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“I WANT TO GO HOME”:
THE REPRESENTATION OF DUAL HOMECOMING
IN DOROTHY ALLISON’S *CAVEDWELLER*

Abstract. The aim of the article is to discuss Dorothy Allison’s novel *Cavedweller* (1998) in terms of the narrative strategies of doubling. The novel features Delia, a woman who returns to the South with her daughter, Cissy, to reconnect with the rest of her family. While Delia’s return to her hometown meets with social ostracism, her daughter manages to find a sense of identity and belonging in the underground caves in Georgia. The two parallel stories of homecoming are presented by Allison through the images of doubling, which help her to confront regional traumas and tensions of the South.

Keywords: Southern literature; Dorothy Allison; *Cavedweller*; doubling; trauma.

Dorothy Allison’s writings are a chronicle of survival. Born as a “bastard child of a teenage mother from a desperately poor family” (LeMahieu 651) in 1949, in the region that was still experiencing the aftermath of the Great Depression, having grown up in a house rife with verbal, physical and sexual abuse, she not only became the first member of her family to graduate from high school and go to college, but also a writer whose debut autobiographical novel *Bastard Out of Carolina* was nominated for the National Book Award in 1992. As Allison herself writes in *Skin: Talking About Sex, Class & Literature*, “the inescapable impact of being born in a condition of poverty that this society finds shameful, contemptible, and somehow deserved, has had dominion over me to such an extent that I spent my life trying to overcome or deny it” (Allison, *Skin: Talking about Sex, Class & Literature* 15). These artistic acts of confrontation

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with the circumstances of her upbringing, and of moving away from her Southern home and all it entailed, have informed her fiction on a fundamental level. Allison's artistic output—novels, memoirs, poems and essays—all document her endurance and staying power when confronted by the social pressures. They also reveal her ambivalence about the American South and the region's paradoxes.¹

This essay focuses on Allison's portrayal of Southern homecoming which can be found in her second novel, *Cavedweller* (1998), and which, like most of her fiction, revolves around a dual perspective—on the one hand, it is a test of resilience for Delia, a character seeking to reclaim the two daughters she had abandoned and to return to a Southern community she was a part of; on the other hand, for Cissy, Delia's daughter, it opens up an invitation to explore the underground world of caves of Georgia, and to find there a homeliness and self-identity which are inaccessible for the Southern society.

DOROTHY ALLISON'S LYRICAL REALISM IN THE PORTRAYAL OF THE SOUTH

Allison's South is a region dominated by an all-encompassing, oppressive socioeconomic struggle. In a 1995 interview, when asked to comment on her "raw" portrayal of the South, she declared that South Carolina "is the country where I grew up. It's the country of my imagination. To me it was always beautiful and terrible and not escapable.... Even when I lived in New York, I imagined it against Greenville." One finds a certain ambivalent complexity in Allison's representations of the South—in how she juxtaposes, on the one hand, the mythologized South with the real South, and, on the other, the detachment of a Southern expat with the insider's regional dedication. As observed by Michael LeMahieu (651), Allison's "work reflects [Southern] background with unsparing criticism and caring concern, a combination that is simultaneously unflinching and endearing." However, since this mix is the result of Allison's very particular first-hand, survivalist experience, it is also

¹ A host of authors have pointed out the paradoxical nature of southern culture. Hugh C. Holman describes it in terms of a "reconciliation of opposites", arguing that one can find "at the heart of the Southern riddle, a union of opposites, a condition of instability" (1). More recently, Tara McPherson stipulates that thinking about the South is infused by a degree of "cultural schizophrenia" (3) in which the traumatizing legacy of slavery collides with the institutionalized nostalgia for a mythical space that was never truly there. Also, the paradoxical nature of the region encourages one to think of it in terms of hyperbolic aesthetics (Choiński).

deeply imbued with trauma—as she herself confessed in a talk at the John Adams Institute: “Drunk, terrified or when I write—that’s when I speak using Southern accent” (Allison, *John Adams Talk*).

When Allison writes about the South, and when her characters flee from it, or return to it, her text becomes a battleground for the unreal and all-too-real. In her words, “it always seemed to me that I lived in a gospel song, not a real place. Not a real place at all” (LeMahieu 665). Allison’s concept of a Southern home is inescapably “mythical”, a space on the borderline of two separate truths—what she could have aspired to as an individual, and what she was allowed to aspire as a member of the “white trash”. Yet, Allison takes special care not to endow this mythologization of her upbringing with any degree of sentimentalism, since—to her—it is exactly the narrative of a condescending melodrama which maintains the derogatory regional stereotypes about class and gender. In her writings, she rejects all “Vaseline-smearred lenses” and strives to render the narrative “hyperreal”. Her South has to hurt, and the homecoming in her fiction is the figurative tempering of an unhealed wound. To Allison, only an uncompromising storytelling and visceral aggrandization may elevate the readers to comprehend the “legendary” and the “mythological” (LeMahieu 666).

The combination of convincing attention to detail with soulful empathy is the cornerstone of Allison’s mode of writing—which she herself defines as “lyrical realism” (LeMahieu 660) and of which the two female protagonists from *Bastard Out of Carolina* and *Cavedweller*, Bones and Cissy, are excellent examples. In her artistic program, Allison “create[s] characters who [she] believe[s] match [her] experience of how people are and how the world is”—who struggle with the layers of trauma and seek to survive in the oppressive socioeconomic system of the South. At the same time, to her, such realistic representations require a “certain amount of poetry ... [which] deepens the realism” (LeMahieu 660). Allison’s lyrical endowment is by no means forced or mawkish. It is a direct consequence of what she observed during her upbringing—that “people in dire situations talk in a kind of poetry” and that when confronted with drastic circumstances, when in the face of a crisis, they challenge existing contexts and think and speak in a way that can dis sever the real South from its mythical iteration.

“I’M GOING HOME TO GET MY BABIES”

In *Cavedweller*, following the tragic death of the famous blues musician, Randall Pritchard, his partner Delia Byrd leaves home with her daughter Cissy, and embarks on a journey from California to Georgia, where she wants to reconnect with her two other daughters, Dede and Amanda. Delia’s homecoming is a quest for redemption. The very first words she utters in the novel, “I want to go home” (Allison, *Cavedweller* 2) are emblematic of the instinctive drive that propels her to return South, as well as of her strong determination to make up for how she had abandoned her two children, when she had fled from her abusive husband, Clint Windsor. As a recovering alcoholic, Delia is seeking to return to the space which she associates with safety and security, one that precedes her addiction, precarious musical career and troubled relationship with Randall.

The geographical gulf between the West Coast and the South—between Los Angeles and Cayro—translates into the divide between two parts of Delia’s life. In the novel, Allison consistently employs the juxtapositions of binary images and the trope of doubling to emphasize this rift, like in the two contrastive sets of photographs Delia looks at before leaving California. One set of pictures in colour, “show[s] Deli leaning back against a lazy-eyed Randall, the infant Cissy cradled in her arms”; the other set consists of “black-and-white snapshots with cracked edges”, which she “finger[s] tenderly”—these show her two other daughters and Clint with “washed-out features and stunned, angry eyes” (5). The juxtaposition of her two partners, her two families, and two lives she lived in two distinct regions of the US accentuates the damage she experienced and the painful rift which she decides to come over with desperate insistence: “Go home.... I’m going home to get my babies” (5).

This imperative to return to Cayro and make amends is pervasive and unstoppable, even though her friend, Rosemary, warns her that the Southern home she wants to reconnect with does not exist. She stresses in all honesty, “nobody there is going to welcome you, honey” (6). After the wake, when, Randal’s house is devastated by mourners and almost burns to the ground, Delia ultimately leaves her disarrayed life behind and heads to California. She feels that “going home was the answer. Making amends, getting her girls, that was the answer” (10)—she intends to return her hometown to “make it right” (12), to reclaim some part of herself that she had left with her daughters down South, the absence of which becomes desperately exposed not only with Randall’s tragic death, but with the death-like decay which had afflicted their relationship long before

the accident—"somehow, in the middle of everyone else's living, Randall had given up on his own life and started dying" (14). Delia's journey to Cayro means leaving the dead behind, both in the literal and metaphorical sense.

In response to her daughter's vehement resistance to the journey, Delia offers an exalted idealization of the South, stressing that unlike in Los Angeles, in Cayro "[p]eople are different.... They're not scared, not having to be careful all the time" (10). Fully immune to any criticism, fiercely determined, in a "thick and husky" voice, she explains to her daughter that "it is going to be so good to get home. You'll see. You'll see" (11). Yet, the journey Delia wants to undertake is her personal pilgrimage and only hers. To Cissy, Cayro seemed like "the back end of the earth" (12), an alien place that remains of no true relevance—in consequence, Delia's daughter cannot make sense of her mother's enthusiasm, and cannot subscribe to the idealized vision of the small town life in the South, which is apparently nothing but homely, welcoming and devoid of California's restiveness. But, given what Delia's life with Clint had looked like, the unconditional praise of Cayro she delivers to persuade her daughter could as well be a dire act of self-persuasion. Her decision is not governed by logic—it is a desperate impulse to collect pieces of her life scattered between the West Coast and the South, and to atone for the abandonment of her two daughters. Thus, when Cissy desperately says "I want to go home" (30), Delia answers emphatically "You *are* going home". The failure of communication between the mother and the daughter results from their different understandings of where home is, and opposite directions their minds take to find that anchor—while Cissy looks West, Delia looks South-East.

Allison uses another binary image to mark the next phase of Delia's homecoming. When she and Cissy finally get close to Georgia after an exhausting drive, the reflexion she casts on a diner counter draws her attention—"The table was dark wood shellacked so thickly that Delia could see her reflection in the surface. Her face looked like it was underwater, slightly out of focus, the murky image of a woman who had never known how to say what she was thinking" (28). The juxtaposition of Delia's actual silhouette with the unreal and indefinite image signals her transitive status of a person en route, a sojourner seeking to regain the control and focus in her life. The figurative mirroring epitomizes the convergence of her two lives: one with Clint, in Georgia, and one with Randal, in California. Both these stages in her life ended in flight, unable to withstand the violent adversities—and in both cases she was escaping due to the lack of mental anchor. The binary image is also symbolic of what these two lives, separated by geographical distance and lived with two

different men, have provided her with: her daughters, who take after her in the most basic ways, that is, not only biologically, but also in how they strive to define the parameters of their safe zones, and how they seek to secure their existence with cohesion and substance, be it through devout religiousness, a desperate need for independence or escapist caving.

Delia's physical homecoming becomes complete when she is recognized in a local diner. However, there she is not welcomed as a native of Cayro but immediately blacklisted as a shameful deserter. It swiftly emerges that the congenial homecoming she had hoped for is merely wishful thinking. The initial experience of the diner is pleasantly evocative of her past Southern life: "She had never liked the coffee in California. It was too strong. This coffee she could drink all day. It was right, like the smell of the air was right, the humidity soothing her parched skin" (37) Yet, soon after that, the diner cook identifies her and announces loudly: "I know you.... You that bitch ran off and left her babies" (39). For a brief moment, when Delia saw she was being recognized, she thought that the cook might ask her for an autograph. While in California she may have enjoyed the status of former music star and be asked for signatures, in the South her artistic career is irrelevant. The moment she completes the journey between Los Angeles and Cayro, she is demoted. All of her recent celebrity privileges are abrogated, and the community she described to Cissy as homely will only see her as a pariah, as a notorious mother who was guilty not only of abandoning her husband, but, most importantly, her children. To the people of Cayro the only thing that matters, the only lenses she would be perceived through are those of betrayal, as stressed by the cook: "We remember. You the kind we remember" (39). And the reaction of the cook is a tell-tale sign of the struggle that awaits her if she wants to be reunited with her daughters.

REDEMPTION IN THE DARK

While Delia's return to Cayro becomes a compound process of public humiliation and repentance, which not only allows her to establish the continuity between two stages of her life, but also provides a context for another, more covert homecoming of the novel. Cissy, who found the South so alien and incomprehensible, and who rebelled against her mother's desire to move back there, unpredictably finds in Georgia a homely space she does not even know she needs—she takes on caving and quickly finds solace and homely experience in the darkness of the underground mazes. In chapter 13, Nolan, Cissy's

best friend takes her for a surprise trip outside of Cayro, to a plot of land his family used to own. There, Cissy goes underground for the first time, to a cave called Paula's Lost. Nolan's uncle, Brewster, made the cave famous when he mapped some of its passages. However, the cave was later forgotten—which "did lend Paula's Lost a mysterious aura" (240). The cavern looks bottomless, and immediately becomes a space of enduring fascination and ambitious discovery. As Cissy leans over the edge, she asks "How far down does it go?"—to which Nolan says, "No one knows" (240). It becomes imperative for her to find an answer to that question.

The entrance to the underground cavern is a threshold to a novel sensual microcosm, which consumes Cissy completely. When she first turns her light off in the cave, and becomes surrounded by darkness, and carried away into a different experiential sphere: "... the dark absolute, a blackness that touched her nerves with icy shudders and broke a sweat in the pockets of her body"—and as her eyes adapt to lack of light, her pupils register flashes of glittering colour: "Instantly she could feel the open space above her expand as synapses fired and sparked. A bead of coloured flame lit as she clenched her teeth. Every sound made colour" (242). The synaesthesia and the myriad of stimuli Cissy experiences are formative for her, and they trigger a revelation that later in the novel informs her on the most fundamental level. Little does she know that when she enters the cave with Norman for the first time that she is crossing an epistemic threshold that would allow her to find an anchor and a place she would be able to consider her true "home" in the South. Nolan seems to know that for some staying in the cave and submersion in the dark can bring about a unique sense of serenity—as he says, "some people can't stand it, but for some the dark feels like home" (242). Cissy is one such person, a natural "cavedweller". For her, the study of the caves, and the submerging in the damp, engulfing darkness becomes an ultimate act of self-exploration which subsequently allows her to discover that it is those underground caverns that truly constitute her home.

Carried away by the darkness, Cissy finds all her senses overstimulated: "Her cranium felt like a drum-head, open to the most subtle strokes, ready to produce the most delicate tones, every note brightened with pigment" (243). As the underground experience intensifies, she hears and sees more: "If white was all the colors, and black none, which one moved across her dry, aching pupils now?" (243). The sensual overdrive translates into a new, overwhelming sense of safety, which she has never experienced before. Cissy starts to believe that "nothing here would hurt her" down in the caverns—"[t]he words in her

head were white on white: I am safe here” (243). The dark separates her from all her family tensions and the leftover sense of alienation she experienced earlier after leaving California. In the moist, arcane underworld of the caves, she is liberated from all the threats and dangers which menaced her in the house on the surface. The dark of Paula’s Lost becomes Cissy’s elysian seclusion—it allows her to recover from the trauma of loss she was suffering from but, most importantly, it allows her to grow.

All of her subsequent trips to Paula’s Lost become Cissy’s figurative exploration of the hidden place. Contrary to the name of the cavern, for her nothing is lost there—things are discovered. The *grotto* in which she separates herself from the world and exposes herself to new stimuli, allows also for the exploration of her own physicality and sexual identity. She visits the caves with two other women, Jean and Mim, whose lesbian relationship becomes apparent to her over time. They impress Cissy with their unabashed sense of identity and their confidence—in her eyes, the two women who start exploring the caves with her, “look like heroines in science fiction books” (272). They are anything but Southern, reminding her of “Los Angeles and New York City ... and they talked like it too, mentioning books and films and far-off places as casually as they hugged each other when they separated” (273). In such company, Cissy practices feminine pilgrimages to the heart of subterranean world of Georgia. When she maps the caves, looking for unknown passages, she is figuratively mapping her own self, seeking to understand her identity, and to cope with her past traumas.

As Cissy finds blissful solace in this separation from the world above, she initiates an obscure exchange with the cavern—filling it up with her body and voice, but also letting it enter her: “If I do not move, the dark will fill me up, make me another creature, fearless and whole. This must be what Amanda feels when she prays so hard, like being held close in the hand of God” (312). The homely tranquillity Cissy experiences in the cave is uplifting and makes her feel complete—just like her zealous sister finds consolation in religion, she discovers her haven in the depth of the cavern. She becomes a devout acolyte to the sacramental experience which develops into the cornerstone of her caving religion. The transformative power of that experience finally traverses the anxiety she had been struggling with ever since she and her mother left California. The Georgian underworld becomes her true home.

Addicted to the sensual experiences of caving, Cissy “love[s]” (314) only the “wild” caves—not those whose interiors have been scrutinized and mapped. She seeks to enter those caverns that were unfamiliar and to own

their interiors. Only in their natural and primordial environment can she find the visionary excitement she craves—"cave light challenged perception and invited hallucinations. The light in wild caves was tricky and strange. It tricked the eyes, seduced fear, and manufactured terror. It made you feel yourself utterly mortal and at risk" (314). The exhilaration Cissy derives from the observing the interplay between light and dark in the confined space of the cavern was alluring and addictive. To return to the darkness, she learns to appreciate so strongly, she even makes attempts to recreate the darkness in her own house: "Cissy had hung double-thick curtains all over the windows, sealed the edges of doorjamb and put a muffling quilt over the door itself" (315). The experiments fail. It was only among the corridors of the underworld of Georgia that Cissy may feel whole again, and where she can feel home again: "the deep dark was what she wanted" (315).

When unable to visit the caves, Cissy feels homesick and "pine[s]" (274) for the spiritual solace they offer. She "imagined she could hear gospel music in the darkness just outside of the light's little circle. Every time Cissy went into a cave, she found herself thinking about God, the God who stacked rock on rock and watched over fatherless girls" (274–75). The consolation Cissy finds in the cave mitigates the traumas she had experienced—of the loss of her father, and of having her life turned upside down when she was wrenched from her roots in California. In the sanctuary of the Georgian caves, she encounters the soothing presence of the absolute, but not a judgemental and vengeful deity Grandma Windsor or her sister Amanda proclaim. The spiritual experience she comes upon in the caves is based on the personal harmony of the sensual and the carnal. It is an epiphanic encounter that is directed inward, one that through the exploration of the underground cave system, allows for the higher understanding of her own body and her gender identity. So, the deity Cissy discovers in Paula's Lost is not the idol of inhibition and restriction—her journey into the depths of the Georgia caves is driven not to limit, but to expand, to practice the private study of the nooks and crannies of her beliefs, her femininity and her body: "God was the moment past orgasm, lying spent, belly-down on her own bed with her hand over her mouth—nothing she wanted any of her family to know about" (275). The confidential nature of her spiritual experience in the caves, of how the dark feels so inviting and homely, and of how protective she becomes of her sojourns into Paula's Lost testifies to how the subterranean caverns become the shelter she never had, and provide her with stability and repose her fragmented life could never offer.

Cissy's new caving spirituality, as well as the very microcosm of the underworld, has a primordial character. The cavern's dark, moist interior evokes the blissful, secure sense of prelapsarian serenity: "This far down there were no bugs, no butterflies, or birds, no snakes or living things to be feared. Down here only microorganisms were dangerous, ancient viruses waiting for the warm medium of blood and human stupidity" (309). The journey to the centre of the cave is to Cissy like the exploration of the female *grotto* of the earth, which she enters through the crevice of Paula's Lost. The underground is also the space of transformation and evolution: "Jesus, magic, or death—anything was possible in the cave" (278). It provides a space for the change of the flesh—but not the kind sickly decay Cissy observes in Clint as he is suffering from cancer, when his body is withering away. The cave initiates a metamorphosis, which may mutate the body and change it, but in doing so, it empowers rather than limits. And with every visit Cissy becomes more in synch with her physical self. Until finally, once, after four hours down in Little Mouth, she "felt completely loose and happy in her body" (307). It is the transformative power of the cave, of the dark, moist "mystery" it reveals to Cissy that allows her to seek out her female identity: "Consummation, the slow alternation of what people thought they knew, that was what Cissy saw in the cave" (308). Because it is "a laboratory of corruption. Sweat left on a rock layered with bacteria that might grow even in the chill. Things underground altered, underwent a terrestrial change. Without sunlight or heat to dry it out, the rocks grew phosphorescent and took on the gleaming imprint of handfalls and finger grips" (308). In this "laboratory of corruption", Cissy's physicality seems to evolve as well, with every scratch and scrape she suffers from bumping against the hard rocks, and with every bruise, she strengthens her body and improves her durability and stamina: "She was stronger than rock, more determined than the tides of sand and grit that moved along the underground creeks" (308). The cave is empowering her not only spiritually, but also physically.

For Cissy, caving becomes "like sex for most people" (325). The dark of the cave provides her with a space that turns out to be stirring enough to encourage her growth as a self-aware female, but simultaneously, to undermine the axioms of her earlier thinking and liberate her from the oppressiveness of the surface world: "But in the dark she became for the first time fully conscious of her own body and curiously unself-conscious. Unseen, she moved freely. In the dark her body moved precisely, steadily, each foot placed exactly, while her hips rocked loosely on the pistons of her thighs" (325). The subsurface grottos become her space of emancipation, of deliverance from the

onerous existence which was the object of perpetual judgement from other members of the community. She wonders if the caves were for her “what California was for Delia? That unknown country where no one looked at her, no one knew her, and she could become anything she wanted, do anything without worrying about what others might see and think?” (325).

The excitement Cissy experiences with every prospect of a trip to the caves is akin to precoital arousal: “Every time Cissy changed over into her mud-heavy boots and old clothes for another trip underground, she felt the anticipation of another encounter with the mystery” (277). The dark, moist interior of the cave evokes vaginal associations—making Cissy’s ambition to study the subterranean maze, and to draw a map of the innermost interior of the *grotto*, an attempt to understand the fundamental aspects of her own femininity. Hence, if the personified, divine “mystery” hidden in the cavern has a gender, Cissy has no doubt it is a female: “It was as if her passage through the dark offered Cissy what she had always wanted, confrontation with God in the imagined body of a woman, the mama-core, the bludgeoned heart of the earth” (308). The cave becomes the space of female affinity only because of the mere presence of women’s echoing voices, but also because of their character. Bound by a “surprising friendship with those strange girls” (278), that is with Jean and Mim, Cissy develops “love” for female “open, unafraid shouts” (278). The cries produced in the dark, damp caverns bring her a Delphic revelation, pointing to the mystery of her body. The voices of women who are liberated from the small-town prudery, who undress unabashed and who are “laughing under the shower” (279), emancipate and thrill her: “Love heated her blood, speeded her heart” (278)—and in this communion of voices amplified by the resounding walls of the cavern, and hidden from the public sight, she begins to discover the bonds of female companionship that had not been part of her experience prior to her exploration of the caves: “For the first time in her life, she did not feel alone” (278).

CODA

Dorothy Allison’s *Cavedweller* can be viewed as a narrative study of regional trauma. The parallel stories of the mother and the daughter who struggle to find a sense of belonging in the South, and to recover from their traumatic experiences, dramatize also Allison’s own ambivalent feelings about the region.

While Cissy discovers her personal sense of feminine identity in the underground caverns, her mother's mental anchor remains in terrestrial Georgia—as she declares: “I was born here, so I was born crazy. And I want to die here, die with my hands doing something, not idle and spread. Not empty” (323).

At the end of the novel, after Cissy gets lost in the caves, Delia confesses her sense of despondency over her daughters' struggles: “Lord, I almost lost you. And Dede shot Nolan, and Amanda's drinking, and I just don't know” (423). While Delia manages to put down roots in the South again and completes the ritualized trials of the community, her daughters are unable to complete the same feat. Especially to Cissy, Cayro remains a town and community that does not amount to a true “home”. This is not a place she wanted to go to right from the start of the novel, and is not a place she could identify as her own. It was only in the caves that she encounters homeliness and enlightenment that allowed her to thrive. Both Delia's anxiety and Cissy's aversion remain emblematic of how Allison herself addresses the region in her lectures and non-fiction writings. In this way, in *Cavedweller*, the very trope of homecoming itself is essentially binary, bringing together the life journeys of the mother and the daughter—and while Delia's return to the South is the framework for the plot, it is Cissy's discovery of homeliness and empowerment in the caves that is Allison's answer to the Southern socioeconomic oppression she scorns so strongly.

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“CHCĘ WRÓCIĆ DO DOMU” –
OBRAZY PODWÓJNEGO POWROTU DO DOMU
W POWIEŚCI *CAVEDWELLER* DOROTHY ALLISON

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest omówienie strategii narracji powieści *Cavedweller* (1998) Dorothy Allison. W książce Delia postanawia wrócić na Południe ze swoją córką Cissy, aby ponownie zjednoczyć się z rodziną. Podczas gdy w jej rodzinnej miejscowości Delię spotyka ostracyzm, jej córka odnajduje na Południu tożsamość i poczucie przynależności w podziemnych jaskiniach w stanie Georgia. Dwie równoległe historie powrotu do domu przedstawione są w powieści przez binarne obrazy, które samej Allison pozwalają lepiej zrozumieć regionalne traumy i napięcia.

Słowa kluczowe: literatura amerykańskiego Południa; Dorothy Allison; *Cavedweller*; binarne obrazy; trauma.