

THE IMAGE OF THE NEW MAN IN POST-WAR SHORT STORIES:
“THE MAN WHO LOVED ISLANDS” BY D. H. LAWRENCE AND
“THE WHITE ROSE” BY HANNA MINA

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Abstract. Much has been said about men’s sense of disillusionment, decentralization and loss caused by the great wars of the twentieth century that brought them to question inherited notions of self-identity and masculinity. Interestingly, the found literature explored the Western man’s experience and overlooked other stories, such as that of the Arab man who was similarly tormented by the war. The paper in hand seeks to argue that both the Western man and the Arab one were in search of a new self-definition in the eve of the world wars as made clear when comparing two defining short stories “The Man Who Loved Islands” by D. H. Lawrence and “The White Rose” by Hanna Mina. Throughout this paper, I will examine the various ways via which these two war authors responded to the urgent need of asserting a new self-image and identity for post-war men. Following the findings of masculine studies that developed during the 1990s, it becomes clear that the New Man embraced a new masculine identity that reflected an awareness that a person was not born a man, but became one when abiding by the rules of patriarchy.

Keywords: new man, masculinity, war, island

INTRODUCTION

Human history is a history of wars depicted in conjunction with art in societies’ heritage books. The English as well as Arabs, as descendants of empires, followed the rhythm of battles in their poems and stories that celebrated the heroic deeds of warriors, presenting them as legendary, divine figures. However, these “dark times” came to question and tumble down all certainties associated

with manliness and masculinity. This paper proposes a comparative study of emerging masculinity that came to shape patriarchy in the aftermath of the 20th-century world wars, putting under scrutiny patriarchy's male domination, centrality, and hegemony as envisioned by both Lawrence and Mina in "The Man Who Loved Islands" and "The White Rose," respectively.

1. THE NEW MAN

A shared belief among historians is that the two world wars broke down deeply rooted codes and long-cherished expectations of manliness and masculinity, which explains the academic endeavour in the field of gender studies to fathom the outcomes of the war on concepts as society, culture, and sexuality. Masculine studies, at first, "structured [. . .] gender in the popular images of soldier hero," writes Coyne (2015), but little was done in relation to the emotional and psychological outcomes of the war. In other words, much of the work on war has involved an interest in gender representations mainly that of heroic soldiers, but this has been peripheral to the actual crisis generating from the war. The most relevant of the types of masculinity this paper is concerned with are the ones specified by Spicer (1997), being the traumatized and damaged everyman as a prevailing representation of masculinity in the aftermath of the wars.

Such representation echoes the rise of the New Man, a descendant of the war who embraced a masculine identity that reflected the modern man's uneasiness with the inherited images of bravery and heroism that came under question, asserting that they limited his potential and estranged him. The development of such a character can be traced in the late D. H. Lawrence's work as he first hand experienced war, but we can also find echoes in some Arabic colonized countries such as Syria, as they unwillingly participated in the war, a fact made clear in the early writing of Hanna Mina who witnessed the war as a young boy and explored its lingering consequences in his first short stories collection *The White Rose*.

The development of masculine studies was tacitly associated with the 1990s as a tumultuous period that met the field's scope of interest being the configuration of manhood "as established hegemony [...] the process of what would seem to be a troublesome period of transition" (Mackinnon 150). However, if we relate hegemony to tumultuous times, I believe that the period in the aftermath of the Great war was a "troublesome period of transition," that falls within Mackinnon's classification and definition of masculinity as "the status (...) accorded to males (...) under capitalism" (150-79). While masculinity is clearly a construction embedded within power relations - a social experience deeply-rooted in the social, cultural, economic, and political organizations of a society, it is justifiable to understand the rise of the New Man as a reaction to the resulting hegemony during the post-war modern era. It is what Lois Bibbings tried to show in *Telling Tales about Men* (2010), while exploring the hegemony of the soldier masculinity that persisted even after the war, asserting that there was nothing "more effeminate and cowardly than a man willing to stand up for his beliefs when the nation was mobilized [...] and behind the very essentialized construct of the citizen soldier's masculinity"(20).

The impact of the war was endlessly encompassing. The Middle East, colonized at that time, was deeply affected by the rising debate over the issue of the war and its forging of the New Man as emerging masculinity that refused to live in the shadow of patriarchy and yield to its demands of hegemonic, heroic manhood. Similarly, young, educated Arab men were questioning dominant notions of traditional Arab masculinity that the war brought under scrutiny. Enjoying a rebellious spirit, these youngs refused to live in the shadow of their fathers. "Emergent masculinities in the Arab world," writes Inhorn, "foregrounds new forms of male agency" (39). With the most devastating conflict facing the world, it is fair to say that all parts of the world, including the Arab region, were not immune to and faced the same challenges and changes issuing from the war. Inhorn further explains the conditions of the war, saying

that “Arab men, women, and children who remained in [...] tumultuous home countries often faced disappearing labour opportunities, high unemployment rates, rampant corruption, military rule, and increasing [...] rage against governing forces” (Inhorn 40). Having said this, Inhorn shows that to surmount these conditions, Arab men had to face considerable stress from war, impoverishment, colonization, and lack. She further insists on the fact that “Arab men [...] are changing their personal lives, interjecting new notions of manhood, gender relations, and intimate subjectivities into their ways of being” (45). Seeking the change, “[...] most ordinary Middle Eastern men bear little resemblance to (...) vilifying caricatures,” that used to present them as “terrorists, religious zealots, and brutal oppressors of women” (Inhorn 46). Inhorn’s study of the Arab men’s myriad struggles under the most tiring of circumstances sheds light on the complex negotiations of gender that put under scrutiny patriarchal paradigms of gender construction and definition.

Additionally, Inhorn asserts that her theory of “Emergent Masculinities” differs from Raewyn Connell’s theory of “hegemonic masculinity” which has influenced the field of gender studies. She understands hegemonic masculinity as often concentrating on attributes such as wealth, professional success, and the power to control others, including marginalized masculine forms (63). This view of masculinity renders it a constant, limited thing, whereas Inhorn views masculinity as an ever-in-progress process, enacted in different ways as men evolve, live, and develop. Her understanding of masculinity as an act falls within the influence of Judith Butler’s contribution to gender studies. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), Butler questions the essence of gender roles and identity as being determined by physical and biological factors. She understands gender as a performance or construction made up of behaviours and roles, assigned to either man or woman. She explains: “Performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate ‘act’, but rather as the reiterative and citational practise by which discourse produces the effects that it names”(Gender 2).

For Butler, the categories women and men are outcomes of “a sedimentation of gender norms” (*Gender* 178) in that they are “tenuously constituted in time, [...] through a *stylized repetition of acts*” (*Gender* 179, emphasis in original). In this vein, “emergent masculinities” as developed by Inhorn entails change over the course of life as men age, mature, love, and think.

Inhorn’s development of the concept was highly shaped by the work of the Marxist scholar Raymond William who, in his essay “Dominant, Residual, Emergent” (1977), defines emergence as “new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship [that] are continually being created” (122). It becomes clear that in a changing world, traditional masculinities fail to persist as new forms of masculine practices are needed to grasp these sweeping changes.

2. “THE MAN WHO LOVED ISLANDS” AND “THE WHITE ROSE”: A CASE STUDY OF THE NEW MASCULINITY

In the aftermath of the war, the world was resetting itself with the fall of the classical leading countries and the rise of other countries from the fetters of colonization. This condition of being on the verge of change occupied and influenced the works of two authors who experienced the war that influenced and stimulated their art.

For whatever reason, it is clear that Lawrence influenced Arab writers such as Hanna Mina. Given the iconic stance of his works, it can be argued that Lawrence’s ideas reached out to a young generation of Syrian authors who were in search of their voice, muse, and style. As a modernist novelist and thinker Lawrence put forth a presentation of the modern man when exploring one of his recurrent themes: the individual’s existential problem and search for a voice. The havoc destruction of the war can be easily traced in Lawrence’s work when shedding light on the inner emptiness the modern man came to experience and his questioning of inherited values and ideologies. It is in this vein that we can trace Lawrence’s

fascination with Frederick Nietzsche's philosophy. Like Nietzsche, Lawrence tries to dig into the depth of history to find out the curse of the modern man, what went wrong and rendered the world "a tragic one" (*Lady Chatterley's Lover* 5). Such tragedy is understood by Nietzsche as the delusion of reason when writing "One also finds a profound delusion which first appeared in the person of Socrates, namely the imperturbable belief that, as it follows the thread of casualty, reaches down into the deepest abysses of being, and that it is capable, not simply of understanding existence, but even of correcting it" (1997, 73). In his work *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1921), Lawrence perceives old civilizations as the carriers of deeper knowledge that has unfortunately been lost to mankind who succumbed body and soul into the dictations of the mind, reason, and conventions, losing, therefore, his authentic self.

Drawing from the modern debate over the New Man, Mina rises as the spokesperson of a generation of young Arab writers who lived the wars and started dreaming of ending colonization and rebuilding their countries. His work raises questions about identity, love and power, and truth. The emphasis on the modern man's dilemma is indicative of an attempt to rebel against the linguistic, economic, and gender exchanges the Arab world experienced in the aftermath of the war. Coming to age in the period between the two world wars and participating in the war for independence, Mina found his muse in the misery of the common man who seems to slip from the very consciousness of the country.

It is this congruence that brings both authors along. It is this common interest in understanding the forces that forge the New Man's self-identity, expressing a sense of disillusionment with the inherited notions of identity, masculinity and manhood. These images prove to be a limiting constraint as they lead to the absence of the individual who falls prey to conformity and convention that further accentuate his alienation.

2.1. THE ISLAND

New men appropriated diverse styles of masculinity to conceive their manhood as echoed in two iconic texts that call for our attention, namely “The Man Who Loved Islands” by D. H. Lawrence and “The White Rose” by Hanna Mina. Though written at different periods, they express a common desire for fleeing the wretchedness following the massive damages caused by the war. Actually, the main characters in the novellas are in search of a perfect place, a utopia. “In literary tradition,” comments Stefania Michelucci “Utopia, which is etymological ‘a no man’s land’ (*ou-topos*), a ‘no place,’ and also a ‘happy place’ (*eu-topos*), finds its ideal setting in remote islands usually ignored by maps, off the known routes, and is mostly identified with idyllic environments or virgin nature” (2015). By the end of his life, Lawrence chose to isolate himself and flee the destroyed London that brought him further despair and added to his illness. In the search for a suitable alternative, Lawrence travelled the world looking for a place that would give him a special tint to time and space and to start considering his lifetime project Rananim, the perfect land. Meanwhile, the author developed a liking for islands, as a heavenly place untouched by decay and chaos.

In the midst of extreme poverty, in Lattakia, Syria, Hanna Mina was born in 1924, in a family that had to migrate to the city of Iskenderun, fleeing the Othman and French. The family kept moving from the countryside, then back to Iskenderun, where he spent his teenage years in the “quagmire” district and found a job in the nearby harbour after dropping out of school. Moving from one place to another led him to dream of a distant place where he can settle, be happy and write. His writing stemmed from the life he knew best, a life of misery and lack. With looming death and a growing sense of alienation and dehumanization, Mina found refuge in the big blue sea that was his muse and inspired his work, including “The White Rose”. Though the short story was written during the war for independence, it was only published in 1990 in a short story

collection under the same title. It is about a painter who accidentally meets a young man and a woman who seem lost, searching their way out of the wood, so he offers to help them. Written in a simple, staccato, short sentences, the short story depicts a casual encounter that turns into a philosophical dialogue questing for the self. As the character converse on love, society, and culture, they drift far away from the way out of the forest and find themselves in a cabin-like tavern on a distant beach, where the painter informs his companions that he is leaving them to start his new kingdom, Solomon's kingdom as he calls it.

The two contexts may seem different at first glance; nevertheless, they express a longing for a happy place and an eternal time where man can restore his humanity and heal his manhood destroyed by the calamities of the war. This metaphysical mode, at instances even mythical, indicates a desire to gain control over time and place. "This unconscious drive to control the pace of our given temporal life can be disguised by way of certain spatial and transcendental moves" (Ragachewskaya 2019). These moves are evoked through the selective choice of the island as the locus of the new man's rebirth. In this vein, Jill Franks, *in Islands and the Modernists: The Allure of Isolation in Art, Literature and Science*, comments that:

Islands exert a unique appeal because they are contained spaces, and therefore, theoretically at least, controllable. [. . .] In science the concept of containment is more concrete. [. . .] In social science, the idea of island as controllable space is more problematic. The human psyche projects its desires as well as its hostility on islands, and finds that it cannot control its environment in the way scientist controls his or hers. (Franks 7)

The small size and the mystical dimension associated with the island render it an appealing place where the modern man can find solace and redemption. Driven by a desire to seek tranquillity and peace, the male protagonists in both novellas demonstrate an awareness of the conflicting nature of life in the city and the demands and fetters imposed on them, as a warring cite. The narrative pace in both texts is enlivened with a sensory description of a distant, fairytale-like

island: "There was a man who loved islands," writes Lawrence ("Man Who Loved Islands" 151), while Mina describes "The sea was at its roots, giving rise to a muffled roar and elongated waves on its shores" ("The White Rose" 10). The use of the simple past marks narration and grants the texts a mythical, outlandish dimension. The search for the island is referred to as being restless in "The Man Who Loved Islands" as Mr Cathcart is in constant search for his own Paradise, like that of the painter who, once finding his paradise, urges his friends to feel "themselves alone (...) forg[e]t the cities (...) fe[el] that they [are] not what they used to be, (...) g[e]t rid of their dark memories and (...) the ticking of the clock" (The White Rose 21). Through the characters' eagerness to escape memories and ties that confine them, Lawrence and Mina develop a desire for transcendence, emptiness and void. Such a void carries a deeper wish for rebirth.

The longing for rebirth grants the journey to the island a religious connotation of a pilgrimage. This quest is what Erick Fromn refers to as positive freedom that sets men free since it "is based upon the [revival of the] uniqueness and individuality of man" (viii), derived from the belief that "each man is generally precious in God's sight" regardless of any social or cultural constraints imposed by society (Novak 7). As we can trace the Romantic influence in both authors' works with the journey back to nature, this pilgrimage is referred to as savage pilgrimage because the individual is in "search for an image authentic" (Freeman 8) that does not answer the predicaments of culture. This authenticity is evoked in "The White Rose" through a succession of verbs of action that foregrounds primitivism "hunt, tell stories, make love in the wild". Abandoning the manners and the veneer of society, the dwellers of the painter's island are depicted in "continuum with the entire universe" (Widmer 609). Similarly, Lawrence envisioned the dwellers of his Rananim in a letter to Koteliansky: "In my island, I wanted people to come without class or money, sacrificing nothing, but each coming with all their desires, yet knowing that his life is but a tiny section of a whole so that he shall fulfil his life in relation to the whole" (qtd. in Burack 219). Both

quotes accentuate the epistemologically utopian quality of the island as it frees men from the social, cultural, and institutionalized hindrances imposed by society and which rendered his existence tragic.

2.2. THE DREAM THAT FALLS APART

Following the plot of tragedy, Lawrence's novella witnesses a reversal of fortune, announced by "heavy malevolence" (*The Man Who Loved Islands* 159). Life on the first island drifts into gloominess: animals start dying, the housekeeper deceives the master, and so the other dwellers who seek control over the land, and the danger of bankruptcy becomes more and more evident. The earlier mentioned perfection, "everything perfect and everybody happy" (*The Man Who Loved Islands* 154), seems to have ceased place for corruption and doom "Out of the very air came a stony, heavy malevolence" insists Lawrence (*Ibid.* 159). This swift reversal is evoked through a gap in the pace of narration, further reinforced when Mr Cathcart decides to shift to another second island, depicted as "lonely and untouched", surrounded by rocks and stones (*Ibid.* 163). The rocky nature of the second island and the smallness of its size reflect a stillness in spirit:

He didn't want anything. His soul at least was still in him, his spirit was like a dim-lit cave underwater, where strange sea-foliage expands upon the watery atmosphere, and scarcely sways, and a mute fish shadowily slips and slips away again. All still and soft and uncrying, yet alive as rooted sea-weed is alive. (163)

The stillness that characterizes the second island puts forth a death wish, a desire for motionlessness, emptiness, and shadowiness. Furthermore, he shines away both of his wife Flora and their newborn daughter and moves to another even smaller island. In John J. Clayton's words: "Lawrence examines schizoid withdrawal and longing for regression that ends in the annihilation of real contact with the world and therefore annihilation of the self" (187).

This annihilation is what renders the utopia a dystopia. What initially started as an opportunity for happiness soon turns into a moment of loss. “These (...) realms of time” soon reveal themselves to be a long cold winter as the seasons cease to replace one another and the protagonist Mr Cathcart loses hope in controlling time as he dies lonely covered by snow on frozen land. The process was not however sudden and unprepared for but rather foreshadowed by the protagonist’s gradual alienation of and estrangement to body and language.

Mr Cathcart planned to invite to his first island only perfect people with accomplishment, dreaming of creating “a minute world of pure perfection” (*The Man Who Loved Islands* 153). But, these people came with their inherited ideas and ideologies and sought to impose and implement them on the new land. Actually, the dwellers of the first island failed Mr Cathcart’s vision as they imported their rules and customs from the imperfect world they came from. This world they come from is torn by the Great War, a war that put into question their political, economic and social ideas. In this vein, the first island may stand for England against which the author is levelling a harsh criticism as she succumbed into this war. Similarly, the engineer in “*The White Rose*” refuses to let go of the city as he keeps urging the painter to find their way out of the forest and holding tight to his car to carry on the journey.

Both stories investigate the influence the city is exercising on the individual. It is a vivid example of the deeply rooted indoctrination that blinds the individual to the beauty of the pristine and natural. Throughout this “savage pilgrimage”, the painter calls out for the engineer “to leave your floors and your cares [and] to follow me in the woods” (*The White Rose* 27). The engineer, however, refuses to follow, claiming that this “is a crazy place” (*Ibid.* 29), insecure as neither gate nor a fence protects it from outside invasion. “Sharks have appeared in our waters” (*Ibid.* 43), he warns the painter urging him back to the safe city. The animal imagery is a metaphor of colonization that Mina harshly criticizes in his work, blaming it for “defil[ing] the temple, [selling] it, it is my father’s house and you

made of it a cave for thieves” (Ibid. 28). It seems that in both texts, men are unable to transcend the social and political paradigms that have been shaping them in their cities. Both Lawrence and Mina look back to these paradigms as corrupt and rotten, enchainning man and restraining his development as he cannot transcend the temporal as well as cultural conditions of his existence. Man fails to set himself free from the world he grew in.

As both texts advance, the uncontrollable laws that stand against the protagonists’ dream of self-fulfilment are further revealed through the love relationships experienced by Mr Cathcart and the engineer in the selected texts. In “The Man Who Loved Islands,” the protagonist shifts to a second island as he fails to create his perfect world in the first island, hence announcing a shift in focus “from the realm of political and social activities to the relationship between the protagonist’s interaction with a girl from he gets a child” (Michelucci 2015). Similarly, in “The White Rose”, the painter reveals an unspoken love affair between the engineer and the lady. He refers to this love as that of Solomon and the queen of Sheba (The White Rose 18). The painter comments that this is not a story of two hearts, but that of two arrogant monarchs. In a poetic style, he reports their love: “Solomon called, Bilqīs remained among the infidels. Bilqīs called, Solomon abode in his kingdom They exchanged gifts and met, yet a distance between them stood. Love controlled by the mind” (Ibid. 18). The use of mythology to understand the engineer’s love for the lady asserts that man’s love is doomed as it is controlled by reason, a recurrent idea in Lawrence’s work who understood such love as the tragedy of the modern man.

Comparably, Lawrence uses a mythical figure to refer to Mr Cathcart’s love for Flora; it is “saxifrage” a flower that is thought to grow among stones. Both figures accentuate the self-centeredness of the male protagonists and the futility of their experiences that remain untouched and unchanged. Thinking he will reach extreme perfection as both love and ideology fail him, Mr Cathcart chooses a third, even smaller island to set in. the third island is marked by a denial of the self through a rejection of the needs of the body, this

is suggested in the novella through the prevalence of winter to evoke a denial of the body's desires and the loss of language. "The Master", comments Michelucci "is disturbed, annoyed and exasperated by the sound of his own voice" (8). The loss of language suggests a dissolving of the protagonist as he becomes consumed by the island. As for the engineer, the latter refuses the unconditional invitation of the painter to remain on his island and chooses, instead, to go back to the city. When bidding farewell, the painter asserts that "It is known that the son of Man remains alone" (41). Both novellas assert the defeat of man in controlling time and space. Mr Cathcart loses control over his island, while Nature fulfils its revenge as he dies covered by snow. The engineer, on the other hand, surrenders and gives up on change when he cowardly chooses to return to the city as he fears the painter's island.

3. THE POLITICS OF NEW MASCULINITY

It seems that Lawrentian protagonists are inevitably defeated as they are unable to come to terms with what Lawrence coins in *Studies in Classic American Literature* "the spirit of place". It corresponds to the idea of virgin land, suited for the creation of Rananim, yet turns out to be hostile by either pushing the characters to escape or by sucking the marrow of their vital strength. This hostility can be explained by man's inability to adjust himself in nature as he always seeks to dominate it. Such a depiction of male characters finds echos in Mina's engineer as he fails to feel the spirit of place.

Both Mr Cathcart and the engineer fail to connect with the island as they remain staunch to the life they left behind. Novak refers to such a life as the "Father's Law". He explains that "Western consciousness rested [...] upon [...] fundamental images that each man is generally precious in God's sight" (Novak 7). However, being in God's sight entails a limiting understanding of one's self and asserts that man's definition of himself is not his own but rather imposed on him. Both novellas shed light on the prevention and

limitation of these impositions exercise on man to achieve self-identity. He remains therefore at the threshold of self-realization, which explains why the characters fail to reach an authentic sense of themselves.

As man is restricted by such a deeply rooted constraint, being haunted by the law of the father, Mina and Lawrence turn to history and recreate its stories, deconstructing meanwhile the inherited expectations that used to define manhood. Interestingly, both authors believed that the primary image that restricted man is the image of the dying Jesus Christ, which pinpoints another common ground that brought these two authors closer. It is the notion of sacrifice that the authors visited, claiming that man has been sacrificing himself to meet the expectations of the Father. Placed directly after “The Man who Loved Island”, “The Man Who Died” recounts Christ’s reversed journey back to life. “Lawrence (...) tried to revive old myths as means of revitalizing what he considered to be sterile and misdirected Christian religion” explains Cowan (241). The short story retells Christ’s journey back to life, bringing the “dead white face” to the land of the sun. While Mr Cathcart dies in a frozen land, this unknown man is brought back to life and migrates to the land of the sun, indicating as such the possibility that this man can be Mr Cathcart brought to life and that he is to be healed in the land of Iris, where he gets “in touch with men” (The Man who Died 181), replacing the biblical, original text “ascended to my father” (John 20.11.8), the touch advocates Lawrence’s bodily religion that glorifies the virtue of life, body and desire as expressed by the narrator when referring to Christ’s new journey back to life as being on a “mission [. . .] [of] intimate warm [touch]” (The Man who Died 194). It is this touch, this connection with the other and the self that will revive the innate in man and allow him to assert his self-definition. It is in this respect that we can read “The Man who Died” as it comes to find an answer to Mr Cathcart’s failure to grasp “the spirit of the place” and to provide the new man with an alternative, authentic self-image.

It is the painter in “The White Rose” who stands for the new

man. Similar to Lawrence, Mina's saviour chooses a different path than the original story and, instead of carrying the cross and sacrificing himself for the sake of mankind, he chooses to abandon them and remain by the sea alone. As a matter of fact, this very choice is important when referring to Mina's writing, who seems to gain the reputation of the godfather of the literature of the sea in the Arab world, according to Mansour Jamil (2018). Jamil asserts that unlike American literature of the sea, the sea in Mina's work is not a mere setting as actions do not take place in the sea, but "(...) take place mainly on the periphery of the sea (...)" (2018); it is instead a mirror to the psychological turmoil his characters survive. The vastness of the sea and the depth of its waters, even experienced from far, permits Mina to pinpoint the main concerns of the new man in the eve of the war for independence. "The White Rose" has therefore set the tone for the sea to be Mina's first source of inspiration and muse as all his following novels "are dipped in the tumultuous waves of the sea", writes Suzan Seif Eddine (2018).

Being a mirror to the character's psychological status, the narrator uses a particular language to describe the sea as "roaring like a lion", "the sea is a vast, blue agitated pool" (*The White Rose* 10) that reveals the painter's initial turmoil, fear, sadness and loss of control that soon fade away when he decides to remain in his island. It redeems his soul. Being a remedy, the sea is "the best way [that] confirms the depth of the gap that exists in the attachment to the unknown for the sea is life and freedom," reports Suzan when quoting Mina (2018). Additionally, Mina's association between his characters and the sea "has a creative energy that [grants them] the ability to revive the universe" (Suzan 2018). This explains Mina's choice of characters that are larger than time and that carry in them a legendary attribute to restore life torn by poverty, colonization and imperialistic agendas.

CONCLUSION

As he becomes aware of the limitations smothering his existence in the eve of the great wars marking the first half of the 20th century,

the New Man embarked on a spiritual, pilgrimage-like journey to explore his own self-consciousness, refusing to live in the shadow of the hegemonic Father. Both Lawrence and Mina envisioned an escape to a distant island as a possible *locus* for rediscovering the self. It is amid the natural that the dialectical opposition between self-destructive life and the creative experience of the self, prophet-like characters develop and mythical stories unfold. By revisiting history and religion through a blending of the sacred with the pagan, the selected narratives provided us with an alternative based on a hailing of the physical and natural in man.

Many similarities can be drawn when reading these two war narratives, mainly the authors' common interest in the New Man's quest for self-definition and realization. Healing the male self-proved to be a universal concern that brought these two authors on common ground, despite their ideological and political stands.

When Lawrence aspired for a new milieu that would redeem his modern man who lost his soul to the industrial and mechanical, Mina was setting his political theory into practice through the character of the painter. While Lawrence's New Man does not manage to establish a clear political agenda, due probably to the fact that the author himself did not position himself within any clear political, "The White Rose" can be read not only as a political allegory but as an exercise for Mina to bring his political system altogether, accentuating the need for man to free himself from the fetters of the old, colonial systems. As framed by the painter, it is a system based on comradeship, self-valuing and love.

What this paper sought to establish was mainly a bridge that would transcend time, geography and mainly ideology to prove that the human experience was one and the same. In a post-colonial world, this paper attempted to argue in favour of world literature where differences became enriching and concerns became one. It is the first step into seeing the marriage of ideas and thoughts that can take place when we invest in the universal human experience.

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