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MODERNITY, MODERNISM AND WOMEN NOVELISTS

DOKTORA TEZİ

Çiğdem ALP

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I. Women, Modernity, and the City	11
CHAPTER II. Modernism and the Female Experience	25
CHAPTER III. Experimental Modernism: The Subversion of Romance Formulas and the Dismantling of Realist Representation of the City in Virginia Woolf's <i>Night and Day</i>	44
CHAPTER IV. The City and the <i>Bildung</i> of the Female Subject in Radclyffe Hall's <i>The Well of Loneliness</i>	69
CHAPTER V. The Fantasy of an Ideal Place: Sylvia Townsend Warner's <i>Lolly Willowes, or, the Loving Huntsman</i> and Rebecca West's <i>Harriet Hume: A London Fantasy</i>	105
CONCLUSION.....	136
WORKS CITED.....	142
ÖZGEÇMİŞ	154
ÖZET	155
ABSTRACT	156

Introduction

In her notorious essay entitled “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown” (1924), Virginia Woolf argues that “on or about December, 1910, human character changed” (5). It was in 1910 that the Edwardian period came to an end by the accession of George V to the throne. In the same year, the English artist and art critic Roger Fry organized the *Manet and the Post-Impressionists* exhibition that contained major art works by prominent figures like Paul Gauguin, Henri Matisse, Édouard Manet, Paul Cézanne, and Van Gogh. As Peter Childs states in his study on modernism, it is not clear whether Woolf uses this specific date to refer to the change of government at the time or the post-impressionist exhibition arranged by Roger Fry (87). However, what is certain is that it points to a new direction in artistic and literary creation, which departs markedly from the Victorian tradition. In “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown,” Woolf criticizes the Edwardian authors such as John Galsworthy, H.G. Wells, and Arnold Bennett for their over-emphasis on external reality rather than the true nature of the characters. She writes that these writers “have looked very powerfully, searchingly, and sympathetically out of the window; at factories, at Utopias, even at the decoration and upholstery of the carriage; but [...] never at life, never at human nature” (19). Between the years 1910 and 1930 –the period called “High Modernism”– not only the character but also many aspects of the novel changed in line with the exhilarating developments in every area of life.

Modernist literature is often characterized by its accent on impressionism and subjectivity (that becomes visible especially in the works written by the stream-of-consciousness technique); its movement away from objectivity through the dismissal of omniscient narrator, fixed narrative viewpoints and clear-cut moral stance; its blurred distinction between different genres (the novels became more poetic and poems more prose-like); its fragmented structure and random and nonlinear narrative (Barry 82). It was

specifically between the years 1910 and 1930 that many great authors all over the world such as Ezra Pound, Marcel Proust, Stéphane Mallarmé, André Gide, and Franz Kafka produced influential works labelled as “modernist.” In Britain, among the works written during this period and launched into public taste are James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922), and Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). All of these writers experimented with new forms and brought new understanding to the representation of literary characters and their relationships with the external world.

However, except for the influential figure, Virginia Woolf, modernism has often been associated with the practices of male authors and artists. Up to the 1980s, the literary and intellectual activities of women writers have been undermined by the critics of modernism. In fact, along with the above-mentioned practitioners of modernism, there were many women writers who pioneered the new literary techniques and dealt with untouchable matters that challenged the former conventions. As the feminist critic Bonnie Kime Scott underlines in *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (1990), “[w]hen we turn in our research from a few masters and movers of modernism to its forgotten, gender-inflicted territories, we may suspect, like Lilly Briscoe, that we are tangled in a ‘golden mesh’” (3). This “golden mesh” includes names like Djuna Barnes, Willa Cather, Hilda Doolittle (known as H.D.), Mina Loy, Jean Rhys, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair, Rebecca West, Sylvia Townsend Warner, and Radclyffe Hall.

In her 1929 essay “Women and Fiction,” Virginia Woolf also calls attention to the golden age of women’s fiction in the first decades of the twentieth century. She highlighted that women’s fiction of the period is technically developed and intellectually rich because women start using their own sentences to express their own values and alter the subject matter of the novel to relate primarily the female experiences. The changes in law and customs, Woolf argues, inevitably result in the renovation of art:

The change which has turned the English woman from a nondescript influence, fluctuating and vague, to a voter, a wage-earner, a responsible citizen, has given her both in her life and in her art a turn toward the impersonal. Her relations now are not only emotional; they are intellectual, they are political. The old system which condemned her to squint askance at things through the eyes or through the interests of husband or brother, has given place to the direct and practical interests of one who must act for herself, and not merely influence the acts of others. Hence her attention is being directed away from the personal centre which engaged it exclusively in the past to the impersonal, and her novels naturally become more critical of society, and less analytical of individual lives. (*Granite* 83)

As Woolf's comments suggest, women writers were highly influential in the transformation of the modernist novel as they made formal and thematic changes in their writings to respond to the new ways of life brought by modernity.

Woolf's argument is significant in two respects. First, it implies that gender politics is effective in determining and constituting the modernist literary tradition. In *Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism* (1991), Marianne DeKoven argues that both feminism and socialism do give shape to modernist works: "Modernist formal practice has seemed to define itself as a repudiation of, and an alternative to, the cultural implications of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century feminism and socialism. [O]n the contrary, modernist form evolved precisely as an adequate means of representing their terrifying appeal" (4). Gender issues, therefore, affect the ways the external world and its influences on the consciousness of a character are represented. Another point that is worth a close look is the relationship between social practices and literary creation. Modernism –just as the other literary movements such as neo-classicism, romanticism, and naturalism– is the outcome of cultural, social, and political developments. There is surely a close link

between the narrative strategies and societal factors. The analysis of gender politics and social practices, therefore, is essential for a better evaluation of modernist literature.

Recently, the widely-held belief that modernism is predominantly a male construction has been challenged owing to the literary and cultural works on gender and modernity. Women's studies in the last thirty years have questioned the existing literary canon that has prioritized the male line and focused on the neglected female tradition by bringing to light the texts written by women. Michael Levinson's *A Genealogy of Modernism* (1984), Rachel Blau DuPlessis's study *Writing beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (1985), Shari Benstock's *Women of the Left Bank, Paris 1900-1940* (1986), Gillian Hanscombe's *Writing for Their Lives: The Modernist Women 1910-1940* (1987), Bonnie Kime Scott's anthology *The Gender of Modernism* (1990), Marianne DeKoven's *Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism* (1991), and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's three-volume work *No Man's Land* (1988-1994) all point to the presence of the female tradition that contributed to the formation of modernist art and literature.

Cultural studies are particularly important for giving the neglected women writers their right place in the modernist movement. Modernism is generally regarded as the formal aestheticism of male writers, and modernist texts are usually evaluated in terms of whether they contain these new literary devices or not. However, the studies on gender and modernity indicate that modernism is something more than formal changes. The content of the novel and the new ideas proposed by the writers are crucial for making sense of modernist literature as well. As Rita Felski argues in her work *The Gender of Modernity* (1995), "recent feminist work in the area of popular culture and cultural studies has paved the way for a rethinking of women's modernity that can include a consideration of the politics of experimental art but that can go beyond the isolated hypostatization of the modernist text" (29).

In *Modernism 1890-1930*, Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane argue that modernism is basically “the art of modernization” (27). The writers and artists of the period deal with the rapidly changing world, the consequences of urbanization and improved technology, the effects of war, and the demands of women and workers. The changes in society are observable especially in big cities which are, in Bradbury’s terms, the “centres of intellectual and cultural exchanges” (“Cities of Modernism” 96). Cities such as London and Paris inspired the literary creativity with their complicated structures. They gave women writers the opportunity to observe and experience new life styles, and to be in touch with the intellectual and literary circles. In *A Room of One’s Own* (1929), Woolf says that during the nineteenth century a woman writer’s “sensibility had been educated for centuries by the influences of the common sitting-room” (66); “[i]t was impossible for a woman to go about alone. She never travelled; she never drove through London in an omnibus or had luncheon in a shop by herself” (67). In the twentieth-century, however, the scope of women’s fiction was expanded from the familiar sitting-room to a wider environment because many women could then involve in urban life more easily. The content of the novel was enhanced to cover women’s experiences in the city –as mothers, workers, shoppers, artists, authors, suffragists, single or married women. The cities were redrawn to confront the established views on love, marriage and sexuality.

Not only the content but also the form of the novel altered. The new female consciousness was expressed by the employment of new narrative strategies. The structure of genres such as romance, fantasy, and *Bildungsroman* was modified to convey the female vision of the city. As the critic James J. Miracky argues in *Regenerating the Novel: Gender and Genre in Woolf, Forster, Sinclair, and Lawrence* (2003), literary genres were transformed to explore and express the modern identity:

Given the interrelatedness of gender and genre in the history and theory of the novel, it is no wonder that the early twentieth century, considered a

time of “gender crisis” and instability, ushered in a period of contestation over the form of the novel that was often articulated in gendered terms. For modernist novelists, the era’s artistic drive to “make it new” pointed toward the novel as the most promising medium for innovation. Since a major arena for exploring modern identity was the world of gender roles and sexual identities, this world was bound to be engaged in the matter and form of the modernist novel. (74)

Women authors resorted to new narrative techniques and devices to represent the wide range of experiences available in the city. These experiences serve to question and challenge conventional views on gender roles. The twentieth-century women’s fiction represents new perspectives on life by destabilizing the earlier formulae characterizing the literary genres.

In *Writing beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (1985), Rachel Blau DuPlessis underlines that literary genres are determined by ideological (and thus social and cultural) premises, which reinforce certain values regarding family, gender, and sexuality. Women writers put these values into question and offer different viewpoints by making changes in the structure of genres:

Narrative in the most general terms is a version of, or a special expression of, ideology: representations by which we construct and accept values and institutions. Any fiction expresses ideology; for example, romance plots of various kinds and the fate of female characters express attitudes at least toward family, sexuality, and gender. The attempt to call into attention political and legal forms related to women and gender, characteristic of women’s emancipation in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is

accompanied by this attempt by women writers to call narrative forms into question. (DuPlessis x)

It is important to take these changes into consideration for the study of modernist literature because narrative strategies are interrelated with the social and cultural foundations of modernism. It is necessary to redefine modernist writing by considering all of these aspects. In this way, it becomes possible to rediscover the “sea-change” in the twentieth-century literature:

‘Sea-change’ has come to mean deep, pervasive change, encompassing all levels of life as it is lived. The advent of twentieth-century modernity was such a change. A sea-change, in the realm of the empowered maternal, in which “nothing” of the disenthroned but not annihilated father “doth fade,” but instead is transformed “into something rich and strange,” describes the emergence of modernism. Modernist writing *is* “rich and strange:” its greatness lies in its density and its estranging dislocations. (DeKoven, *Rich and Strange* 3)

Among the writers who contributed to the making of a “sea-change” in modernist fiction are Virginia Woolf, Radclyffe Hall, Rebecca West, and Sylvia Townsend Warner. What unites these authors is the subversive nature of their works, which criticize the conventional ideas that restrict women’s autonomy and undermine their potentials. They reconstruct the established parameters with their challenging fictions. In Woolf’s *Night and Day* (1919), Hall’s *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), West’s *Harriet Hume: A London Fantasy* (1929), and Warner’s *Lolly Willowses, or, the Loving Huntsman* (1926), the Victorian ideals and narrative strategies are altered to suggest new points of view about gender. Even though all of these novels extended the borders of modernist fiction with their new techniques and subject matter, they received little attention from the scholars

of modernism. Woolf's *Night and Day* and Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, for instance, are often regarded as "realist" rather than "modernist." Although West employs stream-of-consciousness technique in *Harriet Hume: A London Fantasy* and Warner unites realism with fantasy in *Lolly Willowes, or, the Loving Huntsman*, these works have been kept in the background of the prominent names. In this study, however, it will be analyzed how these writers revolutionize the modernist novel and extend the borders of women's fiction by subverting the formulas of literary genres such as romance, fantasy and *Bildungsroman*.

For this purpose, the first two chapters of this study aim at explaining the terms modernity and modernism with a focus on the female experience. Many philosophers, historians, and literary critics emphasize that both modernity and modernism are basically the products of urban culture. The heterogeneous structure of cities such as London and Paris has brought about diverse experiences and life styles. Modernist writers inevitably responded to the innovative ideas, new perspectives and organizations developed out of urban culture. They changed their writing styles and themes to be able to reflect the pace of developing cities and the intricate relationships among city dwellers. In the first decades of the twentieth century, cities became the places where the growing number of women played a vital role in the formation of everyday life and society. Many women writers of the time depict in their works the female perception of the city, and they challenge the earlier traditions while narrating women's experiences. Thus, modernist women writers have helped to the establishment of the female tradition in English literature, which was long undermined by the critics of modernism. The aim of the first two sections is to ascertain the characteristics of women's writing that was shaped basically by the liberating developments in the cities.

In the third chapter titled "Experimental Modernism: The Subversion of Romance Formulas and the Dismantling of Realist Representation of the City in Virginia Woolf's

Night and Day,” it will be focused on how Woolf modifies romance formulas to narrate the new female consciousness in an urban setting. In both *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (1957) and *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (1976), the Canadian literary theorist Northrop Frye argues that romance novels offer an ideal world through happy endings. The marriage of loving couples who come together after a series of adventures implies that a dreamlike world can be created. In *Night and Day*, however, Woolf questions and satirizes the Victorian understanding of marriage as the ultimate choice of a young lady. As the main character of the novel, Katharine Hilbery, walks in the streets of London and encounters new people and life styles, she becomes aware of her own desires and approaches the idea of marriage from a different perspective. Moreover, Woolf departs from the realist tradition by portraying London differently in line with the diverse impressions of the characters. All of these traits make *Night and Day* an innovative text, which is distinguished from the Victorian conventions in terms of form and content.

The fourth chapter of this study, namely, “The City and the *Bildung* of the Female Subject in Radclyffe Hall’s *The Well of Loneliness*,” deals with the changes Radclyffe Hall makes in the structure of *Bildungsroman*. The theoretical framework of this part is based mainly on the Italian scholar Franco Moretti’s work *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (1987) –a critical work which gives insights as to the features of *Bildungsroman* conventions in English literature. According to Moretti, the English *Bildungsroman* up to the twentieth century is characterized by its emphasis on order, maturity, childhood innocence, and stable endings rather than youthful dynamism, mobility, and postponed endings. Radclyffe Hall’s lesbian novel, however, differs from the Victorian examples by exploiting the traditional devices. While narrating the experiences of Stephen Gordon in London and Paris, Hall also confronts the traditional understanding of gender roles and sexuality. With its different structure and novel ideas on gender, the novel has a crucial place in modernist literature.

In the final chapter entitled “The Fantasy of an Ideal Place: Sylvia Townsend Warner’s *Lolly Willowes, or, the Loving Huntsman* and Rebecca West’s *Harriet Hume: A London Fantasy*,” the focus will be on how Warner and West employ fantastic elements in order to challenge the restrictive views on gender. The literary theorists Rosemary Jackson and Tzvetan Todorov argue that fantasy writers attempt to transgress the established order to create a new world. Both Warner and West reconsider the everyday life and practices in London that is characterized by male aggressiveness, and they try to find an ideal place where women can develop their potentials as autonomous subjects. The formal and thematic aspects of both novels subvert the Victorian ideals and contribute to the formation of the female tradition.

Chapter I: Women, Modernity, and the City

Modernity is a derivative word from the Latin *modo* and the Late Latin *modernus* meaning “just now,” “presently.” In recent studies, however, it is not easy to arrive at a precise definition of the term. Modernity is rather a controversial concept because there is a disagreement about the definition and periodization of the term. While some critics consider modernity the consequences of the developments during the Renaissance period, others evaluate it as the result of the seventeenth-century scientific developments urged by Galileo, Hobbes, Newton, Leibniz and Descartes. It has also been discussed that modernity is the outcome of the eighteenth-century Age of Enlightenment that aimed at the management of nature and society through reason for justice, morality, organization, understanding and happiness (Childs 17). In the broadest sense, modernity is taken as the rational organization of everyday life under the light of reason and the removal of religious authority from social, cultural, economic, political and scientific domains.

In the introductory chapter to their critical work *Modernity and Its Futures* (1992), Stuart Hall, David Held and Gregor McLennan highlight the distinctive characteristics of modernity. In this text, it is argued that modernity began to be associated with social, economic and cultural changes instigated by the eighteenth-century industrialism in Europe, and it became a global phenomenon in the twentieth century with the emergence of non-European industrial societies such as Australasia and Japan. These critics describe modernity as the sum of different historical processes: “the political (the rise of the secular state and polity), the economic (the global capitalist economy), the social (formation of classes and an advanced sexual and social division of labour), and the cultural (the transition from a religious to a secular culture)” (2). Hall, Held and McLennan also underline that modernity is characterized by the division between private and public life: the emphasis on individual choice has opened up new possibilities for constructing one’s own life and experiencing new life styles; at the same time, new institutions and

organizations from hospitals to schools have been founded to respond to the individual needs of the people. In modern societies, social relations are regulated by power relations inscribed into the structure of the state: “Modern states are large, interventionist, administratively bureaucratic and complex systems of power *sui generis*, which intervene to organize large areas of social life” (3).

One of the most distinctive aspects of modernity is obviously the rapid urbanization. Cities have gradually come to represent modern ways of living and become magnets for people wanting to attain better social and economic possibilities. By 1900, there were eleven cities in the world populated over one million. More than five million inhabitants were living in London and New York, three million in Paris and two million people in Berlin (Childs 22). Due to the developing technology and the changing worldview brought by modernity, cities offered their inhabitants new and exhilarating life styles. However, they also hosted the underprivileged classes who suffered from the terrible economic conditions. According to Diana Wallace, there are two images characterizing the inter-war years: “Pictures of the carefree flappers of the ‘Jazz Age’ with their cocktails, cigarettes and new dances –the ‘Charleston,’ the ‘Turkey Trot’ and the ‘Black Bottom’ – contrast with bleaker pictures of the General Strike of 1926, mass unemployment, [...] bug-ridden slums in Liverpool, Glasgow, Manchester and East London, and the Jarrow Hunger Marchers” (11). Wallace notes that between the years 1914-1939, living standards were rapidly rising due to the developments in engineering, cars, electricity and plastics. New houses were built and provided with electricity; the number of motor vehicles reached three million; and day-tripping became a new pastime on account of the rising number of cars (11).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the regulation of everyday life through reason was highly influential in the theories suggested for the planning of the metropolitan cities. In *The City of To-morrow and Its Planning* (1929), for instance, the

urban planner Le Corbusier criticizes the chaotic and disorganized urban life and underlines the necessity of the rational planning of the metropolis. “Man,” he says, “governs his feelings by his reason; he keeps his feelings and his instincts in check, subordinating to the aim he has in view” (5). For Le Corbusier, a city is a human creation just like the poetry is a human act (xxi). His ideal city is founded on reason and directed towards a particular aim; it is not directionless and purposeless. In order to distinguish between ordered and chaotic cities, Le Corbusier compares the decisive man who walks in a straight line with the pack-donkey meandering along the streets:

Man walks in a straight line because he has a goal and knows where he is going; he has made up his mind to reach some particular place and he goes straight to it. The pack-donkey meanders along, meditates a little in his scatter-brained and distracted fashion, he zigzags in order to avoid the larger stones, or to ease the climb, or to gain a little shade; he takes the line of least resistance. (5)

In Le Corbusier’s point of view, cities like Paris that are following The Pack-Donkey’s Way should be transformed into a new structure, that is, they should follow Man’s Way for perfection. Thus, as Deborah L. Parsons argues in *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City and Modernity*, “Le Corbusier’s envisioned urbanite is thus not a dallying wanderer absorbed by the impressions of urban experience, he is a rational and purposive man who proceeds directly to a preknown destination” (11).

Le Corbusier’s ideal city coincides with the idea of progress, with modernity’s insistence on the rational regulation of everyday life for social and economic welfare. It is apparent that technological advancement from transportation and communication to the health care has helped to ease people’s lives. At the turn of the twentieth century, automobiles and motor buses were being largely used for transportation. The use of

telephone, typewriter, and tape-machine helped modernize office organization. In 1895, the use of X-rays in modern physics was a revolutionary discovery (Childs 22). All of these rapid changes have been regarded as the humanity's purposeful and positive movement toward the establishment of a better society. Defenders of modernity consider this process "a universal endeavour that leads to gradual emancipation of all human beings" (Childs 18). According to the German theorist Jürgen Habermas, for instance, modernity is an incomplete project that has been continually renewing itself in the face of new problems and situations. The faith in reason, Habermas argues, can provide solutions for the problems of society. Therefore, he writes that "instead of giving up modernity and its project as a lost cause, we should learn from the mistakes of those extravagant programs which have tried to negate modernity" (167-68).

Even though technology, urbanization, institutionalism, and new systems of industry and organizations associated with modernity have facilitated human life in many respects, the changing social relations have been questioned and criticized by many thinkers. It has been argued that although reason and science brought material benefit, modernity ignored human autonomy and self-knowledge. By undermining spiritual life and reducing human beings to rational animals, modernity is considered to have made people emotionally, psychologically and technologically dependent. The struggle for change and transformation is thought to give momentary satisfaction rather than long-term fulfilment (Childs 18). Many social theorists underline the privileged position of those who hold the power in the regulation of society. The French philosophers Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, whom Habermas called the "young conservatives" (169), draw attention to the power relations inherent in the structure of modern societies, which tend to categorize everything in absolute hierarchies and undermine those who are at the periphery. The German philosophers Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno –the members of the Frankfurt School– also make a critique of Western culture that values

pure reason over everything. The overemphasis on pure reason, they argue, inevitably results in the emergence of authoritarian people and totalitarian regimes.

Long before the above-mentioned critics, Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud questioned the foundations of modern Western culture as well. Nietzsche's aversion towards pure reason, Christian morality fostered by the state, and the idea of progress urged by modernity permeate almost all of his writings. In *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (1872), Nietzsche acknowledges that the modern world insisting on scientific optimism has lost its essence, its creative power that is found in Greek tragedies. He distinguishes between Dionysian and Apollonian forces representing artistic creativity and rationality respectively and underlines the necessity of the union of both forces for an ideal world. According to him, "every culture that has lost myth has lost, by the same token, its natural, healthy creativity. Only a horizon ringed about with myths can unify a culture. The forces of imagination and of Apollonian dream are saved only by myth from indiscriminate rambling" (641). Nietzschean philosophy offers the union of passion and thought; it devalues Christianity since it creates slave morality that makes individuals remain true to established values; and it criticizes the idea of progress, which keeps people away from action and creativity as they wait for the happy days to come¹. As Michael Bell notes, "Nietzsche diagnosed the whole tradition of Western metaphysics from Socrates onwards as a subtle form of falsehood reflecting an inner suppression and outer domination" (9-10). Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud also comment on the negative consequences of the changing world in the lives of people. While Marx emphasizes the exploitation of the working class by the advantaged classes, Freud calls attention to the

¹ Jean-Michel Rabaté also emphasizes that the great figures of modernism such as Baudelaire, Flaubert, Mallarmé, and Nietzsche attack "modernity's smug optimism; they deride its blind faith in the progress of science, a bourgeois meliorism which barely veils a starker reality defined by the steady progress of international capitalism" (10-11).

suppression of human instincts in modern societies where human behaviours are controlled by the laws and social norms.

Recent feminist studies have also approached the concept of modernity critically. Many scholars focus particularly on the exclusion of women and other marginalized groups from the discussions about modernity. In her essay “Modernism and Modernity: Engendering Literary History,” for example, Rita Felski writes: “The dethroning of the white bourgeois male as privileged subject of history reopens and leaves unresolved the question of what modernity might mean for women and other subaltern groups” (191-92). Alluding to the Marxist critic Marshall Berman’s work *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (1982) in which Goethe’s Faust is depicted as the representative of the modern age, Felski argues that in male discourse women are usually associated with tradition and conservatism whereas men are represented as active and autonomous subjects who attempt to transcend this traditionalism. In Berman’s work, Felski writes, Faust “comes to stand for the adventures and horrors, the ambiguities and ironies of modern life, as exemplified in the creative destruction and constant transformation unleashed by the logic of capitalist development” (*Gender of Modernity* 2). However, Felski underlines that such vision of the modern person fails in explaining the status of the young village girl Gretchen in Goethe’s work, who is seduced and abandoned by Faust during his struggles for new experiences and self-development (*Gender of Modernity* 2).

Felski states that not only the contemporary writings but also the works produced in the nineteenth century point out the association of modernity mainly with the male experience. The female experience, on the other hand, is largely ignored and considered out of the discourse of modernity:

Many of the key symbols of the modern in the nineteenth century –the public sphere, the man of the crowd, the stranger, the dandy, the flâneur– were indeed explicitly gendered [...] a recurring identification of the modern with public was largely responsible for the belief that women were situated outside processes of history and social change. [...] Seen to be less specialized and differentiated than man, located within the household and an intimate web of familial relations, more closely linked to nature through her reproductive capacity, women embodied a sphere of atemporal authenticity seemingly untouched by the alienation and fragmentation of modern life. (*Gender of Modernity* 16)

The public sphere is often thought to have been shaped by the economic and social endeavours of men who crowd the streets of the modern cities. In contrast to the active image of men in public sphere, women in the nineteenth-century discourse are regarded as passive and ineffectual agents in shaping the modern world.

However, Felski maintains that the re-examination of the nineteenth-century texts has shown that such a strict division between public and private, masculine and feminine, modern and antimodern is not so clear because

the ideology of separate spheres was undercut by the movement of working-class women into mass production and industrial labor, causing numbers of writers to express their fears that the workplace would become sexualized through the dangerous proximity of male and female bodies. The expansion of consumerism in the latter half of the century further blurred public/private distinctions, as middle-class women moved out into the public spaces of the department store and the world of mass-produced goods in turn invaded the interiority of the home. (*Gender of Modernity* 19)

Therefore, it is not possible to define modernity merely as the outcome of male activities and experiences. Women have also taken part in the transformation of society, and their contribution to modern life is more than what is assumed to be in the past and contemporary discussions on modernity.

Beginning with the late nineteenth century, more and more women began to participate in public life. The laws passed by the Parliament have changed the prospects of women in a positive way. The Married Women's Property Act in 1882, for instance, gave married women the right to own and control their own property. In addition, the Education Act of 1870 allowed the education of both sexes between five and twelve, and thus the number of women teachers increased in time. In 1902, local boards started to open up high schools for girls. With the Education Act of 1918, the school leaving age was raised to fourteen; however, only fourteen percent of children could continue secondary education because of the school fees. During the inter-war period, the number of girls attending secondary school increased from 185 000 in 1920 to 500 000 in 1936. Girls had the chance of receiving boys' education in the single sex public schools and grant-maintained secondary schools, and these institutions encouraged female autonomy. By 1914, women could get a degree from the universities of London, Wales, Scotland, Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool. Oxford granted degrees to women in 1920 and Cambridge in 1948 (Wallace 31-32).

Apart from the Property and Education Acts, the Representation of the People Act in 1918 enfranchised women over thirty who met the property requirements. Six million adult women out of eleven were granted the right to vote, and the age discrimination guaranteed that the number of women eligible for voting would not exceed the number of men who could vote. It is in 1928 that all women over the age of twenty-one had the right to vote without any limitations. Additionally, the parliament passed the Sex Disqualification Removal Act of 1919 and ensured the accession of women to all legal

professions. By 1925, the entrance of women to the examinations of the civil service was approved. Female civil servants, however, were not paid equally with the men holding the same position. Furthermore, the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1923 gave women the right to divorce on equal terms with men. In the 1920s, the propagation of the contraceptive knowledge in maternity centres and mothers' clinics helped reduce birth rate, and the average size of the British family dropped to 2.2 between the years 1925 and 1929 (Kent 296-97).

All of these legislative reforms have revolutionized women's lives both at home and in public life. Especially during the Great War, many women took up the jobs vacated by men, and they started to work as munitions workers, agricultural workers, tram conductors, ambulance drivers, and frontline nurses. They acquired new roles and enjoyed the blurring of the distinction between manly and womanly work (Kent 277). The blurring of distinction between manly and womanly spheres was not restricted to professional life. Women's social life also changed thanks to their participation in various clubs and public houses where many subjects from art and literature to politics and sports were being discussed. In *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (1990), Elaine Showalter discusses that clubs in the Victorian Period provided a lifelong training for men who wished to exclude women from social life. She writes that they "were the stronghold and headquarters of opposition to women's suffrage" (12). It was in the 1880s that a number of women's clubs were established, and one of them was the feminist Pioneer Club which gave lectures on politics and literature (12). In the first decades of the twentieth century, however, clubs became the haunts for many urban women who wished to free themselves from the duties of domestic life. Women office employees in London, for instance, could attend the Rifle Club on the flat roof of Strand House. Members of the Langbourn Club used to assemble to enjoy tea on the roof of their building. At Murray's Club in Beak Street, both men and women would come together to

dine and dance the foxtrot. In addition to these city clubs, many Londoners including women enjoyed musicals, operas and ballets in the West End. Going to the movies was also a popular pastime activity for the London folk. By the year 1921, there were 266 cinemas in London.²

Despite all these developments and women's contribution to city life, they are almost absent in the works of the urban planners and urban sociologists of the early-twentieth century such as Le Corbusier and Georg Simmel. Even if they appear in these texts, they are mostly associated with the popular culture. Le Corbusier's modern city is mainly designed for business life. The aim is the systematic transportation of working people from the residential places in the suburbs to the city centre that is filled up with blocks of huge skyscrapers. However, for Le Corbusier, the city centre spared for work life is basically the domain of male inhabitants:

The cities of the present that Le Corbusier assesses are presented in the form of maps and statistics of population density, traffic movement, and suburb growth. The modern city is repeatedly described as being based on 'man's way,' on an exactness of space achieved by an adherence to geometrical law. Where are women in Le Corbusier's urban landscape? Is their 'way' subsumed by, inferior to, or disregarded by that of man? For Le Corbusier's modern city is based in a need to accommodate traffic that must move at high speed to deposit its passengers into the heart of a city in order to begin the work of the day. Yet despite the rise of women in employment, this experience is predominantly that of the male. Le Corbusier has little interest in the influx of women into the city, their

² For the details of social life in London, see *Forgotten London: A Picture of Life in the 1920s* by Elizabeth Drury and Philippa Lewis.

purpose, location, and times of arrival. (Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis* 12-13)

While Le Corbusier comments on the organization of the metropolitan life through reason, the German sociologist Georg Simmel focuses on the rational responses of the urban residents to the city and their effects on the human psychology. In his 1903 essay entitled “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1903), Simmel describes the metropolis as “the seat of money economy” (62), and in this money-dominated milieu individuals have nothing to do other than to develop their intellectual strategies for self-defence. Whereas in rural life everybody knows each other and the producer of the goods, in an urban setting people remain detached from each other for the protection of the inner life against the numerous external stimuli, “[i]nstead of reacting emotionally, the metropolitan type reacts primarily in a rational manner” (62). According to Parsons, Simmel’s detached observer is primarily male. She maintains that although Simmel wrote articles on the women’s movement and although many female students attended to his lectures, still he associates urban women with the mass culture. Even though Simmel’s “cultural criticism identified the materialist spirit of mass culture and the domination of the male, bourgeois controllers of production, in its images and language it accepted the idea of ‘feminized’ culture *en masse*, and identified with the (intellectual, male) individual standing apart from it” (29).

Parsons argues that the identification of women with the mass culture is not unique to Simmel. Popular news and theories also tended to see the crowd as female, and usually the women invading the streets were depicted as “shoppers and prostitutes”³,

³ According to Rita Felski, the treatment of the prostitutes in the nineteenth-century art and literature gives insights regarding the difficulty of drawing a strict line between public and private spheres. Felski notes that “Both seller and commodity, the prostitute was the ultimate symbol of the commodification of eros, a disturbing example of the ambiguous boundaries separating economics and sexuality, the rational and

indistinguishable both in terms of their adherence to fashion and their uncontrolled desires” (29). Parsons notes that in the cartoons of *Punch* or in Émile Zola’s *A Bonheur des dames* (1883), the unconscious, amorality, materiality, and sexuality are linked to femininity. Masculinity, on the other hand, is defined by rationality and consciousness. Thus, the dichotomies of interior/exterior or passive/active correspond to gender distinctions (29)⁴.

It is obvious that in the texts about urban life and modernity, the presence of women is often undermined. Felski underlines that the phenomena such as “industry, consumerism, the modern city, the mass media, and masculinity are in some sense fundamentally masculine, and that feminine values of intimacy and authenticity remain outside the dehumanizing and alienating logic of modernity” (*Gender of Modernity* 17). However, Felski argues that these feminine values are also significant factors that are worth considering for the study of modernity because modernity does not simply mean industrialization or urbanization. Women’s experiences of modernity as mothers, workers, artists, lovers, activists or readers are highly suggestive of the modern life styles as well:

To be sure, women’s lives have been radically transformed by such quintessentially modern phenomena as industrialization, urbanization, the advent of the nuclear family, new forms of time-space regulation, and the development of the mass media. In this sense, there can be no separate

irrational, the instrumental and the aesthetic” (19). Besides, their presence marks “the potential anonymity of women in the modern city and the loosening of sexuality from familial and communal bonds” (19).

⁴ Even though the pervasive image of women as shoppers is considered a feminine attribute, it is actually an indicator of the growing number of working women who want to purchase their own money according to their own wishes. In *Forgotten London: A Picture of Life in the 1920s*, Elizabeth Drury and Philippa Lewis argue that in the 1920s there were 780,511 women in work (out of 2,412,944), and these women working in shops and offices invaded the city streets to discover the new-style department stores. Besides, the desire for shopping became an opportunity for middle-class women who wanted to contribute to the family budget by opening amateur shops selling art objects and home-made cakes. Not only the working women but also thousands of housewives participated in city life through shopping because they came from the suburbs to the city centre after completing their daily housework (66-67).

sphere of women's history outside the prevailing structures and logics of modernity. At the same time, women have experienced these changes in gender-specific ways that have been further fractured, not only the oft-cited hierarchies of class, race, and sexuality but by their various and overlapping identities and practices as consumers, mothers, workers, artists, lovers, activists, readers, and so on. It is these distinctively feminine encounters with the various facets of the modern that have been largely ignored by cultural and social meta-theories oblivious to the gendering of historical processes. (*Gender of Modernity* 21-22)

The "feminine" world and the everyday experiences of women—from religion, fashion, motherhood to same-sex love and artistry—are closely linked to modernity as they are subject to the complexities of the modern world. Therefore, it is wrong to regard women "as pure victims and outsiders in an alien milieu. Rather, they are desiring and complicitous agents deeply immersed in the ambiguities and complexities of the modern world" (Felski, "Afterword" 293).

Indeed, the "New Woman" of the 1890s and "flappers" of the 1920s make it clear that the seemingly antimodern subjects such as fashion and sexuality—which are often regarded as the aspects of the popular culture—have close links with the changing values brought by modernity. For the New Women of the late nineteenth century, for instance, the outward appearances as well as personal choices determining one's everyday life were a means to suggest the equality between men and women. They smoke like men, possessed latch keys, rode bicycles, wore divided skirts or knickerbockers, and went out without corsets (Hill 7). The young women of the 1920s—who were called "flappers," "boyettes," "Modern Women," or "Modern Girls" by society—also wore suits, had a short haircut, drove fast cars, played golf and tennis, and had sexual freedom unlike the girls of the same age during the pre-war years. For these women, the mannish clothes and

behaviours were not just a matter of fashion. Rather, they were a kind of protest against maturity and motherhood, a reaction against the Great War that caused the death of approximately a half million men (Kent 287-88). As the phenomena of the “New Woman” and the “flappers” suggest, both public and private lives of women are significant for the study of modernity. Even though women’s contribution to modern urban life is often underestimated, a reconsideration of their experiences in the city can prove that women are not minor figures but “key players in theories of modernization” (Felski, “Afterword” 292).

Chapter II: Modernism and the Female Experience

Modernism, just like the term modernity, has been subject to many discussions. One of the reasons of the disagreement among the critics is the designation of an exact date for the commencement and the end of modernism. Peter Faulkner, for example, identifies “the arts of the period 1910-1930” as modernist (13). Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, on the other hand, argue that modernism is the literary and intellectual movement that became influential between the years 1890-1930. According to Marianne DeKoven, it emerged and became dominant in the period from 1880 to 1920, and its influence continued until the end of World War II (174). Apart from the discussions on the dates of modernism, the scope of modernism has also been questioned. Until the 1980s, modernism was generally identified with “white, male, heterosexist, Euro-American middle-class terms” (Childs 13). In the past three decades, however, the scope of the term has been extended to cover what was excluded in the literary studies of the earlier periods. As Kevin J.H. Dettmar notes in the introductory chapter to *A Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture*, in recent studies “The texts of modernism have been queered; racialized, their whitewash striped away; gendered, regendered, and cross-gendered; classed; globalized; potcolonialized; popularized. [...] While modernism was, to some extent, born elitist, it now suffers the indignity of having elitism forced upon it” (4). Therefore, it is not anymore possible to talk about modernism in monolithic terms. There is not a single and unified understanding of modernism because there are many modernisms each of which needs a careful consideration.

Modernism –as Ezra Pound’s well-noted injunction to “make it new” suggests– is often described as the new and vigorous literary and artistic forms that challenge Victorian conventions. According to Malcolm Bradbury, what unites modernist writers such as Thomas Hardy, D.H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, H.G. Wells, Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson is “a prevailing sense of dislocation from the past, and a commitment

to the active remaking of art" ("London" 178). The need to express human conditions through new forms undoubtedly stems from the altering world views and life styles urged by modernity. Being the modern novel's chief concern, "[m]odernity meant *change* –a perpetual departure from all tradition, a fascination always with the new, a hunger for the future rather than the past" (Matz 218). However, the relationship between modernism and modernity is quite ambivalent. On the one hand, many writers and artists were fascinated by speed and motion, the new forms of machine and the factory system, and the introduction of new commodities into daily life. The futurists, for instance, celebrated speed and power acquired by technological innovations (Harvey 23). On the other hand, many modernist works such as *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *Sons and Lovers* (1913) sought out the ways to express the traumatic experiences of people in the face of new developments.

The attempts to respond to the intricacies and ambiguities of modern life changed both the form and content of the Victorian narratives. The writers' tendency to "make it new" challenged the realist representation of everyday life, which was the dominant literary mode in Britain since the eighteenth century. Realist writers, as is well-known, aim at the accurate depiction of the common experiences of people who are mostly of middle-class. They choose real-life characters and ordinary settings in order to create verisimilitude; resort to long descriptions to narrate the external reality; use omniscient narrators to comment on the characters and the themes of the novel in detail. However, at the turn of the twentieth century, these aspects of the novel were considered ineffectual in conveying the real human states. As Jesse Matz writes:

Modernity had changed everything, bringing global war, urban chaos, revolutionary technology, sexual freedom; the novel inherited by the moderns, however, seemed essentially traditional –slow, staid, set, and so unable to match the flux, the bewilderment, the excitement that now

defined modern life. Therefore the moderns tried to “make it new” by trading the novel’s regular forms for experimental forms of flux, perplexity, openness, scepticism, freedom, and horror. (215)

Modernist writers dealt with representing reality as well; however, their main focus was on subjective reality rather than on objective reality: they prioritized the representation of the psychological states of individuals rather than the social development of the characters; the exposure of the unconscious was considered more important than the description of the external world; the emphasis on transitory thoughts and impressions subverted chronological order and dramatic plot (Parsons, *Theorists* 53).

Jesse Matz argues that one of the chief reasons of the modernist writer’s inclination for the internal reality was the scepticism about the certainty of judgments and senses in a world where everything is in a continual flux (218). Related to this issue is the growing awareness over the gap between appearances and reality. Many writers questioned the differences between what is on the surface and what actually lies beneath it. They tried to find out “deeply ironic or even ruinous differences between the ways things seem and what proves true about them;” therefore, in many modernist works “Appearances reverse realities [...]. Impressions and presuppositions exist to be corrected or defied; truths and realities retreat to the story’s end, or beyond” (Matz 219). Thus, unlike the literary works in the Victorian tradition, the meaning and the ending of the modern novel usually becomes vague and unclear. Truth also becomes relative, “contingent upon circumstances, changing with time and place” (Matz 219). As a result of subjectivism and the idea of relativity, the omniscient narrator is generally replaced with the subjective narrator, who is “speaking or overheard in the act of living, directly involved with the people, objects, and concerns of his or her narrative world, or aligned with some particular character’s point of view” (Matz 219). The narrator of the modernist novel,

therefore, presents diverse viewpoints because she or he becomes capable of approaching the events and situations from a variety of perspectives.

The insistence on inward looking and interiority is grounded mainly on the theories proposed in the field of psychology. Freud's investigation of the unconscious apparently influenced the way the characters were portrayed in the works of fiction. As Deborah Parsons underlines, psychological and philosophical studies provoked a change in the depiction of character and identity:

For as psychological and philosophical theory demonstrated the significance of mental phenomena such as dreams, instinctive associations and memories, and confidence in the reliability of external or surface appearance dissolved, writers were faced with the challenge of conveying both the multiple, transient perceptions of the individual self on the one hand, and a profound sense of the irrevocable strangeness of another human being on the other. (*Theorists* 80)

In order to reflect the flow of ideas in the minds of individuals, authors such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson employed the stream-of-consciousness technique⁵. A natural consequence of this technique was the portrayal of fragmented selves instead of unified identities: "Character lost coherence as a result: unified selves fragmented into such a welter of perceptions, motives, memories, and desires that fictional people ceased to have the fixed, standard "qualities" that had made them engaging and memorable in the novels of the past" (Matz 220-21).

⁵ The term stream of consciousness was first suggested by the American psychologist William James. In *Principles of Psychology* (1890), he writes: "It is nothing jointed; it flows. A 'river' or 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. *In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life* (239). In the literary field, the term "stream of consciousness" was first coined by the British writer May Sinclair to describe Dorothy Richardson's novelistic style.

Another reason of the change in the attitudes and techniques of the modernist writers was the new perception of time. The French philosopher Henri Bergson's idea of time was particularly influential on many modernist writers. According to Bergson, the thing called present consists of the past as well:

Duration is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances. And as the past grows without ceasing, so also there is no limit to its preservation. Memory [...] is not a faculty of putting away recollections in a drawer, or of inscribing them in a register. There is no register, no drawer; there is not even, properly speaking, a faculty, for a faculty works intermittently, when it will or when it can, whilst the piling up of the past upon the past goes on without relaxation. (173)

The idea that the past always exists in the mind of an individual and that it continually affects and shapes one's present actions, behaviours, and ideas led to a technical innovation in fiction writing. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, for example, Woolf constantly moves forward and back in time while narrating the protagonist Clarissa Dalloway's one day in London.

Apart from these technical aspects, the content of the modernist novel also altered because of the rapid changes in the structure of society. Unlike the earlier works which concentrated on the commonplace, the average, and the ordinary, the writers of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century started to deal with the uncommon, the unusual, or the neglected aspects of life. The aim of the novelist was no more to give moral lessons. As Jesse Matz highlights, the modern fiction prioritized aesthetic concerns over ethical matters: "Moral certainties would become unavailable as the ambiguity of human motivation, the relative nature of goodness, and even the savagery of human appetites would have the last word" (222). The Victorian tendency to draw a strict line

between good and evil was challenged by the depiction of complicated characters and ambivalent situations. In addition, “Sexuality and basic physical experience would finally get due representation: what had been illicit or irrelevant now became the proper stuff of fiction, as freer explorations of basic needs broke open fiction’s moral frames (Matz 222). Beginning with the late nineteenth century, sexuality became one of the main concerns of many artists and novelists. It is obvious that Freud’s “emphasis on bringing into consciousness the conflicts and fantasies of the unconscious helped move contemporary discussions of sexuality out of the Victorian closet” (Olson 143). However, many modernist works – James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, D.H. Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, and Radclyffe Hall’s *The Well of Loneliness*– were banned by reason of obscenity.

All of these innovations in the form and content of the novel are also noticeable in poetic creation and in a wide variety of art products. In poetry, for instance, individual feelings and emotions were expressed through symbols. The poets such as Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot experimented with unrhymed free verse in their poems. Beginning with the late nineteenth century, many artists like Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Georges Braque ceased to create the verisimilitude of the external world in their paintings. Rather, there was a tendency towards abstraction, towards the psychologically-perceived reality. The art movements such as impressionism, futurism, and expressionism also affected musical rhythms. Composers such as Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, and Igor Stravinsky, for instance, preferred atonality and revolutionized the earlier techniques in order to respond to the ambiguities and intricacies of modern life.

The most distinctive aspect of modernist movement is its formation out of urban culture. As Malcolm Bradbury underlines in “The Cities of Modernism,” modernism is above all “an art of cities” (96). He notes that it is impossible to think of modernism without taking into account the places such as Berlin, Vienna, Moscow, St. Petersburg, London, Paris, Zürich, New York and Chicago in which “the new aesthetics were distilled;

generations argued, and movements contested; the new causes and forms became matters of struggle and campaign" (96). Beginning with the late nineteenth century, the city and the intricate relationships of its inhabitants have become one of the main preoccupations of the writers. In *The Country and the City* (1973), the Marxist critic Raymond Williams argues that prior to this period much of English literature was chiefly about the country and small towns⁶. Whereas the country was often associated with innocence, the city was generally linked up with vice and moral weakness. Williams argues that the main response to the city was to identify "the crowding of cities as a source of social danger: from the loss of customary human feelings to the building up of a massive, irrational, explosive force" (217).

According to Raymond Williams, the perception of the city merely as a place of degeneration has vanished in time as the cities have steadily become the hubs of many liberating movements and activities. The need for the establishment of a better society was predominantly expressed in the cities: many people demanded the right to vote and the reform of parliament; they struggled for a better education system; the workers were organized in big cities in order to react against the tyranny of the capitalist system (231). As he writes,

Out of the very chaos and misery of the new metropolis, and spreading from it to rejuvenate a national feeling, the civilising force of a new vision of society had been created in struggle, had gathered up the suffering and the hopes of generations of the oppressed and exploited, and in this unexpected and challenging form was the city's human reply to the long inhumanity of city and country alike. (231)

⁶ Raymond Williams notes that, before the late nineteenth-century, it was Charles Dickens who could successfully depict the paradoxical and contradictory nature of the city. He reflects "the random and the systematic, the visible and the obscured, which is the true significance of the city" (154).

Thus, the traditional understanding of the city as a homogenous structure was challenged. Instead, the heterogeneous nature of the metropolis has become the focal point for many writers.

Such a change in the perception of the city has definitely influenced the artistic creation. In the hands of modernist writers and artists, both the charming and unfavourable features of urban life became the grounds for the expression and experimentation of the new artistic forms and subject matter: "The pull and push of the city, its attraction and repulsion, have provided themes and attitudes that run deep in literature, where the city has become metaphor rather than place" (Bradbury, "The Cities of Modernism" 97). It became a metaphor for various subjects such as loneliness and alienation, personal strength and weakness, limitation and freedom, individual autonomy and social pressure. James Joyce's Dublin or Virginia Woolf's London came to represent various ideas related to human conditions. In modernist fiction, therefore, cities were no more simply background settings. Rather, they were highly suggestive of deeper meanings beyond the observable reality.

The cityscape, therefore, is quite significant in giving shape to modernist literature. In "London 1890-1920," Malcolm Bradbury underlines that the new modern art both encounters the modern city and develops out of it: "The sense of cultural stress and strain is of course an explanation for a new art, an art of fragments and images, an art of language retrieved from chaos and misuse, an art which encounters the city but also arises from out of it in a new translucent form" (182-83). Referring to Jackson Holbrook's view, Bradbury states that there is a direct relationship between city experiences and the form and the content of the novel. The urban aesthete, he argues, constructs his or her work by responding to the city: "The urban artist, unmistakably encapsulated in the city, here to say, attempts by his techniques less to humanize or limit the city than catch at its mixture of onerous reality and strange unreality, its unexpected forms and masses, its odd

disjunctions, fleeting exchanges, inviting corruptions” (182). The city becomes an exhilarating subject matter for the artists, who represent this topic by applying various forms and techniques.

London in particular has a vital place in the twentieth-century literary creation. It was “the obvious centre of English-language Modernist activity” (Bradbury, “London” 172). At the turn of the twentieth century, the population of London rose to about six and a half million. The English industrial and commercial revolution filled the streets of London with technological innovations that created a sense of excitement. London had a leading role in the fields of communication, commerce, banking, and culture. The newspapers, the books and new ideas spread to the rest of the country from London. There was a prevailing sense of change everywhere; at the same time, this big metropolis was noted for its imperial confidence, growing trade, and social stability. Due to the developments in culture, publishing, finance, and shipping, many people from the other parts of England as well as from the other countries of the world migrated to London. Despite many social reforms, however, there was also the problem of poverty: there was a huge gap between the developed West End and the poor and anarchic East End (Bradbury, “London” 179-80). All of these aspects of the city have given shape to the modern art and literature. As Bradbury argues,

[T]he London cityscape, as a scene and a set of social contrasts, becomes important literary subject-matter and the source of new forms. One reason for this was that, like many of their fellow men, writers were being urbanized, following the tide of metropolitan migration, feeling those emotions of isolation and separation, despair and hope that characterize city life. The aesthete is the dandy, and the dandy is an essentially urban figure, a style-maker standing out in the general display. (“London” 181)

Apart from London, Paris was also a centre of attention for many writers, artists and thinkers from all over the world. In his article “Revolt, Conservatism and Reaction in Paris 1905-25,” Eric Cahm says that the bohemian tendencies and the liberating movements in Paris made this metropolis the centre of many significant modernist activities, and the invigorating atmosphere attracted the innovative figures like Diaghilev, Stravinsky, the Cubist painters, Apollinaire, and Gertrude Stein (162)⁷. In “The Cities of Modernism,” Malcolm Bradbury also underlines the liberating nature of Paris. He writes, “Paris is surely, for Modernism, the outright dominant culture, as the fount of bohemia, tolerance and the émigré life-style” (102). These aspects of Paris allured many prominent British writers and artists. Between the years 1919 and 1940, the important British figures such as Samuel Beckett, Lawrence Durrell, Ford Madox Ford, James Joyce, Duncan Grant and Percy Wyndham Lewis either studied in Paris or lived there as expatriates. It was essentially in the 1920s - after the financial and moral decline caused by the war— that Paris became the ideal metropolitan city for many expatriates due to its “cultured, tolerant, feverish and active, radical but contained” climate (Bradbury, “The Cities of Modernism” 103).

Modernism, as has been discussed up to now, is often regarded as the formal innovations and vigorous techniques, which are used to depict human states and conditions predominantly in urban culture. The works produced between the years 1910 and 1930 are specifically notable for their different aesthetic approach to the representation of reality. These works are generally analyzed under the label “High Modernism,” a term that is used to refer to the “aesthetic formalism” of the canonical

⁷ In this text, Eric Cahm emphasizes that although Paris was the heart of new modernist activities particularly between the years 1905 and 1914, there was a reaction against the modernist trends after the war. It was because the defenders of old traditions in every area of life were not content with the “foreign import” on art and literature. There was an attack on the “barbarism” of the new foreign styles introduced by Ibsen, Tolstoy, Maeterlinck, and the Cubists. Cahm notes that a complete break with the past cultural and social values became possible after 1920.

names such as Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf (Parsons, *Theorists* 1). However, except for the example of Virginia Woolf, high modernism has often been considered the product of male writers. As Marylu Hill discusses in *Mothering Modernity: Feminism, Modernism and the Maternal Muse* (1999), “the traditional view of High Modernism as predominantly the self-contained product of a select group of men (and one token and secondary female in the person of Virginia Woolf) has left out many women writers from the community of modernist authors (2). In “Lost and Found: Remembering Modernism and Rethinking Feminism,” Lisa Rado also calls attention to the neglect of women’s experiences of modernism. She highlights that

the English departments of the 1950s and 1960s engaged in a massive cultural ‘forgetting’ that repressed the existence of central female modernist writers like H.D., Marianne Moore, Djuna Barnes, Gertrude Stein, Rebecca West, Dorothy Richardson, and even to an extent Virginia Woolf, while elevating select male writers –primarily Joyce, Lawrence, Pound, Eliot, Hemingway, Faulkner, Lewis, Proust, and Kafka– to an unassailable literary elite. [...] the community of modernist women writers became a truly “lost generation” until the mid-1980s⁸. (4)

Beginning with the 1980s, the critical studies on gender and modernism have made it clear that, contrary to widely-held beliefs, in the first decades of the twentieth century there were many women writers who contributed to the establishment of the female tradition and hence to the development of the modernist fiction. In her groundbreaking work *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to*

⁸ Lisa Rado bases her argument on Lionel Trilling’s views concerning the demands of Columbia College students in the 1950s for a course in modern literature. The faculty first opposes the students’ request thinking that institutionalizing such a course may cause the demoralization of the students. Later, Trilling and his colleagues agree on giving the course and choose the texts by Yeats, Eliot, Joyce, Proust, Kafka, Lawrence, Mann, and Gide. Rado states that this selection is remarkable because it consists merely of male authors (3-4).

Lessing (1977), Elaine Showalter stresses the female tradition that was constructed particularly after the 1880s when women writers started to express their own values through fiction. Showalter mentions three stages in women's writing: Feminine, Feminist, and Female. The first of these phases between the years 1840 and 1880 is characterized by the tendency to imitate the existing male norms in art and literature. The period between 1880 and 1920 is identified as the feminist phase in which the male standards are protested and minority rights are demanded for autonomy. Finally, the female stage corresponds to the period from 1920 to the present. It is during this phase that women writers were mainly preoccupied with finding their own identities and expressing the female experiences (13).

According to Showalter, these categories are not rigid in that it is possible to detect feminine elements in the feminist phase, and vice versa. Thus, women's fiction written between the years 1910 and 1930 contains the elements of both feminist and female writing. It questions male norms and values and emphasizes the female experiences. In this sense, what distinguishes women's novels during the period called High Modernism is the subversive nature of these works. They challenge the existing genres by exploiting the form and the content of the novels. The traditional novelistic devices employed in the earlier examples of romance, fantasy, and *Bildungsroman* are modified by women writers to represent the new female consciousness. By focusing on the female experience, women writers have reconsidered the idea of happy ending through marriage, the clear-cut distinction between the good and the evil, and the role of sexuality in the formation of the autonomous identity.

As Marianne DeKoven underlines in "Modernism and Gender," women writers were highly influential in pioneering the formal practices that define modernism:

If we take a moment to define, briefly, the salient formal features of Modernism –the cluster of stylistic practices that, more than any of Modernism’s other describable features, we use intuitively to identify literary works as modernist– it becomes clear that women writers were just as instrumental in developing these forms as the great male writers usually credited with inventing Modernism. (175)

Two names that stand out as the forerunners of the new literary techniques are Dorothy Richardson and May Sinclair. In her thirteen-volume novel sequence *Pilgrimage*, Dorothy Richardson experiments with quite novel forms and techniques, which are distinguished from those prevalent in the Victorian tradition. The unfinished sentences without full stops and “unparagraphed text,” the continual switch between the past and the present, and the shift from the third person narrative to the first all characterize Richardson’s *Pilgrimage* series. These aspects of the novels make the reading process difficult for readers⁹. Another important figure who practiced new literary styles is May Sinclair. As it was noted before, she is the first person who used the term “stream of consciousness” in the field of literature. In a review to Dorothy Richardson’s *Pointed Roofs* (1915), Sinclair denotes this phrase to refer to the narration methods used in the novel. Sinclair’s own works are also characterized by their through revelation of human psychology. In both *Mary Olivier: Life* (1919) and *The Life and Death of Harriet Frean* (1922), for example, she draws on the findings of Freud and Jung in order to describe the modernist themes such as dreams, sublimation, repression, and sexuality¹⁰.

⁹ *Pointed Roofs*, the first book of Richardson’s novel sequence, was published in 1915. Between the years 1916 and 1938, Richardson wrote eleven more books. The last book of the series, *March Moonlight*, was published in 1967. For further information on Richardson’s works and writing style, see Deborah Parsons’ work *Theorists of the Modernist Novel: James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf*.

¹⁰ Jean-Michel Rabaté stresses that May Sinclair is one of the few modernists who was a competent philosopher. Sinclair analyzed German idealism in her work *A Defence of Idealism* (1917), and she was also a founder of two London psychoanalytic schools. According to Rabaté, Sinclair was trying to blend

Many modernist novels by women writers have received little attention from the critics of modernism. Since most of these works follow chronological order, have omniscient narrator, and concentrate generally on external reality rather than on inward psychology, they have been labelled as “realist” rather than as “modernist.” However, the close analyses of the seemingly realist texts produced between the years 1910 and 1930 have proved that women writers, just like their male counterparts, made changes in the existing forms and subverted the traditional structures of the literary genres such as romance, fantasy, and *Bildungsroman*. Virginia Woolf’s *The Voyage Out* (1915) and *Night and Day* (1919), for example, transform the romance formulas to express the new female consciousness in the city. Similarly, Radclyffe Hall’s *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) departs from the earlier examples of *Bildungsroman* by challenging the traditional views on gender and morality. As DeKoven argues,

Using these formal descriptions as a neutral guide, we can displace the patrilineality of what, before second-wave feminist criticism’s revisions, had been the exclusively masculine Anglo-American high modernist canon (James, Conrad, Yeats, Pound, Eliot, Lawrence, Joyce). Modernism had mothers as well as fathers. In texts crucial to the feminist canon such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1891), Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* (1899), Gertrude Stein’s *Three Lives* (1903-6), and Virginia Woolf’s *The Voyage Out* (1915), we can see that women writers produced modernist form concomitantly with the men generally credited with inventing Modernism. (175-76)

There is a direct relationship between the changes in the formal aspects of literary genres and the changes in the social and cultural structure of society. In *The Political*

psychoanalysis and Hegelianism to solve existential problems. For Rabaté’s discussion of May Sinclair, see pp. 15-16.

Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act (1981), the Marxist critic Frederic Jameson highlights that “there is nothing that is not social and historical –indeed, that everything is “in the least analysis” political” (11). It is obvious that the changing life styles and worldviews in the first decades of the twentieth century affected the way the writers represented the world in fiction. Women writers also inevitably played with the former techniques and modified them to relate the new female consciousness, which was shaped particularly by urban culture. As more and more women started to participate fully in city life as mothers, single women, artists or workers, women writers conveyed their experiences of modernity by making use of different narrative devices.

Women writers, therefore, are not outside of modernism that is often characterized by the new aesthetic forms. However, modernism is not simply a matter of form. As Bonnie Kime Scott argues in *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (1990), the content of the novel that is shaped by the new understanding of family, religion, sexuality, marriage, and love is also highly crucial in evaluating modernist works. All of these issues are closely linked to gender politics, which is a constituent feature of modernist literature. Scott writes:

Gender, layered with other revised conceptual categories such as race and class, challenges our former sense of the power structures of literary production. We suspect that modernism is not the aesthetic, directed, monological sort of phenomenon sought in their own ways by authors of now-famous manifestos –F. T. Marinetti (futurism), Ezra Pound (imagism and vorticism), T. E. Hulme (classicism), Wyndham Lewis (vorticism), T. S. Eliot (“Tradition and the Individual Talent”), and Eugene Jolas (the “revolution of the word”) –and perpetuated in new critical-formalist criticism through the 1960s. Modernism as caught in the mesh of gender is

polyphonic, mobile, interactive, sexually charged; it has wide appeal, constituting a historic shift in parameters. (4)

Modernism has definitely challenged the existing parameters by dismantling both the formal and thematic features of the Victorian literature. Such a turn in parameters was caused by the subversion of restrictive views and practices determining one's life. In their works, women writers reacted against the restraining ideas on gender by representing unconventional characters, different settings, and controversial issues. The subversive nature of their works has helped to constitute a shift in the established parameters of the former traditions.

In her 1931 essay "Professions for Women," Virginia Woolf notes that the former literary traditions tend to represent women as passive agents rather than active subjects because the Victorian ideal demands from a woman to be submissive rather than subversive. Woolf notes that the Victorian phantom known as the "Angel in the House" character reinforces the idea that women are basically sympathetic, charming, unselfish, and pure creatures who care for the demands of others rather than their own wishes (*Death of the Moth* 237). In modernist fiction, however, the stereotypical image of woman as an "Angel in the House" is replaced with the figure of self-conscious, demanding and desiring woman who is sure of her place in society. Another point Woolf underlines in this essay is the importance of being able to write freely about passion and bodily desires. She addresses women writers by stating that "you cannot review even a novel without having a mind of your own, without expressing what you think to be the truth about human relations, morality, sex" (238). Killing the "Angel in the House" and expressing sexuality unreservedly are necessary for the production of a genuine work. It is in this way that the existing restrictive norms on gender roles can be subverted.

In her critical essay “For the Etruscans,” Rachel Blau DuPlessis discusses the subversive feature of the female aesthetic in detail. According to her, the main reason of women’s reaction against the suppressive practices is their “outsider/insider social status” in society. A woman is an outsider –by her gender– as she is outside of the hegemonic power relations. However, she is also an insider as the producer of culture: “an outsider by her social position, by her relation to power; may be an insider by her social position, her class. She can be both. Her ontological, her psychic, her class position all cause doubleness. Doubled consciousness. Doubled understandings” (278). This doubled consciousness, that is, the “both/and vision,” DuPlessis argues, causes “the end of the either-or, dichotomized universe, proposing monism [...] in opposition to dualism, a dualism pernicious because it valorizes one side above another, and makes a hierarchy where there were simply twain” (276). Hence, the female aesthetic does not serve to perpetuate but challenge the existing hierarchical order: “the female aesthetic turns out to be a specialized name for any practices available to those groups –nations, genders, sexualities, races, classes– all social practices which wish to criticize, to differentiate from, to overturn the dominant forms of knowing and understanding with which they are saturated” (285)¹¹.

As the views of the above-mentioned critics suggest, gender politics is crucial for a better evaluation of modernism and modernity. Women’s literary responses to modernity

¹¹ In the same essay, DuPlessis also argues that there is a difference between male and female reaction against the social order. High modernists, DuPlessis argues, are generally nonhegemonic since they criticize bourgeois culture. However, male writers criticize this order by depending on patriarchal and aristocratic values. The cultural criticism of women writers, on the other hand, is mainly based on left-wing ideals: “This set of individuals with residual values (Eliot, Pound, Yeats, Lewis, Lawrence) depends on responses to a once-existing, and somewhat mythologized, social basis in peasantry and patriarch. Aristocrat, head, *il capo*. A revolution from the right. Literature by women, in its ethical and moral position, has analogues with the equally nonhegemonic modernism in its subversive critique of culture. (Most –Woolf, Lessing, H.D. – are in no way right-wing; this more than just an “interesting observation.”) In women’s writing, as in modernist, there is a didactic element, related to the project of cultural transformation, of establishing values. In women’s writing, as in modernist, there is an encyclopedic impulse, in which the writer invents a new and total culture, symbolized by and announced in a long work, like the modern long poem” (286).

give insights as to how these politics work in the creation of the female identity. As Bonnie Kime Scott highlights in “Modernism and Gender,” “the widening of modernism to include the broader culture of modernity is important to any gender analysis” (536). Because cities are the epicentres of both modernity and modernism, it is helpful to analyze women’s experiences in the city and their representation in literature. Cities have always inspired the literary creation. In the works of Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, and Robert Louis Stevenson, for example, the psychology of the main characters is revealed through their wanderings in the city. Their relationships with London expose the social and cultural structure of society. However, these works generally foreground the male rather than the female perception of the city.

Not only male writers but also women authors have dealt with the complexities of urban life; however, they focused mainly on the female experiences. In relating women’s lives in the city, women authors question the oppressive ideas that tend to undermine women’s contribution to culture. The wanderings of women in the streets of London and Paris uncover the hegemonic structure of society and open up new possibilities for the creation of an ideal place where women may fully participate in life as autonomous subjects. While representing women’s lives in the metropolis, women writers generally apply, in Susan M. Squier’s terms, a “decentered perspective.” They focus on the female experiences, which were generally ignored in the former traditions. While depicting the cities such as London and Paris, they specifically concentrate on the implications of the city for women. In her essay “Virginia Woolf’s London and the Feminist Revision of Modernism,” Squier states that Woolf employs a “decentered perspective” in *A Room of One’s Own* and in her London essays in order to bring marginal outsiders to the foreground. In “Great Men’s Houses,” for example, Woolf calls attention to the amount of time and labour spent by women to provide what is vital for life while great men like Thomas Carlyle are preoccupied with writing (109). Similarly, Squier takes the story of

Judith Shakespeare as a succinct example of Woolf's decentered perspective as it calls attention to the silenced, marginalized and neglected women invading the city streets. Just like Woolf, many writers such as Dorothy Richardson, H.D., Rebecca West, Radclyffe Hall, Sylvia Townsend Warner, and May Sinclair turn the camera on the neglected women.

The focus on the female experience serves to subvert both the form and the content of the traditional narrative. In her essay "The Modern City and the Construction of Female Desire: Wells's *In the Days of the Comet* and Robins's *The Convert*," Squier argues that male and female writers differ from each other in their treatment of the vision of women in the metropolis. Besides, they employ different narrative strategies to express their experiences:

As modern women writers encountered and transformed the textual city to make generic plots more accommodating to their own desires, they told a very different tale from that of their high modernist brothers: a tale not only of the disfranchisement and disintegration of the sovereign male subject, but also of woman's enfranchisement, both literal and literary. (73)

Squier notes that in the female aesthetic, women are not objects of men's desires but rather self-sufficient subjects. The female aesthetic, therefore, questions the hegemonic structures of society and demands for a change in the established parameters. As women walk in the city and respond to the intricacy of life, the form of the novel is regulated in a new way to express the demands of women. Women writers do "make it new" by expressing their own stories in new styles.

Chapter III: Experimental Modernism: The Subversion of Romance Formulas and the Dismantling of Realist Representation of the City in Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day*

All human relations have shifted –those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature.

–Virginia Woolf, “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown”

In “Modern Fiction,” Virginia Woolf criticizes the “materialism” of Edwardian novelists as they are concerned with the external reality rather than the characters’ states of mind. A writer’s task, she argues, is to represent life formed by the “myriad impressions” the mind receives (*Common Reader* 150). Although Woolf attacks restrictive literary traditions of the time and the Victorian period in many essays, her second novel *Night and Day* (1919) has been criticized for its conventionality. E.M. Forster, for example, writes, “Even the style has been normalised, and though the machinery is modern, the resultant form is as traditional as Emma” (173). In a review to *Athenaeum*, Katherine Mansfield also evaluates the book as “a novel in the tradition of the English novel” (82). Indeed, *Night and Day* shares some of the characteristics of realist novels with its omniscient narrator and chronological plot of love and marriage. However, throughout this work, Woolf questions both social and literary conventions by subverting romance formulas and describing psychologically-perceived London. While the subverted romance structure exposes the established views on gender and marriage, the portrayal of London through the consciousness of the characters prevents the novel from being a wholly materialist work. In this respect, *Night and Day* may be considered to be one of Woolf’s

experimental works¹² challenging traditional form and subject matter, and hence laying the ground for her later modernist works.

Night and Day narrates the complicated and partly comic adventures of five young people –Katharine Hilbery, Mary Datchet, Cassandra Otway, Ralph Denham, and William Rodney– in hopes of finding true marriage partners in Edwardian London. The novel as a whole is based on romance formulas, which Northrop Frye discusses largely in both *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* and *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*. Frye views romance as a narrative mode rather than a genre giving shape to most of Greek and medieval works as well as to the realist novels of later periods beginning with the eighteenth century. In his analysis of this literary mode, he focuses mainly on four aspects: love, quest, two contrasting worlds having different characteristics, and happy endings. Love is defined as “the central element” affecting the plot and characterization (*Secular* 24). Quest for an ideal order and/or partner is a determining aspect of romance. Questing characters, Frye says, encounter two different worlds: “the idyllic world” associated with “happiness, security, and peace” and “the demonic or night world” that involves “separation, loneliness, humiliation, pain, and the threat of the pain” (53). At the end of the novel, the night world is defeated with the elimination of all obstacles, and thus a happy ending is provided.

According to Frye, the stories told in romances have a revolutionary quality since the happy resolution of the events suggests the possibility of defeating the undesirable order. By the elimination of all the barriers preventing the transformation of individuals and society, these stories nourish the hope that a dreamlike world can be created:

¹² In her first novel *The Voyage Out* (1915), Woolf also plays with romance structure by ending the novel with the death of the female protagonist, Rachel Vinrace. For further information, see *The Feminization of Quest-Romance* (1990) by Dana A. Heller.

But if romance so often appears as a kind of naive social snobbery, what becomes of the revolutionary quality in it [...], the proletarian element rejected by every cultural establishment? We found the focus of this revolutionary quality near the end of a romantic story, usually at the recognition scene. It appears in the polarizing between two worlds, one desirable and the other hateful, the triumphant upward movement of the living hero rising from the dead dragon, the point that expresses the reader's identity with a power of life strong enough to smash through any kind of barrier and danger. (*Secular* 163)

As the above quotation suggests, the revolutionary aspect of these romantic stories involves the merging of loving couples, who finally find happiness in marriage.

Even though Frye defines romance as a revolutionary narrative form since it points to the ways to change the world for the better, this transformation is often presented to have occurred as a consequence of the deeds of the male hero. Women, on the other hand, are usually depicted as subsidiary figures helping men in the establishment of an ideal world. Frye considers romance similar to both dreams and rituals. He states that "translated into dream terms, the quest-romance is the search of the libido or a desiring self for a fulfillment" (*Anatomy* 193). Dana A. Heller calls attention to the fact that women described in many romances are "always subordinate to the masculine libido," and they merely "serve to symbolize various aspects of the masculine drive." That is why, she notes, they appear as subsidiary characters strengthening the images of men instead of female heroes questing and asserting their own identities (4).

This passive existence of women is underlined by Dana A. Heller in *The Feminization of Quest-Romance* (1990) –a critical text analyzing the examples of quest-romance challenging the masculine myth entrapping women in domestic sphere. Heller

emphasizes that the representation of independent women questioning and embarking on a quest in literature is necessary for the defiance of the negative images of them produced in male-dominated society. In many literary works, she says, the “active and self-determining hero” has a wider social environment permitting him an active participation in life. Women, on the other hand, encounter an “enclosed space” to transcend: “a house, a garden, an institution, an introspective mind” (10). Even if these obstacles are overcome, the quest generally ends with “illnesses, suicides, and mental deterioration” (10). Furthermore, marriage has always been presented as a solution for women to realize their aims and aspirations. However, based on the article “Psyche, or Wholeness” by Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Heller perceives marriage as one of the main factors stopping the quest of the female protagonist and signalling once more the passivity of women as their desires are thought to be unrealizable without marriage (11).

Throughout *Night and Day*, Frye’s idea of marriage as a revolutionary power is put into question. On the whole, the novel draws on romance conventions as it tells the story of questing lovers and describes in depth two contrasting worlds characterizing most romances: the night world of dreams and the day world of realities¹³. Woolf, however, subverts the structure of romance by making use of certain strategies. The unification of love and quest is one of these methods Woolf employs in the novel. In her critical study *Writing beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (1985), Rachel Blau DuPlessis writes: “*Night and Day* takes up two heroes from two misallied couples, the primal stuff of the comic love plot, yet asserts that they can only affirm mutual passion because of quest. Thus love and quest are joined at narrative resolution, rather than being separated as in the nineteenth-century paradigm” (54). In this way, marriage is not presented as an end in itself. Rather, it is regarded as a mutual partnership of desiring lovers, who come together for the realization of their aspirations in

¹³ The original title of *Night and Day* in Woolf’s manuscript was “Dreams and Realities.”

life. Besides the union of love and quest, the comic elements and the ironic tone also serve to parody and trivialize orthodox views on gender and marriage. Moreover, the portrayal of Mary Datchet as an unmarried but self-sufficient character underlines that it is possible for a woman to attain her goals without getting married.

Being a novel published right after the First World War and during the heyday of the suffrage movement, *Night and Day* is basically about questing individuals who are trying to find their ways in London. This quest becomes apparent especially in the dreams of Katharine Hilbery and Ralph Denham, who decide to get married after Katharine secretly breaks off her engagement with relatively traditional man, William Rodney. The dreams of this aspiring couple are used by Woolf metaphorically to refer to the process “in which the rational, separative logic of reality –what she sometimes calls the facts of existence– can be dissolved by the emotional, unifying illumination of an extraordinary insight –the vision” (Cumings 339). Through Ralph and Katharine’s dream worlds, Woolf questions whether it is possible to reconcile “an intense private individuality, whose basic instinct is self-realization through moments of vision (‘night’), with the outside world, that large part of life defined by social roles and imposed duties (‘day’)” (Stape xviii).

In his analysis of romance structure, Frye makes a distinction between a person who is dreaming and the image of that person in dreams. He writes: “If I dream about myself, I have two identities, myself as a dreamer and myself as a character in my dream. The dreamer is, so to speak, a god in relation to his dreamed self: he created him but remains in the background watching” (*Secular* 107). Katharine Hilbery, the daughter of an upper-class family living in Chelsea, has such a divided personality as Katharine in real life differs from Katharine in her world of dreams. Katharine in actual life is an unhappy woman without a profession, and she is not content with her existing position as a dutiful daughter. The opening scene of the novel, which echoes Jane Austen’s social comedies,

calls attention to how routine life of daylight precludes women like Katharine from using their faculties fully:

It was a SUNDAY evening in October, and in common with many other young ladies of her class, Katharine Hilbery was pouring out tea. Perhaps a fifth part of her mind was thus occupied, and the remaining parts leapt over the little barrier of day which interposed between Monday morning and this rather subdued moment, and played with the things one does voluntarily and normally in the daylight. But although she was silent, she was evidently mistress of a situation which was familiar enough to her, and inclined to let it take its way for the six hundredth time, perhaps, without bringing into play any of her unoccupied faculties. (5)

Katharine's roles as a single woman living with parents make her life uninteresting and unfruitful. Both Mr. and Mrs. Hilbery demand her to "put in charge of household affairs" and respect their Victorian roots and traditions: "Ordering meals, directing servants, paying bills, and so contriving that every clock ticked more or less accurately in time, and a number of vases were always full of fresh flowers was supposed to be a natural endowment of hers" (36). Apart from household duties, Katharine is expected to help her mother write the biography of Richard Alardyce —an eminent Victorian poet and the dead father of Mrs. Hilbery. Throughout the novel, the Victorian past surrounds Katharine. The room allocated to the belongings of Alardyce together with other heirlooms of their lineage turns into a shrine to which the guests accompanied by Katharine pay a frequent visit. The conventions and rituals determining the nature of the Hilbery House put barriers before Katharine. She finds herself stuck in the past and tries to find the ways to repudiate it in order to be able to concentrate on the present:

Sometimes Katharine brooded, half crushed, among her papers; sometimes she felt that it was necessary for her very existence that she should free herself from the past; at others, that the past had completely displaced the present, which, when one resumed life after a morning among the dead, proved to be of an utterly thin and inferior composition. (35)

Katharine's secret preoccupation with mathematics and astronomy together with the dream world she creates become a means to defy the existing life associated with constraints. In *Night and Day*, "mathematics (and the stars, which Katharine sees as being akin to math in their impersonality) functions as a key signifier of Katharine's other self, her dream world" (Priest 69). Even though Mrs. Hilbery wishes her daughter to have a poetic mind, Katharine prefers studying "the exactitude, the star-like impersonality, of figures to the confusion, agitation, and vagueness of the finest prose" (37). Although she has to keep her studies in secret because of "the unwomanly nature of the science," mathematics gives her uncertain and vague life a direction that is free of imposed roles exerted upon her (37). In other words, Katharine tries to shape her own identity by "opposing the tradition of her family," which prioritizes literature (38)¹⁴.

Apart from mathematics and astronomy, the fantasy world of Katharine also functions as a signifier of her quest for the attainment of a better life that is free of thwarting barriers. In her dream world, Katharine emerges as an active agent rather than a passive individual. There, "she took part in a series of scenes such as the taming of wild ponies upon the American prairies, or the conduct of a vast ship in a hurricane round a black promontory of rock, or in others more peaceful, but marked by her complete emancipation from her present surroundings" (37). All these "unwomanly" scenes remove

¹⁴ According to Susan J. Leonardi, the reason for Katharine's dislike for literature as well as her mother's inability to finish the biography is the male language that does not allow the expression of female feelings and consciousness. For further information, see Leonardi's article "Bare Places and Ancient Blemishes: Virginia Woolf's Search for the New Language in *Night and Day*."

Katharine from the borders of the Hilbery House and transform her into a venturing hero. In the scene in which Katharine ponders on accepting William Rodney's marriage proposal with the hope of studying science, Woolf underlines how this dream world means liberation and happiness for Katharine:

Here she sighed, and, putting the thought of marriage away, fell into a dream state, in which she became another person, and the whole world seemed changed. Being a frequent visitor to that world, she could find her way there unhesitatingly. If she had tried to analyse her impressions, she would have said that there dwelt the realities of the appearances which figure in our world; so direct, powerful, and unimpeded were her sensations there, compared with those called forth in actual life. There dwelt the things one might have felt, had there been cause; the perfect happiness of which here we taste the fragment; the beauty seen here in flying glimpses only [...]. It was a place where feelings were liberated from the constraint which the real world puts upon them; and the process of awakening was always marked by resignation and a kind of stoical acceptance of facts. (124)

The divided nature of Katharine's personality that finds expression in her dreams is observable in Ralph Denham's character, too. Just like Katharine, Ralph Denham also quests for another world, where he can devote himself to the writing of "the history of English village from Saxon days to the present time" (197). He is portrayed as a responsible, hard-working and successful solicitor, who has to support financially his siblings and widowed mother living in Highgate. Ralph's responsibility toward his family is the main reason that lies behind his inability to leave everything behind for a new life in the country dedicated to literature. "The grasp of the family system" (21) prevents him from pursuing his own ideals. That is why dreams become a dwelling place for him

through which he tries to escape from the real world that does not satisfy his soul. There is again Ralph in actual life and Ralph in his dreams:

It sometimes seemed to him that this spirit was the most valuable possession he had; he thought that by means of it he could set flowering waste tracts of the earth, cure many ills, or raise up beauty where none now existed; it was, too, a fierce and potent spirit which would devour the dusty books and parchments on the office wall with one lick of its tongue, and leave him in a minute standing in nakedness, if he gave way to it. His endeavour, for many years, had been to control the spirit, and at the age of twenty-nine he thought he could pride himself upon a life rigidly divided into hours of work and those of dreams; the two lived side by side without harming each other. (112)

Both Katharine and Ralph try to escape from the limitations of real life. However, the above passage calls attention to how male and female quest differs from each other. While Katharine craves for having an occupation through which she can have a room of her own, Ralph wants to leave his office where he has to work ten hours a day like a slave. Whereas Katharine longs for getting rid of domestic life that keeps her at home, Ralph tries to rescue himself from public life where people are reduced to money-making mechanisms. Ralph asks: "All this money-making and working ten hours a day in an office, what's it *for*?" (193). Katharine, on the other hand, says to her friend Mary Datchet, "I want to assert myself, and it's difficult, if one hasn't a profession" (49). Even though there is a disparity between the male and female quest that stems from the different roles imposed on men and women, both Katharine and Ralph try to establish a balance between the actual and fantasy world, between "the thought and action, between the life of solitude and the life of society, this astonishing precipice on one side of which the soul

was active and in broad daylight, on the other side of which it was contemplative and dark as night" (295).

Woolf suggests that it is through love that these aspiring minds can bring night and day together. In Edwardian London, the union of the couple necessitates the marriage of the partners. Marriage in romances, however, prevents the quest of female characters. Woolf tries to solve this problem by implying that the marriage of Katharine and Ralph will allow them to pursue their own ideals. Besides, Woolf stresses that their relationship is different from that of William and Cassandra, which entails a more traditional understanding of marriage. Throughout *Night and Day*, Katharine searches for a "magnanimous hero" for whom she may feel passion (172). Besides love and passion, she is in pursuit of a union that will allow her to study math and astronomy unreservedly. At the beginning of the novel, Katherine regards marriage with William as a solution for an escape from the already existing life retarding her quest. She regards marriage as "an archway through which it was necessary to pass in order to have her desires" (189). It seems to her that, just like her aunt Lady Otway, she can "give way" to her husband (186) and "pretend to like emeralds when she preferred diamonds" (189). However, her engagement with William becomes a burden for her rather than a revitalizing power because he is not the magnanimous but a conventional man, who tends to undermine the capabilities of women. Her engagement with Ralph, on the other hand, is the result of mutual love, and it offers the possibility of liberating togetherness "where each is free, where there's no obligation upon either side" (293).

Both William Rodney and Cassandra Otway are used by Woolf as foils to Ralph and Katharine in order to highlight the disparity between conventional and liberating ideas concerning life. Cassandra and William are also questing characters, though their views are mostly shaped by traditional values defining Victorian culture. Cassandra, the daughter of an extended family of twelve children, is a woman searching for an escape

from the ordinary life she is living in their country house. Although her quest is not directly expressed, her eccentric interests and overzealous appetite for learning about almost every area of life prove that she is trying to find a way to transcend the enclosed space she is in. For example, Cassandra spends her days in her bedroom that has “the ceiling hung with mulberry-leaves, the windows blocked with cages, and the tables stacked with home-made machines for the manufacture of silk dresses” (183). Silkworms, of course, are not the only means to widen the enclosed space surrounding her: “She had worshipped architecture and music, natural history and humanity, literature and art, but always at the height of her enthusiasm, which was accompanied by a brilliant degree of accomplishment, she changed her mind and bought, surreptitiously, another grammar” (297). By dealing with many subjects extending from silkworms to literature, Cassandra tries to understand the huge world that is not open to her in the Otway House.

Similarly, William Rodney –a man coming of “the oldest family in Devonshire” (58) – has some ideals, too. He is a clerk and definitely a learned man having a good taste of music, art and literature. “No one could doubt that William was a scholar” (123), writes Woolf to underscore his intellectual capacity. Literature for him has a supreme importance giving meaning to a meaningless life; it is “a source of divine joy” (47). His passion for words and phrases makes him look for a life in which he can channel his efforts to the writing of plays. In one of the dialogues with Ralph about life and literature, for example, he utters his wish for a life dedicated to literature: “I should be ten times as happy with my whole day to spend as I liked. [...] I could spend three hours every day reading Shakespeare” (63).

Though both Cassandra and William are in search of a life that is different from the existing one, their conventional views about marriage and gender roles do not suggest a modern union like that of Katharine and Ralph. Their engagement is used as a foil by Woolf to highlight the modernity of the relationship between Katharine and Ralph. As it

was previously mentioned, in most romances, women are subject to male libido, and they serve to magnify the image of men. In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf also calls attention to the same point by using the metaphor of looking-glasses. She writes, "Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size" (35). They are usually considered objects of men's desire rather than self-sufficient subjects (Squier, "The Modern City" 70). In *Night and Day*, Cassandra functions to reflect the image of William greater than it actually is. William desires a woman to be controlled; he does not want to be that woman's "slave or her dupe" but "her master in future" (281). That is why he decides to get married with Cassandra, who becomes his looking-glasses. Unlike Katharine, Cassandra is attentive to what William says about literary works. She likes to be educated by him, tries to learn Greek, and read Macaulay's "History of England" upon his request. Moreover, she wants "to have a great many of children" since "[William] likes children" (377). The marriage of this couple, therefore, does not offer a better future, specifically for Cassandra.

The union of love and quest for the attainment of goals in life is one of Woolf's strategies to question the traditional understanding of marriage represented in many examples of quest-romance. Another method employed in *Night and Day* is the insertion of comic elements, which help to satirize and trivialize established notions of gender and marriage. It is especially through the character of William Rodney that Woolf uncovers the restrictive nature of existing life in terms of women. In Chapter Eighteen, in which Katharine wants to break off her engagement with William, she says that "without [love] our marriage would be a farce" (213). Even though they do not get married at the end of the novel, still their relationship turns into a farce mainly because of William's conventionality.

Two scenes of the novel are specifically notable for showing Woolf's attempts to turn marriage into a farce: the first is when William proposes to Katharine and the second is when he tries to convince her that their engagement should continue. William is a man who "can't help having inherited certain traditions and trying to put them into practice" (57). While proposing to Katharine on the Embankment at night, for instance, he thinks of the probable gossips if he is "seen alone with [Katharine] on the Embankment" (58). Moreover, he tries to prevent Katharine from walking home alone since it is quite late, and he summons a taxi-cab. The image of a woman followed by a man and a taxi-cab along the Embankment creates a comic effect. In this way, Woolf undermines the romantic treatment of marriage proposals as sacred moments in a person's life. In William's point of view, women are "nothing" without marriage; single women are "half alive" and can only use half their faculties (56). For him, marriage is like a holy union. However, in Chapter Eighteen, while discussing an important issue like marriage, William cannot concentrate on this subject but thinks of Katharine's unkempt hair and the leaves on her dress:

A man naturally alive to the conventions of society, he was strictly conventional where women were concerned, and especially if the women happened to be in any way connected with him. He noticed with distress the long strand of dark hair touching on her shoulder and two or three dead leaves attached to her dress; but to recall her mind in their present circumstances to a sense of details was impossible. She sat there, seeming unconscious of everything. He suspected that in her silence she was reproaching herself; but he wished that she would think of her hair and of the dead beech-leaves, which were of more immediate importance to him than anything else. (215)

As the above quotation makes it clear, Woolf once more plays with the idea of marriage by caricaturing William's conventional views about women.

Another strategy Woolf employs in *Night and Day* is the portrayal of Mary Datchet as a single but powerful woman, who has a job and a room of her own. Having "a power being disagreeable to one's family," she achieves to stay away from the pressure of familial duties thwarting personal development (50). Mary leaves her father, siblings and the family house in the village of Disham and starts living in a suffrage office in London after her college education. In her essay entitled "Tradition and Revision: The Classic City Novel and Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day*," Susan M. Squier argues that Mary Datchet is the only woman in the novel, who achieves "the female utopia" as she remains a genuinely working character in the end (126). Through the character of Mary Datchet, Woolf rewrites the tragic story of Judith Shakespeare whom she mentions in *A Room of One's Own*. While Judith Shakespeare commits suicide since London of the Renaissance period does not allow her to participate in public life, Mary Datchet of the twentieth century is provided with a voice to assert herself. Mary can talk about love as well as "the impersonal topics, such as the housing of the poor, or the taxation of land values" (72). As Anne F. Fernald puts it,

Of all of Woolf's characters, Mary Datchet is the hostess who best inspires substantial and exciting talk of poetry and politics. Mary's success at generating talk is one of Woolf's refutation of the prejudice against women that long excluded them from coffeehouses and debating societies. In creating Mary Datchet, Woolf makes a claim for the contribution that women can make to the public sphere. (92-93)

The figure of Mary Datchet is used by Woolf to offer an alternative to marriage. Through her relationship with Ralph, Woolf underlines that marriage is meaningless

without love. Besides, by depicting her as a powerful individual in London, Woolf emphasizes that women can become independent without marriage. Like the other young characters of *Night and Day*, Mary questions what love is all the time. She thinks that “love is a devastating fire which melts the whole being into one mountain torrent” (118). For her, “marriage without love doesn’t seem worth while” (220). That is why she rejects Ralph’s marriage proposal when she finds out that he loves Katharine Hilbery. Therefore, just like Katharine, Mary does not consider marriage an end in itself. She thinks that she can change the existing world for the better with Ralph because he is “the least conventional” person “like most clever men” (71). Instead of having a loveless marriage, Mary prefers dedicating her life to public matters. As Rachel Wetzsteon underlines, the character of Mary suggests that it is not necessary for a woman to get married to achieve her goals in life:

Particularly striking is the character of Mary Datchet, whose role in *Night and Day* can be compared to that of Lily Briscoe in Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*, a self-doubting but driven artist who questions the supremacy of marriage and motherhood. While Katharine is fiercely independent, her self-reliance does not take the form of attending a university or obtaining a job. Mary has done both; and her selfless labors remind us, even as we follow the progress of Katharine’s love, of the alternatives to marriage – whether as a novel’s ending, or a woman’s fate. (xxiv)

While the subversion of romance formulas helps Woolf problematize the idea of marriage preventing the quest, the representation of London based on the psychological and emotional states of the characters provides her with the means to avoid the materiality of fiction. *Night and Day* “reflects Woolf’s interest as an emerging experimental writer in its frequent exposition of the states of the mind of its main characters” (Ronchetti 29). While Woolf’s divided characters are struggling for bringing

the actual and dream world together, they perceive London in their minds accordingly. Hence, London scene “serves to break down barriers between thoughts and events, between incidents and emotions and speculations and memories” (Daiches 31). As Allison Tzu Yu Lin writes:

Woolf’s London composes her own narrative pattern, makes a psychological turn in the writing of fiction, from James’s centre of consciousness which passively perceives the external world, to her own expression of emotion –the characters’ emotion which subjectively maps the cityscape. Woolf’s mode of seeing illustrates a mode of narration. This mode of seeing reveals a process of mapping a psychological London. (109)

In fact, apart from *Night and Day*, London permeates almost all of Woolf’s novels, short stories, and essays. However, while representing London, she specifically focuses on the implications of the city for women. In her essay “Virginia Woolf’s London and the Feminist Revision of Modernism,” Susan M. Squier states that Woolf employs a “decentered perspective” in *A Room of One’s Own* and her other London essays in order to bring marginal outsiders to the foreground. In “Great Men’s Houses,” Squier argues, Woolf calls attention to the amount of time and labour spent by women to provide what is vital for life while great men like Thomas Carlyle are preoccupied with writing (109). Similarly, Squier takes the story of Judith Shakespeare as a succinct example of Woolf’s decentered perspective as it calls attention to the silenced, marginalized and neglected women invading the city streets.

In *Night and Day*, Woolf applies a “decentered perspective” as well. While telling the stories of questing young people, she especially highlights how London is perceived by the female characters of the novel. She tries to uncover the meaning of the city for women. To do this, as in “Great Men’s Houses,” Woolf narrates life in the houses

thoroughly. The houses of *Night and Day*, therefore, are not merely places where the events take place. Rather, they come to represent the characters' states of the mind. In *The London Scene*, Virginia Woolf emphasizes that one should have an understanding of "private houses" in London to be able to make sense of urban life. In her view, knowing what is going on in these houses is as important and necessary as knowing the streets, buildings, theatres, shops, parks and institutions of the metropolis. One of these private houses mentioned in this work belongs to Mrs. Crowe, who hosts intellectual and prominent people of the period and provides an environment for discussions of many subjects including London life. By focusing on Mrs. Crowe's house, Woolf underlines that London is not merely "a gorgeous spectacle, a mart, a court, a hive of industry," it is rather "a place where people meet and talk, laugh, marry, and die, paint, write and act, rule and legislate" (83). Mrs. Crowe's house is presented as a microcosm giving an idea about the complex structure of London.

In "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment" (1925), the urban sociologist Robert E. Park discusses that the urban structure is characterized by human relations, and, at the same time, the city determines the everyday activities of people. He acknowledges that "the city is not [...] merely a physical mechanism and an artificial construction. It is involved in the vital processes of the people who compose it; it is a product of nature, and particularly of human nature" (1). Woolf represents London as a place produced by human nature. Apart from its physical existence, London has also a mental existence. All the houses in the novel – particularly the house accommodating Katharine Hilbery and her wealthy parents and the flat owned by Mary Datchet – represent the mind of the city. The two different worlds suggested through the characters of the text are further emphasized by the differences between these houses. They are like microcosms representing the larger structure of the metropolis.

The Hilbery house located in Chelsea is remote from rapid and noisy life of London, the streets of which are invaded by the crowd of people, cabs, omnibuses and trains. Apart from being a secluded place that is quite away from the hustle and bustle of the metropolis, the Hilbery house is also presented like a Victorian dwelling place, where great importance is attached to family traditions. Katharine's duty in this house, as it has been noted before, is to continue these conventions by serving the tea-parties made for relatives and distinguished literary figures who pay frequent visits to their house. Due to the tendency to embalm the memory of Richard Alardyce and preserve the cultural heritage of the Hilberys, life in the Hilbery house seems stuck in the past. Although the ticks of the clock and the visitors coming in and out of the house remind readers of the passing of the time, the sense of the past continually surrounds the place and the characters. At the very beginning of the novel, readers feel the nostalgia for the past in this house through Mrs. Hilbery's remarks: "After all, what is present? Half of it's the past, and the better half, too, I should say" (10). Even the works chosen by Mr. Hilbery to be read aloud in his study point to the past, as he thinks that novels of Henry Fielding are "something real" when compared to "the moderns" (90). Katharine feels the necessity "for her very existence that she should free herself from the past" (35), but the gaze of ancestors prevents Katharine from concentrating on her own life, from creating a space for herself. This point is illustrated by Katharine's views of her own attempts to write the biography of Alardyce together with her mother:

So Mrs. Hilbery was raising round her the skies and trees of the past with every smoke of her pen and recalling the voices of the dead. Quiet as the room was, and undisturbed by the sounds of the present moment, Katharine could fancy that here was a deep pool of past time, and that she and her mother were bathed in the light of sixty years ago. What could the

present give, she wondered, to compare with the rich crowd of gifts bestowed by the past? (98-99)

Because her life lacks an orientation toward the future, Katharine envies “people like Ralph and Mary” who have “all their own way, and an empty space before them” (92). Her life creates a space for her to carry out domestic errands such as “ordering meals” and “directing servants” freely, but it does not allow her to proclaim publicly that she is interested in astronomy and mathematics.

Katharine’s life in this house affects her perception of London. Even though she becomes an active individual in the fantasy world she creates, she cannot create a space for herself in public life. While looking through the window of her room, she thinks that it is difficult to hear her own voice in “the shapeless mass of London” (92). London is like a shapeless place because her life enclosed within the walls of their house prevents her from fully discovering and defining this big metropolis. While caring for her parents, relatives and the visitors, she forgets her own self. That is why, while standing by the window, she likens the heavy traffic of London to a thick texture silencing her own voice: “The incessant and tumultuous hum of the distant traffic seemed, as she stood there, to represent the thick texture of her life, for her life was so hemmed in with the progress of other lives that the sound of its own advance was inaudible” (92).

Katharine’s wanderings in the city also give an idea about the female vision of London. Walking stands out as “a metaphor, which reveals the psychological state, mood, and emotion of the character,” it is not merely “a symbol of quest, but also Woolf’s experimental practice of expressing the character’s thought” (Lin 114). The mind of London is revealed through her walks in the streets. While hurrying into Lincoln’s Inn Fields thinking of Ralph, for example, Katharine contrasts the crowded street leading to his office “with the domestic streets of Chelsea” (382). As she is enclosed in domestic

sphere and cannot participate in public life, she feels herself “an invisible spectator” in Kingsway, who stands “unobserved and absorbed” by the crowd (383). Similarly, the Strand and the Embankment are shaped by Katharine’s thoughts:

She looked desperately at the smooth-bowled pipes, and wondered -should she walk on by the Strand or by the Embankment? It was not a simple question, for it concerned not different streets so much as different streams of thought. If she went by the Strand she would force herself to think out the problem of the future, or some mathematical problem; if she went by the river she would certainly begin to think about things that didn’t exist –the forest, the ocean beach, the leafy solitudes, the magnanimous hero. (234-35)

Both Strand and Embankment represent Katharine’s confused mind stemming from her relationship with William. She decides to get married with him to have a room belonging to her, but still she wishes for uniting with a magnanimous hero. Strand and Embankment, therefore, emerge as two distinct characters reminding Katharine of this conflict. Her choice between the two, therefore, is not merely a matter of deciding which way to walk. It is rather a choice between two life forces that is likely to affect her whole life.

Another place that gives an idea about the mind of London is Mary Datchet’s flat, which is “situated in a street mostly dedicated to offices off the Strand” (39). In opposition to the secluded Hilbery house that addresses the past, Mary’s home is open to public life and oriented toward the future. It hosts many people who come together either merely for enjoyment or for discussing literature, art, and politics. The guests of the house are usually those who are dedicated to change and to the reform of society. Mr. Basnett, for instance, with whom Mary decides to work after she has quit her job in the suffrage office, is an educated man who is preparing a plan “for the education of labour, for the

amalgamation of the middle class and the working class” (309). The behaviours, clothes and even the hair styles of the young minds frequenting the place imply that they are in defiance of the existing order and in search of a way to change the world for the better. The description of the room and the people occupying it clearly reflect this state of mind:

The room very soon contained between twenty and thirty people, who found seats for the most part upon the floor, occupying the mattresses, and hunching themselves together into triangular shapes. They were all young and some of them seemed to make a protest by their hair and dress, and something sombre and truculent in the expression of their faces, against the more normal type, who would have passed unnoticed in an omnibus or an underground railway. (43)

By creating a liberating atmosphere welcoming the variety of people and ideas, Woolf contrasts the modernity of Mary’s flat with the conventionality of the Hilbery House where everything is determined by established rules and Victorian principles.

In line with Mary’s independent life in this house as well as her involvement in public life, London for Mary becomes a fascinating city that allows her to assert herself; it is “like a vast electric light, casting radiance upon the myriads of men and women who crowded round it” (41). She takes great pleasure from living in “the wonderful maze of London” (41). She finds this maze splendid since she is aware of her central position in London (Squier, “Tradition and Revision” 125). Unlike Katharine who feels herself a spectator among the crowd, Mary imagines herself a part of the crowd:

Out in the street she liked to think herself one of the workers who, at this hour, take their way in rapid single file along all the broad pavements of the city, with their heads slightly lowered, as if all their efforts were to follow each other as closely as might be; so that Mary used to figure herself a

straight rabbit-run worn by their unswerving feet upon the pavement. But she liked to pretend that she was indistinguishable from the rest, and that when a wet day drove her to the Underground or omnibus, she gave and took her share of crowd and wet with clerks and typists and commercial men, and shared with them the serious business of winding-up the world to tick for, another four-and-twenty hours. (67)

The female vision of the city also becomes apparent through Cassandra's responses to London. Because of her limited life in Stogdon House, she is enchanted by the wide range of possibilities in London and romanticizes this big metropolis in her mind. Her life in their country house is shaped by her disillusioned father, Sir Francis, who is rewarded by a pension in return for his services in India, and her mother Maggie Otway, who pretends that she is a person having "considerable social standing and sufficient wealth" (182). Together with her brother Henry Otway, Cassandra protests life in this house that has strange and comic traditions. Lady Otway, for instance, based on her readings of "fashionable papers" talking about "the behaviour of Christmas parties in ducal houses," arranges expeditions to Lincoln for her guests by thinking that this is the most suitable way to entertain them (190). The visit to London, therefore, becomes a means for Cassandra to travel into a new world where she can experience a completely different life. Even "a journey to London by express train" turns into "a very pleasant and romantic adventure" for her (296). The people in the carriage seem important in her eyes since they are heading for London. Like a curious child, she examines the buildings and the crowd of men and women invading the streets of London with "intense curiosity" (296).

Not only the female but also the male characters of *Night and Day* create images of London in their minds. Their vision of London coincides with their attitudes towards life and women. Susan M. Squier notes that William Rodney's country origin makes him hold conventional views about women. What he desires most from a woman is the

appreciation and praise of his own abilities. In the eyes of William, Squier writes, a woman is “a paper doll” just like London is “a toy city” (“Tradition and Revision” 122). She states that “Rodney presents himself as passionately involved with Katharine, and with London, when in fact he is merely involved with the pleasant figure of himself –as lover and urban sophisticate– revealed against a backdrop of admiring women in a stage prop city” (122). Unlike William Rodney, Ralph Denham’s urban background makes him believe in the autonomy of women and the city and admire them wholeheartedly. In contrast to William, Ralph does not see them merely as mirrors magnifying his own image. Squier says, “Denham’s response to Katharine, as to London, is affirmative, responsive, admiring. He accepts the innate autonomy of both woman and city rather than attempting to force them to mirror him” (123).

Woolf resorts to a systematic characterization in order to express the complex nature of self-divided characters living in London. The inner confusion of the central characters, their struggles for the establishment of a harmony between the real and fantasy world, their constant movement away from and into these two separate spheres are all represented with a patternized characterization. The self-divided characters of *Night and Day* all possess within themselves some features of both night and day. While the actual life these characters are leading manifests their personalities observable in daylight, the dreams and secret desires narrated throughout the novel display their dark sides. They are like black and white figures standing on a chessboard where every piece has its own counterpart. Once Woolf starts the game and moves the pawns located in front of the figures, the more about the complex nature of characters enshrouded behind the curtains is revealed. As the function of each figure in a chess game is determined by its relation to both its counterpart and other figures of opposite colour, the identities of the characters are shaped through their relationships with their other sides and other individuals.

Katharine, Ralph, William, Cassandra and Mary quest for the ideals while moving on the huge chessboard, though these ideals have different implications for men and women. Woolf's London is shaped by the consciousness of the characters and their stance in life. While moving from one square to other on the chessboard, that is, from one place to other in London, the characters try to discover their own identities and realize their aims. The divided nature of characters and their efforts in trying to have a better life become clear through Katharine's thoughts. After she and William secretly break off their engagement and mutually agree in a funny way that Cassandra is a better match for William, readers see Katharine walking and pondering in South Kensington as follows:

Her mind, passing from Mary to Denham, from William to Cassandra, and from Denham to herself—if, as she rather doubted, Denham's state of mind was connected with herself—seemed to be the tracing out the lines of some symmetrical pattern, some arrangement of life, which invested, if not herself, at least the others, not only with interest, but with a kind of tragic beauty. She had a fantastic picture of them upholding splendid palaces upon their bent backs. They were the lantern-bearers, whose light scattered among the crowd, wove a pattern, dissolving, joining, meeting again in combination. (274)

The lanterns these characters carry refer to their dreams and desires, to their expectations from life. They are splendid as the palaces of fairy tales. At the same time, these dreams are difficult to be realized; too heavy to be carried on one's back. Their realization necessitates the defeat of conventions and the elimination of obstacles. With such an aim in mind, the characters continually interact with each other and London throughout the novel.

Randy Malamud states that Woolf's task "until the 1930s was to undermine and dismantle the linguistic and literary structures of the past" (32). In her work *Virginia Woolf's Novels and the Literary Past*, Jane de Gay also highlights that Woolf parodies conventional views on marriage and courtship by transforming old literary methods which she attacks in "Modern Fiction." She argues that the allusions to Shakespeare's plays turn some scenes of *Night and Day* into comedy. At the same time, Woolf subverts traditional literary methods by "her use of Romantic metaphors" such as fire and light, which help her to focus on "the workings of the mind and the imagination" instead of the plot (62). David Daiches also underlines that Woolf tries to develop a technique to avoid the materiality of traditional fiction in both *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*. In fact, in Woolf's short stories published before *Night and Day*, it is possible to observe her efforts to change the content and the form of literary works in order to express the modern experiences of people. In "Phylliss and Rosamond" (1906), for instance, Woolf tells the story of two sisters, who are torn between the traditions in their family house expecting their marriage and the liberating atmosphere of Bloomsbury, where young people talk about many subjects including paintings. "Kew Gardens" and "The Mark on the Wall" (1917) are also indicators of Woolf's attempts to break the old narrative techniques. In these stories, she does not talk about the details of the outside world but the perception of these details in the mind. *Night and Day* is another experimental work of Woolf in which she tries to free herself from the traditional form and subject matter. The subversion of romance structure as well as the depiction of psychologically-perceived London paves the way for her later career as an urban modernist writer.

Chapter IV: The City and the *Bildung* of the Female Subject in Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*¹⁵

For Miss Ogilvy had found as her life went on that in this world it is better to be one with the herd, that the world has no wish to understand those who cannot conform to its stereotyped pattern.

—Radclyffe Hall, “Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself”

When *The Well* was published by Jonathan Cape in July 1928, Radclyffe Hall was already a well-acclaimed author, especially with her fourth novel *Adam's Breed* (1926) which received the Prix Femina Vie Heureuse-Bookman and James Tait Black Memorial Prize¹⁶. Just like her earlier works, *The Well*—a novel about the struggles of a lesbian woman—was reviewed by many prominent critics of the time as well. These early critics, either negatively or positively, were more concerned with the literary qualities of the novel rather than its controversial subject. In *Nation and Athenaeum*, for example, Leonard Woolf appreciated Hall for having a better “feeling for the psychology of her character than have most male novelists of her caliber,” yet Woolf noted that “the book fails as a work of art” because the relevance of the incidents to each other “is intellectual, not emotional, and therefore not artistic” (54). In *Evening Standard*, another influential critic, Arnold Bennett, evaluated the novel more positively: “Uncertain in touch at first, this novel is in the main fine. Disfigured by loose writing and marred by loose construction, it nevertheless does hold you. It is honest, convincing, and extremely courageous” (56). Despite the critics’ comments on the artistic value of *The Well*, the

¹⁵ Throughout this chapter, *The Well of Loneliness* will be shortened as *The Well*.

¹⁶ Prior to Hall, E.M. Forster was the only writer who received both of these awards with his work *A Passage to India* (1924).

journalist James Douglas's editorial in the *Sunday Express*, on August 19, took readers' attention to the contentious subject matter of the novel and started one of the most disputed obscenity trials in England. "I would rather give a healthy boy or a healthy girl a phial of prussic acid than this novel" wrote Douglas in his review, and considering the novel "moral danger," he called for the withdrawal of the book or its submission to the home secretary (38)¹⁷. In return, Jonathan Cape sent it to Home Secretary Sir William Joynson-Hicks, who demanded the initiation of legal processes based on the Obscene Publications Acts of 1857. In November 1928, the Chief Magistrate Sir Chartres Biron¹⁸ declared *The Well* "an offence against public decency, an obscene libel" (49) and ordered the destruction of all copies. Even though Cape achieved the publication of the book first in France by Pegasus Press and later in the United States, *The Well* could not be published in England until 1949.

In 1928, apart from *The Well*, two novels with lesbian themes appeared in the literary scene of England: Compton Mackenzie's *Extraordinary Women* and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*¹⁹. However, it was Hall's book that provoked many discussions because of its overt and moving narration of the same-sex love between women. *The Well* is a *Bildungsroman* recounting the story of a woman in finding her own sexual identity and satisfying her desires from childhood to adulthood. The protagonist Stephen Gordon –who was born "a narrow-hipped, wide-shouldered tadpole of a baby" (13) – is the daughter of well-to-do parents living in Morton, who give her a boy's name as they have expected a male child. Despite her mother Anna Philip's objections, Stephen is brought up like a boy by her father Sir Philip because he understands that she is an invert. Based on his readings

¹⁷ James Douglas was also known for his condemning views on Joyce's *Ulysses* and his role in the banning of D.H. Lawrence's 1915 novel *The Rainbow*. For further information, see Elisabeth Ladenson's critical work *Dirt for Art's Sake: Books on Trial from Madame Bovary to Lolita*.

¹⁸ During the trial, the Chief Magistrate refused to listen to witnesses such as Vera Brittain, E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, and Leonard Woolf, who came together in order to defend the novel.

¹⁹ In 1928, male homosexuality was a crime in England while lesbianism was not. In France, on the other hand, none of them had been considered illegal since the Napoleonic Code.

of the sexologist Krafft-Ebing—who uses the term sexual inversion to refer to homosexuality—Sir Philip Gordon lets her daughter train her body like a boy by riding and fencing, he wants Stephen to have a good education and does not force her to get married. However, Sir Philip Gordon's efforts to protect her daughter from the denunciatory gaze of people fail since Stephen feels the pressure of society throughout her life. She falls in love in Morton with a married woman Angela, who regards Stephen not as a lover but "a kind of strong drug, a kind of anodyne against boredom" (147). Then, while working in a unit in France as an ambulance driver during the First World War, she meets Mary who does not "care for the world's opinion" but only for Stephen (312). Although they become happy in Paris for some time, Stephen consciously pretends to be in love with another woman named Valérie Seymour because she thinks that she will not be able to give Mary "[c]hildren, protection, friends whom she can respect and who'll respect her" (425). All the events in the novel, which mainly take place in Morton, London, and Paris, are narrated in chronological order covering the time span from the late-Victorian period to inter-war years.

Throughout *The Well*, Hall calls attention to the hardships of living in a predominantly heterosexual society and demands tolerance for the invert who is mostly viewed as "moral lepers" (376). In order to make her novel more convincing, Hall resorts to the ideas of the sexologists Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis. In *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), Krafft-Ebing analyzes homosexuality under two headings: "homo-sexual feeling as an acquired manifestation in both sexes" (286) and "homo-sexual feeling as an abnormal congenital manifestation" (335). According to Krafft-Ebing, acquired homosexuality is mainly the result of observation and masturbation, and "there is an immediate return to normal sexual intercourse as soon as the obstacles to it are removed" (286). Conversely, congenital inversion "appears spontaneously, without external cause" and "may be brought into relation with hereditary degenerate conditions" (285). In

Studies in the Psychology of Sex, Havelock Ellis uses the term homosexuality to define “all sexual attractions between persons of the same sex” (1). He regards “sexual inversion” as one aspect of homosexuality, which is, “sexual instinct turned by inborn constitutional abnormality towards persons of the same sex” (1). As David Ayers puts it, Hall follows the sexologists “in using the established concept of ‘inversion’ for homosexuality, treating the invert as ‘third sex’, and assuming that inversion is congenital rather than being dependent on early emotional formation or adult choice” (141). Hall’s dependence on the inversion theory becomes clear from the introductory commentary Ellis writes for *The Well*. He says: “So far as I know, it is the first English novel which presents, in a completely faithful and uncompromising form, one particular aspect of sexual life as it exists among us to-day.” He also underlines that Hall successfully reflects the difficulties of these people living often in “hostile society.”

Although *The Well* is known as the first novel dealing openly with lesbianism in English literature, some aspects of the book have been subject to criticism. First of all, Hall has been criticized for depicting Stephen Gordon as a congenital invert instead of a conscious individual capable of making a choice regarding her sexual identity. In her article “Zero Degree Deviancy: The Lesbian Novel in English,” Catharine R. Stimpson argues that “Hall projects homosexuality as sickness. To deepen the horror, the abnormal illness is inescapable, preordained; an ascribed, not an achieved, status” (368). According to Heather K. Love, “Stephen Gordon is a disappointment from the start” because “Hall describes her existence as an aberration, one of nature’s mistakes” (500)²⁰. Hall’s view of

²⁰ In “An Inverted Romance: *The Well of Loneliness* and Sexual Ideology,” Jean Radford puts Stephen’s congenital homosexuality into question. In Radford’s point of view, Stephen’s lesbianism may be considered the result of her identification with the father rather than the hostile mother figure. Based on her readings of *The Well* under the light of Freudian ideas, Radford argues that “the mother’s hostility may be the *cause* not the *consequence* of Stephen’s inversion” because “[u]nable to take up a feminine position because of her hostile mother, she identifies with the loving parent and his masculinity” (102).

lesbians as masculine women is another point that has been questioned by many critics²¹. Both Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis conceive lesbians as women having masculine traits. This idea, however, fails in explaining feminine lesbians. “Historically,” Diane Hamer writes, “sexologists who have defined the ‘true invert’ as the woman with masculine desires, ‘a man trapped in a woman’s body,’ have had more difficulty in trying to account for those women who were lovers” (62). Hamer argues that Hall solved this problem by “posing class difference as a framework for the women’s desire for each other; Stephen’s lover, Mary, the ‘womanly woman,’ is saved from her working class fate by Stephen’s aristocratic love for her. Mary, however, is regarded by Hall as ‘normal,’ not lesbian, proof of which is established by her eventual return to heterosexuality” (62). In *English Literature of the 1920s*, David Ayers also finds Hall’s idea of homosexuality problematic. Ayers notes that “Mary is in any case not an invert –the very model of inversion central to the novel does not allow that two inverts can love each other– and Stephen’s final sacrifice of the novel is to force Mary into the arms of a man by allowing her to believe that she no longer loves her” (144).

For some critics, Stephen’s treatment of Mary as a fragile woman who needs protection indicates Hall’s desire for conventional heterosexual love plot. It is true that the life of Mary and Stephen in their house in the Rue Jacob in Paris implies a traditional understanding of marriage, which demands from women to support their husbands while they are busy with their own professions. In *The Well*, for instance, Mary voluntarily deals with the household while Stephen tries to finish her forthcoming novel. Hall writes: “Each of them now had her separate tasks –Stephen her writing, and Mary the household, the

²¹ Radclyffe Hall, who uses the name “John” in real life, was known for her mannish lesbianism as well. In *Uncommon Arrangements: Seven Portraits of Married Life in London Literary Circles 1910-1930*, Kate Roiphe gives details regarding Hall’s relationships with her lovers Mabel Batten, Una Troubridge and Evguenia Souline, and she describes Hall’s “mannish appearance” in detail. Roiphe states that at the age of fifty-two, Hall’s “mannish appearance” was notable as she “was wearing a man’s poplin shirt, one of her collection of ninety-four neckties, and a suit made by the finest Bond Street tailors” (218).

paying of bills, the filing of receipts, the answering of unimportant letters” (340)²². The division between manly and womanly tasks and Mary’s leaving with Martin Hallam for protection are considered signs of Hall’s employment of traditional love plot. Elizabeth Ladenson, for example, writes: “The world of *The Well*, strangely enough (at least to the eyes of twenty-first century posterity), is one where men should be men and women women: the former are ideally strong, taciturn, and virile; the latter fragile, emotional, and feminine” (110). In *Sisters and Rivals in British Women’s Fiction, 1914-1939*, Diana Wallace posits that many lesbian novels produced between the inter-war years break up “the canonical male-female-male triangle” and replace it with “the female-male-female triangle plot” (6). However, Wallace notes that unlike her earlier work *The Unlit Lamp*, Hall follows the classic narrative pattern in *The Well* by using the female character as an object of exchange: “Stephen’s gesture is the canonical one of exchange ‘between men,’ where Stephen takes the place of one of the men and the feminine Mary is an object of exchange” (29).

The Well is generally regarded as a conventionally narrated novel appealing to the middlebrow. “*The Well*,” Joanne Winning says, “has always stood outside this exclusive circle of texts, existing in a space beyond this heady intellectual milieu and (in)famous for its subject matter rather than its style” (373). As Winning puts it, in the 1920s, during the time of high modernism, “questions about the value of a literary text inevitably center around divisions between traditional literary forms and the revisionist, experimental forms of modernist writing” (372). *The Well*’s love plot told by omniscient narrator in chronological order, its realistic depiction of the setting and the characters, and its

²² Katie Roiphe argues that in real life “what Hall craved was the comforting invisibility of traditional marriage” (242). She evaluates Hall’s relationship with Una Troubridge as the reproduction of Victorian marriage life in the twentieth century. In spite of “their modernity, their lesbianism,” Roiphe writes, “Radclyffe Hall was reproducing a Victorian conception of love, in her own world of women: the man (John) had the power in the world, and the privilege to dabble in external relations, and the woman (Una) looked after the home” (243).

didactic tone set the book apart from modernist examples of literature. According to Ladenson, for example, the book is not innovative in terms of formal aspects. She writes, “Hall’s novel is thematic to the point of didacticism. Resolutely eschewing innovation to form, it advances an argument through the highly conventional narrative of an involuntarily unconventional life. Whereas *Ulysses* is all style, *The Well* is all subject matter” (107). The book is also criticized by Virginia Woolf, one of the “theorists of the modernist novelists.”²³ In a letter to Ottoline Morrell in November 1928, she talks disapprovingly about the quality of the novel by stating that “The dullness of the book is such that any indecency may lurk there” (564).

In “Hall of Mirrors: Radclyffe Hall’s *The Well of Loneliness* and Modernist Fictions of Identity,” Laura Green argues that “Woolf’s dismissal of Hall has traditionally been read as a marking of the boundary between modernist aesthetics and the traditions of Victorian and Edwardian realism from which modernism distinguished itself” (277-78). According to Green, “‘Neither one thing nor another’ accurately describes *The Well*’s relationships to, on the one hand, a Victorian narrative concern with the social and material milieus and, on the other hand, a modernist concern with interior consciousness” (278). Indeed, it may be misleading to view the novel simply as a traditional Victorian narrative and ignore its innovative features that contribute to modernist literature. In this work, Hall both uses and subverts the techniques defining *Bildungsroman* tradition in England, and thus she dismantles the restrictive norms in society that serve to continue the established order. Moreover, the journey theme used frequently in the examples of *Bildungsroman* contributes to the development of the modern female subject in *The Well*. Stephen Gordon’s life in London and Paris as a self-sufficient writer, in a way, rewrites the lives of women represented in the literature of earlier centuries. Thus, this chapter aims at

²³ In *Theorists of the Modernist Novel: James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf* (2007), as the title of the book implies, Deborah Parsons defines Woolf as one of the theorists of the modernist novel together with Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce.

analyzing Hall's contributions to modernist literature by focusing on her use of *Bildungsroman* conventions and her depiction of Stephen Gordon character as a modern urban citizen.

Women, Modernity, and the *Bildungsroman* Tradition in English Literature

In its broadest sense, the term *Bildungsroman* is used to refer to a novel narrating "the development (psychological and sometimes spiritual) of an individual from childhood to maturity, to the point at which the main character recognizes his or her place and role in the world" (Murfin and Ray 31). As Bakhtin puts it, the central theme in these novels is "the image of *man in the process of becoming*" (19). The process of becoming, that is, the bildung of "*a character, an individual personality*" (Engel 266) involves a series of events that befall the heroes as they grow up. The nature of events together with the character's responses to them is quite significant in determining the bildung process and forming the structure of *Bildungsromane*. According to Franco Moretti, all of these aspects do not only shape the structure of *Bildungsromane* but also suggest different attitudes towards modernity as they are basically ideologically-driven. In *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (1987), Moretti analyzes German, French, and British *Bildungsroman* tradition, which follows a different path in each country. He argues that while the continental *Bildungsroman* was affected by the historical changes (The French Revolution, the post-Napoleonic Restoration, and the rise of capitalism in big cities), narrative strategies and cultural assumptions in English novels from *Tom Jones* to *Great Expectations* remained unchanged and served to the continuity of the established order.

Moretti views European *Bildungsroman* as "the 'symbolic form' of modernity" that is associated with "mobility and inner restlessness," and he argues that it entails the use of "youth" for the expression of dynamic and instable nature of modernity (5). At the turn of the eighteenth century when "Europe plunges into modernity," Moretti writes, "youth

is 'chosen' as the new epoch's 'specific material sign', and it is chosen over the multitude of other possible signs, because of its ability to *accentuate* modernity's dynamism and instability" (5). Thus, "[m]odernity as a bewitching and a risky process full of 'great expectations' and 'lost illusions'" (5) is represented through the period of youth –a period in which individuals explore the new "social space" and experience "unexpected hopes" as a result of great social changes and mobility (6).

Youth is the key element determining European *Bildungsroman*; however, the treatment of youth in German, English and French tradition presents noticeable differences. Moretti underlines this point by focusing on two principles giving shape to plot structure: the classification principle and the transformation principle. He notes that both of them are always present in a literary work; however, the frequent use of the one instead of the other "implies very different value choices and even opposite attitudes to modernity" (7). If the classification principle –governing the English family romance and the classical *Bildungsroman*– is dominant within a text, then it has only one "marked ending" that is "perfectly clear and stable;" events become meaningful only when they lead to this obvious ending, hence "the meaning of events lies in their *finality*" (7). Besides, this principle calls forth the novel of marriage, and the classical *Bildungsroman* "posits 'happiness' as the highest value, but only to the detriment and eventual annulment of 'freedom'" (8). Moreover, as in most English novels where the classification principle is prevailing, the idea of youth comes to an end since "youth is subordinated to the idea of 'maturity,'" the story gains meaning "only *in so far as* it leads to stable and 'final' identity." (8).

Based on his analyses of *Tom Jones*, *Jane Eyre*, *David Copperfield*, and *Great Expectations*, Moretti argues that in these works, rather than the period of youth, the heroes' childhood is more significant. It is childhood innocence rather than youthful experience that is brought forward in English tradition. "The greater the expectations that

give youth a special significance, the lesser the happiness and the self-realization the protagonist will be able to experience as an adult,” says Moretti in his discussion of Pip of *Great Expectations*, who is denied the marriage of his childhood friend Biddy due to his “break away from the world of his childhood” (184). According to him, one of the reasons that lies beneath the dejection of the youth is the stability of English society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In spite of the Industrial Revolution and the workers’ Chartist movement, stability is regarded in English culture as a value having crucial importance. English society, writes Moretti, is “sure of itself and at ease in a continuity that fuses together ‘tradition’ and ‘progress.’ It is a world that cannot and does not want to identify with the spirit of adventure of modern youth;” therefore, “the notion of social mobility cannot evoke the certainly ambiguous but fascinating and vital figures” of the continental *Bildungsroman* (185).

In contrast to the classification principle, the texts under the influence of transformation principle are characterized by their indefinite and “postponed endings.” The stories told by Stendhal, Pushkin, Balzac, and Flaubert become meaningful because of their narrativity and open-ended processes. Hence, “[m]eaning is the result not of a fulfilled teleology, but rather, as for Darwin, of the total rejection of a solution” (Moretti 7). Unlike Anglo-Germanic traditions, French examples involve the novel of adultery suggesting instability, and the “fascination with mobility and metamorphoses ends up dismantling the very notion of identity” (8). Besides, “[w]here the transformation principle prevails and youthful dynamism is emphasized, as in the French novelists, youth cannot or does not want to give way to maturity: the young hero senses in fact such a ‘conclusion’ a sort of betrayal, which would *deprive* his youth of its meaning rather than enrich it” (8).

It is apparent that social and ideological premises affect the formation of identity in a *Bildungsroman*. These premises also shape the way male and female characters are depicted in this genre because the bildung process is closely linked with the assumptions

about gender. In *The Myth of the Heroine: The Female Bildungsroman in the Twentieth Century*: Dorothy Richardson, Simone de Beauvoir, Doris Lessing, Christa Wolf, Esther Kleinbord Labovitz argues that the female heroine is missing in the literary works produced before the twentieth century because, for the most part, “*Bildung* belonged to the male hero” (2). She notes that although the novel of development spread from nineteenth century Germany to England and France, “no comparable work followed depicting the female heroine. Let us remember that all definitions of this literary form had thus far presupposed a male education and experience” (3). In *Margaret Drabble’s Female Bildungsromane: Theory, Genre, and Gender*, Ian Wojcik-Andrews also calls attention to the absence of female experience narrated in *Bildungsromane*. Typically, he says, “the content of the *Bildungsroman* describes a hero’s journey away from a private, familial life” and the hero’s identity “is achieved by the end of the journey” (3). While the journey of the male hero is described in detail, the journey of the female hero is often disregarded in pre-twentieth century examples of the genre.

Even if women appear as main characters in the texts, their experiences differ from those of their male counterparts. In *Unbecoming Women: British Women Writers and the Novel of Development*, Susan Fraiman focuses on the terms apprenticeship, mentor, and mastery characterizing most of *Bildungsromane* and analyzes the meanings of these aspects in terms of women. Fraiman stresses that apprenticeship involves the free choice of the hero, that is, middle-class men self-consciously choose to develop their talents and skills (5). The heroines, on the other hand, “are largely what other people, what the world, will make of them” (6). According to Fraiman, “[h]er finding of friends, her picking of work are both subsumed by the single, all-determining “choice” of a husband” (5-6). Since women are usually apprenticed to seek husbands rather than a proper vocation for themselves, their identity is formed through their experiences of domestic life. While the pursuit of a vocation becomes a “liberating force” for male heroes, the

enforcement of women, who are “shut out from the stimulation of a career,” into marriage retards and prevents female development (Labovitz 53).

One of the main factors preventing the bildung of a female subject is the limited scope of education options available for women. Because women could not receive formal education in the nineteenth century, they were mostly dependent on self-study. Conversely, schooling “plays a major role for the *Bildungsroman* male hero whereby his steps are directed toward an eventual career goal” (Labovitz 21)²⁴. Related with the issue of education is the place of mentors in the development of an individual. In a *Bildungsroman*, mentors stand out as role models who are influential in guiding the hero towards certain goals. However, Fraiman notes that, in most of the examples of the genre, heroines usually have problems with their mentors, which in turn prevents self-mastery in the long run:

The typical girl also has trouble with mentors. She rarely has a formal education, mothers are usually either dead or deficient as models, and the lessons of older men are to have voluptuous overtones; though she may spend the whole novel in search of positive maternal figures, it is too often true that her one mentor is the man who schools her in order to wed her. And finally, consequently, when the mentor is a husband and when apprenticeship reduces to a process of marital binding, it never leads the heroine to mastery but only to a life time as perennial novice. (6)

²⁴ Franco Moretti approaches the education of boys from a different perspective. In his point of view, the channeling of boys to boarding schools and sportive activities keeps them away from actual life and undermines their youthful energy. He writes: “Channeled into places and activities tightly secluded from the rest of the world (boarding schools, and that major nineteenth-century invention –sport), English youth could not possibly identify with those symbolic values –indefiniteness, social and spiritual mobility, ‘giddiness of freedom’”(184-85).

As the above quotation suggests, the absence of formal education and the heroine's poor relationships with her mentors (as well as the absence of such a relationship) make the formation of an individual personality problematic or even impossible for women. Another point hindering personal growth is the immobility of the heroines, who usually remain within the boundaries of domestic milieu. Journey from the country to the city is an essential aspect of the bildung process because it gives the heroes the chance of trying out new experiences (including sexuality) and enhancing their vision of life. However, this is mostly possible for the male hero:

[T]he individual search for a vocation or career may lead the hero to leave home at an early age to make his way independently. The family might appear as hostile to his ambitions and especially to new ideas. However, his real life education begins in a new setting, often in an urban center as contrasted to his early provincial life. (Labovitz 4)

According to Fraiman, middle-class women can do travel "only at the risk (or in the aftermath) of infamy (7). Moreover, they are expected to avoid sexual encounters. Fraiman notes that "the female protagonist's progress, at least until the twentieth century, is generally contingent on avoiding the abyss of extramarital sexuality, on successfully preventing 'things' from happening to her" (7). Whereas extramarital sexuality is conceived as a natural phenomenon for the male hero in his journey to adulthood, it is considered an improper activity for women because of the conviction that it may take them away from the accepted standards of society.

The image of women depicted in literary texts as well as the narrative strategies used to represent female experiences have changed notably with the coming of the twentieth century. More and more women began to be engaged in public matters and seek the ways for self-assertion. Thus, many writers such as Virginia Woolf, Dorothy

Richardson, Rebecca West, and May Sinclair tried to express this new consciousness concerning women in their novels. Twentieth-century *Bildungsromane* have been transformed to cover women's experiences of modernity. In other words, the female *Bildungsroman* became possible "only when *Bildung* became a reality for women, in general, and for the fictional heroine, in particular. When cultural and social structures appeared to support women's struggle for independence, to go out into the world, engage in careers, in self-discovery and fulfillment, the heroine in fiction began to reflect these changes" (Labovitz 7).

Stephen Gordon and the Bildung of a Female Subject: The Subversion of *Bildungsroman* Conventions in *The Well of Loneliness*

In *The Well*, Radclyffe Hall subverts the English *Bildungsroman* tradition governed basically by the classification principle. In fact, some aspects of the novel –the didactic tone and the strict division between good and bad characters– make it closer to the realist examples of the Victorian literature. However, *The Well* as a whole is rather innovative and transformative because it aims at dismantling the existing order for sexual tolerance²⁵. Throughout the book, Hall calls attention to the drawbacks of some social norms that prevent the personal development of individuals, who have 'untypical' ideas and behaviours as opposed to the expectations of British society. Moretti argues that "if the English hero wants to have a destiny, he must preserve precisely those 'common' qualities –anonymous, ordinary, widespread– that characterize him right from the start" (191). Moretti posits that unlike "unsettled, mobile, enterprising, alive" youth narrated in the European novel, the heroes in English examples become representatives of the middle class who are stick to common nature (191). Hall's Stephen Gordon character questions

²⁵ In *The Well*, Hall establishes a parallelism between the sacrifice of Christ for humanity and Stephen's sacrifice for the whole inverts. According to Ed Madden, this is innovative because Hall's use of Biblical language is a kind of Foucauldian "reverse discourse," which helps to provide the powerless with a voice (162).

these common qualities and the idea of normality characterizing the English protagonist. Her childhood and adulthood experiences both point out and question the social practices constructing gender identity, which force individuals to remain true to the conventional pattern.

The first half of *The Well* is set in late Victorian Morton, where traditions reinforce the strict division of gender roles and condemn any kind of nonconformity. For Lady Anna Gordon as well as the inhabitants of Morton, Stephen is a “queer kid” (20) from the start, whose bodily features and gender disposition present a sharp contrast to socially accepted norms. Her strong angular body and her tendency towards masculine activities such as fencing and hunting make her gender “unintelligible” to the Morton folk²⁶. Mrs. Antrim, one of the neighbors of the Gordon family, for instance, says: “Stephen is very unusual, almost –well, almost a wee bit unnatural– such a pity, poor child, it’s a terrible drawback; young men do hate that sort of thing” (72). Moreover, during her childhood period, Stephen’s gender is unintelligible to her as well because she cannot reconcile her own needs with the demands of society. She is expected to be a womanly woman like her mother Anna Gordon, who is described as “the archetype of the very perfect woman” (11). However, Stephen wants to be “William Tell, or Nelson, or the whole Charge of Balaclava” (19). Knowing that she is not what other people expect her to be, she continually questions her identity: “I’m lost, where am I? Where am I? I’m nothing –yes I am, I’m Stephen –but that’s nothing” (70).

²⁶ In “Gender Trouble in the Literature Classroom: Unintelligible Genders in *The Metamorphosis* and *The Well of Loneliness*,” Margaret Sönser Breen states that Stephen’s gender is unintelligible because of the heterosexist discourse in society. She writes: “Stephen Gordon is an invert, whose gender dysphoria, like Gregor Samsa’s monstrous vermin status, ruptures the conventionally naturalized relations between body, gender, and desire. Stephen’s challenge, one might say, is the issue of how to *be* a masculine woman who can love a woman (or, perhaps, how to *become* a man within society that refuses to understand ontology, and so gender, as the effect of that society’s heterosexist injunctions). Within this context, Stephen Gordon, like Gregor Samsa, necessarily proves an unintelligible gender” (154).

Stephen's gender nonconformity makes her "The Other" of Morton. This point differentiates *The Well* from the examples of traditional English *Bildungsroman*. According to Moretti, in the English tradition, the protagonist stands for normality, security and stability. On the other hand, "The Other" threatening the hero (such as Iago, Satan, Blifil, Bertha Mason, Heathcliff, Kurtz, Dorian Gray, Hyde, Frankenstein, and Dracula) always tries to dismantle these values. Therefore, these characters are depicted as freaks or monsters, who have the potential of weakening the existing order. In Moretti's viewpoint, it is "The Other" that provides mobility in the English novel because the villain has a different language from that of the protagonist. The enemy "stands for social mobility in a world that does not acknowledge its right of citizenship: it must therefore protect and disguise itself" (200-01). It must behave in this way "not only for obvious personal profit, but for a sort of ontological reason, since whoever yearns for a change of status in a rigidly classified universe is perceived by the latter as a taxonomic anomaly: a freak, a 'monster'" (201). Since the villain works to the dismantling of the established order instead of remaining true to it, it constitutes the dynamic aspect of the plot generated out of the villain's antagonism with the hero's values.

In *The Well*, however, it is the protagonist Stephen who is considered an anomaly. By making Stephen "The Other" of society, Hall puts the idea of normality into question. Stephen's otherness challenges heterosexist ideas and attitudes that tend to reject the presence of same-sex love. Hall uses Stephen's *otherness* not only to transform society for the approval of homosexuality but also to call attention to socially-constructed gender roles that generally serve to maintain male supremacy. Violet and Roger Antrim, the children of the neighbouring family, for example, demonstrate how gender roles are internalized during childhood period and how they influence the life of boys and girls in a considerably different way. They "epitomize the gender divisions: the freedom and activity possible for the boy and the limitations imposed on the feminine" (Radford 103).

Violet, a girl “full of feminine poses” (47), is raised to be a perfect mother and housewife. Having been trained by her parents to be “a dear little housewife,” she gets pleasure from taking on the role of a mother while playing doll-games with Stephen and pretends to knit dresses for her dolls (47). In contrast to Violet’s training in domestic skills and duties, Roger Antrim’s education prepares him for the public life. He is free to “climb trees and play cricket and football” with his fellows from Eton, and he knows that “being a boy constituted a privilege in life” (47). The sharp division between ‘manly’ and ‘womanly’ activities definitely shapes the worldviews of boys and girls differently.

The attitude of Roger and Violet toward Stephen indicates that gender roles are internalized by people during their childhood. They learn what is ‘normal’ and react against those who behave contrary to their expectations. Violet, for example, thinks that only boys eat too much and criticizes Stephen’s appetite for food bitterly. She says: “You’re a pig! You eat too much more than I do, mother said to-day, and boys need more than girls!” (48). Similarly, Roger makes fun of Stephen’s riding horse astride like a boy instead of riding it in the side-saddle position:

‘Well now, listen,’ he drawled, ‘and I’ll tell you something. You thought they admired you squatting on your pony; you thought you were being very grand, I’ll bet, with your new riding breeches and your black velvet cap; you thought they’d suppose that you looked like a boy, just because you were trying to be one. As a matter of fact, if you really want to know, they were busting their sides; why, my father said so. He was laughing all the time at your looking so funny on that rotten old pony that’s as fat as a porpoise.
(51)

In line with their education, the Antrim children evaluate everything according to their appropriateness to rigidly determined gender roles. The violation of the boundaries between male and female spheres is found unnatural and condemned severely.

Another point underlining the effects of social norms on personal development is Stephen's unconventional clothing style. The outward appearance of Stephen is one of the main reasons of her poor relationships with her mother. Lady Anna Gordon wants her daughter to wear "large hats trimmed with ribbons or roses or daisies" (72), and part her hair "in the middle and draw it back loosely" (73). Stephen, on the other hand, prefers masculine apparel and wears a "plait screwed up tightly in the nape of her neck with a bow of black ribbon" (73). They both know that clothing is "a form of self-expression" (73). However, because of their disparate personality, Stephen's efforts to express her true self usually result in self-interrogation sessions as she continually asks whether she is queer or not. The adaptation process sometimes fills her with a "sense of some uncomprehended injustice," and the whole world including the God seems to her "so unreal" (74). When Stephen starts a new life in London, becomes a well-known writer, and thus becomes surer of herself than before, her clothes and hair-style change accordingly, and they reflect this newly-found freedom:

Her hair was quite short. In a mood of defiance she had suddenly walked off to the barber's one morning and had made him crop it close like a man's. And mightily did this fashion become her, for now the fine shape of her head was unmarred by the stiff clumpy plait in the nape of her neck. Released from the torment imposed upon it the thick auburn hair could breathe and wave freely, and Stephen had grown fond and proud of her hair. (210)

In Morton, Stephen's unintelligible identity is represented through her clothes: she is sometimes what her mother makes of her and chooses her clothes accordingly; at other times, she tries to find her own identity and express it through her own style. In London and later in Paris, Stephen achieves to assert herself freely in her own style. Therefore, the transformation of the hair from the plait along the neck into the short-cropped hairstyle has a symbolic meaning in that it implies the passage from a passive existence to a liberated way of life.

It is often mentioned that Stephen's mannish appearance supports the pathological view of lesbians discussed in the works of the sexologists Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis, who define lesbians as women having masculine traits. However, as Esther Newton writes in "The Mythic Mannish Lesbian: Radclyffe Hall and the New Woman," cross-dressing in *The Well* "stands for the New Woman's rebellion against the male order and, at the same time, for the lesbian's desperate struggle to be and express her true self" (99). Stephen's clothing, therefore, is not only an outward expression of her sexual identity but also an explicit indicator of her struggle with a male-dominated society in which women are respected as long as they conform to traditional gender categories. Newton makes a distinction between the first generation of New Women (who were influential beginning from the 1870s to the First World War) and the second generation of New Women (who were born in the 1870s and active in the first decades of the twentieth century). The aim of the first generation was to be autonomous subjects by attaining economic freedom and refusing domestic roles. For the woman of the second generation, independence from family was indisputably a right, and their main preoccupation was sexuality signifying female autonomy. Newton argues that women like Radclyffe Hall of the second generation dealt with the issue of sexual identity as part of the modernist discourse (91-93). Clothing was used by these women as a site whereby they could express the idea of sexual freedom as well as social and economic independence.

In her discussion of Stephen character, Newton states that “Hall makes her the hero –not the villain or clown– of her novel” (100). As it was previously mentioned, until the twentieth century, the hero in the English *Bildungsroman* represents order and stability while the evil character threatening the order is regarded as a freak or a monster. In *The Well*, the hero disturbing the order is Stephen. Even though Stephen is considered a queer person by most of the characters of the novel, Hall makes readers feel sympathy for her because she persistently highlights the drawbacks of some societal forces preventing self-mastery. It is especially in Morton that Stephen is subject to condemnation. Morton is definitely a conservative Victorian setting that is not open to new developments brought by modernity. When Sir Philip buys a motor-car, for example, the townsfolk, Lady Anna and Old Williams –the person responsible for the stable and the horses in the Gordon House- receive it with suspicion. “Conservative, suspicious of all innovations, people had abstained from motors in the Midlands” (65) writes Hall to describe the responses of the Morton folk to the car. Old Williams considers it “to be an outrage to his stables” (65), and he reacts against the chauffeur Burton who expresses “large disdain of the horses” (66). Anna Gordon cannot get used to the new invention as well because she finds it unsuitable for her feminine style:

Anna was doubtful regarding this new purchase. She was one of those women who, having passed forty, were content to go on placidly driving in their broughams, or, in summer, in their charming French victorias. She detested the look of herself in large goggles, detested being forced to tie on her hat, detested the heavy, mannish coat of rough tweed that Sir Philip insisted she must wear when motoring. Such things were not of her; they offended her sense of the seemly, her preference for soft, clinging garments, her instinct for quiet, rather slow, gentle movements, her love of the feminine and comely. (65)

In parallel to her thoughts of clothes, Lady Anna Gordon evaluates the new technology in light of present gender categories and finds it contrary to her womanhood.

In Morton where people are stick to conventional ideas and practices, Stephen is considered “a social disaster” (74). Not only her inversion but also her intellectual capacities keep her aloof from the men and women of her age. Stephen hates activities such as garden parties and dinner gatherings because she considers them “firmly conservative in spirit, as conservative as the marriage service itself, and almost as insistent upon sex distinction” (77). Even though she tries to be friends with girls at these parties and pretends that clothes and popular actors interest her a lot, she fails in establishing a genuine conversation. Men also abstain from interacting with Stephen because of her cleverness and broad knowledge of various subjects. “Men found her too clever if she ventured to expand” writes Hall in order to explain the reason of her unsuccessful relationships with the opposite sex (77). Since men prefer ignorant yielding women, Stephen is considered an improper candidate as a marriage partner: “She was handsome but too large and unyielding both in body and mind, and they liked clinging women” (77). By underlining this point, Hall reveals the dominant ideology inherent in conventional societies, which abhors the involvement of women in intellectual field instead of domestic sphere.

Stephen’s educational background distinguishes her from most of the female heroes narrated in pre-twentieth century novels. In spite of her mother’s objection, Stephen gets a good education and is oriented towards a career by Sir Philip and her tutor Miss Puddleton. Unlike Violet Antrim and other young girls of Morton, Stephen is not educated to have a perfect husband. “Marriage isn’t the only career for a woman” (106), says Sir Philip to Stephen after her rejection of Martin Hallam’s proposal. Through Stephen’s complicated relationship with Martin, Hall points out traditional ideas that view marriage as an institution raising the status of women in society. For Stephen, Martin is an

amiable man with whom she can talk about everything unreservedly. However, when this unromantic companionship comes to an end, the attitudes of the townsfolk towards Stephen suddenly change. Hall writes: "Stephen well knew that her neighbours' good-will had been only fleeting, a thing entirely dependent upon Martin. He it was who had raised her status among them –he, the stranger, not even connected with their county" (107-08). It is not education but marriage that elevates women's position in the traditional setting. In Morton, as Violet Antrim tells Stephen, a woman is not considered "complete until she's married" (172). In fact, marriage is important for Stephen as well. Her relationship with Mary comes to an end since she cannot offer her the happiness of a marriage life that is approved and respected by all the members of society. However, Stephen rejects the idea of marriage for social acceptance.

According to Anna Gordon, education is an obstacle before a woman as it does not bring happiness and the prospect of marriage. While arguing with Sir Philip Gordon about Stephen's education, for example, she objects the idea of higher education by giving the example of Puddle, a learned woman of Oxford graduate. She says: "[Puddle] was what came of this higher education –a lonely, unfulfilled, middle-aged spinster" (111). In spite of her objections, Sir Philip and Puddle become role models for Stephen. As it has been in traditional *Bildungsromane*, Hall represents a deficient mother figure. However, contrary to problematic relationships with mentors narrated in these novels, Stephen's interaction with her father and governess is quite productive and fruitful because she becomes a self-sufficient writer at the end of her apprenticeship period. Sir Philip is an intellectual man who has "one of the finest libraries in England" (26). Knowing that Stephen is an invert, he wants her daughter train her body and mind, be friends with books and develop her writing skills so that she can become happy in the future. Puddle, a closet invert, also encourages Stephen to write and endows her with "new thoughts, new hopes and ambitions" (69).

Stephen's authorship is extremely significant in the bildung of her identity. It is not important for economic reasons because, after her father's death, she already inherits large amount of money that is enough to sustain her life independently. It is rather important for self-expression and self-assertion. Through writing, Stephen faces up to her past and welcomes the future. Her first novel *The Furrow*, for instance, is "a kind of unnatural mental vigour" (216) developed out of her scandalous relationship with Angela. In the article "Stephen Gordon, Novelist: A Re-Evaluation of Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*," Claudia Stillman Franks sees Stephen's artistic ability "as a potential cure for her ravaged self-respect since it is the one activity by which she can hope to prove herself" (132)²⁷. Therefore, it is writing that keeps Stephen alive and hopeful. According to the critic Susan Watkins, Stephen's novels also function to compensate Stephen's inability to reproduce children as a congenital invert:

Stephen's first novel is both her child (the inheritor of her bloodline) and a literal atonement for the 'sin' of inversion. Although the equation of book to child is not an unfamiliar one for a woman writer to make, it might appear to be curious, merely compensatory, for a woman writer who never expected to have children because she would never have heterosexual reproductive sex. (60)

The Well also departs from the English *Bildungsroman* tradition with its treatment of sexuality. Hall views sexuality as an important factor in the development of personal identity. The bildung of Stephen's identity is achieved not through sexual avoidance but through sexual experience. According to Moretti, in the English tradition, youthful

²⁷ According to Franks, Hall's depiction of Stephen as a successful writer having the power of imagination is crucial for *Künstlerroman* tradition as well. She writes: "Before Radclyffe Hall, there had not been many fictional treatments of women artists, not many novels which traced the course of a woman's career in the arts from its origins to its maturity, and Radclyffe Hall has certainly never been given the credit she deserves for her contribution to this genre" (126).

experiences and adultery come to mean instability that is likely to disrupt the existing order. Therefore, instead of youthful dynamism, childhood period and innocence are over-emphasized in the English *Bildungsroman* (184). However, Hall conceives sexuality and Stephen's youthful experiences as a necessity for the formation of an individual personality. At the age of twenty one, Stephen has a relationship with Angela –an American woman who acted on the stage in New York and married to a Birmingham magnate Ralph Crossby. In fact, this relationship merely consists of a few innocent kisses: "[T]hey would draw together and start kissing, and Stephen would be utterly undone by those painful and terribly sterile kisses" (147). Yet, for the first time in her life, Stephen feels "quite simply and naturally in love" (146). Although it ends disastrously because Ralph sends Lady Anna Gordon the love letters written to Angela, this experience makes Stephen stronger. After this incident, she goes to London with Puddle and starts her writing career.

Stephen discovers sexuality in the real sense with her lover Mary Llewellyn whom she met in the Breakspeare Ambulance Unit –a Unit composed of Englishwomen to help wounded soldiers during the war. With Mary, she experiences the feeling of fulfilment and considers it a natural thing, although many people find this relationship strange and unnatural. Hall writes: "A STRANGE, though to them a very natural thing it seemed, this new and ardent fulfilment; having something fine and urgent about it that lay almost beyond the range of their wills. Something primitive and age-old as Nature herself, did their love appear to Mary and Stephen" (313). This new feeling together with Stephen's experiences in liberating Paris gives her the urge to write and express herself with the power of words. In their house in Paris, "Stephen was working like someone possessed, entirely re-writing her pre-war novel. Good it had been, but not good enough, for she now saw life from a much wider angle; and moreover, she was writing this book for Mary"

(342). Sexuality helps Stephen to see life from a different perspective, which she aims to represent in her third novel.

Franco Moretti argues that most of the literary works produced in England end happily, usually with the marriage of loving couples. The “marked ending” also suggests the construction of final and stable identities. *The Well* challenges the traditional ending by leaving the protagonist “in the process of becoming.” Thinking that she will not be able to provide Mary with a socially-approved marriage life, Stephen pretends to be in love with Valérie Seymour and encourages Mary to leave with Martin Hallam. Many critics disapprove of this sacrificial act because they argue that it once more associates the lives of lesbians with suffering. Jodie Medd, for instance, argues that in the works of sexologists based on case studies, “the term “suffer” is relentlessly active in all its registers; the female invert is always suffering –from neurasthenia, a false marriage, thwarted desires, or she may even “suffer” from the caresses of women” (120). Similar to this discourse, Medd says, Hall “not only fashions her protagonist, Stephen Gordon, after the medical psychosexual codes of inversion, but also scripts Stephen’s fictional biography according to the tragic invert narrative codes, heightens the discursive pathos with a rhetoric of Christian messianic sacrifice, achieving a thick novel of heroic suffering” (121).

According to Laura Green, however, the ending of *The Well* is not “a complete triumph of previous fictional convention” (291). *The Well* is rather unconventional because it does not suggest a novel of marriage. Besides, it is not tragic in the sense that Stephen remains a successful writer at the end of the novel, who will probably continue to write and go on trying out new experiences. Green states that the ending of the novel does not suggest a wedding:

[W]hen Mary leaves with Martin [...], she exits from the novel as well as from Stephen’s life. We may assume a wedding, but we never witness one.

Unlike previous stories of heroines who express artistic ambitions or rebel against the conventions of heterosexuality [...], *The Well of Loneliness* does not demand either its protagonist's marriage, or, as the price of avoiding it, her death. (291)

Green notes that "it is not necessary to view Mary's expulsion from Stephen's life as evidence of a tragic vision. By the time Mary leaves, Stephen has already become a successful author" (291-92).

The unclear and unstable ending of *The Well* suggests that the construction of identity is a life-long process. Life becomes meaningful only when individuals continue to learn from their experiences and evaluate life based on their knowledge of people and incidents. The final paragraphs of the novel demonstrate how Stephen gains awareness of her new role in life –to speak to God in the name of all inverts who have been conceived as outcasts by the members of society. She learns to speak for "thousands of miserable, unwanted people, who have no right to love, no right to compassion because they're maimed, hideously maimed and ugly" (204). In the final scene, Stephen's room is possessed by the cries of all inverts, who want her to ask God why they are so miserable. Stephen's "barren womb" becomes fruitful by the demands of these people. Susan Watkins posits that "In this metaphorical pregnancy and annunciation Stephen becomes the voice of the entire 'sterile' class of the inverted" (61). Throughout her life, Stephen wants to experience the feeling of oneness. She achieves to become one flesh with the inverted class at the end of the novel:

And now there was only one voice, one demand; her own voice into which those millions entered. A voice like the awful, deep rolling of thunder; a demand like the gathering together of great waters. A terrifying voice that made her ears throb, that shook her very entrails, until she must stagger

and all but fall beneath this appalling burden of sound that strangled her in its will to be uttered.

‘God,’ she gasped, ‘we believe; we have told You we believe ... We have not denied You, then rise up and defend us. Acknowledge us, oh God, before the whole world. Give us also the right to our existence!’ (437)

At the end of the novel, “Stephen speaks for the first time of the inverted as a “we” and, called and possessed by the inverted legions of which she is a part, she simultaneously experiences the painful clarity of the singular author even more intensely than before” (Mortimer-Sandilands 38).

Journey to London and Paris /Journey to the Self

The theme of journey is highly effective in determining the structure of the English *Bildungsroman*. Generally, the physical journey is accompanied by the spiritual journey. However, it is usually men who go outside of domestic sphere and try out new identities in different places –particularly in big cities. Women, on the other hand, typically stay at home and keep themselves busy with domestic duties and finding a marriage partner. *The Well* challenges the view of women as angels in the house. Stephen, for example, leaves her family home in Morton behind and starts living independently first in London and then in Paris, “the center of literary lesbianism in the first part of the twentieth century” (Stimpson 370). By presenting Stephen as an independent woman living in the metropolis, Hall underlines the possibility of the bildung of modern female subject. As Mortimer-Sandilands puts it, Stephen’s “passage from Morton to London, and later to Paris –from home, nature and aristocratic ritual to urbanity, enlightenment, and individual creativity” is also “a passage into a decidedly modern subjectivity” (38). Besides, Hall uses different places to draw attention to conventional gender categories and provide alternative spaces for sexual inverts. Morton, London, Paris and the battleground on the French border are

not used by Hall merely as settings where some events befall the characters of the novel. Rather, they are suggestive of different viewpoints concerning gender and sexuality.

Moretti underlines that the theme of journey “is the English version of the most common narrative metaphor for youth” (203). However, he calls attention to the differences between English and Continental *Bildungsromane* in their treatment of the journey theme: “[U]nlike Wilhelm Meister, Lucien de Rubempré or Frédéric Moreau, who are quite happy to leave their childhood homes, or Julien Sorel and Fabrizio del Dongo, who are forced to leave because they have deliberately defied their world –the English heroes always leave against their will, and without having in any way deserved such a fate” (203). In English novels such as *Tom Jones*, “a normal and innocent protagonist is unjustly accused and, for one reason or another, is not able to defend himself,” and then the hero is either forced to flee or live in exile (202).

The journey, and the mobility that goes with it, cannot therefore be seen by them as the ideal opportunity to *try out new identities*. It is just the opposite, a long and bewildering detour in which the roles they play in the course of time are merely disguises –unnatural, and sometimes repugnant–dictated by necessity. Whether framed in a comedy of errors, in a chivalrous epic or in a legal nightmare, the transformations of the hero during his journey are in each case alien and hostile to his nature. The farther he strays from his point of departure, the stronger the anxiety at ‘no longer being himself.’ (203)

The English journey theme representing the dynamic nature of the youth has negative connotations because the protagonist’s adventures during the journey are considered dangerous, something that should “pass by as swiftly as possible” (204).

Just like in a traditionally-structured *Bildungsroman*, Stephen's journey to London is the result of Lady Anna Gordon's expulsion of her daughter from Morton. Stephen is forced to leave against her will on account of her transgression of the heterosexual order. Her leaving is a kind of exile since Morton for Stephen is an indispensable part of her aristocratic identity. As Hall writes, "the spirit of Morton would be part of her then, and would always remain somewhere deep down within her, aloof and untouched by the years that must follow, by the stress and the ugliness of life" (35). Even though Stephen leaves Morton reluctantly, she journeys to Paris willingly with the aim of getting acquainted with new people and fresh life-styles. "You need life, you need people. People are the food that we writers live on; get out and devour them, squeeze them dry, Stephen!" (231), says the playwright Jonathan Brokcett after he realizes that she is desperately in need of novelty and inspiration to write her third novel. Journey to Paris, therefore, functions as a healing power for procrastination that most authors suffer from. It is a conscious choice of Stephen and affects her positively by providing her with the pleasure of a new beginning.

Thus, all the places narrated in *The Well* are described as characters influencing people and their choices in life. In her article "From *Topos* to Anthropoid: The City as Character in Twentieth-Century Texts," Jane Augustine argues that in almost all literary works produced before the twentieth century, the city is used only as a background setting, a *topos*, in narrating the realistic stories of characters, who are trying to solve their personal problems regarding love, marriage, work life, war, or identity (73). In the works of twentieth-century authors, Augustine argues, cities are depicted as human-like entities: "the city takes on the mixed qualities and functions of a human character. The city becomes less a *topos* and more anthropoid – 'man-like,' 'resembling the human being,' more organic and seemingly capable of choice. It becomes quasi-human" (74).

Augustine also explains how city as a character is represented in the twentieth century literature. First of all, the city as a character is observable if the characters of the novel, specifically the protagonist, are in a continual movement as they are travelling, and not restricted to domestic environment. Second, the city as a character is present when the characters are bemused, immature and weak, not in touch with established values, and hence not sure of their personal identity. Third, the city as a character is discernible when characters perceive certain aspects of the city as a force or will and produce responses accordingly. Fourth, the city as a character is also an actual city that is present on this planet –Paris, New York, London. The historically rich and physically large city having rich “idiosyncratic style” elicits from its inhabitants some unpredictable elements that form and add up to already existing styles, just like individuals who make decisions that shape their own styles. Fifth, the city as a character can be discerned when the power of sexuality is discovered by the characters of the novel (74).

In *The Well*, not only London and Paris but also Morton and the French border – described as no-man’s-land– have separate characteristics. They are distinguished from each other especially with their attitudes towards gender and sexuality. The heterosexual Morton is intolerant of the inverts and their transgression of the strictly-defined gender roles. As Victoria Rosner underlines, even the houses in Morton keep gender divisions intact. She argues that the Gordon family house exemplifies the architecture of a typical English country-house designed according to gender categories. She writes: “Floor plans for such homes often show the house divided into male and female zones, with designations such as “Young Ladies’ Entrance,” “Bachelor’s Stairs,” “Gentleman’s Rooms,” “Gentleman’s Dressing Room,” and innumerable other variations on the theme, carefully demarcating who belonged where” (320). Sir Philip’s study and Lady Anna’s drawing room are the signs of gendered zones in the Gordon manor. “The drawing room,” Rosner argues, “is a shrine to upper-class femininity, and Lady Anna is its choicest ornament”

(320). The study, on the other hand, is dedicated to “the master of the house” and his intellectual activities (321). Stephen chooses the latter instead of the first and prefers reading and discussing books with her father. The study, therefore, “serves as the mold for Stephen’s masculine identification” (Rosner 321).

Having masculine traits in a woman’s body, Stephen cannot securely associate herself with either of the male and female categories. Her identity is illegible in the heterosexual world of Morton. During her service on the French border, however, she feels herself belonging to a community –the community of women who came together to work for the national cause. The war, writes Rosner, “allowed masculine women to become permissibly visible, even speakable. It praised women for assuming roles and activities previously assigned to men, as factory workers, administrators, and ambulance drivers” (326). The Croix de Guerre award given to Stephen during the war is not only the symbol of her heroic deeds during the war. This award also suggests that all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, can and should be treated on equal terms. The social approval Stephen searches for in Morton becomes possible on the front line with her successes on the battleground²⁸. Throughout *The Well*, Hall emphasizes that work is the only weapon for the inverted women to realize their aims. Puddle always reminds Stephen of the value of work in personal development. She says, “Make the world respect you, as you can do through work” (339). Working for the country makes Stephen and the other inverts efficient and respectable: “War and death had given them a right to life, and

²⁸ In “‘Still Some Obstinate Emotion Remains:’ Radclyffe Hall and the Meanings of Service,” Claire Buck underlines that the status of women is strengthened during the war. However, this newly-acquired position is lost after the war. She writes: “In Hall’s writing, the invert’s life in the pre-war period is one of frustration and discomfort because of her failure to conform to traditional expectations of femininity in either appearance or behaviour. The war therefore is welcome because it temporarily expands the possibilities for women. Post-war disillusion is the result of a return to pre-war conditions” (180). Another critic who calls attention to the declining status of women and lesbians during the post-war period is Leigh Gilmore. She says, “In postwar England, reproductive service was an explicit national project in which all women were to participate. Lesbians were considered not to be doing their part to provide the human resources, in the form of children, necessary to rebuild the national apparatus of war-making” (611).

life tasted sweet, very sweet to their palates. Later on, would come bitterness, disillusion, but never again would such women submit to being driven back to their holes and corners. They had found themselves –thus the whirligig of war brings in its abrupt revenges” (272). World War I paves the way for them to assert themselves out of the domestic milieu²⁹.

Going away from domestic life is very crucial for the bildung of a modern female subject. In *The Well*, the journey to the city comes to mean a journey to self-discovery. Stephen changes both physically and mentally in London. Her face becomes “thinner and more determined,” and the mouth “less ardent and much less gentle” (210). Just like the branches of a sap flowing in the streets of London “with a more determined purpose” (209), Stephen’s directionless life becomes more and more purposeful as she aims at developing her writing skills. Hall writes that “Stephen’s life in London had been one long endeavour, for work to her had become a narcotic” (210). However, London’s static structure is insufficient to instigate her writing ability necessary to write a novel as good as *The Furrow*. In fact, London is described as a modern place where the strict division of gender roles becomes indistinct. The gay playwright Jonathan Brockett, for instance, washes the dishes and prepares the meal for Puddle and Stephen. This scene, without doubt, presents a sharp contrast to the world of Victorian Morton. However, London is still not as lively as Paris. According to Julie Abraham, London’s cultural closeness to Morton is the reason of Stephen’s preference for Paris: Stephen can “meet a gay man, in London, who will lead her on to the gay world of Paris. But London cannot be Stephen’s queer city because it is culturally too close to home” (342).

²⁹ Susan Watkins views *The Well of Loneliness* as subversive because Stephen’s congenital inversion is not seen as degeneracy and a threat to nation. Rather, in the novel, “Stephen’s inversion accompanies her typical aristocratic love for country and nation,” and the successful deeds of the inverts during the war are considered as important as the reproduction of the next generation (58). For further information, see “‘The Aristocracy of Intellect’: Inversion and Inheritance in Radclyffe Hall’s *The Well of Loneliness*.”

Therefore, Paris offers Stephen the chance of participating in a new social milieu that is relatively tolerant about the same-sex love. Rosner states that “Paris was far from being a paradise for lesbians, who risked their families, social standing, and livelihood by making their sexual preferences known, but to a greater degree than London, Paris provided a space for the potential expression of same-sex desire” (323). Valérie Seymour’s apartment on the Quai Voltaire is one of the places in Paris that provides a space for the expression of same-sex love. Valérie Seymour, a rich cultured lesbian, hosts in her salon many homosexuals desirous of asserting themselves freely, without any reservation. It gives Stephen the pleasure of being a part of the community of people having common interests in life:

The erstwhile resentment that she had felt towards Valérie Seymour was fading completely. So pleasant it was to be made to feel welcome by these all clever and interesting people –and clever they were there was no denying; in Valérie’s salon the percentage of brains was generally well above the average. For together with those who themselves being normal, had long put intellects above bodies, were writers, painters, musicians and scholars, men and women who, set apart from their birth, had determined to hack out a niche in existence³⁰. (349)

Seymour’s salon becomes a kind of harbour for homosexuals who are in need of the healing power of friendship. Contrary to the heterosexual Morton, Valérie’s house provides an alternative space for the sexual inverts.

Valérie Seymour character is actually based on a real historical figure –the American writer Natalie Barney who began a salon in 1909 in Left Bank Paris and went on

³⁰ By making the salon a place of intellectual activity, Hall attacks the view of homosexuals as immoral and degenerate people.

for decades. It caught the attention of the famous French and American writers, scholars and artists of the period, including Radclyffe Hall, Renée Vivien, Mata Hari, Isodore Duncan, Gertrude Stein, and Colette (Rosner 323)³¹. Amy Wells-Lyn argues that Natalie Barney's salon "was a safe space for women to express their creative, artistic and sexual feelings" (97). Similarly, Seymour's house, too, provides a secure space for homosexuals to convey their views on various subjects. Apart from being a safe place for genuine communication, it defies the strictly-defined gender roles. Here, in the apartment of Valérie Seymour, both men and women can participate in all activities and conversations. Unlike the manor of the Gordon family, the architecture of this house does not allow to the existence of "gendered zones" within a house. Besides, Seymour's flat is not an ordered but an untidy place: "Nothing was quite where it ought to have been, and much was where it ought not to have been" (244). Victoria Rosner underlines that this messy aspect of the house is in fact the indicator of the blurring of gender divisions. She notes that the salon is a "gorgeous mess that permits gender categories to blend and blur, a place where such blurring seems the rule rather than the taboo exception" (324).

Hall provides a detailed description of bars, night clubs, studio parties or occasional cafés of Paris, which are frequented by gays and lesbians. However, in the eyes of Stephen, these places are the centres of degenerate and deviant life. Rejected by the "polite" society of Paris, the homosexual people turn their heads to the places such as The Ideal Bar, Le Narcisse, and Alec's bar. The passages describing the miserable conditions of

³¹ Amy Wells-Lyn states that dinner parties, plays and literary gatherings actually began before 1909 at Barney's previous house in the Rue de Longchamp in Neuilly. After she disagrees with her landlord who criticizes the Sapphic plays acted in the garden of the house, Barney moves to her new house in the Rue Jacob. Wells-Lyn points out how this salon challenges male-supremacy and encourages female friendship. She writes: "Another way in which the Barney salon continued to challenge the male-centered environment was with the *Académie des femmes*, established by Barney in 1927 as an unofficial attempt to create a female equivalent to the "men-only" *Académie française*. The *Académie des femmes* involved weekly Friday evening salon gatherings at which mainly women, but also occasionally men, read from unpublished works" (96). For more detailed discussion of Barney's salon, see "The Intertextual, Sexually-Coded Rue Jacob: A Geocritical Approach to Djuna Barnes, Natalie Barney, and Radclyffe Hall."

the bars and people are considered by some critics as the sign of Hall's misogynic and homophobic ideas³². Indeed, Stephen abstains from identifying herself with the homosexuals frequenting these places. She regards Alec's Bar, for example, as a "meeting-place of the most miserable of all those who comprised the miserable army" (387)³³. However, the meeting of these people in these shabby places is also a kind of defiant act, which aims to revolt against the order that keeps them stuck in terrible conditions. As Hall puts it, "There they sat, closely herded together at the tables, creatures shabby yet tawdry, timid yet defiant –and their eyes, Stephen never forgot their eyes, those haunted, tormented eyes of the invert" (387). Therefore, "[r]ather than simply a scene of self-destruction and limitations, the bar (like the war front) is also an important site of contest and of a change, a space that has only recently been carved out from heterosexual monopoly" (Rosner 331).

In contrast to "the garish and tragic night life of Paris" (378), Martin Hallam's Paris introduces Mary and Stephen with a totally different world. The "Paris he showed them" becomes a "complete revelation to Mary" because it welcomes "men and women; neat, well tailored men; pretty, smartly dressed women who laughed and talked, very conscious of sex and its vast importance" (417). Hall is aware of the fact that the gates of the gentle Paris is not open to homosexuals yet, but she forces these gates by offering alternatives through the liberating atmosphere of Valérie Seymour's salon and the defying nature of the underground bars. These spaces challenge the conventional structure of Morton, which leaves one's identity unintelligible to the members of society.

³² For further information, see Heather K. Love's article "'Spoiled Identity': Stephen Gordon's Loneliness and the Difficulties of Queer History."

³³ According to Lorelee MacPike, the reason of Stephen's failure in establishing connections with these people is her aristocratic heritage. She writes, "Stephen's failure to establish the social connections which make a locale one's own is ultimately class-bound." Mmml. Duphot and the fencing master in Paris "are not Stephen's social equals." Stephen rejects the Paris lesbian community because it is unsavory and indecorous" (231).

Radclyffe Hall contributes to modernist literary tradition by dismantling the *Bildungsroman* tradition in England. The subversion of the genre also subverts the strictly-defined gender categories in society. Stephen Gordon's experiences in London and Paris are particularly significant for the questioning of the restrictive gender roles and the formation of an autonomous identity. Hall's novel encompasses the experiences of women in their search for an identity and leaves the process of identity-formation incomplete, meaning that it will continue to be shaped by the changing conditions of society. Even though *The Well* is criticized for being conservative and traditional in terms of social and literary premises, it is "has far more integrity than the diet of fantasy offered to young women by the desert romancers and their ilk, "and it is "at least as sustained, and at points more persuasive, as the examination of sexuality in the work of Hardy and Lawrence" (Ayers 141).

Chapter V: The Fantasy of an Ideal Place: Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly Willowes*, or, the Loving Huntsman and Rebecca West's *Harriet Hume: A London Fantasy*³⁴

Illusions are to the soul what atmosphere is to the earth. Roll up that tender air and the plant dies, the colour fades. The earth we walk on is a parched cinder. It is marl we tread and fiery cobbles scorch our feet. By the truth we are undone. Life is a dream. 'This waking that kills us. He who robs us of our dreams robs us of our life.

—Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography*

Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly Willowes* (1926) and Rebecca West's *Harriet Hume* (1929) are two significant but neglected examples of modern fantasy novel, which raise questions about the status of women in society. Another fantasy novel produced in the same years with a similar aim is Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (1928), which is undoubtedly one of the finest examples of modernist fiction. Woolf's novel is innovative in terms of both form and content. It challenges traditional categories of genre by employing the structures of biography, romance, fantasy, and historical novel. In addition, Woolf queries social and ideological premises about gender by transforming the male protagonist into a woman and setting Orlando in an imaginary journey through centuries, covering the time span from the sixteenth century to the twentieth century. The fantastic world created in *Orlando* provides Woolf with the necessary tools to satirize and confront prevalent assumptions and practices pressurizing women. Similarly, the fantastic elements in *Lolly Willowes* and *Harriet Hume* serve to subvert and transform the existing real world and thus give voice to unnoticed urban women, whose abilities and potentials are by and large undermined by the members of patriarchal and male-dominated societies. Just like

³⁴ Throughout this chapter, the names of the novels will be shortened as *Lolly Willowes* and *Harriet Hume*.

Orlando, the relationships of the characters with London point out the restrictive beliefs and practices that constitute a barrier for women's development. Warner and West question male aggressiveness, and they search for a space that will allow the reconciliation of the opposite values.

Both Warner and West aim at eliminating cultural constraints that prevent individual development by resorting to fantasy –a genre that best suits this aim. In her essay "From Elfland to Poughkeepsie" (1973), Ursula K. Le Guin underlines that fantasy is "a different approach to reality, an alternative technique for apprehending and coping with existence. It is not anti-rational, but para-rational; not realistic, but surrealistic, superrealistic, a heightening of reality" (71). As Le Guin's statements suggest, fantasy offers an alternative world that is different from the existing one. However, since the new world is created to cope with the existing order, it has ontological ties with the real world. In other words, there is an intense relationship between the real world and the fantastic world because the latter is produced out of the practices in the real world. It is, in a way, a literary response to reality. This relationship is further emphasized by Rosemary Jackson, who considers fantasy as an attempt to compensate what is absent and lacking due to cultural constraints (3). She notes that "[t]he fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'" (4). While focusing on the unrepresented and constructing a new world accordingly, the fantasy writer inevitably transgresses the existing law and "constitutes a break in the system of pre-established rules" (Todorov 166).

Since there is a close connection between social practices and the fantastic world created in literary works, the fantastic elements used in these texts have different forms, shapes and meanings in different centuries. Early examples of ancient literature, for example, from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* to *The Odyssey*, contain the elements of superstition and magic, which were regarded as facts by the people of the time (Mathews 5-6).

Beginning with the Renaissance, and especially after the eighteenth century –that is, with the secularization of societies– the supernatural forces naturally began to be used for the expression of human condition and human psychology. In other words, as in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) and Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), fantastic elements attempted to narrate the influence of bourgeois society on individual consciousness rather than to explain the codes of the spiritual world. Fantasy in secular cultures, therefore, has a different function as well as different forms: “It does not invent supernatural regions, but presents a natural world into something strange, something ‘other.’ It becomes ‘domesticated,’ humanized, turning from transcendental explorations to transcriptions of a human condition” (Jackson 17). As an expected consequence of the insistence on reason and science in secular societies, “[f]rom Gothic fiction onwards, there is a gradual transition from the marvelous to the uncanny” (Jackson 24).³⁵

The view and treatment of the evil/the other in fantasy tales have changed as well. The evil, just like the fantasy novels, is shaped by the ideological tendencies in society: “The concept of evil, which is usually attached to the other, is relative, transforming with shifts in cultural fears and values. Any social structure tends to exclude as ‘evil’ anything radically different from itself or which threatens it with destruction, and this conceptualization, this naming of difference as evil, is a significant radical gesture” (Jackson 52). In Christian and pagan fantasy stories, good and evil are represented by non-human creatures: there are angels, fairies and wise men on one side and there is Satan, the devil, the demon on the other. In early romance fantasies, “The Other” described as evil is reflected by a supernatural creature, which is considered different from the

³⁵ In *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, Todorov explains in detail the differences between the uncanny, the fantastic-uncanny, the fantastic-marvelous, and the marvelous. The marvelous refers to supernatural events (as in the fairy tales), which cannot be explained rationally. The uncanny, on the other hand, refers to strange and extraordinary forces that puzzle the reader, but rational explanations for them are provided by the writer. For further information, see pp. 41-57.

'ordinary' and 'common' (Jackson 53-54). Beginning with the late eighteenth century, the evil is not necessarily a supernatural force but an aspect of human nature, that is, "the 'other' is no longer designated as supernatural, but is an externalization of part of the self. The text is structured around a dialogue between self and self *as* other, articulating the subject's relation to cultural law and to established 'truths,' the truths of the establishment" (Jackson 55). Thus, the strict division between good and evil is blurred in modern fantastic novels³⁶. This point is significant in that the blurring of distinctions between these forces helps the fantasy writer question what is accepted as moral/normal and approach the evil from a different perspective. Moreover, according to Todorov's analysis of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, modernist fantasies turn the 'normal' person into a fantastic being with whom the readers associate themselves: "If previously the hero with whom the reader identifies was a perfectly normal being (so that the identification could be easy and so that we could be astonished with him by the uncanny nature of events), here it is the same central character who becomes 'fantastic'" (174). Therefore, modernist fantasies are quite subversive as they challenge the rigidly-defined categories of normal/abnormal and good/evil (which may be further extended to cover the division between male/female, sane/insane, primitive/civilized, etc.).

Todorov notes that one of the themes prevalent in fantastic texts is metamorphosis. It involves the transformation of an individual into another being (eg. a man turned into a monkey or a monkey turned into a man) as well as the transformation of daily time and space (109-19). In these cases, the existing order is altered, and the newly created form suggests quite novel meanings and perspectives concerning life. The theme of metamorphosis is related to what Brian Attebery calls "the process of coming of

³⁶ In her 1973 essay "The Child and The Shadow," Ursula K. Le Guin defines the texts with a strict division between good and evil forces as "false fantasies." She says that in these fantasies "the tension between good and evil, light and dark, is drawn absolutely clearly, as a battle, the good guys on one side and the bad guys on the other, cops and robbers, Christians and heathens, heroes and villains." According to Le Guin, many nineteenth and twentieth century works are basically false fantasies (57).

age,” which refers to the transition from immaturity to maturity, from childhood to adulthood and active participation in social life. Attebery argues that the realistic fiction of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that aims to represent social realities is limited in two respects. First, it cannot create a better world as it is primarily concerned with the real world in which women do not have a space for the realization of revolutionary and artistic desires. Second, the texts produced in these centuries typically have plots of marriage, madness and suicide. Even though Jane Austen, George Eliot, Kate Chopin, and Edith Wharton are all economically independent women writers in real life, they cannot attain new social roles to women characters in their works. According to Attebery, women fantasists can and should transcend this reality to make women come of age (87-92)³⁷. The theme of metamorphosis, therefore, implies not only a material change but also a mental change.

The theme of journey in fantastic novels can also be evaluated in terms of physical and psychological change³⁸. The journey into the consciousness of the other (as in *Harriet Hume*) and the journey from one place to another (as in *Lolly Willowes*) imply different mind-sets and different world orders, and the passage from the one into the other serves to reveal the ideological and social structures inherent in society. Fantastic journeys are also related to the concept of “The Other” and the theme of metamorphosis. The traveller during his/her journey inevitably contacts with other people and places that are different from the familiar ones. Besides, the traveller acquires new perspectives during the journey, and this usually results in the transformation of the self and the other. The

³⁷ Attebery underlines that fantasy is based on traditional storytelling forms and motifs, on the legacy of myths and fairy tales. Contemporary women fantasists reevaluate these traditional forms and constitute a new tradition by “refurbishing the archetypal images of the goddess, redefining the qualities of heroism to include female experience, and reaffirming women’s access to the narrative storehouse of the past” (89).

³⁸ According to Le Guin, fantasy is the best medium to express the journey theme. She says that “most of the great works of fantasy are about that journey: and that fantasy is the medium best suited to a description of that journey, its perils and rewards. The events of a voyage into the unconscious are not describable in the language of rational daily life: only the symbolic language of the deeper psyche will fit them without trivializing them” (54).

journey of women in modern fantasies –either physically into an actual place or psychologically into the minds of other people– usually creates awareness as to their place in society and definitely contributes to “the process of coming of age.”

Lolly Willowes

Sylvia Townsend’s first novel, *Lolly Willowes*, became a best-seller after its publication in 1926. However, despite its success in those years, Warner could not find a place in the literary canon. According to Robin Hackett, Warner’s political stance as a communist and her lesbianism are the main causes of her exclusion from the literary canon³⁹. Hackett argues that she has been ignored by modernist, leftist and feminist scholars because of her interest in rural matters. In the 1920s, Warner lived in London and became friends with the members of the Bloomsbury group, namely David Garnett and Steven Tomlin. She once had lunch with Virginia Woolf and later befriended Leonard Woolf. However, in the mid-1930s, while modernism was considered the expression of urban matters and mechanization, she led a rural life, wrote about country people and focused on agricultural workers rather than factory workers. Hackett also notes that another reason of Warner’s dismissal from the literary canon is the impossibility of the categorization of her writings since they cover realistic and fantastic fiction, talking cats, elves, witches, and historical realism (85-86). *Lolly Willowes* is one of these works in which Warner unites realism with fantasy by turning the ordinary spinster, Aunt Lolly, into a witch after her pact with Satan in the final chapter of the novel. The blurring of the distinctions between genres is definitely a conscious act: “The feminist fantasy novel of the twenties is a response to realism’s failure to make permanent female space in the citadels of male power” (Marcus 141). The realist and fantastic worlds described in the

³⁹ Warner joined the Communist Party in 1935 and worked for the democratization of the countryside, and she had forty-year relationship with the poet, Valentine Ackland, until Valentine’s death in 1969. For the details of her political life, see Maroula Joannou’s chapter in *Weapon in the Struggle: The Cultural History of the British Communist Party*.

novel suggest contrasting ideologies regarding the status of women in society. Warner resorts to witchcraft to free women from the submissive roles attributed to them by the aggressive and possessive masculine culture. Not only the witchcraft but also the setting is used by Warner to uncover different mindsets that prevent the formation of an autonomous female subject.

Lolly Willowes consists of three chapters. The first chapter gives details about Laura's life in London between the years 1902 and 1918, when she has to look after the children of her elder brother, Henry, and involuntarily takes on the role of "Aunt Lolly." Through flashbacks, Warner describes Laura's childhood and early adulthood period at Lady Place –their family house near the Dorset Hills. There, she leads a relatively free life with her mother, father and two brothers, Henry and James. After the death of her father, however, Laura goes to Apsley Terrace in London to live with Henry and his wife Caroline. Because inheritance laws prioritize male rights, Laura is taken from the guardianship of her father and transmitted to the care of her brother. The second chapter narrates her routine and boring London life between the years 1918 and 1921 when she continues to be "Aunt Lolly" to her nieces. However, she reacts against this spiritless life and goes to the village of Great Mop in Buckinghamshire Chilterns, where she rents a room in Mrs. Leak's cottage. Finally, in the third chapter, Laura is transformed into a witch in the year 1922, and she learns in the Witches' Sabbath that the villagers are already witches and in cooperation with the Devil.

The first two parts of *Lolly Willowes* depict the rural and urban life in England realistically. It is apparent that Laura has always had a tendency to deal with the powers of nature which instigate her power of imagination: she is interested in botany, brewery, and "rural pharmacopeia;" she walks through the countryside to find healing herbs; and "she even wrote a little book called 'Health by the Wayside'" (31). However, apart from these hints about Laura's future witchery, there are no supernatural elements, no witches or

werewolves in the first two chapters of the novel. The actual world Warner describes is characterized by its conservative and patriarchal structure that tends to undermine women's powers and potentials. Even though Laura feels herself attached to Lady Place and the countryside because of her interest in the natural world, neither the countryside nor the city allows her to develop herself according to her wishes.

Warner makes it clear that family traditions and social norms force women to have a passive existence. The Willowes family is a conservative family that demands from its members to follow a moderate path:

The point of view was old-fashioned, but the Willoweses were a conservative family and kept to old-fashioned ways. Preference, not prejudice, made them faithful to their past. They slept in beds and sat upon chairs whose comfort insensibly persuaded them into respect for the good sense of their forbears. Finding that well-chosen wood and well-chosen wine improved with keeping, they believed that the same law applied to well-chosen ways. Moderation, civil speaking, leisure of the mind and a handsome simplicity were canons of behavior imposed upon them by the example of their ancestors.

Observing those canons, no member of the Willowes family had risen to much eminence. (10)

It is obvious that family canons insist on the common, the average, and the ordinary patterns of life. These conventions allow men to be active in family matters and free in personal decisions; however, they keep women within the boundaries of domestic life. Men can easily become mobile to seek academic career and job opportunities. Henry, for instance, becomes an ambitious lawyer, and James studies chemistry in Germany while

Laura attends “Mme. Brevet’s dancing classes in winter” and takes daily three hours lessons from Miss Taylor at home (19).

What is expected from Laura is to prepare herself not for a profession but for a successful marriage. “My dear, it’s high time Laura married! Why isn’t she married already?” (27), asks Aunt Emmy to Laura’s father, Everard. In spite of the expectations of her relatives, Laura chooses to stay single and prefers the companionship of the books: “she had almost come to the end of the books in the Lady Place library” (24), writes Warner to express her insatiable appetite for knowledge. Moreover, the books she prefers are considered unsuitable for a young lady like Laura:

So Laura read undisturbed, and without disturbing anybody, for the conversation at local tea-parties and balls never happened to give her an opportunity of mentioning that she had learnt from Locke on the Understanding or Glanvil on Witches. In fact, as she was generally ignorant of the books which *their* daughters were allowed to read, the neighboring mammas considered her rather ignorant. (25)

In a conservative society, ignorance comes to mean deviation from the standard norms. In contrast to the views of the neighbouring mothers, Laura is definitely a learned woman. However, this does not help her have a profession of her own. Even though she is interested in her father’s brewery, it is James who takes charge of the family business. The patriarchal culture demands that not only family properties but also the family business pass through the male line.

In this traditional milieu, Laura’s relationship with her father is both unconventional and problematic. It is unconventional because, unlike a traditional patriarchal figure, Everard is attentive to her daughter’s needs and supportive of her decisions. When Laura’s book “Health by the Wayside,” published at the local press, does

not sell well, Everard buys the remaining copies without telling her. In addition, he does not pressurize Laura to get married. After Mrs. Willowes's death, Laura is left to the care of her brothers and father. "None of the men now at Lady Place know much about bringing up a young woman, which is a positive turn for Laura, who is assured freedom from the interference of a feminine training" (Knoll 347). Although Laura is set free of the training of lady-like behaviours, her mother's death gives her the role of mother and caretaker, a role that she cannot repudiate until she becomes a witch and starts controlling of her own destiny:

As things were, she had a recompense for the loss of her liberty. For Everard needed comfort, he needed a woman to comfort him, and abetted by Miss Boddle's insinuations Laura was soon able to persuade him that her comforting were of the legitimate womanly kind. It was easy, much easier than she had supposed, to be grown-up; to be clear-headed and watchful, to move sedately and think before she spoke. (20)

Laura's services to her father prepare her for the necessities of domestic life. While the brewery business passes through the male line, domestic duties pass through the female line in the family. After Everard's death, she is handed over to her brother to carry on the same domestic roles: "Her father being dead, they took it for granted that she should be absorbed into the household of one brother or the other. And Laura, feeling rather as if she were a piece of property forgotten in the will, was ready to be disposed of as they should think best" (10).

Warner underlines that not only the countryside but also the city relegates women to the secondary position –especially those who do not have professions and control over their own money. "London is Lolly's prison" (149), writes Jane Marcus to define her passive existence in the city. Laura is unhappy in London because of two

reasons. First, she loses her real identity as she becomes Aunt Lolly, a poor spinster. Second, the mechanical life in London disconnects her ties with nature. In *Lolly Willowes*, through the character of Laura, Warner attacks the idea of spinster as an abnormal and unnatural being. Warner wrote *Lolly Willowes* in 1926 when there were nation-wide discussions about demographic problems stemming from the disparity between the number of single men and women. Warner's novel is a critical and literary response to the tendency that views two million unmarried women as obstacles before national progress⁴⁰. It is "a triumphant vindication of the spinster" (Nicholson 51).

In London, Laura is regarded merely as a spinster rather than an individual who is conscious of her own needs and desires. Both Henry and Caroline meet Laura with men connected with the law. However, she sees these men, and the idea of marriage, as a trap suppressing her own voice: "Their jaws were like so many mousetraps, baited with commonplaces. They made her feel shy and behave stiffly" (52). As Joannou argues, for several literary heroines of the interwar years such as Miriam Henderson, Muriel Hammond, Lolly Willowes, Joan Ogden, and Joanna Godden, "marriage is rejected precisely because it is seen as an imposed rather than a natural condition, a threat to their precious sense of personal autonomy" (86). In Caroline's view, however, being single is an

⁴⁰ In *Ladies, Please Don't Smash These Windows: Feminist Consciousness and Women's Prose, 1918-1938*, Maroula Joannou discusses the position of single women in England during the interwar years and their representation in the literary works of the period. She underlines that single women became one of the main concerns of the Victorians in the 1840s and 1850s, and the 'Odd Woman' was largely considered a demographic, economic and moral problem in the 1890s. In the 1920s, after the war, the number of unmarried women exceeded the number of single men. Consequently, the terms 'superfluous woman' and 'spinster' were used interchangeably to define unmarried women, the latter became a widely-used pejorative word. The situation of the superfluous woman caused a discussion between those who wanted to objectify the spinster and those who considered her an individual conscious of her needs, desires and potentials. Joannou notes that the problem of two million superfluous women became a pastime activity for the nation. While the liberal *The New Statesman* criticized the view of single women as superfluous and thwarted, the social theorist A.M. Ludovici found them unnatural and a hindrance before national development. Moreover, in the 1920s, women were encouraged to go to the colonies so that they could find suitable partners and thus solve demographic problems (77-82).

unnatural condition. According to her, Laura is a pitiable virgin who is dependent on their support for living:

Caroline resigned herself to spending the rest of her evenings with Laura beside her. The perpetual company of a sister-in-law was rather more than she had bargained for. Still, there she was, and Henry was right –they had been the proper people to make a home for Laura when her father died, and she was too old now to begin living by herself. It was not as if she had had any experience of life; she had passed from one guardianship to another: it was impossible to imagine Laura fending for herself. A kind of pity for the unused virgin beside her spread through Caroline’s thoughts. (55)

In London, Laura exists as long as she is of use to her nieces: “Laura was necessary. Caroline did not know what the children would do without their Aunt Lolly” (55). It is not her intellectual capacity but her virginity that defines Laura’s identity in the city.

Lolly Willowes criticizes the negative image of unmarried women in society. However, it may be misleading to view the novel merely as an attack on the false representation of single women because Warner also points out the disadvantageous status of all women. The relationship between Caroline and Henry exposes the negative consequences of aggressive masculinity on women. Henry wants a yielding wife as he desires yielding people in his professional life. Warner implies that the competitive world order forces men to disregard and underestimate those who have different ideas:

Laura also thought that the law had done a great deal to spoil Henry. It had changed his natural sturdy stupidity into a browbeating indifference to other people’s point of view. He seemed to consider himself briefed by his Creator to turn into ridicule the opinions of those who disagreed with him,

and to attribute dishonesty, idiocy, or a base motive to every one who supported a better case than he. This did not often appear in his private life, Henry was kindly disposed to those who did not thwart him by word or deed. His household had been well schooled by Caroline in yielding gracefully, and she was careful not to invite guests who were not of her husband's way of thinking. (51)

In this competitive world of London, Caroline has no choice other than to forget her own identity for the sake of others. Caroline's role at Apsley Terrace is to order the house and encourage Henry "to have an even higher opinion of his own" (51). Because of the roles attributed to her, London becomes a prison for her as well.

Warner describes Apsley Terrace as if it were a big machine. Laura hears "iron noises from the kitchen" and "the automatic noise of the carpet-sweeper" (44). Each part of the machine is assigned particular tasks, and life in Apsley Terrace is characterized by these gendered tasks. Laura does "shopping, letter-writing, arranging the flowers, cleaning the canary-cage, and the girls' walk" (45). Caroline does sewing and needlework, and checks the kitchen. The children attend dancing-class on Saturday afternoons. Henry goes to his club, meditates in the smoking-room, or does law-work. On Sunday mornings, he winds the clock: "First one and then the other the quivering chains were wound up, till only the snouts of the leaden weights were visible, drooping sullenly over the abyss of time wherein they were to make their descent during the seven days following" (47). The winding of the clock is a kind of symbolic act assuring Henry's role as the head of the family. His task is to check the whole system so that the machine works properly in the regular pattern and does not go out of control. The gendered dynamics of Apsley Terrace make everyone a part of this routine and mechanical life: "Even Laura, introduced as a sort of extra wheel, soon found herself part of the mechanism, and, interworking with the other wheels, went round as busily as they" (44).

It is through city walks that Laura escapes from the depressive mechanism of Apsley Terrace. Even though Warner attacks the patriarchal ideology governing urban life, she does not reject the city completely. Most critics argue that London in *Lolly Willowes* symbolizes male supremacy. Jane Marcus writes: "In male discourse the city is a female body. In women's fantasy novels the city is a hostile male body;" the heroines of *Harriet Hume* and *Lolly Willowes* "retreat to nature, the garden or the forest to find nature and the body of the mother" (138). Similarly, Bruce Knoll notes that, for Warner, "all that is associated with urban civilization is male, and consequently evil. In opposition she sets up nature as a female ethic completely outside the patriarchy in which she had grown up" (355). Based on the positive image of Satan in the novel, David Ayers says, "'Better the devil you do not know' than the devil of patriarchy and urban civilization is the moral of the book" (66). Indeed, urban life harms Laura both psychologically and physically: she feels herself entrapped in an unpromising life and grows paler as time passes. However, her wanderings in the city allow her to pursue her own desires:

Out of these she had contrived for herself a sort of mental fur coat. Roasted chestnuts could be bought and taken home for bedroom eating. Second-hand book-shops were never so enticing; and the combination of east winds and London water made it allowable to experiment in the most expensive soaps. Coming back from her expeditions, westward from the city with the sunset in her eyes, or eastward from a waning Kew, she would pause for a sumptuous and furtive tea, eating *marons glacés* with a silver fork in the reflecting warm glitter of a smart pastry-cook's. These things were exciting enough to be pleasurable, for she kept them secret. (75)

City walks, therefore, set Laura free from the routine life and strip her of the responsibilities of domestic life. Warner uses walking as a metaphor for self-discovery. While walking in the streets of London, Laura is not anymore "Aunt Lolly, a middle-aging

lady, light-footed upon stairs, and indispensable for Christmas Eve and birthday presentations" (57). Rather, she is a desiring woman who is in search of her own pleasures.

Furthermore, these walks pave the way for an independent life. During her wanderings in the streets of London, Laura enters a flower's shop to buy chrysanthemums, which come from the Chilterns. Then she goes to a bookshop, buys a guidebook and a map, and finally she goes to Great Mop with the help of the money she inherited from her father. For the first time in her life, she openly defies the patriarchal order. "Nothing is impracticable for a single, middle-aged woman with an income of her own" (95), says Laura to Henry, who strongly objects to her leaving for the country. The journey from London to Great Mop marks the transition from a passive existence to an autonomous life. In this secluded village, she feels happy as she decides to forget all patriarchal institutions that suppress her: "If she were to start forgiving she must needs forgive Society, the Law, the Church, the History of Europe, the Old Testament, great-great-aunt Salome and her prayer-book, the Bank of England, Prostitution, and the Architect of Apsley Terrace, and half a dozen other useful props of civilization. All she could do was to go on forgetting them" (136). When she starts exploring the village on foot with "the blistered heel" and "bleeding footsteps," she leaves all these institutions behind (103). Walking in the countryside –just like walking in the city– turns into a self-discovery process: the bleeding footsteps "indicate an infusion of herself, her spirit and her very life, back into her beloved earth and nature" (Knoll 354).

Warner turns to witchcraft when the countryside is threatened by male possessiveness represented by Titus⁴¹, the son of James and Sibyl. Titus is the only family member who supports Laura for her decision to live in a small village. He comes to Great

⁴¹ According to Jane Marcus, Titus is reminiscent of Lytton Strachey, one of the founding members of the Bloomsbury Group (154).

Mop to stay with his aunt and write the biography of Fuseli while discovering the countryside. However, Titus's existence threatens Laura's newly-found freedom because she once more becomes "the same Aunt Lolly, so useful and obliging and negligible" (150). He reminds her of the domestic duties she wants to forget. In addition, Titus's efforts to define and give meaning to the country disturb Laura because he loves "the country as though it were a body;" his is "a possessive and masculine love" of nature (147). Whereas Laura has to struggle for coming to Great Mop, Titus easily quits Bloomsbury and takes possession of the land:

It was easy for him to quit Bloomsbury for the Chilterns as for a cat to jump from a hard chair to a soft. Now after a little scrabbling and exploration he was curled up in the green lap and purring over the landscape. The green lap was comfortable. He meant to stay in it, for he knew where he was well off. It was so comfortable that he could afford to wax loving, praise its kindly slopes, stretch out a discriminating paw and pat it. But Great Mop was no more to him than any other likeable country. He liked it because he was in possession. (148)

The intrusion of Titus into Great Mop "raises the question whether anything in the world of the novel escapes the possessive reach of patriarchy" (Shin 712). According to Warner, the fantastic world provides an escape from the negative influences of patriarchy. "She, Laura Willowes, in England, in the year 1922, had entered into a compact with the Devil" (155). Immediately after Laura becomes a witch, she uses her magical powers to make Titus fall into a wasp's nest and then return to London.

Laura's metamorphosis into a witch implies that there is no way for a woman other than to become a fantastic being in a male-dominated society. Laura says, "One doesn't become a witch to run round being harmful, or to run round being helpful either, a district

visitor on a broomstick. It's to escape all that –to have a life of one's own" (215). At Lady Place, Laura is described as a different person who has unusual tastes compared to those of the children of neighbouring families. In London, she is considered unnatural as she chooses to remain single. In the fantasy world of *Lolly Willowes*, however, she achieves to become an autonomous individual and speak on behalf of all women who have been subject to social pressure throughout their lives. During her conversation with Satan, Laura says:

I see them, wives and sisters of respectable men, chapel members, and blacksmiths, and small farmers, and Puritans. In places like Bedfordshire, the sort of country one sees from the train. You know. Well, there they were, there they are, child-rearing, house-keeping, hanging washed dishcloths on currant bushes; and for diversion each other's silly conversation, and listening to men talking together in the way that men talk and women listen. [...] Nothing for them except subjection and plaiting their hair. (212)

By creating a fantastic world, Warner defies the actual world and its traditional structure which basically serve to dispossess women. Warner's fantasy, therefore, is an attempt to compensate what is absent and lacking in the real world due to cultural constraints.

Throughout *Lolly Willowes*, Laura searches for an ideal place in which women can attain freedom and autonomy. According to Warner, such a place should have certain characteristics. First of all, it should be devoid of male aggressiveness that ascribes submissive roles to women and keeps them in the domestic space. In the fantastic world of *Lolly Willowes*, male aggressiveness is attacked by the transformation of Satan into an understanding and supportive figure. Warner's Satan is opposed to traditional perception of Satan as an evil and destructive power. Rather, he is "undesiring and unjudging" (222).

As Bruce Knoll argues, “He is a wise, understanding, and gentle protector: not at all the evil creature depicted in the Christian scriptures” (355). While conversing with Satan, Laura complains of men’s indifference to what women talk: “Quite different to the way women talk, and men listen, if they listen at all” (212). In contrast to the unresponsive male figure, Satan in *Lolly Willowes* eagerly listens to Laura’s long speech on women’s problems: “She had never made such a long speech in the whole of her life, nor spoken with such passion” (213). Satan’s role as an understanding male figure provides a space for women so that they can express themselves freely. Thus, the unsaid and the unseen aspects of culture are made visible.

According to Warner, an ideal place dissolves all divisions and establishes a common ground to unite people having different qualities. The Witches’ Sabbath is described as such an event that welcomes everyone regardless of their class and gender. As Alison Lurie writes, all witches and warlocks in the Witches’ Sabbath “feast and drink and dance, choosing partners without regard for age, class, or sex” (xii). It is like Bakhtinian view of carnival that suspends the hierarchies of everyday life. “In spite of Mr. Gurdon’s rosette there was no Master of Ceremonies” (176), writes Warner to point out the equal status of all participants. Similarly, when Mrs. Leak sees Mr. Gurdon, one of the villagers, she tells Laura: “He thinks he can boss us here, just as he does in the village” (171). Nobody is a boss but a participant in the Witches’ Sabbath. In this liberating atmosphere, sexual boundaries are challenged as well. Even though Laura feels shy and considers herself a “social failure” (174), she finds herself dancing with the red-haired Emily:

Laura liked dancing with Emily; the pasty-faced and anemic young slattern whom she had seen dawdling about the village danced with fervor that annihilated every misgiving. They whirled faster and blaze in a single destruction. A strand of the red hair came undone and brushed across

Laura's face. The contact made her tingle from head to foot. She shut her eyes and dived into obliviousness –with Emily for a partner she could dance until the gunpowder ran out of the heels of her boots. (175)

This seemingly homoerotic scene suggests that Warner's ideal place is free of sexual boundaries⁴².

Throughout the novel, it is stressed that an ideal place must provide the necessary conditions for women to have professions of their own. Warner writes in the final chapter of the novel that Laura "was a witch by vocation" (160). The transformation of Laura into a witch by vocation is meaningful in that it aims to compensate what is absent in a woman's life in the actual world. Throughout *Lolly Willowes*, Laura cannot develop her potentials because of the traditions that tend to keep women at home rather in public life. Although she is interested in herbs and brewery business, for instance, the existing order does not permit her to choose it as a profession. During World War I, Laura starts working at a depot in London to do up parcels. In spite of Caroline's objections, her niece Fancy also goes to France after her husband's death in the war to be a lorry driver:

Caroline could not understand her eldest daughter. She was baffled and annoyed by the turn her own good sense inherited had taken. The married nun looked at the widowed amazon and refused battle. At least Fancy might stay in her very expensive flat and be a mother to her baby. But Fancy drew on a pair of heavy gauntlet gloves and went to France to drive motor lorries. Caroline dared not say a word. (63)

It is apparent that war opened up new possibilities for women to participate in public life. However, after the war, "[t]his recognition of women's right to participate in the public

⁴² For the analysis of the lesbian implications in *Lolly Willowes*, see Jane Garrity's work *Step-Daughters of England: British Women Modernists and the National Imaginary*.

affairs of the nation was [...] accompanied by considerable social pressure to return to the domestic sphere as traditionally conceived" (Nesbitt 453). After the Armistice, Laura left her work, came home, and "She lay down upon her bed, and presently fainted" (64). When she comes to herself again after a fortnight, she is again restored to her previous status as Aunt Lolly. Laura feels powerful again when she starts working as a henwife at Mr. Saunter's poultry farm in Great Mop: "She liked to feel their acquiescence, their dependence upon her. She felt wise and potent. She remembered the henwife in the fairy-tales, she understood now why kings and queens resorted to the henwife in their difficulties" (133).

In the final scene of *Lolly Willowes*, Laura decides to sleep alone in the woods. It is not clear whether she will return back to Great Mop or search for new places to stay in. What is certain is that she will never let her own being crashed under the feet of patriarchy. She is quite content with her present situation that allows her to experience new adventures: "Lovely to be with people who prefer their thoughts to yours, lovely to live at your own sweet will, lovely to sleep all night! [...] It was an adventure, she had never done such a thing before, and yet it seemed natural" (222). In a lecture to the Royal Society of Arts on "Women as Writers" (1959), Warner emphasizes the importance of new experiences for a woman writer if she wants to produce great works. She says: "Emily Brontë was fortunate in being the daughter of a clergyman, because the daughter of a clergyman, with her duty of parish visiting, has wonderful opportunities to become acquainted with human passions and what they can lead to" (544). Warner suggests in *Lolly Willowes* that it is only through new adventures that an ideal place that is free of restrictions can be established. Women can do come of age if cities based on these experiences are founded. The real world in the novel calls attention to the obstacles before women's development both in the city and the countryside. Warner's fantasy

world, however, attacks and transforms these places so that women can express themselves freely.

Harriet Hume

Rebecca West's third novel *Harriet Hume* recounts the fantastic love affair between a successful pianist Harriet Hume and a tricky politician Arnold Condorex⁴³. Set in London of the post-war years, the novel consists of five chapters relating a succession of meetings of the couple, who are respectively presented as passionate lovers, estranged individuals, and reconciled partners. In *Paradoxical Feminism: The Novels of Rebecca West*, Ann Norton states that *Harriet Hume* is West's "most overtly modernist work of fiction" because of "its focus on character and psychology rather than plot, its heavy use of myth, its stream-of-consciousness depiction of Arnold's mind, and its lushly poetic language" (121). West does not follow a chronological order in narrating the events, and Harriet's extraordinary ability of reading Arnold's thoughts provides psychological insights into consciousness of the novel's characters. More importantly, this modernist work employs fantasy to reveal male images of women and criticize the competitive nature of men's world. Harriet's ability of mind-reading mocks stereotypical images of women and exposes the unstable feature of male cities. Both London and the imaginary city of Mondh emerge in the novel as a cultural space through which West expresses her views on the issue of gender. She implies that an ideal place should resolve the conflicts stemming from the differences between male and female approaches to life.

In her essay "The Strange Necessity," West underlines the relationship between fantasy and reality. She writes: "Throughout the whole of his life the individual does

⁴³ Rebecca West was born as Cicely Isabel Fairfield in 1892. At the age of nineteen, she took the pen name of Rebecca West from the heroine of Ibsen's play *Rosmersholm* (1886). Just like the heroine of this play who has a relationship with a married politician, West had a long term relationship with the author H.G. Wells, who was married to another woman at the time.

nothing but match his fantasy with reality and try to establish, either by affirmation or alteration, an exact correspondence between them" (62). According to West, the establishment of a harmony between reality and fantasy necessitates the reconciliation of the various conflicts that tend to contradict each other. In another essay titled "The Long Chain of Criticism," she argues that one of the main functions of art is to solve the conflicts in real world by creating an imaginary world:

Every man is in a state of conflict, owing to his attempt to reconcile himself and his relationship with life to his conception of harmony. This conflict makes his soul a battlefield, where the forces that wish this reconciliation fight those that do not and reject the alternative solutions. Works of art are attempts to fight out this conflict in the imaginative world. They are great works of art if the forces involved are immensely numerous, and if the artist can truthfully report the conflict as he knows it. (265)

In West's opinion, therefore, art has a transformative and liberating force. By transforming and changing the existing conditions, art attempts to produce alternatives to problems stemming from disparate views and ideas. Thus, it makes the unseen and unsaid aspects of culture come to surface.

Harriet Hume can be viewed as West's attempt to reconcile the conflicts. According to Ann Norton, *Harriet Hume* is "about the way people see the world in pairs of opposites -male/female, artist/politician, private life/public life" (52). West reflects these opposites by portraying Harriet Hume and Arnold Condorex as two dissimilar characters having different personalities. Harriet Hume is a successful concert pianist living in a secluded Kensington flat adjoining a beautiful garden⁴⁴. She is definitely not an "Angel in

⁴⁴ In *Rebecca West: A Life*, Victoria Glendinning notes that Harriet Hume character is based on West's pianist friend, Harriet Cohen. The garden in Kensington is also the garden seen from West's terrace at Onslow Gardens (134-35).

the House” character. Rather, Harriet is an independent and self-assured woman whose life is not limited to her small flat in Kensington. She goes to Barcelona or Warsaw to perform her art, follows what is going on in the world from newspapers and knows the economic foundations of political life that force people to compete with each other. In addition to all these, she is a beautiful woman and enjoys sexual freedom. As Bonnie Kime Scott says, she embodies the characteristics associated with the new woman: “She lives on her own, enjoys sexual freedom, and pursues a career as a pianist, all attributes of the new woman” (*Refiguring Modernism* 140).

On the other hand, Arnold Condorex, who lives in a luxurious and flamboyant eighteenth-century house in Portland Place, is portrayed as a totally different character. He is an ambitious politician who follows the path his mind dictates him. Believing in the principle urging that “a man must rise in the world” (56), he achieves to become a wealthy and powerful statesman in time. Unlike Harriet who attaches no importance to wealth, Arnold plays tricks and defalcates funds entrusted to him in order to attain money and power. He even becomes the leader of Mondh, an imaginary city in India that does not have a physical existence apart from a discursive one. Arnold loves Harriet and finds her sexually attractive but still gets married with Lady Ginevra, the daughter of a well-to-do politician, for deriving personal benefits. However, he fails just like the city he created with words has failed and commits suicide after his deceits are finally discovered. With all of these qualities, Arnold is “a prime example of unprincipled opportunism” (Orel 135).

Just like the characters, London is also polarized in *Harriet Hume*. This polarization is made visible by the descriptions of the houses of Harriet and Arnold. While Harriet’s small flat represents art and beauty, Arnold’s house symbolizes the corruption in politics. Harriet’s flat is part of a fine old house that “had been converted to feed the house-hunger that raged after the Great War” (13). It has “lean-arm-chairs and divan on which cushions are no mere luxuries” (15). In spite of its oldness, Harriet’s house is full of small

art objects that scatter around the rooms. There is an Early Victorian match-box “sprayed with mother-of-pearl and golden leaves” (15). “Music it was that stuffed the shelves,” and the lowest shelf is spared for the issues of *Morning Post* (16). Harriet serves tea with the cups one of which “was India red, and the other that pale blue which Victorian ladies used freely in their water-colour drawings of the Bay of Naples” (25). The most precious art object in the house is the piano –which is a “superb monster” in the eyes of Arnold (15). It is not only the flat that is associated with art. Harriet’s garden also represents beauty and is described as if it were an art work. Harriet likens the three trees at the end of her garden to three women portrayed in Sir Joshua Reynolds’s painting “The Three Graces Decorating a Statue of Hymen.”

In contrast to Harriet’s simple flat, Arnold’s house is a luxurious one owned as a consequence of political tricks. “I could not have lived here had I not risen in the world” (129), thinks Arnold while showing the house to Harriet. The house –designed by the Adam Brothers– is served by the footman, the butler and many other servants. He reminds Harriet of the power he has over his servants:

Sometimes I think I derive no great good-fortune from standing where I do in the universe. But that position brings some advantages. (My dear, how pretty you are! How very pretty!) And one of them is that were ten serving men to spring upon us here in this hall, and I were carrying away the vase, and you had your frail arms about that mirror, it would still be they who had to go, and we who stayed. Is that not an advantage, my peerless one? (130)

In Arnold’s view, this house is a place where he can exert his wealth and political power to rule and dominate the people around him. Harriet, on the other hand, regards it as an art piece and eagerly appreciates its artistic style: “Oh, it goes far beyond all expectation!”

she exclaimed. "The wrought-iron of those banisters grows like ivy! And not like common ivy either! Like that which twines the thyrsus of Apollo." (129). For Harriet, it is not the material but artistic value of the house that is so precious.

In *Harriet Hume*, art stands out as a powerful force that helps to liberate women. The view of women as fragile entities is challenged by Harriet's secure status as a woman artist in the metropolis. In the eyes of Arnold, Harriet is first and foremost an object of desire, a perfect example of feminine beauty. According to him, she is an elegant woman having "exquisite understanding of the female person" (84). As he desires to govern and dominate everybody, he wants to conquer this sweet beauty: "The sweet fool! Well, I wish I were the King and could give her what she wants. Ah, what ineffable grace!" (83-84). Her feet are so nice that Arnold considers them "not feet at all but spurs added as a last touch to a bird-woman built by a magician expert in fine jewellers' work and ornithology," and hence she becomes "the most ethereal woman" in his eyes (11). Harriet, in these descriptions, is not like a real human being but rather like a goddess. In contrast to the passive role attributed to her by Arnold, Harriet's artistry places her to a subject position in society. It is a power that defies Arnold's wish to conquer everything: "While all of London belongs to the musician, from the Queen's Hall where she performs to Kensington Gardens where she feeds the ducks, Arnold is offended by her intrusion into public space" (Marcus 143).

West also highlights that art has the capacity to question and challenge the male understanding of government and politics. Harriet argues that a musician's task is to find the best form for the expression of human vices and follies. According to her, solo performance is limited in that it is an individual rather than a collective act: "To sit alone at one's instrument is to be like an unlimited monarch" (143). An orchestral performance "has the defects of democracy" (143) because some performers are given so little tasks. Chamber music, on the other hand, is the ideal way to govern different sounds. She

favours chamber music as it provides a kind of democratic atmosphere for the expression of all tones. Harriet argues that the task of politicians should also be to find a form of government that will allow the expression of “the will of people” without the intervention of “the personal interest of any group” (142). Harriet wishes a government that is free of personal interests. Arnold’s reply to Harriet’s comments about the ideal form of government, however, reveals the aggressive and competitive nature of the male world: “It is strange that this fundamental stuff of politics has never interested me. ’Tis the negotiation has ever charmed me, and the struggle for eminence” (143). Arnold’s world is not based on cooperation but competition, “all men rejoice in the ruin of others” (225).

West criticizes the competitive nature of male world by using the imagined city of Mondh. Mondh is the reminder of the fact that cities founded on pure male ideals are eventually bound to fall. Mondh is invented out of Arnold’s political speeches. Being an expert in Far Eastern affairs, Arnold is summoned by the Secretary of State for India to learn about the location of Mondh, though he cannot find anything except for the city of Pondh. With “a certain slight adjustments of the facts,” he turns the city of Pondh into Mondh. “Let Pondh be Mondh,” he cries after he comes to the conclusion that such a lie would not make any difference “for the cause of the British Empire, of civilisation, of peace” (71). Mondh, therefore, is the creation of man’s desire to rise in the world. It is a fantasy city that is based on words and lies. As Carl Rollyson writes, it serves to demonstrate “how politics can become a fantasy, a matter of words in a game agreed upon by its participants that bears no connection to reality” (71). When it is found out that Arnold has squeezed money out of an Indian Prince to make so-called investments, this political game comes to an end. The city of Mondh collapses, it is shattered into pieces.

Throughout *Harriet Hume*, West juxtaposes Mondh and London to call attention to the potential drawbacks of patriarchal cities. West implies that an ideal city should be the product of both sexes. Whereas Mondh is the outcome of male speech, London is the

product of the actual practices of all individuals including women. Even though women's contribution to urban life is generally undermined by men, West considers it a significant factor in the production of a more democratic society. In spite of Arnold's tendency to associate women with domestic life, women do participate in public life to create a harmonious whole as in chamber music. Jane Marcus describes Mondh as "the patriarchal city of the male world of money and power" (145). In this world, everything is assessed by its material value. "[T]he only usefulness I have ever seen in music is that it affords employment," says Arnold to express his views on music (206). Harriet, on the other hand, comes together with successful musicians to play Mozart and Beethoven, whom she calls "the wisest men who ever lived" (141)⁴⁵. In Harriet's world, it is important to come together with men in order to share and express ideas about life. It is the only way for the resolution of conflicts stemming from different outlooks on life.

In contrast to Harriet who longs for the union of the opposites, Arnold Condorex desires the destruction of all opposites that cause his downfall. According to him, Harriet is his opposite who is threatening his secure position in society. There are mainly two reasons why he finds Harriet disturbing. First of all, she is a powerful woman who can speak through music: "As she speaks, the keys of the piano begin to vibrate hard enough to create a tone, as if to make unmistakable her feminine voice, powerful enough to express her own thoughts and not merely reiterate men's ideas" (Norton 53). Another reason that undercuts Arnold's authority is Harriet's extraordinary ability of mind-reading. By reading his thoughts, she lays bare the male understanding of success in life. Both Harriet's artistry and her "witch-like" power make Arnold feel powerless (22). These

⁴⁵ In her article "Rebecca West and the Visual Arts," Margaret Diane Stetz mentions the influence of male composers and painters in West's fiction. Stetz notes that Rebecca West "would affiliate her writings with literary mothers—with, for instance, Emily Brontë, whom she numbered among the "saints" of literature, and with Charlotte Brontë, whom she called "a supreme artist"—but she would choose as her fathers composers and painters: Bach, Mozart, Beethoven; Vermeer, Turner, Monet, and others" (49).

qualities are opposed to Arnold's wish to govern and dominate everything. Harriet is uncontrollable. She is the opposite, the other. She is the one who should be silenced: "Damnable witch, she had enchanted him into feeling a sense of loss and shame for what is no crime, but the world's constant practice, only abused in priggish books, like the laying-out of wealth to usury! God, why do we not burn witches now?" (109).

As in *Lolly Willowes*, the fantastic element in *Harriet Hume* is used to question and challenge the male world. West makes use of fantasy to comment on the human psychology that tends to categorize and stereotype everything, including people. In *Harriet Hume*, "Arnold thinks of men and women in broad, dualistic stereotypes. But it is to mock just such thinking that West grants Harriet the power to read Arnold's mind" (Norton 52). For Arnold, Harriet becomes "The Other." She is the representative of the other sex that must be suppressed. Instead of finding a way to bring the opposites together, Arnold prefers getting rid of the other. In the final chapter, after Arnold shoots himself with a revolver, and the spirit of him begins walking madly around the streets of London. He intends to murder Harriet and goes to her flat thinking that "the will of the spiritual world is paralysed. And it has become so by the pull of two strong opposites! Oh, I must instantly relieve humanity of its sufferings, which must be immense!" (251). The male principle urges that the suppression of the opposite is necessary for the well-being of humanity.

The final chapter of *Harriet Hume* is obviously an attempt to find a solution for the union of opposing views. In fact, the ending of the novel is unclear because it is not certain whether Arnold has murdered Harriet and the couple has come together in an astral realm. Although the ending is obscure, the union of the couple in eternity apparently implies the reconciliation of the opposites, that is, the union of men and women. Harriet welcomes Arnold to live in "A Very Happy Eternity" together, and she turns into a dedicated lover ready to do anything for Arnold (287). In the same way, Arnold transforms

into an unaggressive man as he understands the danger of too much insistence on money and power. The change in Arnold's views on life is clearly felt from his speech addressing two policemen who come to rescue Harriet:

I see that you have led a good life, and have never been infected with the desire to rise in the world, nor sold your soul to the abominable principle of negotiation. Else you would know that there is no more delicious knowledge for me than that there is nothing in the house but a lady, and that I need not be at pains to make the one a palace and the other an empress. (284)

Arnold gives up his ambition to rise in the world and attain power. Rather, he desires a new place where there is no emperor or empress but a mutual understanding of the opposites.

As the novel comes to the end, Harriet points out that it is really difficult for a woman to put her power effectively into action in public life. She says to Arnold, "[W]hat was the use of me being so innocent in this g-g-garden [...] when I had no power to impose my state on the rest of society? I may have been innocent, but I was also impotent. If I had derived a comprehension of harmony from my art, it was a grave lack in me that I could not instill it into others and establish it as the accepted order of life" (266-67). Harriet underlines that it is necessary for a woman to have power. However, she argues that such a power should be used for positive causes. If men use their power for the development of civilization, then a harmonious society can be established:

Humanity would be unbearably lackadaisical if there were none but my kind alive. 'Tis the sturdy desire you have to shape the random elements of our existence into coherent patterns that is the very pith and marrow of mankind. Think, my love! You must admit that when you were not pursuing

the chimera of greatness, you performed many very worthy achievements that enabled our species to establish itself on this globe more firmly. Did you not see the building of bridges, the teaching of children, the suppression of riot and bloodshed? Is that so small a thing? (267)

By uniting Harriet and Arnold, West implies that both men and women are necessary for the creation of a better society. As Victoria Glendinning writes, “the conclusion is that neither sex can achieve much in the world without harnessing the complementary attributes of the other” (135).

In both *Lolly Willowes* and *Harriet Hume*, Warner and West fantasize an ideal place that is not shaped by aggressive male ideals. The existing world order undermining women’s capacities is challenged and re-shaped by these writers. In *Lolly Willowes*, Laura turns into a witch and gains the power to speak on behalf of all women who have been subjugated throughout their lives. Similarly, by reading Arnold’s thoughts, Harriet questions and challenges male ideals of power and wealth. In both novels, fantastic elements are used to transform the existing system that is governed by the male principle. In “Refiguring the Binary, Breaking the Cycle: Rebecca West as Feminist Modernist,” Kime Bonnie Scott notes that West’s modernism is constructive and liberating rather than destructive:

West offers a modernism that challenges the repetition of wasted lands, culturally and economically impoverished lives, and sexual and class warfare. The modern world is still reinventing destructive dualities. In West’s writing, we have the example of increasingly experienced defiance of these structures, and a restocking of the imagination of her readers toward constructive and liberating myths, fantasies, and behaviors. (186-87)

Not only West but also Warner aims at constructing a new place that is not oppressive but liberating. Both authors imply that women can come of age if the cities are transformed by taking women's capacities into account. The fantastic worlds narrated in *Lolly Willowes* and *Harriet Hume* point to the necessity of such a transformation.

Conclusion

This study explores women's experiences of modernism and modernity by focusing on the novels written by British women authors between the years 1910 and 1930. During this period known as "High Modernism," women were producing a great number of works on various subjects from archaeology and aesthetics to science and politics. As Virginia Woolf underlines in *A Room of One's Own*, "there are almost as many books written by women now as by men" (79). In spite of the productivity of women writers in the first decades of the twentieth century, modernism is generally identified with masculine terms. According to the critic Peter Childs, one of the reasons that lies beneath the "masculinist elitism" of modernism is the tendency in the 1910s to eradicate the feminine and moralistic tone of the Victorian literature. Childs notes that, at the turn of the twentieth century, literature was viewed as a profession and as outside of women's domestic space. In addition, it began to be perceived as a serious academic discipline that could teach certain behaviours and emphasize national identity. That is why, Childs argues, some noteworthy developments occurred in the field of literature during this period: *Times Literary Supplement*, the World's Classics series by the Oxford University Press, the Nobel Prize for Literature, and the English Association played a vital role in the formation of British identity (23).

The stress on the formation of a masculine national culture, however, came to mean for some male writers to establish a virile English literature as opposed to the "feminine" Victorian tradition. Childs writes:

This growing emphasis on a masculine national culture culminated in the setting up in 1910 of the Academic Committee: a coterie of male writers gathered together with the aim of establishing all that was best and most important in English letters. It included Thomas Hardy, W.B. Yeats and

Joseph Conrad and, at times, constituted a dining and debating club which was to a degree set upon establishing a virile, manly English literature. One of the Committee's conclusions was that Victorian literature had been too feminine and moralistic, and that writers such as George Eliot, whose reputation has never been lower, had held back the English novel in comparison with its European equivalents. Much of this can be easily read as a reaction to the rise of the suffragette movement and its equivalent in writing, the New Woman. (24)

In *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing*, Elaine Showalter also identifies women's writing between the years 1840 and 1880 as feminine. However, Showalter rightly posits that it was the feminine phase because there was no option for women writers other than to imitate the existing male tradition in literature (13). In her discussion of the nineteenth century women novelists such as Jane Austen, Emily Brontë, and Charlotte Brontë, Woolf also underlines that these authors had to base their works on male forms and standards because "they had no tradition behind them, or one so short and partial that it was of little help" (*A Room* 75).

In addition to the lack of the female tradition, women writers in the nineteenth century suffered from the lack of experience. They were not mobile as their male counterparts. Women of the time did not have the same opportunities with those of men; they could not work as lawyers or doctors and attend different clubs and activities to develop their potentials. All of these matters affected the way women presented the world in their novels. As Woolf writes in *A Room of One's Own*, the content of *Villette*, *Emma*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Middlemarch* would be different if women had the chance of experiencing life fully:

One could not but play for a moment with the thought of what might have happened if Charlotte Brontë had possessed say three hundred a year [...]; had somehow possessed more knowledge of the busy world, and towns and regions full of life; more practical experience, and intercourse with her own kind and acquaintance with a variety of character. [...] She knew, no one better, how enormously her genius would have profited if it had not spent itself in solitary visions over distant fields; if experience and intercourse and travel had been granted her. (69).

As this passage highlights, there is a close relationship between life and literature. The social and cultural conditions of society undoubtedly determine the style and content of a literary work.

It was only after the 1880s that women authors started to question male standards and values and enhance the scope of their novels. Because women started to gain their democratic rights and become part of workforce, they gained awareness as to their place in society. The “New Woman” of the 1880s –the “intelligent, sensitive, and sexually healthy woman, who often had ambitions beyond motherhood” (Ledger and Luckhurst 76)– appeared in the novels of feminist writers such as Sarah Grand, Mona Caird, Menie Muriel Dowie, and Ella Hepworth Dixon. Although the New Women were condemned and ridiculed by some writers and anti-feminist groups as “mannish,” “overeducated bore,” “a bad mother,” “oversexed vamp,” and lacking the features of the “ideal Victorian womanhood,” their contribution to the later generation of women writers was immense in that they helped the formation of an autonomous female identity (Ledger and Luckhurst 75).

In the twentieth century, women writers found a broader social milieu to be represented in literature. Women were now more active in social, political, cultural, and

professional domains. They were not merely governesses, nurses, or workers but journalists, travellers, and regularly-paid officers. Many women who gathered particularly in big cities such as London, New York, and Paris could follow their own interests and get in touch with different circles. The mobility of women writers helped inspire the literary imagination and share new ideas with their colleagues. As Bonnie Kime Scott underlines in *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, many women writers came together in Sylvia Beach's bookshop or Gertrude Stein's rooms in Paris. They met in the vicinity of Washington Square or Seventh Avenue in Harlem. In Natalie Barney's salon on Rue Jacob and Peggy Guggenheim's Hayford Hall in England, they met the bohemian artistic community and discussed sexuality unreservedly (6).

These developments had a profound impact on women's writing. The twentieth-century women writers altered the form and content of the novel on account of the new experiences caused by modernity. Generally speaking, modernism is a response to the exhilarating changes in every area of life. Modernist authors responded to new life styles by employing different techniques and expressing new subject matters. Without doubt, the modernist literary movement cannot be evaluated without taking the works of women authors into consideration. Modernism is often characterized by the formal innovations and vigorous techniques, which are used to depict human states and conditions predominantly in urban culture. Up to the 1980s, these formal experimentations were generally considered the products of male writers. Beginning with the 1980s, however, the studies on gender and modernity have proved that women were also pioneers in introducing new literary techniques. Besides, the studies on modernity have underlined that not only the form but also the content of the novel was modified by women writers. It is necessary, therefore, to evaluate modernism by taking formal and thematic changes into account.

For this purpose, this study analyzes Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day* (1919), Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), Rebecca West's *Harriet Hume: A London Fantasy* (1929), and Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly Willowes, or, the Loving Huntsman* (1926). All of these works depict the female experiences in the metropolis and subvert the structure of the existing literary genres by employing new narrative strategies. As the views of the literary theorists such as Northrop Frye, Franco Moretti, Rosemary Jackson and Tzvetan Todorov indicate, all literary genres are ideological and determined by the social and cultural practices of the period in which they are written. The examples of romance, fantasy, and *Bildungsroman* produced until the twentieth century generally represent women as passive agents rather than active individuals, and this coincides with the status of women in society at the time. The twentieth-century women writers, however, attack the false representation of women in literature by challenging the earlier conventions. They do not only change the traditional views on gender but also the modernist literature. They "make it new" by employing different techniques and suggesting new viewpoints.

In *Night and Day*, Virginia Woolf plays with the idea of marriage by introducing Katharine Hilbery with new experiences and intercourse in London. She changes romance structure to relate the new female consciousness. Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* puts the idea of morality and sexuality into question. The mobility of the protagonist –from the country to the city –plays a significant role in the construction of modern female subjectivity. Just like Woolf, Hall dismantles the formulas of *Bildungsroman* to be able to criticize the existing order that puts barriers on women's development. In both *Harriet Hume: A London Fantasy* and *Lolly Willowes, or, the Loving Huntsman*, Warner and West portray the lives of urban women, and they quest for an ideal place where men and women can follow their own interests. To create an ideal world that is devoid of male aggressiveness, they resort to fantastic elements.

The analysis of the works by women writers is crucial for the discovery of the “rich and strange” nature of modernist literature. Beneath the richness of the modernist movement lies the efforts of women authors, who have been long undermined by the critics of modernism of modernity. The Marxist critic Terry Eagleton argues that ideologies refer to the ideas, values and feelings through which individuals perceive their societies at different ages, and “certain of those ideas, values and feelings are available to us only in literature” (xiii). Women’s literature in the first decades of the twentieth century both reflects and questions these values and hence provides new ways of looking at the world and human consciousness. It is obvious that women authors extended the borders of modernism by walking out of the sitting-room and letting themselves to the flow of the city.

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ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Ege Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünde araştırma görevlisi olarak çalışmakta olan Çiğdem Alp, 2002 yılında Marmara Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi İngilizce Öğretmenliği’nden mezun olmuştur. Alp, 2005 yılında yüksek lisans derecesini Ege Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünden “Belonging to Nowhere: Identity Crisis in the Works of Irvine Welsh and James Kelman” başlıklı teziyle almıştır. 2006 yılından itibaren doktora çalışmalarını Ege Üniversitesi’nde sürdürmekte olan Alp, 2009-2010 tarihleri arasında bir yıllık süreyle Amerika Birleşik Devletleri’ndeki Temple Üniversitesi’nde araştırmalarda bulunmuştur.

TÜRKÇE ABSTRAKT:

Bu çalışmanın amacı, 1910-1930 yılları arasında İngiliz kadın yazarlar tarafından kaleme alınmış romanlar üzerinde odaklanarak modernizm ve modernite kavramlarını irdelemektir. Genel olarak şehirli insanın ruhsal ve sosyal deneyimlerini aktaran bir akım olan modernizm, edebiyat alanında mevcut biçimsel özellikleri ve anlatı tekniklerini radikal bir biçimde değiştirmiştir. 1980'lere kadar, bu yeni biçimsel özellikler büyük ölçüde erkek yazarların ürünü olarak görülmüştür. 1980'li yıllarla birlikte, modernizm ve modernite üzerine yapılan çalışmalar kadınların da erkekler kadar yeni tekniklerin geliştirilmesi ve kullanılması konusunda öncü olduklarını göstermiştir. Ayrıca söz konusu çalışmalar, modernizmin değerlendirilmesinde eserlerin içeriğinin de biçimsel özellikler kadar önemli olduğunu vurgular. Bu tezde Virginia Woolf'un *Night and Day* (1919), Radclyffe Hall'un *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), Rebecca West'in *Harriet Hume: A London Fantasy* (1929) ve Sylvia Townsend Warner'ın *Lolly Willows, or, the Loving Huntsman* (1926) adlı romanları hem biçim hem de içerik açısından incelenmiştir. Söz konusu yazarların ortak özelliği, kadınların özerkliğini ve kapasitelerini görmezden gelen geleneksel değerleri sorgulamalarıdır. Bu metinlerde, şehirde yaşayan kadınların deneyimleri yeni anlatı teknikleri kullanılarak aktarılmış ve romans, fantastik roman ve gelişim romanı gibi edebi türlerin yapısında değişiklikler yapılmıştır. Woolf, Hall, Warner ve West bu değişiklikler aracılığıyla hem modernist edebiyatın oluşumuna hem de kadın yazınının gelişimine katkıda bulunmuşlardır.

İNGİLİZCE ABSTRAKT:

The aim of this study is to explore women's experiences of modernism and modernity by focusing on the novels written by British women authors between the years 1910 and 1930. Modernism is often characterized by the formal innovations and vigorous techniques, which are used to depict human states and conditions predominantly in urban culture. Up to the 1980s, these formal experimentations were generally considered the products of male writers. Beginning with the 1980s, however, the studies on modernism and modernity have proved that women were also pioneers in introducing new literary techniques. Besides, these studies have underlined that not only the form but also the content of the novel was modified by women writers. It is necessary, therefore, to evaluate modernism by taking formal and thematic changes into account. For this purpose, this study analyzes Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day* (1919), Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), Rebecca West's *Harriet Hume: A London Fantasy* (1929), and Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly Willowes, or, the Loving Huntsman* (1926). What unites these authors is the subversive nature of their works, which criticize the conventional ideas that restrict women's autonomy and undermine their potentials. While narrating women's experiences in the city, they subvert the structure of the existing literary genres such as romance, fantasy, and *Bildungsroman* by employing new narrative strategies. All of these formal and thematic changes have a significant role in the development of modernist literature and women's writing.