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Exploring Sexuality within the Modernist Bildungsroman

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Abstract

In his introduction to *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman*, Gregory Castle presents a unique critical interpretation for analyzing modern British novels. Instead of approaching early-twentieth-century authors in “terms of [their] innovation and experimentation, and in terms of the relation between such practices of modernity and the traditions that they are meant to displace,” his study of how the modern Bildungsroman “fails” to achieve “harmonious socialization” reveals a relevant, pressing issue shared among modernist authors: the dehumanization and socialization of identity as inherited by the Victorian Bildung tradition (Castle 2). Within the modernist Bildungsroman, a relationship appears between identity, sexuality, and ideology which is similar to Michel Foucault’s theory of “power-knowledge-pleasure” (11). For Foucault, these three forces “sustain the discourse on human sexuality” (11) and are portrayed as “perpetual spirals of power and pleasure” (45). Ideology attempts to control sexuality by “subjugat[ing] it at the level of language, control[ing] its free circulation in speech, expunge[ing] it from the things that were said, and extinguish[ing] the words that rendered it too visibly present” (Foucault 17). For the purposes of my argument this is relevant because analyzing the sexual discourse within the modernist novel and the ways which early-twentieth-century authors resisted ideology’s attempts to suppress and silence sexuality in literature reveals their ultimate purpose of recapturing the humanist values within the classical Bildungsroman. By tracing this argument to D. H. Lawrence’s *The Rainbow* and James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, I will establish that the modernist Bildungsroman is a Bildungsroman of sexuality.

Introduction:

Sexual Discourse in the Modernist Bildungsroman

“Is it possible to remain within the main coordinates of the Bildungsroman tradition and at the same time create a hero who dissents from that tradition? Is it possible that dissent can propel the genre toward new modes of expression and new modes of inharmonious but achieved development?” (Castle 4)

In his introduction to *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman*, Gregory Castle presents a unique critical interpretation for analyzing modern British novels. Instead of approaching early-twentieth-century authors in “terms of [their] innovation and experimentation, and in terms of the relation between such practices of modernity and the traditions that they are meant to displace,” his study of how the modern Bildungsroman “fails” to achieve “harmonious socialization” reveals a relevant, pressing issue shared among modernist authors: the dehumanization and socialization of identity as inherited by the Victorian Bildung tradition (Castle 2). Castle argues that in order for authors to resist the ideology established by a rigid Victorian regime, the “aesthetico-spiritual Bildung,” an ideology conceived with the “classical Bildung,”¹ became the essential goal for the hero in the modernist Bildungsroman, as a way to defy Victorian narrative conventions (Castle 47). Although Castle offers various ways in which the nonconformist hero preserves identity, he only briefly considers how the modernist Bildungsheld’s sexuality resists the “socially pragmatic” qualities of the Victorian Bildungsroman. Only by incorporating Michel Foucault’s theories on the discourse of sexuality and the

¹Classical Bildung refers to the German Bildungsroman ideology developed by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Wilhelm von Humboldt in the eighteenth century that emphasizes the young man’s “aesthetic education and a spiritualized inner culture, on the harmony of [his] intellectual, moral, spiritual, and artistic faculties, or on achieving a dialectical harmony of self and society, of personal desire and social responsibility” (Castle 7).

“perpetual spirals of power and pleasure” (45) in *The History of Sexuality Volume I: An Introduction* with Castle's analysis of the modernist Bildungsroman does the function of sex become not only embedded within the modern British novel, but serves as a critical and necessary discourse in the formation of the modernist hero's identity.

Modeling on Alden's introduction to her book, *Social Mobility in the English Bildungsroman: Gissing, Hardy, Bennett, and Lawrence*, I will clarify my terms to establish my argument that the modernist Bildungsroman is a sexualized Bildungsroman. Bildungsroman is a genre that traces a young man's or woman's journey toward maturity, a coming of age novel. Bildungsroman is primarily concerned with how that individual, known as the Bildungsheld, develops “within a particular social world” (Alden 1). The genre begins with the Bildungsheld's childhood and continues to the point when the individual realizes, reclaims, or sacrifices identity.² Identity in the Bildungsroman is generally defined as the “individual selfhood achieved through growth and of social experience as an education which forms, and sometimes deforms, that self” (Alden 1). However within the modernist Bildungsroman, the identity is achieved through sexual growth and experience. Throughout my argument I will be referring to ideology, socialization, and institutionalization. For ideology I will apply Alden's definition:

[the] inescapable social consciousness, that picture of the world which every person must acquire as he or she grows up in a particular society at a particular time. That there will be competing pictures of the world is also true, and I assume that in the nineteenth century, class is the major determinant of competing

² Depending on what type of Bildungsroman determines what happens to the Bildungsheld's identity. Within both the classical and modernist Bildungsroman, the hero realizes and reclaims identity. Within the Victorian period, in the English, French, and female Bildungsromane identity is sacrificed for the higher purposes of socialization.

ideologies. One's experience necessarily will be understood within the context of ideology, and it is the task of ideology to smooth over contradictions, to present experience as orderly and natural. (13)

Finally, using Wolfgang Streit's definition of sex and sexuality in *Joyce/Foucault: Sexual Confessions*, the "domain of the body, which precedes and can later be approached through speech, is defined by the terms *sex*, *desire*, *lust*, or *physicality*, as opposed to the term *sexuality*, the speech-related, discourse version of sex" (Streit 4).³

The Bildungsroman was established during Germany's Enlightenment period with the publication of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795-96). During this time Germany was immersed in a "climate of intense aesthetic and philosophical exploration and creative production" (Castle 7). Due to this political and aesthetic atmosphere, the German Bildungsroman was initially focused on an individual's development within society; a development which "achiev[ed] a dialectical harmony of self and society, of personal desire and social responsibility" (7). This type of novel would trace the individual's growth from childhood to adolescence, up to a point where his⁴ character becomes actualized; thus the Bildungsheld achieves a harmonized balance between personal aesthetic beliefs and social ideologies (Alden 1). The classical Bildungsroman usually concluded by "rewarding those whose desires for self-development are identical to the demands of the social system" (Castle 18). Despite the hero's brief transgression during his development, a period when his actions and beliefs

³ Streit's use of these terms follow Foucault's method and his use of the "terms *sexe* and *sexualite* in the French original *La volonte de savoir*." When referring to the physical act of sex in all its forms Streit uses "sex" whereas "the putting into discourse of this "sex" as "sexuality" (e.g. *HS I* 12-13). (Streit 160).

⁴ Within the classical Bildungsroman, the Bildungsheld was a male; not until the nineteenth century do the protagonists change not only in gender but also in nationality, creating the female and colonial Bildungsromane.

contradicted societal norms, his indiscretions served as a necessary transition and discourse. For in the end, the Bildungsheld understood the “errors” of his youthful and “misguided” ways and atoned for previous societal transgressions through his process of socialization. What must be noted is that the individual does not sacrifice identity through the process of socialization within the classical Bildungsroman. Instead, he realizes that his aesthetico-spiritual self coincides with societal expectations and he willingly chooses to become socialized to maintain this harmony between identity and ideology.

However, once the Bildungsroman was introduced into France and England in the nineteenth century, Castle notes that both traditions perverted the “Goethean and Humboldtian ideals of aesthetico-spiritual Bildung” (47), replacing the “emphasis on aesthetic education and a spiritualized inner culture” (7) with socially pragmatic ideologies that focused on socialization and social mobility. Patricia Alden in *Social Mobility in the English Bildungsroman: Gissing, Hardy, Bennett, and Lawrence* argues the same point, citing Marianne Hirsch’s article, “The Novel of Formation as Genre: Between Great Expectations and Lost Illusions,” to show the differences between the “more optimistic, politically conservative German variant from the English and French ‘novels of disillusion’” (133). Where Goethe’s Bildungsroman reveals the “hero’s triumphant ascension to an achieved and harmonious Bildung,” the French Bildungshelden were faced with “the narrative defeat, of frustrated rebellion and co-optation” (Castle 18). Although within the French Bildungsroman “dialectical harmony is still prized,” it occurs only when the individual becomes integrated “into the operations of the state and its institutions” (Castle 13). The social pragmatic variants found within the French tradition were also seen within the English one, however unlike the French,

the English Bildungsroman “legitimiz[e] the rise to power of a certain class of young men, rewarding those whose desires for self-development are identical to the demands of the social system” (Castle 18). Within both Bildungsromane, the heroes resisted socialization but finally succumbed to it and were forced to sacrifice their identities to achieve both financial stability and social mobility. Near the end of the Victorian period, the English hero fails to achieve Bildung and dies rather than become socialized. Castle’s example, Jude in Thomas Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure*, concludes an exhausted tradition of Bildungsroman within the Victorian period. By entering the varying cultural discourses presented in France and England during the nineteenth century, the parameters of the classical Bildungsroman were adapted to fit each society’s ideologies and in the process lost the essential aesthetical-spiritual quality relevant to it.

The female Bildungsroman further emphasized “the subversive potential of the genre in the nineteenth century” because not only did she struggle to create her aesthetical-spiritual identity in a social discourse that denied its very existence, but she also struggled against an ideology that was inherently patriarchal and consequentially against her before she even entered into that discourse (Castle 21). In addition, the colonial Bildungsroman within the English tradition was “always a more or less self-conscious role-playing, in which colonial subjects f[ound] themselves in an alienated relation to the goal of classical Bildung, with effects that ran from sincere imitation to subversive mimicry” (Castle 128). When he refers to the “colonial Bildungsroman,” Castle limits his definition to those primarily produced by Irish authors. However this definition can be expanded to incorporate other novels created throughout the British Empire. Before the modernist period and after Germany’s Enlightenment, the various

forms of Bildungsroman identified the “monster in the social system as that person who wishes to become socially mobile, to move fluidly upward into a high social class” (Castle 19). The focus on identity and aesthetical-spiritual beliefs was subsumed by ideology to the point where the novel served the purposes of enforcing and legitimizing institutions that upheld normative discourse.

In the modernist Bildungsroman, however, Castle argues that the emphasis returns to the “humanist values” presented within the classical tradition because modernist authors

recognized in the humanism they resisted the only weapon against a far worse threat: the dehumanization of technological modernity, neatly symbolized by the socially pragmatic variant of Bildung that had come to dominate the educational system and the professionalization of labor. (25)

Within this discourse, the modernist Bildungsheld refuses to sacrifice the aesthetic-spiritual self to socialization, preferring either death or exile. Out of the two choices, exile becomes more apparent within the modernist Bildungsroman because the hero’s identity does not become subsumed by ideology nor is it extinguished through death. Despite the various outlets through which society attempts to promote socialization, such as education and religion, the modernist hero resists their influence and establishes an aesthetical-spiritual self that opposes ideology.

Although Castle traces how public institutions such as education and religion pressure the modernist Bildungsheld to conform to social mobility and socialization, he does not fully explore how these institutions control individuals through the suppression of their sexuality. Because the modernist Bildungsroman introduces sex into its discourse

and makes it the central theme, the novel becomes a sexualized Bildungsroman, but even when Castle refers to Patricia Alden's "sexual Bildung," he does not analyze how the protagonist's sexuality fundamentally undermines and resists socialization (106). Only by applying Foucault's theories to Castle's study can we trace how modernist authors preserved "humanist values" by introducing a hero who resists the ideology that governed sexuality within the Victorian period to expose how institutions limited sex to its utilitarian function and reveal how socialization attempts to control an individual's sexuality in order to control the individual. Foucault's purpose "to examine the case of a society which has been loudly castigating itself for its hypocrisy for more than a century, which speaks verbosely of its own silence, takes great pains to relate in detail the things it does not say, denounces the powers it exercises, and promises to liberate itself from the very laws that have made it function" supports the underlying premise of the modernist Bildungsroman as identified by Castle (8).

Foucault's *The History of Sexuality: Volume I* begins by stating that before the Victorian period, "sexual practices had little need of secrecy; words were said without undue reticence, and things were done without too much concealment; one had a tolerant familiarity with the illicit" (3). While society has arguably always created laws and enforced ideologies which restricted the free expression of sexuality, we find, according to Foucault's analysis, that social forces during the Victorian Period were particularly vigilant in orchestrating a government-supported suppression of sex and in subjecting it to a social discourse. By doing this the Victorians made sex into a biological necessity and sexuality "carefully confined; it moved into the home. The conjugal family took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction" (Foucault 3).

Foucault argues that, in this way, Victorians muted the pleasurable attributes of sex and reduced its purpose to those which were primarily “utilitarian and fertile” (Foucault 3). For the sake of achieving domestic and economic stability, sex was thus no longer viewed as a desire in and of itself, but a means to a very specific and single end. Sexuality was, in effect, reduced to a means of production in the most Marxist sense of the term, as a form of capitalism (Foucault 5).

As a result, any form of sexuality that was “sterile,” meaning any form of sex that did not fulfill the purposes of procreation, “carried the taint of abnormality” (Foucault 4). Since this “abnormality” was rendered not only immoral in theological terms but also illegal, sexual pleasure was regarded as an offense punishable by law. For instance, any and all “visible” pursuits of sexuality outside its utilitarian purposes “would be designated accordingly and would have [the individual]... pay the penalty” (Foucault 4). By establishing this foundation within the Victorian period, sex “not only did not exist, it had no right to exist and would be made to disappear upon its least manifestation” (Foucault 4).

Furthermore, all forms of “illegitimate sexualities” that were considered “acceptable” were isolated within either the brothel or the mental hospital, purposely removed from general society and placed “where they could be reintegrated, if not in the circuits of production at least in those of profit” (Foucault 4). Only a sexual “deviant’s” socio-economic status determined which of the two locales they frequented. Those too poor to afford prostitutes were relegated to mental institutions where patients were subjected to psychoanalytic treatments offered by the hospitals, thus inevitably being labeled “abnormal.” Psychoanalysis was used as a form of “Freud’s conformism”

because of its attempts to “normalizing” sex (Foucault 5). Although Foucault admits that Freud made progress with placing sex within an acceptable means of discourse, it was a discourse governed by “such circumspection, such medical prudence” as to create “a scientific guarantee of innocuousness” (5).

When Foucault says that “sex and its effects are perhaps not so easily deciphered,” he is referring to sex in its historical and social context, yet within a Bildungsroman, specifically the modernist Bildungsroman, sex and its effects can be analyzed (6). Sex within a literary discourse supports “the demand for sexual freedom, but also for the knowledge to be gained from sex and the right to speak about it” (Foucault 6). The fact that sex is prevalent within modernist novels, supports Foucault’s point that since

sex is repressed, that is, condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression. A person who holds forth in such language places himself to a certain extent outside the reach of power; [the author] upsets established law; he somehow anticipates the coming freedom. (Foucault 6)

Since the “discourse of modern sexual repression” is defined by “historical and political” factors, the repression of the sexual identity becomes inevitable “because [sexuality] is incompatible with a general and intensive work imperative” (Foucault 5-6). Foucault’s point reveals that within the Victorian period, sexuality becomes reduced primarily to its utilitarian function. This is comparable to Castle’s argument that within the English Bildungsroman “identity is the means by which a social formation assimilates that which is antithetical to it, bringing otherness into its sphere and conquering it” (18). Both

Foucault and Castle recognize respectively that ideology subsumes sexuality and identity, but since sexuality in the modernist novel was vigorously censored and repressed, I would argue that within the modernist Bildungsroman, sexuality and identity become inseparable from each other and hence essential to the hero's development.

The relationship that appears between identity, sexuality, and ideology in the modernist Bildungsroman is similar to Foucault's theory of "power-knowledge-pleasure" (11). For Foucault, these three forces "sustain the discourse on human sexuality" (11) and are portrayed as "perpetual spirals of power and pleasure" (45). The relationship between ideology and sexuality can be described as follows: ideology is continuously attempting to suppress sexuality while at the same time sexuality resists this and overthrows ideology. Like oil and vinegar, each coexist in a constant flux but are never able to overwhelm the other. By making this analogy, I do not mean to suggest that ideology and sexuality mimic the hierarchical relationship found between that of oil and vinegar; I would rather present them as binary forces that continuously conflict and define each other. Ideology attempts to control sexuality by "subjugat[ing] it at the level of language, control[ing] its free circulation in speech, expunge[ing] it from the things that were said, and extinguish[ing] the words that rendered it too visibly present" (Foucault 17). For the purposes of my argument this is relevant because analyzing the sexual discourse within the modernist novel and the ways which early-twentieth-century authors resisted ideology's attempts to suppress and silence sexuality in literature reveals their ultimate purpose of recapturing the humanist values within the classical Bildungsroman.

Tracing this argument to D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* and James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, I will establish that the modernist Bildungsroman

is a Bildungsroman of sexuality. In the section “Resisting Sexual Conformity: Ursula as a Modernist Bildungsheld in Lawrence’s *The Rainbow*,” I will argue that Ursula’s ability to experience sexual pleasure outside of the realm of marriage serves as a way to undermine societal norms. Using Ursula as a model reflects both Castle’s and Foucault’s theories, proving that the hero’s purpose within the modernist Bildungsroman is to reclaim a sexual identity free from the dehumanizing effects of socialization. In the section “Resisting Social Conformity: Identifying the Sexual Discourse in Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*,” I will discuss how Stephen Dedalus’s sexual encounters throughout his childhood and adolescence prompt his loss of faith in the Catholic Church and lead to the creation of his modernist aesthetics which challenge the very discourse of his sexual suppression.

Resisting Sexual Conformity: Ursula as a Modernist Bildungsheld
in Lawrence’s *The Rainbow*

In *Social Mobility in the English Bildungsroman*, Patricia Alden argues that within Lawrence’s works “sex is often the meeting ground for two classes...unit[ing] working class and bourgeoisie, to heal the division between body and mind, to balance blood consciousness and mental consciousness, and to accommodate the need for individuality and the need for community” (99). However I would argue that for Lawrence the “need for individuality” takes precedence over the “need for community” and that the individual’s sexual experience matters more than the success of a sexual relationship (Alden 126). Lawrence does not “turn his back on society” as Alden argues but exposes how ideology fears and confines the “subjective freedom” that sex offers (99). For Lawrence, “sex is the only way to achieve a sharply defined self” since

according to Foucault, an individual's sexuality inherently resists being defined by ideology and consistently overthrows its suppression (Alden 127). As Alden observes, "by making sexual experience the avenue to true selfhood, [Lawrence] ignores the trauma of upward mobility" that Castle notes typical of both the English and French traditions of Bildung in the nineteenth century (99). Due to this, Lawrence's *The Rainbow* represents a modernist Bildungsroman because throughout the novel, Ursula's identity and sexuality "upsets established law" and "anticipates the coming freedom" from a society that limits how she expresses her sexuality (Foucault 6). Furthermore, Alden's point that the "endings of Lawrence's Bildungsromane are tentative, and the sexual relationships which would assuage his protagonists' loneliness without threatening their identity remain elusive" is inaccurate (Alden 116). For instance when Ursula's sexuality is placed into social discourse, her sexual identity survives at the end of the novel despite ideology's attempts to confine it within the parameters of marriage. However, I agree with Alden's point that Lawrence "took his revolution inward, offering an experience of liberation and an expansion of the self through sex" (128). This internal discourse expressed externally through sex was relevant throughout Lawrence's works and was the central theme and purpose of all modernist Bildungsromane.

Because *The Rainbow* traces Ursula's resistance toward socialization, it upholds Castle's definition of the modernist Bildungsroman. Since Lawrence was writing during a time when people were "seeking a way out of the Victorian impasse between officially sanctioned ideals of sexual 'purity' and unofficial but tolerated forms of sexual exploitations, including easily available prostitution and under-the-counter pornography" and his "sexual themes in literature...earned him the reprobation of censors throughout

his career,” his novel creates a Bildungsheld who struggles to create and retain a sexual identity removed from a Victorian utilitarian discourse (Cowan 70).

Although *The Rainbow* had previously been labeled as a modernist Bildungsroman in the “Escape from the Circles of Experience: D. H. Lawrence’s *The Rainbow* as a Modern Bildungsroman,” Edward Engelberg’s article was published before either Foucault’s or Castle’s works. Because of this, his view of *The Rainbow* as a modernist Bildungsroman traces how the novel represents “a trial and error warfare with experience, which allows finally a glimpse of an ideal that rises inevitably out of experience” (Engelberg 109). Even though he defines and applies experience in a very general sense, his points can be focused to demonstrate that it is Ursula’s sexual experience that makes *The Rainbow* a modernist Bildungsroman.

Engelberg begins by stating that before the modernist Bildungsroman, the English novel’s use of “experience was proving to be a fairly ineffectual method of coping with the world” because it never addressed the aesthetical-spiritual self (104). For Engelberg, *The Rainbow* focuses on the development of the hero’s identity while at the same time being immersed within the “traditional framework of the *Bildungsroman*” (106). He validates his point by stating that because Ursula remains “the consistent –and human – character within a moral scheme,” her experience is characteristic of the Bildungsheld (Engelberg 106). In fact “the hero’s journey through experience would become a sort of dialogue of self and soul, a dialectic between the character’s objective experience and his subjective assimilation of it” (Engelberg 107). Engelberg’s use of “objective” and “subjective” is critical, because when they are applied to Ursula’s sexual experiences, the

objectivity of the experience becomes associated with society's view whereas its subjectivity relates to how she uses it to establish and further her own identity.

As a modernist *Bildungsheld*, Ursula fits Castle's definition as well, where the hero values the formation of the identity over materialism and social mobility. The fact that Lawrence chooses a woman to be his *Bildungsheld* is yet another deliberate transgression of convention. In Chapter 11, "First Love," Lawrence presents Ursula as a young woman entering into the discourse of sexuality when she becomes not only acquainted with her first lover, Anton Skrebensky, but also introduced to normative discourse represented by Fred Brangwen's wedding and the church's service. Before meeting Skrebensky, she reinforces her role as a modernist hero when she begins to question the "cloud of self-responsibility [that] gathered upon her" (Lawrence 263). Previous to this chapter, Ursula was a child defined by both her parents and social ideologies. However in this chapter, she becomes a woman beginning to be "aware of herself, that she was a separate entity in the midst of an unseparated obscurity" (263). Growing self-awareness is a definitive quality of a *Bildungsheld*. However her perception of being "separate" from the "unseparated obscurity" identifies her particularly as a modernist *Bildungsheld* since, as previously stated by Castle, the hero within the modernist *Bildungsroman* resists conformity and socialization. Through this resistance, the individual reclaims humanity and resists the effects of socialization, which in the modern novel comprises the dehumanization and loss of individual aesthetic-spiritual beliefs.

Also in this chapter, the institution that represents socialization is represented by the protestant church. While attempting to uphold Christian practices, Ursula questions

“How could one keep up a relationship with that which one denied?” (Lawrence 264). She questions religion’s ability to force individual acts of charity and rather, generalizes one’s experience, by compelling one to act in accordance to ideology. She realizes that “there was something unclean and degrading about this humble side of Christianity” because “random” acts of kindness become institutionalized and unnatural (265). She comes to this realization when

Theresa slapped Ursula on the face. Ursula, in a mood of Christian humility, silently presented the other side of the face. Which Theresa, in exasperation at the challenge, also hit. Whereupon Ursula, with boiling heart, went meekly away.
(265)

Her denial of Christian charity is based on how it forces the individual to act out of character. Despite her struggle “to do what was right...she didn’t want to do what the gospels said” because it goes against her personal, humanist beliefs, an early example of Ursula performing as the modernist *Bildungsheld* resisting social conformity (264).

Once she realizes that religion inherently conflicts with her aesthetic-spiritual beliefs, she states that “One was not oneself, one was merely a half-stated question. How to become oneself, how to know the question and the answer of the oneself” was a process of internal discourse which only the individual can decide (264). Seeking to answer her question of “how could one become free” by filling the impersonal void through satisfying the “immediate need, the immediate satisfaction,” Ursula begins her journey of understanding sexuality and how it shapes identity; thus representing Castle’s definition of the *Bildungsheld* as one who seeks out harmonization (267). Only when she

becomes introduced to Skrebensky and sex does Ursula realize how she can establish an identity unrestrained by the controlling and suppressing ideologies of society.

When she first meets Skrebensky, their discussion about what they prefer to study associates each of them with two contrasting ideologies. For instance, the fact that Ursula is interested in languages, which conflicts with Skrebensky's study of engineering, identifies her as subjective and him as objective. Furthermore, Ursula's observation that Skrebensky "seemed perfectly, even fatally established," is a comment on how he represents socialization (271). Even when they become sexual, Skrebensky continues to represent socialization. For him, the act of kissing is "asserting his will over her" (280). However for Ursula, "she would kiss him just because she wanted to," not to control him or to conform him to her ideologies, but for the sake of sexual satisfaction (281). Her subjectivity and desire for identity purposely conflict with his objectivity to establish how her sexuality represents nonconformity. Lawrence's strategy reflects Foucault's thoughts on the relationship between power and pleasure, that "power that lets itself be invaded by the pleasure it is pursuing; and opposite it, power asserting itself in the pleasure of showing off, scandalizing, or resisting. Capture and seduction, confrontation and mutual reinforcement" (Foucault 45).

Before experimenting with her own sexual identity, Ursula becomes aware, through Skrebensky, of the social consequences of publicly expressing pleasure. For example, Skrebensky discusses the affair between his friend Ingram and Emily. Since this couple made a public display of their pleasure, Emily becomes the one that "wouldn't be seen in the streets with Ingram" because society ostracizes women's sexuality (Lawrence 276). Once Ingram and Emily's sexual experience becomes a "common tale afterwards,"

the hold of normative discourse over Skrebensky and his sexuality is firmly established. Emily and Ingram's experience then uphold ideology's purpose: warning other young people of the penalties associated to expressing pleasure outside of the socially accepted parameters of marriage (276). As Foucault stated in his analysis, the Victorian period dealt with all forms of "deviant" sexuality harshly and effectively.

The fact that Ursula is aware of how society stigmatizes individuals who publically pursue fulfilling their sexual desires makes every one of her sexual acts a conscious choice to resist society's laws in order to fulfill her sexual identity, exemplifying Engelberg's observation that "always, with Ursula, there is yearning followed by enactment; she never retreats, she always chooses" (109). When she and Skrebensky first kiss, the "hot, drenching surge" functions as the release of both of their repressed sexualities (278). Instead of him controlling her and taking what he desires from her, "she drew him nearer, she let him come further," thus demonstrating her control over the sexual moment (278). Her awareness of "what a kiss might be" and that "the same, deep-reaching kiss" (278) will never be repeated, demonstrates an awareness not only of herself but of how society attempts to eliminate sexual pleasure from the sexual act and focus instead on procreation according to Foucault, where all illegitimate forms of sexuality are "driven out, denied, and reduced to silence" (Foucault 4).

Her awareness that Skrebensky serves as a form of socialization begins when she analyzes whether or not she should define her sexuality by her own definition or by his. She considers the possibility that she "could limit and define herself against him, the male" but chose to "be her maximum self, female, oh female, triumphant for one moment in exquisite assertion against the male, in supreme contradistinction to the male" (281).

Here Ursula asserts a female identity and female sexuality that transgresses against a patriarchal institutional ideology that governs sex.

Furthermore, at Tom's wedding it becomes even clearer how drastically Ursula's view of sex contrasts with Skrebensky's view. Ursula's interaction with the moon, where she wants to open her breasts and body to possess "more communion with the moon, consummation" is free and natural, unable to be expressed or confined within a social discourse (296). While she experiences this intense physical and sexual epiphany, he places "a big, dark cloak around her" to bind her to socialization (296). Yet she wants "her naked self...[to] be[] upon the moonlight, dashing the moonlight with her breasts...to fling away her clothing and flee away" (296). Ursula does not fully realize her sexual self because Skrebensky is "set and straining with its tension to encompass her and compel her...[and] set a bond around her and compel her" (297). While she almost experiences an orgasm, he attempts to conform her to his will through the social conventions of masculine pleasure by making her feminine pleasure, in a very Foucaultian sense, "disappear upon its least manifestation – whether in acts or in words" (4).

However when "lust seized her," she takes control over his body, his will becomes "warm, soft iron yielded, yielded" while "her soul [becomes] crystallized with triumph" (Lawrence 298-9). After her orgasmic experience, she has to "caress him to life again. For he was dead" (299). The whole experience occurs with her receiving and controlling the pleasure, an empowerment that she very much fears because in the process "she had hurt herself, as if she had bruised herself, in annihilating him" (300). Her fear is not entirely grounded in the fact that she has "annihilated" Skrebensky, but

rather, it originates from her understanding that to place oneself into a sexual discourse automatically introduces an individual into a discourse that may destroy identity for the sake of another's pleasure. At the expense of Skrebensky's emasculation, her sexual release allows her to observe "How lovely, how amazing life was" (301). Despite Skrebensky's attempts to suppress her sexual identity, she remains whole and in control of it, yet after this she is hesitant about entering into a sexual discourse fully knowing what dangers it holds.

Skrebensky on the other hand has a completely opposite reaction. While in church, she observes that "he seemed very much clothed" (301). By covering his body completely after the sexual experience, his "sexuality was [being] carefully confined," a trait which Foucault observed within the Victorian period (Foucault 3). Skrebensky's shame and attempt to distance himself from pleasure by clothing his body completely, conveys both his and ideology's fear of a female sexual identity free from the established parameters of marriage.

Ideology is further represented through the discourse of the church service. Here the function of sex is seen in the reading where "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth" (301). This is exactly what Foucault observes of the Victorian period, an ideology that limits sex to its purely procreation and utilitarian purposes. By having this religious reading follow the sexual experience, Lawrence emphasizes the conflicting discourses between identity and socialization.

Ursula's opinions of religion correlate to those of the modernist Bildungsroman: "Multiplying and replenishing the earth bored her. Altogether it seemed merely a vulgar

and stock – raising sort of business. She was left quite cold by man’s stock – breeding lordship over beast and fishes” (301). She reveals her contempt for an ideology supported by religious and social institutions that attempt to eliminate pleasurable attributes of sex and refuses to conform to society’s beliefs. Because of her sexual experience the previous night, she consciously resists this ideology, illustrating both of Castle’s and Foucault’s arguments. By having her state that “in her soul she mocked at this multiplication,” Lawrence criticizes the institutionalization of sexuality and the suppression of the sexual identity (301).

At the end of Chapter 11, Lawrence shows how the rainbow serves religion’s purpose of socialization by representing the contract between God and humanity, in which God promises never to destroy the earth with water as long as his followers will use sexuality for procreation. She was amused by the idea that “some nymphs would relate how they had hung on the side of the ark, peeped in, and heard Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, sitting in their place under the rain, saying, how they four were the only men on earth now, because the lord had drowned all the rest” (302). As the sermon proceeds, Ursula’s attention during the reading of the book of Genesis, when Noah and his sons have survived God’s flood, becomes focused on the word “flesh.” Her questions about why the Bible stresses the word flesh and “Who was this lord of flesh” are questions of who controls the flesh and determines how it should be used (302). Within this context both the rainbow and flesh are being interpreted through the religious institution as means of suppressing sexuality.

Ursula however does not become fully aware of how important her sexuality is to shaping her identity until the end of Chapter 15, “The Bitterness of Ecstasy,” when she

experiences sex within the parameters of her engagement with Skrebensky. When analyzing Skrebensky's and Ursula's last sexual experience together, Cowan identifies that "Ursula renounces the forms of sexuality [she] has taken in her relationships with Winifred Inger and Anton Skrebensky, as she had earlier rejected the marriage proposal of Anthony Schofield" because "she must resist whatever would diminish her true self and prevent her from coming into her own being" (87). Although "she is awakened for the first time to the awful power of self – and its dangers: and it frightens her, enough to prevent her from severing her relationship with Skrebensky," she is not consciously aware of why she must end the relationship (Engelberg 109). The failure of physical pleasure proves that her body first becomes aware of how marriage and Skrebensky would lead to the loss of her identity.

Cowan and Engelberg argue that Ursula realizes that marriage represents the loss of her sexual identity; however, both disregard her letter in the concluding chapter, "The Rainbow," when she tells Skrebensky that she is pregnant with his child. Her letter reflects what society expects, a pregnant woman must give birth to a child within marriage. When she says "For what had a woman but to submit? What was her flesh but for childbearing, her strength for her children and her husband, the giver of life? At last she was a woman," she places society's ideologies into her own discourse (450). Not until she becomes unconscious, in a typically modernist post-Freudian strategy, is she allowed to resist and rid herself of socialization.

Must she belong to him, must she adhere to him? Something compelled her, and yet it was not real. Always the ache, the ache of unreality, of her belonging to Skrebensky. What bound her to him when she was not bound to him? Why did the

falsity persist? Why did the falsity gnaw, gnaw, gnaw at her, why could she not wake up to clarity, to reality? (455)

Within herself, without society imposing its ideologies, she realizes that she does not need Skrebensky to raise the child. She understands that her identity need not be sacrificed for the sake of financial stability and comfort. Her sexuality seeks “the unknown, the unexplored, the undiscovered,” which in all actuality is her identity (457).

When she comes to this conclusion, she reclaims her identity and sexuality because this “sexual passion, takes the power of shaping [her] destiny out of [her] hands, so that [she] is no longer personally responsible, yet it gives [her] the power to realize a self” (Alden 114). She then is able to reinterpret the rainbow at the end of the novel, which previously religious discourse identified as suppressing human sexuality, as “the earth’s new architecture , the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built up in a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the over-arching heaven” (Lawrence 459). Only through her resistance to socialization, her conscious decision to not sacrifice her sexual identity, and her understanding of the importance of retaining self-identity is she able to “anticipate the coming freedom” as represented by Lawrence through sex and the rainbow (Foucault 6).

Resisting Social Conformity: Identifying the role of sexuality in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

"Joyce's fiction...would have less stature, less of a sense of centrality to the intellectual life of our century, less 'modernity' in our estimation, did it not respond to this felt importance of sexuality and sexual change" (Brown 4).

Just as Castle argued that scholars focused on Joyce solely in "terms of [his] innovation and experimentation" (2), Richard Brown similarly argues in *James Joyce and Sexuality* how critics "rarely had a clear distinction in their minds between Joyce's treatment of sexuality and what they considered to be his exaggerated interest" (Brown 1). By "exaggerated" Brown means perverted in this context, referring to how early scholars would either ignore or devalue the sexual subject matter of Joyce's works. He validates his premise by citing both Stuart Gilbert's and T. S. Eliot's analysis of Joyce's works, noting how both scholars disregarded the subject-matter of sex and instead turned the focus "towards what seemed to be comparatively unexceptionable correspondences between *Ulysses* and *The Odyssey*" (1). For Brown, sex is the "heart of what [Joyce's] fiction might be trying to investigate" (1). His argument coincides with my investigation of how sex functions as the critical theme within the modernist Bildungsroman because it offers the hero an opportunity to retain an aesthetical-spiritual identity despite ideology's attempts to suppress it. When Brown states that Joyce wrote within a period "recognized as a time of much questioning of conceptions about sexuality and as a time of considerable visible change in the institution of marriage," his observation coincides with Foucault's theory concerning sexuality and marriage within the Victorian period, that "sexuality was acknowledge[d] in social space as well as the heart of every household,

but it was utilitarian and fertile one: the parents' bedroom" (3). Just as Castle distinguished the differences among the various types of Bildungsroman, noting how within the nineteenth-century Bildungsroman the function of social mobility replaced the development of the aesthetical-spiritual self, and just as Foucault argued that ideology uses a variety of discourses to suppress sex in the nineteenth century, Brown similarly describes the Victorian period in terms of its "sexual repression and ignorance" and defines the early-twentieth-century in terms of its "'modern' enlightenment and toleration" (Brown 4). However Brown does not apply a Foucaultian approach of identifying "the ways in which sexuality is 'put into discourse'" but rather analyzes sexuality in terms of its subject matter within Joyce's works (3).

Wolfgang Streit's *Joyce/Foucault: Sexual Confessions* offers a more post-structural approach to how sex functions in Joyce's oeuvre. Streit considers how Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* "supplies the historical framework for Joyce's sexual confessions" and argues that Joyce "self-critically questions his own texts' sexual discourse" (2). In accordance with Foucault's work, Streit analyzes how "desire and the sex act as they are spoken of, as they become part of an epistemological sphere by virtue of that speaking...are transformed into language or discourse" (Streit 4). Furthermore, he notes that regardless of how sex is portrayed within Joyce's works, it is always placed within a social and political context (Streit 6). Yet Streit's study is restricted to the function sex serves for Joyce within the discourse of confession, while my study will attempt to combine his observations with Castle's study of the modernist Bildungsroman to show how sex in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* stimulates the development of Stephen Dedalus's aesthetical-spiritual identity, a crucial development within the

modernist Bildungsroman. Once achieved, Stephen is on the verge of fulfilling Joyce's modernist aesthetics and he understands how both Irish patriotism and religion serve the sole purposes of ideology, not identity.

Before Stephen enters into the sexual discourse in Joyce's modernist Bildungsroman, he is introduced to the conflict between ideology and pleasure when Dante, Mr. Casey, and his father discuss the scandal surrounding Parnell's affair with Mrs. O'Shea. Parnell's sexual affair with a married woman "provokes his loss of power, driven by the religious order but manifested on the political level" (Streit 29). The social consequences that ideology imposes on Parnell coincide with Foucault's theory that once sexual identity enters into social discourse, it is automatically subsumed by it and extinguished. Quite accurately Mr. Casey predicts that Stephen will remember "the language with which the priests and the priests' pawns broke Parnell's heart and hounded him into his grave," because in the novel Stephen finds himself in the same situation, resisting ideology when he is arguing the validity of his modernist aesthetics (Joyce 42). Mr. Casey's discussion of "language" demonstrates Foucault's point about the limitations discourse places on the expression of sexuality, that the "verbalization of sex continues to expand in this circle, since language can speak about the body incessantly without every reaching it" (Streit 32). Stephen's development of language and aesthetics coincide with the maturity of his sexuality and adolescent identity.

Throughout the heated debate between Dante and Mr. Casey concerning Parnell's fall, Dante consistently represents the voice of ideology, saying that the Irish priests were "doing their duty in warning the people" about Parnell's sexual affair and that the bishops and priests "must be obeyed" or individuals, like Parnell, will suffer the same social

consequences, but the point is not that Parnell's sin was sexual, but the fact that his sexual transgression was exposed and he was "a public sinner" (Joyce 39-40). Parnell not only represents the experience of sex outside the socially established parameters of marriage, but he also placed the pleasurable attributes of sex above its "utilitarian and fertile" purposes (Foucault 3). It comes as no surprise then that Dante views "Billy with the lip...the of guts up in Armagh...[and] Lord Leitrim's coachman"⁵ as moral leaders because each publically accused Parnell of being a sinner and assisted in enforcing ideology by denouncing Parnell's name and reputation.

Although Mr. Casey argues that there should be a separation between religion and politics, for ideology's purposes both serve the same purpose of controlling sex. However Simon Dedalus and Mr. Casey refuse to adhere to the Catholic Church's decision regarding Parnell, disagreeing with the methods through which the institution enforced its ideology. Because it was a private affair both men feel that it should not have entered into the discourse of politics, yet by placing it into social discourse, the priests and bishops were able to control the politician's sexual identity and suppress it. Mr. Casey's story of "a very famous spit" conveys his opinion of social discourse: by spitting into the eye of a drunken old harridan who screams "I'm blinded! I'm blinded and drowned!" Joyce reveals Mr. Casey's desire to blind the Catholic Church (Joyce 44). His desire to see the end of the Church's meddling in politics is again witnessed at the end of the scene when he is "scraping the air from before his eyes with one hand as though he were tearing aside a cobweb" shouting "No God for Ireland" (46). Mr. Casey's desire to have Ireland cleansed of a religious institution is rooted in his desire to escape ideology, which

⁵ The Reverend William J. Walsh, archbishop of Dublin...the Reverend Michael Logue, archbishop of Armagh...and Lord Leitrim, an English Landlord (Gifford 144).

inspires Stephen's desire to escape religious discourse. However as Foucault points out, this can only occur when one possesses control over their own sexuality.

However, this is not the only time in Stephen's childhood when sex is suppressed by being introduced into discourse. At Clongowes Wood College, Streit notes how "religion plays its most prominent part...[because] the sex of the pupils is being monitored and discussed" (30). He refers of course to the scene when the students are discussing rumors of some of the older fellows being caught in a homosexual act with two younger students, Simon Moonan and Tusker Boyle. The fact that the older students are given a choice between corporal punishment and expulsion shows the two modes through which ideology enforces socialization: submission or exile. Cecil Thunder's comments that the one student, Corrigan "is right and the other fellows are wrong because a flogging wears off after a bit but a fellow that has been expelled from college is known all his life on account of it," summarize the central tenet of the modernist Bildungsroman (50). Cecil is correct that by submitting to corporal punishment, Corrigan retains the possibility of social mobility. But yet at what price? By doing this, Corrigan sacrifices his sexual identity while the other students are expelled knowing that their homosexual act is placed within discourse; however their sexual identities are not subsumed by ideology...at this specific moment. Although in the scene they are in control with how their sexuality is placed into discourse, they however gain a sexual identity at the cost of becoming socially and economically disempowered. Thus revealing the modernist Bildungsheld's dilemma: to retain social stability or aesthetical-spiritual identity. Cecil's comment upholds the purpose of ideology but goes against the fundamental purpose of the modernist Bildungsroman, a point Castle establish in his

argument. Parnell's fall from political power and the priests' punishment of homosexuality introduce Stephen at an early age to the purpose religion plays in repressing sexual identity. He learns that to place one's sexual identity into a normative discourse automatically puts the individual into a dilemma of choosing socialization or a sexual identity.

As the novel continues to unfold, Stephen becomes closer to experiencing the suppressing effects of ideology personally. Previously Stephen only knew of Parnell through the political discussion of his family and becomes merely associated with ideology when he witnesses the older students being punished at Clongowes, but once he is older ideology attempts to conform his aesthetic beliefs more directly. In chapter 2 section 3 on the night of the Whitsuntide play, Stephen's memory takes him back to the end of his first term in college when he was confronted by his fellow students concerning who were the greatest writers and poets of English literature. When Boland poses the question on who is the best poet, Heron quickly chooses Lord Tennyson which both Nash and Boland agree with. However, Stephen "forget[s] the silent vows he had been making and burst[s] out: -Tennyson a poet! Why, he's only a rhymester!" (79). Once he speaks out against the socially accepted merits of Tennyson's poetry and confesses that Byron is the greatest poet, Heron, Nash, and Boland take on the role of ideology and attempt to socialize Stephen to their Victorian aesthetics. Just as Parnell's scandal and the students' homosexuality were labeled as immoral by ideology, so do the boys label Byron as "a heretic and immoral too" (80). As both Parnell and the homosexual students suffered the social consequences of their sexual actions, similarly Stephen is punished for his aesthetic beliefs. Because Stephen refuses to sacrifice his aesthetic beliefs, "Nash

pinioned his arms behind while Boland seized a long cabbage stump which was lying in the gutter. Struggling and kicking under the cuts of the cane and the blows of the knotty stump Stephen was borne back against a barbed wire fence” (80). Yet when faced with the choice between surrendering his aesthetics or conforming to society’s, Stephen proves himself to be a modernist *Bildungsheld*, because he refuses to submit to their physical and verbal abuse.

In chapter 2 section 5, Stephen uses the money earned from his essay prize to “appease the fierce longs of his heart” when he begins experiencing sexual fantasies, seeing a “figure that had seemed to him by day demure and innocent...by night...her face transfigured by a lecherous cunning, her eyes bright with brutish joy” (94). Following these “dark orgiastic riot[s],” Stephen feels the “keen and humiliating sense of transgression” (94). This “transgression” relates to Foucault’s point that “the mere fact that one is speaking about [sex] has the appearance of a deliberate transgression” and is when the hero realizes that his desires do not correlate with ideology’s purposes of procreation (6). Stephen continues to experience the “wasting fires of lust” wanting to “sin with another of his kind, to force another being to sin with him and to exult with her in sin. He felt some dark presence moving irresistibly upon him.” His body recognizes the pleasure that his mind, his faith, and ideology all deny. Yet despite this, pleasure refuses to be suppressed and he “awaken[s] from a slumber of centuries” accepting the prostitute’s embrace (95). As he “surrender[s] himself to her, body and mind, conscious of nothing in the world but the dark pressure of her softly parting lips” the unspoken pleasure becomes the “vehicle of a vague speech” and he finds himself “strong and fearless and sure of himself” (96). Only when Stephen allows his sexual identity free

reign does he liberate himself from ideology and achieve a “dark peace” and a “cold indifferent knowledge of himself” (97). As a modernist hero, he begins to recognize a self not defined by social discourse through sex.

However at this point Stephen is not completely free from the effects of ideology. As Streit observes, “the text reveals sin as the incentive that encourages Stephen to turn to the Virgin Mary” which leads him to confess and momentarily sacrifice his sexual identity for “salvation” (32). The iconic imagery of the Virgin Mary serves both Stephen’s and ideology’s “desexualized concept of women...as virgins or saints actually lays the foundation for the written expression of sexuality that continues to spread throughout *A Portrait*” (44). This is why Stephen treats Emma as the Virgin Mary, imagining himself kissing her sleeves and submitting himself to her will (44). The retreat reinforces this social discourse to the point that a “thick fog seems to compass his mind” (Joyce 104). Due to the Virgin Mary and the retreat he begins to question his sexuality, experiencing a shame that made the “sordid details of his orgies stank under his very nostrils” and establishing a deep rooted fear of hell (107). Joyce presents a hell where “all laws are overturned: there is no thought of family or country, of ties or relationships” (112). Joyce depicts a church where hell is the recognition of self. For when there is no thought of family, country, ideology, or relationship, all that is left is identity and even in hell it continues to exist. For the church and ideology, that is the only unforgiveable sin: identity.

Despite ideology’s attempts at socializing Stephen and his own methods of suppressing his pleasure, Stephen finds himself disgusted by “the rigidity of the lifestyle led by members of a religious order” (Streit 34). Furthermore, the monitoring and

physical abuse of students' sexuality at Clongowes Wood was too fresh in his mind, while the religious discourse threatened "his wish to write by destabilizing his linguistic competence: 'a din of meaningless words drove his seasoned thoughts hither and thither confusedly' (4.487-89)" (Streit 35). As a modernist Bildungsheld, he realizes that his "destiny was to be elusive of social or religious orders...He was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering among the snares of the world" (Joyce 144). The snares that Stephen is referring to are those set by ideology through either religious or educational institutions. When he discovers pleasure from the "disorder, the misrule and confusion of his father's house and the stagnation of vegetable life," he begins to realize the power that sexuality serves in the formation of his identity (144).

This is fully realized with his encounter with the bird girl. Streit cites Edmund L. Epstein that this scene is a "revision of an account of his encounter with a prostitute in the *ur-Portrait*" (45). He is described as being "unheeded, happy and near to the wild heart of life. He was alone and young and willful and wildhearted" (Joyce 151). When he views her, "an outburst of profane joy" overwhelms him and during this moment "no word had broken the holy silence of his ecstasy" (152). Continuously throughout the scene he refers to himself being alone, within the realm of silence, and overwhelmed by his emotional response. Although the blue and white clothing of the bird girl functions as a Marian image, Stephen takes himself out of social discourse, away from the influences of ideology, and achieves his aesthetical-spiritual self.

Although he reclaims possession of his identity, he struggles with expressing it in his modernist aesthetics. Obviously he is a modernist hero, especially when he says that

when “the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets” (177). He clearly identifies the discourses which Foucault argues limits the free expression of sexuality. Later when he discusses his definition of “tragic emotion” with Lynch, he describes it as a “face looking two ways, towards terror and towards pity,” which captures the two ways in which ideology handles the public expression of an individual’s sexual identity (179). Also by making the tragic emotion “static” he quite accurately reveals what Foucault argues concerning ideology; that ideology resist change and the multiplicity of discourse which sex offers (179). However when he discusses how art is either static or kinetic, and that the “arts which excite them, pornographical or didactic, are therefore improper arts” he is mistaken (179). As Brown points out, Stephen’s

desire to distance art from sexual desire in this theory is merely superficial. If we trace back Joyce’s aestheticism to its origin in the debating society paper ‘Art and Life’ dramatized in Stephen Hero, it is clear that the idea that art should be independent arises not in opposition to political or to erotic art but in direct opposition to those arts pressed into the service of the Catholic Church or patriotism. (131)

Even though Stephen realizes his aesthetical-spiritual self through his sexual development and that this sexual identity persists at the end of Joyce’s Bildungsroman, he still struggles to express it. Stephen is not Joyce in this regard. Joyce purposely has his modernist hero fail in expressing his modern aesthetics, for within Stephen’s failure is the possibility of the development of his identity, through both his aesthetics and sexuality.

Conclusion: Modernist Bildungsroman as Sexual Bildungsroman

“The Bildungsroman continues to be relevant for novelists who may generally repudiate the values of the German Enlightenment, but who embrace its core value of Bildung. Like the sonnet, the Bildungsroman is tremendously elastic, its conventions so few and relatively simple that resistance to them beyond a certain point is tantamount to putting them aside altogether” (Castle 4).

With modernist authors such as Lawrence and Joyce, sexuality becomes the fundamental force that inspires their heroes to successfully achieve identity, despite, as each author highlights, the normative discourse represented in religious and educational institutions. The fact that both *The Rainbow* and *A Portrait* had to overcome editors' Victorian views to become published, and shortly after were censored for their “immoral” content, proves that each author was working on an evolving tradition that could no longer abide nor be governed by a Victorian ideology. While Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895) began questioning and pushing the limitations of social mobility and socialization in the Victorian Bildungsroman, by 1915 Lawrence and Joyce had been key to transforming the traditional novel to promote humanist values, thus establishing the modernist Bildungsroman. Within those twenty years, artists not only began to criticize the intentions of a Victorian ideology but were in the process of creating an aesthetical-spiritual philosophy that would purposely contradict and undermine any and all forms of normative discourse: hence why “modernist aesthetic practices are often discussed in terms of innovation and experimentation” (Castle 2). This is why Joyce's and Lawrence's combination of sexuality and identity within the modernist Bildungsroman becomes one of the central issues addressed by all authors within the twentieth century.

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