes of the chimney in which the poor boy is obliged to spend his life (Blake, 2005: 34). Indeed, the misery of the little sweeper appears to be echoed by his own exclamation: “They cradled me in the clothes of death,/ And taught me to sing the notes of woe”⁶⁹. As a result, it is possible to state that in his *Songs of Experience* William Blake has probably conceived death as something which cannot be separated from human misery. Moreover, in some of Blake’s poems death appears to be associated especially with those individuals to whom life had seemed to not spare misery, pain, sorrow and woe. For instance, his song *London* appears to exemplify the issue above. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that Joan Baez has decided to put it inside her poetry-song album *Baptism: A Journey Through Our Time* probably because of her attachment to oppressed human beings.

According to many critics, then, *London* is rife with fecund statements in which the most important topic seems to be the “cyclical nature of institutional oppression” (Lambert, 1995: 141). Notwithstanding this, the leading topic of this poem appears, otherwise, to be human misery spent in the core of a dead city. At the beginning of the poem, indeed, the poet is describing such a painful image by saying: “A mark in every face I meet,/ Marks of weakness, marks of woe” (Blake, 2005: 45). The dead city, then, seems also to be affected by “the chimney-sweeper’s cry” and “the hapless soldier’s sigh”, which “runs in blood down palace walls”⁷⁰. In so doing, then, a miserable chimney sweeper and a soldier murdered by his own blood seem to major the feeling of emptiness which affects a dead and horrific city. Thus, it seems that in *London* the misery and the apparent nonsense of these scattered figures have been able to turn the city into a dead place. Furthermore, human sorrow is altogether strengthened by the depiction of a miserable human existence able to stuck the whole city and its inhabitants.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Among all these things, furthermore, the poet states: “In every cry of every man./ In every infant’s cry of fear./ In every voice, in every ban./ The mind-forged manacles I hear” (Blake, 2005: 45). As a result, the minds of all men seem to be forged in stillness as if they were no more able to respond to life. Finally, the last image of the poem, after all, looks as if it represented another condition of misery among human individuals. In this stanza, then, the poet suggests that through “the midnight streets he hears how the youthful harlot’s curse/ Blasts the new-born infant’s tear/ And blights with plagues the marriage-hearse” (Blake, 2005: 45). According to Stephen Lambert, the teardrop of an infant and the hearse of a married couple will be cursed by this “perverse” mother figure (Lambert, 1995: 142), who had condemned both the joy of a birth and a marriage to misery.

Nevertheless, before I conclude my analysis on *London*, it is possible to refer to a John Donne’s letter addressed to one of his friends in which a similar description of London could be found. Indeed, in this letter entitled *To Mr. E. G.*, the poet offers a description of London by affirming: “Now pleasures, dear, our City does possess,/ Our theaters are filled with emptiness;/ As lank and thin is every street and way,/ As a woman delivered yesterday”⁷¹ (Donne, 2001: 142). Hence, this sub-chapter has attempted to discuss about William Blake’s perception of death in his work *Songs of Experience*. Although sometimes death appears to be accepted by the poet as an integral part of life, it has also been demonstrated how in certain occasions death could be nothing more than weakness and woe.

Bibliography VIII

Baez, J. (1969) *Daybreak* New York: Avon Books.

Blake, W. (2005) *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience* Boston: Digireads Book Publishing.

Daiches, D. (1943) “Contemporary Poetry in Britain” *Poetry* 62/3: pp. 150-164.

⁷¹ Donne, J. (2001) *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne* New York: The Modern Library, p. 142.

- Donne, J. (2001) *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne* New York: The Modern Library.
- Lambert, S. (1995) "Blake's London" *The Explicator* 53/3: p. 141.
- Lorca, F. (2012) *Federico Garcia Lorca -42 poems-* PoemHunter.com: The World's Poetry Archive.
- See *Casida of the lament by Federico Garcia Lorca* Los Angeles Times 15 July 2011 viewed 18 Oct. 2014
<<http://articles.latimes.com/2001/jul/15/books/bk-22383>>
- Taylor, L. (1950) "Federico Garcia Lorca" *Hispania* 33/1: pp. 33-36.
- Walcott, D. (1986) *Collected Poems 1948-1984* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Chapter IX

Men fell on the centre of the Universe: in between Meditation and lyrical moments

The jars in my cellar are plastered deep with mould; My singer's carpets are half crumbled to dust. [Po-Chu-I]

The night was dark, no father was there. The child was wept with dew; The mire was deep, and the child did weep. And away the vapour flew. [William Blake]

I step from a land no eye has been, To a land no hand may ever hold; My name with the sea's cold tears in green, My words are the wind's words graved in gold. [Henry Treece]

The ninth chapter of this dissertation intends to illustrate some literary examples about the importance of Meditation for human beings. In what ways could Meditation conceive moments of lyrical wanderings to human creatures? How much have these moments influenced human mind and heart? I will try to furnish some possible answers. Thus, this chapter will explore those intimate moments of meditation in which human beings can be allowed to confess their most secret thoughts and feelings. Indeed, I will first of all analyse some chapters from John Donne's *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*. In particular, since Joan Baez has included John Donne's *No Man is an Island* in her album of Poetry, I will especially stress my attention on chapter seventeen and on the poet's reflections upon the issue of death. I will demonstrate, moreover, how a sick man, being aware of the vicinity of his death, has expressed the core of his most secret feelings. Secondly, I will be dealing with Stephen Dedalus, the main character of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* especially because Joan Baez has included the very incipit of this novel in her album *Baptism*. Specifically, I will analyse the way in which he has been able to give shape to his most intimate struggles during his youth.

Thirdly, I will try to discuss about Arthur Rimbaud's *Childhoods* from his book *Illuminations*. As a result, the reader will become aware that Joan Baez has also included the poem *Childhood III* by Arthur Rimbaud in her 1968 album *Baptism*.

9.1 *No Man is an Island: John Donne's Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*

The main topic of this sub-chapter will be the idea that Meditation is able to offer human beings the opportunity to reflect upon something in particular. Indeed, in order to introduce this behaviour, it has been decided to refer to a chapter of Joan Baez's *Daybreak*, which chapter has been entitled *Meditation*. In that occasion, Joan Baez makes the reader aware of the importance of Meditation for human beings. As a result, being at school in a very pensive and meditative mood, her idea of Meditation, then, has been described by her in such terms: "Stop the fantasies. Look with your eyes. Listen with your ears. Everything is alive. Perhaps you can hear it being alive" (Baez, 1969: 137). Moreover, it is during these moments of meditation in which, according to the writer it is possible "to realize that you have only this one moment and if you miss this minute, you are missing everything, because all you have is that minute" (Baez, 1969: 138). In so doing, then, it is as if Joan Baez wanted to underline the importance of meditation for men in order to give voice to their wanderings. Thus, this suggestive image has been quoted especially because it seems that, in his meditative work *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, John Donne does not want to miss that very "minute". Indeed, the English poet wrote this book during the period in which he was affected by an illness which according to him would have brought him to death. According to the scholar Anthony Raspa, it has just been his illness which would have conducted the poet to reflect upon his condition and his relationship with God (Donne, 1987: 1). Furthermore, this scholar makes the reader aware that in a letter to Sir Robert Ker, the poet has confessed of having used the period of his convalescence in order to "put his meditations into some such order" (Donne, 1987: 5). Hence, I will above all take into consideration those

meditative moments in which the poet appears to have given voice to some of his last intimate reflections upon the issue of death. Specifically, I will stress my attention on three of his *Meditations* since chapter sixteen. Nevertheless, being the poet's illness the ground in which he has expressed his meditations upon death, I would like to introduce him by quoting his poem *A Fever*. In this poem, indeed, the poet is meditating about the death of a woman, who had been affected by a mortal fever. Notwithstanding this, the poet has decided to mention her fever in order to make a reflection upon the final moments of a world which is condemned to disappear after the woman's death. As a consequence, he tells her: "When you from this world will go,/ The whole world vapours with thy breath" (Donne, 2001: 18). As a consequence of this, it seems just this meditation upon death and its attempt to involve Mankind which could be considered as one of the crucial topics in John Donne's *Meditations* in chapters sixteen, seventeen and eighteen.

Having said that, let us begin by considering John Donne's reflections upon the issue of death in these *Meditations*. To begin with, chapter sixteen has been entitled *From the Bells of the Church Adjoining I am Deadly Remembered of My burial in the Funerals of Others* and, according to the scholar Anthony Raspa, it is the first moment in which John Donne introduces the image of the *bells* tolling for a dead person as if they were important tools able to remind him of his imminent dying (Donne, 1987: 11). Consequently, in hearing the bells tolling for the funeral of a person, John Donne has got the impression of being diminished in his own life and of having much more approached to his final breath. Indeed, he states: "Here the bells can scarce solemnize the funeral of any person [...] but now he is gone into that house into which I must follow him. [...] And when these bells tell me, that now one, and now another is buried, must not I acknowledge that they have the correction due to me, and paid the debt that I owe? (Donne, 1999: 97). In addition, the poet also declares: "When these hourly bells tell me of so many funerals of men like me, it presents a comfort when so ever mine shall come" (Donne, 1999: 99). Thus, it is possible to state that, according to John Donne, the bells tolling for every

dead man are able to make anyone else be reminded of his/her final breath. In addition, this very idea has been expressed also in the following chapter. Indeed, chapter seventeen has been entitled *Now, This Bell Tolling softly for Another; Says to me: Thou must die* and it seems that the poet is insisting on the main idea he had expressed in the previous chapter. Once again, in continuing to hear the bells tolling for that same person, the poet declares: "So this bell calls us all" (Donne, 1999: 102). As a direct consequence of this, I will stress my attention especially on those few lines from chapter seventeen which have been quoted by Joan Baez in her 1968 album of poetry by the title of *No Man is An Island*.

First of all, John Donne introduces its meditation by a sublime question: "Who can remove it from that bell which is passing a piece of himself out of this world?" (Donne, 1999: 103) and, in so doing, he seems to insist on his idea that every man's death is able to call the attention of anyone else on his/her own last hour. Indeed, in his own opinion as well as the impetuous of the sea arriving to the land will destroy everything around it, thus every man's death will diminish his own life. Indeed, he solemnly affirms: "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if the promontory were [...] so any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind" (Donne, 1999: 103). Additionally, his last words: "and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee" (Donne, 1999: 103) seem to prove further evidence on the issue above. This very idea, then, according to which human beings are together involved in Mankind could remind the reader of Joan Baez's belief in the idea of communal living and brotherhood among fellow men. As a result, she has probably decided to include *No Man Is An Island* in her album of poetry because of this reason. Finally, it is in chapter eighteen when the poet goes on to say that he "received benefit and instruction from him when his bell tolled" (Donne, 1999: 109). An instruction, perhaps, from the mysteries of death related to human beings who, according to John Donne, "in the womb of the earth diminish" and "are not transplanted but transported" while away

their dust, “with every wind” is flown (Donne, 1999: 110). Hence, it is possible to end this section by saying that John Donne’s *Meditations* about death have given to the reader some notions about the sublime last thoughts of a sick man in a situation of absolute loneliness.

9.2 *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: young Stephen Dedalus’ meditations

“But he was not sick there. He thought he was sick in his heart if you could be sick in that place. He wanted to cry” (Joyce, 2013: 9). By these words, the Irish poet and writer James Joyce has decided to introduce the struggles of a young man named Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of The Artist as a Young Man*. Stephen, the solitary protagonist of this novel, will help the audience to understand the importance of Meditation for him. Indeed, it seems as if these moments of meditation have offered the young boy the possibility to wander about several topics such as isolation, death, solitude and love. In particular, it has been decided to open a parenthesis on this novel because in her album of poetry *Baptism*, Joan Baez has also made a reference on the incipit of the whole story.

For instance, since the very beginning of the novel it is possible to become aware of Stephen’s strong sense of solitude. In particular, his early tendency to sing and to dance when his mother “played on the piano the sailor’s hornpipe for him to dance” (Joyce, 2005: 2) appears to prove evidence on the issue above. Furthermore, the narrator’s expression: “O, the wild blossoms/ Oh the little green place.” He sang that song. That was his song.” (Joyce, 2005: 2) seem to exemplify Stephen’s tendency to natural rather than human things. Moreover, the incipit of the novel seems to make evidence on Stephen’s sense of isolation either through the way in which his own family appears to terrify him. For instance, the final scene of the very incipit of the story describes Stephen’s uncle in his attempt to terrify his nephew. Indeed, in trying to make Stephen apologize because “he hid under the table”, his uncle tells him that if he does not apologize, “the eagles will come and pull out his eyes, pull out his eyes” (Joyce, 2005: 3). Hence, this sub-chapter aims to underline the importance of those meditative moments

in which young Stephen Dedalus has been able to express his heart, his mind and especially his sense of isolation from the outside world.

First of all, Stephen Dedalus' meditations should be seen as suggestive and lyrical monologues through which the character is trying to give shape to his intimate emotions. As a result, according to the scholar Jerry Allen Dibble, it is just through these "moments of lyric intensity" that the reader could have the impression of being immersed into the consciousness of this character. Moreover, he goes on to say that it is just because of these moments of lyricism, which the whole novel should be considered as a lyrical novel constructed through the technique of the narrative monologue. This technique, indeed, offers the main character of a novel the possibility to instantly express his emotions through his own monologues (Dibble, 1976: 33). Thus, I will use these ideas in order to sustain the issue that, once again, as it has been seen in John Donne's *Devotions*, Meditation has offered Stephen Dedalus the possibility to reflect upon some of his most hidden emotions.

For instance, there is a passage in the novel when during a solitary moment of meditation, Stephen Dedalus begins to wander about the emptiness of the Universe and the issue of death. Indeed, he points out: "What was after the Universe? Nothing. But was there anything round the universe to show where the nothing place began?" (Joyce, 2013: 11). As a consequence, it appears as if the young man is extending his wanderings to the emptiness which he seems to perceive beyond the Universe. Moreover, these feelings of emptiness appear usually to be found by him on the landscape around. For example, his becoming aware that around him "the sea was cold day and night: but it was colder at night" (Joyce, 2013: 12), seems to prove evidence on this issue. In another occasion, furthermore, Stephen Dedalus looks as if he wanted to link his desire of dying to the dark landscape around him during a period of sickness. For this reason, I will quote his words: "There was cold sunlight outside the window. He wondered if he would die" (Joyce, 2013: 18). In addition, it is just the hearing of a bell tolling during that very occasion which could remind the reader of John Donne's

Devotions. As a consequence, the hearing of the bell, while tolling, is able to make young Stephen think of his own imminent death. Indeed, the narrator points out that he said himself this song: “My coffin shall be black/ Six angels at my back/ Two to sing and two to pray/ And two to carry my soul away” (Joyce, 2013: 18). Hence, it is as if young Stephen’s meditations during his sickness enabled him to reflect upon death and solitude.

Moreover, Stephen’s lyrical wanderings about solitude could be exemplified by further moments of meditation. For instance, near the end of the first chapter it is said that “he was alone”. And perhaps, it is just this condition of loneliness and isolation which makes him focus his attention only on “the sound of the cricket bats which like drops of water in a fountain fell softly in the brimming bowl” (Joyce, 2013: 49). Additionally, either love appears to become a synonym of solitude in his own thoughts. Indeed, in chapter two he exclaims that he saw himself “older and sadder, standing in a moonlight garden” with the woman who had denied her love for him many years before (Joyce, 2013: 52). At this point, there is also a poem by James Joyce, entitled *Alone*, in which it is possible to deal with this same issue. In this poem, indeed the poet is making a reference to the woman he is in love with by describing his being alone while “the noon’s grey golden meshes make/ All night a veil” (Joyce, 2004: 15). However, sometimes Stephen’s loneliness does not seem to represent a load for him. For this reason, in a passage of the novel, after he had positioned on the corner of his room, it is said that he “began to taste the joy of his loneliness” (Joyce, 2013: 57). Nevertheless, notwithstanding this, the novel appears to displace further passages in which the meditative Stephen Dedalus does not seem to rejoice in his own solitude. Rather, it is during these meditative moments that he considers himself as completely bound away from reality. For example, it is said that “nothing moved him or spoke to him from the real world [...] he could respond to no earthly or human appeal, dumb and insensible to the call of summer and gladness and companionship” (Joyce, 2013: 78). On the contrary, it seems that only being enclosed by his cold bedroom is able to offer him moments of reflection. In Joyce’s words: “He went up to his room

after dinner in order to be alone with his soul (Joyce, 2012: 115) [...] To be alone with his soul, to examine his conscience, to meet his sins face to face, to weep over them” (Joyce, 2013: 116). Finally, all these quotations borrowed from James Joyce’s *Portrait* have been used in order to show the way in which Stephen Dedalus has expressed some of his most intimate feelings through intense meditative moments.

9.3 Meditation and Loneliness in Arthur Rimbaud’s *Illuminations*

Having discussed about John Donne and James Joyce, let us move on to analyse the last section of this chapter. Specifically, in this sub-chapter I will try to depict the issue of solitude in childhood especially because it seems that the French poet wanted the reader to reflect upon this very condition. For this reason, it has been decided to make a reference on Arthur Rimbaud’s poems entitled *Childhoods*, which have been included in his work *Illuminations*. I will try, finally, to make evidence on the sense of loneliness which it is possible to derive from this poet.

Firstly, let us begin by considering the feeling of solitude in Arthur Rimbaud’s *Childhoods*. In his book entitled *Illuminations*, the poet has decided to dedicate one of his sections to the topic of infancy. In particular, since Joan Baez has sung the French poet’s *Childhood III* in her album of poetry, it has been decided to mention something on the entire section. As I have already announced in the previous chapters, this book of poems has been translated by Louise Varese from French into English. Nevertheless, despite this let us move on to deeply analyse Rimbaud’s *Childhoods*. For instance, in *Childhood I* an infant appears to be condemned to solitude since the very first lines. Indeed, the poet represents him by using these words: “That idol, black eyes, without parents;/ His domain runs over beaches called by ship-less waves” (Rimbaud, 1957: 7). Moreover, in *Childhood II* it appears that the same vehement feeling of loneliness has been transferred by the poet to a little girl, who being remained motherless, is seen “dead behind the rosebushes” (Rimbaud, 1957: 9). Indeed, it is also the absence of maternal figures which has majored the feeling of desolation around. The

flowers, then, the poet makes the reader aware that they droned and the clouds have been turned into “eternity of hot tears” (Rimbaud, 1957: 10). Thus, Rimbaud’s images of emptiness seem to have become the background of a childhood whose only companion appears to be loneliness.

On the contrary, in *Childhood III* Arthur Rimbaud appears to discuss about his own solitude. Indeed, the French poet decides to turn himself into a wretched child who would like to reflect upon his condition of loneliness. As a result, the dark landscape around appears to become the ground in which the poet would meditate upon some of his intimate feelings. For example, when the poet claims: “In the woods there is a bird; his song stops you/ and makes you blush” (Rimbaud, 1957: 11), he seems to prove evidence on the issue above. The poet’s blush, then, appears to be altogether conditioned by the following image: “There is a clock that never strikes./ There is a hollow with a nest of white beasts./ There is a cathedral that goes down and a lake/ that goes up”⁷². In such a wretched and unusual place where no sound is heard and the whole environment is overflow, as a consequence, it is as if the poet wanted to reflect upon his childish isolation together with the apparent loneliness of the surrounding place. Indeed, he begins to meditate: “There is a little carriage abandoned in the copse/ [...] There is a troupe of little actors in costume,/ [...] And then, when you are hungry and thirsty, there/ is someone who drives you away” (Rimbaud, 1957: 13). As a matter of fact, this last expression appears to remind the reader of that sort of oppression which especially miserable men are often obliged to endure because of their society. Finally, it is possible to affirm that Joan Baez has probably decided to include *Childhood III* in her 1968 album of Poetry in order to underline this very idea.

Bibliography IX

“Classic Poetry Series James Joyce Poems” *Conscious Living Foundation* 2004, viewed 10 Aug. 2014

⁷² Ibid.

<http://www.consciouslivingfoundation.org/ebooks/new7/james_joyce_Poems-2004_9.pdf>

Baez, J. (1969) *Daybreak* New York: Avon Books.

Dibble, J. A. (1976) "Stephen's Aesthetic and Joyce's Art: Theory and Practice of Genre in "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 6/1: pp. 29-40.

Donne, J. (1999) *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions and Death's Duel* New York: Vintage Spiritual Classics.

Donne, J. (2001) *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne* New York: The Modern Library.

Introduction and Commentary by Anthony Raspa in Donne, J. (1987) *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* New York: Oxford University Press.

Joyce, J. (2013) *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* State College: The Electronic Classics Series.

Rimbaud, A. (1957) *Illuminations* New York: A New Directions.

Chapter X

Love and Poetry: oh sad, sad Love!

There's a lonely grave that's visited by drivers on their way. I'll return to you, my darling, from the river in the pines [Joan Baez]

I loved you alone and I loved the whole world. What does it matter that our lives are different? [Derek Walcott]

I have, until now, discussed about Mankind involved with death, solitude, sadness and war. Apparently wretched conditions, I may say. Nevertheless, now I will try to turn my page on something which should be quite different. As a consequence, in this chapter I will be dealing with the topic of Love. Thus, this chapter attempts to give some examples of Love poems. Specifically, I will pay my attention on the way in which different poets have explored the issue of Love. First of all, some notions about Joan Baez and the role of love in her life will be discussed. Secondly, I will turn my attention on E. E. Cummings' love poems. In particular, I will analyse his poem *All in green went my love riding*, which has been sung by Joan Baez in her album of poetry. Thirdly, James Joyce's early love poems will be taken into consideration. Above all, I will introduce this section by referring to his poem *When The Shy Star Goes Forth In Heaven* which has been altogether included in Joan Baez's *Baptism*. Finally, I will briefly discuss about the image of the heart in some of Joyce's early poems.

10.1 Joan Baez and Love

Every man, every child and every woman reading Joan Baez's life will agree on the idea that she has always been involved with love during her life. A sort of humble love, I may say, according to which human beings should have behaved as the same parts of a great whole. In particular, I will demonstrate how her love for peace, nonviolence and freedom has been

turned by herself into a very appropriate way of living. However, in order to assess this main idea, I will name some of those individuals who appear to have changed her life through the issue of love. For instance, the first person whom Joan Baez names in her first autobiography is her beloved friend Ira Sandperl. Ira, a Quaker who has introduced Joan Baez into the notion of nonviolence, has been described by her exclamation: "He is an endless joy to me" (Baez, 1969: 80). Especially his love for Gandhi, his continuous "trying to meet God, face to face," his love for books and his will "to be free of earthly ties and desires" (Baez, 1969: 78) seem to have conditioned the American folksinger especially toward compassion and respect for her fellow men.

Another important presence in her life, moreover, was a man whom she called "the black Angel of Memphis". As a matter of fact, she is referring to one of the most memorable figures she could ever have met: Martin Luther King. Indeed, they both had been long lasting friends who met in 1965 and marched together for human rights. "A big chocolate angel" (Baez, 1987: 101), she describes him in his second autobiography by these words. Nevertheless, Martin Luther King has introduced her into the idea of brotherhood among white and black human beings who did not share the same colour of skin and were supposed to be enemies. In addition, Joan Baez's statement: "I had gotten the spirit" (Baez, 1987: 104) could prove evidence on her being changed in spirit and mind by such a great figure. Indeed, there is a passage in her second memoir in which Joan Baez imagines to have still some time to talk to his beloved friend after his having been killed. Thus, the folksinger tells him: "What I was concerned with was not your flesh, but your spirit" (Baez, 1987: 113). In particular, her expressions: "You, more than anyone else who has been a part of my life, are my hope and inspiration" or her idea "to end the preoccupation with age and death" after having known him (Baez, 1987: 113) appear to exemplify the impact which this great figure of love and peace has had on her life. Thus, it appears as if Joan Baez's love for Martin Luther King has guided her especially toward the importance of the divine spirit inside each man.

In another occasion, furthermore, Joan Baez deals with her affair with a young girl. Indeed, in the chapter entitled *Blue Jeans and Necklaces* of her second memoir, the folksinger attempts to make the reader aware of how a woman has changed her life. Thus, she describes their relationship in such terms: “I had an affair with a girl when I was twenty-two. It was wonderful. It happened, I assume, after an overdose of unhappiness at the end of an affair with a man, when I had a need for softness and understanding” (Baez, 1987: 82). As a result, it seems that the young girl, whose name is Kim, has been able to change something in Joan Baez’s life. For this reason, the American folksinger goes on to state: “I assume that the homosexuality within me saved me from becoming cold and bitter toward anyone” (Baez, 1987: 82). In addition, another important figure of her life should be considered her husband David Harris, from whom she has had her single son: Gabriel Harris. The relationship, then, between David Harris and Joan Baez seems to have been above all professional. Indeed, as she has declared in the 4th chapter of her second autobiography, she began to be interested in David Harris in 1967 when she had already been convicted at Santa Rita Rehabilitation Center because of the anti-draft movement (Baez, 1987: 146). At the time, then, David Harris seemed to be involved with the anti-draft movement against the Vietnam war and against social injustice. As a consequence, Harris’ care for human rights could be considered as Joan Baez’s becoming attached to his person. Indeed, the following Baez’s words appear to prove evidence on the issue above: “We were involved in the same political work. He had a good mind. He cared about little kids dying under bombs in Vietnam, and sometimes all I could think about was those kids.” (Baez, 1987: 147). Seemed united by the word “Resistance”, lastly, Joan Baez and David Harris got married soon after she was released from prison and they went to live in the Los Altos Hills on a “quarter-acre of land” which they called *Struggle Mountain* (Baez, 1987: 151). Moreover, soon after their marriage David Harris was arrested and convicted for three years and Joan Baez released her albums *David’s Album*, which she dedicated to her husband and his resistance against war and social injustice,

and *One Day At A Time*, in which she has altogether addressed a letter to her husband in such terms: “Dear David, your spirit is strong here on Struggle Mountain. [...] The Arizona sky breathes over your head [...] You are fine. I even think I see the birth of a real revolution, if our weapon remains the power of love... and if we keep doing it one day at a time...”⁷³. Hence, this brief paragraph has attempted to give an overview on Joan Baez and the meaning of love for her. Changed by some of the individuals she has met during her life, Joan Baez has been able to demonstrate how love could influence human life.

Finally, I will turn my attention on the relationship between Joan Baez and Bob Dylan. Specifically, I will demonstrate how Joan Baez’s love story with Bob Dylan seems to have influenced the American folksinger in a different way. In particular, I have decided to analyse Joan Baez’s poem-song *Diamonds and Rust* because it appears to be very suitable in such a purpose. *Diamonds and Rust*, then, is also the title of an entire album which was published during the 1970s when Joan Baez decided to cooperate with *A&M Records* in Los Angeles. The main topic of this song seems to be love and, indeed, Joan Baez decided to dedicate it to Bob Dylan soon after the end of their love story. In this song, as a result, it seems that Joan Baez has linked the issue of love to the issue of past memories. The past memories of a long forgotten love, then, appear altogether able to cause a profound sense of solitude, melancholy and regret to Joan Baez. As a result, there is a passage in her second autobiography where the American folksinger recalls the issue of past memories. This chapter, then, has been entitled *Winds of the Old Days* and it deals with those moments in which during the American 1960s Joan Baez spent her time with Bob Dylan. For instance, there is a passage in which Joan Baez recalls the period of the Civil Rights Movement spent with him. Indeed, she has pointed out: “The civil rights movement was in full bloom, and the war which would tear this nation asunder, divide, wound and irreparably scar millions upon millions of people was moving toward us like

⁷³ See Audio Source “*Joan Baez/ One Day At A Time*” 1969 Vanguard Records USA: New York.

a mighty storm” (Baez, 1987: 92). Furthermore, in a letter which Joan Baez addressed to her mother there is a passage in which she confessed to her mother her love for Bob Dylan: “We understand each other’s need for freedom and there are no chains, just good feelings and giggles and a lot of love. And I enjoy his genius [...] I really love him” (Baez, 1987: 87). Hence, it is possible to affirm that Bob Dylan has shared fundamental values with the American folksinger and that he cannot be fully separated from some of the most important memories in Joan Baez’s life.

As a consequence, it is possible to affirm that the main topic of her song *Diamonds and Rust* appears to be the link between love and past memories. The metaphor of the diamonds and of the rust, then, seems to embody this very idea. Indeed, as Joan Baez herself has pointed out in her memoir *And A Voice to Sing With* this song originated from a long-forgotten memory of Bob Dylan, which memory occurred to her soon after the end of their love story. As a result, she has written: “My throat clutched painfully at a long-forgotten memory and tears spilled rapidly down my face, landing in emeralds, which sparkled in their own light. There were garnets and sapphires, too, and rubies. And there were diamonds” (Baez, 1987: 83). It is, then, as if the image of the diamonds were a metaphor to symbolize her tears because of an ended love. Indeed, there is also a passage in the poem-song in which Joan Baez appears to refer to the issue of past memories. Imagining to talk to Bob Dylan, then, she has claimed: “We both know what memories can bring/ They bring diamonds and rust” (Baez, 1987: 83). That is to say, then, that according to the American folksinger past memories are only able to recall tears and regrets. In addition, the entire poem intends to recall other old memories especially when Joan Baez appears to be reminded of her beloved. For instance, in the first stanza Bob Dylan seems to be turned by Joan Baez into a ghost calling her under a full moon. “And here I sit/ Hand on the telephone/ Hearing a voice I’d known/ A couple of light years ago/ Heading straight for a fall”⁷⁴, Joan Baez goes on to declare.

⁷⁴ See Joan Baez – Diamonds and Rust Lyrics in *Lyrics-Mode* viewed 14 Nov 2014
<http://lyricsmode.com/lyrics/j/joan_baez/diamonds_and_rust.html#!>

In the second stanza, then, Joan Baez appears to insist upon the topic of past memories. Indeed, she states: “As I remember your eyes/ Were bluer than robin’s eggs”⁷⁵. In the following stanza, moreover, it seems that Joan Baez is altogether echoing the topic of love. Although their love had already come to an end, Joan Baez has all the same decided to confess to her long-forgotten lover: “Our breath comes out of white clouds/ Mingles and hangs in the air/ Speaking strictly for me/ We both could have died then and there”⁷⁶. Thus, it is possible to affirm that the relationship between Joan Baez and Bob Dylan has influenced the American folksinger and her perception of love in a new way.

10.2 Wholeness and Order in E. E. Cummings’ *Tulips and Chimneys*

This second sub-chapter intends to give an overview on some of the main issues explored in a collection of poems written by the poet E. E. Cummings, whose title is *Tulips and Chimneys*. Specifically, I will be dealing with the poet’s own search for wholeness and order both in life and literature through the images of nature and love. In particular, I have decided to discuss about this issue because Joan Baez has included Cummings’ love poem *All in green went my love riding* in her 1968 album of poetry.

To begin with, I would like to precise that *Tulips and Chimneys* was published in 1919 by the American poet and also artist E. E. Cummings. Additionally, in the Introduction of this collection, written by Richard Kennedy, the poet has been described as both an individualist and an iconoclast who was dealing with a new and contemporary poetry⁷⁷ (Kennedy, 1976: 5). Indeed, Cummings himself later on noted that, according to him, the only symbol of art should have been the *Prism* because it was able to distort reality, and, as a direct consequence of this, it was able to lead to unrealism (Kennedy, 1976: 6). Nevertheless, I will be stressing my attention on the absolute research for wholeness, integrity and

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ See Introduction to *Tulips and Chimneys* by Richard Kennedy.

order in his poems. There is, for instance, an article written by the journalist Milton Cohen and entitled *E. E. Cummings: Modernist Painter and Poet* in which it is possible to capture the idea that, as a matter of fact, the life of Cummings cannot totally be taken apart from his art. As I have stated above, the American poet had been a poet and also a painter. According to Milton Cohen, poetry and painting were never divided in the poet's life especially in his representation of nature in both arts. To quote Milton Cohen: "For a poet and painter who revered nature as deeply as Cummings' did [...] this need to express between self and nature, male and female, was essential to his artistic identity" (Cohen, 1990: 65). Moreover, he goes on declaring that even the most casual reader of his poems could not stand, even a second, without noticing Cummings' profound feeling of love for nature and its mountains, flowers, friends and love (Cohen, 1990: 67). Thus, it is possible to assess that nature covers an important role in E. E. Cummings' poems, specifically, in his search for a transcendent wholeness.

10.3 *All in Green Went My Love Riding*: E. E. Cummings' love poems

Having discussed about the issue of nature in E. E. Cummings' poems, I will now verge my attention on the topic of love. Specifically, I will try to examine the poet's idea of love in some of his poems.

Firstly, let us introduce E. E. Cummings' perception of love. In her introduction to *And A voice to sing with*, for instance, Joan Baez has decided to quote a passage from one of E. E. Cummings' poems. In such a quotation, the American poet states: "While you and I have lips and voices which/ are for kissing and to sing with,/ who cares if some one-eyed son of a bitch/ invents an instrument to measure Spring with?" (Baez, 1987: 11). It has been decided, as a consequence, to introduce E. E. Cummings' love poems by quoting himself because these few lines appear to contain some key elements. Nevertheless, before arguing about his idea of love, I would like to drive the attention of the reader on a poem by the black poetess Maya Angelou which poem seems to deal with Cummings' previous idea of love. Indeed, as well as E. E. Cummings suggests that love is even able to blind

human care for Spring, in her poem *Touched by An Angel* Maya Angelou affirms: “We, unaccustomed to courage exiles of delight,/ live coiled in shells of loneliness/ until love leaves its high holy temple/ and comes into our sight/ to liberate us into life [...] Love costs all we are and will ever be./ Yet it is only love which sets us free”⁷⁸. Thus, it is possible to affirm that, according to E. E. Cummings, love should be considered as one of the most important values in human life.

Secondly, let us turn on the idea of expansion in some of E. E. Cummings’ poems. Indeed, according to this poet the experience of love should be considered as the experience in which two certain lovers would expand themselves especially through nature. That is to say that, in his own opinion love is “the experience of becoming, the moment in which time dies and growth occurs” (Tal-Mason, 1968: 91). However, this very idea of expansion could remind the reader of a poem by John Donne entitled *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*. In this poem, indeed, the English poet is describing himself and his beloved while they are becoming a compass which, moving altogether, could never make them separate. As a consequence, he tells his lover: “Our two souls therefore, which are one./ Though I must go, endure not yet a breach,/ But an expansion like gold to air thinness beat (Donne, 2001: 38). Moreover, Cummings also considered love as the only possible reason of his being alive (Tal-Mason, 1968: 93). For instance, in his collection of poems *Tulips and Chimneys* it seems possible to deal with some interesting love poems able to prove evidence on the idea above. For instance, in his poem *All in Green Went My Love Riding*, which has been included by Joan Baez in her album *Baptism*, it appears possible to resume all the previous issues expressed above about E. E. Cummings’ ideas of Love.

First of all, the opening image of this poem appears to reflect upon the idea of growth which, according to the poet, is possible to achieve only through love. In particular, the image of nature is altogether able to enable both

⁷⁸ “Classic Poetry Series Maya Angelou Poems” *Poem Hunter – The World’s Poetry Archive* 2012, viewed 26 Sept. 2014
<http://www.poemhunter.com/i/ebooks/pdf/maya_angelou_2012_6.pdf>

lovers to expand themselves. Indeed, in the above cited poem the poet is describing a riding between two lovers in such terms: "All in green went my love riding/ On a great horse of gold into the silver dawn" (Cummings, 1996: 14), as if the two riding lovers were fully immersed in the process of growing also through nature. Moreover, the two lovers are altogether involved into a sad scene of hunting where they are all the same able to expand themselves. Indeed, the images of "four lean hounds crouched," the image of "the merry deer which ran before" and the vision of "a cruel bugle" which sang "four red roebuck at a white water" (Cummings, 1996: 14) appear to catch the attention of the two lovers. Nevertheless, although the two lovers seem to be hurt by the hunting scene, it is possible to observe that their love ride cannot stop running. Indeed, the male lover points out: "Horn at hip went my love riding/ Riding the echo down,/ Bow at belt went my love riding,/ Riding the mountain down" (Cummings, 1996: 14) as if he wanted to underline that love is the only vital elements of both two lovers. Finally, near the end of the poem the male lover appears to make a comparison between dead animals and the "dancing death" of his love riding at a green mountain (Cummings, 1996: 15) as if he wanted once again to underline the lovers' expansion across the landscape around. Similarly, in Cummings' poem *Oriente I* borrowed from his homonymous section, love appears to be linked once again to the experience of death. In the last stanza, indeed, the male lover declares to his beloved: "I speak to thee with a sword/ And thou are silent. Thy breast is as a tomb/ Softer than flowers./ Come hither, o thou, is love not death?" (Cummings, 1996: 31). Conversely, in another song entitled *IV* the poet seems to insist upon the idea of growing through love and its expansion to the natural environment. For instance, in this brief song the poet tells his lover that her "fingers make early flowers of all things" (Cummings, 1996: 13). In another poem borrowed from Cummings' section *Amores*, then, the poet makes a comparison between love and the whitening of the earth, the crumbling of the moon and the fluttering of stars into dust (Cummings, 1996: 43). In such an occasion, then, it appears that the male lover is expanding the end of the

world to the breaking of his lover's beloved upon his lips (Cummings, 1996: 44). Finally, in his *Portraits II*, the poet is once again describing a similar situation when he affirms to his woman: "your hands are the snow,/ And thy fingers are the rain./ And I hear the screech of dissonant flowers,/ And most of all I hear your stepping feet/ *Ragging the world* (Cummings, 1996: 84). Hence, this sub-chapter has tried to give an overview on the main idea of love which it is possible to derive from some poems in Cummings' *Tulips and Chimneys*. Specifically, being love an expansion and an experience of growth, it has been decided to stress the attention on those poems in which love seems to become a part especially of a natural whole.

10.4 *When the Shy Star Goes Forth in Heaven: James Joyce's love poems*

Having discussed about Cummings' perception of love in his poems, let us move on to look at how love is perceived by the Irish poet James Joyce. In particular, I will stress my attention on the idea that the topic of love has often been explored by James Joyce with torment.

To begin with, by the title of *When the Shy Star Goes Forth in Heaven*, I mean not only a song by Joan Baez, rather, a poem by the Irish poet James Joyce which has been included in one of his early collections of poems. Doubtless, this brief poem could be considered as a love poem, a litany perhaps by a lover who is tormented by the issue of love. The male lover, as a consequence of this, is praising his woman by telling her: "When the shy star goes forth in heaven,/ Hear you even one who is singing by your gate./ His song is softer than the dew/ And he is come to visit you" (Joyce, 2004: 62). Moreover, he also imagines his lover to wonder: "Who may this singer be/ whose song about my heart is falling?" (Joyce, 2004: 62). Nevertheless, despite the idyllic image of a man singing to his woman in order to touch her heart, the poem appears to give shape, whereas, to a sort of wretched love condition. Additionally, the image of the heart should be seen as one of the most common characteristics of Joyce's love poems. There is, as a result of this, an article entitled *What the Heart is: Interstices of Joyce's Poems and Fictions* by Randy Malamud in which the scholar deeply discusses

about the poet's use of such a symbol in his love poems. According to him, in Joyce's poems the image of the heart has not only a single and precise meaning. On the contrary, in his writings the heart could mean "love, fooling, success, irony and despair" (Malamud, 1999: 92). Moreover, according to this scholar, the image of the heart in *When the Shy star goes forth in Heaven* could represent the symbol of implacable and erotic passions (Malamud, 1999: 94).

Notwithstanding all this, it seems that James Joyce's early love poems are nothing more than associated with pain, sorrow and despair. Especially sadness, being the main characteristic of James Joyce's love poems, will be immediately discussed. For example, *Because your voice was at my side* looks as if it is chanting a sad situation of love. The poet, thus, is describing the pain he had caused to his friend because of his falling in love with his woman. Indeed, in the first stanza the poet states: "Because your voice was at my side,/ I gave him pain./ Because within my hand I held/ Your hand again" (Joyce, 2004: 19). In addition, his sense of guilt makes him affirm later on: "There is no word, nor any sign/ Can make amend./ He is a stranger to me now/ Who was my friend" (Joyce, 2004: 19). In another poem, entitled *Dear Heart, Why Will You use me so?* a further wretched love torment seems to transpire from the poet's wonderings: "Through the clear mirror of your eyes./ Through the soft sigh of kiss to kiss./ Desolate winds assail with cries,/ The shadowy garden where love is" (Joyce, 2004: 22). In the same way, Joyce appears to depict a long forgotten and past love in his poem *Love came to Us*. Indeed, being love gone by, the two lovers remain as the "grave lovers" of a love which "at first is all afraid" (Joyce, 2004: 34). Furthermore, love is once again associated with grief and old memories in *Rain has Fallen all the Day*. The image of the rain, falling all the day and the image of the leaves which "lie thick upon the way of memories", suggest the lover to depart from all memories because, probably, they will hurt him (Joyce, 2004: 44). Finally, having made some references to James Joyce's early love poems, it is possible to assess that his

idea of love appears to be most of all tormented, frustrated and far away from happiness.

Bibliography X

“Classic Poetry Series James Joyce Poems” *Conscious Living Foundation* 2004, viewed 10 Aug. 2014

<http://www.consciouslivingfoundation.org/ebooks/new7/james_joyce_Poems-2004_9.pdf>

“Classic Poetry Series Maya Angelou Poems” *Poem Hunter – The World’s Poetry Archive* 2012, viewed 26 Sept. 2014

<http://www.poemhunter.com/i/ebooks/pdf/maya_angelou_2012_6.pdf>

Cummings, E. E. (1996) *Tulips and Chimneys* New York: Liveright.

Malamud, R. (1999) “What the Heart Is: Interstices of Joyce’s Poems and Fictions” *South Atlantic Review* 64/1: pp. 91-101.

See Joan Baez – Diamonds and Rust Lyrics in *Lyrics-Mode* viewed 14 Nov 2014 <http://lyricsmode.com/lyrics/j/joan_baez/diamonds_and_rust.html>

See *British Ballads and Folk Songs from the Joan Baez Songbook* Vanguard Records New York: Ryerson Music Publishers, INC.

Tal-Mason, P. B. (1968) “The whole E. E. Cummings” *Twentieth Century Literature* 14/2: pp. 90-97.

Wordsworth, W. (2003) *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems* Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd.

Chapter XI

Humankind and God

*The little boy lost in the lonely fen
Led by the wandering light,
Began to cry, bud God, ever nigh,
Appeared like his father, in white.
He kissed the child, and by the hand led,
And to his mother brought,
Who in sorrow pale, through the lonely dale,
The little boy weeping sought. [William Blake]*

This chapter will explore the relationship between human beings and God through poetry. First of all, I will analyse the relationship between Joan Baez and God. Specifically, I will take a look into her being a Quaker and at those values which Quakerism has transmitted to her. Moreover, I will also discuss about the role which Quakerism has covered in American literature. Secondly, since Joan Baez has included Wilfred Owen's *The Parable of the Old Man and the Young* in her album of poetry, some notions about this poem will be altogether spent. In particular, the second sub-chapter will attempt to give an overview on how a certain involvement between a sinner and God could become an authentic relationship of awe. Thirdly, I will analyse another kind of relationship between God and human individuals especially through John Donne's *Death's duel*. Finally, I will open up a discussion about black Gospel and the way in which it has influenced both human beings and the American Civil Rights Movement.

11.1 Joan Baez and Quakerism

"My father was still taking us to Quaker meetings" (Baez, 1969: 70). By such words Joan Baez introduces the reader into her being a Quaker. In an interview given to James Day, moreover, Joan Baez told him that both her

parents were children of ministers, who had inherited their being pacifists from that. In addition, she went on to say that what did Quakerism gave to her was the idea of having no “nationalist feeling than anywhere which is the blessing”⁷⁹. As a consequence of this, the idea of silence being the main characteristic of Quakerism could be also turned into the intimate capacity for human creatures of behaving as pacifists. For instance, in her second memoir Joan Baez has noted: “I like the idea the Quakers have of silent meditation” (Baez, 1987: 39). Indeed, there is a chapter in Joan Baez’s *Daybreak* entitled *What would you do if?* which could make evidence on this main idea. In this chapter the writer is incredibly able to connect Quakerism to love and pacifism. Indeed, according to her it is important to “love your enemy but confront his evil, love your enemy and you shall not kill” (Baez, 1969: 161). As a matter of fact, Joan Baez has quoted a passage from the Bible in order to affirm her strong belief in love and pacifism. Moreover, in her opinion, Quakerism meant especially nonviolence. She has firmly believed in the idea that men, sooner or later, would have apprehended the importance of being humble with other people. Indeed, she states: “There’s violence in human nature, but there’s also decency, love, kindness” (Baez, 1969: 163). At this point, Joan Baez’s words have been able to remind the reader of an important English writer and also activist who lived during the 18th and 19th century in Victorian England. Her name was Elizabeth Fry, she was a Quaker and she believed in the idea of helping unfortunate individuals, especially, women and children. Indeed, she changed the lives of female inmates condemned to prison by the Victorian society. Her motto, furthermore, was: “I am to be a Quaker, feet to the lame; speech to the dumb” (Whitney, 1947: 55). Hence, it is possible to affirm that the main characteristic of Quakerism is the idea of being kind and pacifist with everyone. In addition, another important figure, who has majored in Joan Baez her approach to God, has also been Martin Luther King. As it is known, Martin Luther King has been a black minister, who has decided to

⁷⁹ Day, J. Video Interview. Joan Baez: Day At Night 20 Apr. 1974
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=norR2Q7NmdA>>

turn his idea of God into the idea of equality and love among human creatures. Indeed, as Joan Baez has written in her second memoir: “King would rally everyone in the church, and talk about how all folks were equal in God’s eyes, and how we must love our white brothers and sisters” (Baez, 1987: 109). As a consequence, his being interested in the idea that God should have meant “love, freedom and equality” is also expressed by Joan Baez when, being by his side, she states: “He put aside his prepared speech and let the breath of God thunder through him, and up over my head I saw freedom” (Baez, 1969: 103). Thus, these examples seem to have demonstrated how the relationship between Joan Baez and Quakerism or God has been able to transmit to her those fundamental values, such as love and pacifism, which make us men.

11.2 Quakerism in Literature

Quakerism has not only influenced the lives of human beings, rather, it seems to have influenced also literature. There are, indeed, several novels, poems and memoirs in which its influences could be visible. To begin with, one of the most important characteristics of Quakerism is, doubtless, silence. In the *Memoir of the life of Elizabeth Fry*, for instance, silence is one of the most important elements which Elizabeth Fry has been able to transmit to several female prisoners. Being accustomed to disorder and painful conditions, Elizabeth Fry has played an important role in gifting these women with the importance of *silence*. Indeed, in a passage of her sister’s long memoir about her life, the writer makes the reader aware that in prisons women began to be “assembled in silence, left the room in order, they were more quiet, they reprov’d their children with less violence and they gained their livelihood by knitting” (Fry, 1848: 271). As a consequence of this, this brief section will explore the Quaker influence in literature and the way in which it has either influenced some known poets and writers. Specifically, I will take into consideration a book entitled *The Quaker Influence in American Literature* and the unedited prison memoir *Inside Santa Rita* written by Joan Baez, Sir.

Inside Santa Rita: A prison Memoir of a War Protester

Let us begin by considering a prison memoir written by the mother of Joan Baez. First of all, this book is a prison memoir in which Joan Baez, Sir has decided to tell the period which she spent with her daughter at the *Santa Rita Rehabilitation Centre* during the 1970s soon after their protests against military drafts. Indeed, I have decided to mention something about its chapters entitled *O Come, All Ye Faithful* and *Christmas Day at Santa Rita* because the author seems to refer to Quakerism. In particular, I will be stressing the attention on the way in which Quakerism appears to have influenced Joan Baez and her mother especially in their love for music and communal living. For instance, in *Inside Santa Rita* the writer seems to be clear in her belief that “church meant especially singing”⁸⁰ in her own opinion. Moreover, Joan Baez’s mother goes on to affirm that her daughter “had been allowed to have her guitar sent” (Baez, 1994: 58) even though she was behind the bars. As a consequence of this, I will above all discuss about the relationship between Joan Baez and Quakerism in terms of Music. In addition, I will demonstrate how in a precise moment during her imprisonment, Quakerism and Music appear to be united in her person. Indeed, there is a scene in her mother’s prison memoir where this influence seems to be visible. During Christmas, then, the female inmates of Santa Rita decided to have a service on their own. For this reason, they decided to organize it by the dorm where they had been supposed to sleep. As a result, the writer makes the reader aware that her daughter Joan Baez, then, was able to held a proper Quaker meeting made up by music and prayers behind the bars. Firstly, she told her companions: “We can sit on the floor and it helps, if you like, to shut your eyes” and, moreover, she went on to argue: “I’m going to think of something pretty” (Baez, 1994: 61). Indeed, the narrator observes: “Now was the day for Joan’s guitar and to hear some of these rich young voices harmonizing. [...] and so she sang the song all the

⁸⁰ Baez, J sir (1994) *Inside Santa Rita: a prison memoir of a war protestor* Santa Barbara: John Daniel & Company, p. 58.

way through and nobody stirred” (Baez, 1994: 69). Finally, as her mother suggests: it was time to shake hands, the Quaker way of closing Meeting and Joan Baez sang quietly “Let us break bread together on our knees” (Baez, 1994: 62). Thus, this passage has demonstrated how Quakerism has influenced Joan Baez and her mother especially in their love for Music and communal living.

The Quaker Influence in American Literature

In the previous sub-chapter I have discussed about the influence of Quakerism in Joan Baez’s life. Nevertheless, I will now shift my attention on the influence of Quakerism in American Literature. In particular, among all the American writers who have been influenced by Quakerism both in their art and heart, I will especially be dealing with Walt Whitman. Specifically, I will explore some passages from Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* in which the poet’s relationship with God looks as if it became visible.

Having introduced the main topic, let us move on to look at the American poet Walt Whitman. Although Quakers have not always considered Walt Whitman as one of their members (Hintz, 1940: 59), I will demonstrate how several Quaker values have been embodied by him. In particular, I will refer to some passages from *Leaves of Grass* in order to demonstrate his involvement with God. His parents were both Quakers and Quakerism has been able to modify his relationship with God. In *The Quaker Influence in American Literature* by Howard Hintz, it is said that Walt Whitman thought that there was nothing greater than the “blending of divine love and faith” in human heart and that there was nothing deepest than the thought of God (Hintz, 1940: 63). Moreover, as well as Joan Baez has believed in the human capacity of being compassionate and humble among human creatures, Walt Whitman thought human individuals should have alimented their “Inner Light”, the capacity of constantly feeding their spirit (Hintz, 1940: 62). As a consequence of this, it is possible to say that Walt Whitman put the importance of such an human ability at the basis of his relationship

with God. For example, in *Leaves of Grass*, God is considered as a constant feeding and protection for his “Inner Light”. Sometimes, indeed, Whitman points out: “God comes a loving bedfellow and sleeps at my side all night and close on the peep of day” (Whitman, 2007: 23) or “I waited unseen and always, and slept while God carried me through the lethargic mist” (Whitman, 2007: 61). Similarly, Joan Baez has believed in the idea that the spirit of God was in every man, especially “in low class people” (Baez, 1987: 36). In another occasion, then, the poet continues to demonstrate that his relationship with God is merely founded on a strong sense of peace and calmness. Indeed, he declares: “All I know that the hand of God is the elder hand of my own. And I know that the spirit of God is the eldest brother of my own” (Whitman, 2007: 24). In the following line, moreover, as well as for Martin Luther King and Joan Baez God meant especially equality, it appears that this idea is altogether announced by the American poet. Consequently, he claims: “And that all the men ever born are also my brothers... and the women my sisters and lovers” (Whitman, 2007: 24). On the contrary, in another passage Walt Whitman appears to offer the reader another characteristic of his approach to God. Indeed, since the American poet believed in the issue that the ideals of God and Justice sought not to be searched in churches or in any other institution (Hintz, 1994: 62), the poet firmly declares: “The saints and sages in history... but yourself? Sermons, and creeds, and theology...but the human brain, and what is called reason, and what is called love, and what is called life? I do not despise you priests; My faith is the greatest of faiths and the least of faiths” (Whitman, 2007: 59). For instance, there is a passage in Joan Baez’s *And a Voice to Sing With* where the American folksinger seems to express the same idea above. Indeed, she states: “I am now entering my most touchy subject. I don’t know what to believe. I would like to be able to believe everything straight out of the Bible, fact for fact, in the manner of a devout catholic. But common sense, or perhaps disbelief tells me no” (Baez, 1987: 38). In so doing, then, it is as if Joan Baez were taking apart from formal religious Institutions. Finally, moreover, according to Walt Whitman, human

individuals should have been considered as the active agents of their “Inner Light”. In his own opinion, “if life and the soul are sacred the human body is sacred” (Whitman, 2007: 97). As a matter of fact, this issue could be seen as a fundamental aspect of Whitman’s consideration of God. Indeed, according to him, “nothing is greater to one than one’s self is” (Whitman, 2007: 65). For this reason, probably, he has believed in the idea that God does manifest Himself directly in human beings. In a passage, then, in *Leaves of Grass* he affirms: “In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass; I find letters from God dropped in the street, and everyone is signed by God’s name” (Whitman, 2007: 66). Hence, these ideas expressed above have proved evidence on how intimate the relationship between a man and God could have been.

11.3 Sinners and God

Having discussed about the Quaker influence in literature and the relationship between a poet and his Creator, let us move on to analyse the relationship between sinners and God in poetry and prose. Specifically, I will explore those situations in which human individuals seem to express their fright in front of God. Notwithstanding this, I will introduce this topic by referring to *The Schooner Flight* and *The Parable of the Old Man and the Young*. Furthermore, I will also furnish other literary examples which, although they do not belong to the same historical period, have been inspired by my study on Joan Baez and her choices.

First of all, in his poem *The Schooner Flight*, Derek Walcott is able to represent his character’s being afraid of the divine spirit of Jesus. In particular, the poet appears to link the protagonist sense of desperation and loss to the idea of someone who could have helped him to survive these feelings. Indeed, Shabine’s feelings make him tell: “Where is my rest place, Jesus? Where is my harbour?/ Where is the pillow I will not have to pay for,/ and the window I can look from that frames my life?” (Walcott, 1986: 350). As a consequence of this, it is just this kind of human reverence and submission to God which I would like to underline in this sub-chapter.

Secondly, my topic will altogether be introduced by Wilfred Owen's *The Parable of The Old Man and the Young*. This parable, which has been borrowed from the Bible even though in a very original way, has been also included by Joan Baez in her album *Baptism*. Specifically, I have decided to quote it because that very feeling of submission to God may be caught. In the parable, indeed, God had commanded Abraham to bring his son Isaac to the top of a mountain and kill him. The old man, then, being completely submitted to God decides to obey to his God's will. Thus, the parable opens by the image of a father who "went, and took the fire with him and the knife" (Owen, 1961: 348). Nevertheless, his son Isaac, noticing that his father had not taken any lamb to be sacrificed on the mountain top, asks him: "My father, behold the preparations, fire and iron,/ But where the lamb for this burnt-offering?" (Owen, 1961: 348). Notwithstanding this, Abraham "bound the youth with belts and straps,/ And stretched forth the knife to slay his son" and even though "an angel called him from heaven to stop him", the old man would not so and "slew his son" (Owen, 1961: 348). Hence, this parable is able to prove evidence on how, sometimes, the relationship between men and God could be spent in fright and submission.

Thirdly, I will also furnish some literary examples in which this hard relationship between human beings and their Father could be visible. For instance, in *The Ballad of the Ancient Mariner*, the old sailor's sin of having killed the white Albatross has brought him to a series of submissive behaviours. At a certain point, indeed, a lonesome Spirit begins to make the ancient mariner's ship float (Coleridge, 2003: 219). The strange spirit, then, who "loved the bird/ That loved the man/ Who shot him with his bow" (Coleridge, 2003: 220), begins to frighten the old mariner by reminding him of holy Jesus. Indeed, it points out: "Is this the man?/ By him who died on cross,/ with his cruel bow he laid full low/ The harmless Albatross [...] The man has penance done/ And penance more will do" (Coleridge, 2003: 220). Consequently, the feeling of submission which the old sailor begins to feel could be exemplified by the mariner's being forced to a moment of trance (Coleridge, 2003: 221). Nevertheless, it is just after this moment of trance

when the old mariner's curse does begin. Hence, the idea that a man has been punished for having killed a sacred animal has been demonstrated by the mariner's submissive behaviour in front of the heavenly spirit.

Another important instance of a probable submissive relationship with God can be exemplified also by Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Precisely, I will refer to that crucial passage in which the young protagonist, after he had slept with a woman, begins to submit his soul and sin to God. For instance, Stephen's Calvary seems to begin by such an expression: "His prayer, addressed neither to God nor saint, began with a shiver" (Joyce, 2013: 73). Moreover, his submission to God is also proved by his wondering: "What did it avail to pray when he knew that his soul lusted after its own destruction? He knew it was in God's power to take away his life while he slept [...] His loveless awe of God told him that his offence was too grievous to be atoned for in whole or in part" (Joyce, 2013: 87). His sin, furthermore, "which had covered him from the sight of God" (Joyce, 2013: 88) is able to prove evidence on Stephen's painful relationship with God. In addition, in the scene in which Stephen is listening to a sermon held by a priest, it is said that "he suffered its agony" and that the faint "glimmer of fear became a terror of spirit" (Joyce, 2013: 94), as if he could not stand the anger of God because of his sin. Indeed, his body had also died and "the soul stood terrified before the judgement seat" (Joyce, 2013: 95). Finally, it seems just God's eternal punishment of sinners which is able to terrify him. Indeed, Stephen's reactions are: "God could call him now, call him as he sat at his desk, before he had time to be conscious of the summon. God had called him. Yes? What? Yes? His flesh shrank together as it felt the approach of the ravenous tongues of flames [...] He had died. Yes. He was judged" (Joyce, 2013: 106). Thus, the relationship of fright and reverence which young Stephen is able to endure with God has proved evidence on how submissively a man can approach to God.

Finally, the last section of this sub-chapter intends to view another example of a man-God submissive relationship. In particular, I have chosen to quote some passages from John Donne's *Death's Duel*. First of all, it is important

to underline that *Death's Duel* has been the last sermon which John Donne has written before his death. Moreover, it was also used to become the author's funeral sermon too⁸¹ (Donne, 1999: 154). In this sermon, then, the English poet has given shape to a reverential, more than submissive, relationship to God. The main topic being death, John Donne seems to recognize in God "his care of us in the hour of death" (Donne, 1999: 154). God is, furthermore, according to John Donne all "salvation because unto this God the Lord belong the issue of death" (Donne, 1999: 157). Hence, it seems that John Donne has represented in God his total acceptance of death. In addition, in John Donne's opinion God is altogether able to shut "that maternal womb" in which "we have eyes and see not, we have ears and hear not" (Donne, 1999: 158). Thus, God is able to free human beings from that deadly condition and to guide them through life. The acceptance of God and his reverential relationship with him, then, appear to be the most important elements in John Donne's last sermon. According to him, additionally, God has proved human beings not to be frightened by death because "the union of the body and soul makes the man" (Donne, 1999: 163). This sermon, as a consequence of this, looks as if it wanted to prove evidence on the idea that God had conceived immortality to men. For this reason, the entire sermon aims to tell Christ's Passion. God shall, moreover, establish men "into a life that shall last as long as the Lord of Life himself" (Donne, 1999: 167). Finally, God is able to remind the poet of his neither being alone, nor afraid of death. His last words, then, are: "The Son of God, who was never from us, and yet had now come a new way unto us in assuming our nature, delivers that soul by a new way, a voluntary emission of it to his Father's hands" (Donne, 1999: 176). Hence, this last section has given shape to another kind of relationship between a mortal man and God. Even though this relationship cannot be considered as totally submissive, it is surely reverential and very suggestive.

⁸¹ Donne, J. (1999) *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions and Death's Duel* New York: Vintage Books, p. 154.

11.4 Black Gospel and Religion: some notions

“He was dying for a dream,/ And he was very meek;/ And in His eyes there shone a gleam/ Men journey far to seek./ It was Himself in my pity bought;/ I did for Christ alone/ What all of Rome could not have wrought/ With bruise of lash and stone” (Cullen, 1924: 76). By such words, the black poet Countée Cullen is able to open the final section of this chapter. Being the main topic religion and the relationship between Humankind and God, I will try to give some notions about Black Gospel. In particular, although black Gospel has furnished important notions about the Civil Rights Movement, in this final section I will above all be dealing with black’s faith and the role which God has covered for them.

Let us begin by considering the importance of Gospel for black individuals. Gospel has always meant freedom and human rights for African American people. Indeed, as the scholar Michael Castellini has stated on his dissertation, there is a conspicuous number of freedom songs which was sung by black people during their oppression and slavery, which songs have directly been borrowed from gospel and spiritual songs (Castellini, 2013: 1). In particular, as this scholar goes on to argue, “black sacred music had sprung from the African forests” (Castellini, 2013: 4). Moreover, the first grass-roots black communities began soon to organize themselves into gospel groups in order to vindicate their position (Castellini, 2013: 7). The idea, then, that everything coming from nature would have been seen as “sacred by negroes” is able to make me open a parenthesis on a religious ballad from the *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* by Francis James Child. By the title of *The Cherry-Tree Carol*, this ballad contains a passage from the holy Gospel and it has also been sung by Joan Baez in her album *Trilogy*. Indeed, it tells the moment in which Mary, “walking through an orchard good where was cherries and berries as red as any blood”, asks Joseph: “Pluck me one cherry, Joseph,/ For I am with child” (Child, 1904: 98). Nevertheless, from Mary’s womb the voice of her baby suddenly comes out: “Bow down then the tallest tree,/ For my mother to have some”. The following image, then, opens in such a way: “Then bowed down the highest

tree/ Unto his mother's hand" (Child, 1904: 98). The idea that a natural element is linked to the holy child, could be evident in the following passage in which the prophecy of the child is announced. A sacred baby, then, who was born and "lulled in a wooden cradle" and who appears to be destined to such a doom: "O I shall be as dead, mother,/ As the stones in the wall;/ O the stones in the street, mother,/ Shall mourn for me all. [...] Upon Easter-day, mother,/ My rising shall be [...] the people shall rejoice/ And the birds they shall sing/ To see the uprising of the heavenly king" (Child, 1999: 100). Thus, in the ballad by Francis James Child it appears that the power of a holy gifted baby and his tragic destiny are not fully separated from some natural images taking part to his prophecy.

Notwithstanding this, let us pay again the attention on black Gospel. Among black communities, then, the relationship between black people and God appears to be unique. Their motto, then, was: "Jesus is Everything and to Ultimate Alternative to a world where no protection exists" (Castellini, 2013: 22). Hence, it is possible to point out that religion has meant for black individuals as a way of taking position against years and years of oppression. For this reason, black individuals have been singing spiritual songs for freedom; they have been accepting God's protection in the very idea of "walking with Jesus in the storms of life" (Castellini, 2013: 26); and they have been believing in the idea that men could be united only by the Holy spirit (Castellini, 2013: 28). Hence, as the reader has already seen in Quakerism, black Gospel appears to have been founded upon the ideas of love, freedom, collectiveness and strength. Nevertheless, before ending this chapter, I would like to conclude by quoting two poems by the black poet Countée Cullen in which poems it seems to be visible the pureness of the sacred black gospel. In the first poem, entitled *For My Grandmother*, the woman's "dying creed" is compared to a "lovely flower fell to seed" as if she would have grown again after death (Cullen, 1924: 76). In this poem, then, the image of the flower can remind the reader of that very idea, according to which, black Gospel cannot be fully separated from nature. Whereas, in the second poem entitled *A Lady I know*, it is said that "poor

black cherubs rise at seven to do celestial chores” while a lady is wondering if her class would “late and snore” even in heaven (Cullen, 1924: 77). As a result, the image of black cherubs joining heaven in chorus can remind the reader of the other idea, according to which, black Gospel cannot be separated from the power of its spiritual songs.

Bibliography XI

Baez, J Sir (1994) *Inside Santa Rita: a prison memoir of a war protester*
Santa Barbara: John Daniel & Company.

Baez, J. (1969) *Daybreak* New York: Avon Books.

Baez, J. (1987) *And A Voice To Sing With* New York: Simon and Schuster
Paperback.

Castellini, M. (2013) “Sit in, Stand Up and Sing Out Black Gospel Music
and the Civil Rights Movement” *College of Arts and Sciences Atlanta:*
Georgia State University.

Child, F. J. (1904) *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* Boston and New
York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Coleridge, S. T. (2003) *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems* Ware:
Wordsworth Editions Ltd.

Cullen, C. (1924) “Three Epitaphs” *Poetry* 24/2: pp. 76-77.

Day, J. Video Interview. Joan Baez: Day At Night 20 Apr. 1974
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=norR2Q7NmdA>>

Donne, J. (1999) *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions and Death’s Duel*
New York: Vintage Books.

Fry, K. (1848) *Memoir of the life of Elizabeth Fry with extracts from her
journals and letters* London: John Hatchad and Son.

Hintz, H. (1940) *The Quaker Influence in American Literature* New York:
Fleming H. Revel Company.

Joyce, J. (2013) *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* State College: The
Electronic Classics Series.

Owen, W. (1961) “The Parable of the Old Man and the Young” *The
Massachusetts Review* 2/2: p. 348.

Walcott, D. (1986) *Collected Poems 1948-1984* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Whitman, W. (2007) *Leaves of Grass* New York: Dover Publications, INC.

Whitney, J. (1947) *Elizabeth Fry* London: Guild.



Conclusion

This dissertation was born because of my love for poetry and music. I think that poetry does not belong to the earth. Rather, I think that poetry belongs to a place which is in between this world and the vacuum above. I firmly believe in the idea that poetry is able to preserve the truth which we have all been searching for so long. Poetry, then, I think can hardly be separated from music. Whenever words' throat does not perceive the air around, music blows it into their lungs. Music, I think it looks like a white damsel in the sky which harmonizes the clouds and silences the rains. Music is the delicate spouse of poetry. It counts its steps and whenever poetry falls into an eternal slumber, music does wake it up. I do not even think that poetry has got a shape. Whereas, I imagine it like a flowing soul with a pen in its hand. Music at its back, face to face with the sun and the moon, and poetry which never dies. Despite criticism, I am convinced that poetry is able to stand for itself. Thus, it was just because of the combination between poetry and music that this dissertation was born. Joan Baez, then, has helped me to realize this project. Her vibrato, the soundly notes of her breast and her fingers on a guitar's chords have become the eternal inspiration of mine. Her humility, her care for her fellow men and her self-awareness have been, for my own sake, a model to imitate. Her attitude toward life, then, has offered me the possibility to become aware of how men could be powerful in mind and heart. As a result, I have decided to consider Joan Baez and her social and political activism especially during the American 1960s and 1970s. At this point, I have decided to explore the Folk Music Movement held in America during that era or even before. Later on, then, I have also spent some words about Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement for black's freedom in America. Moreover, I have also decided to turn Joan Baez into a literary figure. I have explored her as if she were a poetess, ever apart from poetry or prose. Her reflections upon human existence have enabled me to find the art of poetry in her. In her, indeed, I have seen the combination between poesy and music. In particular, Joan Baez's favourite poets and her spoken-sung album of poetry *Baptism: A Journey Through*

Our Time, her twenty minutes war ballad *Where are you now, my son?* and her relationship with Francis James Child's collected ballads have put me in relationship with this very condition. As a consequence, I have been dealing with the mystic poetry of Walt Whitman, the enigmatic and altogether nostalgic poetry of Henry Treece, the sublime poetry of John Donne, the melancholic poems by William Wordsworth and the innocent songs by William Blake. Moreover, I have also been revisiting the American poet E. E. Cummings and the idea of wholeness especially in his love poems. Nevertheless, even more famous poets have been quoted during my own study, among them: James Joyce, Federico Garcia Lorca, Arthur Rimbaud and Wilfred Owen. The presence of Joan Baez, then, has been fundamental in such occasions because some key elements of her life do not appear to separate from several topics explored by the above cited poets. For these reasons, I have decided to explore those very moments in which several individuals have reflected upon the very load of being involved into life. I have imagined human beings walking along an invisible row made up by thorns and perils. Indeed, as if they had jumped from their maternal womb, I have analysed the complicated and altogether wretched relationship between them and their mothers. Moreover, I have explored the way in which a father could take care of his sons and daughters during their adulthoods. Nevertheless, since human creatures appear to have been destined especially to solitude and absence, I have turned the paternal figure into a long forgotten presence. Moreover, having been brought up in total loneliness, I have decided to put humans in relationship with War. Dressed in helmet and uniform, uniformed to the military mass society, Men have lost forever their innocence and purity. Furthermore, I have also put men in relationship with Death and Sorrow. Human meditation and isolation, then, have seemed to make humans visible especially in their own most intimate and secret feelings. Furthermore, I have decided to turn love into a further torment for them. Entangled with death, pain and despair, I have finally demonstrated how love has pushed men to torture themselves. Finally, I have explored human beings in conversation with God. Whether sinners or not, their

approach to religion and God has, sometimes, appeared to gift them with hope.