Ageing and Imperial Mobility in the British Novel, 1845–1945

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines representations of ageing in eight British novels from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. The four chapters and one epilogue explore how the novels' rewriting of the Bildungsroman gives rise to novelistic genres or types of writing, such as realism, detective fiction, modernism, and modern satire. I compare and contrast cultural assumptions of the ageing of each novel with those of the Bildungsroman so as to elucidate the ideological logic and contradiction of the novelistic genres that the individual novels represent. Scholars on the Bildungsroman tend to attend primarily to the evolution or variations of the genre in isolation, rather than how the genre has been revisited by other genres for their self-fashioning. This dissertation illustrates how to investigate the emergence and characteristics of novelistic genres while focusing on their constant interaction with each other.

This dissertation also emphasizes historically-modulated spatial conditions for ageing. The modern history of Britain features the earlier and quicker development of capitalist social relations and imperial political-economic expansion. Culturally diverse forms of movement arise in particular moments in this British history of imperial expansion and the development of world-economic system, and enable or limit British subjects' normative ageing depending on their class, gender, ethnicity or other social qualifications. Among distinct forms of imperial movement this dissertation covers are voyages out for financial or military enterprise, the return of gone-native British subjects alongside the reverse 'invasion' of colonial natives, British women's universalizing Western values to imperial peripheries, and the quest for a recuperative power for the Western civilization in distant lands. Investigating narratives of ageing in eight novels by situating them in these contexts of imperial movement, the dissertation illuminates hitherto unnoticed formal and thematic peculiarities of each novel and its genre. Ultimately, this dissertation attempts to establish a methodology to study the history of the British novel.

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Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to my wife and family. I could never have finished this work and be writing these words now without their steadfast support, patience, and love. Thoughts of them rescued me from numerous moments of anxiety, fear, and frustration. I hope writing this dissertation has made me a better son, brother, and husband. No goal makes this dissertation more worthwhile.

This journey is coming to an end. Five years of work, experience, and partnership in Seattle will live on within me.

At a café in Seattle on July the 5th, 2016, looking over Green Lake.

Introduction

This dissertation explores representations of ageing in a variety of British novels from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. The four chapters focus on the ways in which representations of ageing in eight novels contribute to the development of novelistic genres, particularly realism, detective fiction, modernism, and modern satire. The years also mark an era of imperial political-economic expansion and of the development of transportation technology, during which time increasing numbers of people, items, and capital moved between the metropole and imperial peripheries. This mobility provided opportunities for Western subjects to come of age and mature both financially and spiritually. Among distinct forms of imperial movement this dissertation analyzes are voyages out for financial or military enterprise, the return of gone-native British subjects alongside the reverse 'invasion' of colonial natives, British women's involvement in universalizing Western values to imperial peripheries, and the quest for a recuperative power for the Western civilization in distant lands. Investigating narratives of ageing in eight novels by situating them in these contexts of imperial movement over the years, the dissertation ultimately attempts to provide a new framework to study the history of the British novel.

The Bildungsroman is a representative novelistic genre that centers upon the biographical form and stylizes the story of individual characters' ageing and eventual socialization. As we shall see in details below, academia generally locates the origin of the classical Bildungsroman in the late-eighteenth German literary tradition, particularly in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre,* and regards the coming-of-age story as a cultural form of reconciliation between the individual and society. British novels written during the Victorian and

modern periods and widely considered as Bildungsromane include, but are not limited to, *David Copperfield*, *Jane Eyre*, *Jude the Obscure*, *The Story of an African Farm*, *The Way of All Flesh*, *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *The Voyage Out* and *The Rainbow*.

However, this dissertation does not call attention to those novels commonly referred to as the Bildungsroman.[1] Many of the novels this dissertation covers do not belong to the category of the Bildungsroman because of their primary themes and the brevity of the time their plot covers. Throughout this dissertation, I analyze eight novels roughly in chronological order: William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1848), Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868), Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of Four* (1890), E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924), Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Sunset Song* (1932), Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* (1934), W. Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* (1944), and Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts* (1941). The plot of *The Sign of Four*, for example, covers only a few days; Sherlock Holmes infamously never takes long to solve his cases. The novel that is discussed in the Epilogue—*Between the Acts*—depicts only a single day's event: the modern English pageant.

Instead of attempting to categorize the novels as Bildungsromane, I plan to elucidate how each of the eight novels rewrites or even radically transforms the classical Bildungsroman and represents ageing in a distinct fashion. The Bildungsroman per se is not the main focus of this dissertation; instead, it will be frequently referred to as a standard against which I analyze diverse forms of ageing stylized in the eight novels. The classical Bildungsroman speaks to particular historical and cultural conditions as we shall see below, and serves the ideological

[1] For a study on the classical Bildungsroman, its European variations, and its eventual, if still arguable, decline in the early twentieth century, see Franco Moretti's *The Way of the World*, which I believe remains the most comprehensive and authoritative.

purpose that those conditions require. This dissertation shows what happens when, in later periods of history, authors question the ideological assumptions of the Bildungsroman while continuing to utilize certain aspects of its structure in developing another novelistic genre.

That is also the reason I often use, instead of the Bildung, the term 'ageing' which is a purely physical concept with no cultural or ideological connotations. I do not mean to suggest that it is possible to analyze the purely physical and temporal notion of ageing by dissociating it from the cultural discourse(s) rendering it representable. Instead, the following chapters focus on examining the similarities and differences between the cultural assumptions in the ageing of each novel and those of the Bildungsroman. Analyzing how the novels rewrite the Bildungsroman helps to uncover the distinct ideological logic and contradiction of the other novelistic genres that those individual novels represent. This dissertation thus attempts to provide a methodology to track and investigate the rise of various British novelistic genres not in isolation but in conversation with another genre, the Bildungsroman. I find it problematic that scholars on the Bildungsroman attend primarily to the evolution or variations of the genre in isolation, rather than how the genre has been revisited by other genres for their self-formulation.[2] This dissertation illustrates that we can better understand the emergence and characteristics of novelistic genres by focusing on their constant interaction and negotiation with each other. In the remaining pages of the Introduction, I will elaborate on certain major features of the Bildungsroman as a standard of comparison. Then I will discuss why imperial movement is crucial to understanding changes in the representation of ageing and outline the ways in which

[2] Besides Moretti, for major recent manuscripts focused on the development and cultural assumptions of the Bildungsroman, see Patricia Alden, Tobias Boes, Gregory Castle, Lorna Ellis, Jed Esty, Marc Redfield, and Joseph R Slaughter.

multiple forms of imperial movement provide decisive spatial conditions that allow accounts of ageing to arise.

Karl Morgenstern, a professor of rhetoric at the University of Dorpat, is known to have coined the term Bildungsroman in 1819 in the intellectual atmosphere heavily influenced by the Enlightenment. According to Fritz Martini, Morgenstern saw the novel as a modern literary form designed to educate the reader by portraying the development of the inner soul through social experiences, emphasizing "the doctrine of a well-rounded cultural attitude, and an ideal of education concerned with the exercise of reason and feeling and aimed at the whole person" (7). Martini points out that self-formation through aesthetic and cultural education is emphasized in earlier German conceptions of the Bildungsroman as seen in Friedrich Schiller's or Goethe's works and that they focus on the "inner history" of the characters, rather than the event itself (20).[3] The earlier theories of the Bildungsroman share the belief that aesthetic, moral, and intellectual educations combine together to develop a harmonious and mature inner self in the context of national culture that was then being established. The Bildungsroman manifested a "certain continuity based on a common national, social, and ideological culture shared by poet and public" (Martini 25).

The subsequent studies of the Bildungsroman tend to shift attention from the universal ideals of the Enlightenment such as reason or autonomous self to history as the driving force of progress and the dialectic between the individual and society. Mikhail M. Bakhtin, for example, correlates the rise of the Bildungsroman with the emergence of historical time and necessity. According to him, Goethe distances himself from the intellectual atmosphere of the

[3] For a brief outline of the history of the German conceptions of the Bildungsroman, see Jeffrey Sammons.

Enlightenment and does not advocate abstract values and principles such as rationality, reason, or universal morality. Eventually in Goethe's works can be found the idea of historical and natural temporalities merged in such a way that everything is located by necessity in particular time and space: "Man's emergence is accomplished in real historical time, with all of its necessity, its fullness, its future, and its profoundly chronotopic nature" ("The Bildungsroman" 23). Goethe's works, especially *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, symbolize the ways the individual synthesizes with existing national society in a dialectical manner that changes both parties and envisions a progressive but controllable model of history: "It is as though the very *foundations* of the world are changing, and man must change along with them" ("The Bildungsroman" 23-24; italics in original).[4]

Franco Moretti provides arguably the most substantial and thorough analysis of the ideological underpinnings of the Bildungsroman. Moretti argues that the rise of the genre is interwoven with that of capitalist modernity in the West. Against the relatively static existing community with all its traditional institutions and cultural norms, the young protagonist's ambition and exploration of the world represent the social and economic dynamism of the middle-class and the radical leveling movement of capital: "It is a necessary exploration: in dismantling the continuity between generations, as is well known, the new and destabilizing forces of capitalism impose a hitherto unknown mobility" (Moretti 4). As seen in *David Copperfield*, *Pride and Prejudice*, or *Jane Eyre*, the protagonist of the Bildungsroman displays a

[4] James Hardin introduces some definitions of the Bildungsroman that do not require the reconciliation between the individual and society. However, "most traditional definitions of the Bildungsroman consider an accommodation between the individual and society an essential characteristic of the genre" (Hardin xxi). I do not diverge from this wide consensus when I refer to the 'classical' Bildungsroman.

distinct interiority and defies through his or her pursuit of authentic development traditional moral norms and hierarchized social systems that predetermine the individual's destiny.

Nevertheless, in the classical Bildungsroman the modern autonomous individual ultimately reconciles with national community so as to demonstrate that the nation-state is able to integrate the rising social class of the bourgeoisie and the new era of capitalist social relations they pioneer. According to Moretti, the purely economic logic of self-propagating capital threatens to challenge and exceed all national, moral, and epistemic bounds. The ultimate end of the cultural mechanism of the Bildungsroman is to demonstrate that the modern independent-minded, adventurous, and potentially revolutionary individual is counterbalanced by the existing cultural norms and epistemological grasp of organic national culture: "Only by curbing its intrinsically boundless dynamism, only by agreeing to betray to a certain extent its very essence, only thus, it seems, can modernity be represented" (Moretti 6). Clarifying Moretti's analysis of the Bildungsroman, Jed Esty also holds that "the discourse of the nation supplies the realist bildungsroman with an emergent language of historical continuity or social identity amid the rapid and sweeping changes of industrialization" (4).

The protagonist eventually reaches the moment of reconciliation where he or she harmonizes with his or her autonomous individuality with existing moral codes, and the Bildungsroman represents this synthesis as the maturity of ego and the totality of life.[5] Moretti calls this synthesis a symbolic compromise or contract, and he notes that marriage often plays a

[5] Although gender definitely affects the specific ways in which he or she interacts with societal norms, the general assumptions of the Bildungsroman still apply to its female versions. Thus, I do not differentiate between genders in laying out theoretical foundations of the genre. See Lorna Ellis on the female Bildungsroman and how it also represents modern individuals' eventual reconciliation with society and attests to the fundamentally conservative logic of the genre.

crucial role as a social contract in which the modern individual's voluntary self-realization is imagined as compatible with societal norms: "It has been observed that from the late eighteenth century on, marriage becomes the model for a new type of *social contract*: one no longer sealed by forces located outside of the individual, . . . but founded on a sense of 'individual obligation'" (22; emphasis in original).[6] The coming-of-age plot of the Bildungsroman often reaches the climax of resolution when the protagonist internalizes the norms of his or her national culture and settles down through marriage. The resolution envisions a harmonious synthesis between individuality and society, demonstrating the flexibility of national community as well as the controllability of the dynamism of capitalist modernity.[7]

The project of this dissertation—exploring the history of the British novel by situating its diverse subgenres in conversation with the Bildungsroman—is primarily enabled by this cultural logic of the Bildungsroman: stylizing the modern individual emerging as a national subject in its contractual and dialectic relation with the outer world. Although the Bildungsroman establishes itself as a unique novelistic genre for its thematic focus on formative years of the young protagonist, many authoritative accounts of the novel in general also draw attention to this tension, negotiation, or prospect of reconciliation between the modern individual and the objective world. In *The Theory of the Novel*, for example, Georg Lukács claims that the novel is a dominant cultural expression of the modern world based on human alienation due to capitalist social relations: "The mental attitude of the novel is virile maturity, and the characteristic

[6] For a detailed elaboration on how the normative heterosexuality that culminates in marriage is crucial to socially integrating the bourgeois and also establishing their cultural hegemony, see Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction*.

[7] See Clifford Siskin for another interpretation of the Bildungsroman as a conservative cultural gesture to tame individuals who desire to climb social ladders and defy existing deferential hierarchies in the milieu of rapid economic expansion, urbanization, and growing population.

structure of its matter is discreteness, the separation between interiority and adventures" (88). The novel is a symbolic attempt to confront and restore the ultimately irrecoverable totality between subject and object or between the individual and the world in modern society. 'The problematic individual' seeks the meaning of life, the lost connection between his interiority and the world, and he continues to try and fail, thereby formulating irony as the primary feature of the novel as well as his world.[8]

Although positing the argument in slightly different terms from Lukács, many materialist/Marxist literary scholars also view the novel as addressing the same historical conditions that the Bildungsroman particularly brings into relief and symbolically resolves. They commonly point out that the novel is a modern literary form aimed at overcoming multiple forms of alienation essential to modern society and synthesizing the developmental, universalizing force of capitalist modernity with the particularizing force of existing culture as in the Bildungsroman.[9] For example, Fredric Jameson explores the perpetual tension constitutive of realism—the dialectic between the affect of the present which is yet to be named and the meaning-laden narrative of traditional literary genres—but he also suggests that this perpetual tension is applicable to the novel in general: "if 'the novel' is . . . the last genre to be dissolved in

[8] In *The Historical Novel*, Lukács's focus somewhat shifts from the lost totality to class struggles as the driving force of history, but his emphasis on historical necessity still echoes Bakhtin's view of the Bildungsroman. He argues that not just the historical novel but the novel in general needs to portray the individual's inner world through interaction with objective realities.

[9] It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to delve deep into this historical dilemma imminent in modernization between universality and particularity. See Pericles Lewis for a detailed account of the intellectual history concerning this dilemma which descends from Burke and Rousseau. Also see Dipesh Chakrabarty for another conceptual framework to analyze this dilemma in (post)colonial contexts.

realisms' struggle against reification and reified form, then it becomes paradoxically clear that realism's ultimate adversary will be the realist novel itself" (*The Antinomies of Realism* 162).

As can be seen in these Marxist accounts of the novel, the Bildungsroman epitomizes a crucial cultural ideal of the novel. The novel explores and attempts to overcome symbolically the conflicted relations between the individual and society in the rapidly changing social milieu of the capitalist world, and the Bildungsroman expresses the perfection of that aspiration. The classical Bildungsroman is a conservative cultural expression to imaginatively resolve the problematic relations and stylizes the nation-state's successful integration and control of the boundless dynamism of capitalist modernity in the form of the literary character's normative ageing.

The Bildungsroman's idealistic character, however, often renders its actual existence questionable as a practical novelistic genre. In fact, many scholars point out that there is no novel that fully qualifies for the conditions of the Bildungsroman. In his provocatively titled work, *Phantom Formations,* Marc Redfield maintains that the Bildungsroman is a phantom and that the novels generally considered as the Bildungsroman, even *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre,* would exceed or fall short of the definition.[10] Redfield draws attention to how the Bildungsroman discloses the impossibility of its own aspirations such as the ideal harmony between the individual's consciousness and the objective world or the universal communicability through homogeneous national culture. Lukács, in line with his analysis of the irrecoverable totality in modern literature, critiques the prototype of the Bildungsroman, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre.*

[10] For a brief introduction of literary 'purists' who argue that the term Bildungsroman should be used only for those novels written under the particular German contexts, see Jeffrey L. Sammons.

According to Lukács, Goethe's attempt at synthesis is ultimately incomplete, and his utopian outlook for the immaculate amalgamation of the individual soul and social reality remains lyrical and idealistic. Lukács concludes that "no artistic skill is great and mastery enough to bridge the abyss" (143).[11]

I agree that, as the aspiration of the modern world to reconcile progress and tradition, free individuals and national community, or universality and particularity is itself a project that is never to be completed and remains ultimately utopian, the Bildungsroman can never reach its ideological perfection; otherwise, it would be no longer a modern literary genre.[12] In this sense, I do not believe that the tenuous possibility of synthesis and the ultimately unresolvable inner contradictions in the Bildungsroman necessarily annul the whole genre. The idealistic but unfulfillable ideological gesture of the genre toward harmony and synthesis can help us to uncover and examine its inner tensions and competing voices as well as those of other novelistic genres that attempt to rewrite the story of ageing.[13] In tandem with this approach to its instrumentality, Tobias also claims that national consciousness of the Bildungsroman needs to be understood as "'performative' rather than 'normative'" (28).[14]

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[11] For another elaboration on the improbability of the ideal synthesis of the Bildungsroman, see John R. Maynard. He maintains that the genre often discloses the force of individuality that never changes or the force of society that often threatens individuality.

[12] See Anthony Giddens on modernity as an on-going project with inner contradictions and ambiguities. In *A Singular Modernity*, Fredric Jameson also sees historicism and capitalism as central to modernity and elaborates on the perpetual dialectic between diachrony and synchrony, between the breaks and continuation of discrete modes of production.

[13] On the novel's lack of semantic closure and unfulfillable longing for totality as not defeatist but liberatory, *The Dialogic Imagination* by Bakhtin is arguably the most famous. He emphasizes that the novel incorporates variegated voices and speeches in a dialogic fashion and features the negation of one unitary and indisputable discourse.

[14] This instrumentality of the 'ideal' Bildungsroman reflects what Fredric Jameson views as the instrumental nature of Lukács's notion of totality and Althusser's structural whole. Jameson

When I later refer to the 'classical' or 'ideal' Bildungsroman, for example, I will have in mind those novels such as Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, or Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*. However, I do not mean to suggest that they completely realize the ideals of the Bildungsroman and achieve an immaculate reconciliation between the individual and national community with no lingering tension or opposing voice. Rather, I would suggest that one can find in those novels only a relatively optimistic view toward the synthesis and relatively favorable historical and cultural conditions for such an optimistic expression. In *Pride and Prejudice,* for instance, Elizabeth initially resists Darcy and the socially superior and traditionally privileged status he represents; however, after visiting Pemberly she learns that his class privilege accompanies moral values and eventually submits to traditional societal norms through her own voluntary decision. Armstrong argues that *Pride and Prejudice* "revises the basis of class superiority and teaches the reader, much as Darcy claims Elizabeth taught him, to transform the signs of mere rank into those unselfish social principles that the novel associates with the constraint of sexual desire and thus with bourgeois morality" ("The Fiction of Bourgeois Morality" 365). The novel achieves this symbolic reconciliation between individuality and socialization without undermining either party.

I do believe that it is still possible to uncover resistant voices in *Pride and Prejudice* that do not fully endorse this final synthesis; this will be possible in any novel as long as we readily accept Bakhtin's notion of the dialogic nature of the novel. However, it is still hard to deny that *Pride and Prejudice* is ultimately a 'happy-ending' story of coming-of-age in comparison with those late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century variations of the Bildungsroman such as *Jude*

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acknowledges the notions of totality and 'History' with capitalism as its driving force. However, they are the absent cause, or an instrument of measure, rather than reality. See *The Political Unconscious,* 38.

the Obscure or *The Voyage Out*. One can compare and contrast these novels with *Pride and Prejudice* and examine how the cultural assumptions of the latter Bildungsroman are questioned or even negated in the former and how the social conditions the former represent generate alterations to the classical Bildungsroman. I believe that this type of research would be much more productive than simply claiming that *Pride and Prejudice* equally frustrates the ideal of the Bildungsroman and does not count as one.[15]

This dissertation plans to use this 'absent' cause of the classical Bildungsroman strategically with the purpose of illuminating the ideological logic of the ageing in the eight novels more effectively. The use of the absent cause will enable me to better analyze the emergence of other novelistic genres—realism (Chapter I), detective fiction (Chapter II), modernism (Chapter III), and modern satire (Chapter IV)—and how they question or recast the idealistic narrative of ageing of the classical Bildungsroman so as to establish themselves as distinct genres. This dissertation argues that, however antagonistic or skeptical their stance toward the idealism of the Bildungsroman, those other genres formulate their unique story of ageing always through their conversation with the Bildungsroman.

Additionally, the approach of this dissertation emphasizes historically-modulated spatial conditions for ageing. Especially in the context of British literature from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century, spatial conditions were often kinetic rather than static to allow British subjects to explore the world, widen their interiority, and socialize. Compared to other Western countries, the modern history of Britain features the earlier and quicker development of capitalist

[15] The idealistic gesture of the classical Bildungsroman has been strategically applied to cultural studies, too. For example, see Joseph Slaughter on the mutually constitutive relationship between human rights law and the Bildungsroman. According to him, both attempt, but always fail in reality, to establish the normative modern subject in the imaginaries of the nation-state.

social relations, industrialization, urbanization, and imperial political-economic expansion, including negative repercussions of those phenomena. The diverse forms of movement I introduced in the beginning arise in particular moments in this British history of imperial expansion and the development of world-economic system, and enable or limit British subjects' coming-of-age depending on their class, gender, ethnicity or other social qualifications. This historical situation of Britain as the leading world-economy makes its own form of the Bildungsroman focus more on the individual character's social activity than aesthetic or cultural education as seen in the German form. Patricia Alden notes that "[i]n its English form then, the Bildungsroman linked the individual's moral, spiritual, and psychological maturation with his economic and social advancement" (2).

Edward Said elaborates especially on the empire as a ubiquitous, if invisible, presence in the British novel that creates possibilities for this "economic and social advancement" of British subjects. According to Said, "imperialism and the novel fortified each other to such a degree that it is impossible . . . to read one without in some way dealing with the other" (71). The Empire is a crucial foundation for British subjects' coming-of-age. That is why any studies on the British Bildungsroman or, as for the current dissertation, on other British novelistic genres in conversation with the Bildungsroman, need to take the contexts of the Empire and imperial movements into consideration. Simultaneously, we cannot take imperial mobility as a given reality because its cultural expressions are never identical; also, it was never accessible to all social strata to the same degree. Diverse cultural imaginations of imperial movement emerged in conjunction with those of ageing from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century.

Beginning with the historical landmark of the passage of the first Reform Bill in 1832, which confirmed bourgeois hegemony, the mid-nineteenth century witnessed the rapid ascension

of free trade economy within empire and beyond. Upon the final victory in the Napoleonic Wars, the supremacy of the British Empire based on largest territories, a global chain of transportation and communication, and powerful navy drastically accelerated the movement of population, items, and capital which was unprecedented in history. The bourgeoisie-led industrial capitalism expanded at a phenomenal rate, and the tightening net of international economy drew the geographically remote areas into direct relations with each other. History from now on became "world history" (Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital* 47), and the nineteenth-century empires such as Britain or France were "nation-states with colonial appendages operating within the framework of a world-economy" (Wallerstein 75).[16]

The increasing imperial mobility of commodities and people in this period across the globe in the emerging world-economic system correlated with the upward social mobility of many British subjects. The optimism of the British Empire and the shared belief in the developmental logic of imperial modernity generated a variety of literary representations of global movement such as travel, adventure, military or financial enterprises in a triumphal fashion. Imperial movement in the mid-nineteenth century provided ample opportunities for the British youth to come of age as exemplary British subjects and acquire British imperial ethos.[17] As we shall see in Chapter I, however, not all British subjects were entitled to these modes of

[16] See P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins for how Britain transitioned from feudal society to bourgeois political economy more smoothly compared to other European powers and achieved hegemony. The authors articulate on the social and economic potency that landowners preserved even toward the first half of the twentieth century by investing in financial sectors.

[17] One can find numerous adventure tales depicting this type of coming-of-age in the context of the mid-nineteenth-century imperial expansion. For example, see Frederick Marryat's *Mr. Midshipman Easy* (1836) or R. M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1857). For an analysis of the nineteenth-century imperial literature designed particularly to teach young readers about British moral code, loyalty to hierarchy, masculinity, and other imperial values, see J. A. Mangan or John M. MacKenzie's "Hunting and the Natural World in Juvenile Literature."

triumphal movement, and this limitation owing to their gender, class, or ethnicity give rise to other distinct accounts of ageing.

The early and successful global expansion of the British Empire and the rapid movement of people and items, however, carried potentially disruptive effects on its Bildungsroman, if not explicitly surfacing during the era of its unquestionable hegemony in the mid-nineteenth century. As analyzed above, the Bildungsroman expresses the ideal reconciliation between the modern individual and organic national community. The growing cosmopolitan culture in the metropolis of the Empire was not in accord with this idea of coherent national culture. Tobias Boes argues that the national consciousness the Bildungsroman professes to express is never to materialize completely. Instead, it always carries within it cosmopolitan elements which "undermine simplistic narratives about national consciousness and its putative quest for closure in the normative ideal of the nation-state" (Boes 34). Boes's critique of the Bildungsroman for the implausibility of its idealistic national consciousness thus applies with particular poignancy to its British versions in the context of accelerating imperial movement.

Toward the mid-1870s, this contradiction in the ideological logic of the British Bildungsroman starts to emerge. According to Hobsbawm, the 1870s transition was "part of a process of turning away from a capitalism of the private and public policies of laissez-faire . . . and implied the rise of large corporations and oligopolies as well as the increased intervention of the state in economic affairs" (*The Age of Empire* 73). The profitability of imperial economy dropped and gave rise to speculative finance capital, the rival rising imperial countries like Germany or the US began to challenge the supremacy of the British Empire, and the moral foundation of civilizing missions was increasingly questioned.

Giovanni Arrighi pays attention to how the British hegemony started to decline when finance capitalism prevailed as the dominant force of the world economy. According to him, when industrial expansion was proceeding too rapidly and profitability staggered, the surplus capital turned into credit and engendered short-lived, speculative financial activities and military enterprise which often eluded people's epistemological grasp and practical control: "The more widespread and intense interstate competition for mobile capital became, the greater the opportunities for those who controlled surplus capital to reap speculative gains and the stronger, therefore, the tendency for capital to shed its commodity form" (177). Under the tighter international competition for limited markets, the increasingly monopolized and risky movement of finance capital across the globe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century often nullified existing national political body and cultural norms. Hannah Arendt notes that "its logical consequence is the destruction of all living communities, those of the conquered as well as of the people at home" (137).

During this age of empire in comparison with earlier decades, the accelerating imperial movement of commodities and people started to undermine the British people's sense of national coherence and the developmental logic of imperial expansion. 'Alien' elements that would presumably invade and corrupt the British also prompted the state to reinforce its disciplinary power, compromising the agency of the autonomous individual—an important cultural assumption of the Bildungsroman. Analyzing the rise of detective fiction in this era, Ronald Thomas points out that "[b]y reasserting an objective . . . social authority over individual freedom, the detective story imposes restrictions on the autonomy of the self" ("Detection in the Victorian Novel" 171).

As Chapter II discusses in depth, these cultural anxieties met a series of ominous literary representations of imperial movement, including the return of the gone-native British, natives' reverse invasion, and the influx of suspicious imperial booty.[18] These forms of imperial movement correlate to diverse 'abnormal' forms of ageing in the literature of this period. Arguably the most conspicuous literary trope of ageing during this period is degeneration, almost the literal opposite of coming-of-age. Whereas the latter represents cultural faith in the progressive logic of modernity and in its controllability, ideas of degeneration reflect collective anxiety that questions those ideals.[19]

In the early twentieth-century, the declining political-economic and moral status of the Empire, which is no longer represented by triumphal forms of imperial movement, gives rise to various eccentric or failed versions of coming-of-age in modernist texts, such as premature death or perpetual youth. It is no coincidence that two great modernists—Virginia Woolf and James Joyce—launched their careers by creating modernist (failed) Bildungsromane that depict the frustration of coming-of-age in imperial contexts: *The Voyage Out* (1915) set in South America and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) in Ireland respectively. As Chapter III articulates, modernism in part emerges as a response to the crisis in the ideal vision of gradual and harmonious reconciliation between the modern individual and national community as in the Bildungsroman. Jed Esty also takes colonial experiences into consideration and argues that those (failed) modernist Bildungsromane explore "nonteleological or nonlinear models of historical development" (*Unseasonable Youth* 176). He notes that the themes of the (failed) Bildung attest

[18] See "Going Native in Nineteenth Century History and Literature" by Patrick Brantlinger for a succinct but effective outline of the theme of going native and its prominent examples in both imperial as well as domestic fictions.
[19] For a concise analysis of how the theme of degeneration surfaces dominantly in the late-nineteenth century imperial fiction and the early twentieth-century modernism, see Rod Edmond.

to “an era of globally uneven development, wherein progress is no longer symbolically safeguarded by the promises of organic nationalism” (*Unseasonable Youth* 15).[20]

Toward the mid-twentieth century, the devastating experiences of the Great War forced many writers to abandon the moral justification of the Empire and the developmental and universalizing logic of imperial modernity. According to Nicholas Owen, “[t]he strains of debt imposed by the First World War on Britain’s national economy and the post-war intensification of nationalist unrest in the Empire prompted a far-reaching reappraisal of British commitments after 1918” (192). Later during the Depression, Britain desperately tried to maintain its influence over its colonies and dominions, and its political and economic ties with them allowed it to suffer less severely than other Western powers did.[21] Nevertheless, as Anthony Clayton notes, the Empire “faced, in several territories, more sophisticated insurgency fueled in part by the hardship of the Depression years” (291).

The inter-war years were the time when Britain had to acknowledge the historical reality that their central position of the pre-1914 world was flatly lost and that the U.S.A. had replaced it as the super political and economic force in the world. Philippa Levine analyzes growing anti-colonial nationalist movements and points out that the British never properly understood or responded properly to those demands due to their domestic concerns and anachronistic adherence to imperial ideals. During the inter-war years “in which western imperial powers were embracing ever more democratic forms of government, the profound lack of indigenous representation in

[20] See Gregory Castle for another exploration of the evolution of the genre in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. He investigates how modernism, instead of abandoning the Bildungsroman, refigures it and attempts to restore the classical Bildungsroman initiated by Goethe with a focus on aesthetics.

[21] See Robert Johnson’s Chapter XI, *British Imperialism*, for how Britain attempted to maintain its status as world-power by consolidating its relationship with the dominions.

most of the colonies looked more and more out of step with the political tenor of the age" (Levine 166). The British Empire revealed its perfidious morality and inefficiency in coping with anxieties and unrest in imperial peripheries.

It is still undeniable, however, that the means of transportation and communication continued to develop and the infrastructure for global mobility was becoming accessible to wider social strata until the outbreak of the Second World War. The inter-war years marked another era in which travel literature gained wide popularity although for different thematic concerns from previous decades. New cultural representations of the movement between the metropolis and imperial peripheries started to gain ground with the focus on one's sheer disillusionment with the Western civilization and desire to avoid the traditional mode of socialization.[22] This desire of escaping to another, better place on the planet is aggravated by the sense of breaking from the past. The shock of the Great War was so decisive that people quickly deserted the hope of reviving the past. According to Hobsbawm, the impact of the Great Depression was even stronger, and it was "a catastrophe which destroyed all hope of restoring the economy, and the society, of the long nineteenth century. . . . Old-fashioned liberalism was dead or seemed doomed" (107).

Hence, a new, avant-gardist trope of ageing emerged: rebirth. Paul Fussell notes that, prompted by gruesome memories or reports of cold trenches in WWI, many writers or war veterans deliberately engaged in the life of diaspora and sought for a better place with "warmth, civility, taste, beauty—everything the war was not" (4). Helen Carr emphasizes that many travel writings in the inter-war years were energized by a passionate quasi-primitivist quest as

[22] For well-documented research on the theme of "the urge to escape Western civilization" in British travel writings in the early twentieth century, see Barbara Korte.

famously seen in Lawrence who "longed for a truer, simpler, more intense way of being" (83).[23] This desire to disown one's social ties and seek the source of 'rebirth' outside the epistemic taxonomy of dominant national culture gestures toward the complete negation of the ideological assumptions of the classical Bildungsroman—the synthesis between the modern individual and localized national community through cultural mediation. As Chapter IV shows, this gesture for symbolic rebirth in distant lands inevitably risks fetishizing other cultures and reproducing the dominant cultural logic that one wishes to escape.

The following four chapters consider these various expressions of imperial movement in their respective historical contexts: to sum up, voyages out for financial or military enterprise (Chapter I), the return of gone-native British subjects and the reverse 'invasion' of colonial natives (Chapter II), a British female subject's involvement in universalizing Western modernity to India (Chapter III), the quest for a recuperative power for the Western civilization in exotic lands (Chapter IV). These modes of imperial mobility allow peculiar stories of ageing to emerge, and those stories constitute the novelistic genres and create structural as well as ideological tensions within. A closer analysis of representations of ageing in the context of imperial movement, not limited to the Bildungsroman, will contribute to elucidating hitherto unnoticed formal and thematic aspects of each novel as well as its genre.

Chapter I discusses William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1848). The story covers the years from the last phase of the Napoleonic Wars to 1832, the year of the first Reform Act. The novel was serialized in 1847 to 1848, during which time the revolutionary movements

[23] Carr points out that even prior to the Great War, travel writing changed from didactic, purpose-oriented texts to impressionist literary works, more like memoirs than manuals. She discusses travelers' anxiety, sense of guilt and frustration encountering others cultures that have lost their originality under Western influence.

were active in the Continent, especially in France, and met the British equivalent in the Chartists movements. Chapter I shows that *Vanity Fair* responds to both of these historically decisive moments and explores the French influence that the female protagonist embodies. The formative years of realism in the mid-nineteenth-century Britain correlated with the rise of national consciousness with the rapidly emerging middle-class as its new hegemonic center and with France as its cultural other. The chapter analyzes how Thackeray's text draws the map of a new Britishness as well as the representational scope of a new genre, literary realism. Except for the Epilogue, this is the only chapter focused on a single work. I believe that *Vanity Fair* is a massive literary work that deserves a full-chapter length investigation and by itself illustrates a wide spectrum of complexity and contradiction of the genre of realism.

Specifically, this chapter argues that the novel focuses on the account of Becky Sharp's ageing and stylizes it as an anti-Bildungsroman opposed to her archenemy Dobbin's normative coming-of-age. Rather than embodying the ideal reconciliation between the modern individuality symbolic of social mobility and organic national community, this female social upstart never stops unsettling the norms of British gentle culture. The dazzling trajectory of her ageing, however, never fully escapes the disciplinary gaze of British society, and she is eventually banished from the territories of the imperial center as well as from the representational scope of this self-professed 'realist' work. In contrast to male British characters who enjoy the access to colonial peripheries where they find opportunities for economic success and upward social mobility, her movement and ageing are confined geographically as well as culturally to the margins of Britain and Britishness, marking their subtle bounds. The chapter maintains that the novel exemplifies through the 'abnormal' ageing of Becky how the self-formulation of British

realism entails compromises with its ideal of objective, anti-stereotypical narration and allows Britishness to ideologically reaffirm itself.

Chapter II turns to two famous late-nineteenth-century detective fictions: Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* published in 1868 and Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of the Four* in 1890. The analysis focuses on the disorienting movement of colonial items and people in the age of empire and attends to how the two novels demonstrate the cultural logic of detective fiction, which solves threats posed to the imperial center by maintaining the appearance of the classical Bildungsroman. As discussed above, the classical Bildungsroman envisions a social whole through the successful formation of the modern national subject. Chapter II argues that the seemingly successful coming-of-age of British protagonists in the two novels provides a normative façade for the novels that symbolically restore the status quo and the security of the Empire.

Both novels, however, interrogate the assumptions of the normative coming-of-age, especially those assumptions having to do with the modern individual subject. This chapter points out that, underneath the normative façade of the successful coming-of-age, the detective work of both novels completes itself ironically by undermining the ideals of the classical Bildungsroman. In *The Moonstone*, Blake seems to perfect his coming-of-age by having the case solved and marrying his sweetheart. However, the seemingly successful detective work as well as Blake's maturity occur only after the story incorporates the fear of degeneration and miscegenation, the most unsettling cultural imaginations that question the ideals of the Bildung as well as the progressive logic of history. Doyle's *The Sign of Four* demonstrates the evolving role that coming-of-age plays in generating a structural as well as thematic tension in detective fiction. Whereas Blake's coming-of-age is still central to the detective plot of *The Moonstone*,

The Sign of Four presents the extremely tenuous connection between Watson's awkward coming-of-age and Holmes's unreal and boundary-challenging detective work. The analysis of this thematic and structural tension highlights the anachronism of the traditional coming-of-age narrative as well as the fantastic nature of the detective narrative.

Chapter III moves to the twentieth century and conducts another comparative study, pairing E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* published in 1924 and Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Sunset Song* in 1932. This chapter delves into how the two novels develop modernist styles and themes by debunking the assumptions of the classical Bildungsroman in two unique fashions. Chapter III explores two young women's attempt to come of age in radically different social conditions—one engaging in a privileged form of imperial movement and the other marginalized from it—and the ways in which both lead to 'unorthodox' forms of the Bildungsroman. Ultimately, the chapter joins recent scholarly efforts to redefine modernism and embrace a wider spectrum of literary achievements that represent hitherto relatively marginalized social and national experiences.

The discussion of *A Passage to India* focuses on a British bourgeois woman Adela's frustrated coming-of-age. The excessively suppressive discipline of the British Indian society hinders the development of the autonomous individual, and the nature and culture of India refuse to be fully comprehended by the modern Western values that Adela and other British characters attempt to propagate, such as reason, logical causality, and Christianity. The chapter analyzes how the social conditions of the periphery of empire negate the ideals of Western modernization inherent in the Bildungsroman and give rise to modernist themes and styles. As for *Sunset Song*, the chapter explores how Chris's coming-of-age in dire conditions, rather than developing a narrative trajectory similar to that of Adela, enables her to grow collective subjectivity thanks to

her own unique rural environment of the northeast of Scotland. Her peculiar coming-of-age story grows not into metropolitan or colonial modernism like *A Passage to India* but into no less historically meaningful modernist experiments, including Benjaminian storytelling. The historical and collective consciousness of *Sunset Song* testifies that the novel shifts the narrative focus from an individual 'modernizing' protagonist to an entire community that is exploited and about to collapse in the face of modernization. The comparative study of the two distinct modes of rewriting the classical Bildungsroman helps to illuminate complex early twentieth-century social conditions and experiences that a narrow definition of modernism cannot represent appropriately.

Chapter IV discusses two novels from 1930s to '40s: Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* published in 1934 and *The Razor's Edge* by W. Somerset Maugham in 1944. Both novels share many prominent characteristics of modern satire such as criticism, humor, and the focus of narration on the externals instead of psychological peculiarities that typifies 1920's modernism. This chapter analyzes how both novels' unique account of ageing integrates the motif of quest and argues that their account of ageing is crucial to the rise of modern satire during the last phase of the Empire. By demonstrating that the two novels' status as modern satire effectively brings into light certain important social experiences of the early twentieth-century, this chapter additionally contributes to revisiting the history of the early twentieth century British literature that has been exclusively focused on modernism over other important literary forms, including satire.

In *A Handful of Dust*, the cultural atmosphere of moral bankruptcy and idleness in the era of financial capitalism under the aftermath the Great War gives rise to the theme of mechanical repetition as a dominant expression of ageing. The atmosphere prompts its protagonist Tony Last

to search for an opportunity to revive his anachronistic ideal in a foreign soil and be symbolically 'reborn.' In the context of the moral and politico-economic status of the Empire in drastic transition, the chapter demonstrates that modern satire emerges with a focus on the externals of people due to the severance between individual consciousness and the outside world, whereas the classical Bildungsroman depicts the interaction and eventual synthesis between the two. The novel satirizes the British subject's isolated and solipsistic attempt to transcend the grid of the imperial culture that he finds unbearable. I analyze how his quest for rebirth turns back into a futile and mechanical ageing that ends up fetishizing other cultures and provides no prospect of future resolution or progress in the age of finance capitalism.

The analysis of *The Razor's Edge* also investigates the trope of mobility aiming at revitalizing the Western society. The transatlantic trajectories of several characters intertwine to represent the flow of finance capital and its endless, speculative, and morally nihilistic nature as it attests to the capital's expansion for the sake of expansion. The protagonist Larry no longer advocates for the ideal of the Bildung in the meaninglessly repetitive world of finance capitalism; he then launches a quest for wisdom and remains perpetually 'young.' Larry's enchainment in his youth, however, does not symbolize a radical source of a new civilizational beginning; instead, it turns out to be part of the culture of late imperialism and finance capitalism which no longer allows any progressive trajectory of coming-of-age but only mechanical repetition. The comparative study of the two novels with a decade gap also illuminates the evolution and decline of modern satire in the 1930 and '40s. The satiric narrator of Waugh's novel maintains a morally superior stance toward characters and harshly exposes the absurdity of their behavior. On the contrary, Maugham the narrator fails to grasp the whole trajectory and meaning of Larry's and other characters' global mobility in the social milieu based on financial

capitalism and the impending Second World War. Maugham becomes overwhelmed and enervated himself, and starts to lose his satiric edge.

In the Epilogue, I reiterate my major arguments unfolded throughout the dissertation and briefly discuss Virginia Woolf's posthumously published novel—*Between the Acts* (1941)—to expand on the motif of rebirth explored in Chapter IV. The Epilogue argues that the decline of imperial ethos, the rise of totalitarian regimes in the Continent, and the pervasive feeling of the crisis in civilization no longer allow spatial mobility through empire to provide a sustainable and triumphal vision of ageing and maturity. Now the British envision a temporal movement across their glorious national history and myths in search for a source of symbolic rebirth. An analysis of the historical revival of the pageant in the 1930s reveals that this impulse for communal rebirth is not always distinguished from that of the Nazis who declared to launch the 'Thousand Year Reich.'

The Epilogue discusses how the pageant in *Between the Acts* allows the audience to revisit their own national past and experience the continuous recurrence of their past on their present consciousness. Woolf's pageant helps the audience to defamiliarize their own past and history and to envision individual and civilizational rebirth as unnamable but potentially conceivable. The Epilogue maintains that Woolf's vision of rebirth questions the binary of the Bildungsroman between the modern individual and organic national community and instead requires a radical reexamination and rearrangement of accumulated fragments of the past. Of utmost importance is that the novel's vision of rebirth and ageing reintegrates the fundamental contingency and indeterminacy of nature to the realm of human experience. *Between the Acts* envisages a possibility of civilizational rebirth in such a fashion that the rebirth does not entail mythologizing their past or fetishizing other cultures but recovers the element of nature that has

been marginalized by modernity. I end my dissertation by saying that Woolf finally restores human ageing as ‘natural.’

Chapter I: An Impossible Bildung and the Bounds of Realism and Britishness in *Vanity Fair*

William Makepeace Thackeray's novel, *Vanity Fair,* covers the period from the last years of the Napoleonic Wars up to 1832, the year of the first Reform Act. The novel portrays the era of the Bourbon Restoration when the British Empire was climbing to its unprecedented global prominence. As Philippa Levine notes, "a global chain of harbors, a powerful and dominant navy, and an empire that, by 1815, was the largest in the modern world" eventually started to maximize the mobility of population, items, and capital which had been somewhat hindered during the Napoleonic Wars (60). Victorian literature, especially realism of the early and mid-nineteenth century, was the dominant cultural response to cope with this phenomenal eruption of writers' horizons. David Amigoni succinctly notes that "it was fiction, above all, that was seen as having the credentials to 'document' Victorian expansion" (93). Also the physical mobility of the time, undergirded by the rising middle-class and free trade economic policies, often converted to social mobility.[24] The rapidly widening and mobilizing world forced the then-burgeoning British realism to continuously challenge the limits for its representation in both empirical and psychological dimensions during the earlier decades of the Victorian era, and Thackeray's monumental work was a representative literary attempt.

Equally noteworthy is the fact that the novel was serialized in 1847 to 1848, during the years when revolutionary fervor ignited the Continent, and especially France. The following pages will show that, first of all, *Vanity Fair* is a literary response to and reflection of both of

[24] Class boundaries were perceived as increasingly permeable due to "wild speculation in the early years of uncontrolled entrepreneurship, with the enhanced possibilities of making and losing entire fortunes, and the breakdown of older Tory theories of class obligation" (Poston 12).

these historically decisive moments by one of the two most influential writers of the early Victorian years, the other being, of course, Charles Dickens. The chapter will elaborate on how Thackeray's novel not only reflects but also ideologically attempts to contain the revolutionary spirit overflowing from France and arising in the form of the Chartist movement in Britain. In the formative years of both realism and a national consciousness centering upon the rapidly-emerging middle-class, the novel engaged in discursively drawing the map of Britishness as well as the scope of realist literary representation. In particular, this chapter will focus attention on the ageing and geographical as well as socio-economic mobility of the problematic and ambitious female protagonist, Rebecca, or Becky, Sharp. This revolutionary upstart unsettles British high society and is eventually banished from the territories of Britain as well as from the representable scope of British realism. The ageing and mobility of this female character structure the narrative in a way that contributes to elucidating and 'mapping' the boundaries of realism as well as Britishness. Contrasting her to another major character, William Dobbin, will further illuminate the liminality of her position which is crucial in undertaking that symbolic cartographic project.

For the past several decades, scholarship has often focused on the generic peculiarities of *Vanity Fair*. Earlier critical works on the novel delve into, for example, how Thackeray inherits literary conventions that he gradually fails to control: satire and comedy (Robert E. Lougy), how multiple perspectives in the plot establish a balance and generate moral judgement as well as comic vision (Robert M. Polhemus), and how the omniscient narrator remains reticent at crucial moments to allow readers to grasp and interpret gender politics and violence (Maria DiBattista). Recent literary scholars after 1990, and especially in the twenty-first century, share a tendency to explore the representation of Britishness and its ideological motivation by situating the novel in the European or imperial politico-economic context. Sandy Morey Norton, for instance,

investigates the juxtaposition of the voices in the novel which support or criticize imperialism as well as the ideal notions of femininity and domesticity. Patricia Marks argues that the ebb and flow of Becky's success mimic the disruptive effect of French on the British linguistic field.

In general, recent scholarship attends to how Thackeray's novel reveals the contradictions in Britishness and British national culture. For Corri Zoli, the novel suggests that French and Indian elements are part of British culture in the context of the world economy and that the nationalist attempt to homogenize British culture cannot but fail. Julia Kent analyzes how the novel portrays French 'amoral' culture as part of Britishness and thus debunks the illusion of the separate spheres. The current chapter is indebted to all these previous scholarly works. However, these works fail to see the account of Becky's ageing and movement as structuring the plot and mapping of Britishness. Also, with a few exceptions, scholars generally interpret the novel as debunking British national culture by focusing on its heterogeneity. On the contrary, I will analyze the novel's performance as a disciplinary power that tracks, monitors, and contains Becky's radical alien nature, and argue that the novel eventually becomes part of the discursive process of establishing normative national culture.

The earliest noticeable fact regarding the problematic nature of Becky's ageing is the absence of her childhood. Becky "never had been a girl, she said; she had been a woman since she was eight years old" (12). The absence of childhood derives from "the dismal precocity of poverty" (12). Everything that she finds in her boarding school annoys and bores her because "her father, reprobate as he was, was a man of talent; his conversation was a thousand times more agreeable to her than the talk of such of her own sex as she now encountered" (14). Nancy Armstrong points out that, "with the formation of a modern institutional culture, gender differences . . . came to dominate the functions of generation and genealogy" (*Desire and*

Domestic Fiction 11). Fiction "helped to formulate the ordered space we now recognized as the household, made that space totally functional, and used it as the context for representing normal behavior" (*Desire and Domestic Fiction* 23-24). In *Vanity Fair*, the absence of Becky's childhood and the precocity due to her early exposure to the world of male adults lay the foundation for her later negligence of womanly, domestic sentiment and also her violation of the bourgeois norm of separate spheres.[25] Skipping those formative years in which she is supposed to acquire womanly virtues, Becky had "no soft maternal heart" (14). Claudia Nelson notes that precocious child-woman figures in Victorian literature "offer sites for the expression of cultural anxiety about parenthood in a world in which domesticity was both undergoing significant changes and being required to serve as a kind of secular religion" (114). The absence of childhood—the period of naivety and innocence—differentiates Becky from normative British girlhood and prefigures a dangerous subject that could later threaten the norms of society.

The potentially threatening possibility of Becky's absent childhood is easily monitored and detected by society. When Becky is hired as a governess by the Crawleys and is later found to have secretly married their first son, Captain Rawdon Crawley, his aunt inquires into her background and easily learns from the president of Becky's boarding school that "Mrs. Rawdon Crawley was the daughter of an opera-girl. She had danced herself. She had been a model to the painters. She was brought up as became her mother's daughter. She drank gin with her father, &c. &c." (192). A persistent feature of Becky's intriguing—as well as manipulative—action throughout the novel is that it amplifies the lack of childlike innocence and sympathy and, at the same time, it never completely escapes the disciplinary gaze of society. Becky's potentially

[25] Chris R. Vanden Bossche also discusses public and private spheres to investigate the gendered features of adolescence in the 1830s. See his essay on how those separate spheres require male and female adolescents to come of age in distinct fashions.

radical talents are conspicuous, and reveal a trajectory of ageing and movement that unsettles the British establishment and, in Becky's later years, turns her into a human marker of the limits of societal norms. This topic will be discussed in depth later in the chapter.

Becky's childhood, or the lack thereof, is brought into relief in contrast to that of her archrival, William Dobbin. His father is "a grocer in the city" and he thus originates from the emerging middle-class, attending school with sons of gentlemen (39). He is initially mocked and bullied by his fellow students, "who rightly considered that the selling of goods by retail is a shameful and infamous practice, meriting the contempt and scorn of all real gentlemen" (39). Shy and awkward by nature, he endures all the scorn, and the narrator spares no time to urge his growing British middle-class readers to sympathize with Dobbin: "Who amongst us is there that does not recollect similar hours of bitter, bitter childish grief?" (39). Dobbin finally stands against injustice when he watches "a big boy beating a little one without cause" (42). The narrator portrays his heroic act as following:

> [I]t was the shout of the beef-eating British, as leaping down the hill they rushed to hug the enemy in the savage arms of battle— in other words, Cuff coming up full of pluck, but quite reeling and groggy, the Fig-merchant put in his left as usual on his adversary's nose, and sent him down for the last time. (44)

Even this humorous depiction of the children's fight clearly represents a "conflict between old aristocratic influence and lower middle-class commodity" (Wiltse 41). Ed Wiltse is also right in pointing out that "the narrative presentation clearly aligns Dobbin with 'the beef-eating British' who beat the odds in beating the French" (41).

Representing both justice against abusive use of power as well as Britishness that fights foreign enemies, Dobbin passes one of the earlier rites of passage for his coming-of-age in an exemplary fashion. He earns respect from his fellows, although his shyness and awkwardness never entirely disappear even in his later years. In fact, his shyness and awkwardness only accentuate his later struggles to abide by his sense of justice and his unwavering loyalty to his friend George and Amelia. When necessary, he bravely overcomes his own shyness to take care of his friends' welfare. Unlike Becky whose class origin is at best suspicious, and whose mother is a French opera singer, Dobbin has a 'respectable' and thereby productive period of childhood in the course of which he is portrayed as the self-legitimating middle-class and its ideal version of Britishness.

Like Becky, Dobbin's later years continuously mirror the experiences of his formative years. Although the mature Dobbin undergoes a long period of mental torture due to his unrequited love for Amelia, the simple, black-or-white sense of justice he demonstrates early in his life characterizes the way he later deals with numerous public and private issues with firm conviction. He never stops epitomizing that respectable but simultaneously childlike worldview. Analyzing the mid-nineteenth-century British variations of the classical Bildungsroman such as *David Copperfield*, Franco Moretti notes that "the heroes' childhood . . . is granted an emblematic and lasting prominence" (182). Compared to the situation of France, according to Moretti, British society was relatively stable despite its own social unrest including Swing Riots, the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Anti-Corn Law League, and Chartism, and never underwent drastic politico-economic subversions in the eighteenth and nineteen centuries. The clear-cut, binary worldview that does not permit serious moral ambiguity persisted throughout the period. As a result, literary representations of development regard childhood experience as more decisive than

that of youth. The firm value-system internalized during childhood wields influence on the following years of one's life and marks forms of deviation from its classificatory system as pathological or threatening. Moretti claims that "the fairy-tale may well be the most appropriate narrative genre for the task, and the childhood . . . stage of life most suited for absorbing such a clear-cut and unquestionable value structure" (213).[26] Moretti's analysis suggests that Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* can be read as a conflict between this British narrative of development, with all of its due respect for tradition, and the ruthlessly meritocratic and potentially anti-establishment narrative of development which the British saw as deriving from the French Revolution.[27] Dobbin and Becky, of course, represent the two narratives of development respectively.

That Becky represents French influence in British society is evident from the beginning of the novel, when she leaves the boarding school with Amelia and 'comes out' to society. She throws her copy of the acme of the British eighteenth-century classicist tradition—Dr. Johnson's dictionary—out of the window and triumphantly shouts, "[T]hank Heaven for French. Vive la France! Vive l'Empereur! Vive Bonaparte!" (10). As the initial gesture in her socialization, her treatment of this authoritative British 'text' and French speech anticipate her later deviance and strategies. Lisa Tadwin argues that women in nineteenth-century Britain are generally marginalized from the male patriarchal discourse of society that Johnson's dictionary represents,

[26] As to the mid-nineteenth-century British Bildungsroman, Moretti suggests that "[r]ather than novels of 'initiation' one feels they should be called novels of 'preservation'." (182)
[27] This binary reflects the two major intellectual traditions starting from Burke and Rousseau on how the nation resolves the contradiction between individuals and the general will. Pericles Lewis maintains that Rousseau emphasizes universal principles as the voluntary national will whereas Burke does particular national tradition. See especially p70-93.

and Becky's gesture symbolizes her defiance of its dominant status in national culture.[28] Becky "learns to entrap and confound her oppressors below and beyond the surface of signification," knowing that "her negligible social status makes direct application for redress impossible" (Tadwin 666).

As a daughter of a British painter and a French opera singer, Becky clearly understands the cultural influence that France exerts on the British. She forges her identity by appropriating the discursive power of French culture, claiming that she is from "a noble family of Gascony, and took great pride in her descent from them" (11). She cleverly takes advantage of the differentiation between the threat posed by French politics and military prowess and the high status that French aesthetic culture carried in Britain although, as we shall see below, the differentiation was not always firm. Albeit suspicious, her French background, and especially her proficiency in the language, prompts her to quickly rise in the estimation of those in high society. British ladies and gentlemen see that Becky "spoke French so perfectly . . . and it was agreed that her manners were fine, and her air distingue. Fifty would-be partners thronged round her at once, and pressed to have the honor to dance with her" (288-89). Completely intrigued by his wife's entrepreneurship and superb skills in manipulating the vanity of people, Rawdon Crawley "believed in his wife as much as the French soldiers in Napoleon" (348).

Becky's coming-of-age, as half-French and deprived of normative childhood, however, soon turns out to be potentially disruptive to British society, and her dramatic upward mobility intimidates as much as it fascinates those in high social circles. Early in the novel when she

[28] See Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* for a historical analysis of print culture as crucial to the transition from the old feudal society to the modern nation-state, although Anderson does not fully analyze gender division in access to print culture.

compares herself with other girls from gentle families, she is firm against the established hierarchal system in Britain: "I am a thousand times cleverer and more charming than that creature, for all her wealth. I am as well-bred as the Earl's grand-daughter, for all her fine pedigree" (14). While residing with the Crawleys as a governess, Becky is also acknowledged by Rawdon's aunt Miss Crawley, an extremely rich and, if not completely sincere, radical-minded Francophile: "You have more brains than half the shire— if merit had its reward you ought to be a Duchess— no, there ought to be no duchesses at all— but you ought to have no superior" (112). This sheer meritocratic ideal is always associated with French revolutionary influence in the novel, and when Becky and Rawdon stay in Belgium after Waterloo, "the English men of fashion in Paris courted her, too, to the disgust of the ladies their wives, who could not bear the parvenue" (294). Becky's upward mobility, as much as it is a product of her sheer personal charms and talents, associates her with France especially in the mind of those who feel 'defeated' by that upstart.[29]

Culturally intrigued and militarily threatened by France, Britain never stopped envisioning its own identity in relation to its neighbor. The time when the novel was published saw particular social and cultural changes: the rise of the bourgeoisie and thereby the need to redefine Britishness, especially against its foreign other, France. John Rignall notes that "[t]he revolutions of 1848, along with the unification of Italy and the Franco–Prussian War with its immediate aftermath of the Paris Commune, were the political events in Europe that had the greatest impact in Victorian Britain" (240). Culturally, France was the complex other of Britain,

[29] Pointing out the common association of Becky with Napoleon, H. M. Daleski suggests calling Becky "a soldier of fortune" more accurately (142). He notes that "the campaign is her whole life. . . . Becky starts with neither status nor possessions, being a penniless orphan, the daughter of an artist and an opera girl. All she has are the natural resources with which she is endowed" (143).

and the British regarded French culture always with mixed feelings. French novels "may be disturbing to Victorian readers but they can never be so scornfully dismissed" (Rignall 246). Especially in the 1840s, when *Vanity Fair* was being conceived, the post-Napoleonic Wars détente started to dissolve, and the invasion scare emerged again, evoking historical memories of the wars. Matthew Heitzman analyzes the continuous process of envisioning Englishness through Frenchness and points out that Thackeray also keenly observed and critiqued "the ease with which old fears could become new, the facility with which old nationalist posture could be readopted, and the seemingly ceaseless return of history between England and France" (55).

At this historical juncture, Becky's coming-of-age, with no specifically defined class background but marvelous success in society with her own talents, functions in the plot of the novel on multiple semantic levels. The story of her ageing, first, helps to reveal flaws inherent in the stubborn British establishment and often derives sympathy from the narrator, too. Just like Becky, Thackeray was also in the insider/outsider position in English society, always carrying a somewhat critical stance toward the mainstream British culture. Born in India and permanently connected to India through his father who died there of fever, his mother who married another Anglo-Indian, and a mixed-race niece, Thackeray was also deeply aware that "this conflation of an ethnic, cultural, and national distinction in the term 'English is to greater and lesser degree arbitrary" (Zoli 428).[30] At one point in the novel, the narrator sympathetically points to Becky's initial struggles to settle down in British society when she attempts without any assistance to cajole Amelia's brother Jos Sedley into proposing to her. The narrator laments "how Rebecca

[30] For another analysis of the author's ambiguous stance toward French culture and Napoleon, see Patricia Marks' "'Mon Pauvre Prisonnier': Becky Sharp and the Triumph of Napoleon."

now felt the want of a mother!— a dear, tender mother, who would have managed the business in ten minutes" (53).

The novel uses Becky's conspicuous social mobility and all of its French implications in order to amplify and ruthlessly debunk British norms and value. The dynamism of Becky's meritocratic quest is brought into relief by the British class system and aristocrats' complacent adherence to their inherited status in this transitional era when the bourgeoisie were emerging as a hegemonic social group. As opposed to Becky's personal talents, Sir Pitt Crawley, the dissolute baronet, "had rank, and honors, and power, somehow; . . . and in Vanity Fair he had a higher place than the most brilliant genius or spotless virtue" (90).

Becky's relentless pursuit of social success with no moral sentiment is not contrasted but in fact mirrored by those equally upstart British bourgeoisie. When urging his son George Osborne's marriage with Miss Swartz, an extremely rich mulatto heiress, Mr. Osborne is so blinded by profits as to become a multi-cultural capitalist: "Gad, if Miss S. will have me, I'm her man. I ain't particular about a shade or so of tawny" (229). The novel satirizes Mr. Osborne for his color-blind material greed at the expense of the mixed-race character. The financial guru Mr. Osborne's transnational capitalism, which levels existing aristocratic social distinctions, seeks only profits and does not particularly protect ethnic purity, mirrors the half-French entrepreneurial Becky. His son George Osborne, supposedly a more 'enlightened' next generation British bourgeois man, decides to marry his sweetheart Amelia despite her father's recent bankruptcy. He says to his father, "I don't like the color, sir. Ask the black that sweeps opposite Fleet Market, sir. I'm not going to marry a Hottentot Venus'" (214). He plays a role in keeping the British national character clean from vulgar materialism by denouncing the 'absurd' idea of interracial marriage. Albeit impulsive and dissolute, Osborne Jr. exemplifies a more

'civilized' British national character based on ethnic purity against that of Osborn Sr. which undermines the purity for the sake of transnational capital.

Becky's purely strategic marriage with the somewhat spoiled but still promising military officer Rawdon Crawley also cements Becky's coming-of-age with its 'French' disregard for true and virtuous sentiment. This Frenchness again epitomizes the reality of British morality that supposedly defines itself against its cultural other. As long as Becky's social mobility and ageing is successful, and located in the center of the upper-class British society, the story unfolds by accentuating this heterogeneous nature of British culture that includes what it attempts to define as French. The narrator depicts the marriage in British society as equally motivated by profitability:

> Miss Maria Osborne, it is true, was "attached" to Mr. Frederick Augustus Bullock, of the firm of Hulker, Bullock & Bullock; but hers was a most respectable attachment, and she would have taken Bullock Senior just the same, her mind being fixed— as that of a well-bred young woman should be— upon a house in Park Lane, a country house at Wimbledon, a handsome chariot. (121)

As mentioned earlier, British domestic morality established itself on the ideal of separate spheres: men's harsh economic public space and women's moral private space. Also for a standard against which British morality could define itself, it required what it perceived as French counterpart: the culture that nonchalantly violates the distinction between the two spheres. Julia Kent points out that Victorian literature was often employed to culturally sanitize the private space from the public space, the world of market; by contrast, French fiction mixes those two spaces, resulting in the corruption of the private space. In *Vanity Fair* and especially through Becky's embodiment of French morals, however, Thackeray "demystifies the protected

status of sentiment in the English novel" (Kent 136). Since her coming out, Becky's development embodies what was then regarded as French styles of radical social mobility and moral corruption. The novel uses her coming-of-age to vividly exemplify and satirize the aspects of British culture that have already been deeply permeated by what it defines as its cultural other.[31]

Due to her risky social mobility and liminal status, Becky's coming-of-age and her success in high society never develops the novel into a classical Bildungsroman. "[M]ost traditional definitions of the Bildungsroman consider an accommodation between the individual and society an essential characteristic of the genre," but her ageing does not reach this type of reconciliation (Hardin xxi). In her analysis of what she categorizes as British female Bildungsroman, Lorna Ellis points out that the British female Bildungsromane such as *Betsy Thoughtless*, *Emma*, or *Jane Eyre* also depict "the protagonists' eventual reintegration with society, which demonstrates the fundamentally conservative nature of the genre" (25). The gender variations of the genre focus on the female protagonists' "growing ability to understand and to manipulate societal expectations," and this feature exactly applies to the case of Becky Sharp (Ellis 34). Nevertheless, Ellis maintains that the female Bildungsroman is still a symbolic expression that suggests the traditional hierarchical society is flexible enough to reintegrate the modern romantic individual who would otherwise never stop defying existing societal norms.

[31] Cheryl Wilson also explores the presence of French influence in British national consciousness by focusing on British social dance. She notes that social dance was related to nationalism in the early nineteenth century and analyzes how Becky's French dancing abilities allowed her to achieve something in Britain which Napoleon could never with his military might.

What distinguishes Becky's ageing from the traditional Bildung is thus the fact that it is fundamentally uncontainable. Becky's relentless pursuit of financial and social capital with only deceptively-equipped respect for traditional norms and ethics suggests that she embodies the supposedly French radical ethos as well as, or in other words, the unstoppable mobility of raw capitalism to the extreme.[32] At the same time, the British gentle society, in which Becky ceaselessly attempts to realize her potential by scaling the social ladder, is not portrayed as completely worthwhile to settle down in. The society is too corrupt and superficial to accommodate and reconcile this sheer force of unshackled modernity. This chasm forces Becky to move on endlessly. The narrator notes:

> It may, perhaps, have struck her that to have been honest and humble, to have done her duty, and to have marched straightforward on her way, would have brought her as near happiness as that path by which she was striving to attain it. But . . . if ever Becky had these thoughts, she was accustomed to walk round them and not look in. She eluded them and despised them. (423)

This quote illustrates both Becky's rebellious nature and the stiff morality of British society that does not truly appeal to her. Also, her never ending pursuit of cutting-edge items and fame vividly represents the perpetuation of capitalism through constantly creating new fashions.[33] She later recalls that "[h]er success excited, elated, and then bored her. At first no occupation was

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[32] In Jeff Nunokawa's "Sexuality in the Victorian Novel," *Vanity Fair* is one of the novels in focus, and Nunokawa analyzes how characters' irrational, uncontrollable desires continue to frustrate the rationalized economic interest that was culturally promoted and upheld in the nineteenth century.

[33] For an analysis of the ways in which *Vanity Fair* illustrates the 'reified mind' of commodity and people expressing their subjectivity or the lack thereof through commodity desire and indulgence, see Christopher Lindner.

more pleasant than to invent and procure . . . — to procure, we say, the prettiest new dresses and ornaments; to drive to fine dinner parties, where she was welcomed by great people" (503).

For its closure, however, the narrative needs Becky's relentless social mobility to come to an end. Just like Napoleon's dramatic fall at the end of his irrational pursuit of power, Becky's refusal to settle down eventually wrests her life out of her own control. Even after her infidelity—in fact, the novel never truly reveals its veracity—is finally found by her husband and she is virtually banished to the continent, she still comes near to opportunities to be reintegrated to British 'virtuous' society. However, her relentless nature cannot mix with the torpid, virtuous national society, and she remains marginalized. Becky was "very respectable and orderly at first, but the life of humdrum virtue grew utterly tedious to her before long. It was the same routine every day, the same dullness and comfort" (643). When the traditional-minded society cannot integrate a problematic individual, it has no choice but to quarantine or marginalize her. As mentioned earlier, Becky's identity and the trajectory of her life never entirely escape the disciplinary knowledge network of society. Becky's brother-in-law, the new heir of the family Sir Pitt Crawley, finally learns of Becky's notoriety and "spoke of the honor of the family, the unsullied reputation of the Crawleys; expressed himself in indignant tones about her receiving those young Frenchmen— those wild young men of fashion, my Lord Steyne himself" (526).

While analyzing the European variations, or violations, of the classical Bildungsroman during the period of the post-1815 Bourbon Restoration—with such examples as *Le Rouge et le Noir* and *Eugene Onegin*—Moretti focuses attention on this recurring theme of the separation between the problematic modern individual and the restored traditional society. The ambitious, idealistic protagonists never find wisdom from the national tradition, which they deem as monotonous, dull, and reactionary. Moretti notes that "[t]o generate a story in so torpid a context,

nothing less than the 'Romantic' interpretation of Napoleon is needed, so wide spread in the early 1800s" (104). Nevertheless, in those narratives of failed Bildung, "[r]estless, unnerving tension, endless war and countless other similar expressions are all negative definitions: they are the opposite of peace and tranquility" (104). The protagonists have purely meritocratic ideals of universal justice that can never be realized, and Moretti maintains that the incompatibility between these purely idealistic visions and reactionary national society is the major narrative force. Those narratives are consequently not featured by the protagonists' gradual development and social reintegration but filled with ironies, contingency, ruptures, awkwardness, and "the sense of a day in battle" (105). Becky's coming-of-age similarly finds its narrative form in a series of risky jumps and dashes, and a single dramatic downfall when the background of the narrative, British society during the post-Waterloo years, decides to eliminate this unassimilable narrative figure, the mercilessly meritocratic half-French woman.

While Becky's failed Bildung and her subsequent marginalization suggest the desire of British society to detect and quarantine French influence, British national consciousness in this novel also reinvents itself during this transitional era through the coming-of-age of Dobbin. Upon their first meeting, Becky and Dobbin recognize each other as their absolute other. Becky "did not like him, and feared him privately; nor was he very much prepossessed in her favor. He was so honest, that her arts and cajoleries did not affect him, and he shrank from her with instinctive repulsion" (241). While Becky, due to her unrivalled wit and brilliance as well as her national origin, is definitely associated with Napoleon, the captain and later major Dobbin's stern discipline and conservative nature easily remind readers of the Duke of Wellington. While Becky is banished from Britain geographically as well as culturally, Dobbin's return to Britain after his

admirable service in India, and his drive back to London, entail the narrator's rare depiction of the national pride through the natural beauty of British countryside:

> How happy and green the country looked as the chaise whirled rapidly from mile-stone to mile-stone, through neat country towns where landlords came out to welcome him with smiles and bows . . . ; by old halls and parks; rustic hamlets clustered round ancient grey churches— and through the charming friendly English landscape. Is there any in the world like it? (578)

This passage effectively illustrates Dobbin's ideologically central role toward the end of the novel. His reappearance in the central stage of story now combines with what the narrator sees as the unparalleled national beauty of Britain and landlords' genially welcoming of this son of "a grocer in the city." Originating from the rising middle-class and eventually marring Amelia, a daughter of a fallen London financier and widower of his friend George, his coming-of-age functions as a symbolic device to resolve both the class and personal tensions in Dickensian fashion.

Dobbin is in fact an ungainly and awkward military officer in appearance and never truly emanates heroic features; but his honesty and humbleness, which distinguish him in this 'Vanity Fair,' as well as his firm devotion to his late friend and Amelia allow him to emerge superior to any characters in both private and public spheres. As discussed earlier, Dobbin embodies a new Britishness based on the middle-class even in his childhood, and now "his name appeared in the lists of one or two great parties of the nobility" (495). His subsequent coming-of-age features his gradual influence on the vain bourgeois characters that would otherwise never be reformed.[34] He

[34] This social integration of the mercenary bourgeoisie reflects a wider cultural change during the

eventually succeeds in persuading the uncompromising Mr. Osborn to acknowledge his widowed daughter-in-law Amelia through what is arguably the most decisive speech in the novel for the plot to reach resolution:

> "You don't know what she endured, sir," said honest Dobbin with a tremor in his voice, "and I hope and trust you will be reconciled to her. If she took your son away from you, she gave hers to you; and however much you loved your George, depend on it, she loved hers ten times more." (609)

Not only do his coming-of-age and representation of Britishness result in the resolution of middle/upper class tensions in British society, but his character also helps to envision the generational transmission of bourgeois virtues. Amelia's son George is spoiled by his grandfather, who aspires for aristocratic culture, and grows arrogant until he is influenced by Dobbin and learns the virtue of honesty and humbleness:

> One day, taking him to the play, the boy, declining to go into the pit because it was vulgar, the Major took him to the boxes, left him there, and went down himself to the pit. He had not been seated there very long before he felt an arm thrust under his and a dandy little hand in a kid glove squeezing his arm. George had seen the absurdity of his ways and come down from the upper region. (599)

Dobbin reconciles competing classes, reforms an irrationally mercenary bourgeois, transmits bourgeois morals to next generation, marries Amelia, and protects her from Becky, who later attempts to take advantage of Amelia's childlike naivety. Within the boundaries that are further

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time. For an analysis of the culture of economy during the mid-nineteenth century and of the ways in which financial capitalism as well as the middle-class commercialism became slowly but steadily reconciled to high gentle society, see Ronald Michie.

accentuated, or even created, by the trajectory of the radical French Becky's coming-of-age, Dobbin's coming-of-age both suggests that the gentle and moderate bourgeois can achieve peaceful socialization and symbolizes the continuity and soundness of British national consciousness during the time characterized by class tensions throughout Europe.[35]

There is room to interpret the closure of the narrative through Dobbin's success and marriage with Amelia as generically ambiguous. The romantic nature of his success and of Amelia's sudden rise from poverty and integration into high society thanks to the inheritance from Mr. Osborn seems to continue the tradition of romance rather than initiating the mid-nineteenth-century prime of realism. One of the most remarkable features of the shy, awkward, but honest Dobbin is his lack of complex interiority. Throughout the novel, the narrator does not depict the upstart bourgeoisie under a favorable light, although, at the same time, he keenly understands that the age of nobility is fading. The narrator's choice of Dobbin as the central character of the novel toward the end even seems to be his unfulfillable longing for the age of innocent, brave, patriarchal, and medieval chivalry.[36] For the novel to develop to realism by centering on Dobbin's coming-of-age, the complex process of negotiation and compromise between the individual and society is too seriously missing. Society is portrayed as too seriously flawed to realistically integrate Dobbin to its privileged center, and Dobbin too seriously lacks

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[35] In his discussion of the nation and its ideology, Étienne Balibar also emphasizes the nation functioning as a symbolic family: "as lineal kinship, solidarity between generations and the economic functions of the extended family dissolve, what takes their place is . . . a nationalization of the family, which has as its counterpart the identification of the national community with a symbolic kinship" ("The Nation Form" 101-02).

[36] James Eli Adams discusses how medievalism emerged as a cultural phenomenon to counter what was perceived as social disorder during the early nineteenth century. Those medievalists often found in brave and loyal soldiers just like Dobbin the embodiment of the medieval ideals: "Men in battle do not fight for profit or a contractual obligation; they risk their lives out of brotherhood and loyalty to a cause" (100).

the sense of alienation and refined interiority to realistically struggle with the issues of modern society.[37] The novel *Vanity Fair,* by banishing Becky, whose ageing and social mobility has been employed to blatantly but 'realistically' expose and satirize the hypocrisy of the British, and then choosing as the central figure Dobbin, who is the opposite to Becky in every sense, attempts to reach its resolution that seems to succeed the tradition of romance.

Many scholars thus point out the conflicts between realist and melodramatic impulses within *Vanity Fair,* and argue that the increasingly romantic features and resolution toward the end of the novel need to be read as limited and ironical.[38] Robert E. Lougy calls attention to Thackeray's design to debunk abstract ideals by realistically exploring particulars of reality, and claims that the author's attempt "to bestow heroism upon Dobbin through inherited action sequences . . . are equally ineffectual, although they do suggest the hold that previous definitions of heroic had on Thackeray's imagination" (80). In fact, the narrator constantly reveals his consciousness of the genre of his novel. Until the final romance of Dobbin and Amelia gestures toward the organic national unity at the expense of Becky, the narrator constantly manifests his realist focus on the particulars of common life against the lingering influences of traditional genres during these formative years of realism. For example, his earlier depiction of Amelia's mundane life reveals his self-consciousness as a realist: he claims that "the life of a good young

[37] After analyzing the melodramatic impulses and idealized social harmony in Charles Dickens's works, Adams notes that "a novelistic realism that depends on the evocation of private psychology necessarily emphasizes forms of alienation, weakening the social and moral bonds on which Dickens wishes to insist" (62).

[38] For a brief analysis of the ways in which fictional genres mix and combine, see Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, especially p283-95. He argues that scholars focusing on the novel often neglect other literary traditions which continuously influence or combine with the novel.

girl who is in the paternal nest as yet, can't have many of those thrilling incidents to which the heroine of romance commonly lays claim" (119-20).

Another example is found in the narrator's confession that the excessively naïve and passive Amelia is far from a typical literary heroine and that he is not one of the conventional romance writers but a 'historian' who speaks to the truth:

> I know that the account of this kind of solitary imprisonment is insufferably tedious, unless there is some cheerful or humorous incident to enliven it— a tender gaoler, for instance, or a waggish commandant of the fortress, or a mouse to come out and play about Latude's beard and whiskers, or a subterranean passage under the castle, dug by Trenck with his nails and a toothpick: the historian has no such enlivening incident to relate in the narrative of Amelia's captivity. (571).

George Levine analyzes nineteenth-century British realism and emphasizes that the focus of realism on everyday particulars allows it to deflate the effects of the catastrophic events, transcendental ideals and abstract moralism of earlier literary conventions such as comedy or romance.[39] Commenting on Thackeray, however, Levine notes that "[h]is novels become nostalgic comments on forms no longer possible" (134). As a realist, Thackeray "felt impelled to mute the violence [of the plot movement of romance against the elusiveness of reality] and to

[39] As a pioneering scholar on realism and the novel, Ian Watt also points out that the realist writer's "exclusive aim is to make the words bring his object home to us in all its concrete particularity, whatever the cost in repetition or parenthesis or verbosity" (29). Franco Moretti in *The Bourgeois* also maintains that minute details of ordinary life found in realist novels—'fillers'—carry bourgeois ethos. Fillers "*rationalize the novelistic universe*, turning it into a world of few surprises, fewer adventures, and no miracles at all" (82; emphasis in original).

imply its incompatibility with the diffuseness and aimlessness of the ordinary" but he was still "attracted to the passionate excesses of traditional romance forms" (Levine 134).

The narrator's self-consciousness in his pursuit of realist representation under the persistent influence of other literary conventions was, in fact, not uncommon during the era. As mentioned earlier, the 1840s were a transitional period in literature as well as politics and economy. The growing middle-class readers' community expected writers to both reflect the empiricist science and utilitarianism of the time and represent the rapidly changing and expanding world that required new perspectives and representational forms in place of traditional aristocratic literary conventions. However, just as the political and social influence of traditional forces and underrepresented groups of people—both domestic and foreign—were never utterly defeated but continued to compromise bourgeois prominence, traditional literary conventions also continued to exert influence. Deidre David notes, for example, that "the fantastic and sensationalistic aspects of Victorian fiction inherited from early nineteenth-century gothic narratives undermine the devotion to formal realism shared by the majority of Victorian novelists and readers" (3).[40] Fredric Jameson in *The Antinomies of Realism* also argues that when realism incorporates conventional genres such as melodrama, which have typical meanings and destinies, it simultaneously challenges their stereotyped meanings and destinies by presenting contingency and some unnamable part of reality:

> That this is also a clash of aesthetic ideologies is made clear by the way in which older conceptions of destiny or fate are challenged by newer appeals to that

[40] Ian Duncan also points out that "[t]he late-Gothic modes of a fragmented and intercalated narration . . . performs a disturbance of the narrative conventions of organic unity, historical continuity, and evolutionary progression" (12).

> equally ideological yet historically quite distinct notion of this or that 'reality,' in which social and historical material rise to the surface in the form of the singular or the contingent. (134)

Jameson maintains that this perpetual tension in realism between universality and particularity, between forces which create and destroy stereotypes, or between the unnamable eternal present and named emotions, is crucial to realism.[41]

Vanity Fair exemplifies this transitional literary mode in which many writers sought to formulate their realist narrative styles in relations with the literary conventions that continued to haunt them. The romance-style closure of the novel which features Dobbin's Dickensian coming-of-age and nuptial bliss based on no mercenary motive but true love is, therefore, a product of the self-proclaimed historian's compromises with conventional genres. In addition, as this chapter has analyzed thus far, this generic compromise is motivated by the impulse to reinvent British national consciousness which culminates in romantically envisioning a social whole by elevating bourgeois virtues and excluding what are perceived as alien elements.

It also needs to be remembered that, historically, the British bourgeoisie's liberal politics and free-trade economic ethos during the mid-nineteenth century never seriously conflicted with the nation-state. The bourgeois often relied on the state to contain or, if necessary, oppress inner struggles and contradictions of capitalist social relations through nationalist ideologies. Balibar also maintains that in France and "in other old bourgeois formations, what made it possible to

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[41] Realist writers did not universally struggle to eliminate the influence of preexisting conventions but attempted to utilize them to truthfully represent reality. John Bowen quotes Dickens as saying: "comedy is necessary because mixed modes are life-like. We cannot preserve the integrity of genres in our lives, which are necessarily profoundly mixed experiences, and so should not try to do so in fiction" (273).

resolve the contradictions capitalism brought with it and to begin to remake the nation form . . . was the institution of *the national-social state*" ("The Nation Form" 92; emphasis in original). The nation state intervened for the bourgeois not just in the reproduction of the economic system but "particularly in the formation of individuals, in family structures, the structures of public health and, more generally, in the whole space of private life" (92). Immanuel Wallerstein also stresses that bourgeois liberalism was never fundamentally incompatible with the state and instead viewed it as the vehicle for reforms and the agent to protect the interests of the propertied classes: "Liberalism has always been in the end the ideology of the strong state in the sheep's clothing of individualism; or to be more precise, the ideology of the strong state as the only sure ultimate guarantor of individualism" (10).

Vanity Fair's generic compromise through Becky's banishment and Dobbin's symbolizing of national harmony then makes it clear that the novel's realist focus on particularities, which negate the completion of meaning, gradually gives way to the nationalist desire to envision a social whole. The mid-nineteenth-century British bourgeoisie's representative genre, realism, always needed to be qualified by the bourgeoisie's need of the state support and of nationalist ideology. This desire to redefine and idealize the national identity finds an appropriate literary expression in the form of the melodramatic completion of Dobbin's coming-of-age and Becky's fall. Ed Wiltse is correct in this regard when he argues that:

> *Vanity Fair* emerged in the signal year of 1848, when revolution across Europe, waning but still visible Chartism in England, and famine and abortive revolution in Ireland pressured and destabilized notions of Englishness . . . . This confluence makes this novel an ideal site to study the complex interaction between nation and genre. (42)

What makes this novel particularly appropriate as a site "to study the complex interaction between nation and genre" is the ways in which it utilizes Becky's ageing and movement to mark the boundaries of diverse aspects of Britishness even after her banishment. After she is caught flirting with Lory Steyne in her room by her husband Rawdon who believes she has been unfaithful, she is deserted by everyone including her servants and leaves for Europe on virtual exile. Her coming-of-age and mobility no longer retain their dynamism to unsettle British society and vividly reveal its hypocritical and mercenary aspects. Her development does not culminate in socialization, as in the case of Dobbin; instead, she is completely marginalized from British society.

Nevertheless, Becky still plays the same role as that of Dobbin in the thematic concern of the plot: defining the Britishness in the mid-nineteenth century. While Dobbin symbolizes the national unity at its core, Becky, now in the vicinity of Britain, draws the cultural and even geographical boundaries of Britishness by the trajectory of her movement. As discussed earlier, she moves constantly on the verge of violating the decorum of British culture and being associated with un-Britishness even before she is banished, risking her eventual exclusion. Her brother-in-law "declared her behaviour was monstrously indecorous, reprobated in strong terms the habit of play-acting and fancy dressing as highly unbecoming a British female" (526). Once fallen on the other side of the subtle boundaries of British decorum and norms, "it was Mr. Wenham's business, Lord Steyne's business, Rawdon's, everybody's— to get her out of the country, and hush up a most disagreeable affair" (639). She is never allowed to rejoin British genteel society, and her aging and movement now become her unending wandering just outside the bounds of everything that is defined as truly British:

> She took up the cause of the widows of the shipwrecked fishermen, and gave work and drawings for the Quashyboo Mission; she subscribed to the Assembly and WOULDN'T waltz. In a word, she did everything that was respectable. . . . She saw people avoiding her, and still laboriously smiled upon them. (641)

What is noteworthy in her exile, to begin with, is the fact that she stays in the vicinity of Britain and never moves farther than the continent. Geographically, it is only in Europe and later in the countryside of Britain that she can live in exile, and, as a woman, her mobility never reaches out to imperial peripheries. In short, Becky is never allowed to stay either too close to or too far from the core of Britain. As a woman, she is never allowed the kind of privileged mobility enjoyed by male characters in the novel in order to launch a completely fresh start. For example, Jos Sedley, Amelia's silly, vain and idle brother, is employed by the East India Company "as collector of Boggley Wollah, an honourable and lucrative post, as everybody knows" (20). After being excessively humiliated due to his cowardice in Belgium on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo although he is not a solider and does not even engage in the battle, he simply goes back to India where his ruined reputation does not follow him. Albeit humorously, Jos is portrayed as successfully formulating his new identity there. Initially he "dreaded to meet any witnesses of his Waterloo flight" (383). Back in India, however, he "described what the Duke did and said on every conceivable moment of the day of Waterloo, with such an accurate knowledge of his Grace's sentiments and proceedings" (384). Without any possibility of detection, Jos "was called Waterloo Sedley during the whole of his subsequent stay in Bengal" (384). He even accumulates fortune and, "having served his full time in India and had fine appointments which had enabled him to lay by a considerable sum of money, he was free to

come home and stay with a good pension" (573).[42] It is also in India that many soldiers like Dobbin serve and rise in social ranks.

Written in the mid-nineteenth century and depicting the early nineteenth century, the novel never represents the colonial space as possibly threatening or unsettling, as it is increasingly perceived toward the end of the nineteenth century. This complacent representation of colonies is first expressed through the characterization of Rhoda Swartz. As shown earlier, the greedy bourgeois Mr. Osborn easily goes color-blind and manifests no anxiety of transculturation or miscegenation when he pushes his son to marry the mulatto heiress, Rhoda Swartz, in order to take advantage of her colonial wealth. She is the center of this 'Vanity Fair,' becoming the object of many characters' material desire, but she can aspire to join British society only through her immense material wealth. Jennifer Brody notes that her social status mirrors that of Becky in that she "must be doubly rich to be desirable, as Rebecca must be doubly clever to succeed" (29). Whereas Becky can disguise her identity and manipulate others to her advantage, for the 'black' Rhoda, "erasing her malevolently marked materiality is an impossibility" (Brody 43). She is desired only for her wealth without herself being able to desire, and is easily forgotten without even being able to incur anxiety.

Particularly for male British subjects, the novel portrays colonial peripheries as places that provide extremely handy opportunities for professional and material success. The colonial

[42] The years when Jos makes fortune in India was exactly the period that saw the economic importance of India rapidly increase in the imperial economy. Robert Johnson points out that the early nineteenth-century British rule in India is featured by a series of reforms and "[t]he resulting commercial revolution in pre-conquest India exposed the subcontinent to the penetration of British merchants to a far greater degree than in China" (24).

space is part of the unquestionable material foundation that supports the imperial metropolis. In *Culture and Imperialism,* Edward Said also points out that:

> As a reference, as a point of definition, as an easily assumed place of travel, wealth, and service, the empire functions for much of the European nineteenth century as a codified, if only marginally visible, presence in fiction, very much like the servants in grand households and in novels, whose work is taken for granted but scarcely ever more than named. (63)

Said adds that "[t]he colonial territories are realms of possibility, and they have always been associated with the realistic novel" (64).[43] Taking it for granted as part of their given reality, male British subjects, as shown in the case of Jos Sedley, benefit from crucial opportunities in the colonial space. There they come of age, achieve both materially and professionally satisfying socialization, and compensate for their low or even ruined status at home. However, Becky, due to her limited mobility as a woman, is excluded from those benefits of the colonial space and detained in the vicinity of Britain.

Becky's limited mobility thus perpetually subjects her to the gaze of the disciplinary power of the British nation. She is not allowed either to come too close to the center of Britishness or to go too far away, and the gaze never fails to track her movement. The grid of the informational network shared by those of power and status immediately distributes the knowledge of her fallen nature.[44] Lord Steyn's lawyer "Wenham had been with the Baronet and

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[43] In *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism. 1830-1914*, Patrick Brantlinger analyzes *Vanity Fair* and also maintains that "Anglo-India and the Empire were givens, and these facts of life the mildly cynical portrait painter of Vanity Fair never questioned at any fundamental level" (105).

[44] See D. A. Miller's *The Novel and the Police* for a thorough analysis of how modern novels

given him such a biography of Mrs. Becky as had astonished the member for Queen's Crawley. He knew everything regarding her: who her father was; in what year her mother danced at the opera; what had been her previous history" (639). Once banished to Europe, Becky's increasingly indecent lifestyle never escapes the informational network that protects British decorum by monitoring harmful elements. While moving around many European countries and further aggravating her reputation in exile, "of which fact, I say, and of a hundred of her other knaveries, the Countess de Borodino informs every English person who stops at her establishment, and announces that Madame Rawdon was no better than a vipere" (645). As Sandy Morey Norton points out, "[t]his situation provides neither the physical distance (as residence in the colonies might) nor the financial insulation to protect her from scandal" (134).

The narrator appears himself in the story toward the end, and demonstrates that he designs himself and his novel as part of this knowledge network that closely locates and monitors this dangerous element embodied by the character of Becky:

> Tapeworm, who of course knew all the London gossip . . . poured out into the astonished Major's ears such a history about Becky and her husband as astonished the querist, and supplied all the points of this narrative, for it was at that very table years ago that the present writer had the pleasure of hearing the tale. (667).

Becky realizes that "the far-off shining cliffs of England were impassable to her" (640). The border that geographically differentiates between the virtuous England and fallen Becky is "impassable" especially when her own creator is part of that network.[45] That the master voice of

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enact the disciplinary gaze of social norms. The second chapter of this dissertation will also address this issue in depth.

[45] According to Said, the discursive power of the novel derives from "the accumulation and

this novel, although so far it has been satirical toward British society, now gestures toward itself as part of the network sharing the information of Becky with British people clarifies the ideological purpose of the novel. The novel contributes to reinventing British national character by illustrating the confidence of British culture in identifying and tracking harmful alien threats and keeping them at bay.

Becky's peculiar position and subjection to the disciplinary network of power due to her limited mobility also effectively illuminate the moral and cultural margins of Britishness. As a conspicuously marginalized figure, she marks and foregrounds the boundaries, both literal and metaphorical, which no gentle bourgeois British subjects should violate. When Lady Partlet, one of the many British travelers who are undoubtedly informed of Becky's reputation, encounters Becky in Europe, she "marshalled all her daughters round her with a sweep of her parasol and retreated from the pier, darting savage glances at poor little Becky who stood alone there" (640). Alienated from British high society of which she was once part, she keeps ruining her reputation and defines everything that British decorum views as un-British. She starts gambling and "[f]irst she played only for a little, then for five-franc pieces, then for Napoleons, then for notes: then she would not be able to pay her month's pension: then she borrowed from the young gentlemen" (644). This vividly illustrates her violation of British code of behavior for women who are not even encouraged to engage in economic activities but supposed to provide a private shelter for men returning from the world of the market.

Becky further associates herself with everything that Britain defines as its cultural and territorial other and strenuously attempts to keep out of its bounds. The narrator adds that "[s]he

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differentiation of social space, space to be used for social space," and "the narrative sanctions a spatial moral order" (78, 79).

became a perfect Bohemian ere long, herding with people whom it would make your hair stand on end to meet" (645). While she was already perceived as disregarding the strict class hierarchy in Britain, now her ageing and unending movement—with no prospect of socialization and settling down—makes her further embody a carnivalesque world that completely annuls class hierarchy. Becky "was at home with everybody in the place, pedlars, punters, tumblers, students and all. She was of a wild, roving nature, inherited from father and mother, who were both Bohemians, by taste and circumstance" (652).[46] She does not only render the bounds of Britishness more visible and easy to supervise and control, but, finally, she herself becomes those margins of Britishness.

Her endless movement just beyond British national bounds, both actual and metaphorical, thus plays another related role: distinguishing the nation from its European others—similarly civilized and advanced, but never the same. Germany is portrayed as the place that is morally and intellectually loose enough to accommodate figures like Becky and still be swayed by her guiles:

> When it became known that she was noble, of an ancient English family, that her husband was a Colonel of the Guard, Excellenz and Governor of an island, only separated from his lady by one of those trifling differences which are of little account in a country where Werther is still read and the Wahlverwandtschaften of

[46] For an analysis of the carnivalesque nature of language, see Patricia Marks. She argues that the historic/fictive association between Napoleon and Becky invades British society on a variety of levels, and their invasion is carried out in linguistic terms which debunks the stable meaning of language.
For another analysis of carnivalesque features in the novel, see Christopher Lindner. He contrasts the carnivalesque character of British commodity culture with Bakhtinian carnival. According to him, whereas the latter has possibilities of creativity, the former represents the fetishizing and fetishized aspect of commodity culture.

> Goethe is considered an edifying moral book, nobody thought of refusing to receive her in the very highest society of the little Duchy. (673)

While the colonial regions in the novel are represented as firm material foundations of the metropolis beyond doubt, Britishness more eagerly defines itself against its closer foils, and Becky, forced to reside in those less 'civilized' European nations, functions as a particularly useful marker, indicative of where Britishness ends and foreignness starts.[47] There are places throughout Europe which accept those fallen British men and facilitate their downward spiral even further. Those Britons are "men whose names Mr. Hemp the officer reads out periodically at the Sheriffs' Court— young gentlemen of very good family often, only that the latter disowns them" (645). They are "frequenters of billiard-rooms and estaminets, patrons of foreign races and gaming-tables. They people the debtors' prisons—they drink and swagger—they fight and brawl—they run away without paying" (645). Becky "took to this life, and took to it not unkindly" (646). These British people are disowned by their nation but are never too far away, thereby constantly recalling the subtle bounds of respectable Britishness in its European neighbors.

Marking the geographical as well as moral bounds of Britishness, the trajectory of Becky's life ultimately maps the representational limits of British realism. As discussed earlier, the narrator repetitively reveals his consciousness of the lingering influence of old literary conventions in juxtaposition with his attempt to formulate his realism and audaciously expose the mundane or even humiliating particulars of British society. As the story unfolds towards the

[47] John Rignall analyzes how Europe played a crucial role in many exemplary Victorian novels to define Britishness. According to Rignall, continental Europe was often depicted as a place that allows sexual licentiousness in contrast to the strict moral code of Britain.

end, the author increasingly compromises his realist impulse by banishing the half-French, disruptive Becky and romantically portraying the national harmony and stability through Dobbin's respectable coming-of-age. Thackeray now uses Becky's marginalized status and socially irreconcilable ageing and mobility to illustrate his authorial decisions regarding how far his purely realist narrative ideal can go. Toward the denouement of Becky's story, the author no longer hides his idea that there should be limits to realist representation, and he precisely connects the limits with the needs to protect female virtues that most intimately symbolize Britishness:

> There are things we do and know perfectly well in Vanity Fair, though we never speak of them: . . . and a polite public will no more bear to read an authentic description of vice than a truly refined English or American female will permit the word breeches to be pronounced in her chaste hearing. (637)[48]

The narrator adds, "[W]hen Becky is out of the way, be sure that she is not particularly well employed, and that the less that is said about her doings is in fact the better" (638).[49] Her increasingly dissolute, morally unconstrained lifestyle, including gambling and sexual license, determines the limits of what this self-proclaimed historian can include in his story. This also coincides with the narrator's withdrawal from his earlier omniscient perspective, and he

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[48] See "The Fiction of Bourgeois Morality and the Paradox of Individualism" by Nancy Armstrong for a further investigation of how the mid-nineteenth-century British novel operates as an effective tool for bourgeois morality to envision its bounds and to maintain a social order.

[49] Some literary scholars interpret this as the author's comment on the arbitrariness of history writing. See, for example, Edward T. Barnaby. According to him, the novel implies that any representation of historical events is a result of arbitrary choices and depends on the historian's perspective. Nevertheless, as the above scene illustrates, when the narrator's deliberate reticence mostly centers upon Becky's immoral behaviors, it need rather be interpreted as part of the novel's ideological purposes.

consciously gestures toward siding with the respectable British audience and refuse to be able to explore Becky's compromising character. Becky meets "her maternal grandmother . . . , a hideous old box-opener at a theatre on the Boulevards. The meeting between them . . . must have been a very affecting interview. The present historian can give no certain details regarding the event" (646-47).

In short, in the novel's experiment with the generic possibilities and limits of realism, Becky's ageing and mobility finally contribute to mapping what need be, can be, or deserves to be represented in this self-proclaimed realist novel. In its formative years of the mid-nineteenth century, realism attempted to assess and establish its representing capacities in relation with the expansion of the world and the dazzling growth of commerce and physical, as well as social, mobility. In regard to the establishment of this new novelistic genre, *Vanity Fair* suggests that as crucial as coping with epistemological challenges prompted by the widening world is to negotiate, evaluate, and define, if in an arbitrary fashion, its formal bounds in relation with the reformed concept of Britishness in the context of the rising bourgeois ethos.[50] Nothing can mark the bounds of realism and foreground its generic limits of representability better than a peculiarly visible character whose identity is always already marginal and whose ageing and mobility map what is representable 'properly' in every sense of the word. The character needs to be neither too domesticated nor too foreign, and neither come too close nor to be able to stray too far away, in order to be a more effective symbolic tool to track the subtlety of the margins of realism, British decorum, and British national character.

[50] For a brief analysis of the relationship between the novel and the nation in the British context, see Patrick Parrinder. He points out that "[t]here is . . . a direct link between the peculiarities of the novel as a literary genre and the part played by novelists in the definition of Englishness" (15).

The marginality of this amazingly talented, intriguing but also threatening Becky Sharp plays exactly that role in this generically ambitious and experimental novel, *Vanity Fair*. She marks as well as embodies those multivalent bounds. Also the ability of the informational network of British disciplinary power to detect, watch, and finally quarantine this protean liminal element is to confirm British national confidence in culturally reinventing itself as a united whole in the mid-nineteenth century. This cultural gesture to envision stable Britishness and instate order through literature against the continental revolutionary threats "not only places the readers in a position of privileged knowing and moral judgment, thus shaping his/her subjectivity into middle-class Victorian norms, but often does so with the aim of creating conformity" (Shires 65).

One might argue, however, that the ideological contradiction in the novel is never completely cleared away by its final treatment of Becky. I agree with this stance on a fundamental level, but I would like to finish with a few final comments on how to interpret this lingering contradiction in light of the ideological purpose of the novel and in connection to the novel's treatment of Becky's ageing and mobility. The current chapter has shown that Becky's flashy coming-of-age and mobility inside British society, and the ways she unsettles its norms, irrecoverably reveal the emptiness and hypocrisy of British morals and unveil several British upper- and middle- class characters who are equally money- and success- driven, but merely less talented than Becky. This chapter has also analyzed how the novel accentuates the shy and flat character of Dobbin and how he fails to develop a truly realistic interiority in relation with his society. That will enable readers to understand why, at the close of the story, following the depiction of the seemingly happy married life of Dobbin and Amelia, the narrator states, "Ah! Vanitas Vanitatum! which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? or, having it, is satisfied?" (689). The current chapter has suggested that many 'Beckys' still keep 'growing'

and ‘moving’ within the very core of Britain, thereby forcing the continuous efforts of the mainstream British culture to reinstate the limits of novelistic representation, as well as Britishness, against continuously disrupting, threatening, and haunting elements. It is true that the ‘French’ side of Becky definitely indicates the existence of heterogeneity in Britishness.

Several scholars zero in on this heterogeneity inherent in Britishness and concludes that this novel ultimately exposes the fictiveness of Britishness and debunks the ideal of homogeneous national culture. For example, Corri Zoli analyzes the Black Hole neighbor where Amelia and Jos temporarily live with other Anglo-Indian returnees who also bring in Indian culture and servants. She points out that the Anglo-Indian transnational interests are imported into the metropolis and become part of national culture; Empire is built upon the flow of capital, and its center is always mobile and transnational, too. She maintains that “[t]hrough the imaginary existence of the Black Hole of London one can imagine an England that is itself not a homogenous national space” (437). She concludes by arguing that “[d]reams of a British national culture—like a British nation-state in India—are thus but a *fantasy* of power and a fiction of pure Englishness, this novel contends” (441; emphasis in original).

However, to say that the mere existence of heterogeneous elements—whether physical or discursive—reveals the fantasy of power and undermines British national culture is exaggerating, and even ideologically problematic. In fact, I seriously doubt that we could find any novel that represents “a homogenous national space” or “pure Englishness” when we readily accept Bakhtin’s concept of dialogic imagination of the novel, Friedrich Engels’s notion of the triumph of realism, or Said’s analysis of empire as a given material and imaginary foundation to the nineteenth-century British writers. Zoli often uses the term “reversals of power,” but if the reversal of power can occur so naturally and automatically through the flow of capital and the

dispersal of culture, we can never explain why India achieved full political independence from Britain no earlier than 1947, a hundred years after the publication of *Vanity Fair*.

Heterogeneity is not itself a subversive force. Britishness or British national culture is not maintained through its homogeneity but through detecting, disciplining, and controlling heterogeneous elements and replacing them in their 'proper' places. In "'Class Racism'," Balibar holds that essential to nationalism is "the endeavor to produce a unified community in the face of external 'enemies' and the endless rediscovery that the enemy is 'within' identifiable by signs which are merely the phantasmatic elaboration of its divisions" (215). The nation-state has never been homogeneous and will never be, but that does not suggest that the power of nationalism is a fantasy. Nationalism develops its strategies not only through its universalizing force but also through its particularizing force that divides, categorizes, disciplines, and hierarchizes its inner differences. In his analysis of the exclusionary logic of liberalism, Uday S. Mehta also points out that liberalism envisions the nation-state based on social contract by assuming not just universal anthropological capabilities—for example, rationality and reason—but also 'the law of nature' that is presumably inherent in individuals and needs to be fostered so they can learn to observe and respect social distinctions: "The exclusionary transformation of Locke's universalistic anthropology is effected by the implicit division and exclusion of the social world that Locke imagines" (66). According to Mehta, sociologists point to "how the differentiations of a given society condition both its own reproduction and its various internal boundaries" (66-67). The nation-state does not reproduce and develop itself simply by 'uniting' people but by having them accept and respect 'natural' divisions, boundaries, and hierarchies.

What distinguishes this novel, especially through its depiction of Becky's ageing and movement, is thus not its depiction of heterogeneity in Britishness but its literary representation

of the confidence and effectivity with which the disciplinary gaze of British society monitors, detects, ridicule, and, if necessary, banishes un-British elements no matter how protean and deceptive they are. The disciplinary power of the novel is not negated by the heterogeneity of what the novel depicts and satirizes but expressed through the confident way the novel deals with that heterogeneity. The satiric force of the novel which ridicules those 'un-British' British thus partly derives from this ultimate confidence. The depiction of Becky's conspicuous ageing and mobility effectively reveals, or itself becomes part of, this disciplinary power of the novel.

The disciplinary power of the state will remarkably increase in the late nineteenth century in reaction to accelerating social mobility and the rising possibility of identity change, and particularly against threatening forms of imperial movement such as imperial booty that arouse the sense of imperial guilt, the return of the gone-native British subjects, and the reverse 'invasion' of natives. Cultural anxiety and the increasing need for a more acute disciplinary power in the late nineteenth century generate a new novelistic genre—detective fiction. The next chapter will investigate what type of coming-of-age narrative detective fiction requires.

Chapter II: Coming-of-Age and Its Contradiction in *The Moonstone* and *The Sign of Four*

Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868) and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of Four* (1890) are both landmarks in the history of detective fiction in Britain. *The Moonstone* highlights the transition from sensation fiction, immensely popular in the 1860s, to detective fiction, one of the most representative popular literary genres in the late nineteenth century. *The Sign of Four*, as the second Sherlock Holmes narrative by Doyle, established him as the most renowned detective fiction writer of the era.[51] The two, at the first glance, might not seem to be the best texts to investigate the trope of ageing. The plot of detective fiction often covers a short period of time during which a crime occurs and then is relatively soon—sometimes even in hours—solved by a detective figure equipped with extraordinary power of reasoning. Detective fiction does not often deal with a long period of time to portray a character's journey of life until he or she completes socialization as in the classical Bildungsroman.

However, what makes both novels unique as detective fictions is that they illustrate primary features of the traditional literary coming-of-age: As Franco Moretti persuasively analyzes in *The Way of the World*, central characters of both novels also perceive and experience problems in their society which contradict their individual desire, develop a mature interiority while struggling with those problems, and apparently establish their 'true' self in the end. By harmoniously reconciling with their society in the form of marriage, they attempt to envision the

[51] T. S. Elliott referred to *The Moonston*e as "the first and greatest of English detective novel" (413). Although it is not historically true that *The Moonstone* is exactly the first, the novel undeniably helped to kindle the boom of detective fiction during the late nineteenth century in Britain. Doyle's status at the pinnacle of the boom is unquestionable. For a thorough historical research of the detective and its literary representation, see Haia Shpayer-Makov.

totality of life. In particular, both texts situate the accounts of detection and coming-of-age in the transnational geopolitical network through the movement of colonials and items between the metropolis and the peripheries of the Empire. This chapter will discuss how the two detective fictions incorporate and reformulate the conventional narrative of coming-of-age under the condition of the tightening network between the imperial center and peripheries in the late nineteenth century. I explore the ways the coming-of-age narrative in the two detective fictions constitutes as well as contradicts their narrative structure as well as ideological content. Also the comparative study of the two novels illuminates how the plot of coming-of-age maintains the normative façade of detective fiction but increasingly exposes its fragility, thereby accentuating the crisis in the ideals of modernity and impending modernism.

Crucial to understanding the rise of British detective fiction in the mid- to late nineteenth century—such as those by Wilkie Collins, Conan Doyle, Arthur Morrison, Headon Hill, and Tom Taylor—is that detective fiction is a direct response to both the metropolis and empire. The intensifying political, economic and cultural interdependency between the metropolis and colonies threatened to compromise British national character and blur its cultural boundaries. The situation created unprecedented social concerns that literary detectives symbolically attempted to resolve.[52] The doubt of the efficiency of the Empire and of its underlying beliefs of progress and cultural superiority engendered a more reactionary domestic metropolitan culture in which detective fiction arose. In reaction to the increasing concern of imperial crimes, especially owing to the lingering memories of the 1857 Indian Mutiny and the 1865 Morant Bay uprising in

[52] For a brief historical analysis of the skeptical perception of the security and contribution of empire in the late nineteenth-century Britain after the depression of 1873, see Avner Offer. He notes that "the system of hegemonic stability was redistributing economic and military power away from Britain and making a challenge to its hegemony more likely" (707).

Jamaica, the imperialism represented in popular culture became more blatantly racist, jingoistic, and propagandistic in the late nineteenth century as seen in imperial and adventure writings by G. A. Henty, W. H. G. Kingston, and R. M. Ballantyne. The metropolitan culture featured "[a] heightened sense of conflict, a greater anxiety about British capacity to survive and prosper, but also more powerful convictions of cultural superiority and moral worth" (Mackenzie, "Empire and Metropolitan Cultures" 280).

British territory still grew, accentuated by Queen Victoria's ascension to the throne as Empress of India in 1876, but this expansion was "more vexed than the seemingly unlimited opportunity for progress that characterized mid-Victorian writings" (Hughes 48). As major part of metropolitan culture, detective fiction symbolically reflected this need to resolve fears arising from moral as well as economic and political uncertainties of the Empire and to reimagine national security and identity. Detective fiction in the late nineteenth century thus functioned both to culturally maintain the status quo of the Empire and to indirectly attest to its vulnerability.

Besides apparently imperial issues, domestic social changes in the late nineteenth century also helped to pave the way for the ascent of detective fiction. The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857, The Second Reform Act of 1868, The Education Act of 1870, and The Married Women's Property Act in 1870 did not merely respond to but also promoted controversy over existing Victorian gender, class, and other social privileges and growing social mobility.[53] Compared to that of early nineteenth-century crime fiction such as the Newgate novel, the crime in detective

[53] Lillian Nayder, for example, elaborates on 'bigamy' novels' and notes that use "the crime of bigamy to dramatize perceived threats posed to the institution of marriage by the introduction of civil divorce" ("The Empire and Sensation" 443).

fiction is not limited to streets but occurs also in domesticity, which creates the figure of the detective as transgressor of the private/public binary and the class boundary, especially in the case of lower class detectives.[54] The two novels illustrate the threats from imperia peripheries in the forms of treasures which undeniably symbolize exploited property or literal plunder. These ominous imperial treasures incur domestic mysteries and crimes, and this nexus between the transnational movement of such items and domestic social concerns in the late Victorian society necessitates refined detective forces.

The recent scholarly discussion of the two novels focuses on the disciplinary imagination of detective fiction and the extent to which it contains threats posed to British domesticity in the forms of imperial wealth. As for *The Moonstone*, D. A. Miller lays a foundational Foucauldian interpretation of the novel as "a parable of the modern policing power" (51). Miller controversially claims that "the novel is thoroughly monological" for its representation of the omniscient and omnipresent master voice of detection, but he provoked many later scholarly analyses of the tensions and ambiguities in the novel (54). Tamar Heller critiques Miller in her claim that the novel "defers rather than fixes meaning," emphasizing how the story reveals other forms of social repression while covering some (142). Peter Thomas also elaborates on how most characters in the novel actually 'act' to formulate an innocent self although society is presumed to isolate corrupting sources and to police its own innocence. The same critical approach applies in Melissa Free's attention to how the detective story exposes the interdependence between home

[54] The Newgate novel, named after a notorious London prison, refers to a new genre developed in the early nineteenth century which generally depicts romanticized criminal "as the sympathetic victim of repressive legal system" (Ronald R. Thomas, "Detection in the Victorian Novel" 172). For another brief adumbration of the ways in which the early nineteenth-century Newgate novel paved the way for the late nineteenth-century detective fiction, see Lyn Pykett's "The Newgate Novel and Sensation Fiction 1830 – 1868."

and away, highlighting the incompleteness of detective work at home. A series of critical studies uncover the intellectual history of the time and its constitutive role in detection. Critiquing, again, Miller's exclusive focus on everyday life as the locus of surveillance, for example, Ronald Thomas attends to the establishment of forensic science and the medicalization of crime to detect, measure, and control the physiological features of body.[55]

In case of *The Sign of Four,* recent criticisms also interpret literary detection as a symbolic mechanism to solve threats from the margins of empire. Critics discuss several interrelated topics: how detective work reveals the inseparability of domesticity and empire, cultural anxieties typical of the fin de siècle period, and newly established fields of quasi-medical and scientific knowledge to reimagine the cultural purity of Britain. For example, Christopher Keep and Don Randall point to "fundamental incapacity of British culture to expel from its unconscious that tincture or trace of the poisonous other upon which it had come so crucially to depend" (208). Other notable criticisms include the analyses of scientific taxonomies designed to better control South Asia and monitor the Empire (McBratney), toxins as indicative of harmful foreign substance as well as the result of the British's contacts with oriental cultures (Harris), and the queerness of Holmes and his home in the modern city which better equips him to detect and solve equally marginal, alien and queer characters and other elements (McCrea).

Of particular relevance to my thesis is that these critical works often focus on how detective fiction compromises the notion of the autonomous individual as source of agency in

[55] For another analysis of the novel with a focus on urbanization, sanitation, and the establishment of medical knowledge which undermined the notion of the solidity of body, See Talairach-Vielmas. Also for an approach to detective fiction which calls attention to just the discursive working of discipline through everyday life but also a variety of late Victorian social movements for 'purity' in tandem with the rise of detective fiction, see Christopher Pittard.

face of these formidable threats as well as the no less unsettling disciplinary forces of detection itself. These social and cultural contexts anticipate an altered, limited notion of the individual's coming-of-age. Lauren M. E. Goodlad, for example, argues that the detective narrative "pressures the abstraction of the sovereign individual—the kind of subject whose concrete literary form is the Bildungsroman" (150). My analysis of the two novels starts with the claim that the elements of the Bildung in those novels demands more attention than recent work suggests. These two detective fictions neither simply discard nor revive the literary tradition of the Bildungsroman in the late nineteenth century. Instead, the peculiar revisions and integrations of the narrative of coming-of-age in the two detective fictions better illuminate the latter's own formation.

1. *The Moonstone* and the Contradictions of Blake's Coming-of-age

In *The Moonstone*, Franklin Blake is a mastermind that organizes several witness-narratives, including his own, in order to locate the lost moonstone, detect the thief, and ultimately prove his innocence and marriageability. At first glance, this centrality of Blake thematically in the story and structurally in the narrative seem to anticipate his coming-of-age, develop his mature self, and restore his surroundings as in the classical Bildungsroman. According to Mr. Betteredge, the narrator of the first narrative and the Verinders' head servant, Blake "came of good blood; he had a high courage; and he was five-and-twenty years of age" (15-16). Blake receives modern education in the continental Europe before he returns to Yorkshire in the hope of marrying his cousin Rachel Verinder as well as delivering their mutual uncle's ominous birthday gift for her. The classical Bildungsroman portrays the flexibility of the traditionally hierarchized and institutionalized national society to integrate the modern individual

that represents the progressive movement of modernity. As if affirming this notion of the Bildung, Mr. Betteredge toward the beginning describes Blake's coming-of-age and accentuates his apparent centrality as representative of the old British aristocratic tradition and its agreeable liveliness in the modern time: "Look as I might, I could see no more of his boy's rosy cheeks than of his boy's trim little jacket. . . . He had a lively touch-and-go way with him, very pleasant and engaging, I admit" (27). The introduction of this principal character implies that Blake is an ideal figure to potentially ease class tensions and envision social harmony through his coming-of-age.

The moonstone functions as a major obstacle to Blake's successful coming-of-age and detective work. From the beginning, the story makes it undeniable that the stolen moonstone on the night of Rachel's birthday allegorically brings to British domesticity the imperial curse of the massacres at the Siege of Seringapatam. The narrator of the prologue and another relative of the Verinders' describes Rachel's uncle Colonel John Herncastle's murder and robbery to his relatives in England. He also journalistically reports a larger picture of the plunder committed by British soldiers: "The camp-followers committed deplorable excesses; and, worse still, the soldiers found their way, by an unguarded door, into the treasury of the Palace" (4). Although this writer of the family letter establishes that what he says is "for the information of the family only," the content of his letter brings into relief the economic as well as moral inseparability between the English 'domestic' in both of its senses and the imperial colonies that support it financially in an unjustifiable fashion (5).[56] This cursed moonstone, which subsequently incurs

[56] For a brief discussion of the historical reference of the moonstone, the famous jewel the Koh-ni-Noor which was similarly robbed in India and dedicated to Queen Victoria, see John Sutherland.

suspicion, turmoil and the dispersion of the family, epitomizes guilt about crimes committed in South Asia and fears that imperial plunders might economically and morally disrupt English national integrity.[57]

The servant Betteredge's comment upon the disappearance of the moonstone and the subsequent chaos in the noble family Verinders' domesticity points to this fear of contradictions in the ideals of the Empire: "Who ever heard the like of it— in the nineteenth century, mind; in an age of progress, and in a country which rejoices in the blessings of the British constitution?" (33). Owing to Rachel's mistaken belief that Blake purposefully stole the moonstone, Blake faces the double-challenge: self-exoneration to prove himself marriageable as well as allegorically restoring national unity and identity. The solution of this case of theft that arouses the sense of guilt will thus culminate in the completion of the central character's coming-of-age. The initial setting and character development anticipate the detective narrative as constitutive of that of coming-of-age and vice versa.

As the story of detection unfolds, however, the consciousness and agency of this character-embodiment of the classical Bildung turns out to be seriously limited. In face of the threat that originates far outside the cultural and epistemological bounds of national community, Blake features the near impotence of the cultural underpinnings of the classical Bildungsroman. According to Betteredge, "Mr Blake disliked all boys, his own included . . . . Master Franklin *was taken* from us in England, and *was sent* to institutions which his father could trust, in that superior country, Germany" (14-15; italics mine). The repetitive use of the passive voice in the

[57] Melissa Free's research shows that Collins was always reluctant to affirm imperial projects as opposed to his colleague and close friend Charles Dickens. See her analysis for how he even had to disguise his true political intention in his non-fictional writings about the Empire to avoid his friend's censorship.

quote already starts to debunk the ideals of the development of the modern 'autonomous' individual. The passivity of Blake's character prevails under the veneer of his continental mobility and education throughout the story.

Blake's continental education is further travestied, albeit humorously, by the good-natured Betteredge:

> After he had learnt what the institutions of Germany could teach him, he gave the French a turn next, and the Italians a turn after that. They made him among them a sort of universal genius, as well as I could understand it. He wrote a little; he painted a little; he sang and played and composed a little—borrowing, as I suspect, in all these cases, just as he had borrowed from me. (15)

The European education of this youth from a traditional English noble family renders him unstable both intellectually and financially. He fails to develop a coherent mature self in the style of the classical Bildung and an appropriate agency in his personhood to represent and protect the English home and morality from the imperial 'curse.' Instead of portraying the maturing and widening of his interiority, the story unfolds by increasingly accentuating the limits of his consciousness and disclosing the limits of the representational capacity of his own narrative. In the midst of search, he says, "What was to be said next? [W]hat was to be done next? There rose the horrible fact of the Theft—the one visible, tangible object that confronted me, in the midst of the impenetrable darkness which enveloped all besides!" (345).

The description of his limited, unpromising Bildung also speaks to the limits of his class position in projecting national unity. In order to reproduce the traditional protagonist of the Bildungsroman who functions to reimagine national identity through his individual coming-of-

age and socialization, Blake needs to prove himself as a uniting consciousness to achieve social harmony. On the contrary, Blake's limited consciousness fails to solve the problem partly due to his class-based bias and failure of class-crossing communication. The Verinders' second housemaid Rosanna passionately loves Blake, finds his smeared nightgown, and hides it in the Shivering Sands without his awareness. She approaches him several times and insinuates her decisive involvement in the case to him but to no avail. Betteredge says, "Neither Mr Franklin, with his wonderful foreign training, nor I, with my age, experience, and natural mother-wit, had the ghost of an idea of what Rosanna Spearman's unaccountable behaviour really meant" (26-27). In other words, neither the modern knowledge that Blake's "foreign training" represents nor the British national tradition that Betteredge's experience suggest—the two central components of the Bildungsroman to be dialectically synthesized—overcomes this interpretive failure owning to class boundaries.[58]

Historically important is that the plot covers the years 1847 and 1848 when Chartism peaked in Britain in lieu of the revolutionary fervor throughout Continental Europe. The novel alludes to the contemporary class tensions through the limits of the culturally dominant perspective that Blake and Betteredge represent. Tamar Heller is thus right in saying that "[t]he lack of communication between Rosanna and Blake shows how member of the working class are invisible to those they serve" (147). Only another housemaid, Betteredge's daughter Penelope, realizes early in the plot that "the poor thing is breaking her heart about Mr Franklin Blake," but

[58] Philip O'Neill also argues that the two characters' knowledge systems reveal difficulties in all types of interpretation: "The coordinates separating good and bad, light and dark fluctuate and fuse and popular prejudice is parodied and turned against itself" (16). However, he fails to illuminate the class dimension in their limited interpreting faculty and focuses on the fundamental arbitrariness of interpretation.

her voice is not recognized at critical moments (92). Rosanna's invisibility and the repression of the low-class she represents are best symbolized by the Shivering Sands. Rosanna identifies with the quicksand early in the novel as a low-class woman who wishes to be heard, foreboding her demise there: "It looks as if it had hundreds of suffocating people under it— all struggling to get to the surface, and all sinking lower and lower in the dreadful deeps! Throw a stone in, Mr Betteredge! Throw a stone in, and let's see the sand suck it down!" (25).

In *The Servant's Hand*, Bruce Robbins elaborates upon literary representations of the servant in Victorian and modern British literature and puts forth a convincing argument that the marginalized character of the servant problematizes the distinction between the private and the public for modern family. Capitalism expels servants from the modern nuclear family, but they still stand in "for the absent member of a larger, former family" (157). A fatal role servant figures often play in Victorian literature evokes the traditional communal responsibility that capitalism ignores "in order to turn family members into wage laborers" (151). According to Robbins, "[w]hen we hear these fading after-echoes of the preindustrial family, we can perhaps understand why the convention again and again urges the reader to identify novelistic servants as abandoned children" (152). Modernist fictions like *A Passage to India*, Robbins argues, depict the utopian vision of a renovated social whole in which everybody, including the servant, is invited, expressing the "specific desire that is stimulated by inequalities of class and race and seeks obscurely to abolish them" (164). Reading *The Moonstone* through the interpretative lens provided by Robbins, one can see clearly that the upper-class character Blake's narrow perspective fails to recognize his servant Rosanna's claim for a wider circle of intimacy and to envision a social whole that overcomes class boundaries.

After Rosanna's tragic death, the class tensions and the failure of cross-class communication are now expressed through another underprivileged friend of hers, Limping Lucy. Her infuriation with Blake for his failure to notice Rosanna features a class dimension. As she hands Rosanna's letter to Blake, Lucy asserts out of her anger that she "meant to take her away from the mortification she was suffering here. We should have had a little lodging in London, and lived together like sisters" (184). She adds that "the day is not far off when the poor will rise against the rich. I pray Heaven they may begin with him" (184). Heller observes the historical relevance of the novel by pointing out that "Lucy's cry, the novel's clearest allusion to the revolutionary period of 1848 that is its setting, shows how women's rebellion also can symbolize other types of resistance" (148). As for the coming-of-age motif, the story demonstrates the inadequacy of the traditional mode of Bildung to interpret and resolve class and gender alienation in order to envision national harmony. Rather, Blake's passive and deferred coming-of-age exposes and amplifies inner divisions and conflicts of British society as magnified by this case of the lost imperial booty. The ending of the story makes it clear that if Blake had successfully noticed and understood Rosanna's mental anguish in a timely fashion, the case of the stolen jewel would have been solved much earlier. In regard to the structure of the plot, his limited consciousness of social fragmentation protracts the detective narrative while compromising the traditional coming-of-age narrative.

Socially-prevalent motifs of deceptive appearances/reality further accentuate the epistemological limits of Blake in the context of empire and the metropolis. The true thief, Ablewhite, is the foremost example of this deception. When he is suspected of the theft by the public, he says to Rachel, whom he attempts to woo for the purpose of her inheritance: "My reputation stands too high to be destroyed by a miserable passing scandal like this" (208). He

leads a double-life as a principal member of many women's religious charity groups in London and a dissolute man in debt with a married mistress in the suburbs. Drusilla Clack, a cousin of Rachel and the second narrator, is a religious devout entrusted to take care of Rachel in London; however, she turns out to carry strong sexual and material desires in disguise. While attempting to locate the stolen diamond, Blake does not realize his own deceptiveness as the initial 'thief' until later in the novel. Ezra Jennings, a true sympathizer to Blake and the medical expert who uncovers Blake's unconscious, is introduced in the beginning as repulsive. His appearance is also, if inadvertently, deceptive: "It was impossible to dispute Betteredge's assertion that the appearance of Ezra Jennings, speaking from a popular point of view, was against him" (364).

Deceptive identities illustrate the contemporary social environment of the novel. Despite the existing class boundaries in the Verinders' manor in Yorkshire, which frustrate the servant Rosanna's desire to be noticed, the Victorian metropolis features urbanization, industrialization, and immigration to and from imperial peripheries and results in the anxiety over the ways identity can be changed, invented, manipulated, or discarded. James Eli Adams notes that in this age, which was also informed by growing bureaucracy and extensive document-keeping, identity "devolves into a parcel of disembodied information, an array of external facts and features—name, historical records, handwriting, physical descriptions—existing apart from the person they ostensibly describe" (208).[59] These social changes, in conjunction with the urban growth and the impoverishment of the working class in the metropolis, "link… to changes in policing such as the formation of the new Detective Police in 1842" (Pykett 34). As a pioneering British detective

[59] According to Anthony Giddens, one feature that distinguishes the modern world from the pre-modern is the 'disembedding' mechanism': "the 'lifting out' of social relations from local contexts and their rearticulation across indefinite tracts of time-space" (18). People are constantly uprooted from their traditional role and place, and placed in vicinity of strangers and unfamiliar environments.

novel, *The Moonstone* represents cultural anxiety toward malleable identity through its deceptive characters.

The most unsettling deceptive force in the novel emanates not from a person but from the moonstone itself. In the imperial network of exploitation described by the novel, the moonstone reflects the social relations of the colonizer and colonized. In the story, however, the moonstone is given as a mere valuable object to Rachel by her uncle, but her uncle disguises his true ominous intent for revenge under this dazzling jewel, doubling its deceptive nature.[60] All these modes of deception in the metropolis intertwine with the accelerating imperial mobility of items and people, which further accentuate the limits of Blake's agency as the autonomous individual. His privileged and mobile education is not capable of removing his limited consciousness regarding lower classes, and he is unable to interpret and solve the mystery of the lost treasure and other related deceptions surrounding it in his society. The traditional Bildung affirms the localized national tradition in incorporating the modern protagonist, and Blake's education and movement is at best limited to the European continent in a way that resembles the aristocratic youth's conventional Grand Tour. His conventional mode of coming-of-age is unable to foster an agency to interpret and solve transnational imperial crime and identity forgery in the metropolis.[61]

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[60] Elaine Freedgood explores the popular obsession with the story of the "thing" in the burgeoning culture of new items and commodities in Victorian Britain, arguing that the idea of fetish was prevalent even before Marx or Freud. See Talairach-Vielmas for another analysis of the fetishistic culture in the Victorian metropolis with a focus on "the magic of the Great Exhibition" (75).

[61] The limits of the autonomous modern individual under disciplinary power as well as the state intervention are crucial to the understanding of detective fiction. Detective fiction reflects the era when the beliefs of liberalism, individualism, and free trade begin to fray and the state reasserts its authority through social discipline, economic protectionism, and overseas military

The novel's representation of British print culture in the novel also emphasizes Blake's failure to develop interpretative agency. The collective wisdom and knowledge from widely shared and circulating British print culture is an important infrastructure for a new national character based on the growing middle-class reading public.[62] Ideally, national culture presents an organic, flexible, and respectable cultural bounds in which the modern individual achieves socialization through a dialectic process in the classical Bildungsroman. In the novel, however, Betteredge 'interprets' *Robinson Crusoe* for all kinds of spurious wisdom, which encapsulate the inapplicability of British national humanistic wisdom for the refined reasoning required to interpret the aforementioned modes of deception: "When my spirits are bad— *Robinson Crusoe*. When I want advice— *Robinson Crusoe*. In past times when my wife plagued me; in present times when I have had a drop too much— *Robinson Crusoe*. I have worn out six stout *Robinson Crusoe*s with hard work in my service" (9). *Robinson Crusoe*—a foundational text in the history of the British novel which prototypically depicts the colonization of remote tropical lands and the subjugation of foreign races—is treated as a mere source of humor devoid of practical use.

The novel draws attention to the split between the social foundations of the conventional coming-of-age and the agency appropriate to solve the diverse deceptions introduced in the story. Collins represents this agency as alienated from the ideal of coming-of-age, thus generating structural tension between the narratives of detection and of coming-of-age. There are three detective characters in the novel who decisively solve the problems incurred by the

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intervention. For a further analysis, see Ronald Thomas's "Detection in the Victorian Novel."

[62] It was through the rise of print culture that the middle class established and propagated their cultural and moral superiority against the nobility whose status was based on wealth and genealogy. For a further analysis, see Benedict Anderson. He argues that the bourgeois print culture allowed organic national culture to emerge and provide people with a new sense of community reconciling those individuals freed of feudal societal bindings to their nation state.

disappearance of the moonstone and help to complete Blake's coming-of-age: Sergeant Cuff, Mr. Murthwaite, and Ezra Jennings. To summarize my analysis of the following pages, common between the three is that they are not portrayed as subjects that grow and settle as part of localized national culture; instead, they all embody to varying degrees perpetual mobility and liminality, the margins of modern national society, specialized and unorthodox knowledge, and/or no reproductive power or signs of generational continuity.

Sergeant Cuff of Scotland Yard, the Detective Force in London established in 1842, is telegraphed to come when Superintendent Seegrave is unable to detect the thief of the moonstone. Known as one of the pioneering detective figures in the history of British detective fiction, Cuff displays an almost surreal power of reasoning, which becomes a possible threat to traditional British norms and manners. Not a private detective but still hired as a confidential agent, he keeps the scandal within the family temporarily, but, in return, he needs to be allowed to penetrate the private sphere and even psychology of the Verinders and compromise the boundary between the private and public spheres. Conversations with family members often proceed as follows: "'I suppose you know, Mr Cuff,' [Blake] said, 'that you are treading on delicate ground?' 'It isn't the first time, by a good many hundreds, that I find myself treading on delicate ground,' answered the other, as immovable as ever" (118). As representative of professionalized skills based solely on logic, reason, and data without any trace of his past familial or local ties, he often threatens to step on the heretofore 'sacred' region of traditional and intimate knowledge and relations.

The challenge of his pure logic and reason against traditional and intimate relations is most spectacular in his confrontation with Lady Verinder over his accusation of Rachel: "She met the Sergeant's eye with an eye that was as steady as his own. The family spirit showed itself

in every line of her face" (161). The intimate relations and knowledge she represents as a noble person in a traditional rural community are displayed with equally strong impact against Cuff's seemingly immaculate logic:

> Your knowledge of her character dates from a day or two since. My knowledge of her character dates from the beginning of her life. State your suspicion of her as strongly as you please—it is impossible that you can offend me by doing so. . . . My one reason for speaking positively, is the reason you have heard already. I know my child. (163)

While the traditional Bildung envisions a moderate progress of modernity within national cultural tradition, Cuff represents the extreme realization of rationality as defiant of existing communal and intimate realms of power. His power of scientific inquiry, reasoning, and logic does not compromise with traditional human relations, alienating the ideal synthesis of the Bildungsroman.

Equally noteworthy in Cuff's character is his excessive infatuation with nature and gardening. Unless he exerts his almost outwardly power of inference and induction, he discusses proper ways to grow roses with the gardener of the Verinders. When Blake visits Cuff's place later in the novel to ask him to resume his investigation, he notices that "[f]ar from the crimes and the mysteries of the great city, the illustrious thief-taker was placidly living out the last Sybarite years of his life, smothered in roses!" (354). Cuff's unreal power of logic with no social grounding and his equally extraordinary infatuation with gardening suggest his bifurcated, thus tenuous, relationship to his society. He works as a detective to restore society to normalcy and thus does not defy the status quo; however, his peculiar positioning within his society alienates

him from the moderate dialectic between the development logic of modernity and traditionally localized national community.

Also noteworthy is that Cuff soon stops being a threat to the existing society, and it denotes his limits as a detective force. Betteredge's antagonism against him never entirely disappears but remains humorous, and gives into his gradual trust in Cuff. Betteredge represents the new public that still remains loyal to the English tradition based on landed aristocracy but accepts this new expertise. Reitz also notes that "[i]n the character of Betteredge, Collins dramatizes an Englishman's evolution from suspicion to appreciation of what Cuff represents: a complex imperial world and the profession (detection) such a world makes necessary" (61). What integrates Cuff into the existing culture more effectively is ironically his failure as a sleuth. His power of observation and reasoning remains confined in the domestic field of experience and imagination and the orthodox manner of scientific inquiry. He fails to see through the maidservant Rosanna's affection for Blake or to understand imperial social relations behind the moonstone, attributing its disappearance to Rachel's insolvency as he has seen in other cases of young British upper-class women. This detective's investigation needs supplementation from two other detective figures whose marginality and range of experience and knowledge surpass those of Cuff.[63]

Murthwaite is the second detective figure who detects critical clues to solve the case. As another source of crucial agency, he represents more heightened liminality and mobility that

[63] Expanding on Benjaminian concept of experience, Goodland also argues that in the novel, personal and any local, situated experience based on sovereignty is limited and flawed. She suggests as the nature of agency in the novel "the kind of multi-sited sovereignty which *The Moonstone* projects when it portrays knowledge-making as a collective project of assembling the plural formations of transnational experience" (153).

exceed the bounds of Britishness and of modern society, accentuating his symbolic uprootedness and non-possibility of coming of age and settling down as a coherent national subject. According to Betteredge, "Mr Murthwaite, who, at risk of his life, had penetrated in disguise where no European had ever set foot before" (65). With somewhat unrealistically immaculate linguistic and disguising abilities, he can 'go native' at his whims and mingle with Indians without being noticed. Through his detachedness, boundary-crossing geopolitical mobility and intimate experience of Indians, he provides the Verinders' lawyer Mr. Bruff with decisive clues to detect the Indians' intention. Bruff rejoices in his accidental encounter with Murthwaite at a party and the value of his irreplaceable advice: "It was impossible to deny that he had met my difficulty fairly; thanks to his superior knowledge of the Indian character—and thanks to his not having had hundreds of other Wills to think of since Colonel Herncastle's time!" (284). Emphasized in Bruff's words describing Murthwaite are not just his intimate experience of Indian languages and culture but also his separateness from the English professional system in which experts like Bruff and also Cuff are involved. Murthwaite's detachment from any particular establishment or interpretative taxonomy ironically enables him to purge national identity of alien elements while alienating him from the social foundations of the classical Bildung further than Cuff.

Murthwaite's boundary-blurring mobility and identity-shifting intrinsically do not exclusively operate to reestablish and affirm national identity. As the final narrator of the story, he describes the sublime scene in which the moonstone is restored to its original location, the statue of a Hindu god. His final remarks are: "You have lost sight of it in England, and (if I know anything of this people) you have lost sight of it forever. So the years pass, and repeat each other; so the same events revolve in the cycles of time. What will be the next adventures of the Moonstone? Who can tell?" (466). He proclaims that the moonstone has been forever lost from

the attempts of the British capitalist force of modernity to commodify this religious symbol. Goodlad also emphasizes the auratic feature of the moonstone and argues that it "metonymizes India's sovereignty while refracting Britain's contingent imperial power" (136). In the above quote, Murthwaite stresses the circular nature of time, disavowing the liberal belief in linear progress. Rather than trying to epistemologically and physically subsume Indian properties into the capitalist grid of the British Empire, he "watches with respect the spirituality unfolding before him" (Free 362). His exceptional mobility and marginality are by nature not confined to affirming British national culture as in the classical British Bildungsroman but also play a role in revealing its provinciality.

Murthwaite's mobility and liminality as well as Cuff's—and even their uncanny appearances—pave the way for Ezra Jennings. It is decisively through Ezra Jennings's contribution and sacrifice that Blake redeems himself and completes his coming-of-age by marrying Rachel and anticipating reproduction.[64] Ironically, however, Ezra Jennings is a character marginalized by British culture and thus needs to be silenced, rather than embodying it like Blake. In his conversation with Blake, he says, "No. I was born, and partly brought up, in one of our colonies. My father was an Englishman; but my mother——We are straying away from our subject, Mr Blake" (366). As a colonial subject of miscegenation, he lives isolated and shunned by his neighbors until he sympathizes with Blake and decides to help him. In addition, the novel deploys Jennings's marginal status to exemplify the interlocked relations between class

[64] Deirdre David also notes that as an English-educated subaltern character, Jennings serves to ensure that "English ruling-class life may resume a complacent serenity untroubled by memories of who looted India fifty years ago and unmolested by relentless Indians" (*Rule Britannia* 142). I agree to his interpretation of Jennings as conducive to empire, but he does not note that Jennings's sacrifice and service rather reveal contradictions in Blake's happy-ending as I will argue.

and racial forms of marginalization. He is an assistant of Dr. Candy, the family physician of the Verinders, but now that the doctor is irrecoverably ill, "[t]he work all falls on his assistant. Not much of it now, except among the poor. They can't help themselves, you know. They must put up with the man with the piebald hair, and the gipsy complexion—or they would get no doctoring at all" (320). As a social minority, he treats only the poor who cannot afford another option.

As significant is Jennings's peculiar appearance. Partly due to his origin, his portrayal is full of boundary-threatening, liminal implications:

> His nose presented the fine shape and modelling so often found among the ancient people of the East, so seldom visible among the newer races of the West. His forehead rose high and straight from the brow. His marks and wrinkles were innumerable. From this strange face, eyes, stranger still, of the softest brown—eyes dreamy and mournful, and deeply sunk in their orbits—looked out at you, and (in my case, at least) took your attention captive at their will. Add to this a quantity of thick closely-curling hair, which, by some freak of Nature, had lost its colour in the most startlingly partial and capricious manner. Over the top of his head it was still of the deep black which was its natural colour. Round the sides of his head—without the slightest gradation of grey to break the force of the extraordinary contrast—it had turned completely white. The line between the two colours preserved no sort of regularity. At one place, the white hair ran up into the black; at another, the black hair ran down into the white. (189)

The bizarre, extraordinary appearance of Cuff and Murthwaite anticipates earlier how Jennings's appearance will also symbolize a facet of the agency that arises not in British social fabrics but

through margins and transgression. His uncanny appearance displays the juxtaposition of the ancient and the modern, the East and West, and the old and the new.[65] His ontological liminality and in-betweenness, and disruption of the linear time unsettles the normative process of coming-of-age and negates the evolutionary logic of linear development.[66]

The eccentricity of Jennings's appearance reaches what art and literary historians define as grotesquery. Geoffrey Galt Harpham characterizes the grotesque primarily as a liminal status. According to Harpham, the grotesque does not merely indicate the hideous but the juxtaposition of the familiar and unfamiliar in such a way that they remain unnamable and liminal, refusing to be pinned down by any symbolic taxonomy. The grotesque arises when "in the midst of an overwhelming impression of monstrousness there is much we can recognize, much corrupted or shuffled familiarity" (Harpham 5). Harpham argues that the grotesque allows a better understanding of "hitherto ignored reservoirs of meaning on the margins—in the ulterior, the secondary, the unstressed, and the repressed" (22). Through his grotesquery Jennings also embodies both monstrosity and an alternative interpretative and experiential possibility. Rather than the normative coming-of-age, he incurs the opposite: fears of miscegenation and degeneration. His negation of the cultural assumptions of normative coming-of-age and of the

[65] For an analysis focused on the abnormal body and how the normalcy of the nineteenth-century Victorian culture defines it as immoral and exclude it, see Mark Mossman.

[66] Although it is beyond the scope of the current dissertation to analyze evolutionism and its relation to the theories of modernity, evolutionism and the notion of purely linear progress still need to be differentiated from the dialectic and historicist logic of modernity that the Bildungsroman symbolizes. In "The Crisis of Bourgeois Realism," *The Historical Novel*, Lukács argues that in the post-1848 era the bourgeois compromise the democratic revolution and lose the grasp of history as the real driving force. They replace the dialectics of history with the perspective of linear progress or vulgar evolutionism. Fredric Jameson also emphasizes that modernity does not develop in an evolutionary fashion. Instead, "any theory of modernity must both affirm its absolute novelty as a break and at one and the same time its integration into a context from which it can be posited as breaking" (*A Singular Modernity* 57)

Bildungsroman enables him to see hitherto unexplored psychological dimensions and complete the narrative of detection.

Further distinguishing Jennings from normative British culture is that he is an opium-addict, and it is also opium that Jennings prescribes to Blake to repeat the action that he took during his trance a year ago. The two Opium Wars were recent collective memories in Collins's time. However, they were often repressed in mainstream media for their undeniable wickedness. Recently scholars have explored the relations of opium with empire. Mary Roth argues that opium and other drugs are reminders of the Orient and Oriental invasion: "A sinister form of invasion was the persistent mythology of colonial acquisition as a disease or drug infecting the metropolis" (87). Opium was a cultural symbol to remind the British of their imperial guilt and to arouse in them the fear of degeneration through the contact with the Orient in the metropolis during the fin de siècle.[67] Although the novel does not yet belong to the period of fin de siècle, and the cultural anxiety of degeneration does not prevail in the story which apparently restores the social status quo in the end, Jennings's physically disoriented temporality and opium addiction anticipate the late-century fear of detrimental contacts with the Orient and of subsequent degeneration. This notion of degeneration undeniably evokes the notion of 'ageing backward,' almost the literal opposite to coming-of-age. As one of the foundational Victorian detective fiction, *The Moonstone* prefigures one of the dominant themes of later Victorian detective fictions. The fear of miscegenation and degeneration that the character of Jennings insinuates denotes the contradiction inherent in imperial modernity and exemplifies one of the

[67] For an analysis of the representation of alcohol and opium in the Victorian novel and of the ways in which writers both acknowledged and feared the pleasures derived from intoxication, see McCormack.

most prevalent cultural imaginations in regard to individual coming-of-age as well as the progress of the collective.

Jennings's unorthodox experiment dramatically stages this metaphorical degeneration, or 'ageing backward.' He manipulates Blake's unconsciousness to return to the past in order for the spectators to figure out what happened on the night of the theft and to exonerate Blake. Bruff, part of the English establishment and representative of professional rationality as discussed earlier, expresses his concern: "It was quite unintelligible to his mind, except that it looked like a piece of trickery, akin to the trickery of mesmerism, clairvoyance, and the like" (397). This unorthodoxy of Jennings's medical treatment, with his prescription of opium, discloses multilayered contradictions within the assumptions of modernization. Jennings controls Blake's unconscious, and Blake symbolically returns to the past to repeat his crime in a trance, which reminds readers of the initial theft of the moonstone by the hands of his uncle British officer John Herncastle who was also "given up to smoking opium and collecting old books; sometimes he was reported to be trying strange things in chemistry" (31).

The foremost irony is that Blake is forced to go back to the past to complete his coming-of-age. To prove his marriageability and envision the progress of British national whole, he ironically needs to 'degenerate' first. To complete the narrative of detection through his coming-of-age, he needs to debunk the cultural assumptions of the narrative of coming-of-age first. In the late nineteenth-century culture of decadence, "failings or frustrations tend to be interpreted as the return to an earlier state, or the eruption of a past that has not been left behind, usually because it is aligned with intractable psychic forces antagonistic to civilization itself" (Adams 378). Published in 1868, the novel does not yet allow the fear of degeneration to subsume other thematic concerns; instead, the novel appropriates tropes of degeneration through opium, trances,

and mesmerism to complete the normative marriage plot. Nevertheless, an irony remains: Of the utmost importance in his coming-of-age is now not what Blake will do in the future but what he did in the past. As if he needs to reinforce this irony, he has returned to the past partly and "resumed the habit of smoking" to expedite the experiment (385).

During the experiment, Blake also becomes a mere object of gaze as a spectacle of the invoked unconsciousness. Blake's narrative records that "[t]he events of the next ten days—every one of them more or less directly connected with the experiment of which I was the passive object—are all placed on record, exactly as they happened, in the Journal habitually kept by Mr Candy's assistant" (392). His body becomes a text to be read, interpreted, and analyzed in "the proposed exhibition" (408). In the late nineteenth century, forensic science was developed and widely applied in both the metropolis and empire to better read, monitor, and discipline the body of British subjects. Ronald Thomas points out that "national professional organizations for analyzing and curing the body were formed, technologies for protecting and enhancing it were developed, business for exploiting and profiting from it thrived, and magazines for displaying and selling it achieved wide circulation" (*Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science* 17).[68] Blake's privileged, modern form of mobility and coming-of-age lead not to an autonomous individual with agency but to a passive object that allows its own component unknown even to itself to be mastered by the observers. The coming-of-age plot reveals its sheer irony through this climactic scene in such a way that it successfully maintains only its outward form toward the end

[68] See also Ronald Thomas's "*The Moonstone*, Detective Fiction and Forensic Science" for how modern forensic science, criminology, criminal anthropology, and other related disciplines make the individual and social body into a text that can be analyzed only by the expert in science.

of the novel. As a result, Blake's coming-of-age provides the final case of the deception-motif discussed above.

The story finishes with the conventional happy-ending of the coming-of-age plot: marriage symbolic of the restoration of national unity and a new baby symbolic of the generational continuity of that unity. However, as shown so far, the detective plot of the novel unfolds by revealing ironic distinction between the central character Blake's coming-of-age and the crucial agency to restore social order. The accelerating movement of people and items through the tightened interdependence between the imperial center and peripheries and the correspondent identity crisis in the metropolis magnify the deceptive nature of things and identity. This cultural context compromises the romantic ideal of the autonomous individual equipped only with a perspective bounded by existing national knowledge or experience. The detection in this social context instead requires scattered forms of agency with the boundary-crossing mobility and liminality. This type of agency in the novel is embodied by the subjects associated with margins, impersonality, uprootedness, and no fixed, localized culture to settle and reproduce. The word 'uprootedness' almost literally denotes the impossibility of the 'growing' of those liminal subjects of essential agency and implies that national unity and social order that seems to be restored in the end by Blake's coming-of-age is no more than wish-fulfilment. *The Moonstone* does not entirely negate the traditional coming-of-age story. Instead, it incorporates the coming-of-age story in order to maintain the image of national unity only after debunking the values underlying that normative coming-of-age. Blake's coming-of-age narrative supplements the detective fiction as its inner contradiction.

2. *The Sign of Four* and the Severance between Watson's Bildung and Holmes's Detection

Conan Doyle's detective fiction *The Sign of Four* is an obvious successor to *The Moonstone*. One of the characters in the novella is named after Mr. Ablewhite of *The Moonstone*, and, published twenty-two years after *The Moonstone*, also deals with imperial crimes, oriental invasion, and the restoration of organic national culture.[69] The narrative also reaches its denouement with the mystery solved, and one of the central characters—Sherlock Holmes's friend and assistant Dr. John Watson—marries Mary Morstan, which resolves the tension that has been developed throughout the plot between his individual desire and social norms. The story thus juxtaposes narratives of detection and coming-of-age again. The narrative of detection unfolds with the purpose of containing elusive threats owing to the accelerating imperial mobility in the form of ominous items and people and of reimagining national identity, and the narrative of coming-of-age depicts the completion of Watson's normative English subjectivity and heterosexual, intraracial modern family. I argue that *The Sign of Four*, in comparison with *The Moonstone*, illustrates notable changes in how the detective narrative enfolds the coming-of-age narrative, and those changes elucidate the evolution of detective fiction toward the turn of the century.

As the well-known second-person narrator of the Holmes series, Watson mediates between the almost unrealistically brilliant and agile Holmes and ordinary readers like Watson himself. He acknowledges Holmes's superior intelligence but occasionally challenges him so that Holmes can display his power of observation and logic to readers, who rely on him in detecting and solving threats posed to their nation. For example, earlier in the story Watson says to Holmes, "Now, I have here a watch which has recently come into my possession. Would you

[69] Lillian Nayder in "Victorian Detective Fiction" also focuses on Doyle's indebtedness to Collins, including the reappearance of the name Ablewhite, and illuminates the reinforcement of imperialist ideology through the ways Doyle reworks Collins's representation of imperial crimes.

have the kindness to let me have an opinion upon the character or habits of the late owner?" (10). Watson "intended it as a lesson against the somewhat dogmatic tone which [Holmes] occasionally assumed" (10). The result is, predictably, that Holmes once again provides an accurate picture of the owner to the point of embarrassing Watson, and Watson once again confirms both for himself and readers Holmes's incomparable superiority. Similar to Blake of *The Moonstone*, Watson has benefitted from modern education and experienced a wider world though limited to the bounds of British national culture and institutions; He engages in the profession of medicine and participated in the Afghanistan War. Just like Blake, however, his coming-of-age as a typical British subject fails to entail abilities to solve the case related to imperial crimes committed by British subjects, which unsettle the conventional values and institutions of modern British society such as family, the civilizing mission of empire, and the hierarchal distinction between the British and colonial natives.

A closer look better reveals the extent to which Watson's narrative embodies the traditional coming-of-age plot. While accompanying Holmes after the prison-breaker Jonathan Small and his Andaman Islander assistant Tonga, who have stolen the treasure that should return to Morstan, Watson oscillates between romantic desire and existing class boundaries, and his pursuit of synthesis between his individual desire and the traditional norm of social hierarchy intertwines with the process of solving the case and restoring national identity. As soon as the duo successfully recaptures the treasure, he fears that the treasure might place Morstan beyond his reach or that it might make his courtship sound mercenary: "Was it fair, was it honorable, that a half-pay surgeon should take such advantage of an intimacy which chance had brought about? Might she not look upon me as a mere vulgar fortune-seeker?" (50).

This development of complex interiority arising from the tension between Watson's individuality and social conventions parallels, but noticeably never disrupts, the duo's detective work:

> I had not the professional enthusiasm which carried my companion on, nor could I look at the matter as a mere abstract intellectual problem. . . . The treasure, however, was a different matter. That, or part of it, belonged rightfully to Miss Morstan. While there was a chance of recovering it I was ready to devote my life to the one object. True, if I found it, it would probably put her forever beyond my reach. Yet it would be a petty and selfish love which would be influenced by such a thought as that. If Holmes could work to find the criminals, I had a tenfold stronger reason to urge me on to find the treasure. (65)

The quote illustrates the parallel or rather severance between Holmes's detective work and Watson's romance. Holmes views this case as "a mere abstract intellectual problem" and proceeds accordingly whereas Watsons regards the entire process as his romantic desire to help his beloved one, although he provides his detective friend with no practical help. Compared to *The Moonstone*, the earlier development of the case in *The Sign of Four* attests to this widening structural gap between the coming-of-age and detective narratives.

As opposed to Watson, Holmes encompasses the knowledge and skills necessary to solve the case. As a private detective, Holmes belongs to no governmental institution but still assists police officers without earning any credit. Shpayer-Makov draws attention to this superiority of private detectives to official ones in detective fiction and points out that "side by side with a justification of the maintenance of order, the texts also propose resistance to state power. Moreover, they generally do not recommend strict bureaucratic means, but a reliance on

individual norms" (270). It is common to interpret the role of the private, gentlemanly literary detective as a cultural reaction to attenuate the power of the state "to coerce the individual to obey the law and state regulations for the good of society" (Shpayer-Makov 268). According to Shpayer-Makov, Holmes's private detective work resolves tension between competing liberal ideals of individualism and state intervention.[70]

This observation, however, does not accurately apply to Holmes's characterization. The eccentric individualism that Holmes evokes does not resonate properly with the liberal ideals of progress based on the autonomous individual's agency. The autonomous individual is crucial to the coming-of-age narrative alongside flexibly modulated national society, but what informs Holmes's coming-of-age is the absence or disruption of that modern, sovereign, well-rounded individuality. First, the opening passage depicts his cocaine addiction:

> For some little time his eyes rested thoughtfully upon the sinewy forearm and wrist all dotted and scarred with innumerable puncture-marks. Finally he thrust the sharp point home, pressed down the tiny piston, and sank back into the velvet-lined arm-chair with a long sigh of satisfaction. (5)

His cocaine addiction associates him with not the development of the liberal individuality but hints at potential degeneration and even impurities inherent in national identity.[71] Christopher Pittard also emphasizes that "[p]urity was an overdetermined term for the late Victorians. Discourses of degeneration and eugenics applied it to racial debates" (6). Although Holmes

[70] Caroline Reitz reframes this cultural need for detective fiction as the state's attempt to "reconcile the at times violent authority the nation needed for law and order with the mild justice that was the very justification for an expansion of its authority at home and abroad" (45).
[71] For an analysis of the representation of cocaine and the abject in the novel and how Holmes himself embodies the abject to detect other abject figures to reveal imperial anxieties, see Benjamin D. O'Dell.

never allows his decadent features to subject him entirely, his inner impurity suggests that his agency— "the last and highest court of appeal in detection" in his own words—possibly contradicts the British national identity he professes to protect and restore (6).

An amateur artist, connoisseur, and avid reader of European literature, Holmes "abhor[s] the dull routine existence" and "crave[s] for mental exaltation" (6). He laments even the commonplaceness of crimes, and pursues exquisite forms of stimulus, otherwise relying on drugs. Holmes seems to be "seeking like all the distinguished aesthetes of his century—like Des Esseintes and Dorian Gray, like Poe, Baudelaire, Swinburne, and Pater—to escape from the 'commonplace,' to free himself from what Baudelaire denominates '*les noirs ennuis*'" (Barolsky 93; italics in original). All the power to protect Britishness and discipline the national boundaries against foreign threats originates from this single character of Holmes, but ironically he uproots himself from common British culture, suggesting no possibility of synthesis with his society as crucial to the notion of the Bildung. Holmes is "a hero without a plot, a displaced person" (McLaughlin 57). Other aspects of his character bring into light his impersonality, if not inhumanness, and his voluntary alienation from the ethos of bourgeois individualism. He embodies the surreal power of pure reason and eliminates any emotional side from his detective work: "Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science, and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner. You have attempted to tinge it with romanticism, which produces much the same effect as if you worked a love-story or an elopement into the fifth proposition of Euclid" (7).

His distinction from the romantic ideal of bourgeois individualism is further expressed through his disturbing misogyny and indifference to romance, which implies the absence of reproductive possibilities in his character and negates the possibility of his coming-of-age in a

conventional fashion. Holmes claims that "Women are never to be entirely trusted,— not the best of them" (70). After he successfully solves the case and Watson announces his engagement with Morstan, Holmes says, "But love is an emotional thing, and whatever is emotional is opposed to that true cold reason which I place above all things. I should never marry myself, lest I bias my judgment" (117). The impossibility of generational continuity further accentuates his isolation from normative English culture in close conjunction with which the autonomous individual's coming-of-age would arise in the Bildungsroman. Although he is already well-known in Britain for his almost surreal detective work, his "name figures in no newspaper. The work itself, the pleasure of finding a field for my peculiar powers, is my highest reward" (2). Ultimately, his uprootedness from common society and impersonality accentuate the sheer severance between his detective plot and Watson's coming-of-age narrative within the larger framework of the plot despite the duo's physical adjacency and apparent comradeship. Detective work always occurs somewhere else from coming-of-age despite their physical and discursive proximity.

In the social context of the late nineteenth century, in which identity is increasingly subject to measuring, detecting, reshaping, and manipulating, the Holmes figure amplifies this transformation of subjectivity to the point where he embodies not merely a malleable identity but a purely functional existence.[72] With his machine-like reasoning and aestheticism, Holmes disavows not just traditional social ties but also, through his decadent features, the liberal ideals of progress centered upon the modern individual. The novel suggests that only the liminality,

[72] Diane Simmons analyzes Holmes through the lens of 'imperial narcissism' and argues that he is a fantasy of narcissistic grandiosity against the fears of the other: "[b]alancing these fears is a grandiose wish for omnipotence found in the near omniscience with which Sherlock Holmes can solve seemingly insoluble problems. . . . Finally, the near-magical nature of Holmes' abilities of detection betrays the narcissist fear that such power is not real, but only a fantasy" (76).

mobility, and unrootedness of the Holmes character functions as an effective counterstrategy to detect and fend off similarly elusive, boundary-violating, and protean threats. In this regard, the novel illustrates how the characterization of the literary detective reflects the blurred boundary of Englishness as it turns out that the English are criminals and Jonathan Small is more attached to the natives than to the corrupt English officers who betrayed him. Joseph W. Childers also calls attention to "the presence of the taint from within, that which can be neither repudiated nor absorbed. This internal filth threatens to expose the limits of Englishness, the national character, as permeable and unstable" (203).

The accelerating imperial movement of people and items in the late nineteenth century further blurs the normative boundaries that the mid-century Victorian modernity upholds, including, but not limited to, those between the domestic and foreign, between the civilized and savage, and between the metropolis and jungle. Most of all, the treasures robbed in the midst of the Indian Mutiny of 1857 generate the domestic issue of inheritance for the Morstans and Sholtos in London. According to Reitz, "considering Doyle's imbrication of foreign and domestic worlds, it makes better sense to assume that in an age of Empire, the domestic has indeed become international and vice versa" (71).

In face of this type of threat, the traditional interpretative network based on coherent national culture and conventional knowledge is disturbingly impotent. Holmes's knowledge covers the globe, and he benefits from recently established taxonomic scholarship such as physical anthropology designed to expedite surveillance over natives. To solve the complex case and, first of all, identify the Andaman Islander who murdered Bartholomew, Holmes uses a contemporary science journal:

> "This is the first volume of a gazetteer which is now being published. . . . 'The aborigines of the Andaman Islands may perhaps claim the distinction of being the smallest race upon this earth, . . . They are a fierce, morose, and intractable people, though capable of forming most devoted friendships when their confidence has once been gained.'" (69)

Holmes enjoys the full access to this professional source of knowledge that was then being established in the center of empire to monitor and control identity, while he himself eludes that taxonomic grid of knowledge.[73] Holmes switches between identities with disguises, and his agility and sharpness even evoke animalistic characteristics: "So swift, silent, and furtive were his movements, like those of a trained blood-hound picking out a scent" (44). John McBratney argues of Holmes's resistance to categorization that "his almost supernatural powers of detection make him a figure so extraordinary that he eludes percentages and, therefore, escapes the statistician who would assign him to an aggregate type" (161). At one point, he disguises himself as an old, haggard sailor, but at another he moves nimbly like the Andaman Tonga. Holmes could be deemed as a fantasy of the coming-of-age narrative: Holmes can 'age' to any direction at his whims.

Holmes's exclusive agency, nevertheless, turns out incapable to solve imperial crimes completely since his abilities are limited to disciplining the imperial center and neither reach 'the contact zone' of imperial peripheries where the crime originally occurs nor alter the fundamental

[73] For a brief adumbration of the establishment of new fields of study in reaction to imperial expansion in the Victorian era, see John McBratney, "Racial and Criminal Type: Indian Ethnography and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of Four*."

imperial politico-economic structure.[74] Holmes's detective work is fundamentally temporary and superficial. On the verge of being captured, Small does "throw the treasure into the Thames rather than let it go to kith or kin of Sholto or of Morstan . . . . You'll find the treasure where the key is, and where little Tonga is" (96). The treasures and the 'savage' Andaman Islander Tonga are lost under the Thames—the marrow of the imperial center. This metaphorically as well as literally points to the inseparability between home and away and the existence of the 'savage' within civilization under the imperial imaginative and politico-economic structure. I agree with Childers that "contamination by the other . . . is too much for any one person to defend against. The result is an imperial filth that has become, like the Agra treasure, peremptorily English, inhering in Englishness itself" (218). Operating only in the metropolis to detect and quarantine threats against social order only on the surface, Holmes's supernatural force remains limited.

What decisively reveals the limits of Holmes's agency—the agency he wields at the expense of conventional coming-of-age—is another coming-of-age narrative, of the fallen colonial Jonathan Small. Situated in the text just prior to the final resolution in which Watson marries Morstan, Small's peculiar coming-of-age account structurally punctures Watson's. In this framed narrative, he first narrates to Holmes, Watson, and the police detective Athelney Jones about how he grew up among small farmers in Worcestershire but "got into a mess over a girl, and could only get out of it again by taking the queen's shilling and joining the 3d Buffs, which was just starting for India" (97). His coming-of-age differentiates itself from a conventional coming-of-age that envisions a social whole through the protagonist's action and

[74] Mary Louise Pratt also emphasizes colonial peripheries in her deployment of the term "contact zones." The term refers to "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the word today" (34).

socialization. On the contrary, Small's displacement to the imperial periphery is "a reimagining of national identity that excluded specific actors from the realm of the dominant culture" (O'Dell 992). He narrates about how he became invalid out of the army after losing a leg in an unfortunate accident and briefly worked as a plantation overseer until the Indian Mutiny in 1857.

Later when he was standing on sentry at the Agra fortress, he was trapped by two Sikhs. The Sikhs ask Small to join them in the murder and robbery, unequivocally revealing the dark nature of British imperial projects: "We only ask you to do that which your countrymen come to this land for. We ask you to be rich" (102). Smalls describes to his audience how he felt at that critical moment:

> "Whether Achmet the merchant lived or died was a thing as light as air to me, but at the talk about the treasure my heart turned to it, and I thought of what I might do in the old country with it, and how my folk would stare when they saw their ne'er-do-well coming back with his pockets full of gold moidored." (103)

As these quotes suggest, his own coming-of-age narrative hinges on the fact that colonial space is where 'civilized' British moralities are nullified as opposed to the common imperialistic rhetoric. Also at the scene of the murder, Small and the three Sikhs swear mutual fealty, which is ironically the only lasting loyalty in the colonial space, especially in contrast to Major Sholto and Captain Morstan who callously abandon their pact with Small.

Small's mobility and the intimacies he forms with Indians reminds us of the title character of Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*. Whereas Kim serves for the British-raj through his liminality as Holmes does in the metropolis, Small's intimacy with Indians leads to murder,

robbery, and the serious compromise of the morality that British Empire claims to promulgate.[75] British-India is "depicted by Conan Doyle as a land where people arrive with no history or matrix of reference, where no connection is fixed or preordained and all ties are up for grabs" (McCrea 78). Yumna Siddiqi further elaborates upon the bifurcated literary modes of the British colonial's social mobility in imperial peripheries and the social repercussions of their return: "some colonials are marginal, physically ravaged characters who threaten the peace, while others are their respectable counterparts who attain middle-class or even gentry status by virtue of their colonial wealth" (70). She points out that this class of the imperial lumpen-proletariat, epitomized by Jonathan Small, bears "witness to a social stratification by class in colonial societies that was at odds with imperial ideology" (75). Small's case illustrates the vivid class divergence for the British in imperial peripheries and debunks the ideology of imperialism as supporting a social whole and unity in remote areas in which ideal comings-of-age could be imagined. Small's peculiar coming-of-age arises from the moral and social anomie of empire and both structurally and thematically disrupts Watson's conventional coming-of-age story on the verge of its completion and calls its universal applicability into question.

The denouement of the story, rather than solving, displays the provinciality of Watson's coming-of-age and of its cultural assumptions. The loss of the treasures allows Watson to complete his romance and marry Morstan without lingering class tensions. A new professional bourgeois, Watson successfully overcomes his anxieties, and his bourgeois interiority finds peace with his society. The seemingly successful restoration of national identity against foreign

[75] Patrick Brantlinger explores the theme of going native represented in the nineteenth-century literature and argues "[t]he threat of racial degeneration among whites at home and in the colonies raised the specter of 'the imperial race' itself falling prey to a collective form of going native" (67).

threats affirms the ideology of normative family, apparently completing the totality of life. In this sense, the detective narrative integrates the coming-of-age narrative in the same fashion as in *The Moonstone*, although it is only after the cultural assumptions and beliefs of Watson's coming-of-age have turned out to be incapable of solving late-nineteenth century imperial threats in the context of accelerating movements and contacts of people, items, and cultures.

However, the extent to which the coming-of-age narrative of Watson severs from the detective narrative of Holmes qualitatively differentiates *The Sign of Four* from *The Moonstone* in their respective reformulation of the Bildungsroman. In the latter, although Blake's coming-of-age does not present any significant agency to solve the problem, it remains thematically and structurally central to the detective work described in the novel. Blake presents himself as a body to be observed in Ezra Jennings's experiment in order solely to prove his innocence and marriageability. Even though he acts as a passive object to be gazed at, and he symbolically repeats the past and 'degenerates,' the narrative momentum to complete his coming-of-age still drives the detective work that targets at restoring national unity and purity.

In *The Sign of Four*, on the contrary, Watson's self-reflection, the development of his interiority, romance, and final marriage—the entire unfolding of Watson's framed narrative of coming-of-age—do not essentially engage in the work of detection at all. As discussed earlier, the ending describes how Watson's coming-of-age and the detective work converge: Watson exclaims, "Whoever had lost a treasure, I knew that night that I had gained one" (94). However, as opposed to *The Moonstone*, the detective work does not 'aim' at the completion of coming-of-age. In short, Holmes does not need Watson. Nor does he work for him. The juxtaposition of the coming-of-age and detective narratives is remarkably arbitrary, and they do not thematically supplement each other but parallel until the awkward denouement in which a few days of

acquaintance lead the couple to marriage. The awkwardly abrupt progress of Watson's romance and marriage during only a few days that Holmes's needs to complete his detection calls into question even the raison d'être of Watson's coming-of-age framed narrative. To sum up, the conventional coming-of-age narrative expresses the ideal of modern historical progress containable within organic national society, whereas the late nineteenth-century detective fiction is a cultural expression to eliminate threats aimed at the center of modernizing power. The virtual rupture, or at best tenuous connection, between the two narratives in *The Sign of Four* accentuates the naivety of the coming-of-age story and a socially displaced, fantastic nature of the detective work. That rupture was not yet fully developed twenty-two years earlier in *The Moonstone*.

The current chapter investigated how two well-known detective fictions incorporate the coming-of-age narrative to portray the success of detection at the expense of the cultural assumptions of the Bildungsroman. The comparative study of the two texts also explored the evolving role the coming-of-age narrative plays in creating a structural tension in detective fiction. Nevertheless, the ending of both novels manifests that the form of the coming-of-age plot still persists. This ultimately implies that detective fiction is a cultural expression of the Victorian belief that those uncertainties and anxieties about the ideals of modernity, which literary modernism later explores, are still fundamentally containable. If tenuous, fragile, and revelatory of self-contradiction under scrutiny, the apparent completion of coming-of-age in these detective fictions denotes Victorian psychological confidence. The previous chapter analyzed how Becky's mobility and coming-of-age in *Vanity Fair* marks the bounds of realism and Englishness. A couple decades later, the coming-of-age narratives in *The Moonstone* and *The Sign of Four* maintain the normative façade of detective fiction. Even that façade collapses

in modernism, and the next chapter will discuss the evolution, or degeneration, of the coming-of-age narrative in the early twentieth century.

Chapter III: *A Passage to India* and *Sunset Song*: Two Modernist Rewritings of the Bildungsroman

The early twentieth century witnessed the accelerating movement of commodities and people within empire and beyond due to the rapid ascent of speculative finance capital and the tighter interdependence between the metropolis and peripheries. Intense global rivalries against other European and North American powers for more global markets, the Great War, the decreasing politico-economic and moral status of the Empire, and numerous domestic social and cultural movements against the bourgeois establishment rendered it inevitable for many British writers in the 1920s to question the fundamental assumptions of modernity. They started to openly resist, or even negate, the Enlightenment tradition of human agency, universal morality, the civilizing role of imperial projects, organic national culture, and the sustainability of capitalist social relations. They expressed their response to this period of significant social upheavals through artistic experiments, which are widely known as 'modernist.'[76]

As an artistic response to the disorienting and unsettling social milieu under the imperial world system, literary modernism often transformed traditional literary genres, including the Bildungsroman, in ways that revealed or even debunked the cultural and ideological foundations of those conventional genres. This chapter starts with a claim that modernist writers did not simply discard the classical Bildungsroman as the ideal, and increasingly anachronistic, literary form of synthesis between radical changes of modernization and the bounds of national

[76] 1920s are generally considered as the age of high modernism, but when modernism began and ended is subject to debate. Peter Childs holds that modernist practices as responses to the extremity or crisis in modernization began to emerge in the mid-nineteenth century but that modernism is "primarily located in the years from 1890 to 1930," earlier in Continental Europe and somewhat later in Britain (*Modernism* 19)

community. Instead, this chapter argues that modernists rewrote the classical Bildungsroman to reveal the contradiction in its ideology as well as to express new tropes of ageing that more accurately symbolize the relation between self and society during their time. I analyze E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* published in 1924 and *Sunset Song* by Lewis Grassic Gibbon (the pseudonym of James Leslie Mitchell) in 1932 and discuss how the two writers develop modernist themes and styles through the (failed) Bildung of their respective female character. The comparative study of the two works also explores how their distinct modes of rewriting the Bildungsroman reflect the uneven experience of the forces of modernization, generating different modernist techniques. Investigating the two distinct modes of coming-of-age thus ultimately helps us to redefine modernism and widen its generic scope in a way that better appreciates diverse literary achievements of the time and wider social conditions they represent.

The two literary works have many advantages for the purposes of my research. Besides the temporal proximity, the foremost comparative advantage lies in that both novels portray a young woman as one of their protagonists, and each narrative stays focused on her perception and experience of central events of the novel. Each story deals with her attempt to come of age and her marriage which, whether it eventually takes place or not, operates as a major narrative momentum. In *A Passage to India*, Adela Quested, a young bourgeois woman, enjoys the privileged bourgeois mobility to imperial peripheries and attempts to come of age in a particular imperial setting. On the other hand, *Sunset Song* is the first part of Lewis Grassic Gibbon's trilogy, *A Scots Quair*.[77] As opposed to Adela, however, Chris Guthrie's coming of age does not involve privileged transnational mobility but occurs rooted in her local rural community in the

[77] I will analyze only *Sunset Song* not only for the limited scope of the chapter but also because *Sunset Song* covers the main character Chris Guthrie's formative years.

northeast of Scotland. An analysis of Chris's Bildung helps to provincialize Adela's experience and style of ageing as a young bourgeois woman's.

Another merit of the two novels for my research is their stylistic ambiguities or generically transitional status. *A Passage to India* is not generally considered as one of 'high' modernist works such as *Ulysses* or *Mrs. Dalloway*. The transitional status of the novel between Victorian realism and modernism makes it particularly eligible for my exploration of stylistic transformations in the early twentieth century. This chapter delves into its generic ambiguities by analyzing how the representation of coming-of-age in British India in the early twentieth century anticipates the classical realist Bildungsroman but instead ends up engendering modernist techniques.

On the other hand, Lewis Grassic Gibbon is generally regarded as a central figure of the Scottish Renaissance in the early twentieth century which sought for cultural independence from England. *Sunset Song* integrates Scottish language, myths, and traditional folk cultures, resulting in peculiar literary experiments that reflect an important facet of the Scottish experience of modernization. Nevertheless, the novel has not often been interpreted as modernist but generally as part of Scottish regional literature.[78] This chapter maintains that *Sunset Song* brings into light different social conditions leading not to canonical metropolitan modernism but to no less a peculiar and essential way of representing social upheavals of the time between the wars. Combined together, the two novels illustrate how different localities and social conditions from

[78] Despite Gibbon's canonical status as a modern Scottish writer, for example, Michael Levenson in his exhaustive work on modernism never mentions Gibbon nor *Sunset Song*. On the contrary, in a recently published *International Companion to Lewis Grassic Gibbon*, the first essay is titled "Lewis Grassic Gibbon and Modernism," which suggests the tenuous or unacknowledged relation between the two. The author of the essay Morag Shiach discusses how one can better understand Gibbon's oeuvre by situating it in relations with modernism.

the metropolis rewrite the classical Bildungsroman in distinct fashions and respectively contribute to the rise of modernism.[79]

The critical tradition on *A Passage to India* is comprehensive, reflecting its canonical status. Earlier criticisms draw attention to the novel's representation of Forster's liberalist ideology and its limits. Lionel Trilling, for example, analyzes Forster's anti-imperial liberalism and at the same time how his liberal and Christian values are negated in India. Malcolm Bradbury also investigates how the novel carries liberal ideals such as reason and universal morality while depicting the sense of disorientation and ambiguity in the meaning of experience. Later criticisms tend to reinforce this focus on the ambiguities in the novel but often situate it in conversation with more explicit ideological issues of imperialism, gender and race. Benita Parry elaborates on Forster's depiction of many aspects of India which are not incorporated by the western imperial interpretative grid. According to her, Forster does not completely transcend his historical contexts as a liberal bourgeois intellectual, but his nonconformist dispositions still generated a dissentient, though not radical, stance. Jenny Sharpe points out that the alleged sexual assault on Adela alludes to both the 1857 Mutiny and 1919 the Amritsar Massacre and that the novel critiques the imperialist deployment of the rape of English women by Indians as a sexist and racist symbol to justify the rule of empire. Recent criticisms continue to cover a wide spectrum of topics: the novel as debunking of imperial romance (Davidis) or the provinciality of the Mediterranean Renaissance ideals (Shaheen).

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[79] Many recent modernist studies focus on expanding the spectrum of modernism. Peter Childs notes that "[m]odernism has predominantly been represented in white, male, heterosexist, Euro-American middle-class terms, and any of the recent challenges to each of these aspects either reorients the term itself and dilutes the elitism of a pantheon of modernist writers, or introduces another one of a plurality of modernism (*Modernism* 13). For recent attempts to situate modernism in transnational, relational, and ecological contexts, see Susan Friedman, Jessica Berman, Rebecca Walkowitz, and John Brannigan.

Criticisms of *Sunset Song* are not particularly abundant compared to those of *A Passage to India*. As noted above, *Sunset Song* has often been discussed as part of Scottish regional literature, and as a result failed to receive much critical attention it deserves. Scholars who specialize in Scottish literature have attempted to point out thematic as well as stylistic peculiarities of the novel and their wider resonance outside the limited cultural realm of the early twentieth-century Scottish Renaissance—the kind of resonance underpinned by the fact that Gibbon's commitment to Scottish nationalism was never consistent. Timothy Baker navigates the ways the novel blurs the multi-layered boundaries between the Scottish and the English, romance and realism, and history and myth. Baker points out that Gibbon constantly searches for a gray area, a middle way between opposing experiences or values. Cairns Craig explores how Gibbon depicts communal voices and values against which he allows his own political and ideological viewpoints to be evaluated. Hanne Tange turns to linguistics issues and maintains that Gibbon magnifies the relation between language and social status, illuminating the tension between Scots as local, traditional and subordinate language and English as elite and cosmopolitan language which prompts social mobility. Other critics emphasize rather explicit social critiques by Gibbon and his novel. For example, Roy Johnson attends to how the novel depicts the destructive force of the political and economic system on the Scottish crofters' community. Glenda Norquay calls attention to the fact that Gibbon often uses strong female characters as central to his narratives and discusses how he uses those characters to express his own resistance against dominant social norms.

1. *A Passage to India*, Adela's Frustrated Bildung, and Modernism

In *A Passage to India,* Adela Quested is a young woman who aspires for authentic opportunities to grow up spiritually and socially in a new environment of British India. Upon arriving in India, she wants "to see the *real* India" and to figure out whether Ronny, her fiancée, is the right partner to marry (17; emphasis in original). When she says that "I'm tired of seeing picturesque figures pass before me as a frieze," she clarifies her attitude not to passively accept the established views and norms of her British-Indian community (21). Critically observing how other young people of her generation merely embody and reproduce the normative ideas and behavioral codes that their community imposes upon them, she avows that she will attain her genuine knowledge for her authentic growth to adulthood:

> Adela thought of the young men and women who had come out before her, . . . had been set down to the same food and the same ideas, and been snubbed in the same good-humored way until they kept to the accredited themes and began to snub others. "I should never get like that," she thought, for she was young herself. (41)

In that Adela also attempts to settle down eventually in the form of heterosexual marriage while pursuing her authentic education and inner maturity, she intends to reconcile her individuality to her British-Indian society in a dialectic fashion. Hence the earlier character development of Adela anticipates the plot of the classical Bildungsroman. Mohammad Shaheen is right in pointing out that "Adela who somehow stands for British morality arriving in India to decide whether a more lasting home beyond the Lake District (where she first met Ronny) would materialize" (97). As a bourgeois woman whose fiancée is a magistrate serving the British-Indian government, she is entitled to the privileged imperial mobility that allows her to reach a brave new world and try the ideal synthesis of the Bildungsroman, rather than searching for a mere

means of survival and job opportunities in colonies. Rejecting the conventional knowledge, desiring to educate herself about her surroundings in the imperial setting, and aspiring to know better about her future husband in order to achieve heterosexual and intranational marriage, Adela entertains primary characteristics of the protagonist of the classical Bildungsroman.

Upon her arrival, however, the British-Indian community to which Adela now belongs vexes her plan to grow in the ways symbolized by the Bildungsroman. First of all, as part of strategies to maintain their imperial rule over Indians in the periphery of empire, the British-Indian community overstresses the cohesiveness and the discipline of their culture so as not to leave room for the development of individuality. A number of scenes indicate that private and autonomous ideas through which Adela is supposed to develop and protect her own individuality are constantly marginalized or threatened. For example, Mrs. Moore—Ronny's mother—witnesses that when his son tries to excuse himself for judging Indians in a derogatory manner, he merely repeats words that could secure him a safe footing in his bureaucratic organization, rather than speaking up his own mind: "'India isn't home,' he retorted, rather rudely, but in order to silence her he had been using phrases and arguments that he had picked up from older officials, and he did not feel quite sure of himself" (27). Davidis is correct in pointing out that "[t]he British projects for the mapping of India had been completed for many years, leaving bureaucracy to command a gridded colony, one that has no blank spaces to fill in" (266).

While talking about a British play they watched together, Mrs. Moore also "noticed now how tolerant and conventional his judgments had become; when they had seen *Cousin Kate* in London together in the past, he had scorned it; now he pretended that it was a good play in order to hurt nobody's feelings" (34). When one's life is reduced to conforming to the appropriate role-playing imposed by social norms, the motif of theatricality as one's identity arises. In the

imperial outpost, British public ethos infiltrates and governs every sector of one's private life, and an individual's identity is reduced to merely 'performing' their assigned compulsory roles. Under this situation, one's effort to develop independent individuality is hard to materialize and one's attempt to synthesize individuality with society and thus achieve the Bildung is forestalled.

Several metaphors also represent the encroachment upon individual psychology by public ethos. For example, the net imagery suggests the disciplinary codes of behavior which stifle the germination of individuality in this British Indian society: "The roads, named after victorious generals and intersecting at right angles, were symbolic of the net Great Britain had thrown over India" (10). Mrs. Moore envisages the annihilation of the private space within her national community in India when she sees a wasp: "Perhaps he mistook the peg for a branch— no Indian animal has any sense of an interior. Bats, rats, birds, insects will as soon nest inside a house as out" (28). In this unique social milieu of the imperial setting which features repressive socialization, Adela's assent to be engaged with Ronny does not guarantee her the sense of synthesizing the individual's freedom with social codes in a voluntary manner, which culminates in the classical Bildungsroman like *Pride and Prejudice*.

Instead, Adela senses that she is expected to merely adopt a role assigned by her society and has to discard her spiritual journey. Adela "had meant to revert to her former condition of important and cultivated uncertainty, but it had passed out of her reach at its appropriate hour. Unlike the green bird or the hairy animal, she was labelled now" (88). As Peter Childs argues, the narrative "places a question mark over Forster's abiding belief in personal relations in general, but over marriage in particular" (200). This outpost of empire does not allow marriage to be a young character's culmination of maturity in the sense of the Bildungsroman. Adela starts

to realize that marriage in her community might be a social discipline that represses one's own interiority and sexuality.

Adela becomes most seriously suspicious of her marriage without the genuine feeling of love when she comes on the verge of experiencing the alleged sexual assault in one of the Marabar caves. The caves, as a metonym of India which is beyond Europeans' epistemological grasp, throw into light the limits of liberal British values, such as human agency, individual autonomy, love, marriage, and all personal relations, in which Adela is supposed to nurture. Childs points out that "[h]er journey to them [the caves] is thus associated from the start with overtones of love's place in her proposed marriage to Ronny" ("*A Passage to India*" 196). Adela initially regards the exploration of the caves as an opportunity to foster her spiritual and intellectual growth; however, the caves turn out to be a space that frustrates her marriage plan as well as negates all the humanistic values that she is supposed to internalize:

> Whatever is said, the same monotonous noise replies, and quivers up and down the walls until it is absorbed into the roof "Boum" is the sound as far as the human alphabet can express it, or "bou-oum," or "ou-boum," –utterly dull. Hope, politeness, the blowing of a nose, the squeak of a boot, all produce "boum." (141).

As Peter Morey points out, "[b]eyond the mental horizon of British India, things are always taking on and shaking off meaning seemingly at random. In that sense they can never be brought under Britain's discursive control" (265).

This semantic lacuna in the novel testifies to the limits on British-India's liberal approach to and representation of India and to the collapse of the ideals of the Bildungsroman that Adela attempts to embody. Many aspects of India that are not grasped by the Western interpretative

network show that the imperial outpost in India does not provide Adela with a knowable and stable space in which she can grow up as a typical protagonist of the Bildungsroman, reproducing and celebrating the progressive, but not revolutionary, model of modernity through her national community. In the caves, Europeans lose their universalizing liberal beliefs that they carry such as the reasoning ability and human agency in order to dominate the outer worlds: "Nothing, nothing attaches to them [the caves], and their reputation—for they have one— does not depend upon human speech" (118). Forster suggests that "in the metaphysical aspect . . . reason is useless" in unknown cultures like India (Hawkins 61). Levenson notes that modernism marks "the shift from realism to impressionism, from the world-as-it-is to the world-as-it-appears. As such, it, too, can take on an aspect of skepticism: doubts about the possibility of linguistic reference can correspond to doubts about the objectivity of the world" (98). Forster starts with a seemingly typical Victorian fiction centered upon the narrative of coming-of-age but toward the midst of the novel develops modernist themes against this imperial environment.[80]

In rereading *A Passage to India* as the failed Bildungsroman, one should also note that Mrs. Moore undergoes the same epistemological crisis as Adela although she is the one expected to provide Adela with a role-model on her way to maturity. Mrs. Moore, who has internalized liberal values for a longer period than Adela has, faces a more serious psychological trauma due to the collapse of the founding assumptions of her life:

> But suddenly, at the edge of her mind, Religion appeared, poor little talkative Christianity, and she knew that all its divine words from "Let there be Light" to

[80] See Benita Parry for another analysis of Forster's critique of liberal Victorian values. She also argues that the novel's self-reflexivity, semantic lacunae, and critique of the western values all testify to its advancement to modernist styles and themes, and explores how the development of modernist styles accompanies a critique of imperialism.

> "It is finished" only amounted to "boum." Then she was terrified over an area larger than usual; the universe, never comprehensible to her intellect, offered no repose to her soul, . . . and she realized that she didn't want to write to her children, didn't want to communicate with anyone, not even with God. (144).

Whereas Adela is about to launch the exploration of the world and self and is thus at the first stage of the developmental narrative of the Bildungsroman, Mrs. Moore is supposed to be a synthesizing adult figure who represents the stabilizing power of existing social norms and values. As the quoted passage vividly shows, however, this narrative in the outpost of empire presents not an individually and socially mature adulthood but a problematic adult character who becomes completely disillusioned with the entire values that underlie her civilization, such as human agency, reason, family, and Christianity.

When Aziz's trial approaches, Mrs. Moore becomes extremely apathetic and isolates herself from worldly affairs: "Why all this marriage, marriage? . . . The human race would have become a single person centuries ago if marriage was any use. And all this rubbish about love, love in a church, love in a cave, as if there is the least difference, and I held up from my business over such trifles!" (195). The novel, as a frustrated Bildungsroman, implies that in the periphery of empire, an individual person's growth might not lead to spiritual maturity or the harmonizing of individuality and socialization but highlight the dissonance between them. Hence the novel renounces the Victorian faith in the dialectical and safely modulated progress of modernity that the traditional Bildungsroman exemplifies.

Other potential role-models for Adela in terms of the Bildungsroman—the adult British-Indian characters—are also portrayed in a skeptical perspective especially around the social

panic that the alleged sexual assault on Adela incurred. Living in the periphery of empire far from their homeland, those British adults are keenly conscious of the time period of their residence in India and of the experience that they believe they have gained during that period. However, the growth and experience that they claim do not entail moral maturity or the reconciliation of individuality and socialization. Instead, their growth in India merely represents the mechanical accumulation of time and the petrification and reinforcement of racial and gender prejudices that they employ in order to perpetuate their superior positions.

For example, when the Collector, Mr. Turton, argues with Mr. Fielding on Aziz's case, he relies on the period during which he stayed in India to support his conviction of Aziz's guilt:

> "It does indeed. I have had twenty-five years' experience of this country"—he paused, and "twenty-five years" seemed to fill the waiting-room with their staleness and ungenerosity—"and during those twenty-five years I have never known anything but disaster result when English people and Indians attempt to be intimate socially." (158)

The period itself of his residence and service in India exerts authoritative power over the fellow British. However, as the narrator's choice of words such as "staleness" and "ungenerosity" indicates, Mr. Turton's own ageing in India has led to only reinforcing his bureaucratic authority without resulting in moral maturity. Abdul R JanMohamed is correct when he says:

> [S]ince the colonialist wants to maintain his privileges by preserving the status quo, his representation of the world contains neither a sense of historical becoming, nor a concrete vision of a future different from the present, nor a teleology other than the infinitely postponed process of 'civilizing.' (22)

The imperial space of the novel not only stunts Adela's Bildung but also fails to provide proper advisers for her. The British adults either alienate themselves from society like Mrs. Moore or discard individuality in favor of all-encompassing racial and national biases.[81]

The middle-aged British man, Cyril Fielding, is the only adult who shows certain signs of maturity and flexibility upon which young British people like Adela might be modelled in the novel. Fielding criticizes British-Indians' racial ideology and sides with Aziz relying only on his firm individual and independent conviction that Aziz is innocent. He also persuades Aziz not to claim too harsh a compensation against Adela after he is proved innocent in the court. Fielding tries to be tolerant to everybody and remains sensible while everybody is immersed in group ideologies.

His retention of a liberal mind and resistance against group ideologies is, nevertheless, partly due to the fact that he does not have the sense of belonging anywhere and "travel[s] light" (114). Travelling lightly, he does not stick to any cliques or communal sentiments, and thus, while displaying at least certain liberal virtues that others adults are in want of in this British-Indian society, he does not represent any bounded, organic community in which Adela could socialize and settle. After his first meeting with Aziz, which was not particularly satisfactory, "'I shall not really be intimate with this fellow,' Fielding thought, and then 'nor with anyone.' That was the corollary" (111). Fielding "really didn't mind, that he was content to help people, and like them as long as they didn't object, and if they objected, pass on serenely" (111).

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[81] On the modernist Bildungsroman and the frustration of its developmental logic, Esty also notes that "[a]s the national referent was increasingly embedded in the matrix of colonial modernity, the destinies of persons, and the peoples they represent, had to include not only the story of progress, but also stories of stasis, regression, and hyperdevelopment" (*Unseasonable Youth* 25).

After Fielding finally changes his lifestyle by marrying Stella, a daughter of Mrs. Moore, and settles down in the British society, he aligns himself with the oppressors of India and he represents their ideas to Aziz, rendering their personal interracial relationship more fragile: "He had thrown in his lot with Anglo-India by marrying a country woman, and his was acquiring some of its limitations" (312). He even jeers by saying to Aziz, "Who do you want instead of the English? The Japanese?" (315). Although his open-mindedness still distinguishes him from other British adults, and he stays in friendly relations with Aziz, his vision of reconciliation that might overcome social and national divisions ultimately remains in purely personal relations. The limited scope of this personal vision under larger colonial contexts is clearly noted by the final lines of the novel: "the temples, the tank, the jail the palaces, the birds, the carrion, the Guest House, that came into view as [Fielding and Aziz] issued from the gap and saw Mau beneath: they didn't want it, they said in their hundred voices, 'No, not yet, and the sky said, 'No, not there" (316). Fielding testifies to the irreconcilable dissonance between the individual and society for the British subject in this socially fractured colonial environment and to the implausibility of a social whole that the classical Bildungsroman would symbolize through organic national culture. Even his socially limited virtues like his liberalism and independent individuality rely on his privileged entitlement to a mode of mobility—"travel lightly"—among diverse social and racial groups. This is certainly a male-bourgeois privilege to which Adela has no full access.

After the accident in the caves, the gender ideology that surfaces in tandem with British nationalism further hints that this society is hardly flexible enough to accommodate autonomous individuality in the environment of the imperial periphery. The prevalence of gender ideology during the commotion over Adela's case operates to objectify and fetishize young British women

in such a way that it becomes improbable for those young women to find an authentic way for coming-of-age.[82] The British, who have never cared much for Adela before, now start to regard her as embodying national femininity that they should protect collectively at any expense: "Although Miss Quested had not made herself popular with the English, she brought out all that was fine in their character. For a few hours an exalted emotion gushed forth . . . . 'What can we do for our sister?' was the only thought of Mesdames Callendar and Lesley" (173).

Also Mrs. Blakiston, who has not enjoyed much attention from her fellow British due to her relatively low-class status, is now symbolized as the national emblem at stake: "The wife of a small railway official, she was generally snubbed; but this evening, with her abundant figure and masses of corn-gold hair, she symbolized all that is worth fighting and dying for; more permanent a symbol, perhaps, than poor Adela" (175). Davidis is right in remarking that this nationalist discourse "use[s] women only as a tool and thereby create[s] a governmental ideology that bolsters its power over a presumably inferior race by using the so-called inferior sex" (261). This imperial outpost which reduces women to the sign of national domesticity grants women no sovereignty of their body and denies them an agency to develop their own Bildung. In addition, the novel portrays this nationalist gender discourse as if it is an independent force operating by its own mechanism: "The evil was propagating in every direction, it seemed to have an existence of its own, apart from anything that was done or said by individuals" (181). As a result, the novel

[82] One can find arguably the most thorough and convincing historical analysis of the colonial gender discourse of the novel in Jenny Sharpe. She points out that "[a] colonial discourse on rebellious Sepoys raping, torturing, and mutilating English women inscribed the native's savagery onto the objectified body of English women, even as it screened the colonizer's brutal suppression of the uprisings" (29).

further stresses not the negotiation or compromise but the severance between society and the individual.

Although Adela finally betrays the majority of the British Indians' expectation and demand in the court and exonerates Aziz, all she can do thereafter is completely detach herself from the British Indian society and literally disappear from the remaining narrative of the novel. Soon after the trial, Adela completely gives up her project to explore the world, develop her authentic individuality as a modern woman, and harmonize her individuality with societal expectations as a mature national subject in this British Indian society. The previous chapter also discussed the ascent of the disciplinary power of the state and its pressure on the individual autonomy in the context of imperial social relations in the late nineteenth century. Nevertheless, *The Sign of Four* and *The Moonstone* still maintain at least the façade of the Bildungsroman and imply, if tenuously, the vision of synthesis between self and society without completely annihilating the valence of either. On the contrary, Adela in *A Passage to India* is forced to realize that India is not the right place to have her Bildungsroman written, and this is how the novel rewrites the Bildungsroman in such a radical fashion.

As Adela's trial and disappearance indicate the failure of this novel to reproduce the Bildungsroman, the styles in which the narrative progresses increasingly display notable changes. Although the novel starts in a realist fashion, depicting characters and events mostly in a journalistic and chronological fashion with causal sequences, the narrative from around the middle onward often proceeds by abrupt leaps and moments of epiphany and lingers on the description of minute scenes.[83] Only illogical, ungraspable epiphanies explain the characters'

[83] For another analysis of how the narrative style changes in the three chapters of the novel, see

sudden awakenings and momentary reconciliations and propel the narrative following Adela's frustrated Bildung. Adela's epistemological awakening at the court is not clearly explained. She suddenly sees, or thinks she sees, the true picture of what happened in the Marabar caves. Aziz also later drops his accusation of Adela for not clearly explicable reasons.

Especially during Fielding's final meeting with Aziz while the Hindu festival is taking place, they collide with each other on their own boats by chance at the same moment as the climax of the festival, and the scene envisions a mythic moment that muddles all the social and discursive boundaries:

> They plunged into the warm, shallow water, and rose struggling into a tornado of noise. The oars, the sacred tray, the letters of Ronny and Adela, broke loose and floated confusedly. Artillery was fired, drums beaten, the elephants trumpeted, and drowning all an immense peal of thunder, unaccompanied by lightning, cracked like a mallet on the dome.
>
> That was the climax, as far as India admits of one. (309)

It is through this aleatory moment that Aziz and Fielding are "[f]riends again" although their complete reconciliation and friendship is, as discussed earlier, not achieved within the novel but left for an indefinite point in the future beyond the narrator's imagination (310). When Adela finally bids farewell to Fielding, they also only momentarily imagine or glimpse at some chance

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Leland Monk. According to him, the first "Mosque" chapter has its narrative devolve around the theme of connecting the Moslem and Forster's liberal values whereas the last chapter sees the narrative progress mostly by chance and transcendence.

of mutual understanding and reconciliation beyond their ordinary world—the kind of reconciliation not by their own work but by a mystic power:

> Yet they were dissatisfied. When they agreed, "I want to go on living a bit," or, "I don't believe in God," the words were followed by a curious backwash as though the universe had displaced itself to fill up a tiny void, or as though they had seen their own gestures from an immense height. (257)

As these examples demonstrate, the frustration of the dominant assumptions of the Bildungsroman in the imperial setting is the watershed for this stylistic transformation. In this generically transitional novel, the above narrative techniques start to illustrate common modernist features against the particular setting of imperial peripheries.

In recent modernist studies, it has become increasingly common to situate modernism in imperial contexts, thereby expanding the definition of modernism which has been traditionally focused on the metropolitan social and cultural milieu. In his pioneering work on defining modernism as metropolitan artistic expression, Fredric Jameson puts forth this argument:

> [T]his last–daily life and existential experience in the metropolis—which is necessarily the very content of the national literature itself, can now no longer be grasped immanently; it no longer has its meaning, its deeper reason for being, within itself. As artistic convention it will now henceforth always have something missing about it, but in the sense of a privation that can never be restored or made whole simply by adding back in the missing component. ("Modernism and Imperialism" 51)

Jameson argues that the metropolitan commodity culture whose entire globalized mode of production is not fully representable creates a circumstance which modernists try to cope with and culturally resolve.

Many scholars have critiqued this metropolitan focus of modernist studies and emphasized the accelerating movement and dispersion of people, items and cultures, and disorienting experiences in the peripheries of empire. For example, Michal Valdez Moses challenges the conventional interpretative tendency that views modernism as a retreat to aesthetic autonomy and instead locates one origin of modernist styles in peculiar social and cultural situations of the margins of empire. He points out, for example, that Conrad's novels represent epistemological crisis, linguistic chaos, and ethical groundlessness that experiences in the peripheries of empire generate. He claims that "our theory of the origins of the aesthetic form of modernist literature must take account of the decisive contribution made by the peculiarly disorienting experiences of the modern European consciousness at the imperial periphery" (46).[84]

As a non-high modernist but transitional work between realism and modernism, *A Passage to India* effectively exemplifies how modernist techniques arise through British subjects' unsettling experience in the peripheries of empire beyond the cultural and epistemological bounds of their nation. In the novel, all the abrupt leaps and semantic ruptures as narrative momentums and final resolution undermine the underlying beliefs that the classical Bildungsroman represents. The typical nineteenth-century ideals that Victorian literature—

[84] For a theoretical inquiry into the relationship between the rise of modernism and experiences in colonies, critiquing of Fredric Jameson's narrow definition of modernism as the metropolitan conception, see Patrick Williams. For a notable collective work that explores diverse manifestations of that relationship, see *Modernism and Colonialism British and Irish Literature, 1899-1939*.

especially the British Bildungsroman—symbolizes, such as temporal causality, progressive but knowable and controllable historical development, the gradual and organic synthesis of self and society, are negated in the imperial setting in Forster's novel. The ways the narrative unfolds especially after the Marabar caves thereby pave the way for modernist styles.[85] In the case of *A Passage to India*, particular historical experiences in imperial peripheries contextualize the development of modernism from Victorian literary tradition.

In short, Adela's privileged imperial mobility as a young bourgeois woman, if limited due to her sex, allows her to attempt to find her true self as well as socialize as a mature British subject in an imperial setting. However, her Bildungsroman fails to be written due to the excessive nationalist ethos of her British Indian society as well as the alienating power of India that incurs the epistemological and representational crisis to British subjects. A social whole is thus not envisioned through the reconciliation between the modern individual and organic national community but through a mythical or transcendental vision.[86] One of the ways in which a new novelistic genre of the early twentieth century—modernism—emerges is this failure of the Bildungsroman in imperial peripheries. In *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and*

[85] As modernism continues to be redefined, it is increasingly difficult to pin down modernist narrative themes and styles, but there are still some generally accepted features. For example, Childs refers to them as "radical aesthetics, technical experimentation, spatial or rhythmic rather than chronological form, self-conscious reflexiveness, skepticism towards the idea of a centered human subject, and a sustained inquiry into the uncertainty of reality" (*Modernism* 19).
[86] Armstrong also explores how modernism generates new symbolic forms to restore social order. According to her, bourgeois morality functions as the mediator between the individual and society, and modernism does not negate but critiques this mediation. She attends to the socially detached nature of modernist alternatives: "Given this remove from social history, any reimagining of the social order can never amount to more than . . . dream, hallucination, or art" ("The Fiction of Bourgeois Morality" 384)

the Fiction of Development, to which I am indebted for my approach to the modernist (failed) Bildungsroman in colonial contexts, Esty also maintains that:

> If the national was the proper cultural container for the bildungsroman's allegory of development, then modern imperialism was a culture-diluting practice that violated 'national-historical time' and set capitalism loose across the globe in ways that would come to disturb . . . our dream of inevitable, and yet measured, human progress. . . . It is in this sense that empire throws the Goethean formula of novels out of joint, cracking the alignment between biographical and 'national-historical' time while exposing both to the logic of historical paralysis and regression. (6)

As a thematic bridge to my analysis of *Sunset Song*, I will pose the final argument on *A Passage to India*. One reason why *A Passage to India* does not completely develop to modernism lies in that, for those who retain the privileged mobility to return to their 'normal' England at their whims, the imperial outpost which frustrates Adela's Bildung and negates liberal Victorian values is still a place that they can easily leave behind. Toward the end of the novel, the narrator follows Fielding's route from India back to Europe and suggests that the possibility of realizing the ideals of the Bildungsroman is confined to, but at any rate exists in, the European territories: "The buildings of Venice, like the mountains of Crete and the fields of Egypt, stood in the right place, whereas in poor India everything was placed wrong. He had forgotten the beauty of form among idol temples and lumpy hills" (275). Whereas India has turned out to be an ungraspable and chaotic muddle for Europeans, Europe provides an intelligible world in which Europeans can enjoy aesthetic education that is an essential part of their Bildung. Shaheen is right in pointing out that "[o]ne can envisage the Mediterranean human

norm waiting for Fielding's return from India to tell him in frank terms that liberal humanism or other Western values lose force when they travel beyond their border to serve the designs of imperialism" (111). If the ideal historical progress of modernity within the bounds of the national community that the Bildungsroman stylizes is possible, the narrator limits it to the European soil.

By describing Adela's frustrated Bildungsroman in the outpost of empire, the novel dismantles the universality of British values but does not fundamentally undermine the stability and normativity of England as a place to realize the founding ideas of the Bildung. For those who have the socially privileged form of global mobility to navigate between the imperial center and peripheries, their experiences in the peripheries, however unsettling they are, largely remain epistemological and psychological, rather than ontological. The novel portrays the young female protagonist's estrangement from the British-Indian society and failure to mature as a coherent British subject and uses it as a catalyst to develop modernist themes and styles. When that catalyst turns out to be too threatening and unbearable to them, their mobility allows them simply to return to Britain.

2. *Sunset Song* and the Coming-of-age as a Collective Subject

The mobility that allows Adela or Fielding to travel to imperial peripheries and examine their society's values in a different locality testifies to their privileged status back in their home country. Although Adela's social and physical movement is limited due to the gender norms of her society, Adela's experience allows the assumptions of British modernity to be tested because, as a white British bourgeois subject, she is still part of its universalizing force that encroaches upon India. The sheer uneven development under the imperial system does not allow such privileges to every subject in Britain but affect individuals and communities in varying scales

and forms. Compared to Forster's novel, Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Sunset Song* portrays a rural underprivileged locality in the semi-peripheries of empire which undergoes significant changes due to the Great War and other political and economic upheavals of the early twentieth century. *Sunset Song*, in this sense, portrays British subjects' experience of modernization from a drastically different angle of social spectrum from *A Passage to India*.

As I mentioned earlier, although Gibbons' novel deploys extraordinary literary experiments to dramatize the violent experience of modernization, it has not often been discussed as a modernist work. This becomes problematic even further because modernist studies have virtually dominated the studies of the early twentieth-century literature. My analysis of the novel as another rewriting of the Bildungsroman focuses on how another social situation and its limited access to imperial mobility lead to another modernist narrative of ageing in a distinct fashion from Adela's in *A Passage to India*. The narrative of ageing that *Sunset Song* generates differentiates the novel from metropolitan or colonial settings-based modernism and features another acute representation of the individual as well as collective experience of the time. My analysis of *Sunset Song* thus contributes to redefining modernism, illuminating wider artistic expressions that deserve more scholarly attention and better understanding the historical and cultural anomalies of the time.

The story is set in the early twentieth century in a small, traditional farming village of Kinraddie in the northeast of Scotland, an extremely different environment from that of *A Passage to India*. However, the narrative initially centers on similar topics: a young female protagonist's dilemma between pursuing her individuality and accepting the traditional values and ways of life of her community. The narrator begins with the history of Kinraddie lands with the obvious intention to narrate from the birth to the demise of a typical Scottish community. The

narrator uses a number of Scots vocabularies to accentuate a peculiar local color of the community. The Scottish characters run their farm, plough, sow, and harrow their land, harvest crops, and raise cattle. Some of them own a mill or other shops related to traditional agriculture. Structurally noteworthy is that both the Prelude and Epilude of the novel are titled "The Unfurrowed Field" and the intervening chapters are also named after the distinct stages of the agricultural cycle: "Ploughing," "Drilling," "Seed-Time," and "Harvest." The content as well as structure of the novel suggest a cyclical temporality of agricultural society, complicating its later depiction of the progressive temporality of history.

Further complicating its layers of temporality, the novel embeds a mythical time in the historical and natural times of the narrative from the very beginning:

> KINRADDIE lands had been won by a Norman childe, Cospatric de Gondeshil, in the days of William the Lyon, when gryphons and such-like beasts still roamed the Scots countryside and folk would waken in their beds to hear the children screaming, with a great wolf-beast, come through the hide window, tearing at their throats. (1)

Gibbon juxtaposes mythic, natural, and historical times and envisions a longer and deeper temporality that exceeds the progressive or linear time with which the universalizing logic of imperialism operates. Exploring the temporal pattern of the novel, Shiach contextualizes it within Gibbon's contemporary modernists who also "sought in history's rhythms and forms some kind of framework to represent their contemporary worlds' fragmentary and complex particularities" (11). According to Shiach, modernists often attempted to read "historical processes, individual lives, and sometimes cosmic or astronomical structures as structurally connected" (11).[87] The

[87] For a further analysis of Gibbon's interest in alternative temporalities, check the rest of

initial setting of the novel already suggests that Gibbon tries to generate modernist themes and styles through a locality far from the metropolis or imperial peripheries.

The complex temporalities lay the foundation in which Chris Guthrie's own complicated, fractured identity emerges. Growing up in this traditional rural community, Chris is portrayed as a smart girl who excels in many subjects in school. Her split identity comes to the fore early in the novel. One Chris is attached to the land and the traditional Scottish way of life; the second Chris—the English part—longs for a modern, self-realizing life and upward social mobility. Chris's divided self carries the tension between these two opposite aspirations:

> So that was Chris and her reading and schooling, two Chrisses there were that fought for her heart and tormented her. You hated the land and the coarse speak of the folk and learning was brave and fine one day; and the next you'd waken with the peewits crying across the hills, deep and deep, crying in the heart of you and the smell of the earth in your face, almost you'd cry for that, the beauty of it and the sweetness of the Scottish land and skies. (32)

The earlier part of the novel portrays her more often as detesting the restrictive and static societal norms of Kinraddie: "'The kitchen's more her style than the College.' Some folk at the tables laughed out at that, the ill-nature grinned from the faces of them, and . . . English Chris came back in her skin a minute, she saw them the yokels and clowns everlasting, dull-brained and crude" (85). Her divided self thus symbolizes the conflict between the two opposing components of modern history: the developmental logic of modernization and the cyclical pattern of

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Shiach's essay. In her project to find the affinity between Gibbon and the mainstream modernism, Shiach also compares Gibbon's Diffusionism to Yeats's vision of historical cycles and rhythms.

traditional life. The earlier part of the novel allows the reader to anticipate Chris's struggles to reconcile these two contradictory aspects of her life as in the Bildungsroman.

Despite some common structures of personal dilemma between Chris and Adela, however, a remarkable difference of Chris's community from Adela's arises in its low and unstable political and economic status. Whereas Adela's is a bourgeois and military British-Indians' excessively disciplined, closed community with strict codes of socialization and the aim of 'modernizing' the natives, Chris's is a traditional rural community in the margins of Britain which faces the danger of being destroyed by the brutal modernizing force from London. To Chris's brother who deserts his outmoded community, "it also grew plain . . . that the day of the crofter was fell near finished, put by, the day of folk like himself . . . the last of the farming folk that wrung their living from the land with their own bare hands" (75). In this semi-peripheral region of empire, Chris's split identity is also shared by many other villagers who want to deny their Scottishness and whose aspiration for and mimicry of Englishness the narrator occasionally satirizes: "Chris loitered on the road in the tail of the hasting scholars, the little things they were, all legs and long boots, funny how they tried to speak English one to the other, looking sideways as they cried the words to see if folk thought them gentry" (121).[88]

Her split self speaks to many other modes of duality in her family as well as her rural community in face of the modernizing forces from the center of empire. To Chris's perception especially during her earlier years, the English represent modernity, social mobility, education, literacy, and also normativity and moral discipline whereas the Scottish do social backwardness,

[88] For a deeper analysis of the link between language and social status in the novel, see Hanne Tange. She uses the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's studies on how a specific linguistic norm reinforces social and cultural status and attends to "the sense of a linguistic hierarchy where Standard English is placed near the top, while vernacular Scots is ranked in a lower position" (28).

abnormality, deviation, or even incestuous desire. Earlier in the novel, her father John Guthrie, a typical traditional Scottish farmer, represents to Chris many negative sides of this traditional northeast Scots community: unrestrained desire, uncouth language and behavior, the violent treatment of women, etc. He impregnates his wife many times, who eventually kills herself and two new babies in the fear of another upcoming labor. Chris's ambivalent feelings toward her father accords with her split identity between the English and Scottish parts.

Especially after Chris' mother dies, the family life quickly deteriorates; Will, Chris's brother, finally leaves for Argentina with his lover, and her father John finally becomes paralyzed and dies too, but not before attempting to force Chris to his bed and pushing her through a miserable period of ordeal. On the other hand, the English part of Chris is the one who reminds her of disciplinary norms even in the private realm of her life: "[Will] was feared what father would say if he found them lying like that. . . . The English Chris as sleep came on her again. Was it likely a brother and a sister would do anything if they slept together?" (39). Throughout approximately the first half of the novel, her coming-of-age plot progresses through these dualities that structure her character and her own traditional Scottish community.[89]

The fractured identity of Chris as well as her local community elucidates the fact that she does not really have a unified and organic national culture with which she could harmoniously synthesize in order to settle down as a coherent national subject. Tom Nairn explores this historical fissure between Scottish sub-national culture and English modernity and delves into how Scotland failed to develop their own national culture since the 1707 Union. According to

[89] For a more focused analysis of the complex relationship between Chris as a young woman and the nation of Scotland, see Glenda Norquay. She points out that "to associate Chris Guthrie with Scotland need not necessarily invoke the familiar mythologizing of woman as nation, as eternal and as of the earth. Chris serves as representative of Scotland's own complex history because of the challenge she presents to schematic political models and abstract systems of belief" (86).

Nairn, the Highland Scotland remained marginalized from England and retained their own sub-national culture whereas the Lowlands quickly benefited from its southern neighbor and enjoyed economic gains and modernization, creating the local bourgeoisie who quickly allied with their equivalent in England and did not particularly care for developing modern Scottish national culture. Nairn points out that:

> [Scottish writers and intellectuals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries] could not deal with modern experience in Scotland because in the relevant sense there *was no* 'modern experience': such experience was the product of culture, not its pre-existing social basis. And this culture arose in certain characteristic social and historical conditions which were, inevitably, lacking here. (161; emphasis in original)

Chris's rural, dilapidating Kinraddie community in the northeast of Scotland geographically does not belong to the Highlands that presumably preserve their subnational culture, but it is not able to develop its constituents to the bourgeois, either. This liminal status of Chris's environment contributes to presenting a different artistic challenge from that of the classical Bildungsroman in which the 'modern' individual attempts to synthesize with organic 'national' community. Chris is forced to bypass the modern individual's attempt to compromise with the stabilizing force of a national community. Instead, what she needs to face is the possibility of her community's complete demise.

Toward the middle of the novel, a series of events gradually propel the Scottish, 'traditional' part of Chris to prevail over her English, 'modernizing' part. At her father's funeral, she weeps much and at last realizes what a tormenting life he lived in the poor village and how much he had to sacrifice for his family. She is also sexually attracted to Ewan Tavendale, a

coarse, uncouth young Scots villager who reminds her of her own father, and eventually marries him. They get married on a New Year's Eve and host a jubilant party with all the villagers invited, singing many traditional Scottish songs and dancing to them. She even forgets her childhood dream of becoming a teacher and pursing social mobility. While Adela's growth represents and tests the liberal values of English modernity in an imperial setting, Chris's growth symbolizes the diminishment of the English-Chris—the modernizing half—and the ascent of the Scottish-Chris.

The ascent of the Scottish Chris does not indicate that the novel is turning fundamentally traditionalist, reproducing the Kailyard literary tradition of the nineteenth-century Scotland.[90] Chris's coming-of-age symbolizes another historical trajectory that does not conform to either the classical nineteenth-century Bildungsroman or the kind of the modernist Bildungsroman that *A Passage to India* exemplifies. The decline of the English-Chris does not suggest a defeatist marginalization from modernity or a failure to achieve Bildung and proper adulthood. Instead, it accompanies the development and expansion of her historical awareness and her collective subjectivity. When she laments the death of her poor father, it is not merely about John Guthrie the individual but what he represents in the history of Scotland:

> *Oh father, I didn't know* She hadn't known, she'd been dazed and daft with her planning, her days could never be aught without father; and she minded then, wildly, in a long, broken flash of remembrance, all the fine things of him that the years had hidden from their sight, the fleetness of him and his justice, and the fight unwearying he'd fought with the land and its masters to have them all clad

[90] For an exemplary analysis of the traditional nineteenth-century Kailyard literature as representing the destructive dialectic in the Scottish context in which there is no vision of progressive history, see "Fearful Selves," *The Modern Scottish Novel*, by Cairns Craig.

> and fed and respectable, he'd never rested working and chaving for them, only God had beaten him in the end. (116; emphasis in original)

As the quote vividly illustrates, with her understanding of her father's life comes her historical awareness of the land and Scotland the nation.

As discussed earlier on the Prelude of the novel, the narrative also incorporates a longer historical time through Chris's romance. Chris's dating with Ewan involves their visiting Dunnottar where the Scottish covenanters died fighting for their religious freedom: "Chris stared at the places, sick and angry and sad for those folk she could never help now, that hatred of rulers and gentry a flame in her heart, John Guthrie's hate. Her folk and his they had been, those whose names stand graved in tragedy" (125). Furthermore, her widening consciousness even exceeds the imagining of political history. Her coming-of-age involves her gradual realization of how precious the land is and how attached she has been to the land whose value transcends individuals' life: "Sea and sky and the folk who wrote and fought and were learned, teaching and saying and praying, they lasted but as a breadth, a mist of fog in the hills, but the land was forever. . . . And she had thought to leave it all!" (119). Baker also calls attention to the semantic significance of the land and points out that "[t]he permanence of the land itself renders the lives of its individual inhabitants at any given time less meaningful in themselves, but also suggests a continuity that stretches beyond any individual consciousness" ("*A Scots Quair* and History" 53). Chris's peculiar coming-of-age trajectory does not entail the development of bourgeois private interiority as in the classical Bildungsroman but her growing identification with her people as a collective as well as their history and land.

The plot of the novel, although starting by focusing on the fractured identity and sheer dilemma of Chris which might have foretold a similar trajectory to Adela's life, now leans more

toward emphasizing the local traditional Scottish life and the people through a variety of unique stylistic achievements. First of all, the narrator does not take the position of the omniscient, reliable, and journalistic realist narrator who depicts a knowable, unified community which Benedict Anderson focuses on as material conditions for novels in *Imagined Communities*. The narrator keeps shifting from the second and third person perspectives, using "you" to refer to Chris, the characters in general, or the reader. Chris's expanding collective interiority and historical awareness also accord with the narrator who makes himself part of the collective that inherits and communicates the folklores and collective wisdom of this Scottish rural community with all of their ambiguities and contingency preserved. In the Prelude where the narrator introduces main characters, he says, "But Mistress Munro would up and be at the door and in she'd yank Andy by the lug, and some said she'd take down his breeks and skelp him, but maybe that was a lie" (15). The narrator communicates the history of the village at secondhand and leaves his story open to further inscription.

Also in Chris's wedding ceremony that turns into a communal event, many villagers from her local community participate in transferring folk, collective wisdom to her, which the narrator incorporates sumptuously into his own story. For example:

> Ah well, no doubt she'd train him up well, and he [Long Rob of the Mill] advised Ewan now, from the little that he knew of marriage, never to counter his wife; not that he thought she wasn't well able to look after herself, but just that Ewan mightn't find himself worsted though he thought himself winner. Marriage, he took it, was like yoking together two two-year-olds, they were kittle and brisk on the first bit rig—unless they'd fallen out as soon as they were yoked and near kicked themselves and their harness to bits—but the second rig was the testing-

> time, it was then you knew when one was pulling and one held back, the one that had sheer sweirty—and that was a word for Mr Gordon to put into English—in its bones, and the one with a stout bit heart and a good guts. Well, he wouldn't say more about horses, though faith! it was a fascinating topic, he'd just come back to marriage and say they all wished the best to Chris, so sweet and trig, and to Ewan, the Highland cateran, and long might they live and grow healthy, wealthy, and well content. (157-8)

The narrator blurs the boundary between his own story and the villagers' folk tales, describes the villagers' rural life and their tales in their own Scots terms and rhythms, and integrates myths to the fabrics of historical time; these techniques combine to endow the story with a vibrant energy of oral collective literary tradition.

Even toward the end of the novel when the new minister commemorates those who died in the war, the author's name is included in the War Memorial alongside Chae, Rob, and Ewan, which testifies that the author counts himself as part of this dying peasants' community.[91] Craig in *The Modern Scottish Novel* explores how Gibbon is distinguished from other Scottish writers who establish themselves as distanced, educated figures in their texts and find no imaginative and progressive quality in their own Scottish community. My analysis of the novel supports Craig's argument that in *Sunset Song* "a narrative structure in which the community, through its gossip and its reminiscence, becomes the organizer of the narration, inserting into the body of Grassic Gibbon's fiction the fictions with which it embroiders its own life" (65).

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[91] Douglas S. Mack also pays attention to the collective nature of the narration and, as for the inclusion of the author's name in the War Memorial, argues that "the author James Leslie Mitchell is making a cameo appearance, in order to identify himself with the pre-First-World-War peasant-farming community in which he grew up" (213).

Developing as a collective voice and experience throughout the story and locating its thematic equivalent in Chris's coming-of-age as a collective subject, the narrator takes the role of the 'storyteller' in Walter Benjamin's sense. In "The Storyteller," Benjamin claims that with the disappearance of storyteller in the modern times, "the ability to exchange experiences" is also vanishing (83). According to him, the storyteller functions as an inherently collective communicant who tells groups of people local or foreign tales that he or she experienced or heard from other storytellers; he thus provides wisdom and counseling so that the meaning of his stories is not exhausted but always allows the listeners' own understanding and interpretation.

Benjamin contrasts the storytelling with two other modern forms of account: the novel and information. He argues that "[t]he storyteller takes what he tells from experience—his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale" (87). The novelist, on the contrary, "has isolated himself. The birthplace of the novel is the solitary individual, who is no longer able to express himself by giving examples of his most important concerns, is himself uncounseled, and cannot counsel others" (87). As for information, its "value . . . does not survive the moment in which it was new. . . . It has to surrender to it completely and explain itself to it without losing any time" (90). On the contrary, a story "does not expend itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time" (90).

The most significant about the storytelling as opposed to the modern novel and information, according to Benjamin, is the inexhaustibility of its meaning and the continuous dialectic and mutual supplementation between the material of the storytelling and its listeners. The storytelling does not transmit verifiable information or an individual isolated writer's view. Instead, the storytelling always carries a potential to disrupt dominant discourses by evoking

unheard, collective voices and residues left out of it. Benjamin laments the marginalization of the storytelling in the European mainstream literary tradition which is focused on the development of the bourgeois individual interiority in the national community as epitomized by the classical Bildungsroman.

Benjamin's concept of the storyteller helps to illuminate how Gibbon's *Sunset Song* refuses to reproduce the Victorian literary style and instead revitalizes the elements of the storytelling to represent a distinct social context in the northeast Scotland. Also the storytelling of *Sunset Song* finds its most conspicuous literary expression in its protagonist's 'unorthodox' Bildung. The 'modernist' Bildungsroman of Chris does not undergo a modern individual character's disorienting experience of having its private bourgeois interiority as well as the crucial assumptions of European imperial modernity tested or even negated as in *A Passage to India*. Instead, Chris's Bildung overcomes her initially fractured and turbulent self by opening it to the collective experience over a longer time than modern history.

The novel's celebration of collective wisdom and life rooted in the land does not negate history. *Sunset Song* in this sense never turns into romance by creating a romantic illusion of a pastoral social whole. Neither the novel nor its characters in Kinraddie are ignorant of how irrevocably the world-economic system are altering their life in the early twentieth century. Then it is the Great War that finally forces their traditional way of life to violently and abruptly enter the world history.[92] Chris hardly gives birth to little Ewan when the First World War breaks out.

[92] See *Out of History* for Craig's elaboration on the relationship between Scottish literary tradition and world history. He maintains that the development of literature parallels history, and due to the lack of participation in the England-led world history, Scottish literature did not develop its own novelistic tradition. It was through the devastating impact of the WWI that Scotland became directly involved in world history and that Scottish writers launched the Scottish Renaissance.

No sooner does she enjoy the brief happiness of her conjugal life than many of her friends, Chae and Rob, and finally her husband enlist. During the war, a few people become wealthy, selling stocks for war supplies. They give up their woods and lands for commercial use. Farms turn into pasture, and woods are cut to make ships. Newly-enriched people, English-speaking gentry, buy lands and evict people to other parts of country.[93] New technology, such as cars, appear and people clearly see that new machines will displace traditional Scottish farmers. When Chris's brother visits home on leave, and she asks him if he will settle back in Kinraddie permanently, he says, "Havers, who'd want to come back to this country? It's dead or its dying—and a damned good job!" (216).

Despite the author's origin in and affection for the Scottish crofters' traditional ways of life, he clearly suggests that they cannot survive the turbulent age of world history in the early twentieth century. The last scene in which the entire community gathers around the Standing Stones and commemorate war casualties vividly depicts this tension between the vision of collective life based on the land and the consciousness of the modernizing wave of history. At the very last moment, after mourning for war casualties of their village, villagers "saw the minister was standing behind her [Chris], waiting for her, they'd the last of the light with them up there, and maybe they didn't need it or heed it, you can do without the day if you've a lamp quiet-lighted and kind in your heard" (258). This romantic, and even somewhat sentimental, vision of the story is constantly counter-balanced by the novel's keen historical consciousness. After the minister delivers a speech in front of the Standing Stones, he, Chris and a few friends of the war casualties start to sing "The Flowers of the Forest"—the community's song that the

[93] For brief but useful statistical data on how peasants' life altered in Scotland in the early twentieth century, especially owing to the repercussions of the Great War, see David Craig.

villagers also sang earlier at Chris's wedding—but "the young ploughmen they stood with glum, white faces, they'd no understanding or caring, it was something that vexed and tore at them, it belonged to times they had no knowing of" (257). This generational severance lends poignancy to the historical rupture in communal vision. The song, as a form art, would help to connect individuals to a larger collective whole and a longer history of theirs, but now "can only provide fleeting access to the past" (Baker, "*A Scots Quair* and History" 51). The novel both represents the beauty and wisdom of the collective life of this community as well as its inevitable historical finiteness.

The Standing Stones, as the primary landmark of the community as well as the semantic center of the story, can be seen as *Sunset Song*'s counterpart to the Marabar caves of *A Passage to India*. When earlier in the novel the English side of Chris prevails and she aspires for knowledge and social mobility, she wants to borrow books from a previous minister of the village. On her way to the minister's:

> The Standing Stones pointed long shadow-shapes into the east, maybe just as they'd done of an evening two thousand years before when the wild men climbed the brae and sang their songs in the lithe of those shadows while the gloaming waited there above the same quiet hills. And a queer, uncanny feeling came on Chris then, she looked back half-feared at the Stones and the whiteness of the loch, and then went hurrying through the park paths (57).

As the quote illustrates, the Standing Stones throughout the novel emanate the aura of accumulated mythic and historical memories. The Stones constantly remind Chris of a temporality that exceeds her individual consciousness.

Once Chris identifies with the land and its people and matures as a collective subject, the Standing Stones more explicitly function as the physical as well as symbolic center of the community that she is part of. That is how the Stones provide a site in the end in which the community commemorate war casualties and envision "*a greater hope and a newer world*" (256; italics in original). Even at this moment the Standing Stones present a dual perspective for a mythic continuity as well as a historical rupture:

> It was high, there, you saw as you sat on the grass and looked round, you could see all Kinraddie and near half the Howe shine under your feet in the sun, *Out of the World and into Blawearie* as the old speak went. And faith! the land looked unco and woe with its woods all gone, even in the thin sun- glimmer there came a cold shiver up over the parks of the Knapp and Blawearie, folk said that the land had gone cold and wet right up to the very Mains. (254; italics in original)

The view from the Stones presents a shine "[o]ut of the world" and simultaneously the land "with its woods all gone." The Stones do not only envisage a transcendental vision and hope but also foreground the historical effect that capitalism and the Great War has wrought on this rural community. With the Standing Stones as its thematic and structural center, the novel portrays Chris's coming of age not as a developmental modern individual but as a collective subject that identifies with the land, but simultaneously reveals the precariousness of its vision.

I would like to finish with a final elaboration on the difference between the ways *A Passage to India* and *Sunset Song* respectively rewrite the Bildungsroman and generate modernist techniques. First of all, Chris does not have the kind of mobility that Adela in *A Passage to India* enjoys as part of the modernizing force of empire. Chris's lack of mobility, or her decision not to pursue the English-Chris and grow as a modernizing individual, places her in

a better position to identify with her peasants' society. Craig also discusses how Chris's forced or self-imposed marginalization from modernization allows her to better represent her peasants' own culture and critique the universality of English modernity. He persuasively points out that "the advantage, or disadvantage, of being a woman" makes her stay in her community and "allows her a perspective upon the community that can chart its failings without transferring to an entirely different cultural environment all her potentiality for growth and development" (*The Modern Scottish Novel* 66). Whereas Adela benefits from the privileged mobility that her social status bestows upon her and thus comes to India but fails to achieve her Bildung, Chris does not seek the same logic of the Bildung but shares the common destiny with her dying community. Chris's choice to seek a different trajectory of coming-of-age from the modern protagonist of the classical Bildungsroman allows her to mature as a collective subject with historical awareness and to better learn, remember, and witness the exploitation, sacrifices, and marginalization inherent in the modernizing process under the system of the English Empire.[94]

Chris's choice to come of age in this way thereby necessitates the narrative which embodies a storytelling of the community and describes their collective voices and experiences. Her rural marginalized locality and its lack of the linguistically and culturally centralized, bourgeoisie-led nation culture enable a different set of literary experiments which neither charts the synthesis of the modern individual with national community nor artistically transform its failure to explore bourgeois characters' subjective crisis in a modernist fashion as in the case of Adel. As Childs notes, modernism has "almost universally been considered a literature of not just

[94] In *Out of History*, Craig notes that the unique position of Scotland as alienated from the dynamic of history since the Union allows it an advantageous position to critique the teleological concept of history. The common critical interpretation of Scottish literature as mutilated and frustrated often presumes the English type of history and literature as normative and problematically applies the English standard to Scottish literature (30-63).

change but crisis," and the two novel's distinct rewritings of the Bildungsroman exemplify how modernism can occur through significantly different social experiences of the crisis in modernization. *Sunset Song* sheds light on a communal life by shifting the narrative focus from an 'modernizing'—whether it is successful or not—individual protagonist to an entire peasants' community in the semi-periphery of empire. Instead of portraying a bourgeois 'individual' struggling to live and mature, Gibbon's novel portrays a 'collective' that dies together.

For the future of modernist studies, Levenson requests that "[t]he varying pace of change in nations and regions, the uneven development in different media, modes, and genres, the sheer diversity of artifacts, and the contradictions in the self-understanding of individuals and movements all need to be respected" (10). By analyzing how the two authors rewrite the classical Bildungsroman from extremely different localities and social situations in the turbulent times of the early twentieth century, and consequently develop distinct modernist techniques, this chapter attempts to meet Levenson's request.

However, one needs to keep in mind that not everything written in the early twentieth-century Britain is modernist. Nor every writer who spent his or her productive years in the early twentieth century is modernist. Modernism cannot help but to cover only a limited spectrum of social experiences of the time. Many writers still continued to write in traditional literary genres. In doing so, they attempted to pay due attention to many facets of their contemporary world and many other individuals or groups of people whose life is no less important than those whose personal and social peculiarities modernists chose to explore. In the next chapter, I will explore how two modern writers used satire and developed their own stories of ageing.

Chapter IV: Satire and Ageing as Endless Repetition in Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* and W. Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge*

The 1930s and 1940s witnessed the decline of the supremacy of the British Empire as its world-wide influence shrank and the U.S.A. replaced it as the hegemonic political and economic force in the world. Britain also suffered from unemployment, poverty, and other social unrest, although her economic protectionism after the 1929 Crash and mutually supplemental relationship with her dominions and dependencies helped her economy to recover quicker than other Western countries.[95] Britain desperately attempted to maintain social unity through imperialist propaganda; John M. Mackenzie notes that "[t]he international economic crisis and the continuing desire for security at home and Empire abroad seem to have created an Indian summer in the dissemination of imperial ideas" (225). The upsurge of imperialist popular culture in the 1930s did not, however, completely distract the public from the changing world, especially as the public enjoyed a variety of new media such as film and radio. The British saw their dominions gradually achieve self-government while witnessing the rise of totalitarian regimes in Continental Europe, especially Nazism in Germany.

In face of the turmoil of society and the popularity of imperialist popular culture, writers and intellectuals in the 1930s displayed a more direct engagement with social issues. Rod Mengham points out that after epochal disasters such as the Great War and the Depression, "[a] surprising number of writers active in the 1930s were prepared to take up clear political positions" (359). As seen in renowned fictional as well as non-fictional works published in the

[95] See D. K. Fieldhouse's "The Metropolitan Economics of Empire" for a brief analysis of the British economy and its relationship with the Empire in the 1930s. He points out that Britain's reliance on capital investments in the Empire to compensate for a deficit in visible trade was temporarily beneficial but ultimately detrimental for its long-term economic dynamism.

thirties and forties including George Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), *Animal Farm* (1945), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1931), or Wyndham Lewis's *The Apes of God* (1930), writers deployed diverse literary styles to expose and critique social evils.

One of the literary genres that writers often found effective for social criticism was satire. In this chapter, I will elucidate how two novels published in the 1930s and 1940s—Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* (1934) and Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* (1944)—generate another unique narrative of ageing that reflects contemporary disillusionment with Western civilization and the quest for a recuperative power in distant lands. This chapter analyzes how the two novels develop satiric techniques to represent the new expression of ageing that the quest prompted. The comparative study of the two novels' representations of ageing illuminates how modern satire declines against the cultural and social milieu of the 1940s. Finally, as mentioned in the introduction, a goal of this dissertation is to provide a new framework for the history of the British novel. Reading these two early twentieth-century novels as 'satiric,' not 'modernist,' is a meta-critical act that questions conventional periodization of literary history. This chapter situates the study of the two novels in the ongoing conversation about the studies of the early twentieth-century British novel.

1. Modern Satire and Modernism

Before analyzing the two particular novels as 'modern' satires of the 1930s and '40s, I clarify the definition of the genre in conjunction with my metacritical contribution to the studies of early twentieth-century British literature. First of all, as a literary genre, satire is one of the oldest. Satire is widely considered as beginning with Roman verse satires of Horace and Juvenal or later with the subversive force of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque in the Renaissance, and, within

the scope of British literature, reached its peak of popularity and artistic sophistication in the Augustan period but continued as we saw in *Vanity Fair*.[96] As an old and protean literary genre, satire refuses to be pinned down to any particular set of features and combines or overlaps with other modes of writing, nonfictional or fictional. Many scholars suggest provisional working definitions of the genre. For example, Leonard Feinberg tersely defines it as "a playfully critical distortion of the familiar" (19). Northrop Frye claims that satire is generally extroverted and intellectual and handles abstract ideas and "presents characters as mouthpieces of the ideas they represent" (290). He analyzes the genre by splitting it into the attitude and the form. As the name of an attitude, satire is "a combination of fantasy and morality" (Frye 290). As the name of a form, satire is "more flexible, and can be either entirely fantastic or entirely moral" (Frye 290).

Full exploration of satire and its tradition exceeds the scope of this chapter, for, as Ruben Quintero points out, satire is "an enduring creative product of a jumbled and sometimes specious genealogy—rhetorically assertive, concretely topical, and palpable as an art form but with its title and pedigree as a genre perpetually in question" (9). Instead, this chapter uses widely accepted essentials of the 'modern' satirical novel. After outlining diverse efforts to define the satirical novel, Peter Petro presents two essential categories: criticism and humor. The criticism inherent in satire generally implies that there is "a model, an ideal *counterpart*: a Platonic ideal, or its approximation in reality," even if a model is not explicitly presented in the novel (17; emphasis in original). According to Quintero, satire assumes "a standard against which readers can compare its subject" (3). Chris Baldick also notes that a repeated plot in satire is "to expose a

[96] For a thorough analysis of satire and its cultural and anthropological origins, both in verse and prose, see R. C. Elliott's *The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art*.

naïve protagonist to the inner workings of some respected institution, in which he is baffled to discover that the reigning code of conduct is the exact opposite of the professed ideal" (244).

Another common feature of modern satire is its focus on the externals, rather than complex human interiority. Reed Way Dasenbrock accentuates the centrality of Wyndham Lewis to modern British satire: "If there is a tradition of satire in English fiction in the twentieth century it descends from Lewis." (244). He analyzes Lewis's satiric works and notes that the generic features of satire include, but are not limited to, the detached narrator's voice, the focus of narration on the externals instead of the human psyche, and the flat and comic depiction of characters.[97] Dasenbrock discusses how those writers engaging in the satiric tradition comically as well as scathingly caricature the group psychology and those who conform to the behavioral patterns imposed upon them by social norms. David Bradshaw further explores the dominant sentiment of the time which lay ground for satire; the post-WWI era was thought by many writers as worth representing only in a comic form because they doubted all existing social traditions and values. Bradshaw notes that "the surface of the visible machinery of life was alone used" (221).

While I acknowledge that the above essentials are fundamentally tentative and I do not intend to provide a transhistorical or fixed definition, I would defend these essentials against arguably the most frequently suggested criticism. W. H. Auden's comment on the plausibility of modern satire is representative:

> Satire flourishes in a homogeneous society where satirist and audience share the same views as to how normal people can be expected to behave, and in times of

[97] Dasenbrock later points out that social satire was influential in the 1920s and 1930s, and as the Great Depression and the looming of another total war made the situation too grave to portray in a comic manner, visionary literature took over the center stage.

> relative stability and contentment, for satire cannot deal with serious evil and suffering. In an age like our own, it cannot flourish except in intimate circles as an expression of private feuds. (385)

Auden claims that modern society does not provide a firm moral standard against which the reader can judge or ridicule the target of satire. It might be true that the early twentieth-century Britain was more chaotic and heterogeneous than the age of Jonathan Swift, but it does not follow that there was no standard that individual writers attempted to sustain, whether conservative or progressive. The above comment reveals Auden's own pessimistic view of modernization rather than the general tendency of literature in the thirties and forties.

Even if modern satire often lacks a happy-ending in preference to a particular dystopian dark humor, it does not necessitate the lack of a social standard. In Orwell's *1984*, Winston Smith succumbs to Big Brother, but the reader can infer that this modern satire implicitly advocates for a more human, "idealized form of socialism" against authoritarian regimes and machinations (Petro 17).[98] Huxley's *Brave New World* also presents a grim vision of the technological manipulation of human psyche and reproduction but indirectly provides the author's liberal ideals of human freedom and autonomy as an ideal counterpart. In short, modern satire, "either explicitly or implicitly, tries to sway us toward an ideal alternative, toward a condition of what the satirist believes should be" (Quintero 3).

More metacritical issues beyond the features of modern satire are at stake, however, in analyzing the two novels not as modernist but as satiric, although they depict certain negative repercussions of modernization, display conspicuous literary styles, and were, most of all, published in the early twentieth century, "the era of modernism" (Greenberg 2). Jonathan

[98] For a brief summary of arguments on the problem of the norm in satire, see Petro, 17-21.

Greenberg is one of the literary scholars who attempt to include modern satire under the arc of modernism. He finds affinity between modern satire and modernism in their charges against false feeling or sentimentality "as the handmaiden of a coercive, even tyrannical, ideology wielding its power through the construction of a bourgeois public taste" (14). Drawing upon affect theories, he accentuates the defamiliarizing function of modern satire toward socially coded emotions and points out that modernists also emphasize maintaining a critical distance from socially coded emotions, especially Victorian sentimentality.

As seen in Greenberg's case, the attempts to label modern satire as modernist risk defining satire too broadly. The defamiliarizing of ordinary emotions could be part of satire but is never a decisive feature of the genre, or any genre.[99] The boundary between modernism and modern satire received recent scholarly attention, and the relationship between the two takes part in a larger disciplinary discussion of the early twentieth-century history of British literature—the discussion this chapter plans to engage in. As mentioned earlier, modern satire gained a wide artistic and popular attention particularly in the 1930s and modernism enjoyed its prime in the 1920s through the works such as *Ulysses*, *The Waste Land*, and *Mrs. Dalloway*. The temporal proximity has often blurred the distinction between the two periods under the term "interwar years" in the history of British literature.

However, many scholars distinguish between haute modernism and modern satire, whether using the term 'modernism' to refer to the latter period or not. By doing so, they call attention to the need of reevaluating the dominant understanding of the literary history of the early twentieth century in the interest of provincializing the 1920s modernism. Thomas S. Davis,

[99] For another attempt to interpret modern satire as a subgenre of modernism, see Lisa Colletta. She focuses on the absurd, irrationalism, uncertainty, etc. as common features between modern satire and modernism.

for example, notes that later modernist writings in the 1930s and 1940s cohere as a distinct type different from the modernism of earlier decades and points to peculiar features such as national consciousness, the loss of imperial power, outward turn from interiority, and collective sentiment. According to Davis, the 1930s witnessed many writers oppose modernist predecessors' focus on the inner life, consciousness, epistemic instability, and subjective experiences.[100]

Jed Esty is another literary scholar who also introduces a refined model to comprehend the cultural and literary trend in the thirties and early forties with the notion of 'the anthropological turn.' Esty argues that in the face of nationalist movements in the dominions and colonies, the retreating dominance of the Empire, and the rise of rival super powers like Germany and the USA, high modernist styles which represented metropolitan cosmopolitanism gave way to late modernism in the thirties, which turned to national culture and popular and pastoral traditions. Writers attempted to reimagine social wholeness in aesthetics no longer from the imperial metropolitan culture but through national culture: "if high modernism offered a *cosmopolitan-aesthetic* mediation of universal perspectives and their local antitheses, then late modernism represents a new *national-cultural* mediation of the universal and the local" (36; emphasis in original).

Davis and Esty both refer to the literature of the 1930s and 1940s as 'modernist' but attempt to identify the features that distinguish them from what is commonly known as modernism of the earlier decades of the century. However, they risk expanding the term 'modernism' excessively and including almost every early twentieth-century literary

[100] Kristin Bluemel calls the literature of the said period as "intermodernism." She delineates many important features of intermodernism and also suggests the need for establishing a new literary history.

achievement under the umbrella term, modernism. Other literary scholars accentuate generic differences between the literatures of the twenties and the thirties/forties and refuse to expand the term modernism. Chris Baldick, for example, introduces another noteworthy standard of marking distinction; by consulting Cyril Connolly, he argues that 'the modern movement' consists of the two camps: the Mandarins and anti-Mandarins, the former representing "the descendants of late Victorian Aestheticism, perfectionists cultivating a subtle, flamboyant, esoteric art for the benefit of an exclusive leisured readership" whereas the latter indicating "realists, or vernacularists," who "emerge from the new journalistic culture of the same period, and attempt to address a larger readership with a plain-speaking directness (393).[101]

Baldick calls for a better periodization of modern British literature, which prompts a more accurate appreciation of non-modernist literary works. He argues that modernism has become a cause that demands loyalty against realism, while the latter has been understood in a biased, simplifying fashion. Bradshaw argues for the centrality of satire in doing justice to the literary history and discusses how satire fails to receive due scholarly attention for its stylistic differences from modernism. Generally, modernists sought to explore the interiority of the human psyche and the consciousness of characters, while satirists paid attention to social considerations: appearances, jobs, eccentric behaviors, cold material worlds, etc. Those satiric works were often conceived as opposed to modernists' post-romantic constructions of subjectivity.

[101] Baldick notes that the camps alternated for dominance in literature during the early twentieth century: "a prolonged 'Edwardian' phase of realism (1900-18); a post-War decade of resurgent Mandarinism led by Bloomsbury; and a slightly premature 'Thirties' revival of vernacular styles" (394).

Recent years saw several scholars question the privileged cultural position of modernism and illuminate the entire historical and political process in which modernism has been canonized as a sole and legitimate representation of the culture of the time. Declan Kiberd maintains that after World War II in the American academy, the modernism that T. S. Eliot stands for became dominant in correlation with the rise of New Criticism. Eliot's conservatism, which abhorred the collapse of the political supremacy of Europe and the rise of nation-states, fed in the post-WWII era "the notion of 'an end to ideology' then sponsored by establishment intellectuals in Washington" (272). Kiberd adds that "American liberalism learned how to congratulate itself on a permanent suspension of judgment, a refusal to note the political and social matrices out of which so many texts sprang" (272). Thus, modernism began domestication, and many scholars ignored its nationalistic character and reinterpreted and 'recreated' modernism as "cosmopolitan avant la lettre."[102]

Neil Lazarus launches a dual criticism against early twentieth-century literary studies focused on modernism. He draws attention to how modernism was established as a canon in conjunction with the supremacy of a particular type of postcolonial studies that focuses on hybridity, epistemic instability, and political ambivalence. He introduces Raymond Williams's criticism of modernism and points out that according to Williams, modernism was initially "a specific determinate intervention into the field of modern literary production in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century," but later in academia "all of the forms of cultural production displaced by modernism—those, that is, that were not modernist—were pronounced *pre*modern

[102] For another collective scholarly effort to historicize the rise of modernism in Western academia and to revalue realism that has often been unfairly interpreted and marginalized for its naïve aspiration for totality, see *Peripheral Realisms*, Spec. issue of *Modern Language Quarterly.*

and disparaged as such, as relics, mere anachronism" (429; italics in original). Lazarus maintains that despite the cogency of Williams's thoughts, "[t]he modernism that Williams critiques is in a sense a retrospective modernism, the modernism that would come into existence . . . as a result of what Fredric Jameson has termed the 'canonization and academic institutionalization' of the modernist movement" in the late 1950s (430). Lazarus demands that literary scholars discover the original resistant and uncompromising movements that many modernist works tried to embody. As important is challenging the hegemony of modernism. Hence, he quotes Williams, crucial is the attempt to search out "an alternative tradition taken from the neglected works left in the wide margin of the century" (435).

While focusing on the themes of ageing and mobility expressed in the two novels, my research speaks to this project of questioning the status of modernism and of exploring other generic developments that depict particular realities elusive of the conventional scope of modernism in the first half of the twentieth century. I do not suggest that modern satire is incompatible with modernism. Every literary genre is subject to influences from other genres and transforms itself while interacting with social changes, and that permeability enables the genre to persist or evolve. Every definition of a genre is tentative and open to further inscription and expansion. However, the above research shows that modern satire has sufficient credentials to distinguish itself from modernism. The focus on the externals, humor, criticism and a firm moral standard that the criticism presumes makes modern satire epistemologically stable and ideologically oriented as opposed to the modernist emphasis on epistemic uncertainty, the self-consciousness of language, temporal strata, the exploration of the complex and vague human psyche.

Therefore, I believe that continuous efforts to mark a certain group of works as satire and explore their generic peculiarities are more productive than subsuming them under modernism. Even if the latter action might elevate the status of modern satire in academia, the former is more meaningful for uncovering and appreciating more diverse literary achievements and their represented worlds. I demonstrate that satire is crucial and effective in representing an important cultural imagination of ageing in the early twentieth century, illuminative of a certain important cultural perception of the time. The following analysis investigates how 'rebirth' replaces the Bildung as the dominant symbolic form of ageing through a mode of imperial movement—quest—and how the satiric force of the novels manifests by debunking that ideal of rebirth. The authors deploy satire for no other reasons than to dramatize the themes of quest and ageing in the most adequate fashion.

My analysis comes in the wake of previous literary criticism on the novels, which is not abundant for reasons adumbrated above. Some scholars attempt to read the Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* as modernist by accentuating certain characteristics (Greenberg and Colletta). Others call attention to the satiric force of the novel rather than establishing its modernist affiliations. Edward Lobb argues that it formally mixes realism and symbolism and satirizes the loss of humanism, feminine men, cultural nihilism, and meaningless sexual intercourse. Martin Stannard emphasizes the author's worldview as a conservative Catholic. Stannard maintains that Waugh alludes to an authentic Catholic civilization by describing transcendental Catholic truths undermined by post-Reformation progress, cultural bankruptcy, and nihilism. Frederick Beaty posits the novel as a realistic masterpiece and maintains that it explores the society that lacks "something higher than man-made ideals" (110).

Recent literary criticism on Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* are rarer. They attend to how the novel satirizes modern American society during the interwar years as well as the West's quest for spiritual wisdom in foreign lands. Jane O'Halloran notes that in their quest, male Westerners in Maugham's novels reproduce their Western social status even in their attempts to escape. Krishna Manavallie elaborates on how Maugham responds to the orientalist notion that the East is prehistoric to ensure the superiority of the West and at the same time able to serve as an exotic recuperative place. Other critics elucidate Maugham's personal interest in and understanding of Hindu philosophy and his attempts to embed it in the novel (Kaur Singh and Ashley).

2. *A Handful of Dust* and the Failure of Rebirth

Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust*, published in 1934, apparently engages two distinct genres: urban satire and lost world literature. The generic juxtaposition implies an interrelation of upper class life in England and the exploration of foreign lands as post-1918 life in England pushes many wealthy, sensitive English men to seek a regenerative power in foreign soils.[103] The narrated time in the novel immediately follows the Depression, and the first half accentuates the lethargy and anachronism of people who mechanically repeat superficial routines and fail to engage in any meaningful and productive profession. Sterility and mechanical repetition emerge early as the dominant form of ageing.

This type of ageing, not as maturing and synthesizing with society but as hollow repetition, is first expressed by social parasites like John Beaver. He is a jobless socializer who

[103] For an analysis of the theme of "the urge to escape Western civilization" in the early twentieth-century British travel writing, see Barbara Korte or Helen Carr.

later functions as a lover and conduit for Tony Last's wife Brenda to fall into the superficial social life in London. The satiric narrator, who remains detached from characters' interiority and portrays their externals, depicts Beaver: "From leaving Oxford until the beginning of the slump he had worked in an advertising agency. Since then no one had been able to find anything for him to do. So he got up late and sat near his telephone most of the day, hoping to be called up" (5). Beaver represents the youth who no longer share the ethos of civilizational progress after the experience of the Great War and the Depression but have yet to find an equivalent to the dynamism of the nineteenth-century industrial capitalism. Their life has become no more than habitual, embodying nothing but repetition of unproductive and customary upper-class living patterns. Their immediate elders, who experienced the war and spent their youth in the brief boom of the twenties, sense a break from the youth of the thirties; the elders were "passing into middle age; they were heavier, balder and redder in the face than when they had been demobilized, but their joviality persisted and it was their turn now to embarrass their successors, deploring their lack of manly and gentlemanly qualities" (9).

The main character Tony Last is a country gentleman. In the beginning, he lives with his wife Brenda and his eight-year-old son John Andrew. Tony indulges in his manor house, which reflects the lack of a sense of progress. The narrator mentions a country guide book in which the house is introduced: "This, formerly one of the notable houses of the country, was entirely rebuilt in 1864 in the Gothic style and is now devoid of interest" (13). The house is not convenient to maintain and even annoys his relatives; however, Tony is content with and proud of his archaic house in Hetton and remains ignorant of his wife's boredom and eventual affair with Beaver. He names the bedrooms after Arthurian legends and retains a variety of old-fashioned, inconvenient, expensive Gothic decorations: "all these things with which he had

grown up were a source of constant delight and exultation to Tony; things of tender memory and proud possession" (14).[104] He believes that the outside world is not sophisticated enough for his own world when he wonders "whether it would be easy, nowadays, to find craftsmen capable of such delicate works" (15). The characters in the novel are rarely described as capable of generating meaningful changes in their habitual life by facing the reality of the changed world. Even Tony's Anglican father uses the same sermon that "had been composed in his more active days for delivery at the garrison chapel; he had done nothing to adapt them to the changed conditions of his ministry and they mostly concluded with some reference to homes and dear ones far away" (39).

The only person who remains professionally dynamic and financially successful is Beaver's mother. She is a property-broker and developer and in the opening paragraph portrayed as devoid of the capacity for sympathy. While talking with her son about a recent fire on a house, she ponders on how she would benefit from the accident. She is afraid that "the fire never properly reached the bedrooms. . . . Still they are bound to need doing up, everything black with smoke and drenched in water and luckily they had that old-fashioned sort of extinguisher that ruins *everything*" (3; italics in original). Many people owe her money for properties, including the Lasts, although she is not a respected member of society. Tony says to Brenda, "She's hell. Come to think of it we owe her some money" (29).

The novel portrays all these characters, especially the younger generation, are portrayed as living a patterned, mechanically repetitive life in a way that evokes a trope of ageing as sterile repetition. The detached narrator's voice brings into relief the superficial and inorganic nature of

[104] For the Catholic Waugh's admiration for early-English Gothic revival and contempt for later Victorian fake-medievalism and sentimentality, see Michael Brennan.

ageing. As I mentioned earlier, satire in the thirties has not enjoyed as much positive critical valuation as modernism, partly because its focus on the external features of people and society was considered not to be 'realist' enough compared to modernism's unprecedented penetration into the complex human psyche. However, in simple terms, the reason the narrator of *A Handful of Dust* describes only the externals is because there is nothing but the externals to describe.

According to Georg Lukács, the novel, as opposed to the epic, "seeks, by giving form, to uncover and construct the concealed totality of life" in the midst of all "the fissures and rents which are inherent in the historical situation" (60). He adds that "the fundamental form-determining intention of the novel is objectivized as the psychology of the novels' heroes" because totality is no longer discovered in the alienating modern capitalist society (60). In realist novels, a complex interiority of the individual character develops through his or her continuous struggles, compromises, and negotiations with outside society, and the classical Bildungsroman stylizes the ideal synthesis between the individual and society. *A Handful of Dust*, on the contrary, depicts the sheer absence of complex interaction, not to mention reconciliation, between the individual and society.

The novel portrays life as an endless habit, and the narrative unfolds, not toward maturity, but in a static process that registers the same, only superficially different, routines. The most noteworthy characteristic of the characters like Tony and Beaver is their lack of any reflexive interiority and psychological depth. In the scene of the Lasts' Christmas party, the life of mechanical repetition conforming to ordinary social patterns is, once again, not even perceived as a problematic social milieu but as a norm: "This year, everything happened in its accustomed way; nothing seemed to menace the peace and stability of the house" (78). When Beaver, an exemplary social parasite, visits the Lasts, he is an automaton of socializing skills and

manners. He "was well practiced in the art of being shown over houses; he had been brought up to it in fact, ever since he had begun to accompany his mother, whose hobby it had always been, and later, with changing circumstances, the profession" (43).

It is this type of "profession" that characterizes the world the novel satirizes. With the financial centrality of Mrs. Beaver, the property broker in society, and her son and other people living a morally bankrupt and parasitic, idle life, the novel represents the social milieu of finance capitalism. Vladimir Lenin had already explored in 1917 the rapidity with which the richest countries in Europe and America were morally decaying due to the supremacy of finance capital:

> the ownership of capital is separated from the application of capital to production, that money capital is separated from industrial or productive capital, and that the rentier who lives entirely on income obtained from money capital is separated from the entrepreneur. (67)

At this stage of capitalism more and more people in developed capitalist countries cease to participate in productive enterprises but rely on dividends, securities, and bonds: "The rentier state is a state of parasitic, decaying capitalism, and this circumstance cannot fail to influence all the social-political conditions of the countries affected in general" (102). Instead of engaging in the production of meaningful, tangible items as in the era of industrial capitalism, the characters of this novel denote the most negative aspect of finance capitalism: the idleness of life relying on the self-expansion of capital without the input of industrial activities. According to Lenin, imperialism in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century is the highest stage of capitalism.

Hannah Arendt, like Lenin, elaborates on the centrality of finance capitalism to imperialism and its destructive force against the binding cultural and moral norms of the political body of the nation state. When capital found the bounds of the nation-state no longer practical, it

pressured national government to succumb to and expedite its expansion: "export of power followed meekly in the train of exported money, since uncontrollable investments in distant countries threatened to transform large strata of society into gamblers . . . and to replace the profits of production with profits in commissions" (135). Arendt adds that:

> When the accumulation of capital had reached its natural, national limits, the bourgeoisie understood that only with an 'expansion is everything' ideology, and only with a corresponding power-accumulating process, would it be possible to set the old motor into motion again. At the same moment, however, when it seemed as though the true principle of perpetual motion had been discovered, the specifically optimistic mood of the progress ideology was shaken. (144)

In the previous chapter, the discussion of *A Passage to India* showed how British imperial subjects' experience in the peripheries of empire exerted a 'disorienting' and 'unsettling' impact on the ideals of modernization and, in Arendt's terms, "the specifically optimistic mood of the progress ideology was shaken," which lent context to the rise of modernism in the 1920s.

When finance capitalism and its logic of perpetual expansion of capital finally marginalize any other lingering ideals of human progress and moral standards, people of the thirties' society in the novel do not even perceive the social milieu dictated by finance capitalism as disorienting or unsettling but they take it for granted to a point where they 'embody' it.[105] The mechanically repetitive, circular nature of lethargic, habitual, and patterned life in the thirties' Britain indicates that their subjectivity does not carry any skepticism of, or resistance against, the dominant social system of finance capitalism but has completely become part of it. With no

[105] See Hannah Arendt for a further elaboration on how people's becoming part of a larger capitalist and bureaucratic system with no authentic interiority or traditional sense of class loyalty paves the way for totalitarianism in the thirties.

meaningful interiority and only the externals, their lives give rise to satire. The narrator's criticism and dark humor at the characters' external aspects effectively portray those whose subjectivity does nothing but reproduce the mobility of capital and whose ageing symbolizes not the complex and synthetic dialectic of the Bildung but sterile and shallow mechanical repetition.

As for Tony, his anachronistic attachment to his quasi-Gothic Victorian manor house distracts him for engaging in capital investment like other landowners under the expanded and expanding market in the imperialist era. Raymond Williams calls attention to how the landed aristocracy, despite its loss of political power throughout the period of industrialization, maintained its social imagery and status by imperial investments: "The network of income from property and speculation was now not only industrial but imperial. . . . the country-houses of George Eliot, of Henry James and of their etiolated successors are . . . the country-hoses of capital rather than of land" (282).[106] Tony's lethargy, passivity, and blind fascination with his inconvenient and malfunctioning manor house suggest that Tony does not inherit the financial dynamism of elder landowners but adheres only to the past familial glory. As discussed in Chapter I on *Vanity Fair,* the landed aristocracy was portrayed as lethargic and decadent even in the mid-nineteenth century when the bourgeoisie began to assume social hegemony. In the 1930s, the infiltration of the lethargic and repetitive aspect of finance capitalism into every facet of society and the destruction of traditional moral norms further alienate old-fashioned landowners like Tony from modern culture and push them further toward their own anachronistic glory fetishized in their house.

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[106] See P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins for a further analysis on how landowners maintained their economic and social prestige by investing in finance capital. According to the duo, landowners tended to cooperate with financial sectors instead of industrialists because they usually detested the philistine and money-grubbing industrialists, and the investment in financial and service sectors were deemed to be personal rather than bureaucratic.

The ethos of the mechanically repetitive and unproductive social environment finds another conspicuous example in the characterization of the Moroccan princess, Jennifer Abdul Akbar. She is the only person of color that appears in the story before Tony leaves for Brazil. Brenda and her friends use her to keep Tony distracted while Brenda herself is having an affair with Beaver although, in fact, Tony remains ignorant of what Brenda desires and what she does in London. However, in the social milieu where the global movement of commodities and people has become a given reality, the reliance on self-propagating capital has become a norm, and the lethargy and inertia are all that have become of the leisured class, a character like Akbar does not incur any serious cultural or moral effects. The superficiality of her characterization causes her to be viewed only as part of the repetitive routines and gossips of the London life and of the commodified Eastern culture generated by the excesses of mobile capital of the world economy. When Akbar visits Tony's house and meets Tony and his son, Tony is neither fascinated with nor repelled by her; he is simply bored by her and her autobiographical tale just as he is by anything modern outside his Gothic house. She says, "You are shy of talking about yourself, aren't you, Teddy? It's a mistake, you know, to keep things bottled up. I've been very unhappy too" (125). Tony "looked about him desperately in search of help; and help came. 'Oh, there you are,' said a firm, child's voice" (125).

Also Akbar's room in London is a complete hodgepodge of cultural items from all around the world: "swords meant to adorn the state robes of a Moorish caid were swung from the picture rail; mats made for prayer were strewn on the divan; the carpet on the floor had been made in Bokhara as a wall covering; while over the dressing table was draped a shawl made in Yokohama" (156). The juxtaposition of distinct cultural items devoid of authentic or traditional meaning no longer disorients the British people's notion of culture. Instead, it merely

complements the superficial nature of the excessive mobility of monopoly and finance capital that exceeds the bounds of national culture.

Tony's son John's sudden death marks a turning point in this novel. Initially, blinded by his own habitual lifestyle and psyche, Tony does not realize that the death will be a crucial turning point in his marital life. Tony remains ignorant of what his wife is up to and what she does outside his tightly closed house, impervious to the outer world in both cultural and psychological senses. After briefly attempting to protect her reputation and trying to allow her to divorce him, Tony realizes her shallowness and deception while talking to her cousin, Reggie, who on behalf of Brenda asks him to give up the house and grant a larger amount of alimony to her. Tony decides to leave for Brazil in search of a certain revitalizing power. His decision reflects the failure of the synthesis between the individual and national community as in the classical Bildungsroman and the attempt to locate a new field of socialization outside the imaginary and physical bounds of national culture.

The symbolic magnitude of his son's death prompts Tony's disillusionment with English life and his pursuit of symbolic rebirth. On the way back from a frustrated fox-hunting, Tony's son John is accidently kicked by a horse and dies immediately: "Everyone agreed it was nobody's fault" (143). Tony's friend attempts to console him by saying repetitively: "'No, it wasn't anybody's fault. It just happened.' 'That's it,' said Tony. 'It just happened . . ." (145). The sheer absurdity and contingency of the death of the child whom Tony expected to be heir to his house and the failure to find any convincing explanation for the abrupt severance of the generational continuity emphasize a sense of break from the past; at the same time, they bring

into relief a lost sense of continuity into futurity and the widespread desire to start all over again in a new place.[107]

That the novel generically consists of satire in the first half and lost-world literature in the second symbolically testifies to the historical context in which, in regard to the idea of ageing, the sense of repetitiveness and sterility and the pursuit of chances for rebirth in exotic lands culturally interrelate. It does not take long until the trope of rebirth manifested in the genre of the quest or lost-world literature unveils itself in this novel as another case of sterile repetition. As discussed earlier, the novel features the absence of conflicts or negotiations within consciousness between the individual and society. Tony does not develop any meaningful dialectic between his consciousness and the external world even after his disillusionment with his wife and modern society. As shown in his belated realization of Brenda's unfaithfulness due to his patterned, unreflective life, the novel continues to revolve around the temporal disjuncture between consciousness and the outer world, foregrounding the characters' inability to turn knowledge into meaningful and appropriate actions in time. As we shall see below, this theme of belated realization endows the narrative with an important repetitive structure to depict the individual characters' lack of agency to envision a progressive prospect in history and the mechanical repetition as their form of ageing.

This satiric novel deploys the technique of dramatic irony and describes many characters or events through which readers see Tony might attain a more accurate picture of the current situation of the outer world and realized the absurdity of his quest for a recuperative power for his Gothic ideals.[108] However, Tony constantly fails. As discussed earlier, the travestied and

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[107] On the collective sense of break from the past after the Great War and especially the Depression, see Eric Hobsbawm's "The Fall of Liberalism" in *The Age of Empire*.

[108] For a detailed analysis of diverse forms of irony found in the novel, see Frederick Beaty. He

neglected Moroccan princess Akbar suggests the kind of oriental wisdom that has become only a part of the commercial culture of global finance capitalism in the thirties, but Tony fails to note it. Also Brenda's cousin Reggie whom Tony converses with before he decides to leave is caricatured as a ridiculous imperial archaeologist suggestive of the absurdity of the imperial quest which Tony is about to launch: Reggie returns "from Tunisia where he was occupied in desecrating some tombs. His departure, like all his movements, was leisurely. . . . He was prematurely, unnaturally stout, and he carried his burden of flesh as though he were not yet used to it" (200-1). His room reminds the reader of the hodgepodge of Akbar's room filled with cultural rubbish: "His house in London was full of [his archaeological expeditions'] fruit—fragmentary amphoras, corroded bronze axe-heads, little splinters of bone and charred stick, a Greco-Roman head in marble, its features obliterated and ground smooth with time" (201-2).

Also on board the ship toward Brazil, Tony meets and has a brief affair with a shallow, flippant creole girl named Thérèse de Vitré who is returning to Trinidad after studying in Paris. When landing, her father is waiting for her: "He wore a panama hat and smart silk clothes, and smoked a cheroot; the complete slave-owner of the last century. Thérèse did not introduce him to Tony. 'He was someone on the ship,' she explained, obviously" (232). Another passenger tells Tony that "Reserved lot, these real old creoles, . . . Poor as church mice most of them but stinking proud. Time and again I've palled up with them on board and when we got to port it's been goodbye" (232). If fragmentary, all these pieces of information suggest the disillusioning, true picture of the Empire in the 1930s and the anachronistic nature of imperial ideals or fantasy. However, these historical realities of empire fail to register in Tony's consciousness, and to the

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interprets Tony's belated realization of the meaning of his situation as the Catholic author's critique of "the character's sole reliance on rational self-sufficiency" (92).

end of the story his subjectivity carries this sheer chasm between his interiority and society, the chasm that the traditional coming-of-age plot should overcome to produce an organic whole of social subjectivity.[109]

Dr. Messinger's fantastic story of a legendary lost city in the deep Amazon fascinates Tony, and they start an expedition, which is not far from utter disaster: "It was not possible to read by the light of the storm lantern. Sleep was irregular and brief after the days of lassitude and torpor. There was little to talk about; everything had been said during the day, in the warm shade among the stores. Tony lay awake, scratching" (235). Dr. Messinger is incompetent at locating the path or reaching the Pie-wie people, who he claims know the exact location of the city. The nineteenth-century lost-world literature, which Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines* exemplifies, is no sooner reproduced than parodied as the trope of rebirth as quickly gives way to that of mechanic repetition.

As the European explorers did in *King Solomon's Mines* with eyeglasses, Dr. Messinger and Tony try to impress and manipulate another Indian tribe, the Macushi, with their trade goods so the Macushi can guide the duo and carry their cargos. However, the Macushi are impervious to their intrigue: "'It's no good,' said Dr. Messinger after half an hour's fruitless negotiation. . . . "But they'll fall for the mice, you see. I *know* the Indian mind'" (262; italics in original). As Frederick Beaty points out, Dr. Messinger's assertion, "I *know* the Indian mind," reminds the reader of the equally self-deluded assertion by Tony, "I know Brenda so well" (99). One of the goods they use is tellingly a mechanical toy-mouse. The mechanic mouse is, as discussed more

[109] On the 'deflation' of heroism in Waugh's earlier works, see Anthony Lane. Imitating Waugh's own dark humor, Lane claims that "[a] Waugh hero does not make his mark upon the world; he waits, not with any masochistic thrill but in a near-trance of resignation, to see what damage the world will choose to inflict upon him" (410).

below, the central symbol, which embraces the novel's various targets of satire. The effect Dr. Messinger expects as was displayed by similar items in Haggard's novel is not produced. The mouse frightens the Macushi, and they flee to their village overnight, leaving the duo short-handed and isolated in the depth of the jungle.

The juxtaposition of and ideological connection between the upper-class British life and Tony's quest accentuates how the narrative unfolds toward the end. The narrator alternates the satiric representation of the London life with Tony's grotesque wandering in the jungle, which discloses how the genres of modern satire and lost-world literature are mutually constitutive in the thirties. For example, at the end of a paragraph, the narrator says, "it was ten o'clock by Tony's wrist watch when they reached their camp" (242). And in the immediately following paragraph, the narrator turns back to London: "Ten o'clock on the river was question time at Westminster" (242). The Lasts' politician friend, Jock, has a question as ridiculous as Tony's situation:

> I should like to ask the Minister of Agriculture whether in view of the dumpling in this country of Japanese pork pies, the right honourable member is prepared to consider a modification of the eight and a half score basic pig from two and a half inches of thickness round the belly as originally specified, to two inches. (242-3)

Also Brenda is deserted by the social parasite Beaver who learns that Brenda, with no divorce settlement from Tony, is financially unstable. He suddenly leaves for San Francisco, leaving Brenda behind in a small flat and embodying another meaningless mobility enabled by the world capitalism.[110]

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[110] For a fuller analysis of the relationship between the primitive and the civilized in the novel, see George McCartney. According to him, Waugh, as a Tory, did not seriously care about the inherent, unique nature of the primitive of the Amazon but only in relations to his concern about

Tony gets a fever and in his delirium reaches Mr. Todd, a crazy old man who detains Tony and has Tony read Dickens repetitively to him. Like the mechanical mouse that appears to him in his delirium, he falls into the mechanical repetition of reading the representative literature of the Victorian era that, in fact, is exactly the time in which Tony entrapped himself by adhering to his manor house. Tony's being trapped in that trope of (un)ageing is dramatized in a horrible fashion in the end. The sense of progress mediated by national culture in the classical Bildungsroman or the pursuit of rebirth outside the bounds of the existing social whole finally turns back into the ageing as sterility and mechanic repetition. Deep in the Amazon, Tony falls into repeating the repetitiveness of his British lifestyle.

The denouement of the narrative does not feature a resolution but an extended repetition. Tony's cousin Teddy "surveyed his charges with pride and affection. It was by means of them that he hoped one day to restore Hetton to the glory that it had enjoyed in the days of his Cousin Tony" (308). The father's property is not handed down vertically to his son but horizontally to his cousin, willing to repeat his cousin's solipsistic and anachronistic ideals. This horizontal and repetitive rather than progressive and developmental prospect of life thus finds symbolic expression in the narrative style, which ends not in a resolution or dialectic, but in anticipation of further repetition. Brenda also marries Jock after Tony's death is known, and she is expected to repeat her shallow, mechanical social life in London.

In short, like Sybil in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Tony is not even dead, and the idea of rebirth or a new beginning of progress is forestalled.[111] The house is a thematic anchor

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his own culture. McCartney notes that Waugh used the primitive mind to depict what he imagined as living without a proper Western tradition.

[111] As well-known, the title of the novel comes from Eliot's *The Waste Land*. On thematic parallels between *A Handful of Dust* and *The Waste Land*, see Edward Lobb. He points out that

paralleling the Amazonian jungle, which metonymically denotes the culture that does not take a stance vis-à-vis the changing status of the Empire but mechanically repeats its routines in the social milieu of finance capitalism. The meaningless death of the next-generation inheritor and the life-in-death of the current owner imply the inability of the culture to envision a prospect of progress. The lunatic Mr. Todd is a character who ironically helps Tony to live forever in his sterile, repetitive life of anachronism. The failure of individuals' consciousness to walk in step with and reflect changing social conditions of the Empire frustrates the ideal of the Bildung or rebirth and finds a proper form of symbolic ageing in the life-in-death, mechanic repetition.

3. *The Razor's Edge,* Endless Ageing, and the Decline of Satire

Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* was published a decade later in 1944. This novel repeats the generic mixture of satire and the quest tale. Maugham appears in the novel as a character/narrator, and the story is primarily in the form of his reminiscence of an American man named Larry Darrel and a handful of people related to him on both sides of the Atlantic during approximately previous twenty years before the publication of the novel. Maugham the narrator travels to the USA frequently and makes some friends including Elliott Templeton, an art-broker who works both sides of the Atlantic, his sister Louisa Bradley, and her daughter Isabel. When invited to Louisa's house, Maugham meets Larry, a young veteran back from WWI. He served in France as a pilot and upon discharge becomes disillusioned with worldly affairs despite the appearance of composure. However, deep in his mind his war trauma persists. Since he

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"[b]oth Eliot and Waugh, for example, depict the pervasive boredom of the characters' lives and their futile pursuit of momentary transcendence in meaningless sex, and both societies seem devoid of real emotion" (141).

witnessed his close comrade full of vigor perish meaninglessly, he looks for an answer to the question whether there is any profound meaning in the world.

Larry's quest for a spiritual source of a new individual as well as civilizational beginning entails a satiric critique of the cultural milieu of finance capitalism in the 1930s and '40s. This chapter explores the significance of his quest by calling attention to his peculiar appearance of perpetual youth. In comparison to Tony in *A Handful of Dust*, Larry's everlasting youth fails to symbolize a radical source of 'rebirth' outside the cultural and economic grid of the society he professes to escape and cure. Maugham the narrator's uncertain and changing stance toward Larry also helps to illuminate how the novel compromises its satire in face of the ungraspable supremacy of finance capitalism and the horror of the Second World War.

In the beginning, Larry is engaged to Isabel and well-received in Isabel's house. However, she does not understand why he rejects every nice job offered to him thanks to his influential acquaintances, including rich stockbroker Henry Maturin, whose son Gray is Larry's friend and loves Isabel: "The question at issue was Larry's odd disinclination to go to work" (25). It is strange to everyone that Larry does not commit to any of those coveted positions. Larry gives "no reason except that he hadn't made up his mind what he wanted to do" (26). Maugham becomes interested in Larry and attempts to befriend him. He asks what Larry really wants to do. Then, "[h]e gave me his radiant, fascinating smile. 'Loaf'" (32). A job is an essential medium or conduit between the individual and society or between the private and the public. In modern society, a job allows the individual to become independent from guardians and prompts him or her to enter capitalist social relations. Larry's disinclination to work suggests a refusal to socialize as he seeks his own authentic fashion of adulthood.

Other characters emphasize the value of professionalism and the responsibility of work to Larry whose intention eludes them. Isabel tries to dissuade Larry, who seems to her to be looking for a spiritual life. She says, “A man ought to work. That’s he’s here for. That’s how he contributes to the welfare of the community” (72). The Bildung in the traditional coming-of-age plot takes place when one integrates the values of his nation into one’s subjectivity and reconciles one’s modern individuality with existing national community without serious conflicts like revolutions. On the contrary, what Isabel and other people encourage Larry to do by seemingly speaking to the idea of the Bildung is, in fact, participate in the flourishing bubble of American economy in the twenties. By setting his story in the 1920s America, the center of the post-WWI global economic boom, Maugham vividly portrays how the supremacy of finance capitalism affects people’s view of the future and notion of ageing.

The optimism regarding the future of America is prevalent. Elliott attempts to help enrich Larry and establish Larry’s social reputation through his wide international influence and connections:

> It was evident to a man as clear-sighted as Elliott that America was entering upon a period of prosperity such as it had never known. Larry had a chance of getting in on the ground floor, and if he kept his nose to the grindstone he might well be many times a millionaire by the time he was forty. (36)

Isabel also addresses the American prosperity to persuade Larry:

> “This is a young country, and it’s a man’s duty to take part in its activities. Henry Maturin was saying the other day that we were beginning an era that would make the achievements of the past look like two bits. He said he could see no limit to

> our progress and he's convinced that by 1930 we shall be the richest and greatest country in the world." (45)

The satiric force of the novel toward the beginning derives from these moments of dramatic irony. When the novel was published in 1944, Maugham's contemporary readers had long experienced the ruinous repercussions of the Depression and were in the midst of WWII. Unlike Europeans devastated by WWI and disillusioned with their old civilization in the twenties, Americans cherish nothing but this blind optimism about their future and glorify their young civilization in which even poor immigrants' offspring like the Maturins emerge as financially successful citizens. As Isabel says, ageing in this young country means simply being swallowed by the seemingly unending progress based on the unprecedented economic boom. As in *A Handful of Dust*, the characters fail to develop any genuine interiority, and this modern satire has nothing but the external of the characters who do not hesitate to 'embody' the logic of capital.

Many people benefit from this flourishing bubble economy by stocks or, as exemplified by Elliott, transatlantic businesses, which illuminates the dominance of financial capitalism and the ease and quickness with which people attempt to make money:

> [Henry Maturin] wrote to Elliott that he was as much opposed to gambling as he had ever been, but this was not gambling, it was an affirmation of his belief in the inexhaustible resources of the country. . . . So successful were Henry's Maturin's transaction on his behalf that now Elliot found himself with the tidy sum of fifty thousand dollars which he had done nothing to earn. (122)

However, his countrymen's life featured by self-indulgence and the lack of skepticism further alienates Larry: "Do you know, I've got an idea that I want to do more with my life than sell bonds" (45). Larry finally decides to leave for Paris: "I don't know why, but I've got it into my

head that there everything that's muddled in my mind would grow clear" (48). The beginning of Larry's ceaseless movement is his refusal to settle down conventionally or engage in secular works, and his travel to France to find an answer to his spiritual question is thus his own modern version of pilgrimage.[112]

Paul Fussell elaborates on the ways in which many British writers or war veterans after the Great War left in search of a better, often romanticized, place where they attempted to envision a new self. He argues that many writers criticized Britain in the nineteenth century, too, but they did not often explicitly express their hatred of their country and desire to emigrate. Fussell also interprets this urge to escape Western civilization in the post-WWI era as part of ageing, a rite of passage in the modern world: "Freud has perceived that if one motive for travel is curiosity, a stronger motive is that which impels adolescent runaways" (15-6). As Larry's case suggests, this urge to escape did not only derive from the crippling memories of WWI but also involved social criticism. Fussell argues: "The impulse to flee will be the stronger when the father is one who closes pubs, regulates sexual behavior, devises the British Christmas, contrives that the sun shall seldom be seen, and finds nothing wrong with the class system and the greedy capitalism sustaining it" (16). Likewise, Larry does not simply attempt to escape from his horrifying memories of the Great War but to find a source of wisdom to repair the social deterioration he witnesses in his mother country.

After staying in France for a while and intermittently meeting Maugham and his other old acquaintances to tell them about his studying and spiritual search, Larry then travels to Lens, France, where he works in a coal mine and meets Kosti, a former Polish officer who further

[112] On the theme of travels as pilgrimage in modern literature, see Alexander Peat.

stimulates Larry's impulse to get 'true' experiences, rather than indirect experiences from books. His endless mobility finally brings Larry to Bombay where he works as a deck worker until he meets a Hindu spiritual leader and learns the Vedanta philosophy. According to the philosophy, there is no beginning or end but the eternal circle of life. Larry learns to liberate himself from the cycle of human sufferings by identifying with the Absolute.[113] However, after experiencing a momentary epiphany, which he believes to be the ultimate beauty and bliss on a high mountain, he decides to return to the secular world. Rather than leaving the cycle of human suffering by remaining on the mountain, he desires to embrace every moment of life and hopes to spread to his fellow Americans his newly found wisdom that spiritual composure and liberation are much more important than financial gains.

Most of all, his peculiar appearance symbolizes Larry's movement in search of wisdom outside the bounds of the American capitalist social grid. By moving around the world with socialization deferred endlessly, Larry stays 'young.' After his long, not well-provided journey, "he looked very well; he looked, indeed, with his deeply sunburnt, unlined face, amazingly young," says Maugham (149). In the classical Bildungsroman, the youth's successful process of socializing and maturation attests to the capacity of organic national culture to control and contain the endless movement and levelling power of capital that the modern individual represents. Larry's status of eternal youth suggests that he does not find a society with which he would reconcile his individuality in a dialectical manner and 'normally' mature. Maugham thinks he "had a feeling already that [Larry] never took root anywhere, but was always prepared at a moment's notice, for a reason that seemed good to him or on a whim, to move on" (148). His

[113] For a detailed analysis of how Larry's spiritual and physical journey mirrors the teaching of the Katha Upanisad, see Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh

'uprootedness' indicative of the negation of normative coming-of-age and his detachment from his own society are further accentuated by Larry's constant aloofness: "I felt that there was something within him, I don't know whether to call it awareness or a sensibility or a force, that remained strangely aloof" (149).

The novel contrasts Larry's unageing with other characters who fall abruptly into symbolic senility due to the Great Depression. As discussed above, whereas the stable national community's successful, harmonious integration of the modern individual finds its literary expression in the Bildungsroman, its total failure to integrate a disillusioned individual manifests itself in the eternal youth as with Larry; then the most disastrous collapse of the existing social system and the shattered belief in the endless financial growth generates a character subsumed by mobile, speculative finance capital, who abruptly jumps to senility. After revoking her engagement to Larry, Isabel marries Gray, and the couple and Gary's father, the stock market guru Henry, suffer severely from the Crash in 1929. Maugham meets Gray and says, "I was taken aback. His hair had receded on the temples and there was a small bald patch on the crown, his face was puffy and red, and he had a double chin" (140). He compares Larry to Gray: "He was a year younger than Gray. They were both in their early thirties, but whereas Gray looked ten years more than his age, Larry looked ten years less. Gray's movements, owing to his great bulk, were deliberate and rather heavy; but Larry's were light and easy" (149). The contrasting words, "deliberate" and "heavy" versus "light" and "easy," indicate the difference in degrees to which they attached themselves to their society. The explosiveness and unpredictability of capitalism and the inability of society to control and modulate the mobility of finance capital deprive characters like Gray of the time to gradually and properly mature and, consequently, deprive them of their youth.

In contrast to Larry's eternal youth is another character who mirrors Larry in his perpetual mobility, and who also seemingly better deals with the fluctuations of financial capitalism than Gray does. As a transatlantic art-broker and socializer, Elliott Templeton represents another type of eternal mobility owing to the network of the world economy. He pursues aristocratic tastes and finds satisfaction in surrounding himself with people of high social ranks and reputation: "there were many old families in France and some in England whose circumstances compelled them to part with a signed piece of Buhl or a writing-table made by Chippendale himself if it could be done quietly, and they were glad to know a man of great culture and perfect manners who could arrange the matter with discretion" (6). Bridging the reciprocal needs of impecunious landed European aristocrats and American nouveaux riches who desire to elevate their artistic taste, Elliott amasses wealth and, like Mrs. Beaver in *A Handful of Dust*, is the most active person in the world of this novel. Further in parallel with Larry, he does not seriously suffer from the Depression. Just like Larry, his movement across social as well as national boundaries places him in contact with diverse groups of people, and he is lucky to listen to his friend's advice in Vatican to sell his American securities and purchase gold before to the Crash breaks out.

As I mentioned earlier, aristocrats and traditional landowners engaged in financial sectors rather than industrial ones and maintained their influence and prestige with some success for some years even after the Great War. The novel portrays how they finally retreat from the center stage of the world economy under the aftermaths of the Depression, and so does Elliott:

> Such of the great ladies who had advanced Elliott's career were still alive were well along in years. The English peeresses, having lost their lords, had been forced to surrender their mansions to daughters-in-law, and had retired to villas at

> Cheltenham or to a modest house in Regent's Park. Stafford House was turned into a museum, Curzon House became the seat of an organization, Devonshire House was for sale. (119)

Elliott is a transitional figure. He combines his longing for the beauty of aristocratic tastes and the Catholic Church with his secular interests and benefits from the period in which aristocrats invest in mobile capital and attempt to maintain their lofty lifestyle. Now in the 1930s, however, he mocks and detests philistines as he gradually loses his grip on his social circle: "Elliott was confounded to meet politicians who spoke French with a vulgar accent, journalists whose table manners were deplorable" (121). Nevertheless, Elliot cannot desert his habitual social life: "Like a dying actor when he has the grease paint on his face and steps on the stage, who forgets for the time being his aches and pains, Elliott played his part" (224).

Having embodied the mobility of finance capital as well as identified with old aristocrats for their noble tastes more successfully than others, Elliott never cared to develop an authentic interiority and bypasses the complex interaction and negotiation between individuality and society for the development of mature adulthood as in the classical Bildungsroman. As Elliott adheres to his social life and mobility even after his acute disappointment, the superficiality and mechanical repetitiveness of Elliott's mode of ageing leads to his regression to childishness. He feels embittered when the Princess Novemali does not invite him to her party, although he is now too weak and old to attend any party:

> "The old bitch. She'd never have got anywhere without me. I gave parties for her. I introduced her to everyone she knows. She sleeps with her chauffeur; you knew that of course. Disgusting! He sat there and told me that she's having the whole garden illuminated and there are going to be fireworks. I love fireworks." (226-7)

As shown in Larry's or Gray's cases, Elliot's childishness symbolizes another twisted ageing in the capitalist world that keeps moving on its own logic and does not allow a dialectic between the autonomous individual and stable national community. The artworks he helps others purchase are mocked, and the only useful legacy he leaves to his niece Isabel is money. The relentless mobility of capital is so powerful and the charm of the luxurious life based on financial speculation is so prevalent that nobody has substantial individuality to resist or negotiate with the power of social norms.

Toward the end of the novel, Larry's quest and his own mode of (un)ageing start to become an object of satire, too. His quest for wisdom is, like the case of Tony Last in *A Handful of Dust*, contradictory in itself as an attempt to find a pure, primordial beginning of civilization in another culture. First of all, Larry prolongs his mobility at his whims due to the money he has fortunately inherited but which he does not seem to bother about. When he returns from India, he meets Maugham again:

> "I've got more money than I can spend."
>
> "Notwithstanding the crash?"
>
> "Oh, that didn't affect me. Everything I had was in government bonds." (145)

He seeks for wisdom in a new culture but ironically his mobility also relies on the imperial networks that the Western empires cast over the world. After analyzing Maugham's novels set in exotic lands including *The Razor's Edge*, Jane O'Halloran also concludes that the protagonist of Maugham's novel "does not relinquish any power" in pursuit of a recuperative power in another culture; "indeed, it is the power inherent in belonging to an imperialist nation that gives him the choice between 'civilization' and the 'primitive'" (78). Both Larry and Elliott represent the time

in which the travel/pilgrimage of people, artworks, and capital have all become part of the world economy.

Larry's eternal youth, like Elliott's vigor which ends up in childishness, also turns out to be self-contradictory. In their penultimate meeting, Maugham emphasizes Larry's peculiar youth again: "Larry seemed as fresh as ever. His eyes were shining, there wasn't a line on his smooth face, and he didn't look a day more than twenty-five" (283). However, Larry's youth is no longer the sign of his vitality uncontaminated by the explosive and often destructive force of capital. Instead it increasingly indicates his failure of socialization and also his naivety and inability to realize that it is impossible to stay outside of the grid of capitalism that has penetrated every corner of the word. Although Maugham was initially interested in Larry's alternative worldview and behavioral pattern while satirizing others, Larry has been elusive to Maugham, due not only to his ceaseless global movement but also to the abstract ideals Larry imparts to him. Now he finally becomes skeptical of Larry and of the wisdom he claims to have found in India:

> "Well, all I can say is that it's damned lucky for you that you have a private income."
>
> "It's been of great use to me. Except for that I shouldn't have been able to do all I've done. But my apprenticeship is over. From now on it can only be burden to me. I shall rid myself of it."
>
> "That would be very unwise. The only thing that may make the kind of life you propose possible is financial independence."
>
> "On the contrary, financial independence would make the life I propose meaningless."
>
> I couldn't restrain a gesture of impatience. (281)

In his analysis of Joseph Conrad and Graham Greene, Simon Gikandi elaborates on the inevitable failure and disillusionment resulting from such quests as people of the West launch in Africa or other remote regions of the world. Gikandi analyzes how Western travelers' quest to find an uncontaminated, pure culture to recuperate their decaying civilization is doomed to fail because they project their desire to other cultures and unwittingly subsume those different cultures in their teleological developmental ideology. According to him, travelling to Africa is perceived as an escape from the existing taxonomies. However, as long as one conceives Africa as the primordial beginning of the old Western civilization and approaches it as such, one still apprehends Africa by inscribing the language of one's own culture on it and thereby reproduces one's own taxonomies. Gikandi argues that "the modernist excursion . . . into Africa will take the form of a narrative journey defined by circularity—a movement from disillusionment to expectation to disillusionment" (188).

Likewise, Larry's adventure and spiritual discovery, although his initial motive for the quest was honest and authentic, is subsumed by the grid of the world economy established by the Western empires and does not function as a secretive wisdom that could affect people in America.[114] Instead, the world is the same even after the Depression, and people blindly return to a normative form of life. One difference of *The Razor's Edge* from *A Handful of Dust* is the disappearance of dark humor around the result of the futile quest. Larry's quiet return to his country as opposed to Tony trapped deep in the jungle in a gruesome fashion points to the absence of the shock effect deriving from one's failure to realize the mechanical repetitiveness of one's life in the modern world. Larry's ceaseless quest has become just a tiny, neglected part of

[114] On Maugham's ambivalent stance toward Indophiles' fascination of Hinduism and his contemporary Orientalist writings, see Krishna Manavalli

the secular world—the capitalist world now led by America and characterized by the infinite proliferation, mobility and mixture of commodities and cultures. Larry's discovery of wisdom does not alter the course of the world; Isabel, who was once Larry's fiancée and is now rich again and about to return to America, does not even read the book that Larry writes and publishes for himself. Larry is soon forgotten by the other characters and absorbed into the immense dynamism of American culture and capitalism. Larry's mode of ageing—eternal youth—turns out not a sign of civilizational rebirth but a facet of the culture in which one does not achieve the Bildung but eternally embodies the hollow, mechanically repetitive mobility of capital.

Another major difference of *The Razor's Edge* from *A Handful of Dust* which deserves attention is that the author appears in the story and narrates it. While the veracity of the story has never been evidenced, Maugham the narrator still says, "I have invented nothing" except for using pseudonyms for those whom he will narrate (3); however, he soon contradicts himself: "I have taken the liberty that historians have taken from the time of Herodotus to put into the mouths of the persons of my narrative speeches that I did not myself hear and could not possibly have heard" (4). Since the progress of story relies on the narrator's recollection of people and events and of other people's telling him of what he has not witnessed, the narrative does not unfold in chronological order but often moves across time or at seemingly the narrator's convenience or whims. The major difference of this novel from *A Handful of Dust* lies in the fact that changes in the narrator's attitude toward, and thoughts of, the movement, quest and ageing of the main characters are vividly foregrounded.

Despite stylistic peculiarities, Maugham the narrator maintains an autobiographical and realist fashion in this satiric novel, which does not challenge ordinary readers' understanding.

His narration does not develop into an audacious, unprecedented epistemological attempt to explore deep human psyche but primarily focuses on the characters' conversations or actions, as in *A Handful of Dust*. What characterizes the author/narrator's attitude toward other people and distinguish it from that of the narrator in *A Handful of Dust* is his increasingly passive aestheticism. Instead of sharpening his satiric edge to represent and critique the effects of the disorienting force of finance capital and imperial ethos, his detached aestheticism allows retreat from them. He keenly observes or even points out explicitly other characters' dishonest desires and schemes to themselves. However, at confrontational and decisive moments, he increasingly portrays himself as a passive aesthete and does not dare to redirect the flow of events. For example, toward the end Maugham confronts Isabel to address her trap to intoxicate Sophie and have her leave in shame, which leads to her tragic death. Maugham asks her to admit the truth:

> "What a liar you are, Isabel."
>
> "Don't you believe me?"
>
> "Not for a moment."
>
> Isabel got up and walked over to the chimney-piece. . . . Like most French women of distinction she dressed in black in the daytime, which peculiarly suited her rich coloring, and on this occasion she wore a dress the expensive simplicity of which displayed her slender figure to advantage. (302)

He appreciates Isabel's physical beauty, and stops addressing the issue. Likewise, when he finds Larry's quest absurd, he often describes his physical beauty and avoids taking positive actions to enlighten Larry. As a narrator/character, Maugham increasingly sounds emasculated by the characters and events he finds elusive or even contemptible.

This sense of resignation as an artist implies that there is no room for individual agency. Through his characterization of himself as initially satiric but increasingly resigned, Maugham suggests that avant-gardist artistic intervention in the world is not sustainable. In *A Handful of Dust*, the narrator focuses on localized scenes and satirizing the externals of people who live a patterned life. The omniscient narrator's detachedness in *A Handful of Dust* still assumes the implied author's moral superiority to those whom he mocks and ridicules ruthlessly. On the contrary, the narrator of *The Razor's Edge* admits early in the novel that "it is very difficult to know people and I don't think one can every really know any but one's own countrymen" (4). He nonchalantly admits the limits of his knowledge in such a mobile world in which one encounters things and people of different cultures frequently. Although he still manages to maintain a satiric tone, he increasingly foregrounds his consciousness of powerlessness and resignation toward the end through his detachment from critical events and retreat to passive aesthetic joy.[115]

In the end, all the characters, including Maugham, reproduce their patterned life devoid of individuality and agency. Maugham attempts to satisfy himself by saying in the end that everybody has attained their desires: "For all the persons with whom I have been concerned got what they wanted. . . . And however superciliously the highbrows carp, we the public in our heart of hearts all like a success story; so perhaps my ending is not so unsatisfactory after all" (314). He knows every person he has concerned with has problems and they have never reached any climactic moment of awakening to resolve their exposed shortcomings. In these last lines, he

[115] See Dasenbrock for a more analysis on how the mid- to late twentieth-century satirists start to lose the satiric force of their predecessors. He analyzes Kingsley Amis and argues that "Amis's fiction apparently means that there is no possibility of a satirist's maintaining an uncompromised satirical stance in regard to his objects of derision" (248-9).

mocks himself as well as the world for not being able to do anything but let everything repeat itself.

On the first page, he already asks readers not to expect any customary ending:

> I have little story to tell and I end neither with a death nor a marriage. Death ends all things and so is the comprehensive conclusion of a story, but marriage finishes it very properly too and the sophisticated are ill-advised to sneer at what is by convention termed a happy ending. It is a sound instinct of the common people which persuades them that with this all that needs to be said is sad. (4)

Maugham refers to the traditional coming-of-age plot and contrasts it with his own narrative devoid of the traditional beginning or resolution. The (un)ending of his story and his self-mockery attempt to define the narrative still as a success story and illustrates the difficulty of a traditional ending of a coming-of-age story in a world characterized not by progress and resolution but mechanical repetition and normative conformity.

Like Tony in *A Handful of Dust* who is entrapped and forced by the madman to read Charles Dickens repetitively in his (un)dead and (un)ageing situation, Larry's imprisonment in his own youth does not symbolize a radical source of a new civilizational beginning. Instead, it lends poignancy to the inability of the West to realize that quests for an alternative, pure civilization somewhere else already relies on the logic of one's own culture that one finds repulsive. The culture of late imperialism in the world of finance capitalism does not allow any ascending, progressive trajectory for coming-of-age but only horizontal, mechanical repetition. In this situation, the narrator of *A Handful of Dust* still assumes a superior position with a sarcastic and satirical tone. A decade later in 1944, however, the narrator of *The Razor's Edge* begins to become enervated himself.

Although the two novels debunk and satirize the idea of symbolic rebirth, however, the search for rebirth continued desperately when it was obvious to many writers that Western civilization was entering the phase of demolition with the Depression, the rise of totalitarian regimes, and WWII. In Epilogue, I discuss how Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts* makes another attempt at a symbolic rebirth and a new ageing for the individual as well as civilization.

Epilogue: Rebirth through the Past and 'Natural' Ageing in *Between the Acts*

The preceding four chapters bring narratives of ageing in relation with imperial mobility in British literature. The global network established by imperial expansion and the world-capitalist system produced multiple forms of movement from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries: British subjects' movement of varying degrees for military service or business enterprise in colonies (Chapter I), the reverse 'invasion' of natives and the return of gone-native British subjects (Chapter II), a bourgeois English woman's propagating Western modernity in imperial peripheries and a peasant Scottish woman's marginalization from it (Chapter III), and British and American subjects' quest for a recuperative power in exotic lands (Chapter IV). The Empire and the associated modes of movement enable and illuminate forms of ageing. The chapters analyze seven novels in rough chronological order with consideration of the imperial context within and through which the ageing occurs, and investigate how the novels reexamine or radically rewrite the classical Bildungsroman and produce peculiar accounts of ageing. The chapters attend to how those accounts of ageing contribute to the rise of distinct novelistic genres, albeit not exhaustively, in the history of the British novel: realism in the mid-nineteenth century (Chapter I), detective fiction in the late nineteenth century (Chapter II), modernism in the early twentieth century (Chapter III), and modern satire in the mid-twentieth century (Chapter IV).

For this closing section, it might seem absurd that I select Virginia Woolf's posthumous work, *Between the Acts* (1941), a novel whose story centers upon only a single-day communal event—the English pageant—in a rural, manorial setting with no apparent representation of imperial movement. At first glance, the story seems to eschew any theme of overseas movement

or ageing. I argue, however, that the very lack of any conspicuous imperial movement or ageing in Woolf's novel represents a concrete cultural response to the status of the Empire on the verge of the Second World War. As discussed in Chapter IV, the retrenchment of empire, the rise of rival imperial powers like Germany and the USA, the threats of totalitarian regimes, and economic struggles in the 1930s turned many British writers' and artists' attention from imperial expansion and the experience in colonial peripheries to revisiting, reviving, and even glorifying localized national tradition and folk art. When empire was "shrinking back to its core, with the prospect of its impending demises, it should have been important to ask what constituted the core" (Brannigan, "Eugenics, Devolution, and Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*" 103). John Brannigan calls attention to "concerns about racial health, about birth rate and population decline, and about the preservation of the rural as a haven of racial identity and tradition" in the late 1930s ("Eugenics, Devolution, and Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*" 104).

According to Jed Esty, Woolf's choice of the English pageant as the central event in her last novel indicates her involvement in this cultural transition from "metropolitan modernism to minor culture" (105). The English pageant was popular across political spectrums in the 1930s.[116] Esty points out that the reconsolidation of social and cultural wholeness through communal genres like pageant suggests a perceived necessity to recover national unity not fractured by the cosmopolitan and metropolitan culture of the imperial context.[117] Under the desperate situation in face of another world war in which "[n]obody seriously predicted or expected [parliamentary democracy's] post-war renaissance," the collective search for a new

[116] On the history and the modern revival of the English pageant, see Youngjoo Kim.
[117] For another recent analysis of this tendency for many British writers and artists to turn to national landscape and past in the late 1930s, often renouncing their earlier commitment to the modern and abstract, see Alexandra Harris.

beginning, a source of recuperative power and symbolic rebirth continued (Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes* 141). The searching eye started to turn inward to the national history, myths, and anthropological peculiarities.

I argue, therefore, that *Between the Acts* does not simply ignore the motifs of mobility and ageing that represent, and are enabled by, the global political and economic network of the British Empire. In this Epilogue, I focus on how Woolf envisions new themes of mobility and ageing that arise in the single-day communal event and engage with the cultural milieu toward the end of the imperial era that this dissertation covers. These distinct symbolic forms of mobility and ageing presume a historical environment where imperial expansion and outward mobility can no longer be central to the narrative of ageing without being brutally satirized as in *A Handful of Dust* or *The Razor's Edge*. The following analysis proves that new forms of mobility and ageing in the novel represent not spatial and horizontal movement across empire and beyond but a vertical and temporal one across British national tradition in search for a source of 'rebirth' of both the individual and national collective. At the same time, the symbolic 'rebirth' in Woolf's novel does not, as in *A Handful of Dust* or *The Razor's Edge,* fetishize other cultures and gesture toward a radical break from tradition but requires acknowledgement and radical reexamination of the fragments of one's individual as well as national past.

In particular, this Epilogue argues that *Between the Acts* restores nature to ageing. Although the classical Bildungsroman portrays 'human' ageing, it ideologically functions to stylize the ideal reconciliation of the progressive logic of modernity with national community. Modernity, however, has entailed the objectification and marginalization of nature. The previous chapters explored how the Bildung finds its variations or radical transformations in the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century, including the most 'unnatural' ageing of mechanical

repetition in the social miliue of finance capitalism. The Epilogue elaborates on how Woolf's novel brings nature back to the realms of human experience and artistic form. I discuss how Woolf's novel envisions symbolic rebirth by eventually reinstating human ageing as 'natural' against any man-made discourse that imposes a norm of ageing.

Although the topic of ageing on *Between the Acts* has not received notable attention in recent criticisms, this Epilogue remains indebted to their explorations of numerous historical, political, ideological, and generic features of the novel. The abundant criticism testifies to Woolf's canonical status as a representative modernist, and a variety of critical methods have been applied to her last novel. Recent criticisms from the 1990s onward tend to uncover the novel's political and ideological engagement by situating it in the particular historical and cultural contexts of the late 1930s. For example, many scholars interpret the novel as Woolf's feminist vision against totalitarian regimes and ideology (Patricia Klindienst Joplin and Merry M. Pawlowski), whereas Ben Harker analyzes how Woolf responds, somewhat negatively, to the left politics of her time. John Whittier-Ferguson and Patricia Ondeck Laurence focus on the linguistic experimentation of the novel and explore how it blurs the conventional boundaries between silence and speech or between the outer and inner worlds. Sam See and John Brannigan delve into how Woolf addresses contemporary evolutionary theories and quasi-scientific concepts of eugenics or devolution. Sanja Bahun applies psychoanalysis to her reading of melancholia and the destructive as well as creative collapse of the boundary between subject and object. Jed Esty elaborates Woolf's complex approach to collective ideals of Englishness, whereas Christina Froula calls attention to Woolf's cosmopolitan vision beyond national culture or myth. Other scholars apply animal studies (Vicki Tromanhauser), the concept of the abject (Sara Crangle), and Bakhtinian carnival (Christopher Ames) to the novel.

Central to the novel is the English pageant. The plot comprises mostly of the pageant and characters' reflection on it, which reveals their intimate desires and anger. The novel briefly depicts the Olivers and their preparation for the pageant, but focuses on the unfolding of the pageant and how characters interact with each other and reflect on their own life in response to the pageant. As the dominant theme of the novel, the pageant decisively represents national history and myths and allows the audience as well as the reader to envision psychological rebirth. While primarily analyzing the pageant and its disruption due to a variety of elements including nature, this Epilogue also attends to characters' individual as well as collective psychology, which paves way for the historical rise of the English pageant during the time.

The English pageant gained enormous popularity during the 1930s and, as an outdoor play of huge size, is inevitably subject to the influence of nature.[118] Furthermore, as the last scene where Isa and Giles are described as primitive cave-dwellers and "the curtain rose" suggests, Woolf extends the motif of theater to the rest of the novel and imagines the couple's life after the pageant as the beginning of a new play, life, or even civilization (149). Throughout the novel, the reader is allowed to watch not only the pageant but also how the characters who watch the pageant 'play' their own part. The reader can see, as I will analyze below, that how they play their part is a product of their (failed) negotiation with social behavioral codes. The theatricality of individual characters' identities functions as a lens to focus upon how society imposes appropriate ways of ageing.

In the morning of the festive day, the head of the family, Bartholomew Oliver, "crumpled the paper which he had cocked into a snout" and surprised his grandson (9). The narrator

[118] On the characteristics of the Abinger pageant that is a direct model of Woolf's, see E. M. Forster's *Abinger Harvest*, 369-84.

comments that "[i]t was impressive, to the nurses, the way an old boy of his age could still bawl and make a brute like that obey him" (9). Mr. Oliver clings to his previous social status as was involved in "the Indian Civil Service", and he scolds his grandson for not growing as manly but being "a coward" (2, 14). The narrator almost sarcastically points out that his slapstick acting toward his grandson impresses only "nurses." Mr. Oliver "bawled" at his hound as if "he were commanding a regiment" (9). His anachronistic and ridiculous 'acting' suggests this retired imperial man is not a role model for future generations like his grandson and that the coming of age through triumphal imperial services that this retired empire servant clings to is now no more than a travesty. An appropriate mode of mobility and ageing no longer lies in imperial expansion and the progressive logic of modernity but is now expected to originate from national past and tradition that the pageant is about to perform.

His son, Giles, who serves the Empire as a stockbroker, feels isolated from his rural community as soon as he arrives to attend the annual pageant that his family hosts. He keenly senses that he is expected to play a part at this communal event according to social norms: "Visitors, he had concluded, as he drew up behind; and had gone to his room to change. The ghost of convention rose to the surface, as a blush or a tear rises to the surface at the pressure of emotion; so the car touched his training. He must change" (32). Michel Foucault notes out that "[d]isciplinary normalization consists first of all in positing a model, an optimal model that is constructed in terms of a certain result, and the operation of disciplinary normalization consists in trying to get people, movements, and actions to conform to this model" (*Security, Territory, Population* 57). Giles feels uncomfortable as part of a chain of actions through which normalizing discipline produces itself. He maintains a more realistic view on the current historical situation than his father and is frustrated with both how he was raised for the imperial

industry and his sense of impotency at the crisis of Europe. Giles responds to this situation by offsetting his agony with a sense of victimhood. He believes that "[g]iven his choice, he would have chosen to farm. But he was not given his choice. So one thing led to another; and the conglomeration of things pressed you flat; held you fast, like a fish in water" (33).

As the quote suggests, imperial bureaucracy does not allow one to choose one' own style of ageing and develop an autonomous interiority but requires participation in the system. Giles, albeit critical, still voluntarily endows with inevitable causality the past events that he thinks have raised and driven him to date as the next patriarch of his family in imperial service. He believes that he has never been given any choice but to grow up in conformity with the scenario of his environment and perform his assigned role of serving the empire, which does not appeal to him. Portraying himself as "pressed flat" and "held fast," he dramatizes his ageing as helpless and tragic. Like that of his father, the portrayal of Giles suggests that the mode of coming-of-age owing to the imperial network and capitalism no longer provides the ideal story of ageing. The relationship between Giles's individuality and his imperial system does not offer a dialectical synthesis like the classical Bildungsroman but sheer antagonism. Defining his identity as a victim and believing that his life deserves compensation, Giles does not hesitate to judge and blame others. He "hung his grievances on" Swithin, who lacks the sense of historical reality, and excludes the homosexual Dodge from the group he designates as "*We*" (32, 76).[119]

Isa, Giles' wife, interprets her identity and ageing in another way that exposes her response to the social system underpinned by patriarchy and imperial capitalism. While Isa knows that she loves the villager Haines, she recognizes another love for "her husband, the

[119] For an analysis of how in the novel the inner circle "we" is defined through its differentiation from those defined as lesser beings such as homosexuals, idiots, or animals, see Tromanhauser.

stockbroker—the father of my children" (10). As her terms describing her husband indicate, the love with her husband is formulated in a patriarchal society where the husband assumes the head of family through economic activity in financial capitalism, as the family perpetuates itself through paternal lineage. Her self-conscious utterance of these terms implies that she regards her living in this system as unfamiliar role-playing. Isa feels that she, "in her webbed feet was entangled, by her husband, the stockbroker" (5). Having a sense of her life as definitely "abortive," she is frustrated with her domestic life (11).

With this sense of her identity as another type of compulsory role-playing, Isa does not suggest a possibility of synthesis between individuality and society as in the Bildungsroman. The oppressive patriarchal morality does not allow her to reconcile with her community without negating her sexuality as seen in her secret desire for Haines. Her discontent with her own role prompts Isa to imagine replacing her own unfortunate ageing with that of other humans, nations, poems or even the century: "What remedy was there for her age—the age of the century, thirty-nine—in books? . . . Keats and Shelley, . . . The life of Garibaldi, . . . Eddington, Darwin, or Jeans" (14). However, "[n]one of them stopped her toothache" (14). As Lily in *To the Lighthouse* does, Isa, as an amateur poet, attempts to attain an epiphanic resolution through her own artistic and utopian vision. She seeks for an alternative world where there is no change, no temporality at all: "What do I ask? To fly away, from night and day, and issue where—no partings are—but eye meets eye—and . . ." (57). As opposed to Lily in the earlier high modernist work, however, Isa's individual artistic vision does not enable her to heroically overcome the tension between her individuality and social expectations. Her individual vision only accentuates her psychological isolations. Hermione Lee correctly points out that Isa's imaginary world is "a dreary, passive form of retreat from the harsh world" (209).

The ideas of ageing shown in Isa's frustration alongside Giles's anger and Mr. Oliver's anachronism all attest to the failure of the imperial capitalist and patriarchal system to formulate a flexible and accommodating national community in which the individual socializes without undermining their autonomy. As analyzed, and before centering upon the pageant, this novel dramatizes the characters' problematic ageing through the motif of theatricality inherent in their identity. The theme of the Theatrum Mundi is anything but new; however, it signifies a perceived mode of ageing due to the rise of modern social forces especially since the mid-nineteenth century in contrast to the romantic conception of individual sovereignty. James Eli Adams notes that:

> Early Victorian scheme of progress and political economy are founded on a bedrock of individual autonomy, a deeply held faith that individuals are free to shape their own worldly destinies. Over the course of the century this faith . . . gradually yields to an emergent psychology attentive to a host of forces . . . that constrain human self-determination. (211)

Anthony Giddens analyses how twentieth-century high modernity further aggravates the dissonance between individuals and society. When an individual is keenly conscious of performing daily routines and suffers from anxiety toward compulsive social and particularized roles, "[t]his individual came to feel that the thoughts in his 'brain', as he expressed it, were not really his. He felt himself to be 'staging' all his reactions to the convention of day-to-day social life" (61). The particular creativity of Woolf's novel lies in that it situates this concept of modern theatrical identity within the historical rise of an actual theater, the English pageant in the 1930s. Woolf's last novel captures this historical articulation of the two 'theaters': the first as a motif to express the individual characters' disorienting and compulsory fashion of ageing and the second

as a communal ritual to provide a sense of symbolic resolution and rebirth and presumably remove the disorienting sense of theatricality in the individual characters' identities.

The upper-class spectators wait for the pageant to begin, but they do not trouble to help the servants prepare for the pageant. They passively wait for the annual pageant to take place and eliminate their sense of isolation: "They stared at the view, as if something might happen in one of those fields to relieve them of the intolerable burden of sitting silent, doing nothing, in company. Their minds and bodies were too close, yet not close enough. We aren't free" (45). They desire a certain artistic illusion that could resolve anxiety and restore a sense of binds. This desire lucidly exposes totalitarian elements in the rise of the English pageant during that period while ideally the pageant is expected to solidify British nationhood against continental totalitarianism.[120]

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt argues that the isolation and fragmentation of individuals lay a foundation for totalitarianism: the fanatical submission to and psychological union with an absolute leader were seen as a proper choice for the masses who "grew out of the fragments of a highly atomized society" (317).[121] Many critics also illuminate how Woolf's last novel experiments with the pageant that gained popularity due to nationalist and collectivist desires, which Woolf always found suspicious. Ayako Yoshino elucidates

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[120] In *Three Guineas*, Woolf also analyzes diverse British cultural practices and education and questions the dichotomy between the liberal Britain and the fascist Germany. In her fictive letter to a British gentleman, she asks him whether "if we encourage the daughters of educated men to enter the professions we shall not be encouraging the very qualities that we wish to prevent" (71).

[121] Arendt elaborates on the masses' desire for absolute authority and unity in the 1930s. When the order of traditional class hierarchy declines while an alternative system is yet to come, that desire is strengthened, "so that someone who not only holds opinions but also presents them in a tone of unshakable conviction will not so easily forfeit his prestige, no matter how many times he has been demonstrably wrong" (305).

ideological assumptions of the pageant by pointing out that Louis Napoleon Parker's pageant, upon which Woolf's and many other pageants were modeled during this period, was "a nationalistic form of drama" and "a locus of patriotic sentiment" where "class distinctions should be temporarily forgotten" (51-52). Characterized by the mobilization of thousands of villagers, spectacular sizes, historical episodes, choruses, and long marches, the explosive number of pageants across political spectrums throughout Britain allowed the public to regain a sense of belonging and collective rebirth out of social turmoil—a sense not easily distinguished from that promoted by the Nazis who declared the commencement of the Thousand-Year Reich.

The motif of theater is thus not limited to the individual character's subjectivity or the English pageant but also inherent in fascist politics in general. Roger Griffin attends to "theatricality intrinsic to fascism as a political ideology" (11). Fascism "replaces all genuine freedom of opinion and all democratic processes based on individual consciousness by a 'permanent revolution' founded on ritualized authority and an elaborate civic liturgy sometimes referred to as a 'civic' or 'political' religion" (Griffin 15).[122] Walter Benjamin elaborates on the theatricality of fascism as follows: "Fascism sees its salvation in giving these masses not their right, but instead a chance to express themselves. . . . Fascism seeks to give them an expression while preserving property. The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into politics" ("The Work of Art" 241). In the age of mass reproduction and of emerging new media like the gramophone, radio, photography and film, it was possible to politically manipulate artworks, thereby freeing them from the ownership of conventional institutions. According to Samuel Weber, "[t]he star and the dictator had a similar function and origin. In both, the

[122] On primary features of totalitarian art, see Frederic Spotts. He points out that fascist politics "provided the populace, now deprived of debate and elections, with a stronger sense of political participation than ever before" (57).

'amorphous mass' could find a face and a voice that it might call its own, or if not its own, that it could at least recognize and use to secure its own position" (45). On the contrary to the synthetic dialectic between the individual and national society as stylized in the Bildungsroman, fascism is based on the most radical annihilation of individuality, which makes the masses identify with their leaders like spectators in a theater with fanatical nationalist zeal. Thus fascism provides a sense of an abrupt rebirth for the public out of the ruins of old civilization.

Analysis of Mr. Oliver, Giles, and Isa shows that the existing norm of ageing, which descends from the age of imperial expansion and the patriarchal and capitalist social system, is no longer perceived as tenable although the system never completely disappeared. The spectators, who feel isolated and frustrated with the existing social and political system, provide the condition upon which the group ritual begins to flourish and allows identification with a glorious national myth and tradition on stage and an opportunity for psychological 'rebirth.' As opposed to the protagonists in *A Handful of Dust* and *The Razor's Edge*, who desire a source of symbolic rebirth in other cultures, the characters in Woolf's novel seek a symbolic collective rebirth in their own national tradition. Now their movement is not headed toward other worlds horizontally in the wake of imperial expansion and the universalizing force of modernization but turns vertically to their own past and myth that the pageant represents in a glorifying fashion.

In the beginning, Miss La Trobe's pageant indeed seems to serve as a vehicle to unite the audience through this type of collective absorption in national glory. The pageant gathers isolated individuals into a cohesive whole by staging scenes that evoke national history and grandeur and by employing new technologies like the gramophone. Phyllis Jones, acting the infant England, stresses that she was "cut off from France and Germany," and "sprung from the sea" (54). This insular identity distinguishes Britain from the continent where the threat of fascist

parties and imminent war prevail. The subsequent piece of music from the gramophone plays a militaristic song suggestive of phallic worship, reminding the audience of the virtues of masculine heroism and patriotism: “Armed against fate, the valiant Rhoderick, Armed and valiant, Bold and blatant, Firm elatant, See the warriors — here they come” (54).

The scene dramatizing the Age of Reason even blurs the representational gap between reality and fiction and assimilates the audience with the idea embodied onstage. A guest of the family, Mrs. Manresa, “radiating royalty, complacency, [and] good humour,” feels that she is the “queen of the festival,” and another woman “beat[s] time with her hand” (55). This familiar tune generates a mood where individual spectators begin to discard their nervous and isolated psyches and regain a sense of communality: “Muscles loosened; ice cracked” (55). Michele Pridmore-Brown notes that “[a]s the familiar tunes blare, the audience members are lulled into a tranquilized complacency. Their identities as conquering imperialists bearing the torch of reason are comfortable fixed” (413). Mable, playing Queen Anne, declares that the age of reason has come, and the gramophone emits “a merry little old tune” (86). Mr. Oliver “joined his fingertips” to the rhythm, and even the self-professed wild child of nature, Manresa, “smoothed her skirts about her knees” (86).

However, La Trobe’s pageant soon betrays the audience’s expectation and interrupts on diverse levels their complacent immersion in the collective spirit. First of all, the increasingly satiric content of the pageant proves that La Trobe, as an outsider figure who was suspected to have “Russian blood in her” and “wasn’t altogether a lady,” does not intend to mesmerize the audience with a glorified history of Britain (40). Exclaiming “begad! Reason!”, Mr. Oliver becomes embarrassed at the unexpected narrative, and the audience bursts out laughing, “All the

fuss about nothing!" (92, 95).[123] As the audience perceives the behaviors of the actors as absurd, they fail to empathize with the characters.

In addition, the amateur quality of the pageant performed by villagers, the lack of curtains and lighting equipment, and a couple of intervals all distract the audience from full immersion in the pageant and the presentation of national history and myths. In this pageant that refuses to be controlled completely by the director, "the actors delayed," and "the audience slipped the noose," which infuriates the director La Trobe (84). The absence of the stage settings foregrounds the mediated nature of history and discloses the mobility between the actors and their characters. The audience watches, for example, the entire process in which Phyllis Jones exits after impersonating infantile England, and Eliza Clark, licensed to sell tobacco in real life and cast as Elizabeth I, appears onstage and begins to display the glory of the queen. She is "splendidly made up," but makes the audience wonder, "Could she be Mrs. Clark of the village shop?" (57). Eliza, who is already familiar to the villagers, cannot perfectly disguise herself as queen onstage due to her splendid but loose make up, and she remains the audience's woman-next-door.

The events onstage hardly create a mimetic illusion that might saturate the audience with the sense of mythic glory. This amateur theater that employs familiar neighbors as actors instead of professionals continuously exposes a representational gap between the actors and their assigned roles and thus the mediated nature of history. This representational gap creates emotional distance between the audience and the stage and alienates them from empathy with the performers. The audience sees the villagers who have acted as pilgrims behind the stage now come to the front and turn into the audience at the Globe Theater. When this act is to end, Mrs.

[123] See Maria Dibattista for a detailed analysis of how the satiric content of the pageant critiques the patriarchal system of British society.

Clark exits, "taking her skirts in her hand, striding with long strides," in contrast to the expected conduct of her character, the queen (65).

Most decisively preventing the pageant from proceeding as La Trobe originally intended is nature. With its fundamental indeterminacy and unpredictability, nature impedes the aim of the director to represent history and to control the audience's consciousness. In this sense, nature in and outside the pageant ranges from natural phenomena and creatures to people or factors that cannot play a part standardized by social codes or by an authoritarian figure.[124] The village idiot Albert, scampering in and out of the play, discomposes the gentle audience members who worry that he might do "something dreadful" and ruin the pageant (60). When he plays the hindquarters of the donkey and moves unexpectedly, the audience wonder, "Intentional was it, or accidental?" (116). The audience unwittingly becomes aware of the fictiveness of history through the pageant, which intends to be concealed in order to keep the audience mesmerized. When Mrs. Clark, loosely disguised as Elizabeth I, makes a patriotic speech about the glory of England, her attempt immediately fails due to an abrupt wind that dishevels her hair decoration. Mrs. Clark's clumsy and ludicrous effort to amend the decoration generates "vacancy" between their history represented on the stage and the audience (54). The audience "becomes a herd led not by a dictator but by nature, specifically its incongruous, theatrically displayed feelings" (See 658). Nature accidently allows the audience to maintain a critical distance and watch and reflect on how each actor or actress assumes and performs his or her assigned part.

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[124] For an analysis of Woolf's critique of various social and personal masteries, see Andrew Miller. Woolf's critique of authority is not limited to political authoritarian order but extended to "the tangled relations among these various fantasies of social control, personal control, and aesthetic control: fantasies that coalesce around a desire to affirm the traditional prerogatives of sovereignty" (136).

The wind blows away even the song that the villagers playing the part of the working class sing as chorus: "Cutting the roads . . . up to the hill top . . . we climbed" (54). Ben Harker interprets this as Woolf's ambivalence and hesitation toward aligning herself with the working class. In her novel, the working class is "object rather than subject" (Harker 446). That the villagers' "words are repeatedly lost on the wind is perhaps a wry joke at Woolf's own expense . . . and her fiction had seldom been able to keep working-class characters in focus" (Harker 446). However, nature, with its fundamental unpredictability and contingency, does not privilege even the standpoint of the working class. Woolf's radical vision refuses to privilege any voice as claiming the unmediated real. The classical Bildungsroman requires a complex process of compromises or negotiations between the individual and national community until it reaches a synthesis, and nature in this novel forestalls any attempt to bypass this fundamentally endless process through aesthetic illusion or to privilege a certain social group as a transparent mediator of the national whole.[125]

As a result, these natural elements of the pageant exemplify Brechtian alienation effects. Bertolt Brecht developed the epic theater by examining a major governing strategy of fascism: having the masses empathize with a leader like Hitler who seems to provide them with a new, better national identity. Brecht maintains that in his epic theater "the spectator was no longer in any way allowed to submit to an experience uncritically by means of simple empathy with the characters in a play" (71). When the public tended to fall victim to a visionary leader who promised symbolic rebirth out of the civilizational ruins of the 1930s but who in fact concealed

[125] Christina Froula also attends to the radical role of nature in the novel. In the novel, "the outsider allies her art with 'Nature' against manmade chalk marks, schemes, systems, theories, forms social, architectural, and aesthetic" (Froula 297). Froula analyzes the subversive power of nature against "the enforced univocality of totalitarianism" (297).

problematic social conditions, Brecht designed a theater that allowed the audience to grasp the structural social contradictions. As Woolf wrote in her diary: "'I' rejected: 'We' substituted" (*A Writer's Diary* 279), implying that her emphasis shifted from the modern individual's vision to collective experience, Brecht also urges the audience not to identify with the bourgeois interiority emphatically displayed on stage and disguised as universal, but to pay attention to social and historical reality that generates the conditions of human alienation. The audience starts to perceive larger social conditions when they do not passively empathize with the characters but perceive their speech and behavior as unfamiliar. The audience becomes aware of the fictive and mediated nature of what is represented on stage.[126]

In *Between the Acts*, it is nature that continuously converts the failure of the realistic representation of historical characters into the representational gap that allows the audience to see the 'theatricality' of representation. Nature, and its contingency and unpredictability that some characters embody, expose fundamental deficiency and incompleteness inherent in any arbitrary interpretation and representation of history. Rather than existing as a set of concrete objects or a fetishized concept like Mother Nature, nature operates as a function embedding contingency and indeterminacy into a discourse that attempts to define the meaning of national culture and the individual ageing.

In this sense, the role of nature is not defined as interrupting the audience's sense of nationalist communal unity and reinstating the liberal critical subject. A series of natural phenomena and creatures sometimes supplement or even extend the unifying function of art, which La Trobe initially entertained through her pageant. For example, at the Augustan Age

[126] See Roland Barthes for a further analysis of the difference between bourgeois art and Brechtian epic theater. See Elin Diamond for a feminist reading of Brechtian theory.

scene, a spectator Cobbet of Cobbs Corner senses that nature helps music to "join the broken": "And the trees with their many-tongued much syllabling, their green and yellow leaves hustle us and shuffle us, and bid us, . . . come together, crowd together, to chatter and make merry while the red cow moves forward and the black cow stands still" (83). "The cows annihilated the gap; bridged the distance; filled the emptiness and continued the emotion," thereby assuaging La Trobe's frustration when she feels that sudden wind distracts the audience's attention and destroys the illusion of her art (96).

Toward the end of the pageant, nature again contributes to forming a sense of unity among the audience. La Trobe presents an empty stage and attempts "to douche [the audience] with present-time reality" but gets frustrated when the audience refuses to confront themselves because it was "reality too strong" (122). Instead, the sudden rainfall restores audience unity, and La Trobe is relieved, saying, "Nature once more had taken her part" (123). Isa imagines that the rain is "all people's tears, weeping for all people," and other villagers imagine the same later on (123). Isa's thought suggests that a shared sense of unity and purification forms around the audience, not limited to Isa's own imaginative faculty. Nature blurs the binary between the modern individual subject and national community—the binary that the classical Bildungsroman presumes and attempts to overcome.[127]

As mentioned earlier, when the nineteenth-century liberal notion of progress and modernity came to be doubted and the threat of another war lurked in the 1930s, people were

[127] For an elaboration on how Woolf's fiction explores and questions this binary through formal experimentations, see David McWhirter. He maintains that Woolf creates a fiction that encompasses tragedy's empathetic vision without succumbing to the confinement of personality and at the same time sees the world through comedy's detached social perspective without perpetuating social codes of morality.

easily tempted for a totalitarian vision that negated the liberal ideal of autonomous individuality and promised an abrupt symbolic rebirth through fanatically glorifying national history and myths. La Trobe's (un)successful pageant suggests that such a revived order and unity should not be imposed by authoritarian artists or leaders. As seen in the scenes where nature plays a part, the new vision of unity and rebirth that the pageant-novel envisions neither imposes an ideology that finalizes the identity and boundary of its community nor derives from the individual subject's intellectual or imaginative faculty. Instead, it acknowledges and incorporates the essential indeterminacy and incompleteness of nature. The accidental elements that natural phenomena and creatures represent in the novel are unpredictability and contingency per se, which refuse standardization by human intention and discourses. They destroy the exclusiveness and disguised completeness of discourses, which promise symbolic rebirth on both individual and collective levels.

Max Horkheimer and Theodore W. Adorno illuminate modernity's marginalization of nature. According to the duo, the enlightenment objectifies and masters nature through continuous abstraction, classification, and "mathematical theorem" (18). These means of objectification and domination isolate humans from nature and even from themselves. The duo warns that the domination of enlightenment culminates in totalitarianism. Since the singularity of individuals was not thoroughly annihilated during the age of liberalism, "enlightenment . . . has always sympathized with social coercion" (Horkheimer and Adorno 9). Only when the dominative feature of instrumental reason is disclosed, and its ramifications in society investigated, can enlightenment reveal itself as "nature audible in estrangement" (Horkheimer and Adorno 31). They argue the human mind should redefine enlightenment and reason by integrating fundamental diversity and singularity of nature into the realm of experience. In this

regard, the unfolding of the pageant in *Between the Acts* implies that if a sense of unity and rebirth from nature had been part of La Trobe's initial design, it would not have been anything but another illustration of human mastery over nature. On the contrary, for instance, the rain scene illustrates how nature contributes to the sense of purgation and rebirth beyond La Trobe's intention as author.

Despite La Trobe's frustration, therefore, the aim of her direction is ironically achieved more fully than intended when the narrative of the pageant continues to alternate between disturbance and supplement from nature. The satiric content of the pageant tells that La Trobe intends to urge the audience to discard passive acceptance of their glorious history as determining their own identity formation. Then, if the audience fails to receive her message as it is, but, with the aid of nature, they discover gaps through which they can view and interpret history on their own, one can argue that La Trobe's message for the audience to critically view their own history is attained beyond her authorial design. Not only does the content of La Trobe's artwork dismantle the telos of history propagated by particular individuals or groups, its form, by integrating nature, also reaches beyond its producer's intention and allows the audience and the reader to critically meditate on the history represented on stage.[128]

By embedding indeterminacy in the man-made discourses, nature helps the audience realize the malleability of identity and imagine unacted parts and alternative trajectories of ageing. The audience feels "[a]s if the play had jerked the ball out of the cup; as if what I call myself was still floating unattached, and didn't settle" (102). Swithin goes to see La Trobe at an

[128] Many critics also focus on Woolf's form of authorship which reflects her anti-authoritarian themes. For example, see Patricia Klindienst Joplin. She points out that "in both theme and structure, Woolf's last work becomes a meditation on the proximity of artist to dictator—of author to authoritarian ruler" (89).

interval by “ignoring the conventions” and says, “What a small part I’ve had to play! But you’ve made me feel I could have played . . Cleopatra!” (104). The audience’s mingled collective voices also start to question what changes or what remains in their identity formulated by their common history: “The Elizabethans . . . Perhaps she [La Trobe]’ll reach the present, if she skips. . . . D’you think people change? Their clothes, of course. . . . But I meant ourselves . . . Clearing out a cupboard, I found my father’s old top hat. . . . But ourselves—do we change?” (83). As discussed earlier, the characterizations of Mr. Oliver, Giles, and Isa suggest that the modernization of empire based on expansion, capitalism and patriarchy no longer supplies a desirable mode of ageing. Now the pageant allows the audience to navigate their own national history and tradition with elements of nature incorporated and to imagine other narratives of ageing.

At the same time, the pageant prompts the audience to radically question the validity of the recent national ethos that has defined the meaning of their individual adulthood. The pageant stages the nineteenth-century imperialist scene, and the audience watches Victorian hegemony they grew up internalizing. Budge, as a constable, wields his baton and browbeats the audience. Eleanor, in the hope to help her fiancée to promulgate imperial ideology to colonies, sings a comforting feminine song to raise morale, “I’ll be a Butterfly,” while her fiancé Edgar sings “Rule, Britannia” with its imperial overtones (115). This scene explicitly reveals gender politics and coercive imperialistic ideology. Mrs. Lynn Jones and Mrs. Etty Springett, two of the old aristocratic guests, start to feel embarrassed at the values of the Victorian era, which have been crucial to their growth as British subjects: “Why, she [Mrs. Jones] did not know, yet somehow she felt that a sneer had been aimed at her father; therefore herself” (111).

The word that Mrs. Jones selects to describe her home is “unhygienic” (118). She picks that word after deciding that the word “impure” is not appropriate (118). The word “impure” assumes a state in which a pure substance loses its purity after mixture with an external substance. The original substance can recover its purity by removing alien elements in a physical process. On the contrary, the word “unhygienic” indicates a process of decay that occurs inside. In this case, it is impossible to regain its hygienic status by simply separating external harmful elements. Her choice of the word suggests that they begin to doubt whether the “we”—our parents, our childhood, or our own home—has not been fostering ‘fascist’ power like discrimination, domination, and exclusion in the name of triumphal imperial expansion and modernization.

Foucault points to power as not of a definite source but operating and circulating as part of people’s everyday life: “Power must . . . be analyzed as something that circulates, or rather as something that functions only when it is part of a chain” (*Society Must Be Defended* 29). To uncover the logic of power, the pageant-novel affords the characters “the opportunity to contemplate their emotions, and the social and historical forces which condition them, from a distance that is at once historical and aesthetic” (McWhirter 797). The represented history on stage as well as the mediated nature of history lead to the audience’s reexamining of the cultural assumptions they have abided by while growing up. They can no longer live in a self-complacent manner. One unidentified voice in the group says, “He [Reverent. Streatfield] said she [La Trobe] meant we all act. Yes, but whose play? Ah, that’s the question!” (135).

In the last act of the pageant, the audience’s images are reflected by the actors’ “[t]in cans,” “[b]edroom candlesticks,” “[o]ld jars,” and “[a]nything that’s bright enough to reflect” (125). The fragments of English literary history from the previous scenes, the audience’s interior

monologues, and even animals' voices coexist with the uncertainty and indeterminacy of nature preserved. In the jumbled voices, even "the barriers which should divide Man the Master from the Brute were dissolved" (125). Tromanhauser notes that the last scene "strips away the appeasing fictions the characters have entertained about their own natural selection and the separation of the properly human life from the growing shadow of its degenerate, animalized other" (83).[129]

Although the actors are reciting these lines, seen onstage are the audience themselves reflected by the mirrors. The spectators see themselves playing the characters of English literary tradition and speaking the lines. With no boundary, distinction, hierarchy, or dominant discourse, this scene presents the 'nature-like' state of all their personal and traditional literary voices. As nature throughout the pageant is not confined to either building unity with national heritage or interrupting unity by dismantling national grandeur, the last scene of the present time, supplemented by nature, does not dictate the audience to blindly adhere to national tradition; nor does it urge the individual members to break from the collective history and envision a rebirth through socially isolated vision. Now it is left to the collective audience to rearrange all these floating voices from national history, their (un)conscious voices and even the voice of nature so as to create a better life and community that provides a sense of unity without eliminating inner differences: "Or was that, perhaps, what she meant? . . . if you think, and I think, perhaps one day, thinking differently, we shall think the same?" (135-36).[130]

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[129] On the spatial form of modernist literature which this avant-gardist last scene illustrates by juxtaposing all the past and present, heard and unheard voices, see Joseph Frank. He argues that the general disbelief in the triumphal idea of linear progress leads modernist literature to question the temporal aspect of the narrative and thus spatialize its form.

[130] Angeliki Spiropoulou puts Woolf in conversation with Walter Benjamin and explores how

The outsider artist La Trobe's own notion about her role is also that she "seethes wandering bodies and floating voices in a cauldron, and makes rise up from its amorphous mass a recreated world" (105). At the crisis of civilization from another devastating world war, Woolf's last message is that, not in fetishized other cultures but with these amorphous ruins of all existing values, morality, and systems, one should recreate a new identity, a new civilization, a new play and be 'reborn.' That is why, to La Trobe, "another play always lay behind the play she had just written" (63). The search for a better narrative of ageing and a better narrative of history needs constant renewal through engagement in particular socio-historical contexts, instead of being fixed on an arbitrary telos.[131]

During an interval of the pageant toward the end, Isa also imagines herself as a donkey laden with the burden of the past: "How am I burdened with what they drew from the earth; memories; possessions. This is the burden that the past laid on me, last little donkey in the long caravanserai crossing the desert" (106). As opposed to the earlier description of Isa's mental agony, however, now the past is not an antagonistic impersonal force—in James Joyce's words, a nightmare from which one is trying to awake. Instead, Isa talks to herself as the donkey:

> "On little donkey, patiently stumble. Hear not the frantic cries of the leaders who in that they seek to lead desert us. Nor the chatter of china faces glazed and hard. Hear rather the shepherd, coughing by the farmyard wall; the withered tree that sighs when the Rider gallops; the brawl in the barrack room when they stripped

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both writers "lamented" the destruction and fragmentation of tradition by modernity as well as saw "the potentially liberatory effects" in it (156).

[131] On the telos of community in Woolf's novel, see also Melba Cuddy-Keane. She elaborates on the difference between an open-ended community with no central authority in the novel and Freudian notion of community that presupposes a mythic origin in which allied brothers challenge the authority of father.

> her naked; or the cry which in London when I thrust the window open someone cries." (107)

The past is now imagined as full of heterogeneous voices that juxtapose totalitarian "frantic cries," the British pastoral tradition of "the farm yard wall," and the awareness of violence in everyday life in London. One can find material in those fragmented past voices for the individual as well as collective project for rebirth, provided that one questions their validity, arrange them in a better way, and endows them with better meanings.

In "Craftsmanship" published a few years earlier than *Between the Acts*, Woolf again argues that in the long history of the language in endless interaction with the outer world, English words have come to carry numerous connotations and not "to express one simple statement but a thousand possibilities" (*Collected Essays* 246). She asks the reader to understand every single English word as "not a single and separate entity, but part of other words" in the infinite chain of tradition, and Woolf maintains that it is impossible to create "a brand new word" (*Collected Essays* 249). The project for rebirth should not entail romanticizing other cultures or envisioning an asocial aesthetic but this acknowledgement as well as radical exploration of the past. Whatever the outcome of that project, nature and its contingency and indeterminacy should persist, so no one can assume an authoritarian role and determine the telos of the new arrangement.

In the last scene, Isa and Giles are about to perform a primitive scene divested of any historical and social reality and be 'reborn':

> Alone, enmity was bared; also love. Before they slept, they must fight; after they had fought, they would embrace. From that embrace another life might be born.

> But first they must fight, as the dog fox fights with the vixen, in the heart of darkness, in the fields of night.
>
> Isa let her sewing drop. The great hooded chairs had become enormous. And Giles too. And Isa too against the window. The window was all sky without colour. The house had lost its shelter. It was night before roads were made, or houses. It was the night that dwellers in caves had watched from some high place among rocks.
>
> Then the curtain rose. They spoke. (149)

With only two fundamental human emotions—love and hate—they are about to speak as primitive people, apparently free of any influence of historical situations or lingering tradition. Then, their individual life and community would be supposedly "hygienic" with no sources of social decay.

However, the entire plot prior to this moment tells that this vision would be an unattainable idea only for a point of reference. Before the couple lies another historical reality. As soon as they speak, their words will carry "corrupt murmurs" uttered by the past (106). Their writing of a new narrative of ageing will require not outbound imperial movement but inward temporal movement across history and the revaluing and rearranging of "the old vibrations" (106). Their rebirth will incorporate fragments of individual and collective memories while maintaining the indeterminacy and contingency of 'nature,' which will not endorse any arbitrary discourse to determine the meaning of the ageing of the individual as well as of history. Woolf's death in the midst of the Second World War was never natural. Nevertheless, at the end of the

history of literary ageing that this dissertation explores, Woolf's *Between the Acts* finally restores human ageing as 'natural.'

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