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# Representations of the Female *Bildungsroman* in Modern Narratives of Travel

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Doctor of Philosophy

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## Declaration of Originality

I, Angela Carlton \_\_\_\_\_ certify that I am the sole author of this doctoral thesis and that I have compiled it in my own words. I also certify that this thesis has not been already submitted for any other degree or diploma in any other university or institution. Additionally, all the sources and literature that have been used to support my argument have been rightfully acknowledged and referenced.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the concept of a reworked *Bildungsroman* in modernist texts that have not previously been studied together. This project maintains that *The Voyage Out* (1915), *Women in Love* (1920), and *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1941) expand traditional *Bildungsroman* and Grand Touristic narratives by representing gender limitations within the literary frameworks. I demonstrate how the texts represent non-conservative paths of development for women by using travel as a mechanism for exploring the impossibility of integration and equality between the sexes, as well as a means for demonstrating how women are constructed, perceived and historically mythologized in a foreign space.

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## INTRODUCTION

My project argues for ways of looking at canonical authors, such as D.H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf, as marginal. In this endeavor, I examine Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1915), Lawrence's *Women in Love* (1920), and Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1941). In this thesis, I take the lead from Mao and Walkowitz's idea of "vertical expansion", first presented in "The New Modernist Studies" and which set out to challenge "once quite sharp boundaries between high art and popular forms of culture" (Mao, Walkowitz 737), to investigate how the tradition of the *Bildungsroman* can be reconsidered in the context of modernism in relation to female narrative, collective narrative and narrative based on autobiographical fact. In my thesis, I examine in particular how modernism helped to reshape the traditional *Bildungsroman* in relation to women's development. In a traditional *Bildungsroman* the "formative years and spiritual education"<sup>1</sup> do not necessarily rely on successful integration of the protagonist into his or her society, as there are many examples of *Bildungsromane* in which the spiritual maturity also involves a recognition of one's limitations, through the stripping down of all delusions, and being a mature person.<sup>2</sup> However, the *Bildungsroman* does usually involve an education or experience of life, which is unequal for female heroines, and the genre does not typically involve a marriage plot, which does often permeate novels of female development. In this thesis I will argue that the growing up and development of self-awareness involves the realization of the struggles that women still face in the very achieving of maturity, and of the problems raised by their continued participation in a society that doesn't recognize them as equal members of that society.

My study thus represents a further contribution to and critical expansion of the reflection on the *Bildungsroman* in such works as, among others, Franco Moretti's *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (1987) and Gregory Castle's *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* (2006). Though Moretti expanded the genre by arguing that youth epitomized the genre's instability and dynamism and could include modernist novels, he only included in the latter texts authored by men (James Joyce's *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, Rainer Maria

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<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica: a dictionary of arts, sciences, literature and general information* (1910).

<sup>2</sup> See for example Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1779) and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1861).

Rilke's *Malte Laurids Bridge*) and argued that WWI put an end to the genre by opening up the way to modernist experimentation, with the focus no longer on the possibility of growth but of regression (Moretti 22-24; 38).<sup>3</sup> Departing from Moretti's interpretation, Castle suggested that the conventional narrative structure of self-awareness and education associated with the classical *Bildungsroman* did in fact persist in modernism, though its focus became failure and sometimes traumatic episodes in the formation of the individual (thus allowing the genre to acquire a new sense of social and critical purpose), and with the use of memory sometimes replacing the linear narrative of personal growth. Relative to these investigations, my study seeks to expand the focus from individual growth to include collective growth, and to trace in the evolution of the genre the influence of varied phenomena such as the legacy of the Grand Tour, modern tourism, the shift from industrialism to capitalism, technological advances and WWI; it is for this reason that I include Lawrence's *Women in Love*, which can be said to explore collective growth and the memory of generations; and West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, which may be seen to focus on the failure of an entire nation to develop. The traditional *Bildungsroman* of the nineteenth century often incorporated travel as a trope to aid the protagonist's journey of development; it also often contained an emphasis on integrative development that was necessarily patriarchal. In exploring these texts—which can be said to belong to established canons, but can at the same time be deemed to have been produced from different margins of that canon, as will be discussed later—I will also focus on the evolving representation of travel and tourism, specifically in terms of gender and sexuality.

In this Introduction I will first explain my choice of three primary texts, outlining their status at the margins of modernism and the main features they share, to justify my consideration of them together. I will then review some key precursor novels that form a lineage that my three texts extend and depart from; and then outline some of the principal critical, thematic and theoretical contexts on which I rely, including modernism, bad modernism and geomodernism; the generic question of the *Bildungsroman*; and the thematic and structural role of travel. All of

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<sup>3</sup> Moretti discusses how the *Bildungsroman* can be expected to go through “countless metamorphoses, to enhance the existence of the modern individual” (38) after explaining that marriage was one of the key factors signifying maturity in the traditional *Bildungsroman*, but that in a modern world it does not serve the same social pact or have the same clout.



these aspects will be discussed from the perspective of gender and in particular of the representation of women's evolving—though often still stifled—roles. By bringing together the challenge to classic literary forms such as the realist novel, the utilization of the journey motif and the *Bildungsroman* with their legitimization of the Grand Tour and its purpose to educate and refine white, Western, male elites, I aim to show how these texts engage in an extended reflection on forms and themes that need to be overcome, but which continue to shape women's social position and psychological make up. What makes this study unique is that the three texts I have chosen, never studied together, focus on female heroines who, through embarking on these traditionally male-oriented journeys, also fully expose, however, the exclusionary limits of modern British literature. The white women journeying in these narratives are positioned as simultaneously part of the privileged and colonizing elite but also as marginalized others who are meant to support the aims of British males. Placing a subjugated yet privileged woman outside her domestic sphere works to problematize literary forms aligned with patriarchy and supports methods for reevaluating traditional forms from a new, female perspective, such as the female *Bildungsroman* and a reworked Grand Tour. It is through revisiting these reworked forms and expanding on their theme of the female usurpation of male plot that I plan to align travel within these texts with crossing gender and sexuality borders. I will thus consider women's language and women's appropriation and transformation of traditionally male literary genres such as the *Bildungsroman*. Rita Felski has argued in *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics* (1989) that Hélène Cixous does not show concretely how the female style of writing that she advocates for in "The Laugh of the Medusa" and which she calls *écriture féminine* can be technically accomplished and achieve any social change; in her book Felski thus argues for moving beyond what she views as the reductive focuses of second wave feminists like Cixous that, Felski claims, would construct an aesthetic based on an illusionary connection between experimental writing and female emancipation. It is with this debate in mind that my thesis considers novelistic choices concerning style, character construction and representation of socio-historical contexts in the narrative. In *The Voyage Out*, for example, I will consider style in Woolf's focus on things uttered, interruptions, silences and half-formed words; socio-historical contexts in West's attempt to reclaim the lost

history of women, especially surrounding important historical events; and character construction in Lawrence's endeavor to create a new type of heroine who makes proactive and bold choices pertaining to her own sexuality and career, as we see in Gudrun in *Women in Love*. In these new representations the female heroines seek to express their reality in their own terms.

So then, what were the formal and thematic modernist characteristics of Woolf's *The Voyage Out*, Lawrence's *Women in Love* and Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, and in what way do these texts locate themselves, as I have said above, on the margins of modernism?

Most critics agree that Virginia Woolf's literary and artistic development can be traced through her novels, in particular, in chronological order: *The Voyage Out* (1915), *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), finally culminating in her book *The Waves* (1931), which, though not her last novel, is usually considered the zenith of her artistic style. *The Voyage Out* belongs to this modernist trajectory for its fragmentation and fluidity of language and its innovative use of form. Woolf experiments with internal character narration, as well as third-person omniscient narrator, while testing limits of that third-personal narration. She uses stream-of-consciousness and some degree of her tunneling technique, which Woolf discovered while writing *Mrs. Dalloway* in 1923. In her diary from that same year on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, Woolf writes that she had discovered a "tunneling process", which allowed her to "tell the past by installments" (*The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, Vol. 2, p. 272) for her characters. This method Woolf used to illustrate how a commonplace or everyday activity might trigger a memory or "tunneling backwards" in our mind's eye and how that memory will then influence the emotions of the present; we can see this method already being developed especially as Rachel recalls her childhood with her aunts and alludes to a past trauma from her father. Thus form is manipulated in order to find a new expression for women. At the same time, however, as Woolf's first novel, *The Voyage Out* may be seen as her least sophisticated; the third-person omniscient narrator continues to dominate, as does the adherence to chronological time. As her most autobiographical novel, it may be also deemed the most likely to reveal her personal feelings on matters of love and sexuality, as Woolf is often directly associated with its protagonist Rachel.

Woolf married her husband at roughly the same time she finished *The Voyage Out* and so it is easy to parallel Rachel's impending marriage to Hewet at the end of the text with Woolf's. *The Voyage Out* can therefore be associated with Woolf's own maiden voyage as a novelist, and it can be seen to be still at the margins of (insofar as still developing towards) her more fully established modernist practice and the maturity of style of her later works.

The work of a male writer often described as misogynistic<sup>4</sup>, *Women in Love* can also be seen to be peripheral to modernism, though for different reasons than those identified for Woolf. Lawrence was provocative and distanced himself from the modernist canon.<sup>5</sup> His work was both traditional and completely radical; his sexual explicitness resulted in his novels being banned. More or less a sequel to *The Rainbow* and following a provincial, lower-middle class family, *Women in Love* can be classed as a "bad modernist" in Mao & Walkowitz's sense, which, is the argument that after modernism had been seen as "bad" (subversive and anti-conventional), almost by definition, by its critics then it began to evolve into the mainstream and into the standard against which the value of literature was measured. Therefore, Mao & Walkowitz aim to recover a sense of the "badness" of modernism. Lawrence's text would belong to this reclaimed brand of "bad modernism" insofar as it maintains a resistance to being accepted within or assimilated to recognizable, familiar modernist forms, continuing to pose a challenge both to the champions and the detractors of modernism.

D.H. Lawrence's writing methods were very different from Woolf's or Joyce's (if we take them, for convenience, as prototypical modernists). Lawrence was principally concerned with continuity and "flow" in his work. Through this method, Lawrence believed he would remain in touch with a more authentic writing and sentiment for his novels. At first glance, his novels do appear to have many of the characteristics of a realist novel, which is perhaps why critics like

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<sup>4</sup> "In 1970 Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* attacked Lawrence for misogyny and phallocentrism (behaving as though the world revolves around penises). The feminist critique knocked Lawrence off his Priest-of-Love pedestal, since when he hasn't nearly managed to clamber back on" (Catherine Brown, "D.H Lawrence and Women", 2014).

<sup>5</sup> See e.g.: "Lawrence never quite belonged among the modernists anyway. Impatient with their aestheticism, he declared that his concern was with 'man alive.'" Kunkel, Benjamin. "The Deep End." *The New Yorker*, 6 July 2017, [www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/12/19/the-deep-end](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/12/19/the-deep-end).

Henry James were so quick to dismiss him, as James briefly commented on Lawrence in his article “The New Novel”, claiming that of all the emerging modern authors worth reviewing, Lawrence hung “in the dusty rear” (James 3). Lawrence stuck to traditional chronological methods to indicate the passage of time, while his narration is third-person omniscient—although David Lodge in *The Modes of Modern Writing* (1977) does suggest that Lawrence was vague enough about dates as to add some ambiguity to what would otherwise be a hard reality of events leading into other events. What is most striking about Lawrence’s style, Lodge comments, is his lexical repetition. Lawrence uses key words again and again so that

[Each] clause or premise takes its impetus from an item in the preceding one, the repeated words knitting the units together in the pattern of Ab Bc Cd De etc. Yet the effects of progression and continuity this produces is a kind of illusion—the discourse is not really moving forward to encompass new facts, but unfolding the deeper significance of the same facts (Lodge 200).

While modernism is generally concerned with urban metropolitan contexts, Lawrence’s focus is different. Andrew Harrison refers to the unique position of Lawrence as both central and peripheral (or regional, which is the term he uses) to modernism by his sense of “modernist awareness” which involves how his “characters and cultural communities inhabit their own ‘worlds’” (Harrison 46). Harrison’s further point that Lawrence’s words “form an engagement with regional landscapes, demonstrating how formal innovations [...] developed in response to an exploration of conflicted regional identities” (46), illuminates *Women in Love* as expanding the themes that had been the traditional domain of the *Bildungsroman* genre by representing “modernist awareness” or newly inhabited “worlds” created by consciousness as the psychic space where the community, and individual members of the community in crisis, go in order to achieve “self-estrangement” from their reality where development had become impossible. This is a similar “self-estrangement” to what Lawrence enacted in his personal life.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, Rebecca West’s *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* is probably the most contentious of the three examples of (peripherally) modernist literature that I include. While West was better

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, Jacobson comments on how compared to T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats, Lawrence’s denouncement of modern society was much more radical and pure, considering that Eliot still found solace in the institution of the Anglican church, while Yeats believed in the “country-house”; Lawrence rejected all of modern society and this set him apart from his contemporaries as an outsider (Jacobson 81).

known as a journalist, there is little doubt that much of her earlier work can be regarded as modernist, especially her 1919 novel *The Return of the Soldier*, which experimented with Freudian psychoanalysis and was critical of war and patriarchal society. Peter Childs discusses *The Return of the Soldier* in *Modernism* (2000), stating, "In traditional terms [*The Return of the Soldier*] appears a story about salvation through [sic] unselfish love" (Childs 183), that operates through a series of binaries that the text then dismantles. "The novel also uses a complex modernist narrator who mediates between the reader and the story. Jenny is not entirely reliable in that she never acknowledges the sexual feelings she evidently has for her cousin" (Childs 184). Like Woolf's *The Voyage Out*, *The Return of the Soldier* is preoccupied with challenging gender roles. In fact, Woolf used Rebecca West in *A Room of One's Own* "as her example of the kind of feminist writer who drew hostility from contemporary patriarchs simply because she wrote about the equality of the sexes" (Childs 168). West was quite revolutionary in her personal life as well as her professional life. To quote Childs again: "West was a socialist, anti-imperialist and feminist. She turned from acting to journalism and wrote for *The Freewoman*, *The Clarion* and *The New Statesman* amongst other journals and newspapers" (Childs 168). It was when she began writing for *The Freewoman* that she changed her name from Cicily Fairchild to Rebecca West, a name she chose because it was the name of a heroine in Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* (Childs 168). West wrote against patriarchal institutions like marriage, which is how she originally met H.G. Wells after critiquing his work *Marriage* (Wells was married himself before entering into a longstanding affair with Rebecca West, which ultimately led to the birth of Rebecca West's only child.) Within her work as a journalist Rebecca West hoped to inspire *The Freewoman* to "develop [its literary side] arguing that a movement towards freedom of expression in literature should develop in its pages alongside Marsden's interest in ethics and philosophy" (Gasiorek 197). And her reputation as a respected writer amongst her male contemporaries meant that she became "the only woman featured in the first issue" (Gasiorek 211) of Wyndham Lewis's *Blast* (1914). West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, however, can be deemed peripheral insofar as she is "late" to modernism, experimenting with the representation of the self and of a catastrophic historical reality, directly experienced, in ways that are more than journalistic and strive towards the epical. *Black Lamb*

*and Grey Falcon* is unique for combining a multiplicity of forms, and for its manipulation of historical and journalistic narratives as a means for dissenting against war, and can thus also be seen as belonging to the margins of modernism, aligned with the movement's revolutionizing of form, and yet grounded in factual narrative and endowed with a clear socio-political aim.

All three texts thus can be seen as liminal to modernism, both part of and yet at the edges of its sphere of attraction. One related special focus of this thesis is in regards to the way death is represented within the three novels. All of them center around death as symbolic disunity. I interpret the link between the deaths of individuals and the death of society as a shift from nineteenth-century realism towards a twentieth-century reworked *Bildungsroman* of which I follow the evolution, from the death of Rachel in *The Voyage Out* through to the death of society in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. In this sense my thesis is also about uncovering the innovative paths of development and non-conservative models of resolution for women. This also helps explain my choice to include a male author such as D.H. Lawrence, which may appear inconsistent in a study of texts inspired by a reworked form of the *Bildungsroman* that explore methods of departure from traditionally male forms. However, similar to Woolf, and significant to this study, is Lawrence's dealing with the theme of death and dissolution as a "route to a new creation, [...] there may be a kind of heroism in following it, even at the cost of one's own extinction" (Lodge 205; Lodge uses these words to describe the conclusion of Lawrence's "England, My England", but they also apply to the theme of *Women in Love*).

At this point, it may be useful to point out two other reasons why I am including Lawrence in this thesis. Firstly, I am mindful of Castle's observation that the modernist *Bildungsroman* presented characters that were more "psychologically embedded in relationships" (213) and he recognizes that this is especially true for women characters, and even more so with women characters' relationships to other women. This is an important focus of Lawrence's novel, as I shall discuss in the chapter dedicated to it, and analysing these relationships will be useful to throw light on and contextualise other relationships that advance the development of the female protagonists of my other two texts.

And secondly, this decision is supported, indirectly, by the work of Susan Stanford Friedman, who, in her *Mappings: Feminism and Cultural Geographies of Encounter* (1998), argues in favour of moving away from gender determinations. For Friedman, the future of academic feminism “involves moving beyond gender, involves, to be more precise, recognizing and intensifying shifts that have already begun taking place in part because of what I am calling the new geographics of identity” (Friedman 17). In this context, Friedman discusses two terms which she borrows from Elaine Showalter (1977) and which relate to different ways of reading and analyzing gendered texts: gynocriticism and gynesis. Gynocriticism refers to the tradition of holding texts authored by women as an inherently separate category from texts authored by men because of the existence of patriarchy as a commonality for all women, despite varying situational, temporal or spatial aspects of the individual women writers. Whereas gynesis, a mode of reading and interpretation which emerges “out of poststructuralist critique of the author as source or origin of expressivity, has been more concerned with the textual effects of gender than with gendered writers” (26). I find that there is a correlation between the way the writers experiment with form and with their characters’ sexuality and gender. However, I do recognize, along with Friedman, that correlation between the two modes of examination can be productive when varied situations, privileges or formations of authors’ identities, including gender identity, can affect textual representations of feminine, female and other. Poststructuralist analysis was central to Friedman’s conceptions of “female writing” as a way to disrupt patriarchy. In this vein, I find Hélène Cixous’s *écriture féminine* useful as an anti-realist writing that takes meandering directions, rather than following a straight-forward “masculine” style. The analysis of style is intricately connected to the ideological critique of patriarchy and supports the inclusion of a problematic author such as Lawrence, who despite being a male is still disruptive to the conventions and traditions of masculine style that Cixous describes. *Écriture féminine* is a term Cixous first employs in *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1976) to introduce the idea of a new mode of writing for women that would oppose what she sees as traditionally masculine methods. Cixous claims that her newly presented style of female writing has two aims, “to break up, to destroy and

to foresee the unforeseeable, to project” (Cixous 1) but also to break away from “the old (*la nouvelle de l'ancien*)” (Cixous 875).

For Cixous, until the new female writing, fiction has

[Been] run by a libidinal and cultural—hence political, typically masculine—economy; that this is a locus where the repression of women has been perpetuated, over and over, more or less consciously in a manner that’s frightening since it’s often hidden or adorned with the mystifying charms of fiction; this locus has grossly exaggerated all the sins of sexual opposition (and not sexual difference), where woman has never had her turn to speak—this being all the more serious and unpardonable in that change, the space that can serve as a springboard for subversive thought, the precursory movement of a transformation of social and cultural structures. (Cixous 879)

The texts examined in this study contain instances of writing that can be associated with the aims of *écriture féminine*, by using emotionally charged, poeticized, language to further or disrupt the plot. “It’s time to liberate the New Woman from the Old by coming to know her—by loving her for getting by, for getting beyond the Old without delay” (Cixous 878). In this regard, Woolf in particular anticipates *écriture féminine* by the way she describes how stories about women should not be focused on endings but on beginnings and the displacement of the old path, they are in effect “roads going nowhere” and should be as much to do with improvisation as with logic (see Cixous, *Reading with Clarice Lispector* 4).

Cixous emphasizes the creation of a new expression that would be appropriate for a new understanding of womanhood. This includes *Women in Love* which, despite being authored by a man, offers politically subversive representations of women and attempts to find new modes of expression for female sexuality. I acknowledge that Lawrence is often problematic and inherently sexist in this objective; however, the book works to transform cultural representations of women. However, rather than focusing on the body and on conceptions of a pure femininity as emanating from more body-conscious writing modes, as Cixous does, my focus in this thesis is on the significance of unraveling conventional development plots and realist structures that were written for male protagonists. Thus, while I wish to highlight the affinity to Cixous’s *écriture féminine* in some of the stylistic choices by the three writers that I discuss, my focus will be, rather, on the combination of stylistic, generic and structural narrative revisions that elaborate what may be described as an evolution of *Bildungsroman* when it involves the development of women or any societal integration of women—for the challenging positioning of female characters as resistant,



in their development. This resistance is seen through the negation of traditionally patriarchal plot narratives, such as the marriage or motherhood, and also for the non-conservative outcomes of the texts, which include themes of violence (Rachel wants to throw herself into the sea; Hermione smashes a snow globe over Birkin's head), discord (Gudrun abandons Gerald for another lover without any particular reason; Rebecca West's inability of preventing Gerda accompanying her on her journeys, which mount in tension and snobbery) and chaos (Laura Crich drowns at night and her recovered body is described as having strangled her new husband to death; West trying to make sense out of the accounts from the female family members surrounding the Archduke's assassination).

My three primary texts have in common modernist authors' depiction of movement beyond borders that embody a psychological death wish of the characters as members of "civilisation". They long for escape from their role as tools of an increasingly mechanized and visibly violent society. There is, I contend, along with the need for analysis of the representation and effects of gender in the texts, a need to focus on the periphery of the biographical details of the authors, especially in understanding their commitment towards sacrificing traditional novelistic conventions or forms. This applies to Lawrence too. As Chris Baldick points out in *The Modern Movement* (2004),

Despite its benignly erotic title, *Women in Love* is a book about doom and dissolution, and among the many self-destructions we witness in it is that of Lawrence as the novelist, now sacrificed in order to be reborn as a visionary romancer. Driven to despair by the War, Lawrence was by now embroiled in fantasies of mass extermination and had come to regard humanity as a verminous infestation of the earth. From that position, inevitably, the commitment of the traditional novel to the sympathetic portrayal of human individuals within social relations was no longer Lawrence's [...]. (Baldick 230)

Another, related aspect that joins these three apparently quite different texts is the way they include and represent actual travel, which leads to crossing borders, limits and sexuality. Woolf, Lawrence and West extend the shift that was produced from the transformation of Grand Touristic travel to modern tourism into an imagined realm with alternative histories and the desire to journey continuously outward in an escape from patriarchy, violence and prejudice. This new writing of dissent problematized the female *Bildung* and demanded a non-return to the existent structures of home. The journeys in these texts result in a non-return to the patriarchal "home"

that was the hallmark of traditional Western journey narratives from as far back as Homer's *Odyssey*. As Castle put it, "In the female *Bildungsroman*, this process [of development] is complicated by the fact that the very society that ought to permit such accommodations delimits or represses the process of self-development even before it starts. That is to say, it delimits or represses the idea of female self-development on principle" (Castle 215). Castle claims that the female *Bildungsroman* of the nineteenth century anticipated the modernist *Bildungsroman* that serves a similar critique of the traditional form—a form that is "gendered male and that women must either give in or give up hope" (218). My chapters explore texts that participate in finding new meaning by unique manipulations of realist narratives. For instance *The Voyage Out* highlights Rachel's inability to integrate into a society, as her journey that by all appearances is a traditional coming of age story is subverted by her inability to communicate. *Women in Love* displays repetitions of words and the appearance of a spontaneous structure to create a sense of urgency and chaos. Lawrence presents his readers with an unusual focus on the extremity of emotional reactions in his characters in lieu of any clear or rational plot development as a way of translating the violence innate in capitalism. It is worth noting that the literal travel in *Women in Love* is situated at the very end of the text (at least travel abroad) rather than being as extensive and pervasive as is the case in *The Voyage Out* and *Black Lamb*; however, I discuss travel in this novel more broadly, as I see it nuanced by Lawrence's conceptions of women and men trying to find "their path in life" (Brown, "D.H. Lawrence and Women"<sup>7</sup>). Thus I would argue that the conception of journey in the work extends to the generational journey of the Brangwen family, in as much as it becomes the journey of couples to "polarize" or find balance with each other; the evolution of the sisters culminates in the actual instance of travel abroad that occurs at the book's end.

Travel is, of course, central to *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. Here, Rebecca West manipulates the travelogue, journalistic writing and historiography by combining mundane,

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<sup>7</sup> Catherine Brown's blog article gives six reasons why Lawrence should be reevaluated by feminists, including that he writes strong female characters with sexual appetites. In this regard I investigate the way he reimagines a heteronormative couple and the development of love unions and family, particularly.

seeming superfluous, everyday details with an extensive poeticized rendering of the history of the Balkans, as well as producing long soliloquies of dialog meant to present a certain political perspective. It was as a journalist that West was commissioned by the British Council to write about the Balkans as she found it, the impetus being that West's findings would shed light on how the tenuous nationalist binding of Yugoslavia, prior to 1914, might have inspired or festered cultural sentiments that contributed to World War I. In *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, West writes herself as her protagonist, on a quest to discover the answers of a nation's history, culture and mythology; West makes clear that she is taking the initiative to find the answers for herself. In many of her novels, and certainly in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, West employs techniques of psychological investigation to analyze orthodoxies of sexuality, gender and class (Childs 142). "West was one of the first novelists to make use of the psychological realism of Henry James, on whom she'd already written a book" (Childs 184). Thus I consider *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* as expanding the *Bildungsroman* by way of its bold defying of the traditional form (blending fiction and autobiography), its comprehensive scope and the unique mythos that West employs as she travels through the Balkans, with a spiritual guide and her husband as observers. Despite its autobiographical core, *Black Lamb* approaches the *Bildungsroman* by following the development of West's consciousness (and that of womankind) as she decides to learn first-hand about the causes of World War I; I will discuss in the last chapter of this thesis the experimental writing method that she uses to do so, as well as the problematic of Rebecca West as a western, British woman placing herself as the representative voice of the Balkans, and the concept of women as outside of nation and outside of place as a potential justification for this position.

As I suggested above, one of the principal aims of my thesis is to explore how the primary texts examined result in a non-return to the patriarchal structure and established "home" that was previously the hallmark of Western journey narratives, and in this respect I propose that the authors I have chosen for this study set out to revise the language and form of the novel, including, in particular, the depiction of travel to the South and the tradition that develops out of the *Bildungsroman* by creating works that challenged classical forms in their contemporary context; as also suggested, however, their ability to effectively negate these accepted

conventions was in part stymied by their continued operation within dominant systems of power and culture. For instance, the three texts in question were written for British audiences and feature ostensibly British characters encountering and assimilating foreign landscapes in order to reflect on boundaries, identities and limitations. In all three texts, the female characters are voyaging outside of institutional aspects of patriarchy; for instance in *Women in Love*, Gudrun and Ursula are on a journey to develop who they are as individuals outside of the patrilineal heritage established for them in Lawrence's earlier text relating to their family, *The Rainbow* (1915). However, as we shall see in more detail in the following chapters, despite similarly liberating elements within the novels, there are an equal number of problems pertaining to how the characters receive and use the foreign, which maintain the protagonists as fixtures of the colonizing elite. An example of this would be the way Rebecca West inserts herself into her own text, attempting perhaps what Cixous would see as a blending of her personal history with the "history of all women, as well as national and world history" (Cixous 882; though West's style is distant from that advocated by Cixous), except for the obvious problem that West is recording the history and mythology of the Balkans from a British woman's perspective, and so cannot actually understand the experience of the women she claims to be uncovering. Moreover, her intended audience is not the people of the Balkans, or the dead to whom she dedicates the book, but British citizens, in the hopes that her insights will alter their preconceptions of the Slavs, and thereby possibly contribute to the prevention of future war, although it is important to point out that the dates for when she starts (1936) and finishes her project (1942) indicate that her aim is already doomed. Thus in the following chapters I consider the way that language, images, and gender codes are presented to disseminate, influence, as well as highlight changes within the British condition.

As part of my analysis of the texts, I will discuss the evolving shift in the traditional *Bildungsroman*, observed for example in motifs of touristic travel that emerged from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. These motifs include the notion that women who traveled abroad would experience an awakening induced by the romantic climate, which would be problematically portrayed by conflating foreign exoticism with a pseudo-liberation found

through a romantic “savior”. I will thus describe the evolution of female journey narratives through the three primary texts covered in this examination, firstly in *The Voyage Out* by Rachel’s refusal to take on the advice by those that would want to influence her towards becoming a suitable wife and mother, which by consequence leaves her without any avenue for personal development so that she finally dies. I will discuss how Woolf aims to parallel the spiritual death of patriarchal marriage to a physical death, and how Rachel’s inability to independently develop is the sickness brought on by the inequality of women in patriarchal society. Next, I will describe how this progression is furthered in *Women in Love*, as Gudrun chooses to reject Gerald at the end of the novel, picking another suitor who may otherwise be seen to be irrelevant to the text except for the fact that Loerke’s foreignness and interest in the arts distinguishes him from Gerald as heralding progress, universalism and newness. Gudrun is shown to make proactive choices towards her development, such as moving to London to pursue a career as an artist, and going to Germany at the novel’s conclusion. In this respect, she is seen to be advancing while Gerald is locked into a dying past of industrialism and inheritance as he continues his family’s coal mining business. This is a metaphor, I argue, that Lawrence uses to indicate that Gerald is blinded to the onslaught of cultural change—a blindness that eventually leads to his suicide at the end of the text. The central concept of the *Bildungsroman*—the process of becoming that leads to the character’s achievement of a form of more mature self-awareness—can be seen to continue to be relevant to while being recast in *Women in Love*, as the novel follows the development (or the lack thereof) of a group of people instead of a single individual.

Finally, I will look at *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* as drawing upon, developing and transforming the female *Bildungsroman* further by blending a multiplicity of forms. West inserts herself into the text and uses a combination of fiction and non-fiction as she journeys around the Balkans to record her observations and insights on the history, mythology, and the everyday life of the people. Her explicit objective is to write a comprehensive understanding of the country that might preclude another world war, and, by consequence, prevent the needless deaths of thousands of people. In this sense, we see the evolution of female *Bildungsroman* as West is thematizing collective experience through traveling in order to obtain knowledge and her own

personal voice as she tells stories. At the point of reaching *Black Lamb*, I will have to call into question the form of the *Bildungsroman* entirely, as this is pushed towards the merger of fiction and autobiography, possibly towards the more recent form of autofiction.

As part of my discussion, I will note how nineteenth-century social pressures on women centered their development on being better wives and maternal figures. This pressure towards self-improvement for the sake of men ensured the isolation of women. This isolation, paired with a journey abroad, fostered an inward and spiritual journey for women. The crossroads between nineteenth-century internal development for women and twentieth-century expansion and incorporation of women as equal to men is particularly interesting when interpreted in travel narratives, as modern means of connecting across cultural and class boundaries created a preoccupation with the “other”. I will thus investigate the degree to which different landscapes inspire rebellion or independence in the female characters and also if they develop independently or as a result of a romance or liaison with male characters. However, as pervasive as the theme of the foreign in the domestic may be in Woolf’s, Lawrence’s and West’s work, I have selected to focus on texts that represent instances of travel and movement that characterize women moving outside their domestic spheres, crossing the limits of their culture’s morality and directly, and often violently, encountering the foreign or unfamiliar. By focusing on themes of travel I hope to illustrate the various methods these outwardly quite different texts and authors use to express patriarchal limitations for women at home and abroad and how death and violence is symbolized within these limitations.

The physical and spiritual deaths are presented differently in the different texts, but all illustrate how pushing boundaries tests the limits of control. The characters cross national borders into mythologized locations that also represent the text “breaking free” from established, male-oriented development stories into “uncharted” female space. Though death remains an integral part of each text, I will argue that in the three principal novels discussed in this thesis death becomes inextricably linked to the way patriarchal control destroys possibilities for women. Thus, the texts aim to arrive at a literary space where female heroines can express their reality in their own terms. Rachel wants to express herself, but she lacks the appropriate understanding of how

she succumbs to (physical) death instead of (spiritual) death through marriage to Hewet—in her death, she is also unable to return “home”, which would signify the completion of growth in the traditional *Bildungsroman*; Gudrun sabotages her relationship with Gerald for freedom and thereby destroys it; and finally Rebecca West writes herself as epic hero on a quest to discover the answers of a nation’s history, culture and mythology for herself instead of waiting for another war led by men to bring the fragments of news to her as she waits, Penelope-like, at “home” in her (hospital) bed. In Rebecca West’s text the hospital bed becomes a double metaphor for the sickened and threatened state of society as long as women are associated with domesticity or deemed the weaker sex.

Before I turn to the analysis of the novels in the three main chapters of this thesis, in the next chapter I will review some of the central literary text, critical approaches and theoretical concepts on which my analyses will rely. First, however, I need to add a short explanation of what I have chosen *not* to do. Insofar as my chosen focus involves female travel and transformation, this may raise the expectation that a text such as Forster’s *A Passage to India*, which includes the travel abroad of the young woman Miss Quested, should be part of my discussion. However, Forster’s novel takes place within a British imperial colony (which since 1918 had been given a measure of self-rule), and its exploration of the notions of the domestic and the foreign within this formally established colonial context would require consideration of quite different structures and relationships than those engaged by the three texts I have selected. These continue to relate to a European milieu that, even when marginal, as in Santa Marina, or othered (in Dainotto’s sense—see below) as in the Alps or the Balkans, means that the travelers remain within a range of cultural parameters that are still relatable to their domestic/national-cultural experience. This is not the case in the setting of *A Passage to India*, where the cultural encounter is regulated by specific colonial rules. This is not to say, of course, that there aren’t analogies. The episode in the Marabar caves, where Miss Quested has her overwhelming, incomprehensible and frightening experience, leading to accusing Dr. Aziz of having attacked her, is a case in point, as it could be seen to parallel the nearly hallucinatory episode that Rachel has in the Amazon forest when she sees a two-headed creature standing above her (I will analyse this in the chapter on *The Voyage*

*Out*). However, *A Passage to India*'s development of this as a specifically colonial clash of cultures and prejudices moves Forster's novel into quite a different sphere, especially as it proves destructive of the possibility of friendship between the men, Dr. Fielding and Dr. Aziz, rather than transformative for the young woman. Thus, while I acknowledge that a study of these analogies would also be productive, I have chosen—even if it were for no other reasons than the length allowed for a dissertation—to exclude from my inquiry texts that belong to an explicitly colonial setting.



## CHAPTER ONE: LITERARY PRECURSORS AND MODERNISM

### Literary Precursors

To examine the literary tradition out of which my three main texts develop, I travel back to a selection of antecedent texts that involve episodes of travel south for their female heroines. I will thus focus on issues surrounding new modes of tourism and analyze similarities and differences between representations of the English and American girl abroad, as well as the notion of geographical expansion; I will also undertake a review of how these novelists so far have handled Italy and Italians, why Italy is written as a place of death, and will ask if an evolution has occurred. In doing so, I will consider questions in particular that are critical aspects of travel's transformation.

*Little Dorrit* (1857) and *Middlemarch* (1872) are obvious novels to use as a starting platform to illustrate the shift towards modern travel. In *Middlemarch*, Casaubon informs Dorothea that their wedding journey to Rome is his second trip to the city. He first travelled there in 1816 to visit the Vatican museum. Significantly then, Casaubon would have been amongst the earliest travellers able to see the Vatican museum when its collections had been restored after the fall of Napoleon, designating him as an earlier archetype of tourist. From this position, he considers his original journey "the epoch" of his life and goes on to say of Rome, "Indeed I think it is one among several cities to which an extreme hyperbole has been applied—'see Rome and die' but in your case I would propose an emendation and say, see Rome as a bride, and live henceforth as a happy wife" (Eliot 184-85). Thus Casaubon still regards travel as a means for the acquisition of knowledge, as did the Grand Tourists. He also does not see travel to constitute the same thing for himself and for Dorothea. However, Rome comes to embody an epoch in Dorothea's existence, as well.

Dorothea remembered [the journey] to the last with the vividness with which we all remember epochs in our experience when some dear expectation dies, or some new motive is born. (Eliot 193)

The prevailing archetype of the Grand Tourist is also represented in *Little Dorrit*. In the first guesthouse where the Dorrit family stays after their riches have been acquired, we are shown

examples of the type of travelers one might meet in the middle of the nineteenth-century. The Dorrit party consists “of an elderly lady, two grey-haired gentlemen, two young ladies, and their brother. These were attended (not to mention four guides), by a courier, two footmen, and two waiting-maids” (Dickens 434). The Dorrits’ experience of travelling over the Alps towards Italy is luxurious, but it is implied that Mr. Dorrit, being new and unfamiliar with the way the rich travel, blunders and is therefore not a true Grand Tourist. When one innkeeper allows another traveler to occupy one of Mr. Dorrit’s booked rooms, Mr. Dorrit reacts out of embarrassed anger, “How do you dare to act like this? Who am I that you—ha—separate me from other gentlemen” (Dickens 459).

Alison Booth’s “Little Dorrit and Dorothea Brooke: Interpreting the Heroines of History” (1986) raises interesting points of comparison on *Middlemarch* and *Little Dorrit*. Booth argues that the novels emphasize “the true interpretation of the secular ‘progress’ of the heroine, involved as she is in a complex of independent fates” (Booth 196). This supports this study’s focus on novels that have shifted away from traditional conventions, religion and the upholding of a moral code as a guide for protagonists towards a secular and independent consideration of characters’ personal motivations and developments. The shift is brought into focus by the mechanism of travel, as protagonists are forced to consider and critique their culture and home by comparison with the foreign and exotic. What is most relevant in Booth’s criticism is her recognition of both heroines’ journeys south as the catalyst for their own consignment to their fates: “Significantly it is in Italy, a land seeming to embody history, that each faces her disillusionment” (Booth 207).

*Little Dorrit* and *Middlemarch* are embedded with imagery equating the journey South to a descent or departure from societal practices and sanctions. These texts question the validity of the values the heroines are moving away from. Once Little Dorrit is outside of the prison, she is confronted with the pointlessness of her existence and feels stagnant, ironically, because in actuality she is free and travelling southward:

It was from this position that all she saw appeared unreal; the more surprising the scenes, the more they resembled the unreality of her own inner life [...] the descent into Italy, [...] let them out from a gloomy and dark imprisonment—all a dream—only the old mean Marshalsea a reality. (Dickens 488)

This passage highlights that Little Dorrit is aware of the technically improving turn the quality and circumstance of her life has taken but is unable to perceive these changes in reality; instead, the internal reality of her journey remains as bleak and confined as the prison she has physically left. This parallels Dorothea Brooke who likewise is disappointed with her journey to Rome when she discovers that despite “being led through the best galleries” (Eliot 160), “shown the grandest ruins” (160) and experiencing the “most glorious churches” (160), she cannot help but feel overwhelmed by the “dreamlike strangeness” (160) of experiencing Rome, “and she had ended by oftenest choosing to drive out to the Campagna [...] away from the oppressive masquerade of ages, in which her own life too seemed to become a masque with enigmatical costumes” (160).

*Little Dorrit* and *Middlemarch* are about women unable to realize their aspirations because of societal conventions. They are critiques of English society and uniform travel. The texts are written about an earlier time: published in 1857 and 1871 respectively, they are both set during the late 1820s to parallel developing historical conditions that would lead to political and cultural changes such as the reform bill (1832) and to satirize English regulations and attitudes that keep men and women alike imprisoned and enslaved. Dorothea and Little Dorrit make great sacrifices for the men in their lives but both realize that they will get nothing back from their sacrifice. “According to the tradition deriving from George Eliot and Henry James, a feminine ideal is an artistic failure. [...] perhaps [Dorothea’s] folly like Little Dorrit’s purity is designed to raise the rhetorical question: if idealism will not do, what better do we have?” (Booth 194-5).

It is in Henry James’s *Daisy Miller* (1879) and *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), which present us with naïve American girls adventuring into the world of dogmatic European conventions, that travel becomes a pervasive metaphor as a mechanism towards self-awareness and character death. The theme of *Daisy Miller* is the dichotomy between innocence and guilt. Winterbourne had been told that “American girls were exceedingly innocent” (14). He is able to displace his worry onto Daisy being an American girl, and thus blameless of her social blunders, which nonetheless eventually causes Winterbourne to abandon her. Daisy is not innocent of understanding, but rather actively and determinedly a nonconformist. She tells Winterbourne that she hopes he is “disappointed, or disgusted, or something” (26) with her behavior. Winterbourne

asks his aunt whether he thinks this makes Daisy *bad* or *guilty*; Mrs. Costello responds by saying, “whether or not being hopelessly vulgar is ‘bad’ is a question for the metaphysicians. They are bad enough” (31). What eventually determines Winterbourne’s ultimate disapproval of Daisy is her interest in the Italian Giovanelli, which results in her being outcast from American Roman society. Winterbourne asks himself, “would a nice girl—even allowing for her being a little American flirt—make a rendezvous with a presumably low-lived foreigner?” (37).

Daisy, like Isabel Archer in *The Portrait of a Lady*, clearly revels in her ability to break from convention. Daisy’s death stands for the failure of her belief in freedom from societal sanctions, which are represented by the fever she contracts. In *Portrait*, Isabel’s “illusion that freedom is an abstract quality inherent in the individual soul’ is an illusion that persists until the end of the novel” (Perloff 432). At the end of *Daisy Miller* it is unclear whether society, Giovanelli, Winterbourne, Daisy’s mother or Daisy herself are responsible for her death—just as in the end of *Portrait* it can be suggested that many of the characters are in some way liable to the unhappy ending for Isabel, and that Gilbert Osmond is not the sole “bad” character.

Mrs. Touchett, in *Portrait*, suggests that American women are “the companions of freemen” (126) exemplifying that even in America, it is not women who are free. The dubious Madame Merle understands this point when she says, “she was born under the shadow of the national banner” (213). She tells Isabel “a woman [...] has no natural place anywhere, wherever she finds herself she has to remain on the surface and more or less to crawl” (237). Isabel resists this depiction of women, but does not realize that others have orchestrated her life. For example, it is Ralph who is responsible for the inheritance of her large fortune, leaving her half of his inheritance. This newfound wealth does allow Isabel greater freedom of movement. Mrs. Touchett explains Isabel’s new liberties:

You can go and come, you can travel alone, you can have your own establishment: I mean of course if you’ll take a companion—some decayed gentlewoman, with a darned cashmere and dyed hair, who paints of velvet. [...] I only want you to understand how much you’re at liberty. You might take Miss Stackpole as your *dame de compagnie*. (264)

Isabel chooses Mr. Osmond in order to break societal expectations but she is actually miserable: “They were strangely married, at all events, and it was a horrible life” (503). Dorothea similarly marries Casaubon and Will of her own choosing. And Dorothea’s lament to Celia that

she was unable to carry out any plan (Eliot 674) is echoed by Isabel's statement to Madame Merle that she "can do nothing" (Portrait 477). Both come to realize their limitations whilst in Rome, where the ruins around them seem to dwarf their individual problems. Like Little Dorrit and Dorothea, Isabel goes for a drive alone in Rome, where she considers what the city represents to her:

But she had grown to think of it chiefly as the place where people had suffered. This was what came to her in the starved churches, where the marble columns, transferred from pagan ruins, seemed to offer her a companionship in endurance. (597)

The final novels that I wish to look at as precursors to my main texts are *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905) and *A Room with a View* (1908) by E.M. Forster. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Lilia falls in love with an Italian, Gino, much to the chagrin of her family. Philip travels to Italy on a mission to rescue Lilia from Gino. Philip blames Italy's "glamor" for persuading Lilia to forget her "position" in society (26). But of course, Lilia's supposed preference for Italian life (85) is also just as stereotyped as Philip's. In an early letter back to her family Lilia writes, "one sees the Italians unspoiled in all their simplicity and charm here" (9). However, Lilia is eventually jaded by newfound cultural restrictions that lead to her death. Lilia begins to determine that "Italy is such a delightful place to live in if you happen to be a man" (35). And she is shown to agree with the ultimate cause of taking her son to England to be raised, "an unexpected terror seized her at the thought of [...] any English child being educated at Monteriano" (33).

It is significant that the Grand Tour led to Italy being associated not only with sexual promiscuity but also with effeminacy. Chloe Chard explains in "Women Who Transmute into Tourist Attractions: Spectator and Spectacle on the Grand Tour" (2000) that romantic choice words such as "sublime", "grotesque", "sentimental", and "imagination" were meant to be sensed in topography intuitively by aesthetes; this sensing ability was considered a traditionally feminine quality. Thus the character Casaubon supposes that Will Ladislaw may become a Byron, a Chatterton, or a Churchill, all of whom were largely perceived as flamboyant figures. But Cecil Vyse in *A Room with A View* (1908) is a more extreme example of the cultured effeminate, being introduced as being "[L]ike a Gothic statue. Tall and refined, with shoulders that seemed braced square by an effort of the will [...]" (Forster 90). The "effort of the will" suggests that Cecil

struggles to fit into his own romantic visions of masculinity, which a moment later Forster aligns with asceticism: “he remained in the grip of a certain devil whom the modern world knows as self-consciousness, and whom the medieval and dimmer vision, worshipped as asceticism.” (Forster 90) Cecil is likened to a Medieval guard at the portals of a French cathedral, implying he upholds the codes of chivalric honor by disallowing anyone to “enter” Lucy (including himself). Chard notes that the traveling English combine travel with feminization by their continued insulation abroad. Indeed, when Cecil refers to himself as an *Inglese Italianato*, Lucy does not think it applicable to someone who “has spent a quiet winter in Rome with his mother” (116).

Others wish to restrain Lucy or push her in the direction of their own aspirations. Mr. Beebe discusses with Cecil his desire that Lucy should break free from the “strings” of Miss Bartlett, but leaves out that he desires to be the one to “tug” at the strings. Cecil suggests he has been responsible for breaking Lucy’s strings by becoming engaged to her, but regrets his metaphor. “He cursed his love metaphor; had he suggested that he was a star and that Lucy was soaring up to reach him?” (97). Lucy is thus objectified as a prize to mold and not as an equal.

Lucy’s interaction with Italian bodies results in her awareness of violence, poverty and cultural subjugation. Lucy is encouraged to look at Italians but not be touched by them. But whose life is really ending with violent death? James Michael Buzard touches on this point in *Forster’s Trespasses: Tourism and Cultural Politics* (1998). Buzard’s most germane point is that tourists use foreign bodies to project their desires and to attain fulfillment by imposition. “If tourism can offer its clients the enthralling opportunity to indulge their fantasies without the ordinary limitations domestic life imposes, some body somewhere must pay the price” (162). Buzard maintains that Forster uses the Italian body carelessly for the voyeuristic fantasies of English readers. “[The] discourse of tourism displays its ideological power, transforming the symbol of authenticity, the Italian male body, into an instrument entirely subsumed in its function within an English plot” (165).

The physical and spiritual deaths are presented differently in the antecedent texts I have examined, but all illustrate how testing cultural norms affect powerlessness. As the characters cross national borders into “primitive” locales, they also cross gender and sexuality borders and

there they surrender themselves, their privilege of nationality and past identities. The key difference between these antecedent texts and the main three texts of my examination is that though death remains an integral part of these later texts too, it is not in defeat that the characters submit to death but as a heroic alternative to patriarchy. Thus we arrive at a textual space where women can express their reality in their own terms, where Rachel in *The Voyage Out* chooses death instead of marriage and also chooses not to return “home”; Gudrun sabotages her relationship with Gerald for freedom and thereby destroys him in a complete opposite ending to the plot of, for example, *The Portrait of a Lady* where Isabel’s pursuit of independence leaves her destroyed; and finally Rebecca West writes herself as epic hero on a quest to discover the answers of a nation’s history, culture and mythology for herself instead of waiting for another war led by men to bring the fragments of news to her.

### **Modernism**

In *Human, All Too Human* (1878), Nietzsche writes of how he seeks shelter from the disparity of his views by artificially inventing “a suitable fiction” for himself, which he defends by arguing, “(and what else have poets ever done? And to what end does art exist in the world at all?)” (Kolocotroni 17). This, he argues, is a far preferable alternative than upholding the moralities and conventions that moored humanity in the past. In the same work, Nietzsche claims that all of his work is unified by “a persistent invitation to the overturning of habitual evaluations and valued habits” (17). It is this invitation to overturn the systems and conventions of the past that first marked modernism as a cultural movement, and within art, as an exploration for new methods of expressing humanity. Similarly, Karl Marx wrote in Thesis Eleven (1845) “The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various way; the point, however is to change it” (Marx 286), by which he meant to advocate that people should take action towards social change rather than simply theorizing on it. In Nietzsche’s retrospectively written, prefatory essay to *The Birth of Tragedy* (1886), he claimed that it was the duty of artists to influence cultural change by “overthrowing the Victorian fetishisation of morality” (Childs 66). For Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil*, art was the only justifiable phenomenon for human existence on Earth, “Art—and not

morality—is represented as the actual metaphysical activity of mankind...it is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence of the world is justified” (Childs 66). In Nietzsche’s own words, he claims that what has been historically considered immoral was just as beneficial for human development as what has been traditionally valued as good, “[...] we believe that severity, violence, slavery, danger in the street and in the heart, secrecy, stoicism, tempter’s art and delivery of every kind, —that everything wicked, terrible, tyrannical, predatory, and serpentine in man, serves as well for the human species as its opposite” (Nietzsche 57).

As modern thinkers like Nietzsche and Freud abandoned the moralism of the nineteenth-century for an agnostic “immoralism”, as Nietzsche was apt to describe it (*Beyond Good and Evil* 10), the accepted literary conventions also began to shift and be reevaluated. Some modernist writers, influenced by Marx and especially Freud, with his new methods of psychoanalysis and discovering the unconscious, were eager to provoke change by “waking up” their audience to the true nature of reality, time, conventions, and inner life. Realism, as a concepts and a set of conventions, also was to be re-thought.

Aesthetically, realism can be taken as the apparently faithful representation of actual experience in a detailed, evaluative style that supports a general belief in a common phenomenological world. Lodge provides a still relevant definition of realism as “the representation of experience in a manner which approximates closely to descriptions of similar experience in nonliterary texts of the same culture” (Lodge 31-2). However, this subscription to historical reality, prevalent in the nineteenth century, became problematic to philosophers such as Marx and Nietzsche for its reliance on general acceptance in categorization, classification, as well as a collective conviction in shared ethics, standards of beauty and historical causation. As the early twentieth-century brought with it social and economic revolutions, such as the transition from industrialism towards a more mobile form of capitalism, the beginning of the dissolution of colonial rule, women’s suffrage, and especially the World Wars, these collective societal convictions became less clearly defined and modernists used the opportunity to experiment with artistic forms that reflected the changes wrought within society. However, within the modern writing of the early twentieth century there always continued, alongside the experimental, formally



innovative movement, a strong realist strand—represented, for instance, by Bennett, Wells, Galsworthy, and which was then taken up by later writers like Auden, Isherwood, Orwell and Day Lewis. These writers opposed modernist trends and they were criticized for their continued subscription to nineteenth-century realism.

Tyrus Miller, in his comprehensive work on modernism (1999) argues that conceptions of modernism “go well beyond narrowly aesthetic concerns” to include considerations of “nationality, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality; questions of political engagement; concrete experiences of wars and other important historical events; developments in technology; and religious beliefs” (Miller 4). For instance, Miller describes how in Britain “historicocultural” myths developed such as the disappearance of “old England” brought about by the onslaught of destructive modernization. We can see such myths represented in all three of the primary works I interpret in this study: Woolf’s soothsayer character of Mr. Pepper in *The Voyage Out* parallels the crumbling roads and failing infrastructure of ancient Rome with the state of England’s modern Empire; Lawrence’s depiction of the English countryside being encroached upon by the industrialization and capitalistic mindset of the modern city resonate strongly in his representations of the doomed pastoral; and Rebecca West’s plea is to modern artists to appreciate and remember the beauty of the folk art as she traverses the Balkans in the hope to discover how cultural identity might be better understood in order to prevent future wars.

Modernism, it has been argued, precipitated a “change in human character”, as Virginia Woolf famously asserted in “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown” (1923), when she wrote that “on or about December 1910 human character changed” (70). Her essay is a response to Arnold Bennett’s criticism of her literary style. Woolf argued that the changes in human character warranted a transformation of the novel. Modernism reflected changes in the human condition and called for newly recognized “truths” and an original response to cultural happenings. According to Woolf in “Mrs. Bennett and Mr. Brown” there were two separate groups of modern writers, whom Woolf named as the Edwardians and the Georgians. In the Edwardian camp, Woolf placed Bennett, Wells and Galsworthy, writers that Lodge considers belong to that realist tradition which subscribe to a “common phenomenal world” and who use “I” as an “unqualified

sign of authenticity". In the Georgian camp, Woolf placed herself, as well as Conrad, Joyce and Eliot.

Similarly, Henry James also separated Bennett and Wells into a distinct group of modern writers in his essay "The New Novel" where he eloquently and brutally condemns these Edwardians, as Woolf named them, for their lack of innovation and their preservation of past traditions. James celebrated Conrad and Ezra Pound (though he disliked D.H. Lawrence) for their "infinite subtlety of nuance" (52). However, the fact remains that Conrad, James, Pound and definitely Joyce were not as popular amongst the public as were their contemporaries Bennett and Wells, whom Woolf and James held in such fervent contempt (Woolf also was not a fan of Ezra Pound referring to him as a "humbug" in a letter to Roger Fry in 1918). Lodge suspects that the reason for the greater success of Bennett and Wells, at the time, was in part due to a "philistine backlash" (53) that had occurred after the trial of Oscar Wilde, which halted the literary innovations that the English Decadents had encouraged. Virginia Woolf believed that it was the realist and stagnant form that Bennett and Wells subscribed to that condemned them to writing boring fiction, untrue to *real life*. Woolf's main argument against the realist tradition was that it was unable to authentically capture reality,

For 'reality', Virginia Woolf substitutes the word 'life'; and 'life', she asserts, is something that traditional realism cannot capture. 'We suspect a momentary doubt, a spasm of rebellion, as the pages fill themselves in the customary way. Is life like this? Must life be like this?' No, 'Life is not a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged: life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display...?' (Lodge 55)

### **New, Marginal and Bad Modernisms**

In 1999 the Modernist Studies Association (MSA) was formed with the aim of acknowledging the reconfiguration of the study of modernist literature. This led to the birth of New Modernist Studies, which was conceived of by Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz in their seminal text *Bad Modernism* (2006) and then further elaborated in their essay "The New Modernist Studies" (2008) with the aim of reconsidering established modernist texts whilst revisiting overlooked or less popular texts and the parameters of modernism itself. Mao and

Walkowitz use this new approach of viewing and reflecting on conceptions of self as an outsider to reconsider what stylistic choices modernists artists were making that directly subverted pre-established conventions considered “good” for imbuing beauty, clarity or order. In other words, Mao and Walkowitz approach what were once held to be marginal or bad modernist writings and reconsider them under the expanding definitions of selfhood.

As I have argued, my study focuses on reconsidering texts that are in some ways peripheral to modernism and the modernist canon; however, I will show they can be seen as similarly divisive by their methods of reworking the female *Bildungsroman* and mechanization of violence across borders. In this section, I therefore situate my study within recent critical arguments relating to geomodernism (to which I shall come shortly), as well as marginal and the “bad modernisms” that pertain to works excluded from the canon.

In *Bad Modernism's* chapter “Forced Exile: Walter Pater’s Queer Modernism”, Heather K. Love describes how modernism is the moment when writers and artists first expanded on the romantic notion that “bad could be good” (*Bad Modernisms* 19) and elaborates on Nietzsche’s “transvaluation of all values” by seeking a greater resolve to “wreck the old world in order to make room for the new” (19). Love goes on to say that “this ‘heroic’ version of modernism has been most consistently identified with modernism itself” (19). The “heroic” in quotations and her choice of words describing the art movement’s purpose, such as “revolt” and “wreck”, imply that the fundamental trait that distinguishes modernism is that it aims to take action against commonly accepted cultural practices. However, this “heroic” version of modernism is not to be confused with the classical heroic ideal of romantic-chivalric or Homeric epic, as Baldick observes: “[the] conception of military glory, already questioned by nineteenth-century writers, had been destroyed by the machine gun, and now lay buried in Flanders’s mud” (328). As the world became increasingly connected through the technological advance of modes of travel and communication established conventions began to shift uneasily as nations became self-conscious under foreign scrutiny. Baldick writes that “the many writers who attempted in this period to evoke or define the Englishness of England and the English found too that they could do this best by

adopting some such 'alien' perspective, as returned exiles, as anthropologists, or as tourists in their own land" (304).

In *Exiles and Émigrés in Modern Literature* (1970), Terry Eagleton addresses the problem of the lack of English born and bred great poets and novelists in the early twentieth century. He argues that the cultural representations that work to illustrate convictions and typify problems in English culture were what made George Eliot and Charles Dickens great novelists. He maintains that the disappearance of native English authors in the twentieth century is "significantly related to the entry of the émigrés" (Eagleton 11). It is his assertion that no English great author makes up the canon of English literature in the twentieth-century excepting D.H. Lawrence, who, as working-class, is basically as "related to the national culture as Dublin or even New England: a culture which, like those, belonged and yet was excluded both foreign and familiar" (17). It is worth noting that Eagleton's chosen list of "most significant writers of twentieth-century English Literature" (9) completely excludes women writers. His list includes: Conrad, James, T.S. Eliot, Pound, Yeats and Joyce. Briefly he mentions Virginia Woolf, but swiftly discredits her as "daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen, privately educated" (12), which immediately associates her achievements with her father's position and undermines her ardent self-education despite the restrictions she faced from formal educational institutions. Nowhere are West, Mansfield, Rhys, H.D. or Barnes mentioned, as part of any class delineation, whether national or émigré.

Though Eagleton's identifications of great English novelists were made in the 1970s and have since been widely disputed, I maintain that it is precisely these differences to the recognized and accepted categories and environments meant to affect "great English novelists" that have enabled Woolf, Lawrence and West to write both for and against England, being in their own identity formation both inside and outside of the English milieu.

Eagleton understands this liminal space and the danger it presents for national and cultural character when he expresses his concern for "the ways in which the social attitudes adopted by particular twentieth-century writers shape or limit their power to achieve that sense of interrelation between concrete living and the shape of a complete culture which the greatest

nineteenth-century authors displayed” (12). Eagleton’s anxiety over the lack of an authentic national modern canon is interesting because it seems to take for granted that modernism itself is responsible for the destruction of those neat nationalistic literary traditions. Eagleton recognizes that “the years of major achievement in English literature [...] are the years spanning the First World War: the period when English civilization itself was called into radical question” (15); yet, he continues to maintain that this production by émigrés illustrates “the inability of indigenous English writing [...] to ‘totalize’ the significant movements of its own culture” (15). Although Eagleton’s text is now quite dated, it is useful for the language and associations Eagleton presents when interpreting why émigrés and exiles—rather than the “indigenous” English—were producing great English literature. The language Eagleton uses in his study exemplifies clearly how modernist studies were undergoing a vertical expansion where previous gender and genre demarcations were being reconsidered.

The lack of “native” English writers within the modern canon was one of the many aspects disapprovers of the modern movement claimed made it intrinsically “bad”. “Bad modernisms” can also be used as a way to ironically describe the dissenting approaches, aspects and techniques that modernists purposefully employed, according to Mao and Walkowitz. For example, “bad modernisms” could refer to the use of abstraction, fragmentation, stream-of-consciousness or other modern approaches of writing. These approaches were considered innovative and dynamic means of forcing reflection on aesthetics and antiquated modes of development that might have been taken for granted by society. However, though innovative, many of these new approaches to art were directly taken from societies and art forms considered to be primitive at the time, as for example, Roger Fry and other post-impressionists who openly drew inspiration from African art to create fragmented representations in place of realistic ones. Despite this borrowing of already long-established African artistic methods, Virginia Woolf could not completely conceive of African art as a legitimate form by itself, writing that she could only “dimly see that something in their style might be written” (Bloom 429). Instead Woolf understood African and so-called “primitive” art as a channel of inspiration leading to new Western styles, which she championed as the impetus behind a change in human character. Roger Fry’s 1910

“Manet and The Post-Impressionist” exhibition expanded Western artistic endeavor towards the incorporation of African art. However, Woolf and other modernists oscillated between denouncing imperialism and realizing their own hypocrisies; Woolf’s difficulty in this regard is most evident in her aiding her husband research his book *Empire and Commerce in Africa* (1919), which attacked Empire for the treatment of the colonized natives but, as Elleke Boehmer shows in *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*, Leonard’s work also illustrated that the Woolfs “could not conceive of indigenous society in its present state as able to govern themselves independently” (Boehmer, 2005). These and other elements of bad modernisms, which remain bad, are littered through modernists’ works and problematize the dissident tonality of the texts.

D.H. Lawrence’s *Women in Love* is another contentious example of bad modernism, for its association of “primitive” art with licentious women. Lawrence writes of Birkin recalling the “African fetishes” (Lawrence 219) he had seen at Halliday’s flat in London, where he would go to retreat from respectable society and to divulge in the “Dionysic ecstatic way” (218) which is associated with freedom, and over-and-over again with “pure sensuality”. Lawrence details the form of a fertility doll at Halliday’s house: “He remembered her: her astonishing cultured elegance, her diminished, beetle face, the astounding long elegant body, on short, ugly legs, with such protuberant buttocks, so weighty and unexpected below her slim long loins. She knew what he himself did not know. She had thousands of years of purely sensual, purely unspiritual knowledge behind her” (219). In this passage the African female body is fetishized alongside of African traditional art as containing an intrinsic mysticism and unconstrained sexuality that Lawrence uses merely to juxtapose against Western practices, which he implies are more orderly, more dominant and controlled. This becomes excessively clear further on in the passage when Lawrence writes, “The white races, having the arctic north behind them, the vast abstraction of ice and snow, would fulfill a mystery of ice-destructive knowledge, snow-abstract annihilation. Whereas the West Africans, controlled by the burning death-abstraction of the Sahara, had been fulfilled in sun-destruction, the putrescent mystery of sun-rays” (220). Considering that *Women in Love* ends with a white male walking out into a snow oblivion and dying, this earlier passage hints at the key binary of the book, which is related in terms of north/south, with the north craving

absolute death and oblivion while the south endures rot and decay. I will explore these more fully in my chapter on Lawrence to show how they intersect with the revision of the tropes of travel and the novel of the development of the self.

In the introduction to *Bad Modernisms*, Mao and Walkowitz explain what is bad modernism, and why it can be good. They clarify that no other art “has been more dependent upon a refractory relation between itself and dominant aesthetic values, between itself and its audience, between itself and the bourgeoisie, between itself and capitalism, between itself and mass culture, between itself and society in general” (Mao, Walkowitz 2-3). *Bad Modernisms* gathers a series of compelling essays that provoke and unsettle the recurrent contradictions inherent within modernism.

For instance, Rebecca Walkowitz’s chapter on “Virginia Woolf’s Evasion: Critical Cosmopolitanism and British Modernism” discusses how Woolf was able to emphasize the contradictory characterization of women in modernist literature. Woolf creates purposeful disruptions to combat women’s literary portrayals, such as with the marked wall in her short story “The Mark on the Wall” (1919), to force the reader to make a correlation between the evasion of the mark on the wall and the evasion of the war. Walkowitz identifies the narrator as imagining scenes of war and destruction before being

relieved to have this vision disrupted: this is the story’s first image of militarism, and it gestures toward the fighting not many miles away. One imagines that the narrator is relieved because thoughts of war are distressing in themselves, but she attributes her relief to a more specific distaste: the narrator calls her vision of war ‘an old fancy, an automatic fancy’; it is a vision shaped by worn images of heroism and chivalry rather than by personal experiences or singular thought. (Walkowitz 128)

This example highlights how the female narrator is as uncomfortably present inside a domestic space as the mark on the wall. Though both may appear innocuous to the reading audience, Woolf emphasizes that both contain the power to disrupt the bigger occurrences such as war and patriarchy, through narrative. Walkowitz goes on to write, “evading automatic fancies, Woolf’s narrator is trying to evade ‘generalisation,’ which she associates with the social rituals and fashions of the past. The narrator criticizes the generalizations of British culture and then attempts to avoid generalizing rhetoric: as she speculates about the future of the novel, how it will

tend to omit the description of reality in favor of the reality reflected in the minds of individuals [...]" (128). This passage suggests that Woolf and Walkowitz would have the narrator break out of the confines of the room, and thus out of the domestic "Angel in the House" portrait that has been drawn of her as a woman ornament, as insignificant to the "reality" of happenings as a mark to a wall. However, by venturing into other realities or yet imagined territories such as that designated for the future of the novel, women can potentially mark their own path.

The symbolism of crossing geographical borders for the heroines within these texts pertains to many significant aspects of modernity, such as the rise of nationalism in Europe, as well as the increasing amount of paranoia and restrictions that came with travel surrounding the timeframe of the world wars. In *English Modernism, National Identity and the Germans, 1890-1950*, Petra Rau (2009) argues that E.M. Forster, H.G. Wells and D.H. Lawrence respond to "'bad' modernity of the mechanistic age, of which German is increasingly seen as an aggressive and hyperbolic manifestation" (Rau 121). Lawrence, Woolf and West exhibit the national anxiety surrounding German identity as grotesque (as is the case with Woolf's Miss Kilman) or linked with "bad" aspects of modernism, such as xenophobia and the idealization of "progress" as leading towards a world "unity" or "harmony". For instance, their characters of German origin propagate these anxieties; and in Forster's work this bias is extended to his representation of Italians as prone to violent passions.

"For Lawrence [the crossed boundary is] primarily that between the body and the machine, for Woolf it is the boundary between the body-under-control and the body-out-of-control" (Rau 121). Forster's Schlegel sisters in *Howards End* continuously have their character questioned by their upright and conservative English community for their half-German ancestry; Woolf's Miss Kilman, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, combines "excessive physicality and social marginality; the tension between her near-insensibility as a minor character and her spectral, monstrous omnipresence as a preoccupation" (Rau 131) demonstrates how modern means of connecting across cultural and class boundaries has created a grotesque preoccupation with the "other". Miss Kilman wears a shabby green mackintosh coat: "year in year out she wore that coat; she perspired; she was never in the room five minutes without making you feel her superiority, your



inferiority; how poor she was; how rich you were [...]" (Woolf 11). Lawrence's Winifred Inger, in *The Rainbow*, uses her position of authority as a school mistress to seduce the young Ursula Brangwen. Winifred Inger's lesbianism is troublingly linked with the modernity of female emancipation and masculinity: Winifred, a schoolteacher of young impressionable English girls, is independent, sexually liberated and thereby a threat. In the chapter of Lawrence's *The Rainbow* entitled "Shame", Winifred is depicted as a "clean type of modern girl whose very independence betrays her sorrow" (Rau 135), which highlights the anxiety married to the notion of the emancipated women. The two women have an intimate affair until Winifred realizes that Ursula is beginning to reject her: "The fine, unquenchable flame of the younger girl would consent no more to mingle with the perverted life of the elder woman [...]. At the bottom of [Winifred] was a black pit of despair" (Lawrence 635). And West's Gerda in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*—although the context is different from Lawrence's or Woolf's at this point, as West starts writing when Germany is already under Nazi regime, and then completes and publishes her work during the war, when Britain had already declared war on Germany—casts a negative view on nearly everything Rebecca learns about Yugoslavia and the Balkans, claiming the superiority of Germany as her justification; these characters are all examples of Germans tied up with aspects of the grotesque. These examples all serve to illustrate the problematical elements of western modernism: while these texts are radically subversive towards hegemonic institutions, they are at the same instance reinforcing traits that would be described as "bad" modernisms for strands of xenophobia, racism, sexism, and homophobia.

Another aspect of "bad" modernity was the adjustment in the West from changes within the capitalist structure of how writing can pay, which in the twentieth century involved new forms of publication, the cost of printing, the circulation of magazines and books and the changing role of lending libraries. Thus, it follows that the changes in human character that warranted a transformation of the novel were not entirely based on changing ideals and notions of equality but also on monetary gains inspired by the burgeoning celebrity status that modern writers were given and the greater demand for journalistic and travel writing. "With levels of literacy in this period reaching about 80 per cent, England boasted a potential 'reading public' of about twenty

million adults [...]. Few novelists or poets could make a living without engaging in some form of journalism, and fewer still could reach a significant readership unless their works were commended by reviewers, at least in the more respectable papers” (Baldick 17). Modernization changed travel for the British: new technologies, mass media and mass production allowed ideas and impressions to be transmitted across landscapes faster (Culter 2003). Keith Williams (1996) points out in *British Writers and the Media 1930-1945* that during the twentieth-century there was high hope but also high anxiety about new technological channels amongst writers. This anxiety applies not just to technologies of writing but in a wider sense. Though 1930-1945 covers the period of time that West was writing *Black Lamb*, these extreme emotional responses to new technologies were also present in the early twentieth-century, especially when we consider the high anxiety surrounding the development of industrialism and capitalism in Lawrence’s work. Craig Gordon (2018) comments on Lawrence’s tendency to abstract the individual as a mechanization of society. In this sense, Gordon says, Lawrence perceives the modern world as homogenizing the natural humanity of individual men and women: “The second homogenizing tendency that Lawrence identifies proceeds from a reaction to this materialist subsumption of the individual within a mechanical aggregate, which seeks to identify a countervailing organic principle of cosmic unity—what he will refer to as the ‘one-identity’ or the ‘En-Masse”” (Gordon 352). Though Woolf’s *The Voyage Out* is decidedly less marked with the theme of technological advancements distorting humanity, Woolf was concerned (personally and in her fiction) with how women could be part of a modern economy, earn an income and independence while also participating in a patriarchally built society. In terms of modes of production, new anxieties emerged for writers who were concerned about being read authentically in an age of mass publication.

Patrick Collier (2006) argues that British writers and artists marketed themselves, occasionally even unconsciously, not only by submitting countless newspaper and magazine articles and literature reviews to earn a living, but also by encoding a self-promoting emphasis within their fiction, poetry and lyric writings. This working within capitalist systems of production is certainly true for all three of the writers examined here, despite their simultaneous strains against

hegemony. “[N]ovelists such as D.H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf relied heavily upon American sales of their work, the home and Imperial markets being too small and conservative to sustain their radical experiments” (Baldick 21). Virginia Woolf and her husband Leonard set up the Hogarth Press as a way to publish themselves and their friends. D.H. Lawrence worked as a journalist and essayist to scrape an income, despite his open detestation of journalistic writing, which he considered as “statement without creation” (*Letters*, 2, p. 35). However, he was later quoted as saying “little articles for the newspaper [...] seems far the best way to make money” (41) and even considered not publishing *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* due to possibly falling out with his editors, which he was warned would be “dangerous financially speaking for the magazine market” (29). Rebecca West maintained a respected position as a journalist in addition to being a novelist and was commissioned to write *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* to shed light on how past tumultuous historical events in the Balkans had led to World War I. These facts are important to observe now, not only because in the case of D.H. Lawrence, for instance, they illustrate his contradictory views of artistry, but as a whole they indicate how being a subversive writer or artist becomes more nuanced within capitalist systems of production. For example, though the Woolfs were fortunate enough to be able to establish their own press to publish their work and their friends’, for many less privileged writers such as D.H. Lawrence the nature of what was published relied on the ability to make sales and appeal to a wider audience.

The three texts in question were definitely written with a “respectable” British audience in mind, which led to the often dense or obscure symbolic language, coding and layered imagery that all three authors employed in order to include more controversial ideas in their work. They all feature ostensibly British characters encountering and digesting foreign landscapes in order to reflect on “home” boundaries, identities and limitations. Thus language images and gender codes are cleverly manipulated in order to disseminate, influence, as well as highlight changes within the British condition. However, as Mao and Walkowitz illustrate, modernist authors were often guilty or at least accused of exhibiting too much trepidation about pushing their experimentalism too far beyond what was socially acceptable in terms of social mores and the status quo in their writing and thereby pandering more to the very institutions they appear to want to criticize.

In *Bad Modernism* the modern novel's tonality, whether dissenting or sympathetic, directly correlates with developing "strategies of cosmopolitanism" (Mao, Walkowitz 119). Walkowitz argues that Woolf's writing remains relevant because "she proposes that international sympathy and national dissent are nourished in part by those evasions of syntax and plot that qualify, unsettle, and redirect enduring habits of attentiveness" (123). Therefore, sending British women abroad challenges literary traditions such as that of the heroic male odyssey, which champions pro-national and patriarchal motivations of defending home and country via going to war, using violence, domination and colonization to celebrate masculine power, honor and supremacy. Positioning women abroad also confronts educational and grooming traditions such as the Grand Tour, which was designed to polish the male elite, and by doing so, the selected texts can be shown as innovative representations of female *Bildungsroman*. The three works of this analysis cast uncertainty on the concept of belonging in a home culture as a woman, and also on the assurance of returning there which within traditional male-oriented travel narratives is usually representative of a personal growth and a readiness to take a cultivated position in the home society. These texts explore travel and movement beyond borders as a means to expand gender and genre.

The works I analyze also respond to the poverty, discrimination and cultural differences encountered through these travels, and this is another aspect that I will be commenting on in the next chapters. Roberto Dainotto's *Europe (in Theory)* (2007) has explored in detail the intellectual context of the construction of Southern Europe from a northern perspective. Dainotto considers post-colonial studies in relation to the construction of identities in Europe. He traces to Montesquieu the creation of the north-south binary, casting Southern Europe as irrational with Northern Europe as rational. The cultural, political, romantic and economic exchanges that take place in these landscapes, whether they pertain to "cultural globalization" as Melba Cuddy-Keane posits (2003) or whether the blurred borders relate to erosion of strict gender and sexuality categories as Bonnie Kime Scott argues (1995), will also form a background to my analysis of the texts. I hope to investigate modernists' colonization of landscapes for what they might represent as well as their histories. As Laura Winkiel (2006) suggests, the transnational production of works

and the way the British were influenced by landscapes, people and art of transnational regions promoted a globalization of modern culture. It is to these aspects that I turn next.

### **Geomodernism**

Recently, critics have been reconsidering and expanding on the significance of geography and border crossing in both modernist and postmodernist frameworks. In *Geomodernism* (2005), Doyle and Winkiel define modernism as a movement that “breaks open, into something we call geomodernism, which signals a locational approach to modernism’s engagement with cultural and political discourses of global modernity” (Doyle, Winkiel 3). The collected essays that make up the text compare literature from multiple geographical and political contexts, to expand and challenge any notion of a fixed modernity. The essays collectively focus on inconsistencies in the way modernism has been categorized and represented, with special regard to nationalist and race movements. The text aims to decentralize modernism from the West. Geomodernism is useful in my own research for the way in which Western artists attempt to discover “primitive culture” as a way of finding new origin and beginning “anew”; however, Geomodernism usually places emphasis on non-Western examples of modernism.

In a powerful essay, Simon Gikandi writes that “in the end, modernism sought energies in the strangeness and distance of the other but it could only bring this other back in the terms that seemed to fit into its essentially Eurocentric framework” (Gikandi 49). This is certainly the case in the three primary texts I examine: Woolf, for example, attempts to find a new language for Rachel to express herself. Rachel begins to find her voice while in a mythologized location somewhere in an unmistakably colonized, South American jungle. Lawrence attempts to locate the primitive and “pure” sexuality between the truly masculine and feminine in his modernism; while West journeys to discover the history of the Balkans for herself but the radically journeying “herself” remains a British citizen employed by her government to produce a text for a British audience and for enhanced British understanding of a foreign land.

Geomodernisms also concerns itself with imagined geographies, such as the one described within Woolf’s text. In the section on imagined geographies or “psychogeographies”,

space is discussed in terms of its metaphorical distance to highlight unequal boundaries between race, gender and nationhood, such as the “sexual spaces” that Susan Stanford Friedman describes in her essay on colonialist literature. In her *Mappings*, Friedman relocates feminist theory towards transnationalism and away from discourses focused on difference. *Mappings*, in particular, is useful to my research as Stanford Friedman focuses on transformative encounters for women in foreign locations. Post-colonial studies have been arguing the importance of recontextualizing how post-colonial spaces are described and engaged within Western works for decades; for them, “the issues of travel, nomadism, diaspora, and the cultural hybridity produced by movement through space have a material reality and political urgency as well as figurative cogency” (*Mappings* 19). Like other critics, Friedman recognizes that writers such as Woolf, Lawrence and West are “voyaging out” and straining against their “civilized center” or locational position of privilege, into new forms of writing and dissenting work to destabilize the tenets of Western foundationalism.

### ***Bildungsroman* and Women’s Development**

The early definition of the traditional *Bildungsroman* developed from its first mention at a lecture from 1819 at a provincial German university by Karl Morgenstern<sup>8</sup>, through Wilhelm Dilthey’s early writings on the term in *Poetry and Experience* (1906), to the celebration of it as German heritage by Thomas Mann<sup>9</sup>, but throughout these developments consideration of gender is neglected.<sup>10</sup> From its conception theorists have struggled to agree on a commonly accepted meaning for the term *Bildungsroman*. Tobias Boes argues in “On the Nature of the *Bildungsroman*” (2008) that while Dilthey’s formal introduction of the *Bildungsroman* in *Poetry and Experience* focuses on the “genre’s concern with ‘inwardness’ and ‘personality’ at the expense of

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<sup>8</sup> Karl Morgenstern’s 1819 lecture on the *Bildungsroman* at the University of Dorpat in Estonia. (Steiner 38)

<sup>9</sup> “Mann’s 1908 essay ‘Versuch über das theater’ concludes by privileging the German *Bildungsroman* above all other genres” (Schonfield 19).

<sup>10</sup> “The majority of studies of *Bildungsroman* not only focus almost entirely on novels written by males about male protagonists, but also define the genre in terms that apply exclusively to male experience” (Goodman 28).

social concerns and interpersonal relations" (648), Morgenstern's lecture regarding the term had insisted that the "*Bildungsroman* gazes not inward, at the development of its fictional protagonist, but outward, into the real world and toward the development of the audience" (648). And in *Poetry and Experience* Dilthey described the *Bildungsroman* as a singularly German achievement, "a product of unique political circumstances and an antithesis of the French and English novels of social realism" (647). This claim was championed by Thomas Mann and was prominent during the Third Reich. Tobias Boes in *Formative Fictions: Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism, and "Bildungsroman"* (2008) notes that despite a later generation of scholars breaking from Dilthey's theories of *Bildungsroman*, the genre still retained its sense of separateness from other forms and was largely perceived as a dangerous road that helped pave the way "for fascism" (647).<sup>11</sup>

The concept of literary generic form being a product of political circumstances and as an antidote to previously established norms is relevant to the development of the modernist novel, as Boes wrote in an earlier article, "Modernist Studies and the *Bildungsroman*: Historical Survey of Critical Trends" (Boes 2006). This essay details emerging trends in the *Bildungsroman*, especially those that develop in the modernist literatures of Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. Boes describes a "significant symbolic relationship between uneven development in colonial modernity [...] and anti-development in canonical fiction of the same period" (Boes 240).

The interplay between *Bildungsroman* and the nineteenth-century novel may be partially responsible for changing portrayals of female heroines in literature. For example, George Eliot's female *Bildungsroman*, *Romola* (1863), follows the "awakening" of the eponymous protagonist. Although Romola's developments lead her away from the male influences of her father and husband and spiritual guide, Savonarola, she only progresses to discover an innate capacity for Christianity and altruism after traveling to a "plague-stricken village" where she is reborn to "serve others simply because they need it" (Gosselink De Jong 78). For Romola then, her "daring to know the self, and making a commitment to life beyond the self", as Gosselink defines the objective of protagonists of a *Bildungsroman*, leads her to unlock "feminine virtues" that had been denied her and subdued within her from the influence of pagan and egoistic males. Therefore,

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<sup>11</sup> For further history of the relationship between *Bildungsroman* and burgeoning German nationalism see, Todd Kontje. *The German Bildungsroman: History of National Genre* (1993).

this novel, though it does follow the same ideology of a traditional *Bildungsroman*, only highlights the genre's ineffectuality at representing a progressive and freethinking woman.

As I pointed out earlier, Moretti and Castle are not concerned with a female extension of the *Bildungsroman* specifically, and therefore their revision of the genre does not enable reconsideration of its importance for female characters. However, Castle's study is useful in that he makes the claim that the concept of the modernist *Bildung* derived out of a continuation of Enlightenment aesthetics, which "had been rationalized and bureaucratized in the course of the nineteenth century" (Castle 3). His claim gives the *Bildungsroman* a new program of investigation, since it would be analyzed in the way it critiques traditional forms, while Moretti, on the other hand, merely considers the *Bildungsroman* to be redundant in the twentieth-century. My purpose is not necessarily to claim that the *Bildungsroman* as a form remains relevant or not in the twentieth-century, so much as it is to see how the modernist movement dealt with the concept of a female *Bildung*.

In *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development* (1983), Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland discuss how the *Bildungsroman* has its origin as the province of the development of the white male, and thus enables further erasure of female development:

*Bildungsroman* has emphasized the interplay of psychological and social forces. Through further questioning, the definition of the genre has gradually been expanded to accommodate other historical and cultural variables. Gender, however, has not been assimilated as a pertinent category, despite the fact that the sex of the protagonist modifies every aspect of a particular *Bildungsroman*: its narrative structure, its implied psychology, its representation of social pressures (Abel 4-5).

While there are examples of *Bildungsroman* with female protagonists (such as *Jane Eyre*), what I describe here is a gendered alternative to traditional form of *Bildungsroman* that I call female *Bildungsroman*, which has meaning beyond just adopting the aspects of the traditional *Bildungsroman* and applying them to female characters. Essentially, the traditional *Bildungsroman* relies on character growth in traditionally male-institutions of power such as in systems of education and career—avenues that have historically been denied to women; thus their integration as heroines of this literary genre is obviously problematic and non-functional.

An example is Rachel from *The Voyage Out*, who, Boes argues, "drifts" (241) through an underdeveloped colonial space which



[...] lacks discursive conventions of nationhood that provided closure to the traditional *Bildungsroman* plot. Imperial expansion challenges the pretense of an organic relationship between culture and state, creates zones of uneven development and negates traditional narratives of formations (241).

However, there exists within a female *Bildungsroman* a sense of danger, which indicates the departure from traditional form into unknowns, inextricably tied up with historical emergence. Boes notes in "On the Nature of the *Bildungsroman*": "more than a hundred years after Morgenstern, and in complete innocence of his work, Mikhail Bakhtin defined *Bildungsroman* as a kind of novel in which 'man's individual emergence is inseparably linked to historical emergence'" (Boes 648-49). *The Voyage Out* at the same time makes use of and yet departs from the *Bildungsroman*. Woolf looks backwards through gendered memory, history and experience; and yet, Woolf illustrates that a literary genre of development, designed by institutions of patriarchy, is unable to produce a female protagonist that would be the equivalent to the genre's male protagonists. For instance, the women's suffrage movement is discussed in *The Voyage Out* with everyone having an opinion except Rachel who would have the most to gain from its enactment.

The history of the *Bildungsroman*'s evolution in the UK begins long before even *Romola*, but, Boes notes, "the word itself made its way across the Channel as a part of the lexical infusion that arose from Edwardian interest in the writings of German thinkers such as Freud, Weber or Simmel" (Boes 231). The *Encyclopedia Britannica* of 1910 first described it as involving as its main theme "the formative years or spiritual education of one person" (II. 188). An important critic of the *Bildungsroman*, Jerome Hamilton Buckley, wrote in his *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* (1974), that in order to be a *Bildungsroman*, a novel would have to exhibit two or three of an established list of characteristics including "childhood, the conflict of the generations, provinciality, the larger society, self-education, alienation, ordeal by love, the search for a vocation and a working philosophy" (Buckley 18). However, Boes argues that although Buckley critiqued several modernist texts and their conditions that would have constituted them as experimenting with conventions of *Bildungsroman*, including an analysis of Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, he was mainly interested "in pointing out continuities with a longer tradition and has little to say on how modernist experimentation might problematize or otherwise relate to *Bildungsroman* form" (Boes 232).

However, Boes quotes Jameson, who stresses that “literary genres are ‘experimental constructs’ which are constantly being renegotiated by new works that come into contact with them” (Boes 234). With this in mind it is interesting to consider the *Bildungsroman* as an early recognition of the constructions of life and the human ability to move away from past constructions, i.e. in generational conflict or through education, as individual thinking evolves and responds to social, political and cultural stimuli.

More recent analyses of the *Bildungsroman* have been privileging the twentieth century over the nineteenth, including Abel, Hirsch and Langland’s *Voyage In*, as well as Susan Fraiman’s *Unbecoming Women* (1993), and Rita Felski’s *The Novel of Self-Discovery* (1986), which refuses to condemn the *Bildungsroman* with its emphasis on integrative development as necessarily patriarchal. Felski celebrates “the historical process of women coming to consciousness of female identity as a potentially oppositional force to existing social and cultural values” (Boes 235). Felski’s seminal *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics* (1989) contains an integral argument on the difference between female and male *Bildungsroman*, in her chapter “The Novel of Self-Discovery: Integration and Quest”. Felski writes:

Perhaps the genre which is most clearly identified with contemporary feminist writing is the narrative of female self-discovery, in which access to self-knowledge is seen to require an explicit refusal of the heterosexual romance plot, the framework which has traditionally defied the meaning and direction of women’s lives. Thematising gender as the central problem for women attempting to reconcile individual and social demands, the contemporary narrative of female development exemplifies an appropriation and reworking of established literary genres such as the *Bildungsroman*. (Felski 122)

In “The Novel of Self-Discovery”, Felski considers the potential for a feminist *Bildungsroman*, and what the genre would entail. She argues that while the traditional male *Bildungsroman* typically moves young men from a social activity or formal educating institution towards a gradual inner awareness, a feminist *Bildungsroman* would do the opposite, in the sense that the female characters, whether young or old, would move from an alienated and benign domestic space towards a “changing self-consciousness” (Felski 134) as they encountered social activity and settings in an outer world. However, Felski also argues that *Bildungsromane* adhere to a linear and chronological progression, towards either an inner development or an outer one, and she is very critical of the notion of attributing especially

feminine characteristics to a text simply because it challenges established literary structures. While I do not always subscribe to everything Felski writes in *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics*, however I do find the text useful for its descriptions of the dichotomy between a traditional *Bildungsroman* and what would be the potential for a feminist *Bildungsroman*. Felski's text is thus a key one in the development of my argument, which also relies on her later text *The Gender of Modernity* (1995), a further investigation of the theoretical approaches drawn from "feminist cultural studies to argue against the often-perceived binary opposition between a self-consciously 'masculine' high modernism and a feminized mass culture" (Felski 17). As novels of development often include travel and movement as representative of the educational phase of human development, my study is interested in exploring how modernist texts represent female characters developing through travel.

## **Travel**

The history of female travel within literature begins with early letters and travel writing from women who, for various reasons, found themselves travelling on the original Grand Tour route or further afield, as many accompanied husbands to positions they took for the British Empire. Among these early women travelers were for example Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), Lady Florentia Sale (1790-1853), Harriet Martineau (1802-1876), Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), Amelia Edwards (1831-1892), Lady Anne Blunt (1837-1917) and Gertrude Bell (1868-1926). The collection of letters written home reveal an awareness of the separateness of traveling as a female, and also, of a separate method of chronicling the experience. For instance, Mary Astell (1666-1731), a philosopher and feminist, wrote that it would be very important for the world to see more of women traveling because there was more purpose for it and that though "it is surfeited with Male-travels, all in the same tone, and stuff with the same trifles; a lady has the skill to strike out a new path, and to embellish a worn-out subject, with variety of fresh and elegant entertainment" (Astell 1724, p. 23).

The fact that Astell specifically suggests that women's travel writing would "strike out a new path" is significant in the history of the concept of a gendered writing, as well as in the history

of a separate or different kind of development for women in the traditional *Bildungsroman*. Similarly to Woolf, but well ahead of her in time, Astell advocated the education of women by recommending “setting up residential colleges for women’s education”; moreover, “in reflections on marriage, she described the institution of wedlock as tyrannical and not to be entered into carelessly” (Tuson 21). These suggestions are two of the main arguments that will also be made in Woolf’s *Three Guineas*. The link between the need for women’s education and critique of the institution of marriage is directly raised in modernist literature involving female travel. This is because British women traveling as tourists at the start of the twentieth century were still within the shadow of past Grand Touristic and Victorian conventions, which meant that women traveled as part of an education intended to groom them for marriage to a worldly gentleman. However, the crisis within the modernist texts I examine occurs as the conflict arises between women becoming more self-aware, gaining broader insights and deeper understandings and then attempting to use that new knowledge to find their way within a male-constructed world that functions to restrict them.

As Astell put the question that emerges from this conflict, “are women born slaves?” (Tuson 21). This question, Tuson writes, permeated the writings of “several European women travel writers when they encountered different and sometimes more tempting, domestic arrangements and legal systems of Ottoman & Asian society” (Tuson 21). However, in early-twentieth-century texts such as Forster’s *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, female characters mistakenly believe they’ll find more freedom in societies outside their own, such as Lilia Herriton when she marries Gino in Italy, only to discover a wholly different system of patriarchal constrictions that keep her trapped. Astell originally calling for a “gender-specific form of traveling and travel writing” provided for two centuries “a justification and a purpose which attracted an increasing number of women authors” (Tuson 21-22), even though in the eighteenth century travel writing by women “was almost exclusively an occupation confined to the aristocracy and gentry and women’s accounts of their travels were frequently disseminated to family and friends in the form of letters [which provided] a specifically intimate and informal vehicle which many

women writers subsequently adapted, sometimes even inventing fake recipients in order to justify their publication” (Tuson 22).

Travel held the promise of discovery and awareness, but also some anxiety, nationally and individually. All of the destinations discussed by the three primary texts, including Yugoslavia and South America, were frequently romanticized or misunderstood as either idyllic escapes or else violent, mythic places of uncertainty and dissonance. “Violence was, indeed, all I knew of the Balkans: all I knew of the South Slavs. I derived the knowledge from memories of my earliest interest in liberalism, of leaves fallen from this jungle of pamphlets [...] and later from the prejudices of the French, who use the word ‘*Balkan*’ as a term of abuse, meaning a *rastaquouère* type of barbarian” (West 21). But Rebecca West was commissioned by the British Council to write about the Balkans as she found it. Therefore the British reading public may have felt conflicted between the stereotypes they had previously understood of the Balkans and the rediscovered, and largely positive impressions conveyed by Rebecca West. This also shows the evolving state of modern woman as traveler, thinker and truth-teller. Since the 1990s various studies of women traveling in the Orient have emerged that focused particularly on whether and to what degree “women might be said to have ‘colluded in colonialism’ and to what extent their more feminine capacity for empathy gave them or should have given them, a more open-minded approach to Eastern domestic life” (Tuson 26). In this regard, my investigation of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* will also seek to understand how West’s insights into the Balkans, and her specific focus on the women of the Balkans, offers fresh perspectives from both her point of view as a Western woman and also from the women, and the stories of women, she encounters.

There is no doubt that earlier women’s travel writing influenced, and made possible, the later work of Rebecca West and Virginia Woolf. For instance the famous female traveler Mary Wortley Montagu was the “obvious inspiration for Orlando, whom, like Orlando, wore Turkish trousers when she came back to England and is shown in them in paintings by Charles Jervas and Jonathan Richardson” (Tuson 27). Incidentally, Wortley was also a hard critic of her education compared to that of her male peers. She described it as “‘one of the worst in the world’ and complained that her governess tried to ‘fill my head with superstitious tales and false notions’.

Escaping into her father's extensive library, she embarked on a program of self-education, learning Latin, Greek and French, reading Ovid, Dryden and Molière, and writing her own poems and prose. Through her father's intellectual circle, she was exposed to the stimulus of dinner table conversation with contemporary literary figures" (Tuson 31).

Abel argues in *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development* (1983) that the nineteenth century placed social pressures on women that centered their development on being better wives and maternal figures. And, according to Boes (2006), this pressure towards self-improvement for the sake of men ensured the isolation of women. This isolation paired with a journey abroad fostered an inward and spiritual journey for women (Boes 234). However, by the end of the nineteenth-century, modern writers were attempting to rework their female characters' *Bildung* (232) to incorporate aspects of feminism within the character development gained from personal relationships, study and travel. The crossroads between nineteenth-century internal development for women and twentieth-century expansion and incorporation of women as equal to men is particularly interesting when interpreted literally in travel narratives.

This study expands beyond landscapes representative of the Grand Tour, which, even when they became accessible locations for women, remained symbolic spaces to instill female education, maturation and preparation for marriage, as Chloe Chard (2000) describes. Earlier women travelers' destinations "generally reflected the changing geopolitical interests of European diplomacy and the imperial and colonial projects" (29), which is similar to the case in *The Voyage Out*. Britain did not have large formal colonies in South America; there was instead an "informal empire" that has been described in an article by Peter Winn as suggesting "that the continuity of foreign control was the underlying condition of economic and political life in Latin America during the nineteenth century" (Winn 100). Thus Rachel travels as a tourist on board her father's ship, which is going to exploit and capitalize on resources in South America, while Rebecca West's destination is determined by the threat of war. In *Women in Love*, Lawrence poetically depicts the change in landscape as the characters travel into the high Alps as the zenith of man's eternal battle for claim to the Earth from God, and, significantly, Gerald's capitalistic ambition is his defeat in this landscape, but not in the sunken coal mines of England where he can hide away. In all

three texts, religion and the morality it imposes a constant struggle for women as they attempt to find themselves outside of its tight constraints. As Wortley suggested in a letter from her travels through Austria in 1716, “I never in my life had so little charity for the Roman Catholic religion as since I see the misery it occasions; so many poor unhappy women! And the gross superstition of the common people, who are some or other of them, day and night, offering bits of candle to the wooden figures that are set up in almost every street [...] God knows whether it be the womanly spirit of contradiction that works in me, but there never before was such a zeal against Popery in my heart” (Tuson 33). In this case, seeing other cultural practices contributes to Wortley having new and deeper understandings of herself; however, perhaps not so much for the women she saw, who became an undifferentiated mass of brainless automata that repeat superstitious rites, as also happens for the characters in the novels I investigate. In a similar instance where Wortley is exposed to the remains from a battlefield in Petrovaradin she writes that she could not look at the remains “without horror, on such mangled human bodies, nor without reflecting on the injustice of war that makes murder not only necessary but meritorious. Nothing seems to be plainer proof of the irrationality of mankind (whatever fine claims we pretend to reason) than the rage with which they contest for a small spot of ground, when such vast parts of free Earth lie quite uninhabited [...] I am a good deal inclined to believe Mr. Hobbes that the state of nature is a state of war” (Tuson 33). These significant developments of opinions on issues ranging from war to religion intimate that travel has a serious impact on the way humans view the world and reflect on their own home culture. As Lady Hester Stanhope’s letters from the early 1800s account of her development, “every year brought her nearer to the simplicity of nature, and taught her to throw down those barriers which pride, reserve and etiquette have hedged in persons of rank in this country” (Tuson 93). Modernity hastened the rate at which artists and writers were willing to dispose of barriers, reserves and etiquettes; while, as we have seen, critics like Eagleton suggested that the amount of non-English born artists and writers in the twentieth century can be attributed to the eschewing of cultural norms.

In the main chapters of my dissertation, I will investigate the degree to which different landscapes inspire rebellion or independence in the female characters and also if they develop

independently or as a result of a romance or liaison with male characters. Lynne Walhout Hinojosa (2010) argues that the conversion plot of Lucy in *A Room with a View* inverts morals and promotes new “aesthetic spirituality” similar to D.H. Lawrence’s approach in his writings. *The Voyage Out*, *Women in Love* and *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* stage alternative tenets of morality based on compassion, sexuality and companionship.

Though these three primary textual examples appear quite different from one another, their representation of female journeying connects them. West’s text, for example, is journalistic and written in prose; however, I maintain that her text challenges illusions of historicity by acknowledging a dynamically different modern era and audience. West makes clear that part of her interest in unraveling Yugoslav history is to uncover the lost stories of all of the women who were connected to the great men of history. *The Voyage Out* follows Rachel as she develops self-awareness, which is brought about by her exposure to people and places dissimilar to her; her complete rejection of assimilating is as important as West’s desire to rewrite history to give women a position and place, or as Lawrence’s passion for representing unbridled and raw female emotionality. I will suggest that women can be epic heroes when their journey explores inward psychology and moments of being rather than physical and patrilineal explorations of empire and patriarchy. To reverse the image of woman as an “other” to be confronted, conquered and protected “is a heroic process in which the alternative creation of a woman’s epic vision may well play a central role” (Alwes 66).

## **Conclusion**

I aim to situate my three primary texts within a contemporary framework, with consideration of the recent scholarship. I will analyze them as emergent female travel narratives that have developed from trends I have described in this Introduction. I traced these trends from what I called the “antecedent texts”. As I have outlined, my primary texts all challenge and problematize the *Bildungsroman* and female development, while they explore what possibilities of identity exist for women in the fast-changing, complex world of the first half of the twentieth century. I aim to demonstrate that all three attempt to find their own form of “voyaging out” into



experimentalism by seeking how to represent woman, by locating their plots on a foreign space that is usually the subject of male ventures, but which can at the same time signify a breaking free from the violence of patriarchal society. However, these texts, similarly to patriarchal and colonial pursuits, seek the primitive or else misrepresent foreign space. Woolf's words from *Three Guineas*, "As a woman I have no country", are often quoted without the continuation, where she states that "some love of England dropped into a child's ears by the cawing of rooks in an elm tree, by the splash of waves on a beach, or by English voices murmuring nursery rhymes, this drop of pure, if irrational, emotion she will make serve her to give to England first what she desires of peace and freedom for the whole world" (Woolf 99-100). In the full version of this quote, Woolf explicitly states that some "irrational emotion" has led her to put England first in the pursuit of peace and freedom; so it is also with the similarly nationalist sympathies of Lawrence and West. Though I will show that the texts, in their experimentalism, manage to be saved from becoming another testament to male power and have broken free into "uncharted" female space, I will also measure the methods of their voyaging and how imperialist, nationalist and even patriarchal agendas continue to be served through them.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE VOYAGE OUT

### Introduction

This chapter is the first of the three in which I examine three seemingly dissimilar texts: *The Voyage Out* (1915) by Virginia Woolf, *Women in Love* (1920) by D.H. Lawrence, and *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1941) by Rebecca West. All transform representations of women through experimenting with literary themes and forms, including travel literature and the form of the traditional *Bildungsroman*.

The texts examine non-conservative paths for female development in what is today referred to as the modernist canon. A form inspired by the *Bildungsroman* but which develops and transforms its tradition is employed to explore the formative experience of women, to support the demonstration within these narratives that departures from conventions go beyond previous adaptations to the genre. All of these texts, as I have explained in the introduction to this thesis, are contentious examples of modernist writing, for being—in various ways that I will later explore—different and yet related to the modernist movement. The novels develop modes of experimental writing which problematize established genres such as the *Bildungsroman*, which privilege what Rita Felski (1989) argues are bourgeois depictions of the male journey to self-realization. The texts work to destabilize literary conventions by redirecting plot, narrative voice and female development outward into formal and thematic experimentalism in the manner of stream-of-consciousness writing, repetition, revitalizing Edenic mythology or simply by recording the unheard voices of woman to locate them within history, instead of at its margins.

In this chapter, I attempt to read *The Voyage Out* not only as Woolf's first novel or in terms of its delicate balance of realism and experimentalism, on the path to a more advanced, "more modernist" achievement, but in its own right, for its feminism and its methods of reworking the *Bildungsroman*. I consider the context for its development, the tropes and traditions it transforms and the new space and language it offers to women.

*The Voyage Out* is not written with a traditional development of plot; although there is a fundamentally linear narrative that follows the chronology of the voyage, the text deviates from

tradition by way of its style of narration. The novel follows the experiences of Rachel Vinrace in an early example of a style that anticipates what was later described by Hélène Cixous as *écriture féminine*. *The Voyage Out*'s ruptures and reversals of established, past literary conventions, and its reworking of mythology, as well as its use of its investigation of psychological depths are all combined in Woolf's text to highlight the disparities present when these modernist techniques are implemented with a female protagonist as opposed to a male one, and particularly with a female protagonist that sets off on a traditionally male journey, literally in terms of geographic travel and border crossing and also metaphorically in terms of psychological and romantic encounters with the unfamiliar.

*The Voyage Out* is foremost a journey of encounters as Rachel, who is initially brought aboard her father Willoughby's ship the *Euphrosyne*, is taken and exchanged as if she were property. Along the way the various characters who come to possess power over her trajectory attempt to mold her with the impression that she is a clean or "virgin" slate. The first part of the novel follows the voyage out from London to South America, where Rachel is convinced to stop over on the island of Santa Marina with her aunt and uncle instead of continuing up the Amazon with her father. As a bargain, her aunt promises Rachel they will go on a river journey themselves to make up for the change of plans. Whilst staying in her aunt and uncle's villa in Santa Marina, Rachel becomes acquainted with the guests of the nearby hotel. There Rachel meets two young men, who though close to her in age, have greater advantages of education and career. She becomes more aware of the extent of limitations due to her lack of education and naivety. Eventually, one of the young men, Terence Hewet, proposes marriage to Rachel; however, on the river journey that the tourists undertake, Rachel contracts a fever that ultimately kills her.

Meanwhile, Rachel's chaperones, her Aunt Helen and Uncle Ridley Ambrose, initially appear to be Rachel's protectors as they expound progressive and pro-women views such as advocating for the suffrage movement. However, as we shall see, Rachel later determines Helen and Ambrose to be complicit in the imperialist and patriarchal establishment they claim to be against by their political inaction and ineffective roles as chaperones. Indeed it is under their care that Rachel is subjected to Mr. Dalloway's unwanted sexual advance.

The Dalloways board the ship midway through its journey and use their political and social influence to work their way on board. It is important to note that they are interlopers on the journey whose presence alters the mood of the ship by implanting an implied etiquette for the other passengers to follow. They are perceived to be superior by the other passengers and they act their part as entitled and privileged citizens of the Empire. The Dalloways also take an interest in influencing or manipulating Rachel for their own purposes.

Mr. and Mrs. Dalloway are diametrically opposed to the Ambroses in the novel. The Dalloways are cast as politically active conservatives (Mr. Dalloway is a Member of Parliament and aspiring Prime Minister); they are imperialists and zealous colonialists who acclaim military and British nationalism, whilst denouncing women's suffrage as an attack on the institutions and the status quo. The Dalloways similarly criticize the Ambroses for being dissenting academics, insinuating they would rather hide behind books than take any real action towards helping society prosper. The Dalloways demonstrate their power and policing the thoughts and habits of the ship's occupants. In the most extreme instances of their power, Richard Dalloway sexually assaults Rachel while Clarissa Dalloway imposes her ideas of correctness upon her. However, Rachel does find reasons to admire the Dalloways more than her Aunt and Uncle as she is taken in by their charms and apparent straight-forwardness, mistaking these attributes for "truth" and "strength".

In Santa Marina, we first see Terence Hewet and St John Hirst as Rachel and Helen observe them unseen from a window outside the hotel, which is a trope that reoccurs throughout the novel where women are outside and looking in on male interactions. The two men are similar as Oxbridge students with many prospects for their futures, but they are distinguishable by their opposing views on women, education and employment. Hewet is painted as more of a dreamer and an aspiring novelist who wants to aid Rachel on her road to maturity, whilst Hirst is colder, less interested in women and doubtful of their intellectual capacity. The two men take opposite points of view on Rachel's naivety and lack of education, which again reinforces Rachel's mounting sense of helplessness as others continue to make decisions about her and take action towards her without consideration or respect for her independence. Hewet attempts to educate

Rachel by lending her books and eventually proposing marriage in an apparent attempt to be her savior. Instead of marrying Hewet, however, Rachel eventually succumbs to a mysterious fever caught in the virgin jungles of the Amazon which were already ominously shown to have destroyed a white, male intrepid traveler. In dying, Rachel's life is rendered just as pointless and deadening as it would have been in marriage to Terence; the hopelessness of Rachel's death is reinforced by Terence's later claim that by her death they had finally become one. However, this is quite a different perspective of an unexpected death at the end of a novel such as, for example, with Lilia's death in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* or the deaths of the American heroines in the works of Henry James, which we saw earlier in the Introduction. In those texts, the male characters either seek to distance themselves from the death/woman or else are shown to be completely indifferent to it. In *The Voyage Out*, Hewet's sympathy could be mistaken as a progression towards gender equality, as it appears that Hewet empathizes with Rachel's position and wants to educate her himself. Still, this is merely another example of the male fantasy to control or mold women, which reimagined in modernity, incorporates new notions of "liberating women". For example, Forster's Cecil Vyse in *A Room with a View* wants to be the one to "cut the strings" that hold Lucy's metaphorical kite down. In other words, if a woman is to succeed, the male fantasy involves that it is out of male efforts that she succeeds. Still, this is merely a fantasy: the desire to "understand" female mysteries and the fear of their advancement is directly connected with the desire for mastery over women, as illustrated in its most insidious form as a rape fantasy in the scene from *Women in Love* when Gerald breaks a horse into submission within view of Gudrun (this will be examined in detail in the next chapter).

Woolf shows us through Rachel's journey to self-awareness that patriarchal marriage equates to the death and destruction also prevalent in colonialist and capitalist agendas. However, Rachel's death demonstrates the urgent need for female education and equality. Equal education opportunities are essential for women to find and create their own pathways beyond the linear and conventionally masculine modes of development. However, all three of my texts beg the question of whether equal education is enough, or whether this will merely cause women to assimilate and become complicit into patriarchal systems of control without a corresponding

overhauling of the patriarchal structure of society. Woolf's appeal for women's education and women's writing is clearly articulated in *Women and Fiction*:

The very form of the sentence does not fit [women]. It is a sentence made by men; it is too loose, too heavy, too pompous for a women's use. Yet in a novel, which covers so wide a stretch of ground, an ordinary and usual type of sentence has to found to carry the reader on easily and naturally from one end of the book to the other. And this a woman must make for herself, altering and adapting the current sentence until she writes one that takes the natural shape of her thought without crushing or distorting it. (Woolf 136)

In *The Voyage Out* Woolf experiments with the form of the sentence. For instance in the scene from chapter eleven, when the party returns at nightfall from their picnic on a hillside, Woolf writes disjointed and confused sentences which creates a sense of delirium that we see again later in the novel when Rachel contracts a fever. Woolf personifies the dusk and fireworks and describes them acting unpredictably to enforce an element of malaise and to imply that the environment is working against the foreign travelers.

"The dusk fell as suddenly as the natives had warned them, the hollows of the mountain on either side filling up with darkness and the path becoming so dim that it was surprising to hear the donkeys' hooves still striking on hard rock. [...] Then the fireworks became erratic, and soon they ceased altogether, and then the rest of the journey was made almost in darkness, the mountain being a great shadow behind them, and bushes and trees little shadows which threw darkness across the road" (136).

In an article that outlines imperial revisions in *The Voyage Out*, *Orlando* and *Mrs. Dalloway*, Ashley Nadeau (2014) commented on the divergent ways in which women of the Empire have confronted foreign environments. Specifically, they look at revisions that claim a woman's knowledge of the empire directly correlates to her identity, class, and marital status; while men are free to explore the empire, women come to know it on the terms of men and through supporting men as wives and mothers. In order to show this, the authors compare these texts by Woolf to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and argue that, while Marlow was disquieted and made to feel remorseful for his journey into the heart of the empire, the female travelers in Woolf are alienated by the depth of their unawareness of "exploitative capitalism at the heart of colonialism" (Nadeau16). Nadeau asserts that scholarship surrounding the trope "of the exploration theme as a continued project of testing potential female subversion of imperial patriarchy" is still lacking (16). Her research supports my examination of women departing from old-world, male-created paradigms, though I also consider this idea of departure in terms of breaking into new forms of

writing. Nadeau's research posits that the theme of exploration is central to "women's resistance to empire and, particularly, the sexual reproduction empire requires. In general, Woolf's work is consistently interested in marriage and maternity as a constitutive force of empire and in the development of alternative female possibilities" (17). Woolf describes this departure eloquently when praising Dorothy Richardson on her *Pilgrimage* series. Woolf wrote in a review that Richardson had the ability to present "the core of consciousness," with her unique insights and structural innovations, which Woolf describes as being fresh like an "oyster within the shell, rather than the 'old deliberate business,' the obvious formal structure which characterizes a man's fictional compositions". She goes on to claim that modern authors, as she considered herself, wanted "to be rid of realism, to penetrate without its help into the regions beneath it" (Flint 374). In the following section I will discuss how Woolf's text evolves from literary tradition and how Woolf situates herself within the modernist canon.

Considering how *The Voyage Out* links to the trope of the primeval woman or "pre-language", I maintain that Woolf invokes a female language in order to advocate for the equal education of women. My chapter will also analyze Rachel's latent sexual trauma and the unconscious parallels between patriarchy and colonialism.

In terms of female language, I will suggest that Cixous's later theory of *écriture féminine* pertains to *The Voyage Out* as there is much emphasis placed on the language used by the female characters as evidence for the need to reclaim space for women. Woolf's approach towards a female *Bildungsroman* or female style of writing in *The Voyage Out* is based largely on Rachel's encounters, whether they are based on an assault by Mr. Dalloway that triggers a latent sexual trauma from her childhood, or on her engagement to Terence Hewet which reveals to Rachel her frustration with the inequality of their education. These encounters force Rachel further along a path towards development. However, though the novel's dealing with Rachel's development does have some of the appearances and techniques of traditional *Bildungsroman*, these methods are disrupted by Rachel being an uneducated and oppressed woman. The presentation of Rachel as a "virgin" state that others attempt to manipulate draws a parallel between patriarchy and colonialism. We see Rachel's father treating his other property similarly,

as tools (with) which to exploit. With the *Euphrosyne*, Willoughby appropriates the resources of other parts of the world. However the *Euphrosyne* is masqueraded as a leisure cruising ship in order for Willoughby to maximize his profit and offer cover to his real schemes. This domineering nature extends over Rachel. Willoughby serves as an oppressive and abusive figure who presides over Rachel's movements.

Woolf reworks mythology and uses a fluid language to disrupt chronology, setting and established literary tropes, themes and methodologies of writing. Woolf breaks open language to create a multiplicity of meaning through fragmented writing, vagueness and an attempt to render the unconscious mind; for instance, Rachel is shown looking into the depths of the sea from on board the ship and imagining the "black ribs of wrecked ships", the "spiral towers made by the borrowings of great eels" and "the smooth green-sided monsters who came flickering this way and that" (Woolf 167). This imagery exposes Rachel's unconscious mind and her latent sexual trauma; however, Rachel's voyage begins to render the unconscious mind awake, which is why she imagines that she can begin to see outlines of the still-black, wrecked ships that symbolize her state-of-being. We can see this form of writing as Woolf starting to experiment with an early version of the stream-of-consciousness that would later become her signature style. Another excellent example of Woolf's method for rendering the unconscious mind occurs in the picnic scene of *The Voyage Out*, of which I will provide a full analysis in the section "Rachel's Conflict of Sexual Awakening within a Colonial Space", later in this chapter.

According to Roland Barthes in *Elements of Semiology* (1964), the binary structure of Content and Form is undermined in the twentieth-century. Where historically "the critic (or commentator) was supposed to establish a just connection between Content (reality) and Form (appearance), between the message (as substance) and its medium (style)" (Barthes 4), Barthes argues that, with the undermining of binary oppositions, the text is no longer regarded as "double but multiple; within it there are only forms, or more exactly, the text in its entirety is only a multiplicity of forms without a content" (Barthes 6).

Barthes uses the analogy of an onion to describe how there is not a core of content waiting to be uncovered by the coverings of form, but rather a multiplicity of layers, which



contains “nothing except the infinity of its own envelopes—which envelop nothing other than the unity of its own surfaces” (Barthes 10). As Michèle Barrett points out in *Imagination in Theory* (1999), with the multiplicity of forms is the heightening awareness of a vast intersection of cultures and identities brought on by migration, globalization, travel, colonization, World Wars and diaspora. It is this intersectionality that results in many of the unconscious parallels between patriarchy, colonialism, capitalism and other facets of modernity, which occasionally creates a feeling of chaos, confusion (or, in *Black Lamb*’s case, as we shall see in the fourth chapter, an overwhelming amount of information involved in the stories’ progression). “This points to issues of ‘cultural difference’ and the question of whether and how we could, or should, ‘translate’ experience” (Barrett 1).

In *The Voyage Out*, Woolf is receptive to psychoanalytic theories and represents the workings of the unconscious mind as much as the conscious, in order to translate the unconscious feelings Rachel is made aware of through psychic experiences on board the ship and then at Santa Marina, though Rachel is unable to articulate her feelings. Woolf uses fragmented language, abortive sentences, dream sequences, and mythology to reveal Rachel’s “true” feelings and “actual” reality. For example, when Richard Dalloway forcefully kisses Rachel on the *Euphrosyne*, we are shown some of the same imagery that Woolf used to describe the rendering of Rachel’s unconscious mind as she experienced earlier when she looked into the depths of the sea. “‘You have beauty,’ he said. The ship lurched. Rachel fell slightly forward. Richard took her in his arms and kissed her. Holding her tight, he kissed her passionately, so that she felt the hardness of his body and the roughness of his cheek printed upon hers. She fell back in her chair, with tremendous beats of the heart, each of which sent black waves across her eyes” (Woolf 205). The lurching ship is a mechanism that moves Richard towards Rachel, but it is also indicative of Rachel’s sexual trauma being triggered and the black waves that are sent across her eyes allude to the black ribs of the ships Rachel saw at the bottom of the sea, and we understand that the kiss from Richard has sent Rachel reeling into deeper clouded uncertainty. This is obvious in the immediate scenes that follow, as initially after the kiss Rachel is said to feel “peaceful” and “at the same time possessed with a strange exultation” (205). She looks into the

sea again but is sensually assaulted with a vision of fitful, scattered crests of waves, indicating Rachel's inability to clearly grasp or give expression to her emotions around the new sexual experience. At dinner that evening, Rachel is described as feeling "no longer exalted, but uncomfortable" (206); however, "formal platitudes were manufactured with effort" (206), which Woolf inserts to remind the reader of the "actual" reality that women were expected to adhere to. Woolf's poetic language has been abandoned here for realist description by an omnipresent narrator that reminds us that there are conventions to follow. Finally, at the end of the chapter as Rachel goes to bed she is subjected to terrible dreams, which further expose the tumultuous state of her unconscious mind:

She dreamt that she was walking down a long tunnel, which grew so narrow by degrees that she could touch the damp bricks on either side. At length the tunnel opened and became a vault; she found herself trapped in it, bricks meeting her wherever she turned, alone with a little deformed man who squatted on the floor gibbering, with long nails. His face was pitted and like the face of an animal. The wall behind him oozed with damp, which collected into drops and slid down. Still and cold as death she lay, not daring to move, until she broke the agony by tossing herself across the bed, and woke crying, 'Oh!' (206)

The gibbering represents Rachel subconsciously realizing that she is prevented from personal development by patriarchal society that she sees as manifested by a "little deformed man" who has corrupted language and structures such as the oozing, narrowing brick tunnels around her, to keep her confined to expectations that further patriarchal aims and the desires of men.

Woolf links patriarchy to the sexual abuse and exploitation of women just as she connects it to the exploitation of foreign resources. These points operate in unison within the text as a greater, combined enemy that has come to represent the dominating, hegemonic western culture. Woolf's concerns with voyaging to the South American continent for profit, her allusions to war, her enveloping of all this in the journey to consciousness of Rachel shows that Woolf parallels geopolitical structures like colonialism and capitalism with Rachel's exploitation by patriarchal systems, aligning woman with the primordial nature as colonized by men. For example, in one scene Helen is described as occupied in sewing "a great design of a tropical river through a tropical forest" while "naked natives whirled darts" and in between her stretches she reads a sentence on the "Reality of Matter or Nature of Good", while Mr. Pepper, nearby, is busy "cutting roots with a penknife". This scene is laden with symbolism, the penknife, for example, being one

of Woolf's more prevalent literary signifiers of the phallus. Helen sitting and sewing is an age-old trope for the primordial woman, and here relates to Helen's literary namesake from *The Odyssey*, as in mythology women would weave as a key female domestic occupation but not always to fall in with men's purposes: In the most famous example, in the *Odyssey* Penelope weaves (and undoes at night what she has woven during the day) to postpone the moment when she'd be forced by the suitors to choose one of them. Helen is seen weaving when Telemachus visits the court, and is presented with a golden spindle by King Polybus's wife and again towards the end of the story as she gives Prince Pisistratus a robe that she claims to have woven for his future bride. The fact that Helen in *The Voyage Out* is sewing a tropical scene with a yellow river conveys the colonial agenda of the journey, with the color yellow symbolizing the sickness of colonialism. We understand from this passage that Helen is maintained in this centuries-old attitude for women by the weight of patriarchal discourse that shapes her reality, evidenced by the lines she is reading on the tangible reality of matter and nature, as well as more violently by the threat of Mr. Pepper's knife/penis (Mr. Pepper appearing here as symbolic of patriarchal culture at large), who as a male is able to wield power that Helen is only given in the form of a sewing needle.

Critics like Felski denounce this trope of primeval and pre-language woman as inauthentic. And yet, Woolf reworks these conceptions to undermine patriarchal institutions and create a space for women to communicate their suppressed feelings and desires. Felski argues that pandering to the association of women with a primeval female language, with being "mysterious" and "unknowable", is just as problematic as patriarchal conceptions of woman as maternal and submissive; however, Woolf in *Three Guineas* advocates for immense institutional changes in education, the workforce and culture in general, as the entire history of women has been constructed, enforced and maintained by patriarchy; therefore, reworking male-constructed myths of women is empowering for allowing women to reconstruct the way knowledge, history and language are transmitted and absorbed. Woolf attempts to translate the "kitchenmaid's cry into the language of educated people" (*Three Guineas* 79-80) for her fictional and male recipient of her letter which brings to the forefront the conundrum of communicating women's centuries-old separate anguish into an understandable equivalent in the language of "educated people", i.e.

men. Woolf repeats twice in her essay the need for new words in the English language but insists there is no time; “we have no time to coin new words, greatly though the language is in need of them” (*Three Guineas* 73).

Thus, conceiving of a primordial and pre-language woman is a playful but also radical possibility for women to imagine an independent development for themselves outside of male historiography. It can be argued that this idealistic imagining is counterproductive as there are myriads of female identities around the globe and it is impossible and problematic to imagine a universally independent and primordial Woman; in the case of Rachel, however, Woolf shows that Rachel’s awakening and her desire to trace her female origins is a journey steeped in sadness as she senses the entire history of female oppression by patriarchal institutions, as well as her growing awareness of her abuse inflicted by her father, Mr. Dalloway and Hewet.

### ***The Voyage Out* and the Possibility of Female Writing**

Woolf’s emergence as a writer is as complicated as *The Voyage Out*, as it develops not only from the deep sense of injustice she experienced as “the daughter of an educated man” (Woolf, *Three Guineas* 4) and from the sexual abuse by her older half-brother; but also from her sense of inheritance, as well as the right to critique the profession of her father. The tension between Woolf’s desire to develop the work of her father and to completely dismantle it and its foundations caused Woolf to struggle, especially early on in her career, to strike the right artistic voice and tonality, particularly with articulating a message wholly bound up with reforming language, literary form, gender and expressions of memory, which are the cornerstone considerations of her career. According to Anna Snaith (2015), “Woolf does not reject tradition in favour of experiment, but rather tenses one against the other, thus in part undoing the opposition” (Snaith 208-9). As mentioned earlier, many critics have read *The Voyage Out* predominantly in relation to Woolf’s later works where the full extent of her experimentalism is evident. Joanne S. Frye (1980) wrote that the tone of *The Voyage Out* was of a novel of manners, but it was evident Woolf was “working toward an appropriate form for the metaphysical concerns which dominate all

her fiction. Although she has not yet found that form in *The Voyage Out*, its blending of metaphysical concerns into its structure lays the foundation for the formal originality of her later fiction” (Frye 402). And E.L. Bishop (1986) records *The Voyage Out* as a rather traditional work that “contains both thematic and stylish intimations of the later, more experimental novels,” which has been remarked upon “but never adequately explored” (Bishop 343). Today there has been further scholarship pertaining to the themes and styles present in *The Voyage Out* but none that sufficiently explains Rachel’s death and how it relates to other representations of female development.

Matthew Macer-Wright (2015) in his essay “Voyages In?” (in the collection *The Voyage Out: Centenary Perspectives*) rejects the large amount of recent Woolfian scholarship that focuses on biographical information about Woolf’s life, which he claims may detract from the “layers of symbolism that easily match the intensity and suddenness of anything in Lawrence’s *The Rainbow*, also published in 1915” (Macer-Wright 108). Macer-Wright implies that Lawrence’s novels are more often read for their content separated from biographical undertones than Woolf’s work, and argues that connecting the text’s content to the author’s biography “does not make what happens in the novel more truthful, more significant, and perhaps has the opposite effect” (107).

*The Voyage Out* can be seen to explore the links and difficulties inherent in the possibilities of emancipation for a young woman—a daughter—who seeks self-expression in language and in her emergent sexual awareness. *The Voyage Out* showcases traditional heterosexual marriage as part of a political institution built and achieved through propaganda, lies, domination and abuse. Adrienne Rich writes at length on dismantling and challenging heterosexuality as a political institution; in her seminal essay “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” (1980) she claims that though “the question inevitably will arise: are we to condemn all heterosexual relationships—including those which are least oppressive? This question, though often heartfelt, is the wrong question here” (Rich 659). Instead of focusing on individual and qualitative differences, Rich suggests that challengers to patriarchal traditions of

dominance and heterosexuality as an ingrained and forced institution should focus on the institution as a whole which has created

a history of female resistance which has never fully understood itself because it has been so fragmented, miscalled, erased. It will require a courageous grasp of the politics and economics, as well as the cultural propaganda, of heterosexuality, to carry us beyond individual cases or diversified group situations into the complex kind needed to undo the power men everywhere wield over women, power which has become a model for every other form of exploitation and illegitimate control. (659-660)

*The Voyage Out* was written long before Adrienne Rich's comments and before third-wave feminism led to problematizing the notion of global liberation for all women, and so though the novel is an early grasping and courageous move towards dismantling the myth of heterosexuality as an institution that imbues psychological and physical death, it is also very much about the urgent need for Rachel's liberation as a representative of the group Woolf categorized as "the daughters of educated men".

Woolf does gesture at the difficulty of translating the voices of women from different economic statuses, such as with her point about the "kitchenmaid's cry" (*Three Guineas* 79-80) referenced earlier in the introduction to this chapter, but issues of patriarchy are discussed through the framework used to communicate with "educated people". And, I would argue, this is about as far as Woolf goes to recognize the diversity of women's oppression. *The Voyage Out's* strategy is for locating a new female way of writing and space for the English-born "daughters of educated men", though she does explicitly state that women should not maintain any loyalties to their country as they do not hold a significant amount of power over the laws, land or economy of the country and this resonates loudest in her famous words, "In fact, as a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world" (*Three Guineas* 99). And yet, Woolf seeks for a universal female expression free from Western male control, which would indicate that these daughters of educated men are considered to hold some privilege and position imbued into them by the same society outside of which they would want to be. For instance, Woolf writes about changing the lives of "all men and women", yet, in the subsequent lines she refers to the "us" within the strata of "the procession of [the] educated" (*Three Guineas* 59).

Relatedly problematic is that Woolf insists that men and women have inherently different mental strategies and capacities for learning. For instance, when questioning the need for wars, Woolf writes “obviously, there is for [men] some glory, some necessity, some satisfaction in fighting which [women] have never felt or enjoyed. Complete understanding could only be achieved by blood transfusion and memory transfusion [...]” (Woolf 6). Woolf here indicates that, symbolically, the sexes are different not only through their experiences of the world, which would attribute to their different historical memories but also through an inherent physical difference that somehow is attributed to blood. The way in which Woolf evokes the term “memories” also implies an intergenerational, ongoing social memory of men, which forms a counterpoint to Woolf’s widely quoted statement from *A Room of One’s Own* “For we think back through our mothers if we are women” (*A Room of One’s Own* 76).

This idea of an inherently different social memory and physical blood lends itself to Woolf’s ultimate argument in *Three Guineas* that women should not incorporate themselves within male society but create an “Outsider’s Society” that is helpful or peaceful to men yet held completely separate and even indifferent to male society. In this way, we can begin to understand Woolf’s argument that the English language as built and used by men, for the education and employment of men, is greatly in need of new words. Nick Montgomery attributes to *The Voyage Out* a “disengagement from the authority of the paternal word and an affirmation of the semiotic otherness of the maternal voice” (Montgomery 34), and highlights that the “paternal word or symbolic code emerges from the persistent defeat of verbalization evident in the curiously frustrated conversations and abortive utterances of the characters” (34).

Woolf’s feminism in *Three Guineas* caused friction between her and her contemporaries, including many friends that had stuck by her until its publication. Then, Bloomsbury figures such as E.M. Forster and Maynard Keynes became openly hostile to Woolf’s newly outspoken politics; Woolf’s nephew Quentin Bell records Maynard Keynes’s reaction to *Three Guineas* as “angry, and contemptuous; it was, he declared, a silly argument and not very well written” (Bell 205).

However, at the time of writing *The Voyage Out*, Woolf was still developing her politics and was unsure of whether or not, and to what degree, she would engage in political action. In *A*

*Room of One's Own*, Woolf expresses her belief that women's writing directly engages as political action. However, Elaine Showalter (2009) contends that Woolf's recourse to writing abstracted her anger "from its physicality"; "denied any action, Woolf's vision of womanhood is as deadly as it is disembodied. The ultimate room of one's own is the grave" (Showalter 243). Indeed, in *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf implies that the conditions in which Charlotte Brontë and Lady Winchilsea were writing pushed them into anger, and prevented them from being able to express their genius, or their skill from emerging untainted. This suggests that Woolf believed it pertinent to artistic genius to repress, or else abstract and diffuse those feelings within layers of meaning, as Woolf herself attempts to do. "It is a thousand pities that women who could write like [Lady Winchilsea] should have been forced to anger and bitterness" (*A Room of One's Own* 59). And, "[Charlotte Brontë] had more genius than Jane Austen; but if one reads them over and marks that jerk in them, that indignation, one sees that she will never get her genius expressed whole and entire" (*A Room of One's Own* 72). Showalter claims that Woolf's modernist techniques of writing were developed to help her "evade confrontation with her own painful femaleness and enabled her to choke and repress her anger and ambition" (Showalter 2016).

As Woolf's earliest novel, *The Voyage Out* is powerful for illustrating how important it was for Virginia Woolf to be taken seriously as a novelist by contemporary literary artists and specifically her male peers. It is ironic that though Woolf passionately argues later in her career that women should think back through their mothers, while also being a proponent of female writing and coining new words for women's language, she was directing her letters in *Three Guineas* at an imaginary *man*.

The Woolf of *The Voyage Out* is still interrogating how her male contemporaries will receive her novel. In *A Room of One's Own* Woolf responds to a sentence from *Jane Eyre*: "Anybody may blame me who likes" which causes Woolf to wonder with a leap from character to writer, "what were they blaming Charlotte Brontë for" (*A Room of One's Own* 67); with a similar leap—authorized by Woolf's own—I wonder when I read in *The Voyage Out*, as Woolf writes, "no one takes a novelist very seriously, thank heavens", who was not taking Woolf seriously? Reading on a few further lines the answer is given, through Hewet's unlikely person: "There's no



doubt it helps to make up for the drudgery of a profession if a man's taken very, very seriously by every one—if he gets appointments, and has offices and a title and lots of letters after his name, and bits of ribbon and degrees. I don't grudge it 'em, though sometimes it comes over me—what an amazing concoction! What a miracle the masculine conception of life is—judges, civil servants, army, navy, Houses of Parliament, lord mayors—what a world we've made it!" (*The Voyage Out* 240). Woolf was worried about not being taken seriously by patriarchal institutions from the beginning of her career, which accounts for the near decade it took her to produce her first novel. I will investigate this anxiety, its causation and the tradition Woolf seeks to develop with *The Voyage Out* in the next section.

### ***The Voyage Out* and the Education of Women**

Though precursors of *The Voyage Out* involve narratives of female journeys and development, also authored by women, such as George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, their realism and stylistic conventions tend to keep them within the framework of patriarchal writing. However, *Middlemarch* did expand the boundaries of realism, as Brian Swann shows in his 1972 article "*Middlemarch: Realism and Symbolic Form*". Swann describes how in *Middlemarch* Eliot maintains the paradigms of historical realism and yet extends its meaning "not only in the direction of the incorporation of strictly accurate historical backgrounds, but by embodying the 'mythopoeic aspect of history'". Swann gives as an example how Eliot sets her events around the Reform movement in England and integrates "the physical incidents and structures of the Reform Bill, [as] a structural metaphor which symbolizes the efforts of individuals in the novel to evolve or reform themselves" (Swann 283). Writers were expanding and redefining the conventional boundaries of genre as far back as the nineteenth-century for the purpose of evoking a societal reaction. However, Henry James' opinion expressed in his 1873 review of the novel, in the monthly magazine *Galaxy*, was that *Middlemarch* "sets a limit, we think, to the development of the old fashioned English novel" (Swann 279), which he meant as an equivocal compliment to say that the novel was "too perfect", or in his words "too copious a dose of pure fiction" (Swann 279).

*Middlemarch* was also innovative for its representation of female development, for though we see Dorothea set out the goal of leading “a grand life here—now—in England” (*Middlemarch* 59), she is ultimately disappointed as she grows aware instead of how little any independent achievement of her own would contribute to progress. Eliot sheds light on the unfairness of patriarchal marriage for women and how any female hopes are subject to male approval before they can be realized. For instance, as Cara Weber illustrates in “The Continuity of Married Companionship: Marriage, Sympathy, and the Self in *Middlemarch*” (2012), though Dorothea begins with the idea that in marriage to Casaubon she would “learn everything” in order to “help him the better in his great work”, shortly afterwards she is prevented from physically or mentally assisting Casaubon, and is then reduced to “sobbing bitterly” on her honeymoon. Weber describes how the narrator ensures the audience “do not expect people to be moved by what is not unusual” in regards to Dorothea’s suffering in marriage (Weber 494). “The novel’s philosophical critique emerges through an analysis of women’s experience of marriage, presenting an alternative understanding of ethics as the open-ended negotiation of a relationship and of the self as the practice of this negotiation, conceptually grounded by an understanding of meaning as achieved over time” (495). Thus, Weber demonstrates how Eliot began to reshape the traditional *Bildungsroman* for the purpose of illustrating how women’s development would be in response to male directives on their lives. Weber provides a quote from Eliot’s “Natural History of German Life” (1856) where she had written: “The greatest benefit we owe to the artist, whether painter, poet, or novelist, is the extension of our sympathies” (Weber 495).

A great metaphor, within literature, for expanding boundaries and considering alternative perspectives is travel to a foreign land. The advent of the steam engine in the nineteenth-century opened up travel to middle and working-class members. Travel and movement have historically been the undertakings of privilege, and before the nineteenth century these opportunities had been limited to wealthy male elites or soldiers. In England, this meant that the Grand Tour, which had previously been a journey designated for upper class men for the purpose of completing their education abroad, was made accessible to a larger public. As the nineteenth century progressed, women were increasingly found on the Tour, accompanying their husbands or with older female

chaperones, because, as Elizabeth Abel informs us in *The Voyage In*, in relation to *The Voyage Out*'s heroine Rachel Vinrace, "a respectable twenty-four-year-old woman could not travel alone" (Abel 3). Commonly the purpose of these chaperoned voyages was to prepare women for future marriage with an educated and culturally sophisticated man. In literature, these journeys often force the protagonist to reflect on values and limitations of their home society; this can be increasingly problematic for women who are doubly displaced as female and foreigner.

In this section I will therefore discuss how in *The Voyage Out* Virginia Woolf sets out to highlight the way that the lack of equal education for women results in their unequal societal development so that any journey towards the self-awareness desired in a traditional *Bildungsroman*, or the self-improvement desired on a traditional Grand Tour, are ultimately stymied. Related to this, as we shall see in more detail later, is Woolf's emphasis on the intersection of masculinity and nationalism. And also related is her exposure of the way that the possibility for women to understand their own sexuality is prevented. For example, Woolf meaningfully directs the reader's attention towards the need to censor the descriptions of female sexuality, which is represented in a letter Helen writes where sexual content is represented elliptically with parentheses. The narrator informs us that the part of Helen's letter relating to sexuality "may not" be quoted to the reading public. In this way, Woolf subtly breaks the fourth wall to communicate a political statement directly to the reader. The connection between this censorship and Rachel's is implicit. Woolf highlights societal censorship, and especially female censorship from sexuality as part of the larger problem in gender inequality. In the letter, Helen describes her bewilderment at being charged with chaperoning Rachel on the journey to South America:

'It's an odd fate that has put me in charge of a girl,' she wrote, 'considering that I have never got on well with women [...] However, I must retract some of the things that I have said against them. If they were properly educated I don't see why they shouldn't be much the same as men [...] The girl, though twenty-four, had never heard that men desired women, and, until I explained it, did not know how children were born. Her ignorance upon other matters as important' (here Mrs. Ambrose's letter may not be quoted) . . . 'was complete'. (Woolf 222)

Helen's appeal for the "proper" education of women, though radical from the position of an older female chaperone for a traditional Grand Tour heroine, is still revelatory of the distance created

not only between men and women by unequal education but also between women, as Helen admits to not getting on with women nor to “having much to do with them” (222). And she prays “for a young man to come to my help” (222), forthrightly preferring to resign her influence to an unknown man who might “prove how absurd most of her ideas about life are” (222), implying that as a woman herself she is ill-equipped for the task.

At a climatic moment, deep in the jungle with Hewet, Rachel runs and gets tangled in a confusing tumble with Helen. When Rachel is calm she sees above her, “two great heads, the heads of a man and woman, of Terence and Helen” (Woolf 381). This two-headed entity recalls that Terence has, just a moment before this scene unfolded, stated that he is “a man, not a woman” (380). Rachel repeats, “‘A man,’ [...] and a curious sense of possession coming over her [...]. This body of his was unreal; the whole world was unreal” (380). This moment is symbolic of several problems for Rachel: on the one hand she feels she must choose between Helen and Hewet in the sense that, if she chooses Helen she will voyage into an unknown development, possibly not allowed to be explored based on societal limitations, but if she chooses Hewet the implication is that she is ready to integrate into the next phase of womanhood in the terms of patriarchal society. Within the scene, it also becomes obvious to Rachel that in marriage to Hewet she would be tying herself to him completely and thereby consenting to her own physical and mental take-over. Rachel rejects both parties and the vision of her domestic future, and shortly thereafter contracts a mysterious fever. The fever eventually “rescues” her from a marriage fate that would mean a spiritual death. The physical death is juxtaposed with the spiritual death that, as Rachel begins to understand, culminates from patriarchal society’s heterosexual marriage contract, which lends to the erasure of female identity. After listening to a passage read by Hewet, in which we are only told, “someone else had written” (391) on marriage, Rachel feels doubtful about her future happiness in a marriage contract to Hewet. The passage quoted reveals,

It did not take her long to find out that motherhood, as that function is understood by the mother of the upper middle classes, did not absorb the whole of her energies. She was young and strong, with healthy limbs and a body and brain that called urgently for exercise [...] Perhaps, in the far future, when generations of men had struggled and failed as she must now struggle and fail, woman would be, indeed, what she now made a pretense of being—the friend and companion—not the enemy and parasite of man (392-93).

When Hewet asks Rachel if that is what their marriage will be like she resists answering and “seemed doubtful” (393). Throughout the novel, Rachel displays a consistent resistance to information she receives from others regarding how to correctly live or digest information. Instead of marrying Hewet, Rachel eventually succumbs to a physical death that prevents her body and mind to continue being used by others, though Terence’s later claim that in death they had finally become one cynically highlights the power of the male word, as by verbalizing his claim he has issued its veracity.

As Rachel struggles to understand her position in the world and society, she ultimately rejects the traditional place for women, which includes domesticity and subordination to patriarchy and which, she considers, has already been carved out for herself and other women in her social milieu. Rachel’s death implies avoidance of entrapment and the forging of a separate path to social expectations, but at the expense of her life, which thus cannot be characterized as an escape. Woolf shows us through Rachel’s journey to self-awareness that though her tragic death embodies a space reclaimed for women in literature, outside of patriarchal and colonialist agendas, it is obviously not a sustainable solution for women to escape the restrictive life within patriarchal marriage. If anything, Rachel’s death demonstrates the urgent need for female education and equality, not to be complicit within patriarchal systems of control but to find and create their own pathways beyond the linear and conventionally masculine modes of development. Indeed, in *Three Guineas* Woolf asserts that it is no good for women to read more literature, newspapers or listen to further speeches written by men because that will only lead to a greater confusion since women “cannot understand the impulses, the motives, or the morality which lead you to go to war, to make any suggestion that will help you prevent war” (*Three Guineas* 13). This implies that an “equal” education would be insufficient if it meant that women would simply be adopted into patriarchal society; instead, they need their own language (and I am using “language” loosely to describe an entire mode of communicating knowledge) in order to thrive. This idea is strikingly similar to Cixous’s terminology on how women would interpret language and information differently.

Cixous's *l'écriture féminine* has been described by Verena Andermatt Conley (1990) as "referring less to a writing practiced mainly by women than, in a broader logical category, to textual ways of spending. [It suggests that it is writing that leads to] an undoing of hierarchies and oppositions that determine the limits of most conscious life" (Conley vii). However, Felski considers *l'écriture féminine* as dubious and vague denotation for what actually pertains to a broad spectrum of innovative or experimental writing, produced by men and women within the generally long and expansive period of modernism. She writes: "By defining feminine textuality as a spontaneous outpouring from the female body, [Cixous] manages to avoid the question of whether *l'écriture féminine* actually reveals any significant differences from existing modes of experimental writing" (Felski 36).

Felski's main argument in *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics* is that a literary feminism would have to fully involve the socio-political concerns present at the time any given text is written. Felski argues that theorists like Cixous and Kristeva are incorrect to "disengage women's writing from the social and political realm, and to write those realms off as repressive and 'phallogentric' in favor of withdrawal into linguistic and erotic play which only serves to reaffirm existing structures and women's traditionally marginalized role" (Felski 40). And while that is a compelling point, I believe that female writing, found for instance in *The Voyage Out*, is present in the text's encounter with traditionally male tropes, plots, language, and genre which highlights the inherent violence against women in those mechanisms. The political element of *l'écriture féminine* exists in the problematizing of traditionally male methods of writing and how this impacts on the audience and the canon. *L'écriture féminine* also problematizes heterosexual relationships by presenting alternative developments for female protagonists in a feminist *Bildungsroman*.

Virginia Woolf utilizes poetic prose to challenge previously accepted ways of writing women. For instance, Woolf wrote in a letter to Clive Bell that she thought a great deal about "what book I will write—how I shall re-form the novel and capture multitudes of things at present fugitive, enclose the whole, and shape infinite strange things" (Marcus, 378). Maria Alessandra Galbiati and Peter James Hams argue in "Reality and Language in *The Voyage Out*" (2010) that Woolf's initial formulaic challenge was to find a satisfactory way to communicate experience,

particularly women's, without the right words to translate it. The authors acknowledge that in *The Voyage Out* Woolf "does not attempt any innovation with respect to the creation of particularly omniscient narrator [...]. The narrator of *The Voyage Out* is able to provide full descriptions of characters, setting, and events, as well as being privy to the inner thoughts and feelings of each of the characters" (Galbiati, Hams 67). However, Woolf does experiment with narration, as Galbiati and Hams detail; Woolf balances dialogue with interior thoughts in such a way as to create "two planes of levels of expression" in order to better locate what Woolf believed to be "hidden beneath the surface of the utterance" (69). For instance, when an elderly married character, Mrs. Thornbury, relays to Hewet about how now that she is traveling and has time alone with her husband she is going to put herself "to school again" (Woolf 125), she also begins to rhapsodize about ancient culture and the military, all of which is discussed on the back of her domestic life at home, where she is a mother of a large family, and never has enough time alone to reflect on history. "After all we are founded on the past, aren't we, Mr. Hewet? My soldier son says that there is still a great deal to be learnt from Hannibal. One ought to know so much more than one does. Somehow when I read the paper, I begin with the debates first, and, before I've done, the door always opens—we're a very large party at home—and so one never does think enough about the ancients and all they've done for us. But *you* begin at the beginning" (Woolf 125). The implication here, buried underneath layers of dialogue, is that if Mrs. Thornbury did have enough time to reflect on history, politics and society she might not have been in the same position—but would instead be akin to Hewet who, she emphasizes, has the ability to begin at the beginning, unlike her. This passage is reminiscent of Woolf's discussion of Jane Austen's domestic life in *A Room of One's Own* where she records the dismay of Austen's nephew at his Aunt's ability to write, despite her endless interruptions: "How [Austen] was able to effect all this [...] is surprising, for she had no separate study to repair to, and most of the work must have been done in the general sitting-room, subject to all kinds of casual interruptions" (*A Room of One's Own* 67).

Galbiati and Hams discuss Patricia Laurence's (1991) theory, set out in *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, that Woolf was attempting to translate "silence" or

the “unsayable” into expression. They describe this silence as “embodied in women” and say that it “can be understood as a discourse of resistance” (69). This theory corresponds with the many aborted sentences, descriptions of nonsensical exclamations, unintelligible words and countless examples of a character’s inability to find the right words that occur in *The Voyage Out*; not to mention the pertinent statement from Hewet that he wants to write a novel about silence when Rachel is Hewet’s audience and receives this information in silence.

Hewet, indeed, might have found excellent material at this time up at the villa for some chapters in the novel which was to be called ‘Silence, or the Things People don’t say’. Helen and Rachel had become very silent. Having detected, as she thought, a secret, and judging that Rachel meant to keep it from her, Mrs Ambrose respected it carefully, but from that cause, though unintentionally, a curious atmosphere of reserve grew up between them. Instead of sharing their views upon all subjects, and plunging after an idea wherever it might lead, they spoke chiefly in comment upon the people they saw, and the secret between them made itself felt in what they said even of Thornburys and Elliots. (Woolf 255-56)

In this segment, in particular, the “secret” that is felt by Helen is opaque and seems both to relate to the aforementioned text of Hewet’s as well as being entirely separated and contained in the way women are inhibited in communication through silence and secrets. The vagueness of this paragraph is conducive to feminist writing style in the sense that though the audience is privy to Helen’s interior thoughts in relation to her niece, it is impossible to associate Helen’s conclusions with anything fixed and they thereby remain elusive and fluid.

### **The Voyage Out through the Lens of the *Bildungsroman***

As we saw in the Introduction, a reworking of the Grand Tour and a rebellion against Victorian and puritanical manners first began to appear in the modern journeys of canonical and prodigious serial texts such as *Little Dorrit* (1857) and *Middlemarch* (1872), followed shortly after by more severe works like *Daisy Miller* (1879), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) and then, in the twentieth-century by, for example, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905) and *A Room with a View* (1908). These books’ initial break from puritanical conventions and expectations establish them as antecedent texts to the female *Bildungsroman* that *The Voyage Out* represents. Those earlier texts rework the traditional Grand Tour and eighteenth-and-nineteenth-century values (Boes



2006); they all share the presence of a female heroine who uses the traditional journey south to question and unsettle established conceptions of character development. Thus travel to foreign landscapes, and especially to Southern Europe, began to represent a crossing of gender and sexuality borders (Goodlad 2006), while still supporting old world stereotypes. In the texts Southern Europeans are frequently represented and displayed as the “other” whilst any progressive break from stereotypes or conventions is written for the benefit of western audiences. The texts I have selected encounter places that evolve colonial discourse, as the places journeyed too are considered domains of English birthright, but are not actual colonies.

In the early-twentieth century, tourism to the traditional Grand Tour locations—Italy, Greece, Southern France and the Alps—was still popular and becoming more accessible to the middle and even working classes (Williams 1996). Italian and Greek history and culture were often claimed as extensions of the British heritage, or cultural birthright; many artifacts were transported from Southern Europe to Britain. Anglo-American Hellenism and appropriation of Greek and Roman tradition meant to inspire confidence and add the appeal of tradition to expanding capitalism and industrialization (Cooper 2004). And this notion extends to the primary texts of this research. For example, while the locations in South America (the imaginary Santa Marina of *The Voyage Out*), the Alps and the Balkans are not British colonies they are treated by the respective texts’ characters as if they were. In this sense, the characters travel to these places with a sense of entitlement, as well as hostility.

South America and other distant landscapes were frequently romanticized or misunderstood as either idyllic escapes or else violent, mythic places of uncertainty and dissonance. *The Voyage Out*’s audience is immediately made aware that the journey is a mythical one against Empire. After the audience understands that Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose are representatives of unorthodox existences, it appears that these heroes are protected by some magical enchantment: “But some enchantment had put the man and woman beyond the reach of malice and unpopularity” (149). The enchantment, however, turns out to actually represent a begrudged tolerance rather than any kind of mystical protection, as we later learn that Helen and Ridley in their inaction ultimately remain champions of the old patriarchal order. Mr. and Mrs.

Dalloway, for their part, represent an old-world style of English travel, which pre-dates but is attuned with the colonial and mercenary interests of Willoughby and his ilk.

Abel, Hirsch and Langland describe how the nineteenth-century placed social pressures on women that centered their development on being better wives and maternal figures. This, according to Boes (2006), led women on an inward and spiritual journey (Boes 234). However, by the end of the twentieth-century modern writers were attempting to rework their female characters' *Bildung* (232) to incorporate aspects of feminism within the character development gained from personal relationships, study and travel. The crossroads between nineteenth-century internal development for women and twentieth-century expansion and incorporation of women as equal to men is particularly interesting when interpreted literally in travel narratives. Although the spaces encountered in the three texts analyzed in this study expand beyond the landscapes representative of the Grand Tour, they share a similar function insofar as the latter, even when they became accessible locations for women, remained, as Chloe Chard (2000) points out, symbolic spaces to manifest female education, maturation and preparation for marriage.

I will attempt here to provide a succinct description of the evolving state of the *Bildungsroman* in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain. Boes records the first mention of the *Bildungsroman* in Britain as found in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* of 1910, which was around the same time that Woolf had begun writing *The Voyage Out*. Boes notes that after the entry into the encyclopedia, the term *Bildungsroman* quickly entered into common usage to indicate any novel that "has as its main theme the formative years or spiritual education of one person" (Boes 231). All three of the novels of my study illustrate that the growth of the protagonist involves the awareness of the struggles that women still face in the very achieving of maturity, and their continued participation in a society that does not recognize them as equal members. This is represented through the death of Rachel Vinrace in *The Voyage Out*, or through the stymied marriage plot and spiritual union between heterosexual couples in *Women in Love* or else through the confused, conflicted, and ultimately failed development of Yugoslavia as seen through the eyes of foreign interloper Rebecca West. The *Bildungsroman* is pertinent to this study as it is representative of enabling a protagonist to be initiated appropriately into society, or else learning the limits of their

opportunities in society; however, within the latter point there is an implied journey that the protagonist of any *Bildungsroman* undertakes in order to achieve a higher understanding of selfhood; the marriage plot or lack thereof becomes in this context emblematic of the failure to self-actualize as a woman in an unequal society. In the case of Yugoslavia, as we shall see in chapter four, its failed union does not prevent *Black Lamb's* protagonist from arriving at self-awareness, but part of her awareness belongs to the scope of how patriarchy is connected to the formation and security of modern nation states. Since we know that nationhood is ordered and maintained by men, by extension, women involved in a *Bildungsroman* are displaced in the world of development.

In one of the *Bildungsroman's* earliest conceptions, the genre's goal was described as being the poetic expression of enlightenment. The word itself can be broken down into terms meaning the novel of form(ation)/development (or that constructs an image of the protagonist). In this basic and reductive sense, the texts I examine follow in the tradition of the *Bildungsroman* by constructing innovative forms of *Bildung* for alternative protagonists. The enlightenment in *The Voyage Out* arrives as the violence of patriarchy is exposed for robbing women of any independent means to develop. As Felski argued, the feminist *Bildungsroman* should be celebrated as "the historical process of women coming into consciousness of female identity as a potentially oppositional force to existing social and cultural values" (Felski). However, Felski was here referring to later examples of feminist *Bildungsroman* from authors such as Doris Lessing, who, Felski argued, were more progressive for not killing their heroine at the end of the text and for showing that women could live independently and without a patriarchal marriage plot. Felski argues that eighteenth-century and even some early twentieth-century novels would often include the heroine's death at the end of the novel as an atonement or redemption for her earlier transgressions; or else, the novel would conclude with the heroine's marriage to a seemingly out-of-reach man as a reward for her good behavior. This schema creates and supports the dichotomy of good/bad womanhood and the types of avenues available to those women. Felski's point is interesting and given this history, it makes it all the more striking to see how Rachel's death departs from that pattern by not being redemptive and by being in fact the culmination of

her refusal to accept that dichotomy of womanhood, or the role reversed for her by her society. The devastating and unexpected arrival of Rachel's death emphasizes the lack of viable options for Rachel's life.

The debate of classifying literary genre has always revolved around and responded to political and cultural change and I maintain that *The Voyage Out* uses many of the same tropes and motifs of earlier literary genres, such as the *Bildungsroman*, in order to denounce them in the name of gender equality. For instance, though the heroine is Rachel, the beginning of the novel sees Helen and Rachel quietly listening to the male characters' conversation through a wall that separates them; the women can see the men through a window from the outside of the ship but the men cannot or do not notice the women. The men conversing are former university friends and are overheard by Rachel and Helen telling stories. As they are discussing the state of contemporary scholarship, the third-person narrator shifts the focus of the reading audience to the historical position of women during male interludes such as this one which have long dominated literature:

Each of the ladies, being after the fashion of their sex, highly trained in promoting men's talk without listening to it, could think—about the education of children, about the use of fog sirens in an opera—without betraying herself. Only it struck Helen that Rachel was perhaps too still for a hostess, and that she might have done something with her hands (Woolf 155).

The narrative reveals fresh insight into women's historical thinking during the multitude of male speeches that permeate literature. The women are trained to promote this talk, yet occupy their mind with educating children or things as benign, Woolf suggests, as fog sirens in an opera. The sirens create an association with the warning signal produced by foghorns, which would here suggest the disruption of an opera representing established art forms. This is an easy metaphor for what Woolf is attempting to replicate through her experimental writing. Woolf's style disrupts the performance. The scene also alludes to women's ancient representation as otherworldly seductresses or muses, whose historic role is to entice and encourage men. Helen suspects that Rachel does not have the right countenance to embrace this female tradition and considers she would be better doing something actively. There are several instances in *The Voyage Out* where women are shown to be on the outside looking in on men's existence, which represents the

distance between the male and female worlds and the impossibility of sharing an equal knowledge of each other within patriarchal construction. For instance, at night, after Rachel's room, in the villa she shares with her aunt and uncle, has gone dark, she is described as being drawn to the light emanating from Hewet's window. "When it was dark she was drawn to the window by the lights of the hotel. A light that went in and out was the light in Terence's window: there he sat, reading perhaps, or not he was walking up and down pulling out one book after another; and now he was seated in his chair again, and she tried to imagine what he was thinking about" (Woolf 258). But the reality is that Rachel cannot comprehend what Hewet is thinking about because her lack of equal education and opportunity has shut her out from his world. Rachel is only able to grasp the objects that Hewet might encounter or the movements he would make without any understanding of how his mind might be involving those things. As *The Voyage Out's* narrator puts it, "Her mind was as the landscape outside when dark beneath clouds and straitly lashed by wind and hail" (258), or in a word, Rachel's mind is inscrutable. But Hewet's mind, by privilege of being a man, is alight and far removed from Rachel in a social and exciting environment such as a bustling hotel. While Hewet is anticipating his future and procuring his mind for it, Rachel is metaphorically, at least, awaiting death. In this sense, Hewet is living out the traditional development we could expect as readers from a *Bildungsroman*, while Rachel is in decline.

Boes notes that Franco Moretti suggested that the "symbolic form of modernity is the *Bildungsroman*" by way of the novel of formation not relying on the protagonist's growth but on youth: "youth is, so to speak, modernity's essence, the sign of a work that seeks its meaning in the future rather than in the past" (Boes 236). But Woolf forces the audience to consider what Rachel's future potential really is without the same opportunities of her male contemporaries.

Boes argues:

The heedlessness of youth allows narrative to symbolically represent the 'formlessness' and revolutionary vertigo that attend the experience of modernity—but at the same time also to bind and contain it, for youth must invariably end. The hero grows up, enters into a position, and the social order reasserts itself. This echoes a division first proposed by Georg Lukács, who in *Theory of the Novel* distinguished between the *Bildungsroman* and the 'romance of disillusionment', suggesting that the *Bildungsroman's* goal is clearly defined as the celebrated return of the protagonist to "organic society". (237)

If the “ordered” and “organic” society that the *Bildungsroman* deposits its protagonists into after youth is patriarchal then women would not have a realistic position outside of those of wife and mother. It is possible to argue therefore that the first anxiety for the natural development of Rachel’s character occurs in the scene where she overhears male conversation and her chaperone and spiritual guide, Helen, realizes she will not make a good hostess, and by implication a good wife: her *Bildungsroman* is set up to fail.

Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983) discuss how the *Bildungsroman* has its origin as the province of the development of the white male, and thus enables further erasure of female development:

*Bildungsroman* has emphasized the interplay of psychological and social forces. Through further questioning, the definition of the genre has gradually been expanded to accommodate other historical and cultural variables. Gender, however, has not been assimilated as a pertinent category, despite the fact that the sex of the protagonist modifies every aspect of a particular *Bildungsroman*: its narrative structure, its implied psychology, its representation of social pressures. (Abel 4-5)

Therefore, a space that does assimilate gender challenges the implications of the original *Bildungsroman* traditions.

In the Introduction I outlined the history of the *Bildungsroman*, in which I recalled that Boes (2006) noted a “symbolic relationship between uneven developments in colonial modernity and anti-development in canonical fiction of the same period” (Boes 240). An example is Rachel from *The Voyage Out*, who, Boes suggests, “drifts” (241) through an underdeveloped colonial space which

[...] lacks discursive conventions of nationhood that provided closure to the traditional *Bildungsroman* plot. Imperial expansion challenges the pretense of an organic relationship between culture and state, creates zones of uneven development and negates traditional narratives of formations. (Boes 241)

*The Voyage Out* at the same time makes use of and yet departs from the *Bildungsroman*. In chapter seventeen, the narrator describes how “two separate systems of life” had begun to exist in Santa Marina, which is a nuanced reference to the dual systems of development that exist within modern society for the opposite sexes. For instance, all of the characters appreciated going to the Ambroses’ villa to break from the hotel, which the narrator describes as having a “slightly inhuman atmosphere”. In *The Voyage Out* the villa is representative of the removed state

of womanhood of domestic life, while the hotel represents the bustling action of male institutions like Parliament, university and the military. The villa is separate and aloof from the busy happenings of the hotel, and is described as welcoming even “people whose identity was so little developed the Ambroses had yet to discover if they had names” (Woolf 169). To bridge this divide, Woolf describes that a correspondence was established between the two institutions with the words “hotel” and “villa” coming into new meaning to signify the separate worlds at Santa Marina. This example is one where Woolf effectively illustrates the problem of a development, designed by institutions of patriarchy, as unable to individually represent and translate female experience. The metaphor of the “villa” and “hotel” works to reveal the necessity of creating and establishing distinct, yet bridgeable, spaces for women to develop.

In *The Voyage In*'s introduction Abel asserts that her book's aim is to identify “distinctively female versions of the *Bildungsroman*” by firstly revising “generic definitions, beginning with the assumptions underlying the earliest forms” (5), significantly beginning her book with a description of the themes of *The Voyage Out*. I agree with Abel that female versions of these male-created genre classifications exist only with the dismantling of preceding assumptions about how to write women in literature. And I also claim Woolf's “female style” of writing is against the grain of realist and *Bildungsroman* traditions by metaphorically voyaging into decidedly unknown and unreal spaces such as the mythical South American landscape, where, in the case of *The Voyage Out*, the old-world female heroine dies to ignite something new. As I shall argue in the next pages, Woolf's female *Bildungsroman* proposes a “female-style” for writing women that sets an original precedent for a female journey developing outward from male conventions in preference of unknown destinations. This bold new direction develops a female journey narrative.

The authors of the traditional *Bildungsroman* used travel as a metaphor for transference. Travel remains a pervasive and powerful vehicle, which enables the heroes to arrive at action, self-empowerment and awareness or knowledge. *The Voyage Out*'s narrator demonstrates the link between travel and power by referencing the ship's “dignity” (Woolf 20), mystery and independence—all things that Rachel is unable to achieve; the difference being that the ship is

“moving by her own power and sustained by her own resources” (Woolf 20). I will return later to the correspondence between Rachel and the ship.

Travel and movement in the Western world have long been the privileged domain of the elite, white male. Woman has always been held as marginal to these travel narratives, whether she is dutifully and chastely waiting at home, as in the case of Penelope, or attempting to undermine or usurp the heroes’ deeds like Helen or Circe. *The Voyage Out* is a perfect example of a text that breaks open past literary conventions, and exposes the limitations placed upon women inside the stories and the format that binds them there. *The Voyage Out* searches for a new approach for writing women, and women writing.

### **The Voyage Out as Modernist**

*The Voyage Out* is a reworking of the traditional *Bildungsroman* through disruptions to the novel’s plot—for example, when the voyage fails to deliver home the heroine, or when Rachel’s marriage to Hewet is disrupted by Rachel’s death; but Woolf also experiments with the form of the *Bildungsroman* and with the fluidity of writing, the fragmented or unfinished sentences and multiplicity of contexts, in a way that I would argue qualify the novel as modernist. In an example where Hewet is reading to Rachel from a text by an unnamed author, the audience’s attention is led to focus on the importance of maintaining the proper formulation, order, and chronology when authoring a novel. Woolf highlights the problem of aspiring writers wanting to create original content while remaining reliant on outmoded literary traditions as she writes that “Terence, meanwhile, read a novel which some one else had written, a process which he found essential to the composition of his own” (Woolf 391). Then, this same issue of being aware of the conventions of older styles is implied to be responsible for the hypocrisy Rachel discovers in her own writing: “she produced phrases which bore a considerable likeness to those which she had condemned” (391-2). As Hewet reads and paraphrases from his text, its content becomes the focus of the passage:

[The protagonist] had not realized at the time of his marriage, any more than the young man of parts and imagination usually does realise, the nature of the gulf which separates the needs and desires of the male from the needs and desires of the female...At first they had been very happy. The walking tour in Switzerland had been a time of jolly



companionship and stimulating revelations for both of them. Betty had proved herself the ideal comrade...They had shouted Love in the Valley to each other across the snowy slopes of the Rifflehorn' (and so on, and so on—I'll skip the descriptions)...(Woolf 392)

Hewet describes the author as a "hero, a literary man" (Woolf 392), and yet he complains that the text is predictable, skips descriptions and jumps ahead "15 pages or so" (346), filling in gaps with his own, in part mocking elucidations, to which Rachel responds, "Why don't people write about things they do feel?" (346). Rachel's question resonates with Cixous's opinion that "A capacity for improvisation should mark a reading process that could be qualified as feminine and that is one of improvisation as well as logic" (*Reading with Clarice Lispector* 4). Rachel, anticipating Cixous, would prefer a text to capture the tone of actual and spontaneous desire; especially woman's too often eclipsed desire.

In *The Voyage Out*, Woolf writes in an emerging experimental style that has been criticized by Anna Snaith (2015), Joanne S. Frye (1980), Kate Flint (1991), amongst others, as too hesitant with the application of the modernist techniques that would take precedence in her later canonical works. These techniques of style include "musical" or lyrical poetic prose, stream-of-consciousness, and Virginia Woolf's own "tunneling" technique (*The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, Vol. 2, p. 263), a style that engages with personal memory in our day-to-day activities, as exemplified fully in *Mrs. Dalloway*. In a diary entry dated 30<sup>th</sup> of August, 1923, Woolf writes about her fully realized tunneling technique while writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, which at that time still had the working title of *The Hours*: "I should say a good deal about *The Hours* and my discovery; how I dig at beautiful caves behind my characters; I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humour, depth. The idea is that the caves shall connect, and each comes to daylight at the present moment" (Woolf 263). Here Woolf is excited about experimenting with style and allowing it to reveal new methods of writing. She is clearly working towards achieving an exact tone for her ideas and yet only three years prior to this entry, another account from Woolf's diary shows her to be self-conscious of these same methods and to question her originality, as she writes that what she's doing is "probably done better by Mr. Joyce. Then I begin to wonder what it is that I am doing: to suspect, as is usual in such cases, that I have not thought my plan out quite plainly enough [...]" (Woolf 68). These entries indicate Woolf's eagerness to create a new approach to

writing and perhaps also reveal her frustration and anxiety surrounding the male modern canon. Woolf thought authors such as Joyce were using an experimentalism that she found both effective and not effective enough for her purposes, for which she needs to find, and articulate, a more adequate, more developed and more clearly thought-out form, which in her later diary entries she seems to feel she is finding, e.g. through the tunneling technique and a genre that can supplant the “novel”. Perhaps her most direct diary appeal for a new and original style that would supplant the experimentalism of the modern ‘novel’ as well as traditional forms completely is dated from the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 1925. Woolf describes how in conversation with her deceased sister’s widower Jack Hills he became emotional about the prospect of authentically writing biography:

‘But could one tell the truth? About one’s affairs with women? About one’s parents? My mother now—she was a very able woman—we all owe her an awful lot—but hard.’ She said an odd thing to Nessa once—that she hated girls, especially motherless girls. [...] (But while I try to write, I am making up ‘To the Lighthouse’—the sea is to be heard all through it. I have an idea that I will invent a new name for my books to supplant ‘novel’. A new — by Virginia Woolf. But what? Elegy?) (The Diary of Virginia Woolf ,Vol. 3, p. 13)

This passage hints at Woolf’s impatience with the elucidations of men, as she uses her writing to interrupt Hills’ questions of method; first by dismantling his assertion about his mother and then to redirecting her thoughts to her own semi-autobiography and the processes of writing *To the Lighthouse*. Woolf writes that she wants to invent a new name for her books to supplant “novel”, and suggests “elegy” as a possibly more appropriate term. *The Voyage Out* clearly ends with Rachel’s death but if we consider the text as an elegy, it reveals how the work is considered more poetically, perhaps as a remembering of the “angel in the house” that Woolf would later suggest she wanted to kill. Woolf was considering the significance of death to life and also to the importance of reimagining forms in order to find a better structure to support the new female language she wanted to achieve.

Woolf largely informed her writings and characters from her own experiences to directly criticize the establishment and seek an independent method of writing. The most important difference between Joyce’s “internals”, as Woolf describes his stream-of-consciousness, and Woolf’s is what Hermione Lee has referred to as Woolf’s “feminist programme [...] inextricably bound up with her desire to revolutionise biography” (Livesey 126). This is an interesting point when considering *The Voyage Out*, which has also been criticized by Macer-Wright (2015) as too

reliant on autobiography. However, though this text is often dismissed as having a “traditional framework” (Frye 402) with only “discordant elements [that] jar and begin to form their own stronger and deeper patterns (Frye 402) or else as a “rather traditional work [that] contains both thematic and stylish intimations of the later, more experimental novels” (Bishop 343), it is important to remember that this first work of Woolf’s was produced over a period of at least ten years, at great mental and emotional strain that eventually lead to her first mental collapse. Instead of dismissing or undervaluing the novel as simply an introductory work, I believe it is more fruitful to consider it as the first instance where Woolf begins to build a new language and space for women in order to grasp new means of female expression outside of male-centric realities. Woolf’s narrator experimentally travels in and out of the different characters’ minds in order to discover “what it was all about?” (Woolf 22); there is a lyricism to the combination of her words and fluidity of her sentences which is conducive to her work’s subject of unraveling the way people think in any given moment. For instance, as Rachel and Helen conclude their evening dancing in Santa Marina, Woolf focuses her descriptive language on painting an unsettling, uneasy or sickly atmosphere through symbolic language: “Outside, the mountains showed very pure and remote; the dew was sparkling on the grass, and the sky was flushed with blue, save for the pale yellows and pinks in the East” (280); and then, Evelyn states “‘How silly the poor old lights look!’ said Evelyn M. in a curiously subdued tone of voice. ‘And ourselves; it isn’t becoming.’ It was true; the untidy hair, and the green and yellow gems which had seemed so festive half an hour ago, now looked cheap and slovenly” (280). In these two descriptions, the narrator juxtaposes words that have traditionally represented beauty, especially female beauty like “pure”, with words that evoke fear or sickness, “remote”, which suggests a sense of isolation or unknown; or again with “pale yellows and pinks”, yellow being a used to symbolise an encroaching illness or simply to invoke a sense of dread. Woolf uses it again as Helen and Rachel walk back to their accommodation that evening: “When they came to the high yellow wall, where the lane turned off from the road, Helen was dismissing the two young men. ‘You’ve come far enough,’ she said. ‘Go back to bed.’ But they seemed unwilling to move” (281). The yellow wall thus becomes symbolic of a blockage for women who intend to veer in their own direction, and of course despite Rachel’s

female guardian's dismissal the men refuse to leave the women alone, which is illustrative of men's lack of respect for women in society. At the end of the evening, Rachel tells Helen that she feels "like a fish at the bottom of the sea" (281), which recalls her earlier reflection of monsters and broken, ribbed ships at the bottom of the seas, indicating that society's sickness is what is dragging Rachel down towards her death. Another example of Woolf's lyrical description of the condition of women's oppression occurs when Rachel muses over her life with her aunts, as she reflects that their meaningless conversation together "lasted her hundreds of morning walks round Richmond Park, and blotted out the trees and the people and the deer" (Woolf 22). In this passage Woolf implies that women's lack of education causes them to not effectively be a part of their environment outside of sheer functionality, i.e. walking, or mindless talk.

These attributes cannot be looked at completely without also taking into account the autobiographical elements that shaped Woolf's work. To understand *The Voyage Out* as one of the earliest examples of writing against the canon and creating a space and language uniquely for women it is essential to look at the process and development of the work. I consider alongside Kate Flint that, "As ever with Woolf [...] the question of what she writes as a woman is inseparable from her own consideration of the difference which gender makes to how she writes" (Flint 362). In *The Voyage Out* there is much discussion around what texts Rachel is reading or that are being recommended for her to read by others. Because Woolf was largely self-educated from setting diligent reading lists for herself and having access to her father's library, it is easy to read the autobiographical development of Woolf in Rachel's characterization. Rachel rebels against reading historical texts, philosophy, or literature like Defoe in preference of the modern. In the same way, Woolf would rebel against her father's profession of writing biographies by creating a modernist adaption of the same genre in *Orlando*. The text remains a spectacular example of defiance and appeal for change to modern society dominated by institutions of male power.

When given a choice Rachel herself prefers "modern books, books in shiny yellow covers, books with a great deal of gilding on the back, which were tokens in her aunt's eyes of harsh wrangling and disputes about facts which had no such importance as the moderns claimed for

them” (Woolf 245). Helen Ambrose, for all her perceived greater freedom thanks to having married an academic who even supports women’s suffrage, would still prefer to recommend Rachel to read “Defoe, Maupassant, or some spacious chronicle of family life” (245). This seemingly innocuous preference of literature actually indicates that Helen is still entrenched well within patriarchal systems that position her as wife and mother foremost. But Helen ultimately does not interfere in Rachel’s choice of literature and Rachel chooses, as an example, Ibsen and a novel “such as Mrs. Ambrose detested, whose whole purpose was to distribute the guilt of woman’s downfall on the right shoulders” (245), a feat Helen considers is achieved only “if reader’s discomfort were any proof of it” (245). Helen implies that her preference is with literature that preserves old traditions and the myth of the domestic and dutiful wife, over books that unsettle patriarchal order. Represented in this example of Helen’s cowardice is a point of contention ever present in Woolfian criticism: how audible does dissent against patriarchy need to be? While Woolf’s heroine Rachel considers it should be louder than Helen’s, the fact that Rachel dies of a fever while Helen and Mrs. Dalloway survive is interesting. It implies that only women who remain complicit in patriarchal systems stand a chance of physical survival at the sacrifice of women like Rachel (and men, in Septimus’s case in *Mrs. Dalloway*) who refuse to comply.

Woolf emphasizes throughout the text that the impossibility of Rachel and Hewet’s union emerges from the social structures that have advanced one and held back the other, and that continue to do so despite the many books that Hewet lends Rachel in the hopes of educating her. These books only serve to make her more aware of her lack of autonomy in the world around her.

There are instances within the text where silence, interruptions and inaudibility pointedly replace moments where women are called upon to speak. In one example, Rachel takes part in the hotel dance in Santa Marina, with St John Hirst, who is “one of the three” (Woolf 269) most distinguished men in England, and Rachel attempts to make ordinary conversation, after just having discovered from their dancing together that “their methods were incompatible” (268). This also extends to their ability to communicate: “After three minutes the silence became so intolerable to Rachel that she was goaded to advance another commonplace about the beauty of

the night. Hirst interrupted her ruthlessly. ‘Was that all nonsense what you said the other day about being a Christian and having no education?’ he asked” (269).

These moments of stifled conversation are important for communicating that societal limitations for women render them unable to speak, as Hirst himself realizes: “St John was considering the immense difficulty of talking to girls who had no experience of life” (269). In fact, like her literary predecessor Lucy Honeychurch in E.M. Forster’s *A Room with a View* (1908), Rachel Vinrace also prefers to play music than to speak and she lets the music convey the feelings that are otherwise inexpressible to her due to a lack of understanding and knowledge of her own emotions and mind. Rachel attempts to convey to Hirst as she tells him that though it is true she has practically no education, “I also play the piano very well” (269). Like Forster, Woolf uses music to denote an alternative language for women and a means to evade the linguistic strictures of patriarchy. Ben Hutchinson demonstrates in *Modernism and Style* (2011) that music is the only art form that remains “alinguistic” (Hutchinson 53) and, being recognized as such by the modernists, has been the model of poetic prose used by Woolf and Joyce with their unique brands of stream-of-consciousness. Woolf uses poetical prose in reference to past literary styles of writing and as a way of dismantling them.

For instance, Woolf uses Hellenic themes and mythology, which she often reworks to undermine their symbolic permanence. “There’s an abyss between us,” (Woolf 313) St John laments to Helen,

His voice sounded as if it issued from the depths of a cavern in the rocks. ‘You’re infinitely simpler than I am. Women always are, of course. [...] Helen sat and looked at him with her needle in her hand. [...] With one foot raised on the rung of a chair, and her elbow out in the attitude for sewing, her own figure possessed the sublimity of a woman of the early world, spinning the thread of fate—the sublimity possessed by many women of the present day who fall into the attitude required by scrubbing or sewing. (313)

Here Woolf demystifies the spinning Fates of ancient literary tradition by aligning their weaving the lives of men to the dull business and daily maintenance of domesticity. Helen here appears to embody the position of the traditional woman. Hirst misplaces his admiration for Helen in thinking she has special and secret feminine power: “I’d rather you liked me than anyone I’ve ever met” (313) he exaggerates. Helen asks, “what about the five philosophers? (313). When Hirst

considers this he realizes that “Far away on the other side of the world as they were, in smoky rooms, and grey medieval courts, they appeared remarkable figures, free-spoken men with whom he could be at ease [...] They gave him, certainly, what no woman could give him, not Helen even” (314). Again, the literal divide in space between England and Santa Marina also represents the divide between the sexes; Hirst feels more comfortable in a world designed by and for men. He then puts forth his question to Helen about what his next movement in life should be, the bar or to stay at Cambridge? This indicates that Hirst remembers that oracles, Fates and spiritual guides are traditionally women. In the literatures of western patriarchy, women often lack reason in their own right and instead guide men by magic and mystified feminine power, which Woolf has suggested is actually housework, childcare and promoting male endeavor. Helen delivers in this role by suggesting Hirst go to the bar. Hirst’s response—“He pressed her for no reasons” (314) — shows that he treats Helen’s suggestion rather as a command, which following the segment involving oracles and guides, aligns Helen with having similar magical powers. It is as if Hirst is bewitched by Helen and unable not to go with her. Woolf highlights the problematic of this kind of allusion by illustrating how it robs women of their agency, attributing their willpower to mysticism instead, and to their being non-rational vehicles of a divine message or pre-written truth.

There are multiple instances within the text where characters warn against an unchallenged certainty in the permanence of the British Empire and hold it parallel to the civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome. Indeed, it was part of the ideals of *Bildung* to have a basic understanding of Greek and Roman history, which were taken for granted as extensions of British history and would have been thoroughly taught in British public schools and then at Oxford and Cambridge. Theodore Koulouris describes how Woolf used a “Greek Notebook” to record her thoughts on and analyses of the Greek material she studied. Commenting on *The Odyssey*, Koulouris notes that, “[a]s perhaps the best example of the epic genre, the central aim of the *Odyssey* is to narrate the heroic deeds of men. [...] Woolf started reading the *Odyssey* whilst still in Greece [...] and while she was] not unsceptical of Homer’s treatment of women, the Homeric influence is clearly evident in her earlier texts [...] Woolf echoes a vividly Homeric narrative” (Koulouris 175). Woolf often uses Hellenic themes to rework Homeric traditions for writing women.

However, as noted by Susan Stanford Friedman, “For many feminist poststructuralists in particular the lyric mode and poetry (especially avant-garde poetry) are tied to the repressed feminine, maternal, and pre-oedipal whereas narrative and the novel (especially the mimetic novel) are linked to the repressive masculine, paternal, and oedipal” (*Mappings* 228-29). Anticipating the poststructuralist feminists of whom Friedman writes, *The Voyage Out*’s style provides women with a political positioning against patriarchal narrative techniques and creates a unique women’s narrative that is separate from novels centered on male development.

### **Rachel’s Conflict of Sexual Awakening within a Colonized Space**

The narrator of *The Voyage Out* makes this apparent by proclaiming the disillusionment of the passengers with their view of England as the ship takes them further away from their domestic space. England is described as “a shrinking island in which people were imprisoned” (Woolf 167), which signifies the changing perspective induced by movement away from the homeland. In this instance, innovations in technology and culture that allow for greater ease of travel for a wider population are seen to work against the west. The same technological advances that enable easier global connections heighten the threat of global war, as well as cultural disillusionment for members who have been marginalized by their home society, as Rachel has been. Indeed the narrator continues to show that not just England is affected by this aspect of “bad modernity”, but that “[t]he disease attacked other parts of the earth: Europe shrank, Asia shrank, Africa and America shrank, until it seemed doubtful whether the ship would ever run against any of those wrinkled little rocks again” (167).

According to Koulouris, “Woolf employs the figure of Richard, the roaming bard, who in a veritably Homeric fashion roams England selling his books and telling stories” (Koulouris 176). If we return to the earlier point that Richard Dalloway represents an old Grand Tour gentleman, this reference to a roaming bard is apposite: Mr. Dalloway is relaying stories of Empire in order to preserve and expand its traditions. At one point, Mr. Dalloway raises his hat to some warships that pass. Clarissa squeezes Rachel’s hand and exclaims, “Aren’t you glad to be English!” (Woolf



199). At lunch Richard begins to work as the bard Koulouris describes, by telling stories of “valour and death, and the magnificent qualities of British admirals. Clarissa quoted one poet, Willoughby quoted another. Life on board a man-of-war was splendid, so they agreed, and sailors, whenever one met them, were quite especially nice and simple” (199). This instance may be seen to hark back to the Homeric fashion of singing the glories of war. By preserving Clarissa’s purity and illusions, Mr. Dalloway can feel more masterful and rewarded for his efforts in the interest of patriarchal management. Richard then goes on to tell Rachel that he hopes he never meets a woman who has the “political instinct” (197), as this would threaten the system he is working to preserve. However, Helen remarks “that it seemed to her as wrong to keep sailors as to keep a zoo, and that as for dying on a battlefield, surely it was time we ceased to praise courage—‘or to write bad poetry about it,’ snarled Pepper” (199) who here interrupts Helen’s concern for the reality of war to complain about technical aspects of heroic poetry. The irrelevance of his commentary at once signifies the problem with the remoteness of academics from real suffering whilst also illustrating that women’s views, no matter how informed, are always eclipsed by the male view.

Nonetheless the reference to “bad poetry” stresses Woolf’s views that modern writing should reject the habit of writing in, or attempting to recreate, the past literary traditions, as that domain exists to uphold and glorify institutions of patriarchy. “But Helen was really wondering why Rachel, sitting silent, looked so queer and flushed” (199). Koulouris states that “Rachel cannot escape the influence of Hellenism even from within the decidedly un-Hellenic cultural context of Santa Marina” (Koulouris 93). I would extend Koulouris’s identification of the influence of Hellenism to that of western patriarchal and colonial tradition, too, which has the impact of eclipsing Helen and silencing Rachel.

The Dalloways describe their activities whilst traveling continental Europe, the descriptions of which have an ironic and patronizing facade of care and involvement with local communities, though the motivations behind their involvements remain unclear. For instance, whilst the Dalloways are traveling in Spain, Mrs. Dalloway is described as having “let loose a small bird which some ruffian had trapped, ‘because one hates to think of anything in a cage

where English people lie buried” (Woolf 174). This scene resembles a moment Rebecca West describes in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, when West and her husband are entertained by an upper-class Dalmatian family and the “old gentleman” patriarch tells them “a favorite family joke” where his wife released all of his caged birds on Easter day: “never will [you] have heard of a woman behaving so wickedly,” he mockingly chastises, to which the wife responds, “well birds in cages, that is something I do not like” (West 214). In both texts the concern for the liberation of animals takes precedence over the liberation of people, but when considering Mrs. Dalloway’s caveat “where English people lie buried,” the point is emphasized that Mrs. Dalloway considers liberty to be a particularly British right of honor and is disinterested, at best, in whether other nationals are subject to “anything in a cage”. The upper-class individuals do not want to see imprisonment around them, which becomes a frivolous concern when the reality of their position and their material possessions contradict their sympathies with caged birds and does not extend the same concern to human beings.

Clarissa Dalloway travels to foreign landscapes to ensure that English people maintain their superior status and that the locals in the area understand that superiority through symbols. Mr. Dalloway communicates his chief desire to travel to various ports to have coal collected in the ship, whilst they stop at ports to see things for themselves. Woolf uses the objects the Dalloways carry or show interest in as symbols that illuminate their colonialist intentions and hierarchical status. As Mrs. Dalloway comes onto the ship she is described as having “her body wrapped in furs, her head in veils”; they carry with them “Many solid leather bags of a rich brown hue [...Mr. Dalloway] a dispatch box, and his wife a dressing case suggestive of a diamond necklace and bottles with silver tops” (Woolf 175). Mrs. Dalloway’s dress suggests the old-world traveler. These specific projections of old-world travel are directly referenced again in the novel when Mrs. Paley “gave the advice of an old traveller that they should take nice canned vegetables, fur cloaks, and insect powder” (361). All are examples of Western, upper-class flair whilst the goods they carry and wear intimate their superiority and their ability to colonize or wield death. This power is guaranteed by Mr. Dalloway’s position as an MP, an aspiring Prime Minister, which garners influence and freedom of movement: “Mr. Dalloway wished to look at certain guns, and was of

opinion that the African coast is far more unsettled than people at home were inclined to believe” (174). Here again we are to understand Mr. Dalloway’s intentions via his object interests. Woolf significantly combines Mr. Dalloway’s desire to look at guns with his opinion of the unsettled African coast to lead the audience to associate Mr. Dalloway with a colonialist and violent agenda towards Africa.

In another instance from the text that illustrates the violence manifested in colonialism, the party of tourists decides to “adopt the methods of modern warfare against an invading army” of ants that have hijacked their picnic and though the guests reassure each other the ants will not sting there is a concern they will “infest the victuals” (Woolf 253); the entire scene is described from a classically bemused, yet removed narrator which harks back to the conventions of realism; for instance, Woolf writes “The table-cloth represented the invaded country, and round it they built barricades of baskets, set up the wine bottles in a rampart, made fortifications of bread and dig fosses of salt. When an ant got through it was exposed to a fire of bread-crumbs, until Susan pronounced that that was cruel, and rewarded those brave spirits with spoil in the shape of tongue” (253), this demonstrates the narratorial detachment. And yet, Woolf is associating the mindlessness of the general populace with a self-destructive army of ants, as near the start of the novel she had already compared doomed inhabitants of England to be “swarming about like aimless ants, and almost pressing each other over the edge [...and] making a vain clamour, which being unheard, either ceased, or rose into a brawl” (Woolf 85).

In this earlier scene the narrator is describing Rachel’s unconscious conceptions of England as the ship takes her further away from its view. And so, considering the two scenes together, we can see that Woolf was making a subtle but clear statement about the state of being a citizen of a modern nation-state, and specifically about the aimlessness and hopelessness of being a citizen of a government more concerned with how best to situate and orchestrate its inhabitants for profit and war. In the later scene, this conception is brought into consciousness as the picnic party symbolizes the governing elite who are happily at play with the ants who symbolize the average citizen. The elite worry the ants will “infest” or possibly even stage a backlash “sting”, but ultimately enjoy building barricades out of wine bottles and firing an assault

of breadcrumbs against any ant which is able to get through the barricade, which can be read as the elite's manipulation of the people in the interest of their own enjoyment and opulence (see the wine bottle barricades), whilst any ant/human that resists their constructs is attacked.

The *Euphrosyne* is symbolic of two major societal critiques. Firstly the ship provides the means to allow Rachel's father Willoughby and the Dalloways access to colonization, domination and appropriation of other cultures, land and resources; and as such the ship is representative of patriarchal power—or more crudely of Willoughby's phallus—to take Rachel deep into the jungles of the new world where he is also collecting his spoils and reaping his rewards off of the resources of the local resources for profit. However, Rachel fancifully imagines that life as a ship would provide her with “a life of her own” (168) as she would be “sustained by her own resources. The ship might give her death or some unexampled joy, and none would know of it. She was a bride going forth to her husband, a virgin unknown of men; in her vigor and purity she might be likened to all beautiful things” (168). With this description in mind as well as the real purpose of the ship as designated by Willoughby and chartered by Mr. Dalloway, we see that Rachel and this ship have parallel lives: both are owned by Willoughby, taken by Mr. Dalloway and then deposited. The freedom that Rachel imagines she would have if she were the ship is rendered just as illusory as any perceived freedom Rachel would receive from marriage.

Woolf wrote in *A Room of One's Own* that before achieving the right to vote, given the choice between money and the vote she would have chosen money: “Of the two—the vote and the money—the money, I own, seemed infinitely the more important” (*A Room of One's Own* 53); however, the example of Rachel and the ship as having parallel fates highlights that the ship is steered by others to serve as a means for its owner's exploitation of foreign resources and colonialist pursuits, equivalent to Rachel's subjugation to patriarchy. Rachel and the ship are both being used by Willoughby as extensions of his power; a power that Mr. Dalloway capitalizes on in both examples by boarding the *Euphrosyne* and assaulting Rachel. As Mr. Dalloway feels entitled to abuse the “property” of Willoughby we are shown a clear hierarchy of power within British patriarchy, with Mr. Dalloway at the highest echelon as patriarchy's enabler, then Willoughby as its executor and Rachel and the ship designated as its trappings.

Immediately after the ship sets sail, Helen is seen reflecting on Rachel's mother's marriage to the unsentimental and brutish Willoughby: "And she married [...] and she was happy, I suppose" (Woolf 161). Helen notes that though Willoughby is traditionally handsome and masculine, he is "never simple and honest about his feelings" and she "suspected him of nameless atrocities with regard to his daughter, as indeed she had always suspected him of bullying his wife" (161). So that the reader then, still manipulated by the narrative to view the Ambroses and particularly Helen as likeable, progressive characters, has to wonder, what *nameless* atrocities is Helen referring to? It is a well-known fact that Woolf herself was sexually abused by her older stepbrothers, and as this book is her most autobiographical text, it is fitting to consider the possibility that Rachel and her mother were subjugated sexually and physically to the demands of their father. This conclusion also applies to Rachel's encounter with Mr. Dalloway who molests her aboard this ship.

Indeed, the allusion to latent sexual trauma is recurrent. When Rachel sees Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose kiss on board the ship she looks down "into the depth of the sea" (Woolf 164), which is a metaphor evoked periodically for the subconscious mind, especially after any incident involving heterosexuality or love. For example, after Hewet and Rachel have agreed to marry, Hewet explains that he likes Rachel because he cannot figure out what she's thinking and the lack of knowing makes him want to react violently towards her, as he demonstrates by clenching his fist and shaking it so near her "that she started back" (393). "There are moments," Hewet continues, "when if we stood on a rock together you'd throw me into the sea" (393). Rachel responds to this by imagining being "flung into the sea, to be washed hither and thither, and driven around the roots of the world—the idea was incoherently delightful [...] 'I'm a mermaid! I can swim,' she cried" (393-94). This can be loosely taken as a reference to the myth of Ino who throws herself into the sea along with her son to escape the murderous wrath of her husband Athamas (though Ino was herself murderous—the madness of her husband was punishment for her attempt to kill her stepchildren); after Ino's death she was worshipped as a goddess of the sea (Leukothea).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See "LEUKOTHEA," [www.theoi.com/Pontios/Leukothea.html](http://www.theoi.com/Pontios/Leukothea.html).

However, the myth works in *The Voyage Out* to illustrate how, in marriage to Hewet, Rachel would always be subject to the whims of his mood, which could just as likely turn towards violence as kindness, as is demonstrated by his shaking his fist at her. Rachel imagines, for herself, a more autonomous unknown, which she romanticizes as a mermaid. Incidentally, mermaids do not have sexual organs and they are therefore by implication free from sexual exploiters, and could, in line with the mythical depiction of sirens, which are often conflated with mermaids, even bring about the destruction of others, instead of being the one pursued. In actuality, Rachel's precipice is crossed by agreeing to enter into a marriage contract with Hewet, which leads her to contract a fever that ultimately results in her death and the realization of her fantasized escape. In Abel's words:

On the verge of entering adult life as Terence's wife in London, Rachel withdraws into a feverish inner landscape that dramatizes her fears about adulthood, fears possibly anticipated by her mother's premature death. Terence idealizes Rachel's death as a moment of perfect communion between them; but for Rachel the hallucinatory descent into suffocating water provides her only escape from a violent and confining social world and from the female body that frustrates her spiritual and artistic cravings. (Abel 4)

Imagining the depths of the water over the *Euphrosyne*, Rachel sees the water disturbed only on the surface by the ship, but further down the water is obscure and greenish with traces of wrecked ships, great eels and greenish monsters. The eels are phallic, whilst the wrecked ships and greenish monsters allude to trauma and mental disturbance. Koulouris suggests "that Mr. Dalloway's kiss in *The Voyage Out* is the only heterosexual kiss" (Koulouris 98) in Woolf's fiction; while this claim is not actually true because, as I have mentioned, in *The Voyage Out* alone, the Ambroses and the Dalloways both kiss passionately, it is safe to argue that in her texts Woolf exhibits a sustained tendency to render acts of love or the feeling of being "in love" laced with feeling of awkwardness, regret and consternation. Why did Rachel feel like a victim? Throughout the text, Rachel has encounters that demonstrate the illicit connection Woolf draws between patriarchal systems of control and heterosexual intimacy. For example, just before the passage that described England as a shrinking island, the narrator explicates,

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All old people and many sick people were drawn, were it only for a foot or two, into the open air, and prognosticated pleasant things about the course of the world. As for the confidences and expressions of love that were heard not only in cornfields but in lamplit rooms, where the windows opened on the garden, and men with cigars kissed women with grey hairs, they were not to be counted. Some said that the sky was an emblem of the life to come. (Woolf 167)

In this passage *The Voyage Out's* narrator describes the older patriarchal generation as confident and comfortable in their traditional life and its organization. The men with cigars represent the phallic oppressor of women who are seen not equally participating in the kissing but *being* kissed, and the narrator implies that these attempts to preserve the past are irrelevant. Changes are occurring in the world, outside of the old, lamplit rooms where the ability to foresee future implications is limited. For as the narrator conveys, "while all this went on by land, very few people thought about the sea. They took it for granted that the sea was calm; and there was no need, as there is in many houses when the creeper taps on the bedroom windows, for the couples to murmur before they kiss, 'Think of the ships to-night,' or 'Thank Heaven, I'm not the man in the lighthouse!'" (167) In this section the sea does not singularly represent global changes threatening home life that were brought on by modernity, but also the subconscious mind. The ushering in of modernity caused the population to reexamine their understanding of both home and world, and discover discord in both. Yet, Woolf's passage would suggest that modernity is "tapping on the bedroom windows" regardless of whether inhabitants would rather maintain reliance on past structures of civilization. The ships and Heaven referenced are symbolic of the security promised by continued faith in Empire and God.

The threat of violence brought on by breaking from these structures is present throughout the novel, for example with the figure of Willoughby. After witnessing her aunt and uncle kissing, Rachel's thoughts are violently disturbed by her father's instructions, "enforcing his words as he often did, when he spoke to his daughter, by a smart blow upon the shoulder" (Woolf 164) indicating that violence is a normative platform for communication in Rachel's home.

Rachel finds correlation in the physical and sexual violence she has experienced and any future marriage as is demonstrated by the dream Rachel has after Mr. Dalloway assaults her aboard the *Euphrosyne*:

She dreamt that she was walking down a long tunnel, which grew so narrow by degrees that she could touch the damp bricks on either side. At length the tunnel opened and became a vault; she found herself trapped in it, bricks meeting her wherever she turned, alone with a little deformed man who squatted on the floor gibbering, with long nails. His face was pitted and like the face of an animal. The wall behind him oozed with damp, which collected into drops and slid down. Still and cold as death she lay, not daring to move, until she broke the agony by tossing herself across the bed, and woke crying, 'Oh!' (206)

Here Rachel saves herself from entrapment by throwing or tossing herself into a void just as she later imagines herself to do when discussing her future life with Hewet. Rachel's entrapment leads to only one choice for an escape. Rachel's agency leads her to leap into extreme unknowns instead of accepting domination from Mr. Dalloway or Hewet. Before kissing her, Mr. Dalloway tells Rachel that she does have "an inestimable power—for good or for evil. What couldn't you do [...] You have beauty" (205). Thus Richard views female power as only available via their seduction of men. But Rachel rejects this estimation of female power and after waking from her dream imagines that the ship is filled with "barbarian men" (206) that harass the ship, to the extent that she gets out of bed to lock the door and cannot sleep anymore. If we continue to pursue the metaphor of Rachel and the ship as doubles, it becomes obvious that Rachel retreats into the inner sanctuaries of her mind to escape from the onslaught of "eyes [that] desired her" (206). However, this event also represents Rachel's awakening and realization that she is locked in by the patriarchal structures that entrap her.

In *Virginia Woolf: Feminist Destinations* (1988) Rachel Bowlby discusses Woolf's depictions of heterosexual love and romance as an absurdity within innately unequal social structures. Koulouris attaches Bowlby's suggestion to Rachel's eventual engagement to Terence marking the "beginning of her end" (Koulouris 99), as I will also demonstrate in the paragraphs that follow. Woolf parallels this marking of the beginning of Rachel's end with the prophetic warning throughout the text of the beginning of the end of the British Empire.

Colonial interest is certainly present within *The Voyage Out*, where the original purpose of the journey to South America is for a business venture of Rachel's father, so that his ship can "carry dry goods to the Amazons, and rubber home again" (174). In my MA thesis entitled "The Lacking of the Empowered Woman" I discussed at length the anti-colonialism present in *Mrs. Dalloway*. I uncovered instances where Woolf had satirized western views of colonial regions and



people; however, I also found that most commonly Woolf chose to distance both herself and her characters from anything other than London, which indicated that for Woolf, London, with phallic Big Ben at its center was still the center of her world. *The Voyage Out* remains the only novel of Woolf's that moves away from a center of power and into a region evocative of a colonized space. I suggest that as Woolf's first novel this departure from western civilization's center meant to establish Woolf's personal and political stance as anti-colonial. However, as I discussed previously, Woolf's relationship to colonialism is at best problematic and opaque. Woolf's struggle between unveiling the hypocrisies of imperialism and realising and rejecting her own hypocrisies is most evident in her aiding her husband research his book *Empire and Commerce in Africa* (1919). *Empire and Commerce in Africa* was critical of the British Empire for its treatment of the colonized natives; however, the book was problematic for containing passages that doubted the ability of indigenous society to self-govern. Though Woolf was correct in perceiving the violence and discord that befell ex-colonial states after colonial powers left, Woolf's dubious opinions on indigenous societies paired with textual examples from *The Voyage Out* is reminiscent of simplistic and stereotypical representations of the "other", by writers who have been criticized for pandering to a colonial nostalgia, such as is evident in Forster's *A Room with a View*. *A Room with a View* depicts Lucy witnessing a violent fight in Florence between two Italians that ends in one of the participants being stabbed to death; the victim's blood covers the pastoral paintings Lucy has just purchased. Though the moment represents a transition for Lucy, and she imagines that "she, as well as the dying man, had crossed some spiritual boundary", her development is at the Italians' expense—both economically as the paintings have been wasted, covered in Italian blood and discarded in the Arno, but also in the simple fact that while Lucy's perspective changes, her regard for the "other" only becomes more negatively fixed.

In the distance she saw creatures with black hoods, such as appear in dreams. The palace tower had lost the reflection of the declining day, and joined itself to earth. [...] She spoke of the Italian character [...] "And the murderer tried to kiss him, you say—how very odd Italians are!—and gave himself up to the police! Mr. Beebe was saying that Italians know everything, but I think they are rather childish."

In *The Voyage Out*, on the contrary, the narrator romanticizes the imagined colonial landscape and people:

The country itself taxed all their powers of description, for they said it was much bigger than Italy, and really nobler than Greece. Again, they declared that the natives were strangely beautiful, very big in stature, dark, passionate, and quick to seize the knife. The place seemed new and full of new forms of beauty, in proof of which they showed handkerchiefs which the women had worn round their heads, and primitive carvings coloured bright greens and blues. Somehow or other, as fashions do, the fashion spread; an old monastery was quickly turned into a hotel, while a famous line of steamships altered its route for the convenience of passengers. (Woolf 217)

In both examples, the “other” is shown to be unpredictable, prone to violent passions and dangerous to the western tourist. The earlier depiction of the “other” as strange and threatening has been reimagined with a noble mystic. This implies a sense of greater possibility, but for whom? For the more “uncivilized” natives or the westerners there to enjoy their wrongly perceived “freer” society? Woolf illustrates, as Forster did in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *A Room with a View*, that there had begun to exist “a kind of dissatisfaction among the English with the older countries and the enormous accumulations of carved stone, stained glass, and rich brown painting which they offered to the tourist” (Woolf 217); instead the tourist desired something “newer” where they could perhaps leave their own mark on history or behave however they would naturally feel, as the civilizing constraints of the West do not exist. In the old world, Lucy Honeychurch considers the passionate outbursts of emotion and anger in the “other” as strange. And as Forster’s Lilia tragically discovers to be the case in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, “Italy is such a delightful place to live in if you happen to be a man” (Forster 35), indicating that though different than England, the more authentic and primitive Italy also has a patriarchal system established.

In *The Voyage Out*, the English discuss the South American landscape as if it were a virgin land to be cultivated to their projected visions and idiosyncratic ideals. It “reminds one of an English park”, said Mr. Flushing (377), who goes on to suggest that if they would only transform the jungle around them they might make it more like England—“It might be Arundel or Windsor’, Mr. Flushing continued, ‘if you cut down that bush with the yellow flowers’” (378)—indicating the western colonizing desire to reshape foreign landscapes to be familiar. And yet in its uncivilized and virgin state it remains unclear what kind of place it is to live if you are a woman.

## Why Does Rachel die?

After Rachel's death, Mrs. Thornbury reflects on life:

There was undoubtedly much suffering, much struggling, but on the whole, surely there was a balance of happiness—surely order did prevail. Nor were the deaths of young people really the saddest things in life—they were saved so much; they kept so much. The dead—she called to mind those who had died early, accidentally—were beautiful; she often dreamt of the dead. (Woolf 445)

In this reflection, Mrs. Thornbury suggests a contentious view of the disruption of marriage plot in the novel as in fact “saving” Rachel, or future Rachels from a similar fate of inequality in marriage. Mrs. Thornbury conjectures that Rachel is left intact as she “kept so much” that we can only assume would have otherwise been *taken* from her. Mrs. Thornbury imagines that Rachel, in her early death, is left beautiful—in a dream world or unreality where she can retain herself, free from further abuses by patriarchal plots, such as in marriage and childbirth. In the dream world or unreality of Mrs. Thornbury, and other women's imaginations, this reveals that women exist as a concept to have ideas of beauty and unity put upon them, rather than developing individualistically. She becomes a female sign and warning against patriarchy.

In this sense, Woolf herself is caught in that impasse as a writer. To an extent, Woolf's writing is symptomatic of the problem related to the non-completion of the journey and life as a response to patriarchy. Marilyn Farewell describes Woolf's hesitation to write with personal emotion as directly correlated to her fear of upsetting her male peers: “Woolf was dedicated to women's causes, but her health and her fear prevented her from radical participation in the moment of the 1920s” (Farewell 444). And so, Woolf aligned herself with T.S. Eliot's notion of an androgynous mind that sheds a “white light of truth” through objectivity (450). In doing this, Woolf tempers her writing in order to be more appealing for her male readership and thereby fails to balance with men herself, much like her heroine. But more importantly, there is the implication from Farewell that Woolf was untrue to herself by holding back and controlling what she really felt in the name of sensibility. Of course, I'm not suggesting this impasse is Woolf's fault so much that even someone whose writings have been so influential to feminist thinking is still a victim of the patriarchal management of plots. “Like so many women writers wanting to write from their own

experiences yet knowing well that men will be the final arbiters of their work, Virginia Woolf did not pursue some of her more radical insights into the writings of women" (451).

The patriarchal plots that *The Voyage Out* upsets then are heterosexual marriage or motherhood, which is also represented in the exploitation of foreign land. In *The Voyage Out* the marriage between Rachel and Hewet is thwarted in Rachel's early death, while the exploitation of Santa Marina is doomed most significantly by a river journey where the party sees the hut where the body of a "famous explorer who had died of fever" was found. The hut is surrounded by yellow, scarred earth, "scattered with rusty open tins" (Woolf 377). Mr. Flushing laments that Mackenzie had died "almost within reach of civilization—Mackenzie, he repeated, the man who went farther inland than any one's been yet" (377). This passage recalls Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: as Marlow comes to a deserted village in the jungle, he describes how "the huts gaped black, rotting, all askew within the fallen enclosures. A calamity had come to it, sure enough" (Conrad 12). The yellow and rusted tins that surround Mackenzie's hut allude to the sickness that civilization brings with it into foreign spaces and refers to the ugly reality that arrives with western, male "explorers". In this passage of the text, Woolf writes in a sober, realist style that juxtaposes starkly with the novel's more experimental and fragmented sentences. The events of the quite "civilized" river journey are described in a linear and matter-of-fact purpose, and explained through the mouthpiece of Mr. Flushing, as is indicated by the first sentence, which prepares the audience for a more austere referral of events: "Thanks to Mr. Flushing's discipline, the right stages of the river were reached at the right hours, and when next morning after breakfast the chairs were again drawn out in a semicircle in the bow, the launch was within a few miles of the native camp which was the limit of the journey" (376). Woolf describes Mr. Flushing's "discipline", which is being able to do things "correctly"; we the audience understands that western exploration is a serious and deliberate undertaking, reflecting the societal standards it derives from as rigid and precise. The native camp where the boat launches from is only briefly referenced as a locational limit to chart their journey by, and not as a space worthy of description in its own right. In these realist descriptions, Woolf indicates that, much like the female body, foreign space is the subject of male ventures.

As Rachel becomes increasingly aware of how little her society values her life in its own right she begins to feel that her body is under attack by the patriarchal plot, a view she expresses towards the end of the novel.

'Directly anything happens—it may be a marriage, or a birth, or a death—on the whole [people] prefer it to be death—every one wants to see you. They insist upon seeing you. They've got nothing to say; they don't care a rap for you; but you've got to go to lunch or tea or to dinner, and if you don't you're damned. It's the smell of blood,' she continued, 'I don't blame 'em; only they shan't have mine if I know it!' (Woolf 403)

Woolf kills her heroine to save her from the violence patriarchal society would inflict on her. In death Rachel is free from marriage ownership by Hewet, free from the demands of male sexuality, free from the false education that society would offer her to help her conform into her role as wife and mother and free from facilitating future male transactions. But beyond Rachel's relinquishment from the trope of "Angel in the House", Woolf has also freed her text from literary conventions that were born out of this same patriarchal society that would do violence to her heroine. In killing Rachel, Woolf has saved her book from becoming another testament to male power and has radically broken free into an "uncharted" female space for literature.

## **Conclusion**

*The Voyage Out* is an innovative example of a text that breaks away from conventional ways of writing women. As Woolf's earliest work of fiction, the text succeeds to raise questions about how to conceive of female development within literary genres that had been previously determined by and for men. Woolf uses an experimental style of language to write new sentences to fit women whilst also realizing the daunting nature of such a task which threatens to be subsumed by patriarchal constrictions of plot, syntax and grammar. In *The Voyage Out*, Woolf compares the development of the female body and mind in patriarchal plot-narratives as synonymous with the patriarchal desire to dominate and develop foreign land and resources, and in the text the concept of escape becomes a fantasized unreality that leads the protagonists to a mythologized non-place where Rachel fades into non-existence as the only means of physical escape. In this text, established concepts of temporality and spatiality become expanded and reshaped to fit a female style and a female textual body. *The Voyage Out* is therefore representative of a female text, as the body of a traditional novel is designed to champion the

development of the white male; instead Woolf employs a poetic prose to disrupt the development of traditional forms of literature and thereby unsettle the literary conventions and embedded moral lessons that would force Rachel into marriage. Woolf kills Rachel in order to allow future heroines a different outcome: this is evident in a scene with the character of Evelyn after Rachel's death, as she is proposed to by Mr. Perrot. Evelyn says "I'm not as simple as most women" and "I think I want more. I don't know exactly what I feel" (450), which is reminiscent of Rachel's confusion regarding her engagement to Hewet; however, Mr. Perrot persists saying that he will wait for her. Evelyn responds, "Suppose I thought it over and wrote and told you when I get back? I'm going to Moscow; I'll write from Moscow" (450); Mr. Perrot kisses her suddenly then, in a similarly intrusive manner to how Mr. Dalloway and Hewet kissed Rachel, and insists that he will wait for her. The kiss does not make an impression on Evelyn, which "bewilders" Mr. Perrot; however, the implication is that Evelyn is not in touch with her feelings and therefore unable to react negatively or positively to the kiss and proposal. Mr. Perrot leaves her alone and the scene concludes with Evelyn walking up and down a path, symbolic of the general confusion and aimlessness of women "left alone". Evelyn is left considering "What did matter then? What was the meaning of it all?" (450). This scene can be seen to anticipate the conclusion of Lawrence's *Women in Love*, as Gudrun leaves at the end of the novel to go off to Germany on her own, but still unsure of her direction. It is significant that Evelyn and Gudrun do not know what it is that they want, but unlike Rachel they are hesitant to enter into a marriage contract and understand that they want more: they are choosing to pursue journeys that might enable them to gain a deeper awareness of their feelings and thereby avoid a spiritual death.

## CHAPTER THREE: *WOMEN IN LOVE*

### Introduction

This chapter will analyze D.H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* (1920) for its unique approach to representing female (and in his case, male) development in what I argue is a form that takes up aspects that were central to the traditional *Bildungsroman* and extends them in a reworked form that involves the combined development of multiple connected characters. *Women in Love* can be seen to adapt the traditional *Bildungsroman* by representing an empowered female character, Gudrun Brangwen, who seeks her own path for development outside of patriarchal limits. However, within the novel, patriarchy acts as destructively on men as it does on women, as Lawrence illuminates the harmful imbalance of gender roles in modern society. Gudrun's quest is thus intricately connected with that of her sister Ursula, her lover Gerald Crich, and Ursula's lover, and finally husband, Rupert Birkin in a configuration of relations that Lawrence calls, as we shall see, "star equilibrium". Although in a traditional *Bildungsroman* the character's full development is the main object of the plot, in *Women in Love* the main characters appear to be already formed at the start, although they still have not reached their maturity and their development towards self-awareness continues throughout the book, evolving through their relationships.

Gudrun's independence arrives with the loss of her abandoned partner, Gerald Crich, whose death harbingers the contradictory and destructive consequences that will ensue from the inevitable collapse of western patriarchy, while entailing a nostalgia for the rebirth of old-world masculinity. Lawrence portrays archetypal masculinity as incompatible with the demands of modern culture and its liberated female figure. *Women in Love* is filled with similar contradictory elements. As I shall demonstrate, Lawrence writes with a rapid fluidity, which he intends to make his audience "feel" the association between the development and fate of the individual characters and that of society.

Lawrence's numerous contradictions, exaggerations and juxtapositions occur to create a new mode of communicating human experience, which would do away, as fully as possible, with

traditional prose or restrained emotional responses. Lawrence did not want to see the equality of the sexes within the controlled developments of the modern society that he found himself within, he aimed to achieve a consummate union of mind and body in order for individuals to let go of their worldly and societal constraints. This is where his nostalgia for “the primitive” rests, though not without an acknowledgement of the primitive’s ultimate unknowable consequences and dangers.

The text remains problematic in a number of ways, including for its misogyny masquerading as sexually provocative and empowering perspectives, as well as polarizing depictions of race, gender and sexuality. *Women in Love* is a contentious example of modernist literature, as it adheres to key realistic conventions, including linear chronology and omniscient narration; however, it does experiment with rhythm and visualization in order to elicit sensory reactions to reading the text.

*Women in Love* picks up on the story of the Brangwen sisters from where it had been left off in Lawrence’s earlier chronicle of the Brangwen family, *The Rainbow* (1915). David Lodge in his seminal text *The Modes of Modern Writing* (1977) demonstrates how *Women in Love* evolved out of the combined first draft of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, which was to be a novel that Lawrence originally called “The Sisters”. Lodge describes how *Women in Love* “separated itself from *The Rainbow*” and can be seen as “a microcosm, too, of the way *The Rainbow* developed from its family-saga beginning to its visionary conclusion, and of the way Lawrence developed, in the writing of these paired novels, away from the more conventional realistic fiction of *Sons and Lovers*” (Lodge 201).

In its echoing of the trajectory of the *Bildungsroman*—the quest of a protagonist (in this case, the four main characters) towards self-awareness—*Women in Love* is most akin to *The Voyage Out* in its cynicism about modern progress, especially in regard to how misconstrued progress adversely affects the individual. As we saw in the previous chapter, *The Voyage Out* illustrates how newfound freedoms for women, such as freedom of movement and the vote, deliver greater confusion for women who still remain relatively uneducated and unprepared by comparison with their male peers. While *Women in Love* reflects the adverse effects of the



extensive mechanization of war, it correlates war's violent attitudes between individuals to those that occur within family structures to reveal how western society is progressing towards self-destruction.

*Women in Love* takes impetus from *The Rainbow*, which followed the Brangwen family through several generations, mirroring the evolution of society from industrialization to the latest phase of capitalist exploitation contemporaneous with Lawrence's England. What is most striking to any reader of *Women in Love* is the radical approach to writing, through which Lawrence disrupts writing conventions at the same time as he challenges boundaries in order to unsettle and confuse his audience into questioning the status quo. Although *Women in Love* is relatively easy-to-read prose, the intensity of feelings described between the four central characters of Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen, Rupert Birkin and Gerald Crich are often bewildering, unusual and heavily layered with opaque symbolisms.

The story follows the Brangwen sisters, Ursula and Gudrun, after Gudrun returns to her family home of Beldover after having studied art in London. Gudrun feels out-of-touch with village life and unfit for the blatantly opposing worlds that she finds on return to Beldover. The upper-class world of the Crich family—the local industrialists—and the Roddices—a Baronet's children—is too enmeshed with privilege for Gudrun to feel connected with them, despite her having been acquainted with Hermione Roddice in London where they met as equals in the liminal space of cosmopolitan and bohemian city-life. However, the colliery world of the poor townspeople does not support Gudrun's creative or intellectual drive and they gawk at her in her strange, colorful clothing.

The text begins with the sisters discussing marriage as the only logical next step in their development, and despite both sisters' negativity about the institution of marriage, the novel follows their conforming romantic relationships. Gudrun becomes involved with Gerald Crich, the eldest son and heir to the Crich family mining business. Lawrence's reference to the need for society to "put out the lights" (Lawrence 156) of civilization indicates that he believes that the false lights of progress are leading humanity to its destruction.

Ursula Brangwen, the more conventional of the sisters, is paired with Rupert Birkin, a school inspector who imposes his philosophical and moral thinking onto the other characters. Ursula is a schoolteacher in competition with Hermione Roddice for Rupert's affection. The four central characters eventually become more seriously committed, with occasional imbalances in their symmetry such as when Rupert ineffectually aims for Gerald to enter into a sacred blood bond with him to symbolize a homosocial unity he feels lacking in his life (Lawrence 179). Other instances of discord in the buildup to the tragic climax of the novel occur as Gerald's sister Diana is discovered to have drowned alongside her new husband; Gerald and Gudrun's first sexual encounter in her father's house is foreboding of death as Gerald creeps up to Gudrun's bedroom with "clayey" boots and trousers; he reminds Gudrun of an apparition or a "young Hermes" and she feels she has "no choice" but to sleep with him (300); finally the revelation that Gerald shot and killed his younger brother as a child are omens of the ultimate disharmony and destruction that conclude the novel.

The text closes with the four protagonists traveling together to the Alps, where Ursula and Rupert decide to get married, while Gudrun and Gerald dissolve their relationship because Gudrun determines that she prefers Loerke, a German artist they meet there. Gudrun announces that Gerald is "so limited, there is a dead end to him" (Lawrence 406). Gerald responds to his rejection first by trying to strangle Gudrun to death but then walking off into the mountainous abyss to commit suicide.

This chapter focusing on *Women in Love* extends the argument of my first chapter on *The Voyage Out* as it argues that Lawrence's novels shows how societal and textual conventions impede, rather than foster development. One of the key differences between *Women in Love* and *The Voyage Out* is that while Woolf presented patriarchy as the main arbitrator in preventing women's integration within society, Gerald's death in *Women in Love* highlights that patriarchy is closely aligned to the problem of capitalistic enterprise which enables the mechanization of war as much as discontent in sexuality.

In *Women in Love*, Lawrence manipulates its didactic structure by working the plot against the apparent symmetry of Gudrun/Ursula, Gerald/Rupert, in particular by eliminating

Gerald. As Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson notes in *Writing Against the Family: Gender in Lawrence and Joyce* (1994): “with Gudrun left over as a reminder of failed relations, the ending implies that Ursula and Rupert will retain their ‘polar’ relationship only with difficulty. The novel ends with the distinctive Lawrence triad—man and woman in relations, with the woman figure doubled. Psychologically, the doubled female figure makes up for, and is also a sign of, castration” (Lewiecki-Wilson 204). In this regard, I argue that the “doubled female” is Lawrence’s commentary on the subconscious feminization, or loss of old-world masculinity adjacent with societal progression, and therefore symbolizes the castration of Patriarchy; however, as I will demonstrate, this feminization is as much championed by Lawrence as shown to be a misguided remedy for the sickness induced by the growth of capitalism. This misdirection of society is symbolized by Lawrence’s asymmetry. As I will show, Lawrence privileges, over female liberation, a return to the primitive or to a “blood-consciousness”. Indeed, Lawrence can be considered to have viewed feminism as a problematic effect of capitalism, since he saw capitalism as a result of “mind consciousness” and the further separation from the natural instincts and desires of the body—feminism then is an extension of this over-rationality, which would further distort sexual relationships between men and women. This is seen through the sexual relationship between the young, teenage Ursula in *The Rainbow* and her schoolteacher Winifred. Lawrence portrays this lesbian relationship as a result of the gender imbalances created during the chaos of the modern world, and Ursula is saved from it by fully embracing her truer and womanlier sexuality. Interestingly, this is not how Lawrence portrays the homoerotic relationship between Gerald and Birkin in *Women in Love*, which is part of “blood consciousness” and alludes to the sworn blood fealty between ancient, medieval knights, and wrestling Greek gods, whereas the dynamic between Winifred and Ursula had been painted as cold, pubescent, and disembodied: “Soon the naked, shadowy, figure of the elder girl came to the younger” (Lawrence 353); “‘It is here,’ said the voice, and the wavering, pallid figure was beside her, a hand grasping her arm.” (354). In these two examples, Winifred is described as a ghost, or a figure not really present. Ursula isn’t even confident who is grasping her arm, as it is only described as a hand. This marks the start of

sexual relationship between Ursula and Winifred as something not really palpable and therefore an instance of unreality and “mind” over “blood” consciousness.

However, Lawrence does laud women’s emancipation as supporting the breakdown of Christian moralism and Victorian conventionalities that stifled human emotions and sex. Gudrun’s rejection of Gerald at the end of *Women in Love* dismantles the symmetry that would have been achieved with traditional marriage for both couples at the end of the text (Woolf similarly dismantles the symmetry of the traditional marriage plot in her most traditionally written novel *Night and Day*<sup>13</sup>). Gerald’s resultant self-annihilation then undermines the unity of Ursula and Birkin, since Birkin longs for the lost homoerotic connection between Gerald and himself. “I didn’t want it to be like this—I didn’t want it to be like this,” Birkin cries after seeing Gerald’s frozen body; “He should have loved me” (Lawrence 420), he laments, and he forgets Ursula’s presence, later telling her that she is only enough for him as a woman but that he wanted “a man friend, as eternal as you and I are eternal” or else “another kind of love” (421), which Ursula decries as a “perversity” and which Birkin does not deny.

Gerald’s death arises out of his inability to adapt his conception of his masculinity to the evolving demands of modernity. Gerald is repeatedly described as being “blind” (Lawrence 157, 176, 208). His blindness prevents him from being attuned to the demise of Western patriarchy, unlike Birkin, who asks Gerald, “Don’t you feel like one of the damned?” as they are hurtling through a doomed London in a “swiftly-running enclosure”—a train carriage symbolizing modernity taking them to a changing destination, which fills Birkin with “despair” and hopelessness, “as if it were the end of the world” (50). Gerald laughs, answering no. Gerald’s blindness to reality is his ultimate downfall and the reason Lawrence describes him as being ruled by a “mechanical control” and having a “mindless body” (147).

Lawrence employs a series of repeated binary oppositions in order to illustrate how modernity is reversing formally fixed hierarchies, such as male/female and North/South. For instance, in the chapter “Fetish”, Gerald is asked if he has been to hot countries—hot here

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<sup>13</sup> The novel ends with Katherine Hilbery engaged to Ralph Denham and William Rodney engaged to Katherine’s cousin Cassandra, while Mary Datchet ends up alone focusing on advancing the women’s suffrage movement instead of marriage.

substituting for 'South' or 'non-Western' and Gerald confirms he has been to the South American Amazon. I read this as corresponding to the space where Rachel, in *The Voyage Out*, died from an inability to integrate with her male peers. In the same sense, Gerald ultimately dies in a cold climate, i.e. the 'North', or 'Western world', from his stasis within past loci of power. Accordingly, Gerald's immobility to change is his downfall whereas Rachel's incapability to change is hers.

My chapter will demonstrate how the "doubled female figure" (Lewiecki-Wilson 204) at the novel's conclusion is representative of a patriarchal castration that Lawrence champions in and of itself, but illustrates his reticence to provide female liberation as a remedy for capitalist takeover. This is because Lawrence promotes a primitivism that would reestablish pure modes of masculinity and femininity that are meant to perfectly balance each other—Lawrence is suspicious that female liberation and feminism are aligned with modern aims that would adversely further restrict humanity's growth. Instead, by aligning Rachel's death in *The Voyage Out*, which serves as her liberation from the oppression of patriarchy, to Gerald's death in *Women in Love*, which liberates him from the inevitability of modern progression, I suggest that Lawrence provides an alternative solution of a return to "the primitive" in order for both sexes to achieve a "star-equilibrium" (Lawrence 126, 130) or pure equality, based on a concept of organic emotionality unfettered by modern conventionalities and systems of power.<sup>14</sup>

In the scene from "Fetish", Maxim Libidnikov, a member of Birkin's bohemian company in London, attempts to explain to Gerald how modernization hinders a bodily or sensory "feeling" of existence. Maxim shares his desire to live "without ever putting on any sort of clothing whatever", which would enable him to "feel things instead of merely looking at them [...] I'm sure life is all wrong because it has become much too visual" (Lawrence 65). Gerald is unable to process Maxim's meaning as pertaining to how the structures of society he abides by are keeping him confined; however, he looks over Maxim's body and sees that he appears "healthy" and "well-made" which leaves him feeling ashamed, though he doesn't understand why. As we shall see later in this chapter, Lawrence's imbues his short story "Sun" (1926) with the same message on the advantage of sensory and bodily existences.

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<sup>14</sup> I will discuss Lawrence's "star-equilibrium" further on page 138.

In *Women in Love*, Gerald's actual struggle to free himself from the patriarchal restraints is manifested as an inability to overcome Gudrun's independence. Initially this impasse urges him towards violence and then to suicide. For instance, when he witnesses Gudrun speaking to her new German lover and looking "lofty and superb" (Lawrence 403) he has a sudden desire "to kill her. He thought, what [...] a perfect voluptuous consummation it would be to strangle her [...]. Then he would have had her finally and for ever; there would be such a perfect voluptuous finality" (403). The desire for a consummate finality is what leads Hewet at the end of *The Voyage Out* to claim that in death Rachel had finally become one with him. Both texts expose the impossibility of "total consummation" in a space where equality does not exist between men and women. The idea of a "total consummation" carries a double meaning when considered in light of the effects of modernity and its destruction of human life by mechanized war as well as the natural beauty of the countryside by industrialization. In this chapter, I will discuss how Lawrence relates the consumptive nature of modernity to individual love relationships and ultimately advocates for a return to the primitive to accomplish a return to a natural order. He demonstrates the characters' frustrated attempts to reach their organic "pure" selves by their highly emotive uses of language, which he manipulates to represent how the way we learn to communicate our emotions has been corrupted by the effects of modernity.

This chapter will proceed with the discussion of the loss of belief in the community specifically related to the alienation of individuals from their communities and family structures. The establishment of individualism arising from capitalism leads to the disconnection of individuals from their community and nature. An example of this disconnection occurs with Gudrun feeling out of place in Beldover when she returns from her London life. Moreover, the encroachment of industry on the countryside, juxtaposed with the smallness and limited social opportunities of the village as opposed with the modern metropolis create a conflict of interests for the two sisters in Beldover, as Gudrun feels more at ease in London while Ursula feels a depression at her lack of connection with her natural environment; specifically the destruction of nature is recurrent metaphor for the detachment of the individual organic life and by implication for the loss of the true purpose of life.

Therefore, the next section, which shows how *Women in Love* can be seen to function as a the quest to self-awareness, or *Bildungsroman*, of a group of connected individuals, postulates that modern society leads to the impossibility of achieving integrative development as the nature of society becomes increasingly inhuman, violent, destructive and consumptive. The following section, on *Women in Love* and social, sexual and personal relations, details the way the tide of increasing violence and mechanization of society renders the individual incapable of disengaging from or incorporating societal norms and thus to being forced into the position of a voyeur, incapable of stopping society's inevitable destruction. The section focuses on the collapse of moral compass when individuals are unable to act as the cultural and social systems around them change beyond recognition. This is explored in examples such as Gerald's accidental shooting of his younger brother while playing, the Crich family observing the drowning of their sister without intervening or Loerke remaining impassive as Gerald attempts to strangle Gudrun.

As I explore in the following sections relating to travel and why Gerald dies, I argue that the novel's experimental style is constructed to reflect the violence, the chaos, discord and hopelessness of World War I. I conclude that Gerald's death is Lawrence's petition to return to the primitive. If Rachel's death in *The Voyage Out* was her liberation from patriarchal control, Gerald's is a liberation from irreversible negative ramifications of a "pure masculinity" imagined by needing to conform to modern society. However, I argue that, unlike Rachel's, Gerald's death results from a refusal to integrate and a relinquishment of his power, whereas Rachel was always powerless. Gerald is illustrative of an older order of male power and yet his instances of authority and willpower, such as when he beats his horse into submission, indicate that he carries a power that Lawrence is nostalgic for, and hopes to see a rebirth of in modern men.

*Women in Love* is a sophisticated example of Lawrence's writing style and worldview. The novel comprehensively grapples with his largely negative views of modernity, especially the expansion of industry, repressed sexuality and male/female relations. Lawrence's work aims to expose the dangerous limits of progress, which he epitomizes in the dramatic ending where Gerald loses his grip on reality after being rejected and therefore feeling emasculated by Gudrun. Gerald wanders off into the sheer, white and unforgiving landscape of the Swiss Alps to meet his

death. Gerald is Lawrence's representative of the negative effects of modernity on English masculinity. His ultimate death freezes him in time as a monolith of vanquished masculinity. In this way, Lawrence unravels the *Bildungsroman's* thread of development and challenges his own concept of "star-equilibrium" and balance, ending on the cynical note that societal structures, as well as textual ones, are ultimately designed to confine people in and destroy, rather than to develop, them.

#### **D.H. Lawrence's Position on Modernity and *Women in Love's* Position in Modernism**

From Ursula and Gudrun's "father's house in Beldover" (Lawrence 3), the setting immediately situates the novel as leading out from a space of patrilineal English heritage in the Midlands, which we are informed have been scarred by industrialism: "They drew away from the colliery region, over the curve of the hill, into the purer country of the other side [...]. Still the faint glamour of blackness persisted over the fields and the wooded hills, and seemed darkly to gleam the air" (8).

Lawrence drew inspiration for his novel's setting from his own childhood home of Eastwood, also located in the English Midlands, near enough to Nottingham so that Lawrence was continuously confronted with the encroachment of industrialism on the surrounding hills, fields and diminishing remnants of Sherwood Forest. There are parallels to be drawn between the industrialism that has pervaded the countryside and the figure of the modern woman who is changing definitions of the feminine. Ursula and Gudrun are employed as schoolteachers; both are intelligent, opinionated and articulate—signifiers of the modern woman. Gudrun has just come back from London and "the provincial people, intimidated by Gudrun's perfect sang-froid and exclusive bareness of manner, said of her: 'She is a smart woman.'" (Lawrence 4).

This divide of worlds may be seen reflected in Lawrence's tendency to present dichotomies in his work. Del Ivan Janik suggests that the primary dichotomy that Lawrence was concerned with was that between the "organic-nature, the body, the blood and the mechanical—civilization, the mind, the intellect" (Janik 360). Janik proposes that Lawrence's answer for the healthy and satisfied life of the individual rests in the essentialness of balance between body and



mind. His work places emphasis on reclaiming our human connection to the body because “the mind had dominated so completely for so long” (360), with its higher hierarchical position in our society. For this, Lawrence blamed Judeo-Christian dogma, specifically the notion of the sacrifice of bodily pleasures, as “preparing the way for modern science” (360). Thus,

Lawrence believed that in choosing to pursue the path of the not-self, the perfection of mechanization through analysis and abstraction, Western man had come to ignore half of life’s potential: the path of fulfilment through organic, intuitive awareness. To gain wholeness we must know both and achieve a creative balance between them. (360)

In the rest of this chapter I explore Lawrence’s particular approach to modernist writing and how he related to his modernist contemporaries with regard to their philosophical approaches and style. For instance, Lawrence believed that this previously mentioned perfection of mechanization is the aim of modernity, and advocates to a return to primitive forms of sexuality grounded in the unconscious and the body (what he calls “blood consciousness”) and unhampered by rationality or “mind consciousness”. This is reflected in the formal structure of Lawrence’s work, its themes and his style. I will return to *Women in Love* in a moment, but a short detour via his short stories “Sun” (1926) and “The Woman Who Rode Away” (1928) will be useful at this point. These stories should help to situate Lawrence’s modernism and to clarify the duality behind this philosophy of mind and blood consciousness.

“Sun” tells the story of an unsatisfied married woman, Juliet, who is ordered by her doctors to be taken away “into the sun” (“Sun” 24) and so leaves her husband behind in New York as she sets sail for Sicily with her toddler son. Juliet is unhappy to be hampered by the responsibility of looking after her young child but finds some empowerment in insisting that he go naked on the beach, as she does.

In a scene where she is watching him as he plays, she observes how her son “held himself tight and hidden from the sun, inside himself, and his balance was clumsy, his movements a little gross. His spirit was like a snail in a shell, in a damp, cold crevice inside himself. It made her think of his father. And she wished she could make him come forth, break out in a gesture of recklessness, a salutation to the sun” (“Sun” 25). In this passage, the reader is presented with a series of images, with some repetition, for example, “inside himself”, symbolic of

how the restraints of society, such as clothes, keep us hidden, physically and mentally from a healthier perspective of life which is represented as living openly and unashamedly in nature. In this story, Lawrence presents his ideas by juxtaposing images such as “civilized” society being depicted as a “damp” body, “inside a shell” or “fishy”, while organic living made for a body that is “rosy, rosy turning to gold”, clothed by the “golden-rose tan of the sun”.

Lawrence’s early writings fault modernity for the speeding up of mechanization, as well as shifting gender and sexuality paradigms, which Lawrence saw as creating a tension for dominance between male and female energies. At the same time, Lawrence was a champion of female liberation as he appreciated that societal structures kept women fixed in institutions like marriage, without being able to develop with the same liberty of consciousness enjoyed by men. An example of this can be read in “The Woman Who Rode Away”, which is story of the young wife (we never learn her name) of an older rancher in New Mexico who made his money through a profitable but now defunct mining company. The story’s heroine is kept hidden away from visitors, especially other men, as if she were a possession: “It was as if his wife were some peculiar secret vein of ore in his mines, which no one must be aware of except himself” (“The Woman Who Rode Away” 41). The town is described repetitively as “dead”, which symbolizes her own spiritual death resulting from her marriage. After a sustained period of living in isolation, she decides to ride away on horseback and find the natives who she faultily assumes will offer her a more authentic and alive perspective of reality. This is the same mistake that Forster’s Lilia makes in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), when she believes that marriage to a younger Italian man will offer her further freedoms than she would have experienced in England, only to end up feeling miserably confined, abused and neglected by her husband. Similarly, when the heroine of “The Woman Who Rode Away” does encounter the natives for the first time, the disconnect between their worlds is fully exhibited and she realizes that she is just as powerless over her destiny as she was with her husband. In a recent study by Olga Soboleva and Angus Wrenn (2017), Lawrence’s attraction to the idea of “essential ethnic ‘otherness’” and the warring dualities of mind and blood consciousness are set against his keen interest in the Russian and Slavic “other” and the idea of the “other” as a savior. As Ursula Brangwen is a descendant of a

Polish mother and English father, Soboleva and Wrenn make the claim that Ursula at first over-identifies with her Polish lineage, but throughout the course of the two novels *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* is able to strike an “increasing sense of balance within the duality of her personal self [...] unlike her mother and grandmother [which] allows her to reject the prospect of a marital union with Anton Skrebensky” (Soboleva and Wrenn 2017). Here, Soboleva and Wrenn make the claim that it is through the rejection of the “other” as a mystical savior that Lawrence believed there would be a salvation for the West: “[The] revitalizing power of the ‘other’ was no longer linked to the country’s iconic exoticism and its personification of the ‘savage,’ but rather to its liminality and cultural hybridity—to its inherent potential to forge a more complex and powerful whole that can be raised to a higher level than the simple sum of its parts” (235).

In “The Woman Who Rode Away”, Lawrence brings forth the nameless protagonist’s realization of her powerlessness with a series of images that are meant to be absorbed and felt emotionally by playing on the readers’ fears and predispositions to arrive at their meaning: “she met his black, large, bright eyes, and for the first time her spirit really quailed. The man’s eyes were not human to her, and they did not see her as a beautiful white woman. He looked at her with a black, bright, inhuman look, and saw no woman in her at all. As if she were some strange, unaccountable thing, incomprehensible to him, but inimical. She sat in her saddle in wonder, feeling once more as if she had died” (47). In this segment, the words “inhuman”, “strange”, “unaccountable”, “incomprehensible”, “inimical” alongside of “black” and “bright” are meant to paint a picture of the “Other” as unknowable and terrifying, while also being imbued with an attractive brilliance for those same qualities.

Lawrence’s disillusionment with modern society is best voiced in *Women in Love*, where his early theories on what is “bad” in modern civilization are vividly expressed. *Women in Love* is an example of modernist fiction by its asymmetry, lyricism and treatment of psychology. Though critics like David Lodge have noted that today writers such as Lawrence, Forster, Hemingway and Madox Ford only connect to the modernist movement “tangentially” (Lodge 56), I maintain that through its asymmetry (which I will explore in greater detail later) the novel actually speaks to a larger rejection of linear narration and boundaries in general by seeking a primitive and freer use

of consciousness and language. Laura Frost in her chapter on Lawrence in *Bad Modernisms* (2006) writes:

Lawrence, perhaps more self-consciously than any other modern novelist, set out to transform the representation of sexuality as a means of liberating consciousness in general. Although Lawrence now tends to be classified as a transitional modernist figure, insofar as his work does not show the technical experimentation of Woolf or Joyce, for example early critics such as Q.D. Leavis and F.R. Leavis (and modernist arbiters of the next generation, such as Frank Kermode) present him as an exemplary modernist (Frost 96-7).

Frost goes on to explain that Lawrence himself considered his work quite radical and his intention to “revitalize sexuality by writing about it without repression, abstraction, romanticism or cliché” (Frost 97) marks him as most recognizably modernist. Frost wonders if canonical modernists’ inability to discuss erotic fantasy spontaneously and innovatively is largely what lead Lawrence to reject them as prudish and self-absorbed: “Lawrence jeers at the high modernists—Joyce, Proust, Richardson, and Stein—whose self-absorption and abstraction sabotage spontaneity” (Frost 105); Lawrence hoped to “wrench ‘this serious novel out of its self-consciousness’” (105). And indeed, as we read *Women in Love* we see a juxtaposition between characters who are absorbed in cold abstraction like Hermione, Gudrun and Gerald—all of whom Lawrence repeatedly associates with words such as “cold”, “white”, “ice”, “abstraction”. Even when Lawrence writes about these types of high-modernist novels, with colorless characters he describes as “pale-faced” (Frost 105), and while Lawrence utterly rejects the realist and popular novels of his day as having female characters who are “smirking, [and] rather plausible huss[ies]” (105), there is the sense that Lawrence views himself and his writing method as something separate entirely. It is this feeling of being trapped in-between worlds and in-between styles that translates so audibly into Lawrence’s fiction, and despite his later novels taking a turn towards fascism and belief in a great leader, such as we see for instance in *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* are where Lawrence’s most experimental and innovative writing methods are formed.

Lawrence was interested in maintaining a flow in his writing, which he preserved by writing out an entire story anew when he was asked by his publishers to revise a draft (Lodge 197). His insistence on recreating the entire work imbues his writing with spontaneity, freshness and continuity. Lodge considers Lawrence’s composition to be akin to “a sound, a ‘tremulation on the ether’ to use his own phrase: an utterance that, like an oral epic, could only be modified in the

action of recitation” (Lodge 198). For instance, in a scene describing the tension between Hermione, Rupert and Ursula as they gather in Ursula’s school house, the language becomes rhapsodically lyrical as we are meant to hear the feelings emanating between the characters: “Hermione roused herself as from a death—annihilation. ‘He is such a dreadful Satanist, isn’t he?’ she drawled to Ursula, in a queer resonant voice, that ended on a shrill little laugh of pure ridicule. The two women were jeering at him, jeering him into nothingness. The laugh of the shrill, triumphant female sounded from Hermione, jeering him as if he were a neuter” (Lawrence 35). In this exchange, we witness the struggle for dominance between masculine and feminine energies, with the battle being explored through what Lawrence insinuates are gender-specified sounds. The characters slip in and out of conscious deaths as they seek to destroy and rebirth one another.

Rather than as a “sound”, Marianna Torgovnick (1980) describes Lawrence’s style in relation to painting, stating that the reader of *Women in Love* “must often dwell on the image created by the words on the page and arrive at meaning through the contemplation of such images; words to describe the meaning of the image come only after the image itself has been absorbed and assimilated” (Torgovnick 422).

Lawrence’s habit of rewriting his work anew gives credibility to how Lawrence felt life should authentically be represented as an undulating “flow”, as Lawrence writes in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*: “It is the way our sympathy flows and recoils that really determines our lives” (Lawrence 197). Each passage builds on what is written before, which helps to create a cathartic, pulsing and affected rhythm to his novels. He maintains this flow, according to Lodge, by “rhythmical repetition, produced by syntactical parallelism [...where] words themselves do not convey meaning, [...] they are but gestures we make, a dumb show like any other” (Lodge 199-200). Sam Wiseman comments in “Strange Old Feelings Wake in the Soul: Ambivalent Landscapes in D.H. Lawrence” (2015) that the Lawrence of *The White Peacock* (1911) anticipated Woolf’s “dreamlike, fluid description of London at night, describing the city in an enraptured, painterly tone rather than in terms of artificiality and mechanization” (Wiseman 2015). Nidesh Lawtoo (2013) compares Lawrence’s style to Joseph Conrad, specifically in *Heart of*

*Darkness*. Lawtoo suggests that after Conrad, “perhaps no modernist writer more than D.H. Lawrence invests the notion of ‘darkness’ with mimetic affects that have the power to dissolve the unity of the ego” (Lawtoo 143). He goes on to suggest that Lawrence’s style of narration is close in proximity to “the tyrannical bent [...] in Nietzsche’s mimetic thought” corresponding to Nietzsche’s characterization of “the master’s will to power” (144). In other words, Lawrence dissolves the ego through the fluid, emotionality of his writing. “He consciously relies on his sensitivity in order to analyze the lived, affective communication between self and other” (150). In this way, Lawrence presented a flowing text as something alive that also cycles through death and rebirth. Lawtoo argues that “Lawrence’s dissolution of the ‘old stable ego’ and the fluid, communicative subject that emerges, phoenix-like, from its ashes, can only be fully understood in the light of Lawrence’s larger anthropological, metaphysical, and psychological research (148).

The exaggerated emotions of the characters in *Women in Love* are symbolic of the deeper and collective psychological state of society in the modern world. Thus, the characters do not act with a rationality or realism but as governed entirely by their emotions, so that rawness and a sense of body are felt emanating from the text. In this regard, the text embodies Cixousian principles of the text as body. For example, Lawrence’s vague and numerous references to a knowing that is attributed to “blood”—or as Lawrence was prone to call it, a “blood consciousness”—speaks to this notion of words coming from the body. “He laughed dangerously, from the blood” (Lawrence 57), is just one of many examples of how *écriture féminine* might be read in *Women in Love*. In Lawrence’s short story “The Virgin and the Gypsy” (1926), this purer knowledge or insight derived from our bodies takes on the dimension of racial purity as well. While this racial outlook can be seen, as suggested above, in “The Woman Who Rode Away” and it is indeed peppered throughout Lawrence’s novels, “The Virgin and the Gypsy” gives a clear example of a woman’s awareness of her sexual desire arriving from her voyeuristic gaze on a gypsy man, whom Lawrence describes as pure and clean: “The curious dark, suave purity of all his body, outlined in the green jersey: a purity like a living sneer” (Lawrence 22). There are other references to the “pure lines” of his face and nose while contrastingly he is described as a “pariah” and his stare is both “bold” and “dishonest” indicating a complexity of desire mixed with repulsion

for “the other”. This notion of superior bodily purity is taken to the degree that the story’s heroine Yvette even romanticizes his bathroom practices “If gypsies had no bathrooms, at least they had no sewerage. There was fresh air” (27). In this story, Lawrence again problematizes the dichotomy of the westerner and the other, albeit the description is disparaging at the same time: as if the racial features combined physical attractiveness and moral degeneracy, by implicating that the nomadic gypsies, or Native Americans as in “The Woman who Rode Away”, have a more sexually “potent” (to borrow a word from Lawrence) life; and as if reconciling this existence with western life could potentially redeem the westerner from too much “mind-consciousness”. As Sijia Yao remarks in her essay on female desire in D.H. Lawrence and Eileen Chang (2017), however, the other isn’t romanticized just in terms of race: in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, for example, this extends to class, as we see in Constance Chatterley’s sexual attraction for the gatekeeper of her husband’s estate: “Both Connie and Yvette rebel against social convention and transgress class boundaries to consummate their primitive love” (Yao 203). Yao also asserts that Lawrence represents a female viewpoint that “disturbs and disrupts the masculine discourse about women’s bodies and sexualities” (205). Yao dismisses feminist critics of Lawrence, claiming, “Despite harsh attacks from some feminists, Lawrence’s discourse about women is more complex and fluid than it seems. [...] He believed that women, sexuality and the communion between man and woman could resolve this bleak realistic situation” (207). However, Lawrence’s perspective is also problematic given the racism inherent in his assumptions on the racial other. I will discuss this in greater depth below in relation to “The Woman Who Rode Away” and Ursula’s first near martial union with the Slavic other of Anton Skrebensky in *The Rainbow*.

In *Women in Love*, the sisters discuss marriage as a potential escape from their isolated existence. Gudrun reveals to her sister that she had returned to their community “hoping now for a man to come along” (4). Ursula asks, “But do you hope to get anywhere by just marrying?”; Gudrun responds, “It seems to be the inevitable next step” (4). Here Gudrun speaks of marriage, not as a journey but as an unavoidable development of her life, implying that outside forces are directing her advancement in society.

Lodge links the theme of marriage to Lawrence's style of writing which, he argues, both produce the same effect of inevitability, as one sentence leads on to the next with each proceeding sentence building on of the phrases of the preceding ones. Lodge discusses this in his chapter dedicated to D.H. Lawrence's work:

Lawrence's writing [...] appears to be 'forwarded by contiguity' in the sense that each clause or phrase takes its impetus from an item in the preceding one, the repeated words knitting the units together on the pattern of Ab Bc Cd De etc. Yet the effect of progression and continuity this produces is a kind of illusion: the discourse is not really moving forward to encompass new facts, but unfolding the deeper significance of the same facts" (Lodge 200). This is further evidenced as Gudrun indicates that having children (the logical next step from marriage in Gudrun's patriarchal society) seems beyond one. Gudrun says, "Perhaps one doesn't really want them, in one's soul—only superficially" (5).

Other critics have taken issue with Lodge's shying away from the ideological conflicts of Lawrence's writing and being too conciliatory towards its darker sides. J. Russell Perkin (2014), for example, defines Lodge's approach as "skeptical and conciliatory" (Perkin 7), characterized by "tentativeness of commitment", by the "hope" that Lawrence's use of dialogue came across as "honest doubt rather than as evasiveness" (Perkin 17), and by the implied justification of some of his most extreme ideas as due to a mental illness rather than ideology, such as "his readiness to sacrifice individual human lives to Life with a capital 'L'...his sexism, and his messianic, apocalyptic mysticism, that sometimes drew him towards fascist ideological positions, and on occasion to the edge of madness"<sup>15</sup> (Perkin 22). Lawrence's writing continues to attract strong and conflicting interpretations, to the point that his critics in turn become objects of criticism by those who read him differently. Indeed, Lawrence was already attracting strong and inconsistent interpretations by his contemporaries, a trend which has only continued.

In this regard, Lawrence attacked some prominent traditions within the modernist literature of his time, especially modernist methods employed by the Bloomsbury Group and writers like Woolf who were more apt to use subtleties to direct the reader's attention to the subconscious or unconscious. In chapter three, "Classroom", Hermione and Ursula argue in Ursula's empty schoolroom after her students leave; Ursula appears to associate subtlety with a type of falsity or repression. However, Laura Frost argues that Lawrence's work and the

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<sup>15</sup> Lodge, *Write On*, 190-1.



progressive and feminist canon that included Woolf and Rebecca West should be credited with “changing those aspects of the female response to male power which are sometimes characterized as passive and masochistic. They contest the assumption [...] that passivity and decadence are normal in women” (Frost 114), without, I would add, the impulse to represent empowered women in polarized and traditionally masculine responses such as ‘aggression’ and ‘violence’.

Lawrence’s criticism of the use of subtlety in modernist literature seems to be especially linked to his disdain for the ‘progressive clique’ and the Bloomsbury group, as many critics have claimed Hermione is a representation of Lady Ottoline Morrell, a close friend of the Bloomsbury circle (Margot Norris for example is one of the critics who observes Lady Morrell’s similarities to Hermione in a chapter pertaining to D.H. Lawrence in *The Modernist Party* (2013)).

Indeed, it was around the time that Lawrence was writing *Women in Love* that he and his wife Frieda moved almost permanently away from England, preferring the life of roaming expatriates. This was possibly due, at least in part, to Lawrence’s uncertainty regarding his own place within London society. In separate letters to E.M. Forster and Lady Ottoline Morrell, both of whom would have belonged to the ‘progressive clique’ that Lawrence described to Hopkin, Lawrence sounds bitter when he writes about his position in society opposed to theirs. To E.M. Forster he wrote, “I don’t belong to any class now. As for your class, do you think it could tempt me? If I’m one of any lot, I’m one of the common people. But I feel as if I’d known all classes now, and so am free of all” (*Letters*, 2, p. 265). And to Lady Ottoline Morrell, in February 1915, Lawrence wrote a very strange letter appealing for her help. He wanted Morrell to write to his wife Frieda’s ex-husband and his ex-mentor, Professor Ernest Weekly, so that she might be allowed to see her children, but Lawrence makes his request in a style that is both hostile and mocking:

It is rather splendid that you are a great lady. Don’t abrogate one jot or tittle of your high birth: it is too valuable in this commercial-minded, mean world: and it does stand as well for what you really are. Because, of what other woman could we ask this? —Of what other woman of rank? I really do honour your birth. Let us do justice to its nobility: it is not mere accident. I would give a great deal to have been born an aristocrat. (*Letters*, 2, p. 281)

Lawrence wrote many of his novels from abroad preferring to be an outsider looking in, he was never really comfortable being in England. And because of this self-inflicted exile many of Lawrence's works naturally involve travel or cross-culture encounters. Lawrence continuously sought to find a culture that was more embracing of his ideals for primitivism. Laura Frost acknowledges "The Woman Who Rode Away" and *The Plumed Serpent* as

[V]ariations on the common interwar theme of leaving a troubled Britain for another, less apparently complicated country. Lawrence had an unusually literal understanding of this theme, as he enacted the flight from Britain himself, to Australia, Italy, New Mexico, and other locales that seemed to offer alternatives to the moribund UK. (Frost 107)

Lawrence suffered from not understanding where he belonged in English society, not totally at ease with the intellectuals, whom he often vehemently disagreed with, nor with the working or upper classes. Lawrence's marriage to Frieda Weekly, the older, German ex-housewife of his professor and mentor also made life more difficult for him during the war and in certain social circles where he was outcast and Frieda was suspected of being a spy. Instead, Lawrence retreated to Italy, New Mexico, Mexico and Australia, constantly in search of a place of belonging and also for the pre-Judeo-Christian 'purity' that he so desperately wanted to uncover. In this mode, Lawrence was able to produce a collective *Bildungsroman* text, as the individual is shown to be growing in relation of symmetry and asymmetry to others, even as they seek to assert their pure individuality; Lawrence allows the characters to gain maturity through voyeuristically watching their country of origin, and each other's destruction.

Lawrence resisted the typical innovations that were being used by modernists and "intellectual elites" by employing extremities of technique and form that appeared haphazard rather than methodical. In addition to this, he pressed the boundaries of contemporary mores further than modernists like Woolf, by directly writing about sex. The extremity of Lawrence's moralism in *Women in Love*, in addition to the directness of his diction in dealing with taboo subject-matter such as sex, has caused his place within the modernist canon to be challenged and dismissed by many. For instance, when Virginia Woolf reviewed *The Lost Girl* (1920) she

referred to Lawrence's overt use of sex as a "the first red-herring" that would be "disquieting [...] to explore".<sup>16</sup>

According to David Lodge, "Lawrence rarely indulges in those deviations from chronological sequence that are generally typical of the modernist novel" (Lodge 197-8). However, Lodge notes that Lawrence is vague about dates, for instance the novel begins "one morning" (Lawrence 3) and the action continues on a non-specified later date, described only as "a school day [...] drawing to a close" (27). This nebulous chronology is significant to my interpretation of *Women in Love* as a collective *Bildungsroman* insofar as it relates to Lawrence's appeal for a return to primitivism, or the "negation of 'progress'" or "preference by 'nostalgia' for 'natural simplicity over artificial complication', as Kingsley Widmer defines it in "The Primitivistic Aesthetic: D.H. Lawrence"; though Widmer admits that these glossary definitions are general, he argues, as do I, that it was "primitivism's moral concepts (the rejection of industrial and mass civilization and the longing for a more simple and virile life) [that] lead his characters towards a primitive landscape where they reveal not their moral transformation but their own repulsions and self-destruction" (Widmer 345). In other words, Lawrence uses lack of chronology and lack of novelistic conventions to create an asymmetry that will undo the plot and contribute to a sense of doom, for the characters as well as the story's progression.

Lawrence uses his novel to stage a formal battle of wills between the narrator and the audience in the hopes of destroying the reader's reliance on the realism of past literary traditions. For instance, throughout *Women in Love*, as the narrator describes a scene, vagueness and opaqueness will pervade lengthy descriptions in order to make the audience aware that reality is not as well defined as traditional realist fiction assumes—creating a foreboding and unshakeable feeling of uncertainty. One such word that creates this effect is "something", which Lawrence inserts often in place of more concrete description. For example, "but something like a strange, golden light" (323) is used to describe Ursula's beauty, followed shortly thereafter with "It was something beyond love" to describe Birkin's feelings for Ursula. And finally a sentence later, "How

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<sup>16</sup> Review by Woolf of Lawrence's *The Lost Girl*, published in *The Times Literary Supplement* of December 2, 1920.

could he say 'I' when he was something new and unknown, not himself at all? This I, this old formula of the age, was a dead letter" (323). But all of this is described without the narrator revealing what is the "something" beyond love, or the "something" new. Lawrence adds elements of uncertainty when the narrator describes things with words like "too" or else "semi" to blur the precision of any statement. This occurs, for example, when Gudrun considers Loerke critically, "He was too soft, too humble" (358). But then suddenly a paragraph later her escalated yet vague notions of Loerke become imbued with hatred, further confusing the audience with sentences like "She hated him for the seasoned, semi-paternal animalism with which he regarded her, but she admired his weight of strength" (359). These statements leave the reader unsatisfied and wondering, "what is 'too' soft?" and "what is semi-paternal animalism?", these determinations are left up to the audience to consider.

Admittedly, Lawrence does adhere to the realist tradition to the extent that I have already mentioned—his use of linear time and of the typical method Lodge describes as hallmark of the realist tradition: "third-person, past-tense narrative in which, whether the narrator chooses to intervene rhetorically or not, the grammar is a constant sign of his presence, and hence of some context, some reality larger than that defined by the limits of any character's consciousness" (Lodge 50). However, Lawrence's prose also includes long rhapsodically lyrical passages where his characters have supernatural or otherworldly examples of feelings and emotions, such as when Gerald approaches Gudrun before their first intimate encounter and he is described as seeming "fixed in an odd supernatural steadfast" (Lawrence 300); this alongside of the tenor of the characters' private battles with their anger, passion and will to dominance suggests a deeper relevance for the intensity of their emotional reactions. This is exemplified as Ursula tells Gudrun that love is not the highest thing on Earth or in space, "it isn't. Love is too human and little. I believe in something inhuman, of which love is only a little part. I believe what we must fulfill comes out of the unknown to us, and it is something infinitely more than love. It isn't merely *human*" (Lawrence 383). In this statement, all of Lawrence's stylistic features are brought together to reinforce his main point which is that something greater than our existence, and therefore unknowable to us, is responsible for directing our lives.

The third-person narrative voice is incongruent with past literary conventions and structures. This goal will be manifest even more clearly in the third text that I explore in my dissertation: *Black Lamb Grey Falcon*, as Rebecca West, as narrator, travels the distance between “the ‘I’ who narrates and the ‘I’ who is narrated” (Lodge 50) as she becomes the principal protagonist of her own story. In *Women in Love*, we can observe Lawrence’s journey to bridge the gap between these two ‘I’s in the character of Birkin who is Lawrence’s linkage between the masculine/feminine and realist/modern traditions. As he takes on the role of teacher and challenger—challenging Hermione, for instance to drop her pretenses and Gerald to accept an unconventional blood union with him—Birkin acts as the most liberated from societal constructs and emotionally mature character, who appreciates life outside of gender, sexuality and temporal confines.

### ***Women in Love: Structure, Star Equilibrium and Collective Bildungsroman***

The Brangwen sisters, and in particular Gudrun, are positioned as especially resistant to patriarchy. Lawrence describes them as having the “remote, virgin look of modern girls” (Lawrence 4), which from the start of the novel, establishes the Brangwens as distant from their local community in the English Midlands. This is also represented by the eventual asymmetry of the characters, as Gudrun defeats Gerald’s polarizing influence. However, in Gudrun’s case there are important questions pertaining to the nature of her development, such as whether Gudrun’s rejection of Gerald relates to his inability to “tame” her into submission. Is Gudrun simply rejecting spiritual death by marriage to Gerald and opting for a more modern lifestyle as a liberated woman? Another distinction should be made to explain the divergent paths of development for each Brangwen sister. I will illustrate that though *Women in Love* is representative of a non-conservative path of development for Gudrun, Lawrence’s portrayal of Gerald’s destruction and Ursula’s acceptance of domesticity suggests a moralism dependent of correct modes of masculine and feminine natures that are inextricably bound up with the ability to adapt to modernity. In fact, Gudrun’s liberation arrives at the cost of Gerald’s inability to adapt to the pressures of modern expectations on masculinity. As an example, in the scene where Gudrun

terminates her relationship with Gerald, she is confident that despite his desire to kill her, she can “outwit him” (405); Gudrun’s superior cunning and wit compared with Gerald’s physical might in this situation works to highlight what Lawrence perceived as a widening gulf between the sexes as they moved into the modern age. “He could never cow her, nor dominate her, nor have any right over her; this she would maintain until she had proved it. Once it was proved, she was free of him forever” (405). This passage suggests the relationship failed because Gerald was unable to dominate Gudrun, thus her liberation seems to arrive alongside her disappointment that Gerald was unable to be “masculine enough”.

Conversely, Ursula is described as passing into a new world dominated by her husband’s movements, which Gudrun scorns in the last scene of the sisters together. “Go and find your new world, dear,’ she said, her voice clanging with false benignity. ‘After all, the happiest voyage is the quest of Rupert’s Blessed Isles’” (Lawrence 384), but again there is duality in Gudrun’s suggestion, she is both scornful of her sister’s domesticity but also jealous and resentful.

The Brangwen sisters represent divergence from old world structures; they have inherited this tradition of change from their Brangwen ancestors, which was the focus of *The Rainbow*. Janik describes how *The Rainbow* establishes the Brangwen family as dynamically responding to the contact between “the old England and the new” (Janik 361); critically, Janik argues however that the Brangwens’ ultimate impulse to voyage out from the old world towards the new industrial world would “draw them gradually away from contact with the land and into a life of uncertainty” (361). It is relevant therefore to recall that *Women in Love* begins with Gudrun returning from her modern life in London, as yet unsatisfied and searching for fulfillment in past institutions for women like marriage and motherhood.

Conversely, the Crich family is positioned as the Brangwens’ binary opposite. The Crichs embody the stagnation of English culture in a modern world. They are established as part of a higher echelon of class, due to their family’s success in the mining business. The Crichs stand for industrialism through their mining enterprise, the symbolism of which we are shown in the description of their family home, Shortlands. “Shortlands looked across a sloping meadow that might be a park, because of the large solitary trees that stood here and there, across the water of

the narrow lake, at the wooded hill that successfully hid the colliery valley beyond, but did not quite hide the rising smoke” (Lawrence 22). The rising smoke is also symbolic of the encroaching end of the gentry, the waste of the countryside by industrialism, and also the fading relevance of coalmining. Rupert Birkin and Hermione Roddice are two other characters that are central to highlighting the mounting class tensions in modern England. An example emerges as Birkin refuses to walk with Hermione around her country estate: “It made her blood run sharp, to be thwarted in even so trifling a matter. She intended them all to walk with her in the park” (Lawrence 73). Janik writes that Birkin refused to walk with Hermione’s party because he had become “stifled and threatened by the oppressively intellectual atmosphere of his mistress’s country estate, [and] seeks and find relief among the trees, the ferns, and the ground itself in a wood to which he flees; he approaches the land almost as a physical lover” (Janik 363). Lawrence strives to represent the subconscious animalistic reactions of his characters through their intensely emotional responses, in order to attempt to reconnect human feeling with nature. For instance, Hermione rationalizes Birkin’s rejection of her in terms of a story about two male swans vying for the affection of a female: “[Hermione] chuckled and laughed as she told how the ousted lover had sat with his head buried under his wing, on the gravel” (Lawrence 73), which is one of many examples of animal imagery in the text that allude to ultimate violence and disharmony.

In the *Voyage Out* and *Women in Love*, the male protagonist attempts to bind himself to the female heroine, regardless of her willingness or ability to be coupled in this way, while the audience experiences a mounting tension from the heroine’s resistance to any union. In the case of *The Voyage Out*, Hewet believes Rachel’s death has finally united them: “They had now what they had always wanted to have, the union which had been impossible while they lived” (Woolf 412). Here, through free indirect discourse, a third-person narrator is being used to relay Hewet’s consciousness. Woolf does this to highlight how Hewet’s mind insists on using the pronoun “they” to describe the posthumous unification of Rachel and himself, as if they had undertaken the journey to death together. Hewet’s life is also described in the past tense. In this sense, it is implied that Hewet continues to believe that Rachel, even in death, is tied to him. This same sentiment is present in *Women in Love*, as Birkin tells Ursula that if he dies, she’ll know he hasn’t

left her, “‘And you won’t have left me,’ he said. ‘We shan’t have any need to despair in death’” (421). As Birkin sees it, ‘love’ is born out of a “death-process” (148) and the end of the world is as good as the beginning in a “progressive process” (148). In this way, time and progress are incongruent concepts forced onto lovers as much as nations; Lawrence illustrates, through Birkin, how the western obsession with technological and societal progress lead to self-destruction. Ursula is nonplussed by Birkin’s philosophy and cries in anger, “You only want us to know death” (148), which she can only envision as the opposite of love and beginning. Gerald then appears “out of the dusk” in an image that presents him as a “one of these strange white wonderful demons from the north, fulfilled in the destructive mystery” (221) and agrees with Ursula that knowing death is Birkin’s desire: “You’re quite right” (148). Birkin’s desire to know death is perhaps why he remains unfulfilled at the end of the text when he is upset that Gerald died without keeping true to their *Blutbrüderschaft* (178) or blood brotherhood that would keep them united in love. Birkin believes in the *Blutbrüderschaft* because it would mean that death is irrelevant to love, “death would not have mattered. Those who die, and dying still can love, still believe, do not die. They live still in the beloved. Gerald might still have been living in the spirit with Birkin, even after death. He might have lived with his friend, a further life” (420). And so we can interpret Birkin’s journey as moving away from “life” represented by his worldly and conventional marriage to Ursula and towards a desire to know “death” represented by a homoerotic fascination for Gerald and the values of the past.

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the *Bildungsroman* is traditionally the province of the white male and although historical and cultural variables have over time have transformed this genre of personal development, gender has largely been left unconsidered, despite the fact, as Abel, Hirsch and Langland (1983) point out, that “the sex of the protagonist modifies every aspect of a particular *Bildungsroman*: its narrative structure, its implied psychology, its representation of social pressures” (Abel 4-5). Similarly to *The Voyage Out*, the title of Lawrence’s text, *Women in Love*, suggests a development, reveals a romantic plot and most importantly, firmly suggests the prominence of the development that takes place in the characters and their experience of love; however, I have defined *Women in Love* as a collective form of the



*Bildungsroman* because the growth the characters experience, which remains a main focus of the text, emerges directly from the undermining of the double marriage plot by the asymmetry of their relationships. The four main protagonists, Gerald, Birkin, Ursula and Gudrun are established as mirroring figures only for the text's development to gradually dismantle their symmetry. There is a particular implied emphasis on the female development, because of the title *Women in Love* and also because of the preceding text, *The Rainbow*, which focused on the progression of the Brangwen sisters.

Soboleva and Wrenn highlight the larger arc of the journey of the Brangwen family from *The Rainbow* to *Women in Love*. To clarify what I mean by the idea of a collective element of the *Bildungsroman*, it's useful to look at how Lawrence writes about "intercultural hybridity" versus "cultural essentialism" as Soboleva sees the duality rise to the surface with these two Lawrentian texts. "*The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* represent, arguably, the most comprehensive and sustained reflection of Lawrence's perspective on the potency of such a transformative intercultural mixing (as a dynamic of elements), in which the notion of Russian 'otherness' is employed as a 'buoying up' of the author's philosophical views" (Soboleva and Wrenn 212). What Soboleva refers to by the idea of Russian otherness is an inherent duality within the Russian psyche that Soboleva argues that Lawrence was inspired by and traced back through Dostoevsky and the entire Slavic cohort. This duality would involve at the same time a notion of Christian purity and moralism while also wanting to be true to the pleasure principle. "The Brangwen sisters' personal drama, their difficulties in finding equilibrium between their convoluted inner selves and the surrounding social milieu, stems directly from their original ethnic liminality—their intercultural hybridity formed of Slavic emotional physicality and the rationalism of the English mind" (Soboleva and Wrenn 212) Lawrence goes beyond gender relations to consider the intersection of ethnic differences "as a potential trigger of the transformative change" (Booth 203) that I claim as an extension to the genre of *Bildungsroman*.

Because of the title, readers approach the novel expecting to learn about developments experienced by not one female heroine but by women in the plural. As has already been discussed above, that romantic plot will be undermined by the suggestion of castration of

patriarchal culture in the asymmetry of the novel's conclusion. However, this castration is celebrated as a fulfillment of a Freudian deathwish as much as it is cast as a nostalgia for the image of the glorified chivalric and Arthurian male (with reference to Birkin's desire for the *Blutbrüderschaft*, a blood bond that establishes Birkin's longing for a return to a Medieval primitive that is supposedly more pure than his modern reality) and their homosocial contracts, which in the modern era Lawrence suggests are corrupted by the feminization of the male figure and the transformation of the pure homosocial into the homoerotic.

And so we arrive at the most important difference between *Women in Love* and *The Voyage Out*, which is that Lawrence's novel pertains not to the development (or lack of development) of merely one character but four. All four protagonists' psychologies and growth are explored equally as a microcosm of society. The characters' career roles and relationships with each other can be interpreted within the larger nexus of modern society. While *Women in Love* can be read as a novel with a traditional plot and focus on social relationships and the possibility, or not, of the main characters' integration within society—in other words, while it can be read as a substantially traditional novel—my argument is that the text can in fact be seen to locate itself equally, and more interestingly, in the tradition of the *Bildungsroman* as a collective, combined form of the genre which traces the development of four main characters whose quest for individual self-awareness is inextricable from that of the others. The *Bildungsroman* interacts with the themes of travel and female development, which I present in the introduction to this thesis; in the instance of the trajectory of the Brangwen sisters it is travel moreover, that makes all the relationships and possibilities of development of the four main characters come to a head at the end of the novel, thus acquiring a relevance that goes well beyond the space that episode of travel has in the plot.

The ultimate asymmetry of the four protagonists is bought about through more than just Gerald's death. Also, though Birkin and Ursula fulfill the traditional marriage plot with their union, Birkin's unrequited longing for a similar union with Gerald counteracts their balance. Gudrun's rejection of Gerald for the German sculptor, Loerke, and her decision at the novel's conclusion to forgo marriage to Gerald in order to travel to Germany and pursue art achieve asymmetry by

leaving Ursula as the only main character to not have an external desire or love interest separate from the fulfillment of the marriage plot. In fact, all of the characters apart from Ursula had other lovers in the text: Gerald had the depraved Soho Bohemian of Pussum, Birkin was connected to the Baronet's daughter and socialite Hermione Roddice, while Gudrun has Loerke. To expand on Soboleva and Wrenn's contributions to the way Ursula can represent a figure who has attained a sense of self-actualization through her rejection of all "others", we can look backwards to her character in *Women in Love's* predecessor *The Rainbow*. In *The Rainbow*, Ursula rejects the love of Anton Skrebensky and Winifred Inger. Soboleva and Wrenn suggest that Ursula's union with Skrebensky would "not offer enough capacity, enough space for the wholeness of her multidimensional nature [...] Ursula is shown to become psychologically more self-contained and more complete, rising above the metaphysical necessity to be attracted to 'the other' in order to attain a sense of wholeness and fulfillment" which is represented through the symbol of the rainbow "shining above the town of Beldover" (Soboleva and Wrenn 218). And so, while Ursula—the individual—does achieve her personal *Bildung* at the end of *The Rainbow*, Lawrence's greater concern that carried through to *Women in Love* is the more urgent need for the entirety of European civilization to abandon the "corrupt materialism" of the modern era in favor of the "primeval naturalism of the pagan" (219). Lawrence, like Rebecca West, looked towards other civilizations he saw as more natural like the Slavs (as Soboleva and Wrenn make the case), the Native Americans, and beyond in order to discover how to usher in a "new system". In this way, the four main characters are experimental representations of larger aspects that Lawrence perceived in Western society, that would need to balance in order to achieve this societal vision for a return to the primitive.

The metaphor for this nexus—what holds the four characters together—is Lawrence's notion of "star-equilibrium". By this term, Lawrence implies that the natural balance reins in humanity. The idea of stars, with their gravitational pull, is how Lawrence associates human bodies with celestial ones, but also with the balance of nation states, as Lawrence sees all systems as vying for balance and power in a larger universal order; in this way the collective *Bildungsroman* adheres to Lawrence's conception of individuals being unable to develop without

equal balance with others in their familial and communal environments, and imbalance spurred on by defunct societal structures such as industrialism and patriarchy lead to larger imbalances that lead to war. Imposed morality, conventions and systems of power disrupt the natural balance which, Lawrence advocates, can be found through a return to the primitive. The disruption of balance leads to catastrophic events such as war. By returning to a primitive state, and trusting intuitions, Lawrence posits the “star-equilibrium” will be nurtured.

What is most destabilizing for the desired return to the primitive is the mechanization of the world. Gerald, for instance, as a young child, “had wanted a sort of savagedom. The days of Homer were his ideal, when a man was chief of an army of heroes, or spent his years in wonderful Odyssey” (Lawrence 191); however, he is blind to the reality that his England and the natural world around him are being “blackened” by the very industrialism that he oversees. The narrator describes how Gerald “never really saw Beldover and the colliery valley. He turned his face entirely away [...]. It was true that the panting and rattling of the coal mines could always be heard at Shortlands” (192), but Gerald ignores the “whole of the industrial sea which surged in coal-blackened tides against the grounds of the house” (192). Gerald’s refusal to acknowledge the reality of the devastation of his surrounding landscape and his own complicity in its plight relates to England’s complicity in systems of industrialism, capitalism and war mongering that are driving her own demise.

Gerald Crich is constructed in the novel as the full embodiment of what Lawrence found to be the most troubling aspects of modern capitalism; Gerald struggles to merge the aristocratic and pre-industrial old-world conceptions of patriarchal control and masculinity with his father’s industrial capitalism as he takes over his father’s mine and attempts to modernize it and himself. However, Gerald is unable to foresee the effects that modernity is having on his personal life or his business. He prefers instead to live in a world of his own imagining, after turning his back on the reality induced by his coalmines on his community; the narrator describes that Gerald instead viewed the world as “a wilderness where one hunted and swam and rode. He rebelled against all authority. Life was a condition of savage freedom” (192).

There are many allusions to his inability to adjust, emotionally and bodily; Gerald struggles to survive through the societal shifts. This failure to understand or adjust to modern change is ultimately why Gerald destroys himself at the end of the novel, yet Birkin's continuous warning is that if society does not also alter its course, away from materialism and consumerism then it too will destroy itself. Lawrence uses the slow and voyeuristic process of watching Gerald's father die as a way of indicating his own voyeurism towards the west's death-process, which I will explore fully in the following sections.

Birkin tells Ursula that if society cannot be changed then he would prefer it to be destroyed. When Gerald asks Birkin how he would propose to "reform the whole order of society" Birkin responds by suggesting, "When we really want to go for something better, we shall smash the old. Until then, any sort of proposal, or making proposals, is no more than a tiresome game for self-important people" (82). These "self-important" people Birkin refers to are undoubtedly the elite intellectual sects that Lawrence felt so excluded from in England, especially when he moved to Croydon where he felt increasingly cut off and isolated from intelligent society. Lawrence described his isolation in a letter dated August 1910 to his close friend, Willie Hopkin, who was a leading member of the Congregationalist Literary Society and an active supporter of the Socialist Democratic Federation: "I seem to have lost touch altogether with the 'progressive' clique: in Croydon the socialists are so stupid and the Fabians flat" (*Letters*, 2, p. 176).

As we saw above, D.H. Lawrence's uneasy relationship with modernism is closely connected with his desire to return to a primitive form of consciousness that emerges directly out of the body and bypasses or excludes the rational mind and its adhesion to oppressive social imperatives. However, Birkin is naïve in assuming that he has reached a higher plateau of being, as James C. Cowan observes in "D.H. Lawrence and the Trembling Balance" (1990); Birkin has an inability to accept the limits of his relationship with Gerald. Thus, Birkin's polarized relationship with Ursula is also doomed to fail, as he is unable to contend with the reality of Gerald's death and rejection of the *Blutbrüderschaft*. Lawrence uses Birkin's succumbing to illness in the chapter "Man to Man" to illustrate the manifestation of his delusions and grandiose sense of self; instead

of viewing himself as part of a collective society, he is too individualistic and this is ultimately his downfall and why he is unable to achieve union with anyone.

When Birkin falls ill it is Gerald and not Ursula who goes to see him. Birkin is discovered “sick and unmoved” considering a future life together with Ursula as “repulsive. He wanted something clearer, more open, cooler, as it were. The hot narrow intimacy between man and wife was abhorrent” (Lawrence 171-172). This is one example of many that Lawrence uses to juxtapose cold and hot states as representative of male and female plains or Nordic and exotic, annihilation and disease. In this instance, Ursula is pure and cold in her “annihilation” and her hatred of Birkin secures her as the more dominant and masculine of the two. Birkin is described, from her perspective, as being “fine as a diamond, and as hard and jewel-like, the quintessence of all that was inimical” (171) a metaphor indicating that Birkin is as fixed as a diamond and therefore “sick” by being singular and unmoving. She is drawing the masculinity and dominance away from Birkin in a display that renders Birkin sick, since his “fine diamond” masculine reality is a metaphor for a stone she would alchemize to suck lifeblood from: “She saw him as a clear stroke of uttermost contradiction, a strange gem-like being whose existence defined her own non-existence” (171). She renders him sick and then feminine as she looks at his face and it causes her to “touch her own forehead, to feel if she were mad” and at the end of the paragraph when she is described as not being able to escape “this transfiguration of hatred that had come upon her” (171), the suggestion is that Ursula has absorbed Birkin’s will and transfigured to the masculine. As Lawrence wrote to Catherine Carswell, “A man must find a new expression, give a new value to life, or his women will reject him and he will die” (Lodge 214). Lodge demonstrates that Lawrence was obsessed with “the definition of a healthy relationship between the sexes and the apocalyptic-utopian idea of a brave new world being born out of the painful dissolution of the old” (Lodge 214).

However, Birkin doesn’t give up the hope that he can have a successful union with Ursula and considers his inability to conquer her will as being responsible for her justifiable hatred of him. Birkin reflects that Ursula is the

queen bee on whom all the rest depended. He saw the yellow flare in her eyes, he knew the unthinkable overweening assumption of primacy in her. She was unconscious of it

herself. She was only too ready to knock her head on the ground before a man. But this was only when she was so certain of her man, that she could worship him as a woman worships her own infant, with a worship of perfect possession. (Lawrence 173)

This is the formula that is also, ultimately Gerald's undoing, as he is unable to master the dominance of Gudrun. Her hatred of him ultimately consumes her until she rejects him for a more appealing suitor.

Gerald similarly feels his masculinity threatened by Gudrun backhanding him across the face the night that Diana died, which he relays to Birkin as he is bedridden. Birkin responds, "The Amazon suddenly came up in her, I suppose" (175), again referring to the polarization between masculine and feminine and subordination and dominance. Though the two men acknowledge the joke is bad, the sentiment in Lawrence's fiction remains—the strong Amazonian woman actually longs to be dominated but Gerald is bewildered and apathetic. Gerald is only moved to inaction: "I don't care a tinker's curse about it" (175). I posit that the asymmetry at the end of the text brought on by Gerald's death is a Lawrentian premonition that patriarchal control would be annihilated and thus thrown off of its perfect polarization with women because of a feminization that Lawrence viewed as threatening a purer masculinity. This is also symbolic of the premonition that the modern woman will eventually learn to destroy man. We see that represented at the end of the text by the doubled female against a single and still-deluded man. Cowan agrees that the novel ends with Ursula's superiority over Birkin as she writes in her final statement to Birkin that he cannot have a relationship with Gerald. Ursula declares the Birkin/Gerald union would be false and impossible. This suggests "her recognition and his failure of insight on why he is prevented from having what he wants: because he will not, or cannot, accept the realistic limits of such a relationship" (Cowan 90). And similarly, Gerald's apathy over this premonition from Birkin is symptomatic of the white man's refusal to acknowledge and grapple with his own demise.

Where Woolf was searching for a new language for women, Lawrence is searching to reclaim the "primitive" and "authentic" language of pure femininity and masculinity, which he describes in binaries: forthrightness/subtlety, dominance/submission. This can be witnessed in Lawrence's tendency to use vague descriptions and repetitious words to unfurl meaning. For instance in chapter 20, "Gladiatorial", when Birkin wrestles with Gerald, the narrator describes

there being “long spaces of silence between their words. The wrestling had some deep meaning to them—an unfinished meaning” (Lawrence 236). The wrestling had some deep meaning to them—an unfinished meaning” (Lawrence 236). In this passage, Lawrence preferences silence over words and assigns deeper meaning to the sensation of touch than to communicated thought which would have to come from the rational mind, therefore from “mind consciousness”.

However, Lawrence implies that by unlocking primitive language men and women will be exalted towards a greater equality than modernity, with its newness and shifting boundaries, can provide. Frost notes that Lawrence’s interwar fiction explored the possibility of men and women as equals, while also problematically investigating notions of how the primitive supplied supposed insights “into what for Lawrence was a lifelong mystery: female consciousness and sexuality” (Frost 112-3). His fiction sought to “wrest the reader out of passivity and into spontaneity, reviving the libidinalized body from the stranglehold of consciousness” (113).

In *Women in Love*, Gerald Crich’s mother is described as a “pure anarchist, pure aristocrat” (Lawrence 292). Evelyn Cobley, in *Modernism and the Culture of Efficiency: Ideology and Fiction* (2009), suggests that Crich’s mother “may even constitute a displaced expression of Lawrence’s own impotence in the face of an apparently unstoppable social investment in efficiency. [Christiana Crich] is representative of a loosely organized caste system subject only to the will of powerful individuals whose privileges are based on accidents of birth” (Cobley 207).

The chapter of Cobley’s book focused on *Women in Love*, “Efficient Management: D.H. Lawrence’s *Women in Love*”, discusses the text from the perspective of the historical crisis surrounding the shift from industrial capitalism towards global consumerism. Cobley argues that the Crich family is central to this shift as through their generations they embody the whole movement behind it. “The anarchistic logic of laissez-faire systems finds expression in the aristocratic tradition represented by the mother, Christiana Crich. Thomas Crich is always already a representative of the ‘paternalistic’ stage that is being challenged by his son’s ‘Americanization’ of the production process” (Cobley 205). However, as Cobley astutely points out, though Lawrence uses the character of Gerald to reveal the ultimate danger present behind these modes of efficiency, he seems to miss the obvious contradiction that his “alternative social modes remain



complicit with capitalism” (Cobley 206). For instance, Birkin’s insistence on the need for total individual freedom easily aligns with the major tenets behind laissez-faire capitalism and as John Marx has suggested in *The Modernist Novel and the Decline of Empire* (2005): “Rupert’s nostalgic yearnings for more organic social bonds are in fact implicated in Britain’s imperial ambitions; his elite ‘connoisseurship’ of ‘things’ like tropical objects and antiquities is representative of the consumer stage of global capitalism” (Colby 206).

Indeed, Lawrence’s skepticism of modern society extends to his beliefs surrounding “unity” in love, which he regards as resulting in a loss of individuality and selfhood. Instead Lawrence, through Birkin, calls for a “new, better idea” which he describes as “star-equilibrium”. This idea is presented in the novel as all of the central characters sit around a table “superficially and intellectually” discussing “a new state, a new world of man” (Lawrence 88). Hermione assumes that if only humanity could realize that everyone is equal in spirit then “the rest wouldn’t matter” (145)—to which everyone responds with silence before abandoning the table. Birkin again takes on the role of correcting Hermione:

It’s just the opposite—we are all different and unequal in spirit. It is only the social differences that are based on accidental material conditions [...] But I, myself, who am I to do with equality with any other man or woman? In the spirit, I am as separate as one star from another, as different in quality and quantity. One man isn’t any better than any other, not because they are equal, but because they are intrinsically other, that there is no term of comparison. (Lawrence 146)

Unfortunately for both Hermione and Birkin despite their differences in opinion, Lawrence illustrates that the end result for humanity is destruction. While Hermione, Gudrun and Gerald delude themselves with mind-consciousness and the functionality of society as a mechanism, Birkin and Ursula still struggle for dominance and ultimately do not find the “star-equilibrium”. This “star-equilibrium” is very closely aligned to Lawrence’s musings in his essay “Morality and The Novel”, when he writes that the value of the novel relies on its being “the highest complex of subtle inter-relatedness that man has discovered” (“Morality and the Novel” 172) while institutions like “philosophy, religion, science, they are all busy nailing things down, to get a stable equilibrium” (172). The problem with the modern novel, Lawrence writes, is that it involves a novelist putting “his thumb in the scale, to pull down the balance to his own predilection, that is immorality. The modern novel tends to become more and more immoral, as the novelist tends to press his thumb

heavier and heavier in the pan: either on the side of love, pure love: or on the side of licentious 'freedom'" (172). Thus we can understand Lawrence's purpose a bit more clearly when he writes a few paragraphs later,

All emotions, including love and hate, and rage and tenderness, go to the adjusting of the oscillating, unestablished balance between two people who amount to anything. If the novelist puts his thumb in the pan, for love, tenderness, sweetness, peace, then he commits an immoral act: he prevents the possibility a pure relationship, a pure relatedness, the only thing that matters: and he makes inevitable the horrible reaction, when he lets his thumb go, towards hate and brutality, cruelty and destruction. (173)

Lawrence's conclusions are about the importance of achieving and maintaining a wholeness of mind and body, and only then as a "full-human" to be able to balance another "full-human" in love. At the end of *The Rainbow*, as Ursula reflects on her existence while looking at a rainbow, Ursula realizes that her identity is infinite, not through a rational or scientific understanding but through intuition. As Cowan describes, Ursula's experience of this epiphany is without the need for religion or god. Ursula opens herself to an unknown that "affords insight on the meaning and purpose of existence" (Cowan 20). Lawrence suggests that it is only through our ability to see ourselves as connected to our environment infinitely that we can gain a wholeness of self. Jack F. Stewart notes in "The Myth of the Fall in *Women in Love*" (1995) that Lawrence felt it was the duty of the novelist to create "a tremulation" that can "make the whole man-alive tremble" (Stewart 195).

To continue the analogy of the characters as representative of nation-states and civilizations—past and present—we can see how Gudrun and Gerald nostalgically long for the pagan culture of a fallen civilization. Thomas Crich's death manages to emblemize the death of past culture while at the same time foreshadowing the death of their current culture, by Gudrun and Gerald's denial of their real feelings, or what Birkin refers to as "the paradisaal entry into pure, single being" (Lawrence 221). Gudrun and Gerald are unable to see the signs for what they really mean and without understanding the significance of historical developments, they are doomed. As Gerald makes clear his intentions to marry Gudrun, Birkin realizes, "He was ready to be doomed. Marriage was like a doom to him. He was willing to condemn himself in marriage, to become like a convict condemned to the mines of the underworld, living no life in the sun, but having a dreadful subterranean activity" (Lawrence 308).

Birkin similarly acknowledges the doomed nature of his country when he ruminates on the “African fetishes” he had seen in Halliday’s bohemian apartment. This symbol for him announces the decline of “the white races”: “having the arctic north behind them, the vast abstraction of ice and snow, would fulfill a mystery of ice-destructive knowledge, snow-abstract annihilation. Whereas the West Africans, controlled by the burning death-abstraction of the Sahara, had been fulfilled in sun-destruction, the putrescent mystery of sun rays” (220). Birkin sees Gerald as an omen messenger who is sent to foretell the destruction of the west.

Despite Birkin’s premonition about Gerald—would he “pass away in [...] this one process of frost-knowledge, death by perfect snow?” Is he “an omen for the “universal dissolution into whiteness and snow?” (221)—Gerald appears unconcerned about his fate as he explains to Birkin, “I don’t care how it is with me—I don’t care how it is—so long as I don’t feel—“ (239). This illustrates the different codes of morality that Gerald and Birkin adhere to: Gerald is apathetic about his life’s course or the consequences of his actions, so long as he is numb to authentic feeling, while Birkin is concerned with feeling and emotionality in the extreme. Birkin wants to embody sensuality as his primary realm of being. Ursula explains that his failing is being too concerned with himself: “It is you who can’t let yourself go, it is you who hang on to yourself as if it were your only treasure. *You—you* are the Sunday school teacher—*You—you* preacher” (218). The amount of revelatory truth in Ursula’s words makes Birkin tense, “stiff and unheeding of her” (218). This shows that though Birkin claims to want to live purely through instincts, in actuality he spends most of his time intellectualizing his feelings, and when presented with this true sentiment from Ursula he physically stiffens against her, incapable of actually letting himself go, of accepting her and, more relevantly, of experiencing how this truth makes him feel.

Gudrun also acknowledges the hypocrisy in Birkin’s philosophy, telling Gerald that Birkin’s ideas seem contradictory: “instead of wanting a woman for herself, he wants his *ideas* fulfilled. Which, when it comes to actual practice, is not good enough” (Lawrence 251). This prediction of Gudrun’s turns out to be true, as once Birkin is married to Ursula at the novel’s conclusion he admits that he is still unsatisfied and that the relationship is not good enough. Lawrence therefore juxtaposes Birkin and Gerald’s positions on feeling in order to illustrate that

while Gerald is too deadened and incorporated by hegemonic systems, Birkin is too focused on internal systems within himself and expects others to bend to his conscious will, therefore he is unable to bring about the start of the equilibrium he theorizes as the solution for humanity.

In the chapter "Marriage or Not", Gerald suggests to Birkin that they make a "double-barreled affair" of their marriages (Lawrence 306). Gerald announces he intends to marry Gudrun with a "venturesome twinkle in his eyes" (306). Here, Lawrence shows us that Gerald considers the marriage in the same way as he considers his work with his coalmines, as part of a venture. Birkin is rightly skeptical of Gerald and says, "There remains to put it on a broad social basis, and to achieve a high moral purpose" (306); Birkin suggests to Gerald, "If I were you I would *not* marry: but ask Gudrun, not me. You're not marrying me, are you?" (307). Gerald pointedly ignores Birkin's question, "Gerald did not heed the latter part of this speech" (307) which suggests to the reader that Gerald would actually prefer to be united with Birkin and not Gudrun. As Cowan interprets, Gerald is wary of Birkin's desire for the *Blutbrüderschaft* because he is "probably unaware that what Birkin is offering is not overt homosexuality but the sublimation of desire into blood brotherhood through sacramental ritual"; however, as they wrestle in the chapter "Gladiatorial", the narrator suggests their wrestling left them with an "unfinished meaning" (236) and this relates to Gerald's latent desire for a homosexual relationship. Thus, when he explains to Birkin his idea of marrying Gudrun and he says, "one must consider it coldly"—and, as we have seen, the "cold" denotes for Lawrence mind-consciousness and abstraction—we are meant to understand that Gerald is moving away from his true feelings and desires because of what he believes has to exist structurally. This is confirmed when Gerald says that "one must take a step in one direction or another" and that "Marriage is one direction—" but trails off on the point. Birkin asks, "And what is the other?" (307). "Gerald looked up at him with hot, strangely-conscious eyes, that the other man could not understand" (307). In this instance, Gerald appears to be briefly in touch with his true desire, which he is shown to understand in his body (notice the use of "hot") but logically rejects. This recalls the moment when, in "Gladiatorial", Gerald had taken hold of Birkin's hand: "Gerald's hand closed warm and sudden over Birkin's, they remained exhausted and breathless" (236). However, by rejecting Birkin in "Marriage or Not", he believes he has

successfully dominated his blood-conscious impulse. Gerald now puts his hand on Birkin's arm in a "deprecating affection. And he smiled as if triumphantly" (308). Cowan notes that touch "does not necessarily have the same meaning for the toucher as for the touched" (Cowan 148) and that it can express aggressive and destructive ends.

Lawrence, as always interested in the dualistic battle of the masculine and feminine forces, believes that Birkin's open desire for a unification between them has led him into a passive role. The narrator illustrates this when he reveals that for Gerald, "marriage was not the committing of himself into a relationship with Gudrun. It was a committing of himself in acceptance of the established world, he would accept the established order, in which he did not livingly believe, and then he would retreat to the underworld of his life. This he would do" (Lawrence 308), by which Lawrence shows that the actual surrender is Gerald's to societal expectations. In this paragraph, the narrator resolves through Gerald's submission to the determined routes of society he had already consigned himself to spiritual death. In this way, *Women in Love* exemplifies how traditional aspects of the *Bildungsroman* that align the individual's personal development logically and methodically to the expected forms of social development—such as a young person getting an education, embarking on a journey of independence and having their viewpoints challenged and modeled to fit within their community—reflect a death rather than a growing up for the individual; the narrative forms themselves are dead, and need to be reshaped. The tired societal structures that cause all these spiritual dead and abstract figures and modes of being, such as detachment from emotionality, require a renewal of literary forms too, in which individual quests for development and self-awareness are shown to be inextricable from that of others—which lends to the idea of expansion of the *Bildungsroman* genre in terms of focusing on the *Bildung* of a community.

*Women in Love's* predecessor *The Rainbow* was about both the familial development that created the right conditions for Ursula to grow up as a holistic individual, as well as about the development of England as a nation through the process of its generations' progress. At the end of *The Rainbow*, we see Ursula becoming almost a god-like figure, compared to the collective mystical components of a rainbow:

And the rainbow stood on the earth. She knew that the sordid people who crept hard-scaled and separate on the face of the world's corruption were living still, that the rainbow was arched in their blood and would quiver to life in their spirit, that they would cast off their horny covering of disintegration, that new, clean, naked bodies would issue to a new germination, to a new growth, rising to light and the wind and the clean rain of heaven. She saw in the rainbow the earth's new architecture, the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built up in a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the over-arching heaven. (*The Rainbow* 418)

In Lawrence's fiction this arrival at self-actualization is very rare, as Mark Spilka argues in "Star-Equilibrium in *Women in Love*" (1955). So the real development for Ursula in *Women in Love* is to understand, via Birkin's influence, that though she has ascended to a more mature status at the end of *The Rainbow*, she must find another whole person in order to achieve the delicate balance that Birkin speaks of; this is a development of the form of the *Bildungsroman*, and a questioning of the relevance of the traditional form of modern society, as the individual is shown to be growing in relation of symmetry and asymmetry to others, even as they (and Lawrence) may seek to assert a "pure individuality" like Ursula at the end of *The Rainbow*.

However, this idea of polarization is disrupted by Lawrence's asymmetry and the fact that at the end of *Women in Love*, though Birkin and Ursula have married and should be polarized, Birkin remains unsatisfied and longs for the lost potential union with Gerald. In this way the novel works as a having an undermined double marriage plot. Gudrun blames asymmetry for Gerald's death as well, and refers to a different language that Gerald had used to communicate his emotions of hate in his final moments: "'There weren't even any words,' she said. 'He knocked Loerke down and stunned him, he half strangled me, then he went away' [...] 'A pretty little sample of the eternal triangle' [...] an inevitable contingency perhaps, but a contingency none the less. But let them have it as an example of the eternal triangle, the trinity of hate" (417). By referencing the holy trinity, and reimagining it manifested in humanity as trinity of hate, Gudrun implies that the moralism governing the western world leads to self-sacrifice, destruction and death.

Edward Engelberg discusses *Women in Love* in his essay "Escape from the Circles of Experience: D.H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* as a Modern *Bildungsroman*" (1963), where he writes:

That Ursula's journey through the widening circles of experience, and her ultimate flight beyond those circles into the arches of heaven, may be limited acts after all is a question Lawrence does not raise until *Women in Love*. There, in retrospect, Ursula sees at one point the possibility that even the exhaustion of experience may bring one only to the threshold of death. Socrates was right: the unexamined life was not worth living; but the modern novelist had to ask whether the examined life was worth living: "She had travelled all her life along the line of fulfillment, and it was nearly concluded. She knew all she had to know, she had experienced all she had to experience, she was fulfilled in a kind of bitter ripeness, there remained only to fall from the tree into death." (Engelberg 111)

At the end of my last chapter, I discussed how Rachel's death in *The Voyage Out* disrupted the marriage plot and exhibited how death was the only alternative space for Rachel to occupy outside of being further exploited by patriarchal control over her existence. I also described how Woolf aimed to create a new language for women, but through various textual examples illustrated that, with only the limited educational tools provided to them, developed out of patriarchal structures, a female language produced merely unutterable, fragmented and frustrated expressions. The language that Lawrence seeks to create is the language of emotionality linked directly to bodily responses, primal instincts and the organic, material environment. However, Lawrence similarly illustrates how, with the development of modernity and the culmination of the Great War, the organic impulses are frozen.

The death at the end of *Women in Love* represents the west's death as an inevitable outcome of systems of patriarchal power, as well as the mechanizations of capitalistic growth. Gerald is representative of the journey England is taking, as far as Lawrence sees it, towards a global capitalism seeking to dominate and destroy.

When he feels rejected, Gerald attempts to destroy Gudrun, which is a consequence of the effects on Gerald of his modernization of his father's management of the mines. As Gerald's ideology and background is revealed, he emerges as akin to Will in *Middlemarch*, who is described as an atypical young man embarking on his own Grand Touristic journey and *Bildungsroman*. For instance, Will reveals to Dorothea that he is against becoming an artist after traveling with German artists from Frankfurt and realizing that he "should not like to get into their way of looking at the world entirely from the studio point of view" (Eliot 370). This implies that Will's travels have broadened his mind with the restless, almost insatiable need to gain new

perspectives and to live against the grain of cultural norms. Another example of this attitude is presented as Will informs Casaubon and Dorothea that the Germans are ahead of the English in terms of their “historical inquiries, and they laugh at results which are got by groping about in woods with a pocket compass while they have made good roads” (372). Similarly, Gerald also aims to rebel against English cultural expectations: “[Gerald] refused to go to Oxford, choosing a German university. He had spent a certain time at Bonn, at Berlin, and at Frankfurt. There, a curiosity had been aroused in his mind. He wanted to see and to know, in a curious objective fashion, as if it were an amusement to him. Then he must try war. Then he must travel into the savage regions that had so attracted him” (Lawrence 192). Lawrence brushes over these biographical and personality-shaping details that in a traditional *Bildungsroman* would have accounted for most of the plot of the novel, and redirects the reader instead to his aggressive emotional responses and how these responses in turn affect the other protagonists in the story, to the point that the symmetry and double marriage plot is undermined. However, the narrator states that, although Gerald was “curious” about “all kinds of sociological ideas, and ideas of reform” (Lawrence 192), they were superficial, and only “skin-deep, they were never more than a mental amusement. Their interest lay chiefly in the reaction against the positive order, the destructive reaction” (192).

The first passion the reader is informed that Gerald has is when he takes an interest in taking over his father’s business. As Gerald sees “his own name written on the wall. Now he had a vision of power” (192). In this way, Gerald has developed as fully mechanized: “The sufferings and feelings of individuals did not matter in the least. They were mere conditions, like the weather. What mattered was the pure instrumentality of the individual” (193).

### **Social, Sexual and Personal Relations in *Women in Love***

Voyeurism plays a significant role in *Women in Love*. Throughout the text Lawrence’s characters observe the decline of western civilization and the emerging badness of modernity. Voyeurism becomes the tool the characters use in order to navigate between the two modes of being that Lawrence describes as blood and mind consciousness. It is also relevant to Birkin’s



notion of “star-equilibrium”, in which, in order to achieve polarization with another, each partner subjects the other to a battle of will based on intense and microscopic scrutiny. For instance, Birkin observes a man-servant as a symbol of how the elite reinforce hierarchal structures by becoming associated and defensive of the family they serve; the narrator describes how Birkin “felt a slight sickness, looking at [the man-servant] and feeling the slight greyness as an ash or a corruption, in the aristocratic inscrutability of expression a nauseating bestial stupidity” (Lawrence 139). Although the concept of “voyeurism” normally implies getting pleasure (generally a sexual pleasure) from observing others, in Lawrence the act of observing the decline of a civilization, or any extreme feeling associated with watching others relates to a Freudian death drive, as Lawrence found it perverse that western society could be aware of its own decline and not strive to preserve it.

As Paul Poplawski recorded in his 1993 work *Promptings of Desire*, Kingsley Widmer<sup>17</sup> associated Lawrence’s death and sexual love with “Lawrence’s iconoclastic ‘demonism.’” Lawrence, he added, “works in a tradition of demonism that uses society’s taboos and anathemas—‘corruption,’ ‘death,’ ‘disintegration’—as a means of negating and undermining the social order and its morality” (Poplawski 124). In *Women in Love*, blood consciousness is the “pure” (Lawrence 74) source of human passion and holds what Dan Jacobson (1967) describes as “primacy over the mental consciousness, which should properly do more than transmute the ‘creative flux’ of life into what Lawrence called the ‘shorthand’ of ideas, abstractions, principles, ideals” (Jacobson 84). When asked by Hermione how one can have knowledge that is not in the head, Birkin responds that knowledge is actually within the blood: “[When] the mind and the known world is drowned in darkness everything must go—there must be deluge. Then you find yourself a palpable body of darkness, a demon—”. To Hermione’s further question, “But why should I be a demon?”, Birkin shouts a quote from Coleridge: “WOMAN WAILING FOR HER

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<sup>17</sup> See Widmer, Kingsley (as quoted in Poplawski) “The Primitivistic Aesthetic: D. H. Lawrence.” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 17, no. 3, 1959, p. 344.

DEMON LOVER [...] why, I don't know." At this, "Hermione roused herself as from a death—annihilation" (Lawrence 56).

This dialogue conveys one of the central conflicts in the text: the choice between untethered emotionality, which Lawrence sees as the only viable route for life, or else assimilation into the systems of power that be, whether capitalistic or patriarchal, which Lawrence attributes to spiritual death. The difference between blood and mind consciousness is symbolized in the text through ethnicity, clothing and physical appearance so that the characters, and the audience, are able to decipher these two modes of being through scrutiny and visualization. An example occurs when Birkin notices the difference between Gerald's immaculate style and his own unstudied sense of dress. "Birkin [was] thinking how scrupulous Gerald was in his attire, how expensive too. He wore silk socks and studs of fine workmanship, and silk underclothing, and silk braces. Curious! This was another of the differences between them. Birkin was careless and unimaginative about his own appearance" (403). Clothes and outward appearances are another fetter of society that relate to mind consciousness, and the inauthentic. Blood and mind consciousness are demonstrated through ethnicity by Lawrence's polarized ideas of culture being divided into two distinctive modes, "hot" and "northern countries" (64); Lawrence associates stereotypical and racist ideas to these modes of cultural expression. Hot countries are described as being embodied with people who are "mindless, utterly sensual" (79), implying a primitive freedom of blood-consciousness somehow geographically bestowed by the "hotness" of the location, "controlled by the burning death-abstraction of the Sahara", where you can "feel things instead of merely looking at them" (65), while the northern countries are trapped in a frozen mind-consciousness that is "ice-destructive knowledge, snow-abstract annihilation" (254).

Birkin describes the dilemma of the individual faced with either living in accord with the "natural" and "pure" passions of the body or else falling into the danger of intellectualizing these "instincts" and remaining fixed in a mind conscious state, which Birkin, and through him Lawrence, views as one the most devastating effects of modern culture.

The characters attempt to redirect their viewpoints and reactions to sensuality by intellectualizing it, which results in an impotency affiliated with modern culture; Birkin, who is

aware of the danger of over-intellectualizing emotions, aims to reconnect with his “animal instincts”. Birkin criticizes Hermione’s observation of blood consciousness for being articulated from a purely intellectual point of view, which he claims is the worst of all intellectualism: “Even your animalism, you want it in your head. You don’t want to be an animal, you want to observe your own animal functions, to get a mental thrill out of them” (Lawrence 54).

Stewart argues that the voyeurism in *Women in Love* works inwardly, being “directed at one’s own acts” (Stewart 447); this self-obsession is further associated with the “narcissism, and solipsism [symptomatic] of the fall in modern culture” (447). David Lodge notices this inward voyeuristic tendency in Lawrence’s short story “England, my England” which Lawrence wrote, crucially, in between completing *The Rainbow* and beginning *Women in Love*. At the story’s conclusion, the main protagonist, Egbert, dies with a death wish brought on by his observation of society around him: “In Egbert’s last agony his own longing for oblivion is developed into an apocalyptic vision of civilization itself desperately seeking its own dissolution” (Lodge 216). This can be interpreted through self-destructive acts that Egbert unconsciously does throughout the story, such as when he leaves a sickle lying in the tall grass. The sickle wounds and permanently scars his daughter when she falls and deeply cuts her leg. In this example, the desire to live and protect one’s family is paralleled with Egbert’s unconscious desire to destroy his family in order to reinstate a primitive existence, free from farming equipment like the sickle, which in “England, my England” is symbolic of a tool that would cut back the natural state of the primitive. Therefore, the sickle in the story is symptomatic of the family’s waxing unhappiness. And as Lawrence wrote in *The Crown*, “The act of death may itself be a consummation and life may be a state of negation” (Lodge 216). Lawrence mirrors the idea of a polarized society with the individual, implying that there is a delicate balance in how individuals and aspects of society relate to each other that is equated to the fine balance between life and death. If society and individual are bound in the same manner as Lawrence’s metaphor of “star-equilibrium”, but one or the other is seeking annihilation, then the entire structure under Lawrence’s vision fails.

This same social criticism can be observed in Lawrence’s later text *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), which focuses on dispelling Judeo-Christian culture and its resulting effects on Western

modernity. The novel is set in Mexico and the evocative opening scene depicts a bullfight as the two American and Irish characters observe. The bulls are described as having been brought over from Spain, which in this text further underpins the vulgarization of “primal” cultures by Westernization, as Spanish traditions are inflicted upon Mexican culture, which Lawrence analogizes as “four Spanish horsemen of the Apocalypse” (*The Plumed Serpent* 11). Observing the bullfight, the female Irish heroine of the novel, Kate Leslie, feels “the shock of amazement [which] almost made her lose consciousness” (11). “Now, Miss Leslie you are seeing Life!”, she is told. Lawrence describes how the younger American, Villiers, watched “intense and abstract, getting the sensation. He would not even feel sick. He was just getting the thrill of it, without emotion, coldly and scientifically, but very intent” (12). In this description he is almost identical to Birkin’s descriptions of Hermione coldly observing her own emotions, with an abstract and intellectual interest, which Lawrence attaches fully to the badness of modernity. As Hermione observes the others the narrator describes her viewpoint as being entirely removed from the sensual and with a detachment of body that Lawrence associates with the bad superiority related to intellectualism and elitism plaguing society: “Again Hermione looked down at Ursula with that long scrutiny, as if she were following some train of thought of her own, and barely attending to the other’s speech” (Lawrence 50).

The early descriptions of Hermione Roddice place her firmly in the highbrow culture of modernity that Lawrence strained against in an effort to return human passion and creativity to its primal “blood consciousness”. Hermione is described as purely automated and in tune with all the machinations of encroaching industrialism on the English countryside and primal relations:

[A]ll that was highest, whether in society or in thought or in public action, or even in art, she was at one, she moved among the foremost, at home with them. No one could put her down, no one could make mock of her, because she stood among the first, and those that were against her were below her, either in rank, or in wealth, or in high association of thought and progress and understanding. So, she was invulnerable, unassailable, beyond reach of the world’s judgment. (Lawrence 17)

However, despite Hermione’s high social position, the narrator conversely describes how, as she walks beyond judgment, she feels herself vulnerable and “exposed to wounds and to mockery” (17) and this was her “secret chink” (17). The real Hermione is thus exposed through the presence of this “chink” in the otherwise machine-like façade that she normally presents. It is not

just Hermione that is guilty of being trapped in an inescapable mind consciousness but also Gerald and at times even Gudrun.

Ian Mackillop, in his chapter "*Women in Love, Class War and School Inspectors*" (1987), discusses the theme of class war and divisions in the novel, specifically in relation to the world of education and the transformations that were occurring politically at the time that Lawrence was writing his novel. Mackillop attributes the relevance of delving into class relations in terms of British education to the fact that Lawrence was himself a teacher at Davidson Road Boys' school in Croydon between 1908-1911, and thus undoubtedly aware of the issues that were facing the institution. Birkin in *Women in Love* is also a school inspector, while his lover Hermione lives with her brother Alexander, a liberal MP. And Mackillop illustrates how the professions of the characters deliberately reference politics that were occurring in the real world. For instance, Mackillop discusses a scandal that erupted in 1911, "concerning the role and opinions of school-inspectors" (Mackillop 47) in which liberal MP C.P. Trevelyan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, "had to defend his department against the charge of 'stirring up a state of class war'" (48). Alexander Roddice debates the scandal at Beldover: "There had been a split in the Cabinet; the minister of Education had resigned owing to adverse criticism. This started a conversation on education" (Lawrence 71). Hermione is assured that "there can be no reason, no excuse for education, except the joy and beauty of knowledge in itself", which causes Gerald to ask whether education was not like gymnastics: "isn't the end of education the production of a well-trained, vigorous, energetic mind?" (71). Whereas Gerald's opinion highlights his view of the body and mind as an economic unit in the mechanization of society, Hermione insists that only knowledge has given her real pleasure in life; however, she is unable to specify what about acquiring knowledge specifically has given her pleasure. This episode infuriates Birkin because he attributes it to falsity in Hermione's character and considers her attitude as due to the social climate that has privileged mind over body.

This conversation parallels the real-life political situation that Lawrence was experiencing, and also highlights how in the early twentieth century changes were exponentially reshaping the

social setting in unprecedented ways. Carol Dix notes in *D.H. Lawrence and Women* (1980) that it was during this early part of the century that

[W]omen's education had expanded faster than anything else in the society around them, so women knew what was available to them but were frustrated in their attempts to take advantage—either in the professions or in a way of life that would be financially independent of marriage. They were politically impotent, and in many ways still emotionally impotent. (Dix 2)

Lawrence, though often described as a misogynist, was none-the-less interested in showcasing the injustice of women's exclusion in society. One of the methods he used for rewriting conceptions of the feminine was to represent emotions that were traditionally not exhibited by women in literature. For instance, Hermione and Ursula engage in a battle of wills when Hermione appears at the schoolhouse where Ursula teaches. Ursula announces that she hates subtleties: "I hate subtleties, [...] I always think they are a sign of weakness," said Ursula, up in arms, as if her prestige were threatened. Hermione took no notice. Suddenly her face puckered, her brow was knit with thought, she seemed twisted in troublesome effort for utterance" (Lawrence 31). Though the emotions represented here are atypical of English heroines it is the effort to "utter" that reminds me of *The Voyage Out*, where women struggling to make utterance was a persistent theme—as Ursula claims to hate subtleties as weakness, this attributes a forthright meaning to the need for dominant language over Hermione's subtle communication.

In the chapter "Shortlands", the Brangwen sisters go to watch the wedding of Laura Crich at the Crich family home of Shortlands, in Beldover, and as the sisters walk through the town to get to the hilltop overlooking the wedding, Gudrun finds herself feeling out of place: "new from her life in Chelsea and Sussex" (9) she "shrank cruelly from this amorphous ugliness of a small colliery town in the midlands. Yet forward she went, through the whole sordid gamut of pettiness, the long amorphous, gritty street. She was exposed to every stare, she passed on through a stretch of torment" (9). Before Gudrun goes to observe the wedding ceremony, which she similarly does not feel comfortable actively participating in, she feels herself vulnerable to the judgments of the lower-class colliery townspeople from whom she has had a complete disconnect. In this sense she is on par with Hermione.

Gudrun observes the process of death while she is employed as an art teacher for Gerald's younger sister Winifred, while the Crich family take for granted Gudrun as their social inferior. Winifred waits in the schoolroom "looking down the drive for Gudrun's arrival" (242). When Winifred sees her coming she feels "anxiety and gravity" (242) and goes to warn her father and Gerald. The narrator notes that as Gudrun enters the house Gerald considers she looks "like a flower just open in the rain, the heart of the blossom just newly visible" (243). The symbolic relevance of Gudrun as an opening flower is further signified as Winifred gives Gudrun flowers and Gerald feels it is "more than he could bear, as her hot, exposed eyes rested on him. There was something so revealed, she was revealed beyond bearing, to his eyes" (243).

This fresh opened flower juxtaposes starkly with the "process of death" (246) slowly claiming Thomas Crich. "Day by day the tissue of the sick man was further and further reduced, nearer and nearer the process came, towards the last knot which held the human being in unity" (246). Until finally Gerald suggests that it is "best to dance while Rome burns, since it must burn, don't you think?" (249). Here we see what the narrator calls the "licentiousness" that Gerald and Gudrun both feel lurking behind the death event, they both have a suppressed desire to break into "frenzy" and an "orgiastic and satisfying event" (250), but instead they deny themselves and continue to participate in accordance with the rules of *their* society and not give in to the remembered "abandonments of Roman license" (250). David Lodge discusses how Lawrence's interwar writing shows him "obsessed with these two, linked ideas: the definition of a healthy relationship between the sexes and the apocalyptic-utopian idea of a brave new world being born out of the painful dissolution of the old" (214). However, Gudrun and Gerald deny themselves a rebirth and instead attempt to content themselves, remaining complacent in the destruction of their present.

What Gerald and Birkin have in common is a desire to dominate others around them as well as to master their own consciousness. In an infamous scene from the chapter "Coal-Dust", Gerald forces a mare to submit to his will, which is actually a metaphor for his desire to force Gudrun to submit to his will. Lodge discusses how the passage conforms "at its deepest level of meaning, to Jakobson's metaphoric category, in that it turns on Gudrun's perception of similarity

between herself and the mare, and an emotional substitution of herself of the mare. Yet this substitution is never made explicit: it emerges out of an intense dwelling on a literal event" (Lodge 200). Lodge also spends much energy focusing closely on the repetition of particular words in this passage such as "soft", which he argues plays a significant role, "for it is a metonymic attribute of the context at the beginning of the passage and a metaphorical vehicle for the sexual mysticism at its conclusion" (200). In the passage itself, the Brangwen sisters, here pointedly described as "girls" to evoke an earlier and younger age, are descending down a scenic hillside, which represents the old and idyllic England, which is described with "picturesque cottages" (Lawrence 93), until they arrive at a railway crossing, which is the literal manifestation of the industrialized countryside by train tracks that have divided up and distorted nature. Hearing and sight are evoked in the passage to experience this brutal assault of progress on the countryside. The women hear the "colliery train [...] rumbling nearer" (93) and on cue a "one-legged man in the little signal-hut by the road stared out from his security, like a crab from a snail-shell" (93). Lawrence aligns signal-hut with snail-shell to suggest that the former has replaced the latter in a vulgarization of nature, brought on by the effects of war that would have left the man "one-legged". Here, he comes out of his signal-hut as a warning to the people not to go forward with technological or industrial progress.

This is the moment that Gerald approaches, sitting "softly" (93) and enjoying the "delicate quivering of the creature between his knees"; once again, like the one-legged man replaced the crab, Gudrun has contextually replaced the mare. Gerald is also described as being "very picturesque, at least in Gudrun's eyes, sitting soft" (93). By the terminology choice of "picturesque", Gudrun mistakenly aligns Gerald with the old English beauty of the cottages on the hillside, she considers him "sitting soft" because she does not perceive him to be a threat to her. As Gerald "saluted the two girls", this salutation is a signal to the readers, akin to the signal the one-legged man attempted to give that the train is a harbinger of destruction to the countryside. Gerald's salute is meant to remind the reader of war and command. The mare (again a substitute for Gudrun) does not like the train, which is at first "hidden" and therefore subconscious. "She began to wince away, as if hurt by the noise [...] The repeated sharp blows of unknown, terrifying



noise struck through her till she was rocking with terror. She recoiled like a spring let go. But a glistening, half-smiling look came into Gerald's face. He brought her back again, inevitably" (93). This scene suggests a sexual violence, but simultaneously a ghastly mechanization that Lawrence has made sure to carefully balance in his description. The "rocking", "like a spring let go" and "brought her back again" all suggest a mechanical repetition. And further sexual violence is suggested as Gerald is described to be "heavy on the mare, and forced her back. It seemed as if he sank into her magnetically, and could thrust her back against herself" (93).

That this sexual violence is happening specifically to Gudrun is made explicit by the description of her "looking at him with black-dilated, spellbound eyes" (94) and "It made Gudrun faint with poignant dizziness, which seemed to penetrate to her heart" (94). All the while this is happening, the trucks of the train, which represent the simultaneous assault of capitalistic and militaristic advance, are described to be thumping "slowly, heavily, horrifying, one after the other, one pursuing the other, over the rails of the crossing" (94). They are mystically described as "eternal" and "like a disgusting dream that has no end" (94); by this Lawrence suggests a cynical and blackened futuristic outlook made manifest by the coal dust that covers the countryside. In this passage Gerald is a manifestation of the coal dust and his violent nature is what is subjecting animals and women, both categories that Lawrence positions together as "natural" to a darker and terribly enduring reality. Eventually the mare gives up and becomes mechanized herself, "her terror fulfilled in her, for now the man encompassed her; her paws were blind and pathetic as she beat the air, the man closed round her, and brought her down, almost as if she were part of his own physique" (94). Lawrence suggests that Gerald has forced Gudrun to merge with him instead of seeing her as an equal and has thus doomed them both.

At any instance when the characters are found to be outside their consciousness, they are normally described as being in pain. Lawrence associates pain as organically arising out of authentic human interactions. In chapter four, "Diver", Gudrun observes Gerald swimming alone into the center of the pond she feels pain at her envy of him and his isolation and freeness. In chapter eight "Breadalby", Ursula watches the ritual-like breakfast at Hermione's house and is struck in hurt "and the pain [was] just outside her consciousness" because the objective coldness

of Hermione's social game overwhelms her, while Gerald looks on with amusement and pleasure and Gudrun with hostility and fascination, which signifies the pleasure that they derive from social performance and analytical observation. Indeed, the same "long scrutinizing" look that Hermione gives to Ursula in her schoolroom, Gudrun gives to Gerald after he emerges from swimming in the water: "She looked at [Gerald] with a long, slow inscrutable look" (143), which suggests they view reality through the same lens of mind-consciousness.

Perhaps the most obvious example of pain in authentic contact is found in the aptly named chapter "Death and Love", where Gudrun and Gerald have sex for the first time. No doubt partially out of necessity to avoid being censored, Lawrence codes and metamorphoses the experience; even so, the word choices are of terms of violence, subjugation, death and destruction, which force the reader to make the association between sex and death. The language—combined with the detail that Gerald arrives in Gudrun's bedroom in an incoherent stupor, caked in mud from a graveyard and shrouded in darkness—provides the symbolism of a man risen from death:

Into her he poured all his pent-up darkness and corrosive death, and he was whole again...And she, subject, received him as a vessel filled with his bitter potion of death. She had no power at this crisis to resist. The terrible frictional violence of death filled her, and she received it in an ecstasy of subjection, in throes of acute, violent sensation. (344)

In this example, Gerald is described having a transformative and renewed sense of self, but at the expense of Gudrun's life force and independent will. As Poplawski describes the scene in *Promptings of Desire* (1993), "the price of the rebirth is the symbolic death of Gudrun" (122). This scene foreshadows the later reversal of fates, as Gerald fails to kill and subordinate Gudrun a second time. When he attempts to strangle her to death in the Alps, he ultimately is replaced and rejected. In this instance, Gudrun chooses the German sculptor Loerke, who wants to turn industries into places of art, "our factory-area our Parthenon", which echoes the sentiments of the Italian futurist Marinetti. This desire to contribute to a renewal of space is contrasted to Gerald's position as a representative of the stagnant and ugly past. After losing his will to Gudrun, Gerald succumbs to a frozen death.

## Modernity's Travel Towards Death and Destruction

*Women in Love* is not a book about peaceful relationships with the other or society, but about how the delicate balance or “tremulation” is prone to destruction, war and death. Cowan notes that “In Lawrence’s view, both modern science and modern religion represent a decline from the wholeness of the ancients. [...] and humankind] has lost the faculty of physiologically based intuition as a mode of knowing the material world” (Cowan 22). The characters manifest a collective distrust of society around them, as well as with each other; despite their overt openness and extreme emotionality, they persist in questioning and reacting violently against one another in what can be said to be recognized as Lawrence’s response to the mayhem of World War I.

It was partly the aftermath of World War I that destroyed Lawrence’s belief in civilization, and *Women in Love* can be seen as Lawrence’s most direct musing on the effects of such a devastatingly destructive war on the individual and individual relationships. The intensity of the characters’ feelings of hate and love, possession and even apathy for each other is meant to mirror the “destructive—consummating” of the war, as Lawrence wrote in a letter explaining the difference of *Women in Love* to its prequel *The Rainbow*. “There is another novel, sequel to *The Rainbow*, called *Women in Love* [...] I don’t think anybody will publish this, either. This actually does contain the results in one’s soul of the war: it is purely destructive, not like *The Rainbow*, destructive--consummating” (Markert 553).

There are numerous scenes from the text that illustrate the total destructive nature of humanity towards itself. For instance, the chapter “Breadalby” portrays the climactic end of Hermione and Birkin’s relationship, as she smashes Birkin over the head with a glass paperweight with the desire to kill him. Hermione is described as being “unutterably” consumed with “one convulsion of pure bliss for her, lit up by the crushed pain of her fingers” (Lawrence 89). The pain is isolated in the far-reaching extensions of her body (her fingers), by which we are meant to understand that Hermione is so removed and deadened to authentic human feeling that even this pure moment of loathing and hatred only offers her the tiniest tinge of real feeling in the tips of her fingers. The power of touch represented to Lawrence the only true or “pure” means of “overcoming ego isolation” (Janik, *The Curve of Return* 80). As Cowan describes it, within

Lawrence's canon, "Touch has the power to activate unconscious, instinctual motives—not mentally derived ideas—into consciousness, thus making self-confrontation and relationship with a significant other possible" (Cowan 155). By specifically referencing the crushed pain located in Hermione's fingertips the reader can associate that Hermione is so far removed from her true emotions that even a complete rendering to a physical attack on Birkin motivated by feelings of hatred only register a limited knowledge of her physical reaction.

Hermione's attempt to kill Birkin associates her with Gerald's similar attempt to kill Gudrun at the novel's conclusion. Alan Friedman notes that "Lawrence's revisions also underscore Gerald's 'Nordic' appearance foreboding 'the universal dissolution into whiteness and snow,' so that Gerald, de-eroticized and increasingly mechanized, seems to be freezing from within. His only passion toward the end results from thoughts of killing Gudrun" (Friedman 212). Thus, Lawrence illustrates the coldness of individuals who are only in touch with their mind consciousness and out of touch with emoting through their bodies. In the Nietzschean sense, this dualism is represented as a conflict between the Apollonian, represented as "an analytical, discriminatory process of the conscious mind, developing in a linear, casual sequence toward a reachable, objective truth" (Cowan 26) and the Dionysian, represented as "a synthesizing, imaginative process of the creative unconscious, developing in a cyclic movement toward a truth not to be defined discursively but to be encompassed in concrete imagery and presentational symbols" (26). Cowan argues that within our modern society it is difficult to balance these oppositional views as society leans towards the Apollonian, and Lawrence, with regards to his desire to return to the "primal", was advocating for "a return to the Dionysian mystery and creative dissolution as means towards regeneration" (26). As I argued in the previous chapter, *The Voyage Out* displays an outlook of humanity approaching the Great War. *Women in Love*, written after the First World War and showing its consequences, consistently represents how love and rebirth cannot exist in a world consumed by mechanization, war and detachment from the body. And as we shall see in my chapter dealing with *Black Lamb*, that text focuses on collecting information from the First World War in order to prevent future wars.

In “The Water Party” another instance of the destructive nature of human relations is visible at the Crich annual family party by the lake. The party initially goes well, especially between the four key protagonists as their romantic interest in each other develops. The event however is blackened when Gerald’s younger sister, Diana Crich, falls into the lake and disappears beneath the surface. Her young husband dives in to save her but also disappears into the water. Gerald attempts to rescue them but eventually gives up, telling Rupert “Once anything goes wrong, it can never be put right again” (158). This is in reference to the theme of death in his family, as Gerald was responsible for shooting and killing his younger brother as a child, and thereafter being fixed with the moniker “Cain”. In “Shortlands” Birkin makes this connection, when Gerald’s mother hopes that Birkin will be Gerald’s friend and look after him: “Am I my brother’s keeper” (19), he asks himself before recognizing this as Cain’s cry to God in Genesis and then considering that if anyone could be identified with Cain, this would be Gerald for accidentally, fatally shooting his younger brother as a child. Birkin wonders if it is right to “seek to draw a brand and a curse across the life that had caused the accident” (20) before ultimately deciding that he did not believe in “any such thing as accident. It all hung together, in the deepest sense” (20).

As Ursula and Birkin discuss the deaths in the lake, Birkin claims that it is better that Diana is dead than alive: “she’ll be much more real. She’ll be positive in death. In life she was a fretting, negated thing” (160). This statement, paired with the reality that Diana’s wedding had only just occurred at the beginning of the novel, continues the theme, identified earlier in *The Voyage Out*’s of death as a sincerer reality for women to inhabit than a ‘negated’ half-life in marriage. “Why should love be like sleep?” (160) Ursula queries, “So that it is like death”, Birkin answers. “I’d rather Diana Crich were dead” (160) Birkin insists, “Her living somehow, was all wrong. As for the young man, poor devil—he’ll find his way out quickly instead of slowly. Death is all right—nothing better” (160). When Ursula challenges this notion, Birkin persists, “I should like to be [dead]—I should like to be through with the death process” (160). Friedman aligns Lawrence’s trend towards destruction with the Freudian death drive, arguing that Lawrence struggled to envision a world free from the death wish: “As antagonists worthy of his animus, he denominated the death grip of class and family constrictions; the landscape laid waste by the

industrial revolution; Christianity's death-obsession; the horrific desolation of the Great War" (Friedman 207). The Freudian concept of the death drive arises out of the desire to restore to the world an earlier "inorganic" (Friedman 207) state of things, which Lawrence strove to adapt to a desire to revert to primitive nature, thereby casting knowledge and society as the enemy that prevented us from living purely in our bodies and blood. As Lawtoo states,

Lawrence agrees with Freud that man's 'origins' must be searched for in the darkness of the unconscious, rather than in the light of 'day's consciousness.' In this sense, Freud's attempt to reach the bottom of the 'cavern of darkness' indicates a return to the sphere of 'sensual immanence' that, in Plato's idealist philosophy, is but a phantom of reality. Yet insofar as Freud is said to venture into this cave with an 'ideal candle' and finds the origins of the unconscious in 'dreams,' Lawrence's figurative language suggests that Freud's project is compromised by the very idealist, 'enlightened' tradition he sets out to critique (Lawtoo 193-4).

In this sense, Lawtoo considers Lawrence to be an anti-Freudian, since Freudian ideas can be claimed as extension of western phallocentrism. "Lawrence, then, denounces the Freudian unconscious in terms similar to those in which he denounced Western entertainment, as a purely abstract theoretical projection or, as he also calls it, a 'shadow cast from the mind'.<sup>18</sup> Freud is thus aligned with the Platonic, idealist tradition his exploration of the unconscious sets out to undermine—via a Platonic myth." (194).

It's interesting, then, that Ursula, whom if we extend the metaphor of coming out of the Platonic cave to see the light of the rainbow at the end of *The Rainbow*, despite her newfound awareness reverts to the traditional marriage plot at the end of *Women in Love*. In complete contrast to Rachel's overwhelming lack of experience, Ursula believes she has reached the end of all experiences: "she had travelled all her life along the line of fulfillment, and it was nearly concluded. She knew all she had to know, she had experienced all she had to experience, she was fulfilled in a kind of bitter ripeness, there remained only to fall from the tree into death" (165). This feeling is supplanted by an overwhelming feeling of hatred towards Birkin after he criticizes expressions of public grief, which he feels to be inauthentic. Then, as if caused by Ursula's

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<sup>18</sup> Jung, Carl Gustav *Psychology and the Unconscious: A Study of the Transformations and Symbolisms of the Libido: a Contribution to the History of the Evolution of Thought*. New York: Moffat, Yard and Co. 1921

intensified animosity for Birkin's lack of sympathy which had "stunned her and annihilated her" (171), Birkin falls ill.

Ironically, this dynamic is reversed when Birkin mourns over Gerald's death. Lawrence reduces human reactions such as violence and grief to polarized masculine and feminine modes of being, as he emphasizes that all of humanity is held in the bi-polar power struggle to find balance between the two competing energies. Friedman argues that

Lawrence emphasizes that Rupert's response is stereotypically feminine, for it evokes a gender reversal in Ursula: when he breaks down weeping she 'recoiled aghast from him, as he sat with sunken head and body convulsively shaken, making a strange, horrible sound of tears. She looked almost with horror on Birkin'. The death of the once vital intimate other, now reduced to mere corporeality, causes a deep psychic disorientation in Rupert. (Friedman 213)

It is Lawrence's representation of the eternal power struggle to find an idealized 'star equilibrium' paired with a societal death wish that leads me to propose that *Women in Love* be read as a collective *Bildungsroman*, distinct from the female but individual *Bildungsroman* that *The Voyage Out* continues to be, yet also focused on how gender affects the possibility of self-development in a patriarchal society that subjugates the claims of the human to the imperatives of industrialism and capital. Copley (2009) quotes Max Weber, when he writes that "by the turn of the century, capitalism was so highly developed that it no longer required the foundation of ascetic Protestantism, but had attained a secular value-system of its own which he named 'economic rationalist'. The 'self-contained' Gerald has nothing but disdain for a 'master' who seeks acceptance from the 'servants'" (Copley 208).

In the text, Gerald personifies the worsened state of the world, as the cultural movement away from Judeo-Christian ethics and industrialism towards a global capitalism—this shift Lawrence categorizes as the unseemly and grotesque sickness of the western world. Ultimately, Gerald's death by suicide and his struggle to overcome the elements of nature represent the emergence of global capitalism as unnatural and the suicide-pact of the western world. This is further demonstrated by Gerald's dismissal of the *Blutbrüderschaft* which Birkin requested him to make. Birkin describes the *Blutbrüderschaft* as an oath taken by old German knights, so that they might "swear to be true to each other, of one blood, all their lives. [...] We will swear to stand by each other—to be true to each other—ultimately—infallibly—given to each other, organically—

without possibility of taking it back” (Lawrence 179). Gerald is uncomfortable with his “fascinated attraction” of Birkin and asks to leave the oath until he understands it better. However, Birkin’s desire for the pact of the *Blutbrüderschaft* is only a nostalgic and naïve desire for a regression from the mechanization of modernity to feudalism, in other words Birkin longs for the supposed harmonic integration of the medieval world, which idealized the notion of personal allegiance. This illustrates how Lawrence viewed the whole history of the west as corrupted hierarchal systems of control. Gerald highlights his belief in his own superiority in the same chapter when he refuses to admit that Gudrun could be his equal because of her social standing as a teacher, while Birkin’s nostalgia for a past feudal world of personal allegiances leads him to place emphasis on the superiority of homosocial brotherhood over social relationships shaped by economic relations: “Birkin wanted him to accept the fact of intrinsic difference between human beings, which he did not intend to accept. It was against his social honour, his principle. He rose to go” (181).

*Women in Love* is about the individual’s need to denounce society and the “mechanisms” that hold it together. The narrator of the text makes clear that only by returning to a pre-societal state can a man or woman become fully in touch with their blood-consciousness and thereby be a whole individual. The characters of Gerald, Gudrun and Hermione are depicted as totally or mostly comfortable conforming to the conventions of society—Gerald as a captain of industry, Gudrun as a socially climbing artist and Hermione as an aristocrat and master of the social sphere—and while all three, at times, proclaim to be interested in reworking society to form a better state, ultimately these characters remain complacent or participatory in societal systems of control.

All three are more concerned with their public personas than with achieving authenticity as true individuals. For instance, when Gudrun prepares to meet Hermione again outside of London she considers “It would be queer to meet again down here in the midlands, where their social standing was so diverse, after they had known each other on terms of equality in the house of sundry acquaintances in town. For Gudrun had been a social success” (Lawrence 16-7). Similarly, Gerald is also shown to be more at ease firmly secured in a position in society: “Gerald



was host. He stood in the homely entrance hall, friendly and easy, attending to the men. He seemed to take pleasure in his social functions, he smiled, and was abundant in hospitality" (27). Gerald's social façade is transparent to Birkin who notices Gerald "seemed always to be at bay against everybody, in spite of his queer, genial, social manner when roused" and Birkin describes his own physical reaction towards Gerald's social smile, which causes him to have "started violently" (70), indicating that the social machine and all its individual mechanisms are of a violent nature, and ultimately destructive to humanity.

Gerald's mother too is described as having "a little social smile [...] for a moment she looked the pleasant hostess" (33). In *Women in Love*, these social acts reveal the social performance as dangerous. Nevertheless, Birkin attempts (in vain, as it turns out) to appeal to Gerald and bring him into blood-consciousness so that they might be united in a relationship akin to Birkin and Ursula's. Gerald betrays his discomfort with relating people in terms of pure being and not in terms of social determinations when he tells Birkin, "if [Gudrun] is my equal, I wish she weren't a teacher, because I don't think teachers as a rule are my equal" (306). Gerald evaluates others based on their functionalism in society. Birkin challenges this statement by saying "But am I a teacher because I teach or a parson because I preach?" (306). To which Gerald becomes uneasy and reveals his hypocritical perspective:

He did not want to claim social superiority. Yet he would not claim intrinsic personal superiority, because he would never base his standard of values on pure being. So he wobbled upon a tacit assumption of social standing. No, Birkin wanted him to accept the fact of intrinsic difference between human beings, which he did not intend to accept. It was against his social honour, his principle. (306)

Lawrence later compares Gerald's need for achieving self-worth through his success and functionality in society to that of a general planning a campaign (328), and in this manner associates societal expectations to war. Indeed, Gerald has entirely abandoned the old Christian ethic of altruism and replaced it in his mind with "position and authority [...] they were the right thing, for the simple reason that they were functionally necessary. [...] It was like being part of a machine. He himself happened to be a controlling, central part, the masses of men were the parts variously controlled" (333).

Lawrence portrays western civilization, and especially the modern movement, as a progression towards decay; the period of the white man, Lawrence conjectures, is in decline.

According to Jacobson, the essence of why Lawrence detested modern society so fully was

because he believed it was driven by the impulse to assert the self-sufficiency of man, his independence from the natural order. The modern world, as he saw it, encouraged men to believe that they could find fulfillment as producers and consumers of material goods, as members of competing political parties or nation-states, as manipulators of yet more and more powerful machines, instead of as creatures whose ultimate allegiance should always be to non-human forces outside themselves and greater than themselves. (Jacobson 81)

Thus, Lawrence describes his characters as living half-lives or ghostly. This is especially pronounced when the characters are featured directly in relation to images that represent carnal-living. "Birkin, white and strangely ghostly, went over to the carved figure of the negro woman in labour" (Lawrence 107).

### **Why does Gerald die?**

Lawrence uses Ursula and especially Gudrun to represent the burgeoning cultural desire to escape from the confines of English borders, which offer them nothing as female citizens except the prospect of marriage and motherhood, both of which the Brangwen sisters strain against for the duration of the novel. "London, Paris, Rome—heaven knows [where Gudrun will go]. I always expect her to sheer off to Damascus or San Francisco. She's a bird of paradise. God knows what she's got to do with Beldover" (Lawrence 131), Birkin explains to Gerald. In this example, Birkin lists the route of the traditional Grand Tour before breaking off to include Syria and America, illustrating a departure from western Europe into greater unknowns. While the concept of "heaven" is evoked twice to indicate the predestined and inevitability of western stability, by making Gudrun a "bird of paradise" Birkin suggests the destiny of women involves an ultimate escape from patriarchal confines. While Gudrun herself imagines "going to St. Petersburg, where she had a friend who was a sculptor like herself [...]. The emotional, rather rootless life of the Russians appealed to her. She did not want to go to Paris. [...] She would like to go to Rome, Munich, Vienna, or to St. Petersburg or Moscow" (308-09). Gudrun is thus

represented as a sculptor who wishes to sculpt her own destiny and who prefers rootlessness, thereby aligning herself with the nomadic, and possibly with the figure of Cain who challenged god's will, as she does (if god is a metaphor for societal expectations). I associate Gudrun to Cain, since her character embodies Lawrence's vision of living "free and limitless" (Lawrence 129) and is opposed to the authority and purity of Christ. Lawrence stated that the masses lacked the strength to be "true" Christians in his Introduction to *The Grand Inquisitor*.<sup>19</sup> Soboleva and Wrenn attest that Lawrence argued that Christ's idealism "undermines the very notion of the so-called visionary leaders, who alone could give meaning to the life of the masses" (Soboleva and Wrenn 231), which suggests that while Gudrun recognized this struggle, she managed to transcend the Christ ideal in favor of a wandering (albeit sinful) Cain; on the other hand, Gerald, who more literally embodied Cain by killing his brother as a child, succumbed to the pressure of the hierarchy and sought self-destruction. I will explore Gerald's connection to Cain in greater detail, further along in the chapter. By selecting Russia as her preferred choice, and indicating an itinerary that leads east and away from the traditional route of the Grand Tour, Gudrun challenges the natural linear order that supports the west. But also, as Soboleva and Wrenn indicate, the Russia that had overthrown imperialism appealed greatly to Lawrence who wrote in a letter to Samuel Koteliansky on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1917: "Russia seems to me now the positive pole of the world's spiritual energy, and America the negative pole. But we shall see how things work out" (Soboleva and Wrenn 225). This also resonates with Gudrun's consideration of going to Damascus or San Francisco; Damascus has strong Christian resonance (in particular St Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus) and San Francisco can be seen to be associated with the American more modern outlook and its still developing capitalist economy (San Francisco in particular was the site of much promise and optimism at the time Lawrence was writing *Women in Love*).

I demonstrated in my chapter on *The Voyage Out* how Mr. Pepper provided a similar comparison of cultures, alluding to ancient Rome as a warning for the deterioration of the western world. In both texts, this deterioration is described as entirely necessary in order to cleanse the

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<sup>19</sup> From *The Brothers Karamazov*

Earth of the spiritually dead. In Woolf's text, patriarchy is the primary evil that needs eradication; however, Rachel's death concludes the novel on a disparaging note relating to Woolf's lack of belief in western society's ability to remodel itself. Woolf demonstrates how patriarchal control allows only for the progression of a single sex, at the expense of women. Woolf illustrates, with the example of Rachel, that the female half of society is en route to spiritual death through their marriages to men, dictated solely by convention and ultimately unfulfilling.

Lawrence envisions capitalism to be culling all but an extremely limited elite into a spiritual death where humanity is increasingly separated from their natural instincts and emotionally numbed. Lawrence outlines the progression from Judeo-Christian towards a "mechanical-material" reality, which is able to exist due to the philanthropic morality laws of the Bible towards more austere and unforgiving manmade laws based around materialism and entitlement. This is exemplified by Gerald's accidental killing of his younger brother. In a biblical evocation of Cain and Abel, Gerald murders his younger brother as they are playing with a gun; however, the higher power that Gerald is forced to answer to is his own curiosity, which has been satisfied albeit horrifically and violently; as Ursula explains the tragic event to Gudrun in chapter four "Diver", "[Gerald] and his brother were playing together with a gun. He told his brother to look down the gun, and it was loaded, and blew the top of his head off. Isn't it a horrible story?" (Lawrence 39). In this example, the gun is a symbol of modernity, and the countless deaths brought on through the mass-scale mechanization of world war. By this analogy I'm suggesting that modern violence, aided by technology, is no different from the violence that is the basis of the Bible story. In this respect violence could be said to be always present and inherent in humanity, (in other words, that individuals are both Cains and Abels—both violent and passive) which is why humanity is desperately in need of polarization and balance of its warring aspects.

Colin Milton argues in *Lawrence and Nietzsche: A Study of Influence* (1987) that "Gerald has a powerful unconscious will to destruction" (Milton 99), referencing Gerald's organization of his mines and desire to dominate Gudrun to the point of annihilation. Gerald is often referred to as a demon-figure and, in this allusion, Lawrence makes the point that Gerald's murder of his younger brother and sequential defeat of his father Thomas Crich, as he inherits his mines and

evolves the business, has seated him as a self-interested godlike figure. These demon-figures of mankind, Lawrence predicts, will lead western civilization into an ice-destruction with a will towards self-annihilation.

The Alps traveled to at the end of the novel represent the final stage of western society's defeat by arriving at the great but deadly and inhumane heights of the sublime, where Gerald as an instrument of capitalism, is obliterated and blurred out by the overwhelming hostility of the environment. His ambition to master others ultimately leads to his self-destruction. He walks higher towards his death:

Always higher, always higher. He knew he was following the track towards the summit of the slopes, where was the marienhütte, and the descent on the other side. But he was not really conscious. He only wanted to go on, to go on whilst he could, to move, to keep going, that was all, to keep going, until it was finished. He had lost all his sense of place. And yet in the remaining instinct of life, his feet sought the track where the skis had gone. (Lawrence 414-5)

In this metaphor for western civilization's journey towards self-destruction, Gerald is absorbed with his journey towards annihilation.

In the penultimate and relatively long chapter "Snowed Up", in the last moments of Gerald's conscious life, he sees something "standing out of the snow" and discovers a "half-buried Crucifix, a little Christ under a little sloping hood, at the top of the pole. He sheered away. Somebody was going to murder him. He had a great dread of being murdered. But it was dread which stood outside him, like his own ghost" (Lawrence 415). And as Gerald looks up at the "shadowy slopes of the upper world" he realizes that it was "Lord Jesus" who would be his murderer, and as he falls "something broke in his soul" (415). The mountain peaks as the "shadowy slopes of the upper world" invert the usually bright joyful depictions of heaven with shadow and "terror" as Gerald also describes the scene. Similarly, Jesus is recast from savior of the soul to destroyer of the soul, as Gerald is consumed by sleep. In this way, Lawrence makes clear that it is religion and particularly Christianity that is complicit in the self-destruction of western society.

After Birkin's return, Ursula is able to achieve her final awakening as she tells Birkin that whilst he was gone she "looked at England, and thought I'd done with" (366). And in this revelation, Ursula has seemingly overcome the final judgment and managed to free herself from

patriarchal and capitalistic control. However, without Birkin by her side as her polarized equal, Lawrence indicates that the road to salvation is narrow and lonely.

As Birkin travels up to the precipice of the Alpine mountains where Gerald dies, he associates Gerald's journey with a violent ascent towards heaven, where Gerald's harsh modern reality "spikes", "slashes" and "pricks" as it wrests with the traditional fabrics of religion and literary convention. In a traditional *Bildungsroman* the ascent into the mountains would have been symbolic of the moment of Gerald's ultimate development, but in Lawrence's novel the mountains instead are illustrative of violent obstacles to both individuals and society, as if nature is what offers death:

He went over the snow slopes, to see where the death had been. At last he came to the great shallow among the precipices and slopes, near the summit on the pass [...]. All was white, icy, pallid, save for the scoring of black rocks that jutted like roots sometimes, and sometimes were in naked faces. In the distance a slope sheered down a peak, with many black rock-slides. (Lawrence 418)

Gerald's death is a sign that the mechanization of society is doomed to fail against the majesty and constant, insurmountable, undeniable reality of nature, which is more powerful than any societal construction or machine. In a similar vein, Lawrence undermines the traditional *Bildungsroman* by allowing his character to fail instead of adapting or transcending. In this way, Gerald's end corresponds to Franco Moretti and Gregory Castle's conceptions of the *Bildungsroman*, as they argue that modernism is the period where the *Bildungsroman* stops or fails, and individual development fails or is frozen. Castle sees the form of the *Bildungsroman* as continuing to have validity but in transformed ways. Jed Esty's *Unseasonable Youth* (2011) analyzes the genre anew arguing, "Modernism exposes and disrupts the inherited conventions of the bildungsroman in order to criticize bourgeois values and to reinvent the biographical novel, but also to explore the contradictions inherent in mainstream developmental discourses of self, nation, and empire" (Esty 3). In this perspective, Gerald's death can be seen to be the ultimate result of these contradictions. Engelberg describes these same terms for Ursula's development in *The Rainbow*; however, Engelberg concludes that by the time Lawrence was writing *Women in Love*, his conviction for human development in the modern era had become more limited.

The aesthetic of distance, meaning both the appeal of spatial distance (geographical and metaphysical) and also the mysterious distance between individuals, which in *Women in Love* relates to the characters' quest for self-awareness in what I have called their collective *Bildungsroman*, resolves into the characters' desire to transcend into self-annihilation, which Gerald's character has been narrowly avoiding throughout the book as his experiences bring him within close proximity to the death of his relatives, instead of his own. First Gerald killed his brother during a childhood game, then he watched his newly married sister and brother-in-law drown in a lake and finally he observed his father succumb to old age; by the end of *Women in Love* he finally arrives at his own reckoning with death. In this final moment, Gerald comes to face a crucifix and realizes God is judging him—he can choose to transcend death and continue down the long slope in front of him towards salvation, and also along the route of the traditional Grand Tour, which would be symbolic of the continued survival of western civilization and its traditions, or he can surrender to death.

However, as Birkin looks into the distance, he considers Gerald's lost potential for transcendence and debunks it: "He might have gone on, down the steep steep fall of the south-side, down into the dark valley with its pines, on to the great Imperial road leading to Italy. He might! And what then? The imperial road! The south? Italy? What then? Was it a way out? It was only a way in again" (418-19). With this passage, Birkin discredits the old values and Grand Touristic idea of cultural acquisition. The passage suggests that had Gerald managed to overcome his false consciousness he would only be led into another social construct. Birkin also considers the mountain obstacle as an illusion based on non-human mysteries and the delusion of man to attempt to overcome nature through mechanization:

Birkin stood high in the painful air looking at the peaks, and the way south. Was it any good going south, to Italy? Down the old, old Imperial road? He turned away. Either the heart would break, or cease to care. Best cease to care. Whatever the mystery which has brought forth man and the universe, it is a non-human mystery, it has its own great ends, man is not the criterion. Best leave it all to the vast, creative, non-human mystery. Best strive with oneself only, not the universe. (419)

Birkin glimpses the Imperial road, and by repeating the terms "South" "Italy" and "Imperial Road" Birkin reminds us of the text's key binary opposition of North/South. In this final passage the

South is a reminder of the past and imperial civilization stretching as far back as Ancient Rome. This implication is given further weight as Birkin later compares Gerald to an Imperial Caesar. After witnessing the place where Gerald dies, Birkin “went home again to Gerald. He went into the room, and sat down on the bed. Dead, dead and cold! ‘Imperial Caesar dead, and turned to clay/Would stop a hole to keep the wind away” (419). Birkin intimates that belief in civilization and Imperialism is just as illusory as belief in God, both routes of belief result in a “steep steep fall” and a way “back in” (418). To construct that, to Lawrence, hinders authentic human development. It is better, Birkin suggests, going into death or “unfathomable night”, “darkness” and uncertainty: “In the distance, called England. And they turned their faces to the unfathomable night in front” (Lawrence 576).

However, what exactly distance is meant to represent is not entirely clear, as with many Lawrentian concepts the meaning is often obscured or purposefully left opaque. For instance, near the end of the novel, Gerald is described looking “into the distance, with the small-pupilled, abstract eyes of a hawk” (654). Perhaps this is the same distance that is responsible for the “infinite distances of silence” (549) that come between Gudrun and Gerald. But then in another altogether different “distance” Birkin and Ursula gaze away from the ugly “winter-grey masses of houses [that] looked like a vision of hell that is cold and angular” and into the distance of “an angry redness of sunset” where Birkin says they will “wander about on the face of the earth [...]” (538), thereby inheriting the fate of Adam and Eve, by wandering the face of the earth after being disinherited by God, or in this case by society. The quote continues: “and we’ll look at the world beyond just this bit” (538); Ursula says “I don’t want to inherit the earth”; Birkin responds, “Neither do I. I want to be disinherited” (538). In this scene the sunset is described as sinking but still bright as is Birkin’s vision of his future with Ursula and Gerald prior to Gerald’s death. After the death, however, Birkin’s relationship with Ursula is undermined and left feeling incomplete; “[Gerald] should have loved me”, he tells Ursula before he turns away: “He forgot her, and turned to look at Gerald” (420). Birkin now realizes that the future of the individual or of mankind does not matter in the greater mystery of the universe, which is a complete rejection of the significance assigned to individual:



The mystery of creation was fathomless, infallible, inexhaustible, forever. Races came and went, species passed away, but ever new species arose, more lovely, or equally lovely, always surpassing wonder. The fountain-head was incorruptible and unsearchable. It had no limits. (419)

The idea of having “no limits” is key to Lawrence’s aesthetic of distance. For instance, Gerald and Birkin always keep a physical distance between their bodies: “they wanted to be free each of the other. Yet there was a curious heart-straining towards each other” (Lawrence 137). As Engelberg writes, “Lawrence insisted that ‘True unity of being [...] is found emotionally, instinctively, by the rejection of all experience not of the right quality, and by the limitation of its quantity’ (Engleberg 103). We see this as Gudrun appears to reject her knowledge of the world in order to be closer in unity with Gerald, “When she opened her eyes again, and saw the patch of lights in the distance, and it seemed strange to her that the world still existed, that she was standing under the bridge resting her head on Gerald’s breast. Gerald—who was he? He was the exquisite adventure, the desirable unknown to her” (Lawrence 492); and her desire to know Gerald completely leads her to reach up for him, “like Eve reaching up to the apples on the tree of knowledge [...] Her soul thrilled with complete knowledge. This was the glistening apple, this face of a man” (492). However, this complete knowledge ultimately shocks her and causes a spiritual death: “And this knowledge was a death from which she must recover. How much more of him was there to know? [...] the finality of the end was dreaded as deeply as it was desired” (493-4). This initial sin, represented by the desire for knowledge and the reference to the myth of Adam and Eve, ultimately connects the idea of bodily knowledge of each other with death; Lawrence creates an asymmetry through the undermined double marriage plot to offset the patriarchal course that society would dictate would follow Gerald and Gudrun’s carnal knowledge of each other.

Gudrun appears to understand most actively that one’s direction in life does not matter in the face of the universe’s great mystery, when at the end of *Women in Love* as she contemplates with Loerke where she might travel next and challenges the need to end at any fixed destination. “One needn’t go where one’s ticket says” (Lawrence 401): by specifically referring to a destination already printed on a ticket, that would have presumably have been set in an ordered system and printed by a machine, Lawrence highlights how it is the duty of the individual to reject pre-established patterns. Loerke ponders that “one might break off, and avoid the destination. A point

located. That was the idea,” but Gudrun does not want to fix any point; she does not want to substitute a new point for an old one.

Gudrun wants to be unfixed by the patriarchal dimensions of progress. When Gudrun is pressed by Loerke to indicate where she might go, she states “It depends which way the wind blows” (390). As Birkin had quoted Hamlet earlier in chapter thirty, this may be read as yet another implicit reference to Hamlet: “I am but mad north-north-west. When the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw” (*Hamlet* Act 2, scene 2). Yet, Loerke purses his lips looking “like Zephyrus blowing across the snow”, Zephyrus, of course, being the Greek God of the wind. Loerke wants to impose his own will onto Gudrun and direct her journey: “[The wind] goes towards Germany,’ he said” (412). Yet again, we find an instance of an individual’s will to control the movements of others and thereby to play god, which is ultimately what Birkin wanted to do to Gerald when he wanted to fix him in a *Blutbrüderschaft* blood contract and “preach” his views onto him, and what Gerald wanted to do with the mare and Gudrun. Through Gerald’s death and Gudrun’s purposeful displacement, Lawrence advocates a new principle for a human morality set on unfixing destinations entirely and existing organically.

In “D.H. Lawrence and the Dialogical Principle: ‘The Strange Reality of Otherness’”, M. Elizabeth Sargent and Garry Watson associate Lawrence’s theory of the novel with Bakhtin’s. They examine Lawrence’s “Why the Novel Matters” and firstly suggest that the way Lawrence defines “I” (as an ‘assembly’) is not a way of discussing polyphony (or multi-voicedness) and that it is entirely “dialogical” in that the two “I’s” (or assemblies) constantly impact on and reshare each other (Sargent, Watson 410). Sargent and Watson’s second example to align Lawrence’s theory of the novel to Bakhtin’s is taken from Lawrence’s “Morality and the Novel”, where he places the largest significance on human “inter-relatedness” and argues that “morality in the novel is the trembling instability of the balance” (411). This “trembling instability of the balance” is what Dan Jacobson writes is most obviously present in what he calls Lawrence’s “theory of the psyche, in his insight into the dangers of ‘abstract idealism’”. Jacobson quotes Freud as saying that “Civilized society exacts good conduct and does not trouble itself with the impulses underlying it [...] Encouraged by its own success, society forces its members into an ever greater

estrangement from their instinctual dispositions” (90). Jacobson notes that Lawrence felt this estrangement of man from his natural instincts intensely and saw it as a polarizing, so that he engaged in a constant struggle against modern society, patriarchy, Judeo-Christian religion, nationalism, industrialism and technological advance.

Thus, in Lawrence’s fiction and particularly in *Women in Love*, Lawrence attempts to separate his characters by degrees of their success at being connected to their natural instincts. All of the characters visibly struggle against dominating trends of modern society that they encounter as manifestations in the other.

In *Women in Love* the character who carries the burden of embodying for us the destructive nihilism of the modern world, with its surface kindliness and productiveness and its inner ‘malignity’, is Gerald Crich, mine-owner and lover of Gudrun Brangwen. Ranged against him, in admiration, sympathy, and despair, is Rupert Birkin, inspector of schools and lover of Ursula Brangwen. (Jacobson 86)

The final passage of *Women in Love* relates to Birkin insisting to Ursula that a person can have more than one love. He admits to Ursula to having wanted “a man friend, as eternal as you and I are eternal [...] I wanted eternal union with a man too: another kind of love” (421). Ursula dismisses this in outrage, debunking the idea as “an obstinacy, a theory, a perversity” (421). However, the final line is from Birkin claiming that he doesn’t believe this additional and unconventional type of love is impossible and his suspended belief undermines the linear progression of the *Bildungsroman*. Although the traditional marriage plot appears to be upheld in one sense, by the fact that Birkin marries Ursula, it is also undermined on the one hand by Birkin’s desire to pair it to a homosocial male relationship on equal terms with marriage (which he cannot pursue due to Gerald’s death), and on the other by Gudrun’s abandonment of Gerald (which leads to the latter’s death) as she strives to escape the patriarchal structures that limit her, and which overwhelm Gerald.

The lost potential of Birkin and Gerald is denied at every level, for instance as Gerald’s body is reclaimed by the British state instead of being left in the snow, imbued with the significance of defeat in the Alps. “Gerald was taken to England, to be buried [...] It was the Crich brothers and sisters who insisted on the burial in England. Birkin wanted to leave the dead man in the Alps, near the snow. But the family was strident, loudly insistent” (421). Here we see again

that Birkin understands the immensity of Gerald's struggle with overcoming his own demons. Birkin wishes to leave his body in the Alps to show respect to his failed attempt to overcome his repression, which had been originally instilled by his position within the societal structures of England. However, the patriarchal family ultimately triumphs. The family and nation reclaim their subject in order to salvage and preserve their ideals.

Howard J. Booth writes in his article "D.H. Lawrence and Male Homosexual Desire" (2002) that "Homosexuality is linked to corruption, to death, and indeed to the temptation of the devil. The desire should be accepted, but as a move that can render it inferior and peripheral" (Booth 100). However, though I think this was Lawrence's intention in *The Rainbow's* chapter "Shame", which detailed a lesbian encounter between a younger Ursula and her schoolteacher Winifred, I contend that with the case of Birkin and Gerald, Lawrence suggests that a balanced bisexuality can exist as equal to, but also entirely removed from, heterosexual experience. Though Booth counters this argument by noting that though Birkin is undoubtedly Lawrence's mouthpiece in *Women in Love*, Lawrence "seems to be drawing, though an earlier self, someone less self-aware about feelings and sexual response than the narrative voice. Birkin has different feelings for each sex: all the time, he recognised that, although he was always drawn to women, feeling more at home with a woman than with a man, yet it was for men that he felt the hot, flushing, roused attraction which a man is supposed to feel for the other sex" (Booth 97-8).

Lawrence conflates several ideas regarding the destruction of the west with Gerald's death: firstly that man, by denying his "dark self" and "blood consciousness" of "pure desire", in other words by living a purely intellectually but sexually repressed life, will destroy both individual and society and create hyper-masculine women like Gudrun, Hermione and Pussum, first introduced in the chapter "Crème de Menthe" and presented as a depraved Soho tramp and Gerald's bohemian lover for a weekend. But there is also Lawrence's point that the "white races [...] would fulfill a mystery of ice-destructive knowledge" which, Stewart argues, Lawrence makes "manifest in the couple" (Stewart 460) of Gerald and Gudrun who share a similar fate—Gerald's through physical death and Gudrun through "the cold devil of irony [...] that freezes Gudrun's soul"

(476). Several depictions of the couple throughout the text describe them as “haloed by a yellow light”, “fair”, “blonde” and “blue”—all qualities Lawrence uses to represent ice and the North.

Lawrence denies Gudrun and Gerald a happy ending, and inverts the traditional marriage plot by having a Crich wedding taking place at the start of the novel, between Laura Crich and her unnamed young husband, and quickly concluding with the tragic death of Laura’s younger teen sister Diana and then Laura’s husband who searches for her, foreshadowing Gerald’s own death at the end of the novel. Even the union of Birkin and Ursula, which is not actually depicted in the text, is ultimately asymmetrical. Thus, Lawrence ensures that all of the relationships in the novel are left intentionally unbalanced and violently opposed: as Diana Crich died with her hands wrapped around her husband’s neck, indicating she “murdered him”, similarly but differently Gerald’s last act towards Gudrun is his attempt to strangle her to death, his hands on the “forbidden fruit” of her neck—before he lets her go and wanders into the blizzard to meet his death. Lewiecki-Wilson describes how Lawrence’s asymmetry works to destabilize patriarchal conventions:

Lawrence’s best fiction preserves open endings, usually by the asymmetry created through the death of a character. The underlying dyadic structure, the wish for the ideal relation of two, usually with a doubled female figure (who in making up for female castration is a differential sign of the missing phallus), expresses the distinctive Lawrentian point of view, accepting and yet wishing to undo the Oedipus complex, the rule of patriarchy. (Lewiecki-Wilson 204-5)

It is through his longing for the end of imperialism in the western world that Lawrence expresses his feelings of tragedy towards the destruction of his homeland. Gerald’s death epitomizes this anti-development and the historical western progression towards its own annihilation: initially, with the Judeo-Christian mythology embedded in the West, exemplified by the retelling of Cain killing his younger brother, which is considered as a consequence of the original corruption and imbalance of natural values, such as the appraisal of sacrifice and the denigration of shame. The progression from the initial sin of the Judeo-Christian mythology by Adam and Eve’s original sin, after which they for the first time feel shame for their naked bodies, advances to the traditional marriage plot, which in *Women in Love* is presented as the endeavor to achieve balance and symmetry in a collective *Bildungsroman*. This obviously fails with Gerald’s death which is

illustrative of the final progression of the doomed western world. Then, Lawrence stresses the inversion of the traditional marriage plot, symbolizing, like Woolf, that traditional, closed and heterosexual marriage relates to a death via its ideology of polarized binding, which the asymmetry at the end illustrates as impossibility. Finally Gerald's death highlights the doom of the western world via the effects of industrialism, which Lawrence instills with the destruction of the natural environment and the final corruption of humanity as a mechanization.

### **Conclusion**

Gerald's death, at the end of *Women in Love*, marks the text's departure from the traditional *Bildungsroman* and Grand Touristic journeys, and is symbolic of the doomed state of the western world. Lawrence's aesthetic of distance—or the uncertainty of the future; the mystery of the universe—places the burden of responsibility for the future survival of humankind on the ability of individuals to transcend societal constructs and accept a purer “blood-consciousness” or primitiveness that Lawrence felt would balance the over-reliance on “mind-consciousness” that western society had succumbed to. Lawrence also appealed for “star-equilibrium” or the balance of these self-actualized individuals with each other in pure masculinity and femininity; however, Gerald's death alongside Gudrun's rejection of Gerald for Loerke, and Birkin's longing for union with Gerald at the novel's conclusion illustrate the unlikelihood that balance and progress will occur. *Women in Love* is, ultimately, a collective *Bildungsroman* because it determines how reliant societal progress is on the necessary interrelationship of and harmony between individuals and how imbalances can lead to catastrophic consequences such as death and war.



## CHAPTER FOUR: BLACK LAMB AND GREY FALCON

### Introduction

It is appropriate that this chapter on Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1941) follows the one dealing with D.H. Lawrence, as Rebecca West was partly inspired to pursue experimental travel writing after meeting Lawrence in Italy in 1921. Even more than Lawrence, West has been marginalized in recent literary criticism, which contrasts to her popularity and influence during the first half of the twentieth-century.

This chapter is divided into five main sections: In the first section I discuss the historical context for *Black Lamb* and then in the sections that follow I describe three ways of reading and comprehending West's methodology within the text, first by examining the way West looks at the difficult history of the region she is visiting, how it relates to its present divisions, and how it can be understood by the west to avoid falling again into the same mistakes that have been committed historically. I discuss how the text can be seen as an expansion of the *Bildungsroman* genre by looking at its complex form. Particularly relevant to the development of the *Bildungsroman* genre is that West interweaves personal narrative with the history of the women she encounters, to show how the protagonist is on a quest not only for the history of the Balkans and its people—and in particular its women—but also for her own personal growth and the achievement of a position from which she can address her society as an autonomous female individual, to help that society grow with her. Finally, I consider the style of formal choices adopted in *Black Lamb*. In the latter sections, I consider the conflict West had to face by blending the personal and historical to create a subjective but simultaneously holistic account of the Balkans at a specific time. I then discuss the concept of cultural death and how travel is configured within this principal theme.

Woolf, Lawrence and West transform the linear narrative by challenging masculinist symbology, gender and sexuality in what Richard Robinson (2007) refers to as “semicolonial” (Robinson 103) spaces, such as a mythologized South American tourist resort that borders the dense and life-threatening Amazonian jungle, an unforgiving white expanse of Alpine cliffs which



illustrate humanity's inability to master forbidden landscapes and finally the transitory and liminal space of a Yugoslavia between the wars. Misha Glenny (1992) explains how, prior to the Great War, Yugoslavia did not exist and, when it was established at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, it lacked "clear borders [...and] constitutional order" (Glenny 100). At the time of the Second World War, Yugoslavia became "invisible" (102) to the western world, by which Glenny means that travel and communication became extremely difficult since it was taken over, firstly by the Nazis and then by its incorporation within the communist bloc.

It was as a journalist that West was commissioned by the British Council in 1936 to write about the Balkans as she found it, the impetus being that West's findings would shed light on how the tenuous nationalist binding of Yugoslavia, prior to 1914, might have inspired cultural sentiments that contributed to World War I. In *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, Rebecca West writes herself as her protagonist, on a quest to discover the answers of a nation's history, culture and mythology; West makes clear that she is taking the initiative to find the answers for herself instead of waiting for another war led by men to bring the fragments of news to her, Penelope-like, at "home" in her (hospital) bed. This establishes a duality of worlds, one where we perceive the public male-driven lunacy of war and one permeated by the private and passive female-idiocy; by traveling outside of her conscripted world of "home", West crosses a gender border with the incentive of preventing war. In Rebecca West's text the hospital bed becomes a double metaphor for the sickened and threatened state of society as long as women are kept locked up at home.

Bernard Schweizer comments in his essay "Epic Form and (Re)Vision in Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*" that "few twentieth-century British texts have been called epic as frequently as *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*" (Schweizer 69). Indeed, *Black Lamb* is often challenging to categorize because it seems to embody so many different genres of writing. The text is one part travel narrative, with comprehensive analysis of everything to do with society in the Balkans from ancient times until its contemporaneity; one part philosophy and political theory; one part oratory, as West interwove her narrative with long soliloquies and passages of discourse to promote certain views to her audience; one part journalistic account of the threat of an impending war, fascism and the role of feminism in modern society; and finally one part

mythology, where West experiments with form, allegory and genre in order to poeticize as much as subvert the tragic state of the war-ridden Balkans and the marginalization of its people, with, I maintain, a special focus on its female figures. *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* remains the *opus magnum* of West's work.

This extremely long text is sub-divided into twelve chapters, thereby inviting comparison with Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. The prominence of the journey motif lends further credence to the epic label, as does the fact that this journey seems to follow the pattern of a quest. Indeed, West is traveling the breadth and width of Yugoslavia in search of answers both to the region's historical vexations and to the perilous course of Western civilization as she saw it focused through the Balkan lens. (Schweizer 69)

Certainly, considering all of these elements, *Black Lamb* can be a daunting book simply because of its massive scale: at 1150 pages it is truly "epic" in length alone. The task that West undertakes is similarly enormous, to record the histories, mythologies, encounters, imagery and poetry of Croatia, Dalmatia, Herzegovina, Bosnia, Serbia, Macedonia, Old Serbia and finally Montenegro, whilst attempting to balance objective and subjective discourse and perspectives in order to establish a "complete" view of a network of people at a critical point in history. Carl Rollyson (1995) notes that *Black Lamb* "interweaves characters, dramatic scenes, dialogue, description, reportage, autobiography, literary criticism, philosophy, theology, and feminism; her insights are grounded in the colloquial as much as they are in art history and figurative language" (Rollyson 177).

The text is foremost a journey by British-born Rebecca West through Yugoslavia, between the wars. Rollyson writes that West "wanted her book not only to be about a journey but to convey the sense of presenting itself as a journey" (Rollyson 182). West hoped that, by traveling through Yugoslavia, accompanied by her husband—whom West uses to provide the rational, calm and reasoned answers to her character's emotional, artistic and broad questions—and a spiritual guide she calls Constantine, she would be able to unravel and understand the complexities that lead to world war. West recognizes that women have historically had unequal access to education compared to males; for instance in an interview from 1981, West describes how, during her youth, Oxford was a place where women could not attend lectures unless they had an official chaperone "sewing red flannel petticoats or knitting a sock" and how they were forbidden from studying certain subjects which might require them to go on expeditions, such as

military strategy. The excuse given for this exclusion was that the chaperones would have a “shortness of wind” from walking over the hills of Oxfordshire;<sup>20</sup> however, in an attempt to break from the domesticity and ignorance allotted to her sex, she goes to draw her own conclusions, “for I knew that in the next war we women would have scarcely any need to fear bereavement, since air raids unprecedented by declaration of war would send us and our loved ones to the next world in the breachless unity of scrambled eggs” (West 2).

West appropriates the tradition of the Grand Tour, where usually privileged and western men would travel in order to acquire the culture and art of other cultures and their histories as personal expansions to their own understanding of their place in the world. West travels in order to examine conceptions and modes of living that are non-western and perhaps still free from the fascist, industrialized and capitalist trends that she sees threatening her livelihood in the west. She does not go as a soldier or travel to write as a man would, but imagines herself in a post-war Europe “widowed and childless” (2), which she acknowledges is an “archaic outlook of the unconscious” (2); even so, she voices in no uncertain terms that equality of the sexes is inevitable in death and therefore she cannot remain passively in Britain while world events that affect her destiny unfold around her.

Her text draws on deep analysis and poetic portrayals of the mythology, history and contemporary conditions of the Balkans. West considers that theology latent within myth-making is dangerous. She comments on this in *Black Lamb*, when she says there is a danger of “not allowing criticism to coexist alongside a constructed myth” (West 902). This, West claims, is responsible for the rise of institutions such as fascism on the back of industrialism and for the continued reign of patriarchy. West rests her hope on the future of art which will bring light and understanding across the unknown that leaves room for these institutions to manipulate theological practices and turn “holy myths” into “glutinous lies” (873). West believes that understanding leads to mastering all of life’s mysteries which will surely destroy “the rock” (1128), that is to say, the rock where West, to her demystified horror, witnesses a black lamb being sacrificed in Macedonia. This ritual comes, within the text, to represent the manifestation of

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<sup>20</sup> See “From the Stacks: ‘The World’s Worst Failure’”

human sacrifice and death in the name of pointless, misapprehended lies that have been spread and spurred on by opportunistic institutions like organized religion and nationalism. These institutions twist the mythos of a place in order to wield power by using peoples' ignorance and fear. By knowing and understanding as much as possible about the Balkans, West demonstrates that she is not willing to be "humbugged by the hypocritical claims of cruelty" (831). West refuses to let her body be laid waste by these hegemonic powers and in order to attempt to understand where their power lies, she provides her text as an offering, the antithesis of the lamb on the rock, being an artistic offering of hope for the future of humanity.

West aims for her commissioned report on the Balkans to provide connections and understanding between the people of Britain and the Balkans to help prevent a future world war, although the Second World War was already advanced at the time she was completing and then published her text, so in some respects the book had already failed one of its principal aims. However, the fact that the war was already underway also added a sense of urgency and necessity to its being written. This massive undertaking could does represent the egotism of the western world and the ongoing tradition of a western traveler/hero journeying to another region for reasons of exploitation and national gain; in this case what is exploited are the stories, myths and histories of the Yugoslav people into what, as I will show later, some have argued is pure propaganda.

Christopher Hitchens, who provided the introduction to *Black Lamb* in the Penguin Classics edition, considers West to be one of greatest female writers of the twentieth century. Hitchens was captured by her "intuitions and generalizations", and by the allegorized non-fictional characters in the text such as Rebecca West's husband, Henry Andrews, who is never actually named within the text and simply transforms into "my husband". Similarly, the historical figure of Stanislav Vinaver is reverentially recast as Constantine, while his grotesque German wife, who in the text becomes Gerda or an image of Nazi Germany, is actually Elsa Vinaver, whom, West acknowledges, is not in reality "quite as outrageous as the book represents her, though she behaves badly enough" (Robinson 111). Together the couple come to symbolize the deteriorating

and dangerous liaisons between Yugoslavia, the Jewish population (Constantine is Jewish) and Germany or, as it still was until 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Hitchens briefly criticizes West for the rather long soliloquies and speeches she allows the allegorical characters to make in order to press a certain point-of-view on the reader; however, he compares this method to Marcel Proust's, whom West greatly admired. He suggests that it is a didactic tool that effectively makes the case for political opinions and elucidations. However, it becomes increasingly obvious that West's preference was for the Serbs over the Croats, the "raw" over the "domesticated" to the point of even romanticising Serbian battles, and the same type of superstitions that she elsewhere criticizes for upholding patriarchal structures, such as when she strokes an ancient relic while imbuing the action with magic. This gives credence to the folklore she hears from the peasants in place of historical realism. Hitchens extrapolates that West's adopted patriotism for the Balkans ultimately comes to disillusionment in the same way that Byron became disillusioned with Greece.<sup>21</sup> This is demonstrated by the gradual debasement of the symbol of the black lamb, which she first encounters in a bourgeois restaurant in Belgrade, where she takes comfort in the black lamb as the only relief she experiences in an environment she sees as a gaudy takeover by a western vision of commerce and "civilization". In this episode, in Belgrade, a traditionally dressed peasant appears carrying a black lamb in his arms causing West to feel hopeful that the "organic" life of the Balkans was still present even in such an environment. However, her growing cynicism with the Balkans is complete four hundred pages later as the second black lamb appears struggling in a peasant's arms in Macedonia. In this segment West considers the peasant to be brutish and disgusting as the lamb is slaughtered and a shaman figure makes a circle with the lamb's blood on a local child's forehead. West experiences the "stench from the rock" (827) which makes her feel sickened. "I knew this rock well. I had lived under the shadow of it all my life. All our western thought is founded on this repulsive pretence that pain is the proper price of any good thing" (827).

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<sup>21</sup> Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812). "Sad relic of departed worth!/Immortal, though, no more;/ though fallen, great!/ [...] A thousand years scarce sere to form a state;/ An hour may lay it in the dust: and when/ Can Man its shattered splendor renovate,/ recall its virtues back, and vanquish Time and Fate?"

In these two scenes, West's feelings for the Balkans and the traditions of the lands take a radical shift from the sunrise restaurant setting in Belgrade to the sunset of Macedonia. The shift in her view of Yugoslavia eventually leads her to identifying religious practice and belief as the problematic foundation to modern world ills: "The Primitive mind is the foundation on which the modern mind is built" (914). I see West identifying a continuous line between primitive superstitions and rituals through to organized religion to modern capitalism and fascism, all of them relying on ignorance, superstition and manipulation of "the common people".

I consider *Black Lamb* as a female *Bildungsroman* that invokes and revises the tradition of the Grand Tour, rather than just as an autobiographical travel narrative, for its bold defying of form, its comprehensive scope and the unique myths that West employs as she travels through the Balkans, with a spiritual guide and her husband as observers. As part of this discussion, I will also consider the problematic of Rebecca West as a western, British woman being the representative voice of the Balkans as West regularly compares villages and scenes that she encounters in the Balkans to ones in England as well as maintaining problematic opinions of Muslims, peasants, and notions of Orthodox Christianity. *Black Lamb* has an entirely unique approach to reimagining travel journalism, fiction, mythology, allegory as interweaving literary forms, and as experienced through the perspective of a woman caught up in history, whether as a foreign observer or part of a national collective, and progressively coming to a renewed awareness. West's distinctive program creates a style that can be seen to function as her own late-modernist alternative to Joyce and Woolf's stream-of-consciousness as she strives to include everything from sensory, emotional, philosophical and informative descriptions of her journey by inserting herself into the text in a bodily sense to totally encapsulate the journey and bring the audience as holistically as she can along with her. In this way, I consider how *Black Lamb* blurs the line between language and body when West merges historicity with her own personal psychological and emotional explorations in the spaces she journeys to. West acknowledges that her text is to be read as a journey, one that she inserts herself into when she writes in response to a critic who accused her of not having any method to a pastiche collection of ramblings: "I broke sequences and relaxed tensions to get the lethargic attention of the ordinary reader along

the road" (Rollyson 182), she writes, in words which her biographer Carl Rollyson interprets as evidence that West hoped her text would naturally present itself "as a journey" (182).

West was quite revolutionary in her personal life as well as her professional life. "West was a socialist, anti-imperialist and feminist. She turned from acting to journalism and wrote for *The Freewoman*, *The Clarion* and *The New Statesman* amongst other journals and newspapers" (Childs 168). As previously mentioned, West changed her name from Cicily Fairchild to Rebecca West as she was inspired by Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* (Childs 168). In a recorded interview where West is asked to discuss her name change, she claims that it was a very sudden and spontaneous move that she later regretted as "Rebecca West" sounded to her to be too hard, but she felt also that her name Cicily Fairchild should only belong to a blonde. This conflict between wanting to be taken more seriously as an established writer alongside a creeping insecurity over her directness is apparent in her claim that T.S. Eliot's comments on her 1928 critical text *The Strange Necessity* had "killed stone dead" her work (Heffernan 309). Laura Heffernan (2008) argues that West's early critical work from the 1910s and 20s, such as her collection of essays *Strange Necessity*, is often eclipsed by more typically male-authored, third-person and objective analysis by established members of the modernist canon like T.S. Eliot. Heffernan claims it was the literary formalism of the early-twentieth century that "remasculinized cultural value" and is responsible for the lack of appreciation of writers like West, and even unconventional ones like Lawrence.

Indeed, the "strange necessity" that is the focus of West's critical work is her belief that art has a role for bringing pleasure outside of being beautiful, that it could also allow one to feel a part of a wider context of knowledge by assessing work "in a personal and almost fictional framework" (309). It is the established (and male) canon that was ironically so threatened by West's points of view in *Strange Necessity*. Samuel Beckett was particularly venomous in his collection of critical essays and letters *Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* (1929), where he championed Joyce while wholeheartedly disparaging West, writing, "When Miss Rebecca West clears her decks for a sorrowful depreciation of the Narcissistic element in Mr. Joyce by the purchase of 3 hats, one feels that she might very well

wear her bib at all her intellectual banquets, or alternatively, assert a more noteworthy control over her salivary glands than is possible for Monsieur Pavlo's [sic] unfortunate dogs" (18). In these remarks Beckett not only dismisses West's critical opinions as being as flippant as selecting a hat but he also compares her to a dog; it is not difficult to sift the deeply entrenched sexism and dismissal or lack of understanding for the innovations of Joyce's experimentalism that Beckett perceives in West. As Jane Marcus wrote, "Rebecca West's *Strange Necessity* and a feminist understanding of the decanonization of its interpretative practices remain important resources for literary criticism now" (Marcus 18). Within her work as a journalist Rebecca West hoped to inspire *The Freewoman* to "develop [its literary side] arguing that a movement towards freedom of expression in literature should develop in its pages alongside Marsden's interest in ethics and philosophy" (Gasiorek 197). And her reputation as a respected writer amongst her male contemporaries meant that she became "the only woman featured in the first issue" (Gasiorek 211) of Wyndham Lewis's *Blast*.

West spent much of her early career working painstakingly for various publications as a professional female writer with strong opinions. West wrote against patriarchal institutions like marriage, which is how she originally met H.G. Wells after critiquing his work *Marriage* (Wells was married himself before entering into a longstanding affair with Rebecca West, which ultimately led to the birth of West's only child). Key to understanding the three main texts of my thesis is the way Woolf, Lawrence and West viewed sexuality as critically important to the way we interpret reality, and specifically in West's case "sexual affairs" between individuals, which she viewed as the perfect analogy for the relationships between nations. She pursues this analogy relentlessly throughout *Black Lamb*. Vesna Goldsworthy (1997) criticizes literary analyses of West that focus more on her personal life, claiming that critics "seem to be more interested in her role in the sexual soap opera of Britain's literati" (Goldsworthy 2) than in her politics; this seems to parallel West's own complaints that intellectuals like T.S. Eliot were not taking her criticism and theories, such as those in *Strange Necessity*, seriously. However, West uses gender biases to her advantage as a means to indirectly comment on problems within patriarchal cultural, as Marina Mackay (2003) argues. Mackay makes the point that identity politics and feminist radicalism



always provided West with her “model of reading international politics” and were tools used as a “protest against a whole set of enshrined political inequities of which she saw anti-feminism as emblematic” (Mackay 130). Indeed, Mackay’s article pays homage to the fact that West is one of the few female writers who continued writing experimentally during and after World War II, and compares Woolf’s career to West, imagining what Woolf’s later career might have looked like if she hadn’t committed suicide in 1941. Mackay suggests that by tracing the similarities between Woolf and West’s World War writings it is possible to “illuminate the connections between feminist consciousness and the causes and conduct of international conflict” (Mackay 127).

Joanna Labon (2000) argues in her doctoral thesis that by the time West came to write *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* in 1940, she had taken on some of Lawrence’s methods of writing, particularly his metaphorical approach to travel writing, which she had initially rejected when she first met him in Italy and then reconsidered as she wrote his elegy in 1930. Labon appealed throughout her thesis, written nearly two decades ago, for more critical examinations of West to take place as there was an unfortunate lack of material, especially contemporary analysis that tackles her work; I have found this to still be the case, with only a handful of articles or critical discussions, such as Hitchens’, regarding *Black Lamb* and its position within the modernist canon, or at least its subversion of the modernist canon. Richard Robinson’s *Narratives of the European Border* (2007) is another study that looks at the importance of the geographical space and the way it is mythologized in *Black Lamb*. While a more recent article from Vesna Goldsworthy focused on the on-going tradition of female travel writing present in *Black Lamb*. Goldsworthy describes travel writing as a way for women to express their experiences and opinions to a larger audience and be taken seriously in her article “Travel Writing as Autobiography: Rebecca West’s Journey of Self-Discovery” (2000). Most recently Stacy Burton has touched briefly on *Black Lamb* in her book *Travel Narrative and the Ends of Modernity* (2013) where she bridges the gap between the geopolitical upheaval of the twentieth century and the imaginative evolution of the travel narrative. Beyond these studies there is still not much contemporary criticism on *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, Rebecca West in general, or female travel writing in the twentieth century, at large.

Labon stated her hope for West's work to enjoy a period of reconsideration for being so complex, as Woolf's work did in the 1980s and 90s. In this regard, West is similar to Lawrence as she has been misunderstood. Woolf herself wrote of West that she had "great vitality" and was a "distinguished woman, broad browed, battler" who could talk any language: "why then this sense of a lit up modern block flood lit by electricity"? (Woolf Diaries 1925-30) Woolf asks in a diary entry from the 13<sup>th</sup> of June of 1935 after having dinner with West and West's husband. Although Woolf's characterization of West reads quite harshly, Hitchens claims it to be a mark of respect from Woolf and I extend that opinion to suggest that the recurrent words "lit up" are a symbol of how human endeavour and brilliance can illuminate the mechanization of modernity, and therefore her use of these words applied to West shows in what regard Woolf held her. Woolf suggests that West is caught up in the wheels of modern progress but still shines brightly as one of its most radiant stars. There is also an adumbration in Woolf's suggestion that the dismissal of West is based on her being a female writer, critic, journalist, historian and shrewdly opinionated. Indeed, just as the symbols of the sacrificial black lamb and the grey falcon are doomed in *Black Lamb*, so too is western society that does not integrate women in its mainstream rather than continue to marginalize them in a male-dominated culture in which it is men that make the important decisions. Though West is adamantly opposed to capitalism seeping into the Balkans from the west, she is seen to be, controversially, similarly critical of the influences of Islam in *Black Lamb*. West chastises some of her too "broad-minded" (West 137) fellow westerners who would argue that even if the Balkans had been unsuccessful in protecting the west from the Ottoman Empire, an "Islamised" western world "could not be much worse than it is today" (137). Though she acknowledges that the west is often "vulgar, economically sadist and superficial" (137), she goes on to argue that the Christians living under Ottoman rule knew a "death in life" that she could "smell [in] the dust, the lethargy, the rage and hopelessness of a Macedonian town, once a glory in Europe, that had too long been Turkish" (137). As for West's feminism, she wrote that she would believe feminism had accomplished its program and that women had achieved equality with men when a country allowed itself to be turned upside down and "led to the brink of war by a totally bald female writer" (West 124). While West is a pacifist with a full head of hair, her

textual offering of *Black Lamb* attempts to reshape western consideration of the Balkans and how its history and geography have played a crucial role in the individual and national destinies of the western world. Robinson interprets *Black Lamb* to have “rhetorically prepared the way for the resistance of ‘good’ west” (Robinson 107) against the alternative ‘bad’ west of Nazism and the ‘bad’ east of behaving as the sacrificial black lamb (Chamberlain) or the grey falcon, which emphasizes theology as the means for manifesting destiny instead of taking physical action, including resistance to the powers that be, to influence the future. As we shall see in the next sections, West’s journey aids the blurring of the lines between nationhood and personal identity; between historical and individual development, as she illuminates how historical violence has the cyclical effect of determining cultural atmosphere while consequently rejecting the forced or false traditions implemented by fascist or imperial regimes.

In terms of her style of writing, West’s text has elements that can be associated to Lawrence’s and Woolf’s, especially in the method of capturing memories and the hidden consciousness of her characters. West’s journeying to escape idiocy and unravel the history and mythologies leading to the Great War opens new possibilities for women and the way women write and take part in history. West’s journey is undertaken to illustrate that reality is proven by seeing or by appearance as much as it is by being felt in the body of our present and the body of our historical conscious memory. West explains that her text is meant to have the appearance of a journey and take the reader on a journey as well. In a letter defending the style of her text West wrote:

I wanted [the audience] to [receive from the story] the loose attractiveness of various pleasant things in life—such as wild flowers in a field. Again and again I broke sequences and relaxed tension to get the lethargic attention of the ordinary reader along the road. (Rollyson 183)

In *Black Lamb* these everyday activities and occupations common to human life are translated as everyday touristic activities such as moments sitting and drinking coffee with friends, touring churches and contemplating the scenery outside of a train window. West herself states that her method of celebrating the everyday occurrences was heavily influenced by Proust. As she writes in her Prologue, “Proust has pointed out that if one goes on performing any action, however banal,

long enough, it automatically becomes 'wonderful': a simple walk down a hundred years of village street is 'wonderful' if it is made every Sunday by an old lady of eighty" (West 10).

West responded to critics who claimed her book was too long and too detailed with the same answer: she agreed that it is too long but felt its size and details were inevitable. This gives the impression that West allowed herself to be swept up herself in her own journey and to allow stream-of-consciousness to naturally emerge; for example, as she describes the peasant woman walking up the mountain in Montenegro, West describes her as taking her destiny "not as the beasts take it nor as the plants and trees; she not only suffered it, she examined it. As the sword swept down on her through the darkness she threw out her hand and caught the blade as it fell, not caring if she cut her fingers so long as she could question its substance" (West 1012). These associations create a flow similar to the Woolfian style, which is combined with West arriving at epiphanies that seem to be more about her own development and maturity than with the peasant woman she is describing: "[...] I saw the desire for understanding move this woman. It might have been far otherwise with her, for she had been confined by her people's past and present to a kind of destiny that might have stunned its victims into an inability to examine it. Nevertheless she desired neither peace nor gold, but simply knowledge of what her life might mean" (1012-13). This epiphany comes as the climax of West's journey of development, derived in her unique and physical way that involves her literally traversing ground and recording details, information, history, dialogue, philosophy, mundanities and sensory elements in her modern female version of the Grand Tour.

West aimed at disrupting traditional narratives and also at maintaining control over her own narrative, especially as a woman, which she explicates is an uncertain identity in a world where reality is constructed by men. As previously mentioned, Susan Stanford Friedman maintained that many feminist poststructuralists linked the lyric mode to the "repressed feminine" and the "pre-oedipal" (Mappings 228-29).

The blending of private dream and recording an "objective existence" are responsible for the way *Black Lamb* emanates vibrations to capture a mood, an atmosphere and involve all the senses so that the reader experiences the text in their body as much as in their mind. Take, for

example, how West describes the recording of King Alexander of Serbia's murder, which stood out to her as an example of discord and uncertainty historically present in sudden regime changes and upheavals in the Balkans. King Alexander was in France in a motorcade when he was shot; West ensures to balance the raw violence with the equally visible non-violent images: "we see a man jumping on the footboard of the car, a gendarme swinging a sword, a revolver in the hand of another, a straw hat on the ground [...]" (West 16). Here the lyricism appears to appropriate the violent action with a simple straw hat lying passively and forgotten on the ground. The swinging sword and the revolver are symbols of phallic power whereas the straw hat, something easily crushed, represents how the peasant responds to violent oppression from those who wear the crown with equally violent overhauls; but also implies that the peasant is still ultimately the losing party, as the king is swiftly replaced by more authoritarian or aggressive leadership. Further along the passage she describes how "a lad in a sweater dodges before his captors, his defiant face unmarked by fear, although his body expresses the very last extreme of fear by a creeping, writhing motion" (West 16). Again, the lad and his sweater symbolize the loss of innocence, while the calm face and the contorted body demonstrate the dichotomy of mind and body. West wants the reader to feel the fear inspired by violence while also demonstrating the relevance of recording sensory, bodily and emotional experiences. Higher emphasis of understanding is placed on the sensory/emotional responses to war because West is unable to process the picture rationally. "I could not understand this event, no matter how often I saw this picture. I knew, of course, how and why the murder happened" (West 17). In this statement, West maintains that facts and the distance between the westerner (especially western woman) with scenes of war and violence are not basis for true understanding. Thus, West recognizes that she will have to undertake the journey herself and to record and translate it from her perspective. It is also worth noting the comparison to D.H. Lawrence's views on the intellectualizing of the state of the world, which he demonstrates as superficial in *Women in Love* when the characters attempt to reach resolutions by discussions taken from a safe distance, whether emotional distances on topics such as love and hatred or physical distances on topics of war and politics. Lawrence also uses the metaphor of a hat being knocked off as a symbol of lost or usurped power when Gerald,

Birkin, Hermione and Ursula discuss intellectually what they would do if someone knocked a hat off their head. The characters' responses to the question mimic the responses of nation-states being threatened: where Birkin advocates passivity and the lack of real meaning imbued in the symbolism of a hat as power, Hermione suggests she would kill whomever attempted to remove her hat. However, the irony rests on the fact that the characters coldly strategize reactions to power without experiencing it emotionally and physically.

Karla Alwes posits that Virginia Woolf's three canonical novels—*The Voyage Out*, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*—work as a cohesive modern female epic. Alwes maintains that female epics deflate and challenge the heroism of war, where battle scenes and celebrations of courageous masculine feats “become in Woolf's reflections on the spirit of European modernity, the *fear of war instead*” (Alwes 56). And this is also true of West's journey in *Black Lamb*, as West writes “We must learn to know the nature of the advantage which the universe has over us, which in my case seems to lie in the Balkan Peninsula [...] which might explain to me how I shall die, and why” (West 22). Bernard Schweizer makes the case for three of West's other novels, *The Fountain Overflows* (1956), *This Real Night* (1984) and *Cousin Rosamund* (1985) to consist of an epic trilogy (*This Real Night* and *Cousin Rosamund* were published posthumously). This new method of epic writing is evident in the way West records the histories of battles, assassinations and brutalities not to glorify them but as a cautionary tale. And perhaps most significantly is the delicate process by which West balances her personal and emotional responses to the stories and dialogues she relates in order to harness the independent empathies of her readers and remind them that history and war are not so distant, that its effects have direct impact on the consciousness and memory of all people.

### **Recording the Conflict Between Personal and Historical Life**

West's travel writing, accounts of and reflection on historical events are integrated into the account of personal emotional growth, in a form of the *Bildungsroman* that is autobiographically grounded but also fictionalized through the techniques I have highlighted earlier, especially in the sections relating to the discussion on *Bildungsroman* and modernism and

style. Particularly crucial to understanding the link in *Black Lamb* with balancing personal history to that of society's is the relevance of West's vivid memory of her mother and cousin reading from the newspaper to a five-year-old Rebecca West about the assassination of the Empress Elizabeth of Austria. West imbues the moment in her personal history with a greater significance than her memory of the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand. Rollyson notes that the memory imprinted upon West from the earliest age that "human beings were as much in love with death as with life" (Rollyson 178). I consider this memory, and particularly its significance for West over her recollection of Ferdinand's killing, as key to understanding *Black Lamb* and its message.

As West writes in her prologue,

I quite simply and flatly knew nothing at all about the south-eastern corner of Europe; and since there proceeds steadily from that place a stream of events which are a source of danger to me, which indeed for four years threatened my safety and during that time deprived me for ever of my benefits, that is to say I knew nothing of my own destiny.  
(West 21)

However, West's larger aim is to discover insight into the destiny for all women by her inclusion of the unheard female voices like the sister of the Archduke Ferdinand's assassin, whom West interviews out of interest "to know what happens after the great moments in history to the women associated by natural ties to the actors' (West 418). At other times West describes in great detail the looks and attitudes of various peasant women whom she describes as "heroic", "stoic" (403) "officer of Earth" (818) but suffering the enormous "grief of the Madonnas" as they bring their children into the world's "broad prisons" (403), where West claims the sons of these women will escape to do the deeds of "upsetting kings and the overthrowal of empires" (403). However, it is the women themselves that she poeticizes as "deformed by the slavery of [their] ancestors" (403). These are the things, West writes, that one is never told. Throughout the text, West gives many detailed descriptions, different points of view and imagined possibilities of events, all presented not simply journalistically but as revealing the hidden "structure of the world, told to people who can be trusted with this knowledge and are receptive to it" (Bennett 131).

The text begins with the quotation, "Happy he who like Ulysses has returned successful from his travels" (1), which is taken from the first line of the 16<sup>th</sup> century poem of the same name

by Joachim du Bellay. I suggest that West begins her text with this to suggest that “the home” to which a happy Ulysses would return is being reconstructed in unforeseen and perhaps threatening ways by the effects of modernity. West reads her poem by “the electric light” (1); she listens to her radio that transmits world news, music and talks which West learns to navigate like “a trapeze artist from programme to programme” (West 2).

After reading the poem, West hears on the radio

[...] the music that is above earth, that lives in the thunderclouds and rolls in human ears and sometimes deafens them without betraying the path of its melodic line. I heard the announcer relate how the King of Yugoslavia had been assassinated [...] so I imagined myself widowed and childless, which was another instance of the archaic outlook of the unconscious [...] The thought did not then occur to me, so I rang for my nurse and when she came I cried to her, “Switch on the telephone! I must speak to my husband at once. A most terrible thing has happened. The King of Yugoslavia has been assassinated.” “Oh, dear!” she replied. “Did you know him?” “No,” I said. “Then why,” she asked, “do you think it’s so terrible?” (2-3)

Rollyson describes how the nurse’s dismay and ambivalence to the happenings outside of her world in England “reminds Rebecca that the word “idiot” is derived from a Greek root meaning private person” (Rollyson 178). West believes that idiocy is culturally imposed upon women to ensure they are “hidden and uninformed about the going on in the world” (178).

Imbued in West’s statement is the desire to maintain global order, and though she demonstrates recurrently the significance that geography has on shaping culture and influencing philosophy, West understands that these cultural philosophies hold even more global significance in a modern world: “the proof lies in the power of these places to imprint the same stamp on whatever inhabitants history brings them, even if conquest spills out one population and pours in another wholly different race and philosophy” (West 747). West’s desire is to understand the Balkans and is not antagonistic, aggressive or colonizing. In fact, West makes clear to her husband that she wants to bring him to show him the wonderful things about the Balkans that she cannot tell him. When he presses her for an explanation of what the Balkans has that is more wonderful than possessed in the west, West states, “we are not as rich in the West as we think we are” (West 23). And so she leaves open the possibility of a mutually beneficial and peaceful perspective achieved by the English journeying to the Balkans. This implies a prerogative to have two worlds meet for unity or understanding instead of in hostility.



## ***Black Lamb* and the Historical Context**

Historical violence is a relevant place to start in my analysis of *Black Lamb* because of what West found most troubling in both the formation and graduation of culture: that is, the dualistic nature of human desire, with one aspect of our selves leaning towards happiness and peace and the other striving towards disorder and destruction: “only part of us is sane [...]. The other half of us is nearly mad. It prefers the disagreeable to the agreeable, loves pain and its darker night despair, and wants to die in a catastrophe that will set back life to its beginnings and leave nothing of our house save its blacked foundations” (West 1102). In Yugoslavia, West saw a multitude of cultural identities being amalgamated with potentially disastrous repercussions. In this section, I will describe how cultural and geographical atmosphere affects major political shifts; as well as the way in which West viewed nation states as macrocosms of individualism and therefore just as prone to unpredictable changes of mood and tonality, but with farther reaching consequences. Finally, I will consider how the westernization of the Balkans encouraged a cultural backlash triggered by a historically engrained response to preserve and defend cultural heritage.

Timothy Wientzen’s article “An Epic of Atmosphere: Rebecca West, *Black Lamb*, and Reflex” explains *Black Lamb* as an epic attempt to explore “the political significance of milieu by mapping it onto the geopolitical situation of wartime Europe” by an analysis of fascism “that stresses its dependence on those political reflexes enforced by ‘atmosphere’” (Wientzen 62). Wientzen’s article—which can also be seen to relate to Susan Sontag’s exploration in *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003) of collective responses to traumatic images of war, violence and fascism—builds on the lectures by Ivan Pavlov on reflex (1925, trans 1927) and Virginia Woolf’s *Three Guineas*:

In *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, the language of reflex underscores West’s understanding of the vexed relationship between economic modernization and the nation. What defines fascism for West is its attempt to manufacture new, facile traditions without regard to the organic practices of its citizens and the long, shared history of a national community. (Wientzen 62)

West is interested in the variety of cultural and national traditions within Yugoslavia and how they unite against the shadow of encroaching fascism and the gradual westernization of the Balkans through the spread of capitalism and urbanization. Perhaps the most important element of understanding Yugoslavia to West is “seeing” and she attempts to translate for her western audience the many instances where significant sights have struck her, in order to comprehend the atmosphere of a place so key to the balance of war and peace in Europe. For instance, in Sarajevo West is startled and delighted by the image of seeing snow on a mosque, which she claims holds “something delicious about that incongruity” (West 319), emphasizing the way atmosphere in Yugoslavia affects cultural institutions and public belief; the snow appears incongruous to West as a westerner because she recognizes the snow as out of place on the cultural institution of a mosque, which she would imagine (without seeing) to be in the Middle East, Turkey, or North Africa, geographical locations where snow is unlikely to fall— or, rather, locations unlikely to be *imagined* with snow. Thus, the act of seeing the mosque with snow challenges that preconceived notion and affects for her the atmosphere of the place. The term “atmosphere” is being used to describe the way individuals and groups respond to visual and other sensory or interactive aspects of their geographical environment and how this “atmosphere” results in more significant cultural shifts.

West consistently reminds her audience of incongruities that affront her “cold inner eye that trusts nothing, least of all my own likings” (West 320). For instance, as West and her husband go to visit a banker in Sarajevo who “worked hard according to the severest Western standards” (320) and who worked in “large modern offices, which indeed almost amounted to a sky-scraper” (32), the “almost” present in this description invites us to doubt the appropriateness of Western standards belonging in Yugoslavian space: if the buildings cannot be as tall as they would as in a western capital city, then how can the working standards compare, given the different conditions? Thus a hierarchical perception of West/East is implicated and simultaneously challenged as West recognizes its influence over the atmosphere. It is slightly reductive, especially when discussing *Black Lamb*, to describe the contradictory atmospheres as West/East, when there are multitudes of cultural identities that are presented with conflicting or complex

attitudes towards each other within the text. For instance, Germany is portrayed as a hegemonic but barbaric nation, especially in its disregard for Jews and Slavs.

Even so, the stark contradiction of atmosphere is further affected by the banker, who is never named, and who relays to West and her husband how as an exiled German Jew he had once felt himself to be an equal in Germany and an inferior in Yugoslavia. The banker now smiled with a gravity that “could not possibly become laughter” (321) in order to say, “it is puzzling, you know, not to be able to look to Germany as one’s second home, when it has been to one all one’s life long. But one can come home to one’s hearth, and I am fortunate that Sarajevo is mine” (321-2). West here highlights how the diaspora of German Jews to the various parts of Europe, including the Balkans, is part of the greater nexus of beleaguered identities that have experienced centuries of traumas.

The catalyst of violence in Yugoslavia, West suggests, is the preceding oppression by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in conjunction with displaced, intersectional peoples who were annexed from their historical communities and traditions, whilst being amassed haphazardly in the liminal space of Yugoslavia. West makes reference to the culture of violence being nurtured by Kaiser Wilhelm and the Hapsburg dynasty. As a signifier of Franz Ferdinand’s ingrained thrill of brutality, she notes that he had, in one day’s sport, bagged “two thousand one hundred and fifty pieces of small game” (334) and had boasted of having killed three thousand stags. West extends this propensity of brutality to Wilhelm’s attitude for the Hungarians as one of insolence: “When receiving a deputation of Slovaks, though they were not a people whom he would naturally have taken into his confidence, he said of the Hungarians, ‘It was an act of bad taste on the part of these gentlemen ever to have come to Europe,’ which must remain an ace in the history of royal indiscretion” (336). West also saddles the real responsibility of the Great War on Franz Ferdinand’s Chief of General Staff Conrad von Hotzendorf who maintained a zealous hatred of Serbia which he regarded as Austro-Hungary’s “predestined foe” (341) and “most vulnerable enemy” (341). West considers that Conrad, along with the Austrian Minister Berchtold, spurred World War I with their refusal to see the Serbian Prime Minister “when he offered to come to Vienna to negotiate a treaty with Austria” (342). This refusal unfortunately pairs with Franz

Ferdinand's decision to travel to Bosnia on St. Vitus's Day, which was received as a direct insult, as St. Vitus's Day marked the defeat of the Serbs by the Turks at the battle of Kossovo in the fourteenth century, and the end of their freedom with the Ottoman occupation. In the nineteenth century, Serbia had become an autonomous principality but still within the Ottoman empire; Bosnia-Herzegovina, which had remained a non-autonomous part of the Ottoman Empire, had then been annexed by the Austro-Hungarian empire in 1908. Thus, though the Serbs had defeated the Turks in 1912 and felt that her honor had been restored, the visit on St Vitus Day by the Austro-Hungarian Emperor who had annexed Serbia's Slav neighbors in Bosnia-Herzegovina was seen to have an ominous symbolic significance. This carried the emblematic reminder that the Serbs were threatened by pressure of Austrian control, and ignited the fury of the Bosnian-Serbs, who had been oppressed for centuries. It was then that a select group of young Serbian revolutionaries allegedly plotted the infamous assassination of Franz Ferdinand, the *attentat* in which Gavrilo Princip shot Ferdinand through the heart. In this act that spawned the most violent war in history at the time West was writing *Black Lamb*, West comments to her audience, "So was your life and my life mortally wounded, but so was not the life of the Bosnians, who were indeed restored to life by this act of death" (350). In this remark, she illustrates that the act, though devastating for Europe and much of the world, was perceived as restorative and cleansing for the Bosnian-Serbian revolutionaries who were reacting against historical tyranny over their land and customs. This recalls the dedication of *Black Lamb*, "to all my friends in Yugoslavia, who are now all dead or enslaved" and the included proverb, "grant to them the Fatherland of their desire, and make them again citizens of Paradise", which aligns the text with a gesture of rebirth and the desire to provide the Slav people with a cohesive and comprehensive representation.

West elucidates on the *attentat* and its repercussions by presenting not only tactical and diplomatic short-sightings and failings but also by highlighting how the natural environment and symbolism surrounding the succeeding events made war inevitable. Wientzen comments that whenever fascism appears in *Black Lamb*, "it represents not only a threat to the endurance of such cultural particularity, but also reflex stripped of virtue—a disregard for 'the way the people live' in favor of empty routines and cognitive grooves through social engineering". He also points

out that in *Strange Necessity* West refers to the relevance of reflex by writing about “truths which we learn almost without exercise of thought, by immediate perceptions” (*Strange Necessity* 47) and specifying that one of these truths is the material embodiment of “body-consciousness” (99). Wientzen closes his argument by stating that West makes the case for “nationalism that is embodied without appealing to either the biological codes of fascism or its distinctive approach to reflex” (Wientzen 73). This is evident in the passages that cover the events directly following the *attentat*. For instance, the train that brought the bodies of the Archduke and his wife home in the dead of night was “horribly spattered by the blood of a railwayman who had been killed at a level crossing” (West 363). This emblematically demonstrates several of West’s key points in *Black Lamb*, including that the lives of the Archduke and Sophie, were the stimulus for the death of the unnamed workers of their sprawling Empire. Though the noble couple had, in life, a gross elitist disregard of the commoner, especially Serbian commoners, the suggestion of this passage extends to their death as the harbinger of countless more deaths brought on by the impending, highly mechanized war. The train being sent shrouded in the night to avoid crowds lends implication to a German efficiency and clandestineness that was especially disastrous as a tactic in the world wars but also refers to the arrival of a fully modernized Europe and how this modernization alters the normalcy of events. West references this again and again in allusion to German culture throughout *Black Lamb*. For instance, at the beginning of her journey into Yugoslavia, as she travels alongside Germans going on holiday to Yugoslavia, she describes in an exasperated fashion her observations of these strains of German character: “It was perplexing that they should have been surprised by the lateness of the train” (West 35). West is also annoyed by the German’s disdain for what they imagined of Yugoslavian accommodation: “Pigsties!”, to which West objects that she had stayed in a “huge hotel that was positively American in its luxury” in Zagreb, which correlates West’s expectation of German taste with modernism and newness.

West makes the seemingly grandiose statement that the haphazard funeral proceedings were themselves responsible for the Great War, an assertion she bases almost entirely on the dramatic atmosphere and inappropriate juxtaposing elements of the scene such as modern travel

advertisements. She writes that when the coffins were laid on the train platform it appeared to be “the signal for a blinding and deafening and drenching thunderstorm” (364) so that the priests were forced to consecrate the coffins in a crowded train platform waiting-room in order to take shelter from the storm, and West does not fail to note the incongruently or their being surrounded by “advertisements of seaside resorts” (364). In his article “Cultures of Impressions” Jesse Matz discusses the impact of modern advertisements on influencing cultural reflex. He argues that modern advertising provided a platform for mass deception and a link between the “advertising medium and the corporate message” (Matz 307) intermingled with nationalist iconography; in this instance, it is demonstrated by the funeral of Kaiser Wilhelm as the end of the oppressive era of Habsburg rule, towards the equally insidious cultural hegemony of fascism bolstered by aspects of modernization represented with the presence of these travel advertisements by corporatism and globalization. In exposing this sharp juxtaposition between the glib travel advertisements inside the transient space of a train platform waiting room and the weighty historical moment of the Emperor’s funeral, I am also correlating West’s cynicism about the effects of a globalized world with Theodor Adorno’s point in *The Culture Industry* (1944) on how modern advertising destroys temporal order and insinuates human control over history and its relevance (Adorno 70).

Travel in a modern, globalized world has an altered reality, as both foreign traveler and hosting national are under the influence of mass deceptions about the other since myths and stereotypes involving the other are reproduced and distributed by advertisement as well as word of mouth. West herself claims that violence was all she knew of the Balkans before she traveled there: “I derived the knowledge from memories of my earliest interest in Liberalism, of leaves fallen from this jungle of pamphlets, tied up with string in the dustiest corners of junk-shops” (West 21), which highlights the arbitrariness of how these stereotypes arise and are cemented in public consciousness. These deceptions occasionally overlap as developing nations attempt to “catch up” with western standards through what for many is the erasure of their traditional identities. Ironically, the backlash from young revolutionaries like Chabrinovitch—one of the principal revolutionaries alongside Princip and Grabezh who were held responsible for the murder of Franz Ferdinand—contributes to this erasure and furthers along the violent takeover of fascist

regimes as corporate messages begin to manipulate impressionable idealists to take violent measures to bring about changes that serve colonialist agendas.

West never discounts environment as a major factor for important political responses; for instance, she writes that as the funeral directors tried to move the bodies to the castle after the storm, the thunder and lightning upset the horses and caused so much anxiety, fatigue and horror that West is confident “it was this scene which made it quite certain that the Sarajevo *attentat* should be followed by a European war. The funeral was witnessed by a great many soldiers and officials and men of influence, and their reaction was excited and not logical” (364).

The lack of logic is dependent on the trauma and horror partly provided by the atmosphere and cultural reflex, otherwise referring to an innate response to social stimuli. West provides a measured and appropriate suggestion to the way the aftermath of the *attentat* should have been handled by the Austrian government. What should have followed, West details, was the dismissal of Prince Montenuovo, the revision of the Austrian constitution, decreasing the influence of the Habsburgs and an attempt towards the moral recuperation of Vienna. “If Franz Ferdinand had been quietly laid to rest according to the custom of his people, many Austrians would have felt sober pity for him for a day, and then remembered his faults” (364), but the dramatic insult of the moment and lack of dignity, custom and propriety lead to a much different and impetuous response.

Indeed, when Chabrinovitch was on trial for his role in the *attentat*, he attributed blame to the “poisoned atmosphere of the oppressed provinces, where every honest man was turned into a rebel, and assassination became a display of virtue” (376). The courtroom scene illustrates how reflex is determined not just by environmental or atmospheric impressions but also by language. To give an example, among the evidence provided against Chabrinovitch and meant to demonstrate that he was in league with the Serbian government in a plot to overthrow Austro-Hungary was his response to the question “are you a Serb”, to which Chabrinovitch responded “Yes, I am a Serbian hero” (371); however, this dialogue was deliberately provided by the court to paint Chabrinovitch as a militant nationalist, as the Serbian word for “hero” doubles as “nationalist”; “This has been taken by foreign commentators as proof of Chabrinovitch’s exalted

folly and the inflamed character of Serbian nationalism. But the word '*Yunak*' has a primary meaning of hero and a secondary meaning of militant nationalist" (West 371). Thus, the inflammatory nature of the trial further sparked a national backlash against Serbia and capitalized on centuries-long tensions between the two countries, legitimizing Austro-Hungary in their agenda for retaliation against Serbia. The lack of logic is further brought out by the fact that a lawyer during the trial was able to prove that Franz Ferdinand had no legal right to be in Sarajevo, but at that point Austria had already declared war on Serbia and the trial proceeded on more of a technicality; "It is typical of the insanity of our world that, ten weeks before this, Austria had declared war on Serbia because of her responsibility for the *attentat*, although these were the first proceedings which made it possible to judge whether that responsibility existed" (372). The irony is that the effort of the trial, which was necessary to gauge responsibility for the assassination, takes place after war has been declared. This highlights the irrationality often existing in major political decisions. The language barrier is also presented as a factor that obscures the truth and slants the trial. West goes on to add that the assassination is "imagined to have been far more formidable than it was" (375); these factors demonstrate that atmosphere and reflex are largely responsible for national and collective attitudes which create projected fantasies or imaginings of a historical situation. Thus, atmosphere and reflex have the power to effect large-scale calamities based on swift changes of perception. West often uses emotional terms to describe national attitudes; for instance, she claims that when the Congress of Berlin gave Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Austrian Empire it left Serbia "helpless and humiliated" (482) and that this act was driven by Austria's "hatred" for Serbia; this hatred manifested itself in Princip's bullet, which was then "catalytic to Central European passions" (482). All of this indicates that West viewed nation-states as having the characteristics and unpredictability of individuals. What is more, the boundaries and historical ethnic make-up for these states influence how groups will respond to each other, as West demonstrates when she argues that Yugoslavia is an incorporation of identities that are historically incompatible and have been directed by colonizers and empires to feel unfavorably towards one another.

The Slavs were raised up in enmity against the Italian-speaking sections, who were either such descendants of the Roman settlers as had never amalgamated with the Slavs, or



Venetian immigrants. There was no coherence; very little trade, since the Austrian railway system was designed to encourage the prosperity of Austria and Hungary and leave the Slav territories isolated from the rest of Europe. (191)

As George White argues in *Nation, State, and Territory* (2004), these networks and transportation pathways “direct the movement of individuals. Hence, states play an active role in influencing who will bond together in large social groups like nations and similarly help to determine the place and territories in which people will develop strong emotional attachments” (White 10). White argues that the failure of Yugoslavia occurred because the citizens were unable to adopt a sense of cohesive nationhood. The failure of statehood does not happen arbitrarily but is symptomatic of the impassioned reflex of individuals and collective groups within the society.

West records how the historical traumas of a place linger in the atmosphere and therefore contribute to the cultural reflexes that, in the case of the *attentat*, ignited war. For instance, West notices a “fly-blown, dusty, walking dream atmosphere that lingers in Balkan districts where the Turks had been” (294); in another example, she describes how the attitude towards what qualifies as political leaders amongst the Slavs had changed so that they no longer need to have distinguished themselves in guerilla warfare against the Turks (376); however, this historical attitude meant that there was ingrained in the Slavs the need to take political matters into their own hands if oppressed, which lends to possibilities like the *attentat* being considered a possible government conspiracy; though West offers much well-reasoned debate to suggest it was not a conspiracy, she acknowledges that other groups were not so convinced; for example, “This is what the Moslems in the Town Hall thought” (375), which further indicates the disunity of the Yugoslav state.

West finally illustrates that historical violence is issued by the mismanagement of funds in Yugoslavia in order to Westernize the country for the benefit of being on par with Austria who had historically belittled Serbia. Constantine complains of this when he argues that money is not issued to build schools in Macedonia but instead sent to Belgrade in order to make it an impressive capital: “We must make a capital [...] All Western Europeans despise us because we have a little capital that is not chic. They are wrong, for there is no reason why we should have a big capital, for we are a peasant state. But you must give these people what they want, and they

are like children, it is the big shining that impresses them” (85). West captures the sarcasm of Constantine well, which highlights the innate bitterness in Yugoslavia towards Westernization and the historical ingratitude of the West. On several instances, West references how the Slavs had “saved” the West from Islam: “These people of Dalmatia gave the bread out of their mouths to save us of Western Europe from Islam” (139), and so there is an ongoing indication of bitterness towards the West, Austro-Hungary and Germany, all of which are implied to have taken for granted, used and dismissed the Slavs, which contributed to an attitude of antagonism for Westernization, colonization from Austro-Hungary, and finally resulted in the reality of the assassination and war.

This observation on how capitalism is historically connected to violence and the hijacking of people’s lives compares with D.H. Lawrence’s in *Women in Love*, especially in regards to the character of Gerald. Gerald struggles to merge his aristocratic, pre-industrial and old-world conceptions with his acquired role as industrial capitalist who inherits his father’s coal mining business. This difficulty eventually leads him to turn his back on his community in pursuit of a “savage freedom” (Lawrence 192). In comparison, West observes the German tourists in the train car on her way to Yugoslavia and reflects, “Their businesses were, I am sure, most efficiently conducted. But this only meant that since the Industrial Revolution capitalism has grooved society with a number of deep slots along which most human beings can roll smoothly to a fixed destination. When a man takes charge of a factor the factory takes charge of him [...]. Their helplessness was the greater because they had plainly a special talent for obedience” (West 37). In these two examples, it is clear that Lawrence and West felt similarly about the danger of capitalism to strip back individual freedoms, which West explains, lead to fascism, as she sees in the train car that represents a microcosm for Nazi Germany: “These were exactly like all Aryan Germans I had ever known; and there were sixty millions of them in the middle of Europe” (37). Timothy Wientzen (2015) makes the comment that the only reason West believed England had not succumbed to fascism was because of its national tradition; hence Yugoslavia appealed to West, as other more “primitive” cultures appealed to Lawrence, for the reason that it was a land “completely undone by the shock of modernization” and thus represented a place that had

“retained all of the material and cognitive traditions necessary for moral agency. It instantiates a mode of life not only at odds with the currents of capitalist development, but one whose embodied traditions, she imagines, equip citizens with the spiritual capacities to confront fascism” (Wientzen 67). In this regard, both Lawrence and West advocate for England to look towards the histories, traditions, rituals and mythologies of more primitive cultures in order to stay off England’s destruction from future wars.

### ***Black Lamb: Female Bildungsroman, Travel and the Encounter with Myth***

West’s analysis of a complex Yugoslavian history can be read as developing a form of female *Bildungsroman* for the way West blends her own personal history with that of all women, as well as other marginalized and oppressed peoples she encounters on her journey to understand what can prevent war. *Black Lamb* is a renewed female *Bildungsroman* in how the author writes herself in a travel narrative focused on coming to awareness; this is constructed through how she reworks genre, for instance, through voicing views and moments of discovery through the opinions of her husband, and through the adaption and transformation of the tradition of the Grand Tour. The relationship of Gerda and Constantine is also carefully constructed to illustrate the consequences of fascism in personal relationships, as West writes the character of Gerda as manifesting the burgeoning hatred against Jews and “the other” as issued from a misplaced nationalist sentiment. West represents this evolving fascism through the microscopic lens of the couple’s heteronormative relationship. Gerda is German; Constantine is a Slav and a Jew. “I do not understand”, West’s husband expresses in dismay after observing one of many unfathomable interactions between Gerda and Constantine: “Usually a wife or husband is delighted, if only for superficial and worldly reasons, when the other partner has many friends. Unless of course there is hatred between them. Do you think Gerda perhaps really hates Constantine?” (466). West represents their dynamic to her audience by detailing how she and her husband are unable to clarify whether Constantine and Gerda are in love or hate each other. In order to achieve an emotional ambiguity, West and her husband are represented as outsiders to the history of Slavic and German interaction and therefore have a limited emotional awareness to

gauge the dynamism of Constantine and Gerda, especially by comparison with their own relationship. This uncertainty stands in for the larger point West is making about the inability to effectively understand the complexities between other national entities.

However, the dynamic between West and her own husband cannot be regarded without criticism. If West's husband is concerned with what is "usual" (466) between wife and husband, and if we take their relationship as the paragon of what is normal heteronormative relating, we discover an interesting pattern emerging: West continuously depicts her husband as presenting a difficult question, West then mulls over the finer details of the query before her husband is shown to have an epiphany. West normally leaves the revelations about Yugoslavia up to her husband's character to divulge. It is possible that this is out of supreme respect for her husband's discerning nature; however, I maintain it is a literary technique employed by West to indicate how men, western or other (as Constantine also takes on this role of offering explanations throughout the text) are constantly directing and redirecting plot narratives towards topics and conclusions of their own choosing. "I don't know," West responds to her husband's question of whether Gerda and Constantine hate each other; this is followed immediately afterwards by her husband exclaiming "I have it! [...] Most of the people I mentioned were Jews. What an odd, what an elusive thing it is to be a German nowadays" (466). In this way, West's husband solves the problem he presented, wondering why Gerda did not like Constantine having many friends. It is problematic that West establishes her husband as both the critical questioner and the rationalizer who balances out her whimsical or verbose observations with definite conclusions. Another example of this dynamic at work occurs as West's husband presses Constantine to explain why there was so much public objection to the Turkish Prime minister visiting Bosnia: "'But how is it possible,' said my husband, 'that there should be so much feeling against the Turks when nobody who is not very old can possibly have had any personal experience of their oppressions?' The three men looked at my husband as if we were talking nonsense. 'Well,' said my husband, 'were not the Turks booted out of here in 1878?'" (West 317). This exchange continues for a few pages and therefore this is an example of a conversation that feels staged for the reader, as it is unlikely that West's husband would have asked a series of leading questions, coupled with facts that

established the place of the two countries' sentiments and history; so then, this begs the question of why West has positioned her husband as the voice of reason. I posit that it is for the commercial advantage of creating a male protagonist and traditional voice of reason to be relatable to male readers, and thereby to establish credibility by artfully removing herself to the position of observer; however, I also consider that West is establishing irony by transcribing her opinions or, at least, shared opinions with her husband, as if they were solely her husband's, to highlight the expectation of society and the lack of value placed on women and their opinions. This is evidenced earlier in the abovementioned exchange when West asks the men a question and the figure labeled as "the judge", "leaned over to me and whispered, 'It is all right, Madame, they are just talking a little about politics'" (316), by way of dismissing her question and also reminding her that patriarchal society has judged that women should not participate in political discussions.

However, West places similar prejudiced judgments against Gerda for being German. West's disdain for Gerda is problematic because of the fact that West makes explicit her similar contempt for Germany, and not only in regards to the emerging fascism but for western culture in general, often including her own British heritage. West writes of her and her husband's outrage that Gerda must accompany them on a planned trip with Constantine to Macedonia. West's list of reasons why she'd prefer that Gerda do not accompany them goes from the legitimate concern that Gerda will hold the Macedonian people and traditions in contempt—"her contempt for everything Slav and non-German would be at its most peevish in Macedonia, which is the most Slav part of Yugoslavia, and which is not only non-German but non-Occidental, being strongly Byzantine and even Asiatic" (624)—to the flippant and superficial complaints such as her extra bodily presence making their train journey uncomfortable: "The cars and cabs we could rely on in Macedonia would be small, too small for four, though comfortable enough for three (624). But here Constantine insists that Gerda will come with them regardless of their concerns; even after West's husband attempts to coerce him by peering down at Constantine over his "spectacles shining with a light that looked menacing" (624) demanding that Gerda does not come with them, they are still "sentenced by an invisible and nameless authority for some unnamed sin to a

fantastic and ineluctable punishment” (624). This passage is indicative of how western powers attempt to intimidate nation-states, here represented by the aggressive attitude of West’s husband towards Constantine, but, when they are unsuccessful in this strategy, they consider themselves punished by the will of any entity they regard as inferior. It is also worth noting that it was again West’s husband that served as the ultimate authority and made the declaration that Gerda would not come. West uses the description of his bending over Constantine, looking over his glasses, as indications of his cultural superiority but also of his patriarchal superiority over her. In this scene, he literally stands in as West’s protector. This is felt, in part, by his taking the impetus to make demands on Constantine out of a response to West’s emotional distress, as West wrote that she responded to the news of Gerda’s coming on the trip by being “transfixed with horror. Tears began to run down my cheeks [...] It was like having to take a censorious enemy on one’s honeymoon” (623). West highlights how bodily responses to conflict are gendered, but also based on assumptions of cultural superiority. Both West and her husband are left dazed by their lack of success coercing Constantine: “It was not a thing that happens to one in adult life, being obliged to go on a journey with someone whom one dislikes and who has no sort of hold over one, sentimental or patriotic or economic” (624). This scene demonstrates that West and her husband can appear extravagant and even prone to childlike tantrums when denied access to privileges they have come to expect as British citizens abroad.

Indeed, it is relevant to the development of West’s character-self that portrays her own cultural preferences and practices in a negative light. For instance, I’ve indicated passages from the text where West explicitly states she dislikes Gerda, but West also reveals to her audience key insights into how Gerda might have regarded West: “Every word and movement of hers, and even in some mysterious way her complete inaction, implied that she was noble, patient, industrious, modest, and self-effacing, whereas we were materialist, unstable, idle, extravagant, and aggressive” (499).

Another example occurs as West describes her annoyance at being “dogged” (625) by gifts of carnations throughout her journey, which she discovers is due to the Central European custom of gifting ladies flowers based on their husbands’ occupation. West learns that she has been

given carnations because her husband is a banker and the simple flower choice is supposed to “keep me from getting above my myself, for it was ruled that the flowers which I received on my arrival in a town, and during my stay should be modest” (625). Ironically, West seems unable to take the recommendation of modesty to heart as she implies to Constantine that she “detests” carnations; he then explains to West and her husband that it is only on their departure from Yugoslavia that West will receive an extravagant bouquet of flowers, and West finds a reason to critique the leaving bouquet’s planned color as being too personal. It is interesting that West here describes Constantine as having doubt in his eyes, “as if he were wondering whether his wife were not right, and he had greatly exaggerated the degree of our refinement” (625). Constantine is shown to become angry with West at another instance in the text when she suggests that he was wrong to censor John Gunther’s *Inside Europe* (1936), which was a tour de force in the interim of world wars; the work was a comprehensive survey of Europe at the time of great political and social upheaval, which according to West, Gunther captured shrewdly and successfully; and yet Constantine had censored it from sale in Yugoslavia. Constantine asks, “Why should Western crétins drool their spittle on our sacred things?” (836), but West refuses to accept that this is sincerely Constantine’s opinion, attributing it again to Gerda’s influence, or what she refers to as his “abandonment to Gerda’s nihilism” (836). West determines that, in censoring *Inside Europe*, Constantine must have defied “his own convictions just as Voltaire might, once in a while, have grimaced and put his liberal conscience to the door for the sake of taking a holiday from his own nature” (836). In these examples, West’s character appears not only haughty but patronizing to assume the real impulse behind Constantine’s motivations; after their disagreement on censorship West describes how Constantine would not leave the car with them for the remainder of their journey but sat in the car “unhappy” (836) and denying them the bemusement of his boastful stories relating to his “sexual or academic prowess” (836). In this way, West insinuates that Constantine and his opinions are not to be taken seriously and thus she reinforces the hierarchy of western versus Yugoslavian. However, Constantine’s question remains to cloud West’s oeuvre with doubt: “why should westerners write about Yugoslavia?”.

The significance of this question is not lost on West, as she often describes her *Bildung* in terms of her self-awareness of the instances of her cultural advantage, which she uses to throw her own characterization in negative relief. There is a delicate balance between West's self-depreciating view of her own foreignness and her often-misplaced nostalgia for the primitive, which causes her to romanticize Yugoslavia in the same way that occurs in Forster's *A Room with a View* with Italy, and in Woolf's *The Voyage Out* with South America. Gerda insists that West does not understand the locals, at one occurrence, as West takes delight in the beauty of gypsies, to which Gerda bitterly retorts, "you should see that they are nothing but dirty and uncivilized savages, who ought not to be in Europe at all" (661). Gerda demands to know what it is that West values in Yugoslavia: "I do not understand you, you go on saying what a beautiful country this is, and you must know perfectly well that there is no order here, no culture, but only a mish-mash of different peoples who are all quite primitive and low. Why do you do that?" (662), to which West provides the measured response that it is because there are so many different peoples that Yugoslavia is beautiful and interesting. "So many of these peoples have remarkable qualities, and it is fascinating to see whether they can be organized into an orderly state" (662). But here West betrays her over-dependence on Yugoslavia's beauty, as related to its tendency towards the primitive, an issue that dogs her entire work. This dilemma emphasizes West's contention that Yugoslavia can be restructured or "ordered" based on her western perception and therefore on western standards of order. When West gazes nostalgically over the mountains and valleys towards the "ruins of an aqueduct which was pre-Byzantine, which was built when the Roman Empire was still governed from Rome" (663), she views the geopolitical situation of Yugoslavia from this Western, historically linear perspective, which assumes heritage and cultural birthright derives from Ancient Rome. Thus as West seems to exclude the Ottoman Empire from her horizon, this example highlights her inescapable view of the landscape from within the Western perspective.

Gerda, as the epitome of German order, believes it is diversity that causes the lack of order in Yugoslavia, whereas West argues it is a lack of large historical figures such as Peter the Great or Catherine the Great. She determines that these grandiose figures manifest national pride and



their absence makes inspiring loyalty to a centralized power or any ordered system such as communism or imperialism difficult. Instead the disunity creates small rebellions that act against the government in “independent groups, as Princip and Chabrinovitch did” (486). The consolidation of Yugoslavia occurred largely because of allied forces from World War I using to their advantage the euphoria deriving from the destruction of Austro-Hungary to embolden a large army of newly liberated Slavs to act as a “spearhead” (591) against the Austrians and Germans, and as always to provide a buffer against Turks and the Middle East for Central and Western Europe.

Out of all the Slavic countries West visits on her journey it is Macedonia that she describes as the least westernized and, the inference is, consequently the most violent. “The prime cause of Macedonian violence is, of course, five hundred years of misgovernment by the Ottoman Empire. But it would never have assumed its recent extreme and internecine character had it not been for England’s support of the Ottoman Empire when it would have fallen apart if it had been left to itself” (676). In the same way that western powers oppress and use the Slavic countries for their assumption of power and to protect against violence their own insecurities, West argues, men use women. West emphasizes the importance of the link between gender and national relations throughout her work, bringing to the forefront the point that similar imbalances of power create and inspire the same violence. For instance, Nicole Rizzuto (2015) discusses the violence against women inherent in West’s earlier work *The Return of the Soldier*, as it relates to conceptions of national past:

[*The Return of the Soldier*] suggests [...] that the drive to symbolize, results not only in failure but in the disappearance of women as witnesses to history. By literarily and figuratively “exulting” as a mythic object and by metaphorically freezing or “friezing,” Margaret by lifting and making her “stand in a niche above the altar [on Monkey Island]” like a statue of a goddess in this Greek temple, Chris evacuates her of her human, material form, her gendered and classed subjecthood, to render her transcendent and inanimate (Rizzuto 90).

In the same sense, West was wary of idealizing or romanticizing national pasts, especially when considering the inclusion of “the other” as the root of the problem. West understood that this “othering” would incite hatred with the eventual threat of a violent removal or ethnic cleansing to return the nation to its idyllic “origin”. As Rizzuto describes it, “Fictional representations of idyllic

national pasts entail the violence of erasure" (82). In this way, women share a common history with other marginalized groups in that they experience a cultural, literary and historical erasure in patriarchal societies. Significant structural changes of an oppressed nation and the *Bildung* of woman embody the same problems and impossibilities. Out of all the causes West lists for Macedonian violence, West notes that a backlash of "Serbian chauvinism" (676) is one of the most significant, especially as it was used against the Austrian Empire's *Drang nach Osten* or colonization of Slavic lands. West makes the association of male chauvinism with colonization when she discusses the general contempt for women in Macedonia: "all the women in the village were treated as if courage or cunning on their part was inconceivable, as if they were lucky to be used as beasts of burden" (677). She argues that even if one woman proves herself as an exception and manages to secure the respect of the men she will not enjoy her raised station because of the continued maltreatment of women in general. West attempts to make an English comparison, presumably for her male audience's comprehension: "If all Englishmen were compelled by a taboo to be treated as inferiors by all female beings over the age of fourteen, forbidden to move or speak freely in their presence, and obliged to perform all menial duties without thanks, an Englishman who happened to have won the V.C. would still not find life enjoyable" (677). West argues that it will be difficult for men to understand this point because the key difference between the sexes is that men lack all sense of "objective reality" and will not recognize a point unless it will "serve his purposes" (687). This is obviously because any figure with the privileged and secured station of power will be reticent to accept an opinion that may challenge or make vulnerable that position of power. The inability to see "objective reality", West argues, leaves men unable to be self-aware or know the "existence of [their] own soul" (678) and mortality, whereas women are more content to accept life's ambiguities and charity. The fear of death and loss of power leaves men perpetually "enraged" (678) and in need of constant reassurance from women on whom, ironically, they are actually "the most dependent" (679). The women accept their universal subordination to men because they recognize that if men gain strength out of women's perceived inferiority then it is "better to let them have it" (680). "The trouble is that too often the strength so derived proves inadequate for the task at hand" (680).

This dilemma is also apparent in Woolf's most famous, feminist polemical essay *A Room of One's Own*, where Woolf presents as a central issue for women their need to achieve financial independence and have physical privacy in order to think, rather than be confined to public spaces such as the drawing room, where they are constantly at the demand of men, amongst other members of the household or people passing through. Molly Hite (2017) comments in her chapter "Making Room for *A Room of One's Own*" that "For Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* [...], the aim of money and a private space is to guarantee the integrity of the creative process [...] the drawing room—the quintessentially female room in the private house—is, by definition, subject to penetration" (Hite 92). This creates an obvious gender inequality since women have no space of their own in order to protect their bodies in order to foster their minds. Both Woolf and West were aware of the extent to which male guard had been secured over the female body, and this restriction in movement and privacy is what had led to women's continual intellectual subjugation.

As I stated in my second chapter, Woolf presumably also thought women needed their own physical space to create because of her view that women and men have inherently different strategies and capacities for learning. Woolf even goes so far as to suggest that in order for men and women to have "complete understanding" they would need to have a "blood transfusion and memory transfusion" (*A Room of One's Own* 6). This is similar to Lawrence's suggestion of "blood consciousness" as it indicates, alongside Woolf's evocation that women should "think back through our mothers" (76) that there is some intergenerational, social and historical memory that women can draw on in order to shape their experience in their world. In this regard, women would need their own space to spare themselves from the cultural onslaught of fascist and patriarchal images, like the images of war that Woolf takes issue with in *Three Guineas*. Wientzen suggest that it was "the use of such visual codes within British institutions [...] that normalizes the domestic 'fascism' of patriarchy" (Wientzen 58).

West notices throughout her travels that the most subjugated women are those who are the most heavily weighed down by traditional garments. This is representative of how women's bodies, their movements and actions are anchored to the whims and doings of their menfolk. As Judith Butler argues in *Bodies that Matter*, women and their material bodies become

instrumentalized by men. In the introduction to the text, Butler makes this clear when she writes that “sex’ not only functions as a norm, but is part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs, that is, whose regulatory force is made clear as a kind of productive power, the power to produce—demarcate, circulate, differentiate—the bodies it controls” (Butler 1). In *Black Lamb*, the women are conceptualized as stiff icons adorned with heavy and burdensome clothing, they are present as symbols of sacrifice to their culture and representative of the centuries in which the Balkan lands have been purposed as a barrier against violence; because of the Balkan’s geographical designation as a liminal space, which western and Central Europe viewed as a kind of sacrificial border protecting the them from Turkish invasion, the Balkans themselves began to be seen as a place of violence and disorder. Similarly to the way the west designated and created the representation of the Balkans as violent and unknown, men have created the conceptualization of women in their image but not as autonomous beings.

Butler describes the existence of men and women with a metaphor based on the Greek word for wood, *hyle*: “women are said to contribute the matter; men the form. The Greek *hyle* is wood that has already been cut from trees, instrumentalized and instrumentalizable, artifactual, on the way to being put to use” (Butler 7). Men providing the form for the conceptualization of women thus stylizes them in the image of man, or to the creative impetus of man, and uses their bodies violently to enforce their own conditions of creation. The metaphor of women as wood cut from the tree of man, outside of biblical associations, recalls the myth of Daphne who transformed into a tree in order to avoid being raped and used violently by the god Apollo. The problematic implication in this story alongside Butler’s metaphor is then that Daphne gains the status of exception and thereby respect of men and cultural remembrance for transforming into the form giving material or else by transforming into the origin. In other words, Daphne has killed her female, material body in order to become the ideal and sexless demarcation of woman by male creation, which in this instance is symbolized with the tree as the Godhead. Nancy K. Miller’s “Archnologies: The Woman, The Text and The Critic” (1986) similarly approaches mythology in order to “over-read” female authorship. In the Arachne myth, Athena challenges the mortal Arachne to attempt to best her in weaving. Athena, never intending to allow Arachne to win, signs

her tapestry with her representation of “a border of peaceful olive wreath from her own tree” (Miller 273), which aligns the symbol of the tree with creativity and authority. This image, juxtaposed with Erigone hanging herself from a tree or Daphne being transformed into an immobile tree, suggests that women who dare to challenge or subvert power structures are punished; in Arachne’s case she is transformed outside her female body into a body that is “restricted to spinning outside representation” (273).

West creates her own reworking of the myth of Arachne when she travels to Macedonia and describes women’s representation. Her *Bildung* as a female author is to find the lost voices of the women bound to historical progress but lost in its folds. In Macedonia, West observes the link between the clothes women are wearing and their bodily death as she describes the dour scene of watching men and women dancing in Skopska Tserna Gora. Viewing the dance was not beautiful or ecstatic but “profoundly depressing” (West 673) to West. Whereas the men were handsome, the women were wearing clothes so cumbersome and heavy that she can only associate them with death: “Their bodies were padded with gowns of the coarse Macedonian linen which is said to be so thick the worms cannot gnaw through a shroud of it” (673). This imagery is interesting when considered with regard to biblical associations for creation also invited by the book’s dedication, which explicitly evokes Paradise men are shaped by god with clay or earth, while women are created from the man’s body, thus women are so removed from the earth and creative processes that West implies their bodies are not even viewed in this Macedonian village, for instance, as organic enough to be penetrated by earth-dwelling worms. They are dehumanized and transformed, via as much cumbersome clothing as possible, into the inorganic, male-conception of form with no substance, they are represented as the fear of inexistence, of death, of the negation of life. With the stable presence of these icons, the men are motivated by fear to continue defending their culture and patriarchal power, or else risk transforming themselves into the inorganic, static, images of death that they have condemned to the lot of women. In other words, as Butler points out, in Greek *schema* means form, and form denotes “shape, figure, appearance dress, gesture, figure of syllogism, and grammatical form” (Butler 8). Put simply, if men conceptualize their sex as the form-givers and to give form is to hold

power, then men have dressed, shaped, figured woman in their own image, but heavily burdened her down so as to make her remain fixed and imprisoned within his conception of his creation. Butler's discussion of Luce Irigaray's criticism of the history of philosophy, which conceives Irigaray's purpose as to ask how philosophy's "borders are secured" (11), helps investigate how the geographical borders of Yugoslavia are maintained in *Black Lamb* with respect to how women are situated there; Butler asks how it is possible to read any text "for what does *not* appear" (11), and declares that Irigaray's answer shows that where women appear in philosophical history is "precisely the site of their erasure" (12). Relating this thought to *Black Lamb*, West's representation of the inert or heavily burdened figures of women is her answer to whether Yugoslavia can remain peaceful and whole, or if it will be the site of future wars. West shows that patriarchal societies issue their own death warrant with violence and enslavement of women, as what men in power are achieving is to allow the violence and enslavement of themselves via stronger national entities, since women are merely the mark "of a masculine signifying act only to give back a (false) reflection" (Butler 13). West's journey results in her text's epitaph, dedicated to her friends in Yugoslavia now "dead or enslaved"; the purpose then for her journey is to warn western societies to reform or meet similar ends. By exposing the limits, erasure and exclusion of women in Slavic society West embodies her own *Bildung*, enabling her journey of development by inserting herself within the text and reworking language, classical forms and travel narratives which "cannot belong to her" (13) as a woman. Despite the fact that from the beginning of the text by the epitaph the audience is aware that the conclusion is death, the text's existence attempts, in vain, to disrupt the flow of history from its course towards death. This is also representative of a reworked version of the Grand Tour and of the female *Bildungsroman* because while West behaves similarly to female travelers who have gone before her like Lady Stanhope and Lady Montagu, her manipulation of form and intention to prevent war create an alternative space for women to travel beyond the limitations established by men. In fact, though West often uses her husband or Constantine to allow her access into what would be closed conversations privy to men, or in order to establish credibility with her audience by using a male voice, she is present in

every page of her monumental text, discovering and developing her opinions from within the text where she has inscribed herself.

Constantine describes the differences between English men and Slavic men, and mentions women's status as a sort of outside limbo beyond cultural expectations. He informs West that, "because you are a woman, [...] so you have no very definite personality" (West 91); indeed, Michael Bennett (1997) suggests that it is female sexuality that threatens patriarchal culture: "[...] a woman's sexuality threatens the very basis of masculinity while at the same time jeopardizing society as a whole" (Bennett 137-38). Nonetheless, women appear throughout the text, histories and mythologies as symbols and motivations directly influencing nation-building and cultural identity. To continue the metaphor of wood being representative of womanhood, it is easy to see the link that Butler makes by associating wood with timber to build "houses and ships" (Butler 7) or else, women become the material needed in order to build a community or to carry generations of men temporally and geographically forward. For instance, when West is traveling through Bosnia, Constantine tells about the mythology and customs surrounding St. George's Day. He describes how Slavic women were used as a distraction and bait against the invading Turks. The women were sent out to the nearby forest of the town and told to sing and dance:

Then when the Turks heard them singing and saw them dancing they thought [...] the fortress would be like a ripe fruit in their hands. But since they were always like wolves for women, they left their ladders and they ran down to rape the poor little ones before they started looting and killing in the town. When they were in the woodlands and marshes down by the river the Christians rose from their ambush and destroyed them. And the little ones who had been so brave went back to the city they had saved, and for a few more years they were not slaves (West 412).

Constantine offers his opinion of how the Slav men trusted the women, "so that there must have been an honourable love between them" (412). This story exemplifies how women are set up to not only defend and sacrifice themselves for the nation, but also how they can later be made into symbols of nation. Constantine explains that the tradition continues every St. George's Day, and all the women of the town go to the river to sing and dance. By retelling this mythologized story every St. George's Day, women are allowed to participate in the history and culture of modern-day Yugoslavia; as sacrificial symbols they are made honorable for men. De Beauvoir states,

A myth always implies a subject who projects his hopes and his fears towards a sky of transcendence. Women do not set themselves up as subject and hence have erected no virile myth in which their projects are reflected [...] woman has only a secondary part to play in the destiny of [...] heroes. (De Beauvoir 174)

By wielding the pen, West uses her own power to take control of the Godhead and thereby take her audience on a journey of what one reviewer in *The New Yorker* referred to as “a spiritual revolt against the twentieth century” (Fadiman 1941). Indeed, just as West distances herself from the western world, she begins to find parallels of displeasure with the Slavic tendency towards sacrifice, which is repulsive to her. Carl Rollyson notes that she rejects the sacrifice of the black lamb and the wiping of its blood on the young girl’s forehead (to purge people of sin) most adamantly (Rollyson 179). West could see unsettling similarities between the changes that were taking place in England in 1939, with Chamberlain appeasing Hitler, and the defeat of Lazar at Kosovo Polje in 1389 who sacrificed himself and his people to the Turks for the promise of a richer life in heaven. To West, no one suffers more from the acquiescing and sacrificing decisions leaders make than women, whom she illustrates are simultaneously excluded from decision-making and visibility in cultural and political life to the point of erasure from history, and yet paradoxically used as symbols of an ideal for the motivation of men.

The way that women are mythologized and culturally constructed reflects religious constructions as well. The many descriptions of the iconostasis within the Orthodox churches in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* highlight the important symbolism behind the iconostasis that separates and veils the chancel from the nave, so that the congregation is held in more mystery and specifically so that the nave that represents the “Earth” is not able to view “Heaven” represented by the chancel. This veiling and protecting is thematic throughout mythology and culture as a way of preserving the imagination over the reality of “an unencumbered body” (Bennett 137-38).

West illustrates how in Macedonia nationalism is thoroughly entwined with religion, so that the construction of the belief in the state and culture imbued by it are what engenders religious belief. West relays a story told by a Macedonian Orthodox priest as an acrobat balances on his head nearby with an “uncanny air of permanence” (West 671). The priest explains that he wants to erect “a huge flagstaff planted” on the nearby “grey peak that dominates” the valley to



carry “the hugest Yugoslavian flag ever made” (671). Beyond the evident phallic element of the flag dominating the landscape and extending out of the mountain peak as a fountainhead of male creation (creating Yugoslavian culture and dominating the land), the priest juxtaposes this desire with the Catholic promotion of the Virgin Mary, which he had been reproached about by a French priest for not wanting to adorn the mountain with it. The Orthodox priest tries to appear profound but there is hypocrisy evident, as he relays what he answered to the French priest: “You speak as one who does not know that this country was not for the Virgin Mary until our flag had flown here” (671), which West implies causes the acrobat to quiver and collapse, instantly falling asleep, as if in a trance, while his friends sing “‘John Brown’s Body.’ ‘It is an old song of our comitadji,’ explained the priest” (671). This scene demonstrates the way Yugoslavian nationalism in Orthodox communities interweaves with religion and creationism, replacing the woman as life giving with the material of a flag. And at this point, especially in regard to the material aspect of the flag, it is not flippant to discuss importance of cloth and materiality in Yugoslavia for forging and maintaining identity. The acrobat symbolizes the delicate process by which the identity must balance and support performance in order to maintain life in Yugoslavia. The fact that the acrobat collapses serves in this scene as a foreboding premonition that the balance cannot be maintained. West suggests the reason for this is that women have been entirely removed from the creative process and used as sacrificial embodiments of male power.

What West most admired about D.H. Lawrence, she wrote, was that he felt an “urgency to describe the unseen so keenly [...] that he has rifled the seen of its vocabulary and diverted it to that purpose” (Rollyson 182). West displays her affinity for Lawrence’s methodology of writing in her elaborations of fact, her vivid rendering of perhaps ordinary happenings into hugely significant symbolisms for Yugoslavia at a critical moment in history. West became obsessively deliberate about pulling her audience repeatedly to the issue of the “unseen” state of women in the country. West does this in clever ways such as describing performances or environments which technically center around female involvement only to demonstrate how lacking in individual agency women are within these spaces.

For instance, as West is watching an unconventional take on a traditional Yugoslavian dance, unconventional because the dancer acted with a great deal of movement and buoyancy, as opposed to more traditional dancing that appears more grounded and “heavy”, Constantine critically states,

A woman must not spring about like a man to show how strong she is and she must not laugh like a man to show how happy she is. She has something else to do. She must go round wearing heavy clothes, not light at all, but heavy, heavy clothes, so that she is stiff, like an icon, and her face must mean one thing, like the face of an icon, and when she dances she must move without seeming to move, as if she were an icon held up before the people. (West 93)

The girl also commits a larger offence by coming back into the room after her dance is over dressed in the traditional attire of a principal male lead dancer, who would have worn much lighter clothing to be able to jump and spring about the heavily clad female dancers. The male-version of this traditional attire is described as consisting of “a tight bodice and kilt of oatmeal linen, with a multicolored sporran, and she wore the typical male Lika head-dress, a cap with an orange crown, a black rim, and a black lock of fringe falling over the ear and nape of the neck on the right side” (West 93). This allowed her to be “very quick and springing; it was in fact a boy’s dance’ (93). Aligned with the significance of materiality in Yugoslavia it is clear how performance must be supported by clothing, it is easy to see that what is required of the women in these traditional dances is to be burdened. The women are being burdened to the point of not having their own facial movements that would represent individuality or loyalty outside of that to the nation of Yugoslavia. In another example, West is disconcerted when she encounters a group of Turkish prostitutes:

I went over to the girl at the loom and stood beside her, looking down on her hands, as if I wanted to see how a carpet was made. But she did nothing, and suddenly I realised she was angry and embarrassed. She did not know how to weave a carpet any more than I do (West 278).

This example, like that of the acrobat, forebodes the inevitable failure of the state because the act that the women are prepared to perform for West is not sustainable, easily seen through, and empty of any real material production. Though West is quick in the beginning of *Black Lamb* to criticize capitalistic nations for disregarding the value of folk art and exploiting virtuosos, as her journey continues she steadily brings to light for her audience the hollow unproductivity

within a nation where even half of its population might not believe (or be really included) in its ideologies and practices.

Weaving and clothes are age-old literary symbols that evoke Penelope and the loom, and also Circe, and her capacity of wielding power and creativity. For three years Penelope wove a shroud for her father-in-law during the day, and every night deceptively undid that day's work to buy time in order to keep her many suitors at bay while she waited for Odysseus's return. This also recalls Arachne who boasted that she was as skilled at weaving as Athena and was challenged by her, who turned her into a spider for daring to defy her. Bennett suggests that weaving has traditionally been treated as the most valued feminine activity next to bearing children (Bennett 132). However, like all traditional feminine arts, weaving creates the possibility for "deception, illusion and trickery" (132). Of course, there is the obvious example of the Fates weaving men's destiny. But also, specifically, in *The Odyssey* Circe almost brings about Odysseus's doom with her attempts to make him forget his loyalty to his fatherland. And Athena, who though a woman is a goddess identified with wisdom, the godhead and as Miller notes "the cerebral male identity that bypasses the female" (Miller 273). After Arachne creates her tapestry in competition with Athena, Athena goes on to mutilate the text and "destroy its author by beating her over the head with the shuttle" (273). Similarly, we see the fears and anxieties towards women reflected in the character of Circe in *The Odyssey*. Circe is seen as "'bounded' in goodness" (Bennett 135) by mortals, who see her alluringly and innocently at the loom and singing. "The gods, however, know [...] her hidden, 'unbound' nature. [...] the gods perceive her drugs and wand" (135) that she ultimately uses to sedate and "unman" Odysseus's men and, perhaps more tellingly, almost causes them to forget their fatherland and their desire to return home. In the chapter "The Lesbian Phallus and the Morphological Imaginary", Judith Butler reimagines Freud's conception of hypochondria as an eroticized narcissism or "a theatrical delineation or production of the body, one which gives imaginary contours to the ego itself, projecting a body which becomes the occasion of an identification which in its imaginary or projected status is fully tenuous" (Butler 33-4). In *The Odyssey*, we see Circe drugging Odysseus and his men as her capacity to alter the male-constructed version of reality, molding it to her

desires while the wand is obviously her possession of the phallus and power which she uses to transfigure and dehumanize men in a reversal of the order of the world. Where women are represented as goddesses, sirens or unearthly beings we witness glimpses of the male-imagining of women as form-giving, power-wielding malevolent tricksters that would use their position of power to destabilize them and the fabric of reality. To extend Judith Butler's point in reference to "hyle" where men give form and women, as matter, receive the form, women become constituted into myths that stand to represent Earth and, particularly a home that needs protecting. In war, men are in a process of maintaining authority over their ground, and myths become useful as a tool to instill fear of what would happen if women became "unbounded".

It is Gerda, a woman, that in *Black Lamb* almost ruins West's trip. Gerda consistently attempts to undermine and derail West's motivations in the Balkans. Clare Colquitt (1986) suggested that Gerda presents just as large a threat to Constantine, who is also a Jewish Serb, as Germany threatens Yugoslavia, and Europe at large. "By painstakingly depicting Constantine's slow 'dying', West warns her readers as well as nations who choose to obey the Siren's call. The Siren to whom Constantine listens [is Gerda, who] both unmans her husband and spoils West's second pilgrimage to Yugoslavia" (Colquitt 79). The scene where the acrobat collapses into a sleep and is surrounded by his peers who sing about a man's body is illustrative of this slow and inevitable death that is due not only for Constantine and displaced Jews but also for Yugoslavia, in general.

Gerda antagonizes West by being willfully ignorant and hostile to the Balkans, and therefore embodying the "idiocy" that West is trying to escape and as a manipulator of Constantine, and thus an interloper on West's journey. West understands that there is no escape from Gerda or from German fascism. She worryingly sees the effects of Gerda's influence on Constantine: "He looked years older, and congested. It was as if in his abandonment to Gerda's nihilism he had withdrawn his consent to every integrating process, even to the circulation of his blood" (West 836).

With the contrast of West and Gerda we can see the balance of life and death being brought to Yugoslavia, in the sense that Gerda is representative of Nazi Germany, prior to the

second World War, while West is offering her book as a life-giving token by its representation of the unseen and unheard voices. As Simone de Beauvoir argued in *The Second Sex*, in mythology it's "the Parcae [and] the Moirai who weave the destiny of mankind; but it is they also who cut the threads" (De Beauvoir 179), which showcases representation of women as the bringers of life and death—holding the world in balance for them to shape. By applying De Beauvoir's conception, it becomes clearer how women in West's text are described as symbols to maintain belief in home and country. As I pointed out earlier, West observes women in Macedonia with bodies so weighed down by thick clothes that "worms cannot gnaw through a shroud of it". It was as if they were wearing "bed-clothes" or like they were "stiff and stylized Virgin of the icons" "inorganic" or "dead" (West 673-74). These descriptions evoke how women are traditionally fixed in society as allegorical symbols of home and family but also hold the mystery of life and death. "Death is [often represented as] woman, and it is for women to bewail the dead because death is their work" (De Beauvoir 179).

West brilliantly and poetically conceives of this visibility whilst witnessing an old peasant woman walking up a path in Montenegro. West writes,

Could the mind twitch away the black curtain behind the stars, it might be dazzled by a brightness brighter than the stars, which might be the battle-field for another splendid conflict as yet not conceived. It was towards this splendour that the woman was leading, as we passed her later, leaving the road and treading over the turf among gentians which she did not see. 'Good-bye!' Dragutin cried to her. 'Good-bye, Mother!' (West 1013)

In this representation, which occurs near the close of the text in Montenegro, West shows us a woman leaving into the unknown as West is riding with Constantine and her husband up a mountainside road when they had to stop to cool the engine; this is when the woman passes them. West views the woman as "the answer to my doubts" and considered her as wanting to "understand the secret which Gerda denied, the mystery of process", which West knows is involved in art and science but in "the Western world where I lived I had seen art debauched to ornament and science prostituted to the multiplication of gadgets" (1012); in this way, West reaches a spiritual epiphany: that escape from death is in the simplified and folk life and not in the modernization of the west. However, the yelling of "Good-bye, Mother" and the use of the word "mother" works to evoke the death of the old status of womanhood as stagnant, while also

pandering to the myth by offering the possibility of the new birth of “splendid conflict as yet not conceived”, by which West is referring to her only remaining hope for civilization which she finds with art. In his etymological study of Greek epic, Douglas Frame (1978) demonstrates that “sleep” was a basic part of Odysseus’s return, and he goes further to make the allegorical connection of sleep and death, when he quotes this passage from the *Odyssey*: “And upon his eyes there fell a gentle sleep, the sweetest sort of sleep with no awakening, which was most like death” (Homer 79-80). Frame uses this connection to support his overarching argument that Odysseus’s traits of ‘wiliness’ and ‘wandering’ originate in an earlier “fundamental connection between ‘mind’ and ‘returning home,’” (Frame xi). However, West’s journey to inspire a “spiritual revolt” against modern capitalism, fascism and patriarchy also involves a convoluted rendering of enclaved and oppressed communities such as displaced German Jews, Slavic Jews and Muslims.

Displacement alongside a multitude of identities contributes to a climate of uncertainty in Yugoslavia, something which West highlights in the Jewish and Muslim populations she encounters in the Balkans. West discusses an insular community of very exacting Jews in Sarajevo as one example of the isolated identities that permeate Yugoslavian myths; she describes the “Bulbul and her mate” (322), which West describes as a husband and wife in an exceptionally strict orthodox Jewish community, and West imbues this particular couple with the significance of “a work of art” (322)—this is attributed to the Selim (male) by aligning him with “a god sculpted by a primitive people” (322) and the Bulbul (female) by comparing her to “Persian ladies of the miniatures, whose lustre I had till then thought an artistic convention but now recognize in her great shining eyes, her wet red lips, her black hair in its white reflections, her dazzling skin” (323). There is a contradiction in the way West describes the pair as a single art piece, implying equality and balance, and yet focuses on the sexualizing aspects of the female figure while the male is rendered god-like, despite the suggestion of his being sculpted by “primitive people”, which upholds the hierarchy of power as western/Jews of Sarajevo, male/female. This impression is furthered as West adds as an afterthought: “But there were other times when everything [the Bulbul] did was so classical, so tired and tested in its validity, that she

seemed to have no individuality at all, and to be merely a chalice filled with a rich draught of tradition" (324).

Conversely, as West depicts a group of Muslim women she encounters at the Sarajevo market in the center of town, she notes that they "did not look the least oppressed" and that she would go so far as to "eat my hat if these women were not free in spirit" (327). This belief is based on a test West says the French consider the "test of a civilized society" (329); this test consists of whether or not the person can "practice the art of general conversation" (329). West uses this alongside her own test consisting of determining whether they appeared "free in spirit", happy despite being old or if they looked hungry or regretful in order to assess the level of happiness of women of other cultures: "First, they looked happy when they had lost their youth" (329), and yet satirically further down the passage she hints that the reason for this may rely on the women not having the ability to read. "None of these women could read. When a boy passed carrying an advertisement of Batya's shoes they had to ask a man they knew to read it for them. They did not suffer any great deprivation thereby. Any writer worth his salt knows that only a small proportion of literature does more than partly compensate people for the damage they have suffered by learning to read" (329). This seems an especially ironic statement in a book of *Black Lamb's* scale and magnitude, authored by a woman to describe her societal observations—we must assume that West is being tongue-in-cheek and that her latter observation contradicts her initial test of the Muslim women's happiness.

### ***Black Lamb: Style, Contradiction and Modernism***

West over-identifies with Yugoslavia and often champions the cultural practices of the region as naturally dichotomous from England. For example, West tells her husband when they arrive at their hotel room on the outskirts Dubrovnik that she does not like the city because it reminds her of "the worst of England" (231). Her husband queries whether she would like it better if they had managed to get a hotel room located in the center of town, but she insists she would not: "I stayed in one of those hotels for a night last year. They are filled with people who either are on their honeymoon or never had one" (230) She states she finds it "a unique experiment on the

Slav, unique in its nature and unique in its success, and I do not like it" (231). Beyond this, West's objection to Dubrovnik stems from her belief that the incongruity in the architecture creates a certain "coldness towards the Yugoslavian ideal in Dubrovnik; which itself appears ironical when it is considered that after Dubrovnik was destroyed by the great powers no force on earth could have come to its rescue except the peasant state of Serbia" (231-2). She only begrudgingly accepts that it is beautiful to look at when her husband suggests she is denying it its deserved credit. These impressions from West reveal her tendency to consider attributes of Westernization to discredit the beauty or purity of the Yugoslavian ideal. Even citizens of Yugoslavia are described as being under the impression that West is a critic of her own country. For example, while they are in Dalmatia, a judge says of West and her husband that if they were traveling abroad "instead of being in England at the time of the coronation" they were "probably members of some party which was in opposition to the government" (191). This is relevant to the way West viewed her book as an offering to the people of England, as well as the government who commissioned her to write it, so that they might be inspired or moved to change their imperialist and capitalistic practices. In significant ways, the book is a dedication to the English people who are *not* yet dead, as she suggests in her epitaph that her friends in Yugoslavia are: "all dead or enslaved".

However, when it comes to her interactions with Gerda, West is notably contradictory in her defense of the west. For example, West is defensive of English rationalism, writers, and its learning institutions as she illustrates in her many confrontations with Gerda, who is archetypal of the worst manifestations of German fascism. A description of this occurs in Serbia as Gerda takes a book that West is reading out of her hands to condescendingly examine it. This infuriates West, who becomes increasingly exasperated that Gerda is willfully misunderstanding the book by British born writer Patience Kemp:

'But it is a work of great learning,' I insisted. Miss Kemp could obviously look after herself and I did not care what Gerda thought of my intelligence, but there seemed to me something against nature in judging a book without having read it and in sticking to that judgment in spite of positive assurances from someone who had read it. 'It is published by a firm called Faber,' I continued; 'they do not publish books such as you imagine this to be.' (West 458-9)



Here, we see West ready to accept the values of the institutions of the country that she accuses of being imperialistic and capitalistic; however, it is as she discovers at the end of the text it is because she aligns the value of inquiry with the Slavs, who, as I've already noted, West believed valued art and science and the desire to question reality in a more honest sense than in the Western world where West felt the subjects had been "debauched" for spectacle (1012). In the same vein, West does not appreciate the unexamined bias against other cultures and civilizations, such as the unfair criticism of Yugoslavia by the west. However, the encounters with Gerda demonstrate that it is not always enough to be physically present in a place in order to arrive at a new point of view.

*Black Lamb* raises significant questions about women's identities within Yugoslavia and is interesting for its use of West as the protagonist, author, foreign outsider and woman who is perceived within these landscapes and cultures. For instance, West's unique position in the text allows her to problematize the issue of censorship with her guide Constantine when they discuss another book with similar historically comprehensive goals to *Black Lamb*. West is annoyed that Constantine, who in reality was a censor for the Yugoslavian Press Bureau based in Belgrade, had decided to censor John Gunther's *Inside Europe* by applying overtly strict standards that prevented, in West's opinion, "the publication of any sincere book" (West 836).

"You are wrong," [Constantine] shrieks, "there is something your English brain does not know that our Serb blood is sure of, and that is that it is right to stamp on books written by such fools. Why should Western crétins drool their spittle on our sacred things?" (West 836)

In fact, West herself received criticism for relying so heavily on Constantine's ideas and ideals, and disseminating them; one critic in particular, Stoyan Pribichevich, considered that her book promoted pro-Yugoslav propaganda. Pribichevich wrote in his review for *The Nation* that "Miss West's elaborate political analysis of Yugoslavia is what the Press Bureau wanted her to say" (Pribichevich 457-58). West does seem to place particular esteem in Constantine, whom she refers to as a "poet" and treats as both muse and spiritual guide. Constantine is partially constructed as fiction, and meant to encompass a myriad of attitudes of the Slavic people. Constantine's character functions as a godlike and immortal spirited character who guides West

on her quest, although West does also regularly criticize Constantine. These are some of the methods for fictionalizing her historical journey. By injecting her history with myth and ethical reevaluations of the role of women in society, West manages to follow a feminist version of modernism's objectives while embarking on an exploration of how women can seek to prevent war through presenting their own narratives on a par with men. This is one of the reasons why I argue that although West remains a peripheral figure to modernism, she is nevertheless allied to modernist aims by her experimentation and manipulation of traditionally accepted modes of revealing what is "truth" and morality.

West's reliance on using allegorical and anthropomorphized symbolisms instead of analysis to discuss Yugoslavia presents the story occasionally with fantastical passages, taking the reader through an accepted imaginative world. West's text is journalistic and written in prose; I maintain that her text challenges but also expands upon the traditional methods of historiography by manipulating the language, dialogue and descriptions. In other words, West was not traveling to Yugoslavia as merely a journalist or historian but in order to transcend her past and the past of the west and to embody what it meant to be a Slav, something she realizes at the conclusion of her text is an inappropriate and unachievable desire as a western woman. "I have prayed, 'Let me behave like a Serb,' but I have known afterwards that I have no right to utter such a prayer, for the Slavs are brothers, and there is no absolution for the sins we have committed against the Slavs through our ineptitude" (West 1126). West also problematizes history, questioning the significance of recalling a great national history as a means for the individual citizen to "plunge for revivification" (West 56). Instead, West creates a specifically modern method for transcribing history as personal vision. In her text's prologue she mentions having created an allegorical world that she refers to as a "private dream" (23):

I am never sure of the reality of what I see, if I have seen it only once; I know that until it has firmly established its objective existence by impressing my senses and my memory, I am capable of conscripting it into the service of a private dream. (23)

As I suggested in my chapter on Woolf's *The Voyage Out*, the departure from western civilization's center is similarly meant to establish Woolf's personal and political stance as anti-colonial. However, as I also mentioned in that chapter, Woolf's relationship to colonialism is at

best problematic and opaque, as is evidenced, for example, by her partially joint endeavor with her husband Leonard Woolf to aid his research for *Empire and Commerce in Africa*—Leonard’s 1919 book contained passages that exposed the hypocrisy of the Woolf’s views of the colonized “other”. As I also mentioned, *Empire and Commerce in Africa* criticized the British Empire for its treatment of the colonized natives, while also containing passages that admitted to not being able to conceive of indigenous society as being capable of self-governing. It is the doubt towards self-governing that is specifically relevant to the issues raised by West in *Black Lamb*, which when compared to Woolf’s perceptions of the violent, chaotic atmosphere of ex-colonial powers, paints West’s skepticism for a unified Yugoslavia in a dubious light for considering the British Empire as providing a structural example for other prospective nations, or else even more problematically for cajoling colonial nostalgia. There is certainly evidence in *Black Lamb* of western moralizing with undertones of colonial nostalgia on the part of West and her husband. For example, as West and her husband are touring the town of Trebinje in Herzegovina they are interested in visiting a Turkish house that was the home of a “famous pasha” (West 275), which was an Ottoman Imperial governing rank during the days of the Ottoman Empire. West describes the house as having an “Arabian-nights air” (276); but more troubling is her response to the group of Turkish prostitutes and the custodian within the Turkish house. West mocks the diction of the custodian of the house and describes him as regarding her “lecherously” as he leads her husband away to look at some “fealthy peectures” (278). West describes the women as being “extremely spotty” with “an inordinate number of gold teeth” and is annoyed when they suggest she buy some of their “offensive hankerchiefs” but describes her intention to “ask my husband to give them some money” (278) despite refusing to buy their products. As West’s husband returns, he informs her that the only reason the custodian removed him was so that she would get “the thrilling experience of seeing those wenches unveiled” (279). The language of this scene is obviously patronizing and condescending, but beyond those western discriminations is the evidence for West and her husband believing to be, and performing as, members of a hierarchically superior culture.

Ironically, in *Black Lamb*, West later critically describes the colonizing behavior of Franz Ferdinand and his wife towards Muslim communities within Yugoslavia: “[Ferdinand’s wife] had been in an upper room of the Town Hall, meeting a number of ladies belonging to the chief Moslem families of the town, in order that she might condescendingly admire their costumes and manners, as is the habit of barbarians who have conquered an ancient culture” (West 345). The irony rests on the incongruent fact that West and her husband were similarly touring the Turkish house in Herzegovina to take in the manners and costumes of a group of Turkish women and West described the experience in terms I have mentioned above as exceedingly condescending. The question for analysis then becomes, does West recognize this alignment in her and her husband’s behavior to Ferdinand and his wife? If so, then West would be forced to acknowledge that her standpoint is arguably barbaric. This is interesting because it is most likely that West does recognize the hypocrisy of her views and is presenting them to offer the audience the holistic perspective of how personal bias and historical circumstance are never separate entities. *Black Lamb*, alongside the other texts in this dissertation, speaks to the impossibility of viewing history or landscape completely objectively as identity politics, emotionality, and the collective memory of national or ethnic groups all merge to structure any perspective of time and place.

This recalls the way in which Woolf acknowledges the traditional western narrative practice of romanticizing imagined colonial or exotic landscapes, as I illustrated at the end of my chapter on Woolf. And there I also referenced Forster’s manipulation of this tradition in *A Room with a View* and *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. I maintain through these examples in chapter two, that Woolf and Forster aimed to establish that whether a western woman viewed the foreign, exotic or imaginary landscapes as strange or beautiful remained irrelevant as the “virgin” or “uncivilized” state remains an inherently unclear place to be if you are a woman; while western men indulge in these fantasies of the foreign as a space of liberation and limitless ambition.

The wildness of “uncivilized” or nonwestern landscapes is prevalent in *Black Lamb*. At a Macedonian monastery, Sveti Naum, West records walking “on a hillside stained with wild stock [...] I put out my hand and it fell on the most poetical wild flowers” (West 745-6).

The existence of such places is one of the determining factors in history, and most of the great cities are among them. The shape of the earth around them, the mountains that

uphold them or the plains that leave them open to their enemies, the rivers and seas or barrenness about them, recommend certain philosophies. (746)

In Sveti Naum, West determines that the structure of this monastery supports patriarchy as she describes a scene where a priest with a “bearded mouth” gives a “deep-lunged prayer” over a crouching young girl whose body was contorted into a “pitiful hieroglyphic of which the interpretation was very plain” (742). West emphasizes that landscape, architecture, rites, and mythology of any temporal space merge to uphold patriarchal systems of power. “The dark vault and massive pillars of the church about us, the stern and ornate iconostasis, announced the unlikelihood of [a change in the conception of the sexes in Yugoslavia]” (742-3).

If human beings were to continue to be what they are, to act as they have acted in the phases of history covered by this book, then it would be good for all of us to die. But there is hope that man may change, for two factors work on him that might disinfect him. One is art [...and the second is] unpredictability, rings our other cause for hope. (1126-29)

In the Epilogue of *Black Lamb*, West explains that her intention for writing the book was to “show the past in relation to the present it begot” (1126), and though she is forlorn about the correlation between the violence and pain she had to record she considers that her contemporary Europe was faced with greater suffering “under enemies harder to conquer than the Turks” (1126), meaning the Germans and the looming destruction of the second world war. For West, the importance of her journey and recording her perspective of the state of Yugoslavia rest on the artfulness in story-telling and that of recalling history, of describing firsthand encounters with the other and foreign, unknown and strange landscapes and environments and how that ability can manifest destiny. Her book is an offering to the west in what she considers its very real time of need to prevent future wars.

### **The Death of a People and Why West Travels**

As we have just seen, West argues in *Black Lamb*'s epilogue that art is one of the factors that might save humanity from destruction. She elucidates that art is the “re-living of experience” (West 1127), captured by manipulating any event or memory to “alter its shape, which was disfigured by its contacts with other events, so that its true significance is revealed” (1127) in

order to prevent “misapprehensions of fact” (1128) which clouds humanity’s consciousness and invites doubt, violence, uncertainty and fear. However, the other factor for hope against the destruction of humanity is, West records, the “unpredictability” of humankind and the unfolding of future events. Unpredictability, West argues, is also to blame for the rising of fascism in Europe, which was spurred by the consequences of the Industrial Revolution. The last line of West’s text reads: “The tramdrivers drove very slowly, and the people were able to throw down their flowers on the spot where King Alexander of Yugoslavia had been killed” (1150). The line encapsulates West’s overall view of Yugoslavia, where industrialism is slowly but definitely on the move, being driven in by western influences and creeping fascism from Germany and Italy. However, West implies that the human endeavour to remember and pay respect to the past alongside the impulse for creativity, represented by the people of Yugoslavia throwing flowers on the spot where their leader he was killed, offers hope for a new beginning. The thrown flowers are simultaneously representing the thousands of lives lost in the Balkans over centuries of violence, brutality, uprisings and changing leadership of a region not easily defined or mapped out.

As suggested earlier, West brings to light the unsaid and unseen from the inhabitants of Yugoslavia to the people of the west. She argues that “Many people are unable to say what they mean only because they have not been given an adequate vocabulary by their environment; and their apparently meaningless remarks may be inspired by a sane enough consciousness of real facts” (West 8). West desires to find the whole truth of the places she explores and to experience it emotionally and by relying on her senses as much as through logic and pragmatism.

West uses her personal journey through this complex region to explore inward psychology and moments of being rather than physical and patrilineal explorations for empire and patriarchy. To reverse the image of woman as an ‘other’ to be confronted, conquered and protected “is a heroic process in which the alternative creation of a woman’s epic vision may well play a central role” (Alwes 66). West ends her book with an explanation of why she purposely neglects to thank her friends for their contributions to her work’s efforts:

All the people I mention in this book are now either dead or living in a state of misery as yet impossible for us to the West to imagine. [...] If I were to name any of my friends this might add a last extravagance to their sufferings. (West 1158)

This statement works as both an appeal to the Western world to attempt at understanding another people, but it also works to establish Rebecca West very clearly as the subject, writing, telling and experiencing the journey and seeing the results of her ambition, which in itself works to break women's role (and Yugoslavia's) as "other".

West's awareness that the journey is historically a means for men to encounter the foreign leads her to attempt to rescript the journey, to identify not with the order-restoring Odysseus but with travelers "who may never find their way home" (Farley 155), who are unsuccessful, defeated or lost. It is true that within the *Odyssey* itself Tiresias suggests that Odysseus may not remain at home for long before he will have to go on a journey again because he has a mission to complete, to visit a place far from the sea, where people do not recognize an oar, and plant the oar in the ground to perform a sacrifice to Poseidon, god of the sea and his enemy. However, his ongoing and privileged travelling as a leader is not the same as the lost and defeated travelling available to displaced people at war, refugees and women. West deliberately illuminates the connection and importance of gender and genre. She understands the necessity, politically and aesthetically, of reconsidering the female traveler. I have shown that this text engages with the journey of a foreign female "other" through the histories, symbolisms and instances of a conglomeration of cultures attempting to unify themselves as a single entity in between two great wars. West's need for clarity and understanding lead her to explore the region for herself to discover if such cohesion was possible, how national identities are forged and where women fall into those constructions. Through all of this she discovers that old means of nation building and myth-making are radically changing in a globalized world.

## **Conclusion**

As a peripheral yet relevant figure of modernism, West manages to integrate travel writing and historical reporting with a peculiarly female twist that is more original than other contemporary examples of travel writing at her time. In this way, *Black Lamb* can be seen as a reworking of the traditional Grand Tour in a hybrid text that uses occasionally fictionalized, and other times quite personal accounts of West's experiences traveling, which is why I have also

claimed *Black Lamb* as a female and renewed form of the *Bildungsroman*. While the text is technically autobiographical, it is also about West's coming to awareness through the fictionalised construction of discovery from opinions received, for example, from Constantine and her husband. West also attempts to unravel a national "Bildung" as she relates personal experiences to national ones through the relationship between Gerda and Constantine, which she uses to highlight tensions between Germany and the Jewish population, but also Empire and annexed peoples. West explores cultural prejudices between countries, while looking closely at women's identities and how they are perceived by the cultural outsider. West uses her style to evoke a reality of how women are historically mythologized. West's text is particularly crucial for its development of travel writing as a useful genre not only for reflecting on historical events, but also for understanding, accepting, and seeking to overcome personal and cultural limitations and misunderstandings, with the ambitious—and unfortunately ultimately illusory—aim of preventing another war.



## CONCLUSION

*The Voyage Out*, *Women in Love* and *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* are all involved in the evolution of the genre of the *Bildungsroman* in various ways. Traditionally, the goal of the *Bildungsroman* was to integrate the individual into society, but if society is changed unrecognizably as a result of modern innovations then it is interesting to consider how those societal shifts affect female development and integration, especially in relation to how women have historically been held marginal to the production and maintenance of society. Modern advances such as women's suffrage and their further inclusion in traditionally male institutions like the university system and the workplace, meant that women's relationship with society and all its facets was in need of urgent reconsideration. However, my project's goal was to examine the representation of western women as described in literature marginal to the modernist canon, journeying outside of their domestic sphere in order to investigate what exclusionary limits (imaginary or real) existed for women of the modern world.

Modernist writers like Woolf were asserting "as a woman I have no country" in order to highlight how women have had no historical role in creating societal structures, and thereby merely incorporating of them into an already established twentieth-century society did not mean they had achieved equality with men. The working "daughters of educated" men of the early twentieth-century were accessory to the men that saw themselves as having inherited the birthright of ancient Greek and Roman traditions, which tangentially were the destinations for the original Grand Tour journeys that upper class men would travel to, to complete their education.

As women were secondary within patriarchal society, the texts that I examined emphasize women's inability to develop into effective competitors with their supposed male "peers" since they were only instructed through a limited and inherently patriarchal program of education. Indeed, I illustrate how women's limited education was meant only to give them enough knowledge for men to easily maintain them as a marginalized other; however, the literary texts I examine do not advocate for further female inclusion into the patriarchal structures already existent (and that is in itself impossible except as complicit accessories) but they encourage a

complete overhaul of society, including of language, to create something new from which women could create afresh. My chapters, and specially my chapters focusing on West and Lawrence, illustrate that men were just as badly in need of this societal overhaul since there is a direct correlation between capitalist hierarchies and fascism. Though, my second chapter on Woolf concluded that fascism is also connected with patriarchy.

My research shows that even the structure of language and literary form exists to serve men in power. *The Voyage Out* is recast as a female *Bildungsroman*; *Women in Love* questions the relevance of an individualistic *Bildung* as opposed to a collective one in which individual human beings and community are shown to be inextricably related, so that the *Bildung* of an individual is co-dependent with that of other individuals; finally in *Black Lamb*, we see the idea of a renewed *Bildungsroman* emerge through a restoring of faith in the ability of individuals to be proactively involved in their own growth and creating their own narratives. In the latter case, where there isn't an opportunity for a narrative because of patriarchal limitations, West seeks them out and invents them. In other words, these texts can represent separate methods for expanding on the nineteenth-century concept of *Bildung*.

As mentioned in my Introduction, the goal of this study was not to determine whether or not the genre of *Bildungsroman* was still relevant to the modern world, which was the conclusion of Gregory Castle's seminal study on the genre, and though Franco Moretti argued that the *Bildungsroman* declined and disappeared around World War I, I have found that its form was still influential and foundational as late as the 1930s. Another goal of my research was to question whether modern women who are considered progressive and freethinking can have a genuine "awakening" from a traditionally patriarchal program of education and then successfully and effectually integrate as members of that society beyond being wives and mothers, thereby, through their own *Bildung*, also leading to, or envisioning the hope for, a transformation of society as a whole.

The texts discussed are, as I also explained, all in a marginal position to modernism. Woolf's because it was her first novel and so does not fully exhibit her stream-of-consciousness style that established her as a premier modernist writer. Lawrence held himself as separate to the

modernist canon by highly emotive prose, and *Women in Love* is no exception. And West's text is not straightforwardly a novel as it involves elements of travel writing, history, journalism and autobiography. However, they all arrive at the intersection of three primary concerns. As mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, the first concern is with whether women can come to awareness and into societal integration, which would align them with the traditional *Bildungsroman*. In this study, I resolve how these texts move beyond, and rework the genre as it had existed by showing how integration is impossible in a patriarchal society. I then discuss how this impossibility is made evident by following the motif of travel, which appears in several *Bildungsromane* and harks back to the tradition of the Grand Tour. In my introduction, I followed this tradition through a number of antecedent texts, building to my primary texts where travel and varying forms of awareness come to an impasse of how self and society (self and other) can, or cannot integrate. Finally, my study finds how the constraints imposed by gender on the achievement of self-aware selfhood are predetermined, in such a way that society denies women any avenue of self-determination.

The texts have in common the aim of expanding generic traditions to explore and situate gender limitations within frameworks such as the Grand Tour and the novel of development. Woolf's text demonstrates the impossibility of union between Rachel and Hewet because of the lack of equal education and opportunities the characters have had access to because of patriarchy. Similarly, Lawrence illustrates the impossibility of "total consummation" because equality does not exist between men and women, which causes an imbalance (Gerald's death and the eventual asymmetry in the love relations between the four main characters) that contributes to imbalances in society that can lead to war. In Lawrence's texts, individual relationships are compared to national relationships, and illustrated as just as capable of being petulant, changing and susceptible to violence from extreme emotional responses, amongst other capricious qualities that makes statehood and government unreliable and the concept of "civilization" a false security. Finally, West renews the form of the *Bildungsroman* by fictionalizing her own traveling to gain deeper insight into the constructions of her discoveries. All three texts use travel, border crossings and the dichotomy of wild nature versus a cosmopolitan or civilized

society, to represent how the identities of women are constructed and perceived. By casting the female in relief against a foreign space that is similarly constructed and colonized by western powers provides insight into women's historically mythologized and commoditized role as an emblem for men to work and fight to protect, however imaginary the concept of women might actually be. I argue that my primary texts develop the genre of the *Bildungsroman* in terms of gender by exposing the limitations with which women are historically faced.

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