The Discomfort of Civilization:

Destabilizing the Bildungsroman in Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* and *Jacob's Room*

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Sammendrag:

Gjennom hele sitt forfatterskap var Virginia Woolf fasinert av forholdet mellom individet og samfunnet. Hun var også opptatt av å finne en litterær form som kunne uttrykke endringer i forståelsen av individualitet, subjektdannelse, og mellommenneskelige relasjoner. Samtidig som hun utfordret og stilte spørsmål ved etablerte måter å presentere litterær karakter. Alle disse spørsmålene vedrørende individet, hvordan beskrive identitet og presentasjonen av karakter i modernistisk fiksjon er koblet sammen og krysser hverandre i mitt prosjekt. Mitt fokus i denne oppgaven er på hvilken måte Woolf utforsker denne tematikken, spesielt gjennom bruken av den klassiske Bildungsromanen i romanene hennes *The Voyage Out* (1915) og *Jacob's Room* (1922). Jeg skal argumentere for at Woolf i disse romanene bygger på men også bryter med sjangerelementer. Dette for å kunne utforske spørsmål om identitet, men også om strukturer og muligheter innen subjektdannelse.

Det som knytter disse romanene sammen, og som har motivert denne oppgaven er likheten i fokuset på utvikling og subjektdannelse. Begge romanene er opptatt av et likt stadie i hovedpersonenes liv der protagonistene er på terskelen mellom ungdom og voksen. Siden romanene skiller seg fra hverandre i at *The Voyage Out* omhandler en kvinnelig protagonist mens *Jacob's Room* omhandler en mannlig protagonist vil sammenstillingen av disse romanene derfor gi et nyansert perspektiv på kjønnet subjektdannelse. I tillegg til dette, gjennom den kritiske skildringen av den sosiale situasjonen og hva det å bli voksen vil innebære, problematiserer romanene ideen om sosialisering. Oppgaven er delt opp i to hovedkapitler, der første kapittel tar for seg *The Voyage Out* og andre kapittel tar for seg *Jacob's Room*.

Abbreviations

Below is a list of abbreviated titles and references used in this work.

VO: The Voyage Out (Virginia Woolf)

JR: Jacob's Room (Virginia Woolf)

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Introduction:

> "The vision of her own personality, of herself as a real everlasting thing, different from anything else, unmergeable, like the sea or wind, flashed into Rachel's mind and she became profoundly excited at the thought of living." (VO 90)

> "It is no use trying to sum people up. One must follow hints, not exactly what is said, not yet entirely what is done." (JR 123)

Throughout her authorship Virginia Woolf was fascinated by the relationship between the individual and society and with finding literary forms to express the changing conceptions of selfhood, of subject formation, and of interpersonal relations, while questioning established representations of character in fiction. This interest is found both in her novels and in essays, such as "Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown" (1923) and "Character in Fiction" (1924). All of these questions concerning the individual, the expression of identity, and the representation of character in modernist fiction are connected and intersect with in my project. My focus in what follows will be on how Woolf explores these questions specifically through her engagement with the Bildungsroman genre. Investigating how Virginia Woolf engages with the classical Bildungsroman in her two novels *The Voyage Out* (1915) and *Jacob's Room* (1922). I will argue that these novels at once draw upon and subvert elements of the genre as a way of exploring questions identity as well as the structures and contingencies of subject formation.

The Voyage Out engages with issues of female development and destructive social forces as the novel portrays the protagonist Rachel Vinrace on her developmental journey to the fictional former colony Santa Marina. The central conflict of the novel revolves around the tension between Rachel's desire for an autonomous sense of self and the many mentors surrounding her, who all seek to form her in relation to social gender constructions. The novel is both an exploration into Rachel's interiority, following her states of consciousness through her interior reflections, dreams and hallucinations, while also a rendering of the destructive nature of the social forces of early 20th century patriarchal society and Empire. *Jacob's Room* revolves around the male protagonist Jacob Flanders, and similarly to *The Voyage Out* engages with issues of development as the narrative follows him from childhood up to his death in the First World War. However, rather than explore the protagonist's selfhood in this novel, Jacob's interiority is more or less absent from the text. As we shall see, the novel challenges the conventions of the Bildungsroman, not only in its treatment of familiar literary motifs, but also through the representation of Jacob's character.

What ties these novels together, and which has motivated this thesis, is the similar emphasis on development and subject formation. Both novels are concerned with a similar stage where the protagonists are on the threshold between youth and adulthood. However, as *The Voyage Out* revolves around a female protagonist, and *Jacob's Room* revolves round a male, the juxtaposition offers a nuanced perspective on gendered subject formation, and what becoming a citizen entails for both women and men in the British society. Furthermore, the novels both problematize the notion of socialization which formation entails, through the portrayal of the social environment and the implications and social responsibilities that maturity implies. These issues and questions are expressed through Woolf's experiments with the

Bildungsroman genre. Although *Jacob's Room* is not usually categorized as a Bildungsroman in the same way as *The Voyage Out*, I argue that Woolf appropriates recognizable conventions of the Bildungsroman as she employs literary motifs that are usually connected to the genre.

The concept of the Bildungsroman I employ in this thesis is closely tied to the theories of Marianne Hirsch in her article "The Novel of Formation as Genre: Between Great Expectations" (1979) and Franco Moretti's critical study *The Way of the World* (2000). When it comes to the problematic and complex issue of the correct translation of the noun "Bildung", which informs how one views the genre, I look to Hirsch's definition, which views the Bildungsroman as a "novel of formation", where the "form" in formation" conveys, according to Hirsh, something of the "Bild" in Bildung. Different understandings of the definition of the Bildungsroman and what falls under this definition has given rise to a long, complex and confusing debate with many different opinions and opposing views. The main problem with the concept of the Bildungsroman is that there does not exist a universally accepted definition of the term. Many of the opposing views and definitions of the Bildungsroman stems from the difficulty of translating the noun "Bildung". Where Hirsch sees "formation" as a satisfactory translation, others have translated the Bildungsroman into "novel of development" and "novel of education". However, as Hirsh argues, these terms become too specific and too general. Hirsch further argues for her choice by pointing to how "formation" is at the same time active and passive "suggesting both the process of education that is depicted in these novels and the product that takes shape (or form) as it grows out of itself in response to external factors" (Hirsch 295). My concept of the Bildungsroman is closely tied to Hirschs' as I employ this in my reading of *The Voyage Out* and *Jacob's Room*, viewing the Bildungsroman, or "novel

of formation”, as “the story of a representative individual’s growth and development” (Hirsch 269).

In his critical study Franco Moretti explores the emergence and nature of the Bildungsroman. The declared aim is to explore the causes, features and consequences of the symbolic shift from maturity to youth in the conception of the fictional hero that occurred at the end of the eighteenth century**.** This decisive thrust from a mature hero towards a youthful hero was, according to Moretti, made by Goethe and it takes shape in his novel *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*, a work that “codifies the new paradigm and sees youth as the most meaningful part of life” (Moretti 3). The cause for this temporal shift and the birth of the Bildungsroman is something Moretti connects to the society at the time, arguing that at the turn of the eighteenth century Europe plunged into modernity, without possessing a culture of modernity (Moretti 5). The reason why youth achieves this symbolic centrality and the “great narrative” of the Bildungsroman comes into being, is because Europe has a need to attach meaning not so much to youth as to modernity.

A part of Moretti’s core argument is that historical and political context is crucial for understanding the literary development of the Bildungsroman, and this is especially significant towards understanding the emergence of the Bildungsroman. According to Moretti, the social environment was one full of changes, leading towards a new social order and understanding of the world. One of the most decisive events that influenced the emergence of the Bildungsroman was the French Revolution in 1789. With the dissolution of the Feudal system where young people grew up to fill the social roles they were born into, growing up became a very different experience. Individuals could now, to some extent, at least be more active in their own formation. In this way,

youth, according to Moretti, became the most important symbol that Western culture found to mirror modernity. The reason for choosing 'youth' as the new epoch's "specific material sign" is youths' ability to accentuate modernity's dynamism and instability (Moretti 5). Youth becomes modernity's 'essence', the sign of a world that "seeks its meaning in the future rather than in the past" (5). The Bildungsroman as Moretti sees it, consequently emerged as a response to modernity.

In his analysis, Moretti views the genre as the most effective literary vehicle negotiating modernity's major conflict, between the "ideal of self-determination and the demand of socialization" (Moretti 15). In his discussion of socialization and the Bildungsroman, he asks the question of how the tendency towards individuality can be made to coexist with the opposing tendency towards normality that comes from society's need for the individual to socialize (Moretti 16). Concluding that socialization is not based on mere compliance with authority, and that the free individual perceives the social norms as their own, thus internalizing the social order. Moretti claims that the Bildungsroman has succeeded in representing this fusion with conviction and clarity. One's formation as an individual therefore coincides with one's social integration. In the Bildungsroman the individual becomes part of the whole. The Bildungsroman, according to Moretti, both represented and contributed to a phase of Western socialization.

In my discussion of the Bildungsroman and its conventions I shall refer to what Moretti labels "the classical Bildungsroman", represented by writers such as Jane Austen and her prototypical-classical Bildungsroman *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). What defines the "classical Bildungsroman", for Moretti, is its attitude to society and socialization. In the classical Bildungsroman the dilemma between

individual autonomy and social integration is portrayed in a positive manner which, Moretti summarizes under the heading: "The Comfort of Civilization" (Moretti 15). In the classical Bildungsroman the logical concept of social integration has been internalized, and turned into a "desire that the individual perceives as his 'own'" (Moretti 67). Socialization becomes an individual's choice rather than a necessity.

Amongst literary critics discussing the Bildungsroman it is a widely established practice to divide the European Bildungsroman tradition in accordance with nationality, and as Gregory Castle points out, in the English tradition social conformity was an important aspect in relation to the Bildungsheld's developmental goal (Castle 8). For Moretti, the significant distinction in relation to the English Bildungsroman is connected with the stability and conformity of English political culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:

> …English society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, despite the Industrial Revolution and Chartism, is by far the most stable in Europe, and is proud to be so. Its value-system is decidedly stable, and the stability itself is seen as a value, and as one of the strongest at that. (Moretti 185)

This sense of stability contributes to a positive outlook on society, making the aspect of socialization much more appealing. The stable attitude towards society does not create friction between nation and citizens. Gregory Castle draws upon Moretti's portrayal of the English Bildungsroman and the sense of a stable society, arguing that this is the reason for the emphasis on the "happy ending" in the English tradition:

> The predilection in the English tradition for a "happy ending" would seem to indicate that an unproblematic assimilation into social institutions is not only possible but desirable. (Castle 18)

This national feature also makes for an interesting perspective in the discussion of Woolf's two novels. Through her engagement with the Bildungsroman Woolf clearly expresses a critique towards aspects of British society, such as Imperialism, patriarchy and the First World War, indicating that her subversion of the genre is connected to a critique of nation. The motivation behind my juxtaposition of these two novels is also related to the ongoing discussion of how the Bildungsroman is influenced by different aspects of modernity. As we shall see the nature and consequences of Woolf's engagement with the Bildungsroman in *The Voyage Out* and *Jacob's Room* illuminate the connections between the Bildungsroman, modernity and modernism that Moretti's theories elaborate on.

My hope is that this thesis might offer a small contribution to the vast amount of Virginia Woolf scholarship through the juxtaposition of these two novels. *The Voyage Out* and *Jacob's Room*, though similar on many points, are rarely discussed and compared at length. Critics mention their affinity, but I have not succeeded in finding criticism that thoroughly examines the two together. Christine Froula has ventured to label the novels "companion pieces" (Froula 64), however she does not go much further on this point, other than a few lines on similarities between the two novels. Other critics also mention their similarity in relation to the premature death of the protagonists and portrayal of character: "She [Woolf] had tried to deal with a similarly inchoate personality in her first novel, *The Voyage Out*…All three of these characters (Rachel, Jacob, Percival) die young, before they have been fully defined…"(Zwerdling 250). However, this is where the discussion stops. Like Froula, Zwerdling does not elaborate much further on the likeness, leaving the comparison more or less unexplored.

Approaching these texts, my focus will be on how Woolf draws upon established literary motifs associated with the Bildungsroman in relation to Rachel and Jacob's development. The specific motifs that Woolf draws upon and which I will be studying in this chapter are those of education, marriage, the journey and death. The motifs of education, marriage and the journey, all constitute important aspects of the genre. What these three motifs have in common, in terms of their relation and function in the Bildungsroman, is the idea of development within a defined social order and emphasis on socialization. However, as death figures as an important aspect of both novels, I will also be exploring how Woolf deals with this motif.

In her study of the Bildungsroman, Marianne Hirsch attempts to define a set of categories concerned with thematic and formal aspects of the genre. An important element of the Bildungsroman is its didactic nature. The Bildungsroman, according to Hirsch, was supposed to function as an instructive experience, with a clear teleology that would function to "educate the reader by portraying the education of the protagonist" (Hirsch 298). Education, both scholarly and moral, figures as an important element of the Bildungsroman and the development of the protagonist is largely focused on how he or she is educated and formed by the characters and mentors that surround them. Exploring the history and nature of the genre Hirsch compiles a list of characteristics for a generic model of the Bildungsroman. These characteristics are flexible enough to account for national and historical change and narrow enough to remain "critically useful" (Hirsch 296). In her discussion, Hirsch points to the different motifs that Woolf engages with. The development of the Bildungsheld is at its roots a quest story as it "portrays a search for meaningful existence within society, for the authentic values which will facilitate the unfolding of inner capacitates" (Hirsch 297). The Bildungsroman has traditionally been associated

with this theme of a journey or quest, where the protagonist is on a journey towards maturity, facing many obstacles on his or her way, which is often related to the struggles of socialization and parting with one's youthful innocence. By overcoming these obstacles and accepting the needs of society, the Bildungsheld finally reaches the goal of a mature identity.

My aim in this thesis will be to examine how Woolf, through her engagement with the Bildungsroman genre explores the connection between the individual and society, especially in relation to gendered subject formation. Additionally, I also wish to explore how through these motifs, Woolf complicates the stable concept of identity and representation of character in the classical Bildungsroman. Through close readings of both novels I will study the how Woolf subverts and unsettles the Bildungsroman in addition to expressing a critique towards society and nation.

The Voyage Out

Unsettling the Bildungsroman

In 1908 Virginia Woolf began writing *Melymbrosia*, which after many years of alterations and revisions, was to become her first novel *The Voyage Out* (1915). *The Voyage Out* follows Rachel Vinrace as she embarks upon a voyage to the fictional former colony Santa Marina in South America aboard her father's ship, which traces her initiation process from a sheltered upbringing towards her entrance into society. The narrative focuses on the tensions that occur in her attempt to develop her own subjectivity within a social environment where constricting gender norms impinge upon her development. Ultimately, the process of initiation reveals that there is no possibility for Rachel to develop freely.

The novel's process of composition was long and troubling, as Woolf struggled with illness and attempts at developing a literary form that would fully express her artistic intentions. Throughout this process the plot stayed more or less the same, but the form changed significantly. Moving away from the conventions of the traditional novel, Woolf developed a more complex form that would unsettle and problematize literary conventions. For Woolf the need to experiment with literary boundaries emerged from a sense of the inadequacy of established narrative conventions of the time, in particular with respect to fully articulating the fundamental ambivalence concerning the individual in relation to society. In addition, Woolf's experimentation sought to find a form in which to explore the concept of selfhood and

states of consciousness. As a result, *The Voyage Out* became an entwined literary and social critique.

In the depiction of Rachel's initiation process and quest for a sense of selfhood the novel's depiction of society and the British Empire is bleak. The novel exposes how the society into which Rachel is to be initiated is founded upon colonialism and patriarchal gender constructions. In addition, through the portrayal of Rachel's interiority, it is made evident that she is neither able nor willing to internalize the social norms and become a citizen of the British Empire. Through Rachel's failed development, *The Voyage Out* critiques social constructions of gender and their influence over the individual, in addition to portraying the problematic situation of subject formation in the context of Empire. Through her social critique Woolf is simultaneously problematizing literary genres and conventions that enforce and reproduce social norms. Articulated through the Bildungsroman, Woolf's critique is especially interesting due to the significant status of this genre in English literary tradition.

The purpose of this chapter is to study how Woolf's treatment of the selected motifs works to problematize the Bildungsroman. My aim is to argue that with her unconventional treatment of these literary motifs, Woolf unsettles the Bildungsroman and subsequently provides a critique of the restrictive nature of the social environment that Rachel finds herself a part of. To do so I will divide the chapter into subchapters, and each subchapter will deal with a different literary motif. In doing so I will analyze how the novel employs the motifs in question and how the nature of the treatment of the motifs conveys Woolf's critique of society with its powerful gender constructions.

2.0 Marriage

In her article "Spatialization, Narrative Theory and Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out*", Susan Stanford Friedman states that the conventional female Bildungsroman in the British literary tradition most often incorporated the motif of marriage into the formation of the female protagonist. By constructing the female protagonist's development towards adulthood around marriage, these novels convey the idea that marriage was the sole goal of female development. Marriage is thus synonymous with adulthood in the female Bildungsroman. In discussing the nature and development of the Bildungsroman Franco Moretti examines an aspect of the classical Bildungsroman which he labels "the rhetoric of happiness" (Moretti 22). He asks the question: "how is it possible to convince the modern – 'free'- individual to willingly limit his freedom?" (Moretti 22), and concludes that it is through marriage. From the late eighteenth century onwards marriage became a type of social contract that is founded on a "sense of individual obligation" rather than forces outside the individual, such as status. Marriage in the Bildungsroman is a metaphor for the social contract that individuals must partake in as the necessary path towards maturation.

The importance of marriage in the classical Bildungsroman is not contrasted with celibacy, but with death or disgrace: "One either marries or, in one way or another must leave social life" (Moretti 23). For the female Bildungsheld, marriage is particularly important as the entire narrative structure is constructed around the concept of courtship and marriage and the manner in which this seeped into the the female Bildungsroman was through the structure of *the marriage plot*. In the

conventional marriage plot the heroine develops in tact with courtship rituals and ultimately reaches a state of maturity symbolized through her marriage. In contrast to the novels concerning female development, novels with a male protagonist have a much more diverse developmental process and subsequently marriage does not define the Bildungsheld's developmental process in the same way.

In his discussion of *Jacob's Room* in his article "*Jacob's Room*: Woolf's Satiric Elegy", Alex Zwerdling describes this aspect as he quotes Erik H. Erikson from his study *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968):

> Before he is expected to take on any of his life commitments – in love, in work – the young man is offered a legitimate period of delay "often characterized by a combination of prolonged immaturity and provoked precocity." His reluctance to bind himself vocationally or to choose a mate is honored or at least tolerated for a period of years because his society accepts his need for self-exploration and social mobility before demanding that the ultimate choices be made. (Zwerdling 250)

Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch and Elizabeth Langland address the differences in the social options available between the female and male Bildungsroman in the introduction to the critical study of the female Bildungsroman in *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development* (1983). They argue that there is a difference in "the restraints of social convention" when it comes to the gender of the Bildungsheld and that "even the broadest definitions of the *Bildungsroman* presupposes a range of social options available only to men" (Abel 7). Drawing upon Jerome Buckley's definition of the genre from his study *Season of Youth* (1975), they point out that various aspects of development that Buckley considers characteristic for the Bildungsroman, are not available for the female Bildungsheld. Some of these points

are the attainment of a formal education, the possibility of leading an independent life in the city where he is able to roam free, where his “real education begins” as well as the love affairs or sexual encounters, “that Buckley sees as the minimum necessary for the male hero’s emotional and moral growth” (Abel 8). Instead of having these options in her developmental process, the development of a female Bildungsheld clearly illustrates that her sole purpose is marriage. Formal education is not an essential part of her developmental process as she will eventually become a wife and mother. In addition, women in the nineteenth-century Bildungsroman cannot leave home and lead independent lives in the city, and when they do; they are not free to explore. Neither is she allowed to engage in love affairs or sexual encounters. These differences in plot elements reflect how the objective of the female Bildungsheld is marriage and motherhood and to “find a place where she can be protected” (Abel 8).

The constant focus on marriage in the nineteenth century Bildungsroman, served a didactic purpose: to inform young women on proper conduct. Especially in the nineteenth century these novels became a popular method of “inculcating the norms of womanhood into young readers” (Pratt 13). By following the young Bildungsheld as she develops in relation to the courtship rituals and obstacles she has to overcome on her path to matrimony, the novel provides a model for behavior that is “appropriate for success in the marriage market” (Pratt 14).

2.1 Marriage in *The Voyage Out*

Marriage is an important theme in *The Voyage Out*. The portrayal of Rachel’s education exposes it as being restrictive in nature as it is focused on preparing her for marriage. The novel engages with the marriage motif not to educate the reader towards marriage, but rather to show the destructive effect this has upon Rachel.

Marriage in *The Voyage Out* becomes a symbol for the limited possibilities available to Rachel, and the forceful social requirements that restrict the opportunity to develop one's subjectivity. In addition to this portrayal, the novel also draws upon the structure of the marriage plot. However, the aim of the conventional plot structure is complicated through the incorporation of elements that weaken the objective. Rachel's marriage plot is one that questions itself from start to finish, unsettling any unproblematic treatment of marriage.

2.1.1 The Dalloways:

The focus on Rachel's education is persistent throughout the novel. The nature of her education and the influence of her mentors revolve around preparing Rachel for marriage. Through characters such as her father, her aunts, Helen, and the Dalloways, attempts are made to form Rachel's development with the goal of marriage and motherhood in sight. From what Rachel tells Hewet about her life at Richmond it emerges that her education has been focused on domestic duties and accomplishments that will prepare her to one day become a wife and to run her own household. However, it is not until the introduction of the Dalloways that the focus on marriage truly begins to impinge upon her development. Before embarking on the voyage with the *Euphrosyne*, which will mark her entrance into adulthood, Rachel has resisted her aunts' desire for her to marry, exemplified as Helen addresses Rachel's aunt Bessie's fear that Rachel will spoil her arms as a result of her insistent piano playing:

> …she's afraid that you will spoil your arms if you insist upon so much practicing.'
>
> 'The muscles of the forearm – and then one won't marry?'
>
> 'She didn't put it quite like that,' replied Mrs. Ambrose.

'Oh no – of course she wouldn't,' said Rachel with a sigh. (VO 15)

Her sigh is directed towards her aunt's worry that she will ruin her feminine form, but also indicates how marriage is a tedious subject. However, with the introduction of the Dalloways, Rachel's perspective on marriage is challenged. The couple that embarks the *Euphrosyne* after finding themselves "stranded in Lisbon", figures as a forceful energy imposing itself upon the entire ship and on Rachel especially. Through the portrayal and treatment of the former MP Richard Dalloway and his wife Clarissa, the novel constructs them more as spokespersons for an ideology than as realistic characters. In their voicing of matters concerning Empire and gender, and through their clearly patriotic and conservative rhetoric, everything they say and the way in which they act become functions to represent and enforce a specific way of life. Not only are they enforcing ideas of Empire and gender, they are also acting out these views. However, through the narrative's satire, the ideologies that they represent are mocked and weakened. This satirical treatment is especially evident in their intense sense of pride and frivolous acceptance of imperialism as they board the ship:

> Being on this ship seems to make it so much more vivid – what it really means to be English. One thinks of all we´ve done, and our navies, and the people in India and Africa, and how we've gone on century after century, sending out boys from little country villages – and of men like you, Dick, and it makes one feel as if one couldn't bear *not* to be English! (VO 51)

Being anything other than English seems unthinkable to Clarissa and this sense of pride and gratification is tightly connected to Empire. The true meaning of what being English signifies becomes vivid for Clarissa as she thinks about the navy and "the people in India and Africa", referring to citizens spread across the British Empire, all individually working for king and country. Clarissa's one-sided praise of Empire

reveals a sense of power and domination. During their stay on the vessel, both husband and wife engage in this kind of colonial rhetoric. In addition they also express conservative views on politics, society and gender. It is the combination of their ideas on gender and their patriotic views of Empire that illustrates how the ideology of Empire is closely connected and reliant on distinct gender roles. This connection is exemplified as Richard Dalloway reflects on the separate spheres for men and women. His view of how his wife should be kept pure by not being allowed "to talk politics" is reminiscent of colonial discourse, where the British woman represents the ideal that motivates the imperialist project. She becomes a symbol for all the sacred values of the British culture that one is supposed to export:

> It is impossible for human beings, constituted as they are, both to fight and to have ideals. If I have preserved mine, as I am thankful to say that in great measure I have, it is the fact that I have been able to come home to my wife in the evening and to find that she has spent her day in calling, music, play with the children, domestic duties –what you will; her illusions have not been destroyed. She gives me courage to go on…(VO 68)

The introduction of the Dalloways is unsettling as their intense internalization and voicing of conservative views on gender affects Rachel greatly. Their presence on the ship and their conduct towards Rachel makes her question her sense of self as well as her personal views. Both husband and wife encroach upon Rachel as they both seek to initiate her into the role she is supposed to take on in order to support and uphold the British Empire. Everyone has their role to play within the Empire and Clarissa and Richard seek to navigate Rachel towards her role.

The portrayal of Clarissa Dalloway is focused on her conventional femininity, exhibited through depictions of her clothing, jewelry and perfume, but also her

conduct towards the opposite sex. During the first dinner with the Dalloways, Clarissa and Richard demonstrate the nature of their relationship, illustrating the clear gender divisions that inform their marriage. Clarissa ascertains that what she finds so tiresome about the sea is “that there are no flowers in it. Imagine fields of hollyhocks and violets in mid-ocean! How divine”(VO 41). This somewhat senseless comment suggests an affiliation with all things considered feminine. It also indicates how Clarissa embodies a specific gender role based on concepts of conventional femininity as she situates herself as an unpractical woman, primarily driven by her feelings and love for flowers. Conversely, Richard’s reply illustrates how he situates himself in relation to his wife, responding with the view of the composed, rational male: “‘But somewhat dangerous to navigation,’ boomed Richard, in the bass like the bassoon to flourish of his wife’s violin” (VO 41). The banter between husband and wife demonstrates the composition of their marital relationship, which consists of an essential feminine and masculine subjectivity. The image of the bassoon and violin suggests that their relationship is harmonious and as a wife and husband they compliment each other with their clearly defined gender roles. Following dinner, there is a sense of Rachel feeling Clarissa’s allure, which manifests itself as she unconsciously follows Clarissa and Helen to another room:

> Rachel followed in the wake of the matrons, as if in a trance; a curious scent of violets came back from Mrs. Dalloway, mingling with the soft rustling of her skirts, and the tinkling of her chains. (VO 46)

Rachel’s unconscious captivation with Clarissa appears to be connected with the femininity that Clarissa radiates through her entire being. Having Rachel follow “the matrons” indicates that what these two women symbolize is the maternal, especially as both will take on the role of surrogate mother to Rachel. Having Rachel follow

suggests that she is about to become initiated into their path. The focus on Clarissa's scent, the "soft rustling of her skirts" and the "tinkling of her chains" convey how her femininity captivates Rachel, almost seducing her to follow. The depiction of Clarissa also functions to symbolize her individuality. The "rustling of her skirts" suggests her embodiment of a specific female gender role, and the "tinkling of her chains" may be interpreted as her constant connection and dependence on Richard. Following the women, Rachel is consumed with thoughts of "with supreme abasement" about how absurd and meaningless her life is, concluding that the world she inhabits and the life she has is "perfectly absurd" (VO 46). This critical evaluation of her life at this point in the narrative indicates that Rachel experiences a sense of inadequacy and emptiness in comparing herself to Clarissa Dalloway. Clarissa's conventional femininity and persistent encouragement of conservative gender politics makes it appear as though for Rachel not to belong to this world and not to uphold these values makes her life meaningless. Rachel does not possess the conventional femininity that Clarissa does, and unlike these two women, she is both motherless and childless. In relation to these women Rachel is an outsider. Consequently, Clarissa takes on the role as Rachel's surrogate mother, inviting her into conventional womanhood, as she attempts to persuade Rachel to desire to follow her example.

In her first conversation alone with Clarissa, Rachel insists that she will never marry, to which Clarissa replies "I shouldn't be so sure of that" (VO 62). Her conviction about marriage is something that amuses Clarissa, and she views it as a testimony to Rachel' youthful and naïve outlook on life, as opposed to something more profound and troubling. During the same conversation, Rachel tries to open up to Clarissa in describing her feelings: "'I am lonely,' she began. 'I want –' she did not know what she wanted, so that she could not finish the sentence; but her lip quivered

(VO 62). Unable to articulate her emotions, Clarissa chooses to interpret Rachel's unhappiness and sense of wanting in relation to herself, and draws upon her own life experience. She claims the solution to her unhappiness is to be found in matrimony:

> 'I know,' she said, actually putting one arm round Rachel's shoulder. 'When I was your age I wanted too. No one understood until I met Richard. He gave me all I wanted. (VO 63)

In addition to what Clarissa states about marriage and relations between men and women, Woolf also uses literature to depict how Clarissa attempts to persuade Rachel towards marriage and conventional womanhood. Upon entering Rachel's cabin, Clarissa reaches out to Rachel by commenting on the various novels lying around. Clarissa notices *Wuthering Heights* by Charlotte Brontë and initiates a conversation about literature: "I really couldn't exist without the Brontës! Don't you love them? Still I'd rather live without them than without Jane Austen" whereupon Rachel answers:

> … 'Jane Austen? I don't like Jane Austen,' said Rachel.
>
> 'You monster!' Clarissa exclaimed. 'I can only just forgive you. Tell me why?'
>
> 'She's so – so – well, so like a tight plait,' Rachel floundered.
>
> 'Ah – I see what you mean. But I don't agree. And you won't when you're older. (VO 59)

Having Clarissa Dalloway, a representative of traditional and limiting gender roles in a patriarchal society, attempt to persuade Rachel to read Jane Austen is not without significance. As Christine Froula points out, for Rachel "Austen's novels, for all their sharpness, wit and irony, signify the education that 'plaits' or plots young girls tightly into femininity, marriage and motherhood" (Froula 71). Clarissa dismisses her

resentment of Jane Austen, saying that she too felt that way when she was younger, but that as she grew older she grew to appreciate Austen, indicating that liking Austen and what her novels seemingly stand for, is part of female initiation. As Rachel develops she too will come to appreciate Austen and conform to the gender role she is expected to embody. In having Clarissa, the spokesperson for conventional femininity and womanhood praise Jane Austen, the novel reveals how Austen became a symbol of the life and virtues that the Dalloways represent. As the Dalloways depart, Clarissa gives Rachel an inscribed copy of Austen's novel *Persuasion*, emphasizing what Clarissa has been doing and is still trying to achieve in persuading Rachel to become the heroine of the marriage plot.

Whereas Clarissa takes on the role as both mentor and surrogate mother in order to educate and initiate Rachel into ideas of conventional womanhood, Richard Dalloway tries to educate Rachel on the politics of society and gender. As Rachel gets to know the Dalloways she is overcome by a feeling that she wants the Dalloways, but especially Richard, to tell her "everything". She initiates a conversation with Richard about politics and Empire, but in the course of the conversation it becomes clear that the two do not understand one another. As a result of their different outlooks on the world communication becomes impossible. Attempting to understand Richard Dalloway's ideal of "unity": 'Well, how shall I reply? In one word – Unity. Unity of aim, of dominion, of progress. The dispersion of the best ideas over the greatest area (VO 67), Rachel invokes the figure of the outsider, a hypothetical widow in Leeds. Her intention with this figure is to question the position of the individual in Richard's idea of unity. Rachel's focus is on "the mind of the widow – the affections" which Richard "leaves untouched" (VO 68). He fails to understand Rachel's point as his perception of society is focused on the conception of "the world as a whole" (VO

69). Whereas Rachel focuses on the outsider and the individual, Richard views society as a machine:

> 'Look at it this way, Miss Vinrace; conceive the state as a complicated machine; we citizens are parts of that machine; some fulfill more important duties; others…serve only to connect some obscure parts of the mechanism, concealed from the public eye. Yet if the meanest screw fails in its task, the proper workings of the whole is imperiled. [sic] (VO 69)

Their views are incompatible, as the narrator also points out: "It was impossible to combine the image of a lean black widow, gazing out of her window, and longing for someone to talk to, with the image of the vast machine" (VO 69). This insinuates that there is no room for individuality in the Empire. In addition this incompatibility of views also functions as a prolepsis for how Rachel, herself an outsider, is not compatible with what society or "the machine" needs her to be. This miscommunication between Rachel and Richard occurs again. Sitting across from each other in her cabin, Rachel's yearning for education and her desire to know everything is interpreted by Richard as sexual attraction. Rather than discussing politics and schooling Rachel in the works of Burke, he kisses her forcefully:

> '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…'You tempt me', he said. The tone of his voice was terrifying. (VO 80)

The nature of the kiss is ambiguous, but nonetheless comic. From the beginning the Dalloways are portrayed in a satirical and comic fashion, which culminates in

Richard's attempt to seduce Rachel. The satire becomes so extreme that critics such as Chene Heady, comment how the scene comes to "border on farce" (Heady 98). This interaction between Rachel and Richard has earlier been treated in a comic manner, such as when she is extremely impressed and absorbed in his story of how his dog died. It is therefore reasonable to read the scene as comic and farce-like. However, there is also ambivalence in Rachel's reaction that functions to darken the nature of the scene. Richard's kiss, though comically portrayed, constitutes a violent sexual act. Rachel responds both positively and negatively. It marks both an awakening of her sexuality and an enactment of "male privilege in the socially constructed economy of desire" (Froula 73).

The theme of sexual awakening is one often found in literature concerning female initiation and formation. The way in which Woolf has Rachel react is intriguing in that it complicates this "awakening". Although sensing a kind of awakening, Rachel is more negative in her reaction, and equates Richard's kiss with the prostitutes in Piccadilly. Her fear of sexuality constitutes an important aspect of the novel's cultural criticism of how women like Rachel were educated in ignorance of life and sexuality. After the kiss Rachel's dreams reveal how the sexual act has evoked a fear of sexuality and of being objectified by men:

> 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, woke crying ‘oh!’… she felt herself pursued… A voice moaned for her; eyes desired her. (VO 81-82)

The dream may also be interpreted in relation to her developmental path. As she becomes aware of the gender constructions, such as with Richard’s kiss, her path towards autonomy grows narrower and becomes more confining. Ultimately, her path will lead her to “a vault”, which may be interpreted as a symbol for marriage and the enclosed domestic space that will keep her safe from being ruined. Marriage figures in this depiction as restrictive and tomblike. Becoming an object of desire forces Rachel to consider how her body becomes significant in relation to the social responsibilities that hang over her such as motherhood. The feeling of entrapment may therefore also be read in terms of an experience of being trapped in her own body. This sense of entrapment and feeling pursued is similar to how Rachel comes to see her life after Helen educates her on sexual politics, while she assures her that nothing out of the ordinary has occurred. In her attempt to educate and calm Rachel, she explains that being desired is a normal part of life, just like marriage. Helen even equates the kiss (a sign of masculine sexual desire and privilege) to marriage: ‘You oughtn’t to be frightened’ she said. ‘It’s the most natural thing in the world. Men will want to kiss you, just as they’ll want to marry you’ (VO 86). By associating these things, Helen connects marriage to male privilege, indicating that marriage, like the kiss, makes women objects for masculine desire within a system of male privilege. Rachel reacts with disgust, equating sexual desire and marriage with prostitution: “It is terrifying – it is disgusting” (VO 86). This discussion brings Rachel into a new understanding of her social surroundings and casts her life in a different light, exclaiming things such as: “So that’s why I can’t walk alone!” (VO 87). She now

understands the limiting effect these gender norms have had on her life. In conversing with Helen, she becomes enlightened about her situation while also shocked and disgusted. Returning to Rachel's dream again, one may interpret the dream as not only depicting her ambivalent reaction to the kiss and the fear of sexuality, but one may also read it as Christine Froula has (Froula 64), as resistance towards the initiation encouraged by Helen and the Dalloways. This reading of the dream brings up an interesting point concerning how Woolf engages with the Bildungsroman. Although these characters seek to educate Rachel in light of their own experiences, literature preferences, actions and explanations; none of them fully succeeds in forming Rachel. She remains resistant to what the surrounding characters are trying to teach her, whether it is Clarissa with her conventional femininity and Jane Austen, Richard with his enforced separate spheres and hard kiss, or Helen's disturbing lesion on male privilege and desire.

2.1.2 The Marriage Plot:

When Rachel reaches Santa Marina the novel begins to follow the structure of the marriage plot and her development starts to revolve around courtship and questions of matrimony and unity. Seemingly the novel follows a conventional pattern; Rachel and Terence meet, sense an attraction, seek to get to know each other and as they grow more aware of their feelings, fall in love and become engaged. However in this structure, discordant elements jar effectively and problematize how marriage figures in the marriage plot, and subsequently the institution itself and the idea of unity that marriage is built upon. Woolf was not unique in seeking to critique courtship narratives and question the nature of marriage as institution, as Jane de Gay notes in her discussion of *The Voyage Out.* Her critique however, is more oblique than earlier novels. While her predecessors and contemporaries treated their critique

and rejection of marriage as a primarily social issue, Woolf treats it as a textual issue. The novel draws upon conventional plot elements structuring the marriage plot, with allusions to Jane Austen, who in many ways developed and perfected the plot with novels such as *Northanger Abbey* (1817), *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) and *Pride and Prejudice* (1813).

Jane Austen's marriage plots reflect Moretti's statements concerning the Bildungsroman and the importance of marriage by tending to emphasize the symbolic significance of marriage as a process of balancing the demands of self and society. Significant to Austen's treatment of the marriage plot is the focus on the development of the self-interrogating consciousness of her heroines as they struggle for self-knowledge within the courtship process they are immersed in. In Austen's novels, the marriage plot is in many ways enacted through the female rite of passage where marriage is the ultimate goal. This is exemplified in her novel *Northanger Abbey,* where Catherine Morland starts as a naïve young woman, who in tact with her courtship with Henry Tilney must confront her naïve outlook, and ultimately reaches a state of maturity that culminates in matrimony. Though not clearly articulated in the novel, it is reasonable to say that Woolf was well aware of the legacy of the patriarchal critical tradition that had constructed Austen's persona and novels. The figure of Jane Austen praised by the Dalloways is a construction from Victorian culture, as her writing came to represent conventional attitudes concerning issues of gender and marriage.

Austen has a prominent role in *The Voyage Out*. Not only is Austen's fiction discussed amongst the characters, Woolf also constructs specific sequences that bear a striking resemblance to scenes from Austen's novels. Although these sequences are

similar, they are altered through tone and style. Consequently they become more like parodies of Austen's courtship narratives or attempts at loosening the "tight plait" of her fiction in order to problematize the concept of marriage and unity. In the introduction to the Penguin Classics edition of *The Voyage Out*, Jane Wheare points out that at first glance it seems to be a novel of development similar to Austen's, depicting "a young woman's emergence into adulthood, her 'courtship', and her ultimate union with a man"(Wheare xxvi). There are also different sections of the novel often discussed in relation to their similarity to Austen's writing. However, with a closer look it becomes clear that although the subject matter is reminiscent of a Jane Austen novel, what is being said is very different. One of the most interesting scenes that illustrates this connection to Austen is the dance celebrating the engagement of Susan and Arthur. Interestingly, this is also the scene where the novel's experimentation with Austen's plot becomes especially obvious. Rachel's piano playing becomes an intervention in the social rituals of mating as the dance evolves into a different literary expression than the "typical" Austen dance.

The dance begins in the manner that would be depicted in an Austen novel, with accounts of excitement, dancing couples, and dilemmas concerning whom to dance with and talk with. So it goes on while, but at two in the morning the musicians leave and Rachel is persuaded to play. With her music she takes the company beyond the waltzes and polkas, into a freer form of modern dance, without rules or steps to follow. As she leads the dancers away from the conventionality and norms of dance, the mood alters and the style of the section becomes more surreal and experimental. The stylistic aspect of the novel changes in relation to what is happening during the dance, and makes the escape from convention and norms felt. Rachel's music makes

the guests free to dance with a lack of self-consciousness and get lost in the moment and become absorbed by the music. As Rachel loosens the dancers from the "ritual patterns of coupledom" she opens up the "conventional mating dance" (Froula 52) to an alternative and free expression:

> The tune changed to a minuet; St John hopped with incredible swiftness first on his left leg, then on his right; the tune flowed melodiously; Hewet, swaying his arms and holding out the tails of his coat, swam down the room in imitation of the voluptuous dreamy dance of an Indian maiden dancing before her Rajah. (VO 185)

As the novel loosens from the conventions of the Jane Austen dance, where courtship is the main focus, the characters experience a feeling of liberation from social norms. When Hewet is freed from the masculine requirements concerning how he is supposed to dance, he begins to dance like an "Indian maiden,". Another example is how the dancers move away from an emphasis on heterosexual mating, to same-sex partners and individual expressions. Eventually they all fall over and regain awareness of themselves and their surroundings. Having danced through the night and in tact with the sunrise they become "conscious that a cold eye had been turned upon them" (VO 187). In addition to these direct literary allusions to Jane Austen, the novel also draws upon conventions of the marriage plot through its plot structure.

The multiple sets of couples in *The Voyage Out* may be seen as a parallel to the structure of the narrative pattern in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), where the plot also follows various couples through their courtship stories. However the couples in *The Voyage Out*, especially Arthur & Susan and Rachel & Terence, function to question the validity of marriage as an institution and to problematize the conventional depiction of courtship in the marriage plot. As Jane de Gay argues in

Virginia Woolf's Novel's and the Literary Past, the disruption of the courtship narrative may be read in part as a reaction against the didactic nature of Austen's novels. This becomes especially evident as Woolf is drawing on specific elements from *Pride and Prejudice*, one of Austen's most didactic novels in relation to courtship. In the construction of the various couples in *Pride and Prejudice* Austen illustrated the do's and don'ts in the courtship process, educating her female readers on how "it might be possible for women to maintain self-respect and build positive relationships as well as gaining economic security" (de Gay 29). Woolf draws upon this aspect of multiple couples, however rather than have a didactic function, they challenge and critique the concept of marriage. Through the various couples in *The Voyage Out*, Woolf is able to weaken and satirize aspects of the marriage plot and question the idea unity in marriage. It is especially through the characters of Arthur, Susan, Rachel and Terence that this becomes evident.

If Virginia Woolf were to write a traditional Bildungsroman depicting female initiation into marriage and maternity, she would have been better off centering the narrative on the minor character of Susan Warrington. Through Susan and her engagement to Arthur Venning, Woolf satirizes the traditional marriage plot while also addressing social issues concerning female dependence on men. In introducing the various characters residing at the Santa Marina hotel the narrator moves in and out of their rooms, and observes them before they go to bed. In this section we are introduced to a lonely woman examining her reflection in the mirror. This is Susan Warrington and her mind is preoccupied with thinking about Arthur Venning, another guest at the hotel:

> She was really wondering what Arthur Venning would say she was. Her feeling about him was decidedly queer. She would not admit it to herself that she was in

> love with him or that she wanted to marry him, yet she spent every minute when she was alone in wondering what he thought of her, and in comparing what they had done today with what they had done the day before. (VO 114)

Through her reflections, the plot of love and courtship is introduced to the text. Throughout the novel the character of Susan is most often depicted in relation to matrimony, making her identity connected and defined in terms of her relationship with Arthur. The novel treats Susan Warrington in a comic fashion, mocking the shallow nature of the conventional courtship-and-marriage plot. In addition, Susan is representative for the restricted lives of women who depend their futures upon their relations to men, be it a father or husband. The scene where the engagement of Arthur and Susan is depicted satirically exemplifies the disruption of the marriage plot. The scene begins as expected, with declarations of love, a proposal of marriage, and the culmination of bliss:

> …'You've made a difference to me' he jerked out, 'I don't see why I shouldn't tell you. I've felt it ever since I knew you…It's because I love you.'
>
> ….'It's the most perfect thing in the world', Susan started, very gently and with great conviction. It was no longer merely a proposal of marriage, but of marriage with Arthur, with whom she was in love. (VO 145)

Woolf's treatment of their relationship turns satirical when they actually begin to talk with one another. De Gay proposes that her treatment of their engagement suggests Woolf's discomfort in seeing marriage as a positive outcome (de Gay 29). However, it may also functions to question the marriage plot in itself. In satirizing the engagement scene and weakening the motivations of the couple, the novel illustrates how marriage does not always signify unity and harmony, and that these narratives revolving around marriage are often too simplistic and insufficient in articulating the

complexities and ambivalences of matrimony. The satirical portrayal of the couple and the nature of their unity are especially clear when they have confessed their love. Susan asks Arthur what was the first thing he liked about her and he replies:

> 'It was a buckle you wore one night at sea' said Arthur, after due consideration. 'I remember noticing – it's absurd thing to notice! – that you didn't take peas, because I don't either'… (VO 155)

The satire makes one question the nature of their relationship, especially when the narrator goes on to say that when discussing and comparing tastes and interests "Susan ascertained what Arthur cared about, and professed herself very fond of the same thing" (VO 155). By having Susan assimilate to his tastes and interests the novel devalues the relationship between the two characters, making it more comical than romantic. Additionally, as de Gay points out in her reading of the scene, the phrase "professed" is often to be found in Austen's writing in relation to exposing hypocrisy; subsequently implying that Susan is trying to impress Arthur in order to secure him as a husband. Another element that imposes ambiguity into the scene of love and passion is the description of what Rachel and Hewet observe when they stumble upon the newly engaged couple:

> …Susan Warrington, lay back upon the ground, with her eyes shut and an absorbed look upon her face, as though she were not altogether conscious. Nor could you tell from her expression whether she was happy, or had suffered something. (VO 156)

By having Susan lie there in such a fashion, the effect the engagement has had on her is presented as complex. Before coming to Santa Marina, Susan had been confined to an insignificant position as a single woman in a domestic sphere, where marriage is the ultimate goal. This position had reduced her to no more than a servant

for her elderly aunt. Through Susan, Woolf is not only mocking the conventions of the marriage plot, but is also commenting on the restrictive social divisions of British society. For Susan Warrington there are only two options; become an old maid and continue as a servant to members of her family, or marriage. Woolf raises the question of what Susan's intentions towards marriage are; is it her love for Arthur or is it a question of bare necessity? Contemplating her life after the engagement, Susan's thoughts revolve mostly around how marriage has solved her problems in terms of how she is treated and how her status in life has risen:

> Marriage, marriage, that was the right thing, the only thing, the solution required by everyone she knew, and a great part of her mediations was spent in tracing every instance of discomfort, loneliness, ill-health, unsatisfied ambition, restlessness, eccentricity…. to the part of men and particularly on the part of women to the fact that they wanted to marry, were trying to marry, and had not succeeded in getting married. (VO 201)

Susan is both a sad example of the restrictive options for women in the early nineteenth-century British patriarchal society and a comical character, a marriage plot heroine put to the extreme. In contrast to Susan, Rachel does not view marriage as solution to her problems and does not think of marriage as a means of escaping her restrictive life. Interestingly, Rachel feels the possibility of escaping her restrictions lies in the notion of being herself and having her own personality. As she talks to Helen about the possibilities that will reveal themselves in Santa Marina, she perceives a vision of her own autonomous self-hood:

> The vision of her own personality, of herself as a real everlasting thing, different from anything else…she became profoundly excited at the thought of living…'I can be m-m-myself,' she stammered, 'in spite of you, in spite of the

> Dalloways, and Mr. Pepper, and Father, and my aunts, in spite of these? (VO 90)

Rachel and Terence's marriage plot is accompanied by an insistent questioning of whether it is entirely possible for men and women to understand and connect with one another. The novel also takes a critical look at the effects of the unity between a husband and wife which is enforced by marriage. Whereas Arthur and Susan act out their parts in adherence with the conventional marriage plot, Rachel and Terence struggle with their roles. Both move through the novel questioning, resisting and contemplating what the unity of marriage will mean for them and their individualities. In attempting to remove himself from everything "distasteful" at the hotel, Hewet explores Santa Marina on his own as he contemplates the idea of marriage, imagining various scenarios between husband and wife such as: "…two people sitting alone over the fire; the man was reading, the woman sewing…" or "the worn husband and wife sitting with their children round them, very patient, tolerant, and wise" (VO 280). The different scenarios that he imagines are all "unpleasant" to him. He imagines how individuality is replaced by conventional gender roles and how the destructing effect the suffocating unity may have upon the relationship. Thinking about unmarried people he imagines them "active in an unlimited world" and reflects how:

> All the most individual and humane of his friends were bachelors and spinsters; indeed he was surprised to find that the women he most admired and knew best were unmarried women. Marriage seemed worse for them than it was for men. (VO 281)

Terence's unpleasant conception of marriage seems to stem from a perception of how marriage will wash away individuality, especially for women, while also immersing

both man and woman into a mundane and restrictive life. Terence is torn between his feelings for Rachel and the nature of the social institution of marriage.

One of the most important courtship scenes between Terence and Rachel illustrates the difficulty of communication, but also the desire for connection. Alone on the cliff overlooking Santa Marina, Terence and Rachel attempt to get closer to one another. Throughout the scene Terence is depicted in a sympathetic manner, especially as he appropriates the female perspective and gives a lengthy feminist speech on the imbalanced power positions of men and women. This represents a clear counterpoint to Richard Dalloway's speeches on gender and society. Not only does Terence express insight when speaking from a female perspective on issues like female suffrage and women's unrepresented lives, but he also shows great interest in Rachel's experiences. As DeKoven states in her discussion of the novel: "If egalitarian marriage, marriage that defied and transcended the Dallowayan system, were possible with anyone anywhere, it should be possible with Hewet here" (DeKoven 107). In this interaction between Rachel and Terence there is a sense that the two are attempting to breach the gap of sexual difference brought about by differences in education and socialization. Removed from the other characters and their imposing rules and restrictions, the two characters have a slight chance of connecting.

Throughout the scene there is a sense that the characters are moving towards a connection, while simultaneously retreating, as the possibility of union seems hopeless. Although Rachel and Terence seem at times to unite, they both experience "a feeling of intense depression" (VO 248) as the other's individuality comes into

focus, like when Rachel is trying to describe a feeling of freedom that comes from being alone. Hewet's reaction expresses doubt towards the possibility of unity:

> It seemed plain that she would never care for one person rather than another; she was evidently quite indifferent to him; they seemed to come very near, and then they were as far apart as ever again…(VO 248)

Likewise when Hewet reflects on his writing, Rachel is overcome by a feeling of depression, expressing the same fear concerning his ability to care for another person: "He might never care for anyone; all that desire to get to know her and get at her, which she had felt pressing on her almost painfully, had completely vanished" (VO 249). When their individualities come into focus they complicate the courtship process, and suggests that individuality and marital unity are not compatible.

2.1.3 Education

Woolf's use of the education motif in *The Voyage Out* is less focused on how education figures an important part of Rachel's development, and is more focused on how the educational possibilities offered to her will restrict her due to their intrinsic gender politics. The passages relating to Rachel's education is where the novel is at times the most outspoken in its the critique of gender politics. Not only does Rachel's education serve to address the inadequacy of women's schooling, but it also exposes the privileged position that men of a certain class have towards the attainment of knowledge. Through the characters of Ridley Ambrose, St. John Hirst and Terence Hewet, the novel portrays how middle-class men acquire culture as something of a birthright and that their privileged access to knowledge informs how they position themselves in society. By having these characters take charge of Rachel's intellectual development, the novel illustrates how the nature of this education does not present

her with a sense of autonomy or power in which to further her own development. The nature in which these men seek to form Rachel only comes to illustrate how, both in education and marriage, she is supposed to be subordinate and dependent upon men. Woolf's treatment of the motif illustrates how the scholarly education given to Rachel is instructed by gender constructions that place her in a subordinate position.

In his discussion of Rachel's Bildung, in *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* (2006), Gregory Castle asserts that although critics have labeled *The Voyage Out* as a failed Bildungsroman, the focus on Rachel's education "locates it squarely in the Bildungsroman" (Castle 218). Drawing on Rachel DuPlessis's depiction of Rachel as a "mid-nineteenth century girl heroine in a twentieth-century context" (DuPlessis 49), Castle argues that the nature of her education positions her on the border between two eras:

> One in which young women acquire only those cultural attainments that would enable them to become better wives and mothers and one in which they are free to aspire to the kinds of education and vocations that were traditionally the sole objects of male Bildung. (Castle 218-219)

This threshold between the male and female Bildung influences the way education is portrayed in the narrative. In addition to complicating the marriage plot through tone and style, the novel also destabilizes the concept by focusing on Rachel's education, and by combining the male and female Bildungsroman traditions.

Rachel is throughout the novel pulled in different directions by various mentors who all seek to shape her subjectivity. In a letter to her brother, Helen writes that she is shocked and angered by Rachel's faulty education and views it as "criminal" to bring people up like that. The problematic aspect of Helen's attitude towards education is that, although she insists on equal educational rights between

men and women, men remain the primary benefactors of education. During the celebration of Arthur and Susan's engagement, Helen enlists the help of St. John Hirst in her plan to educate Rachel. In discussing Rachel's development, Hirst states that "few things at the present time mattered more than the enlightenment of women" (VO 183), the only problem being that the enlightenment which Hirst and his fellow male characters has to offer her is highly problematic.

The male characters attempt to take charge of her education throughout the novel. Although their attempts are futile, their efforts expose a sense privilege and possessiveness in relation to knowledge and education. Their quest to enlighten Rachel is especially evident in how they try to influence what and how she should read. These persistent efforts to instruct Rachel exposes how they perceive women, and how they are under the impression that literature belongs to them; that books are theirs to lend away. Whether it is Rachel's father Willoughby with his instructive *Cowper's Letters*, or Richard Dalloway's politically enlightening literature: *The Speech on the French Revolution* or *The American Rebellion*, Hirst with his Gibbon or Ridley with his Greeks, they all seek to influence Rachel. In all these instances the male sense of ownership is portrayed through the fact that they own copies of the books that they insist Rachel should read, and they are willing to "lend" her these books, indicating that she will never be able to claim the same ownership. As such, she will have remained dependent on men in order to approach the scholarly education they represent. This notion of ownership and the lending of literature establishes a clear hierarchy between Rachel and her male educators. This relationship is well illustrated when Rachel enters the study of Ridley Ambrose in search of books to borrow. According to Katherine Dalsimer, this is a topos that will reoccur throughout Woolf's writing:

> A diffident young woman ventures into the library of a scholar, where she feels herself to be – and its treated as – an outsider, stranger. The scholar is older, and male, and fully at home in the heritage of Western civilization arrayed upon his shelves. (Dalsimer 168)

The manner in which Ridley approaches Rachel's request underlines a sense of her being an outsider in his world, as he places himself in a superior position and patronizingly questions her motivations:

> 'I want a book,' she replied. 'Gibbon's *History of the Roman Empire*. May I have it?'
>
> She watched the lines on her uncle's face gradually rearrange themselves at her question. It had been smooth as a mask before she spoke.
>
> 'Please say that again,' said her uncle, either because he had not heard or because he had not understood.
>
> She repeated the same words and reddened slightly as she did so.
>
> 'Gibbon! What no earth d'you want him for?' he enquired. (VO 192)

His conduct towards Rachel in this segment illustrates how he situates himself in a position of power. Through the tone he employs towards her, his questioning and enquiry into her reasons for wanting to read Gibbon, Ridley is demonstrating his sense of authority and ownership over education and literature. This interaction between the two illustrates Rachel's timidity upon stepping into his intellectual domain. In her reading of the scene, Dalsimer points to how the verbs position the two characters in relation to one another: Rachel "stammered" and "confessed" whereas Ridley "demanded and "exclaimed", illustrating the apparent imbalance in status. In the course of the conversation he belittles her for her lack of cultural capital in relation to her not knowing Greek and states that "…what's the use of reading if you

don't read Greek? After all, if you read Greek, you need never read any thing else…" (VO 192). Paradoxically, it is Rachel's own society that has made Greek inaccessible to her, which characters such as Ridley and Hirst contribute to uphold through their sense of privilege which is built upon the exclusion of women, while they also belittle her lack of this type of knowledge.

This eschewed balance of power between the male scholar and the young female is also evident in the dialogue between Hirst and Rachel during Susan and Arthur's engagement dance. In this scene Hirst seeks to gauge Rachel's intellect and educational background, and ends up patronizing her on her apparent lack of knowledge and the faults of her education. As a result of his exertion of power and authority over Rachel, she is induced to take a very modest view of her own accomplishments such as her musical talents and extensive reading of "the moderns". Hirst places himself in a position of power, whereby he feels authorized to openly scrutinize and assess Rachel's intellect and the possibility of "really talking" to her. This eschewed balance of power becomes especially evident as Hirst brings up Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776):

> 'D'you mean to tell me you've reached the age of twenty-four without reading Gibbon?' he demanded.
>
> 'Yes I have' she answered.
>
> 'Mon dieu!' he exclaimed, throwing out his hands. 'You must begin tomorrow. I shall send you my copy. What I want to know is –' he looked at her critically. 'You see, the problem is, can one really talk to you? Have you got a mind, or are you like the rest of your sex? You seem to me absurdly young compared to men of your age.'

> Rachel looked at him but said nothing.
>
> ‘About Gibbon’, he continued. ‘D’you think you’ll be able to appreciate him? He’s the test, of course. It’s awfully difficult to tell about women, ‘how much, I mean, is due to lack of training, and how much is native incapacity. I don’t see myself why you shouldn’t understand – only I suppose you’ve led an absurd life until now… (VO 172)

His discussion of Gibbon in this segment is less about Rachel’s lack of scholarly knowledge on Roman history and more about lacking a level of cultural capital, “the attainment of which serves as en entrée to social discourses of power” (Castle 224). In addition to being a component of cultural capital, Gibbon also becomes a symbol for masculine rationality and Empire. Early on in the novel Hirst is reading Gibbon, and his experience of Gibbon’s style of writing is portrayed as: “…a whole procession of splendid sentences entered his capacious brow and went marching through his brain in order” (VO 116). This indicates an organized and logical style. This is a text that he wants Rachel to read, and in doing so, wants to shape and restructure her mind into a rationalistic and masculine way by having Gibbon’s sentences “march” though her brain. However, Rachel’s reading of Gibbon is not as Hirst wants it to be. Where Hirst senses “a procession” of sentence that march through his brain, Rachel notices the exotic names which stimulates her imagination and leads her on a different path than Hirst had intended.

Although the characters of Hirst and Ridley position themselves in a clear position of power in relation to Rachel, they are portrayed in a way that weakens their claim to status. Both Ridley and Hirst are frequently treated in a satirical manner as they are portrayed as barely functioning in social settings and unable to take care of themselves. Consequently making fun of the entire persona of the “educated male”

and weakening the notions of authority and power that their education has instilled in them. The treatment of education in *The Voyage Out* revolves around exposing the gender politics that govern whom is allowed to attain knowledge, but also works to reduce the heightened status of the educated male.

2.2 The Journey

The title of the novel, *The Voyage Out,* opens up for various interpretations as to what exactly constitutes the core of the novel. The concept of "the voyage" and of "voyaging out" can be interpreted both literally and metaphorically. Interpreted on a metaphorical level, the idea of the voyage alludes to a well-established literary trope that opens for a reading of life as a voyage, but may also be understood as a person's journey of development towards adulthood. Although the title can conjure up a metaphorical understanding of the voyage as a symbol for Rachel's development, one cannot reduce the flexibility of this understanding to merely an abstract concept. Rachel's journeys do take place, she travels from England aboard a ship and onwards down the river and into the jungle. Retrospectively, the title may also point to Woolf's own embarkation as a novelist and her voyaging out from under the restrictive literary conventions. The title of the novel and the various literal and metaphorical journeys that take place, illustrate how Woolf is drawing on the literary motif of the journey or quest. This motif is often employed in the Bildungsroman, with its focus on growth and maturity.

The literary motif of the quest revolves around the story of a protagonist that embarks upon a mission, encounters impediments and overcomes them, attains his or her goal and sets out on the return voyage; back to society. In terms of the Bildungsroman, the motif of the journey is synonymous with how the protagonist is

on a journey towards maturity. Facing many obstacles on his or her way, often having to do with the struggles of socialization of parting with ones youthful innocence, the protagonist will eventually overcome these obstacles, accept the requirements of society and mature to take on social responsibility and become a citizen.

2.2.1 The Colonial Journey:

The motif of the journey is also present in *The Voyage Out*, however, like Woolf's treatment of the other motifs, she employs it in a fashion that complicates and problematizes the concept. Rachel embarks upon two literal journeys in the novel and both of them seem to hold a promise of hopeful expectation in terms of how they will affect her development. Initially, both journeys seem to promise liberation and signal possibility, but ultimately neither fulfill the goal of her quest. Concerning the voyage from London to the fictional formed colony Santa Marina, Hermione Lee states that:

> …it looks as though the journey is to be a liberating one. We imagine that it will provide opportunities for the twenty-four-year-old Rachel Vinrace to move away, at last, from the sheltered background provided by her aunts and her ship-owning father Willoughby, and to discover…adventure and self-fulfillment (Lee 34)

Neither journey offers Rachel what she is looking for, which is a chance to develop her autonomous sense of subjectivity. Her journey into the jungle leaves her disillusioned, and consequently her voyage to Santa Marina leaves her a stunted youth as she succumbs to death shortly after her engagement. She does not mature and does not become part of society. Instead of contributing towards maturity, her quest contributes to her destruction.

Woolf's treatment of the motif is constructed around similarities to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) as she draws upon literary allusions in the portrayal of Rachel's actual and psychological journey. Conrad's portrayal of the quest is not conventional and sows doubt as to the nature of the motif. This is something which *The Voyage Out* draws upon, while also inserting elements that depart from Conrad's journey. There is an established view among literary critics that *The Voyage Out* has an intertextual relationship with Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Each articulates much of the same concerns towards Empire, while also portraying the protagonists' psychological journey and maturation with the colony as backdrop. Both novels have their protagonists depart from London, the center of Empire, and voyage out to exotic outposts. In doing so they deliver a potent critique of Empire the nature of imperialism. When Marlow travels to The Congo, and into imperialism's "heart of darkness", Conrad expresses a clear critique of the deceptive discourses and the sinister nature of colonialism. *The Voyage Out* also employs this journey to an exotic outpost in order to convey a critique of colonialism. Though less explicit in her critique, Woolf questions the merits of Empire in a more indirect way. Written at different stages of the colonial period, the novels deal with different concerns. Conrad portrays the stage of colonialism focused on charting the unexplored wilderness of the colonial landscape while observing the cruelty of the colonizers. Whereas *The Voyage Out*'s depiction of Santa Marina focuses on tourism and the exploitative nature of trade. Conrad's colonizers are depicted as being brutalizers, whereas Woolf's "colonizers", especially the Dalloways and the Flushings, are portrayed in a satirical and exposing fashion. For instance, The Dalloways are mocked as they spout colonial rhetoric, based upon ideas of ethnocentrism and patriotism. Similarly, the depiction of

the Flushings exposes the exploitative nature of trade, as their sole purpose for the voyage is to exploit both natives and the English women back in London:

> 'The women wore them hundreds of years ago, they wear 'em still, Mrs. Flushing remarked. 'My husband rides about and finds 'em; they don't know what they're worth, so we get 'em cheap. And we sell 'em to smart women in London'. She chuckled, as though the thought of these ladies and their absurd appearance amused her. (VO 272)

In depicting different stages of colonialism and focusing on different concerns, *The Voyage Out*'s journey out to the colonial landscape seeks to accomplish something similar to what Conrad articulated in *Heart of Darkness*. A reading of both the novels makes this intertextuality explicit. Woolf builds upon Conrad's use of the journey to the colony to effectively articulate a critique against colonialism. There is another intertextual bond between the two novels that is more pressing in terms of how Woolf deals with the motif of the quest in relation to the Bildungsroman. It is how both novels use the colony and the colonial landscape as a backdrop for the protagonist's maturation and psychological journey.

A significant difference between *Heart of Darkness* and *The Voyage Out* is how gender figures. Conrad's novel is a highly masculine, in that there are few female characters. The ones that figure in the novel are either protected from the "horror" in the heart of the jungle, or are highly eroticized. The female characters in *Heart of Darkness* are structured around colonialisms gendered discourse. As David Spurr has illustrated in his critical study *The Rhetoric of Empire,* concepts of gender were an important aspect of the colonial discourse. The expedition was coded as masculine desire as the unexplored territory was coded as female, and the exploration as discovery and adventure was a type of male penetration of the female landscape. In

addition, ideas of colonialism were built upon the notion that men and women serve separate functions within in the imperialist enterprise. The male is supposed to explore whereas women need to be pure and protected, but at the same time serving as that which motivates the imperialist project. This understanding of gender and the differences between the sexes is reflected clearly in *Heart of Darkness*. Marlow feels the need to protect Kurtz's Intended, who never receives a name but is only characterized by her relation to Kurtz, from the realities of imperialism. In stark contrast, Woolf places her engaged woman right in the middle of "the darkness", subsequently challenging the gender politics of colonialism. As Conrad's Marlow penetrates into the heart of the jungle in search of truth and insight, so does Rachel voyage into the darkness. By having Rachel become the explorer the novel alters not only Conrad's text, but also the masculine ethos of the quest-story that usually labels the quest in masculine terms. As Tim Young points out in *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*:

> Many explorers deliberately invoke the figure of Odysseus or other classical questers. Such comparisons underline the masculine ethos of the quest, for if the male protagonist compares himself with Odysseus, so the woman (if mentioned at all) occupies the role of Penelope, staying faithfully at home waiting patiently for his return. (Young 88)

Mrs. Flushing's desire to travel up river into the heart of the jungle and to take part in the imperialist project unsettles the gendered discourse of colonialism. The exchange between Mrs. Flushing and Rachel illustrates her disregard for these gender constructions, as she stabs the marital bed while asserting masculine desire for exploitative expedition. This indicates that she is challenging the stability of gender constructions:

> ‘I tell you what I want to do,’ she said. ‘I want to go up there and see things for myself…I want to go up the river and see the natives in the camps.’…she rose and began piercing the bed again and again and again with a long golden pin…(VO 273)

2.2.2 The Psychological Journey

Rachel DuPlessis states that the jungle voyage to the tribal settlement constitutes the central quest of the novel. It is here that Rachel and the other travellers are removed from Jane Austen’s landscape and the micro-colony and are thrust into the symbolic and unsettling world of *Heart of Darkness*. An important aspect that the novel is drawing upon in relation to *Heart of Darkness*, becomes evident with Rachel’s journey into the jungle. Like Marlow, Rachel’s journey into the jungle becomes a depiction of her psychological journey where the landscape functions to reflect the inner workings of her mind. In addition, both voyages lead the protagonists to a state of mental breakdown, changing forever the way they view themselves and civilization.

The group of travellers that set out on the river in *The Voyage Out* consists of Mr. and Mrs. Flushing, Helen, Rachel, St. John Hirst and Terence Hewet. They embark upon a voyage that is supposed to take them to a jungle-village, which according to Mrs. Flushing is untouched by civilization. As the group moves downriver the characters speak less and less and their silence is filled by sounds from animals and the nature. As an effect of their surrounding their words loose meaning. The perplexing effect this radical otherness has upon the travellers, invoke Conrad’s depictions, as the landscape is described in terms of its strangeness and perplexing effect:

> They seemed to be driving into the heart of the night, for the trees closed in front of them, and they could hear all round them the rustling of leaves. The great darkness had the usual effect of taking away all desire for communication by making their words sound thin and small… (VO 309)

Woolf, like Conrad, constructs the voyage down the river as a voyage away from civilization into a more primitive and wild space. In this intertextuality with Conrad, Woolf reproduces colonial rhetoric as she depicts the landscape in highly eroticized terms:

> …The atmosphere was close and the air came at them in languid puffs of scent. The vast green light was broken here and there by a round of pure yellow sunlight which fell through some gap in the immense umbrella of green above, and in these yellow spaces crimson and black butterflies were circling and settling. (VO 315-316)

The description of the environment is portrayed as highly eroticized, excessive growth, its lushness, and its overly fertile nature, the landscape seems to be extremely sexual. The nature of the description of the colonial landscape reflects what David Spurr characterizes as a typical aspect of colonial discourse where the colonial landscape becomes depicted in highly eroticized metaphors:

> The erotically charged language of these metaphors marks the entrance of the colonizer, with his penetrating and controlling power, as a natural union with the subject nation. (Spurr 172)

In addition to the highly eroticized depiction of the environment there is also a sense of the jungle being a highly symbolical and strange setting. This surreal nature that encircles the travellers more and more as the move further into the jungle seems to

draw the characters to a state of introspection, as they communicate less and become more withdrawn.

During the voyage up river the steamer stops in order for the travellers to explore the jungle. Being struck by the “hot, steamy atmosphere, thick with scents” (VO 314) coming from the forest, most of the travellers chose not to voyage any deeper into the unsettling surroundings. Only Rachel and Terence proceed to voyage further. As the two walk deeper into the jungle they become absorbed into a strange and surreal setting, where silence and ambiguities speak louder than words:

> As they passed into the depths of the forest the light grew dimmer, and the noises of the ordinary world where replaced by those creaking and sighing sounds which suggests to the traveller in a forest that he is walking at the bottom of the sea. (VO 315)

The surreal environment of the jungle encroaches upon Rachel and Terence as they hardly speak to each other and the strange creaking silence weighs upon them, making it impossible for the two to “frame any thoughts”. They sense that there is something between them that has “to be spoken of” (VO 316), and when they do finally speak it becomes evident that in they are both affected by the surreal nature of their surroundings, which becomes reflected in the writing style as the segment is fragmented and ambiguous. The manner in which they interact illustrates how the jungle has opened up a possibility for the two to explore their feelings for one another:

> ‘You like being with me?’ Terence asked.
>
> ‘Yes, with you,’ she replied
>
> …. ‘That is what I have felt ever since I knew you,’ he replied. ‘We are happy together-‘ He did not seem to be speaking, or she to be hearing.

> 'Very happy,' she answered.
>
> They continued to walk for some time in silence. Their steps unconsciously quickened.
>
> 'We love each other,' Terence said.
>
> 'We love each other,' she repeated. (VO 316)

The interaction between the two is portrayed as dreamlike and unsettling. Their questioning and declarations of love are strange, but also direct and candid. The unsettling environment that surrounds them seems to possess a force that frees Rachel and Terence from the social regulations and rigid courtship rituals. The voyage into the jungle and the strange effect the environment has on the two reflects how the journey becomes more like a journey into their consciousness as they begin to explore their feelings for each other. The experience of the jungle opens up a new ambiguous world where their states of consciousness, fears, and dreams are explored. Their voyage into the jungle together has brought them closer to each other:

> 'We love each other', Terence repeated, searching into her face. Their faces were both very pale and quite, and they said nothing. He was afraid to kiss her again. By degrees she drew close to him, and rested against him. In this position they sat for some time. She said 'Terence' once; he answered 'Rachel.' (VO 317)

Away from society and "civilization" they move deeper into this space full with "vast green light" and extremely fertile environment, where butterflies circle and settle amid the "sighing and creaking" and "jarring cry of some startled animal" (VO 315 - 316) and the deeper they come the more unsettling the effect. The experience of the jungle stirs Rachel and Terences' consciousness, as the foreign natural setting and the radical otherness intrudes upon their selfhood, instigating a probing into their sense of

self and their feelings towards each other. Ultimately, Rachel reaches an epiphany about life and love:

> 'Terrible – terrible,' she murmured after another pause, but in saying this she was thinking as much of the persistent churning of the water as of her own feeling. On and on it went in the distance, the senseless and cruel churning of the water. She observed that the tears were running down Terence's cheeks. (VO 317)

Like Kurtz's "the horror, the horror" Rachel experiences a clarity of vision, as Kurtz does in *Heart of Darkness*. The sounds of the "churning of the water" which leads Rachel to a realization illustrates how the surrounding nature reflects symbolically to show her growing awareness in relation to how her relationship will engulf her. The churning of the water also points back to Richard Dalloway and his figure of Empire as a machine. Rachel's realization seems to suggest that, as she and Terence have connected, they will become part of this machine. Terence's reaction also indicates a sadness as he too seems to realize what their connection or unity will signify as they travel back to "civilization".

As Rachel and Terence return to their fellow travellers their river voyage proceeds, as they travel deeper into the jungle. When they finally reach their destination the experience of the village in the heart of the jungle is not as expected. Moving towards the village the group are initially undetected, giving them the ability to observe and regard the villagers. The native women, as they are perceived through the eyes of the travellers, are depicted in terms of shapes and patterns, depictions that reduce them as though they have ceased to be human. Moving closer to the village Mr. Flushing goes in front of the others and engages with one of the villagers, described as a "lean majestic man". The contrast between the native man's body and

Mr. Flushing's makes the English body "appear ugly and unnatural" (VO 331). Already at this point one senses signs of extreme self-consciousness on the part of the English and a feeling of self-estrangement. When the group moves closer to the village and its inhabitants, a breakdown occurs in the boundaries between English subject and native object, as the villages return the gaze of the tourists. The native women cease being shapes and forms as they return the gaze:

> …. Their long narrow eyes slid round and fixed upon them with the motionless inexpressive gaze of those removed from each other far beyond the plunge of speech…As they sauntered about, the stare followed them, passing over their legs, their bodies, their heads, curiously not without hostility, like the crawl of a winter fly. (VO 332)

The unrelenting stare of the villagers examines each member of the group, causing the tourists to feel insecure and disturbed. The returned stare that follows the group as they move around pierces their sense of self, and makes them "move uneasily". Not only are the villagers stating at the tourists, the nature of the stare is "not without hostility" (VO 332), making them feel uneasy and uncomfortable to the point that the stare unsettles and disintegrates the stable sense of self. The gaze of the natives leads to a collapse in the very dichotomy of self and other. Mark A. Wollaeger points out that the distinction between the natives and the English become blurred, and one is at times confused as to whom the narrator is referring:

> When sweetmeats where offered *them*, *they* put out *their* great red hands to take them, and felt themselves treading cumbrously like tight-coated soldiers among these soft instinctive people. [emphasis added] (VO 332)

At first glance it seems that the "great red hands" belong to the natives who reach out to accept food that the English have brought with them, but the next clause reveals

that the hands receiving the sweetmeats belong to the English. The contrast in the depictions, while reflecting poorly on the English and their stiffness, uses colonial rhetoric in depicting the natives. Whereas the English are described as "tight" as "soldiers", the natives are "soft" and "instinctive", indicating that the natives are more primitive and connected to nature. Eventually, after a short period of curiosity, the English, with the expectation of the Flushings, "become absorbed" into the village. As they "absorb", the villagers cease staring and resume their previous occupations and the boundaries between the villagers and the English cease to exist. As a result of this, the European subjectivity is disturbed and unsettled. The disintegration of their hitherto stable sense of self affects all the Europeans differently, however of all the characters Rachel becomes the most affected.

After coming into contact with the village women, and witnessing their domestic duties, which are reminiscent of the many images which Terence imagines in relation to how married life will be, Rachel's mental journey halts as she comes to the realization of what married life will entail. Even in the village civilization, far from her own society, the biological conditions that govern women to marriage and motherhood are present. These women, as they are depicted breastfeeding their children, become a symbol for the maternal and the biological that will always impinge upon Rachel and her sense of self, as Rachel herself states "so it would go on for ever and ever" (VO 332). Rachel's quest has not brought her to any form of development; the river has not lead her towards maturity. However, the mental journey has provided her with new insight into her life, and made the vision of the future clear. The voyage up river brought Rachel into an environment where her experience of her surroundings functions to expose the impossibility of her desires.

As Julie Kuehn argues in her critical study *A Female Poetics of Empire from Eliot to Woolf*:

> Her insights into the deeper truth of both this world and gender relations within both 'primitive' and 'cultured' societies – 'terrible, terrible' mark the beginning of the end. (Kuehn 182)

Rachel's psychological journey up river has brought her into a state of disillusionment, symbolized through the mysterious fever she contracts in the jungle, which will eventually lead to her death. Unlike the conventional hero who returns from his journey, ready to join society once again, and accepting the requirements of being a citizen, Rachel returns with disillusionment that will destruct any possibility or desire of socialization.

2.3 Death

Rachel's Bildung ends in death. Following their return from the jungle-voyage Rachel falls sick and eventually dies. As Hewet is reading to Rachel, her head begins to ache and she is suddenly overcome by a strange illness that she has most likely contracted in the jungle. This being the most evident break with the Bildungsroman, Rachel's death has fostered a considerable amount of critical discussion. Her Bildung, which should have ended in marriage ends instead in death and she does not fulfill her role in her marriage plot. As such she will not become part of the Empire. In the scenes depicting her delirium and sickness, Woolf experiments with form and reaches a climax as Rachel voyages further out "creating her own universe in her fever" (Lee 49). The effect of this experimental form is diverse. For one, the form is used to express Rachel's state of consciousness as she struggle moving in-and-out of feverish hallucinations that play out her fears. In addition, these sections also function to

weaken the romantic notions of romance and death established in nineteenth century novels like *Wuthering Heights* (1847). Woolf draws on literary allusions to Emily Brontës novel *Wuthering Heights* to express and question ideas of love and unity, while also illuminating Rachel's death.

In her critical study of literary allusions in Woolf's fiction *Continuing Presences* (1982), Beverly Ann Schlack reads Woolf's construction of Rachel's death and the interaction between Rachel and Terence in the scenes leading up to her death, as closely reminiscent of the scenes between Cathy and Heathcliff during Cathy's delirium and death in *Wuthering Heights*. Schlack points out that when Rachel's illness worsens, Hewet's experience of grief and suffering is transformed into a spiritual feeling of unity and wholeness:

> The longer he sat there the more profoundly was he conscious of the peace invading every corner of his soul. Once he held his breath and listened acutely; she was still breathing; he went on thinking for some time; they seemed to be thinking together; he seemed to be Rachel as well as himself; and then he listened again; no, she had ceased to breathe. So much the better – this was death. It was nothing; it was to cease to breathe. (VO 412)

The feeling of extreme unity in death is a well-know theme in nineteenth century literature. According to Schlack, this theme may be characterized as love finding a perfect fulfillment in death, pointing out that "such a belief pervades many of the greatest love stories in literature" (Schlack 15). As Terence sits next to his dying fiancé, he decides that their love will be preserved and sealed perfectly by death. There is another literary allusion to Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* which is evident as Terence seems to reflect the intense identification Catherine feels towards Heathcliff as she declares that "He is more myself than I am," when he declares to "be Rachel as

well as himself"(Schlack 412). In alluding to established literary representations of love and death Woolf creates an allusive weight to the episode. As Schlack comments, this type of background resonance:

> …deepens the emotional impact and does its rhetorical duty by helping to convince readers that spiritual-mystical attachments count as genuine manifestations of love. (Schlack 15)

However, this presentation of love and death is problematized through Woolf's treatment of it, with the focus on Rachel's hallucinations. Terence goes on to declare as Rachel stops breathing that: "It was happiness, it was perfect happiness" (VO 412). Interestingly, as de Gay points out, the phrase "perfect happiness" is used in *Northanger Abbey* as a synonym for marriage and it also echoes the closing words of Austen's *Emma*. Jane de Gay goes further states that in each of these novels the achievement of "perfect happiness" marks the heroine's disappearance from the text. Rachel's death, de Gay argues, can therefore be seen as "a replication, and a critical commentary on the courtship narrative" (32). In addition to reading Terence's brief feeling of "perfect happiness" as a type of parody of Austen's courtship narrative, there is also a strong presence of irony with the emphasis on the different experiences Rachel and Terence have in terms of this sense of unity.

As a clear contrast to Terence's sense of love and unity, Rachel's mental state and delirium is one that is overcome by a sense of isolation: She was completely cut off, and unable to communicate with the rest of the world, isolated alone with her body (VO 384). It is with these depictions of Rachel's delirium Woolf's modernist form emerges in a bold fashion. When Terence is seeking to connect with Rachel during her sickness, she is far away from him in her own universe, thus making any type of connection or communication impossible:

> Instead of saying, as he meant her to say, that she wished to see them, she said nothing for some time.
>
> ‘You see, there they go, rolling off the edge of the hill,’ she said suddenly.
>
> ‘Rolling, Rachel? What do you see rolling? There’s nothing rolling.’
>
> ‘The old woman with the knife,’ she replied, not speaking to Terence in particular, and looking past him. As she appeared to be looking at a vase on the shelf opposite, he rose and took it down.
>
> ‘Now they can’t roll any more,’ he said cheerfully. Nevertheless she lay gazing at the same spot and paid him no further attention although he spoke to her. (VO 388)

In this passage the lack of communication and unity is portrayed in how Terence tries to make sense of Rachel’s hallucination, which proves impossible. Her hallucinations express Rachel’s states of consciousness and how her illness distort her surroundings, and her visions become highly symbolic in relation to her struggle with her social responsibilities, and her fears of marital life and sexuality. Her hallucinations elucidate her interior struggles. This is exemplified from the depiction of her feverish dream:

> …Rachel again shut her eyes, and found herself walking through a tunnel under the Thames, where there were little deformed women sitting in archways playing cards, while the bricks of which the wall was made of oozed with damp, which collected into drops and slid down the wall. (VO 386)

The dream is reminiscent of the nightmare Rachel has after Richard kisses her, which suggests that Rachel’s fear of sexuality is still present in her subconscious. It is ironic that while Terence seeks to connect with Rachel and experiences a moment of “perfect bliss,” Rachel herself is hallucinating and dreaming about her fear of

sexuality and fears of marriage and what such a union signifies. By inserting Rachel's hallucinations into Terence's spiritual sense of unity it seems clear that Woolf is mocking the concept of unity in death. Interestingly, it is only after Rachel is dead that it seems possible to achieve a happy union. Without Rachel's problematic individuality there is no longer any struggle. Terence contemplates while seated next to Rachel how: "they had now what they had always wanted to have, the union which had been impossible while they lived" (VO 412). In addition, when Rachel dies Terence may finally construct their relationship as a harmonious one, illustrating how, according to Gregory Castle, "Terence conscripts Rachel into a happiness that she always doubted" (231):

> Unconscious whether he thought the words or spoke them aloud, he said, 'No two people have ever been so happy as we have been. No one had ever loved as we have loved.' (VO 412)

Not only does Woolf allude to *Wuthering Heights* in terms of the romantic unity Terence comes to feel, but she also draws upon the novel in regards to the illness and untimely death of Rachel. When Rachel senses that she is developing feelings for Hewet, she looks towards literature in hope that the novels she reads will provide her with insight into her own feelings and the nature of love. Looking through the books she reads from *Wuthering Heights* to George Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman* (1905) and the plays of Ibsen, none of the books "suggested from their analysis of love what their heroines felt was what she was feeling now" (VO 259). However, as Schlack observes: "in her feeling that the passionate, transcendent love of Cathy and Heathcliff offers no enlightenment, there is a significant if only half-realized irony." (19). Her own love story, Schlack points out, is like Cathy's in that it becomes consummated in death. Despite her rejection of any similarity between

herself and Catherine Earnshaw, their struggles and resolutions have much in common. Both suffer delirious states "in which each fears the self-surrender required by passionate love", such as Rachel's fear of sexuality. In addition, they both resist or question concepts of domesticity and demands of married life and ultimately "each dies with her deepest capacities for expressing passionate love unfulfilled" (Schlack 19). The literary allusion to Cathy's ending seems to illuminate and offer an interesting outlook to Rachel and her "resolution". As Cathy "solves" her dilemma by not choosing between Heathcliff and Linton, Rachel finds a similar way out of her predicament of independence versus marriage. Neither character makes a choice, both choose not to choose. Several critics (e.g. Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Christine Froula) read Rachel's death as an opposition. DuPlessis argues that death becomes Rachel's protest against marriage as her primary aim in life. Although intriguing, this understanding works to simplify in a sense what Woolf has constructed in terms of Rachel's character. This understanding of protest would be more suitable for the Rachel of *Melymbrosia*, however the Rachel of *The Voyage Out* is more complex and ambiguous. Instead of an opposition I interpret Rachel's death like Gregory Castle does, as an "opting out" (Castle 230). Throughout the novel Rachel is not characterized as being a character with agency over her situation, therefore I find it problematic that her illness and death should be understood as a form of protest. Rachel's death is rather a way for Woolf to illuminate the problematic concept of socialization which the classical Bildungsroman enforced. Consequently, the novel's stunted youth becomes a critique towards nation. This is a recurring issue throughout Virginia Woolf's authorship, however a novel that shows a great deal of similarity in how Woolf explores the subject is her novel *Jacob's Room*.

Jacob's Room:

The Absence and Presence of the Bildungsheld

While impatiently waiting for Jacob Flanders to arrive and join the dinner party at the Plumers, Mrs. Plumer asks the group of young men "Does anybody know Mr. Flanders?" (JR 24). This is a question that resounds throughout the novel. It is also a question that has fascinated and still engages literary critics. *Jacob's Room* charts the life of Jacob Flanders from his childhood to his early death in the First World War. However, due to the manner in which he is represented, he remains a conundrum to readers. Jacob is both an absence and a presence in the novel that is supposed to follow his social and personal development, as we are only able to observe him empirically and never receive insight into interiority. Problematizing the representation of character in this way, Woolf is able to articulate the problematics of the idea of stable identity, while also articulating a critique towards gendered subject formation. Just as the extensive insight into Rachel's interiority in *The Voyage Out* functions to articulate social critique while unsettling the Bildungsroman, so does the lack of interiority in *Jacob's Room*. The combination of Jacob's absence and presence is part of the text's politics. Another aspect of this politics is found in the narrator's comments throughout the novel concerning gendered subject formation and the difficulty of representing fictional characters.

The narrator of *Jacob's Room* holds a much more prominent position in the narrative than the more omniscient narrator of *The Voyage Out*. Through the narrator of *Jacob's Room* the text is able to deal with questions of identity, subject formation and representation of character through the novel's form. Moving in and out of an

omniscient position, doubting her own observations, the narrator makes for an intriguing narrative element. In addition to making the narrator's position more ambiguous Woolf also makes the narrator's gender female, which functions to emphasize questions of gender.

Written after the First World War, the novel grapples with the experience of the war, and its effects on how the nation and its social structures are perceived. This is treated both in terms of the subject matter, but also in relation to the form of the novel, as Jacob reflects the idea of the "lost generation", moving like a shadow through the novel. The character of Jacob Flanders is both a representative and a victim of Edwardian social values, as the narrative of his bildung exemplifies the social upbringing of a certain type of men from a particular class in pre-war England. This social upbringing, presented through Woolf's critical lens, depicts how gendered identities are constructed around ideas of essentialized masculinity, by the culture into which they are supposed to become immersed. In Woolf's critical dealing with Edwardian gender politics she identifies ideas of authority and passivity as important aspects of the social upbringing of these young men, and how these qualities eventually lead to the destruction of a generation of boys. Through *Jacob's Room* Woolf critiques aspects of the British society, while also exposing it at work.

The intention of this chapter is to explore how Woolf challenges the Bildungsroman through her unconventional engagement with specific motifs connected to the genre. My goal is to explore how, through her character Jacob Flanders and his formation process Woolf explores the relationship between the individual and the gender constructions that inform his formation. I will explore how the novel complicates the Bildungsroman further through the representation of fictional character. Through four subchapters, each dealing with a different literary

motif, my intention is to show how Woolf unsettles the Bildungsroman in relation to her dismal portrayal of socialization and what socialization implies to Jacob and his individuality.

3.0 Education

In a discussion of the modernist Bildungsroman, Gregory Castle argues that, *The Voyage Out*, with its incessant focus on education, may be placed in the Bildungsroman tradition. This is also a relevant observation in relation to *Jacob's Room*, as education serves as an important point in the narrative concerning Jacob's formation. Especially his time at Cambridge figures significantly in this respect. In the course of a conversation between Betty Flanders and Captain Barfoot, Jacob's educational path is discussed; Barfoot has been advised that there is nothing better "than to send a boy to one of the universities" (JR 20). Not much more is said on the subject until the narrator observes: "Jacob Flanders, therefore, went up to Cambridge in October, 1906" (JR 21). The discussion of education in *Jacob's Room* differs from *The Voyage Out*, due to both the difference in gender of the protagonists, but also in relation to the absence of Jacob's interiority. In *The Voyage Out* education figures just as much in relation to what the mentors want to school Rachel in as Rachel's own experience of their schooling.

Education in *The Voyage Out* is focused on Rachel's experiences and her bewildered response to her many mentors' attempts to form her, the effect being that education is treated on an individual level. As Jacob's interiority is absent from the text, there is not so much a focus on Jacob's reactions and experiences. He seems to blend more in with the group of Cambridge students and become a part of something larger, rather than an individual. Rachel is an outsider, constantly questioning the nature of her mentors' schooling whereas Jacob is an insider, seemingly following

what his education enforces. This contrast in the emphasis on education stems from how interiority figures in the two novels. The novel's stylistic features that effect how Jacob is presented reflects what Anna Snaith points out in her article "Virginia Woolf: Public and Private Negotiations" which is that the novel is a both about "seeing from an outsider's position" in addition to dealing with "the impossibility of defining identity" (Snaith 81). Discussing Jacob's education becomes a discussion of the social forces surrounding him rather than his individual intellectual development. We circle around him, but we are not given any insight into his development. Jacob is, to the reader, moving through society and seemingly following the requirements set out for him, more like a puppet than an individual.

The novel's focus on education emphasizes how the university education figures as significant component in the social upbringing of a certain type of men from a particular class in pre-war England. This social upbringing, shown through Woolf's critical lens, illuminates how gendered identities are constructed. In her article "*Jacob's Room* as Parody", Judith Little argues that Jacob moves through the novel unchanged, and that unlike Rachel Vinrace, Jacob does not have anyone taking charge of his education. Little argues further that Cambridge offers "inadequacy rather than destructiveness" and that the readers are not made to feel that "Jacob must escape from the Huxtables and Sopwiths or risk injury to the soul" (Little 235). In this aspect I strongly disagree with Little. Woolf's approach to Jacob's education shows it to play an important role in the aggressive attempt to shape his identity, which ultimately socializes him into sacrificing his life in the First World War. The purpose of this subchapter is to explore and analyze how Woolf deals with one of the cornerstones of the Bildungsroman; namely education. My intention is to explore how Woolf's focus

on Jacob's education subsequently becomes more of a study of the social forces informing him rather than a focus on Jacob's personal reflections and development. I believe that Woolf's portrayal of Jacob's education is focused on the ideologies that the educational institutions are built upon, in addition to showing the power of these ideologies as they become absorbed into the minds of the different characters. Woolf's insistent focus on the ideologies governing these institutions clearly reveals that in these powerful and consuming institutions there is no room for individuality.

3.1 Education in *Jacob's Room*

As a young boy, Jacob catches a crab and places it in a bucket where the crab "with its weakly legs" struggles "to climb the steep side; trying again and falling back, trying again and again" (JR 9). The crab's limited space and futile attempt at escape reflects Jacob's situation in his initiation process. Like the crab, Jacob is placed in a restrictive social space, where he, though seemingly unhappy with the position in which he finds himself, protests weakly against the social forces and is ultimately consumed and destroyed by the workings of his own "bucket". In *The Voyage Out* Rachel Vinrace is on multiple occasions shut out of the privileged world of male education and consequently, due to her marginalization, she becomes an outsider. *Jacob's Room* shows a different side. Here Woolf takes us into the closed world of male privilege to which Ridley Ambrose, St. John Hirst and Terence Hewet belong. Through Jacob, Woolf reveals what it means to be an insider in this masculine world of public schools and Cambridge University, and the destructive consequences this world may have. Through the depiction of Jacob's Cambridge education the complicated expression of character becomes prominent, as "Jacob is both a type, only accessible to the narrator from the outside, and an individual, whose

individuality makes description impossible" (Snaith 81). The "narratorial barriers" become especially evident as we are observing Jacob through other characters and through the narrators' limited perspective. During Jacob's Cambridge years we are primarily following Jacob Flanders, the prototypical young middle class boy in the process of becoming a gentleman. In the powerful educational institution Jacob is a member of, he is silent and passive, in contrast to Rachel's constant questioning.

3.1.1 "The Greek Myth":

Through *Jacob's Room* one is given insight into how discourses function and how they affect people unconsciously. This is especially evident in the discussion of what the narrator calls "the Greek myth". During Jacob's trip to Greece he begins to contemplate his life and his upbringing and becomes, consequently, "profoundly morose". In Italy, Jacob reflects on "this business of going to Greece", which was an important part of his becoming a gentleman, and finds it "an intolerable weariness" (JR 109). As Jacob reflects on his life, the narrator delivers a critical observation aimed at the structures of society and the nature of Jacob's socialization by addressing what she calls "the Greek myth". What the narrator is referring to is the extreme centrality of a conception of Greece and Greek culture became absorbed into ideas of nation and identity in the Edwardian society. This construction emerged from the Victorian period and came to inform and penetrate multiple sides of society. This "myth" revolves around a specific interpretation and idealization of Greek culture, and became, as Linden Peach notes in his study of critical issues in Woolf's writing, a "fiction" that contributed to create notions about the West and about England. England was thought of as "the cradle of civilization" and was "located in an

historical narrative linking Athens with London and Cambridge" (Peach 73). In the discussion of "the Greek myth" the narrator illustrates how this is not merely fostered by the university men, but also by the hero-worshipping women of England. Towards the end of the novel, Clara Durrant and Mr. Bowley walk past the statue of Achilles in Hyde Park Corner. The statue, Clara reads, "was erected by the women of England" (JR 138). This indicates that English women and their hero-worshipping, are contributing to upholding the "Greek myth". Jacob and his generation have been formed and prepared for war, by mothers like Betty Flanders who perceive Greek as a crucial part of a young man's education, and by governesses who "start the Greek myth" (JR 109) as they value young boys through the values of "the Greek myth".

> Look at that for a head (they say) - nose you see – straight as a dart, curls, eyebrows – everything appropriate to manly beauty; while his legs and arms have lines on them which indicate a perfect degree of development – the Greeks caring for the body as much as for the face. (JR 110)

In terms of education, Hellenism became particularly central to institutions such as Cambridge and Oxford, and the public schools that prepared students for entry to these Universities. According to Peach, this development in the latter half of the nineteenth century "corresponded with major social and political changes in England", and in effect, Hellenism became part "of the need to confirm the superiority of the ruling class within this changing climate through a classical education" (Peach 74). Hellenism came to be an important cornerstone in these educational institutions, building on ideas of superiority, class and a specific type of masculinity. The way this "Greek myth" is portrayed in the novel focuses on the ignorance, appropriation and destruction that the "myth" enforces. The focus on the "Greek myth" is a study of how the interpretation of Greek culture informs the

consciousness of all the different characters. For Jacob and his Cambridge friends, the "Greek myth" becomes crucial in forming their ideas of identity. Through their education and socialization, which is built upon a combination of ignorance and appropriation, the "Greek myth" effects how they perceive the world, their own status and their forceful claim over culture and knowledge. Through their education they are socialized into a specific type of aggressive masculinity that the "Greek spirit" is responsible for. Throughout the novel Woolf illustrates how this interpretation of Greek culture in British society has been appropriated towards supporting the masculine hegemony, with destructive notions of identity and nation that will eventually lead these men to their deaths.

3.1.2 Cambridge:

Roaming the streets, Jacob and Timmy Durrant discuss ancient Greece as they shout out quotations from Aeschylus and Sophocles while the narrator comments that:

> They were boastful, triumphant; it seemed to both that they had read every book in the world; known every sin, passion and joy. Civilizations stood round them like flowers ready for picking. (JR 59)

This depiction of Jacob and Timmy exposes how a sense of status and power has become part of how the boys perceive themselves and the world. It shows how they both believe that their educational privilege has put them in a position of power and has instilled in them an aggressive sense of claim to knowledge. As de Gay observes, their education "has instilled in them an imperialist urge to subdue and appropriate the culture of other nations" (de Gay 70). The narrator, through her observations, undermines both Jacob and Timmy's apparent privilege by "describing his reading habits ironically" in order to show how Jacob does not actually engage with the

literature he claims master. In doing so she illustrates how British Hellenism is built upon an inadequate interpretation of Greek culture. The narrator observes that: "…Durrant never listened to Sophocles, nor Jacob to Aeschylus" and that "Jacob knew no more Greek than served him to stumble through a play" (JR 59). The juxtaposition of Jacob and Timmy's extreme sense of power: "we are the only people in the world who know what the Greeks meant" (JR 59) next to their apparent ignorance, illustrates how the "Greek Myth" is indeed a myth which is based upon an interpretation of Greek culture. By exposing the nature of their sense of intellectual supremacy, from which they situate themselves in the world, the narrator is deflating the great ideas their education has instilled in them. The narrator suggests a dark foreshadowing in relation to this combination of extreme sense of power, imperialist urge and ignorance as Jacob is mistaken for a military man:

> Taking Jacob for a military gentleman, the stall-keeper told him about his boy at Gibraltar, and Jacob cursed the British army and praised the Duke of Wellington. So on again they went down the hill talking about the Greeks. (JR 59)

The stall-keeper mistaking Jacob for a military gentleman, illustrates how the aggressive nature and military ethos of their education have influenced Jacob and Timmy. The incident is also a prolepsis of their involvement in the war. Additionally, the reference to Gibraltar, a British colony, is relevant in connecting Jacob's imperialist senses to the Empire. Through this short segment, the narrator provides insight into the effects Jacob's education has had upon his identity. The mistaken identity of Jacob as a military man points to one of Woolf's main critiques of Cambridge, which is how individuals like Jacob were formed by education to compliantly partake in war. Furthermore, Jacob's reaction to the stall-keeper is

significant in relation to Jacob's outward identity as he "cursed the British Army and praised the Duke of Wellington", indicating how Jacob affiliates himself with the conservative gentleman represented through the Duke of Wellington's figure. Moreover, the reference also functions as a prolepsis to the war, as the figure of the Duke of Wellington brings forth ideas of military and war.

Cambridge becomes a highly important part of Jacob's development from a young boy to a "gentleman". The effects of Jacob's education revolve around a specific type of socialization rather than intellectual development. Woolf's portrayal of Cambridge explores how the institution immersed Jacob into a specific way of thinking and how this shapes his identity. In terms of Jacob's education, the narrator explores how Cambridge enforces ideas of superiority, aggressive appropriation, strict gender divisions and exclusion of women and the construction of extremely masculine spaces. In depicting Cambridge the narrator both deflates its status, while also portraying the workings of the masculine space and the destructiveness it immerses Jacob and his generation into. She deflates the grand vision of Cambridge and what it stands for through satirical descriptions and penetrating observations. The narrator is relating the closely shut male space which is reminiscent of the depiction of Ridley Ambrose's study in *The Voyage Out*:

> There were many rooms in the villa, but one room, which possessed a character of its own because the door was always shut, and no sound of music or laughter issued from it. Everyone in the house was vaguely conscious that something went on behind that door, and without in the least knowing what it was, were influenced in their own thoughts by the knowledge that if they passed it the door would be shut, and if they made a noise Mr. Ambrose inside would be disturbed. (VO 191)

The narrators' initial depiction of Cambridge is satirical, making fun of the "light that burns over Cambridge" (JR 29) and consequently the heightened status that the University had and the education that it represents. In observing the three university dons Huxtable, Sopwith and Cowan, the narrator is explicit in her critique. She depicts them in ways that expose their inadequacy, militarism and comedic side which not only undermines the education and system they are apart of, but also illustrates the effect these Cambridge Dons have on their students. In this segment the narrator is able to observe what goes on within the walls of Cambridge, but also what goes on inside the minds of the professors. In presenting these three Cambridge dons, her critique of the institution is clearly articulated. Professor Sopwith is described by the narrator as always "talking, talking, talking – as if everything could be talked –"(JR 30). The effect Sopwith has on his students through his endless talking is depicted as:

> …the soul itself slipped through the lips in this silver disks which dissolve in young men's minds like silver, like moonlight. Oh, far away they'd remember it, and deep in dullness gaze back on it, and come to refresh themselves again. (JR 30)

The knowledge Sopwith is bestowing upon these young men "are at once coins and communion wafers into young men's minds." (Froula 75) This suggest that the knowledge these young men receive will function as cultural capital, and Sopwith's ideas are currency in the masculine hegemony. The image of Sopwith's "communion", according to Jane de Gay, "depicts education as a direct financial endowment." (de Gay 78). Additionally, the scenario makes Sopwith into a "priestly" figure as he is almost missioning these young men into a specific life and identity with his coins that symbolize "sacralized manliness" (Froula 75). At the time of the sacrament the students respect Sopwith and his "silver disks" (JR 30) but as the narrator points out, the silver of the coin will fade and will

eventually "tinkle hollow" and "the inscription read a little too simple, and the old stamp look to pure, and the impress the same – A Greek boy's head" (JR 31). This impress on the "silver disks" and the fixed imprint of the "Greek boy's head", relates to how conventions are imprinted upon these young men, where the impress is always the same – modeled after a Greek boys head. Sopwith's teaching is part of the machine that produces generations of graduates that lack individuality and autonomy. The second Cambridge professor introduced by the narrator is Erasmus Cowan, a man who "sipped his port, and told stories, and without book before him intoned Latin, Virgil and Catullus, as if language were wine upon his lips" (JR 31). However, the narrator poses the critical question of what would happen "if the poet strode in?" (JR 31):

> *"This* my image?" he might ask, pointing to the chubby man, whose brain is, after all, Virgil's representative among us, though the body gluttonize, and as for arms, bees, or event he plough, Cowan takes his trips abroad with a French novel in his pocket, a rug about his knees, and is thankful to be home again in his place, in his line, holding up in his snug little mirror the image of Virgil, all rayed round with good stories of the dons of Trinity and red beams of port. (JR 31)

In her portrayal of Cowan, the narrator is persistent in mocking the Cambridge dons and their sense of knowledge and power. The narrator diminishes the authority Cowan seemingly has over Virgil. By questioning what the poet himself would say to his poor "representative among us" the narrator liberates Virgil from Cowan's grip, while devaluing Cowan's ownership and status. The narrator goes on to illustrate how Cowan has trapped and sculpted Virgil into his own identity as he holds up his "snug little mirror" and sees "the image of Virgil", showing how Cowan uses his appropriation of Virgil to construct his own identity. The third Don that is observed as

the narrator presses her nose to the window of Jacob's Cambridge world is "Old Professor Huxtable" (JR 30). Huxtable is depicted in a way that begs to be read in light of the militarist ethos that Woolf ascribes to the Cambridge education that these men received. The workings of his mind and his nature of reading is rendered in ways that suggest a underlying militaristic nature:

> As his eye goes down the print, what a procession tramps through the corridors of his brain, orderly, quick-stepping, and reinforced, as the march goes on, by fresh runnels, till the whole hall, dome, whatever once calls it, is populous with ideas. (JR 30)

The depiction of Huxtable's mind reveals not only the nature of the education and the educators, but also functions as a prolepsis to the futures of many men during the First World War. By depicting the erudition of Huxtable through military metaphor, Huxtable figures as militaristic, with a destructive effect upon his students. As the narrator envisions Huxtable asleep she imagines how "you might fancy that on a pillow of stone he lay triumphant", connecting the figure of the sleeping Huxtable to a dead warrior or stone monument. Indicating that he will in one way or another contribute to the war.

The connection between Cambridge and militarism is something that reappears throughout the narrator's observations of Cambridge, such as in the image of the students "marching" to the service in King's College Chapel. Woolf's portrayal of these young men marching to service aligns academia and religion with militarism:

> Look, as they pass into service, how airily the gowns blow out, as though nothing dense or corporal were within. What sculptured faces, what certainty, authority controlled by piety, although great boots march under the gowns. In what orderly procession they advance. (JR 23)

The passing of these young men is reminiscent of Leonard Woolf's first remarks upon reading *Jacob's Room*, in terms of how the people in the novel seemed like "ghosts" or "puppets moved hither & tither by fate" (Woolf 170). In the social machine they find themselves a part of, these young men become like puppets and are moved and formed in the direction that society has constructed. The word 'service' is ambiguous, implying both the religious service they are about to partake in, but also military service. As Peach states, the ambiguity "begs the question of how does the one lead to the other?" (Peach 86). The passage suggests through its symbolism and ambiguity that under the "great gowns" of education there are "great boots", illustrating how Cambridge, under its scholarly education instills a military ethos in its students. This passage also functions as a foreshadowing, where references to "great boots", "marching", and "advancing" is a means for the narrator to predict how the Great War will be the ultimate destiny of these young men. Later on in the passage the narrator observes how: "Thick wax candles stand upright; young men rise in white gowns; while the subservient eagle bears up for inspection the great white book." (JR 23). Peach argues that the "unshakeable authority and its associated cultural assumptions" are epitomized in these surroundings such as the "thickness of the wax candles, the greatness of the boots and the solidity of the great Bible" (Peach 86) and the "subservient eagle". In addition to exposing the militarism that is internalized in their education, Woolf later in the novel provides a more piercing attack on militarism in relation to the young men, such as Jacob, who submit to the military ethos. These young men will eventually:

> …In the prime of their life descend with composed faces into the depths of the sea; and there impassively (though with perfect mastery of machinery) suffocate uncomplainingly together. (JR 125)

The text draws a picture of how these young men are drawn to what Cambridge represents and what their fates will become through a recurring image of the lantern under the tree and the insects that are drawn to it:

> …If you stand a lantern under a tree every insect in the forest creeps up to it – a curious assembly, since though they scramble and swing and knock their heads against the glass, they seem to have no purpose- something senseless inspires them. One gets tired of watching them, as they amble round the lantern and blindly tap as if for admittance, one large toad being the most besotted of any and shouldering his way through the rest. (JR 23)

Like the light in the darkness of the forest attracts the insects, so does "the light that burns over Cambridge" attract the young men. The idea of something senseless inspiring these insects translates well with how Woolf depicts Cambridge, the students and the social forces that drive these men into social constructions. Following the description of the insects and the toad being drawn to the light, another image comes as a foreshadowing of what the future has in store for these men:

> Ah, but what's that? A terrifying volley of pistol-shots rings out – cracks sharply; ripples spread – silence laps smooth over sound. A tree has fallen, a sort of death in the forest. After that, the wind in the trees sound melancholy. (JR 23)

The sounds of "a terrifying volley of pistol-shots" that interrupts the buzzing of the insects and their persistent and meaningless tapping suggests the fate of Jacob and Jimmy with the outbreak of the First World War. The fallen tree suggests a premature death, symbolizing the untimely deaths of these young men who, as the narrator notes, there is no need in thinking of them "grown old" (JR 32).

The Cambridge education, as presented in *Jacob's Room* is one that relies on and produces specific notions concerning gender, which will form the young men's lives, their identities and relations to their own sex and the opposite sex. One of the columns that functions to uphold the Cambridge ideal and its "Greek spirit" is the importance of excluding women. The narrator draws a picture of this exclusion, as she introduces the Cambridge Dons and the "light burning over Cambridge" and states: "How like a suburb where you go to see a view and eat a special cake! "We are the sole purveyors of this cake." Back you go to London; for the treat is over"(JR 30). Women may visit, but they will never be admitted to the social and intellectual space that Cambridge enforces. This strict gender division and exclusion becomes especially evident in Jacob's reaction to seeing women at the Kings Chapel Service. In the passage Jacob's musings reflect the "anti-feminine discourses that are part of the public male ideologies epitomized in the Chapel's architecture and the content of the service" (Peach 86). During the service Jacob equates women with dogs, as he contemplates on why women are allowed to take part in the service, reflecting how "…a dog destroys the service completely. So do these women…" (JR 23). The social machine that Jacob becomes immersed in establishes ideas of superiority and privilege, especially between the sexes. The women surrounding Jacob are often depicted in terms of their intellectual weaknesses. In her failed attempt to read the poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Florinda is described as "dumb as an owl" (JR 62), Clara Durrant's letters and her writing are as developed as "those of a child" (JR 74) and Fanny Elmer struggles to read *Tom Jones* due to her lack of education, reflecting how: "…there is something about books which if I had been educated I could have liked – much better than ear-rings and flowers" (JR 98). By describing the inferiority of these women the narrator is mocking them, again blurring her role in the novel. It

would seem that the narrator is in many ways focalizing Jacob's view of the inferiority of women.

The social machine is based upon a strict gender division, which results in Cambridge's masculine and anti-feminine ideology becoming instilled in Jacob and his generation. Though the women who attend the service at Kings Chapel have husbands who are "devout, distinguished, and vouched for by the theology, mathematics, Latin, and Greek", Jacob decides that it is no justification for bringing these women that are on the top of everything "ugly as sin" (JR 24). Or when he is eating dinner and observes Florinda and reflects how: "In her face there seemed to him something horribly brainless –as she sat staring" (JR 63). In addition to articulating misogynists ideas, Jacob also reveals one of the main columns of the ideology; the importance of keeping women out of University life. Jacob's feeling of repugnance when women cross the constructed gender boundaries illustrates how he has become a cog in the social machinery that Richard Dalloway speaks of in *The Voyage Out*. Woolf also illustrates the anti-feminine side of the masculine hegemony at Cambridge through the exclusion of the narrator, illustrating this exclusion but also turning the narrator into a critical voice that, because of her exclusion, is able to exploit this outsider role to articulate resistance and critique. Interestingly, the narrator moves in and out of different positions and perspectives in the novel, which makes one question her authority. This narrative technique that Woolf has created provides the reader multiple perspectives on ideas of society, identity and gender.

Unlike the narrator in *The Voyage Out,* moving in and out of the hotel rooms, the narrator in *Jacob's Room* stands outside of Cambridge, and is unable to penetrate its walls. The reason for the narrator's exclusion of roaming the rooms and halls of Cambridge relates to the narrator being a woman: "Whether we know what was in his

mind is another question. Granted ten years' seniority and a difference of sex, fear of him comes first…"(JR 74). One can therefore read her limited view in this scene as linked to her sex, illustrating through her narrative perspective how women are excluded. It also shows how she is not distanced from the story and the society she is observing. In the Cambridge sequence the narrator is standing in the middle of the court at Neville's Court listening to the sounds and observing the movements in the windows: "All the lights were coming out round the court, and falling on the cobbles, picking up dark patches of grass and single daisies" (JR 32). As she stands there listening and observing movements she reflects on what is happening inside the building and what the young men are doing as they "were now back in their rooms" (JR 32). Instead of depicting what is happening in all the various rooms, as the narrator in *The Voyage Out* is able to do at the hotel, the female narrator in *Jacob's Room* listens to the sounds and tries to imagine what is going on inside the stone walls:

> Were they reading? Certainly there was a sense of concentration in the air. Behind the grey walls sat so many young men, some undoubtedly reading, magazines, shilling shockers no doubt; legs, perhaps over the arms of chairs; smoking, sprawling over tables, and writing while their heads went round in a circle as the pen moved…(JR 32)

By giving the narrator restricted access to the world inside the grey walls of Cambridge the idea of gender and the exclusion of women becomes more explicit and integrated into the structure of the text. Additionally, the strong gender division also depicts how these young men are all contained in a masculine space that enforces a specific set of ideologies and norms that will construct their masculine identity. These solid grey walls that contain these men also function in an enclosing and constricting

way as they represent social spaces that are central to the critique of Edwardian society.

The masculine space of Cambridge is enforced through the exclusion of women through the reading of primarily male authors and philosophers and the encouragement of strong bonds between men. This insistent focus on men and strengthening of bonds and intimacy between men informs Jacob's Cambridge education and socialization into a specific form of masculinity. This extreme focus on gender and gendered relations simultaneously promotes, requires and denies homosexual desire within the institution. Sexual desire and intimacy between fellow students becomes "sanctioned when sublimated into the "intimacy between friends" that "intellectual conversation" …makes possible for Jacob and his Cambridge Classmates" (Harris 432). As Little observes, the intellectual debate between Jacob and Simeon that the narrator is observing, is "enjoyed as a sensuous event" (Little 237):

> …He appeared extraordinary happy, as if pleasure would brim and spill down the sides if Simeon spoke. Simeon said nothing. Jacob remained standing. But intimacy – the room was full of it, still, deep, like a pool. Without need of movement or speech it rose softly and washed over everything, mollifying, kindling, and coating the mind with the luster of pearl… (JR 35)

In addition, the intimacy that is felt between the two is linked to Cambridge with the narrator stating that: "…so that if you talk of a light, of Cambridge burning, it's not only languages only. It is Julian the Apostate" (JR 35). Here Julian the Apostate is given significance in what the intellectual discussion of him does to these two men and how it makes them feel and the intimacy that evolves from such a discussion This "intimacy" between two Cambridge classmates does not remain purely cerebral, but it

also becomes physical. This is perhaps most apparent in the relationship between Jacob and his friend Richard Bonamy. Later in the novel there is a scene where “the boys’ educated joust for words spills over into a very physical wrestling match” (Dobie 206). When Mrs. Papworth, Richard Bonamy’s housekeeper, sees the boys wrestling she asserts “Book learning does it” (JR 80). In her analysis of the novel, Kathleen Dobie reads this physical play-fight as illustrating the connection that Woolf establishes between a Cambridge education and war. This is of course a reasonable reading of the scene. In addition however, I read the scene as illustrating the homosexual desire between Jacob and Bonamy. Later on in the novel Jacob exhibits a desire to revert back to the masculine spaces where Hellenism and the Hellenic ideal redirects sexual desire so that it is confined in the masculine space with its exclusively male members. In his interaction with Florinda Jacob experiences an uneasiness towards her female sexuality:

> He had a violent reversion towards male society, cloistered rooms, and the works of the classics; and was ready to turn with wrath upon whoever it was who had fashioned life thus. (JR 64)

As Susan C. Harris points out, the sexual desire that is directed towards Florinda becomes “dangerous”, whereas it becomes “safe and sanctioned” when transferred to “the intimacy between friends” (Harris 432).

3.1.3 What Jacob Reads:

Similar to *The Voyage Out*, literature and reading plays a central role in Jacob’s education. Whereas Rachel finds freedom in reading “the moderns” as she is also being pulled in different directions as to what she should read, Jacob’s mind seems to be more instilled towards what people want him to read. There is little evidence of

Jacob reading books that he himself chooses, which are not apart of the masculine identity he is supposed to conform to. Whereas Rachel's own experience of reading books she herself has chosen is dealt with explicitly in *The Voyage Out,* readers of *Jacob's Room* are not given much insight into Jacob's reading experiences. There are some intriguing hints that complicate Jacob and his reading, that make one question his intellectual inheritance and superiority in addition to the effect of what he reads has upon his formation. At Cambridge we are allowed a look into Jacob's room and are informed about the many different books he has:

> Lives of the Duke of Wellington; for example; Spinoza; the works of Dickens; the Faery Queen; a Greek dictionary with the petals of poppies pressed to silk between the pages; all the Elizabethans…The works of Jane Austen, too, in deference, perhaps, to some one else's standard. Carlyle was the prize. There were books upon Italian painters of the Renaissance, a *Manual of the Diseases of the Horse*, and all the usual textbooks. (JR 29)

In the same paragraph the narrator hints that Jacob reads literature "as the mood takes him" by stating that he owns the works of Jane Austen "in deference…to some one else's standard" (JR 29), which suggests that Jacob's reading is not entirely driven by his own mood, but is more of a submission to acknowledged discourses surrounding literature. In addition, the reference to Thomas Carlyle points to the importance of biographies of "Great men" in the educational formation of young men, and consequently the how these biographies, represented through Thomas Carlyle functioned to promote "male domination" through histories of men and "heroes and hero worshipping" (Tarr 260). *The Voyage Out*'s use of literary allusions and references function to not only give meaning to plot, but they also function to describe and locate the different characters. Therefore what Rachel reads and how she reacts is

greatly significant. In contrast, *Jacob's Room* and its focus on literature and reading depicts a much more restrained act than the one happening within Rachel's room as she reads modern literature. Literature in *Jacob's Room* is more about appropriation, privilege and power. Jacob's sense of privilege and power is linked to his sense of claim and power over literature and knowledge as the female characters' are often portrayed as being inferior with their lack of understanding for literature. However, the narrator deflates Jacob's sense of power by showing his lack of knowledge and engagement with the texts he speaks so highly of.

Rather than admiring Shakespeare for his writing and his plays, Jacob respects the high status of Shakespeare and treats Shakespeare as a patriotic figure. In addition, Jacob's knowledge of Shakespeare and insight into his writing is portrayed as very superficial. Jacob admires Shakespeare in relation to his status, and patriotic status, while not exhibiting any true interest for the works of Shakespeare. The nature of Jacob's praise suggests that he uses Shakespeare to establish his own sense of identity and superiority. This appropriation is especially evident when he is in Paris, drunkenly discussing "the three greatest things that were ever written in the whole of literature" with Crutterdon and Mallinson. In the lively discussion Jacob declares that: "Shakespeare had more guts than all these damned frogs put together-" (JR 100) as he attempts to quote Shakespeare:

> "'Hang there like fruit my soul,'" he began quoting, in a musical rhetorical voice, flourishing his wine-glass. "The devil damn you black, you cream-faced loon!" he exclaimed as the wine washed the rim.
>
> "'Hang there like fruit my soul,'" Cruttendon and Jacob began again at the same moment, and both burst out laughing… (JR 100)

The nature of Jacob's statement and his failed attempt at quoting Shakespeare suggest that rather than having a true interest, Jacob uses him to project a symbol of his own intellectual power and patriotism. Though Jacob praises Shakespeare and his works throughout the novel, the narrator deflates this praise by revealing the shallow nature of Jacob's reading. During the boat trip with Timmy, Jacob brings with him the plays of Shakespeare:

> Although the plays of Shakespeare had frequently been praised, even quoted, and placed higher than the Greek, never since they started had Jacob managed to read one through. Yet what an opportunity! (JR 35)

The narrator openly deflates Jacob's ownership of Shakespeare by placing Jacob's heightened view of Shakespeare next to the reality of his relationship to Shakespeare, and in doing so she portrays Jacob in a satirical way. The irony of Jacob's relationship to Shakespeare becomes even more evident as Shakespeare's plays become a symbol for the author himself as the narrator observes how "Shakespeare was knocked overboard" and "there you could see him floating merrily away!" (JR 36) The nature of Jacob's appropriation of Shakespeare bears a resemblance to his felt ownership of Greek literature, which is especially evident in the previously discussed passage where Jacob and Timmy roam the streets of London. In both these parts of the text the contrast between Jacob's ownership and his lack of insight and knowledge functions to undermine the privileged position that Jacob and his friends have been given. In addition, these incidents illustrate how the construction of Jacob's identity is based upon shallow ideas of power, status and superiority.

In Jacob's reading of Plato the effect of Jacob's education are illuminated, suggesting that his education and initiation into an ideology shields him from issues of class, nation and gender, which are, while Jacob reads, being enacted on the streets

outside. Plato's *Phaedrus* becomes a symbol for the ideology that Jacob's education is a part of, which Jacob too has become immersed in. In addition, by having Jacob read *Phaedrus* which revolves around a celebration of Greek male beauty, the novel indicates how Jacob's reading enforces the segregation of men and women. In addition, the idealization of manly beauty, which is present throughout the novel, suggests how Jacob is through his education and society, being formed into a specific type of masculinity. The nature of Jacob's reading is reminiscent of Professor Huxtable, whose mental operations are depicted in militaristic terms: "what a procession tramps through the corridors of his brain, orderly, quick-stepping, and reinforced, as the march goes on…"(JR 30). As Jacob is drawn into the *Phaedrus*, the narrator comments how "The Phaedrus is very difficult", proceeding to depict Jacob's act of reading:

> …When at length one reads straight ahead, falling into step, marching on, becoming (so it seems) momentarily part of this rolling, imperturbable energy, which has driven darkness before it since Plato walked the Acropolis, it is impossible to see to the fire. (JR 87)

The *Phaedrus* is depicted as constituting energy that draws Jacob away from the surrounding world, making it "impossible to the see the fire". The "imperturbable energy" that Jacob momentarily becomes part of illustrates how Jacob is removed from the surroundings and to what is happening around him:

> …Jacob, who was reading the *Phaedrus*, hear people vociferation round the lamp-post, and the woman battering at the door and crying "Let me in!" as if a coal had dropped from the fire, or a fly, falling from the ceiling, had lain on its back, too weak to turn over. (JR 87)

The energy that Plato has can be read as being symbolic of the energy of the ideology, which Jacob has become immersed in. Jacob has so conformed to the ideologies he has been brought up with that he is not able to see the destructiveness of what he has become a part of. This scene suggests that Jacob's education has made him insensitive of his surroundings and to the nature of his education. After finishing Plato, Jacob gets up and parts the curtains and sees "with astonishing clearness:

> …How the Springetts opposite had gone to bed; how it rained; how the Jews and the foreign woman, at the end of the street, stood by the pillar-box, arguing. (JR 87)

In addition to the way Jacob reads and appropriates literature, one may view what Jacob is reading as a having installed and prepared Jacob for sacrificing his life in war. In this sense reading becomes another social force in the preparation of Jacob's destruction. Jacob is reported to have read *A History of the Byzantium Empire from 716-1077* by George Finlay, who was a historian that supported Greek independence and who died in Athens in 1875. Additionally, Jacob's choice of the works of Lord Byron may be a foreshadowing of Jacob's destruction, as Byron himself dies of a fever at Missolonghi where he was to support the cause of the Greek independence.

3.2 The Grand Tour:

In the hotel restaurant at Olympia, Sandra Wentworth Williams notices "a young man in a grey check suit" (JR 114) whom we eventually understand to be Jacob Flanders. Her initial observation of Jacob is that he is an "English boy on tour" (JR 114). This observation is in many ways correct. From the outsider's perspective Jacob is the conventional English boy fulfilling a rite of passage by travelling around Europe. Jacob's travels through France, Italy, Greece and Turkey, and undergoes a

personal change. Instead of developing into the young man who will work in an office and eventually become a husband and father, Jacob becomes more and more introverted and begins to question the very structures of his upbringing and the discourses in British society that he has previously accepted and freely enforced. Like Rachel's voyage in *The Voyage Out,* Jacob's journey proves to be destructive.

Additionally, like Rachel, Jacob is driven to embark upon the tour as a result of motivations relating to his socialization and what is expected of him. In *The Voyage Out,* Rachel is transported from one family member to another in the project of eventually giving her away to her future husband. Her voyage plays a crucial part in this process, like the description of the Euphrosyne: Rachel is "a bride going forth to her husband, a virgin unknown to men" (VO 30). Jacob's tour is also informed by his socialization. Jacob's trip draws upon a cultural tradition, which revolved around young men from a certain class travelling "the Continent" as a final rite of passage before they embark on their adult lives. In his critical study *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918* James Buzard explores ideas and views on travel, and cites Thomas Nugent's influential volume *The Grand Tour*, written in 1749, while discussing the ideology and motivations behind the concept of the Grand Tour. Focusing on the aspect of the Grand Tour as a rite of passage, Thomas Nugent stated that it was:

> A custom so visibly tending to enrich the mind with knowledge, to rectify the judgment, to remove the prejudices of education, to compose the outward manners, and in a word form the complete gentleman. (Buzard 98)

The Grand Tour was based on ideas of gender and class and it played a significant part in constructing an elite masculine identity. (See e.g. Rosemary Sweet and

Michele Cohen). As many critics have observed, the Grand Tour was supposed to provide the young British man with a social polish as he stood on the threshold to adulthood. These are views that are reflected through Jacob Flanders and his perspective of himself, what he is apart of, and his surroundings. While he is diligently visiting the Acropolis, following what his guidebook is telling him to appreciate, Jacob's line of thought is interrupted by a group of French female tourists. In accordance with the old ideas of the Grand Tour women have no place in this privileged experience. As the women intrude upon the constructed masculine space of the Acropolis, which he has been nurtured on through the many texts of ancient history and classical literature that his education has inculcated him on, Jacob reacts strongly. Jacob ends up blaming the women for his lack of inspiration and enthusiasm in relating to what he is experiencing and how he is supposed to experience it:

> "Damn these women – damn these women!" he thought. And he went to fetch his book which he had left lying on the ground in the Parthenon…"It is those damned women," said Jacob, without any trace of bitterness, but rather sadness and disappointment that what might have been should never be. (JR 121)

In passages like this, Jacob's opinions not only express how his ideas on women are misogynistic, but they also show a strong sense of gendered boundaries being crossed and unsettled. The Grand Tour was traditionally an important part of constructing an elite masculine identity, and when the women cross the gendered boundaries they intrude upon the very pillars of the Grand Tour as elitist and gendered. Additionally, scenes such as these illustrate how Jacob perceives himself as "the image of the masculine grand tourist" (Sweet 25). On his way to Greece, Jacob reflects on his elitist status and perceives his situation as being privileged, envisioning how his

potential experiences will put him in a heightened position vis-a-vis his friend Richard Bonamy:

> The Roman civilization was a very inferior affair, no doubt. But Bonamy talked a lot of rot, all the same. "You ought to have been in Athens," he would say to Bonamy when he got back. "Standing on the Parthenon" he would say, or "The ruins of the Coliseum suggest some fairly sublime reflection," which he would write out at length in letters. (JR 108)

Jacob's somewhat pompous expectations do situate him as the exemplary young man on tour, embracing his privileged position. Jacob's expectations do not actually focus on what he will be experiencing, but rather on the authority it will give him in relation to Bonamy and how his trip will further his academic writing. In this sense, Jacob´s view on the Grand Tour illustrates how he is reinforcing the normative values of elite masculinity. Interestingly, Jacob refers to Edward Gibbon when he envisions the ideal style for writing down his "sublime reflection" in experiencing Athens, the Parthenon and "the ruins of the Coliseum" (JR 108).

> It might turn into an essay upon civilization. A comparison between the ancients and moderns, with some pretty sharp hits at Mr. Asquith – something in the style of Gibbon (JR 108)

Jacob's intent of integrating some "sharp hits at Mr. Asquith" in his writing on modern civilization is intriguing. Mr. Herbert Henry Asquith served as the Liberal Prime Minister of the United Kingdom at the time, and Jacob's ambition to attack Asquith in his writing suggests that Jacob belongs to the Conservative party, and that Jacob's dislike towards Asquith is connected with Jacob's sense of patriotism and conservatism. It is possible to read Jacob's perception of Asquith in relation to his own need to underscore his own patriotism. The reference to Gibbon, in relation to

Jacob's intention to critique Asquith suggests that his critique of Asquith will have something to do with patriotism, as Gibbon becomes the symbol of Empire. The reference to Gibbon is also interesting, for several other reasons. Edward Gibbon was a great admirer of the Grand Tour and what it stood for. In his study of the grand tour James Buzard quotes Gibbon as he discusses how many felt the tour to be beneficial as it would heighten the "traveller's patriotic appreciation of English customs and social arrangements" (Buzard 99). Buzard quotes Gibbon on his views relating to patriotism and the Grand Tour. Having returned from France and Italy, Gibbon states:

> 'a better Englishman than I went out. Tho' I have seen more elegant manners and more refined arts I have perceived so many real evils mixed with these tinsel advantages, that they have served to make the plain honesty and blunt freedom of my own country appear still more valuable to me' (Buzard 99).

The idea that Gibbon represents is intriguing, especially in relation to how Jacob himself experiences the Grand Tour. Gibbon represents an elusive ideal not only in terms of his "style", but also how he views the Grand Tour and the "seizing" of culture. With Jacob linking his intended experiences to Gibbon´s shows how he believes that his tour will come to reflect Gibbons ideals and views. In *The Voyage Out,* the first clear image of the scholar St. John Hirst depicts how he is deep in an armchair reading "the third volume of Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of Rome*" by candlelight. What attracts Jacob to Gibbon is exactly what Hirst's reading revolves around, which is the style. The way Gibbon's style is depicted in *The Voyage Out* is in militaristic terms, reflecting a sense of discipline and order:

> As he read he knocked the ash automatically, now and again, from his cigarette and turned the page, while a whole procession of splendid sentences entered his capacious brow and went marching through his brain in order. It

> seemed likely that this process might continue for an hour or more, until the entire regiment had shifted its quarters… (VO 116)

For Hirst, Gibbon is "the test." In a conversation with Rachel, Hirst is shocked to hear that she does not appreciate Gibbon and his style of writing as he himself does. For Rachel, reading Gibbon is a struggle as the glory she "had first perceived…had faded" and is unable to "grasp the meaning with her mind" (VO 226). Hirst argues against this by saying: 'Surely it's the most perfect style, so far as style goes, that's ever been invented,' he continued. 'Every sentence is practically perfect, and the wit – ' (VO 226). Gibbon is the ultimate example of the "perfect style" for both Hirst and Jacob, both of who represent or seek to represent "the British gentleman". Gibbon becomes, in both *The Voyage Out* and *Jacob's Room* a symbol for patriotism, imperialism and Empire. With this understanding of Gibbon, it is significant that Rachel cannot read Gibbon and Jacob cannot write like Gibbon, this, I believe is due to the aspect that both, through their trips, become "puzzled" by the Empire. Their voyages, although contrasting, are similar in some regards. While Jacob may at times seem like the prototypical "English boy on tour" his motivations for going on the trip and the effects it has on him complicate not only the idea of the Grand Tour and what it signifies and the "social polish" it is supposed to provide, it also like in *The Voyage Out* brings forth questions concerning Britain and its social structures.

Both voyages are similar in *The Voyage Out* and *Jacob's Room* as they both constitute a part of an initiation process. The trip in *The Voyage Out* seems to be more hopeful as Rachel is promised that she can "go ahead and be a person on your own account" and that the voyage arouses a sense of profound excitement on the "thought of living" (VO 90). For Jacob his motivations to the tour are ambiguous. At times he seems to be the prototypical young British boy who is excited by the prospect of

developing an elitist masculinity, whereas other times he seems to be like a puppet, diligently doing what is expected of him. This can be exemplified on his trip to Greece, where he reflects upon "this business of going to Greece" (JR 109), which I read as Jacob reflecting upon the Grand Tour, and how it seems like "an intolerable weariness" and expresses a desire that "he'd better got to Cornwall with Timmy Durrant" (JR 109). Jacob questions his motivation for going on the Grand Tour, and his desire to do something completely different plants a seed of doubt into his motivation for embarking upon his Grand Tour. Rather than possessing a genuine desire to travel and receive his "social polish" Jacob seems to be longing for something different altogether. Later on during the trip however, the reader is given a sense that Jacob opens up for the possibility of removing himself from the limiting spaces back home that are experienced as confining. In a letter to Richard Bonamy, he writes in a state of melancholia that going to Greece "is the only chance I can see of protecting myself form civilization" (JR 116). Upon reading the letter Bonamy reflects "Goodness knows what he means by that" (JR 117). What Jacob means exactly is difficult to say. However, the effect of the statement in the narrative functions to insert doubt and ambiguity as to Jacob's interiority. At one moment he seems to fit perfectly into the mold society has constructed for him, only to change completely as the text inserts these ambiguous questionings. Interestingly, Jacob finds himself at the "heart of civilization" but subsequently views Greece as an escape from civilization. His statement seems to indicate that "civilization" is the society of Britain, and how he is in the process of becoming civilized into the British society. Civilization in this sense seems to point to the restrictive social setting that Britain represents in his initiation. In many ways Jacob's stay in Greece, although part of his initiation process, actually functions as a pause in his initiation.

3.2.1 Paris:

The first stop on Jacob's trip is Paris. Throughout Jacob's stay in Paris the narrator navigates through different "scene(s)" and situations where we are able to observe Jacob. To begin with we are thrown into a drunken conversation between two characters named Cruttendon and Mallinson, but eventually Jacob enters the scene. We as readers are never given any information as to whom these characters are or what their relations are to Jacob. The first piece of information we are given is a withholding of information as Mallinson says to Cruttendon "You needn't repeat the whole damned thing over again…" (JR 100). What follows is a drunken conversation, seemingly about literature and "the second most beautiful thing in the whole of literature" (JR 101). The style and tone of the conversation is one that relates the condition the three men are in, as they interrupt each other, try to articulate themselves and argue with each other. Seemingly an insignificant conversation with no real substance, the style does reveal an important aspect of the Paris section, where the style and tone reflect Jacob's experience of Paris. Although we are not privy to what is going on inside Jacob´s mind as he roams the streets of Paris, visits Versailles and sits at sidewalk cafes, the style relates to the reader a feeling of excitement and disorientation. The feeling of excitement and disorientation is accomplished through not knowing who the characters are and what the subject of their conversation is about, additionally the conversation is expressed through reported speech followed by omniscient description, which produces a vivid and at times fragmented and blurred experience of the conversation.

The fragmented nature of the different episodes is something the narrator is fully aware of, as she characterizes the scenes as "scraps of conversation", revealing her lack of omniscience and authority. The episodes we are given reveal a reliance on empirical observation from the narrator's point of view, resulting in a feeling of being an observer in the same room and spaces that Jacob moves through while also resulting in missing information and fragmentation. Such as in a conversation that takes place in Cruttendon's studio between Cruttendon, Jinny Carslake and Jacob:

> "Now if you'd like to see what I'm after at the present moment," said Cruttendon, putting a canvas before Jacob. "There. That's it. That's more like it. That's…" he squirmed his thumb in a circle round a lamp globe painted white.
>
> "A pretty solid piece of work," said Jacob, straddling his legs in front of it. "But what I wish you'd explain…"
>
> Miss Jinny Carslake, pale, freckled, morbid, came into the room.
>
> "Oh Jinny, here's a friend. Flanders. An Englishman. Wealthy. Highly connected. Go on, Flanders…"
>
> Jacob said nothing.
>
> "It's that – that's not right," said Jinny Carslake-
>
> "No,' said Cruttendon decidedly. Can't be done."
>
> He took the canvas off the chair and stood it on the floor with its back to them. (JR 101-102)

Jacob seems extremely absent in this segment, where his presence is there but his voice is absent. Since the narrator is dependent on empirical observation relating to what Jacob says and does it is difficult to know what is going on inside his mind. The absence of Jacob's interiority makes it apparent how the narrator's empirical

observations struggle to represent and summarize identity and experiences. It is therefore difficult to understand how Jacob is reacting to his surroundings. Jacob himself struggles with putting into words what he is experiencing, such as when he is writing to his mother and he 'could not make sense himself of his extraordinary excitement, and as for writing it down - ' (JR 105). The difficult act of expressing ones experiences and challenges towards summarizing identity is also visible in *The Voyage Out*. Though the style is more traditional in comparison *Jacob's Room*, the concept of identity and representation is also problematized in *The Voyage Out*. However, in *The Voyage Out* it is insight into Rachel's interiority that complicates ideas of identity, as she does not fit into the role she is supposed to play. In contrast, it is through the absence of Jacob's interiority that Woolf addresses the same issues.

Following the visit to Cruttendon's studio, the three go to Versailles and we are given more scraps or fragments of experiences and conversation. The narrator moves abruptly from one situation to another, making her observations brief and impulsive, as if one is having trouble with keeping pace with Jacob and his friends. The movements between the different episodes are introduced briefly with the narrator stating: "And then, here is Versailles" (JR 102), "And then they went to the little café in the by-street…" (JR 103) or "And finally under the arc lamps in the Garce des Invalides" (JR 104). In a short amount of time we are expeditiously transported to different settings, situations and conversations. These abrupt shifts function to relate the strong sense of excitement which Jacob is feeling, but which he is not able to communicate. This aspect of the novel is reminiscent of how the jungle voyage is portrayed in *The Voyage Out*.

During a conversation with Cruttendon and Jinny at a sidewalk café, Cruttendon sows doubt concerning the goal of Jacob' initiation, and in doing so critiques British society:

> "No Flanders, I don't think I could live like you. When one walks down that street opposite the British Museum – what's it called? – that's what I mean. It's all like that. Those fat women – and the man standing in the middle of the roads as if he were going to have a fit…"
>
> "Everybody feeds them," said Jinny, waving the pigeons away.
>
> "They're stupid old things."
>
> "Well, I don't know," said Jacob, smoking his cigarette. "There's St. Pauls's."
>
> I mean going to an office," said Cruttendon
>
> "Hang it all," Jacob expostulated. (JR 103-104)

What Cruttendon seems to be attacking in his critique of British society is the mundane and monotonous life that awaits Jacob once he returns, which is representative for the life of a middle-class gentleman. Cruttendon launches his attack by objecting to Britain from an aesthetic point of view as he points to "those fat women – and the man standing in the middle of the roads as if he were going to have a fit". By focusing on "the fat women" it seems like Cruttendon is viewing the British women as being lazy and dull. Jinny brings up pigeons being "stupid old things" in the same conversation, which suggests that there is a similarity between the "fat women" and the "swollen iridescent pigeons" (JR 103). Further on Cruttendon continues his critique of Britain based on the idea of "going to an office", which is likely what awaits Jacob. Cruttendon's critique revolves around the ordinariness and the restrictive life of Britain where young men are boxed up into offices. This critique of the restrictive and limiting life that British society life represents is also evident in

The Voyage Out. Rachel and Terence will never be able to lead the lives they want and be together in the way they want in London. They can imagine it, but it can never become reality. In the opening scene in *The Voyage Out*, the picture drawn of London is one that is characterized in the fashion that Cruttendon argues:

> In the streets of London where beauty goes unregarded, eccentricity must pay the penalty, and it is better not to be very tall, to wear a long blue cloak, or to beat the air with your left hand. (VO 3)

London becomes the picture of a social space where there is no room for individualism, and where one is supposed to contribute to the social machine. For Jacob this will be by "going to an office" and eventually becoming a father and husband. Jacob's reaction to Cruttendon's critique exposes his youthful naïve outlook on life as he expostulates "hang it all". During his stay in Paris Jacob seems drawn to a desire to live the Parisian life that Cruttendon and Jinny represent, involving art studios, drunken nights, and roaming around the city. The narrator, however, switches to an omniscient perspective and deflates Jacob's view of the two as "the most remarkable people he had ever met" (JR 104). The narrator moves away from her limited perspective, where she is only able to hear scraps and fragments of conversations, and is able to see the future, specifically, Cruttendon's and Jinny's futures:

> Cruttendon took to painting orchards; had therefore to live in Kent; and must one would think see through apple blossoms by this time, since his wife, for whose sake he did it, eloped with a novelist. (JR 104)

Cruttendon and Jinny's future deflates Jacob's romantic view of the two while also weakening Cruttendon's strong critique and reversion towards the mundane life that Britain represents for him. The need to paint orchards in order to make a living builds

on the critique of the conformity of British life as Cruttendon is forced into painting to make a living rather than to unfold himself artistically as he seems to be able to do in Paris.

3.2.2 Greece:

In the mind of the young traveller Jacob Flanders, Greece has grown to symbolize the ideal of all the values that his education and socialization have instilled in him. In Edwardian society there was a highly established view of Greece as representing an ideal, being the ancient cradle of civilization, history, philosophy, and knowledge. However, the Greece of his imagination proves to be problematic in the encounter with the realities of Greece, comically illustrated through Jacob's meeting with Aristotle. The only Aristotle Jacob meets is Aristotle, the dirty waiter: "carnivorously interested in the body of the only guest occupying the arm chair…"(JR 110). As the strangeness of the jungle destabilizes Rachel and reminds her of her restrictive initiation process, so does Greece affect Jacob. However, Jacob is not overthrown by a sense of surreal strangeness. For Jacob his mental unraveling becomes a reaction to the confrontation between his idea of Greece and the reality of Greece. As his illusion of Greece becomes shattered Jacob, Jacob is stuck in the void between illusion and reality, and becomes more conscious of other illusions that have influenced his life.

Walking around Patras, his first stop in Greece, Jacob seems disoriented and his sightseeing seems pointless as he follows the tramlines "a mile or so out" and then follows them back again. His walk is pointless, as he follows the only thing that seems familiar. In this regard being in Greece does not stir any deep emotion in Jacob, rather "there is a stopper upon all emotions" (JR 109). On his walk back to his hotel Jacob encounters a more realistic picture of Greece than his education has

constructed. Jacob experiences the everyday and ordinary life as he "met several droves of turkeys; several strings of donkeys" and "advertisements of corsets". He becomes disoriented as he gets "lost in back streets" and the constructed idea of the greatness of Greece is deflated as "the place smelt of bad cheese…"(JR 109). All these elements force themselves on Jacob so when he finds himself opposite his hotel "he was glad" (JR 109). Dealing with the real Greece becomes bewildering and disorienting. Having returned to his hotel he is struck, or so the narrator assumes, by a feeling of depression and becomes "like a man about to be executed" (JR 110). The narrator observes Jacob and provides commentary to what she thinks he is feeling, and more generally about the social fabric of British society and of the state of the individual in a restrictive society. As Jacob returns disillusioned from his walk the narrator argues in favor for illusions, stating that: "No doubt we should be, on the whole, much worse off than we are without our astonishing gift for illusion." (JR 109), making one question whether Jacob would be a more content individual if he were able to hold on to his illusions. Either way, his walk and his confrontation with the reality of Greece starts an internal process, where he begins to confront aspects of his life and his beliefs. With Jacob questioning his life his surroundings, Woolf is able to articulate a social critique aimed at the limiting possibilities that Jacob's socialization has laid out for him while also questioning ideas that uphold the constructed idea of "Empire". Becoming more aware and critical of this society, the British Empire beings to "puzzle him" (JR 111). This is especially spelled out in Patras, when Jacob, returning from his walk, more enlightened than when he set of on his walk begins to sense a feeling of depression. His reaction sets a stream of thoughts going concerning how he, and many young boys like him have been brought up in an

illusion. The narrator however, unlike Jacob, is the primary voice of critical enterprise in the novel:

> First you read Xenophon; then Euripides. One day – that was an occasion, by God – what people have said to appears to have sense in it; “the Greek spirit”; the Greek this, that, and the other; though it is absurd, by the way, to say that any Greek comes near Shakespeare. The point is, however, that we have been brought up in an illusion. (JR 110)

In Athens the juxtaposition between the realities of Greece and its status as the birthplace of civilization, history and philosophy becomes glaringly visible, according to the narrator:

> Athens is still quite capable of striking a young man as the oddest combination, the most incongruous assortment. Nor it is suburban; now immortal. Now cheap continental jewelry is laid upon plush trays. Now the stately woman stands naked, save for a wave of drapery above the knee. No form can he set on his sensations…(JR 118)

The combination of the mundane and plebeian of everyday life, with the immortal greatness of the remains of the Ancient world proves unsettling. Their disharmony upsets Jacob who moves more and more into a state of “gloom”. Though the cause for Jacob’s gloom is never fully revealed it is possible to see Jacob’s reaction as disillusionment as his ideas of superiority and privilege are challenged. This is not what Jacob expected as he sat on the train to Greece. He was prepared to seize Greece the same way he seized the literature and the philosophy they were taught at Cambridge. As Jacob appears to discover on his walk, the Greece of his education is not possible to seize. The reaction to his surroundings leaves Jacob feeling disillusioned and through his disillusion he comes to a new and melancholy

understanding of the inevitability of becoming “immersed in things” (JR 111). This sense of disillusionment becomes most potent as Jacob visits the Acropolis. Jacob’s visit to the Acropolis and his reaction to the surroundings is similar to how Rachel reacts as she arrives in the “heart of the jungle”. Both characters are in confrontation with the artifice of their illusions, faced with the realities of their own cultures and the social forces that are instructing their development.

The Acropolis is the place where Jacob should, according to the ideals of his education, find the most inspiration as it stands as the beacon of civilization, where the ideals of Western civilization was founded. However, rather than become inspired by his surroundings Jacob is uninspired and the “seeds of extreme disillusionment” (JR 128) impose themselves more and more upon Jacob and his outlook of the world. Jacob visits the expected sights, and follows his guidebook accurately and diligently as he notes “the slight irregularity in the line of the steps which “the artistic sense of the Greeks preferred to mathematical accuracy,” (JR 119), which his guidebook tells him to notice. At the Acropolis Jacob notices the expected monuments and details and identifies the famous landmarks, but he himself is not overcome with veneration and inspiration. We are told that though diligently doing what he is supposed to do he is “profoundly morose” (JR 119) and senses a feeling of an uneasy “painful feeling, something like selfishness – one wishes almost that the thing would stop” as it “is getting more and more beyond what is possible” (JR 120). It is difficult to say exactly what the reason for this feeling is; however, one may understand the reason for Jacob’s disillusionment as a result of facing the realities of Greece, and therefore facing the constructed nature of his own society. A questioning of Greece becomes a questioning of Britain. By seeing how the Greece that his society has constructed does not exist his understanding of the society he is being immersed in becomes unstable.

While sitting down and reading on top of the Acropolis Jacob struggles to concentrate on his reading and suddenly reflects around the question of “Why not rule countries in the way they should be ruled?” (JR 120). Jacob’s experience of the Acropolis should, according to his education and the ideals that the Grand Tour was built upon, instill in him ideas of grandeur and privilege. Nevertheless, Jacob is overcome with a sense of disillusion and a need to dissect his own society. Though this is not clearly spelt out, especially with the narrator being the main critical and analytical sensibility in the novel, there are allusions to questions of empire and Britain that connect Jacob’s feelings of disillusionment with a questioning of society as we are told that Jacob, while abroad, “got into thinking about politics”. Thinking about “the problems of civilization” Jacob reflects that though the ancient Greeks solved such problems “remarkably”, “their solution is no help to us” (JR 120). Further on in his reading Jacob receives an epiphany as:“…his meditations were given an extraordinary edge; Greece was over; the Parthenon in ruins; yet there he was.” (JR 120). This suggests that Jacob realizes the uselessness of building a society upon ideas of ancient Greece, additionally one may read the statement as a comment on the hollowness of the Grand Tour itself and the ideology behind it.

Jacob’s sense of disillusionment bears similarities to what Rachel experiences on her voyage. Driven by a vision of “her own personality, as a real everlasting thing, different from anything else, unmergeable like the sea or the wind” (VO 90) and inspired by the possibility of being a person of her own account, Rachel travels to Santa Marina and then further into the heart of the jungle. However, Rachel, like Jacob, ends up disillusioned with a new critical and depressive outlook on her life and her process of initiation. Like Jacob, Rachel seems bewildered as to how to react to her newfound insight and ends up in a passive state of melancholy. Rachel’s

confrontation with her social restrictions begins early as her aunt Helen seeks to educate Rachel about men and sexuality, and fill in the gaps that her father and aunts have intentionally left blank. Rachel has lived in a protective bubble where she has been a victim of these sexual politics, without being aware of it herself. Finally understanding the reasons for her restrictive and "hedged-in" life, Rachel reacts with bewilderment:

> 'So that's why I can't walk alone!'
>
> By this new light she saw her life for the first time a creeping hedged-in thing, driven cautiously between high walls, here turned aside, there plunged in darkness, made dull and crippled for ever – her life that was the only chance she had – a thousand words and actions became plain to her.
>
> 'Because men are brutes! I hate men!' she exclaimed. (VO 87)

Still, Rachel holds on to the hope of finding her own identity and freedom. Moving through the various spaces of the small British colony at the hotel. The different hotel rooms all symbolize different aspects of British society. Rachel like Jacob develops a more a disillusioned outlook on life. Whereas Jacob is overcome by the distasteful feeling of depression, feeling like a "man about to be executed" (JR 110), Rachel also senses these feelings of distaste for her society. Finally alone, Rachel exclaims aloud that "It's intolerable" (VO 300) and watching the other guests through the window and reflecting upon the miserable day Rachel gets lost in a melancholic lethargy:

> She had now reached one of those eminences, the result of some crisis, from which the world is finally displayed in its true proportions. She disliked the look of it immensely – churches, politicians, misfits, and huge impostures – men like Mr. Dalloway, men like Mr. Bax, Evelyn and her chatter, Mrs. Paley blocking up the passage. (VO 300)

Similar to Jacob's reaction towards having his illusions shattered, Rachel also becomes highly critical of her surroundings. Through their disillusionment they are able to see the world "in its true proportions", and the "look of it" is something that both characters seem to find unbearable. This sense of disillusion and aversion towards the British Empire seems to cause an obstruction in their development process as they become aware of the nature of their respective initiation processes. Both voyages were supposed to provide personal development towards a state of completed initiation, but instead they encounter aspects that shatter their illusions. They are left disoriented, depressed, and highly critical to their respective surroundings.

Like Jacob, Rachel's ultimate experience of disillusionment occurs on a journey that carries metaphorical meaning. Jacob travels upwards to the Acropolis in search of meaning, enlightenment and role in his society. However, Rachel travels into the jungle of Santa Marina in search of freedom from the restrictive miniature colony of the hotel, which symbolizes the British Empire and its social values. Both quests seem to be a final attempt at reconciliation with their society as they have been confronted with reality during the course of their travels. Before embarking on the river voyage, Rachel is overcome by a feeling of the "aimlessness" concerning the guests and the of the lives of the British hotel colony, perceiving how "her sense of safety was shaken, as if beneath twigs and dead leaves she had seen the movement of a snake" (VO 306). This snake is further depicted as "a profound and reasonless law" that asserts itself, "molding them all to its liking, making and destroying" (VO 307). Eventually this "snake" makes itself more know to Jacob and Rachel. They are however unable to do anything about it and are ultimately overwhelmed by a sense of depression and melancholy.

Jacob and Rachel's disillusionment leads them into a state of deep and paralyzing melancholy. Although presented differently, their melancholia is depicted through similar imagery. A consequence of his disillusionment we are told is that Jacob "surrender[s] to the dark waters which lap us about." (JR 110). The dark waters in this sense functions to illustrate Jacob's mental state. Rachel's mental state during her illness is depicted in a similar fashion as she experiences a sensation of falling into a pool of "sticky water" which ultimately leaves her feeling as though she is "at the bottom of the sea." (VO 397). While different in nature, the similarity in imagery is intriguing to explore. Jacob's sense of distaste towards his initiation process and the outlook of his doomed future, becomes portrayed through the imagery of the "black waters" (JR 110). The "black waters" appear to refer to a sense of disillusionment and critical perception. The nature and workings of the black waters in relation to Jacob depicts the waters as inhabiting a forceful energy as they "lap[s] us about and pull us in different directions, making the individual powerless. Jacob is depicted as "surrendering" to these waters, suggesting that he is capitulating to these forceful energies and the feelings of gloom and darkness. Jacob's surrender indicates that he has no control once he surrenders to these "dark waters". The effect of his surrender becomes problematic for his initiation process as the nature of the British Empire becomes problematic. The narrator observes that Jacob's surrender will complicate the life he is expected to live: "He would go into Parliament and make fine speeches – but what use are fine speeches and Parliament, once you surrender an inch to the black waters?" (JR 110) By surrendering to the dark waters it is suggested that Jacob enters a state of melancholy as his outlook becomes dark and hopeless. Like Jacob, Rachel's melancholia is depicted through watery imagery. Like Jacob, the waters surrounding Rachel put a stopper to her initiation process. Rachel is struggling in and

out of her feverish fantasies during her illness, she imagines herself escaping from the sensation of suffocating heat by slipping into “a deep pool of sticky water; which eventually closed over her head” (VO 397). Rachel’s fall into “sticky water” is as consuming as Jacob’s surrender to the “black waters”, however there is a sense that the “sticky water” is much more distancing and confining. Rather than being flung around by a forceful energy, Rachel lowers herself into the “sticky waters” until she feels as though she is lying at “the bottom of the sea”:

> She saw nothing and heard nothing but a faint booming sound, which was the sound to the sea rolling over her head. While all her tormentors thought that she was dead, she was not dead, but curled up at the bottom of the sea. There she lay, sometimes seeing darkness, sometimes light, while every now and then someone turned her over at the bottom of the sea. (VO 397-398)

Rachel’s imagined descent to the bottom of the sea becomes, from her perspective, a way to escape her situation and her “tormentors”. Earlier in the novel, in a play fight with Terence, Rachel fantasizes about the underwater experience and finds the idea of being “flung into the sea” and to be “washed hither and tither and driven about the roots of the world” “incoherently delightful” (VO 347). Rachel’s desire to become part of the sea appears to portray a sense of liberation, suggesting that Rachel’s descent into the sticky waters. Although confining; the waters offers a way out of the initiation process that she is a part of. The void that her illness and melancholia creates between Rachel and her surroundings becomes a type of liberation from the characters that wish to form and educate her. It is possible to read Rachel’s descent into the “sticky waters” and descent to the “bottom of the sea” as a return to the womb. Curled up at “the bottom of the sea” suggests that Rachel draws back to the fetal position. Her return to the womb and her fetal position becomes a figure of

withdrawal and defeat. The action of returning to the womb becomes her only escape and protection from her mentors. This is intriguing in terms of the Bildungsroman. Rather than maturing and entering the adult world, Rachel illustrates a wish to regress, and to become passive and helpless again.

An interesting point when examining these novels and their use of watery imagery in portraying the inner lives of their characters is the difference in how the two react to the consuming waters and the difference in the nature of the water. Although the water seems in both novels, to offer a state of unconfined consciousness from their surroundings there is a significant difference. Whereas Jacob is depicted as surrendering, Rachel is seemingly intentionally protecting herself. This difference between the two is consequently significant in relation to the discussion of Jacob and Rachel's deaths. Whereas Rachel's illness and death can be read as a kind of self-preservation, Jacob's death is an outcome of how the social machine has overpowered him, which ultimately leaves him dead in Flanders.

3.3 Death

Death broods over *Jacob's Room,* preparing the reader for the inevitability of Jacob's death. From the first page there is a sense that death is present in the narrative. In the course of Jacob's growth from adolescence to young manhood there are images that evoke notions of death in reference to the First World War. This functions to influence the way Jacob's development is perceived. Though we are observing Jacob's development through his education, amorous adventures and late-night reflections, we are as Zwerdling points out, "also witnessing the preparation of cannon fodder" (247). Jacob's death is already signaled through his name as his surname "Flanders" evokes association to the Flanders region of Belgium, which was

the scene of some of the bloodiest fighting on the Western Front during the Great War. As Christine Froula points out, the name Flanders evoked a war story that “did not have to be told in 1922” (Froula). Flanders, as Alex Zwerdling observes, is a synonym for dying in battle as “nearly a third of the million British soldiers killed in World War I lost their lives in the Flanders mud” (Zwerdling 247). Consequently, by naming her Bildungsheld Jacob Flanders and through her frequent allusions to war and death, Woolf is foreshadowing his fate.

> From the start of the novel Woolf uses symbolism and imagery to foreshadow Jacob’s fate, such as when Jacob find a sheep’s skull on the beach as a young boy: He was about to roar when, lying among the black sticks and straw under the cliff, he saw a whole skull – perhaps a cow’s skull, a skull, perhaps, with the teeth in it. Sobbing, but absent-mindedly, he ran farther and farther away until he held the skull in his arms. (JR 5)

Jacob’s intense fascination and pull towards the skull suggest that there is a connection between Jacob and this symbol of death. Holding the skull in his arms, Jacob exhibits a clear affinity with this picture of death. Later on, after Mrs. Flanders and her children return from the beach, the sheep’s jaw is still present in the narrative. When Jacob is sleeping, “the sheep’s jaw with the big yellow teeth in it” (JR 8) lays at his feet, indicating that while it is not in the foreground it is still present. The placement of the sheep’s jaw by Jacob’s feet indicates that he is in close proximity to death. Woolf’s representation of Cambridge is also highly suggestive of Jacob’s downfall. She portrays Cambridge, its professors and students with militaristic and destructive imagery. Although Rachel’s education may be considered destructive, it is more so in terms of how it seeks to limit and suppress her. Jacob’s education, on the other hand, is portrayed as a dangerous force that contributes to his death. Woolf

inserts additional imagery in the text that functions to make death a substantial element. Examples include Jacob's deceased father, who is known only by the inscription on his tombstone, Fanny Elmer walking between tombs of a disused graveyard, the woodwork in Jacob's London room which is decorated by carved roses or ram's skulls and the momentary illumination of faces on Guy Fawkes night before the fire is extinguished and "all the faces went out" (JR 58).

Due to the constant focus on death and mourning, the novel functions partly as an elegy, as many critics have commented on and analyzed. From the first page of *Jacob's Room* the elegiac tone of the novel is present. Death is always there, and Archer's sad call for Jacob on the beach anticipates Bonamy's mournful calling of Jacob's name in the final chapter. The combination of a genre that is preoccupied with the idea of development and one which revolves around lamenting loss and death, creates an intriguing tension throughout *Jacob's Room*, especially in relation to Jacob. *Jacob's Room* is simultaneously an elegy and a Bildungsroman, as we are both observing Jacob's presence and sensing his absence. This contributes to the confusing feeling that arises from reading about Jacob's life, but not knowing much about him and his interiority. The presence of the elegy works to remove Jacob from his developmental story. This gives significance to the fact that he is often presented through the eyes and thoughts of the other characters, illustrating how his absence and eventual death leaves nothing more substantial than memories and shadows. Because of his absence and presence in the text Jacob moves throughout the narrative as a shadow, he is there but it is not possible to hold onto him and grasp him. This idea of death and shadows is something the narrator reflects upon, stating that: "life is but a procession of shadows" and that people are like shadows:

> In any case life is but a procession of shadows, and God knows why it is that we embrace them so eagerly, and see them depart with such anguish, being shadows. And why, if this and much more is true, why are we yet surprised in the window corner by a sudden vision that the young man in the chair is of all things in the world the most real, the most solid, the best known to us – why indeed? For the moment after we know nothing about him. Such is the manner of our seeing. Such are the conditions of our love. (JR 56)

Alex Zwerdling makes a significant point in relation to the nature of Woolf's elegiac tone in *Jacob's Room*, which is the satiric nature of Woolf's elegy. The literature that followed in the wake of the Great War produced a specific way to think about the dead soldiers, conveying a sense of high idealism or hero-worship and a romantic perspective of a lost generation of youths. Zwerdling argues, in contrast to these, "Woolf's elegiac novel is persistently small-scaled, mischievous and ironic" (Zwerdling 254). Jacob is depicted as being far from extraordinary and in many instances, depicted as more typical than unique, which often results in his individuality merging with a group. By not glorifying Jacob Woolf presents an honest account of a young man, rather than a hero of war. Through her satiric elegy Woolf de-glorifies the Frist World War soldier, who was often turned into a symbolic character. By constructing an honest account of a young man through satire, the effect of minimizing the reader's access to his thoughts results in a less sentimentalized sympathy towards Jacob. This stands in contrast to Rachel in *The Voyage Out*. In providing more insight into Rachel's struggle with her identity and social conformity, there is a more pronounced sense of sympathy than in *Jacob's Room*. In addition to a lack of sympathy for Jacob, these narrative techniques also affect how one views his developmental possibilities. With the narrator being able to move back and forth in

time, she keeps us aware of Jacob's impending fate. For example, when she ends the discussion of the love story between Jimmy and Helen by stating that: "And now Jimmy feeds crows in Flanders and Helen visits hospitals" (JR), with the effect of undercutting youthful romance and promise, indicating that she is well aware of Jacob's fate throughout the narrative. Another instance where the elegiac tone undercuts the promise of youth is when the narrator is meditating upon the activities of the young men at Cambridge. In her reflections she anticipates their deaths in the war when she describes the reading and writing "of simple young men, these, who would – but there is no need to think of them grown old" (JR 32). With the combination of the insistent allusions to death and the focus on Jacob's future, his developmental possibilities seem futile.

Death in *Jacob's Room* is something which influences the entire novel, and subsequently how one reads Jacob's character and development. In contrast, Rachel's death, is not something that the narrative prepares you for, but is more of an intense rupture than something which has been foreshadowed throughout the narrative. The sudden nature of Rachel's death disturbs the reader emotionally as it does not conform to the path that the narrative was anticipated to follow. As Rachel DuPlessis points out in discussing the narrative structure of the novel: "Woolf shatters conventional hopes for an ending in marriage" and Rachel's "death creates a dramatic rupture with many of the narrative conventions Woolf evoked" (DuPlessis 50). Although Rachel's Bildung is problematized throughout the novel, her death is something that shatters expectations. Unlike *Jacob's Room* death does not brood over the novel. Instead of having death figure as a major focal point in the novel, the narrative is more preoccupied with Rachel's position as an outsider and her ability to negotiate a place for herself within a restrictive society. *The Voyage Out* revolves

more around an individual's constriction to convention, and subsequently death becomes a way out of these conventions. Rachel is better off dead.

Both Jacob and Rachel's deaths are signaled with a cry. As Terence becomes aware of Rachel's passing he shrieks "'Rachel! Rachel!'" and as he tries to "rush back to her" (VO 413). The narrative describes the intensity of Terence's feelings as he is pulled out of Rachel's room and downstairs in a bedroom far from hers. The tone of the scene illustrates Terence's extreme sense of romanticism towards Rachel and her death, and this indulgent sense of emotion strikes one more as a " public performance than a private expression of loss" (Zwerdling 262). In comparison to Terence's dramatic and intense emotions, the cry of death in *Jacob's Room* is much more stropped of sentiment as Bonamy, when confronted with Jacob's presence and absence, cried out for Jacob:

> Bonamy crossed the window. Pickford's van swung down the street. The omnibuses were locked together at Mudie's corner. Engines throbbed, and carters, jamming the brakes down, pulled their horses sharp up. A harsh and unhappy voice cried something unintelligible. And then suddenly all the leaves seemed to raise themselves.
>
> "Jacob! Jacob!" cried Bonamy, standing by the window. The leaves sank down again. (JR 143)

The scene depicts how outside of Jacob's room life goes on as usual, while inside his room Bonamy and Betty Flanders are confronted with the absence Jacob's death has left. The final chapter of the novel takes place in Jacob's room where Betty Flanders and Richard Bonamy go through Jacob's things following his death in battle. We are never informed of Jacob's death, but it is clearly alluded to throughout the

novel and in the final chapter, while going to his room Bonamy's reflection makes Jacob's death more pronounced:

> "He left everything just as it was," Bonamy marveled. "Nothing arranged. All his letters strewn about for any one to read. What did he expect? Did he think he would come back?" he mused, standing in the middle of Jacob's room. (JR 143)

Bonamy's reaction indicates that Jacob will not return, and he and Jacob's mother are left with a room that has been molded by Jacob's presence. The room thus becomes both a symbol for his absence and presence, but more than the room, this feeling is represented by the boots that Betty Flanders holds out in despair:

> "Such confusion everywhere!" exclaimed Betty Flanders, bursting open the bedroom door.
>
> Bonamy turned away from the window.
>
> "What am I to do with these, Mr. Bonamy?"
>
> She held out a pair of Jacob's old shoes. (JR 143)

The image of Jacob's shoes becomes a resonant symbol of Jacob's character and is in many ways an embodiment of Jacob. As the shoes hold an imprint of his foot they remain a trace of the person whose feet molded them. Just like his room, the shoes have been shaped by Jacob's presence and their existence now revolves around his absence. As such Jacob is present while also absent, which in many ways describes how he figures throughout the text. Returning to Leonard Woolf's initial reaction to the text revolved around how the characters in *Jacob's Room* are like ghosts or puppets. This statement captures much of what Woolf is doing in relation to the character of Jacob Flanders and his complex presence in the novel and the

problematic nature of his formation. Jacob is a puppet in the social order, while his inevitable death transforms him into a ghost-like presence.

Conclusion:

The individual's formation process and initiation into society is presented as a complex situation in both *The Voyage Out* and *Jacob's Room*. Though the novels are different from each other in many respects, and are not often thoroughly discussed together, their similarities and differences have made for an intriguing analysis. Through the close readings and comparisons of this thesis it has been uncovered how in her dealing with the relationship between the individual and society Woolf opens up for a critique of society through an exploration of individual selfhood, while also questioning the representation of character in fiction.

Woolf draws upon established literary motifs in both *The Voyage Out* and *Jacob's Room* and these motifs are treated in unconventional ways in order to deal with questions of formation and socialization. In her engagement with the motifs of marriage and education, Woolf exposes the social obligations these enforce, and their destructive effect upon the individual. In *The Voyage Out* the unity of marriage relies on controlling the individual and shattering their sense of selfhood. *Jacob's Room* critiques marriage in a similar fashion, focusing more on the mundane life it will entail. Education in both novels exposes how intellectual education enforces strict gender constructions based upon notions of privilege and marginalization. Furthermore, the novels reveal a difference in relation to how education figures in the female and male Bildungsroman. Marriage figures as Rachel's primary goal, and she is therefore educated towards this aim. Jacob's education relies on a specific scholarly tradition, but also on a social form of initiation which includes roaming the streets of London, drunken nights, prostitutes and various love affairs – all in the name of gaining valuable life experiences. Moreover, in *Jacob's Room* Jacob's education figures as a contributing force to his compliant sacrifice in the First World War. The

motif of the journey in *The Voyage Out* and *Jacob's Room* is employed as a way of bringing both protagonists, not towards maturity and social responsibility, but to a state of disillusionment and disruption of the formation process. Rachel's experience of the jungle and Jacob's of Greece instill knowledge in the two that will make socialization both undesirable and impossible. The narrative of subject formation in both novels ends in death, leaving Rachel and Jacob forever on the threshold between youth and maturity. Though portrayed differently, their deaths raise similar doubts towards the ideal of socialization in the classical Bildungsroman. Woolf's disruption of the formation process is a rejection the ideal of maturity and represents a dismissal of the concept of socialization.

The deaths of the two protagonists can be understood in relation to the ongoing discussion of how the Bildungsroman genre responds to and is influenced by, aspects of modernity. Returning to Franco Moretti and his discussion of the Bildungsroman, Woolf's stunted youths may with a view to Moretti's argument concerning the emergence of the genre and how this emphasizes the creative influence of the historical and political context, or the experience of modernity. Modernity created the need for a new form, and this form, through the years changed in response to changes in society and aspects of modernity. With this in mind, the stunted youth in *The Voyage Out* and *Jacob's Room* can be understood in light of the experience of the social environment at the time of writing.

Both novels revolve around questions of subject formation in light of cultural and societal questions. The portrayal of the developmental possibilities available for Jacob and Rachel exposes their entrapment in these social systems, and how aspects of society will always impinge upon their subjectivity and autonomous sense of self, making the idea of individualism impossible and the goal of socialization undesirable.

Representing the nation as imperialist and patriarchal and as responsible for the aggression that resulted in the First World War, Woolf's picture of society is dismal, showing what it truly entails to "really be English", weakening Clarissa Dalloway's unthinking praise of Empire as she reflect how Empire "makes one feel as if one couldn't bear not to be English!" (VO 51).

The classical Bildungsroman's concept of socialization was deeply embedded in the idea that the free individual would eventually perceive the social norms as their own, thus internalizing the social order. Internalizing the social order consequently indicates that the individual take on his or her social responsibilities, and in doing so becoming a citizen. However, this desire to internalize social norms is not present in either Rachel or Jacob. Their formation process and attitudes move away from this complacent attitude of becoming part of and supporting the nation. For both Rachel and Jacob death becomes an escape from having to internalize the social norms. By never reaching adulthood, they avoid becoming citizens of the Empire. Moretti's account of the classical Bildungsroman and its emphasis on socialization illustrates how the genre reflects and produces social consent. Consequently, through the figures of her stunted youths, Woolf's novels produce a rejection of nation and the idea of becoming a good citizen who embodies what the nation stands for. The stunted youths are a result of how Woolf viewed her own society. Consequently, it is through Rachel and Jacob's failed formation that she is initiates her experimental writing. Therefore, Woolf's revision of the Bildungsroman conventions in *The Voyage Out* and *Jacob's Room* illuminates how the Bildungsroman form responds to aspects of modernity, and how formal experiment reveals the connection between the Bildungsroman, the experience of modernity and literary modernism.

The figure of the stunted youth in Virginia Woolf's writing would be intriguing to explore further. As I have shown in this thesis, though Woolf's textual politics varies from one novel to the next, there is also a line of continuity. The comparison in form and subject-matter between *The Voyage Out* and *Jacob's Room* illustrates how the experience of reality and nation changed after the First World War. There is nonetheless a sense of correspondence between the two novels as they revolve around similar questions. This connection is something I would like to explore further. A comparative study of *The Voyage Out* (1915), *Jacob's Room* (1922) and *The Waves* (1931) would be fascinating in relation to how Woolf deals with the interaction between individual and society at different times. All three are written at different times, but the negative view of socialization and nation remain. As Alex Zwerdling points out, the three novels portray characters that "die young, before they have been fully defined" (Zwerdling 250). Through the deaths of Rachel, Jacob and Percival it seems as though Woolf does not want her characters to grow up, and mature. Never having to grow up means never having to be defined and becoming part of the unity that will destroy the individual. Furthermore, a comparative analysis of these three novels would illuminate how Woolf's style develops in relation to relating identity and in the representation of characters in fiction.

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