

“*The Voyage Out*”:  
No “*Tempest*” in a Teapot:  
Woolf’s Revision of Shakespeare  
and Critique of Female Education

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Quite suddenly the storm relaxed its grasp. It happened at tea; the expected paroxysm of the blast gave out just as it reached its climax and dwindled away, and the ship instead of taking the usual plunge went steadily....[T]he sky was swept clean, the waves, although steep, were blue, and after their view of the strange under-world, inhabited by phantoms, people began to live among tea-pots and loaves of bread with greater zest than ever.

VIRGINIA WOOLF, *The Voyage Out*

THIS STORM CASTS Virginia Woolf’s *The Voyage Out* (1915) into several thematic directions which this article pursues, including the “tempest” which interrupts the voyage to the fictionalized nation of Santa Marina, and the strange phantoms which haunt both Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and Woolf’s novel. We also witness the civilized veneer of Edwardian England, with its bread and tea-pots coexisting uneasily with those sea-changed phantoms that swim beneath the surface. Finally, we observe the eroticized nature of the ship, and the natural world around it, which contrasts so sharply with Woolf’s heroine, Rachel Vinrace, who never achieves a corresponding sense of erotic fulfillment, or, as important, fulfillment of an intellectual nature. The Shakespearean echoes which filter through this scene in *The Voyage Out* foreground some of the ways in which Woolf’s novel may be read as a revision of Shakespeare, as a novel which expatiates on an important subtext of *The Tempest*: namely, the nature of an appropriate female education.

There are a few similarities between the education of Shakespeare's Miranda and Woolf's Rachel — both young women essentially serve as instruments used to expand their fathers' power and influence — but there are a number of significant differences. In *The Tempest*, we initially associate Miranda with the garden and innocence, but by the play's end, we feel certain that she has been well prepared for her life at court, confirming Ferdinand's prediction from Act One that "O, if a virgin, / And your affection not gone forth, I'll make you / The Queen of Naples" (1.2.451-53).<sup>1</sup> However, Rachel Vinrace fares far worse than Miranda, never surmounting her self-proclaimed ignorance. In contrast to the dangers of *The Tempest*, which are ultimately "safely ordered," Woolf's novel reflects a view of the world in which everything is fragmented and disordered and the dangers are *real*, culminating in Rachel's death. As a result, Woolf uses the subplot involving Miranda's instruction to explore the failure of female education, as well as the role it plays in Rachel's tragedy. In *The Voyage Out*, Woolf explores the implications of a modern-day "Miranda's" education, and considers the ways in which the respective marriage plots involving Miranda and Rachel can be viewed as power struggles, contests which the fathers inevitably win. Because Miranda matures into such an intelligent woman, confident in her own sexuality, and has an ostensibly bright future, Woolf revisits the story, first, to focus on the daughter (rather than the father), and second, to highlight the struggles faced by a young woman in the early twentieth century who hopes to achieve a similar sense of social and intellectual fulfillment. Rachel suggests an ironic contrast to Miranda, and her fate demonstrates that early twentieth-century educational practices could never produce a woman as self-possessed as Shakespeare's young heroine.

In addition to analyzing the similarity of Woolf's and Shakespeare's "strange underworlds" in Section II of this essay, demonstrating how Woolf does indeed revise *The Tempest*, this article suggests some of the ways in which reading Woolf and Shakespeare together, through the lens of postcolonial theory, might work to articulate the specific nature of Rachel's tragedy.

As June Cummins suggests perceptively in her essay "Death and the Maiden Voyage," Rachel's position at the margins of a colonial culture, when subjected to a postcolonial analysis, is a tenuous one. As a member of the colonial culture enjoying the spoils of Santa Marina, Rachel cannot be viewed as completely analogous to the colonized natives; however, as Cummins writes, "Woolf's novel demonstrates how the native inhabitants of Santa Marina, silenced and overshadowed, reflect Rachel's similar marginalization by patriarchal culture" (205). Although postcolonial and feminist theorists both concern themselves with the analysis of marginalized Others, there have been numerous and well-documented instances of a mutual suspicion. In particular, postcolonial critics such as Gayatri Spivak (in her polemical analysis of *Jane Eyre*, for example) have objected when feminists have exploited the hierarchies which underpin the colonial project, asserting a (European) female subjectivity which depends upon the silence and absence of the "third-world woman."

Woolf, however, falls into no such traps in *The Voyage Out*. Rachel Vinrace is far from a liberal-feminist "memsahib" whose privileges are predicated upon her "superiority" to her Santa Marinese female counterparts. Rachel is ultimately destroyed by the same forces of patriarchal, imperialist aggression which render the native residents of the colony similarly powerless. This article attempts to bridge further connections between feminist and postcolonial readings of Woolf's novel, by examining Rachel's "intellectual colonization" (a phrase I borrow from Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar), which allows us to see significant parallels between Rachel and the natives of Santa Marina, a notion underscored by the intertextual relationship between *The Tempest* and *The Voyage Out*.<sup>2</sup> Woolf appropriates elements of Shakespeare's plot and text to illustrate how Rachel loses her battle for intellectual home rule in a manner that Shakespeare's Miranda does not. Woolf offers a critique of aggressive colonial masculinity which denounces the chauvinism of her own culture. There are two key elements of this critique to be articulated in Section III of the present essay. First, I demonstrate how Rachel is regarded as an absence by the forces of

colonial patriarchy in a manner, which also resembles the exclusion of the colonized from the spaces where knowledge is both derived and disseminated. Second, I discuss how various educational practices imprison Rachel in a perpetual state of infantilization, a condition shared not only by the colonized, but by females in the colonizing class as well. It becomes clear that Woolf's heroine, Rachel, seems suspended in an intertextual network *between* the roles of Miranda and Caliban, as both a beneficiary *and* victim of the colonial culture of which she is a member.

## II

This study is not the first critical work to have observed some of the points of comparison between *The Tempest* and *The Voyage Out*. Alice Fox in particular has established several connections between the plots of the two works, but she devotes most of her work to the ways in which Woolf alludes to a wide range of Elizabethan texts, including *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, Edmund Spenser's "Epithalamion," and the travel narratives of Sir Walter Raleigh. However, the connections to *The Tempest* remain the most significant. A number of the parallels are fairly conspicuous: Rachel, like Miranda, is the European-born innocent abroad, who has been sheltered from encounters with the opposite sex. Raised by her father after her mother's death, Rachel first glimpses her "Ferdinand" in the person of Terence Hewet. However, there are additional parallels between *The Tempest* and *The Voyage Out* which require more extensive analysis. The "Caliban" who first shatters Rachel's innocence may be (of all unlikely characters) the Tory MP, Richard Dalloway, whose unwelcome advances terrify Rachel during the voyage to Santa Marina. The connection between Dalloway and Caliban is confirmed when we consider Rachel's subsequent nightmare and the Caliban-like presence of the "little deformed man who squatted on the floor gibbering, with long nails" (77). In yet another parallel, Prospero's Mediterranean island becomes the South American nation of Santa Marina in *The Voyage Out*, where Rachel's father is a true imperialist, bringing goods to South America and exporting its raw materials and wealth back



to England. The twist in *The Voyage Out*, however, is that Vinrace, the modern-day Prospero, tends too much to his own business and not enough to his daughter's education. Unlike Miranda, Rachel has learned almost nothing from her father, and Woolf's novel subsequently veers away from romance toward tragedy.

Although the characters in the novel speak generally of Shakespeare on several occasions, including Mr. Grice's avowed preference for *Henry V* (for him, Prince Hal is "the model of an English gentleman" [54]) and Mrs. Fletcher, who simply "hates Shakespeare" (268), there are passages where *The Tempest* is referred to explicitly. Early in the voyage out, Clarissa Dalloway meets with Mr. Grice, who shows Clarissa the treasures of the sea that he has collected in an assortment of glass jars:

"They have swum about among bones," Clarissa sighed.

"You're thinking of Shakespeare," said Mr. Grice, and taking down a copy from a shelf well lined with books, recited in an emphatic nasal voice:

*Full fathom five thy father lies.*

"A grand fellow, Shakespeare," he said, replacing the volume.

(54)

A second allusion to "Ariel's Song" returns again later as a book-end to the first. Near the end of *The Voyage Out*, after the bizarre (and largely tacit) marriage agreement between Rachel and Terence (282), we hear again these Shakespearean echoes when Terence describes his first impressions of Rachel: "When I first saw you,' he began, 'I thought you were like a creature who'd lived all its life among pearls and old bones'" (293). In *The Tempest*, the singing of Ariel leads Ferdinand from the shore, and he claims that the music "crept by me upon the waters,/ Allaying both their fury and my passion" (1.2.395-96). Believing he has lost his father in the tempest summoned by Prospero, Ferdinand's grief has been tempered by the ever-present music which fills the play. However, as neither Ferdinand's father nor Ferdinand himself was ever truly imperiled, Woolf strips some of the illusions from *The Tempest*, since Rachel's endangerment proves to be so much more real. Although "Ariel's Song" is ultimately a deception, music does play

a similarly important role in both *The Voyage Out* and *The Tempest*. Like the song's effect on Ferdinand, Rachel's music is one of the means by which she comforts herself. Rachel uses her piano to isolate herself from a world in which she, like Ferdinand, seems to have "lost" her father, a man whose first priority is clearly his Hull-based South American export trade: "To feel anything strongly was to create an abyss between oneself and others who feel strongly perhaps but differently. It was far better to play the piano and forget the rest" (36).

An important connection between *The Tempest* and *The Voyage Out* is this pervading sense of parental longing. In Shakespeare's play, Ferdinand is not the only character who has "lost" a parent. The death of Miranda's mother has made Prospero solely responsible for raising his daughter. Similarly, in Woolf's novel, Evelyn Murgatroyd is the "daughter of a mother and no father" (190), while Rachel Vinrace lost her mother at the age of eleven (34). Woolf foregrounds this particular feature of Shakespeare's plot, and it highlights the consequences of the child's single-parent education. More specifically, Woolf is interested in an education entrusted to the care of the father. In a sense, we can view an important part of Rachel's tragedy as the inadequacy of her education; Rachel is largely neglected by her father and has been raised by her two aunts with an apparent ignorance of the world about her, including, most damagingly, her own sexuality. Woolf introduces us to her main character early in the novel by discussing Rachel's education with an intriguing allusion to the age of Shakespeare:

Her mind was in the state of an intelligent man's in the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth; she would believe practically anything she was told, invent reasons for anything she said. . . . All the energies that might have gone into languages, science or literature, that might have made her friends, or shown her the world, poured straight into music. (34)

As I suggested earlier, the dangers of her condition are much more tangible to Rachel than to her counterparts in *The Tempest*. While critics such as Mitchell Leaska have viewed Rachel's death as her willful choice to reject a bourgeois marriage with

Terence Hewet (337), it is also possible to see her demise as tragic, an unnecessary consequence of an insufficient education.<sup>3</sup> I would tend to view Rachel's death, less as a form of resistance, but rather, as evidence of her victimization at the hands of a culture's repressive educational practices. Rachel's education has shielded her from knowledge — particularly sexual knowledge — in a manner far more extreme than appears in the admittedly fantastical world of *The Tempest*. Again, Woolf strips away the illusions in her Shakespearean revision. The link between Rachel's education and her ultimate death appears in an ironic passage immediately after Helen Ambrose has assumed responsibility for Rachel's instruction during their voyage. In a letter, she writes:

I have taken it upon myself to enlighten [Rachel]. . . . Keeping them ignorant [about human sexuality], of course, defeats its own object, and when they begin to understand they take it all much too seriously. My brother-in-law really deserved a catastrophe — which he won't get. (96-97)

The catastrophe does indeed occur, and it arrives during Helen's self-appointed watch as Rachel's educational guardian. The forces that have culminated in Rachel's current emotional and intellectual state have been set in motion far too early to be overturned in the course of the novel's narrative.

An additional connection between the heroines of the two works is their respective knowledge of their family histories. In Act 1 of *The Tempest*, we are introduced to both Prospero and his daughter. In addition to learning of Miranda's essential goodness, we quickly learn that she has a frustrated desire for self-knowledge: "You have often / Begun to tell me what I am; but stopped / And left me to a bootless inquisition, / Concluding, 'Stay; not yet'" (1.2.33-36). At this point in the story, Miranda knows nothing about her family's past and the circumstances which have led to her island exile. During her fourteen years of life, Miranda has been sheltered from a tale of an uncle who usurped her father's dukedom, as well as her father's own complicity in his downfall. As Prospero tells his daughter, "thee my dear one... / Art ignorant of what thou art" (1.2.17-18). Although her father has devoted himself to her education ("I, thy

schoolmaster, made thee more profit / Than other princes can" [1.2.173-74]), the knowledge contained in books has dominated Miranda's studies, rather than a sense of her family history. Although we never learn the exact nature of Miranda's curriculum, we can surmise that Prospero restricts himself to the profound knowledge of the natural world which was characteristic of his magus-like stature, in addition to an instruction in the social graces required of the future Queen of Naples. Absent from her studies, however, is a knowledge of her own family history. In fact, Miranda's mother is mentioned only once in Act 1 (2.55-59) — a passage where Prospero curiously implies that, if not for her mother's assurance that Prospero was indeed the child's father, Miranda's birth legitimacy could somehow be questioned. Other than Miranda, the female is largely an absence in the world of *The Tempest*, and when present, seems to be shrouded in a haze of suspicion and potential betrayal. Similar to Miranda, Rachel seems to have been sheltered from details of her family, particularly regarding her mother. In *The Voyage Out*, Helen Ambrose reveals to Rachel that her mother had been engaged to a man before Rachel's father and that "she enjoyed things. . . . [and] she got on with every kind of person, and then she made it all so amazingly — funny" (186). This information clearly contradicts what Rachel has learned from her aunts; the aunts' portrait of Rachel's mother is much less dynamic, "always making out that [Rachel's mother] was very sad and very good" (187). Because of this less-than-precise description of her mother's character, Rachel's self-knowledge, like Miranda's, has been frustrated by a distorted sense of her family's past.

Miranda also possesses two attributes which initially seem to resemble, or even exceed, Rachel's naiveté. First, Miranda falls in love with Ferdinand, the first man she has ever seen, her father excepted. Second, she possesses an essential optimism about the goodness of human nature despite the evidence of Antonio's, Sebastian's, and Alonso's treachery, as well as the sometimes cruel means with which her father has restored his power. Nevertheless, Miranda exclaims at the end of the play, "O Wonder! / How many goodly creatures are there here! . . . /

O brave new world / That has such people in't!" (5.1.184-87). Miranda's excitement at this moment is linked to her impending nuptials, which perhaps blinds her to the treachery surrounding her. Such excitement also resembles Rachel's illusory excitement at the "possibilities of knowledge" inspired by the gift of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, which is connected to her fleeting, and ultimately frustrated, desire to be a part of Terence Hewet's and St. John Hirst's masculine world of knowledge (175).

Despite these examples of a naiveté — which should be expected from a fourteen-year-old — Miranda consistently demonstrates an uncanny insight which does not fail to escape her father's attention; any points of comparison between the conditions of Miranda and Rachel end here. As Prospero recounts his tale of exile from Milan, Miranda asks a question which is quite incisive for a supposedly innocent girl: "Wherefore did they [the usurpers] not / That hour destroy us?" (1.2.138-39). She also later challenges her father, objecting to the labours he imposes on Ferdinand. Miranda rightly suspects some motive for her father's desire to imprison Ferdinand and tells her love, "Be of comfort. / My father's of a better nature sir, / Than he appears by speech. This is unwonted / Which now came from him" (1.2.499-502). Miranda rightly suspects that her father is merely testing the strength of Ferdinand's love, as Prospero later admits to Ferdinand, "All thy vexations / Were but trials of thy love" (4.1.5-6). Ferdinand has withstood his trials, much as the Biblical patriarch Jacob does for the hand of Rachel in Genesis, whose name adds yet another layer to the intertextual network between *The Tempest* and *The Voyage Out*. In addition, by the end of *The Tempest*, we have additional evidence that Miranda is Ferdinand's intellectual equal when Prospero lifts the curtain to reveal the couple channeling their sexual energies into a game of chess. True, Shakespeare makes a subtle reference to the couple's desire to "mate" at this time, but the playwright also demonstrates that Miranda's mind makes her a formidable opponent for her future husband and heir to the throne of Naples. If one recalls the expression of Prospero's pride in his daughter's education in Act 1, this later scene does confirm that

her father/schoolmaster has indeed “made [Miranda] more profit / Than other princes can” (1.2.173-74).<sup>4</sup>

In *The Voyage Out*, Rachel possesses a thirst for self-knowledge even greater than Miranda’s but usually without the latter’s insight. Through her conversations with Helen Ambrose, Rachel does try desperately to understand her place in the world and to come to terms with her latent sexuality. However, the reader of *The Voyage Out* sees that Rachel’s questions are asked too late in her life and are the product of an education which teaches her very little and grants too much time for idle contemplation. In chapter two, Woolf cynically describes the extent of the “one or two hours” of weekly schooling which Rachel receives:

At that moment Rachel was sitting in her room doing absolutely nothing. . . . The way she had been educated, joined to a fine natural indolence, was of course partly the reason for it, for she had been educated as the majority of well-to-do girls in the last part of the nineteenth century were educated. Kindly doctors and gentle old professors had taught her the rudiments of about ten different branches of knowledge. . . . But there was no subject in the world which she knew accurately. (33-34)

Although the narrator informs us that Rachel’s aunts have provided for her moral instruction, the demands on Rachel’s mind are far from rigorous: her teachers “would have soon have forced her to go through one piece of drudgery as thoroughly as they would have told her that her hands were dirty” (33-34). But despite her indolence, Rachel at least recognizes that this system needs reform, even if Terence and Rachel’s prescription for the education of their future children seems strangely unsatisfactory:

They went on to sketch an outline of the ideal education — how their daughter should be required from infancy to gaze at a large square of cardboard, painted blue, to suggest thoughts of infinity, for women were grown too practical; and their son — he should be taught to laugh at great men, that is at distinguished successful men, at men who wore ribands and rose to the tops of their trees. He should in no way resemble (Rachel added) St. John Hirst.

(294-95)

The exercise designed to inspire thoughts of infinity might only have added to Rachel’s confusion, but here, and throughout

the novel, Woolf also implies that the education planned for the male could also serve for the female; the prescription for the boys to learn to laugh at great men was certainly the more productive endeavour in Woolf's eyes. After all, as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have suggested, *The Voyage Out* is preoccupied with revisionist history: "[Woolf] had begun to question the histories of men that formed the staple of the early reading prescribed by [her father]" (14). In *The Voyage Out*, Woolf challenges the notion of history as comprised of the lives of great men, a tradition represented by the leitmotif of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*. This latter text is one which Hirst recommends to enhance Rachel's education, although Rachel ultimately rejects the work. Another example of Rachel's frustration with the masculine tradition of letters is the unread Cowper that she carries with her. The book had "bored her," which should not be surprising given Rachel's propensity for all things musical. Cowper's own aesthetic preferences clearly do not speak to Rachel's interests: "Give me a manly, rough line, with a deal of meaning in it, rather than a whole poem full of musical periods, that have nothing but their oily smoothness to recommend them" (Cowper 433). As a measure of her frustration with both books, however, Rachel has difficulty articulating her objections, since "read as she would, she could not grasp the meaning with her mind" (201).

Eventually, Rachel claims that Gibbon has a "perfect style," but is nevertheless "unyielding in mind" (201). Rachel is close to formulating an objection to a style which does not speak to her needs as a reader, but she lacks the courage of her convictions when speaking to St. John Hirst, and she never seems convinced that her critique is valid. Once again, Rachel's education has failed her and left her unable to defend herself against St. John Hirst's condescending attitude toward female intellectual powers. Earlier in the novel, Rachel had claimed that, "'It's insolent to —'. . . and [then] stopped" because "she did not know why she had been made so angry" (155). The reason for Rachel's anger is all too apparent; Hirst had dismissively asked her whether she could truly and fully appreciate Gibbon. As Hirst continues one of his many monologues directed at

Rachel, we discover that, even in the process of assailing the powers of the female mind, Hirst does indeed recognize that the lack of education may be a contributing factor in the "ignorance" he perceives: "It's awfully difficult to tell about women. . . how much, I mean, is due to lack of training, and how much is native incapacity" (154). Rachel is rightfully indignant but suppresses her anger, a restraint which Shakespeare's Miranda rarely demonstrates. The best example of the contrast can be found in Miranda's indignation when her father accuses Ferdinand of being a traitor in Act 1. Noting the physical beauty of Ferdinand, Miranda protests that "nothing ill can dwell in such a temple," which elicits this angry response from her father: "What, I say, / My foot my tutor" (1.2.469-70). It seems that Miranda is permitted the licence to speak freely with her father and seizes the opportunity — unlike the more passive Rachel — but the attempt to instruct her instructor is where, in Prospero's mind, Miranda goes too far. Miranda may have been the beneficiary of an education superior to Rachel's, but as her father's "foot," she should never presume to be the one imparting the lessons.

Comparing Woolf's and Shakespeare's heroines, one expects that a fourteen-year-old girl raised in isolation from the European world would exhibit a degree of naiveté, but Rachel is a twenty-four-year old living in the most industrialized nation on earth; Rachel is clearly a victim of her gender and the limits imposed on her education. When Helen writes to family back home in England, she records her amazement at the extent of Rachel's ignorance, serving as Woolf's voice advocating educational reform:

"The question is, how should we educate [girls]? The present method seems abominable. This girl [Rachel], though twenty-four, had never heard that men desired women, and until I explained it, did not know how children were born. Her ignorance upon other matters as important" (here Mrs. Ambrose's letter may not be quoted) . . . "was complete. It seems to me not merely foolish, but criminal to bring people up like that." (96)

Rachel's education has been woefully inadequate, and we know from Woolf's autobiographical writings that Rachel's education was not unlike Woolf's own.



In "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf writes that she was "never at school [and] never competed with children of [her] own age" (65). Woolf, her sister Vanessa, and half-sister Stella were educated more progressively than many Victorian women, since, as Hermione Lee indicates, the Stephen's Hyde Park Gate home occasionally hosted female educators such as Clara Pater and Janet Case (141). However, like Rachel, Woolf's education was largely confined to writing exercises, reading passages from the classics (in addition to Shakespeare) and some musical instruction.

As Elaine Showalter has demonstrated, a classical education was "the intellectual dividing line between men and women" in the late-nineteenth century (42). *The Voyage Out* occupies a place within a tradition of writing in which the female heroine attempts to equal the educational standards of the male establishment, a tradition which includes a number of nineteenth-century novels, such as Catherine Crowe's *The Story of Lily Dawson* (1852), Charlotte Yonge's *The Clever Woman of the Family* (1856), and perhaps most notably George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871). Women who did attain the goal of mastering (or even surveying) the classics were almost exclusively self-taught. Initially, Rachel Vinrace possesses such a goal in *The Voyage Out*, only to be eventually discouraged in her attempts at self-instruction. Rachel's failure would no doubt have delighted her father and her aunts as well. Explicit in nineteenth-century thinking on the subject of female education are three notions outlined by Linda Peterson in her study of the Victorian female educator Harriet Martineau. Citing Martineau's own words, Peterson summarizes three prevailing late nineteenth-century attitudes:

- 1) that if women pursue knowledge, they will "neglect their appropriate duties and peculiar employments";
- 2) "that the greatest advances that the female mind can make in knowledge, must still fall far short of the attainment of the other sex";
- and 3) that women are naturally so vain that "any degree of proficiency in knowledge" will make them forget "the subordinate station assigned them by law, natural and divine." (185)

Martineau advocated a curriculum that educated men and women *together*, initially at home and later in the schools, a program which opposed the segregated instruction that continued to dominate Edwardian schooling in Woolf's and Rachel's own day.

This division of educational labour is one aspect of Rachel's instruction which Helen Ambrose seems to find so appalling: "If [young women] were properly educated I don't see why they shouldn't be much the same as men — as satisfactory I mean" (96). To understand the limited range of options available to women, one can examine an illuminating document from the period, entitled *Progress in Women's Education in the British Empire*, which resulted from a conference on women's education conducted during Queen Victoria's Jubilee of 1897. Despite the presence of charts indicating the dramatic rise in degrees awarded to female graduates at the University of London, a review of the collection's contents reveals the prevalence of the notion that women were still best suited to an education which prepared them for careers in "horticulture," "dairy work and other outdoor activities" or as "factory and sanitary inspectors." There is an overall feeling that women's education, unlike men's, must not be achieved as an end unto itself, but demonstrated by some practical application, such as the avenues, mentioned above, open to working-class women. As a result, women of Rachel Vinrace's class were less likely to reap the benefits of educational reform, since there was no need for them to enter the work force, and to do so offered a potential threat to those "appropriate duties" and "peculiar employments" alluded to by Martineau.

The aspect of Rachel's curriculum which is most "criminal" to Helen Ambrose is the absence of discussions regarding human sexuality. One consequence of this criminality can be found in Richard Dalloway's advances toward Rachel, an action which makes him one of the prime candidates for the novel's very own Caliban. It may not be tragic that Dalloway kisses the unsuspecting Rachel, but it is tragic that she seems unable to make sense of the emotions she feels after the incident, or to be able to discuss them with Helen Ambrose. Initially, Rachel feels that "something wonderful" has happened, but this quickly gives way to a discomfort confirmed by the horrifying dream of the "deformed man" which has been the subject of much critical commentary. Rachel is clearly repulsed by thoughts of her own sexuality, recognizing at this late moment in her life that

she is sexually desired by others, but unable to comprehend the nature of her own desire, a confusion we witness again in the awkward eroticism of Rachel's encounter with Miss Allan (252-57). Perhaps what is most disturbing about Dalloway is that he condones Rachel's complete ignorance of sexuality. Concluding a discussion on the subject of "love" (in the sense that "young men use it," he adds), Dalloway reminds himself and Rachel that sex is unfamiliar ground for the young woman: "But have you any idea what — what I mean by that? No; of course not. . . . Girls are kept very ignorant, aren't they. Perhaps it's wise" (68).

In addition to the general superiority of Miranda's insights outlined above, there is no question that Miranda's knowledge of what Helen Ambrose calls "important matters" far exceeds Rachel's as well. Miranda seems to know herself and to be in command of her sexuality, and not just in the scene discussed earlier where Miranda first admires Ferdinand's "brave form" (1.2.409-502). To confirm the strength of the couple's attachment and the active role Miranda takes in securing their future, consider also that there is a definite proposal of marriage in *The Tempest* (unlike the tacit marriage proposal in *The Voyage Out*) and that it is Miranda who does the asking: "I am your wife, if you will marry me" (3.1.83). Although Prospero is satisfied with the match ("Fair encounter / Of two most rare affections!" [4.1.74-75]), his anxieties are not yet relieved; the Duke's final concern is that the young lovers do not "break her virgin-knot before / All sanctimonious ceremonies may / With full and holy rite be minist'ed" (4.1.15-17). Ferdinand and Miranda are impassioned young lovers whom Woolf contrasts with the passive Rachel and Terence in *The Voyage Out*. While Prospero warns his daughter after catching the lovers in an embrace, "Be more abstemious, / Or else good night your vow" (4.1.53-54), Woolf depicts Rachel and Terence rather differently in the forest as their own "passion" climaxes:

"We love each other," Terence repeated searching into her face. Their faces were both very pale and quiet, and they said nothing. He was afraid to kiss her again . . . On and on it went in the distance, the senseless and cruel churning of the water. [Rachel] observed that the tears were running down Terence's cheeks. (271-72)

What could possibly account for two such different takes on young love? I again suggest that Woolf gestures toward some of the deficiencies in Rachel's emotional development, and by implication, her education, which has left her unprepared to deal with her own sexuality. Rachel is equally unprepared for the erotic encounter with Miss Allan as she is in her perpetual longing to see Terence (222). Rachel's desire is "agony," and Woolf suggests the cause for Rachel's distress:

In her curious condition of unanalyzed sensations she was incapable of making a plan which should have any effect upon her state of mind. . . . Any woman experienced in the progress of courtship would have come by certain opinions from all this which would have given her at least a theory to go upon; but no one had ever been in love with Rachel, and she had never been in love with anyone. . . . It seemed to her that her sensations had no name.

(223)

Again, Rachel's condition is conspicuously similar to Woolf's own, because absent from Woolf's own studies is the topic of human sexuality. In fact, Woolf's memoir recounts that it was not until around 1907, at the age of twenty-five, roughly Rachel's age (and near the time when Woolf began work on *The Voyage Out*), that Woolf was first tutored in such matters by her step-sister's future husband, Jack Hills: "He it was who first spoke to me openly and deliberately about sex" (*Moments* 103). Like Rachel, the young Woolf was a typical late-Victorian/Edwardian bourgeois woman shielded from any discussion of sexuality, a "danger" which was not lost on Woolf.

A discussion of human sexuality was considered terribly inappropriate for the moral development of young women like Rachel and the young Virginia Stephen, but this is only part of the problem which Woolf addresses in *The Voyage Out*. Because women differed biologically from men, the Victorians believed that their overall educational capability differed as well. As Joan Burstyn suggests in *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood*, regular menstruation required regular intervals of rest that comprehensive schooling did not permit. Therefore, women educated too thoroughly were seen as dangerously subject to sterility, a notion which could threaten a bourgeois woman's first priority: her duties in the home (92-95).

In the case of Rachel Vinrace, as we shall see more fully in the next section of this essay, the nature of her education *is* designed for her to be able to execute her own "peculiar employments" (to borrow Martineau's phrase); in effect, Rachel is destined for a life as Coventry Patmore's "Angel in the House," a guardian of morality who ministers to her family and improves the quality of everyone's life, her own excepted. In Woolf's own case, despite the somewhat progressive nature of her instruction, Woolf's diary records that if her father Leslie Stephen had lived, "His life would have entirely ended mine. What would have happened? No writing, no books; — inconceivable" (*Diary* 208). Only Sir Leslie's death in 1904 ensured that Woolf would escape Rachel Vinrace's ultimate fate.

### III

As much as Woolf may have intended Rachel to resemble Miranda, there may be an even more significant comparison to be drawn: Rachel's parallels with Caliban. This is an intriguing proposition given that Caliban was fathered by Satan, and constitutes, in Prospero's words, a "born devil" (which does not speak well of Rachel's father). But Rachel may indeed have symbolic ties to Caliban; after all, Jane Cummins suggests that the deformed man in Rachel's dream may signify far more than a representation of Dalloway's sexual aggression: "The deformed man represents simultaneously Rachel's revulsion upon her discovery of sexuality, her idea of the native [in the colony of Santa Marina] as animalistic and incomprehensible, and, finally, *her own self*" (208; emphasis added). Perhaps Woolf's Caliban is not only Richard Dalloway, but her heroine as well. Rachel is a Caliban, not so much because of any parallels between the characters' functions within the respective plots, but because of the thematic links which connect these two characters who are subjugated by their powerful "fathers." Postcolonial criticism has helped to refocus our attention on the much-misunderstood Caliban, and the ways in which we can reread the play sympathetic to the plight of this character who has been enslaved in his own island home: "This island's mine, by Sycorax my

mother,/ Which thou tak'st from me" (1.2.334-35). A caveat: I do not wish to fall into the theoretical trap outlined by Sara Suleri by making "postcolonial" a "free-floating metaphor for cultural embattlement" (274). In other words, my postcolonial reading does not equate the positions of Rachel and Caliban, or Rachel and the residents of Santa Marina, but it does offer us a way to articulate a relationship between Rachel and her father which is marked by a huge discrepancy in power; Rachel's father fashions his daughter's education in a manner appropriate for his own personal and professional benefit. But simply to equate the conditions of oppression experienced by Rachel with a generalized colonial Other is unproductive because it fails to consider the historical and cultural specificity of various colonial relationships. Instead, my argument is that, as Anne McClintock suggests in another context, colonial women "experienced the privileges and social contradictions of imperialism very differently from colonial men" (6). This is certainly true in Rachel's case. The important point here is that gender dynamics were an inherent component of the maintenance of the colonial enterprise, and McClintock reminds us that male economic self-interest depended on, among other things, a "persistent educational disadvantage" (14), which is the reason why this essay foregrounds Rachel's persistent educational disadvantage in such detail. As Edward Said reminds us often in *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, as a discursive bearer of "knowledge," Orientalism is far more insidious than military or economic power, and the essential Orientalist relationship Said describes is "one between a strong and weak partner" (*Orientalism* 40). A similar arrangement exists at the heart of the gender dynamics within the colonizer's own class in *The Voyage Out*.

We must now consider some of the reasons for the curriculum of Rachel's (and Woolf's) education at the turn of the century and how postcolonial theory can help us to articulate its deficiencies. We need to remember an important notion at this point about *The Voyage Out*: that Rachel is largely an absence to the man ultimately entrusted with her education. Vinrace often omits Rachel from his consciousness, as he does when making

introductions to the Dalloways: "There's . . . Ambrose, the scholar (I daresay you've heard his name), his wife, my old friend Pepper, a very quiet fellow, but knows everything, I'm told. And that's all" (41). Throughout the novel, there is a conspicuous pattern of such instances in which the female is a conspicuous absence. As Pepper and Ridley Ambrose reflect on their salad days as students in the ancient universities of England, "[Helen and Rachel] rose and left, vaguely to the surprise of the gentlemen, who had either thought them attentive or had forgotten their presence" (17). In another notable example of how even the women of the colonial class omit the feminine from their consciousness, Helen Ambrose proclaims her children her greatest passion, and Clarissa Dalloway elicits more information: "Do tell me. You have a boy, haven't you? Isn't it detestable leaving them?" (56). The female child is recollected later, merely as an afterthought for Clarissa. This near-omission of Helen's daughter and her expressed interest in the masculine is unsurprising, given that Clarissa's own greatest passion is her husband's mission as a guardian of empire, and the corresponding idea of "Englishness" which fills her thoughts:

Being on this ship seems to make it so much more vivid — what it means to be English. One thinks of all we've done, and our navies, and the people in India and Africa, sending out boys from little country villages — and of men like you, Dick, and it makes one feel as if one couldn't bear *not* to be English! (50-51).

Clarissa's national identity, her sense of her Englishness, is so intimately bound up with her own fixation on masculinity, that it should not be surprising that the female recedes from her consciousness as conspicuously as it does.

There is a similar network of female absence operating in *The Tempest*. Again, Miranda's own mother is mentioned only once, and, even then, is a somewhat veiled presence in her daughter's mind. As a consequence, Prospero assumes the role of both father and mother, particularly evident in his description of the sorrows of the initial voyage to the island, a narrative which assumes the tone of a father's birthing fantasy:

O, a cherubin  
 Thou wast that did preserve me. Thou didst smile,  
 Infused with a fortitude from heaven,  
 When I have decked the sea with drops full salt,  
 Under my burden groaned, which raised in me  
 An undergoing stomach, to bear up  
 Against what should ensue. (1.2.152-58)

This birthing implies a new beginning for the Duke, and in the absence of Miranda's actual mother, Prospero creates a surrogate island-family, with himself as both mother and father to the wicked, monster-child Caliban and obedient, angel-child Ariel. Further erasures of the female presence abound within the text of *The Tempest*, although one particular instance probably occurs without Shakespeare's intent. As Stephen Orgel reveals, when a deliriously happy Ferdinand interrupts Prospero's masque in Act 4 to exclaim, "Let me live here, ever. / So rare a wondered father and a wise / Makes this place Paradise" (4.1.122-24), there is a curious textual anomaly which had puzzled scholars since the beginning of the twentieth century: why does Ferdinand here neglect Miranda's contribution to his happiness? Orgel reports that Miranda has been omitted from Ferdinand's thoughts here, but only because the crossbar of the "f" in "wife" may have broken early in the folio's print run. Nineteenth-century editors had emended "wife" to "wise" on logical grounds, but nevertheless, "after 1895 the wife became invisible" (112) and a century of readers would be led to believe that Ferdinand was only celebrating his prospective father-in-law, and not his wife-to-be at this moment.<sup>5</sup>

The implications of these omissions of the female presence in both *The Tempest* and *The Voyage Out* are significant. Postcolonial criticism has illustrated how the European colonizer has been construed as a "sovereign subject by defining its colonies as 'Others,' even as it constituted them, for purposes of administration and the expansion of markets, into programmed near-images of that very sovereign self" (Spivak, "Rani" 128). However, any examination of that "sovereign" colonial subject reveals fissures and, ironically, the female European colonial subject often resembles the colonial Other in important ways. When we think of Rachel's disappearance from



the consciousness of her father, the words which Gayatri Spivak uses to describe the position of subaltern women also applies to Rachel:

Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the "third-world woman" caught between tradition and modernization. ("Subaltern" 306)

The notion of the violence inflicted upon Rachel seems confirmed by her ultimate fate, and we see ties to Spivak's description of the subaltern in Rachel's position as she becomes suspended between the "traditional" matriarchal position of Clarissa Dalloway and the roles for the "new woman" as embodied by Woolf herself. And, as I have suggested earlier, her marginalization, often to the point of a complete absence, has taken its toll on Rachel, who expresses an ever-present metaphysical quandary about her own selfhood. After the momentary awakening of her sexuality, Rachel reveals a hopefulness about her self-image, which ultimately proves illusory: "The vision of her own personality, of herself as a real everlasting thing, different from anything else, unmergeable, like the sea or the wind, flashed into Rachel's mind, and she became profoundly excited at the thought of living: 'I can be m-m-myself,' she stammered" (84). However, for Rachel, that stammer foreshadows that the notion of "being herself" is tenuous at best.

Not only is Rachel an absence, but women are more generally excluded from the realm of knowledge; only a man like Mr. Pepper could lay claim to "know everything," and only a man such as Mr. Elliot could possess a "profound knowledge" (115). Such practices seem to have taken their toll on Rachel, who also emphasizes her ignorance when she presents her own "biographical sketch" during Hewet's picnic in the hills of Santa Marina: "Rachel stated that she was twenty-four years of age, the daughter of a ship-owner, [and] that she had never been properly educated" (143). When we return to the scenes involving Rachel and Richard Dalloway, Rachel's intellectual insecurities are painfully obvious, but just as much a part of her identity:

"I know nothing!" she exclaimed.

"It's far better that you should know nothing," he said paternally, "and you wrong yourself, I'm sure. You play very nicely, I'm told, and I've no doubt you've read heaps of learned books." (65)

In contrast, the identities of both Hewet and Hirst are inseparable from their education: Hewet was "educated at Winchester and Cambridge" and Hirst "got scholarships everywhere — Westminster — King's" (144). Despite the best efforts of her male companions, Rachel has been unable or unwilling to consume those "learned books"; just as Caliban is described by Prospero as a "dull thing," it is Rachel's essential nature which makes her unsuitable for the education initially prescribed for her. Rachel's disillusion with Cowper and Gibbon again leaves music as the only mode of inquiry and expression available to her, and one which seems to be the special provenance of the female, as witnessed by the musical dialogue in Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* carried on by Rachel and Clarissa Dalloway (47). Outside the realm of the musical, however, the female is largely silenced. One exception might be the educated and independent Miss Allan, the writer engaged in composing a *Primer of English Literature*. However, hers is not a project addressing the needs of many female readers or writers. Miss Allan seems content to glorify "the great tradition" (years before F. R. Leavis popularized the phrase) from Beowulf to Swinburne, which really constitutes the great, *male* tradition of English literature. Such a tradition, including the "great books" which frustrate Rachel, is one which Rachel initially hopes will introduce her to what S.A. Henke describes, adopting a near-anagram for "Caliban," as "unimagined Cabalistic mysteries," a desire which obviously proves illusory. As Henke asserts, Miss Allan's studies do not serve Rachel well:

But what kind of education is appropriate for a twentieth-century woman? Certainly not the kind of learning represented by Miss Allan. . . . Fondly stroking her father's gold watch, she reverences "the great tradition" of masculine knowledge and tries to compress the "best that has been thought and known in the world" — by men — into digestible capsules of salient information, suitable for assimilation by children and ladies acquainted with the "masters" of English literature from Beowulf to Browning. (4)

It should be apparent to readers of *The Voyage Out* that — insufficient though it is — Rachel's schooling *has* been designed with a very definite end in mind. In her own way, much like Miranda, Rachel has been very carefully prepared for a particular role; Rachel will not rule as the Queen of Naples, but she will have a place in her father's "court." For Vinrace, Rachel's best possible education would teach her the graces of the perfect hostess, and the excessive attention to music will, most likely, not interfere with this plan. The reason Rachel has been taken on the voyage which will lead to her death is that Vinrace "should like her to begin to see more people" (86). However, Vinrace's motivation is hardly unselfish — he has begun to contemplate a career in Parliament, which means that Rachel will have to take the place of her mother. As Vinrace explains to Helen:

"I should want Rachel to be able to take more part in things. A certain amount of entertaining would be necessary — dinners, an occasional evening party. . . . In all these ways *Rachel could be of great help to me* . . . if you could see your way to helping my girl, bringing her out . . . making a woman of her, the kind of woman her mother would have liked her to be." (86; emphasis added)

But what kind of a woman is Rachel really being groomed to be? In the mind of her father, Rachel could best aspire to imitate Clarissa Dalloway, who is the perfect wife of a Tory MP.<sup>6</sup>

Although Helen Ambrose believes the Dalloways to be "second-rate," Clarissa does play to perfection the role for which Rachel is being groomed. Clarissa is dismissive of artists (who enclose themselves "in a little world of [their] own" [45]), although she knows enough of Bronte and Austen to make conversation (57-58). And she is well-spoken enough to speak of the noble work that her husband performs, but without the license to discuss politics *too* freely. As a result of his wife's role playing, Richard Dalloway is grateful that

"I have been able to come home to my wife in the evening and find that she has spent her day in calling, music, play with the children, domestic duties — what you will; *her illusions have not been destroyed*. She gives me courage to go on. The strain of public life is very great." (65; emphasis added)

Clarissa's principal illusion seems to be that artists are the only ones who enclose themselves in that little world of [their] own "with pictures and music and everything beautiful" (45). Clarissa fails to see that she and Rachel have also been shut away. The irony is that Clarissa's class, and the trappings which accompany her position as a woman, ensure that very imprisonment. Again, the very presence of such "illusions" provides another subtle connection between *The Tempest* and *The Voyage Out*. In *The Tempest*, Prospero's power depends upon his ability to conjure up fantastical illusions which deceive the usurpers and help him to restore his dukedom, the maintenance of power through theatrical means which Stephen Greenblatt refers to as a component of the Renaissance "theater state" (49).

In *The Voyage Out*, Dalloway maintains his intellectual "superiority" by relegating his wife to a position in which she serves his own needs. As a result, Dalloway can proclaim, "Few people, I suppose, have fewer illusions than I have" (64), which reinforces the sense of *The Voyage Out* as an anti-*Tempest*, one in which the veil has been lifted and Miranda's innocence has been drowned. In order to maintain an image of himself as a guardian of the "civilized world," Mr. Dalloway needs a partner who, in Clarissa's words, "keep[s] one at one's best" (61). And one of the most important components of the Dalloway marriage is that Clarissa not threaten her husband's self-image; Dalloway's own illusions must be maintained at all costs. Vinrace is trying to mold Rachel in a similar manner, creating the illusion of a well-rounded and well-balanced society hostess, but one whose deficiencies will contribute to Rachel's death. Rachel's self-esteem must be diminished in order to enhance the self-esteem of the fathers and husbands who have helped to construct this role for her. As Woolf later writes in *A Room of One's Own*, the female is the mirror which allows the man to see himself reflected as twice his actual size (35). Terence Hewet seems aware of this process in *The Voyage Out*, when he claims, "I believe that we must have the sort of power over [women] that we're said to have over horses. They see us as three times as big as we are or they'd never obey us" (212). And part of that process of enhancing the image of the male requires the continual

process of infantilization that marks Rachel's condition. Treating Rachel as a child, rendering her here as the largely unseen and unspoken Caliban-child — rather than Miranda's more privileged position — alleviates a potential dilemma for the forces of patriarchy in *The Voyage Out* and allows us to consider another way in which Rachel is analogous to Caliban.

Contributing to the discussion of the colonized as "absence," Edward Said defines the practice of Orientalism as the imperialist's propensity for "disregarding, essentializing, denuding the humanity of another culture, people or geographical region" (*Orientalism* 108). We see numerous examples of the colonial subject (or the colonies, themselves) as an absence in other texts written at the time Woolf was writing *The Voyage Out*, particularly in the description of the blank spaces on the world map in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902).<sup>7</sup> However, that notion of frequently disregarding the colonized, and of rendering him or her as present in the consciousness only when he or she is of practical use for the colonizer (much as Rachel is to her father) becomes especially problematic for the forces of imperial power. The solution to the problem of the absence (which is really not an absence) is addressed by Said more fully in *Culture and Imperialism*:

But of course the natives could not really *all* be made to disappear, and in fact they encroached more and more on the imperial consciousness. And what follows are schemes for separating the natives — Africans, Malays, Arabs [and others] — from the white man on racial and religious grounds, then for reconstituting them *as people requiring a European presence*, whether a colonial implantation or a master discourse in which they could be fitted and put to work. Thus . . . one has Kipling's fiction positing the Indian as a creature clearly needing British tutelage, one aspect of which is a narrative that encircles and then assimilates India, since without Britain India would disappear into its own corruption and underdevelopment. (167; emphasis added)

We may begin to see here how an analogous process of threatened disappearance, combined with a desire for tutelage, is at the heart of male/female relations within the world of *The Voyage Out*. Because Rachel cannot be ignored indefinitely, and because she must be enlisted to serve her father's political

aspirations in the Tory party, she requires the presence of a Helen Ambrose or a St. John Hirst to “illuminate” or “enlighten” her. Such figures provide the necessary tutelage of which Said speaks. As a result, the twenty-four-year-old Rachel becomes suspended in a perpetual adolescence. Rachel is rarely permitted to exercise her will as an adult, but instead continues to appear to others, in the thoughts of Helen Ambrose, as “more than normally incompetent for her years” (20). Rachel’s father continues to refer to her as his “child” (21), which is not without its overtones of affection, but is also nevertheless inscribed with the process of infantilization.<sup>8</sup> Throughout *The Voyage Out*, the women suffer a number of similar indignities. Clarissa Dalloway, we learn from her husband, is “never allowed to talk politics” (64), a practice which we can assume would have been adopted in Rachel’s future as a “proper” Tory hostess. For the moment, however, we need not deal in speculation to see how Rachel occupies the position of a child in her own house. Following the very temporary liberation which follows Dalloway’s kiss, Rachel reflects on an existence in which she is unable even to walk the streets unchaperoned, and is shielded, much like Helen Ambrose in the opening pages of the novel, from any knowledge of the working poor. Like a child, Rachel has been protected from anything which might injure her “delicate” sensibilities:

[S]he saw her life for the first time, a creeping hedged-in thing, driven cautiously between high walls, here turned aside, there plunged in darkness, made dull and crippled forever — her life that was the only chance she had — the short season between two silences. (82)

Woolf wastes few opportunities to remind us of Rachel’s child-like status. In her discussions with St. John Hirst, he describes her as “absurdly young compared with men of [her] age” (154), and after some insulting remarks directed at Rachel by Hirst, Hewet “found that a young woman angry is very like a child” (157).

Rachel’s description of her life as “dull” and “crippled” re-emphasizes the stifled nature of her emotional and intellectual development, which also shares a corresponding under-

development in her physical presence. As Helen suggests to her husband, "she really might be six years old," . . . referring to the smooth unmarked outline of the girl's face, and not condemning her otherwise" (25). However, one of the great ironies of Rachel's tragedy is that the same Edwardian patriarchy which sought to protect Rachel's chastity and moral purity by preserving her in a perpetual state of childishness actually contributes to her eventual demise. As Hermione Lee describes it, "girls of Rachel's (and Virginia Stephen's) age and class are both over-protected from, and the victims of, a system which exploits women intellectually, sexually and socially" (*Novels* 35) Rachel is, indeed, the exploited "child" requiring the tutelage of the father. Nevertheless, there are dangers regarding *too much* tutelage in both *The Voyage Out* and *The Tempest*. As we observe in the case of Caliban, whose education was one of Prospero's great follies, Rachel is only educable to a limited extent. By teaching language to the beastly Caliban, Prospero had tried to fashion him in a role that was "unsuitable." Similarly, by educating his daughter beyond the needs of a surrogate Parliamentary wife, Vinrace would suffer the potential loss of his own prestige and power. There is an interesting parallel at work here between the fathers in the two works: Prospero's choice of Ferdinand as his daughter's husband consolidates the father's hold on the kingdoms of Milan and Naples, while Vinrace's decision to hold his daughter in a state of infantilization strengthens his ambition for a seat in Parliament, all the while tragically sacrificing Rachel's own future and happiness.

#### IV

By the conclusion of the novel, Rachel succumbs, not so much to the fever which she contracts, but to a loss of the will to live in the world which has been made available to her. As June Cummins writes, "Because Rachel's death is not a suicide, we are unable to confer on her a willfulness or conviction that we may see in Woolf's own choice to die. But we can trace a dispirit- edness, a lack of desire or fight that allows us to see her death as a choice" (209). Whether viewed as willful or not, the tragedy of that death foregrounds Woolf's critique of early twentieth-

century female education, a critique which arises from and is connected to an important subtext of Shakespeare's play. Through Woolf's revision of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, we can imagine Woolf asking herself, "How could Miranda have attained the self-assurance, both intellectually and sexually, that she demonstrates at the end of Act 5?" We know that Prospero prized his books "above his dukedom" (1.2.168), and we can surmise that Miranda now shares her father's respect for the bettering of one's own mind. As we have seen in excerpts from Woolf's memoir, the writer recognized that knowledge and self-image were inextricably linked, and a contributing factor in Rachel's tragic fate is the absence of both. *The Voyage Out* inaugurated a lifetime dialogue with Shakespeare's work which we would see explicitly in the discussion of Judith Shakespeare in *A Room of One's Own*, as well as in the Shakespearean allusions which Woolf presents in novels such as *Mrs. Dalloway*, *Orlando* and *The Waves*. Other studies of *The Voyage Out* have analyzed, in great detail, the intertextual nature of *The Voyage Out*, and its relationship to works such as Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* (Gilbert and Gubar), the connections between similar explorations of the self in *The Voyage Out* and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (Pitt), or even between *The Voyage Out* and Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (Henke). The intertextual dialogue between *The Voyage Out* and *The Tempest* is every bit as important for continuing the discussion about the dynamics of Woolf's heroine's quest for knowledge and self-identity, as well as being an important tool for using postcolonial theory to articulate more fully the tragedy of Rachel Vinrace.

*The Voyage Out* is a novel in which "Englishness," at least for the Dalloways, connotes unity and wholeness. "Conceive the world as a whole," Richard suggests to Rachel as he commences a discussion of the proper workings of the imperial machine:

"I can conceive no more exalted aim — to be the citizen of the Empire. Look at it this way, Miss Vinrace; conceive the state as a complicated machine; we citizens are part of that machine; some fulfill more important duties; others (perhaps I am one of them) serve only to connect some obscure parts of the mechanism, concealed from the public eye. Yet if the meanest screw fails in its task, the proper working of the whole is imperiled." (66)



Perhaps lost in Dalloway's catechism is the implication that Rachel not lose sight of *her* own "mean" task: to remain outside the realm of the knowledgeable and powerful and to serve the men who serve the empire. Yet how can England *ever* be whole, Woolf asks implicitly throughout *The Voyage Out*, when the female exists, not as a true partner to the male, but as another "weak partner" in Said's imperial dynamic. Female education can be viewed as woefully inadequate in the Edwardian England of *The Voyage Out* in a way which it had not been in the education of Miranda in *The Tempest*.

By asking her readers to connect *The Tempest* and *The Voyage Out*, both in its network of direct allusions and plot similarities, Woolf secures a place in what Marianne Novy refers to as the tradition of female "re-visions of Shakespeare." Appearing as it did in the first years of the new century, *The Voyage Out* assumes a place as a successor to the nineteenth-century revisions of Shakespeare's heroines, which include Mary Cowden Clarke's "The Rose of Elsinore," published in *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines* (1851), a narrative which imagines *Hamlet's* Ophelia raised by a peasant couple when Polonius was called from Denmark to a Parisian court. Like Clarke, Woolf focuses on the formative years of the young woman's education, which later explains much about the character's ultimately tragic fate.

What may be most interesting about Woolf's use of *The Tempest* is that Shakespeare had drawn upon the riches of non-Western peoples and places in his own play, and Woolf's novel casts her heroine in a condition which is comparable to certain aspects of the experiences of the "Calibans" of the New World. In its way, *The Voyage Out* provides a bridge between a work like the aforementioned "Rose of Elsinore" and Aimé Césaire's postcolonial revision of *The Tempest*, *Une Tempête* (1969). When Said characterizes the latter work as "an affectionate contention with Shakespeare for the right to represent Caliban" (*Culture* 212), his words could equally well apply to Woolf's novel. Woolf aims to represent, not only Caliban's, but Miranda's story, or more precisely, to unite the experiences of Caliban and Miranda through the experience of Rachel Vinrace. As Césaire's play reminds us, Caliban is the excluded, the forgotten

and the exploited, who exists only to serve Prospero's designs. And, as *The Voyage Out* reminds us, in the early years of the twentieth century, these words serve to describe Rachel Vinrace's experience all too well.

## NOTES

- 1 This and all subsequent citations from *The Tempest* are drawn from *The Norton Shakespeare* (1997).
- 2 Gilbert and Gubar describe how colonization possesses an intellectual, as well as political, dimension, as they catalogue the numerous male characters entrusted with Rachel's education, including St. John Hirst and Richard Dalloway. See Gilbert and Gubar, 15.
- 3 Mitchell Leaska argues that Rachel was unable to face life as the bourgeois wife of Terence Hewet: "hers is a death consciously unresisted, unconsciously sought — it is a self-willed death" (337).
- 4 As the editors of *The Norton Shakespeare* suggest in a footnote, "princes" is a generic Renaissance plural for princes and princesses. The choice of words also suggests the extent to which Miranda's education crosses gender boundaries, which is certainly not the case, as we shall see, with the education of Rachel Vinrace.
- 5 Even the recent first edition of *The Norton Shakespeare*, which is based on the Oxford University Press edition of 1986, provides no annotation of Ferdinand's puzzling remarks.
- 6 Readers of *Mrs. Dalloway* will recall that the Clarissa of the later novel at times resists the role of the "perfect" Parliamentary wife: "With twice his wits, she had to see through [Richard's] eyes — one of the tragedies of married life" (116). In addition, in the later novel, Lady Bruton considers Clarissa to be a hindrance to her husband's career, characterizing her as one of those "women who often got in their husbands' way, prevent[ing] them from accepting posts abroad, and [who] had to be taken to the seaside in the middle of the session to recover from influenza" (160).
- 7 Prior to departing on his voyage to locate Kurtz, Marlow sits in the offices of the trading company and stares at the wall. He sees,
 

... a large shining map, marked with all the colours of a rainbow. There was a vast amount of red — good to see at any time, because one knows that some real work is done in there, a deuce of a lot of blue, a little green, smears of orange, and on the East Coast, a purple patch, to show where the jolly pioneers of progress drink the jolly lager-beer. However, I wasn't going into any of these. I was going into the yellow. Dead in the centre (Conrad 36).

 Here, colour suggests "progress," while the unclaimed and uncoloured centre is ripe for colonial expansion.
- 8 The infantilization at work in *The Voyage Out* is similar to that which Vincent Cheng perceives in the relations between Greta and Gabriel Conroy in James Joyce's "The Dead." Just as Greta is made to wear galoshes and is reprimanded by Gabriel for her tardiness at Julia and Kate's Christmas party, we observe similarities in Rachel's treatment at the hands of her father. See Cheng 134-38.

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