



Myths, Legends And Life Stories As Vital Identity Reconstruction Channels In Gail Godwin's *THE ODD WOMAN AND VIOLET CLAY*

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Abstract: This article deals with the identity reconstruction of Jane Clifford and Violet Clay, respectively heroine of *The Odd Woman* (1974) and *Violet Clay* (1978) by Gail Godwin. These two protagonists go back to their native regions where they draw from their family legends and myths as well as ancestors and parents' life stories to reconstruct their identity. First, the article revolves around the lessons that Jane draws from the myths and legends about the late women of her family. Then, it deals with Violet Clay's ancestors and parents' lugubrious, but inspiring past life experiences.

Keywords: identity, myths, legends, fulfilment, life stories.

Mythes, légendes et vécus familiaux comme moyens indispensables à la reconstruction identitaire dans *THE ODD WOMAN ET VIOLET CLAY* de Gail Godwin

Résumé : Cet article aborde la reconstruction identitaire de Jane Clifford et Violet Clay, respectivement héroïne de *The Odd Woman* (1974) et *Violet Clay* (1978) de Gail Godwin. Ces deux protagonistes retournent dans leurs régions d'origine où elles s'inspirent des légendes et mythes familiaux ainsi que de la vie de leurs ancêtres et parents pour reconstruire leur identité. L'article s'articule d'abord autour des leçons que Jane tire des mythes et légendes sur les défrites femmes de sa famille. Ensuite, il relate le passé lugubre, mais inspirant des ancêtres et parents de Violet Clay.

Mots- clés : identité, mythes, légendes, épanouissement, vie.

Introduction

Identity (re)construction is a permanent process that awaits every human being all through their lifetime. However, it becomes more urgent for those who are prey to an identity crisis. These people feel confused about their identity on account of their unpleasant living condition. They find it so hard to fulfil themselves that they question their own existence. In order to sort out their situation, learning about their family members' past life experiences is one alternative among many others.

The woman novelist Gail Godwin is interested in the search for feminine identity by highlighting her heroines' going back to their origins. They draw on their family stories to face their identity crisis. These characters are aware that discovering their ancestors and parents' life experiences by being told their stories is a vital factor of their identity reconstruction.

There is no denying that no one is born *ex nihilo*. Traditional values and social rules predate any individual's birth. Customs, legends and myths about families, as well as family members' past life experiences are an integral part of them. A person's position, responsibilities and social roles constituting their identity are already defined by their traditions from the start of their life. They should either assume it or seek to modify it according to their condition or vision of life. But, it is quite impossible to turn one's back on them because they stand for one's collective legacy.

In this article, the socio-critical approach is used to explore Godwin's heroines' identity reconstruction. In fact, through the narration of family myths and legends, as well as ancestors and parents' life stories, Godwin reveals the realities of her community. She just transposes into writing what she witnesses in her social environment, all the more as most of her heroines are real characters issued from her family. Additionally, it is the custom for the women of this writer's region to raise their children telling them stories from the cradle. In Godwin's society, people set great store to stories on account of their eminent educational values that are instrumental in individuals' harmonious social integration. For all these reasons, we think that the socio-critical approach fits in well with the analysis of the novels under study.

Most Godwin's heroines are feminists who had formerly turned their backs to the traditional norms for their independence's sake. These protagonists' return to their ancestral values raises the problem of the role that the customs play in the quest of personal identity. Thus, this paper tries to sort out this issue by trying to answer the following questions: how much importance do Godwin's heroines attach to myths, legends and family

members' past life experiences? How do they make use of these traditional features to redefine their identities?

In this paper, we attempt to figure out the foregoing questions. It first examines, in *The Odd Woman*, the instructive myths and legends about Jane Clifford's grandmother, mother and aunts. Then, in *Violet Clay*, the eponymous novel, it analyzes the heroine's lugubrious, but inspiring past life experiences of her late parents and relatives.

1. The Instructive Family's Myths and Legends

Jane Clifford, heroine of *The Odd Woman*, is a PhD. holder and teaches literature at University. At first sight, Jane should be happy because she is an intellectual woman who has a decent job. However, she seems dissatisfied with her marital situation. She is a single woman. It can be inferred that Jane's high education and occupation are not sufficient to make her a fulfilled woman. From this perspective, one can ascertain that this heroine has not a desirable identity. Jane needs a man to marry her. She is the mistress of Gabriel, a University teacher. She expects him to create a family with her, respect her and regard her as his second wife. Unfortunately, her lover is reluctant to live up to her expectations. In fact, Gabriel and Jane do not live together in the same city. It is Jane who must always join Gabriel to enjoy their liaison. At the request of Jane to take steps to live with her lover in the same town, the latter is hesitant. It takes long for him to give her a response. In the meanwhile, Jane loses her grandmother.

Jane goes back to her native town to attend her grandmother's funerals. There, she has the opportunity to be told her family members' stories. For example, Jane learns that Edith, her grandmother, was the one who brought her up when her parents were at loggerheads. Her father, Ray Parks, ill-treated her mother to the extent that the latter ran away from her household. She also listened to the legend about her aunt Cleva. At Cleva's request, she was buried along with an illegitimate child. However, according to the legend, she had never been married. But, Cleva had begotten Francesca, a female child. In order to know further details about that legend, Jane did her utmost to meet Francesca herself.

Making the most of her stay in her region, Jane learns about the stories of all the late women of her family. She does so because she is aware of the prominent role of stories in individuals' lives:

Stories were all right, as long as you read them as what they were: single visions, one person's way of interpreting something. You could learn from stories, be warned by stories. But stories, by their very nature, were Procrustean. Even the longest of them had

to an end somewhere. If a living human being tried to squeeze himself into a particular story, he might find vital parts of himself lopped off. Even worse, he might find himself unable to get out it again. (*The Odd Woman*, 43)

Consequently, Jane draws positive materials from her parents' narratives to forge her identity. Jane reconstructs her identity by analyzing the narratives about women from her family. She imagines what she would do if she were in their position. Even if stories have their limits, Jane is aware of their usefulness. As an intellectual woman, she makes use of her critical mind to make out the women, most of whom are either bachelors or widows. She cannot apprehend her own identity without examining their lives.

After being told her grandmother's life experience and the legend about her aunt, Jane gathers that Edith and Cleva can be her role models. As a matter of fact, she has learned that the former was a successful woman. Edith had precociously lost her husband long before Jane was born. Despite her widowhood, she had been a prosperous woman who got by independently from a man's assistance. Edith had struggled hard so as not to remain destitute. As far as her aunt Cleva is concerned, Jane learned that the latter was a fulfilled and emancipated woman who had never been married. However, she had done well in her life.

Jane discovers her cultural identity once she listens to her family legends and myths. In her region, oral tradition plays a prominent part in the education of individuals at an early age. Thus, myths and legends constitute the reservoirs of values that children should acquire. These stories are invaluable sources of moral values and lessons about courage, obedience to parents, respect for the traditional customs, hard work, patience and honesty, to name a few. Listening to them is instrumental in Jane's quest for identity. Jane's parents suffered numerous hardships in the past. Thanks to the myths and legends of their ancestors, they succeeded in overcoming their predicaments. In her turn, Jane looks to her parents to be told their stories. She relies on them to get out of her troubles. She eventually realizes that her family members' stories are an integral part of her cultural identity.

The examination of Jane's grandmother, mother and aunts life experiences seems to be the best way to grasp the feminine identity. As a teacher of literature, she is in a position to analyze and get benefits from them. She can also write and teach them. Jane strongly believes that the true nature and identity of women are hidden in their narratives. The stories and narratives that she is told or reads are containers. In effect, the disappointments and

aspirations of any woman are contained in them. This is why Jane sets great store to them.

Surely, Jane compares her own life to the ones of her late female ancestors. The latter were all prosperous and emancipated women, even if they were single or widows. Jane has also learned that those women had not been successful in their liaisons with their men - husbands and boyfriends - whom they loved tenderly, though. Probably, she runs the risk of living the same love experience that her aunts and mothers had. Therefore, it is necessary that she be critical about her relationship with Gabriel.

After a thorough analysis, Jane now understands the attitude of her lover, Gabriel. She realizes that the latter is hypocritical. It is high time for her to take a decision in connection with her liaison with Gabriel. However, before deciding, she wonders if she should believe in a permanent and sincere love between a man and a woman:

But I want to know... whether there is eternal love between a man and a woman. I want to know whether there has ever existed in this world a lasting, lively love in which a man and a woman exist, for years and years, taking sustenance and delight from this love, being able to do things better because of this love rather than in spite of it. I want to settle this question of whether we need our other half, or if that's just some old story born out of economic necessities. (166)

Jane is certainly a high level intellectual and independent woman, but she lacks an honest lover or husband that will fill in her sentimental life. Gabriel is supposed to be such a man. Unluckily, he is not sincere with Jane, who has put her hope and trust in him. In the beginning of their liaison, Jane was euphoric. She dreamed of an ideal love which could make her happy and full of living force: "I want that kind of love which brings such energies" (168). With Gabriel, Jane will never experience that kind of love which is entirely imaginary. The latter will not fill in her sentimental vacuum. Her desire to express her womanhood with a man in a mutual and true love has been a mere dream. She should face her disillusion.

Jane is the prototype of women who are still attached to traditional values and social institutions such as marriage. For this category of women, marriage should not be rejected. They are aware that it is a requirement of their tradition. Jane wants a man by her side to express her femininity and honor her tradition. Her desirable identity should match up to the expectations of her society that requires a woman to play her social role, namely procreation, in order to perpetuate the human species.

Reasonably, Jane is a realistic character. Even if the patriarchal system materialized by marriage is unfair to women, Jane is anxious to live in a couple. To secure her dignity if she is married one day, she has tried hard to get a good education and a decent occupation, which can make her potential husband recognize her dignity. Among the identity construction pillars, having a family and the recognition of a person's dignity contribute to a stable identity. Jane desires children with a man who should respect and support her. Her education and occupation are not sufficient to provide her with all their identity needs.

Jane thought that her identity could include a desirable man. She has failed in her quest of a perfect match supposed to make her happy and play her feminine social roles. It would be pointless to still rely on Gabriel, who gambles with her romantic life. Therefore, Jane feels obliged to accept her plight. She decides to break up her relationship with Gabriel and learns from the life experiences of her late female ancestors who had all done well without the support of any man. She, too, can get over her disappointments and fulfil herself without counting on Gabriel.

Seemingly, Jane is now aware that she has to concentrate on other matters that can contribute to her well-being. She gathers that a female identity should not be only reduced to a marital life. For this reason, the painful and insipid love experience with Gabriel is now a distant memory. Her occupation and the pursuit of her studies should be uppermost in her mind. Eventually, this heroine identifies herself with her occupation and studies. She devotes her whole time to writing stories and teaching literature. In addition to the family members, both activities are inherent in her identity. Jane carries them out passionately. She feels a new sensation when she gets to the library with a view to collecting ideas for writing her dissertation: "Here she was pure and light, stripped of her usual fears about her own inadequacies, about the uncertainty of the future. [...] For the first time in her life, she was where she wanted to be; she was at one with her task. She was her work" (214).

Story writing is one of the major occupations of Godwin's heroines. The plots of their stories are all about women's lives. The narratives about women are a family legacy among Appalachian people issued from the southern USA. There, mothers and grandmothers are in charge of passing it on their daughters and granddaughters. The family history helps Godwin heroines better discover their background and the lives of their female ancestors. This is why the critic Kathryn Seidel (1999, p.161) believes that tales and legends are channels whereby the living keep in touch with their ancestors: "Stories are part of a family history that give the protagonist a sense of connection and provide her with parables of ancestors whose similar traits led to similar situation".

Gail Godwin's mother was a storyteller. To perpetuate this secular family tradition, Godwin could not break with the rule. To that end, most of her heroines search for their identity by telling stories or writing novels or plays. Some are novelists and the others are dramatists and actresses. For example, in the eponymous novel, the heroine Violet Clay writes stories by painting. Justin Stroke is the main character in *The Finishing School* (1984). She teaches drama and performs. Cate, one of the protagonists of *A Mother and Two Daughters* (1986), teaches drama and writes plays, giving a real living dimension to her writings. In *A Southern Family* (1997), Clare, the heroine, is a well-acclaimed novelist.

As far as Jane is concerned, she teaches oral literature and writes the narratives about her grandmother, mother, aunt, female mates and colleagues. Jane is also interested in the stories of the heroines in the novels by women writers of the nineteenth century. This inclination originates from Jane's belief in the power of words as well as in the influence of people's life experiences on individuals. From her point of view, stories and other people's lives can contribute to individuals' development: "The experiences and words of others can help you. Even if they have been dead hundreds of years. That's what education is. Learning from the words and experiences of others, other human beings who wanted answers just as badly as you do now [is helpful]" (*The Odd Woman*, 18).

It can be deduced from above that the best benefit that Godwin's heroines get after learning others' stories is the materials they draw from them to reconstruct their identity. They exploit them by imitating their characters. They write novels, tell stories and perform plays. Therefore, these heroines do not limit themselves to absorbing stories. They identify themselves with the protagonists of the novels and narratives, then get the best from their life experiences. Afterwards, they create their own stories by diverse means with a view to perpetuating their tradition. Just like Jane Clifford, Violet Clay discovers her true identity only when she traces her family background. Although her family members' life stories are very sad, they are really inspiring.

2. The lugubrious, but inspiring Family's Stories

Violet Clay, heroine of the eponymous novel, patterns her life on her uncle Ambrose. Before being told about him, Violet had just settled in New York. She arrived there to carry out her job of painting. She had worked for Harrow House before her dismissal. No sooner had she settled in this city than

she heard of the distressing news of Ambrose's suicide. Ambrose had been the one who had brought her up. She had had no news from him since ages.

Violet is fully aware that she cannot earn a living and thrives through her art unless she honors her uncle's memory. She considers Ambrose as the last trace of her family: "Well, my last vestige of family had wiped itself out last night" (*Violet Clay*, 207). Ambrose's death presents Violet with the opportunity to know about her family background. She gets back to her native village, where she is told Ambrose and her parents' life stories.

In order to better learn about her family stories, Violet adopts a fruitful strategy. In fact, she stops her activity for a short while. Being told about the life experiences of her family members is a determining factor in her quest of identity. To this end, she takes ample time to investigate her uncle's death and his past life. The only thing that reminds her of Ambrose is his recommendation when she paid him a visit in New York nine years ago. During her stay, her uncle urged her to follow in his footsteps:

[...] when I first came to New York, Ambrose took me to the top of the Sixes and showed me his 'eagle's eye view', as he called it, of the city. He was in top form that night and so was I. [...] Also Ambrose said something else to me that night. We were talking about how the Channel that lets ships into New York was called Ambrose Channel and he laughed and said, 'You got to go through me, kid. (223)

Ambrose Channel is a metaphor. It refers to the secret of his success. By this image, Ambrose shows his niece the way she must follow if she wants to thrive in her life. He wants Violet Clay to be a fulfilled woman by working hard after tracing back her origins. By so doing, she discovers her true identity. Therefore, Violet draws from her uncle's experience to be a successful painter. Her family members' stories are the vital ways of better understanding her profession in order to develop it.

At the very beginning of the novel, Violet rightly introduces herself: "I am a painter" (3). This laconic presentation expresses the heroine's pride in carrying out a fulfilling job that she has deliberately chosen. As a matter of fact, the least we can say is that Violet seems to identify herself with the job that enables her to know who she is. She assumes that identity because it has been constructed by drawing on her family background. This heroine got pertinent materials from it with the awareness that a bright future awaits her:

For years of my life I developed my negative propensity for time travel. At a moment's notice I could plunge into some awful moment of the past (or some awfuller fantasy about the future) and come back with enough material to take a lugubrious bath in. Now I am becoming adept in making the positive trip as well. I send my mental spaceship to points past or future and it frequently come back with old buds of present blossomings...or sometimes a bold design for fruits to come. (306)

Looking back on the past, she remembers the family history that Ambrose had recounted her. Their history is filled with successive sad events. The marking ones are unsatisfactory marriages, death and divorces of parents. Milledge Clay, Violet's father, was killed at the Second World War while her mother, Liza Lee Clay, committed a suicide. Liza threw herself into the sea because her marriage was not satisfactory. Milledge Clay used to oppress, dominate her and cheat on her. The latter's disrespectful behavior resulted in her suicide. Violet had been raised by Georgette Clay, her paternal grandmother. Just like Liza, Georgette experienced an unhappy marital life with her husband, Charles Clay. Yet, she had given up her dream of becoming a renowned painter. She did so in order to be a good mother that is a housewife doomed to procreate and take care of her household. The patriarchal system of her society requires women to assume their womanhood. This is why a woman should not carry out an income-generating job outside, even if she has a qualification.

Violet also remembers that Ambrose had been a very ambitious man like her mother and grandmother. After the production of his first novel which had been a success, he retreated into a cabin at Adirondacks, his village where he concentrated on a second book with a view to making it a success. *Looking for the Laura Lee*, Ambrose's first novel, deals with Violet's mother's life experience. Reading that book has stood Violet in good stead. In fact, not only has it presented Violet with the opportunity to be better acquainted with her family members, but also it has permitted her to have an idea about her uncle's talents and enter his intimacy.

Before his death, Ambrose had been open, sincere and humble with his niece. He had deliberately revealed the disorders in his romantic life. For instance, he had confessed that he had been unfair to his wife. Ambrose had told Violet that he had cheated on his wife, Carol, many times. Therefore, he had found it right her wife's request for divorce: "Well, let's see what I can salvage from my mess. [...] I'll go to Mexico for the divorce. The sooner she's rid of me the better. Then she can marry a man worthy of her" (111). Ambrose

had explained her niece that he had not been able to live up to her wife's expectations: "Two people marry, each expects the other to fill up all those empty hollows. But Carol's a fine woman. Too fine for the likes of me" (111). Despite Ambrose's imperfect behaviour, Violet considers him as a charismatic figure. For her, he embodies a role model:

Even when I didn't see him for months...years when he was in Mexico...I felt he was there for me to refer to, living his life a little ahead of mine, wanting the things I wanted. Even his flaws and mistakes have given me a certain comfort. I could sort of measure myself; judge myself, by him. (97)

On the occasion of Ambrose's death, Violet gets back to her origins. She takes advantage of this return to get over the hardships she had gone through before. During those hard times, she needed a providential support in order to reach her goal:

All those dusks and dawns ago, waiting for it to happen, waiting for my fate to begin shaping itself. I waited mostly for the phone to ring, for Ambrose to call and ask me out again, for the lady from *Vogue* to call and offer me a job, for some outside voice to explain to me what I was doing there and where I was to go next. (107)

Eventually, Violet has managed to sort herself out. That has been possible during her stay in her native town where she has learned about her ancestors' life experiences, which helped her boost her art without anyone's assistance that she was seeking:

There I had crouched in the shadows of my own potential. I had my feelings and I had my materials, but I didn't know how to make one work for the other. There I sat, waiting for something to happen, for the phone to ring, for help to come from outside. That something was happening inside, I never considered. That certain equations were being made, certain colors and tonal values being locked away in my visual memory which could later be opened by the right combination of accumulated experience, I never dreamed. (109)

At the end of Ambrose's funerals, Violet shoulders her family responsibilities. She realizes that she is now the only family member who has to make decisions. It is the awareness of her influential roles in her family that has obliged her to conduct Ambrose's funerals. After burying the latter, Violet

resolves to stay in her family for keep. Her return to Plommet Falls enables her to manage the sole family heritage that is made up of Ambrose's house. Violet's stay in her village marks a turning point in her career in such a way that she eventually understands that painting is confused with her identity. Therefore, she has to fill in the vacuum left by the late Ambrose. Her uncle had been a successful writer. Violet has to face the challenge that Ambrose had been able to take up.

The challenge Violet should face is all the more enormous as she had just divorced and lost her job. That vulnerable woman takes stock of her life and presents her strategy to get out of her predicament:

[...] Only there would be no ancestral fortress to hide out in daintily, drawing my consolations from its hoards and shadows, dressing and undressing myself in front of comforting old mirrors that still bore my child's imprint on their old silver surfaces. If I didn't create my own fortress soon, my ravagers were going to be more pitiless than any anticipated thief or prison escape. (207)

Violet's fortress refers to her own protection from the dependency on others. If she does not arrange to be financially autonomous, she runs the risk of losing her dignity just like when she was married to Lewis. She had ignored the hardships her grandmother and mother had gone through in their respective household. Violet's marital life was disastrous because of the patriarchal system which prevents women from fulfilling their potentials. When she could no longer put up with the sexist behaviour of her first husband Lewis, Violet broke up with him. She had dreamed of a happy marital life. Unfortunately, all her marital experiences were disappointing in a similar way as the ones of her mother and grandmother. Violet had rejoiced at her first divorce because she could not carry out her job of painting due to motherhood. She had to sacrifice her career to conform to her tradition.

Should she live in a couple again, not only would she live under another man's domination, but also her job of painting would not thrive. Violet utterly opposes that option because it cannot allow her to reach her goal. She pictures herself what she would be like if she did not manage to be at the top of her art: "What if Violet Clay wasn't to be one of the shining ones after all?" (4) Violet is determined to succeed in her art, just like her uncle Ambrose. This is why she refuses to sacrifice her career to the benefit of marriage: "But: no. I hadn't yet reached that point of resignation where I surrendered the image of my greatest self. If and that day came, I might as well be dead" (*Idem*).

This heroine can be ranked among the ones who learn from their personal mistakes and make up for them. She should not have ignored her mother and grandmother's unsatisfactory marriages. She could have found a compromise with her husband in order for her to go on painting. Unfortunately, she naively believed that only marriage would make her happy. Despite the comfort that Lewis had offered to her, Violet refused to continue living in the lockdown, still depending on him. The identity she wants to reconstruct has nothing to do with marriage. Violet swears not to sacrifice her life in another liaison with any man anymore. Her career had seriously declined when she was married to Lewis, a well-off lawyer. Her paintings no longer attracted potential clients because she lacked ample time to refine them. Violet's household kept her busy.

Violet's disillusion has driven her to resolve to prioritize her art. To protect herself from the disasters of another marriage experience, she turns down the advances of the policeman put in charge of investigating into Ambrose's death. Her option of giving priority to her painting career is irreversible:

I knew _if only, please God, I would be allowed to keep my eyes I would go on painting till the day I died. As long as I could paint... even if it was just for myself, I wanted to go on living...I would still go on painting because it was something I had to do and something I thought about all the time and something that made me mean and miserable when I wasn't doing it. (244)

This heroine's attitude results from her aspiration to live an ideal life suited to her vision. This vision is her desired identity that boils down to her art. By means of painting, she freely expresses her feelings and her mind is constantly active. The beauty she reproduces in her paintings reflects the ideal life she has always dreamed of. Painting enables her to reconcile with herself and her background. Through painting, Violet narrates her own stories, that of her parents and the misery of women. Violet's paintings reflect her aspirations to the best life. Her own troubles and the ones of her family members are the themes of her paintings. She turns their troubles into beauty. Eventually, Violet realizes that her true identity is confused with her art of painting.

Born of poor parents, Violet is determined to be a success. Since Ambrose had advised her to follow in his footsteps, this heroine commits herself totally to her job of painting so as to be successful as her uncle had been. At Plommet Falls, Violet decides to live and work in the late Ambrose's house. She uses one

room of this home as her workshop. She draws on her family members' lives to paint, just like Ambrose, who used them as the main characters of his novels. The awareness of the hardships that her mother and grandmother had gone through pushes Violet into patterning her life on her uncle. Therefore, she passionately carries out her painting and all her pieces of work are very much in demand.

Looking back to one's past is a determining factor of identity (re)construction. Violet Clay succeeds in constructing a desired identity thanks to Ambrose who gets her to discover who and what her parents were. The difficult social condition of her parents coupled with her own past disappointments and the guidance of her uncle have motivated her to make her life a success and discover her true identity.

Myths and legends of family members are an integral part of people's identity. They constitute important channels whereby individuals can (re)construct their identity. They enable Godwin's heroines to discover the diverse values their ancestors have used to overcome their hardships to ultimately live fulfilling lives. These heroines recognize their usefulness, but they adjust to them to construct their desired identity.

Conclusion

The socio-critical approach has been used to analyze Jane Clifford and Violet Clay's identity reconstruction strategy. Both characters have traced their origins to learn from their ancestors and parents' past life experiences. The legends and myths about Jane Clifford's women of her family have allowed her to reconstruct her desired identity. After hearing the lugubrious stories of her parents' life experiences, Violet Clay has eventually realized that her identity is confused with her art of painting.

At the end of this analysis, it comes out that the family background is an important factor of identity (re)construction. Therefore, it is quite impossible to turn one's back on it. Gail Godwin highlights its vital role. All her heroines turn to the life stories of their ancestors or parents to better understand the functioning of their society. The myths, legends, parents' life stories or experiences are invaluable channels that enable Jane Clifford and Violet Clay to discover the traditional values that govern community life. On discovering their background, they have been presented with the opportunity to modify their vision of life with a view to reconstructing their identity considering what they have learned from the experiences of their ancestors, parents and relatives.

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