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Unfeeling, politics and race in the Balkans in the 1930s: Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*

Nicola Dimitriou

The importance of Rebecca West's work, despite the fact that she was a well-respected journalist and critic in her own time, has only just begun to be recognised and to be done justice. Much of this reevaluation has centred on her 1941 book *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. The book¹ is a prime example of a travelogue that, as Andrew Hammond has suggested, would 'most surely be considered one of the greatest works of the modernist period if only it had not been written in a genre (travel writing) and in a region (Eastern Europe) marginalised alike in British literary studies'.² Extending to some half a million words and written on the brink of World War II, the work has been called a 'monument to the ideologies of national self-rule, anti-imperialism, and feminism'³ while another critic describes it as a 'massively ambitious 1941 travelogue' which offers a 'meditation on the history and culture of the Balkans [...] ... a region West (rightly) feared would soon come under the domination of fascism.'⁴

¹ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2006).

² Andrew Hammond, 'Memoirs of conflict: British women travellers in the Balkans', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 14 (2010), 57-75 (p. 66).

³ Bernard Schweizer, *Radicals on the Road: The Politics of English Travel Writing in the 1930s* (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2001), p. 80.

⁴ Timothy Wientzen, 'An Epic of Atmosphere: Rebecca West, *Black Lamb*, and Reflex Author(s)', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 38 (2015), 57-73 (p. 59).

The text traces a six-week trip West took to Yugoslavia in 1937, while also discussing three other trips that West took to the region between 1936 and 1938. She starts her journey by travelling to Zagreb and is shown the city by Constantine, a poet and a Serb, and two Croats: the mathematician Valetta, a young separatist who believes in an independent Croatia; and a journalist, Marko Gregorievitch, who believes in a united Yugoslavia. She and her husband visit numerous places, discuss politics and nationhood, and have numerous conversations and encounters with the aforementioned people. They then travel to the historic Croatian region of Dalmatia by train and visit the island of Rab, as well as visiting places such as Trogir and Dubrovnik and various other places on their journey. They continue their trip by visiting Herzegovina and Sarajevo in Bosnia. Finally, they travel to numerous other cities in Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro.

While interweaving her travel narrative with a thorough history and ethnography of the region, West develops and shares her myriad views on politics and society at large, as well as feminism and fascism. In order to do so, she adopts, as I hope to argue, a demonstration of ‘unfeeling’, akin to the neutral or objective stance struck by many scientists, to enable her to discuss these views and the multiple races, ethnicities and nationalities in the borderland that the Balkans constituted between the West and the East. The results of adopting such a stance are on full display early on in the narrative. As we first encounter Constantine, Valetta and Gregorievitch, she offers a highly detailed description of the men and their attitudes towards each other:

They are standing in the rain, and they are all different and they are all the same. They greet us warmly, and in their hearts they cannot

greet each other, and they dislike us a little because it is to meet us that they are standing beside their enemies in the rain. We are their friends, but we are made from another substance. The rich passions of Constantine, the intense, graceful, selected joys and sorrows of Valetta, and Gregorievitch's gloomy Great Danish nobility are all cut from the same primary stuff, though in very dissimilar shapes. Sitting in our hotel room, drinking wine, they showed their unity of origin. A door opens, they twitch and swivel their heads, and the movement is the same. When these enemies advance on each other, they must move at the same tempo.⁵

I will be returning more than once to this extract as it demonstrates, with particular intensity, the representations of embodiment that can be found throughout West's writing in this book as a whole and which allow her to orientate herself unfeelingly towards the people she encounters and describes. In addition, with its obvious interest in national character and characteristics, the passage also displays, or else betrays, the conscious and unconscious influence of eugenics on West's writing—an influence I will detail later. In the popular consciousness of today, eugenics represents and is perhaps situated on the extreme end of 'unfeeling' scientific objectivity. As such, this influence perhaps sits uncomfortably and most certainly is part of a complex, at times paradoxical, relationship with West's evident humanism; her interest in and compassion for a region that was often dismissed at the time as not worth visiting, much less writing about.

⁵ West, p. 86.

Even a cursory glance at the myriad articles written about the region in the years leading up to West's visit reveal a somewhat flippant attitude towards the Balkans in the West. In a 1912 edition of *The Graphic*, in an article titled "Why the Balkans Attract Women", one writer found it hard to understand how 'those rough, wild, semi-civilised and more than half Orientalised little countries, [could] appeal so strongly to some of our astutest feminine intelligence'.⁶ Hammond claims such reactions were typical of the time, with 'Eastern Europe as a whole [being] considered a place of disunion and barbarism, full of ignorant peasants and antipathetic races which the Ottoman Empire control[led] simply by turning them against each other'.⁷ West, therefore, was going against popular notions of her time or, at least, was entering into a minor tradition established by a small number of women, by choosing to travel to these parts of the world which were linked in the popular imagination to poverty and degradation and whose very geographical nature placed them in a frustratingly liminal space between the 'civilised' West and the 'barbaric' East.⁸

Indeed, to lend a distinctive identity to the Balkans is part of West's project in *Black Lamb*. Writing on the travelogue, Laura Cowan rightly accentuates that West strongly disagreed with a 'blind adherence to totalitarian systems', which often seek to secure the dominance of one culture or a few, calling attention to the fact that West supported the opinion that 'cultures, countries, and individuals need vital traditions' which she viewed as

⁶ Hammond, p. 58.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁸ Felicity Rosslyn, 'Primitivism and the Modern: A Prolonged Misunderstanding', in *The Balkans and the West; Constructing the European Other, 1945-2003*, ed. by Andrew Hammond (New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), pp. 16-25 (p. 16).

‘essential to healthy individuals and healthy countries’.⁹ By supporting their own identity, rather than simply considering them the aftermath of the Austrian empire or of Ottoman rule, she attempts to give the countries she visits a sense of dignity; countries she believed should not be ruled over but, rather, flourish under their own rule, tradition and self-determination.

West’s tendency to wish for the Balkan countries’ national self-determination is drawn out in Felicity Rosslyn’s study of the book. Rosslyn notes that many European travellers visiting the region brought their own ‘cultural baggage’ with them, and as a result were often willing to sacrifice ‘factual detail’ so as to guarantee the survival of what they thought dearer than anything else, namely, their ‘faith in the existence of somebody’s goodness’. West, too, fell victim to this way of thinking, and at times it becomes clear how she romanticises the Balkans in an attempt to counter the encroaching threat of the empires that surrounded them on the West and the East.

West’s general opposition to the course Western history had taken would provide another reason why she chose to view the Balkans in a particularly, and perhaps overly, positive light. As Hammond helpfully summarises, West held the opinion that “the mechanised age [w]as superficial and economically sadist, reducing the majority to an “economic Hell””.¹⁰ The Balkans, by contrast, were not yet as heavily industrialised as Western European countries and thus were viewed as a convenient escape route for people who, like West, disliked the dehumanising aspects of modernity.

⁹ Laura Cowan, *Rebecca West’s Subversive Use of Hybrid Genres: 1911-41* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc: 2015) p. 4.

¹⁰ Hammond, p. 66.

Many passages in *Black Lamb*, which Hammond notes ‘prefigure contemporary postcolonialism’ in their tone and import, attest to how strongly West felt against the ignorance and iniquities of Western imperialism.¹¹ Indeed, at one point she states in the book that ‘it is our [Western] weakness to think that distant people became civilised when we looked at them, that in their yesterdays they were brutish’.¹² It becomes clear throughout that West is keen not to fall, and not to be seen to fall, into the same intellectual trap. In fact, it could be suggested that West goes to great lengths to create a persona for herself as a Western journalist who is an exception to the Western, imperialist rule. Believing, as Hammond goes on to claim, that the ‘peninsula’s poverty and unrest [were due to] the Great Power’s treaties, settlements, border adjustments and economic interventions,’ West almost fashions herself as a type of intellectual saviour of the Balkans who might promote an alternative and better future for them.¹³ This sometimes meant that West pitched herself against the political allegiances of those she met and hoped to liberate.

For instance, in the text, West describes Gregorievitch as similar to ‘Pluto in the Mickey Mouse films’ for his continued advocacy for the state of Yugoslavia. ‘His face is grooved with grief at the trouble and lack of gratitude he has encountered while defending certain fixed and noble standards in a chaotic world.’¹⁴ Depicting Gregorievitch as Pluto the dog, a naive person mindlessly loyal to the concept of Yugoslavia—a political project the metaphor also subtly belittles—is a demonstration of the sort of paradox produced by

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² West, p. 92.

¹³ Hammond, p. 66.

¹⁴ West, p. 85.

West's double allegiance to anti-totalitarianism and self-determination. While West wished to view her Balkan companions and the concept of Yugoslavia with respect and hope for the future, as a means to go against the world's various contemporary imperial powers, her commitment to the preservation or reestablishment of individual Balkan states meant she often undermined just the people she was trying to promote to the world as reliable, as perfectly capable of having their own self-determined nation, which in turn would be able to stand among all other, well-respected nations of the world. As a result, West often allows sarcasm to enter into her writing as well as dehumanising effects, such as comparing Gregorievitch to an animated animal, which brush up uncomfortably with contemporary eugenics. These effects are enabled and encouraged by the unfeeling façade of the objective journalist West constructs, one who is committed to reporting the unbiased, unpartisan truth while observing people who are supposedly incapable of taking such a stance themselves.

We can feel the dynamics of this unfeeling style at work in West's consideration of the character's attitudes towards each other, in an echo of the passage I reproduced earlier. West goes on to describe how Constantine 'who was still a student in Paris when the Great War broke out, and who had been born a free Serb, seems impious in the way he takes Yugoslavia for granted.'¹⁵ The verb 'seems', which conveniently allows West not to commit herself, takes a certain distance from the adjective 'impious'. It is an example of the tactic of free indirect discourse West often uses to describe the way she imagines the people feel for each other, so that the men's voices and the highly emotive

¹⁵ West, p.85.

terms they may use are only heard through the filter of her own supposedly neutral voice. This tactic becomes even more noticeable when West goes on to consider Gregorievitch's and Valetta's understanding of Balkan politics and each other. She claims that 'to Gregorievitch, Valetta', who is a young, separatist Croat, 'is quite simply a traitor. Only a sorcerer could make [Gregorievitch] realise that the Austro-Hungarian Empire ceased to be when Valetta was six years old, and that [Valetta] had never known any other symbol of unjust authority except Yugoslavia.'¹⁶ With the phrase 'quite simply a traitor', West allows Gregorievitch's voice and opinion regarding Valetta to be heard in all its intensity. However, she cleverly balances this out by using the adverbial phrase, which importantly carries notions of unfeelingness and seeming objectivity, 'quite simply'. This phrase demonstrates that West always keeps a distance from her subject and that even when she incorporates intense vocabulary, she always introduces it with the dominant unfeeling attitude that is commonly found in scientific writing. The phrase removes a significant part of the intensity of feeling that she imagines that Gregorievitch and Constantine suffer from, having fought in a war, and which Valetta feels as a young individual who wants to dramatically change the political landscape of his country.

West's historicisation and effective inoculation of the men's respective political positions serves two closely related purposes. On the one hand, using the men's heated rhetoric as a contrast, this practice of detachment and unfeeling helps to legitimise her writing and its claims, in a manner which recalls Barbara Laslett's thoughts that 'scientists characterise their work as

¹⁶ Ibid.

nonemotional to differentiate science from nonscience as they compete with others for social respect and resources'.¹⁷ It is for similar reasons that West narrates the heated terms that the men use for one another from a cool distance. She presents the men as full of feeling while she remains unfeelingly objective, capable of describing this heated discussion without being part of it, thus establishing her and her account's trustworthiness. This stance is, of course, closely tied to West's position and authority as an author of works of fiction and nonfiction alike. Deborah Nelson has suggested that West fancied herself as a 'realist of a certain kind', which often meant adopting a kind of 'toughness' that 'demanded a heightened sensitivity to reality, just not to other people's emotions.'¹⁸ Unfeeling, therefore, is a way in which she attempts to validate her journalistic opinion on the three men's feelings for one another and about the political situation as more than just opinion. She wanted her voice to be seen as equally valid to scientists' conclusions and findings and, correspondingly, to be held in high esteem. West uses indirect free discourse, a device often used in fiction, to fabricate and create the inner and outer reality of those she meets while placing it under the prism of unfeelingness.

On the other hand, West utilises these devices not only to differentiate *Black Lamb* from other and her own creative writing, but to distance herself from the people with whom she interacts. As hinted at by the contrasts above, West places herself as a representative of the rational Western world interacting with exotic Eastern Others whose highly emotional lack of

¹⁷ Barbara Laslett, 'Unfeeling Knowledge: Emotion and Objectivity in the History of Sociology', *Sociological Forum*, 5(1990), 413-433 (p. 414).

¹⁸ Nelson, p. 10. It is also worthy to highlight that, as James Chandler explains in his work, *Archeology of Sympathy*, 'sentimental' had become permanently and irrevocably associated with bad taste and moral simplicity and 'unsentimentality' with good taste and moral acuity. See James Chandler, *Archeology of Sympathy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013).

self-control is in need not only of explaining but neutralising. West thus unfortunately ends up reinforcing a typical stereotype of her time which supported the idea that certain nations and their people, such as the people of the Balkans, would always be overcome with emotion and would be unable to keep a rational, responsible stance towards a heated topic. Unfeeling then becomes not just a good practice but a positive trait, one owned by West because of her Western heritage. Just as the three men cannot help but become overwhelmed by emotion and therefore think and act irrationally, West cannot help but be unfeeling.

These views are reminiscent of West's time and of the tendency of the mass population to have faith in the innovative (as many believed then) field of eugenics. The influence that eugenics had on society as a whole and, as it shall be shown, on West's thought, was excessive. Eugenics, 'in most western countries in the first four decades of the 20th century was based on the idea that genes control most human phenotypic traits' and was mainly found 'in Britain and the United States'.¹⁹ It is representative that Dr. Tredgold, as quoted in the *Manchester Guardian* in 1931, strongly asserted that 'there was clear evidence that the great majority of 'unfit persons' owed their condition to hereditary defects or tendencies transmissible to following generations'.²⁰ It is for this reason that Professor R. Ruggles Gates, whom the same paper chose to quote at great length, argued that both 'educators and eugenicists knew that men were not born equal in ability of aptitudes, and it was an hallucination to

¹⁹ Garland E. Allen, 'Eugenics and Modern Biology: Critiques of Eugenics, 1910–1945', *Biology Faculty Publications & Presentations*, Department of Biology, 5.

²⁰ 'Churchmen and Eugenics: Dean Inge and Old Prejudices Church Congress ... Our Special Correspondent', *The Manchester Guardian* (1901-1959), 10 October 1930, p. 6.

imagine that universal education could ever bring all men to the same level'.²¹ This view is corroborated by Dr. K. B. Aikman who stated that 'difficult as it undoubtedly was, some form of mass segregation of races seemed to be desirable.'²² There was clear support within the scientific community for some form of eugenicist intervention. During a 1931 meeting of the *British Association for the Advancement of Science*, it was recorded that 'eugenicists, who conferred with the educationists upon how we may get a biologically wiser race', saw 'the British declining toward extinction and all our recent humanitarian legislation hastening the process'.²³ Dr. Robert Sutherland would emphasise the point a few years later, in 1935, arguing that if 'present tendencies went unchecked there could not fail to be a progressive deterioration of the race'.²⁴

Despite the alarmist rhetoric, it is important to note, as P. K. Wilson reminds us, eugenics 'was not confined to academe, the scientific laboratory or the farm. Indeed, it was slowly permeating American cultural thought' as well as mainstream thought in Britain. Eugenics, at the time, could be incorporated into one's understanding of the past and present and, 'more interestingly and controversially, into one's vision of the future [; it did not matter] whether that vision was progressive or reactionary'.²⁵ Although it by no means earned everyone's trust and support, 'the science of eugenics and

²¹ 'British Association: Future of the Race, Of Coal, And Cotton ... Our Special Correspondent', *The Manchester Guardian* (1901-1959), 29 September 1931, p. 3.

²² 'Danger of Race Mixture: A Mongolian "Menace" Instability of U.S. Family', *The Manchester Guardian* (1901-1959), 29 January 1935, p. 9.

²³ 'British Association: Future of the Race, Of Coal, And Cotton ... Our Special Correspondent', *The Manchester Guardian* (1901-1959), 29 September 1931, p. 3.

²⁴ 'Birth-Control Conference: Preserving The Race Medical Officer's Pro', *The Manchester Guardian* (1901-1959), 2 December 1935, p. 12.

²⁵ P. K. Wilson, 'Harry Laughlin's eugenic crusade to control the 'socially inadequate' in Progressive Era America', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 36 (2002), 49-67 (p. 49).

the social-policy debates to which it gave rise interested everyone in the early years of the twentieth century', as Childs has highlighted.²⁶ Given the above information, as well as the fact that, as Frank Stahnisch has pointed out, eugenics infiltrated into the political right and left (of which West was an active member), thus causing the 'boundaries between the political right and left to become challenged', it can be assumed that West was undoubtedly aware of eugenics as a socially acceptable movement of her time and would undoubtedly have been affected, to a lesser or greater extent, by its central tenets, as any other person of her time was also.²⁷

Eugenics make an appearance in various cases in *Black Lamb*, such as when West describes how the Hungarian and Croatian people were unlikely to assimilate, despite living for two centuries under the same crown. West explains how 'the Hungarians or Magyars are a people of far Asiatic origin, akin to the Finns, the Bulgars, and the Turks, and the Croats are Slav, akin to

²⁶ Donald D. Childs, *Modernism and Eugenics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 9.

²⁷ Frank W. Stahnisch, 'The Early Eugenics Movement and Emerging Professional Psychiatry: Conceptual Transfers and Personal Relationships between Germany and North America, 1880s to 1930s', *UTP Journals*, 31 (2014), 17-40, (p. 33). Eugenics, simultaneously, was also used in many instances as a way in which to promote racist views. For instance, in early 20th century America and after WWI, eugenics became the scientific means used by political parties in the USA so as to promote the benefits of restricting 'immigration, especially from southern and eastern Europe'. See Jason McDonald, 'Making the World Safe for Eugenics: The Eugenicist, Harry H. Laughlin's Encounters with American Internationalism', *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 12 (2013), 379-411, (p. 381). This use of eugenics also explains the overall feeling that existed amongst Westerners towards Balkan people. It also explains the general feeling of the time and the rapid shift in the American, [but also applicable to Britain], national mood away from the 'internationalism and toward isolationism that occurred soon after the Great War ended'. See McDonald. The level of racism coming from the Western world can be demonstrated through the fact that immigrants from the Balkans had to face, for instance, 'literacy tests in the United States [the main purpose of which was to] exclude immigrants from southern and eastern Europe'. See McDonald. The political atmosphere, along with the laws applied, would most certainly have led West's readers, and even possibly West herself, to have viewed Balkan people in a derogatory manner.

the Serbs, the Russians, the Poles, and the Czechs.²⁸ West seems to be certain of the sweeping statements she makes regarding genetics and cultural assimilation. She suggests that these peoples will be unable to collaborate and work successfully in the long term due to their race in a matter-of-fact fashion which allows her to avoid having to state her personal position in regards to contemporary Balkan politics. Adopting a mode of thought shaped by eugenics, she embraces a covertly Western position that gifts her with a superficial objectivity. Under this cover, she is able to interpret the situation subjectively while still claiming to be an outside observer rather than an inner active participant—a role her Balkan friends are unable to perform.

But West's noting of these particular genetic traits comes laden with another specifically political agenda, born out of some peculiarly Western European anxieties. Despite believing that the best outcome for Europe as a whole would be self-sufficient, self-determined nations,²⁹ as these 'would be an effort by a people to rebuild its character when an imperialist power has worked hard to destroy it', West's fear that Asiatic power could prevail over Europe in the future worked as a means to lead her to believe that the second best solution would be to gather all Slavic components to work as one against this threat.³⁰ In this case, she attempted to influence her Western readers to feel a type of cultural solidarity towards the Balkans. Thus, by stating that Balkan people are not of 'far Asiatic origin', she is insinuating that they are closer to Europe than her readers may have previously thought. Consequently,

²⁸ West, p. 92.

²⁹ West, on the surface, clearly believed that a 'national self-determination' would help 'advance a tentatively post-colonial sensibility' that would promote a confident type of 'national identification'. See Marina MacKay, *Modernism and World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 55.

³⁰ West, p. 843.

West was drawing on eugenics as a science to suggest that the Balkans deserved to be supported as European nations by the Western world against the imperial powers that were threatening and surrounding them. Indeed, as Jonah Corne points out, Rebecca West ‘foresaw the catastrophic conflict that would engulf Europe and the world’ and was attempting to express these fears through her descriptive narrative.³¹ She supported this under the façade of objective unfeelingness regarding the land’s genes. West’s belief in the independent identities of European nations, which should nonetheless work together as a united whole, built on and connected through shared genes and history, was a means to fight imperialism which she believed was coming from Nazi Germany and a potential Asiatic threat.

Recognising this hidden agenda of West starts to make sense of some of her gestures elsewhere in the book. Her companions’ inability to regulate themselves and their emotions is pointed out by her descriptions, which pay particularly close attention to the men’s instinctive bodily reactions to each other. At the same time, West subtly suggests that they could be regulated under the right kind of Western influence, through a correct or corrected placement of the men in relation to each other. West’s descriptions in fact suggest that her mere presence as an observer is enough to neutralise the men’s deepest antipathies and disagreements, assimilating them forcibly to an unfeeling Western perspective.

Returning to the passage above—West’s very first description of her guides at the train station—we can see how she suggests that, in order to keep a social balance of power in front of their Western friends, who have the main power,

³¹ Jonah Corne, ‘Regicide on Repeat: The Pensive Spectator of Rebecca West’s Black Lamb and Grey Falcon’, *Criticism*, 60 (2018), 47-67, (pp. 67-67).

the three men hesitate to show their real emotions. Their bodies, despite the social and political conflicts they are part of—and because of their common genetic origin, as established from West’s subtly eugenic perspective—respond in the same ways and affect one another as they are ‘cut from the same primary stuff’. Naturally, though not consciously, they want to keep this balance alive. They affect each other’s bodies, West suggests, through the natural force that unites them, despite their contrasting and conflicting social circumstances. At the same time, therefore, unfeeling is not only found deriving from West towards the Balkans. Unfeeling is also found between the men, due to West’s expectations of them regarding unfeeling; expectations which serve her own political agenda. The power that West exercises over them speaks here. As Sara Ahmed points out, ‘maintaining public comfort requires that certain bodies “go along with it”, to agree to where [one is] placed. To refuse to be placed would mean to be seen as trouble, as causing discomfort for others’.³² Gregorievitch, Constantine and Valetta have to remain placed, in the order they were put, and should demonstrate unfeeling towards one another so that West and her party do not sense discomfort.

In conclusion, while *Black Lamb* presented West—in her discomfort with the course of Western civilisation—an opportunity to comment on a multitude of subjects, issues, people and races, unfeeling provided her with the necessary scientific earnestness and seriousness to justify her own subjective beliefs which, in turn, ended up serving Western Europe’s political agenda. She utilises the issue of race and eugenics that was a prevailing concern in the scientific and political world at the time in order to lend

³² Sara Ahmed, ‘Happy Objects’ in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2010), p. 39.

credibility to her own outlook on world politics. This places her in a paradoxical position: both attempting, at least superficially, to undo certain eugenic stereotypes regarding Balkan people, while also inadvertently supporting, due to her political allegiances and through her physical descriptions of the people she met on her travels, the same eugenic tendencies and beliefs that she elsewhere undoes.

West's description of the Balkans and its people in *Black Lamb* demonstrates, then, two potentially conflicting purposes. In the first instance, West wanted to convince her (highly educated, Western European) readers that her text could be regarded as highly as a scientific document in order to persuade them to rally in favour of the Balkans. Her other purpose, to which her unfeeling attitude style acts as a foil, was to allow the West to retain its dominance over the Balkans and the rest of the world. West, as a female writer with Western political power over words, ultimately betrays her ulterior motive which was to have a hand in influencing contemporary politics, a motive born out of a deeply felt anxiety for Britain and Europe's future.