Virginia Woolf and Twentieth Century Narratives of Androgyny

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Abstract

This historically contextualised work investigates Virginia Woolf's often contested theory of the androgynous writing mind. The work draws on early twentieth century discourses prevalent within sexology and psychoanalysis as a means of investigating Woolf's work. This is offset against readings of recent theorizations of sex and gender which accentuate the limitations of the conceptual schema used by early twentieth century theorists.

Since her writing life was framed by two world wars (between publication of The Voyage Out in 1915 and the posthumous publication of her last novel, Between the Acts in 1941) much of this work analyses modernist literature, particularly women's writing, in relation to ideologies that sought both to privilege and to denigrate war-time constructions of masculinity and male sexuality. I argue that androgyny was introduced as a metaphor for writing in A Room of One's Own as a way of controlling militant feminism and male sexuality. At the same time that it sought conservatively to suppress sexual politics in writing, it was itself an auto-erotic figure, based upon mythological and psycho-sexual discourses that either transcended the political dynamics of the time, or relied upon rhetorical constructions then associated with the unconscious.

As Woolf constantly negotiates between embracing and wishing to escape from the various implications of sexual difference, this work traces the relationship that Woolf establishes between patriarchal society, women's sexuality and pre-war and post-war constructions of gender. These constructions are always, for Woolf, intrinsically bound up in her writing praxis, which I trace through her unpublished, extant manuscripts. I argue that because Woolf never abandoned the trope that she had invented for symbolising writing and the subjectivity of the writer, her writing, as it engaged with the encroaching political dynamics of the 1930s became increasingly more arcane. Although she believed that art could somehow transcend the political debates during the 1930s, her reluctance to abandon the once auto-erotic figure that she had developed in the 1920s figured what she began to call "mental chastity." Woolf's retort to politics was, finally, to eclipse history and go back to the beginning, to the primeval and pre-history. This dissertation engages with the mythical, psychoanalytic, cultural and sexual dynamics of Woolf's work and her context.
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Editorial Procedures

The extant, unedited manuscripts and miscellaneous typescript fragments of "The Years" (1932-1934) now contained in the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, are distinguished from the published edition by "Y" and the relevant volume number (I-VIII) rather than "TY" which signifies the published edition. The published edition is underlined, the manuscript volumes are identified by double quotation marks. This strikethrough for example is used to indicate words crossed through by Woolf in the holographs. I have followed Mitchell Leaska's editorial symbols for his edition of The Pargiters, the published volume of the Novel-Essay fragments of The Years (Hogarth 1977).

I have also used the holograph version of To the Lighthouse edited by Susan Dick, London, Hogarth, 1983. References to the published edition are always referred to as "TTL" followed by the relevant page number. The holograph of To the Lighthouse is identified by inclusion of Woolf's original pagination which is identified by "MS" and followed by the relevant page number. I have also included the pagination used by the editor in the published edition of the holograph in consonance with editorial procedures in this edition.

All editions of the novels are the Hogarth Definitive Editions 1990 which are based on the original Hogarth Press editions of Woolf's novels. Other editions have been consulted, but these are clearly marked.

All Freud cited is from the Hogarth Standard Edition, signified in the notes by St. Ed. and followed by the Volume number and Volume date. Full dates of publication, date of volume and date of specific work cited are included in the bibliography.
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Virginia Woolf and Twentieth Century Narratives of Androgyny
Introduction

Diviners and prophets in a very real sense: androgyny in the twentieth century

Curiously enough, I thought that the ultimate explanation might be that there were men's minds in women's bodies, but I was more concerned in finding a way of life than in asking riddles without answers.¹

This dissertation locates Virginia Woolf's theory of the androgynous writing mind both historically and within recent feminist theoretical debates. A contextualised reading is necessary, I will argue, because androgyny has changing resonances within different theoretical narratives and historical periods. "[T]he androgyne is a myth," argues Busst, "[and] like all myths, it is constantly reinterpreted, since its meaning or value must agree with the widely varying preoccupations and experience of different eras and individuals."² Woolf's theory of androgyny carries specific cultural meanings that subsequent theoretical and literary debates have tended to efface. This introduction will debate the relation between the etymology of androgyny (man-woman³) and its institutionalization into various cultural and narrative frames. What it means (or is) to be a man and what it means (or is) to be a woman, and indeed the grounds we assume for understanding maleness and femaleness, are subject to change.⁴

¹ "Miss D" in Havelock Ellis Studies in the Psychology of Sex New York (1901) 1936 Volume Two, Part Two "Sexual Inversion" p241
⁴ For example, see Barrett and Phillips: "[D]ifference is not an absolute, but constructed in various ways according to what is perceived as salient in a particular context." Destabilizing Theory Cambridge, 1992 p8 And see also Ellen Cook: "A personality type alone does not determine behaviour, individuals do not behave in a social vacuum; individuals are affected by the same environmental conditions in different ways." Psychological Androgyny New York, 1985 p128
This dissertation debates androgyny in two ways. It challenges the epistemological grounds we assume in understanding and conceptualising androgyny, and it questions the assumption that androgyny can be represented ontologically. This introduction brings together various instances of critical thought that have problematised an understanding of androgyny by interrogating the assumptions about gender, for as Freud argued: "It is essential to understand clearly that the concepts of 'masculine' and 'feminine', whose meaning seems so unambiguous to ordinary people, are among the most confused that occur in science."5

I begin this introduction with the assumptions made within the narratives of sexology and psychoanalysis in order to show not only recurring rhetorical patterns within each discourse, but also to indicate the popularity of the trope of androgyny. These assumptions are included in order to disclose the connections between androgyny, sexuality and gender. The relationship between sexual orientation and gender identity, identified within psychoanalysis and sexology determines a dysfunctional socio-sexual identity within dominant heterosexist discourses. Such discourses emphasise both the current of cultural thought prevalent during the first decades of this century, and they also indicate the potential limitations of the conceptual frameworks applied by those thinkers. The popular resurgence of androgyny as a way of "being" from the 1960s onwards6 and the concurrent theoretical developments within feminism have further (and usefully) problematised the relationships

5 Freud Three Essays on Sexuality "The Differentiation Between Men and Women" St Ed Vol VII (1901-1905) n.1 p219 This footnote was added in 1915 (Three Essays on Sexuality was originally published in 1905). Freud identified three uses of masculine and feminine: "Masculine' and 'feminine' are used sometimes in the sense of activity and passivity, sometimes in a biological, and sometimes, again, in a sociological sense. The first of these three meanings is the essential one and the most serviceable in psychoanalysis." ibid.
6 Carolyn Heilbrun’s Towards a Recognition of Androgyny was first published in 1964. See also Ellen Piel Cook Psychological Androgyny p15 Karil Weil says that by 1984, Time magazine "published an article citing androgyny as the eleventh "megatrend" in American history." Androgyny and the Denial of Difference Charlottesville and London p1
between gender and sexuality, and it is these relationships, as I will show, that androgyny codes. Much literary criticism which has addressed Woolf and androgyny has manifestly failed to either contextualise or sufficiently theorise her version of androgyny by assuming that it entails a specific way of "being," without investigating how, or indeed, why, this might be so. I have included selective examples of such criticism in order to illustrate the difficulties that arise when Woolf is either not sufficiently theorised or contextualised.

Edward Carpenter's *Intermediate Types Among Primitive Folk* (1914) located the sources of androgyny in ancient and biblical texts. Citing Genesis, Carpenter argues that: "[M]any commentators have maintained that ... not only ... [was] the first man ... hermaphrodite, but that the Creator also was of that nature." Carpenter's recourse to such primary sources assumes that the Judeo-Christian tradition can be cited as the authority par excellence. This same authority was invoked by Dr Schreber as a way of satisfying his ego. Freud argues:

> It was impossible for Schreber to become reconciled to playing the part of a female wanton towards his doctor; but the task of providing God Himself with the voluptuous sensations that He required called up no such resistance on the part of his ego. Emasculation was now no longer a disgrace; it became 'consonant with the Order of Things', it took its place in a great cosmic chain of events, and was instrumental in the re-creation of humanity after its extinction.8

For Carpenter (as, indeed, no doubt for Schreber) the invocation of God was strategic since androgyny was posited not only as an origin from

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7 Edward Carpenter *Intermediate Types Among Primitive Folk* London 1914 p72 Citing Genesis, Carpenter quotes: "Elohim created man in his own image, in the image of Elohim created he him, male and female created he them." ibid. and see also pp146-172. See also MH Abrams *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*, London, 1971, for further accounts of mythological and bisexual deities pp66-83 AJL Busst in Ian Fletcher (ed) p4

8 "Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoïdes)" (1911) St. Ed. Vol XII (1911-1913) p48
which difference evolved, but was also a natural state, a condition preferable to one of difference or division. "I believe," Carpenter asserted:

that the blending of the masculine and feminine temperaments would...produce persons whose perceptions would be so subtle and complex and rapid as to come under the head of genius, persons of intuitive mind who would perceive things without knowing how, and follow far concatenations of causes and events without concerning themselves about the why - diviners and prophets in a very real sense.

Carpenter's theory of the superior person blessed with "the blending of the masculine and feminine temperaments" was one that he had originally propounded in The Intermediate Sex (1908). Carpenter had been more sexually direct in this text: the superior masculine-feminine persons were also blessed with the "Uranian temperament." The diviners and prophets had been "[S]ome of the world's greatest leaders and artists" who had "been dowered either wholly or in part with the Uranian temperament - as in the cases of Michael Angelo, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Alexander the Great, Julius Ceaser, or among women, Christine of Sweden, Sappho the poetess, and others." Representative of the "Uranian temperament" is the kind of man who "while possessing thoroughly masculine powers of mind and body, combines with them the tenderer and more emotional soul-nature of the woman - and sometimes to a remarkable degree."  

9 See also William Veeder Mary Shelley and Frankenstein -the Fate of Androgyny, Chicago and London, 1986: "Ever since the splitting of the androgyne caused, so the myths tells us, mankind's fall into history, we have sought to escape back out of time by reuniting our riven halves. Androgyny is thus a cosmic dream as well as a psychic ideal and a social goal." p23  
10 Carpenter Intermediate Types p62 Carpenter had also argued for this possibility in The Intermediate Sex London 1908 pp17-18  
11 The Intermediate Sex p38  
12 Carpenter described the "Uranian temperament" as being of "dual nature and ... swift interaction between its masculine and feminine elements" ibid. p109 Havelock Ellis, in Studies in the Psychology of Sex (1901) credits Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825-1895) as the originator of this phrase. In 1862, according to Ellis, Ulrichs used "Uranian" in relation to Plato's Symposium: "Later he "Germanized" this into "Urning" for the male, "Urningin" for the female, the condition itself was the "Urningtum." " p2 Ellis says of Ulrichs that "He regarded uranism, or homosexual love, as a congenital abnormality by which a female soul had become united with a male body..." ibid. p68  
13 op.cit. (1908) p32 For women, "[T]he mind... is more logical, scientific, and precise than usual with the normal woman." ibid. p27
For Carpenter, same-sex desire should not be seen pejoratively because it was natural, indeed, embodied and ordained by God. Carpenter had argued in *Love's Coming of Age* that:

The aim of love is non-differentiation - absolute union of being; but absolute union can only be found at the centre of existence. Therefore whoever has truly found another has found not only that other, and with that other himself, but has found also a third - who dwells at the centre and holds the plastic material of the universe in the palm of his hand, and is a creator of sensible forms.

Non-differentiation is the mythical primary condition, a condition to which, according to the Aristophanic (or Platonic) myth, we emotionally strive to return. It is also, according to Carpenter's accounts of social and sexual identity, a superior condition, comprising "diviners and prophets" and "creator[s] of sensible forms." That the assertion of such superiority was the very reason for the destruction of the original proud androgynes in the first place, is an irony unremarked on by Carpenter. But his insistence on the merging of the status of masculinity and femininity affirms difference as an untenable position for homosexuality.

The Aristophanic myth of the primary state of androgyny is a myth that accounts for (and privileges) homosexual love, although homosexuality was actually only one of three primary conditions of sexual harmony. Arrogance amongst the original double-sexed creatures (male and female, female and female, male and male) led to the intervention of Zeus who separated them. For ever after, the divided pairs spent (or

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14 Although see also June Singer *Androgyny The Opposites Within* (Boston) for an alternative reading: "The Androgyne has been nearly totally expunged from the Judeo-Christian tradition, for it apparently threatens the idea of a patriarchal God-image. Male dominance has been the keystone of the Judeo-Christian civilization." p6

15 Edward Carpenter *Love's Coming of Age* Manchester 1896 p20

16 In Plato's *Symposium* it is Aristophanes who provides the account of androgyny as the origin of love and sexual desire.

17 "In the first place there were three sexes, not, as with us, two, male and female; the third partook of the nature of both the others and has vanished, though its name survives." Plato *The Symposium* trans. Walter Hamilton Harmondsworth 1951 p59 Lesbian and heterosexual were the two other variants. For a more detailed discussion of androgyny and *The Symposium* see Kari Weil *Androgyny and the Denial of Difference* pp17-30
spend) their time in trying to reunite with their severed other: "Man's original body having been thus cut in two, each half yearned for the half from which it had been severed."\textsuperscript{18} The Aristophanic myth privileges male homosexuality even as it accounts for primary androgyny:

Those men who are halves of a being of the common sex, which was called ... hermaphrodite, are lovers of women, and most adulterers come from this class, as also do women who are mad about men and sexually promiscuous. Women who are halves of a female whole direct their affections towards women and pay little attention to men; Lesbians belong to this category. But those who are halves of a male whole pursue males, and being slices, so to speak, of the male, love men throughout their boyhood, and take pleasure in physical contact with men. Such boys and lads are the best of their generation, because they are the most manly.\textsuperscript{19}

Walter Hamilton’s 1951 translation of \textit{The Symposium} had some fairly contemporary cultural resonance. Paul Fussell, commenting on homoerotic verse of the First World War, highlights the distinctions that indicated degrees of developing sexual intensity: "As men grow more attractive, they are seen as boys, until finally, when conceived as potential lovers, they turn into lads."\textsuperscript{20} Origins transmuted into and substantiated by myth were one way, then, of both coding and writing about homosexual identity. Margaret Lawrence, writing in 1937, suggested that the development of homosexual tendencies in the First World War trenches was the spur for women's shifting gender and sexual roles: if

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} Plato p61
\item \textsuperscript{19} ibid. p62
\item \textsuperscript{20} Paul Fussell \textit{The Great War and Modern Memory} (Oxford) p283 Fussell also comments: "In Section D ("Pederasty") of the "Terminal Essay" in his 1885 translation of \textit{The Arabian Nights}, Sir Richard Burton resorts to Plato and advances Socrate’s argument in \textit{The Symposium} that "a most valiant army might be composed of boys and their lovers; for ... of all men they would be most ashamed to desert one another." p279 In relation to Woolf and androgyny and homosexuality, see also Barbara Fassler: "In choosing Shakespeare and his sister, [in \textit{A Room}] Woolf includes an intimation of homosexuality in her portrait of androgyny and draws upon current theories of the homosexual as a person who uniquely combines both masculine and feminine qualities to achieve artistic creativity and personal integration." "Theories of Homosexuality as Sources for Bloomsbury’s Androgyny" Signs 5:2 1979 p251
\end{itemize}
women looked more like men, they would appeal to the latent homosexuality in men that the war had unleashed:

There was the psychology of sex. Many of the men who had been through the war thought of women when they thought of them at all in terms of the demi-mondaine. The young women to whom they returned knew intuitively that they were competing not only with a subconscious homosexuality in men, but also with the subconscious attraction to the courtesan. Being practical, they set out, subconsciously if not consciously, to rival both the young lad and the whore. They played safely for their men, appealing to one possibility or the other. 21

Same sex attraction was, then, instituted into a heterosexual framework, where hegemonic gender relations could go unchallenged.

What is also clear, is that these myths and rhetorical codes privileged masculine and male homosexual identities. This has been a source of contention for some feminist critics who argue that androgyny is a kind of smoke screen that seems to obliterate pejorative marks of difference but still in fact privileges masculinity:

[W]hat we have in the androgynous psyche is a blasted image of ideal sexual equality, an ideal destroyed in its very origin because of the stereotypes and negative images that have adhered to women since Eve. In the realm of images, the androgynous is unique in that it attempts to meld masculine and feminine in a new and radically unique manner, and yet it is founded on the very stereotypes it seeks to destroy. Hence it is inherently flawed and persistently fails...to translate successfully humanity's desire to escape the constraints of sexuality altogether. 22

21 Margaret Lawrence We Write as Women London 1937 pp145-6 In the first American edition of this book (originally The School of Femininity New York 1936) Lawrence's theory is fundamentally the same, but there are some differences: "So the little girl pals emerged painted young things dressed in boyish clothes, smoking and laughing girls who occasionally did a bit of thinking. They fascinated the men returning from the fight. No wonder. Were they girls, or were they young lads? The boyish clothes necessitated slender figures, and the cult of slimming came into vogue. The boyish figure and the boyish styles set against the rampant femininity of painted cheeks and lips produced an exotic appeal probably never before achieved in history. Masculinity of dress and attitude set against utter femininity. It was bizarre. It was tantalising. There was no escape from it." p164

22 Diane Long Hoeveler Romantic Androgyny The Woman Within London, 1990 p7 And see Barrett and Phillips Destablizing Theory: "Many feminists came to challenge the quasi-androgynous visions (I want to be a person, not a woman or a man) of a future untroubled by significant differences of sex; the impulse toward denying sexual difference came to be viewed as capitulation to a masculine mould." p5
What remained crucial for writers and sexologists like Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis was the relation between sexual desire and anatomy, which on one level at least, always figured same-sex desire as in some way bound to the heterosexual paradigm: homosexual men could be feminine, lesbian women could be masculine: the male-female dyad remained, to some extent, always intact. Whilst asserting the normality of "inversion" Carpenter and Ellis were also capable, then, of reinscribing the "naturalness" of sex and gender roles. In his case studies, Ellis cites "FR," a male homosexual who, in his defence, maintained that: "I may add that I am fonder of babies than many women, and am generally considered to be surprisingly capable of holding them! ... As a youth, I used to act in charades; but I was too shy to do so unless I was dressed as a woman and veiled; and when I took a woman's part I felt less like acting than I have done in properia persona." Gender roles conflated with sexual preference indicate that gender can be both constructed and natural. Masculinity is recognised as a construct, in the case of "FR," whereas femininity is the natural expression and condition of his homo-erotic desires. This kind of reinscription typifies the limitations of conceptualisations of gender and sexual orientations. Margaret Lawrence in We Write as Women asked, in what were to her mutually exclusive possibilities: "What is a woman to do when she finds in herself the brain capacity of a man and the biological capacity of a woman? Which capacity must she starve, and what happens to the one if she starves the other, and what happens if she starves neither?" Rachel Bowlby argues that the masculine/feminine dyad is itself the limiting basis for androgyny:

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23 Havelock Ellis Studies in the Psychology of Sex (1901) op.cit. Vol II, Part Two, p95
24 Margaret Lawrence We Write as Women p313 Lawrence asks this question specifically in relation to Woolf's postulation of androgyny in A Room of One's Own. She interprets the question of androgyny as an irresolvable question which lies in a choice between "The baby and the book. The care a baby needs. The care a book needs, taking the book as a symbol of intellectual and professional achievement."
Mental qualities are therefore less flexible than they may look at first sight: to say that male minds can be 'feminine' only reinforces the dualism according to which the difference between the two sexes is known in advance.

Ironically, then, one of the implications of this model of androgyny might be a reinforcement rather than an undoing of the habitual separation of sexual characters.25

It is perhaps more useful to concede that "masculinity" and "femininity" represent the limits of a conceptual schema which, in rethinking the relationship between gender and sexuality, reinscribes essentialising constructions of versions of masculinity and femininity. Bowlby's analysis and indeed the evidence of the sexologists highlight the limits of conceptualising human behaviour and desire. Kari Weil's readings of twentieth century androgyny argue that the revival of androgyny in the 1960s claimed Woolf "to authorize its campaign for a necessary cooperation and co-presence of male and female within the individual as within the institution. Thus, the concept of androgyny was integrated into a full fight for psychological and sociopolitical equality between the sexes."26 Weil identifies two periods that follow this equation: one that, because it insisted on emphasising difference, perceived androgyny as a smoke screen that obliterated difference and privileged masculinity, a distinction that I have already indicated. "At the same time," argues Weil, "under the influence of so-called French feminism, a conceptual redefinition of sexual difference and consequently of androgyny was initiated within the academy."27 French feminism has provided some useful ways of reading Woolfian androgyny as a transcendence of the limits imposed by a traditional binary structure, as have some more sociologically based enquiries. Ellen Cook argues that "Sexual preference

26 Kari Weil Androgyny and the Denial of Difference p145
27 ibid.
is now generally viewed as separate from sex-role identity." This position challenges (within the parameters I have established) the sometimes rigid assumptions made by the sexologists about socio-sexual behaviour. It is Cook who offers an explanation for the popularity of the apparent resurgence of androgyny during the 1970s:

Social scientists also became increasingly aware of how traditional views about sex roles colored related theory and research. These views labeled prevalent between-sex similarities and within-sex differences as deviant rather than common and normal. The concept of androgyny provided a way to discuss femininity and masculinity without the prescriptive, sex-specific values of more traditional roles.29

Androgyny was not just a useful platform for evaluating the relation between masculinity, femininity and sexuality, however. Olive Schreiner’s vision of socio-sexual interaction was born out of a socialist-feminist agenda, but her rhetoric follows the same pattern as those of Carpenter and Ellis:

It is here [in a professional work environment] that the man cannot act for the woman nor the woman for the man; but both must interact. It is here that each sexual half of the race, so closely and indistinguishably blended elsewhere, has its own distinct contribution to make to the sum total of human knowledge and human wisdom. Neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, the completed human intelligence.30

Her beliefs and her rhetoric followed, almost verbatim, a spectrum of differing discourses. Edward and Eleanor Marx-Aveling had argued in The Woman Question (1886) that:

According to Kant, "man and woman constitute, when united, the whole and entire being; one sex completes the other." But when each sex is incomplete, and the one incomplete to the most

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28 Ellen Cook Psychological Androgyny p20
29 Ellen Cook ibid. p34 And see also Kaplan and Sedney: "The study of androgyny was stimulated by an awareness of the debilitating effects associated with rigid conformity to sex-stereotypic behaviour. It has therefore been suggested that an androgynous person would be healthier, more adaptable, or better adjusted, than the person whose behaviour is rooted in sex-role stereotypes. Androgyny, in other words, is often proposed as one model of well-being." Psychology and Sex Roles p6
30 Olive Schreiner Woman and Labour London 1911 pp195-6
lamentable extent, and when, as a rule, neither of them comes into real, thorough, habitual, free contact, mind to mind, with the other, the being is neither whole nor entire.\textsuperscript{31}

Carpenter believed that:

\textit{[T]he Uranian temperament (probably from the very fact of its dual nature and the swift and constant interaction between its masculine and feminine elements) is exceedingly sensitive and emotional; and there is no doubt that, going with this, a large number of the artist class, musical, literary or pictorial, belong to this description.}\textsuperscript{32}

Virginia Woolf, in a letter to her sister, Vanessa Bell, echoed these sentiments, when, crowing over her same sex involvement with Vita Sackville-West, she found that she could offer some sympathy to her resolutely heterosexual sister as she wrote in praise of the superiority of Bell's bisexual lover, the artist, Duncan Grant:

You will never succumb to the charms of any of your sex - What an arid garden the world must be for you! What avenues of stone pavements and iron railings! Greatly though I respect the male mind, and adore Duncan (but, thank God, he's hermaphrodite, androgynous, like all great artists)\textsuperscript{33}

These same rhetorical constructions are found in both Jung and Freud. Freud and Jung may have located gender and sexual interaction differently, but their rhetoric was in fact consistent with each other and with earlier sexological narratives. Jung introduced the concept of the anima and animus: "The anima, being of feminine gender, is exclusively a

\textsuperscript{31} Edward and Eleanor Marx-Aveling \textit{The Woman Question} London 1886 p7 They also claim that "There are approximately equal numbers of men and women, the highest ideal seems to be the complete and harmonious, lasting blending of two human lives." p15
\textsuperscript{32} Edward Carpenter \textit{The Intermediate Sex} p109 And see ibid. pp17-18 And see also the Appendix to \textit{The Intermediate Sex}: "In every human being there are present both male and female elements, only in the normal persons (according to their sex) the one set of elements is more greatly developed than the other. The chief difference in the case of homosexual persons is that in them the male and female elements are more equalized; so that when, in addition, the general development is of a high grade, we find among this class the most perfect type of humanity." Dr Arduin "Die Frauenfrage" in \textit{Jahrbuch der Sexuellen Zwischenstuten} (Vol ii p217 Leipzig 1900) p140 See also Gilbert and Gubar \textit{No Man's Land} (New Haven and London): "[Carpenter's] notions of the "man-womanliness" of such artists as Shelley, Shakespeare, and Michelangelo probably influenced Virginia Woolf (either through Forster or more directly), for they are exactly analogous to the ideas she defines in \textit{A Room of One's Own}..." p364
\textsuperscript{33} VW to Vanessa Bell 22 May 1927 L Vol III
figure that compensates the masculine consciousness. In woman the compensating figure is of a masculine character, and can therefore appropriately be termed the animus."  

Just as a man brings forth his work as a complete creation out of his inner feminine nature, so the inner side of a woman brings forth creative seeds which have the power to fertilize the feminine side of the man.

Jung's arguments tend to transcend social imperatives because they are rooted in his belief of the existence of a primordial unconscious that, because anterior to time, is not subject to time either. In his account of "Woman in Europe" (1927) Jung interpreted women's post-war roles as being unprecedentedly involved in the psychic reparation and reconstruction of Europe: "[W]oman is in the process of breaking with the purely feminine sexual pattern of unconsciousness and passivity, and has made a concession to masculine psychology by establishing herself as a visible member of society."  

(Jung also saw post-war society as "an age of neurasthenia, impotence, and easy chairs" which testifies to a sense of emasculation resulting from inactivity - again, for Jung, an unnatural state of affairs resulting from psychic imbalance). This is typical of the sentiments that arose during and after the 1914-1918 years. Ray Strachey, writing about these years and the participation of women in various professions commented that: "The newspapers, a little surprised, but very eloquent...began to say that "the nation is very grateful to the women" - not realising even yet that the women WERE the nation just as much as

35 ibid. p98
36 "Woman in Europe" in Aspects of the Feminine p59 See also "The woman of today is faced with a tremendous cultural task - perhaps it will be the dawn of a new era." ibid. p75
I will discuss this further in Chapter Four, where I include an analysis of Woolf and androgyny which argues that Woolf drew on androgyny in response to her perceptions of war as an excess of masculinity, and where androgyny could redress the gender imbalance caused by masculine military excess.
37 "Woman in Europe" p62
the men were."\textsuperscript{38} Jung appears to support fixed dimensions to human behaviour that limit possibilities for radical social change because (for Jung at least) it was almost impossible to conceptualise a greater mobility and plurality for social roles that was not pre-assigned by gender. Public life was for Jung, and indeed for the British media, ratified by masculinity. Yet if the media could still damn with faint praise women's involvement in the maintenance of social and economic life for the duration of the first world war, Jung warned against the dangers of psychic imbalance that such work could bring:

A woman possessed by the animus is always in danger of losing her femininity, her adapted feminine persona, just as a man in like circumstances runs the risk of effeminacy. These psychic changes of sex are due entirely to the fact that a function which belongs inside has been turned outside. The reason for this perversion is clearly the failure to give adequate recognition to an inner world which stands autonomously opposed to the outer world, and makes just as serious demands on our capacity for adaptation.\textsuperscript{39}

As with Edward Carpenter's quite burlesque accounts of "extreme specimens" of invert in The Intermediate Sex (which are almost parodic imitations of gender roles), all permutations and codings of identity (gender, sexual, inner, outer, the psyche, the body) were still subject to regulations that ensured that nothing strayed too far from socially and politically sanctioned constructions of behaviour.\textsuperscript{40} Freud, writing about

\textsuperscript{38} Ray Strachey The Cause A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain London 1928 p344
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Anima and Animus} op.cit. p98
\textsuperscript{40} Compare, for instance, the consequences of the imbalance of a woman's animus with the "extreme specimen" of sexual invert: "Woman has no anima ..., she has an animus. The anima has an erotic, emotional character, the animus a rationalizing one. Hence most of what men say about feminine eroticism, and particularly about the emotional life of women, is derived from their own anima projections and distorted accordingly. On the other hand, the astonishing assumptions and fantasies that women make about men come from the activity of the animus, who produces an inexhaustible supply of illogical arguments and false explanations." \textit{Marriage as a Psychological Relationship} in \textit{Aspects of the Feminine} p50 And women who are "ridden by the animus" produce a "vast number of commonplace, misapplied truisms, cliches from newspapers and novels, shop soiled platitudes of every description interspersed with vulgar abuse and brain-splitting lack of logic." \textit{The Syzygy: Anima and Animus} ibid. p172 For Carpenter, extreme specimens: "are not particularly attractive, sometimes quite the reverse. In the male of this kind we have a distinctly effeminate type, sentimental, lackadaisical, mincing in gait and manners,
hysterical phantasies and the bisexual constitution of human beings argued that:

[O]ne has to have two sexual phantasies, of which one has a masculine and the other a feminine character. Thus one of these phantasies springs from a homosexual impulse. ... It remains true that a hysterical symptom must necessarily represent a compromise between a libidinal and a repressing impulse; but it may also represent a union of two libidinal phantasies of an opposite sexual character.41

Whether the modernist literati liked him or loathed him, the influence of Freud on twentieth century evaluations of gender and sexual identity could not be ignored. "Man is beginning to understand himself better," conceded Forster, "and to explore his own contradictions. This exploration is conveniently connected with the awful name of Freud, but it is not so much Freud as in the air."42 Freud and his publicisation of sexual repression, bisexuality and the unconscious, then, captured and represented the inter-war zeitgeist. For Margaret Lawrence, psychoanalysis could only aid a feminist agenda: "It is just as well...to remember that the discoveries of Freud and the others have added and not retracted from the feminist demand, inasmuch as if sex does make a difference in minds it must never again happen that one sex shapes the world for itself, forgetting the other sex and its difference, which is not a difference to be

something of a chatterbox, skillful at the needle and in woman's work ... On the other hand, as the extreme type of homogenic female, we have a rather markedly aggressive person, of strong passions, masculine manners and movements, practical in the conduct of life, sensuous rather than sentimental in love, often untidy outré in attire; her figure muscular, her voice rather low in pitch; her dwelling-room decorated with sporting-scenes, pistols, etc." The Intermediate Sex pp30-31

41 "Hysterical Phantasies and Their Relations to Bisexuality" (1908) St. Ed. Vol IX (1906-1908) pp164-165 And see Sigmund Freud "Study of the Origin of Sexual Perversions" (1919) St. Ed. Vol XVII (1917-19) See also Beyond the Pleasure Principle St. Ed. Vol XVIII (1920-1922) "Shall we follow the hint given us by the poet-philosopher, and venture upon the hypothesis that living substance at the time of its coming to life was torn part into small particles, which have ever since endeavoured to reunite through the sexual instincts?" p58; Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1905) St. Ed. Vol VII pp125-243; and the "Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman" (1920) St. Ed. Volume XVIII (1920-1922) pp145-172

42 EM Forster "English Prose between 1918 and 1939" (1944) in Two Cheers for Democracy New York p282
interpreted as inequality. “43 Although Freud’s analysis of bisexual constitution is less clearly related rhetorically to Woolf’s version of androgyny in *A Room of One’s Own*, the representation of an unconscious play of libidinal impulses alerts us to the possibilities of the eroticised metaphor Woolf used for the writing mind in *A Room of One’s Own*:

Some collaboration has to take place in the mind between the woman and the man before the art of creation can be accomplished. Some marriage of opposites has to be consummated. The whole of the mind must lie wide open if we are to get the sense that the writer is communicating his experience with perfect fullness. There must be freedom and there must be peace. Not a wheel must grate, not a light glimmer. The curtains must be close drawn. The writer, I thought, once his experience is over, must lie back and let his mind celebrate its nuptials in darkness. 44

Stephen Heath comments: “Working with marriage, consummation, opposites, man and woman added together, Woolf is returned, even against the possibilities of her thesis, to what is a representation that assigns women to a certain place as woman, in relation to a certain domination and evaluation from men, the place of man.”45 Using “his experience” to communicate, within the paradigm of this heterosexual sexual activity, is to subsume the Other into the One, to reinstate power-based socio-sexual relations at the very moment of transcendence. Yet it is also the crisis of subjectivity that demarcates sexual difference for Woolf, a crisis that the invocation of androgyny promises to transcend. Elaine Showalter criticises the same passage from *A Room* in *A Literature of Their Own*:

43 *We Write as Women* p179
44 *A Room of One’s Own* London p99
45 Stephen Heath *The Sexual Fix* Hampshire and London p114 Although for a view that endorses Woolf’s metaphor, see also Françoise Defromont: “Becoming a woman writer is approached through the metaphor of a rending but thrilling birth delivery, as if writing were born from two powerful tides: the embrace between a living body of one’s own and thinking it out.” “Metaphorical Thinking and Poetic Writing in Virginia Woolf and Hélène Cixous” pp114-125 in *The Body and The Text* ed. Wilcox et al pp119-120
Obviously Virginia Woolf had not looked at or questioned what she had done in this passage: made the writer male. In a book exquisitely in control of its pronouns, this is not a small thing. It suggests, I think, how unconsciously she had felt the soft, dead hand of the Angel in the House descend upon her shoulder, censoring even this little innocent metaphorical fantasy, and transferring it to the mind of a male voyeur. How could any woman writer pretend to be androgynous - indifferent, undivided - in the grip of such inhibition? At some level, Woolf is aware that androgyny is another form of repression, or, at best, self-discipline.46

Showalter's merging of Woolf's life and work in her reading of androgyny takes, as its model, versions of masculinity and femininity that Woolf had learned from her parents and from her sister. Showalter associates Woolf's breakdowns and involuntary incarcerations with her body (the onset of menstruation, her reproductive capacity and menopause). All point to a loss of agency for Woolf, where, at significant moments in her life, Leonard Woolf takes control and decides what would be best for her. "Deprived of the use of her womanhood," Showalter argues, "denied the power of manhood, she sought a serene androgynous "oneness," an embrace of eternity that was inevitably an embrace of death. In recognising that the quest for androgyny was Woolf's solution to her existential dilemma, we should not confuse flight with liberation."47 Showalter appears to simplify as a conclusion what she also attempts to problematise.

Showalter identifies androgyny as the "full balance and command of an emotional range that includes male and female elements..."48 Amongst her arguments are that androgyny actually limited Woolf's literary development, androgyny was "stiffing to her development"49 and that ultimately, "androgyny" was the Bloomsbury serial killer, responsible for the deaths of Mark Gertler, Dora Carrington and Woolf herself: "They

46 Elaine Showalter A Literature of Their Own London 1984 p288
47 ibid. p280
48 ibid. p263
49 ibid. p264
are the failures of androgyny; their suicides are one of Bloomsbury's representative art forms.  

Morag Shiach has also commented on this passage from *A Room* in her edition of *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*: "The difficulty of finding an androgynous image to express her creative and political aspirations is an index of the dimensions of the issues with which Woolf engages in *A Room of One's Own*. Insisting that 'it is natural for the sexes to co-operate,' what Woolf actually finds is a history of conflict and inequality, which marks and restricts the whole field of creative writing."

Actually, Woolf's version of androgyny often depends, rather like the recognition of castration, on looking. Orlando's "androgyne" is, I argue in Chapter Two, at least partly dependent on the scene of his "castration" as s/he (and indeed, we) look at Orlando looking in the mirror. Mary Beton, looking out of the window at the couple getting into the taxi comments that: "The sight was ordinary enough; what was strange was the rhythmical order with which my imagination had invested it..." (R 92) which marks the prelude to her analysis of the androgynous writing mind. Francette Pacteau argues:

Androgyny cannot be circumscribed as belonging to some being; it is more a question of a relation between a look and an appearance, in other words psyche and image. I do not encounter an 'androgyne' in the street; rather I encounter a figure whom I 'see as' androgynous. That is to say, the androgyne does not exist in the real - and this presents us with a major stumbling block in trying to organize a meaning for androgyny, for the impression is always that

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50 ibid. p265 Showalter also cites Nancy Topping Bazin, who, in her book *Virginia Woolf and the Androgynous Vision* (New Jersey) 1973 saw Woolf's suicide as "both an act of despair and an act of faith - despair that the androgynous whole would ever be established on earth but faith in the existence (in the timeless realm of death) of its mystical equivalent - oneness." p222

51 Morag Shiach Introduction *A Room of One's Own* Oxford pxvii

52 "The sight of two people coming down the street and meeting at the corner seems to ease the mind of some strain, I thought, watching the taxi turn and make off. Perhaps to think, as I had been thinking these two days, of one sex as distinct from the other is an effort. It interferes with the unity of the mind. Now that effort had ceased and that unity had been restored by seeing two people come together and get into a taxi-cab." *A Room of One's Own* p92
androgyne does so exist. To even approach the inherent difficulties of the subject, I must posit androgyny not as entity, but as symptom - in the psychoanalytic sense indicative of a repressed desire. 53

Pacteau refutes the ontological and physical status of the androgyne: "it" is not an entity, "it" is a repressed desire. Whilst this returns us to Freud's theory of the hysterical symptom as a phantasy of a repressed libidinal impulse: "It remains true that a hysterical symptom must necessarily represent a compromise between a libidinal and a repressing impulse..."

Pacteau's theory is also redolent of Cixous's demand for the recognition of bisexuality as:

a fantasy of a complete being, which replaces the fear of castration and veils sexual difference insofar as this is perceived as the mark of a mystical separation - the trace, therefore, of a dangerous and painful ability to be cut. Ovid's Hermaphrodite, less bisexual than asexual, not made up of two genders but of two halves. Hence, a fantasy of unity. Two within one, and not even two wholes. 54

Cixous manages to include it all: bisexuality, fantasy, castration anxiety, the erasure of difference and myth - all of the necessary constituent parts that theorists now consider in their valorisations or attacks upon theories of androgyny. Morag Shiach defends Cixous's stand on the denial of difference, maintaining that Cixous "argues for the possibility of sustaining a bisexuality: not as a denial of sexual difference, but as a lived recognition of plurality, of the simultaneous presence of masculinity and femininity within an individual subject. Such bisexuality is open to all subjects who can escape from the subjective and social effects of the

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54 Hélène Cixous The Newly Born Woman Manchester 1986 p84 And see also "The Laugh of the Medusa": "In saying "bisexual, hence neuter," I am referring to the classic conception of bisexuality, which, squashed under the emblem of total castration fear and along with the fantasy of a "total" being (though composed of two halves), would do away with the difference experienced as an operation incurring loss, as the mark of dreaded sectility." "The Laugh of the Medusa" in New French Feminisms ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron p254 And see also Francette Pacteau, citing Pontalis: "The positive androgyne cannot exist outside myth. Incarnated, seen, it is effectively and simultaneously castrated man and woman." "The Impossible Referent Representations of the Androgyne" p70
dominant structures of desire."55 Cixous’s subject is reliant on a polymorphous play of sexual identities which Woolf’s version of androgyny in A Room appears to resist, since Woolf never seems to trust herself to abandon the heterosexual binary structure altogether. (I analyse this more fully in Chapter One, my purpose here is really to introduce a series of helpful problematisations and possibilities.) How can we usefully employ a theorisation of sexual plurality that transcends what we have seen to be, in the work of the sexologists, the limitations of the binary structure? Nelly Furman argues that: "From a Derridean position, the feminist endeavour cannot be conceived in terms of male or female, feminine or masculine; it can only be thought of beyond such polarities as a kind of sexual plurality."56 Yet Francette Pacteau argues that femininity and masculinity are useful in order to contain this plural excess: "[T]his threat of superabundance, of overflowing, is safely contained within the frame of the feminine and the masculine."57 These apparently

55 Morag Shiach Hélène Cixous a Politics of Writing London and New York 1991 p16 See also ibid. p23. For an alternative view of androgyny (and the Other which indicates the problematics of relating Woolfian androgyny with Cixous’s theory of bisexuality, see Karin Achtelstetter: "Virginia Woolf and Androgyny" (University of Kent at Canterbury Women’s Studies Occasional Papers) pp5-6. And see Diane Griffin Crowder Contemporary Literature Vol 24 No2. For other accounts of androgyny and a vision of sexual plurality see also Mircea Eliade The Two and the One (orig Méphistophéles et l’Androgyne) (1962) 1965 p80; Mario Praz The Romantic Agony (1933) 1985 p216; AJL Busst "The Image of the Androgyne in the Nineteenth Century" in Romantic Mythologies ed Ian Fletcher (1967) p1 See also Kari Weil: "the explosion of androgyny and the resulting sexual fusion (or confusion, depending on how you perceived it). "Androgyny and the Denial of Difference p1 56 Nelly Furman "The politics of language: beyond the gender principle?" pp59-79 in Greene and Kahn eds p75 And see also Elizabeth Berg writing about Sarah Kofman: "This third instance beyond the alternative of masculine or feminine is not a synthesis of masculinity and femininity. It is not that there is no sexual difference for the affirmative woman; rather sexual difference is seen as undecidable, producing an irresolvable oscillation between masculine and feminine. The affirmative woman is the female equivalent of the fetishist, who affirms both of two contradictory statements. "The Third Woman" Diacritics 12:2 1982 p19 This is also affirmed by Francette Pacteau: "The fantasized abolition of sexual difference as the resolution of the narcissistic desire for completeness and self-sufficiency is correlative to fetishism. Inherent in the androgyne fantasy is a process of disavowal that allows me to see somebody as a man and as a woman..." op.cit. p70 57 Francette Pacteau "The Impossible Referent" p79
contradictory statements can, perhaps, be partially resolved by looking at Mary Jacobus’s analysis of Woolfian androgyny:

The repressive male/female opposition which ‘interferes with the unity of the mind’ gives way to a mind paradoxically conceived of not as one, but as heterogeneous, open to the play of difference: ‘resonant and porous...it transmits emotion without impediment...it is naturally creative, incandescent, and undivided.’ That’s as good a description as one could wish, not of the mind, but of Virginia Woolf’s own prose - and of the play of difference perpetually enacted within writing.”

And it is writing, that as I argued at the beginning of this introduction, and as I will argue in Chapter One, signals the significant difference that separates Woolf’s version of what she called androgyny from other discourses that figure positive social and sexual possibilities. Yet if we look at critical analysis of Woolf’s work in relation to androgyny, the overriding trend is to see her writing as marked by some form of closure rather than see, as Jacobus argues, writing as the site where the play of difference is enacted.

In The Glass Roof, (1954) James Hafley endorses Woolf’s theory of androgyny: "As a theme this idea is simple enough: the best men have something of women in them, and the best women something of men." This is a fairly substantial gloss on what Woolf wrote about androgyny in 1929, when, in the context of A Room of One’s Own, as I will argue, Woolf invoked androgyny as a causal effect of (and remedy to) early twentieth century sexual politics and literary modernism. Although Hafley’s reading of androgyny as the interaction of the most positive aspects of masculinity and femininity constituted perhaps one of the defining accounts of androgyny from the 1980s onwards his interpretation is somewhat nebulous, taking us away from gender and writing. When he

59 James Hafley The Glass Roof Berkely and Los Angeles 1954 p25
60 Ellen Cook, for example, reads androgyny as “The coexistence of positive masculine and feminine dimensions...” op.cit. p17
does define androgyny in relation to writing, it is in these terms: "[T]he
great novelist is able to characterize persons of the opposite sex as
convincingly as those of his (sic) own."61

Herbert Marder's *Feminism and Art: A Study of Virginia Woolf*
(1968) argues, in relation to androgyny that "She was vulnerable because,
almost in spite of herself, she felt profound reverence for the masculine
intellect..."62 Wishful thinking dressed up as literary criticism does not
necessarily advance progressive analysis of Woolfian androgyny and nor
does criticism like this: "For Virginia Woolf, androgyny was a kind of
parable containing a solution to the dilemma of the feminist at war with
herself."63 Androgyny was, according to Marder, "a corrective to the
excesses of feminism."64 As I argue in Chapter Four, the reverse of this
hypothesis is also true. Marder's analysis of the androgynous coupling of
Ralph and Katharine in Woolf's second novel, *Night and Day*, places
androgyny within a heterosexual framework which elides the possibility
for feminine possibilities exemplified in Katharine and Cassandra:

> The cousins seemed to assemble between them a great range of
> qualities which are never found united in one person and seldom
> in half a dozen people. Where Katharine was simple, Cassandra
> was complex; where Katharine was solid and direct, Cassandra was
> vague and evasive. In short, they represented very well the manly
> and the womanly sides of the feminine nature, and, for foundation,
> there was the profound unity of common blood between them. (ND
> 328-9)

If femininity is one expression of androgyny, then androgyny can hardly
reduced to "a corrective to the excesses of feminism" as Marder argues.
Nor can it be, as Jane Marcus has argued of the couple getting into the taxi
in *A Room of One's Own*, that "[M]ost women are not a part of a woman's
community but are isolated from each other in relation to individual

61 James Hafley op.cit. p101
62 Herbert Marder *Feminism and Art: A Study of Virginia Woolf*, Chicago and London pp107-8
63 ibid. p108
64 ibid. p110
men." In fact, what characterises many of the literary debates on Woolfian androgyny is the assumption that androgyny has an a priori status or meaning, which effectively weakens the possibilities for a theoretical reading. What are we to make of comments like those of Geoffrey Hartman (1970): "[T]here is only one fully developed character in Mrs Woolf's novels, and that is the completely expressive or androgynous mind." Or Allen McLaurin (1973): "Virginia Woolf's artists, because they are open to all sorts of influences and possibilities, are like chameleons. They cannot be pinned down to certain fixed traits. This explains the androgenicity of Orlando, Miss La Trobe and Lily Briscoe." Nancy Topping Bazin (1973) dismisses Miss La Trobe from the androgyny stakes because of: "the fact that Miss La Trobe is a lesbian, her personality is not androgynous and, therefore, she must rely upon the power of art." To do what? Be "androgynous"? Can "art" be "androgynous" per se? Quentin Bell (1968) is fairly opaque: "[I]t is through that nice equation of the sexes that human beings may perhaps come to terms with their passions." Raman Selden (1985) manages to incorporate almost every clichéd myth about Woolf in his interpretation of Woolf's version of androgyny:

By adopting the Bloomsbury sexual ethic of 'androgyny', she accepted a severe withdrawal from the struggle between male and female sexuality. Rejecting a feminist consciousness, she hoped to achieve a balance between a 'male' self-realisation and 'female' self-annihilation. Her repeated attacks of madness and eventual suicide suggest that the struggle to transcend sexuality failed.

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65 Jane Marcus " 'Taking the Bull by the Udders' " pp146-169 in *Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury: A Centenary Celebration* ed Jane Marcus Bloomington 1987 p166
67 *Virginia Woolf the Echoes Enslaved* Cambridge 1973 p169
68 *Virginia Woolf and the Androgynous Vision* p201
69 Quentin Bell *Bloomsbury* 1976 London p71
70 *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* Sussex 1988 p136 Selden may have borrowed from Nancy Topping Bazin for his reading: "I believe that Virginia Woolf's experiences during mania is related to what she would have considered an essentially feminine vision of life and that her experience during depression is related to what she
Other attempts which have analysed androgyny can offer a more useful basis for reading Woolfian androgyny. Bram Dijkstra sees androgyny as encoding a specific strategy that could challenge the economic stereotyping of sexual roles:

Focus on this was not simply a futile gesture designed to shock the bourgeoisie, but was, in fact, the culmination of a slowly developing, ideologically based, counter offensive among artists against the economic motivations behind the sexual stereotypes which had become established in the social environment with the rise of bourgeois industrial society.71

This attempt at tracing androgyny as a causal effect rather than social affect is closer to Woolf's arrival at androgyny in A Room of One's Own, as I will show in Chapter One. My inclusion of sexological and psychoanalytic narratives in support of a contextualised reading of Woolf's version of androgyny is encouraged by the socio-political dynamics of women's campaign for the franchise and the post-war world of literary modernism, arenas that witnessed and provoked the unsettling of socially and politically entrenched gender roles. The engagement with each of those areas in A Room of One's Own (1929) leads Woolf to her elusive conclusion, that writing should be the product of the "androgynous mind." The fundamental difference between Woolf's account of androgyny and those of her contemporaries, is that Woolf related her theory specifically in relation to a sexual politics of writing that developed from a politics of social and sexual interaction and literary modernism. In Woolf's textual practice, however, sex and politics can be elided and embraced, as I will show. Although I engage with popular and theoretical readings of androgyny in this dissertation, it is always my intention to

would have considered an essentially masculine vision of life." op.cit. p6 And see Phyllis Rose: "[T]his statement about the androgynous mind is the final image [in A Room of One's Own], a metaphor which employs sexual terms to signify the transcendence of sex." A Woman of Letters London and Henley 1986 p188

71 BramDijkstra "The Androgyne in Nineteenth Century Art and Literature" Comparative Literature 26 1974 p62
reorganise a series of meanings for androgyny within the context of Virginia Woolf's writing practice.

Woolf's first novel, *The Voyage Out* (1915) provides early examples of Woolf's awareness of popular versions of androgynous idealism, but also testifies to what was in fact a continuous concern for her: the relation between gender and writing. At the beginning of Woolf's literary career, she reviewed *The Feminine Note in Fiction*, which indicated that Woolf was beginning to question the relation of women to men and women to fiction. Contesting Courtney's attempt to define "the feminine note in fiction," and the difficulties arising from the fact that "the feminine and the masculine points of view are so different that it is difficult for one to understand the other" Woolf asserts that the difference is not so rigidly divided:

Yet it is worth noting, as proof of the difficulty of the task which Mr Courtney has set himself, that he finds two at least of his eight women writers 'artists' - that two others possess a strength which in this age one has to call masculine, and, in fact, that no pair of them come under any one heading, though, of course, in the same way as men, they can be divided roughly into schools.

Jane Austen was clearly not of one of these schools: one of Woolf's earliest commentaries of Austen had been that she had "tied her hands together when she dealt with men" In a later review, "Men and Women" Woolf met with the same issue, the unconvincing portrayal of character by the other sex:

Some are plainly men in disguise; others represent what men would like to be, or are conscious of not being; or again they embody

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73 ibid. p16
74 Times Literary Supplement 8 May 1913 'Jane Austen' p12 *The Essays of Virginia Woolf* Volume II See also VW to Ethel Smyth about Austen: "What I shall proceed to find out, from her letters, when I've time, is why she failed to be much better than she was. Something to do with sex, I expect; the letters are full of hints already that she suppressed half of her in her novels- Now why?" 20 November 1932 Letters Vol V
75 This review first appeared in the TLS 18 March 1920 and is reprinted in E Vol III pp192-198
that dissatisfaction and despair which afflict most people when they reflect upon the sorry condition of the human race. To cast out and incorporate in a person of the opposite sex all that we miss in ourselves and desire in the universe and detest in humanity is a deep and universal instinct on the part of both men and women. But though it affords relief, it does not lead to understanding. Rochester is as great a travesty of the truth about men as Cordelia is of the truth about women.\textsuperscript{76}

Woolf's review, "Coleridge as Critic," (TLS 1918) was the first time that she had indicated that she was aware of his attention to androgyny: "The same desire to justify and protect one's type led him no doubt to perceive the truth that 'a great mind must be androgynous...''\textsuperscript{77}

In the same year, she wrote a review of R. Brimley Johnson's \textbf{The Women Novelists}, entitled "Women Novelists" (TLS 1918) This review predates much of what Woolf argued in \textit{A Room}, specifically connected with androgyny. For example:

The women who wished to be taken for men in what they wrote were certainly common enough; and if they have given place to the women who wish to be taken for women the change is hardly for the better, since any emphasis, either of pride or of shame, laid consciously upon the sex of a writer is not only irritating but superfluous. As Mr Brimley Johnson again and again remarks, a woman's writing is always feminine; it cannot help being feminine; at its best it is most feminine: the only difficulty lies in defining what we mean by feminine.\textsuperscript{78}

Reviewers of \textit{The Voyage Out} affirmed the text's "femininity" without really identifying what this could mean: "[N]ever was a book more feminine, more recklessly feminine. It may be labelled clever and shrewd, mocking, suggestive, subtle, 'modern', but these terms do not convey the spirit of it - which essentially is feminine."\textsuperscript{79} Hafley's

\textsuperscript{76} "Men and Women" E Vol III p193
\textsuperscript{77} "Coleridge as Critic" E Vol II pp221-222
\textsuperscript{78} "Women Novelists" E Vol II pp315-6
\textsuperscript{79} Unsigned review Times Literary Supplement 1 April 1915 repr. in Virginia Woolf The Critical Heritage London and Boston ed. Majumdar and McLaurin p49 And see WH Hudson: "There are about twenty characters, men and women, but there is not one real man. She is more successful with her own sex." (From a letter to Edward Garnett) Critical Heritage p61 EM Forster: "written by a woman and presumably from a woman's point of view..." (8 April 1915 Daily News and Leader) Critical Heritage p53 Woolf had written to Clive Bell in
definition of androgyny, the ability to create convincing characters distinct from the sex of the writer, cannot be sustained against the earliest critical reviews of Woolf's first "essentially feminine" novel.

The short-lived sexual evolution of Rachel Vinrace is engineered by two men, Richard Dalloway, a politician, and Terence Hewet, a writer. The distinguishing feature of both these characters, is that they are perceived by other women to be partially female. Mrs Dalloway tells Rachel: "No one understood until I met Richard. He gave me all I wanted. He's man and woman as well." (VO 57) And Evelyn Murgatroyd says of Terence: "There's something of a woman in him..." (VO 262) Critics, even recently, have seized upon Terence as "androgynous," largely ignoring Richard Dalloway's 'femininity'. Stella McNichol argues that:

Hewet is in many ways the ideal man, the ideal lover. He is intelligent and he is visionary. He is both involved in life and able to detach himself from life in order to understand it. His mind is both creative and analytic. He is the androgynous male.  

McNichol includes some very tall orders in her composite figure of the androgynous persona: involvement in and detachment from "life," the need to be intelligent and visionary. Quite why Terence is ideal, or, indeed, why he should be "andrognous" is never sufficiently explained by McNichol. Yet McNichol is not alone in producing troubling assumptions about Terence Hewet and androgyny. Diane Filby Gillespie argues that:

Of all Woolf's artist characters, Terence Hewet has the shortest distance to go to reach androgyny. As an artist he is more likely than most men to criticise traditional values and artistic correlatives if only because his society disapproves of his career choice.

1909: "I want to bring out a stir of live men and women, against a background. I think I am quote right to attempt it, but it is immensely difficult to do." 7 February 1909 L Vol I
80 Stella McNichol Virginia Woolf and the Poetry of Fiction 1990 p9
81 Diane Filby Gillespie "Virginia Woolf's Miss La Trobe: the Artist's Last Struggle Against Masculine Values" Women and Literature Vol 5 no1 pp38-9
Most recently, Lorna Sage has argued that: "[Terence] develops a kind of androgynous insight into women's experience, and it's he who describes to Rachel how patriarchal attitudes work." These are slightly troubling assumptions because Sage suggests that one can "be" androgynous without undertaking to investigate how, or without investigating what androgyny potentially means. If Terence has the shortest distance to go to reach androgyny, does this imply that androgyny is a location that you have to travel to in order to get there? Does criticism of patriarchy alone qualify one as androgynous? And if so, would this apply to women as well as to men? What is the basis, apart from Evelyn's comment, for assuming that Terence really is androgynous? Indeed, given all the attention paid to Hewet, what does "androgyny" tell us about three women who admire and are sexually attracted to two men because those men partially resemble women? In fact, femininity is privileged in these accounts of "androgyny." The opinionated politician, Richard Dalloway, is ironised because his own sense of his masculinity is impaired by his wife’s avowal of his femininity. Richard Dalloway has, for example, an entrenched opinion of gender roles:

"I never allow my wife to talk politics," he said seriously. "For this reason. It is impossible for human beings, constituted as they are, both to fight and have ideals. If I have preserved mine, as I am thankful to say that in great measure I have, it is due to the fact that I have been able to come home to my wife in the evening and to 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." (VO 62)

And neither has the patriarchal status quo, which relies upon these public/private restrictions. Dalloway's assured belief in the immutability

82 Lorna Sage Introduction The Voyage Out 1992 pxxv
83 He also thinks that "[N]o woman has what I may call the political instinct. You have very great virtues; I am the first, I hope, to admit that; but I never met a woman who even saw what is meant by statemanship." VO p63 Yet he also read Jane Austen because: "[S]he does not attempt to write like a man. Every other woman does; on that account, I don’t read 'em." ibid. VO p58
and propriety of gender roles is disturbed because his wife believes that his true knowledge of her is possible because of his femininity: the very clue to what raises him in his wife's estimation is what he represses in himself and patronises in her. Woolf repeated and indicted Richard Dalloway's fantasy of female and male roles in private and public lives in *A Room of One's Own*, where Dalloway's fantasy typifies a moment of selfish regeneration in the sterile public life of the man:

He would open the door of the drawing-room or nursery, I thought, and find her among her children perhaps, or with a piece of embroidery on her knee - at any rate, the centre of some different order and system of life, and the contrast between this world and his own, which might be the law courts or the House of Commons, would at once refresh and invigorate; and there would follow, even in the simplest talk, such a natural difference of opinion that the dried ideas in him would be fertilised anew; and the sight of her creating in a different medium from his own would so quicken his creative power that insensibly his sterile mind would begin to plot again, and he would find the phrase or the scene which was lacking when he put on his hat to visit her. (R 82-83)

Hewet's dislike of traditional, or patriarchal, versions of stereotyped gender identities makes him critical of essentialising formations of masculinity: "My mother thought music wasn't manly for boys; she wanted me to kill rats and birds - that's the worst of living in the country." (VO 233) Yet when Rachel begins to talk about music, there is a shift in narrative tone which appears to reflect Terence's point of view: "'Why do you write novels? You ought to write music. Music, you see' - she shifted her eyes, and became less desirable as her brain began to work, inflicting a certain change upon her face- "music goes straight for things." (VO 220) A thinking Rachel, is, then, an undesirable Rachel. What literature can do, on the other hand, is assert the problematics of gender identities and sexual relations. Reading his book aloud, Terence says to Rachel:

"Listen to this, Rachel. 'It is probable that Hugh' (he's the hero, a literary man), 'had not realised at the time of his marriage, any more than the young man of parts and imagination usually does
realise, the nature of the gulf which separates the needs and desires of the male from the needs and desires of the female..." (VO 315-6)

Life mirrors art: Terence is forced to realise that Rachel does not love him: "Men and women are too different." (VO 322) But his book told him at least that much: "They were different. Perhaps, in the far future, when generations of men had struggled and failed as he must now struggle and fail, women would be, indeed, what she now made a pretence of being - the friend and companion - not the enemy and parasite of man." (VO 316-7) How this difference will be effaced is never really worked out, not least because of Rachel's untimely death. Death is the only reality in which Terence can perceive the possibility of unity. When Rachel dies, he thinks: "They had now what they had always wanted to have, the union which had been impossible while they lived." (VO 376) Such a thought crushes the possibility of Terence as androgyne if we look at what Cixous has to say about death and femininity: "Men say that there are two unrepresentable things: death and the feminine sex. That's because they need femininity to be associated with death..." Indeed, Terence, not entirely unrelated to Richard Dalloway in this respect, tells Rachel: "You've no respect for facts, Rachel; you're essentially feminine." (VO 314)

Rather than affirming Terence's "androgyne," I would argue that Woolf deploys this popular figure in her first novel to indicate the repression and negation of female sexuality and so to privilege femininity as a central concern. Whose phantasy is being reproduced when the flirtatious and unhappy Evelyn Murgatroyd (daughter of a mother but no father) privileges femininity, wishes that she were a man and says that Terence is

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84 And see Joanne Blum: "Their engagement having originated in the mythical region of the Amazon, in apatriarchal space, if you will, Rachel and Terence are unable to sustain it against the divisive impositions of society." Transcending Gender p26
like a woman? For we could also argue that masculinity is eschewed as Evelyn and Mrs Dalloway, looking at Richard and Terence, see femininity narcissistically reflected back at them as masculinity is elided. We are returned to Pacteau: "Androgyny...is more a question of a relation between a look and an appearance...I do not encounter an 'androgyne' in the street; rather I encounter a figure whom I 'see as' androgynous." That androgyny might be made manifest by the narcissistic reflection of femininity, makes some criticism of Woolfian androgyny astonishingly perverse.

Although it is possible to account for Woolf's version of androgyny within her contemporary context, it is also this context that establishes the difficulties of sustaining the androgynous ideal (which is the status Woolf gives it in *A Room*). This dissertation is divided by both these considerations. Briefly, Chapters One, Two and Three analyse Woolf's version of androgyny through the narratives of sexology, psychoanalysis and recent feminist theory. Chapter One investigates *A Room of One's Own*. In the first part of this chapter, I argue that Woolf's introduction of the androgynous writing mind into the otherwise materialist arguments of the text only partly responded to a contemporary popular ideal of bisexuality and sexual inversion. The introduction of androgyny into Woolf's debate was, I argue, an attempt to counter developments in modernist literature and feminism. Chapter Two develops the relation between writing and the body in an analysis of both *The Waves* and *Orlando*. Through a reading of Freud and Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* this chapter examines Orlando's sex and gender as a series of tactical performances in relation to the putative "truth" of the connection between gender, sexuality, clothes and the body. Some defences of

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86 Evelyn: "How it makes one long to be a man!" VO p139 and "[I]n another moment Evelyn was saying that the finest men were like women, and women were nobler than men..." VO p263
androgyne have argued that the androgyne can be determined by dress.\textsuperscript{87} This has been a foundation for much of the critical tradition surrounding \textit{Orlando}, where a change of dress is sufficient to indicate a change of sex.\textsuperscript{88}

Chapter Three, investigates Lily Briscoe's painting of Mrs Ramsay in \textit{To the Lighthouse}. This chapter cautions against some critical readings of \textit{To the Lighthouse} which assume an ontology for androgyny. For instance, Carolyn Heilbrun, in her full length study of androgyny (1964) writes that "\textit{To the Lighthouse} is Virginia Woolf's best novel of androgyny."\textsuperscript{89} Yet Heilbrun never really makes clear in what sense this could be so. In Heilbrun's hands, androgyny takes on a tangible status, it is almost like offering sweets: "Yet [Mr Ramsay] after [Mrs Ramsay’s] death will be able to offer his children androgyny..."\textsuperscript{90} Femininity and death are once again shown to be the conditions for androgyny. More recently, Sue Roe has argued that Woolf's theory of androgyny in \textit{A Room of One's Own} testifies to "an attempt on Woolf's part to re-establish a theory she has inadvertently demolished."\textsuperscript{91} The demolition of androgyny, according to Roe, was perpetrated by none other than Mr and Mrs Ramsay in \textit{To the Lighthouse}, published four years before \textit{A Room of One's Own}.\textsuperscript{92} Such contrasting critical assumptions, separated by almost thirty years of a critical and theoretical history, attest not only to the enduring popularity (or, indeed, unpopularity) of Woolf's theory of androgyny, but

\textsuperscript{87} Robert Kimbrough \textit{Shakespeare and the Art of Humankindness} New Jersey and London 1990 pp 101-120
\textsuperscript{88} Marjorie Garber argues that cross-dressing indicates a range of sexual identities whilst making a distinction between body and clothing. Citing the sexologist, Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935) Garber argues that: "Hirschfeld saw a relationship between androgynes and transvestites; where androgynes were concerned with the physical marks of gender (beard, breasts, genitals), transvestites concerned themselves instead with psychological gender signs, like dress and names." \textit{Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety} London and New York 1992 pp131-132
\textsuperscript{89} Toward a Recognition of Androgyny p156
\textsuperscript{90} ibid. p160
\textsuperscript{91} Sue Roe \textit{Writing and Gender Virginia Woolf's Writing Practice} London 1990 p84
\textsuperscript{92} See also Bernard Blackstone's version of androgyny in his essay, "Virginia Woolf," which argues that Mr and Mrs Ramsay are the personifications of the androgynous couple. Longman's, Green & Co. in the \textit{Writers and Their Work} series 1952 p26
also to what we might collectively see as a series of positive responses that can never finally resolve the relationships between gender and writing or gender and art. This chapter also signals a move into Woolf's relation to war writing. To the Lighthouse is unique in Woolf's ouevre, I argue, in its concentration on pre-war, war-time and post-war art. In a close reading of the central section, "Time Passes," this chapter interrogates the representation of women and of art during the 1914-1918 years.

Chapters Four, Five and Six examine Woolf's response to what she perceived as the masculine politics of the First World War and the intermittent threat of the Second World War. The sexual politics of writing that Woolf was so keen to elide in her analysis of androgyny in A Room of One's Own were the mainstay of her writing during the 1930s. Chapter Four profiles Woolf's writing on the First World War. Working on the assumption that the First World War altered modern consciousness, this chapter investigates the consequences for Woolf who, as a woman, had been excluded from the arena that significantly defined the action and meaning of war, and asks how it was possible to contribute to a new cultural sphere at a time when war writing was sanctioned on the basis of the authority of (masculine) experience. I argue that the ideological structures that upheld culturally celebrated versions of masculinity were eroded by post-war feeling as a result of the shifting image of the site of battle. Chapter Five examines Woolf's writing in the 1930s. Using the unpublished manuscripts of The Years, this chapter concentrates on the connections made by Woolf between the latency of imminent war, female sexuality and writing. It is in Chapters Five and Six that I begin to focus on androgyny as specifically figuring a relation to mind and body. Chapter Six argues that as Woolf felt unable to avoid the political turbulence in Europe during the 1930s, her writing became more cautious as she reintroduced the auto-erotic, psycho-somatic figure of
androgyne from *A Room of One's Own* to figure sexual withdrawal (mental chastity) as the hallmark of artistic integrity.\(^\text{93}\) Comparing the manuscript drafts of *The Years* with *Three Guineas*, I argue that Woolf asserted the impossibility of a writing praxis that might transcend the encroaching political dynamics of Europe during this period. In an analysis of Elvira and the Jew in the bath in the manuscripts of *The Years*, I argue that Woolf was attempting to document, through a negotiation of racial and gender discriminations, the impracticable politics of writing "immortal masterpieces."

Gayatri Spivak writes:

I would like to remind everyone who cites *A Room of One's Own* that "one must be woman-manly or man-womanly" is said there in the voice of Mary Beton, a persona. Woolf must break her off in mid-chapter and resume in her authorial voice. Who can disclaim that there is in her a longing for androgyny, that artificially fulfilled copula? But to reduce her great texts to successful articulations of that copula is, I believe, to make a mistake in reading.\(^\text{94}\)

In fact, as I show in this dissertation, androgyny marked an engagement with the limits of the representable. This dissertation engages with the mythical, psychoanalytic, cultural and sexual answers Woolf tried in her fiction.

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\(^{93}\) See also Jane Marcus: "I suspect in the end we will all come to see Bell's "sexless Sappho" as a true portrait of the artist who equated chastity with creativity." "Storming the Toolshed" *Signs* 7:3 1982 p637

\(^{94}\) Gayatri Spivak "Making and Unmaking in *To the Lighthouse*" in *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* New York and London 1987 p42
Chapter One

Worms with eagle’s wings: some ambiguities of androgyny in A Room of One’s Own

but poor Billy isn’t one thing or the other, not a man nor a woman, so what’s he to do?¹

D’you know it’s a great thing being a eunuch as I am: that is not knowing what’s the right side of a skirt: women confide in one. One pulls a shade over the fury of sex; and then all the veins and marbling, which, between women, are so fascinating, show out.²

On 20 and 26 October 1928, Virginia Woolf read two papers at Cambridge University, one to the Arts Society at Newnham College, the other to the One-Damned-Thing-After-Another Society at Girton College. She was accompanied on these talks by Leonard Woolf, her sister, Vanessa Bell, and Vanessa’s daughter Angelica at Newnham, and by her erstwhile lover, Vita Sackville-West, to the talk at Girton. The talks that had occupied Woolf from January of that year, were published in October 1929 as A Room of One’s Own.³ This celebrated text has become a cornerstone in feminist literary history, so much so that as Sue Roe observes, “[I]t sometimes seems as though every feminist insight has its origin somewhere in the work of Virginia Woolf.”⁴

A Room of One’s Own is an investigation into the material conditions which have historically affected women and their relationship to writing. Woolf’s own brief analysis of what a talk about women and fiction implies:

¹ VW to Vanessa Bell 23 July 1927 L Vol III (“Billy” was short for billygoat, a name given to Woolf in childhood)
² VW to Vita Sackville-West 31 January 1927 L Vol III
³ Woolf first mentioned her “lecture to the Newnhamites about women’s writing” in her diary (Vol 3) on 17 January 1928. On 18 February, her mind was “woolgathering away about Women & Fiction…” D Vol 3 For a detailed account of the (now lost) original papers that she gave and their reception, see SP Rosenbaum Women and Fiction: The Manuscript Versions of A Room of One’s Own Oxford 1992 pp xv-xix
⁴ Sue Roe Virginia Woolf Writing and Gender p3
a few remarks about Fanny Burney; a few more about Jane Austen; a tribute to the Brontës and a sketch of Haworth Parsonage under snow; some witticisms if possible about Miss Mitford; a respectful allusion to George Eliot; a reference to Mrs Gaskell and one would have done. (R 5)

in fact traces a part (and partial) history of her own career as reviewer and essayist. 5 As it happens, Woolf argues, such a selective history of women and fiction is not enough:

But at second sight the words seemed not so simple. The title women and fiction might mean, and you may have meant it to mean, women and what they are like, or it might mean women and the fiction that they write; or it might mean women and the fiction that is written about them, or it might mean that somehow all three are inextricably mixed together and you want me to consider them in that light. (R 5)

These multiple possibilities form a revisionary moment in Woolf's writing praxis. Considering her subject, "women and fiction," as a plethora of possible questions, answers and positions, rather than as a selective, historical tradition, is, Woolf argues, the most interesting, but also the most problematic solution: "I soon saw it had one fatal drawback. I should never be able to come to a conclusion." (R 5) Woolf in fact does come to a notorious conclusion in the sixth section of A Room:

The sight of two people coming down the street and meeting at the corner seems to ease the mind of some strain, I thought, watching the taxi turn and make off. Perhaps to think, as I had been thinking these two days, of one sex as distinct from the other is an effort.

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interferes with the unity of the mind. Now that effort had ceased and that unity had been restored by seeing two people come together and get into a taxi-cab. (R 92)

For certainly when I saw the couple get into the taxi-cab the mind felt as if, after being divided, it had come together again in a natural fusion. The obvious reason would be that it is natural for the sexes to co-operate. One has a profound, if irrational, instinct in favour of the theory that the union of man and woman makes for the greatest satisfaction, the most complete happiness. (R93)

These considerations are the precursors to the formulation of the androgynous writing mind:

And I went on amateurishly to sketch a plan of the soul so that in each of us two powers preside, one male, one female; and in the man's brain the man predominates over the woman, and in the woman's brain the woman predominates over the man. The normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating. If one is a man, still the woman part of his brain must have effect; and a woman also must have intercourse with the man in her. Coleridge perhaps meant this when he said that a great mind is androgynous. It is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilized and uses all its faculties. Perhaps a mind that is purely masculine cannot create, any more than a mind that is purely feminine, I thought. (R 93-94)

Implicit in Woolf's assessment is that unity is a "natural" condition that can be asserted as an origin ("unity had been restored"), and that difference is constructed as being in some way artificial, or at least, not "natural." In the Introduction, I argued that Edward Carpenter's view of homosexuality in Intermediate Types Among Primitive Folk (1914) was one that precluded a recognition of difference because difference, for Carpenter, was (or should be) merged within a single body. The "body," according to Carpenter's thesis, relied for its sexual identity and knowledge upon a narcissistic identification with the same. This was a theory which relied upon the Aristophanic thesis of the origins of homosexual attraction in the recognition of, or identification with, a mirror image of the self.
My contention, that the epistemological framework of androgyny requires contextualisation in order for "it" to acquire a significant meaning, rests on an assumption that androgyny should be located specifically in different historical moments. I argued in the Introduction that androgyny does have an historical beginning but origins, I will show, can also be conceptually problematic. Androgyny is a myth about primordial sexual origins and the undifferentiated self, a myth located in philosophical and biblical narratives, as I showed in the Introduction.

Judith Butler argues, in two essays, that an origin is an impossibility. The first of these arguments, "Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory, and Psychoanalytic Discourse" (1990) summarises both object-relations and Lacanian accounts of gender development: "In the beginning" is sexuality without power, then power arrives to create both culturally relevant sexual distinction (gender) and, along with that, gender hierarchy and dominance." Whether sexuality without power can retain its significant social meaning for us is perhaps debatable, unless we accept Butler's implied definition, that sexuality without power is an undifferentiated polymorphous play of pleasure. The beginning of sex without power, in that case, pertains to an undifferentiated and pleasurable state of being which predates the effects (or conditions) of difference.

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6 William Blake Tyrell defines androgyny as myth "Its purpose is the diminution of anxiety and resolution of conflict, not truth." Amazons: A Study in Athenian Mythmaking pxiv Diane Long Hoeveler cites Albert Béguin in Romantic Androgyny: "The myth is like every tragedy a confrontation with the real, an act of confidence in the faculties of transfiguration that man wishes to attribute to himself and his inventions." p13 Francette Pacteau, citing Pontalis in her essay "The Impossible Referent, representations of the androgyne" argues that: "The positive androgyne cannot exist outside of myth. Incarnated, seen, it is effectively and simultaneously castrated man and woman." in Formations of Fantasy p70 Robert Kimbrough in Shakespeare and the Art of Humankindness argues that "[M]uch of the recent literature on androgyny has been confused and muddled because of the simple inability to distinguish between the fact that androgyny is a mythic concept which represents an inner, psychic state of experience available to all human beings..." p20

In "Imitation and Gender Subordination" (1991) Butler asks, "[H]ow can something operate as an origin if there are no secondary consequences which retrospectively confirm the originality of that origin?" since "The origin requires its derivations in order to affirm itself as an origin, for origins only make sense to the extent that they are differentiated from that which they produce as derivatives." In that case, difference can have no "beginning" and nor can non-differentiation, one cannot be always derived from the other, and nor can one be always privileged at the hierarchical or developmental expense of the other. If the origin cannot be fixed, but relies for its existence only as a relation to that from which the derivative is produced, then the origin can never represent or have a stable meaning or position.

In the Introduction, I referred to Francette Pacteau's problematisation of the ontological status and even the physical shape of the androgyne:

I do not encounter an 'androgyne' in the street; rather I encounter a figure whom I 'see as' androgynous. That is to say, the androgyne does not exist in the real - and this presents us with a major stumbling block in trying to organize a meaning for androgyne, for the impression is always that androgyne does so exist. To even approach the inherent difficulties of the subject, I must posit androgyne not as entity, but as symptom - in the psychoanalytic sense indicative of a repressed desire.  

Androgyne, in A Room of One's Own, is predicated on looking. As the narrator considers her phrase, "the unity of the mind" she reflects that:

clearly the mind has so great a power of concentrating at any point at any moment that it seems to have no single state of being. It can separate itself from other people in the street, for example, and

8 Judith Butler "Imitation and Gender Insusubordination" pp13-31 in Inside/Out Lesbian Theories Gay Theories New York and London 1991 ed. Diane Fuss p22  And see also Kari Weil, who, citing Terry Eagleton argues that: "[T]he whole metaphysical system depends upon the logic and hierarchy of opposition, on the possibility of firmly drawing and maintaining the spatial and chronological dividing line between a first and second identity." Androgyne and the Denial of Difference p11

9 Francette Pacteau "The Impossible Referent Representations of the Androgyne" in Formations of Fantasy ed Burgin et al p62  See also Introduction pp17-18
think of itself as apart from them, at an upper window looking down on them. Or it can think with other people spontaneously, as, for instance, in a crowd waiting to hear some piece of news read out. (R 93)

The "figure" of the androgyne, it is clear from both Pacteau's argument and the textual evidence in *A Room*, is an imaginative investment which is intrinsically bound up with the subject or, in this case, with the narrator of *A Room of One's Own* itself. The man and the woman getting into taxi are not "androgynous": they are two distinct human beings distinguished by sexual and gender difference but they prompt Mary Beton¹⁰ to think of a state of mind in which repression, which arrives with the recognition of sexual difference, can be transcended, or according to Rachel Bowlby, complicated: "The apparently simple duality of masculine and feminine is disrupted in this superimposition of the third element, the spectator."¹¹

Mary Beton advances opinions in *A Room* that, she freely admits, arise from her own culturally inscribed place: "One can only give one's audience the chance of drawing their own conclusions as they observe the limitations, the prejudices, the idiosyncracies of the speaker." (R 6) But as the speaker's position changes constantly, the nature of those idiosyncracies, prejudices and limitations remain both elusive and fluid: "It is not something called the "Self" which speaks, but language, the unconscious, the textuality of the text. If nothing else, there is only a "splendid anonymity" or a plural and neuter "they."¹² From the very beginning of *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf establishes a strategy that insists upon a series of incongruities:

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¹⁰ I am identifying the narrator in *A Room* as Mary Beton by a process of deduction, since Mary Seton is the science lecturer and Mary Carmichael is the author of *Life's Adventure*. See also Gayatri Spivak: "I would like to remind everyone who cites *A Room of One's Own* that "one must be woman-manly or man-womanly" is said in the voice of Mary Beton, a persona." "Unmaking and making in *To the Lighthouse* in *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* p42 Methuen 1987


¹² Alice Jardine "Gynesis" *Diacritics* 12:2 1982 pp56-7
I need not say that what I am about to describe has no existence; Oxbridge is an invention; so is Fernham; 'I' is only a convenient term for somebody who has no real being. Lies will flow from my lips, but there may perhaps be some truth mixed up with them; it is for you to seek out this truth and to decide whether any part of it is worth keeping. (R 6)

Such disclaimers, whilst they free Woolf from the responsibility of assuming or identifying with a particular critical or political position, also establish an element of fantasy and illusion which will eventually enable Woolf to escape from the "web of age-old cultural determinations" that fix and demarcate men and women in various socio-sexual categories. Hélène Cixous argues:

[W]e must make no mistake: men and women are caught up in a web of age-old cultural determinations that are almost unanalysable in their complexity. One can no more speak of "woman" than of "man" without being trapped within an ideological theater where the proliferation of representations, images, reflections, myths, identifications, transform, deform, constantly change everyone's Imaginary and invalidate in advance any conceptualisation. 13

How, then, in (or with) what terms do we speak of "woman" and "man"? "Writing," Cixous argues, is the site for the transcendence of the cultural determinisms embedded in language:

Everyone knows that a place exists which is not economically or politically indebted to all the vileness and compromise. That is not obliged to reproduce the system. That is writing. If there is a somewhere else that can escape the infernal repetition, it lies in that direction, where it writes itself, where it dreams, where it invents new worlds. 14

Woolf's invocation of the androgynous mind promises to transcend the limitations imposed by "appropriate" gender roles: "it" represents that "place" too. But the androgynous mind also threatens to withdraw the extending boundaries of "inappropriate" gender roles which were

13 Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément (trans. Betsy Wing) The Newly Born Woman p83
14 ibid. p72 See also Sandra Gilbert, who, theorising gender, says: "an ultimate reality exists only if one journeys beyond gender to an ontological essence so pure that "it" can "inhabit" any self, any costume." "Costumes of the Mind: Transvestism as Metaphor in Modern Literature." Critical Inquiry 7:2 1980 pp314-417
becoming, argues Woolf's narrator, intrinsic to modernist literature and thought. What Coleridge "certainly did not mean" by the androgynous mind, cautions Mary Beton, is that "it is a mind that has any special sympathy with women; a mind that takes up their causes or devotes itself to their interpretation." (R 94) Nor is the androgynous mind represented by the response to the causes of women which were characteristic of the "stridently sex-conscious" modern age. Mary Beton is bored with Mr A writing about sex, but he writes about sex, she argues, because "He is protesting against the equality of the other sex by asserting his own superiority. He is therefore impeded and inhibited and self-conscious..." (R 96) Woolf's recourse to the myth of androgyny was an answer to a difficult confrontation between the woman writer's socially inscribed position and its effect upon her creative potential. But, the androgynous mind was also emblematic of Woolf's evolving writing praxis as she negotiated the relations of sex and gender to writing between the composition of Orlando and The Waves.

Woolf's invocation of androgyny was received without question. Indeed, some reviewers concurred so completely with Woolf's ideas that the text itself has been accorded the status of a truth. But Woolf was not only borrowing from popular contemporary sources to illustrate a very popular point: she used the figure of androgyny as a strategic way of addressing and moderating both militant feminism and the structural and linguistic experimentations of male modernist literature. Woolf's defence of the androgynous writing mind was, in some ways, a logical conclusion to her arguments in A Room of One's Own, a conclusion which she constantly prepared for within the narrative. A Room of One's Own is as much an examination of the psychology of the writing mind as of the material conditions that have prevented women from writing: for Woolf, one follows from the other, they are interdependent.
Androgyny as an icon of an optimistic balance of, or interaction between, masculinity and femininity still enjoyed a degree of popularity in 1929. The initial reviews of *A Room* accepted Woolf's theory of the androgynous writing mind as an appropriate finale to the text, such was the familiar recurrence of the idealism of "androgyny." An unsigned review, "Women and Books" in the Times Literary Supplement (31 October 1929) observed that: "There is nothing very startling in the belief that, with artistic natures at least, the man's mind has a share of the feminine and the woman's of the masculine, and that the two elements must fuse with and fertilize each other to produce a complete creation."15 Vita Sackville-West went so far as to ally Woolf herself with androgyny. Sackville-West reviewed *A Room* for the "Listener" (6 November 1929), and was unequivocal about Woolf's relationship to the androgynous mind, knowing "of no writer who fulfils this condition more thoroughly than Mrs Woolf herself."16 For Mrs Woolf, although "too sensible to be a thorough-going feminist"17 enjoys the feminine qualities of, let us say, fantasy and irresponsibility, allied to all the masculine qualities that go with a strong, authoritative brain; and it is precisely this combination added to her profound knowledge of literature which fits her so admirably to discuss women in general, and women who write in particular.18

15 Unsigned review 31 October 1929 in *Virginia Woolf: The Critical Heritage* ed McLaurin and Majumdar p256 The reviewer also agrees with Woolf that: "those divisions of sex-consciousness which are disastrous to our age and have led men, in Mrs Woolf's opinion, to write only with the male side of their minds." p256
16 Repr. in *The Critical Heritage* p258 Although see also AJL Busst: "We must...come to the conclusion that both exterior and interior sources of the androgyne play little part in determining its meaning or value in any particular work: these depend uniquely on the preoccupations and convictions, ideals and aspirations of the individual artist or authors which, if not always those of his (sic) whole generation and civilization, are at least largely conditioned by his upbringing and environment." p10
17 *Critical Heritage* p258
18 Ibid. Muriel Bradbrook had damned Woolf in her review of *A Room* for *Scrutiny* I (May 1932) pp33-8) "The shrinking of the heroines is too conscious as the playfulness of *A Room of One's Own* is too laboured. To demand 'thinking' from Mrs Woolf is clearly illegitimate: but such a deliberate repudiation of it and such a smoke screen of feminine charm is surely to be deprecated." p38
Sackville-West's flattering criticism successfully manages to skate over the complexities (and perplexities) of *A Room of One's Own*. Sackville-West was a great believer in "androgyny." On 27 September 1920, she had written in a private journal:

I advance, therefore, the perfectly accepted theory that cases of dual personality do exist, in which the feminine and the masculine elements alternately preponderate. I advance this in an impersonal and scientific spirit, and claim that I am qualified to speak with the intimacy a professional scientist could acquire only after years of study and indirect information, because I have the object of study always to hand, in my own heart, and can gauge the exact truthfulness of what my own experience tells me.

Sackville-West, like Woolf, could claim authority: she had first hand experience of shifting sexual identifications, and what's more, she tells us in her review, Virginia Woolf too had a "dual personality" that authenticated her analysis of women and writing. Commenting on Sackville-West's sense of her "duality", Phyllis Rose says: "No doubt this view of herself as a strange and dubious hybrid of the sexes, more common than conventional thought would allow, was communicated to Virginia, for if it did not inspire it certainly reinforced Virginia's own concern at the time with the dubiety of sex and the arbitrariness of sex roles." Winifred Holtby's account of Woolf in 1932 endorsed *A Room of One's Own* to such an extent that her criticism reads like a faithful transcript of Woolf's own ideas. Her account of Woolf's theory of androgyny is generous, to say the least: "There is the theory, stated as

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19 Woolf wrote to Vita Sackville-West: "Yes, I'm delighted you read my little book, as you call it, dear Mrs Nick: but although you dont perceive it, there is much reflection and some erudition in it..." 22 October 1929 L Vol IV
20 This private document was eventually interpreted and rewritten by Vita's younger son, Nigel Nicolson, and published as *Portrait of a Marriage* Latin 1973 p108
21 Phyllis Rose *Woman of Letters: A Life of Virginia Woolf* London and Henley p179
22 Winifred Holtby *Virginia Woolf* London 1932 Woolf was generally scathing about Holtby's generous book: VW to Ethel Smyth: "- now Holtby's book, just glanced at made me roar with laughter..." 6 October 1932 L Vol V; VW to Hugh Walpole: "I suppose Winifred has merely added another kind of tombstone." October 26 1932 L Vol V; VW to Margaret Llewellyn Davies: "Holtby is a farmer's daughter and I'm told her book is bad - , vain though I am, I cannot read about myself, and my parents and my education - all lies too." 10 November 1932 L Vol V

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clearly and unambiguously as she could state it." 23 William Empson regarded *A Room of One's Own* as a defining comment on Woolf's work, and in spite of his reservations about Woolf's opinions on feminism and writing, he still defended the concept of the "spiritual hermaphrodite":

Most of the important things for a critic to say about Mrs Woolf have been said by herself in *A Room of One's Own*, and centre around a peculiar attitude to feminism. For instance, she says that women novelists must be expected to do something entirely new in describing the mental attitudes of women, and their relations with other women, which male novelists do not know about. This seems a large claim; surely Richardson knew how women talked when there wasn't a man in the room; and when you have said, as Mrs Woolf does say, that every complete author must be spiritually hermaphrodite, you seem to have quelled this aspect of the sex war as vehemently as you called it into being. But her best work is illuminated by this notion...24

As a solution to the problems Woolf finds in analysing women and writing, the "answer" of the androgynous mind does indeed raise even more questions. After analysing difference, Woolf's introduction of androgyny then threatens to erase it.25 Having argued in the text that "Everything is against the likelihood that [writing] will come from the writer's mind whole and entire. Generally material circumstances are against it." (R 50) why should Woolf then presuppose the existence of "the unity of the mind"? If, as she argues, "[T]he values of women differ very often from the values which have been made by the other sex; naturally, this is so." (R 70) what could be the basis for assuming her "instinct in favour of the theory that the union of man and woman makes

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23 Winifred Holtby op.cit. p179
24 William Empson "Virginia Woolf" in *Scrutinies by Various Writers* collected by Edgell Rickword 1931 Vol 2 pp204-216 Reprinted in Majumdar and McLaurin (eds) pp305-6
25 Although see also James Hafley for an alternative reading: "Virginia Woolf's concept of androgeneity is not that there is really no difference between men and women. Only by intuitive perception can men and women be the same; to be a woman, then, is in this sense to be as different as possible from a man - to know by intuition and intellect instead of by intellect alone." *The Glass Roof* p103 And see Frances R Restuccia "Untying the Mother Tongue." Female Difference in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* Vol 4 No 2 1985 pp253-264 This argues that although "Woolf laid quiet siege on what she perceived as male linguistic property" (p255) Woolf introduced androgyny to temper "the magnitude of her love for the female sex." (p262)
for the greatest happiness"? How can she valorise difference by promoting Jane Austen and Emily Brontë: "It is another feather, perhaps the finest, in their caps. They wrote as women write, not as men write." (R 71) and by also suggesting that "[O]ne of the tokens of the fully developed mind [is] that it does not think specially or separately of sex..." (R 94) If "it remains obvious, even in the writing of Proust, that a man is terribly hampered and partial in his knowledge of women..." (R 79) then why should it also strike Woolf as equally obvious that "In our time Proust was wholly androgynous, if not perhaps a little too much of a woman." (R 99) Whilst "It is useless [for women] to go to the great men writers for help..." Charles Lamb is included both in this list of writers who "never helped a woman yet" (R 73)26 and in her list of androgynous writers.27 And yet, in two different entries in her diary, Woolf had urged herself to "correct A room of one's own very carefully before printing."28 and had confessed to "writing idly, to solace my eyes after two hours of intense correction - that much corrected book, Women & Fiction."29 Are the contradictions inherent in A Room of One's Own, all of them located in an intermittent series of contradictory statements in the text, part of a deliberate strategy rather than insouciant proof reading?

The introduction of the androgynous writing mind as a solution to the materialist arguments of A Room strikes an odd note because of the apparent irreconcilability between the social as a felt historical condition

26 The other writers are Sir Thomas Browne, WM Thackeray, Cardinal Newman, Lawrence Sterne, Charles Dickens and Thomas De Quincey
27 "One must turn back to Shakespeare then, for Shakespeare was androgynous; and so were Keats and Sterne and Cowper and Lamb and Coleridge." R p98 Thackeray and Lamb were also, with "the least turn of the pen...delightful to the ear..." R p88
28 D Vol 3 23 June 1929
29 D Vol 3 30 June 1929 "Women and Fiction" was the original title for the lectures that became A Room of One's Own. On 19 August 1929 she wrote: "for good or bad I have just set the last correction to Women & Fiction, or A Room of One's Own. I shall never read it again I suppose. Good or bad? Has an uneasy life in it I think: you feel the creature arching its back & galloping on, though as usual much is watery & flimsy & pitched in too high a voice." D Vol 3

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and the promotion of a conceptual image as a part of the narrator's imagination that resolutely resists that condition. Of the practical and the imaginative, Michèle Barrett argues:

It is never quite clear from her writings which of these arguments she would ultimately subscribe to. The argument of A Room of One's Own, exploring the effect of material and ideological conditions on the mind of the writer, seems to verge on the 'politician's' view, yet her ideal of complete freedom of mind reveals a contradictory belief in the transcendence of art. Virginia Woolf, totally committed to the 'integrity' of her art, yet perhaps equally proud, on the publication of Three Guineas, of being described as 'the most brilliant pamphleteer in England', reveals a deep-seated ambivalence as to the rival claims of art and politics. In a text that isolates and emphasises the devaluation of femininity within patriarchal social structures and then attempts to merge hegemonic male-female relations within a fantasised project of equality, Woolf's vision of androgyny looks more than a little disingenuous.

At Fernham, Mary Beton wonders why Mary Seton's mother never "learnt the great art of making money..." (R 22) The answer lies in the irreconcilability between private and public roles, between biological and social determinism: "Making a fortune and bearing thirteen children- no human being could stand it" (R 23) which signals a subtle transition of the status of woman into the universal human being. Woolf appears to set up the trenchant difficulties that have plagued women - the combination of motherhood with a career. Whilst discerning enough not to dismiss as negligible biological (as opposed to metaphorical) maternity, Woolf is also careful not to valorise it either. Yet "human beings" as a universal category do not have to withstand childbirth and a career: specifically, this burden would (if the professions, in Woolf's resolutely middle-class vision, had been fully open to women) fall to women. If not necessarily a

30 Michele Barrett Virginia Woolf Women and Writing London 1979 p24
postulation of androgyny, Woolf's subtle shift of woman into universal human being, is nonetheless a significant one.

Woolf's proclamation, that she has a "profound, if irrational, instinct in favour of the theory that the union of man and woman makes for the greatest satisfaction, the most complete happiness" (R 93) is still doggedly pursued, even though she tells us that her belief in such a union is irrational. With this antidote to the hierarchical oppressions that have been the historical axis of gender relations, Woolf appears to have discarded the factual for the fantastic. It is characteristic of A Room of One's Own that fact is consistently punctuated by a fantasy of fiction and the writing mind. Mary Beton's reverie of the woman writer thinking is arrested both by a recognition of the insignificance of her thoughts and by the Beadle's panic at discovering a woman trespassing on a turf reserved for Fellows of the college. Mary Beton's thought, she tells us, is not worth troubling her audience with, but when she internalises the thought once more, "put back into the mind, it became at once very exciting, and important; and as it darted and sank, and flashed hither and thither, set up such a wash and tumult of ideas that it was impossible to sit still." (R 7)

Again, Woolf stresses the working mechanics of the female mind: Mary Beton's own internal set of values render the thought important, the Beadle, representing a position of masculine authority, renders the thought useless. But Mary Beton also feels, walking through the colleges, a freedom from "facts": "the roughness of the present seemed smoothed away; the body seemed contained in a miraculous glass cabinet through which no sound could penetrate, and the mind, freed from any contact with facts (unless one trespassed on the turf again), was at liberty to settle down upon whatever meditation was in harmony with the moment." (R 8)
In the third section, the reality of women’s social position is juxtaposed with literary representations of her: "It was certainly an odd monster that one made up by reading the historians first and the poets afterwards - a worm winged like an eagle; the spirit of life and beauty in a kitchen chopping up suet. But these monsters, however amusing to the imagination, have no existence in fact." (R 43) Women’s subjection, argues Mary Beton, makes her potential to write, an almost impossible one:

That woman, then, who was born with a gift of poetry in the sixteenth century, was an unhappy woman, a woman at strife against herself. All the conditions of her life, all her own instincts, were hostile to the state of mind which is needed to set free whatever is in the brain. But what is the state of mind that is most propitious to the act of creation? I asked. Can one come by any notion of the state that furthers and makes possible that strange activity? (R 50)

To answer her question here, she opens Shakespeare's Tragedies and establishes the foundation for an argument that will support, if not quite the androgynous writing mind, then a mind that is free of prejudice and inequality. Invoked here are the historical and material circumstances that constituted the difficulties facing the Elizabethan woman as writer. Addressing those difficulties, Woolf introduces the mythical construct of androgyny in part six of A Room of One's Own. One way of answering her question about the condition of the woman's writing mind is to ask another: "What was Shakespeare's state of mind, for instance, when he wrote Lear and Antony and Cleopatra?" (R 50) In part six, Shakespeare is extolled: for Shakespeare had an androgynous mind. More than this, Antony and Cleopatra is reworked into a feminist fantasy as Mary Beton wonders what this play would have been like if Cleopatra had liked Octavia. She answers with another fantasy and tells us what happens when Chloe likes Olivia.
Women faced and face difficulties that clearly never troubled Shakespeare, blessed from early modern times with an androgynous writing mind. Historically, the androgynous mind has never been possible for women, and the crisis of modernity, as Mary Beton interprets this in *A Room*, with its emphasis on sex and the self, renders the possibility of a "unified mind" simultaneously impossible and necessary. For if women’s material circumstances are "against the likelihood that it [writing] will come from the writer's mind whole and entire" (R 50) then, in part six, "sex consciousness," which is both sexual and political, indicate that psychological circumstances are also against writing coming from the mind "whole and entire." The difference between Woolf's materialist account and her psychoanalytic analysis is analogous to the difference between fact and fiction or fantasy. The odds have been always against women: "it is fairly evident that even in the nineteenth century a woman was not encouraged to be an artist. On the contrary, she was snubbed, slapped, lectured and exhorted. Her mind must have been strained and her vitality lowered by the need of opposing this, of disproving that." (R 53-4) The androgynous writing mind, as Woolf conceives it, requires the evacuation of such a social context that disadvantageously positions women. Mary Beton can claim that Shakespeare has an androgynous mind precisely because his writing does not appear to be sabotaged by his particular circumstances or his ego: if this is a token of masculine privilege rather than androgyny, this is never recognised since material circumstances, and any emphasis on gender and sexuality are missing from the "incandescent" mind of Shakespeare:

For though we say that we know nothing about Shakespeare's state of mind, even as we say that, we are saying something about Shakespeare's state of mind. The reason why we know so little of

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31 Women were not likely to share Shakespeare’s "incandescent, unimpeded" mind, she argued in *A Room of One's Own* (55): "That one would find any woman in that state of mind in the sixteenth century was obviously impossible." (R 56)
Shakespeare - compared with Donne or Ben Jonson or Milton - is that his grudges and spites and antipathies are hidden from us. We are not held up by some 'revelation' which reminds us of the writer. All desire to protest, to preach, to proclaim an injury, to pay off a score, to make the world the witness of some hardship or grievance was fired out of him and consumed. Therefore his poetry flows from him free and unimpeded. If ever a human being got his work expressed completely, it was Shakespeare. If ever a mind was incandescent, unimpeded, I thought, turning again to the bookcase, it was Shakespeare's mind. (R 55)

It is Coleridge, rather than Shakespeare, who becomes an affirmative if elusive source for androgyny, however. Woolf can only tell us what Coleridge did not mean when he wrote about androgyny:

Coleridge certainly did not mean, when he said that a great mind is androgynous, that it is a mind that has any special sympathy with women; a mind that takes up their causes or devotes itself to their interpretation. Perhaps the androgynous mind is less apt to make these distinctions than the single-sexed mind. (R 94)\textsuperscript{32}

This represents a puzzling hiatus in a text that is otherwise devoted to analysing the material and psychological conditions that affect, specifically, women and their relation to writing. Coleridge's account of androgyny is as evasive as Woolf's:

I have known strong minds, with imposing, Cobbett-like manners, but I have never met a great mind of this sort. And of the former, they are at least as often wrong as right. The truth is, a great mind must be androgynous. Great minds - Swedenborg's for instance - are never wrong, but in consequence of being in the right, but imperfectly.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{32} Woolf’s review of Coleridge in 1918 indicates that she had been aware of Coleridge in relation to androgyny at least since then: "Modesty may have required him to say Burke instead of Coleridge, but either name will do. The same desire to justify and protect one's type led him no doubt to perceive the truth that 'a great mind must be androgynous...I have known strong minds with imposing, undoubting Cobbett-like manners, but I have never met a great mind of this sort.' " Coleridge as Critic" 1918 E Vol II pp221-2 Woolf's review, which appeared in the TLS 7 February 1918 was of The Table Talk and Omniana of Samuel Taylor Coleridge OUP 1917

\textsuperscript{33} Samuel Taylor Coleridge Specimens of the Table Talk of the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge Two Volumes London 1835 Volume II September 1 1832 p96 See also Jean Watson's study: "Coleridge's Androgynous Ideal" Prose Studies 1983 Vol 6 pp36-56
A Room of One's Own covers great imaginative and historical ground from the ill-fated Judith Shakespeare to the commercially successful Aphra Behn, to the very modern Mary Carmichael, and the ultra-topical same-sex couple, Chloe and Olivia. All of these women, invoked in fact and in fantasy, present a historicisation of women and their relation to writing. Indeed, Woolf's historical forays are almost transhistorical given the almost unchanging nature of women's circumstances during the three hundred year history that she traces from Behn to "Mary Carmichael." Yet, there were specific cultural resonances that Woolf was aware of, was indeed using, that figured the changes in perception of sex, gender and writing.

Coleridge as a source for her theory of androgyny is puzzling, as she leaps back, as it were, to 1832. Coleridge's own source takes us even further back to the eighteenth century philosopher Swedenborg (1688-1772). Woolf's historical leap backwards is, perhaps, something of a red herring, for Coleridge's great androgynous mind that is never wrong becomes, in Woolf's work, the masculine, egotistical mind that thinks it is always right. St John Hirst, Ridley Ambrose, William Rodney, Sir

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34 Judith Shakespeare had also been "invented" in a three volume romance Judith Shakespeare by William Black (1884). This Judith Shakespeare is William Shakespeare's daughter rather than sister. She too is illiterate, but she refuses to learn to read because the only literature that she does receive is from itinerant clergy men, which criticises theatre and actors, both of which she passionately supports. Here, the resemblance stops.

35 I will argue below that the possible origin for Mary Carmichael was Marie Carmichael, who wrote Love's Creation in 1928. Marie Carmichael was the pseudonym for Marie Stopes. Love's Creation does bear a resemblance to Life's Adventure insofar as both texts are concerned with "androgyny" as a form of spiritual and sexual union.

36 Jane Marcus, in "Sapphistry: Narration as Lesbian Seduction in A Room of One's Own" (Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy 1987) makes a connection between Judith Shakespeare, Radclyffe Hall and A Room of One's Own as "a female code for lesbian love." But, in "Taking the Bull by the Udders": Sexual Difference in Virginia Woolf - a Conspiracy Theory" (Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury: A Centenary Celebration 1987) Marcus argues, in relation to Woolf's introduction to androgyny, that "every woman reader I know sees this passage as Woolf's mnemonic device to force herself out of her feminist and lesbian fantasy world, back to a vision of 'heterosexuality makes the world go round'. That couple is Woolf's rude reminder to herself that most women are not part of a woman's community but are isolated from each other in relation to individual men." p166

37 And see Balzac's Séraphita (1834) which draws on Swedenborgian philosophy.
William Bradshaw, Dr Holmes, Mr Ramsay, Charles Tansley: all are examples of the "great" or "masculine" minds that are never wrong: "Egotism, egotism," she wrote in her diary in 1925, "it is the essential ingredient in a clever man's life I believe."38

Yet Coleridge does figure, nostalgically for Woolf as it turns out, a lost age of literary criticism:

It is the power of suggestion that one most misses, I thought, taking Mr B the critic in my hand and reading, very carefully and very dutifully, his remarks upon the art of poetry. Very able they were, acute and full of learning; but the trouble was that his feelings no longer communicated; his mind seemed separated into different chambers; not a sound carried from one to the other. Thus, when one takes a sentence of Coleridge into the mind, it explodes and gives birth to all kinds of other ideas, and that is the only sort of writing of which one can say that it has the secret of perpetual life.

(R 96-7)

It is, however, the introduction of the image of the androgynous mind that remains one of the most puzzling aspects of A Room of One's Own, a combination of what Forster described as "a very peculiar side of [Woolf]: her feminism"39 and what David Daiches identified as a characteristic of Woolf's work, two years before Forster, in 1939:

The author must be a freeborn citizen of the world he is describing and interpreting if his description and interpretation are to result in a permanently valid pattern of experience. One can become a freeborn citizen through imagination - though imagination working always on a minimum of knowledge. If, however, you live both imaginatively and - might one say? - epistemologically in a world other than the one you are describing, somewhere in your work there will be something that does not fit.40

38 D Vol 3 24 September 1925
39 EM Forster Two Cheers for Democracy New York 1951 p254 A year after Forster's 1941 Rede Lecture, David Daiches commented: "Most of Virginia Woolf's discussions of the position of her sex are good humoured though serious. It comes therefore as a surprise to find in what is the most political of all her books a note almost of savagery in her attack on male domination and its effects on civilization." Virginia Woolf 1942 p147 And see also Deborah Newton's account of Woolf, written in 1946: "Her own special interest was in the advancement of women; a curiously militant streak in her personality, which prompted one of her best works, A Room of One's Own, and one of her poorest, Three Guineas. The latter, though dogmatic and rather clumsy in style, is of value at least in connection with another of her most conspicuous characteristics: an intense hatred of war." p7
Bernard Blackstone merges these two strands of thinking into something that does fit:

Virginia Woolf has been called a feminist, and of course she was this in one or two of the less successful of her writings - in, especially, *Three Guineas*. But more truly we might call her an androgynist, because she puts the emphasis every time on what a man and a woman have to give to each other, on the mystery of completion, and not on the discussion of separate superiorities.41

Between her interests in materialism and her quasi-mystical speculations, what was Woolf trying to say in *A Room of One's Own*? What relation could Mary Carmichael, author of *Life's Adventure*, have to the androgynous writing mind?

In 1928, "Marie Carmichael" wrote *Love's Creation*.42 Jean Guiguet argues that "In her analysis of that imaginary novel *Life's Adventure*...Virginia Woolf undoubtedly puts forward her own conception of the novel, except that for the antagonism between materialism and idealism she substitutes the antagonism between the masculine and feminine natures and points of view."43 The androgynous writing mind, then, is a deliberate answer to the conflicts that Woolf has established throughout the text. Androgyny is an attempt to answer what otherwise appears, as I have argued, a disingenuous merger of hegemonic gender relations. Although Jane Marcus has argued that androgyny represented Woolf's retreat from literary lesbianism into enforced heterosexuality (following as it does the introduction of female protagonists of *Life's Adventure*, Chloe and Olivia) in fact Chloe and Olivia represent a radical departure from the original Marie Carmichael's modern heterosexual couple, Kenneth and Lillian, who, like Chloe and Olivia, share a laboratory.

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41 Bernard Blackstone "Virginia Woolf" 1952
42 *Love's Creation A Novel* London 1928 Marie Carmichael was the pseudonym for Marie Stopes
43 Jean Guiguet *Virginia Woolf and her Works* p177
Kenneth is initially a cause for concern for his mother because he shows an interest only in his laboratory work and not in women. Lillian, a post-graduate student who is equally single-minded about scientific research, is sent to work in Kenneth's laboratory. They fall in love, marry, and are happy ever after until Lillian is killed in a cycling accident. Forced to rethink his priorities, the grief stricken Kenneth travels to the Far East and makes new anthropological discoveries which he occasionally writes about to Lillian's sister, Rose Amber, who, he feels is the only person who can understand him. Rose Amber studies people, she is a "soul doctor" and has married a man fifteen years her senior, Sir Harry Granville, after nursing his fatally ill and scandalous wife. Sir Harry, a possessive man, believes in the mystical union of men and women as "soul-mates." He is also sexually demanding, and the text makes it clear that Rose Amber is neither sexually aroused nor fulfilled by her demanding husband. Fortuitously, he falls over a cliff and eventually dies. After a suitable period of mourning, Rose Amber and Kenneth realise that they were really meant for each other, they fall in love, and the novel ends with Rose Amber's assurances to Kenneth who, when he asks her how long she is prepared to wait for his anthropological discoveries to be accepted, replies: "So long as [you are] the father of my child - always." This conventional enough ending which implies that Rose Amber's ambition stops at maternity, belies the sexual modernity that otherwise infuses the text - a woman who is a scientist and in full time post-graduate education, the recognition that women have sexual desires that need to be fulfilled. The text negotiates extreme manifestations of behaviour and modifies them into harmonious balance: it is not enough to only think about

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44 Rose Amber confesses to Kenneth's mother: "But my body, too, seems to mean so terribly much to him, and it is that which I feel I can hardly understand. I didn't realise quite how strong men's passions are." Love's Creation p274
45 ibid. p416
science, human endeavour has to be balanced to give a sense of proportion that feeds a healthy sense of well-being. Kenneth has to negotiate between his sexual urges and his intellectual curiosity and the novel promises a release into an harmonious and fruitful combination between his body and his mind because he finds the right kind of woman. The "dual soul-life" is prevalent in the text, coded as a form of spiritual complementarity. Rose Amber tells Mrs Harvey (Kenneth's mother) what Sir Harry (her fiancée) thinks of marriage, for example:

[He] doesn't look on marriage in the superficial, commonplace way most men do. He says that there is no real marriage unless the two souls are halves which fit into each other to make a great, beautiful, dual soul-life - the complete human life. I am sure that it is the real way of looking at marriage.\textsuperscript{46}

Indeed, the text supports Sir Harry's belief, as the narrator argues:

Their laughter and comradeship had been but a cloak, a shell, from which they had joyously burst, seeking each other, in each other seeking that exquisite completeness of union in which only the spirit of a man and woman can meet, completing each other, creating by their union a new and wonderful individual. This mystic union can only know the radiant perfection of its rapture before either has even subtly wounded the other.\textsuperscript{47}

The testing ground of social reality, in other words, destroys the idealism of this complementarity. For Rose Amber, Sir Harry's sexual demands and possessiveness destroy that uniqueness of spiritual completion. When she discovers that he had sex with other women between the death of his first wife and his marriage to Rose Amber, she is shocked to discover what she now perceives as the distinguishing feature of sexual difference: "Am I at last face to face with the reality of this profound and terrible difference between the nature of man and woman which has been the theme of so many novels I hated?"\textsuperscript{48} Apparently so. Yet she feels that

\textsuperscript{46} ibid. p249 Rose Amber reiterates this sentiment: "You know Harry is not religious, but he has a sort of queer, half-religious belief that men's and women's souls are not complete except when they love their true mates." p272

\textsuperscript{47} ibid. p166

\textsuperscript{48} ibid. p296
her relationship with Kenneth will somehow ensure a greater compatibility: he thinks of her in a maternal capacity: "That is how Rose Amber should be throned - with a child at her knee..." Promising Rose Amber sexual fulfillment: "You need never fear that we shall not go together - even into the innermost experiences." the two see their union as promising one of supreme compatibility in which work, intellect and sex conjoin in a merry dance of unity:

Rose Amber was eager. "Don't you see how your work is the key of all I was striving after for humanity. I was seeking for a cure for every one's loneliness and sorrow. You're giving us that. Together we must prove that humanity is not only divided up into pairs of great lovers; it is knit up into one great wonderful thing - and the singing of a paean of joy to God in two lives may mean something sublime in the life of the Greater Unit.

The "reality of this profound and terrible difference between the nature of man and woman" is a theme intrinsically bound to Woolf's theorisation of androgyny in A Room. "One has a profound, if irrational, instinct in favour of the theory that the union of man and woman makes for the greatest satisfaction, the most complete happiness" (R 93) wrote Woolf. As in Love's Creation, the foundation for this instinct is based on an ideal: put to a practical test, the instinct sometimes founders, as "Marie Carmichael" demonstrates with the mismatched Sir Harry and Rose Amber. But when it works, as we are presumably meant to see in the developing relationship between Rose Amber and Kenneth, the outcome promises to reinforce traditional gender roles: Kenneth will be a successful scientist (because Rose Amber believes in him) and Rose Amber will be a devoted wife and mother. Although there are clearly common themes worked into both Love's Creation and Life's Adventure, Mary Carmichael's departure is possibly more radical than that of Marie

49 ibid. p409
50 ibid. p413
51 ibid. p415
Carmichael's. Kenneth may like Lillian or even Rose Amber, but in Mary Carmichael's novel, Chloe likes Olivia. The "dual soul-life" is based on an emphasis which distinguishes rather than merges gender difference.

Woolf distinguishes between two types of sex consciousness: the political consciousness that informed women's campaign for the franchise, and the prurient sex consciousness of male sexuality that contributed to what Woolf felt was the indecency of modern literature. This was not just prudery on the part of Woolf, since she had connected the "indecency" of male modernist writing with formal experimentation in her 1924 essay "Character in Fiction." Woolf's criticism of twentieth century writers in "Character in Fiction" was divided into two historical camps - the Edwardians (Bennett, Wells and Galsworthy) and the Georgians. Representing the Georgians were EM Forster, DH Lawrence, Lytton Strachey and James Joyce. TS Eliot was added as the essay developed, and was stylistically paired with Joyce:

Grammar is violated; syntax disintegrated, as a boy staying with an aunt for the weekend rolls in the geranium bed out of sheer desperation as the solemnities of the sabbath wear on. The more adult writers do not, of course, indulge in such wanton exhibitions of spleen. Their sincerity is desperate, and their courage tremendous; it is only that they do not know which to use, a fork or their fingers. Thus, if you read Mr Joyce and Mr Eliot you will be struck by the indecency of the one, and the obscurity of the other. Mr Joyce's indecency in Ulysses seems to me the conscious and calculated indecency of a desperate man who feels that in order to breathe he must break the windows. At moments, when the window is broken, he is magnificent. But what a waste of energy! And, after all, how dull indecency is, when it is not the overflowing of a superabundant energy or savagery, but the determined and public-spirited act of a man who needs fresh air!52

What separated the indecency of the Georgians from the Edwardians was, for Woolf, the fact that the Georgians went public: the Edwardians merely left Woolf thinking that she had "been caught eavesdropping at some

52 "Character in Fiction" (Criterion July 1924) E Vol III p434
purely masculine orgy." (R 97) As Minow Pinkney comments\(^53\), the locus of Woolf's criticism of the Edwardians became gender specific rather than merely generational as she developed her attack on the indecency of "Mr A" the novelist:

And then Alan, I thought, has passions; and here I turned page after page very fast, feeling that the crisis was approaching, and so it was. It took place on the beach under the sun. It was done very openly. It was done very vigorously. Nothing could have been more indecent. (R 95)\(^54\)

"Mr A" the novelist was, Woolf admitted, probably an unconscious reference to DH Lawrence: "He was not in my upper mind; but no doubt was in the lower." There has been critical resistance to the idea of accepting Woolf as a writer who could write explicitly about sex. Bernard Blackstone suggested that Woolf could write about lesbian sex in Mrs Dalloway, but in his account lesbian sex is soon merged with androgyny:

But here, in Mrs Dalloway, we find the moment coming most strongly in an experience between women. It is an extension of the theme of the novels, and it embodies a conviction of Mrs Woolf's - first, that the novel as constructed by male writers is not a wholly satisfactory medium for the woman novelist, especially in its presuppositions about love; and secondly, that there is something androgynous in the nature of the artist, and that this androgyny should be admitted into her work.\(^55\)

Confrontation with Woolf and her relation to sex can easily be avoided, since androgyny is a simple answer that covers a multitude of lazy critical

\(^{53}\) Pinkney argues this point specifically in relation to The Waves, but the criticism applies perfectly well to Woolf's thinking in A Room. See Makiko Minow-Pinkney Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject: Feminine Writing in the Major Novels Brighton 1987 p168

\(^{54}\) Although Lawrence is the novelist Woolf admits to referring to here, she also argued in "Character in Fiction" that both the "Georgian" Forster and Lawrence's work had been ruined by their influence by the previous (Edwardian) generation see E Vol III p433 See also VW to Desmond MacCarthy 27 January 1930 L Vol IV Bernard Blackstone, in his 1949 Virginia Woolf: A Commentary, also suspected that Lawrence was in her mind. p148

\(^{55}\) Bernard Blackstone Virginia Woolf: A Commentary. London 1949 p74 And see also Quentin Bell's reluctance to acknowledge that Woolf could write explicitly about sex: "she regarded sex, not so much with horror, as with incomprehension; there was, both in her personality and in her art, a disconcertingly aetherial quality and, when the necessities of literature compel her to consider lust, she either turns away or presents us with something as remote from the gropings and grappling of the bed as is the flame of a candle from its tallow." Virginia Woolf: A Biography London 1982 Vol II p6
sins. How could she solve the problem of the relation between men and women by positing yet another version of those relations? Relations between women, Woolf argued, were the key to solving dysfunctional heterosexual relations.

Mary Carmichael wrote about Chloe liking Olivia in the same year that Stephen Gordon was not parted from Mary Llewellyn: for 1928 was the year of that most famous obscenity trial which suppressed and banned Radclyffe Hall’s lesbian novel, The Well of Loneliness. Woolf’s diary entries at the time of the publication of A Room of One’s Own revealed the characteristic private anxieties that attended every publication of her work. In this instance, Woolf was worried that she would be “attacked for a feminist & hinted at for a sapphist…” Jane Marcus has drawn attention to the presence of Vita Sackville West at the second of the Cambridge lectures and argues that Woolf’s talk could be seen as one attempt to politicise Sackville West, and to politicise what had been a sexual relationship that was now effectively over. Sex, then, becomes politics in the speaking of A Room of One’s Own, and political writing can express female sexuality. What Woolf does with her figure of androgyny is to express sex as the working of the writing mind, a conjecture that there are “two sexes in the mind corresponding to the two sexes in the body…” (R 93) Indeed, the lecture took place two weeks after the publication of Orlando, Woolf’s fictional biography of the bisexual, transsexual poet. The book was dedicated to Sackville West and contained photographs of her

56 See also for an alternative view that elides the popular alliance of homosexuality and androgyny, Catharine R Stimpson’s “The Androgyne and the Homosexual” pp54-61 (1974) in Where the Meanings Are Feminism and Cultural Spaces New York and London 1988
57 23 October 1929 D Vol 3 In the same entry, Woolf worried that “It is a little ominous that Morgan wont review it.” Forster clearly liked A Room since she replied to his letter: “And - being my best critic, as I think, - how glad I am you liked A room! I was awfully afraid you wouldn’t.” VW-EM Forster January 3 1930 L Vol IV

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dressed as "Orlando". Readers were not slow to make the connection between Vita and Orlando, much to Vita's mother's displeasure.58

Chloe likes Olivia, perhaps as Vita liked Virginia: sharing a lab is like sharing a profession, and Chloe going home to her children could indeed mirror what Vita occasionally did with her children too. The imagery used by Woolf is unmistakably sexual, and is indeed redolent of Woolf's intended writing practice during the construction of Mrs Dalloway:

For if Chloe likes Olivia and Mary Carmichael knows how to express it she will light a torch in that vast chamber where nobody has yet been. It is all half-lights and profound shadows like those serpentine caves where one goes with a candle peering up and down, not knowing where one is stepping. (R 80)

I should say a good deal about The Hours, & my discovery; how I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters; I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humour, depth. The idea is that the caves shall connect, & each comes to daylight at the present moment...59

Content and form - what can be written and the structure it should take - can share the same metaphor, that of the dark and subterranean cave. Woolf can see a light at the end of one cave in her conception of Mrs Dalloway in 1923, which gives her exactly what she wants. Her analysis of female relationships, on the other hand, and her identification of the "nature" of women, are only half-guessed, dim and mysterious, all half-lights and profound shadows, echoing Freud's "dark continent" of female sexuality. Mary Carmichael had, argued Mary Beton, "mastered the first great lesson; she wrote as a woman, but as a woman who has forgotten that she is a woman, so that her pages were full of that curiously sexual quality that comes only when sex is unconscious of itself." (R 88) The criteria that Mary Beton sets out for Mary Carmichael are exactly those that

58 For an account of Lady Sackville-West's appalled response, see Victoria Glendinning Vita: The Life of V. Sackville-West Harmondsworth 1984 pp206-207
59 30 August 1923 D Vol 3 The Hours was Woolf's working title for Mrs Dalloway
she will develop as she argues the case for androgyny in the final section of *A Room*: "But there may be some state of mind in which one could continue without effort because nothing is required to be held back." (R 93). Judith Butler, as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, summarises the Lacanian account of the formation of gender identity: ""In the beginning" is sexuality without power, then power arrives to create both culturally relevant sexual distinction (gender) and, along with that, gender hierarchy and dominance." If the writing mind is to transcend the repressions that otherwise socially curb it, then it is possible to argue that Woolf returns us to a polymorphous play of pleasure that relies upon a state of undifferentiation, a pre-Oedipal jouissance.

The developments in women's political consciousness sensitise Woolf in *A Room* to the changes in gender relations. Yet she also feels that she is living in a sex-conscious age which as a writer, she feels she must transcend: "No age," she claims, "can ever have been as stridently sex-conscious as our own...The Suffrage campaign was no doubt to blame." (R 94) Winifred Holtby was sympathetic to Woolf's dilemma:

> There was the whole movement for the enfranchisement of women. And while on the one hand the suffragettes opened new opportunities and suggested new interests to a woman, at the same time they summoned her to sacrifice the preoccupations of the artist. They wanted her to join in their work of enfranchising the woman citizen. It must have been distracting. How could she dare to claim leisure and security for her little, individual vision of beauty when those other women were marching in procession..."  

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60 Judith Butler "Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory, and Psychoanalytic Discourse" in *Feminism/Postmodernism* p330
61 See *A Room*: "One has only to skim those old forgotten novels and listen to the tone of voice in which they are written to divine that the writer was meeting criticism; she was saying this by way of aggression, or that by way of conciliation. She was admitting that she was 'only a woman', or protesting that she was 'as good as a man'. She met that criticism as her temperament dictated, with docility and diffidence, or with anger and emphasis. It does not matter which it was; she was thinking of something other than the thing itself." R p71
62 Winifred Holtby *Virginia Woolf* p27
Holtby also concurs with Woolf in blaming the suffragettes for preventing any woman from ever again writing like Jane Austen: "It is possible that no writer will ever repeat that miracle. Emily Davies, Florence Nightingale and Emmeline Pankhurst have made that impossible; Margaret MacDonald, Keir Hardie and Bernard Shaw made it impossible." Holtby's critical analysis is a virtual transcription of Woolf's theories in *A Room of One's Own* as she reinvests them with the status of a social and historical truth. Woolf, comparing the indecency of "Mr A" with Shakespeare argues:

He is protesting against the equality of the other sex by asserting his own superiority. He is therefore impeded and inhibited and self-conscious as Shakespeare might have been if he too had known Miss Clough and Miss Davies. Doubtless Elizabethan literature would have been very different from what it is if the women's movement had begun in the sixteenth century and not in the nineteenth. (R 96)

Doubtless it would, but between Holtby's transcription of Woolf's theories in *A Room* and Woolf's equation of two versions of sex consciousness, androgyny appears as the means to softening women's political voice and to checking male libidinal impulses. The two are connected, Woolf argues, because militant women pose threats to a patriarchal status quo: "And when one is challenged, even by a few women in black bonnets, one retaliates, if one has never been challenged before, rather excessively. That perhaps accounts for some of the characteristics that I remember to have found here, I thought, taking down a new novel by Mr A..." (R 95) Yet the sex consciousness identified by Woolf as the political consciousness of the suffragettes was also a sex consciousness steeped in the language of sexual activity. "If the Georgians had deposed the Reason," claimed Holtby, "they had discovered the Nerves. They had discovered sensibilities and intuitions, and memories, and the subconscious mind, and sex.

63 ibid. p90
Particularly they had discovered sex."64 Woolf’s criticism of Edwardian literature, and her solution to the assertion of sexual difference are steeped in the language of innuendo. Criticising the lack of "suggestive power" in the work of Galsworthy and Kipling, Woolf asserts that "when a book lacks suggestive power, however hard it hits the surface of the mind it cannot penetrate within." (R 97-98) The androgynous mind in action seems as blatant a description of sexual intercourse as any produced by "Mr A":

Some collaboration has to take place in the mind between the woman and the man before the art of creation can be accomplished. Some marriage of opposites has to be consummated. The whole of the mind must lie wide open if we are to get the sense that the writer is communicating his experience with perfect fullness. There must be freedom and there must be peace. Not a wheel must grate, not a light glimmer. The curtains must be close drawn. The writer, I thought, once his experience is over, must lie back and let his mind celebrate its nuptials in darkness. (R 99)

Margaret Whitford argues, in relation to the French feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray:

There is a view in psychoanalytic theory, based on clinical evidence, that psychic health may be conceived of, unconsciously, as a state in which both parents, i.e. both the male and the female elements, are felt to be in creative intercourse within the psyche. Along these lines, then, Irigaray argues that for rationality to be fertile and creative, rather than infertile and sterile, it must not be conceived of as transcending or exclusive of the female element. The model is that of a creative (sexual) relationship in which two elements in intercourse bring forth offspring, rather than a domination-subordination model in which one part of the self is repressing another part (as reason may be said to dominate the passions, for example).65

According to this postulation of the organisation of the binary structure, femininity is necessary in order to address what is otherwise perceived as a

64 ibid. p29
65 Margaret Whitford "Luce Irigaray’s Critique of Rationality" pp109-130 in Griffiths and Whitford eds Feminist Perspectives in Philosophy London 1988 p111
lack: masculinity cannot exist, it is sterile without, femininity. In A Room of One's Own, Woolf's vision is anchored to a way of thinking that is not dependent on any form of repression:

But some of these states of mind seem, even if adopted spontaneously, to be less comfortable than others. In order to keep oneself continuing in them one is unconsciously holding something back, and gradually the repression becomes an effort. But there may be some state of mind in which one could continue without effort because nothing is required to be held back. (R 93)

The conclusion (although it never marks an end) that Woolf arrives at is, of course, the androgynous writing mind: "And I went on amateurishly to sketch a plan of the soul..." (R 93) What is implied is that eventually, "repression" is too much of an effort, and that a voluntary return to an unconscious, pre-symbolic stage where sexual difference cannot be distinguished, is a solution. But how will writing be represented within a recognisable discursive practice if the writer chooses to abandon the symbolic order of language which is itself predicated on the recognition of sexual difference? Surely, the difficulties and possibilities encountered by the woman writing cannot be reduced and generalised, as Jane Marcus argues, to a figuration of

new reading and writing strategies, enlisting punctuation in the service of feminism with the use of ellipses for encoding female desire, the use of initials and dashes to make absent figures more present and transforming interruption, the condition of the woman writer's oppression, as in the citations of Jane Austen's experience, into a deliberate strategy as a sign of woman's writing.

At the beginning of this chapter, I reintroduced Edward Carpenter's theory of homosexuality (which can be traced to the "original" Aristophanic postulation of sexual sameness). Carpenter's theory (in Intermediate Types) can preclude the recognition of sexual difference

66 See also Rachel Bowlby Virginia Woolf Feminist Destinations 1988 'Masculinity as 'apartness', would necessarily lose its separate identity in being brought together with femininity as 'togetherness'. p42
67 Jane Marcus "Sapphistry: Narration as Lesbian Seduction in A Room of One's Own in Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy p187
because difference already pre-exists within a single "third sexed" body. Sexual attraction is founded on a narcissistic reflection of the subject who looks. Such a merger helps make a sense of Woolf's hypothesis in A Room, that makes her "ask whether there are two sexes in the mind corresponding to the two sexes in the body, and whether they also require to be united in order to get complete satisfaction and happiness?" (R 93) The body is already represented by Woolf as not necessarily operating within a traditional binary structure. The origin, I suggested, referring to the work of Judith Butler, cannot occupy a fixed position. If this can be so, then is it possible to argue, as Woolf does, that sexual difference can be abandoned, or at least suspended, in a return to a pre-symbolic order which need not necessarily be a pre-discursive one? Mr Ramsay does, after all, appear to enjoy a pre-Oedipal polymorphous experience with Mrs Ramsay as, "Filled with her words, [he is] like a child who drops off satisfied..." (TTL 35) Can the "original" undifferentiated self simply represent a consciously desired point of return? It is a point of return that we can never "know." "Origins can never be fully regained or rediscovered" argues Gillian Beer: "Origins are always antecedent to language and consciousness."68 The androgynous writing mind is Woolf's engagement with the limits of the possible, what the writer can never have or, indeed, can never be. There is no way out of sexual difference.

In 1931, when Woolf was writing her speech, "Professions for Women," she wrote in her diary that she had conceived a sequel to A Room of One's Own "about the sexual life of women."69 This piece too documented the insuperable difficulties which the woman writer confronted when she was forced to recognise the significant cultural

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68 Gillian Beer "Virginia Woolf and Prehistory" pp159-182 in Arguing with the Past 1989 p164
69 D Vol 4 20 January 1931
meanings which give her her identity as a woman. "Professions for Women" marked the beginning of a project that, as I argue in Chapter Five, occupied Woolf until the publication of Three Guineas in 1938. The overlap between each text that Woolf worked on from "The Jessamy Brides," to A Room of One's Own (1929) and The Waves (1931) and the sequel to A Room (which became The Years (1937) and Three Guineas (1938)) that Woolf planned even as she was completing The Waves, indicates that she was at work on a relatively consistent undertaking that involved a constant reinvention and investigation of the relation between gender and writing, women's sexual repression and the unconscious. Chapter Two examines the relations between writing and socio-sexual identities in both Orlando and The Waves. These texts were written before and after A Room of One's Own, but the exploration of the construction of gender and sexual identities in relation to writing and the unconscious was clearly part of a sustained design that intrigued Woolf until the publication of Three Guineas in 1938.
Chapter Two

"Not castrated: no the opposite" 'Orlando', 'The Waves' and the rhetoric of sex and gender

If a biographical study is really intended to arrive at an understanding of its hero's mental life it must not - as happens in the majority of biographies as a result of discretion or prudishness - silently pass over its subject's sexual activity or sexual individuality.¹

The tendency of biological research to-day is to explain the chief features in a person's organic constitution as being the result of the blending of male and female dispositions, based on [chemical] substances.²

And I reply (I think often while holding their hands, and getting exquisite pleasure from contact with either male or female body) 'But what I want of you is illusion - to make the world dance.'³

In his introduction to Orlando, Quentin Bell refers to Vita Sackville-West as "the heroine - although I suppose this was hushed up - of a desperate Sapphist adventure..."⁴ Bell catches the two most popular factors attached to Woolf's original jeu d'esprit: Sapphism and Sackville-West. It is always possible (even salaciously compulsory) to find within Woolf's own sexual history the "meaning" of this complex work. The close chronological proximity of Orlando to A Room of One's Own and Woolf's intimate involvement with Sackville-West during the period of its writing⁵ has encouraged the alliance of lesbianism and androgyny, establishing a specific sexual agenda for androgyny.⁶

¹ Sigmund Freud "Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood." (1910) St. Ed. Vol XI p69
² ibid. p136 ³ VW to Ethel Smyth 15 August 1930 L Vol IV ⁴ Quentin Bell Orlando London 1990 pviii The "desperate Sapphist adventure" is presumably a reference to Sackville-West's affaire de coeur with Violet Trefusis. The private document written by Sackville-West in 1920 was later published by her son Nigel Nicolson as Portrait of a Marriage London, 1973 ⁵ Woolf first met Vita Sackville-West in December 1922. Their sexual relationship began in December 1925 when Woolf went to Long Barn, Vita's home, for three nights. Vita wrote to her husband, the diplomat Harold Nicolson in May 1926: 'I have gone to bed with
Orlando, published only nine days before Woolf's first "talk" at Newnham, waves aside the fixing properties of time, history and gender in a playful interrogation of the relationship between sexuality, gender and writing. This chapter places together the two texts that stand on either side of A Room of One's Own. Although conceived during the same period, Orlando and The Waves have traditionally been perceived as antithetical to each other. Woolf's diary entries during the five year period (1926 to 1931) that cover writing and publication of Orlando, A Room of One's Own and The Waves, reveal a preoccupation with the limitations of the novel as a genre, exemplified by her dislike of what she called the Edwardian realists, and a desire to push towards, even beyond, new narrative boundaries. "Each of the books Woolf wrote around that time," argues Gillian Beer:

strained across genre, attempted to break through - or disturb - the limits of the essay, the novel, the biography, to touch realities denied by accepted forms. In all her work there was an astute awareness that apparently literary questions - of genre, language, plot - are questions that touch the pith of how society constitutes and contains itself.8

What Woolf wanted to get away from, she wrote in her diary, was "this appalling narrative business of the realist: getting on from lunch to dinner: it is false, unreal, merely conventional. Why admit anything to

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7 Orlando was published on 11 October 1928. Woolf gave her first lecture at Newnham on 20 October 1928 and her second on 26 October 1928 at Girton, where she was accompanied by Vita Sackville-West. A Room of One's Own was published on 24 October 1929.

8 For an alternative reading see also Sherron E Knopp: "If I saw You Would You Kiss Me?": Sapphism and the Subversiveness of Virginia Woolf's Orlando" PMLA 103:1 January 1988. She argues that Orlando has not been seen as a lesbian novel because "recent critical enthusiasm for the concept of androgyny has isolated Woolf from more relevant discussions of masculine and feminine gender traits." p29

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6 For an alternative reading see also Sherron E Knopp: "If I saw You Would You Kiss Me?": Sapphism and the Subversiveness of Virginia Woolf's Orlando" PMLA 103:1 January 1988. She argues that Orlando has not been seen as a lesbian novel because "recent critical enthusiasm for the concept of androgyny has isolated Woolf from more relevant discussions of masculine and feminine gender traits." p29
literature that is not poetry...?"9 An entry made in February 1927 introduces the theme of unity characterised by the couple and represented by the soul: of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Woolf decided "Their secret is that they have by nature no divisions of soul to fritter them away: their impact is solid & entire."10 On 15 August 1929, Woolf wrote "And two ideas come to me - to break my rule & write about the soul for once..."

The soul, or "double soul" was, undoubtedly, a reference to her introduction of androgyny in A Room of One's Own. "There are numbers of things that might be said, and that aren't said" wrote Woolf to the sympathetic Goldsworthy Dickinson after publication of A Room, "The double soul is one of them..."11 If we are to accept that androgyny figures the soul and the "double soul" for Woolf then it is clearly both a representation of an apparently heterosexual figuration (Beatrice and Sidney Webb; Virginia and Leonard Woolf; Gwen and Jacques Raverat) and a figure consonant with homosexuality, as is suggested from her letter to Dickinson.

What Woolf wanted for both Orlando and The Waves were new forms that were structurally unified and coherent. She was also preoccupied with quasi-mystical and philosophical speculations about a "double soul" which would somehow allow for the possibility of a

9 November 28 1928 D Vol 3
10 D Vol 3 3 February 1927 And see 23 October 1929, again of the Webbs: "And I compared them with L. & myself, & felt (I daresay for this reason) the pathos, the symbolical quality of the childless couple; standing for something, united." See also VW to Jacques Raverat: "And then, (this is a secret) for some reason, your and Gwen's engagement, being in love, took on for me a symbolical character; which I even tried to put down in writing. All very absurd I suppose: still you were very much in love, and it had an ecstatic quality. Indeed, you will laugh, but I used to think of you, in a purely literary way, as the two people who represented that passion in my mind..." L. Vol III October 3 1924
11 VW to GL Dickinson November 6 1929 L Vol IV Dickinson, a Cambridge Don and friend of Woolf's, believed himself to "have a woman's soul shut up in a man's body...that seems to be my case." See Barbara Fassler "Theories of Homosexuality as Sources of Bloomsbury's Androgyny" Signs 5:2 1979 p241 This example is taken from an unsent letter to Ferdinand Schiller, written in 1921. Fassler also cites Dickinson: "he wrote that the feminine part of him wanted to "lose herself" and "expire and abandon herself," but "the man knows jolly well he's got to have a life of his own, if the whole thing isn't to go to pot, and so he ups and flogs the woman, and so it goes on." ibid. p249
heterogeneous and simultaneously unified individual. As Woolf makes clear to Dickinson in her letter of 27 October, she felt that it was possible for one person to be representative of several: "and I come to feel more and more how difficult it is to collect oneself into one Virginia; even though the special Virginia in whose body I live for the moment is violently susceptible to all sorts of separate feelings."

In a margin note added to the diary entry that records Woolf's first conception of *Orlando* as "The Jessamy Brides"\(^{13}\), she added "*Orlando* leading to *The Waves*. (8 July 1933)," which would indicate that, with hindsight at least, she perceived them in close proximity as one develops out of or alongside another. There are structural differences that distinguish these texts, as well as apparently strong thematic oppositions. *Orlando*, quite fantastically, historicises its subject; *The Waves* virtually abandons historical and chronological context. *Orlando* was to be "great fun to write,"\(^{14}\) *The Waves* a "very serious, mystical poetical work..."\(^ {15}\)

*Orlando* ultimately recognises the play of heterogeneous identities located in a single (female) body;\(^ {16}\) *The Waves* closes multiple identities into a single (male) body (or mind) represented by Bernard. Yet both texts locate sex and gender as the index of a social identity that, if they do not altogether elide the body, are ambivalent about the body's importance as

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12 VW to Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson L Vol IV October 27 1931 And see Gerald Bullett's review of *The Waves* "Virginia Woolf Soliloquises" *New Statesman and Nation* 10 October 1931: "They each have a name, each a private and independent existence; but in one important respect they are all Virginia Woolf." repr. in Majumdar and McLaurin (eds) p269 And see also Louis Kronenberger in the *New York Times Book Review* 25 October 1931 "They are not six people but six imagist poets, six facets of the imagist poet that Mrs Woolf is herself." ibid. p275 And an unsigned review in the *San Francisco Chronicle* 6 December 1931: "But after all is said and done, her people remain poetic reflections. They are simply six Mrs Woolfs..." ibid. pp283-4
13 D Vol 3 March 14 1927
14 ibid.
15 ibid.
16 "For she had a great variety of selves to call upon, far more than we have been able to find room for, since a biography is considered complete if it merely accounts for six or seven selves, whereas a person may well have as many thousand." *Orlando* p202 And see *Orlando* p205
the bedrock of socio-sexual and psycho-sexual categories. And at the heart of both these texts is an engagement with writing about writing: Orlando’s poem and Bernard’s stories are implicitly connected with their sexual identities. "The two works," argues Suzanne Raitt, "often thought to be at the extreme ends of her ouevre - the lightweight romp and the philosophical prose poem - were for her phases of the same cycle, and as she wrote Orlando she continued to muse on The Waves."17

Raitt usefully problematises The Waves: "The problem is with the status of the monologues: are they written? spoken? heard? unheard?"18 For implicit in Raitt’s questions is another question, about the ontological status of those who utter (if indeed they are spoken) the monologues that constitute this text. Are the six named characters really "characters" negotiating the difficulties of gender and sexual difference, or are they six facets of a split psyche, warring elements striving for a nostalgic return to pre-differentiation and a symbiotic relationship with the maternal body?19 The recognition of difference and the attempted erasure of difference is a key issue for the construction of sexual identities in both these texts, as I will show.

Orlando was originally to be "about" lesbianism, or Sapphism, as Woolf referred to same sex relations between women, although the initial conception of Orlando and its relationship to Sackville-West had a reasonably inauspicious start. "The Jessamy Brides" was conceived "Suddenly between twelve and one":

why, I wonder? I have rayed it round several scenes. Two women, poor, solitary at the top of a house. One can see anything (for this is all fantasy) ... It is to be written as I write letters at the top of my speed; on the ladies of Llangollen ... No attempt is to be made to

17 Suzanne Raitt 1993 p151
18 ibid. p150
19 See VW-Goldsworthy Dickinson Letters Vol IV 27 October 1931 "But I did mean in some vague way we are the same person, and not separate people. The six characters were supposed to be one."
realise the character. Sapphism is to be suggested. ... For the truth is
I feel the need of an escapade after these serious poetic experimental
books whose form is always so closely considered.20

Surprised by her plan, Woolf asks herself why she had thought of the
project at all. And two poor, solitary women is as inappropriate a
description of Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West as we are likely to
find. When, later that year, Woolf wrote to Sackville-West about the plan
for her new book, the project had again surfaced, as though arriving
unconsciously:

Yesterday morning I was in despair... I couldn't screw a word from
me; and at last dropped my head in my hands: dipped my pen in the
ink, and wrote these words, as if automatically, on a clean sheet:
Orlando: A Biography. No sooner had I done with this than my
body was flooded with rapture and my brain with ideas. I wrote
rapidly till 12... But listen; suppose Orlando turns out to be about
Vita; and its all about you and the lusts of your flesh and the lure of
your mind...21

Woolf's recreation of Vita as Orlando was part of the playfulness
that she had intended to be an intrinsic part of the writing process: a
sempiternal character who changes sex, from male to female, and writes a
poem over a three hundred year period. Although Woolf clearly
fantasised about Sackville-West as an historical character named
Orlando,22 her project was in one way to deny its lavish biographical
origins in a disavowal of her (or Vita's) lesbian sexual practice. For all of
Orlando's sexual encounters are given an apparently heterosexual
dimension which is usually facilitated by cross-dressing.

Freud's assertion that text could be a substitute for sex does indeed
seem to be endorsed by Orlando: "what an artist creates," he

20 D Vol 3 March 14 1927
21 VW to Vita Sackville-West L Vol III 9 October 1927
22 See D Vol 3 20 September 1927. Woolf was planning "a grand historical picture, the
outlines of all my friends ... Vita should be Orlando, a young nobleman." See also D Vol 3 23
January 1927, when Woolf records being taken round Knole by Sackville-West.
argued, "provides at the same time an outlet for his sexual desire." 23

Whilst there is nothing to indicate that Woolf was even aware of Freud's psycho-sexual biography of an androgynous and homosexual Leonardo, there are certainly similarities between the textual/sexual substitutes identified by Freud and focused on in the critical tradition which fuses Orlando, Woolf and Sackville-West. 24 Leonardo's sublimation of his homosexuality which is otherwise expressed in his art and intellectual endeavour is clearly paralleled in Orlando where sexual desire (and repression) is expressed through writing. In a letter to Vita Sackville-West, Woolf coyly asked:

Should you say, if I rang you up to ask, that you were fond of me? If I saw you would you kiss me? If I were in bed would you - I'm rather excited about Orlando tonight: have been lying by the fire and making up the last chapter. 25

If, as Freud argued, art or writing acts as a sublimation of sexual desire, then the bisexually constituted Orlando, who vacillates between one sex and another, one sexual identification to another, will indeed produce writing that comes from the vacillations promised by Woolf's androgynous writing mind. And sure enough, Orlando "vacillated between this style and that." 26

In a 1920 review of JD Beresford's An Imperfect Mother, Woolf attributed her dislike of the book to Beresford's apparent reliance on Freudian psychoanalysis. In a comment that in fact seems to borrow from

23 Sigmund Freud Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood. (1910) St. Ed. Vol XI p.132 See also Suzanne Raitt "Her responses to Sackville-West satisfied both the desire to make phrases and the desire to make love. Orlando was a perfect crystallization of the energy that was flowing between them." op. cit. p.161

24 See, for example, Helen MacAfee's 1929 review of Orlando: "This extraordinary work, bearing as it does the clear stamp of her mind in its maturity, might in a sense have been called an autobiography." Yale Review 1929 Vol 18 xvi cited in The Critical Heritage p.237

25 VW - VSW 5 December 1927 L Vol III. And see VW-VSW: "I see a porpoise in a shop window at Christmas and pearls and a pink coat - a jersey was it? - anyhow you wore gaiters, and it was the sight of the gaiters - dont tell this to your audience - that inspired Orlando - the gaiters and what lies beyond - well..." February 14 1933 L Vol V

26 op. cit. p.49
the psychoanalytic tradition (negotiating as it does paternal authority with narrative control) Woolf had complained that: "Mr Beresford has acted the part of stepfather to some of the very numerous progeny of Dr Freud. The chief characters...are his children and not Mr Beresford's." And yet Orlando seems indebted to much of Freud's work, which was, if not originally published by the Hogarth Press, certainly available in translation long before Woolf embarked on Orlando. "You could not have escaped Freud in the literary world of the early twenties. Freud! All literary London discovered Freud about 1920..." intoned Bryher. Freud's "Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia" (1911) is an account of the paranoid phantasies suffered by a man, Dr (or Judge) Schreber. The similarity between Dr Schreber's fantasy (translated by Alix and James Strachey only three years before publication of Orlando) "that after all it really must be very nice to be a woman submitting to the act of copulation" does bear a passing resemblance to Orlando's mixed feelings on her change of sex when she returns to England from Constantinople:

Which is the greater ecstasy? The man's or the woman's? And are they not perhaps the same? No, she thought, this is the most delightful (thanking the Captain but refusing), to refuse, and see him frown. ... "For nothing", she thought, regaining her couch on deck... "is more heavenly than to resist and to yield; to yield and to resist. Surely it throws the spirit into such a rapture as nothing else can. So that I'm not sure", she continued, "that I won't throw myself

27 Virginia Woolf "Freudian Fiction" 25 March 1920 Contemporary Writers London 1978 p152. In a letter to an American student, Harmon H. Goldstone, Woolf wrote in 1932 that she had not studied Freud or any psychoanalyst - indeed I think I have never read any of their books; my knowledge is merely from superficial talk. Therefore any use of their methods must be instinctive." LVol V 19 March 1932. Between December 1939 and June 1940, Woolf began to read Freud in earnest, although she was disturbed by what she read. See D Vol 5 2 December 1939; 8 December 1939; 9 December 1939; 17 December 1939; 9 February 1940; 27 June 1940;


29 Freud "Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia" (1911) St Ed XII (1911-1913) p13
overboard, for the mere pleasure of being rescued by a blue-jacket after all."

(It must be remembered that she was like a child entering into possession of a pleasaunce or toy cupboard; her arguments would not commend themselves to mature women, who have had the run of it all their lives.) (O 98-9)

Freud's pioneering work on bisexuality, the unconscious and sexual repression provides key points of understanding that elucidate some of the difficulties of this "jeu d'esprit". For, the most "charming love-letter in literature" could look like a very conservative affair. Given that the character of Orlando was modelled on the flamboyant and lesbian Vita Sackville-West, both the change of sex and cross-dressing in Orlando place same sex desire and apparently same sex relationships within a heterosexual matrix, a fact I mentioned earlier in this chapter.

I showed in the Introduction that there had been, in the first decades of this century, a need to "normalise" same sex relations within heterosexual paradigms in the discourses of both psychoanalysis and sexology. Recent critical theory has, however, provided the possibility of a more radical reading of the apparent conservatism of Orlando. For instance, Judith Butler has asked (without necessarily answering):

Is it not possible to maintain and pursue heterosexual identifications and aims within homosexual practice, and homosexual identification and aims within heterosexual practices? If a sexuality is to be disclosed, what will be taken as the true determinant of its meaning: the phantasy structure, the act, the orifice, the gender, the anatomy? And if the practice engages a complex interplay of all of those, which one of this (sic) erotic dimensions will come to stand for the sexuality that requires them all?31

30 Nigel Nicolson Portrait of a Marriage p201 And see Sherron E. Knopp "If Orlando has any claim to be to be regarded as a lesbian novel, it is one of the best kept secrets in literary history, having eluded even those who should be the first to know." op.cit. p29 Although see also VW-VSW "A woman writes that she has to stop and kiss the page when she reads O: - Your race I imagine. The percentage of Lesbians is rising in the States, all because of you." L Vol IV 4 February 1929
31 Judith Butler "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" in Inside/Out p17
These questions challenge the apparent conservatism of presenting same sex desire within a putative heterosexual framework. Orlando's change of sex facilitates his (or her) lesbian desire. But anatomical change, as we will see, is not necessarily the key determining factor in defining same sex attraction. For Orlando's biographer, his change of sex is "a simple fact": "Orlando was a man till the age of thirty; when he became a woman and has remained so ever since." (0 88) Such nonchalance is belied by the biographer's teasing elaboration of the full implications of Orlando's sex change:

Orlando had become a woman - there is no denying it. But in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as he had been. The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their identity. Their faces remained, as their portraits prove, practically the same. His memory - but in future we must, for convention's sake, say 'her' for 'his', and 'she' for 'he' - her memory then, went back through all the events of her past life without encountering any obstacle. (O 87)

Just as the biographer confronts one of the pivotal controversies of sexual identity in the text - Orlando's memory of himself as a man from her new (and unmemoried) vantage as a woman - s/he rests on "convention" and the "correct" pronouns that affirm and reveal gender and sexual identities. But already, the biographer is telling us, Orlando isn't only "he" or "she." For Orlando consists of plural identities, she is also "their." The singling out of Orlando as "she" or "her" indicates, according to the biographer, a version of feminine identity whose modus operandi is marked by a repression of masculine identifications rather than by a play of co-existent and heterogeneous identities.

Repression characterises the first of Orlando's two trances, following the Russian Princess's betrayal, after she fails to turn up for their planned elopement: "he appeared to have an imperfect recollection of his past life" (O 39) when he finally wakes from his week long deep sleep.

This imperfect recollection is then marked by a repression of sexual desire,
and a withdrawal from public life. Orlando's erstwhile sexual energy is then channelled into copious writing activities: it is a perfect Freudian narrative.

Orlando's relationship with Sasha, reputedly modelled on Sackville-West's infamous love affair with Violet Trefusis (Trefusis "replied" to Woolf's account with *Broderie Anglaise* in 1935) is based on a narcissistic identification which is emphasised in the biographer's narrative. Elizabeth I loves Orlando; she is "the Queen who knew a man when she saw one, though not, it is said, in the usual way..." (O 11) For Elizabeth I, the "Virgin Queen," Orlando is a substitute son and lover, a relationship which threatens her (nominal) virgin status. Orlando, engaged in writing his poem "The Oak Tree" is also the Orlando who the Queen can read "like a page." (O 10) He will be for Elizabeth I "the oak tree on which she leant her degradation." (O 11) Naming and then unnaming is always at deconstructive play (Orlando rewrites "The Oak Tree" so many times that "it looked as if in the process of writing the poem would be completely unwritten." (O 68-9)) This mirroring process between sexual attraction and literary production is replicated in the attraction between the Queen and Orlando and Orlando and Sasha:

Eyes, mouth, nose, breast, hips, hands - she ran them over; her lips twitched visibly as she looked; but when she saw his legs she laughed out loud. He was the very image of a noble gentleman. But inwardly? (O 10)

What seeds of doubt does Elizabeth sow? Orlando's first glimpse of Sasha presents a moment of acute frustration, since although he is immediately attracted to her, he thinks of her as being at first sexually indeterminate, since she has "a figure, which, whether boy's or woman's..." (O 18) The fashion of the time (now Jacobean) also does something to "disguise the sex" (O 18) before Orlando can identify her first (erroneously) as male and
then (correctly) as female, replicating the qualities first discerned in him by Elizabeth I:

Orlando was ready to tear his hair with vexation that the person was of his own sex, and thus all embraces were out of the question. But the skater came closer. Legs, hands, carriage, were a boy’s, but no boy ever had a mouth like that; no boy had those breasts; no boy had eyes which looked as if they had been fished from the bottom of the sea. (0 19)

Sartorial "disguise" appears to indicate that there is a "true" gender beneath the vagaries of fashion, but Orlando is also caught between an identification and a repression as he narcissistically falls in love with what we already know is his mirror image: what he must repress is his ostensible homosexual desire. Butler argues: "Any intense emotional attachment ... divides into either wanting to have someone or wanting to be that someone, but never both at once. It is important to consider that identification and desire can coexist, and that their formulation in terms of mutually exclusive oppositions serves a heterosexual matrix." Yet, as Juliet Mitchell argues in the case of "Dora": "In terms of her sexual desire, Dora is a man adoring a woman." In other words, an anatomically differentiated couple (Orlando and Sasha) is not a sufficient guarantee of heterosexual interaction where psycho-sexual identification is the key to understanding and identifying sexual orientation. "It follows," argues Mitchell, "that if Dora can have a masculine identification there can be no natural or automatic heterosexual drive." The "soul" and the "double soul," the ostensibly heterosexual and homosexual representations that

32 See also VSW-VW: "you have invented a new form of narcissism - I confess - I am in love with Orlando..." L Vol III 11 October 1928
33 Judith Butler "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" p26
34 Juliet Mitchell Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose London, 1982, p11 Freud writes of Dora: "The jealous emotions of a woman were linked in the unconscious with a jealousy such as might have been felt by a man. These masculine or, more properly speaking, gynaecophilic currents of feeling are to be regarded as typical of the unconscious erotic life of hysterical girls." St Ed Vol VII (1901-1905) p63
35 Mitchell op.cit. p12
Woolf was toying with in her work are figured here, I suggest, as a challenge to assumptions that posit heterosexuality as the dominant or only possible sexual position.

When Sasha fails to elope with Orlando, he falls into a trance which the biographer cannot explain: "But now we come to an episode which lies right across our path so that there is no ignoring it. Yet it is dark, mysterious, and undocumented..." (0 38) just like Freud's identification of the dark continent of female sexuality:

But if sleep it was, of what nature, we can scarcely refrain from asking, are such sleeps as these? Are they remedial measures - trances in which the most galling memories, events that seem likely to cripple life for ever, are brushed with a dark wing which rubs their harshness off and gilds them, even the ugliest and basest, with a lustre of incandescence? Has the finger of death to be laid on the tumult of life from time to time lest it rend us asunder? (0 39-40)

The question remains unanswered, but the admission that what is unpleasant has to be repressed is explicit. Freud argued in "Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's Gradiva" (1907) that:

There is a kind of forgetting which is distinguished by the difficulty with which memory is awakened even by a powerful external summons, as though some internal resistance were struggling against its revival. A forgetting of this kind has been given the name of 'repression' in psychopathology... A return... of what has been repressed is to be expected with particular regularity when a person's erotic feelings are attached to the repressed impressions - when his erotic life has been attacked by repression."36

Orlando's repression of the memory of a rejection that is too painful to remember is complicated, however, by the outcome of his second trance which results in his change of sex. The return of the (homosexual) repressed is marked once again by another same sex attraction: the female Orlando can remember Sasha, and she still remembers her as a woman: the original homosexual erotic fixation is transmuted (with Orlando's

anatomical change of sex) into a lesbian erotic fixation. But, if Dora is, as Mitchell argues, "a man adoring a woman" then what are we to make of Orlando's new subject position? Is she, too, still a man adoring a woman? Could a consideration of Orlando's sexual identifications account for the biographer's almost negligible dismissal of the anatomical changes that may (or indeed, may not) account for Orlando's change of sex?

Orlando's second trance takes place shortly after his marriage to the gypsy dancer Rosina Pepita (actually Vita Sackville-West's maternal grandmother) whilst he is the Ambassador at the Court of King James in Constantinople. If this trance is not occasioned by a particular trauma (marriage aside) it certainly becomes the locus for a series of repressions deemed necessary in order for Orlando to identify as feminine. Freud's interpretation of Dr Schreber's feminine identifications, however, imply that Schreber's "feminine phantasy" of becoming a woman was actually a response to what he believed to be a homosexual attraction to his doctor: "The exciting cause of his illness, then, was an outburst of homosexual libido; the object of this libido was probably from the very first his doctor, Fleschsig; and his struggles against the libidinal impulse produced the conflict which gave rise to the symptoms." Is Orlando's new found femininity based on a response to what had originally been a repressed homosexual attraction to Sasha? The biographer is at pains to say not: there is "no denying" that Orlando is a woman. Actually, the biographer lightly sketches over exactly what it is that constitutes Orlando's difference: "in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as he had been." The "respect" that constitutes Orlando's new difference, although explicitly (if tacitly) alluded to ("He stood upright in complete nakedness before us ... we have no choice left but confess - he was a woman." (0 87))

37 "Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia" St. Ed. Vol XII p43
is, incredibly, erased. The genital and secondary sex characteristics which
determine our understanding of psycho-sexual identity, are here imaged
as irrelevant. Rachel Bowlby argues that:

Ironically, Freud's psychoanalytic story of the development of heteroerotic femininity parallels Orlando's in that it involves a
passage through an initial period identical with boyhood before this
is lost with the turn towards what will become femininity.
Femininity for Orlando is the point of opening up - she gains
something and loses nothing - from which places and identities
come to be more mobile, and this outcome could be inferred from
Freud's account; he states for instance that 'in the course of some
women's lives there is a repeated alternation between periods in
which masculinility or femininity gains the upper hand.'

Vita Sackville-West believed that "cases of dual personality do exist, in
which the feminine and the masculine elements alternately
preponderate." And Freud repeated this view too: "In all of us,
throughout life, the libido normally oscillates between male and female
objects." and again in his account of Dr Schreber: "Generally speaking,
every human being oscillates all through his life between heterosexual
and homosexual feelings, and any frustration or disappointment in the
one direction is apt to drive him over into the other." Sackville-West
wrote her views, in secret, in 1920. The sexologists provided, for her, the
key to understanding her lesbianism. Her view of sexual identity is
echoed uncannily (and publicly) in Orlando: "Different though the sexes

38 Although see also Juliet Mitchell who argues that the psychoanalytic concept of
sexuality "can never be equated with genitality nor is it the simple expression of a
biological drive. It is always psychosexual, a system of conscious and unconscious human
fantasies involving a range of excitations and activities that produce pleasure beyond the
satisfaction of any basic physiological need." Feminine Sexuality p2
Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, Pelican Freud Library, Harmondsworth, Penguin,
1973 p165. See also Freud "The Sexual Theories of Children" (1908) St Ed IX Trans D
Bryan pp217-8
40 Vita Sackville-West Portrait of a Marriage p108
41 Freud "The Psychogenesis of the Case of Homosexuality in a Woman" (1920-1922) St. Ed.
Vol XVIII p158
42 "Notes on a Case of Paranoia" St. Ed. Vol XII (1911-1913) p46
are, they intermix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place..." (0 121)

Orlando's change of sex does necessitate loss of a kind, however: loss of title, status, property and social freedom. "The question is," as Parveen Adams observes, "how sexuality and the polarity masculine/feminine can be represented at the psychic level." We can see, in Freud's work on Dr Schreber's paranoic phantasies, that his belief that he was a woman stemmed from a repression of his homosexual desire: "We should be inclined to say that what was characteristically paranoid about the illness was the fact that the patient, as a means of warding off a homosexual wishful phantasy, reacted precisely with delusions of persecution of this kind." Orlando's apparently impossible physical change of sex is, I would argue, one way of representing psychic states of masculinity and femininity which, on one level, had to be embodied in this fantastic narrative venture to give a playful shape to what were otherwise scandalous sexual realities. When Orlando becomes a woman, homosexual desire and heterosexual sex, which had been the parameters of Orlando's relationship with Sasha, become, with the return of the repressed, retrospectively lesbian:

And as all Orlando's loves had been women, now, through the culpable laggardry of the human frame to adapt itself to convention, though she herself was a woman, it was still a woman she loved; and if the consciousness of being of the same sex had any effect at all, it was to quicken and deepen those feelings which she had had as a man. For now a thousand hints and mysteries became plain to

44 St. Ed. Vol XII p59 Freud goes on to say that he had worked with both CG Jung and Sandor Ferenczi on similar cases. Over a range of social classes and genders, Freud reports that "we were astonished to find that in all of these cases a defence against a homosexual wish was clearly at the very centre of the conflict which underlay the disease, and that it was in an attempt to master an unconsciously reinforced current of homosexuality that they had all of them come to grief." p59
45 Orlando was published in the same year as Radclyffe Hall's lesbian novel, The Well of Loneliness (1928) Whilst Orlando was celebrated, The Well was tried and banned for obscenity.
her that were then dark. Now, the obscurity, which divides the
sexes and lets linger innumerable impurities in its gloom, was
removed, and if there is anything in what the poet says about truth
and beauty, this affection gained in beauty what it lost in falsity. (0
103)

Lesbian love is, then, stronger because it is more empathetic than a
heterosexual desire based on difference: in one way, lesbianism is about
being a "better" man. Lesbianism is also, unlike the arrival of Orlando's
femininity, not dependent for its status (or existence) on a repression of
her pre-female self (which avoids her recognition of castration). On the
contrary, lesbian sexuality relies for its very existence on the memory of a
homosexual attraction and heterosexual affair (with Sasha) that will not be
dispelled because of the anatomical change of the subject.

The Archduchess Harriet whose lustful demands caused Orlando's
flight from England to Constantinople reveals herself to be "really" the
Archduke Harry. Cross-dressing and disguise are necessary for the
Archduke, because, in his "true" persona, he can confess to the "female"
Orlando that he had fallen in love with the "male" Orlando. The return
of the Archduchess prevents, once again, Orlando from writing her poem.
The two exchange polite formalities and Orlando's intolerance of female
society suggests that the "vacillation" from one sex to the other is taking
place as she refuses to recognise herself in what is actually another
performance of feminine identity:

"A plague on women," said Orlando to herself, going to the
cupboard to fetch a glass of wine, "they never leave one a moment's
peace. A more ferreting, inquisiting, busybodying set of people
don't exist. It was to escape this Maypole that I left England, and
now..." (0 114)

Orlando turns to discover not the Archduchess Harriet but the Archduke
Harry. Instantly roles are reversed, emphasising the constructed nature of
social intercourse. Whatever Orlando really thinks must give way to what
Orlando is expected to think, as the positions of the Archduchess and the
male Orlando, the Archduke and the female Orlando move through a series of parallel swaps that actually serve to fix the male-female social relationships in a static paradigm:

She was alone with a man.
Recalled thus suddenly to a consciousness of her sex, which she had completely forgotten, and of his, which was now remote enough to be equally upsetting, Orlando felt seized with faintness. (0 114)

Orlando sipped the wine and the Archduke knelt and kissed her hand.
In short, they acted the parts of man and woman for ten minutes with great vigour and then fell into natural discourse. (0 114-5)

But as Diana Fuss has argued: "That hierarchical oppositions always tend toward reestablishing themselves does not mean that they can never be invaded, interfered with, and critically impaired." The Archduke had originally fallen in love with a picture of Orlando. The biographer produces two images of Orlando and invites comparisons between them:

If we compare the picture of Orlando as a man with that of Orlando as a woman we shall see that though both are undoubtedly one and the same person, there are certain changes. The man has his hand free to seize his sword, the woman must use hers to keep the satins from slipping from her shoulders. The man looks the world full in the face, as if it were made for his uses and fashioned to his liking. The woman takes a sidelong glance at it, full of subtlety, even of suspicion. Had they both worn the same clothes, it is possible that their outlook might have been the same. (0 120-1)

Clothes indicate difference because anatomical difference is elided and merged: "often it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what it is above." (0 121) The painted image that the Archduke falls in love with is, moreover, "the image of a sister of hers..." (0 70) Here, there are any number of implications (much aside from incestuous attraction): Orlando really looks like a woman; the sister really looks like a man; Orlando's gender is indeterminate; the Archduke is fundamentally heterosexual

46 Diana Fuss Inside/Out Lesbian Theories Gay Theories p6
since he falls in love with the picture of a man who really looks like a woman. All of the above confirm Judith Butler's argument about the performativity of the gendered body:

That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. This also suggests that if reality is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse, the public regulation of fantasy through the surface politics of the body, the gender border control that differentiates inner from outer, and so institutes the "integrity" of the subject. In other words, acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality.47

But as Carole Vance asks: "If sexuality is constructed differently at each time and place, can we use the term in a comparatively meaningful way? More to the point in lesbian and gay history, have constructionists undermined their own categories? Is there an 'it' to study?"48 One of the distinguishing factors about Orlando is that whenever the biographer has to negotiate a difficult truth about Orlando's sexual or gender status, s/he refuses the confrontation. Writing about Orlando after its publication, Woolf confessed that: "I purposely avoided of course any other difficulty."49 And so the biographer eschews the implications of Orlando's vacillations: "Whether, then, Orlando was most man or woman, it is difficult to say and cannot now be decided. For her coach was now rattling on the cobbles. She had reached her home in the city." (0 122) Does it matter? The illusion that Woolf maintains, the apparent heterosexual desire evinced by the Archduchess has consequences other than the need to create the illusion of an obligatory heterosexuality. Indeed, one could argue that in Orlando homosexuality is the "true" or natural sexual

49 D Vol 3 November 7 1928

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orientation and heterosexuality is constantly fabricated and constructed in consonance with the traditional expectations of given social practices where homosexuality is outlawed.

Orlando's change of sex sanctions the Archduke's repressed homosexual desire (if that is what it was, manifested by adopting dress and behavioural patterns consonant with femininity), and the heterosexual basis of the new relationship (where Orlando is "truly" female and the Archduke is "truly" male) is rejected. Gender and sexual reversals within the relationship are further complicated by what may be another imitation of what is deemed to be appropriately heterosexual. Butler argues:

The performance of drag plays upon the distinction between the anatomy of the performer and the gender that is being performed. But we are actually in the presence of three contingent dimensions of significant corporeality: anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance. If the anatomy of the performer is already distinct from the gender of the performer, and both of those are distinct from the gender of the performance, then the performance suggests a dissonance not only between sex and performance, but sex and gender, and gender and performance. ... In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself...

The disguise of the "Archduchess" returns us to the first sentence of Woolf's text: "He - for there could be no doubt of his sex, though the fashion of the time did something to disguise it..." (0 3) Unlike Orlando, the Archduchess's gender reversal is facilitated exclusively by change of clothes, and the sartorial surface gives every indication of the tenuous and putative "truth" of the relations between gender, desire and sexual identity. But Orlando's cross-dressing from female to male is one necessitated by pragmatic necessity rather than an expression of sexual desire.

Orlando's foray into the underworld of eighteenth century prostitution where, disguised as a man, she successfully procures a

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50 Judith Butler Gender Trouble p137
prostitute, goes no further than the revelation of her "true" identity: she reveals herself as a woman. Both Orlando's experiences as a man and as a woman reveal that gender is both constructed and natural:

To feel her hanging lightly yet like a suppliant on her arm, aroused in Orlando all the feelings which become a man. She looked, she felt, she talked like one. Yet, having been so lately a woman herself, she suspected that the girl's timidity and her hesitating answers and the very fumbling with the key in the latch and the fold of her cloak and the droop of her wrist were all put on to gratify her masculinity. (0 139)51

Gender as performance is clearly more than women putting on men's clothes: femininity and women's desire is as performative a set of actions as Orlando's cross-dressing. The polite drawing room talk of the Archduke and Orlando is mirrored in the elaborate sexual play of Orlando and Nell. Sartorial surface appears to endorse and sanction the heterosexual relations which assert the primacy and regulation of sexual difference. In the mind's eye of the reader, it always appears that men pursue women and vice versa, even when we are told that this is not the case. Diana Fuss, questioning the epistemological assumptions we make about sexual identity asks "How, indeed, does one know if one is gay?:

The very insistence of the epistemological frame of reference in theories of homosexuality may suggest that we cannot know - surely or definitively. Sexual identity may be less a function of knowledge than performance, or, in Foucauldian terms, less a matter of final discovery than perpetual reinvention.52

Fuss sides with Butler (sexual identity is performance, it is not something we can "know") and she also offers what may act as a conclusion to my speculations about sexual and gender identity in Orlando: identity is figured and articulated as a visual and discursive performance which is

51 See also A Narrative of the Life of Mrs Charlotte Charke London 1774 Charlotte Charke gives an account of her cross-dressing escapades which artfully match a period in which she plays the cross-dressing Sylvia in George Farquhar's The Recruiting Officer. Charke also provides accounts of women who are convinced by her cross-dressing when she "passes" as a man, and subsequently fall in love with her.
52 Diana Fuss Inside/Out pp6-7
constantly reinvented. Orlando's revelation of her "true" sex makes Nell relieved: "the plain Dunstable of the matter is, that I'm not in the mood for the society of the other sex to-night." (0 140) And so her performance stops as she "dropped her plaintive, appealing ways." Clearly, some performances out-perform others.

Ultimately, Orlando settles for the respectability of marriage and a child. (Orlando's marriage to Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine made Sackville-West feel that "the general inference is too inconclusive."53) The success of the marriage rests upon two possible factors: first, that Shel is often away, and secondly, that the couple recognise that ideal merger within each other of masculinity and femininity, the precondition, as I argued earlier, for Carpenter's belief in the "intermediate type":

"Oh! Shel, don't leave me!" she cried. "I'm passionately in love with you," she said. No sooner had the words left her mouth than an awful suspicion rushed into both their minds simultaneously. "You're a woman, Shell!" she cried.
"You're a man, Orlando!" he cried. (0 164)

"Are you positive you aren't a man?" he would ask anxiously, and she would echo.
"Can it be possible you're not a woman?" and then they must put it to the proof without more ado. For each was so surprised at the quickness of the other's sympathy, and it was to each such a revelation that a woman could be as tolerant and free-spoken as a man, and a man as strange and subtle as a woman, that they had to put the matter to the proof at once. (0 168)

Yet marriage acts as a kind of closure that confers on Orlando positive proof that she is a woman. Marriage makes her feel like "a real woman, at last" (0 165) and the law further sanctions proof of her identity: ""My sex", she read out with solemnity, "is pronounced indisputably, and beyond the shadow of a doubt (what I was telling you a moment ago, Shel?), female." (0 166) Indeed, only after her marriage and the birth of her child do we

53 Vita Sackville-West to Harold Nicolson cited in Victoria Glendinning Vita The Life of Victoria Sackville-West, Harmondsworth 1984 p204
learn that Orlando's poem, the "Oak Tree" has been acclaimed a critical success:

Fame! (She laughed.) Fame! Seven editions. A prize. Photographs in the evening papers (here she alluded to the 'Oak Tree' and 'The Burdett Coutts' Memorial Prize which she had won; and we must snatch space to remark how discomposing it is for her biographer that this culmination to which the whole book moved, this peroration with which the book was to end, should be dashed from us on a laugh, casually like this; but the truth is that when we write of a woman, everything is out of place - culminations and perorations; the accent never falls where it does with a man). (0 203-4)

Why should the moment that Orlando declares herself a woman coincide with the recognition of her literary stature and triumph?

In A Room of One's Own, Woolf had considered the practical and imaginative difficulties confronting the woman writer. Some of the practical difficulties that prevented women's access to the public sphere arose from women's biological makeup, a problem illustrated by Mary Seton's mother: "Making a fortune and bearing thirteen children - no human being could stand it." Androgyny served as an alternative option in Woolf's argument, a metaphor which implied that writing, rather than children, could come from a sexual merger that takes place in the mind: the androgynous mind promised textual production rather than biological reproduction. (A similar comparison is made in Orlando when the recreative biographer compares himself to Orlando's procreative mother: "Happy the mother who bears, happier still the biographer who records the life of such a one!" (0 4)) This liberating principle straddles two quite different, perhaps irreconcilable, positions. I argued in the preceding chapter that Woolf invoked the androgynous writing mind in order to repress or control the excesses of literary modernism, male sexuality and feminist consciousness. But Woolf's androgynous writing mind also recalls a suggestion that comes from French feminism, a sexualised, eroticised strategy for writing, "writing the body."
"Writing the body" is, like Woolf’s invocation of androgyny, both a troubling and a liberating theory, which has been attacked for its essentialism (marked by its emphasis on the (Western) female body) and celebrated for its liberating escape from the limitations of women's socially prescribed positions. Both these positions stand (potentially) on either side of the essentialist/constructionist divide, a relationship defined by Diana Fuss as one "between the social and the natural":

For the essentialist, the natural provides the raw material and determinative starting point for the practices and laws of the social. For example, sexual difference (the division into "male" and "female") is taken as prior to social differences which are presumed to be mapped on to, a posteriori, the biological subject. For the constructionist, the natural is itself posited as a construction of the social.

Judith Butler's problematisation of the origin confuses and even collapses the two positions: "The origin requires its derivations in order to affirm itself as an origin, for origins only make sense to the extent that they are differentiated from that which they produce as derivatives." In this case, the social as derived from an "original" natural is an impossible distinction to make. In Chapter One, I argued that a useful comparison could be made between Woolf's arguments for the androgynous writing mind and Hélène Cixous's theory of writing. Cixous perceived writing as a radical "place" which could transcend the conceptual limitations set by social structures that position men and women in a hierarchical relationship. Morag Shiach illustrates the problematic implications of Cixous's theory, arguing:

56 Judith Butler "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" in Inside/Out p22
57 And see also Alice Jardine "Gynesis" Diacritics 12:2 1982 Jardine cites as part of a Derridean project for the woman writer: "woman must be released from her metaphysical bondage and it is writing, as the locus of the "feminine operation," that can and does
To evade the bodily is to reproduce a structure of oppression which has made of women's bodies their point of vulnerability and guilt. To speak of the bodily risks a similar reproduction. At a fairly trite level, it is clear there is no escape. Yet this should not surprise us: one cannot simply walk out of patriarchy and shake off its effects. What Cixous tries to do is to subvert the discourse of patriarchy, to open it up to contradiction and to difference, while still retaining the possibility of shared recognition which would make a political movement of and for women possible.58

Woolf's strategies for writing may not have been quite so specifically focused as Cixous's, with her intentional and strategic disruption of patriarchal discourse, but what concerned Woolf - identifying and specifying a female voice in a prohibitive patriarchy - is also clearly replicated in Cixous's thinking. What to do with the body - whose erasure is effected by the introduction of the androgynous writing mind - is an equally troubling dilemma for Woolf, but a dilemma whose resolution can at least begin to be brought about by critics like Alice Jardine. Jardine sees the usefulness of French feminist thought in relation to écriture feminine: "The question of whether a "man" or a "woman" write a text (a game feminists know well at the level of literary history) becomes nonsensical. A man becomes a woman when he writes, or, if not, he does not "write" (in the radical sense of écriture) what he writes, or, at least, does not know what he's writing..."59

Orlando and Bernard represent, in one sense, a particularly overdetermined emphasis on gender, an identity (or identities) which is (or are) constantly figured for them in relation to writing and socio-sexual interaction. But if androgyny signalled, as I argued in the First Chapter, a revisionary moment in Woolf's writing praxis, how did this manifest itself in The Waves, a work which represented for her a stylistic triumph?

subvert the history of that metaphysics. The attributes of writing are the attributes of "woman"- that which disturbs the Subject, the Dialectic, and Truth is feminine in its essence. p64
58 Morag Shiach Hélène Cixous: A Politics of Writing p20
59 Alice Jardine "Gynesis" Diacritics 12:2 1982 p57
Rachel Bowlby argues: "By claiming that men and women should act indifferently with respect to writing, Woolf's narrator rules out the possibility that language may already be differentiating between them, and offers no means whereby a woman could utter her difference as a woman."60 This is always a potential problem for readings of The Waves, a text that was originally conceived before Orlando, and was published in 1931, two years after A Room of One's Own.61 For what is at issue is whether or not gender is constructed simply as a series of rhetorical effects ("We are all phrases in Bernard's story") or whether the social construction of the sexed body affirms the inviolable nature of the construction of sexual difference. Are we returned to the problem of the instability of the body as the bedrock of socio-sexual and psycho-sexual identity?

After publication of The Waves, Woolf wrote to Goldsworthy Dickinson: "But I did mean that in some vague way we are the same person, and not separate people. The six characters were supposed to be one."62 Woolf's series of monologues delivered by six individually named voices, three men and three women, represented, perhaps, a chance to explore Derrida's dream of the "multiplicity of sexually marked voices" or, indeed, the multiplicity of the sexually marked voice.

Derrida asks:

What if we were to reach, what if we were to approach here (for one does not arrive at this as one would at a determined location) the

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60 Rachel Bowlby Virginia Woolf: Feminist Destinations p45 And see Mary Jacobus "The Difference of View" pp49-62 (Belsey and Moore eds) "The gesture towards androgyny is millenial, like all dreams of another language or mode of being; but its effect is to remove the area of debate (and the trespass) from biological determination to the field of signs; from gender to representation ("words" not "things"). And in holding open other possibilities - otherness itself - such writing posits "the difference of view" as a matter of rewriting." p61
61 See D Vol 3 30 September 1926 which also contains a reference to Woolf as a child: "- couldn't step across a puddle once I remember, for thinking, how strange - what am I?" which is repeated in one of Rhoda's monologues in The Waves. "The Jessamy Brides" which became Orlando was conceived on March 14 1927. In a margin note for this diary entry Woolf had written "Orlando leading to The Waves" (July 8th 1933)"
62 VW - GL Dickinson L Vol IV 27 October 1931
area of a relationship to the other where the code of sexual marks
would no longer be discriminating? The relationship would not be
a-sexual, far from it, but would be sexual otherwise: beyond the
binary difference that governs the decorum of all codes, beyond the
opposition feminine/masculine, beyond bisexuality as well, beyond
homosexuality and heterosexuality which come to the same thing.
As I dream of saving the chance that this question offers I would
like to believe in the multiplicity of sexually marked voices...

Bernard is the story-teller and writer, who sums up all the parts of "their"
lives (Susan, Jinny, Rhoda, Neville and Louis) in the lengthy soliloquy
which concludes *The Waves*. Yet what remains problematic for a reading
of Bernard as an androgyne, or the six as one, is that Woolf doesn't quite
abandon social context altogether: it is her selective use of context in this
bold experiment in narrative form, that is the source of this problem,
creating what Leon Roudiez describes in the work of Julia Kristeva, "a split
subject - divided between unconscious and conscious motivations, that is,
between physiological processes and social constraints." Woolf herself
was troubled by what she called "my own position towards the inner & the
outer." These "outer" contexts are manifested as a series of social
institutions which indicate separation of the six into areas which are
predicated on difference: single-sex schools, (Jinny predicts that she will
"have a mistress in a school on the East Coast who sits under a portrait of
Queen Alexandra." university and finishing school, employment
versus domestic routine, writing versus "bestial" maternity. But these
differences are also transcended: *The Waves* constantly alternates between

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63 Derrida in interview with Christie V McDonald cited in Nelly Furman "The Politics of
Language: beyond the gender principle?" p75 in *Making a Difference* Greene and Kahn eds.
64 Leon Roudiez in Julia Kristeva *Desire in Language* Oxford, 1989, p6
65 November 28 1928 D Vol 3
66 *The Waves* p12 This is one a few examples that indicate an historical context for *The
Waves*, which in this instance is sometime after 1901. Rhoda identifies with the Russian
Empress, presumably Alexandra: "The diamonds of the Imperial crown blaze on my
forehead. I hear the roar of the hostile mob as I step out on to the balcony." W p35 Neville
declares the present moment at the same time that he becomes "a subject of King George."
W p152 King George V was on the throne between 1910-1936
a collective and unified identity and the terrible recognition of separation and sexual difference.

In a reading of *About Chinese Women*, Makiko Minow Pinkney concentrates on Kristeva's "impossible dialectic," one which constitutes, according to Kristeva "a constant alternation between time and its "truth", identity and its loss, history and the timeless, signless, extra-phenomenal things that produce it. An impossible dialectic: a permanent alternation: never the one without the other." Pinkney argues:

The condition of possibility of feminine writing is this alternation between the formation of the thetic subject and regression to the pre-Oedipal stage, to the *jouissance* of an as yet undissociated mother and child. As androgyne, Bernard lives precisely this endless oscillation.

Androgyny is, for Minow-Pinkney, a condition predicated on alternating states of repression and identification with both the maternal and the paternal roles. For the female subject, this manifests itself as a repression of maternal identification in order to identify with the paternal logos. With that identification with the paternal, comes the entry into the symbolic order of language which heralds the formation of social identity. The development of these oppositional states of repression and identification introduces an opposition to the mother, and a rivalry between mother and daughter is established. In relation to creativity, argues Pinkney, the position that woman occupies leads to what she calls a "tragic difficulty", made manifest in the "interplay of the symbolic and the semiotic." But what Pinkney has seen as a tragic difficulty for the woman writer is also what Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose have

67 Julia Kristeva *About Chinese Women* cited in Makiko Minow-Pinkney *Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject* Brighton, 1987, p184
68 Makiko Minow-Pinkney pp184-5
69 ibid.p22 See also Rosi Braidotti *Patterns of Dissonance*: "A woman confronted by writing is faced with her entire erotic and libidinal organization; insofar as the act of writing is socially valorised in terms of knowledge and know-how, it is a phallic gesture, that leads the woman to a direct confrontation with the dialectics of identification to the parental figures." p226
argued is the necessary contingency for subjectivity. "Sexual difference," argues Mitchell:

"can only be the consequence of a division; without this division it would cease to exist. But it must exist because no human being can become a subject outside the division into two sexes. One must take up a position as either a man or a woman. Such a position is by no means identical with one's biological sexual characteristics, nor is it a position of which one can be very confident."  

Bernard, "as close as the text gets to a central point of view" is a writer, and it is he who attempts to form a coherent meaning for the random chaos of life from the alphabetically filed incidents in his notebook, which he reads to his friends. Identities are stories for Bernard: "I am a story. Louis is a story." (W 22) This is endorsed by Neville, who reminiscing about an incident in childhood when Bernard rolled bread into pellets, comments: "One pellet was a man, one was a woman. We are all pellets. We are all phrases in Bernard's story, things he writes down in his notebook under A or under B." (W 44) Man, woman, pellet, phrase: the four representations share exactly the same significance. Bernard reiterates the connection between narrative and identity in his soliloquy:

"But in order to make you understand, to give you my life, I must tell you a story - and there are so many, and so many - stories of childhood, stories of school, love, marriage, death and so on; and none of them are true. Yet like children we tell each other stories, and to decorate them we make up these ridiculous, flamboyant, beautiful phrases. (W 159)"

Ridiculous, flamboyant and beautiful phrases ("Why admit anything to literature that is not poetry...?" enjoy a more important status than the various ways difference is instituted in this consistently self-referential text which constantly draws attention to its own methods of construction.

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70 Juliet Mitchell Feminine Sexuality p6
71 Raitt Vita and Virginia p151
72 28 November 1928 D Vol 3
Using flamboyant and beautiful phrases was a strategy Woolf had criticised herself for using, as she wrote in her diary of her critical prose that "I stretch my style to take in crumbs of meaning." Yet this can be strategic, as Judith Butler has argued: "In effect, poetic language is the recovery of the maternal body within the terms of language, one that has the potential to disrupt, subvert, and displace the paternal law." Is this one way of returning to the praise that Woolf heaps upon Emily Brontë and Jane Austen for writing as women ("It is another feather, perhaps the finest, in their caps. They wrote as women write.")? Poetic language (and women's writing) can mean not necessarily the assertion of difference even as attempts are made to erase it (as Woolf appears to do with her introduction of androgyny in A Room), but can be a way of affirming "feminine" writing (or écriture feminine) as a strategic semantic position. Yet Woolf never quite abandons the rules of syntax, a grammatical sin she refused to pardon in her analysis of Joyce in "Character in Fiction" (1924), as I indicated in Chapter One.

Julia Kristeva, in "Word, Dialogue, Novel," looks at the transgressive potential of the 0-2 interval, "a continuity where 0 denotes and 1 is implicitly transgressed." "The only discourse integrally to achieve the 0-2 poetic logic is that of the carnival. By adopting a dream logic, it transgresses rules of linguistic code and social morality as well." The success of the transgression "only exists and succeeds ... because it accepts another law. Dialogism is not "freedom to say everything," it is a dramatic "banter", an other imperative than that of 0." It is the implied connection between self-identification and the self identified by the other, that implies this 0-2 interval in The Waves. Suzanne Raitt argues that:

73 D Vol 3 23 June 1929
74 Judith Butler Gender Trouble p80
75 Julia Kristeva "Word, Dialogue, Novel" pp64-91 in Desire in Language p70
76 ibid.
77 ibid. p 71
"The Waves desperately and courageously confronts the instinct for making stories, and asks why we do it, and what it achieves."78 Implicit in the stories that they all make up for and about each other is a sense of self or identity which is intrinsically bound up with (and whose loss is threatened by) with the narrative process: "But if there are no stories, what end can there be, or what beginning? Life is not susceptible perhaps to the treatment we give it when we try to tell it." (W 179) Raitt argues that Bernard is "haunted by the thought that linguistic sequence may simply not exist; and the absence of linguistic sequence means that identity is impossible."79

When Bernard imagines his future biographers, he invents his own version of androgyny: "'joined to the sensibility of a woman' (I am here quoting my own biographer) 'Bernard possessed the logical sobriety of a man.'" (W 48) The assured knowledge of the imagined biographer is also a confusion registered by Bernard as autobiographer: "nor do I always know if I am man or woman, Bernard or Neville, Louis, Susan, Jinny, or Rhoda - so strange is the contact of one with another." (W 188) Louis and Rhoda dismiss anatomical difference as negligible. Louis's confusion: "Are they men or are they women? They still wear the ambiguous draperies of the flowing tide in which they have been immersed" (W 154) is answered by Rhoda's dismissal: "[t]hey are only men, only women. Wonder and awe change as they put off the draperies of the flowing tide." (W 154) What it can mean to be a man or a woman is both erased by the lack of social context in which these voices articulate their specific experiences, and emphasised by the invocation of those social structures that organise gendered roles. The acquisition of individuality is both unwanted and painful for the six voices in The Waves but it is also inevitable: "We saw

78 Suzanne Raitt Vita and Virginia p146
79 ibid. p147
for a moment laid out among us the body of the complete human being whom we have failed to be, but at the same time, cannot forget." (W 185) Unity is a nostalgic reference point, attainable only in writing: "we melt into each other with phrases. We are edged with mist. We make an unsubstantial territory." (W 7) It is their misfortune that it is precisely these experiences of linguistic indeterminacy that they see as characterising their collective identity: their unified identity is made possible only through rhetorical structures. Bernard wonders in his summing up, how "would Louis roof us all in? How would he confine us, make us one, with his red ink, with his very fine nib?" (W 189) Louis's writing, for Bernard, represents a closure that is both inadequate and limiting for the endless play of difference that the six can represent:

But I seeking contrasts often feel his eye on us, his laughing eye, his wild eye, adding us up like insignificant items in some grand total which he is for ever pursuing in his office. And one day, taking a fine pen and dipping it in red ink, the addition will be complete; our total will be known; but it will not be enough. (W 59)

Writing is exactly that place which collapses and confuses the boundaries that limit social freedom, requiring, as Woolf wrote in *A Room of One's Own*: "some state of mind in which one could continue without effort because nothing is required to be held back." (R 93) And yet Bernard does at least speak for them all as he encompasses finally, and in one place, the phrases that have indeed made all of "them" up:

For one day as I leant over a gate that led into a field, the rhythm stopped; the rhymes and the hummings, the nonsense and the poetry. A space was cleared in my mind. I saw through the thick leaves of habit. Leaning over the gate I regretted so much litter, so much unaccomplishment and separation, for one cannot cross London to see a friend, life being so full of engagements; nor take ship to India and see a naked man spearing fish in blue water. I said life had been imperfect, an unfinished phrase. It had been impossible for me, taking snuff as I do from any bagman met in a train, to keep coherency - that sense of the generations, of women carrying red pitchers to the Nile, of the nightingale who sings among conquests and migrations. It had been too vast an
undertaking, I said, and how can I go on lifting my foot perpetually to climb the stair? I addressed myself as one would speak to a companion with whom one is voyaging to the North pole.\(^80\) (W 190)

In his introduction to Kristeva’s *Desire in Language*, Leon Roudiez argues that: “The speaking subject is engendered as belonging to both the semiotic *chora* and the symbolic device, and that accounts for its eventual split nature.”\(^81\) This represents, in one way, Bernard’s function in *The Waves* as he speaks both for himself and on behalf of the others. His accession to his new identity, after his engagement, which marks out his individuality, follows his move away from orality and his relation with his mother: "Having dropped off satisfied like a child from the breast, I am at liberty now to sink down, deep, into what passes..." (W 73) But Woolf investigated the split subject not as necessarily fragmented between non-differentiation and the symbolic but as a positive multiplicity, "in which every life shall have its voice - a mosaic."\(^82\) Bernard planned: "My book will certainly run to many volumes, embracing every known variety of man and woman." (W 43)

Gillian Beer argues that Woolf’s conception of "Professions for Women" also marked a moment of recognition for her. As Woolf planned to write about the sexual life of women, Beer argues: "she can at last understand the project of the book on which she is at present engaged. *The Waves*, also, has to do with the sexual life, with the six persons of one woman."\(^83\) Moreover, Beer argues, that:

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\(^80\) All of these experiences have been iterated earlier in the text. Louis has a "sense of the generations," dating to "when women carried red pitchers to the Nile." pp41-42 Louis has also "heard rumours of wars; and the nightingale...I have seen women carrying red pitchers to the banks of the Nile." p61 Susan questions her identity as she "lean[s] on this gate...I am not a woman but the light that falls on this gate..." p63 Neville "going upstairs...could not raise my foot against the immitigable apple tree with its silver leaves held stiff." p81 This is repeated: "I will not lift my foot to climb the stair." p100 Bernard himself laments the fact that he will "never see savages in Tahiti spearing fish...or a naked man eating raw flesh." p123

\(^81\) Leon S Roudiez. Introduction to Julia Kristeva *Desire in Language* p7

\(^82\) March 28 1930 D Vol 3

\(^83\) Gillian Beer. Introduction *The Waves* OUP pxiii
In sexual orientation the six characters are fanned across a spectrum that includes Neville's heartfelt and unwavering homo-eroticism, Susan's passionately maternal preoccupation; Jinny's promiscuous and cheerful narcissism, Bernard's heterosexual marriage and fatherhood, Louis and Rhoda's twinned isolations, celibacies. This, then, is the 'semimystic, very profound life of a woman,' the rhythm through which at that time Woolf found it possible to speak of 'the body, the passions.'

But the status of the six can never be affirmed - is their sexual difference merely a matter of rhetorical distinction? Are they really phrases in Bernard's notebooks? Is writing the ultimate "place" that recognises, merges and separates gender and sexual identities? The Waves ends with a recognition of a multiple being as Bernard explores three final possible identities which signal the key thematic issues of this text: writing and both the emphasis and the erasure of sexual difference:

But how describe the world seen without a self? There are no words. Blue, red - even they distract, even they hide with thickness instead of letting the light through. How describe or say anything in articulate words again? (W 192)

And now I ask, 'Who am I?' I have been talking of Bernard, Neville, Jinny, Susan, Rhoda and Louis. Am I all of them? Am I one and distinct? I do not know. We sat here together. But now Percival is dead, and Rhoda is dead; we are divided; we are not here. (W 193)

There is no division between me and them. As I talked I felt 'I am you.' This difference we make so much of, this identity we so feverishly cherish, was overcome. [...] Here on the nape of my neck is the kiss Jinny gave Louis. My eyes fill with Susan's tears. I see far away, quivering like a gold thread, the pillar Rhoda saw, and feel the rush of the wind of her flight when she leapt. (W 194)

Neville, significantly enough, is elided. Although Bernard represents the differences that characterise the six, what seems to be unrepresentable is Neville's homosexuality. "Bernard's stories amuse me," says Neville, "at the start. But when they fall off absurdly and he gapes, twiddling a bit of string, I feel my own solitude. He sees everyone with blurred edges." (W

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84 ibid. pxxvii-viii
31) If the six really are one, as Woolf had intended, then "Neville" represents an aspect of Bernard's homosexuality which he feels it is necessary to repress. For if Neville sees himself as a phrase in Bernard's notebook, and then acknowledges that Bernard's stories never actually tell what matters, then Bernard has failed to adequately represent Neville's own image of himself.

"Is there a way to link the question of the materiality of the body to the performativity of gender?" asks Judith Butler. Implicit in both Orlando and The Waves is a nostalgia for unity that centres on the confusion of constructions of gender difference and the elision of sexual difference. In Orlando, gender difference marks the social losses that Orlando has to learn to live with. The ramifications of the scene of his "castration" are manifested in a series of specific incidents which are constructed as culturally significant, but which can always be turned to Orlando's advantage. In The Waves, sexual difference appears as a condition that warrants denial: the desire to return to the body of the mother, the longing for undifferentiation is the refrain of all the characters. The recognition of the difficulties (though not impossibilities) of such an endeavour (in Woolf's text, at any rate) is what sustains the body, or indeed, the materiality, of the text.

Is it possible to read The Waves as the fulfilment of Derrida's dream of the multiplicity of the sexually marked voice? Is there a connection between Derrida's desire to traverse beyond known sexual boundaries and Woolf's desire to extend the limits of narrative form? Although Woolf was clearly pushing sexual identity and narrative form to new limits in both the fantastic Orlando and The Waves, she never really entrusted herself to break the rules of syntax, she never moved beyond recognisable representations of sexual difference. We never really enter the "sexual

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otherwise" dreamed of by Derrida in his utopian fantasy of sexual multiplicity. Indeed, in Woolf's vision, only the working class is ever represented as moving beyond (or before) linguistic representation: the old woman who sings in *Mrs Dalloway*, Mrs McNab in *To the Lighthouse*, and the caretaker's children who sing in the present day section of *The Years*. In Chapter Three, I explore Woolf's attempted move beyond linguistic representation in the voice of Mrs McNab and in Lily's painting of Mrs Ramsay. The complexities of negotiating sexual difference both in and out of historically defined narratives, the erasure and the insertion of the body, and the intersection of literary and artistic production at the axis of these issues owe an originary debt to Virginia Woolf's fifth novel.
Chapter Three

Let the poppy seed itself and the carnation mate with the cabbage: the fecund, the grotesque and the war in To the Lighthouse

Old paint on canvas, as it ages, sometimes becomes transparent. When that happens it is possible, in some pictures, to see the original lines: a tree will show through a woman's dress, a child makes way for a dog, a large boat is no longer on an open sea. That is called pentimento because the painter "repented," changed his mind. Perhaps it would be as well to say that the old conception, replaced by a later choice, is a way of seeing and then seeing again.¹

The First World War was one of the events of the twentieth century that significantly shaped modern consciousness. "English culture was transformed, and English imaginations were altered, by what happened between 1914 and 1918..." argues Samuel Hynes.² And Daniel Pick, too, argues"[I]t is also an historiographical commonplace to locate the First World War itself as the definitive birthplace of modern language and meaning, the origin of 'the contemporary world', the twentieth-century period that is so often dated from 1914."³ Yet the First World War was, in some ways, perceived as a predominantly masculine event. Although this dissertation draws on contemporary accounts written by women who did witness trench warfare first hand, there is a sense of ambivalence that marks these texts, an ambivalence marked by both repudiating the horror that they saw, and perpetrating the patriotism that attended the first months of the war.⁴ Claire Tylee argues: "[A]lthough in Western culture

² Samuel Hynes A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture London 1990
³ Daniel Pick The War Machine The Rationalisation of Slaughter in the Modern Age New Haven, 1993, p195 And see also Paul Fussell who argued that conscription "could be said to mark the beginning of the modern world." The Great War and Modern Memory Oxford, 1977, p11
⁴ See also Susan Kingley Kent's recent study Making Peace The Reconstruction of Gender in InterWar Britain Princeton, 1993 She argues that women "who were there" focused on men as victims of the advanced technology deployed to fight the war: "Their familiarity with
the First World War is imaginatively seen to mark a shift as decisive as the loss of Eden, the flood, or the birth of Christ, one matter has remained unchanged since the time of the Ancient Greeks: the access of women to the crucial sphere of culturally significant experience. For an understanding of 'modern understanding' we remain dependent on men."\(^5\)

In the Introduction, I argued that it was important to consider Woolf's version of androgyny within her contemporary context, but that this context also demonstrated the impossibility of sustaining the androgynous ideal. Woolf's context was important, I argued, because the reconceptualisation of gender and sexual identities during the first decades of the twentieth century indicated that these identities were constantly shifting. If what it means to be male and/or female is not fixed, and if how we understand masculinity and femininity changes, then androgyny can have no fixed meaning either. This chapter explores two different ideas. It ends by refuting the popular critical celebration of Lily Briscoe's "androgyeny" and examines, instead, the identity and representation of the artist who has to transcend her cultural identity in order to be able to paint. This representation is ambivalent, I argue, because of an intricate series of connections which link Lily (who has to somehow transcend sex and gender) with Mrs McNab (who is represented as the body). The connection between the two is necessary, I argue, because it represented, for Woolf, a way of writing about women, art and war. This chapter also investigates how Virginia Woolf imagined the First World War, the war that shaped the modern consciousness she herself explored in her writing. For, given that Woolf had been excluded from "the crucial sphere of

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\(5\) Claire Tylee *The Great War and Women's Consciousness* London 1990 p8
culturally significant experience," Chapters Three and Four interrogate how Woolf imagined the site of that exclusion. "In one sense, the movement was towards myth..." argues Fussell, in his account of the dissemination of war experience.6 "Sometimes," he argues, "it is really hard to shake off the conviction that this war has been written by someone."7 But if it is possible to interpret the war as an imaginative or discursive narrative, how is the narrative gendered? Is gender constructed as rhetorical effect, a possibility I suggested in Chapter Two, or are subject positions still (or always) instituted through recognisable cultural frames? At issue in women's engagement with war writing is not just how femininity engaged with what was perceived as implicitly masculine, but how cultural constructions of gendered identity were negotiated in the 1914-1918 years and in the post-war decade.

Claire Tylee asks:

Taking the notion of 'myth' to indicate a story or motif ... is women's writing about the Great War mythopoeic? In other words, does there exist an imaginative memory of the First World War which is distinctively women's? If so, has it influenced the form of modern (British) understanding?8 The negotiation of sexual difference during the inter-war years is complicated not just by the question of whether or not women write differently than men, but by the ways in which war is experienced and gendered. Genevieve Lloyd argues that: "The masculinity of war is what it is precisely by leaving the feminine behind. It consists in the capacity to rise above what femaleness symbolically represents: attachment to private

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6 Paul Fussell op. cit. p131 See also Hynes: "Some of the most influential documents in the shaping of English war imaginations were those that recorded in what seemed factual, documentary form, alleged atrocities committed by the German army in the invasion of Belgium and northern France." A War Imagined p52
7 Fussell op. cit. p241
8 Tylee op. cit. p15
concerns, to 'mere life.'

Sharon MacDonald corroborates this point: "[I]t seems that 'peace' has its most prominent sense in our culture not as a state in its own right, but as a concomitant to 'war'... As Marina Warner has put it: 'The idea of peace seems difficult to seize without referring to the absence of war, and thus making war present as a standard.'

The gendered relation of war to peace was a popularly perceived binary at the beginning of the First World War. Christabel Pankhurst, in a speech delivered at the Carnegie Hall on October 24 1914, voiced the tentative fear that if Germany did win the war it would be a disaster for women: "Bismarck boasted that Germany is a male nation. We do not want male nations." The jointly authored (by Catherine Marshall and Charles Ogden) though anonymously published pamphlet Militarism versus Feminism, (1915) included the thoughts of one Fielding Hall: "The nations who succeed," he announced, "are not the feminine nations, but the masculine." The same pamphlet includes Helena Swanwick: "Nothing could be more timely in 1915 than insistence on the lesson that Militarism involves the Subjection of Women." In her own pamphlet, Swanwick stressed the point that "It is time that British men realised that anti-suffragism is 'Prussianism'..." Helena Swanwick also emphasised the relation of peace to war, in what she describes as "the incessant menace of war which we call peace." If peace is definable only in its

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10 Sharon MacDonald "Drawing the lines - gender, peace and war: an introduction" pp1-26 in Sharon MacDonald et al. in Images of Women in War and Peace: Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives. London, 1987, p5
11 Cited in Hynes A War Imagined p88
12 Militarism versus Feminism: An Enquiry and a Policy Demonstrating that Militarism involves the Subjection of Women. London 1915 p18 British Library Catalogues identify Charles Ogden as the author of this work. Jo Vellacott and Margaret Kamester identify Catherine Marshall as the co-author of the work.
13 ibid. p21
14 Helena Swanwick Women and War. London 1915 p5
15 ibid p7
relation to war, because it is not war,\textsuperscript{16} then the simplest understanding of the Freudian account of sexual difference or, indeed, any binary structure can tell us all too clearly the corresponding relations between war and peace and women who are women precisely because they are not men: war is the arena that not only organises difference, but also affirms it. The battlefield was the natural place for man to resolve his anxieties, argued Jung. For woman, the resolution of antagonistic forces was played out in "psychic conflict."\textsuperscript{17}

This chapter considers To the Lighthouse as part of Woolf’s engagement with the post-war decade and, in this context, it examines her account of a woman artist’s negotiation with a painting before the war starts and her negotiation with the same painting after the war ends. For Woolf’s position, vis a vis the 1914-1918 years, gave her an inevitably teleological perspective: "The 'pre-war' is now precisely that," argues Daniel Pick, "a history to be read teleologically, a history tending towards overt world-war, making explicit what was latent."\textsuperscript{18} May Sinclair’s Belgian journal goes so far as to suggest that the intensity of war experience effaces her pre-war memory and life: "What is happening now has been happening always. All your past is soaking in the vivid dye of these days, and what you are now you have been always. I have been a War Correspondent all my life - blaséé with battles."\textsuperscript{19} Whilst this

\textsuperscript{16} Working with this binary is, I am aware, only one way of reading a relation between war and peace. For another reading of this relationship, see also Daniel Pick's account of William James in The War Machine: "James challenges the distinction between the two terms, 'war and peace'; rather than being opposites, they describe in modern life simply the gap between the implicit and explicit mode of violent conflict. The temporality of wars thus requires reinterpretation. Battles do not necessarily begin when the first shot is fired. The relationship between language and military deeds must be reconceived." p14

\textsuperscript{17} CG Jung "Woman in Europe" (1927) in Aspects of the Feminine Jung argues that the contemporary conflict in 1927 for men and women was characterised by a division between Western materialism and Eastern idealism: "The struggle between these opposites, which in the world of the European man takes place in the realm of the scientifically applied intellect and finds expression on the battlefield and in the state of his bank balance, is, in woman, a psychic conflict." p56

\textsuperscript{18} Daniel Pick War Machine p193

\textsuperscript{19} May Sinclair A Journal Of Impressions in Belgium London 1915 p134

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teleology is clear in Jacob's Room, where the narrator drops at least twenty overt references to iconographic images during the pre-war period that became associated with the war during the 1914-1918 years, Woolf is slightly more oblique in To the Lighthouse. (Although Lily does watch Mrs Ramsay "drifting into that strange no-man's land" (TTL 78) at the dinner, and the beginning of the second section of "Time Passes" reiterates Sir Edward Grey's "The lamps are going out all over Europe"20 "So with the lamps all put out..." (TTL 119)) Not only is the status and subject of Lily's painting a consideration that straddles the two periods, but Woolf's concern with narrative development and "lyric" writing was also a reflection on war time experience.

To the Lighthouse was written in the post-war decade of the 1920s, between 1925 and 1927.21 In it, Woolf interrogates the conditions and construction of what is ostensibly one work of art: Lily Briscoe's painting of Mrs Ramsay and her six year old son James. To the Lighthouse marks the limits of Woolf's engagement with an often intensely personal vision set against a period of the unprecedented historical, political, and social consequences of the First World War. As Woolf began to engage with the extension of the franchise (1928) to women22 and the political upheavals in Europe during the 1930s, she experienced her writing as an increasingly tortuous process, as I show in Chapter Five. To the Lighthouse, with the

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20 Sir Edward Grey Twenty Five Years 1892-1916 (1925) cited in Hynes A War Imagined p3
21 Woolf had considered writing a sketch of her father on 6 January 1925 D Vol 3. On 14 May she was anxious to get on with To the Lighthouse: "This is going to be fairly short: to have father's character done complete in it; & mothers; & St Ives; & childhood; & all the usual things I try to put in - life, death &c. But the centre is father's character, sitting in a boat, reciting We perished, each alone, while he crushes a dying mackerel...." Woolf began To the Lighthouse on August 6 1925 (see Susan Dick: To the Lighthouse the Original Holograph Draft p11); it was completed on March 16 1927 and published on 5 May 1927
22 The Representation of the People Act passed its third reading in the House of Commons on December 7 1917. The franchise was given to women over the age of thirty who were "occupiers, or wives of occupiers, of land or premises of not less that £5 annual value, and to women over thirty who held University degrees...." Sylvia Pankhurst The Suffragette Movement (1931) London, 1988, p607 This was amended in 1928 and the franchise was extended to women over the age of twenty one.
exception of the central section and the celebrated dinner party in the first section was relatively trouble free: "Never have I written so easily, imagined so profusely" she wrote in her diary. Whilst it would be true to say that Woolf was a tacit or implicit commentator on the 1914-1918 years in the middle section of this text, her engagement was often so subtly oblique as to consistently escape critical notice.

Samuel Hynes argues of Virginia Woolf that she "fashioned a very Bloomsburyish Myth of the War, a myth that has a first term, the remembered world-before-the war, and a last term, the world after, but no middle. Unlike Rose Macaulay and Rebecca West, she did not try to imagine war itself." "To Virginia Woolf," writes Andrew McNeillie, "the war was, artistically and otherwise, a subject almost unspeakable." "It was a massive experience for someone so mentally frail" intones Nigel Nicolson, adding that "One cannot overlook the First War as an incident in Virginia's life, although she did her best to overlook it herself."

Although the next three chapters (Four, Five and Six) actually take issue with the assumptions that Woolf eschewed writing or even thinking about war, there is still an element of truth in these arguments. This seems at least partially evident in To the Lighthouse, often seen as an elegiac reconstruction of Woolf's childhood summers in Cornwall and a nostalgic recollection of her parents, in particular her mother Julia.

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23 D Vol 3 8 February 1926 See also 11 May 1926 where she records writing To the Lighthouse as "exciting"; 23 November 1926, where she decided that To the Lighthouse is "easily the best of my books..." See also VW to VSW: "The dinner party the best thing I ever wrote: the one thing that I think justifies my faults as a writer: This damned 'method'. Because I dont think one could have reached those particular emotions in any other way." L Vol III 13 May 1927
24 Samuel Hynes A War Imagined p345
25 E Vol II pxii
26 The Question of Things Happening L Vol II pxii
27 L Vol II pxvi
Stephen. But *To the Lighthouse* does incorporate the war years, quite significantly, in its often haunting middle section, "Time Passes." A decade separates the first and third sections, narratives characterised by postponement and closure, in which, a group of people do not go to the lighthouse and the artist Lily Briscoe does not complete her painting. In the third section, ten years later, the trip to the lighthouse is made and the picture is completed simultaneously, culminating in Lily's cathartic moment of vision. In between these moments of postponement and closure, during the war, Mrs Ramsay dies, and so, too, do her eldest children, Andrew and Prue (in battle and in childbirth). Mrs McNab, an elderly woman who lives locally, saves the Ramsay house from complete ruin by repairing years of rot and neglect. The barest elements of plot are also the profoundest symbols of this text.

Two old women cleaning a house and saving it from irreparable ruin was how Woolf imagined and allegorised the carnage of the First World War and the rebirth of post-war Europe: "Time Passes" is a splendidly understated title for the 1914-1918 years. "Is it nonsense, is it brilliance?" Woolf asked herself of this section. It was certainly not original. Gilbert and Gubar, responding to Mrs Flanders listening to the fighting in France in *Jacob's Room* (1922) argue that "the very notion of male combat had released some hidden fury for purification in the wives and mothers who knit and wait on the shore, ... as if battle itself were a kind of gigantic housecleaning." The image itself is also a conservative one, reinforcing a connection between femininity and domesticity, although Alison Light has argued that this was a traditional connection with a difference:

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28 See D Vol 3 24 February 1926; And see VW to Vanessa Bell: "I'm in a terrible state of pleasure that you should think Mrs Ramsay so like mother." L Vol III 25 May 1927
29 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*. Volume 2 *Sexchanges* New Haven and London p315
If the English middle classes found themselves in retreat after 1919, and the idea of private life received a new enhancement, nevertheless it was not the same old private life - the sphere of domestic relations, and all which it encompassed, had also changed. And even if a new commercial culture of 'home-making' was conservative in assuming this to be a female sphere, it nevertheless put woman and the home, and a whole panoply of connected issues, at the centre of national life.30

Indeed, arguments were advanced during the 1914-1918 years that attempted to shift and ascertain the cultural significance of the maternal role. In 1915, Catherine Marshall argued that:

the experience and habits of mind which women acquire as mothers of families and as heads of households might, if applied to a wider field, throw new light on the problems of the great human family of nations, and help to build up a better system of international relations which would make impossible the repetition of such a tragedy as that in which we are now involved."31

The "cult of motherhood" gained great ideological significance during the 1914-1918 years. "[T]he social role of mother was one of the areas of greatest conflict for women once their sons began enlisting for the War. Spurred by growing unemployment and the need to breed an imperial race, a 'cult of motherhood' had been developed before the War, promoting a view of women as naturally maternal beings whose place was in the home" argues Tylee.32 Mildred Aldrich records seeing one woman after saying goodbye to her husband: " "After all, I am only his wife. France is his mother"; and I hoped these poor men, to whom Fate seemed not to have been very kind, had at least that thought in the back of their minds."33 Woolf had invoked the figure of the elderly mother who was also the representative of loss in Mrs Dalloway:

31 Catherine E Marshall "Women and War" (22 March 1915) in Margaret Kamester and Jo Vellacott  Militarism Versus Feminism: Writings on Women and War London, 1987, p40
32 Claire Tylee op.cit. p67
33 Mildred Aldrich  A Hilltop on the Marne London, 1915, p65
Such are the visions. The solitary traveller is soon beyond the wood; and there, coming to the door with shaded eyes, possibly to look for his return, with hands raised, with white apron blowing, is an elderly woman who seems (so powerful is this infirmity) to seek, over the desert, a lost son; to search for a rider destroyed; to be the figure of the mother whose sons have been killed in the battles of the world. (MD 50)

To the Lighthouse abounds with mothers, from the bountiful (Mrs Ramsay) to the slatternly (Mrs McNab); maternity is fatal, (Prue Ramsay) and it is also to be desired and identified with, as Lily wishes to identify with Mrs Ramsay. In all cases, maternity is invested with a different symbolic status that places women at the forefront of a new sexual politics as traditional associations of femininity and maternity are radically subverted. Paul Fussell has shown that one of Lord Northcliffe’s strategies for writing about the war was "the shrewd use of domestic similies which anchored the novelties of modern war to the world of the familiar, the comfortable, and the safe." But even this kind of tactic was subverted by Woolf in To the Lighthouse where the figure of bountiful maternity, the figure of what is comfortable and safe is resisted and inverted to represent the female grotesque.

Central to the design and execution of To the Lighthouse is the middle section, "Time Passes" which bears no apparent relation to either of the two moments that shape Lily Briscoe’s painting. Although Gayatri Spivak argues that the middle section works as the copula that joins the subject (Mrs Ramsay in"The Window") with the predicate (the painting in "The Lighthouse") "Time Passes" also almost "unmakes" the thematic structure of the text ("to play with the copula is to go toward the grim narrative of the discourse of madness and war." Its structural significance is, however, mirrored in the narrative climax:

34 Paul Fussell The Great War and Modern Memory p88 Lord Northcliffe was the publisher of The Times.
She looked at the steps; they were empty; she looked at her canvas; it was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision. (TTL 198)

"Time Passes" is a quite remarkable allegory that marks women's estrangement from the war years, since Lily (and, indeed, the surviving Ramsays) are quite unaware of what happens to the house (or the significant scene of action) when they are not there. When Lily returns to paint her picture, she only has her pre-war memories of Mrs Ramsay to rely on: the intervening years are a void for her. Katherine Mansfield's aversion to Woolf's second novel Night and Day (1919) seems equally applicable to Lily's second attempt at the painting. Mansfield complained:

My private opinion is that it is a lie in the soul. The war never has been: that is what its message is. I don't want (God forbid!) mobilisation and the violation of Belgium, but the novel can't just leave the war out. There must have been a change of heart. It is really fearful to see the 'settling down' of human beings. I feel in the profoundest sense that nothing can ever be the same - that, as artists, we are traitors if we feel otherwise: we have to take it into account and find new expressions, new moulds for our new thoughts and feelings.36

For just as Woolf appeared to ignore the war in Night and Day (although she had been writing about the war in her shorter fiction from 1917) so Lily appears to be attempting a repetition of the same moment (admittedly, a crucial moment in the text) which she had first tried to paint before the war: "There was something (she stood screwing up her little Chinese eyes in her small puckered face) something she remembered in the relations of those lines cutting across, slicing down, and in the mass of the hedge with its green cave of blues and browns which had stayed in her mind...." (TTL 150) Lily's second attempt is accompanied, not only by the narrator's reproduction of Mrs Ramsay's perception of Lily ("With her

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36 Cited in Hynes A War Imagined p269 from The Letters of Katharine Mansfield New York, 1932, 10 November 1919
little Chinese eyes and her puckered-up face..." (TTL 16)) but also by her recollection, as she paints from memory, of what she knows she has irretrievably lost: "Mrs Ramsay! Mrs Ramsay!" she cried, feeling the old horror come back - to want and want [and] not to have. Could she inflict that still?" (TTL 192) But Lily's second attempt at the painting of Mrs Ramsay is an attempt to reconcile herself to the loss of Mrs Ramsay and to reconcile herself to Mr Ramsay. It is in this way that Woolf links the personal significance of memory, identification and desire with the more publicly significant ramifications of the war years.

Judith Lowder Newton argues:

Non-feminist "new-historicism," for example, in its non-cultural materialist modes, has been widely criticised for its tendency to insist upon the totalizing power of hegemonic ideologies, ideologies implicitly informed by elite male values and often presented as typical of the way culture itself is constructed as a whole. One wonders how such readings might be altered were the material world of the domestic, women's anxiety - producing power as mothers, household managers, and silent participants in enterprise, taken adequately into account. It is only once those levels of culture are actively explored that women's contribution to culture and that of other oppressed groups can be taken into account. It is only once this taking into account begins that any historicism can produce something more than history as usual. 37

In "Time Passes," Woolf moves two women, both mothers, to the heart of the action, as it were, as she gives to women a central role and agency in the ravages of war-torn and post-war Europe: Mrs McNab and Mrs Bast, like Lily, hold the memory of loss but they are also responsible for restoration and reparation as they make do and mend the Ramsay house. If this seems to indicate a means of writing women into the vacant plots left by patriarchal history, it can read equivocally, for Mrs McNab and Mrs Bast are a motley pair, the apparently prosaic antithesis of the bountiful maternity embodied in Mrs Ramsay. Lily remains unaware of

the events of "Time Passes" (she sleeps throughout and only wakes at the
end of the section which marks the end of the war and the return to the
house) but its impact reverberates as an integral part of the structure of her
picture as the section considers how war can be represented artistically and
how women can be represented in war.

Virginia Woolf was in London a day after the Armistice. "Taxicabs
were crowded with whole families," she wrote, "grandmothers & babies,
showing off; & yet there was no centre, no form for all this wandering
emotion to take." Woolf found a form (and the missing maternal link
that connects grandmothers to babies) in To the Lighthouse which
combined both a careful textual structure and an amorphous body (Mrs
McNab) to represent the war, giving a simultaneously coherent and
incoherent voice to the war years. Woolf divided To the Lighthouse into
describing the construction of the text as "Two blocks joined by a
corridor." She felt that "The lyric portions of To the L. are collected in
the 10 year lapse, & dont interfere with the text so much as usual."40

"We all seem to think the world will emerge out of the melting-pot
into some strange new shape" argues Maynard in Non-Combatants and
Others: "optimists hope and believe it will be the shape they prefer,
pessimists are almost sure it will be the one they can least approve."41 The
lyric portions of To the Lighthouse are duly given over to the gruesome
saviour of Europe, to the horror of the grotesque Mrs McNab.

Was it Mrs Ramsay, or Lily, or Mrs McNab Woolf had in mind
when she wrote in her diary in 1926:

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38 D Vol 1 12 November 1918
39 See To the Lighthouse The Original Holograph Draft ed Susan Dick Appendix A
"Notes for To the Lighthouse" p48
40 D Vol 3 5 September 1926
41 Rose Macaulay Non-Combatants and Others London, 1916, pp152-3
Yet I am now & then haunted by some semi mystic very profound life of a woman, which shall all be told on one occasion; & time shall be utterly obliterated; future shall somehow blossom out of the past.42

"Modernism means many things," argues Samuel Hynes, "but it is most fundamentally the forms that post-war artists found for their sense of modern history: history seen as discontinuous, the past remote and unassailable, or available only as the ruins of itself, and the present a formless space emptied of values."43 Although time is not "utterly obliterated" (it merely "passes") in To the Lighthouse, the witless Mrs McNab does hold the key to understanding the "semi-mystic" meaning of war. Mrs McNab is Woolf's saviour of post-war Europe. For, just as the outcome of the war looked uncertain at the beginning of 1918, so the Ramsay house was tentatively poised on the verge of collapse. Using metaphors of maternity and domesticity, Mrs McNab puts the European house in order through a "rusty and laborious birth."44 (TTL 133) The young, the healthy, the brilliant, the beautiful cannot regenerate the post-war world in Woolf's vision - or so we would infer from the deaths of the embryonic Mr and Mrs Ramsay, the beautiful Prue and the brilliant Andrew, during the war years. What Woolf finds most distasteful and most disturbing is also what saves the old Ramsay house: the aged and "witless" renew the world. If Woolf invokes a kind of nightmarishness through her restrained and paced narrative of the watery graves of tin soldiers in Jacob's Room,45 it is nothing to her picture of Mrs McNab, who is, indeed, a horror.

42 D Vol 3 23 November 1926
43 Hynes A War Imagined p433
44 Although see also Gayatri Spivak: "Thus Mrs McNab halts disaster in the allegory of a reason menaced by madness, an ontology on the brink of disaster by the near-uncoupling of the copula. She is related to "a force working; something not highly conscious". Once again, the copula between her and this description is not given. They simply inhabit contiguous sentences." p38
45 Jacob's Room: "With equal nonchalance a dozen young men in the prime of life descend with composed faces into the depths of the sea; and there impassively (though with perfect mastery of machinery) suffocate uncomplainingly together. Like blocks of tin
Yet the extant holograph version of "Time Passes" indicates that Woolf was, ultimately, ambivalent towards Mrs McNab, for she was originally kinder to her, before transmuting her into an object of scorn and idiocy in the published version of the text. This chapter focuses on the holograph version of Mrs McNab, not only because Woolf found this section the most difficult to write, but because "Time Passes" comprises an intricate condensation of the war with the compositional difficulties of Lily's painting. Lily's painting is complicated by the narrative development in the first section which has another context (or subtext), besides the processes of transcendence that Lily undergoes before she can paint, detailing the interaction of Mr and Mrs Ramsay and their relationship with their youngest son James, a narrative which explores the psycho-sexual dynamics of the mother-son relationship.

The perpetuation of the war machine constituted evidence of masculine stupidity for Woolf. She saw the war and the peace as evidence of the collapse of the potency of patriarchy, as she wrote to Desmond MacCarthy: "[T]hough women have every reason to hope that the intellect of the male sex is steadily diminishing, it would be unwise, until they have more evidence than the great war and the great peace supply, to announce it as a fact."46 Woolf saw, post-war, a need to re-evaluate social structures which hierarchise not just class but also gender hegemonies. Into this re-evaluation ambles the aged and witless Mrs McNab:

As she lurched (for she rolled like a ship at sea) and leered (for her eyes fell on nothing directly, but with a sidelong glance that deprecated the scorn and anger of the world - she was witless, she

soldiers the army covers the cornfield, moves up the hillside, stops, reels slightly this way and that, and falls flat, save that, through field-glasses, it can be seen that one or two pieces still agitate up and down like fragments of broken matchstick." p151

46 "The Intellectual Status of Women" (1920) in Michèle Barrett Virginia Woolf: Women and Writing London 1979 p56
knew it), as she clutched the banisters and hauled herself upstairs and rolled from room to room, she sang. (TTL 124)

Mrs McNab is pure excess and abandonment with "her sidelong leer which slipped and turned aside even from her own face..." (TTL 125) In the holograph she: "had been drunk in her day, & of her six children, two, it was said, were not by her husband; she had lived, she had loved, in short..." (MS 165/ 214) Yet she is also the embodiment of the war years themselves: "(for night and day, month and year ran shapelessly together) in idiot games, until it seemed as if the universe were battling and tumbling, in brute confusion and wanton lust aimlessly by itself." (TTL 128) It is as Spivak comments: "The disappearance of reason and the confusion of sexuality are consistently linked..."47 In the holograph, the war years are represented as an even wilder bacchanalian orgy:

Now it seemed fiercely battling for no reason, then at peace; now in mounting in lust or conquest one upon another, so that they seemed to until it seemed as if the universe were filled from earth to sky with was full of shapes mounting one on top of another, battling & tumbling - & the now swiftness, now stagnant, but always in a wild brute-commotion confusion. (MS 174/223)

If Mrs McNab represents the new civilisation and future of the post-war world, she is surely a desperate remedy since Woolf appears to be corroborating Leonard Woolf's view of post-war life and the, for him, almost synonymous collapse of civilisation: "[B]y 1918 one had unconsciously accepted a perpetual public menace and darkness and had admitted into the privacy of one's mind or soul an iron fatalistic acquiescence in insecurity and barbarism."48 In the extant manuscripts of "The Years", Eleanor thinks in exactly this way after the war:

She had heard people say over & over again that civilisation was crashing; after the war after the peace, there was nothing but downfall and ruin: And for a moment the angles of the scaffolding & the bestial song of the half drunk young men seemed to her

47 Spivak "Unmaking and Making in To the Lighthouse" p38
terrifying as if there were no order in the world; as if they were all falling into ruin beneath a perfectly indifferent moon. (Vol. VI 31) 

The idea that the war heralded the collapse of civilisation was popular during the war years and Bloomsbury, needless to say, bought in bulk. Leonard Woolf manages seven references to civilisation in the first three pages of his account of the outbreak of war in 1914. Clive Bell wrote a whole book on it, which he eventually published in 1928. Maynard Keynes declared: "Never in the lifetime of men now living has the universal element in the soul of man burnt so dimly." When asked why he wasn't fighting for civilisation, Lytton Strachey took it upon himself to be its personification: "I am the civilisation for which you are fighting..." runs the possibly apocryphal story. Conversely, the campaign medals of 1919 bore the inscription "The Great War Fought for Civilisation" which contradicted the Bloomsbury version.

Freud commented wryly that: "[O]ur mortification and our painful disillusionment on account of the uncivilised behaviour of our fellow-citizens of the world during this war were unjustified. They were based on an illusion to which we had given way. In reality our fellow-citizens have not sunk so low as we feared, because they had never risen so high as we believed." In one way, the war represented the apotheosis of civilisation as the technological developments of the war machine represented the logical conclusion of civilization's endeavours which Gilbert and Gubar describe:

49 Woolf had titled this volume "Here and Now". I indicated on p5 the editorial procedures adopted for identifying the extant manuscripts of "The Years." I give the history of the production of "The Years" and its various titles in Chapter Five n.6
51 Clive Bell Civilisation London 1928
52 John Maynard Keynes The Economic Consequences of the Peace London 1919 p279
53 Cited in Samuel Hynes A War Imagined p244
54 Freud "Thoughts for the Time on War and Death" St. Ed. Vol XIV (1914-1916) p285
with its trenches and zeppelins, its gases and mines, this conflict has become a diabolical summary of the idea of modern warfare - western science bent to the service of western imperialism, the murderous face of Galileo revealed at last.55

In her essay "The Asylums of Antaeus," Jane Marcus argues that civilisation is built around the myth of Antaeus who built a temple as a tribute to his father from the skulls of his enemies.56 If civilisation is built upon the bloody triumphs of masculinity in the celebration of paternal authority, what has Mrs McNab to do with either the collapse or the saving of civilisation? Clive Bell's ruminations on civilisation (which he incidentally dedicated to Virginia Woolf) bear an uncanny (if not unfortunate) resemblance to Woolf's criteria for the material and psychological conditions necessary for the woman writer in A Room of One's Own. Bell argued:

Civilisation requires the existence of a leisured class, and a leisured class requires the existence of slaves - of people, I mean, who give some part of their surplus time and energy to the support of others. If you feel that such inequality is intolerable, have the courage to admit that you can dispense with civilisation and that equality, not good, is what you want. Complete human equality is compatible only with complete savagery. But before plumping for barbarism let the philanthropist remember that there are such things as willing servants or, if he pleases, people content to make sacrifices for an ideal.

At any rate, to be completely civilised, to experience the most intense and exquisite states of mind, manifestly a man must have security and leisure.57

Security and leisure, Bell goes on to argue, are manifested in economic liberty "which will put him above the soul-destroying dominion of circumstance..."58 Five hundred pounds per annum, a room of one's own and the freedom to think of things, the staple arguments in A Room

55 Gilbert and Gubar No Man's Land p259
57 Clive Bell Civilization p205
58 ibid. pp205-6
of One's Own, are criteria not that far removed from Bell's endorsement of the British class system. Indeed, recounting a discussion with a group of "very young intellectuals," Bell comments: "[O]thers again [felt] that a truly civilised people would give every poet and artist five hundred a year...."59

Woolf's scorn for the popular responses to the beginning and end of the war found its way into "Time Passes." At the end of the war she wrote in her diary that "the peace at any rate is over; though the poor deluded servants are spending their day out on a bus to see the decorations. I was right: it is a servant's peace."60 Woolf had recorded her impatience with patriotism to Duncan Grant at the onslaught of the optimistic fervour in 1914:

The revelation of what our compatriots feel about life is very distressing. One might have thought in peace time that they were harmless, if stupid: but now that they have been roused they seem full of the most violent and filthy passions.61

And she makes clear in the Holograph draft of To the Lighthouse that not only is Mrs McNab "nothing but a mat for kings & kaisers to tread on," she is also willing to "stand patiently in the streets to see the kings go riding by," (MS 165 /214) a sort of cheery champion supporting a monarchy that is not only unaware of her obscure existence but which also oppresses her and takes for granted her continued support.62

Yet Mrs McNab also represents for Woolf the inadequacy of any response to the 1914-1918 years. She felt that the government was patronising: "But I don't know - it seems to me a servant's festival; something got up to pacify & placate "the people"..."63 Mrs McNab

59 ibid. p32
60 D Vol 1 24 July 1919
61 VW to Duncan Grant L Vol II November 15 1914 See also VW-Vanessa Bell L Vol II 11 November 1918 and VW-Vanessa Bell 13 November 1918
62 See also Mrs Dalloway "poor women waiting to see the Queen go past - poor women, nice little children, orphans, widows, the War..." p16
63 D Vol 1 19 July 1919
represents for Woolf something of the contempt that she felt after 1918, for the way in which the government appeared to placate people after the four year débacle. Mrs McNab does have some dignity in the holograph: she is also "The voice of the indomitable principle of life, & its power to persist; & its sorrow, & its courage..." (MS 162 /211)

Mrs McNab’s song in the holograph was once a "sprightly dance song" turned into an "elegy," (MS 162 /211) a lament that, in the final version, loses what dignity it might have had to become an old music hall song which, in fact, Woolf disliked, finding it a form of "low" entertainment:

The incredible, pathetic stupidity of the music hall, (for surely we could have risen higher, & only politeness made us laugh,) almost made me feel uncomfortable; but the humour of Harry Tate, though a low grade was still the queer English humour; something natural to the race, which makes us all laugh; why I don’t know; & you can’t help feeling its the real thing, as, in Athens one might have felt that poetry was.64

In the holograph, the music hall song is "elevated" to a primeval, semiotic burble, resisting meaning within any syntagmatic discourse, but being, somehow, itself the very condition of an almost instinctive (or unconscious) regeneration:

a sound issued from her lips - something that had been gay twenty years before on the stage perhaps, had been hummed and danced to, but now, coming from the toothless, bonneted, care-taking woman, was robbed of meaning, was like the voice of witlessness, humour, persistency itself, trodden down but springing up again... (TTL 124)

In the holograph draft, the deterioration of her body and the "broken syllables" contain the "message" that Mrs McNab has for the world in her song:

as if her message to a world now beginning to burst into the in voluntary / loveliness of spring were somehow transmitted - rather by the lurch of the body & the leer of her smile, by her than by & in them were the broken syllables of a revelation more

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64 Diary 1 1 May 1918
profound, but confused, but more profound, than any accorded to solitary watchers, pacers on the beach at midnight, anguished preachers & diviners. (MS 167/216)

Mrs McNab and her song are also redolent of the old woman who sings in *Mrs Dalloway*. Thinking about Clarissa and her sexual coldness towards him, Peter Walsh is about to cross the road when:

A sound interrupted him; a frail quivering sound, a voice bubbling up without direction, vigour, beginning or end, running weakly and shrilly and with an absence of all human meaning into

\[ \text{ee um fah um so} \]
\[ \text{foo swee too eem oo-} \]

the voice of no age or sex, the voice of an ancient spring spouting from the earth; which issued, just opposite Regent's Park Tube Station, from a tall quivering shape, like a funnel, like a rusty pump, like a wind-beaten tree for ever barren of leaves which lets the wind run up and down its branches singing...(MD 70-1)

Here is an old woman who is, simultaneously, the voice of no age and no sex. In a text which punctiliously observes the linearity and progression of time, her song has no beginning and no end: she is anomalous both within the text and within herself, life affirming and incapable of producing life - "for ever barren of leaves." Her song is unmistakably sexual:

\[ \text{still, though it issued from so rude a mouth, a mere hole in the earth, muddy too, matted with root fibres and tangled grasses, still the old bubbling burbling song, soaking through the knotted roots of infinite ages, and skeletons and treasure, streamed away in rivulets over the pavement and all along the Marylebone Road, and down towards Euston, fertilising, leaving a damp stain.} \] (MD 71)

Yet she is a necessary symbol of fertility. The insidious effects of the war have smashed a plaster cast of Ceres, goddess of fertility:

something happened which threw out many of Mr. Brewer's calculations, took away his ablest young fellows, and eventually, so prying and insidious were the fingers of the European War, smashed a plaster cast of Ceres, ploughed a hole in the geranium beds, and utterly ruined the cook's nerves at Mr. Brewer's establishment at Muswell Hill. (MD 75)
Ceres, as the goddess of fertility, is responsible, on account of her daughter Proserpine, for summer and winter, for both fertilising the earth and making it barren too, for mourning her loss and celebrating her return. Woolf's account of the war's "insidious" damage is an attempt to write women and fertility into the aridity of the war-time and post-war urban landscape. But why would these women, deliberately disturbing, be the symbolic hope of fertile regeneration after the war?

I want to suggest that Woolf is making an explicit connection in To the Lighthouse between the dynamics of the family and the patriarchal state by juxtaposing the relation between Mr and Mrs Ramsay with Lily's painting and allegorising (or symbolising) these relations in the "lyric" "Time Passes" in the actions of Mrs McNab. "Time Passes," in holograph, reflects on the conditions of Lily's painting and offers a comment upon the impossibility, not just of representing war in art, but of representing how women negotiated war and art. The paradoxical bind at the heart of Woolf's post-war writing is clearly expressed here. War cannot be represented in art: "The black snout interfered with the whole composition. Was there no composition at all then?" (MS 173/222) And at the same time, it cannot be ignored: "Equally benignant & sublime, she contemplated his misery, she condoned his meanness, she acquiesced in his torture." (MS 173/222) The first draft of "Times Passes" replays Mrs Ramsay's relationship with Mr Ramsay as family and state are symbolically condensed. Into a consideration of how war could be represented in art comes a reference to Lily's "dream of harmony" with Mrs Ramsay:

As for the watchers, the preachers, the souls who had those spirits who, in sleep, had left their bodies, & dreamed of some communion, of grasping the hand of a sharer, & completing, down on the beach, the from the sky or sea the cliff, or the the fu fullness that was incomplete, the vision that asked for ratification, either they had been woken from their dreams by that prodigious
cannonading which had made the wine glasses tinkle in the cupboard, or that intrusion - that black snout - that purple foaming stain - had so gravely interfered damaged the composition of the picture that they had fled. They had gone in despair. They had dashed the mirror to the ground. They saw nothing more. They stumbled & strove now, blindly, pulling their feet out of the mud & stamping them further in. Let the wind blow, let the poppy seed itself, & the carnation mate with the cabbage. (MS 178-9/ 227-8)

Mrs McNab will destroy the hybrid result of wild abandonment in her "rusted laborious birth" (MS180/229) energised by (what else?) the language of war. With a "magnificent conquest" (MS181/230) and "partial conquest" & "triumph" (MS181/230) she and Mrs Bast save the house from irreparable ruin. On the lawn, Mrs Bast's son, Fred/George, stops to pause only when "there was only one square army of thick waving grass yet to be demolished on the lawn..." (MS 183/232) Fred/George himself:

advanced like the sweep of an invincible army over the insurgents rioting before & wary in their tumult... up the bank & over the lawn & so laid them flat. (MS 183/232)

In the final text, George is edited out: he may scythe for victory in the holograph, but it is the two women, Mrs Bast and Mrs McNab, who bring peace in their massive act of maternal generativity. And so the house is saved as peace is restored to Europe. Yet, in the margin of the holograph, as Mrs McNab and Mrs Bast "stayed the corruption & the rot," Woolf wrote: "ask them what the war had been about - did they know?" (MS 180/229) Prophetic and mystical knowledge conveyed through the broken syllables of a song is one way of inscribing women and knowledge into the war years, but to infer that Mrs McNab and Mrs Bast would not know what the war was "about" is to place them historically, socially and politically outside of the discourses that inscribe the boundaries and actions of the war as the battleground of soldiers and politicians. Mrs McNab is, after all, still the doormat of Kaiser and King. In the final version, Mrs McNab does know what the war means, if she does not know
what it had been about: "every one had lost someone these years. Prices had gone up shamefully, and didn’t come down again neither. ... Things were better then than now." (TTL 130) (This nostalgia is repeated by Crosby in the manuscripts of "The Years": "She never saw anybody who remembered the old days."65) What still matters, five years after the end of the war in Mrs Dalloway, is that it is never over for people like "Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating her heart out because that nice boy was killed ... or Lady Bexborough who opened a bazaar, they said with the telegram in her hand, John her favourite killed..." (MD 2) It is precisely this kind of story that does not make the grade into the histories of the war that were being written as Woolf was writing this text. Yet at the same time that Woolf includes the sense of loss and the financial hardships of the war years, it is set up against officialdom (what the war had been "about") and the leering, lurching, witless old woman who nostalgically "recalled the happiness, the security of those summer days" (MS 182/231).

In the holograph, the war comes as an intrusion into what is a reference to the subjects of Lily’s painting:

This intrusion into a scene which was otherwise calculated to stir the most sublime reflections & lead to the most comforting conclusions stayed their pacing. If that snout out-in thrusting itself up in the there expressed the desire wish to meant death, & starvation, & pain, it was difficult to abolish its significance, & to continue, walking by the sea, to adm marvel at the as one walked to marvel at the completeness, & at the roundness, & rounded completeness of human existence. (MS 173/222)

The subject of Lily’s painting - Mrs Ramsay reading to James - is just such a scene "calculated to stir the most sublime reflections." Just as Lily is about to criticise Mrs Ramsay, William Bankes’s rapturous contemplation of Mrs Ramsay and James "made it entirely unnecessary for her to speak...

For him to gaze as Lily saw him gazing at Mrs. Ramsay was a rapture,

65 "The Years" Vol V p144
equivalent, Lily felt, to the loves of dozens of young men...” (TTL 44) The moment of intrusion which destroys this sublime scene is Mr Ramsay’s arrival, which is the occasion of an arresting moment of fecundity for Mrs Ramsay:

Mrs. Ramsay, who had been sitting loosely, folding her son in her arm, braced herself, and, half turning, seemed to raise herself with an effort, and at once to pour erect into the air a rain of energy, a column of spray, looking at the same time animated and alive as if all her energies were being fused into force, burning and illuminating (quietly though she sat, taking up her stocking again), and into this delicious fecundity, this fountain and spray of life, the fatal sterility of the male plunged itself, like a beak of brass, barren and bare. (TTL 34)

As Mrs Ramsay comforts her husband, James’s antipathy towards his father is aroused as the Oedipal drama is played out:

Flashing her needles, confident, upright, she created drawing-room and kitchen, set them all aglow; bade him take his ease there, go in and out, enjoy himself. She laughed, she knitted. Standing between her knees, very stiff, James felt all her strength flaring up to be drunk and quenched by the beak of brass, the arid scimitar of the male, which smote mercilessly, again and again, demanding sympathy. (TTL 35)

Freud says:

In boys the situation of the Oedipus complex is the first stage that can be recognized with certainty. It is easy to understand, because at that stage a child retains the same object which he previously cathected with his libido - not as yet a genital one - during the preceding period while he was being suckled and nursed. The fact, too, that in this situation he regards his father as a disturbing rival and would like to get rid of him and take his place is a straightforward consequence of the actual state of affairs.66

James’s hatred of his father and his affections for his mother are mapped out through the psycho-sexual dynamics of his Oedipal attachment to his mother. Mrs Ramsay remains the sexual centre of the triangular relationship as she soothes her husband: “If he put implicit faith in her, nothing should hurt him; however deep he buried himself or climbed

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66 Freud “Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes” (1925) St. Ed. Vol XIX (1923-25)
high..." (TTL 35) His sexual satisfaction leads to a regression to a pre-Oedipal polymorphous pleasure, however, since he is "[f]illed with her words, like a child who drops off satisfied..." (TTL 35) It is the phallic James who remains "stiff between her knees." (TTL 35) That Mrs Ramsay is seen here as both phallic and vaginal testifies to the reality of the dynamics of the Oedipal relation which exists between her and James, since the condition of his Oedipal attachment assumes that there is no genital difference between himself and his mother. The end of the Oedipal drama for the boy is marked, argues Freud, by the recognition of genital difference as the boy sees that his mother is "castrated" thereby ending an identification with her. Such a scene of recognition seems hardly necessary given the fecund, self-fertilising mother who reinvigorates her husband by making his "barrenness...fertile." (TTL 35) And how is this achieved? By making "all the rooms of the house...full of life - the drawing-room; behind the drawing-room the kitchen; above the kitchen the bedrooms; and beyond them the nurseries; they must be furnished, they must be filled with life." (TTL 35) Implicit is the connection between the sterility of masculinity and the sterility of the post-war landscape which women reinvigorate: for Mrs Ramsay in her domestic triumphs surely prefigures Mrs McNab.

There is a certain irony in the history of the writing of To the Lighthouse and the representation of the painting of the picture in it. For Woolf wrote her text at great speed: "I am now writing as fast & freely as I have written in the whole of my life; more so - 20 times more so - than any novel yet" she wrote in her diary.67 The only trouble she felt she experienced with it was "Time Passes", although even this was written at high speed:

67 D Vol 3 23 February 1926
I cannot make it out - here is the most difficult abstract piece of writing - I have to give an empty house, no people's characters, the passage of time, all eyeless & featureless with nothing to cling to; well, I rush at it, & at once scatter out two pages. Is it nonsense, is it brilliance? Why am I so flown with words, & apparently free to do exactly what I like?68

Lily's picture is represented as a long and painful process of reconciliation with the past and the dead which takes over a decade to complete, since "one got nothing by soliciting urgently." (TTL 184)

In the Introduction and First Chapter, I indicated that Hélène Cixous's problematisation of the socially determined basis of language can often preclude a liberating reconceptualisation of gender. One of the alternatives that Cixous considers has been, according to Morag Shiach, "the transgressive potential of painting as a form of representation" where painting is potentially "a site of representations that challenge the cultural-embeddedness of language."69 Shiach argues:

Again, Cixous sets up an opposition: between the slowness, the necessary deferral, of writing and the rapidity of visual representation.

What is at stake in this 'rapidity', for Cixous, is its power to force the painter outside the secure boundaries of the self, outside the categories of cultural expectation and cliche.70

In what amounts to a reverse process of this contention, where the rapidity of Woolf's writing fulfills what Cixous argues painting can do, Lily's painting allows her to challenge traditional iconographic imagery by representing mother and child as a purple triangular shadow. But in order to do this, Lily herself has to negotiate a position of otherness where what it means, culturally, to "be a woman" has no significance, "subduing all her impressions as a woman to something much more general" (TTL 49). But how does this connect with gender, writing and war?

68 D Vol 3 18 April 1926
69 Morag Shiach Hélène Cixous. A Politics of Writing Shiach cites Cixous's essay "Le dernier tableau ou le portrait de Dieu" (The Final Painting or the Portrait of God) p34
70 ibid. p35
Struggling with the limits of representation, significant (or "meaningful") cultural representation is elided in both the words of Mrs McNab's song and the mother-child representation in Lily's painting. Just as Lily’s painting evacuates the social context of the immediate implications of Mrs Ramsay's interaction with James as well as the wider socio-sexual ramifications that the text deals with, so Mrs McNab's elegy similarly eschews what is actually unrepresentable. Recognisable cultural representations of femininity have to be transcended since the female body has to be renegotiated beyond the boundaries of the war-time and the post-war landscape. But it is the rapidity that, Cixous argues, forces the painter "outside the secure boundaries of the self" that is at once belied and affirmed in the speed of the narrative development in To the Lighthouse. In order for Lily to be able to paint, she must occupy an unspecified transcendent region that is not dependent on her culturally prescribed identity - she has to reconceptualise herself. When she "occupies" this spatial otherness, she can refigure Mrs Ramsay's significance not as a powerful or even bountiful matriarch, but as an integral structural feature necessary to the proportions of her painting.

Helping Belgian refugees in the Palais des Fêtes, May Sinclair outlines the near impossibility of producing a significant form to express the suffering that she sees around her:

They tell you that when darkness comes down on all this there is hell. But you do not believe it. You can see nothing sordid and nothing ugly here. The scale is too vast. Your mind refuses this coupling of infamy with transcendent sorrow. It rejects all images but the one image of desolation which is final and supreme. It is as if these forms had no stability and no significance of their own; as if they were locked together in one immense body and stirred and slept as one.71

Lily's negotiation of herself outside her body to facilitate her vision, is reiterated in the vision of Mrs McNab: "As for the watchers, the preachers,

71 May Sinclair A Journal of Impressions in Belgium p62
the souls who had those spirits who, in sleep, had left their bodies, & dreamed of some communion, of grasping the hand of a sharer..." (MS 178/227) The dream of communion is precisely Lily's dream: she desires not only to identify with Mrs Ramsay but to be one with her:

What art was there, known to love or cunning, by which one pressed through into those secret chambers? What device for becoming, like waters poured into one jar, inextricably the same, one with the object one adored? Could the body achieve it, or the mind, subtly mingling in the intricate passages of the brain? or the heart? Could loving, as people called it, make her and Mrs Ramsay one? for it was not knowledge but unity that she desired, not inscriptions on tablets, nothing that could be written in any language known to men, but intimacy itself, which is knowledge, she had thought, leaning her head on Mrs Ramsay's knee. (TTL 47)

Yet Lily also represents the antithesis of what Mrs Ramsay wants even as she desires unity with her: Mrs Ramsay thinks Lily should marry, whereas Lily resolutely wishes to stay single, seeing marriage as a form of dilution: "For at any rate, she said to herself, catching sight of the salt cellar on the pattern, she need not marry, thank Heaven: she need not undergo that degradation. She was saved from that dilution. She would move the tree rather more to the middle." (TTL 95) To the Lighthouse engages with a dialectic of impossibility. Lily cannot "be one" with Mrs Ramsay, but her creativity is sustained by exactly that desire:

Nothing happened. Nothing! Nothing! as she leant her head against Mrs Ramsay’s knee. And yet, she knew knowledge and wisdom were stored in Mrs. Ramsay's heart. How then, she had asked herself, did one know one thing or another about people, sealed as they were? (TTL 47-8)

When Lily begins the painting again, after the war, an abdication of the social self is the precondition for the execution of the painting: "Always (it was in her nature, or in her sex, she did not know which) before she exchanged the fluidity of life for the concentration of painting she had a few moments of nakedness when she seemed like an unborn soul, a soul reft of body, hesitating on some windy pinnacle and exposed
without protection to all the blasts of doubt." (TTL 151) This symbolic moment of rebirth also recalls Cixous's prescription for a liberating and necessary self-reinvention: "they must invent new beginnings, remove themselves from the fixed categories and identities they have inhabited, explore the 'third body': which is neither the inside nor the outside, but the space between." For the leitmotif of doubt that recurs in this text arises from Charles Tansley's gibe: "women can't paint, women can't write." If Lily's status as a woman is the guarantee of her inability to paint or write, then it is clearly vital that, within the patriarchal structures which Tansley represents, she must negotiate another way of approaching her painting and negotiating her identity.

Daniel Ferrer argues:

This execution of the painting is stretched out, beyond all probability, over a period of more than ten years. To be more precise, there is a break in the execution, and into the void there sneaks loss, absence, death, which all come to break the canvas's desperately compact surface, causing the painting to explode outside its frame and the representation outside its limits.

Ferrer's analysis of the post-war painting which includes the ever extending boundaries of the frame, is also, perhaps even more so, true of the pre-war painting, however: the complex narrative techniques that Woolf felt she had perfected in this text ("Yet I have no idea yet of any other [novel] to follow it: which may mean that I have made my method perfect...") reveal other levels of consciousness that provide layer on layer of context and subtext which constantly re-tell Lily's painting and the narrative itself.

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72 Cited in Shiach op.cit p26
74 D Vol 3 23 November 1926
Even though Lily recognises at the dinner that Mrs Ramsay pities men because they "lack something," it is Mr Ramsay who is necessary for the completion of her painting after the war:

For whatever reasons she could not achieve that razor edge of balance between two opposite forces; Mr Ramsay and the picture; which was necessary. There was something perhaps wrong with the design? Was it, she wondered, that the line of the wall wanted breaking, was it that the mass of trees was too heavy? She smiled ironically; for had she not thought, when she began, that she had solved her problem?" (TTL 184)

Just as the structural dimensions of Lily's painting are reflected in the structure of the text (the central line in the middle of the canvas solves Lily's problems of perspective as "Time Passes" is the corridor joining two blocks) so Lily's negotiation with Mr Ramsay was precisely what concerned Woolf as she was writing To the Lighthouse: "The problem is how to bring Lily & Mr R[amsay]. together & make a combination of interest at the end." 75

Recognising her feelings of loss for Mrs Ramsay, Lily moves to the edge of the lawn and decides that she wants Mr Ramsay in order to complete her painting:

And as if she had something she must share, yet could hardly leave her easel, so full her mind was of what she was thinking, of what she was seeing, Lily went past Mr. Carmichael holding her brush to the edge of the lawn. Where was that boat now? Mr Ramsay? She wanted him. (TTL 192)

Elizabeth Abel argues that:

The symbolic association with war with the developmental turn from feminine to masculine dispensations will be more clearly marked in To the Lighthouse, whose divisive central section conflates Mrs Ramsay's death with the violence of world war, splitting the novel into disjunct portions presided over separately by mother and father. 76

75 D Vol 35 September 1926
76 Elizabeth Abel Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis p41
In order to paint her picture, I argue, Lily has to occupy an unspecified transcendent otherness which does not impinge upon the social limitations of her gender. In the final section, when Mr Ramsay demands praise and capitulation from Lily, both Mr Ramsay and Lily herself, think of her as being dehumanised:

[T]here issued from him such a groan that any other woman in the whole world would have done something, said something - all except myself, thought Lily, girding at herself bitterly, who am not a woman, but a peevish, ill-tempered, dried-up old maid presumably. (TTL 144-5)

Still Lily said nothing. (She is a stock, she is a stone, he said to himself). (TTL 145)

A woman, she had provoked this horror; a woman, she should have known how to deal with it. It was immensely to her discredit sexually, to stand there dumb. One said - what did one say? (TTL 146)

What seems significant is that, pre-war and post-war, Lily Briscoe's awareness of her self-image has not changed. The war appears to have done nothing for either Lily's self-esteem or the fact that she is still haunted by Tansley's taunt that women can't paint. For if Lily is still painting, and women can't paint, does that mean that she is not, after all, a woman? Yet in the final section, after the war, after the death of Mrs Ramsay, Lily does complete her picture.

Why should Lily feel that she needs Mr Ramsay in order to paint her picture of Mrs Ramsay? Spivak argues that Lily uses men: Paul Rayley, William Bankes, Charles Tansley, but most of all, she uses Mr Ramsay in order to complete her painting. As Lily wonders what Mr Ramsay will take to the lighthouse, she reconsiders a compositional difficulty:

The grey-green light on the wall opposite. The empty places. Such were some of the parts, but how bring them together? she asked. As if any interruption would break the frail shape she was building on
the table she turned her back to the window lest Mr. Ramsay should see her. (TTL 141)

Lily's need to escape acts as mnemonic aid as she remembers:

When she had sat there last ten years ago there had been a little sprig or leaf pattern on the table-cloth, which she had looked at in a moment of revelation. There had been a problem about a foreground of a picture. Move the tree to the middle, she had said. She had never finished that picture. It had been knocking about in her mind all these years. She would paint that picture now. (TTL 141)

The most random selection of memory but also the pre-eminence of design and structure are the inspirations that lead Lily to repaint her original picture, of Mrs Ramsay, although significantly, James Ramsay is no longer there as his father guiltily makes up for the trip that never happened ten years earlier. Somebody happens to sit in the window, casting a familiar shadow:

Mercifully, whoever it was stayed still inside; had settled by some stroke of luck so as to throw an odd-shaped triangular shadow over the step. It altered the composition of the picture a little. It was interesting. It might be useful. (TTL 191)

But it is not just Mr Ramsay and the memory of Mrs Ramsay which combine to produce Lily's painting: Mrs McNab makes a fleeting appearance as the washerwoman who contributes to what Lily thinks of as "some comon feeling which held the whole together." (TTL 183) Yet "she could not achieve that razor edge of the balance between two opposite forces; Mr Ramsay and the picture; which was necessary." (TTL 184) Once again, the structure of the text (how to do Lily and Mr R and make a combination at the end) is implicated in the narrative development as Lily remembers Mrs Ramsay before the war and James remembers the scene which Lily painted originally (although he does not recognise it as such):

For in one moment if there was no breeze, his father would slap the covers of his book together, and say: "What's happening now? What are we dawdling about here for, eh?" as, once before he had brought his blade down among them on the terrace and she had
gone stiff all over, and if there had been an axe handy, a knife, or anything with a sharp point he would have seized it and struck his father through the heart. His mother had gone stiff all over, and then, her arm slackening, so that he felt she listened to him no longer, she had risen somehow and gone away and left him there, impotent, ridiculous, sitting on the floor grasping a pair of scissors. (TTL 177)

Just as Lily reconceptualises her painting minus James, so the narrative draws the two moments together. Lily draws her line down the centre of the painting as Mr Ramsay, Cam and James arrive at the lighthouse. At that moment, at the climax of the text, Lily has her vision. "It would be satisfying to be able to end here" says Spivak, but she has to ask: "Is she in fact androgynous, self-sufficient?" Self-sufficiency as a corollary to androgyny is a nice idea, but the answer to Spivak's question rests, perhaps, on the body of criticism that has formed in response to the androgynous writing mind of A Room of One's Own and which has seized upon Lily Briscoe as the representative of such a mind.

A popular critical consensus about To the Lighthouse has regarded Mr and Mrs Ramsay as representative of "the opposing poles of the novel," figuring "principles" of masculinity and femininity. Lily Briscoe, in such an analysis, is a mediating figure of "androgyny" who stands somewhere between the binary couple. Such a reading of Lily as being somehow "androgynous" carries the same problematic proviso indicated in the Introduction and Chapter Two, namely that "androgyny" is made to work as though it is unquestionably ontological, that is, that androgyny entails a specific mode of "being." Toril Moi's attempt to

77 Gayatri Spivak p42
78 Harold Fromm "To the Lighthouse Music and Sympathy" English Miscellany 19 (1968) p190
79 See for example Jack F Stewart "Color in To the Lighthouse" Twentieth Century Literature 31:4 1985 pp438-58 Annis Pratt "Sexual Imagery in To the Lighthouse: A New Feminist Approach" Modern Fiction Studies 18:3 1972 And see Carolyn Heilbrun for a different approach: "Mrs Ramsay, far from androgynous or complete [is] as one-sided and life-denying as her husband." Towards a Recognition of Androgyny p155; Virginia R Hyman To the Lighthouse and Beyond: Transformations in the Narratives of Virginia Woolf p150; Susan Dick Virginia Woolf p53

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rescue Woolf from Elaine Showalter's critique of Woolfian androgyny still follows the tradition of reading the Ramsays within a binary structure with Lily as a mediator who deconstructs the opposition. Useful (and timely) as Moi's rescue was, her analysis still makes some troubling assumptions:

To the Lighthouse illustrates the destructive nature of a metaphysical belief in strong, immutably fixed gender identities - as represented by Mr and Mrs Ramsay - whereas Lily Briscoe (an artist) represents the subject who deconstructs this opposition, perceives its pernicious influence and tries as far as is possible in a still rigidly patriarchal order to live as her own woman, without regard for the crippling definitions of sexual identity to which society would have her conform. It is in this context that we must situate Woolf's crucial concept of androgyny.\textsuperscript{80}

To describe Lily as living "as her own woman" is to discount and gloss over the specific cultural changes effected by the First World War: "[I]n every sphere - political, social, economic, moral - the effect of the war years was to change the entire outlook for women" argued Mary Hamilton.\textsuperscript{81}

Of all Woolf's "war writing," To the Lighthouse offers us the most comprehensive account of the complicated relation between the artist, art and gender in the pre-war, war-time and post-war eras. No other text written by Woolf (apart from The Years) documents the significant schism that separates the traditionally perceived age of innocence from the birth of the modern.

\textsuperscript{80} Toril Moi \textit{Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory}. London and New York, 1988, p13

\textsuperscript{81} Mary Agnes Hamilton "Changes in Social Life" (pp231-285) in \textit{Our Freedom and Its Results by Five Women} (1936) ed. Ray Strachey London, 1936, p246 And see Claire Tylee "Whilst many young men saw the war as an opportunity to prove their manhood, women argued over it as the opportunity to demonstrate what womanhood was." \textit{The Great War and Women's Consciousness} p37
Chapter Four

An age of neurasthenia, impotence and easy chairs: Virginia Woolf and the First World War

Peace must be alive; a vital, intricate, intense, difficult thing. No negation: not the absence of war.¹

"What difference does the war make, after all - to ordinary people? I believe the fact that it, so to speak, doesn't, is going to settle the destiny of this country."²

"The war is putting an end to sordidness and littleness, in literature as in other spheres of human life. The second-rate, the unheroic, the earthy, the petty, the trivial - how does it look now, seen in the light of the guns that blaze over Flanders?"³

In Cyril Falls' 1930 bibliography of the First World War, he and his three other (male) compilers included, within its eleven pages, just two books written by women.⁴ The bibliography was not only representative of attitudes that defined the First World War, it also recreated ideologies which excluded women as "authentic" commentators of the 1914-1918 years and their aftermath. Historical narratives of war were organised to reflect and privilege masculine experience: "masculinity in 1918 was manifested in two ways," argues Samuel Hynes, "in heterosexuality, and in war."⁵ Field Marshall Haig's reservations about journalistic reports of war were located in a fear that the popular image of war as the

² Rose Macaulay ibid. p149
³ ibid. p69 This is cited in a text invented by Macaulay in Non-Combatants: "The Effects of War on Literature" There is no record of this text in British Library Catalogues
⁴ The War 1914-1918 A Booklist Edmund Blunden, Cyril Falls, HM Tomlinson and R Wright. Repr. from The Reader, London The two books were The Irish Nuns at Ypres by M Columban (1915) and Satan the Waster by Vernon Lee (Violet Paget) (1920) Clare Tylee lists 49 women writers who, she believes, contributed significant work in response to the first world war see Tylee Appendix I. She also points out that Falls failed to list Mary Hamilton's Dead Yesterday, Rose Macaulay's Non-Combatants and Others and Rose Allatini's (AT Fizroy) Despised and Rejected. The Great War and Women's Consciousness p128
⁵ Samuel Hynes A War Imagined The First World War and English Culture London, 1990, p234
endorsement of masculinity would be undermined by sceptical non combatant writers and readers alike. To Philip Gibbs he suggested that the war correspondents appointed by the government wanted to "get hold of little stories of heroism, and so forth, and to write them up in a bright way to make good reading for Mary Ann in the kitchen and the man in the street." His use of the name Mary Ann, popular slang for homosexual, suggested a connection between the non combatant and, in Haig's version at least, effeminate homosexuality: war writing really had to be the ultimate boys own story. Why?

By the time that Falls et al had produced their eleven page bibliography, Virginia Woolf had produced all but one of her texts that dealt directly and significantly with the events of and after 1914-1918. She had written her own version of these events, that is to say, whilst the prevailing ideologies and existing "authorised" texts provided the plots of history from which she had been excluded. As late as 1937, after publication of The Years Woolf still felt able to write to Stephen Spender, "I couldnt bring in the Front as you say partly because fighting isn't within my experience, as a woman..."

I argued, at the end of Chapter Two, that Woolf was engaged in a consistent project which was manifested in a series of overlapping texts, beginning with the "Jessamy Brides" and ending with Three Guineas: one new development in narrative form and technique evolved after and out of another. But there is also a discernible political project evident in the genealogy of these texts that, as I argue in Chapter Five, arose from a latency that during the 1930s was, for Woolf, both sexual and political. As

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6 Philip Gibbs Realities of War London 1920 p24 Gibbs was himself a government appointed war correspondent.
7 See also Mildred Aldrich's A Hilltop on the Marne where she compares women with the unfit: "the irregular [transport] service must continue until women, and men unfit for military service, replace the men so suddenly called to the flag..." p67
8 VW to Stephen Spender April 30 1937 L Vol VI
Woolf’s ambivalence about developing a keener political edge to her writing developed, and as European politics and the threat of another war gradually pervaded daily life, Woolf’s war writing took on an increasingly conservative agenda in a very specific way. For whilst her indictments of the ramifications of patriarchy were acute, her attempt to provide solutions to the problems raised by patriarchy was continually invested in the same figure: the trope of androgyny. This chapter engages with Virginia Woolf’s attempts to write about post-war constructions of masculinity and femininity, and it addresses the ambiguities, or inconsistencies, in her thinking about the relationships between gender, sex and politics. Because Woolf reconstructed war as an unstable category, the ramifications of this instability were radically significant. For war was no longer the event that affirmed masculine valour or prowess: everyone could be "in" the war. The "home front" was as susceptible to bombardment as the Western Front: over two million civilians were killed during the 1914-1918 years.

Starting from the premise that the First World War shaped modern consciousness and modernity, this chapter investigates how Woolf imaginatively reproduced the origin and ramifications of that consciousness, when, as Claire Tylee argues:

One of the most important myths we have inherited from the Great War was that the experience of battle was incommunicable; you had to have been there. 'Those That Had Been There' formed an

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9 David Craig and Michael Egan estimate that in the First World War, 5% of fatal casualties were civilians. According to their estimates, 41, 435, 000 (or one in forty of the people in the world) were killed in the war (p3), which, according to my estimate, means that 2, 071, 750 civilians were killed. These figures have subsequently increased to 44% in the Second World War, 88% in the Korean War and 91% in the war in Vietnam. Craig and Egan Extreme Situations: Literature and Crisis from the Great War to the Atom Bomb London and Basingstoke, 1979, p1
10 See for example Samuel Hynes A War Imagined pxi Daniel Pick The War Machine The Rationalisation of Slaughter in the Modern Age p195 Paul Fussell The Great War and Modern Memory p11 Claire Tylee The Great War and Women's Consciousness p8
exclusive, quasi-mystical fellowship. Exclusive, naturally, of women."\[^{11}\]

It is my contention that in the post-war decade, Virginia Woolf was deliberately attempting to negotiate the cultural construction of gender identities by reconstructing the site which was, within patriarchal ideology, insistently represented as masculinity par excellence: war. By the time Woolf came to write her final "war text," the 1914-1918 sections of "The Years", it was her own version of history that she reproduced as she reconstructed the boundaries and experiences of war, especially in the manuscript version of "The Years" and its optimistic vision of a reorganisation of sexual and gender difference which would result in a new synthesis of being. She had returned, by the early 1930s, to the version of androgyny that she had first put forward in A Room of One's Own as a corrective to masculine abuses of political authority.

From 1917 until 1920, Woolf was quite casual about her inclusion of the war years in her shorter fiction: experiment and innovation with narrative was privileged over writing about war. The war was entirely and, according to Katherine Mansfield, lamentably absent from her second novel, Night and Day (1919). From 1922 until 1937, Woolf returned to the First World War in Jacob's Room, (1922) Mrs Dalloway, (1925) To the Lighthouse, (1927) A Room of One's Own, (1929) and The Years (1937). Between them, Woolf negotiates the pre-war (Jacob's Room, To the Lighthouse, The Years) and the post-war years (Mrs Dalloway, A Room of One's Own, The Years). When Woolf confronts (in To the Lighthouse and The Years) the 1914-1918 years, the years that demarcate the war proper, her account is drenched with metaphor. Although Paul Fussell has argued that "the presumed inadequacy of language itself to convey the facts about trench warfare is one of the motifs of all who wrote about the

\[^{11}\] Claire Tylee  p256
Woolf appears to compensate for this "presumed inadequacy" with the most intricate of rhetorical displays where language is anything but inadequate.

Woolf created five first war soldiers: Jacob and his brother Archer (Jacob's Room), Septimus Warren Smith (Mrs Dalloway), Andrew Ramsay (To the Lighthouse) and in the manuscript drafts of The Years George Pargiter (North Pargiter in the published version. North did not take part in the war). In every case, their experiences are narrated, judged and superseded by women. Betty Flanders "experiences" the war that Jacob fights (and is killed) in, Clarissa Dalloway was conceived as Septimus's double, and she too "experiences" his death at her party. Mrs McNab is the witless hope of regeneration after the war years and the death of the brilliant Andrew Ramsay. Elvira savagely criticises the taciturn George for fighting. (For Crosby, the Pargiter's old family servant the difference between war and peace is all but negligible: "The war was over - so somebody told her as she took her place in the queue at the grocer's shop. The guns went on booming and the sirens wailed." TY 266) If, as Woolf wrote, "The pure essence of either sex is a little disheartening" then she distilled that "pure essence" with the most inspired of strategies.

In Jacob's Room, the text in which Woolf felt she had finally found her voice, she promotes what she calls "fireside art," where she produces exactly "the material world of the domestic":

So we are driven back to see what the other side means - the men in clubs and Cabinets - when they say that character-drawing is a frivolous fireside art, a matter of pins and needles, exquisite outlines enclosing vacancy, flourishes, and mere scrawls. (JR 151)

Woolf proposes that it is better to have "fireside art" than battles, death and war, better to have the letters of Mrs Jarvis, representative of "the
unpublished works of women, written by the fireside in pale profusion...” (JR 85) than the "marble heads" and dyspeptic men of Whitehall who casually determine the course of history:

and then the sixteen gentlemen, lifting their pens or turning perhaps rather wearily in their chairs, decreed that the course of history should shape itself this way or that way, being manfully determined, as their faces showed, to impose some coherency upon Rajahs and Kaisers and the muttering in bazaars, the secret gatherings plainly visible in Whitehall, of kilted peasants in Albanian uplands; to control the course of events. (JR 169)

"If we meditate for a while on the sexual implications of the Great War," argue Gilbert and Gubar, "we must certainly decide, to begin with, that it is a classic case of the dissonance between official, male-centred history and unofficial female history..."14 The First World War "meant" more to some women writers than trench warfare as their narratives displaced male-centred accounts of "history". Mildred Aldrich's A Hilltop on the Marne (1915) anticipates the horror of the war: "It will be the bloodiest affair the world has ever seen - a war in the air, a war under the sea as well as on it, and carried out with the most effective man-slaughtering machines ever used in battle."15 The effects of these technological developments resulted in the sinking of the Lusitania16 and the zeppelin raids which ensured that civilians were also potential casualties in the new global dimensions of war. The static, immobile nature of trench warfare, the site of the meaningful action of the war was superseded by the way in which "war" was constantly relocated. For war continued to extend its boundaries, in effect and in language. May Sinclair, like Philip Gibbs an

14 Gilbert and Gubar No Man's Land p262
15 Mildred Aldrich A Hilltop on the Marne London, 1915, p41
16 The "Lusitania" was a civilian cruise ship, sunk on 7 May 1915. For an account of the events that led to the attack and the subsequent abandonment of peace talks see David Lloyd George's War Memoirs Volume I, London, 1934, pp399-400. See also Samuel Hynes A War Imagined "If such things could happen, then everyone was in the war, everyone was a potential casualty. One might argue that twentieth century war really began in the spring of 1915, when the Lusitania went down and the first bomb fell from a zeppelin on London..." p100
"authorised onlooker of war," wrote from Belgium in 1915: "I am going straight into the horror of war. For all I know it may be anywhere here, behind this sentry; or there, beyond that line of willows." The war was fought along 25,000 miles of trenches "equal to a trench sufficient to circle the earth." Yet it was also, according to Sinclair, lurking secretly and quietly in tiny spaces. For Eleanor in the manuscripts of "The Years", war was something you could remember or forget: "She had forgotten the war completely. Now here it was again..." (Y Vol V 57) A war which had cost the allies over five million men also meant the "partial reappearance of things. Sugar cakes, currant buns, & mounds of sweets. The effect of war," wrote Woolf, "would be worth describing..." Mary Rinehart is particularly persistent about defining what war is not, and more exhaustively, what war is:

War is not two great armies meeting in a clash and frenzy of battle. It is much more than that. War is a boy carried on a stretcher, looking up at God's blue sky with bewildered eyes that are too soon to close; war is a woman carrying a child that has been wounded by a shell; war is spirited horses tied in burning buildings and waiting for death; war is the flower of a race, torn, battered, hungry, bleeding to its knees in icy water; war is an old woman burning a candle before the Mater Dolorosa for the son she has given. For King and Country!

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17 May Sinclair A Journal of Impressions in Belgium p12
18 Fussell op.cit. p37
19 Fussell "The war had cost the Central Powers three and a half million men. It had cost the Allies over five million." op.cit. p18
20 D Vol I 12 July 1919
21 Mary Rinehart Kings Queens and Pawns: An American Woman at the Front New York, 1915, pp6-7 Rinehart elsewhere redefines war: "The war is a series of incidents with no beginning and no end. The veil lifts for a moment and drops again." p66 and "War is not moving pawns in a game; it is a struggle of quivering flesh and agonised nerves, of men fighting and dying for ideals." p282 "War is a thing of fearful and curious anomalies. It has shown that humane units may comprise a brutal whole; that civilisation is a shirt over a coat of mail." p366 See also Daniel Pick who produces a similar list: "War is born from the womb of the state. War is the testing ground of virility but it disturbingly produces 'feminine' hysteria amongst the men. War is either very good or very bad for racial reproduction. War is the mechanical human beast. War is the runaway train upon which interminable crimes of passion are committed. War erupts from a secret French steel tube thrusting out beneath the sea and henceforth England is no longer virginal." pp2-3
Rinehart’s multiple accounts mobilise versions of war which render military strategy (or mayhem) superfluous. War is many things, but it is "not great armies meeting in a clash and frenzy of battle" although Daniel Pick points out that the etymological root of "war" indicates that it is exactly that: it "takes us back to the old high German werra , meaning confusion, discord, strife." Nonetheless, Rinehart’s defining account overflows boundaries that inscribe masculinity and battle. Implicit in Rinehart’s account is a disavowal of the complementary pairing of the endorsement of masculinity in war. Such a rejection indicates a developing crisis in accounts of war as an expression of masculinity and a recognition of the instability of the construction of masculinity and war. Daniel Pick writes:

War is rejected by [William] James but in the name of a kind of phallic index of culture, an endorsement of a militarised peace which must remain our biological and cultural inheritance...James interestingly questions the divide between 'peace' and 'war' in ways that might usefully lead us to question the very periodisation of the 1914-1918 disaster.  

If war serves as an omnipresent "phallic index of culture" which guarantees masculinity, then that masculinity is increasingly undermined by technological developments that extend the boundaries of war, rendering superfluous those individual acts of heroism that traditionally bolster masculinity. Olive Schreiner, writing after the Boer War comments:

Time was when the size and strength of the muscles in a man's legs and arms, and the strength and size of his body, largely determined his fighting powers...to-day the puniest mannikin behind a modern Maxim gun may mow down in perfect safety a phalanx of heroes whose legs and arms and physical powers a Greek god might have

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22 Daniel Pick The War Machine p7 The OED also lists "to bring into confusion" and to confuse as the etymological root. "War" is defined as "The state of (usu. open and declared) armed conflict between nations or states; armed hostilities between nations or States, or between parties in the same nation or State; the employment of armed forces against a foreign power, or against an opposing party in the State."

23 Pick op. cit. p18
envied, but who, having not the modern machinery of war, fall powerless.  

By 1914, developments in the "war machine" ensured an increasingly dysfunctional relationship between war and the endorsement of valorous masculinity. Schreiner argued that men and women had different investments in war: "she knows the history of human flesh; she knows its cost; he does not." But only with the assurance of political equality, Schreiner argued, would war as the province of sexual difference and human differences cease: "On that day, when the woman takes her place beside the man in the governance and arrangement of external affairs of her race will also be that day that heralds the death of war as a means of arranging human differences."  

Woolf was less explicitly pragmatic than Schreiner, although she reiterated exactly Schreiner's belief. Although she expressed the hope to Margaret Llewellyn Davies that "some vigorous young woman" would put an end to war, her final war writing, particularly in the manuscripts of "The Years", rested on a vision of sexual equality engendered not through women's equal participation in public life, but through a mystical and unquantifiable union of man and woman. War and the "battle" for the

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24 Schreiner Woman and Labour London, 1911, p41 The Boer War was fought between 1899-1902. And see Gilbert and Gubar: "For four years ... a sizeable percentage of the young men in England had been imprisoned in trenches and uniforms, while the young women of England had been at liberty in farm and factory. Paradoxically, the war to which so many men had gone in the hope of becoming heroes ended up emasculating them, confining them as closely as any Victorian woman had been confined. As if to acknowledge this, doctors noted that ... "the symptoms of shell-shock were precisely the same as those of the most common hysterical disorders of peace time, though they often acquired new and more dramatic names in war ... what had been predominantly a disease of women before the war became a disease of men in combat." "No Man's Land" p318
25 Schreiner Woman and Labour p173 And see pp169-70
26 Schreiner ibid. pp170-1
27 VW to Margaret Llewellyn Davies L Vol II 23 January 1916 And see Eleanor in the manuscripts of "The Years": "she had an uneasy feeling that she, at any rate, knew that something was wrong. And yet she did nothing. She had no strong convictions. She got up she went out, she did this & that; often she forgot about the war for hours together But then, she thought And it was for that reason that there was war. If she as a girl had always read the papers; if she had followed the course of politics; if she had twenty years ago formed a society & headed a procession & gone to Whitehall, & said, if you dont stop what you're doing. A ridiculous thought!" "The Years" Vol V p58
franchise on equal terms with men, along with educational and professional rights were issues that were actually complicated by conflicting ideological positions. "The fear of being antipatriotic haunted the National Union [of Women's Suffrage Societies] and influenced its behaviour" argues Susan Kingsley Kent. Millicent Garrett Fawcett saw one of the effects of the war as the effacement of sexual differences which, pre-war, had been marked out by a series of hegemonic relations. Fawcett's vision was to "see an England where the old enmities and suspicions shall be assuaged and supplanted by a better mutual understanding between class and class, party and party, employers and employed, sex and sex, Irish Nationalists and Irish Unionists." Kingsley Kent argues: "[Fawcett's] emphasis on unity elided her conviction that if suffragists refused to accept the vote on the terms set forth by the Speaker's Conference, the cohesion of the country would break down, and women would be held responsible for renewing and perpetuating the conflict between the sexes." For this reason, Kingsley Kent argues, women capitulated to masculine reluctance to grant them the franchise without any restrictions, accepting, in the end, a compromise: the franchise was given to married women over the age of 30. And after the war, the hope that sexual equality could have been possible was shattered: "Dichotomization, polarization, and conflict became the models through which political, social, literary, artistic, sexual, and psychological experience was lived." But what has the Irish question to do with the woman question?

28 Susan Kingsley Kent Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain p94
29 Millicent Garrett Fawcett, cited in Susan Kingsley Kent p94
30 ibid. p95 And see also Kent pp106-7 She argues that sexologists like Fischer and Dubois invoked parallels between war and the "warring" relations between men and women.
31 ibid. p102
The extant manuscripts of "The Years" (1932-1934) are valuable sources that fill in the otherwise unusual gap in Woolf's output during the 1930s, between the publication of The Waves in 1931 and The Years in 1937. Whilst Woolf continued to indict the loss of life suffered during the First World War, she began to try to find a solution that would end war altogether, a solution that she relayed through the mystical speculations of a racial and sexual outsider: the homosexual Polish Jew, Nicholas Pomjalsky. In the earlier sections of this text, however, (Volume III of the manuscripts, the 1880 and 1891 sections of The Years) Delia Pargiter is shown to fantasise about political agency and a love affair with the leader of the Irish Nationalists, Charles Stewart Parnell.

In the first chapter, I argued that Woolf introduced androgyny as a figure that would temper what she saw as the excesses of militant feminism and male sexuality. The holograph version of "The Years", originally The Pargiters, was written as part of her sequel to A Room of One's Own. It was the beginning of her plan to write about the sexual life of women. Much of the original material is edited out of the published version which means that the context of Delia's sexual fantasy is often elided. For apart from a brief foray into her fantasy of standing by Parnell's side on a public platform, in the published version, Delia's passion for Parnell acquires a rather sudden and unprepared for importance in the 1891 section when Eleanor sees news of Parnell's death:

She must go to Delia. Delia had cared. Delia had cared passionately. What was it she used to say - flinging out of the house, leaving them all for the Cause, for this man? Justice, Liberty? She must go to her. This would be the end of all her dreams. (TY 97)

32 Ray Sargent looks at Bert Parker and thinks: "They'll get you one of these fine days...You'll be floating in the North Sea one of these days - What for? What for what for? He had said the same thing ev many thousand times since the 4th of August." “The Years” Vol V p51
33 Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-1891) who, as leader of the Irish Nationalists, fought for Home Rule in Ireland.
In Part Two of Volume III of the manuscripts, Delia fulfills at least one ambition: she does go to Ireland, her political interest is more than just a dream.

In Volume III, which still corresponds with the 1880 section of *The Years*, Delia, sitting with her dying mother, exemplifies the repressions at work in the uneducated, unmarried, middle-class woman's life: "as she sat there she felt a bar of iron laid across her. She was only twenty two. And yet as she sat there it seemed to her that she was a full of energy, full of power." (Y Vol III 40) (In the manuscript versions of "The Years" Delia is much more clearly aligned with her cousin, Kitty Malone, whose sexual frustrations I discuss in Chapter Five.) As she sits with her mother, Delia finally yields to her fantasy which gives her a sense of sexual agency as a result of her political affiliations. She had first seen Parnell from the Ladies Gallery in the House of Commons, which had prompted her obsession with him. Sex, in Delia's mind, is indistinguishable from politics:

after that she had read every debate in order to follow his career.
She had cut out pictures of him. She had read books upon Ireland.
She was now a fanatical (?) Home Ruler. (Y Vol III 43)

It was the only of [sic] sitting still by her mother's side - to imagine herself haranguing a vast crowd: who, at first horrible were in the end convinced - or did they throw stones at her? Anyhow at that moment Mr Parnell appeared... It was too silly, too silly she told herself. (Y Vol III 44)

Woolf then rewrites the fantasy where Delia is the centre of personal rather than party political interest. Part Two of Volume III of the manuscripts corresponds with the 1891 section of the published text, a

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34 Woolf includes two "part twos" in Volume III. The first part two is dated Sunday March 19 and is the equivalent of the 1891 section. The second part two is dated April 3 and corresponds with the 1907 section, although it is dated 1902 in the manuscript. Volume III was written between February 26 1933 and June 18 1933. Towards the end of Volume III, Woolf began the equivalent of what would become the 1908 section, a section which is also dated 18 June.
section in which Parnell dies. Colonel Pargiter, Delia's father goes to visit his sister-in-law, Eugénie. Together they discuss the death of Parnell:

"Poor thing!" she exclaimed, letting it [her flower] fall. "Poor thing?" he repeated. Her eyes were full of tears. He was puzzled. Did she mean Kitty O'Shea? He hadn't thought of her. (Y Vol III 97)

Sex and politics clearly work as mutually exclusive agents as they are separately considered by Eugénie and Colonel Pargiter. Parnell's downfall was engineered through his scandalous affair with Kitty O'Shea\textsuperscript{35} which, when the scandal broke, terminated his political career: unimpeachable sexual morality was (and is) the safeguard for a life in politics. Only in Delia's fantasies can the two identities merge: her political sympathies give her a sexual identity but in 1880 and in 1891 they could only ever be fantasies: Victorian ideologies that insisted upon chastity for women also rendered women politically disabled. Although Woolf used Delia's fantasies as a way of indicting late Victorian patriarchal society for the sexual and political sanctions it placed on women, the political ramifications of the Irish and the "woman question" are seen in sexual-political embryo in the 1880 and 1891 sections of "The Years" in both manuscript and published form. If androgyny was a metaphor used to temper sex and politics in A Room of One's Own, it forms an interesting corollary to the political dynamics of the 1914-1918 period, where Irish politics threatened a putative "national unity" and forced a compromise to women's voting rights.

In the manuscripts of The Years, Nicholas argues that nothing will be learnt from the First World War because humanity does not know itself. True maturity, he argues, real self-knowledge, will come from

\textsuperscript{35} Parnell had an adulterous affair with Mrs Kitty O'Shea, which brought about his political downfall. Captain O'Shea named Parnell as co-respondent in the ensuing divorce case. See entry sv Charles Stewart Parnell in M Drabble ed. Oxford Companion to English Literature OUP 1985
developing that otherwise undeveloped potential for wholeness. Charles Ogden and Catherine Marshall had made this point in 1915:

"Men and women are not sufficiently differentiated yet in Burma. It is the mark of a young race. Ethnologists tell us that. In the earliest people the difference was very slight. As a race grows older the difference increases." In time they may even take to war, and learn their deficiencies from the glorious history of Europe.36

The androcentrism of war forges difference: the abolition of war would eradicate difference and result in a new state of sexual harmony. Yet how can a plan for personal development and unity work to suture the differences between men and women when those differences are instituted in politics, professional life, education and so on. Nicholas has the answer. The war has come about, he argues, as a result of sexual division fostered in the nineteenth century:

Eleanor talks of 'education.' The nineteenth century was the age of the specialist. The men were educated in one way; to make money: the women in another, to bear children. The result is the war. (I will explain that later) The war has no meaning because we have not had whatsoever. The war is simply naughty children letting off fireworks in the back garden. (Y Vol V 111)37

What matters, he argues, is

to develop not this faculty which makes money, not that faculty which breeds children: it is to develop the whole soul, the whole being. The whole of this at first rudimentary organism which has in it the seeds of completeness - the human of which we know nothing, or next to nothing. (Y Vol V 111-112)

With the development of the "whole soul", by which he means "all our faculties the soul body & brain (they are mixed)" the need for war will be erased because sexual difference will have been erased.

Woolf was recycling old themes:

36 Ogden and Marshall Militarism Versus Feminism p18 Citation from The Queen's Daughters in India
37 And see Diary Volume 1 20 July 1919 "It was a melancholy thing to see the incurable soldiers lying bed at the Star & Garter with their backs to us, smoking cigarettes, & waiting for the noise to be over. We were children to be amused."
All this pitting of sex against sex, of quality against quality; all this claiming of superiority and imputing of inferiority, belong to the private-school stage of human existence where there are 'sides', and it is necessary for one side to beat another side, and of the utmost importance to walk up to a platform and receive from the hands of the Headmaster himself a highly ornamental pot. (R 101)

The "profound, if irrational, instinct" (R 93) that led Woolf to support the androgynous mind in *A Room of One's Own* was an instinct that she followed in the manuscripts of *The Years*. Although she interrogates how difference was organised and maintained before the war with an eye continuously on the war in *Jacob's Room*, she claimed, in *A Room of One's Own* that the war was responsible not only for establishing a particular construction of difference, but for exposing the illusion of heterosexual "romance" before 1914.38

1914 has become the traditional marker that divides an age of innocence from the birth of the dystopian modern, "the happy, innocent golden age before 1914..." as Leonard Woolf nostalgically reflected.39 Virginia Woolf names this innocence in *A Room of One's Own* as the toleration of sexual relations which the war had exposed as an unjustifiable sham. Sue Roe has argued that Woolf's promotion of androgyny in *A Room of One's Own* was disingenuous since she had already challenged the concept of heterosexual harmony in the failure of the Rayley marriage which Mrs Ramsay had engineered.40 But Woolf had in any case, before she arrived at androgyny in the sixth section of *A Room of One's Own*, indicated the collapse of sexual harmony and compatibility in the first section: the destruction of the sexual idyll, she implies, was wrought not by her own depiction of the Ramsays in 1927, but by the First World War.

38 Although see also Susan Kingsley Kent *Making Peace* Kent argues that the war actually engendered a new language of romance for women who had previously been ignorant of male anatomy and sex pp69-70
39 Leonard Woolf *Beginning Again* p132
40 Sue Roe *Writing and Gender: Virginia Woolf's Writing Practice* p84
In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf argues that the war was responsible for exposing the fallacious stability of a hierarchical society where, broadly (and inaccurately) speaking, romance flourished happily amidst the hegemonies. The war alerts Woolf’s alter ego, Mary Beton, to a new awareness that the relations which contributed to the continuation of the patriarchal status quo were founded on a mendacious premise and as a result, after the war, social structures needed reorganisation and literature needed new subjects that did not depend on the old hetero-social and sexual relations. Having dined, on partridge and wine at a male college, Woolf’s narrator is at first hard pressed to identify the lack she senses when she sees the Manx cat “padding softly along the quadrangle.” (R 13) The cat is emblematic of a difference that marks the post-war from the pre-war world:

Certainly, as I watched the Manx cat pause in the middle of the lawn as if it too questioned the universe, something seemed lacking, something seemed different. But what was lacking, what was different, I asked myself, listening to the talk? And to answer that question I had to think myself out of the room, back into the past, before the war indeed, and to set before my eyes the model of another luncheon party held in rooms not very far distant from these; but different. Everything was different. (R 13)

The difference identified by the narrator is only semi-articulable: difference lies not so much in what people say but in "the murmur of the current" which, pre-war, "would have sounded different..." (R 13) "Could one set that humming noise to words?" Mary Beton asks herself. Conveniently at hand are Tennyson and Christina Rossetti: the humming noise, she discovers, is represented by a dialogue of sexual flirtation and anticipation that, actually, is never realised, and anyway is coded through metaphor and simile: "My heart is like a singing bird...is like an apple tree...is like a rainbow shell..." (R 14) But Mary Beton also discovers that it...

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41 Here, Woolf uses the war as marking a divisive point that represents, as commentators of this period have identified, history as a seamless whole structured around four pivotal years (1914-1918).
is a dialogue that belongs to the past: Tennyson has ceased "to sing" and
Rossetti to "respond" and looking for reasons to explain this lapse in
communication, she asks:

Shall we lay the blame on the war? When the guns fired in August
1914, did the faces of men and women show so plain in each other's
eyes that romance was killed? Certainly it was a shock (to women
in particular with their illusions about education, and so on) to see
the faces of our rulers in the light of the shell-fire. So ugly they
looked - German, English, French - so stupid. But lay the blame
where one will, on whom one will, the illusion which inspired
Tennyson and Christina Rossetti to sing so passionately about the
coming of their loves is far rarer now than then. One has only to
read, to look, to listen, to remember.42 (R 16)

War marks difference from peace and men from women: the literary
sexual dialogue of Tennyson and Rossetti had foundered, and all because
of "this preposterous masculine fiction."43

As I showed in Chapter Three, the relationship between private and
public, family and state, militarism and pacifism, were all connections
made by Woolf and her contemporaries. Yet there is a sense, in her
private writing, that Woolf was tempted to subscribe to what constituted
official or public versions of history. In her diary, she writes about "old
Virginia's" shame at her lack of political comment during the war years:

I have long been meaning to write a historical disquisition on the
return of peace; for old Virginia will be ashamed to think what a
chatterbox she was, always talking about people, never about
politics. Moreover, she will say, the times you lived through were
so extraordinary. They must have appeared so, even to quiet
women living in the suburbs. But indeed nothing happens at one
moment rather than another. The history books will make it much
more definite than it is.44

42 And see Margaret Lawrence The School of Femininity. New York, 1937 She also writes
that after the war "The attitude of the young towards the old and the world they had
made became pointedly and bitterly critical. How had the old got that way? Through
believing in things. Through believing in the romance of things that had no reality. The
way out, then, was obviously not to believe in the romance of things. And what was there
to believe in anyway?" p164
43 VW to Margaret Llewellyn Davies op. cit. L Vol II 23 January 1916
44 D Vol 2 18 February 1921
She did not write "a historical disquisition on the return of peace" but produced, in Lyndall Gordon's words, "a counter-history in which war is not the centre-piece ..., a critique of what histories and newspapers accustom us to define as memorable." Woolf's strategies for revision and redefinition address not just the "memorable" but what constituted:

the masculine point of view which governs our lives, which sets the standard, which establishes Whitaker's Table of Precedency, which has become, I suppose, since the war, half a phantom to many men and women, which soon, one may hope, will be laughed into the dustbin where the phantoms go, the mahogany sideboards and the Landseer prints, Gods and Devils, Hell and so forth, leaving us all with an intoxicating sense of freedom - if freedom exists...

"History in her writing is a matter of textures ..., changing light ..., not of events or 'dominant figures of the age' argues Gillian Beer. And indeed, Woolf's shorter fiction yields evidence that "history," in whatever form it filters through, can be rewritten by renegotiating that "masculine point of view."

When the peace celebrations were in full swing, her work took precedence. Conceptualising the war as a soporific, Woolf records in her diary: "there is revolution, & a kind of partial awakenment, one fancies, on the part of the people to the unreality of the whole affair. Suppose we wake up too? We began to set Kew Gardens this week..." This non sequitur signals not only business as usual, but a reordering of traditionally constructed hegemonies, proof that "nothing happens at one moment rather than another." In her short story "A Society," Woolf questioned the sexual hegemonies that, she was to argue in A Room of One's Own, had seemed stable until the outbreak of the war. In the early

47 Gillian Beer "Virginia Woolf and Prehistory" in Arguing With the Past p161
48 D Vol I 9 November 1918 This is consistent with another entry made on June 10 1919. Woolf wrote that Maynard Keynes was critical of the peace terms of the Versailles Treaty, but the overriding concern is the quantity of orders that she received for "Kew Gardens": "But I must really sing my own praises, since I left off at the point when we came back from Asheham to find the hall table stacked, littered, with orders for Kew Gardens."
years of the war (covered in the time scale of the story) propagandist ideologies marked a divide between good (English) culture and bad (German) kultur. The cartoonist Will Dyson exhibited anti-German cartoons in his London show in 1915, a show which ridiculed everything German: civilisation, professors, science and art. When Mary Beton’s research goes badly in A Room of One’s Own, she expresses her anger with the doodle of Professor Von X. Yet in 1920, "A Society" attacks all patriarchal institutions for their culpability in the exclusion of women from the social, cultural and political institutions of the country. As a representative of the eponymous society, Castalia goes to Oxford to investigate and report on academic activity, and in the course of so doing, encounters Professor Hobkin. On her return, she reports that:

Most of [his work] is a defence of Sappho’s chastity, which some German has denied, and I can assure you the passion with which these two gentlemen argued, the learning they displayed, the prodigious ingenuity with which they disputed the use of some implement which looked to me for all the world like a hairpin astounded me; especially when the door opened and Professor Hobkin himself appeared. A very nice, mild, old gentleman, but what could he know about chastity?49

The German attack, the English defence and the hairpin resonate with all the satirical thrust of Swift’s Big and Little Endians in a debate over female sexuality and creativity. But Woolf also ridicules propagandist discourses in acknowledging German cultural exchange and debate by satirising the scale of the debate. The validity of achievement in any patriarchy which eschews the creative potential of women is scaled down to size in this adroit critique of patriarchal ideologies. Woolf declined to privilege the "masculine fiction," even down to its dénouement over any other topic in her quest for new fictional forms. What available strategy was there for such a progressive quest as Woolf’s that could not embrace exclusive ideologies that circulated around good war or bad war, hero or

49 "A Society" The Complete Shorter Fiction p122
victim, but that (as Katherine Mansfield said) could not ignore the war either? Quite by chance, or so she claimed, Woolf hit upon a new idea for a new form for a new novel:

but conceive mark on the wall, K[ew]. G[ardens]. & unwritten novel taking hands and dancing in unity. What the unity shall be I have yet to discover: the theme is a blank to me; but I see immense possibilities in the form I hit upon more or less by chance 2 weeks ago.50

The form without a theme became Jacob's Room, ultimately a form with so many themes, it became, if anything, a dance of disunity. In Jacob's Room, Woolf negotiated the problem of how to write women into the cultural frame of pre and war time Britain in a post war climate, and of how to write women's narratives into a vacant patriarchal plot.

"One does not," Woof bristled, "want an established reputation, such as I think I was getting, as one of our leading female novelists."51 What she felt she was producing instead was "that queer, & very pleasant sense, of something which I want to write; my own point of view."52 Woolf made this entry whilst she was writing Jacob's Room, her account of pre-war England which ends at an unspecified date during the war. Written from a narrative perspective some years after the war, Jacob's Room is an indictment of patriarchy and war from the vantage point of a female narrator.53 Before Woolf had ironised the ideological equations which associated "manliness" with militarism in Mrs Dalloway, she tried to undermine the mythologies about the war and masculinity by denying Jacob interiority and promoting, by a shift of emphasis, the unrecorded histories of women. In fact, as Sue Roe argues, Jacob's relationships with

50 D Vol 2 26 January 1920
51 D Vol 2 8 April 1921
52 ibid.
53 "Granted ten years' seniority and a difference of sex..." JR p89 See also Barry Morgenstern "The Self-Conscious Narrator in Jacob's Room" Modern Fiction Studies Autumn 1972 Vol 18 no 3 p352 See also Rachel Bowlby Virginia Woolf: Feminist Destinations p112 and Makiko Minow-Pinkney Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject p53 Both affirm that the narrator is female.
women compromise his integrity to such a degree that Woolf produces a highly ambivalent account of the dead soldier, from the way he honours Clara Durrant, the "virgin chained to a rock," to the synecdoche at the end of the text when only Jacob's shoes indicate that he has been killed. Indeed, the real vision lies with the narrator whose narrative includes at least twenty overt references to the war, from the proliferation of war veterans identified by lack of one kind or another, eyeless, fingerless, lame, to the "petals of poppies pressed in silk..." (JR 33) between the pages of Jacob's Greek dictionary and the lamps of London which "uphold the dark as upon the points of burning bayonets." (JR 91) The iconography and rhetoric of the war are brought forward, as it were, and familiarised, from Western to home front. Such strategies of familiarisation erode the effectiveness of jingoistic sentimentality, encoding a decay prevalent in the city, all the way back from battle. They also collapse the separate spheres of the "Two Nations". Claire Tylee says that the propaganda surrounding the theory of the "Two Nations" emphasised difference (rather than confusing it as Gilbert and Gubar argue in No Man's Land) "From 1914-1918," argues Tylee, "propaganda and censorship wedged a mythical rift between 'Those Who Were 'There' on the Western Front and the 'Other nation' on the homefront, alienating young men from young women."54

Yet Jacob's mother gets "there." Half asleep (the condition of war time consciousness for Woolf) Betty Flanders thinks that she can hear the guns in battle. Persuading herself that this is a geographical impossibility (she is in Scarborough: it was55) she invokes instead, a series of familiar images:

54 Clare Tylee op.cit. pp128-9
55 Betty Flanders hears the guns whilst she is in Scarborough, which does indicate a geographical inconsistency. Fussell argues that the guns could only be heard from the south-east coast in Surrey, Sussex and Kent. op.cit. p234
Again, far away, she heard the dull sound, as if nocturnal women were beating great carpets. There was Morty lost, and Seabrook dead; her sons were fighting for their country. But were the chickens safe? Was that someone moving downstairs? Rebecca with the toothache? No. The nocturnal women were beating great carpets. (JR 172)

It is as if, argue Gilbert and Gubar, "the very notion of male combat had released some hidden fury for purification in the wives and mothers who knit and wait on the shore, ... as if the battle itself were a kind of gigantic housecleaning."56 (As indeed it is in "Time Passes"). Very quickly, the simile takes on the status of a reality that substitutes women for combatant soldiers, carpet beating for battle scene, the unfamiliar troped into a familiarity that authenticates Betty Flander’s grasp of events. Does this reproduce, even as it tries to dispel, the limitations of her experience? To enable Betty Flanders to experience the war, can the narrator include only that with which she is familiar? Can Woolf negotiate war writing only by reinforcing traditional constructions of femininity?

In 1919, Freud’s work on the uncanny was first published, four years before Jacob’s Room, although it was not translated into English until 1925. In "The Uncanny," Freud argued that: "an uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality..."57 It is possible that what is imaginary becomes confused with what is real in Mrs Flanders’s experience of combat, thereby erasing the distinction that sustains the opposition "real-imaginary" and producing what Freud described as the "uncanny effect." But what was Freud investigating in this short work? What exactly was the "uncanny"?

56 Gilbert and Gubar No Man’s Land p315
57 Sigmund Freud "The Uncanny" (1919) St. Ed. Vol XVII (1917-1919) p244
In German, uncanny is "unheimlich," the opposite of "heimlich"; the opposition enjoys a linguistic complexity missing in the English translation. For "[H]eimlich is a word," argued Freud, "the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, unheimlich." Before moving onto the ramifications of this ambivalence, I want to first consider Woolf's early intentions for Mrs Dalloway and to briefly consider some critical receptions.

In the First Modern Library Edition (1928) of this text, Woolf took the unusual step of writing a foreword where she offered "useful" comments on her work:

Of Mrs Dalloway then one can only bring to light a few scraps, of little importance or none perhaps; as that in the first version Septimus, who is later intended to be her double, had no existence; and that Mrs Dalloway was originally to kill herself, or perhaps merely to die at the end of the party. Such scraps are offered humbly to the reader in the hope that like other odds and ends they may come in useful.

The "double" had been, she argued, an integral feature of the novel's structure. Woolf had written to Gerald Brenan in 1925: "And this I certainly did mean - that Septimus and Mrs Dalloway should be entirely dependent upon each other - if as you say he "has no function in the book" then of course it is a failure." And yet, in her diary, Woolf was increasingly uncertain about the compatibility of Septimus and Clarissa:

I think I can go straight to the grand party & so end; forgetting Septimus, which is a very intense and ticklish business...

I am driving my way through the mad chapter of Mrs D. My wonder is whether the book would have been better without them.

58 ibid. p226
59 Mrs Dalloway, First Modern Library Edition New York, 1928, pvi
60 Although Daniel Ferrer doubts the authenticity of Woolf's declaration in the 1928 edition. See Virginia Woolf and the Language of Madness p9
61 VW to Gerald Brenan 14 June 1925 L Vol III See also VW to Harmon H Goldstone 19 March 1932 L Vol V. Woolf denies having any knowledge of Freud, but reiterates that Septimus "was invented to complete the character of Mrs Dalloway; I could not otherwise convey my whole meaning about her."
The reviewers will say that it is disjointed because of the mad scenes not connecting with the Dalloway scenes. And I suppose there is some superficial glittery writing.

He [Leonard Woolf] thinks it has more continuity than J[acob]s R[oom], but is difficult owing to the lack of connection, visible, between the two themes.\textsuperscript{62}

This much documented relationship does represent a thorny problem that is rarely addressed, although frequently commented upon. Claire Tylee asks: "How does the novel's field of force relate the suicide of a First World War veteran, a shabby insignificant clerk, to a lady of high society, in such a way that her private response to that suicide forms the climax to the novel?"\textsuperscript{63} Although Tylee doesn't answer her question, it is not unreasonable to suppose that, in one way, Woolf's attempt to collapse the gaping chasm that existed between other society ladies and combatant soldiers in the "climax to the novel," was wholly inappropriate. Cynthia Asquith displayed an acute inability to imaginatively grasp the significance of trench life, as is evidenced from her agile leap from France to London: "The first letter arrived from Beb by the first post. He has plunged straight into the shell theatre and had a very busy day extricating mud-sunk lorries, etc. It was as lovely a day as I have ever seen - enchanted sunlight and daffodils. I wore my new mysterious check skirt."\textsuperscript{64} Mrs Dalloway is, in one way, no more empathetic with Septimus: "Oh! thought Clarissa, in the middle of my party, here's death, she thought." (MD 162) Yet she imagines perfectly well how he died:

> Always her body went through it first, when she was told, suddenly, of an accident; her dress flamed, her body burnt. Up had flashed the

\textsuperscript{62} D Vol 2 15 August 1924; D Vol 2 18 November 1924; D Vol 2 December 13 1924; D Vol 3 6 January 1925;

\textsuperscript{63} Clare Tylee p153

\textsuperscript{64} Cynthia Asquith Diaries 1915-1918 28 April 1915 Beb was her husband, Herbert Asquith, second son of Herbert Asquith, then Prime Minister. The ease with which non-combatants moved between gravitas and triviality is also ridiculed in Rose Macaulay's Non-Combatants and Others (1916) See also Monica Salmond Bright Armour Memories of Four Years of War London 1935 (Woolf also used this text in Three Guineas) which is guilty of the same leaps.
ground; through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes. There he lay with a thud, thud, thud in his brain, and then a suffocation of blackness. So she saw it. But why had he done it? And the Bradshaws talked of it at her party! (MD 163)

Although Woolf shows that Mrs Dalloway imagines better than, say Cynthia Asquith, the announcement of Septimus’s death at her party, is, she also feels, inappropriate. So, perhaps, is her response, which indicates that there can be no understanding between the soldiers and the Dalloways and the Bradshaws: "She felt somehow very like him - the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away while they went on living." (MD 165) If war as combat was impossible to imagine, so were the specific effects of that combat. Vera Brittain commented on her return to England: "From a world in which life or death, victory or defeat, national survival or national extinction, had been the sole issues, I returned to a society where no one discussed anything but the price of butter and the incompetence of the latest "temporary..." Does Woolf’s response to Septimus and Clarissa demonstrate her failure to understand the significance of the 1914-1918 years in post-war life? Had she answered her own question: "was the whole thing too remote & meaningless to come home to one, either in action or in ceasing to act?" Perhaps, in a way, it was. Yet on the other hand, Woolf does work contemporary popular iconography into her text. One of Mary Rinehart's emblems of the war in Kings Queens and Pawns (1915) had been the image of the Mater Dolorosa: "war is an old woman burning a candle before the Mater Dolorosa for the son she has given."

Tylee comments: "In the popular mind the grieving mother/fiancée could idealise her dead or mutilated son/lover as the pierced sacred body, and

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65 Vera Brittain Testament of Youth: An Autobiographical Study of the Years 1900-1925 (1933) London, 1992, p429 See also Robert Graves Goodbye to All That London, 1957: "England looked strange to us returned soldiers. We could not understand the war-madness that ran wild everywhere, looking for a pseudo-military outlet. The civilians talked a foreign language..." pp190-2
66 D Vol 1 9 November 1918
identify herself with the ambiguous Virgin mother." Mrs Dalloway imagines Septimus exactly thus. And more than this: she too shares the distinction enjoyed previously only by the Madonna. For Clarissa Dalloway is the very model of the modern Virgin Mary: "she could not dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet." (MD 26) Whether Woolf was aware of Rinehart's metaphorical reading of war or not, women's discourses of war were also clearly sufficient to form an imaginative foundation that did not rely on "authentic" masculine versions.

In 1939, David Daiches criticised Woolf's conception of the figure of the double in Mrs Dalloway in The Novel and the Modern World: "The themes of time, death and personality that run through Mrs Dalloway as through so many of Mrs Woolf's novels are not in themselves unreal or insignificant; but when a twentieth century novelist tries to present these themes through a picture, however refined, of post-war London society, they may become insignificant or unreal." Just before the Second World War, for Daiches at least, Woolf's strategy of coupling "separate spheres" took on a renewed significance and obvious relevance, and although her representation of Septimus Smith was laudable enough, the doppelgänger instituted in social life after the First World War, was not acceptable. Oddly enough, just after the Second World War, in 1946, John Hawley Roberts praised Mrs Dalloway for the very reasons Daiches had criticised it:

Our "joy" in the novel consists in our recognition of the righteousness of this basic design, that is, of the way in which Clarissa and Septimus complement each other, Clarissa's elementary love of life matching Septimus's repudiation of it. The two emotions complete each other to form a whole; one attitude cannot, within the limits of the novel, exist without the other. It is in this way that Septimus and Clarissa become "one and the same person."69

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67 Tylee op.cit. p67
68 David Daiches The Novel and the Modern World 1939, p182
69 John Hawley Roberts "Vision and Design" in Virginia Woolf PMLA 61 p837
This "joy" has since been constantly reiterated. The coupling of Septimus and Clarissa has been interpreted as "extend[ing] the psychological dimension of her fiction and ... invent[ing] an aesthetic form which would unify the opposing principles she sought to connect."70 Or, Septimus has no independent existence, he represents "a defensive 'splitting,' whereby Clarissa's most dangerous impulses are projected into another figure who can die for her; to this extent, she and he are one composite character."71

For Gilbert and Gubar, Septimus and Clarissa are Woolf's "central figure."72 Even better, for those much loved biographical readings, Septimus can be Woolf's alter ego: "[T]he conflict between the male mind and the female mind has been given a savage potentiation by the fact that Septimus Smith, as Virginia's persona in the novel, has been given a male exterior."73 But it is clearly not enough to identify and then abandon the doubling of Septimus and Clarissa: the text itself fails to support the harmonious fusion that some critical readings have resolutely defended.

In fact, the "doubling" of Septimus and Clarissa follows two works by Freud, both written in 1919, "The Uncanny," and, in the same year, the "Introduction to Psycho-Analysis and the War Neuroses." Freud singled out the ego and its relation to the "double" in both texts. "[T]he 'double' was originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego"74 in "The Uncanny." But he also posited this relation specifically in conjunction with post-war trauma. War neuroses were special, argued Freud, because they had "been made possible or [had] been promoted by a conflict in the

70 Joanne Blum Transcending Gender: The Male/Female Double in Women's Fiction p28
71 Makiko Minow-Pinkney Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject p80
72 Gilbert and Gubar No Man's Land p315
74 Freud "The Uncanny" p235
ego",75 a conflict that arose from experience of war and peace. In the ways that Freud outlines, it is possible to see how the doubling of Clarissa and the "shell shocked" war veteran Septimus can work, as the figure represented by Clarissa remains "an energetic denial of the power of death." If the social implications of their doubling are troublesome, can Clarissa and Septimus nonetheless represent a psychological pairing?

Freud says:

[We] have characters who are to be considered identical because they look alike. This relation is accentuated by mental processes leaping from one of these characters to another - by what we should call telepathy - , so that the one possesses knowledge, feelings and experience in common with the other. Or it is marked by the fact that the subject identifies himself with someone else, so that he is in doubt as to which his self is, or substitutes the extraneous self for his own. In other words, there is a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self. And finally there is the constant recurrence of the same thing - the repetition of the same features or character-traits or vicissitudes, of the same crimes, or even the same names through several consecutive generations.76

"Mental processes," if not telepathic, certainly literally leap about from one to another in Mrs Dalloway. Peter Walsh and Clarissa "lived in each other," or so she believes as she walks down Bond Street. (MD 6) When Peter is asleep in the park, he dreams of Clarissa: "They went in and out of each other's minds without any effort. And then in a second it was over." (MD 54-5) This "interchanging of the self" is also endorsed by reiterated imagery, "the constant recurrence of the same thing." Clarissa and Septimus, we infer, look like each other. Clarissa has "a ridiculous little face, beaked like a bird's." (MD 7) Septimus is "pale-faced, beak-nosed..." (MD 11) Clarissa feels positive that she is "part ..., of the trees at home." (MD 6) Septimus feels that: "leaves were alive; trees were alive. And the leaves being connected by millions of fibres with his own body ... when the

75 Freud "Introduction to Psycho-Analysis and the War Neuroses" St Ed Vol XVII (1917-1919) p209
76 Freud "The Uncanny" p234
branch stretched he, too, made that statement." (MD 18) Rezia questions Septimus's identity: "he was not Septimus now." (MD 19) Clarissa feels that she is "not even Clarissa any more..." (MD 8) Clarissa feels "far out to sea and alone..." (MD 6) Septimus "himself remained high on his rock, like a drowned sailor..." (MD 60) Clarissa's constant refrain "Fear no more the heat o' the sun" is echoed by Septimus as he prepares to die: "Life was good. The sun hot" (MD 132) and so on. Yet reiterated imagery is not confined to just Clarissa and Septimus, or even Clarissa and Peter. The old woman encountered by Peter Walsh, singing opposite Regents Park Tube station is the possessor of the "bird-like freshness of the very aged..." (MD 72) an image redolent of both Clarissa and Septimus. Lady Bradshaw had "gone under. It was nothing you could put your finger on; there had been no scene, no snap; only the slow sinking, waterlogged, of her will into his" (MD 88) which echoes Septimus's and Clarissa's social "death by drowning." Such doubling, which acts to connect what is otherwise socially distinct, even opposed, is at the heart of the heimlich/unheimlich relation. Freud argued, as I indicated above, that "heimlich is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, unheimlich." In this way, the familiar can simultaneously be, or become, the unfamiliar which is also recognisable. Such a process, for example, enables Betty Flanders to hear the guns in France from Scarborough and imagine men in battle as women beating carpets.

Yet, argues Ferrer, "For Freud, the double is a substitute who has ceased to reassure. Derived from the mirror image, the double was originally a means of defence, a protection against fragmentation, a conjuring of death."77 In his "Introduction to Psycho-Analysis and the War Neuroses" (1919) Freud argued that war had promoted a conflict

77 Daniel Ferrer op.cit. p12
within the soldier's ego, between his old peace-time ego and his "new war-like one." The relation between the newly formed "double" is a "parasitic" one. "It would be equally true to say," argued Freud, "that the old ego is protecting itself from a mortal danger by taking flight into a traumatic neurosis or to say that it is defending itself against the new ego which it sees is threatening its life."78 Hence, we might understand Clarissa's relief at Septimus's death: "She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away while they went on living." (MD 165) The "double" works, or is acceptable, only if we see Clarissa and Septimus as representative of the post war fragmented psyche, that in fact, "they" predate the unity and fragmentation, splitting and defense within the psyche which Woolf went on to represent in The Waves.

Yet in Mrs Dalloway, Woolf satirised the belief that the war endorsed or even developed masculinity.79 Thrown into bathetic relief is the impact of the First World War:

something happened which threw out many of Mr. Brewer's calculations, took away his ablest young fellows, and eventually, so prying and insidious were the fingers of the European War, smashed a plaster cast of Ceres, ploughed a hole in the geranium beds, and utterly ruined the cook's nerves at Mr. Brewer's establishment at Muswell Hill. (MD 75)

The war is described in a series of complacent clichés which represent Septimus's "warlike" ego:

The War had taught him. It was sublime. He had gone through the whole show, friendship, European War, death, had won promotion, was still under thirty and was bound to survive. He

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78 Freud "Introduction to Psycho-Analysis and the War Neuroses" (1919) St. Ed. Vol XVII p209
79 Although some critics have resolutely failed to pick up on the irony of the acquisition of Septimus's "manliness" in the war. See Lucio Ruotolo: "The war completed the defeminization of Septimus. In the trenches he learned to be a man..." "Mrs Dalloway: The Unguarded Moment" in Ralph Freedman ed. Virginia Woolf: Revaluation and Continuity Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1980, p149 And see also "Before the war, Septimus was too androgynous to conform to society's masculine stereotype." Suzette Henke "Mrs Dalloway and the Communion of Saints" in Jane Marcus (ed) New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf p139
was right there. The last shells missed him. He watched them explode with indifference. (MD 76)

Woolf includes a sense of this indifference in *Jacob's Room* as men move passively towards their deaths:

With equal nonchalance a dozen young men in the prime of life descend with composed faces into the depths of the sea; and there impassively (though with perfect mastery of machinery) suffocate uncomplainingly together. Like blocks of tin soldiers the army covers the cornfield, moves up the hillside, stops, reels slightly this way and that, and falls flat, save that, through field-glasses, it can be seen that one or two pieces still agitate up and down like fragments of broken match-stick. (JR 151)

The post war years were indeed characterised, as Jung had testified, as "an age of neurasthenia, impotence, and easy chairs." Both Elizabeth Abel and Makiko Minow-Pinkney have argued that androgyny was proposed by Woolf during the post-war decade as a counteraction to what she saw as the excess of masculinity in war. Elizabeth Abel argues that by the end of *A Room of One's Own*, androgyny was, for Woolf, "proposed as a corrective to a masculinization of discourse ... that reflects the fascist poem's double paternity." Makiko Minow-Pinkney agrees: "The First World War was then for Woolf a terrible proof of the fundamental wrong-headedness, even bloody-mindedness, of this masculine ideology, exposing the dangerous imbalance of its expulsion of the feminine." If war and consequently, masculinity, are constructed as unstable categories by Woolf, in her writing, what is the relation of femininity to post-war masculinity? Might it not be possible to argue that if Woolf satirises and then extinguishes one ideological construction of masculinity in the figure

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80 In the manuscripts of "The Years", Eleanor recognises one of the names in the lists of the dead: "She remembered how he had held the door open for her as she went out. But what an inconceivably silly thing (?) ... she thought... There he was, now, loyal, floating on top of the water, bobbing up & down in the moonlight." Vol V pp64-5
81 CG Jung "Woman in Europe" in *Aspects of the Feminine* p62
82 Elizabeth Abel *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis* p87
83 Makiko Minow-Pinkney *Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject* p49 And see also Claire Tylee: "War had been depicted in feminist writing as masculinity taken to extremes, 'maleness run riot' (Stobart 1916), and in British propaganda German soldiers represented the worst of masculine bestiality." op.cit. p140
of the double in Mrs Dalloway, she also merges masculinity with femininity in the figure of Lady Bruton to construct yet another version of masculinity endorsed only through militarism?

Lady Bruton "had the reputation of being more interested in politics than people; of talking like a man." \(^{84}\) (MD 93) Hugh Whitbread and Richard Dalloway are invited to the "masculine lunch part[y]" (MD 93) to help smooth out the tangles of Lady Bruton's letter. Her letter is the poor result of a "morning's battle" where a combat is waged around herself as "strong martial woman" and the "futility of her own womanhood." She admires Hugh (otherwise intended to be hated\(^{85}\)) as he rewrites the site of her confusion:

A being so differently constituted from herself, with such a command of language; able to put things as editors liked them put; had passions which one could not call simply greed. Lady Bruton often suspended judgement upon men in deference to the mysterious accord with which they, but no woman, stood to the laws of the universe; knew how to put things; knew what was said; so that if Richard advised her, and Hugh wrote for her, she was sure of being somehow right. (MD 96)

Yet Hugh's transcriptions of Lady Bruton's "tangles" is a careful writing of capitals "with rings round them in the margin" (MD 97) and the result is not the pre-war intoxication of language revered by Septimus, it is the perfunctory ordering of language into a symbolic discourse and one to which Lady Bruton has no access unless it is sanctioned by the fundamental phallic signifier. The contents of the letter, however, are revealed in fragments, so that meaning, for the reader at least, remains confused, in a disrupted narrative form, leaving Lady Bruton to ask whether "...her own meaning [could] sound like that." (MD 97) Xaviere Gauthier says that where women's writing is not in imitation of

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\(^{84}\) This is also the case, in Mrs Dalloway for Lady Bexborough "slow and stately; rather large; interested in politics like a man..." p7 Mrs Durrant in Jacob's Room is seen "enunciating strident politics with Sir Somebody in the back room..." p147

\(^{85}\) VW to Philip Morrell: "By the way, I meant Richard Dalloway to be liked. Hugh Whitbread to be hated." 27 July 1925 L Vol III
masculine discourse, it is represented as "blank pages, gaps, borders, spaces and silence, holes in discourse... If the reader feels a bit disoriented in this new space, one which is obscure and silent, it proves perhaps, that it is women's space." Represented in the text precisely as gaps, blanks, spaces and silence, Lady Bruton's letter remains resolutely obscure, even resolutely feminine. It is Hugh's writing that remains, literally in the margin, Lady Bruton's meaning that is rendered only partially visible to the reader.

Connected with the "tangles" of Lady Bruton's letter, is the old woman who sings opposite Regents Park tube station. Her song is unmistakably sexual and, like Lady Bruton's letter, unrepresentable within syntagmatic discourse:

still, though it issued from so rude a mouth, a mere hole in the earth, muddy too, matted with root fibres and tangled grasses, still the old bubbling burbling song, soaking through the knotted roots of infinite ages, old skeletons and treasure, streamed away in rivulets over the pavement and all along the Marylebone Road, and down towards Euston, fertilising, leaving a damp stain. (MD 71)

Claire Tylee's division between the articulations of Lady Bruton and the old woman who sings opposite Regent's Park tube station, may operate too simply around masculine and feminine binaries, the "essentially phallic" fountain pen which drafts "civilised letters to The Times, " and the "vaginal, feminine" song, a "sacred welt of lyricism." The phallic fountain pen can only be borrowed, it must be returned, and nor does it guarantee the publication of her ideas. In any case, it is in her semi-somnolent state, after Richard and Hugh leave her, that she imagines herself leading battalions to Canada with Richard and Hugh treading the domestic carpet of Mayfair: her imagination gives her her martial status, a status that the ineffectual if serviceable pen of Hugh's cannot. One of her

87 Tylee op.cit. p167
greater achievements is in the apocryphal story circulating around fashionable memoirs, to have advised General Sir Talbot Moore to write a telegram (itself composed of the fragmented phrase), "ordering the British troops to advance upon an historical occasion." (endorsing the metonymy of battle and history) In this case, Lady Bruton gets it all without the bother of the battle between herself as martial woman and futile womanhood: "She kept the pen and told the story." (MD 93) It is only when Richard invites Lady Bruton to their party that her dependent womanhood can be dismantled once again: Richard's invitation signifies the end of the lunch party "whereupon Lady Bruton resumed the magnificence which letter-writing had shattered." (MD 98) As Rachel Bowlby argues: "The disparity between Lady Bruton's ruthless projects and her feminine failings makes a comic exaggeration of the novel's suggestion of the incompatibility of masculine and feminine identities in the present form of their distinction."88

In a review of a poem, "The Village Wife's Lament," written just before the end of the war, Woolf criticises the poet, Maurice Hewlett, for his inability to provide a convincing account of a woman's grief at the death of her husband killed in action in France, and after that, the subsequent death of her infant son. The difference between Hewlett's poem and Hugh's help with the letter, is that Hugh helps to express what Lady Bruton cannot: he does not invent her story for her. Woolf comments on Hewlett: "[F]or all their scrupulous care and regard for the truth, [the verses] strike us not so much as the thoughts and laments of the woman herself as the words of a very sympathetic spectator who is doing his best to express what he supposes must be there beneath the silence and at the heart of the tears."89 For Woolf this is merely game

88 Rachel Bowlby Feminist Destinations p95
89 "War in the Village" September 1918 E Vol II p293
playing, a textual transvestism which failed to relay the experience as verisimilitude. But it was the experience itself that was, she felt, literally unrepresentable:

The argument has too much cogency, the thoughts follow each other in too orderly a fashion to be the cry of a woman bereft of husband and son. Perhaps it is the coarseness - the quality that is the most difficult of all for the educated to come by - that is lacking. By coarseness we mean something as far removed from vulgarity as can be. We mean something vehement, full throated, carrying down in its rush sticks and stones and fragments of human nature pell-mell.90

Nicholas, in the manuscripts of "The Years", articulates what Woolf was experimenting with at the beginning of the 1930s (she was writing the manuscripts of The Years between 1932-1934). Nicholas believes there will be a time when "the soul has learnt to sweep everything everything into one rhythm, forming new wholes ..., then there will be born a language, which will be music, poetry & painting." (Y Vol V 113-4)

Woolf, as I discuss in Chapter Five, was searching for new ways of communication: "I should like to write four lines at a time, describing the same feeling, as a musician does..." 91 Yet her experiments in literary form were, as I argued at the beginning of this chapter, complicated by her ambivalence about both the relation between art and politics and growing international conservatism as she tried to find a solution to the existing threat of fascism (Mussolini had been in power since 1922) and the increasing power of the Nazi party in Germany during the 1920s and 1930s. Woolf's "war writing", particularly her writing about the First World War, is distinguished by an ambivalence that seems to haunt her writing life. As she attempts to include women in history and to explore the implications of culturally specific gender identities, Woolf also engages with the limits of what is barely representable or knowable. On the one

90 ibid.
91 L Vol V July 10 1934
hand, Woolf's problematisation of post-war gender identity signals a dysfunctional relationship between masculine and feminine identity. On the other hand, she resolutely (if not perversely) tests sexual pairing in the figure of the double (Septimus and Clarissa). Even as she explores sexual difference, she maps out female imagination over masculine experience and identity. The male-female dyad is integral to her exploration of post-war gender and sexual identities.

Sexual identity and politics were merged increasingly for Woolf in her writing during the 1930s, but always as a latent and submerged force. If the post-war decade of the 1920s witnessed the rise of narratives that undermined ideologies which endorsed the coupling of war and masculinity, the pre-war decade of the 1930s witnessed a re-establishment of this particular complementary pairing. Sexual withdrawal became Woolf's answer to eradicating war. The trope of androgyny which, for Woolf at least, figured late nineteenth and twentieth century historical constructions of male and female sexuality during the first part of the 1930s, began, eventually, to figure sexual repression. Ultimately, from the auto-erotic psycho-somatic figure which she had created in _A Room of One's Own_, Woolf's eleven year writing project ended with the figure of "mental chastity." Chapters Five and Six investigate these developments.
Women smoking, short skirts and war: the "specimen" days of Virginia Woolf.

...the life of my time which was war.

"And I don't know, but I sometimes think if girls can't fight for their country, they shouldn't smoke."

Can the thirties mix with the twenties? I think it already begins to be a little difficult.

"Professions for Women" and "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid," the last two essays in the posthumously published collection The Death of the Moth (1942), summarise the antitheses that troubled Woolf during the 1930s. These essays raise the problems of negotiating women's sexuality and writing, and of assessing women's marginalisation and exclusion from the public and political arena. It is, I think, legitimate to argue that Woolf had a fairly consistent project during the thirties. "Books descend from books as families descend from families," she wrote in "The Leaning Tower" (21 April 1940). And indeed, "Professions for Women" (1931) led to the novel-essay The Pargiters (1932-34). This became The Years (15 March 1937) which

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1 The title is derived from two diary entries: D Vol 4 November 27 1935: "Too many specimen days - so I can't write..." and 30 December 1935: "I had an idea - I wish they'd sleep - while dressing - how to make my war book - to pretend it's all the articles editors have asked me to write during the past few years - on all sorts of subjects. Shd. women smoke. Short skirts. War &c."

2 Martha Gelhorn "The War in Spain" in The Face of War London 1993 p16

3 Rose Macaulay Non-Combatants and Others p190

4 Stevie Smith Over the Frontier (1938) London 1983 p89

5 "The Leaning Tower" in The Moment and Other Essays p106

6 This has a tortuous and complicated history. The Pargiters did eventually become The Years. Woolf dates the first of the extant manuscripts 11 October 1932. Volume VIII, the last holograph volume is dated 27 September 1934 and the last recorded date in this volume is October 4th, when Woolf began, but never finished in manuscript, her revisions to the 1880 section of The Years. Woolf changed the title of the text that began life as The Pargiters constantly. The title page of Volume VIII lists: The Pargiters; Here and Now; Brothers and Sisters; Dawn; Uncles and Aunts; Time; Ordinary People; Sons and Daughters. In a letter to Donald Brace, Woolf wrote for the first time: "I have decided to call it "The Years"..." 29 September 1935 L Vol V
Woolf perceived as the same book as *Three Guineas* (2 June 1938)\(^7\) which was conceived the day before she gave her speech, "Professions for Women."\(^8\)

Woolf gave her speech on which the essay "Professions for Women" is based to the London Branch of the National Society for Women's Service on 21 January 1931. The day before, she wrote in her diary:

> I have this moment, while having my bath, conceived an entire new book - a sequel to *A Room of One's Own* about the sexual life of women: to be called *Professions for Women* perhaps - Lord how exciting! This sprang out of my paper to be read on Wednesday to Pippa's society.\(^9\)

Woolf's desire to write about "the sexual life of women" developed, during the 1930s, into a new writing strategy which advocated "mental chastity." She included fascism, patriarchy and their relation to war, on her agenda.

Whilst revising *The Pargiters* Woolf wanted to write "an Anti fascist Pamphlet..." (February 26 1935) which became *Three Guineas*.\(^10\) And on 21 June 1935, Woolf wrote to Victoria O'Campo who was then translating *A Room of One's Own*: "I want to write a sequel to it, denouncing Fascism: but must finish my novel first..." The sexual life of women, I will argue, was increasingly negotiated by Woolf through culturally specific ideologies of masculinity. Chapters Five and Six will discuss the complexities and changes in Woolf's project between 1931 and 1938. This chapter examines the ideology of the Angel in the House and the relation between the woman writer, sexual repression and encroaching metaphors of militarism in the

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\(^7\) D Vol 5 June 3 1938: "Anyway that's the end of six years floundering, striving, much agony, some ecstasy: lumping the Years & 3 Gs together as one book - as indeed they are."

\(^8\) This period has also been seen as fragmentary. See Laura Moss Gottlieb "The War Between the Woolfs" pp242-252 in *Virginia Woolf A Centenary Celebration* ed Jane Marcus

See also n.8 for this diary entry D Vol 4 Pippa was Philippa Strachey, secretary to the National Society for Women's Service. Woolf had also written to Ethel Smyth about her inspiration for this new book. See VW to Ethel Smyth 24 January 1931 L Vol IV

\(^9\) Woolf returned to the idea of her "war book" in D Vol 4 on December 30 1935: "I had an idea - I wish they'd sleep - while dressing - how to make my war book - to pretend it's all the articles editors have asked me to write during the past few year - on all sorts of subjects. Shd. women smoke. Short skirts. War &c" This idea returned as she was writing *The Years*: "Sunk once more in the happy tumultuous dream: that is to say began 3 Guineas this morning, & cant stop thinking it." January 28 1937 D Vol 5

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extant manuscripts of "The Years". Both Chapter Five and Chapter Six make use of the extant holograph and typescript drafts of "The Years" and, to a lesser extent, "Three Guineas". In their analyses of Woolf's manuscripts and final texts, Grace Radin and Hermione Lee have both argued that Woolf was too self-censoring to be able to write about sex, and consequently edited the more sexually explicit material as she revised The Years. If this is, to some extent, true, (Woolf herself wrote in the manuscript that the censors prohibited writing explicitly about sex) it is also to simplify the ambitious project that Woolf was attempting: nothing else she ever wrote received so much energy and attention in her diaries as her plans for the form and content of The Years. My inclusion of the holograph and typescript drafts of "The Years" and "Three Guineas" in these chapters is not necessarily to establish a comparative study or genealogy of textual development, although at times this is inevitable. Woolf began to re-think her "war book" in 1935; the final date in Volume VIII of the manuscripts is October 4th 1934. This chapter charts the first stages of Woolf's plan to write about the sexual life of women between 1931 and 1934, a project, which, as I have said, was negotiated through images of masculinity. I will debate in this chapter how this masculinity was coded in relation to the cultural politics of gender in the early 1930s.

and Hermione Lee ed. The Years Oxford 1992: "[T]he self-censorship of The Years on sexual matters is extensive. Rose, Maggie, and Sara no longer discuss, in '1910', the fact that working women cannot afford birth control. Maggie is no longer allowed to say 'Every patriarch has his prostitute'. Rose's lesbianism and Nicholas's homosexuality are muted." pxxvi
See also Charles G Hoffman: "Virginia Woolf's Manuscript Revisions of The Years" PMLA 84:1 1969 pp79-89 Woolf was more pragmatic about her revisions. She wrote to Donald Brace (her American publisher) that she had written approximately 200,000 words which "will have to be considerably shortened and re-written." 2 November 1934 L Vol V
And see VW to May Sarton: 'I tear up my manuscripts when I have any; but in fact I make such wild sketches in hand writing alter so completely on the type writer that a manuscript of mine is mostly nonsense. 2 February 1939 L Vol VI
12 "there is, as the three dots used after the sentence "he unbuttoned his clothes..." testify a convention, supported by law, which forbids, whether rightly or wrongly, any plain description... "The Years" Vol I p61
In *Forever England*, Alison Light pitches her argument entre deux guerres. She argues that: "Since war, whatever its horrors, is manly, there is something both lower class and effeminate about peace time."13 I argued in Chapter Four that within a binary structure or psychoanalytic discourse, there are clearly parallels between defining peace as "not war," and recognising binary structures of peace and war, femininity and masculinity. Samuel Hynes identifies 1931 as "the watershed between the post-war years and the pre-war years, the point at which the mood of the 'thirties became generally apparent."14 Other commentators have defined the end of the post-war twenties (1928) as the beginning of a new pre-war era.15

What does the pre-war decade of the 1930s signify in terms of binaries which organise those gendered categories? 1928 was the one of the first recorded perceptions of a post-war nation identifying itself as pre-war and 1938 (after the 1938 Munich agreement) signalled a mobilisation into wartime precautions.16 If Britain perceived itself as a nation on the verge of war, whilst not actually at war, what do those ten years signify in terms of the organisation of gender and sexual difference? If European fascism, nazism and the civil war in Spain forced a war-time consciousness upon 1930s peace-time, pre-war Britain, and if pacifism figured as an impossibility17 (as it was for many during the 1930s), then how was it possible to define the new and

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13 Alison Light *Forever England. Literature and Femininity Between the Wars* p7
14 Samuel Hynes *The Auden Generation. Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s* London, 1992 p65 Hynes' evidence for 1931 as the watershed year that heralded the beginning of the Second World War were revolution in Spain (the second Spanish Republic was declared on 14 April 1931 (see Sheelagh M Ellwood *The Spanish Civil War* Oxford 1991 p11) ) and the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, which the European left saw as the the beginning of WW II
15 Cited in *The Auden Generation* p40 Hynes himself cites The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror as another turning point in consciousness about European fascism: "[The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror] must have been highly influential in creating the general English attitude toward German fascism...." p130
16 "We were in London yesterday and there everyone took war for granted. They were digging trenches in the parks, loud speakers were telling one to go and be fitted for gas masks..." VW-Vanessa Bell 28 September 1938 L Vol VI
17 Although see also VW to Ethel Smyth: "But I do suggest that there's a strong turn against it [the war] - witness pacifism growing..." 7 June 1938 LVol VI
unstable position that, I will argue, troubled the (woman) writer during this period? Hynes argues that "one can see ... how the writers were troubled and confused by the problem of dealing with a war that was both an ideological and an actual event, and that was at once theirs and not theirs." Referring to the "martyrs" who joined the International Brigade in the fight against Franco, Stephen Spender argues that "The impulse to act was not mistaken..." But if action was the relief, it was a relief denied Virginia Woolf: what constitutes war and what constitutes an adequate response to war were still troubling questions in the new pre-war era.

Was the extreme aggression and masculinity of fascism (which was the connection that Woolf perceived) responsible for shaping Woolf's writing during the 1930s even as she formulated a plan to write about the sexual life of women? For through binaries of sexual and European politics, Woolf attempted the advice she gave to John Lehmann in 1932, "to find the relation between things that seem incompatible..."

Woolf continued to trope women's bodies and desire through the psycho-somatic figure of androgyny, which she had used in A Room of One's Own. Woolf's theory in A Room circulates around an impossible dialectic of fantasy versus lived social reality. Androgyny was the agent that would cement the relation (or non-relation) of things incompatible (hetero socio-sexual relations between women and men), but it could only be conceptualised as fantasy and myth. During the 1930s, Woolf gave this dialectical tension a name: it was the tug between fact and vision.

In Woolf's original conception, fact and vision were to be compatible as she wrote of The Pargiters: "I want to give the whole of the present society - nothing less: facts, as well as the vision. And to combine them both." This

18 The Auden Generation p245
20 "A Letter to a Young Poet" The Death of the Moth London 1981 p141
21 D Vol 4 25 April 1933
was a combination she approved, and she reiterated it in her essay "The Novels of Turgenev" written in November 1933:

[H]e is asking the novelist not only to do many things but some that seem incompatible. He has to observe facts impartially, yet he must also interpret them. Many novelists do the one; many do the other- we have the photograph and the poem. But few combine the fact and the vision; and the rare quality that we find in Turgenev is the result of this double process.22

She could not achieve what she admired, however, and the "Novel-Essay" format failed: "But ideas are sticky things: wont coalesce; hold up the creative, subconscious faculty: thats it I suppose."23 So Woolf attempted to write The Years and Three Guineas simultaneously.24 This failed too: trying to give her fiction a political agenda posed a threat to her sense of the appropriate subject matter for fiction. "[O]ne cant propagate at the same time as write fiction"25 she wrote in 1935. One can't do both because, as she had analysed in 1932, "my brain is jaded with the conflict within of two types of thought, the critical, the creative..."26 which would require in 1937, "2 languages: fiction & fact."27 And she wrote in her diary a discussion she had had with Leonard Woolf: "[L] says politics ought to be separate from art."28 It was a point, of course, with which she concurred, since one can't propagate and write fiction. What, then, could, or should, she write about in a decade dominated by fascism, nazism, civil war in Spain and the increasing inevitability, post-Munich crisis, of a second world war?

22 "The Novels of Turgenev in The Captain's Death Bed and Other Essays" p56 London 1950
23 D Vol 4 20 February 1935
24 D Vol 4 April 14 1935: "I was vagrant this morning & made a rash attempt ,with the interesting discovery that one can't propagate at the same time as write fiction. And as this fiction is dangerously near propaganda, I must keep my hands clear." and May 21 1935: "Oddities of the human brain Woke early & again considered dashing off my book on Professions; to which I had not given a single thought these 7 or 8 days. Why? This vacillates with my novel - how are they both to come out simultaneously?"
25 D Vol 4 April 14 1935 See also Diary Vol 4 20 April 1935: "Do I instinctively keep my mind from analysing, which would impede its creativeness?"
26 D Vol 4 26 May 1932
27 D Vol 5 April 3 1937
28 D Vol 4 October 2 1935
Happy to discover "[n]ew combinations in psychology & body..."29 Woolf wrote to Stephen Spender: "Even I am shocked by the last week in Germany into taking part..."30 although by her own candid admission, "that only means reading the newspapers."31 In his autobiography, *World Within World*, Spender partially empathised with Woolf's concerns about art and politics:

In poetry I was confronted with the dilemma of stating a public emotion which had become a private one, and which yet never became completely my own experience because...it invaded my personality rather than sprang out of it. Critics like Virginia Woolf, who reproached our generation for writing too directly out of a sense of public duty, failed to see that public events had swarmed our personal lives and usurped our personal experience... I tried to relate the public passion to my private life.32

Yet he could act:

The impulse to act was not mistaken. But the action that we took may not have been of the right kind. It was, for the most part, the half-and-half action of people divided between their artistic and their public conscience, and unable to fuse the two. I now think that what I should have done was either throw myself entirely into political action; or, refusing to waste my energies on half-politics, made within my solitary creative work an agonised, violent, bitter statement of the anti-Fascist passion.33

and Virginia Woolf could not: such choice was simply not available to her.

On the other hand, as she was to write in "The Leaning Tower" in 1940, improved media communications meant that war could be experienced factually and imaginatively:

29 D Vol 4 November 18 1935
30 L Vol V July 10 1934
31 ibid.
32 *World Within World*p191 Woolf had written in "The Leaning Tower" in 1940: "But in 1930 it was impossible - if you were young, sensitive, imaginative - not to be interested in politics; not to find public causes of much more pressing interest than philosophy." p115 and "During the most impressionable years of their lives [1914] they were stung into consciousness - into self-consciousness, into class-consciousness, into the consciousness of things changing, of things falling, of death perhaps about to come. There was no tranquility in which they could recollect. The inner mind was paralysed because the surface mind was always hard at work." p120
33 ibid. p202

187
To-day we hear the gunfire in the Channel. We turn on the wireless; we hear an airman telling us how this very afternoon he shot down a raider; his machine gun caught fire; he plunged into the sea; the light turned green and then black; he rose to the top and was rescued by a trawler. Scott never saw the sailors drowning at Trafalgar; Jane Austen never heard the cannon roar at Waterloo. Neither of them heard Napoleon's voice as we hear Hitler's voice as we sit at home of an evening.34

Samuel Hynes argues that: "[A] close relation exists between literature and history, and...this relation is particularly close in times of crisis, when public and private lives, the world of action and the world of imagination interpenetrate."35 Alison Light, interrogating categories of "history," says that the act of questioning those categories:

attacks that opposition of the private and the public which structures and determines the organisation of disciplines and categories of knowledge and which slices them up into manageable portions of fiction and fact, dream and reality, subject and object.36

I will argue that Woolf does indeed call into question the categories that determine private and public discourse by killing and resurrecting that icon of Victorian femininity, the Angel in the House. The unsettling of the binaries between public and private, the eradication of a figure associated with purity and domesticity to facilitate the woman writer, produces what Light calls: "a sense of that other history, a history from inside, [which] gained new significance ... the place of private life and what it represented became the subject of new kinds of national and public interest and found new literary forms."37

Woolf's search for new literary forms was, if not obsessive, then certainly consistent. "[N]o other English novelist of the period," says Hermione Lee, "combined the theoretical analysis of the requirements for the modern novel with a continuing attempt, in every new work, to match her

34 "The Leaning Tower" in The Moment p107
35 Hynes The Auden Generation p9
36 Light Forever England p4
37 ibid p5
vision of reality with its appropriate form." Woolf herself believed that she had:

reached a further stage in my writers advance. I see that there are 4 dimensions; all to be produced; in human life; & that leads to a far richer grouping & proportion: I mean: I: & the not I: & the outer & the inner... and this is echoed in Volume VII of "The Years" as Elvira relates:

I had a vision .. The completely alive & efficient person, is her the one who is able to live in four different states, & four different times all in one - combining what I am to her, what I am to myself what I am to the world at large & what I am to the star (?) & the dust, the waters of peace, the waters of oblivion... (Y Vol VII)

With Spender, Woolf discussed the merits of poetry, prose and levels of consciousness, concluding: "I should like to write four lines at a time, describing the same feeling, as a musician does..." Her attempt to reproduce these "four lines" or co-existing spheres of consciousness was to produce simultaneously her "Novel-Essay" and The Years and Three Guineas. And, as I showed earlier, Woolf perceived these attempts as failure. How did this happen? In the manuscript drafts of The Years, Woolf began a negotiation of constructions of gender difference and sameness, where difference is constructed within public institutions (the university, the law courts, politics and government, the army) and the erasure of that difference is negotiated around imaginative flights of fantasy. This was the difference between the life of what Woolf called fact and the life of vision.

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38 Hermione Lee The Novels of Virginia Woolf London 1977 p14 and see VW to Hugh Walpole: "Oh no - I'm not a novelist. Always wanted to name my books afresh." 20 October 1939 L Vol VI
39 D Vol 4 November 18 1935
40 This volume (which she called "Here and Now") was written between 1 July 1934 and 25 September 1934. See also D Vol 4 7 August 1934 "(but I am thinking all the time of what it is to end Here & Now. I want a Chorus. a general statement. a song for 4 voices.)"
41 L Vol V 10 July 1934 And see also D Vol 4 17 April 1934 "An idea about Sh[akespeare]re That the play demands coming to the surface - hence insists upon a reality wh. the novel need not have, but perhaps should have. Contact with the surface. Coming to the top. This is working out my theory of the different levels in writing, & how to combine them: for I begin to think the combination necessary." And see D Vol 4 30 September 1934: "...a great strain, because so many more faculties had to keep going at once..."
The typescript version of "Professions for Women" is an exercise in the "new combination of psychology and body" that Woolf wanted to pursue. Right at the very beginning of her project, sex and war are inextricably mixed, but not, as Freud had suggested, as the battle between Eros and the death instinct. But if sex and war were mixed, so was something else: writing and the unconscious. Whatever else Woolf wrote about writing, she made clear in the 1930s that the unconscious was both a site of repression and the place where writing came from. In her diaries, as she planned new writing tactics, Woolf consistently returned to the unconscious:

This metaphor shows how tremendously important unconsciousness is when one writes. (October 29 1933)

What is important now is to go very slowly; to stop in the middle of the flood; never to press on; to lie back & let the soft subconscious world become populous; not to be urging foam from my lips. (May 22 1934)

About novels: the different strata of being: the upper under - This is a familiar idea, partly tried in The Pargiters. (1 November 1934)

But ideas are sticky things: wont coalesce; hold up the creative, subconscious faculty... (February 20 1935)

Who was it who said, through the unconscious one comes to the conscious, & then again to the unconscious? (February 27 1935)

Latency was at the heart of Woolf’s writing during the 1930s, and it found its expression in female sexuality and the imminence of violent conflict.

Woolf’s inspiration for a project in which she could explore the sexual life of women emerged from a speech which, before its revisions, combined images of militarism with images of women’s professional advance; murder (albeit symbolic) to facilitate self-expression (and self-defence); and impotence.

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42 Freud: Why War? (1933) St. Ed. Vol XXII (1932-1936) "[T]he instinct of self-preservation is certainly of an erotic nature, but to gain its ends this very instinct necessitates aggressive action." p209
as a result of inexperience and writers like DH Lawrence, who renders the woman writer: "shrivelled and distorted..."\(^{43}\)

Ethel Smyth, who is omitted from the revised version,\(^{44}\) is:

of the race of pioneers ... one of the ice breakers, the gun runners, the window smashers. The armoured tanks, who climbed the rough ground, drew the enemies fire, and left behind her a pathway - not yet smoothed and metalled road - but still a pathway for those who come after her.\(^{45}\)

With the landscape, machinery and technology of the first war incorporated into the feminist struggle for recognition and validation, Woolf does manage to negotiate fact as vision. She utilises the iconography of the war to foreground a feminist struggle, although she was by no means the first to do so. Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence for one, referred to the "militant suffrage campaign" as the "greatest bloodless revolution that has taken place since history began."\(^{46}\)

The war acts as a complicated, perhaps confused signified for Woolf as she uses images of masculinity to negotiate what she calls the sexual life of women. Alison Light says that:

Woolf is of her time in citing the war as marking the moment from which it no longer seemed possible to divorce the dramas of the interior life from the mainstream of history: it was what drew her to look for historical truth in other literary forms - biography, real and fictional, elegy, memoir, as well as novels, ways of writing history, which could accommodate, amongst other things, the woman’s point of view.\(^{47}\)

Woolf was to disclaim any essentialising version of "woman" towards the end of her 1931 speech: "what is a woman? I assure you, I dont know..."\(^{48}\) Her representation of the woman writing (who is also Woolf herself in the

\(^{43}\) "Professions for Women" reproduced in The Pargiters ed Mitchell Leaska London 1978 pxxxix The text is taken from an untitled typescript in the Berg Collection
\(^{44}\) See Michèle Barrett (ed) Virginia Woolf Women and Writing London 1979 pp57-63 and The Death of the Moth pp149-154
\(^{45}\) The Pargiters pxxvii
\(^{46}\) My Part in a Changing World Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence London 1938 Preface p1 (The Preface is unpaginated, page numbers referred to here have been added)
\(^{47}\) Light, Forever England p4
\(^{48}\) "Professions for Women" pxxxiii op.cit.
speech)\textsuperscript{49} is a violent and defensive one, though not quite as vicious as the particular angel she must wrestle with in order to produce her text.

The "Angel in the House" was the image of idealised Victorian femininity, "the woman that men wished women to be."\textsuperscript{50} The Angel was eulogised by Coventry Patmore in his lengthy poem of that name, but she existed outside of the poem too, the Victorian version of femininity constructed and revered by both men and women, created as "a sanctuary both from the anxieties of modern life and for those values no longer confirmed by religious faith or relevant to modern business."\textsuperscript{51} The Angel as an image of virtuous woman was, however, according to Woolf's subversive pen, criminal, having "more blood on her hands than [Crippen or Peace or the man who murd ] all the murderers <who have ever been hanged.>\textsuperscript{52} It will require an act of self-defence on the part of the woman writer to kill the Angel, and this act will then liberate her unconscious or writing mind. Only with the Angel dead can the imagination be free from the restraints imposed upon the writing mind: the writer can say what she likes without being curbed by social censure, which was traditionally the function of the Angel. Carol Christ's analysis of the angel is especially illuminating in relation to the sexual repression of women and the male sexual aggression which is shown to limit the lives of the Pargiter girls. Using Patmore and Tennyson as her models, Christ suggests that the angel was a useful figure for deferring and off-loading the dangers of male sexuality which was perceived as:

dangerous and distasteful. The ambivalence with which each writer [Tennyson and Patmore] portrays man's aggressiveness explains much about his idealization of women's passivity and asexuality. She

\textsuperscript{49} And see D Vol 5 July 11 1937 "I think writing, my writing, is a species of mediumship. I become the person."
\textsuperscript{50} "Professions for Women" op.cit. pp xxix-xxx
\textsuperscript{51} Carol Christ "Victorian Masculinity and the Angel in the House" in A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women ed. Martha Vicinus Bloomington and London 1977 p146
\textsuperscript{52} "Professions for Women" op.cit. pxxii Peace was a criminal hanged in 1879, see n. pxxii
represents an ideal freedom from those very qualities he finds most difficult to accept in himself.53

Christ names Woolf as the first "feminist" to have "shown the ways in which the ideal of the angel in the house in fact limits women's political power and psychological freedom even while it apotheosizes her."54 Actually, this is not a distinction that should be claimed for Woolf, since Ray Strachey and Alison Neilans had both analysed the legacy of the Angel (without naming her per se) before Woolf's essay was published in 1942. In her essay "Changes in Sex Morality", Alison Neilans reviews sexual attitudes over a period similar to Woolf's in The Years (1886-1936, compared with Woolf's 1880 to an unspecified time in the present). Writing in 1936, Neilans says: "In the presence of women whom a man respected or loved it seemed as if he could not bear to face the sexual facts of the lives of his own sex. This was probably why in the world as men had made it women were brought up to ignore these aspects of life."55 Ray Strachey had also made this point in The Cause, which was published in the same year as Woolf's A Room of One's Own:

In one section of society there stood the sacred hearth and the inviolable family, and there women were, in theory, sheltered and respected, not so much for themselves as because they were the centre of the home and the guardians of the "honour" of their husbands.56

Woolf was almost certainly aware of Ray Strachey's book which contained Neilans' essay (the Hogarth Press published Strachey's book in 1936, a year before The Years) which implies that she was tapping into common available

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53 "Victorian Masculinity and the Angel in the House" p147 And see also Noel Annan: "What did [Leslie] Stephen mean by the terms masculine and morbid? His first criterion for the good life was sexual purity, and when alluding to it, Stephen wrote at the top of his voice. Man can be saved from himself by woman: feminine innocence will rouse man from sensuality - this is how eternal womanhood, thought Stephen, interpreting Goethe literally (and wrongly), will draw man upwards. Unless we eradicate 'brutalizing and anti-social instincts', the institutions of marriage and the family will perish. Hence all social forces must be directed to the inculcation of chastity; and since art is a persuasive force, the artist too must play his part." Leslie Stephen The Godless Victorian New York, 1984, p306
54 op.cit. p147
55 Alison Neillans "Changes in Sex Morality" (pp175-230) in Ray Strachey (ed) Our Freedom and Its Results by Five Women London, 1936, p200
56 Ray Strachey The Cause A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain London 1928 p189
sources of cultural history. Edward's response to Kitty Malone in the manuscripts of "The Years", for example, apotheosizes her in a way that Neilans perceived as exemplifying the duplicity of male sexual morality, as I will show.

Woolf is clear in the manuscripts that male sexuality, as a threat to women's chastity, determines and defines the limitations of women's public lives, insofar as women were not allowed to walk alone unaccompanied. "This love," said Woolf, "affected the lives of the girls more strongly than it affected the lives of their brothers. Eleanor and Milly and Delia could not possibly go for a walk alone - save in the streets round about Abercorn Terrace, and then only between the hours of eight-thirty and sunset."57 Milly and Delia, like the woman writer fishing in A Room of One's Own, are aware of sexual feelings, but they cannot identify what these are:

they were ashamed, indignant, confused - all in one - and the feeling, since it was never exposed, save by a blush, or a giggle, wriggled deep down into their minds, and sometimes woke them in the middle of the night with curious sensations, unpleasant dreams...58

Their brother Edward, who knows exactly what those "curious sensations" are, feels that it is important to eradicate such feelings. Edward's response to his own sexuality and his evocation of his cousin Kitty in order to control his sexual drives, exemplify Neilans' perception of the duplicity of male sexuality, but Edward's control of his sexual urges is also figured through the trope of androgyny. Edward is reading The Antigone when he is aroused by the image of Antigone and Ismene:

another sense began to assert itself - a sense that was quite familiar to Edward; that was sometimes a perfect plague; a sense that was almost entirely physical; that was worrying, bothering, because almost instantly, Edward's mind came into conflict with it & said "I will not let myself feel this- this is degrading - this is bestial - this is I will must fight this... I am not going to be beaten this time." And he looked

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57 The Pargiters pp36-7
58 ibid. p38
instinctively at the portrait of a photograph of a fine austere face - hanging which stood on the mantelpiece. (Y Vol I 79-80)

The fine austere face, if it is not the face of his cousin, at least acts as a mnemonic aid as he reaches for his copy of Byron:

He took out an envelope pressed between the pages. He extracted a photograph. Yes, that was Kitty Malone; Kitty, the loveliest, the purest, the most exalted of women. He looked at her for a minute, then replaced it in the complete works of Lord Byron. Nobody must know that he adored Kitty Malone. (Y Vol I 87)

and in the re-writing of this scene in Volume II, Edward:

was her helper, her protector; she became so young, so helpless so beautiful (?) - Oh Lord he broke off: for he knew the symptoms the physical symptoms that were now clouding exciting him that was clouding his eyes. (Y Vol II 96)

The success of Edward's repression of his sexual urges is due to a re-negotiation of a mind/body ontology where he forces himself to occupy a liminal state (or space) between what he thinks he should do and what his body would like to do. This liminal space collapses reading and sex:

his best work was always done, he suspected, when his body & his mind had reached some sort of equilibrium, though it was difficult to determine say exactly what exactly the great (?) relation between the two. (Y Vol I 78)

The relation between the two is easier to determine than to achieve: Edward's friends call him by his family nickname "Nigs" because they feel it belittles him. Edward is too perfect: "more beautiful, more romantic, more perfectly balanced between the life of the body & of the mind than other people." 59

This perfect state is highly cultivated and developed: Edward's mind and his body have been trained at school and university, which both encouraged the use of his mind as a channel for his bodily and sexual urges. His coach "could train a man's mind [almost ] precisely as the other sort of coach could train a

59 The Pargiters p65
man's body." And so, in the manuscripts and in the galley proofs, there is a consistent interaction between Edward's mind and Edward's body:

Greek words had - he could would argue this for hours with Peel, who preferred Latin - an indescribable hardness & combination of hardness & vitality as though - but Edward always checked himself when he felt the temptation to illustrate sensual feelings in images. (Y Vol I 76)

As he read, what had been separate in his brain before seemed to mix. The wine seemed to press open little dividing doors in his brain; all stood open and lit up. He no longer made notes as he read. His eye seemed to take in whole stanzas at a sweep. The whole of his mind seemed to be expanded, lit up. He could almost feel the fabric of his brain rising and falling, like a yellow canopy. It was not reading; it was being. He became person after person. The figure of Antigone rose before him. He knew before she spoke what she was about to say. She was young; she was lovely; she was like-He paused. 61

She was like Kitty Malone. And so Edward sublimates his sexual urges by writing a poem which idealises Kitty. Androgyny, once a metaphor that eroticised the writing mind even as it tempered male sexuality, became, in the 1930s, a trope that figured sexual repression and mental chastity. In Woolf's revision, in the second manuscript volume, cited above, of Edward's overwhelming need to protect Kitty, it is Edwards's friend Ashby (sometimes Ashton in the manuscripts and Ashley in the final version) who wishes to protect Edward: "oddly enough he wanted to protect him from brutes like Gibbs." (Y Vol II 99) Gibbs and Ashby/Ashton are two of Edward's friends, one too physical and of the body, the other too precious and of the mind: Edward, mediating between the two, stands at a junction between boorish heterosexuality and peevish homosexuality and neither sexual identity is tenable for him.

The object of Edward's devoted attention is Kitty Malone, his cousin and daughter of the Master of St. Katherine's, Oxford. Kitty imagines escaping from her rigid and stultifying life by fantasising about an incident that happened to her during a convalescent period in Yorkshire. Woolf re-

60 ibid. p62
61 Galley Proofs The Years p 32
wrote this incident and the scenes with Kitty in Oxford almost obsessively in the manuscript volumes.  

By the time Woolf had arrived at her final edit, from Kitty leaving the house with her umbrella (in the "uncertain spring" of the 1880 section) to her leaving the Robsons' after tea, occupied only twelve pages in the first editions. Woolf's revisions were not, in fact, radical. She repeats the same scene throughout Volume Two with little variation. The final version is substantially, in structure and content, the same, but some of the edited material is more explicitly sexual.

Kitty is one attempt to explode the ideologies of the Angel in the House. Whilst Edward purges his sexual feeling by thinking of the pure and virtuous Kitty, Kitty, bored by the strictly demarcated boundaries of her life, fantasises about George (later changed to Alf) the farmhand, who:

rolled her over in the hay & kissed her and kissed her. That was one of her worst scrapes, as it turned out, for old Snap had Carter, the father, had suddenly loomed up, leading a bull, by a ring through its nose: & George had slunk off, merely at the sight of him. (Y Vol II 17)

That had was been one of the most vivid of her memories - being kissed by a farmhand when she was fifteen: under the shelter of a haystack... (Y Vol III 6)

The triumph of paternal authority stops George/Alf but it is "old Snap" as surrogate mother (Kitty's mother's old nanny) who threatens to mete out the ultimate punishment:

Old Snap had given Kitty such a scolding had told Kitty that if ever she caught her at such games again she would tell the mistress: & then Kitty would never be allowed to come to Carters again. (Y Vol II 17)

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62 Towards the end of the first manuscript volume (which is the volume edited by Mitchell Leaska and published as The Pargiters (Hogarth 1978)) Woolf begins a new chapter, dated 17 November, which starts with Edward's love of the Greek language and progresses on to his feelings for Kitty. Volume I ends with Kitty's history teacher Lucy Craddock and is dated November 28 1932. Volume II, dated 3 September 1932, and dated again on the title page, November 28 1932, begins with Kitty's earnest plan to read Stubbs for her lesson so as not to disappoint Miss Craddock. Volume III begins with Kitty having tea at the Robsons and Woolf begins what she calls Part Two (in Vol III) on 9 March 1933, which begins with Colonel Pargiter in London.

63 These two moments are merged in the final version: "...Alf, the farm hand up at Carter's, who had kissed her under the shadow of the haystack when she was fifteen, and old Carter loomed up leading a bull with a ring through its nose and said "Stop that!" The Years p60
Carters Farm in Yorkshire represents Kitty's only fantasy of escape - she wants to marry the farmhand, work the farm and above all, leave Oxford. For Oxford represents a stifling life for Kitty, doomed to pour out tea for undergraduates: the centre of academic and civilised life is an omni-present reminder that her position is strictly marginal. Like her history teacher, Lucy Craddock, Kitty has only a negligible "sex instinct": sex is culture when centuries of oppression and repression have succeeded in eradicating desire and sexual feelings. Lucy Craddock "was undoubtedly influenced by some long suppressed, almost extinct, sexual instinct..." (Vol I 29) Still, she has her education and has arrived at the academic nexus of Oxford University.

Opportunities are denied Lucy where they are awarded Mr Robson, the self-educated man (from Yorkshire), modelled by Woolf on a man she very much admired, Professor Joseph Wright. Kitty trusts Mr Robson, a trust that could never be extended to Dr Andrews (or old Chuffy) and Professor Lathom. The difference is that Mr Robson respects women, and encourages his daughter, Nelly, to pursue her academic studies (she wants to be a doctor) whereas Dr Andrews and Professor Lathom assert their sense of superiority:

His attitude to Kitty was... the opposite of Dr Andrews' and Professor Lathom's. He was not polite. He did not pick up her handkerchief, or tread upon it. He never pinched her knee. He talked to her as frankly as he talked to a man - at least Kitty never felt that the talk completely changed its character... (Y Vol II 45-6)

Dr Andrews and Professor Lathom were, Woolf intimated, typical of an attitude that insisted upon stressing the superiority of men over the inferiority of women. Woolf had touched on this in A Room with Professor Von X, who was "engaged in writing his monumental work entitled The Mental, Moral and Physical Inferiority of the Female Sex" (R 31) and in her citation of Oscar Browning, who "was wont to declare 'that the impression left on his mind, after looking over any set of examination papers, was that, irrespective of the marks he might give, the best woman was intellectually the...
inferior of the worst man.' " (R 52) Woolf reproduced this argument in the manuscripts of "The Years". This time, Browning is joined by Gladstone, Walter Bagehot, Mark Pattison, Walter Pater, all of whom "thought that the lowest man is intellectually the superior of the cleverest woman..." (Y Vol II 48) Woolf does question what constitutes learning and knowledge outside of the academy: "to call Kitty "uneducated" was, in Miss Craddock's view, a most curious misuse of forms." (Y Vol II 30) What constitutes education may be up for debate, but the fact remains that Kitty's closest encounters with undergraduate life is the tea pouring ceremony that she detests. Not only does this emphasise an incompatible difference between men and women:

Why could they never talk about things that interested her?... She could not talk about the things that interested them. Her little stock of book learning was soon exhausted with the reading men... (Y Vol II 31)

but it also re-affirms the connection between sexuality and education. Tony Ashby feels for Edward what Edward feels for Kitty and he takes advantage of Kitty's familiarity with Edward to extract information about him. But just as the most inferior man is the superior of the cleverest woman, so the most effeminate and asexual man can be sexually stronger than the most robust woman:

for her the physical sensations had side of love had been so repressed not only in her, but in her mothers, & grandmothers, that it was much weaker, even in a girl of perfect physique like Kitty, than in a young man like Tony Ashton... (Y Vol II 23-4)

Compatibility comes for Kitty with the diminution of sexual possibility. Sex is safest (and only ever possible) when it is sex imagined. Kitty likes Tony because: "her body & his body had so little natural attraction for each other that they were singularly at ease..." (Y Vol II 32) Ashby is so effeminate that for Kitty, talking to him is "...almost as if he were a woman..." (Y Vol II 107) The mark of Kitty's desire (or imagined desire) is figured in the same way that Woolf says the writer produces a text: the "self" must be dissolved,
eroded, transcended. The full extent of Kitty's experience was the farmhand's kiss. Although Woolf produced a version of this which was full of innuendo and sexual metaphor, a patriarchal figure leading a bull, a true sexual experience for Kitty would include the loss of self awareness.

Thinking about Edward, Kitty feels:

She would never be intimate with him - never wholly at her ease: she would never lose herself, as she had lost herself with the farmers son never feel the flow of excitement & power that she had felt then. (Y Vol II 32)

For Kitty, who thinks about the farmhand's kiss when she shoud be reading Stubbs, allows herself to fantasise about her experience. Even though her fantasy comes from the darkest recesses, she still thinks of Jo Robson, for example:

she felt that if he like (sic) her, it would be a straightforward affair: she thought how profoundly darkly, dimly, - for the such thoughts were never spoken - were concealed - if Jo liked me he would kiss me, as George kissed me. (Y Vol III 5-6)

Edward, reading the Antigone thinks of Kitty and has to both suppress the thought and invoke Kitty as the Angel. When Kitty herself thinks about sex, it is about the erasure of a specific cultural identity that suppresses sexual desire. And in this way, with the erasure of identity, women's sexual fantasy mirrors the writing process itself.

Woolf's woman writer in her 1931 speech is a figure rich in phallic imagery. Using the metaphor of a woman fishing64 (with a change of sex in the published version, the woman fishing is a fisherman) the woman writer has an insight and then a failure of vision, troped around impotence, which places imagination as phallic and feminine:

64 This was a figure that Woolf referred to again in a diary entry for August 6 1937: "Will another novel ever swim up?" D Vol 5 and in a letter to Lady Robert Cecil, discussing Three Guineas: "But it is only a sketch for a book - a fling of my line (like the old gents on the Tyne) over a boiling and bubbling stream, so full of fish one cant pick and choose." 18 June 1938 L Vol VI
She was not thinking; she was not reasoning; she was not constructing a plot; she was letting her imagination down into the depths of her consciousness while she sat above holding on by a thin <but quite necessary> thread of reason. She was letting her imagination feed unfettered upon every crumb of her experience; she was letting her imagination sweep unchecked round every rock and cranny of the world that lies submerged in our unconscious being.

Then suddenly this fisherwoman gave a cry of dismay. What had happened? The line had suddenly slackened; her imagination had floated limply and dully and lifelessly upon the surface. The reason hauled the imagination on shore and said What on earth is the matter with you? And the imagination began pulling on its stockings and replied, rather tartly and disagreeably; its all your fault. You should have given me more experience to go on. I cant do the whole work for myself.65

Woolf is initially careful to avoid giving "reason" and "imagination" gendered pronouns (rather they are neutered "its") although when she does give them gendered positions, they are fluid and shifting, female or asexual.

Imagination's failure because of her/its lack of experience, knowledge and understanding of sex is one aspect of the problems that affect the woman writer as a result of her cultural conditioning. But sexual knowledge results in the same writing seizure:

The imagination [darts away ] has rushed away; it has taken to the depths; it has sunk - heaven knows where - into what dark pool of extraordinary experience. The reason has to cry "Stop!" The novelist has to pull on the line and haul the imagination to the surface. The imagination comes to the top in a state of fury.66

And not surprisingly with such brutal retrenchment from erotic reverie. If Showalter's reading of these passages is somewhat inspired (she sees the ""figure" of fishing as an allegory of woman's failure to reach orgasm..."67) her invocation of sex is at least on the right track. The problem is that Woolf implies that women can't have a relation to sex: either they know nothing about sex because knowledge has been suppressed and repressed (an argument she advances in the manuscript volumes of "The Years") or they

65 "Professions for Women" op.cit. pp xxxvii-xxxviii
66 ibid. pxxxviii
67 Elaine Showalter A Literature of Their Own p293
know too much: this uncompromising virgin/whore split can be differently negotiated, however. "Reason" and "imagination" fail to co-operate in the 1931 speech because writing, coming from a site which appears to be the unconscious, is also coming from a site that signals sexual repression. "That dark pool of extraordinary experience" is exactly what "reason" cannot let "imagination" explore: "I cannot make use of what you tell me - about women's bodies for instance - their passions." 68

The woman in the act of writing Woolf describes in the speech is redolent of another of her women novelists, Mary Carmichael in A Room of One's Own, who, "...sitting on the banks of a river...lost in thought" lets down a line of thought:

It swayed, minute after minute, hither and thither among the reflections and the weeds, letting the water lift it and sink it until - you know the little tug - the sudden conglomeration of an idea at the end of one's line: and then the cautious hauling of it in, and the careful laying of it out? Alas, laid on the grass how small, how insignificant this thought of mine looked; the sort of fish that a good fisherman puts back into the water so that it may grow fatter and be one day worth cooking and eating. (R 7)

Lack of confidence and lack of education may have contributed to the small fry she puts back into the Oxbridge river - the thought that the woman writing hauls up again in 1931 is surely the one she first caught in 1928. For not only is Mary Carmichael (or Beton or Seton) sitting lost in thought in that trance-like state that is the condition for the woman writer fishing in 1931, she also "wrote as a woman, but as a woman who has forgotten that she is a woman, so that her pages were full of that curious sexual quality which comes only when sex is unconscious of itself." (R 88) Detaching or differentiating sex from gender allows for a fantasy that can rewrite the rules sanctioned by a repressive patriarchy. If Mary Carmichael has to forget that she is a woman, then she must forget the culturally inscribed identity that will

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68 "Professions for Women" op.cit. pxxxix
determine the way that she writes, which should facilitate a re-inscription of
the polymorphous pleasures of the body. Why does this fail in 1931?

"Reason" defends herself against "imagination" in the 1931 typescript:

Calm yourself, I say, as she sits panting on the bank- panting with rage
and disappointment. We have only to wait these fifty years or so. In
fifty years I shall be able to use all this very queer knowledge that you
are ready to bring me. But not now. You see I go on, trying to calm
her, I cannot make use of what you tell me - about womens bodies for
instance - their passions - and so on, because the conventions are still
very strong. If I were to overcome the conventions I should need the
courage of a hero, and I am not a hero.69

That imagination and reason are seen as warring elements that ought to work
as a coherent whole may be emblematic of what Woolf was attempting with
her "fact and vision" project, two separate entities that she wanted to combine
in her Novel-Essay and that she felt that she had produced collectively in
Three Guineas and The Years. Yet reason's censure of imagination signals the
failure of Woolf's desire to write the body, to document what Braidotti has
called "the bodily roots of the thinking process."70 The conditions for creation
are too difficult, too phallocentric, to begin to negotiate with. In the
manuscript notes for "Professions for Women," Woolf writes about a set of
values that are "ready-made." and patriarchal: "To say what one thought - that
was my little problem - against the prodigious Current; to find a sentence that
could hold its own against the male flood."71 Woolf makes it clear that she
can't say what she thinks critically and honestly because she feels that she's
not allowed to unsettle received (masculine) critical opinion. In these
manuscript notes, Woolf's example is the sacrosanct body of war literature
that she would like to criticise (and terminate) but if she raised her voice, it
would never be heard:

For instance, about the war. If I were reviewing books now, I would
say this was a stupid and violent and hateful and idiotic and trifling

69 "Professions for Women" ibid. pp.xxviii-xxxix
70 Rosi Braidotti Patterns of Dissonance Cambridge 1991 p8
71 "Professions for Women" Appendix A op.cit. p164

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and ignoble and mean display. I would say I am bored to death by war books. I detest the masculine point of view. I am bored by his heroism, virtue, and honour. I think the best these men can do is not to talk about themselves anymore.

Of course, none of this would be printed. 72

And of course, none of this ever was, including her tribute to Ethel Smyth:

we honour her not only for being a musician & a writer, but also for being an armoured tank. I never know whether to be angry that such heroism was needed, or glad that such heroism was shown. 73

Imaginative or visionary versions of the war are fine, then; factual ones are too masculine and egocentric. The war Woolf imagined was more interesting and more radical when its iconography was invested in her version of feminist politics than when reproduced by the "authentic" masculine subject. Yet there are also terrible prices to pay for versions of the war imagined, as Woolf showed in the manuscript volumes and galley proofs of the 1880 section of The Years, what she called in her diary "the child scene - the man exposing himself." 74

Rose's encounter with the man by the pillar box supports the popular Victorian belief that it was unsafe for women to travel unaccompanied, but it doesn't take into account, for example, the sexualisation of little girls. The age of consent for girls had risen from 12 to 13 in 1875 as a concession towards eradicating the sex slave trade that transported young girls to Europe. 75 Until as late as 1929, girls as young as 12 could still be legally married. 76 The context that Woolf fails to provide means that actually the sexual hypocrisies and dangers of Victorian London were much worse than the selective picture that she presents. In some ways, Woolf affirms Patmore and Tennyson's model of the angel as an emblem of sexual deferral, exemplified in Edward Pargiter's idealisation of his cousin Kitty Malone whilst he simultaneously

72 ibid. p164
73 "Professions for Women" pxxvii
74 D Vol 4 10 November 1932
75 Alison Neilans "Changes in Sex Morality" in Ray Strachey (ed) Our Freedom and Its Results London 1936 p189
76 ibid. pp209-10
represses his desire to masturbate. In other ways, as I will show in relation to Rose and her encounter with the man by the pillar box, Woolf recasts the cultural meanings of the Angel and provides an account that rests on patterns of identification with the sexual aggressor. This account is in fact significantly edited in the published version, and it is the manuscript and first proofs that I will look at: the material that she edits suggests that Woolf never really quite killed her demonic angel.

Thwarted in her efforts to persuade anyone to go with her to Lamley’s toy shop, the youngest Pargiter, ten year old Rose, disobeys the injunction to stay at home and goes by herself, regarding the episode as an adventure. But the fantasised enemy Rose incorporates into her game becomes a "real" enemy as she walks past him, a man who loiters by the pillar box. When Rose leaves the toy shop, "he gibbered some nonsense at her, sucking his lips in & out; & began to undo his clothes..."77 It is this incident that gives rise to what is perhaps one of Woolf’s most comprehensive and revealing examinations of the abuses of sexuality and desire. In the manuscript and first proofs of "The Years", Woolf provides a more extensive version of this incident in the 1880 section. The differences between the extant holographs and galley proofs reveal Woolf’s ability to write (or not to write) about women’s - or indeed, little girls’ - bodies and their sexual identifications. In Volume I of the manuscripts, Rose, "standing erect, in a way that was ... oddly like her father’s, brushed the crumbs from her frock & said demanded 'May I go to Lamleys?' " (Y Vol I 22) Rose’s paternal identifications go beyond mere idiosyncracies (and innuendos) of posture however:

Also there was Rose’s love for her father - a love so ... implicit & awe stricken - she thought that of her father as of a god who was infallible & omnipotent; that it was more like that of a savage for a for the god of the sun & thunder - a indeed perhaps anthropologists would do well to study children’s passions when they if when they want to understand the savag primitive emotions. (Y Vol I 43)

77 The Pargiters op.cit. p43
More precisely, it is perhaps the psychoanalysts who can elucidate the "primitive emotions" and identify what appears to be Rose's rather persistent Oedipal attachment to her father.

Rose has a curious selection of toys given her gender. For the reason she wants to go to Lamley's toy shop is because "[s]he had a battleship and a three masted clipper: she must have the ducks and swans to float with them." (Y Vol I 48) She is meant to be embroidering a pattern of roses for her father's birthday (a curiously effeminate gift for the Colonel?) when she makes the excuse of looking for her workbox as a way of engineering her escape to the toy shop. Rose's conformity is exhibited in the world of the social. It is in the world of the imagination, or fantasy, that she can pursue her masculine-identified games, where, given that she could be anyone she wants to be, she chooses a line of family genealogy: she is Pargiter of Pargiter's Horse. Even before she has reached the man by the pillar box, Rose is a militant rebel: her language, even as a child, is of rebellion, espionage, militarism:

She told herself that she was making preparations for her raid into the enemy's country... for... she was half playing the Red Indian game all the time. (Y Vol I 51)

What she is playing for the other half of the time is not clear, unless it is her role as Rose the dutiful daughter. On the journey, Rose imagines herself into a life of action, one that is borrowed from her father's real life history:

Her head was full of her father's old stories of the Indian Mutiny. Somehow she felt that though he would be very angry if he caught her disobeying Eleanor, he would also be very proud if he knew that she was defying all the spies (?) who were in ambush in order to deliver his message. (Y Vol I 51)

Rose never quite gets the paternal approval that she is looking for. Although she evacuates the "appropriate" gender roles that she is supposed to occupy, this "masculine" imagination that she carries over into her fantasy play is not entirely appropriate either, for she is punished for actively imagining herself in her father's role. An unforeseen hitch in her game, then, is the appearance
of the real enemy, the man standing by the pillar box. As soon as she sees him, Rose recognises him as her enemy, although he is still, at this stage, incorporated into her game: "The enemy - the enemy!" Rose cried to herself, once more playing the game. (Y Vol I 52) In Volume IV (in a scene corresponding with the 1910 section of the published text) Rose lunches with Maggie and Elvira and insists on the importance of being able to distinguish between fantasy and reality in a way that Elvira seems incapable of doing. Rose's cautionary tale comes from a terrible experience that happened because she failed to distinguish between her "game" and "reality", between the boundaries that circumscribe what it means to be a little girl and the fantasy that explodes those boundaries, of what it is also like to identify as masculine (specifically, as her father). When she volunteers for active service as an ambulance driver in the First World War, Nicholas is charitable enough to admit (in a company that decries the war) that it gives Rose an opportunity to broaden her experiences, "...a chance of developing faculties which in peace would...remain undeveloped..." (Y Vol V 102) At the same time, he insists that the war has no meaning, it is "simply naughty children letting off fireworks in the back garden" (Y Vol V 111) which transforms Rose's real life experience back into a game.

Rose's childhood game falls down, however, because she doesn't have the right equipment to play it properly. Faced with the enemy (and this is the point at which reality and game have to be distinguished), at the crucial moment when she has to act, all she can do is this:

Clenching her hand, as if to pull the trigger of her revolver, she looked him full in the face. Bang! she said to herself. What a horrible face! For a moment she was frightened, genuinely: she became lonely (?) a little girl again (?) who had disobeyed her sister and run away from home. (Y Vol I 52)

78 "How far does Elvira know the difference between fact and fiction?" said Rose Vol IV p30; "But look here, said Rose, there must be a distinction between what's true & what's untrue." Vol IV p35
And Rose is punished, for although she escapes physical abuse, the man returns when she dreams about him. But for what is she punished? What constitutes disobedience? Playing masculine-identified games and identifying with her father at the ripe old age of ten? What the man does to Rose in fact has a curious resonance with the Colonel's gesture at the death of Mrs Pargiter. Here are three versions, manuscript, first proofs and published, of what the man does to Rose, all contained in gesture:

As she ran past him, he gibbered some nonsense at her, sucking his lips in and out; & began to undo his clothes... (Y Vol I 53)

It was a horrid face; it frightened her. He leered at her. He put his arm out as if to stop her. He almost caught her. She dashed past him. The game stopped. She became herself as she ran - a little girl who had run out without telling anyone and disobeyed her sister. Galley Proofs 16)

As she passed he sucked his lips in and out. He made a mewing noise. But he did not stretch his hands out at her; they were unbuttoning his clothes. (TY 24)

It seems, despite Woolf's change of mind between first and final versions, that he is more concerned with himself and the needs of his own desire than with either physically attacking Rose or including her within his gesture: at its most threatening, the aggression of male sexuality is too egotistical to perpetrate what it threatens to do.

Woolf herself makes clear in her "Sketch of the Past" that her gesture of embrace, in which she wanted to include her father at the death of her mother, was rejected. In the first proofs and published version of The Years and in To the Lighthouse, Woolf recalls the same scene. This is Mr Ramsay at the death of Mrs Ramsay, followed by the Colonel at the death of his wife and Woolf herself at the death of her mother:

[Mr. Ramsay stumbling along a passage stretched his arms out one dark morning, but, Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the
night before, he stretched his arms out. They remained empty.]79 (TTL 122)

"Rose!" he cried. "Rose! Rose!" He held his arms with the fists clenched out in front of him.80 (TY 39)

My father staggered from the bedroom as we came. I stretched my arms out to stop him, but he brushed past me, crying out something I could not catch; distraught.81

Although framed differently, the gestures are the same, from the sexual aggression of the man by the pillar box to the anguish of Mr Ramsay and the Colonel to Woolf’s imitation of the gesture. Except, of course, that Woolf’s came first, back in 1895. By collapsing different codes of sexual behaviour around familial (private) and social (public) relations, in this case around the father-daughter relationship, Woolf effectively collapses distinctions between public and private exhibitions of sexuality.

Woolf changes what Rose saw between manuscript, first proofs and published text. When Rose tries to tell her sister Eleanor what happened to her, Woolf moves between versions that hover on the explicit before she abandons these. In the manuscript: "somehow it was horrid nasty, what she had seen: she would not tell anyone: not even Eleanor. He had undressed..." (Y Vol I 58) In the galleys, Woolf gets closer to describing what it was that Rose had seen when the man had "undressed" whilst incorporating what is possibly an unconscious gesture of identification with the man and/or her father as she stretches out her arms and re-plays the scene:

79 See also textual variants between American and English editions: "...along a passage one dark morning, stretched his arms out, but Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, his arms, though stretched out, remained empty." To the Lighthouse Hogarth 1990 p205

80 This is not included in the manuscripts; Woolf added this detail which is identical in the first galleys proofs (p30) and the published text (The Years Hogarth 1990) p39 see also Woolf’s diary for September 12 1934: "I remember turning aside at mother’s bed, when she had died, & Stella took us in, to laugh, secretly at the nurse crying. She’s pretending, I said: aged 13. & was afraid I was not feeling enough." which Woolf reproduced in the Years: "She could see two nurses standing with their backs to the wall opposite. One of them was crying -the one, she observed, who had only come that afternoon." Hogarth p39

81 "A Sketch of the Past" Moments of Being 1978 p106
Rose lay huddled up under the blankets deep sunk in darkness. Then she sighed and stirred and stretched her arms out. Something had swum up on top of the blackness; she saw something in her sleep. An oval white thing dangled in front of her on the blackness; it dangled as if it were hung on a string.\textsuperscript{82}

The oval white thing is a face in manuscript and published text, but it is not so unambiguous in the galleys. Rose's eldest sister Eleanor tries to make the restless Rose tell her why she's so frightened. ""I thought I heard a man in the room," she brought out at last. "A robber," she added."\textsuperscript{83} (TY 34)

Although Eleanor cites the Colonel as a protector who would not allow a robber to hurt Rose, as Freud identified in his analysis of dreams: "In every case the robbers stood for the sleepers' father\textsuperscript{84} which again identifies the man in the street with Rose's father. When Woolf analyses Rose's nightmare scene in her corresponding essay in the manuscript (when The Years was still in its "Novel-Essay" format), it is again as a battle between reason and imagination that, as is evident from the site of Rose's dream, is a battle with the unconscious and with repression that signals the site of writing for Woolf in "Professions for Women." Woolf calls the scene "imperfect" since it is only an "illustration of one of the many aspects of love..." (Y Vol I 60) Love is a peculiar name to give to the sexual threat of Rose's experience and the man's intention, unless it is repositioned in the paradigm of spoken and unspoken relations within the family. This repositioning can certainly be, if not just a forbidden narrative, then the ultimate forbidden narrative - the Oedipal drama that Woolf implies lies just below the surface of family respectability.

Even if Rose never received the paternal approval that she was looking for when she went to the shop to buy the ducks and swans, she is shocked when Elvira says: "We hated our father..." (Y Vol IV 21)

\textsuperscript{82} Galley Proofs p25
\textsuperscript{83} Woolf was consistent about this: Rose thinks that she saw a robber in the manuscript (Vol I p58)
\textsuperscript{84} Freud The Interpretation of Dreams St. Ed. Vol V (1901-1905) p404
No Elvira: no! said Rose, putting up her hand. (Y Vol IV 22)

You can't say you hate your father: said Rose repeated. (Y Vol IV 22)

What you can speculate on, however, is how you feel about him sexually: "Do I love my father sexually?" Peggy casually asks herself at the party. (Y Vol VII 38) She decides not: it is pity that she feels. At her most explicit, Woolf is also at her least searching. When she feels that she cannot be explicit, she covers a whole spectrum of possibilities:

All the novelist can do, therefore, ... in order to illustrate this aspect of sexual life, is to state some of the facts; but not all; & then to imagine the ... impression on the nerves, on the brain; on the whole being, of a shock which the child instinctively conceals, as Rose did; (Y Vol I 61)

Rose has a split consciousness about herself as a result of what happened to her, when, like Edward and his mind and body, she occupies a liminal space between childhood and adulthood:

she did not know why it was that she felt still so queerly divided. She felt that she was a grown woman; and a child; and that there was a gap between.85

What was that queer sensation? It was something to do with being two people; a child and a woman; and something that came between.86

But whereas Edward's identity rests upon a figuration of asexual androgyny, Rose's simultaneous identifications with, and terror of, male sexuality, land her in that arrested stage of sexual development: lesbianism. Freud's notoriously phallocentric account of the development of female sexuality in fact elucidates Rose as a text book example of a lesbian:

To an incredibly late age she clings to the hope of getting a penis some time. That hope becomes her life's aim; and the phantasy of being a man in spite of everything often persists as a formative factor over long periods. This "masculinity complex" in women can also result in a manifest homosexual choice of object. Only if her development follows the third, very circuitous, path does she reach the final normal

85 Galley Proofs pp113-4
86 ibid. p114
female attitude, in which she takes her father as her object and so finds her way to the feminine form of the Oedipus complex.\textsuperscript{87}

In the party section of the manuscripts which is the equivalent of the Present Day section of The Years (Volumes VII and VIII) Rose, decorated for her service during the war, affirms both her martial status and her gender:

She stood there with her hands behind her back, in a military attitude, as though she were leading an expedition.

"Pargiter of Pargiter's Horse" said Bobby, teasing her. Isn't she exactly like the picture of Great Grand papa!"

"I'm proud of it" said Rose

"I'm proud of my family, proud of my country proud of -"

"Your sex?" Bobby interrupted

Well I'd a deal right rather be a woman than a man nowadays" said Rose. (Y Vol VII 150)

This positive assertion confuses cultural signifiers as Rose positively emphasises her biology and her identification with her male ancestors and militarism. But Woolf also systematically edited Rose's lesbianism from first to final versions. In the manuscripts, Woolf develops that hitherto unexplored territory: what happens when Chloe likes Olivia. For Rose likes Mildred, a relationship reviled by Elvira Pargiter:

I could think of Rose with equanimity in the arms of the man ... the other thought - Rose and Mildred - is loathsome: just for ten seconds." But in the one case, you see Maggie, I covered them with syringa petals. In the other- I didn't cover them; at all. I saw them, naked; which seems to prove, Maggie, that the nature of the act itself is a mixture of the ridiculous & the repulsive; or am I wrong? (Y Vol IV 69-70)

And she proceeds to construct fantastic narratives around Rose which, disregarding her lesbianism, re-invest her into an imaginary and protective framework of heterosexuality.

Woolf does try to describe sexual relations explicitly in the manuscripts when she writes about Rose's figure of identification, her father, and his secret mistress, Mira. In the published text, Woolf is coy about what "Bogy" and Mira do:

\textsuperscript{87} Freud "Female Sexuality" (1931) St. Ed. XXI (1927-1931) p229-30
His hand began its voyage up and down her neck, in and out, of the long thick hair. In this small room, so close to the other houses, dusk came quickly and the curtains were half drawn. He drew her to him; he kissed her on the nape of the neck; and then the hand that had lost two fingers began to fumble rather lower down where the neck joins the shoulders. (TY 6)

In the manuscript, Woolf tries to be more explicit than this, but simply can’t do it. Mira has gone to pay for her laundry with money given to her by the Colonel:

When she came back ... they settled down - again he would not take the change - & his hand her head leant further upon his knee; her hand was under his calf: his hand began to explore the... until they th s They & so they sat... (Y Vol III 38)

This certainly reduces the scope of their sexual activity since Woolf can’t name whatever it is that his hand tries to explore. In any case, two people just sitting could hardly trouble the censors, and nor could the covertly metaphorical version of their relationship that Woolf offers as substitute for the sex she could (or would) not explicitly describe:

In the descending shade, Mira was young, too, & romantic; & so that they were in each others arms, were very happy & reckless & ridiculous, as the fire shifted and poured showers of ash through the grate... (Y Vol III 38)

After the death of the Colonel, and the discovery of his letters, no one is particularly shocked to discover that he had a mistress: the kind of prostitution that Mira practices and the Colonel purchases is one of the least insidious in the manuscripts: selling the body for sex does not have the same consequences or meaning as selling the mind for money instead of writing for love.

The chapters from The Pargiters were finally incorporated into The Years, Woolf’s most troublesome and difficult text. Differentiating between the ease and difficulty that distinguished The Years and its intermittent
counterpart Three Guineas, Woolf was to describe the former as being "like a long childbirth" 88 and the latter as "...the mildest childbirth I have ever had."89 Why could she not, as a novelist, write about sex and the body when by the mid-thirties, it was, claimed Mary Agnes Hamilton, de rigueur to write, talk, think, but most importantly, have sex:

> [I]n a recent controversy on the amount of freedom existing in women's colleges, the young disputants appeared principally to be concerned, not with the intellectual but with the sexual freedom, and inclined to think that the authorities exercised too much control, not over their minds, but over their beds. Sex is almost the only topic on which they can be got to talk with fluency. 90

Hamilton claimed that "the post-war generation has definitely rejected the puritan standpoint about sex. It is, or tries to be, proud and not ashamed of its own body, and sees nothing to be furtive about in bodily joys."91 The Years in manuscript negotiates not only the politics of sexual repression and sexual longing alongside social and public organisations of difference; it also negotiates, as I show in the next chapter, what happens when the female body will never have a sexual identity. When a body is rendered physically redundant by a patriarchy that defines the boundaries of female sexuality and desire, what happens to that body, how will it be negotiated, how will it negotiate itself? The final chapter will examine post- and pre-war sexual identities and their impossible relation to writing, in The Years and Three Guineas.

88 D Vol 5 November 10 1936
89 D Vol 5 June 5 1938
90 Mary Agnes Hamilton "Changes in Social Life" pp233-285 in Our Freedom op.cit. pp252-3
91 ibid. p267
I should explain he shares my bath: androgyny, writing and chastity

I'm for the British Museum & Chastity.

some had their vision of a state of society, others of a state of mind.

In a speech to the House of Commons in 1932, Stanley Baldwin warned of a new danger made apparent during the First World War: the threat of war fought from the air:

Up to the time of the last War civilians were exempt from the worst perils of war. They suffered sometimes from hunger, sometimes from the loss of sons and relatives serving in the Army, but now, in addition, they suffer from the fear, not only of being killed themselves, but, what is perhaps worse for a man, the fear of seeing his wife and children killed from the air.

Baldwin's fears continued to support particular constructions of masculinity and militarism that, he at least felt, had somehow survived the changes experienced during and expressed after the First World War. Baldwin's fears about the erasure of patriarchal power were confirmed by Virginia Woolf six years later in Three Guineas: "And if he adds that he is fighting to protect her body, she will reflect upon the degree of physical protection that she now enjoys when the words 'Air Raid Precaution' are written on blank walls."

Woolf's disdain of war as the show piece of masculine valour protecting feminine helplessness was also countered by her objections to

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1 "The Years" Vol VII p117
2 "The Years" Vol V p138
3 "The Years" Vol VI p110
4 Stanley Baldwin's speech, November 10 1932, House of Commons, repr. from The Official Reports of Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons), The New Commonwealth Series December 1932 p2
5 Three Guineas p124
the ultra-masculine political factions which arise from and cause war. Woolf argued that whereas the fascist mind was too masculine, and specifically feminist perspectives in response to the injustices inflicted by patriarchy were too infertile, the fertility of the androgynous mind was, by a process of deduction, a mind that was just right:

For one can hardly fail to be impressed in Rome by the sense of unmitigated masculinity; and whatever the value of unmitigated masculinity upon the state, one may question the effect of it upon the art of poetry. (R 98)

It is fatal for a woman to lay the least stress on any grievance; to plead even with justice any cause; in any way to speak consciously as a woman. And fatal is no figure of speech; for anything written with that conscious bias is doomed to death. It ceases to be fertilized. (R 99)

[A] great mind is androgynous. It is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilized. (R 94)

The excesses produced on either side of the androgynous balance were exacerbated by war. As she was to write to Shena, Lady Simon on 25 January 1941: "No, I dont see whats [to] be done about war. Its manliness; and manliness breeds womanliness - both so hateful. I tried to put this to our local labour party: but was scowled at as a prostitute." In a coda endorsing her theory of androgyny in *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf considered the effects of fascism upon literature:

[A] telegram was sent to the Duce expressing the hope 'that the Fascist era would soon give birth to a poet worthy of it.' We may all join in that pious hope, but it is doubtful whether poetry can come of an incubator. Poetry ought to have a mother as well as a father. The Fascist poem, one may fear, will be a horrid little abortion such as one sees in a glass jar in the museum of some county town. Such monsters never live long it is said; one has never seen a prodigy of that sort cropping grass in a field. Two heads on one body do not make for length of life. (R 98)
Poetry, Woolf argues, cannot materialise from an ideological position that promotes "a sense of unmitigated masculinity."6 (R 98) Woolf's stance is ambivalent. On the one hand, she argues that the association of militarism with masculinity is no longer a viable analogy since technological developments have undermined such constructions: everyone is helpless, not just women and children. On the other hand, fascism7 represents the reassertion of virulent masculinity, a virility that was simultaneously seen by Woolf as emblematic of literary sterility: two heads on one body do not make for length of life.

Woolf despaired of the limited choices available to women in military situations: "rhetoric apart," she asked, "what active method is open to us? ... [B]oth the Army and the Navy are closed to our sex. We are not allowed to fight." (TG 15) Woolf appears to assert a renewed political agency and relevance for women and feminism during this period by exploiting the rhetorical strategies that she felt were her only effective weapon as she returns to the psycho-somatic trope that she had used in A Room of One's Own and called androgyny. What had once engaged Woolf as a trope that figured the discharge of unrestrained writing possibilities was now retrieved as a figure which denoted mental chastity. This chapter explores the uses Woolf made of the figure that she had first introduced in A Room of One's Own, the auto-erotic and psycho-somatic figure of androgyny, and considers how Woolf deployed

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6 Woolf's maternal metaphor was developed by Stevie Smith in Over the Frontier in 1938: "The milk of our mothers' kindness has ceased to flow; and fascism, communism, Italy, Germany, Abyssinia, Japan, the failure of the banking system, the debunking of Adam Smith, follow follow follow, as B follows A, and the sweet donkey the carrot." p74

7 Mussolini became Prime Minister in 1922. He was not overthrown until 1945. Victoria de Grazia summarises the changes in and growth of fascism: "During the first half of the 1920s, fascism grew from a splinter social movement in search of a constituency into a single-party government. An authoritarian regime with shallow social roots in civil society through the late 1920s, it became a mass-based state with totalitarian pretensions in the 1930s." How Fascism Ruled Women 1922-1945 1992 p8 In November 1933 Sir Oswald Mosley formed the British Union of Fascists. In January of 1933, Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. It was in 1933 that the persecution of the Jews began.
this figure in *Three Guineas* and in her creation of Elvira in the manuscripts of "The Years". For although Woolf was reluctant to confront the various political issues and situations that dominated the 1930s, she did manage to find a way of incorporating what she saw as an irresolvable tension: art and politics.

Woolf ends the first section and begins the second section of *Three Guineas* with a differentiation between bodily and mental chastity. Mental chastity is a figure that denotes artistic integrity for Woolf: it is wrong to "sell" the mind at any cost:

> We have seen ... how great a part chastity, bodily chastity, has played in the unpaid education of our sex. It should not be difficult to transmute the old ideal of bodily chastity into the new ideal of mental chastity - to hold that if it was wrong to sell the body for money it is much more wrong to sell the mind for money, since the mind, people say, is nobler than the body. (TG 95)

In fact, mental chastity is one of the conditions predicated on payment of the second guinea: "By chastity is meant that when you have made enough to live on by your profession you must refuse to sell your brain for the sake of money." (TG 92)

Woolf then returns to this in the third section of *Three Guineas*:

> But to sell a brain is worse than to sell a body, for when the body seller has sold her momentary pleasure she takes good care that the matter shall end there. But when a brain seller has sold her brain, its anaemic, vicious and diseased progeny are let loose upon the world to infect and corrupt and sow the seeds of disease in others. Thus we are asking you, Madam, to pledge yourself not to commit adultery of the brain because it is a much more serious offence than the other. (TG 108)

The unchaste mind is not that dissimilar from the masculine mind that produces the fascist poem: the same diseased progeny is the result. Yet at other moments in the text, Woolf’s versions of the mind/body dyad are not so readily divisive: Gertrude Bell, the "pseudo-diplomat" has both her public life and her reading material censored - she must be pure in body
Poverty, one of the conditions for payment of the second guinea, is to be used "for the full development of body and mind." (TG 92) It is the "full development of body and mind...which are the real loyalties ... we must serve..." (TG 93) And Woolf makes explicit the connection between mental chastity and the reconceptualisation of identity as a result of war:

Only, it would seem, to point to the photographs - the photographs of dead bodies and ruined houses. Can we bring out the connection between them and prostituted culture and intellectual slavery and make it so clear that the one implies the other... (TG 109)

In *A Room of One's Own* Woolf argued that the First World War was responsible for the destruction of literary romantic discourse and, as if to ratify this fissure, she causally linked militant feminism as being responsible for provoking prurient displays of male sexuality: the First World War not only produced, it also consolidated the sex war. The androgynous writing mind was introduced to assuage the sex war. It was also potentially poised to erase sexual difference thereby freeing the writer to eschew the ramifications of sex and politics in order to "[t]hink of things in themselves." (R 105)

In *Three Guineas*, Woolf asserted and emphasised sexual difference: the political ideologies that developed during the 1920s and 1930s, the doctrines espoused in Mussolini's Fascism and Hitler's Nazism discounted women, she argued, and women had to assert their differences as women in order to react. "What reason or what emotion," she asked in *Three Guineas*:

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8 See also Samuel Hynes: "A civil war, a sex war, and a class war: in the spring of 1914 these were all foreseen in England's immediate future, and with a kind of relish. Rhetorically speaking, they were already being fought; the language of war had become, by then, the language of public discourse." *A War Imagined* p7

9 Although see also Victoria de Grazia *How Fascism Ruled Women 1922-1945* and Claudia Koonz *Mothers in the Fatherland Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* London, 1988. Both texts discuss the ambivalence of the roles women played in the doctrines of Fascism and Nazism.
can make us hesitate to become members of a society whose aims we approve, to whose funds we have contributed? It may be neither reason nor emotion, but something more profound and fundamental than either. It may be difference. Different as we are, as facts have proved, both in sex and in education. And it is from that difference, as we have already said, that our help can come, if help we can, to protect liberty, to prevent war. (TG 119)

Woolf rebuked Hitler and Mussolini in *Three Guineas* who "in very similar words expressed the opinion that 'There are two worlds in the life of the nation, the world of men and the world of women'..." and in another footnote:

Both repeatedly insist that it is the nature of man and indeed the essence of manhood to fight. Hitler, for example, draws a distinction between 'a nation of pacifists and a nation of men.' Both repeatedly insist that it is the nature of womanhood to heal the wounds of the fighter.10

Woolf has been virulently attacked for her connection of patriarchy with fascism in *Three Guineas*, although this connection was not in fact as impossible as her detractors have assumed.11 In the extant holograph of *Three Guineas*, Woolf makes a clear connection between fascism, patriarchy and feminism. The twentieth century, she argued:

obscured the name of that nineteenth century movement for which it has hitherto stood. It is now perfectly plain that it was an Anti-fascist movement. Those daughters of educated men who calld themselves & were called "Feminists" were in fact the advance guard of your own movement.12

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10 *Three Guineas* Hogarth n.31 p199 and n.48 p205 And see Victoria de Grazia *How Fascism Ruled Women*. She argues that militarism obscured rather than clarified distinctions between men and women: "Soldiering and mothering were not analogous functions as Mussolini had claimed they were with his notorious dictum, "War is to man what maternity is to woman." War making made women the main protagonists of civil society; it tempted the most self-aggrandizing ones to make claims of valour that diminished men and to delude themselves that war time would tolerate the foundation of "Herland" ruled by female sentiments and desires." pp281-2


12 Holograph "Three Guineas" Berg Collection, dated 7 September, p21
Historical and political differences are eliminated as Woolf injects a renewed relevance into feminism. Ray Strachey thought in 1936 that "modern young women" showed "a strong hostility to the word "feminism", and all of which they imagine it to connote." Woolf herself declared feminism as a useful adjective and political category obsolete in Three Guineas:

What more fitting than to destroy an old word, a vicious and corrupt word that has done so much harm in its day and is now obsolete? The word 'feminist' is the word indicated. That word, according to the dictionary, means 'one who champions the rights of women.' Since the only right, the right to earn a living, has been won, the word no longer has a meaning. (TG 117)

Jane Slaughter has also pointed out the secondary status of feminism during this period:

During the war, of course, feminism within the socialist and communist parties remained almost non-existent. The left concentrated on antifascism wherever possible and wrestled with numerous theoretical and tactical differences that needed to be reconciled in order to present a united front. Clearly antifascism superseded all other concerns, and emphasis on feminism no longer played a part in practical politics. Mainstream socialist leaders and organizations, even before 1918, considered the "woman question" important but clearly secondary to political and economic issues. Now with war and fascism dominating European politics, it was almost impossible to mention feminist issues. Women party members, highly visible in antifascist activism, mobilised as workers against fascism. 14

But Woolf saw antifascism and patriarchy as being not only inextricably linked, but synonymous. Adopting the form of the Einstein-Freud correspondence ('Why War' 1932) which had addressed the question: "Is there any way of delivering mankind from the menace of war?" Woolf shifts the emphasis from the exchange of the celebrated physicist and the equally celebrated founder of psychoanalysis onto

13 Cited in Brian Harrison Prudent Revolutionaries 1987 p309
14 Jane Slaughter "Humanism versus Feminism in the Socialist Movement: the Life of Angelica Balabanoff" in European Women on the Left ed. Slaughter and Kern pp187-8
15 "Why War" St Ed. Vol XXII (1932-1936) p199
another unique letter: her own, "a letter perhaps unique in the history of human correspondence, since when before has an educated man asked a woman how in her opinion war can be prevented?" (TG 5) And war could be prevented, Woolf argued, by restructuring (or even reinventing) education and the professions for women and the working class. She proposed, in fact, what Einstein had argued was absolutely not the way to address the question of how to prevent war:

Here I am thinking by no means only of the so-called uncultured masses. Experience proves that it is rather the so-called 'Intelligenti' that is most apt to yield to these disastrous collective suggestions, since the intellectual has no direct contact with life in the raw, but encounters it in its easiest synthetic form - upon the printed page.

Woolf's response to writing and European politics was to develop a highly improbable strategy: writing should be produced through a form of sexual withdrawal: the medium of "mental chastity." Woolf's fantasy in *Three Guineas* was one that encouraged women to abolish and then rewrite hierarchical structures which encourage the competitiveness that ultimately engage men in war. Observing the traditional hierarchy of mind and body, she argued that:

We have seen...how great a part chastity, bodily chastity, has played in the unpaid education of our sex. It should not be difficult to transmute the old ideal of bodily chastity into the new ideal of mental chastity - to hold that if it was wrong to sell the body for money it is much more wrong to sell the mind for money, since the mind, people say, is nobler than the body. (TG 95)

Elizabeth Abel has argued that "mental chastity" was Woolf's response to what she saw as the excesses of fascism. Abel argues that since fascism glorified maternity during the 1930s, Woolf's anti-patriarchal figure shifted

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16 See also Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence "Women possess a latent power, peculiar to themselves, to put an end to war. When war breaks out, men are under a compulsion to join in the work of killing. Women are not, and never have been, under the compulsion to kill. They stand free of the tradition." *My Part in a Changing World* 1938 Preface p5

17 Einstein "Why War" p201
in focus from the mother to the daughter. Victoria de Grazia has identified binaries which established fascist propaganda as a way of maintaining control over women's bodies and allegiance to the state, binaries of the "crisis woman" and the "authentic woman." "By the mid-1930s," she argues, "bits of doggerel, jokes, and songs suggest that fascism's attack on the allegedly sexless, androgynous, socially useless "crisis women" had met their mark." Woolf was establishing a position that was, therefore, absolutely antagonistic to ideological constructions and idealisations of the maternal figure. The embryonic source for the "chaste daughter" was, I would argue, Elvira (later Sara) Pargiter in the manuscripts of The Years.

A key moment in the manuscripts is the interruption of Eugénie's story by Sir Digby, the source of the connection between chastity and Woolf's revised version of androgyny. The edited material from the drafts of The Years makes clear in a way that the published version does not, the origins of Woolf's link in Three Guineas between mental and bodily chastity: "This chastity bodily chastity, returning as chastity of the mind: & so, does everything come over again, only differently?" (Y Vol VII 121)

In her diary, Woolf feared that Elvira would dominate what was then The Pargiters: "The figure of Elvira is the difficulty. She may become too dominant. She is to be seen only in relation to other things." In the

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18 Elizabeth Abel Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis See pp84-107 for Abel's account of Woolf's political writing, especially A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas.
19 Victoria de Grazia How Fascism Ruled Women pp212-13
20 April 25 1933 Woolf was writing the third manuscript volume of The Years when she made this entry, a volume she began on February 26 1933. This volume includes the end of the 1880 section of The Years, and follows structurally the 1891, 1907, and beginning of the 1908 sections. The volume begins with Kitty having tea with the Robsons, and includes Colonel Pargiter visiting his mistress, Mira; Mrs Pargiter's illness, Delia's fantasies about Parnell, Eleanor's fantasies about marrying into the working class, Eleanor's visit to Morris in the law courts, the Colonel's visit to Eugénie on Maggie's birthday. This also marks Elvira's first appearance and follows the format of the 1891 section that Woolf would adhere to. Part two of Volume III is dated April 3 and corresponds with the 1907 section of
section Woolf refers to in her diary, Elvira is 17 and waiting for her sister, Maggie, and their parents to return from a party.\textsuperscript{21} It is Elvira writing that first alerts (or excites) Woolf to the possibility that her sometime alter ego\textsuperscript{22} may become "too dominant." Making one of her many references to the structural and thematic possibilities of \textit{The Pargiters}, Woolf planned:

\begin{quote}
It should include satire, comedy, poetry, narrative, & what form is to hold them all together? Should I bring in a play, letters, poems? I think I begin to grasp the whole ... And there are to be millions of ideas but no preaching - history, politics, feminism, art, literature - in short a summing up of all I know, feel, laugh at, despise, like, admire, hate & so on.\textsuperscript{23}
\end{quote}

Yet the reality of these multiple possibilities iterated by Woolf transmutes into a cautious, rather pedestrian working out of ideas:

\begin{quote}
I am at this moment sitting up in bed writing. The tree is black." She looked up." She I am sitting sitting up in my room, writing. There are four books on the table beside me: also my watch: also the there are also four books. She verified each statement also two chairs; & a This is the present moment. (Y Vol III 111)
\end{quote}

The four books are identified in the manuscript as \textit{Wives and Daughters}, \textit{Timon of Athens}, \textit{Afloat in the Pacific} and Edward Pargiter's translation of \textit{Antigone}.\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Antigone} has a useful political subtext. In \textit{Three Guineas}, Woolf refers to Sir Richard Jebb's translation: "The \textit{Antigone} is clearly one of the great masterpieces of dramatic literature. Nevertheless, it could undoubtedly be made, if necessary, into anti-Fascist propaganda ..., Creon ... is typical of certain politicians in the past, and of Herr Hitler and Signor...\textsuperscript{25} The Years although the manuscript dates this as 1902 (and 1901 in a rewrite of the section beginning p110 Vol III)

\textsuperscript{21} The section ends June 1 1933 in the manuscript, and is followed by one of Woolf's many abandoned rewrites of the 1880 section. The diary entry was made between the beginning and end of this section. The origins for this scene are in a sketch Woolf wrote in 1903 in \textit{A Dance in Queens Gate} in \textit{A Passionate Apprentice: The Early Journals of Virginia Woolf} ed Leaska pp164-7

\textsuperscript{22} "I hardly know which I am, or where: Virginia or Elvira; in the Pargiters or outside." D Vol 4 25 March 1933

\textsuperscript{23} D Vol 4 25 April 1933

\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Wives and Daughters} Elizabeth Gaskell (1866); \textit{Timon of Athens} William Shakespeare; British Library Catalogues identify \textit{Afloat, A Story} by Matilda Leathes London, JF Shaw and Co., 1886
Mussolini in the present."\textsuperscript{25} Whilst the ominous threats of Fascism and Nazism lend a particular historical and cultural relevance to \textit{Antigone}, Woolf still felt that such a reading would be propagandist: "[I]f we use art to propagate political opinions, we must force the artist to clip and cabin his gift to do us a cheap and passing service. Literature will suffer the same mutilation that the mule has suffered; and there will be no more horses."\textsuperscript{26} Even as she recognises that contemporary politics can suggest new ways of reading literary texts, and that literature can interpret the evolving world around her, Woolf eschews these possibilities. But if art is resolutely not for propagating political opinions, what is it for?

Woolf's woman writing is forced to negotiate the impossibility of any literary representation:

> It was impossible to continue the bald catalogue of chair-table with the music waltz sounding. Under its influence the moment was no longer the present moment or, perhaps it was a it was the present moment; no longer to be pinned down satisfactorily by cataloguing chairs & tables. (Y Vol III 112)

Elvira ... tried to go on with her ... attempt to record what was happening. But it was too difficult. They Nobody stayed in one place long enough. No sooner had she described the couple said that there were now two people sitting alone on the roof, that the music began again, & they were gone. (Y Vol 112-113)

These descriptions precede another moment of impossibility. Elvira's mother, Eugénie, is telling Elvira and Maggie about her courtship with their father. Just before the climax of the story, Sir Digby engages Eugénie's attention and she leaves her daughters. Elvira's reaction is extreme: "There! exclaimed Elvira, 'what the use of words Maggie?'" (Y Vol III 148) The interruption makes Elvira "neither like a girl, unlike a woman; but aged, drawn, sexless" (Y Vol III 149) as her mother's narrative is broken off by the voice of paternal authority. This is a key moment in

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Three Guineas} n39 pp189-90
\textsuperscript{26} ibid. p190
the text. For if, as Elizabeth Abel argues, androgyny is the proposed corrective to the extremes of masculine discourse, and Woolf's woman writer, the "chaste daughter" of Three Guineas had her origins in Elvira, then here is the (or certainly a) link between androgyny and mental chastity located specifically in the dangers of patriarchal dominance which renders female sexuality and discourse so negligible. In the final version of The Years, this scene has very different consequences, in a significant shift of emphasis:

"She won't tell us," said Maggie, picking up her gloves. She spoke with some bitterness.

They listened to the voices talking in the passage. They could hear their father's voice. He was expostulating. His voice sounded querulous and cross.

"Pirouetting up and down with his sword between his legs; with his opera hat under his arm and his sword between his legs," said Sara, pummeling her pillows viciously. (TY 124)

The phallic sword is mocked, attesting not only to the type of sartorial vanity that Woolf satirised in Three Guineas, but also to a redundant staging of masculinity.27 I argued in Chapter Four that technological advances in modern warfare meant that war as a traditional testing ground for masculine valour had to be renegotiated. Olive Schreiner argued, even before the First World War: "The private soldier of the great victorious army is not always an imposing object as he walks down the village street, cap on side of head and sword dangling between his legs..."28

The unsexing of Elvira in the first version and Sara's ridiculing of paternal authority in the published version, signals a remarkable shift in filial response to the same performance of masculinity. Writing about the differences between The Years in manuscript and in published form, Grace Radin argues:

27 See Three Guineas pp23-6 See also Leonard Woolf, who equates sartorial vanity with political savagery in Quack, Quack! p37
28 Schreiner Woman and Labour p128

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What is particularly noteworthy is that wherever the MS dealt with "women's bodies for instance...their passions," these passages have been deleted from both the novel and from the essay. Three Guineas deals with economics and politics but not with sexuality; it attacks the tyranny of fascism but only in passing mentions the tyranny of chastity. 29

Yet the relation between fascism and chastity, or political and sexual ideologies, is surely more complex than a simple matter of coy (or careless) textual erasure. Can we, for instance, accept Woolf's adroit switch from bodily chastity to mental chastity? Does the corollary really work? Woolf's attempt to name or explain chastity in the manuscripts of The Years is not particularly successful: "I said, 'Chastity is merely--I--said, I said, I said, What I said was.'" (Y Vol IV 29) Chastity is, as it turns out, sexual repression. In Three Guineas, Woolf makes clear that bodily chastity was a necessary evil because women were not sufficiently protected by law (let alone the moral standards that prevailed (and are currently being reintroduced) in England) if they had children outside of marriage. In footnote 38 to the second section of Three Guineas, Woolf points out that "Until women had the vote in 1918, 'the Bastardy Act of 1872 fixed the sum of 5s. a week as the maximum which a father, whatever his wealth, could be made to pay towards the maintenance of the child.'" 30 (TG 188)

Such states of affairs are reconstructed in Three Guineas as Woolf reconceptualises and redefines mind/body relations through sexual and political paradigms. "It is hard," argues Mary Hamer:

> to overestimate the disruptive implications, freshly experienced in the decades before the Second World War, of giving women the vote. Social, cultural, and psychic organisation were at stake. All used the recognition of genital difference between the sexes as an

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29 Grace Radin Virginia Woolf's The Years the Evolution of a Novel p35
30 This source is taken from MG Fawcett and EM Turner Josephine Butler. In Volume VI of the manuscripts of The Years, Eleanor imagines a conversation that she has with Nicholas: "And then, Nicholas, the economic question: she had to pay for her child--let alone & the social stigma." p15
organising principle and all were vulnerable to erosions of difference.

It is not an accident that the move to put the sexes on a more equal footing should have been accompanied by an unprecedented attempt to rethink the human body and its sexuality.\textsuperscript{31}

Citizenship, I will argue, was in fact a key issue at the heart of Woolf’s complex attempt to negotiate the particular ideological difficulties that attended writing during this period. She located the crux of these difficulties, I want to argue, in the physically chaste (though mentally lax) Elvira, and another tenant who occupies her shabbily genteel building: a man called Abrahamson, the Jew in the bath.

Elvira’s chastity is not only located in the moment of the paternal arrest of a female narrative in the manuscripts. Crippled and hunchbacked, Elvira tries to live her life through the imagination, fantasy and story telling. She is the commentator on practically every version of sexuality and the body in the manuscript drafts (most of which Woolf edits from the final version). It is Elvira who comments disparagingly on Rose’s lesbianism, Edward’s homosexuality, Maggie breastfeeding, sex and population control amongst the working class, and the line of grease left by the Jew in the lodging house bath which she must share.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{31} Mary Hamer, \textit{Signs of Cleopatra}, 1993 pp105-6
\textsuperscript{32} Elvira’s discussion of Rose’s lesbianism occurs in Volume IV pp69-70. This is completely edited from the final version. Edward’s homosexuality is discussed in Volume IV p124 in an exchange between Elvira and Bobby: “Yes Edward’s very good kind to young men” said Elvira. / \textit{Take your meaning} It makes a difference does it?” This is not included in the final version. Elvira’s disgust at Maggie breastfeeding is in Volume IV p118: “So when Maggie said to me, taking the baby on her knee, & beginning to uncover her breast, if you dont like this, why not go?” and p158: “...the woman on the chair under the tree; with her baby in her arm, hugging it; holding it to her...how horrible!” Again, this is not included in the corresponding 1914 section of the published edition. Elvira, Maggie and Rose discuss sex, the working class, over-population and contraception in Volume IV p24: “Look at those wretched little children” said Rose./Stop them then” said Maggie. Stop them having children.” And: “We wouldn’t have children if we didn’t want them” said Maggie. / \textit{You would be allowed} But you cant say that in public” said Rose. ” p26 And: “But I don’t see will (?) that woman down there going to Harley Street? with three guineas?” p27 In the final edition, discussion about birth control is placed towards the end of the 1910 section: “Bring up your children on a desert island where the ships only come when the moon’s full!” she exclaimed. / “Or have none?” said Maggie. Contraception is also discussed in Vol VI of \textit{The Pargiters}: after the war, rich and middle-class women come down from Oxford and decide to try prostitution for a while, although Elvira says that they are “...provided with the necessary whatever you call ‘em.” p73 George adds: “So that they dont have
What happens when a body is not sexually negotiable? How is it negotiated, how will it negotiate itself? In *Three Guineas*, Woolf wrote about dreaming "the recurring dream that has haunted the human mind since the beginning of time; the dream of peace, the dream of freedom". It was a dream for "the capacity of the human spirit to overflow boundaries and make unity out of multiplicity." (TG 163) It was in the creation of Elvira, I will argue, that Woolf found a way of both writing about and linking chastity, writing and the body.

In her short story "A Society" (1920) Woolf had considered chastity and citizenship from woman's position as outsider. Ultimately, no position the women choose is tenable: women can remain "outside" the privileges within patriarchy and deny themselves the right of full citizenship, but must pay the price, not only of the opportunities they must forfeit, but of self-deception: the burden of knowledge is one they are reluctant to carry. This debate, between occupying a position outside society or working within its structures and hierarchies, is pursued in the manuscript draft of *The Years* between Elvira and Bobby (Martin in the published text). Woolf keeps the external framework of the scene - the chance meeting at St Paul's and the meal but edits the conversation that they have about life lived through fantasy and imagination and life lived through (or enabled by) political activism. Elvira cannot enter a profession (she has had no education) and she cannot earn a living with her body (she is hunchbacked). Marriage, the one position open to her, is untenable since Elvira's body is never up for sexual negotiation (as sanctioned through marriage). 33 Elvira, like the women in "A Society"

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33 "It was with a view to marriage that her body was educated..." *Three Guineas* p44
and like Peggy during the party in the final section of the manuscript volumes, wishes to remain in a fantasised space "outside" of patriarchy: enfranchisement for Elvira, and for her sister Maggie, is only to collude with the social structures she abhors: "But suppose we had votes, then we should be Englishwomen. Do we want to be Englishwomen? I don't." (Y Vol IV 56) One of Woolf's anti-patriarchal crusades, included in the manuscript drafts of The Years had circulated around patriarchal privilege and patriotism and the regulation of gender roles within those positions. Maggie, denouncing patriotism as "silly... disgusting... barbaric..." (Y Vol V 100) prompts Nicholas, a stranger to British patriarchal politics, to conclude:

Thats very interesting ... You get two women like Magdalena & Elvira he continued; "who are absolutely uneducated: they have received nothing from their country from the institutions of their country; they cannot inherit titles; they cannot vote; they cannot practice professions; they are kept purely as slaves for the breeding of children: & that system it seems has abolisheds all feelings of patriotism. (Y Vol V 100)

The parallels between state control of women in fascist Italy in the mid-1930s and Nicholas's sardonic incredulity (made, in the manuscripts in the equivalent of the 1917 section of The Years) may be a little stretched, but nevertheless, state control that defines women's bodies in fascist Italy and state control that legislates against women's minds and bodies in patriarchal Britain is not that unwieldy a connection.34 "History and biography" argued Woolf in Three Guineas, "when questioned would seem to show that her position in the home of freedom has been different from her brother's; and psychology would seem to hint that history is not without its effect upon mind and body." (TG 12)

Bobby beats Elvira into an uncomfortable silence: "D'you find it a satisfactory occupation Elvira? Is it enough? Taking notes? Do you

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34 See Victoria de Grazia How Fascism Ruled Women for various accounts of state subordination of women's bodies p5, p7, p25, p31, p41, p71 p137, pp211-213
Testing her further, he asks her what she would do if she didn’t have £250 a year to live on:

"Walk the streets"
"Youd have no success, with your figure"
Sit on Waterloo Bridge & watch the river.
Nonsense. What you’d do is to take the dogs for a walk put flowers in water. You’d live with your brother John on a pitance."
Elvira took up a fork & made a mark in the table cloth.
Yes my dear, it'd be no good taking notes then. (Y Vol IV 126)

Elvira does get a job - and for none of the reasons outlined by Bobby.
Elvira gets a job because she lives in sordid lodgings and shares her bath with a man called Abrahamson, a Jew who leaves a line of grease around the edge of the tub. Elvira needs the job at the newspaper so that she can move out of her accommodation which necessitates sharing a bath, a bath containing the residue of Abrahamson's body. But she establishes that even at her interview, the fact that she is of the same social class as the editor has no impact: "My grandfather was at Eton too, I said..." "But can you write? he said..."35 (Y Vol VII 2) She is sent to a relevant department where "they deal with iron stains in table cloths: how to fry fish in batter, & - she took the newspaper cutting - Lady Cynthia had chosen a beige hat to wear with her underskirt of green." (Y Vol VII 3) She defends herself: "I'd rather write how to get iron stains out of table cloths than this immortal masterpieces reminding (?) one of Proust. The Jews in the bath." She yawned. She fell silent." (Y Vol VII 4) Writing for economic aid or gain is not writing that, according to Woolf, makes a significant contribution to culture - it merely documents transient social topics - Lady Cynthia's outfit and (ironically) the removal of stains. The one constant is Elvira's muse: the Jew and the bath, which is repeated consistently:

35 These positions are reinvoked in the first section of Three Guineas: addressing her correspondent, the letter writer says that although they are from the same class, differences in education mean that: "though we look at the same things, we see them differently." p7
because of the Jew in my bath, I repeated. (2)
But the Jews in my bath. (3)
The Jews in my bath. (4)
How far was any of it true? George asked himself. he had cut a long
strip from some fashion paper.
Certainly also, the Jew was in the bath. (4)
The Jews in my bath. (5)
How far there was any truth in the story of the Jew, he did not
know. (7)

What exonerates Elvira for writing like this, for "prostituting" her mind
and for her apparently racist citation of "the Jew"? "Ought to be a law, she
observed, every man one who writes, or lectures, or sets sets himself up to
instruct the people should be forced to add, "The Jews in my bath:" in
capital letters, the Jews in my bath." (Y Vol VII 8) "The Jew," I will argue,
has a symbolic status in the holographs, although he is no less troubling a
choice of symbol for that.

Woolf wrote this volume, Volume VII, between July 1 and
September 25 1934. Leonard Woolf was, during this period, engaged in
writing his anti-fascist book, Quack, Quack! which he finished on 27
February 1935, a book that condemns Nazi Europe as barbarous and savage
and laments the collapse of "civilisation." In April of that year, the
Woolfs drove through Germany, and Virginia Woolf, whilst aware of the
prevalence of anti-semitic feeling in Germany, remained almost jocose
(concealing what fears?) as she wrote to her friends prior to the journey:

we go through Germany, and as Leonard's nose is so long and
hooked, we rather suspect that we shall be flayed alive...

We are driving through Germany to Rome, so perhaps we shall be
in trouble with the Nazis. But I hope not.

36 VW wrote to Quentin Bell that LW had finished writing Quack, Quack! Letters Vol V
27th February 1935 Leonard Woolf wrote that: "The cancer in western society is not the
class war or nationalism, it is not communism or fascism; it is the refusal of the minority to
share civilisation and its advantages with the majority." Quack, Quack! 1935 pp27-8
37 The widely available The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror (prepared by the World
Committee for the Victims of German Fascism Gollancz 1933) also provided graphic
accounts, both descriptive and photographic, of Nazi violence and anti-semitism in
Germany during the early 1930s.
our Jewishness is said to be a danger - (not seriously)

We have got a letter from Prince Bismarck in our pockets, as people say we might be unpopular as we are Jews.38

Woolf's ready alliance with Leonard Woolf's racial identity ("our Jewishness" "we are Jews") is uncommented upon in her letters. In the drafts of The Years that she was then writing, change in racial or national identity through marriage was tantamount to repatriation according to Woolf, eradicating women's autonomous national identity. Elvira, pointing out the impossibility of patriotism as a position or ideology for her, tells Bobby: "And if I marry a Frenchman I'm French." (Y Vol IV 137)

Yet, Woolf also knew from Leonard Woolf's "spirited attack upon human nature..."39 that Jews in Nazi Germany shared something with women in patriarchal Britain. For included in Leonard Woolf's attack on Nazi abuses in Quack, Quack! was point 4 of the 25 points in the programme of the National Socialist Party (1920):

None but the members of the nation may be citizens of the state. None but those of German blood, whatever their creed, may be members of the nation. No Jew, therefore, may be a member of the nation.40

Woolf's reading of Antigone as anti-fascist propaganda had merged two different political and historical moments: pre-1914 militant feminism and its fight against patriarchy and women protesting against the racial hatred incited by Nazism. Mrs Pankhurst broke a window and was imprisoned in Holloway and this was analagous argued Woolf, to:

Frau Pommer, the wife of a Prussian mines official at Essen, who said: "'The thorn of hatred has been driven deep enough into the people by the religious conflicts, and it is high time that the men of today disappeared.'... She has been arrested and is said to be tried on

38 VW to Violet Dickinson 18 April 1935; VW to Susan Buchan 25 April 1935; VW to Ethel Snyth 26 April 1935; VW to Margaret Llewellyn Davies 28 April 1935 Letters Vol V
39 VW to Margaret Llewellyn Davies 28 April 1935 L Vol V
40 Leonard Woolf Quack, Quack! Hogarth Press 1935 pp87-8 n. cited from Hitler's Official Programme Gottfried Feder English Translation p39
a charge of insulting and slandering the State and the Nazi movement."  

British patriarchy and European nazism were united in their oppression of women. Woolf's parallel connects the arrest of Mrs Pankhurst for the (unspoken) act of throwing a brick (the "terrorism" of the militant suffragettes was never given a voice in press reports\(^\text{42}\)) and the arrest of Frau Pommer for indicting racial oppression. But she fails to distinguish between Mrs Pankhurst's imprisonment in Holloway and Frau Pommer's impending trial for slander against Nazism: the punishments are not, in essence, at all the same. In fact, the most viable connection that Woolf does make between European Nazism and British patriarchy is in her analysis of Elvira and her relation to the Jew in the bath. If even this analogy seems as obscure as Woolf's alliance of Mrs Pankhurst and Frau Pommer, I should make clearer that Woolf's connection is absolutely embedded in a recognition that writing "immortal masterpieces" is impossible because of the political situation of the mid-1930s.

George (later North Pargiter in the published version) thinks: "The Jew was in all their baths, as she put it. But The problem, how to get rid of the line of grease, how to live in decently expansively, the sense of expansion remained with him, as the flower of an evening." (Y Vol VII 10) Woolf summons her whipping boy, the First World War, as George, veteran of that war, thinks:

Specialists, men the traitors are the successful. The specialists, the professional successes; who put a ring round the mind & impede its natural expansion: Johnny's pop-gun: the desire to impress: superiority complex; power over others - these all crumble & corrode & diminish & here we are shut up in little fences of

\(^{41}\) Three Guineas n39 p189 This information is taken, by Woolf, from The Times 12 August 1935

\(^{42}\) See Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence "Every avenue for reaching public opinion was closed to the suffragists. The press would neither report speeches nor accept articles." My Part in a Changing World Preface p2
corrugated iron; while somewhere very near at hand, lies real freedom, real life, an excitement, a community... (Y Vol VII 9)

For George, post-war civilisation means not so much the end of senseless slaughter as the colonial’s return to the mother nation: "And yet he was impressed by the new galleries, new shops, new houses, new machinery of all kinds; & it was exciting, after seeing only black men..." (Y Vol VI 55) In Volume VII of the manuscripts, George wishes to identify himself with a society of outsiders and propounds the basis of Woolf’s theory of mental chastity that she would use in Three Guineas:

If people only wrote when they had something to say, if they only taught when they had knowledge to give,...if But, things being as they are, life for the average man, must be a round of lie telling, of money-making or at least of truth mitigating: because it must be one of money making. (Y Vol VII 6)

It is probable that Abrahamson, who lacks all personal context in both manuscript and final volume, is not individually responsible for impeding the expansion of the mind: the facts are that he shares the run down boarding house with Elvira, works in the tallow trade (which would account for the line of grease in the bath), and doesn’t clean the bath after he’s used it. And yet, Woolf extracts him as her potent symbol. The Jew is duplicitous, both patriarchy which excludes and puts a ring round the mind and the symbol of poverty that necessitates the entry into patriarchy in order to avoid him: "Big wigs all took pay; they had Jews in the bath; & sold had mitigated belief in themselves by their love of office & power." (Y Vol VII 9) Pointing out her article to Renny (her French brother-in-law who "repatriates" her sister, Maggie), Elvira tells him "That’s how I earn my pay: the Jew being in my bath." (Y Vol VII 26) And yet in some ways, the Jew is also Elvira’s imaginative fantasy, because when she tries to explain her job at the party, "The words, very quickly articulated, fell so fast from her lips that could [sic] only make out that she had got a job on a paper: that she had to earn her living; It was as if she
were speaking a kind of shorthand." (Y Vol VII 122) The Jew is elided: only Elvira's poverty and need for a job are the facts that remain.

Elvira's entry into writing is occasioned, I suggest, less by anti-Semitism and more by her declassed situation. Ever downwardly-mobile, her housing crisis energises her into popular journalism. I want to argue that in the manuscripts, Woolf was originally attempting a mobilisation of racial identity in relation to class and gender histories which she collapses over two different historical periods: the post-war years (the historical moment in which Elvira and the Jew in the bath are located) and European politics in the 1930s (the period in which Woolf herself is located), as a way of negotiating defenceless positions (gender and race) within the nation-state.

Woolf keeps the elements of plot that sustain the story of Elvira's writing and the Jew in the bath in the final version of *The Years* but it is the unwanted intimacy of the overflowing boundaries of the body that forms the crux of the plot: exactly how (and why) Sara (previously Elvira) "prostitutes culture" is omitted. Sara's lyrical and meandering story virtually eclipses the political significances that are implicit in the manuscript version:

"And there were people passing; the strut; the tiptoeing; the pasty; the ferret-eyed; the bowler hatted, servile innumerable army of workers. And I said, 'Must I join your conspiracy? Stain the hand, the unstained hand,' - he could see her hand gleam as she waved it in the half-light of the sitting-room, 'and sign on, and serve a master; all because of a Jew in my bath; all because of a Jew?'" (TY 297-8)

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43 In the published version of *The Years* the scene with Sara and North takes place in the "Present Day" section, which is more clearly aligned with the 1930s. The present day in the manuscripts is actually more closely aligned with the 1920s. In Volume VI George left for the Front around 1917 which was between nine and eleven years ago.

44 And see, for example, a letter Woolf sent to Ethel Smyth replying to Smyth's response to *Three Guineas*. She answers a query about her patriotism: "...of course I'm 'patriotic': that is English, the language, farms, dogs, people: only we must enlarge the imaginative, and take stock of the emotion. And I'm sure I can; because I'm an outsider partly; and can get outside the vested interest better than Leonard even - tho' a Jew." June 7 1938. See also VW to Vita Sackville-West "Of course I'm not in the least patriotic..." 29 August 1939 L Vol VI
That she has to get a job in order to earn money so that she can afford better accommodation is the meaning which North finally arrives at:

"How much of that was true?" he asked her. But she had lapsed into silence. The actual words he supposed - the actual words floated together and formed a sentence in his mind - meant that she was poor; that she must earn her living, but the excitement with which she had spoken, due to wine perhaps, had created yet another person; another semblance, which one must solidify into one whole. (TY 299)

Was Woolf trying to eschew overtly political writing? Although it is possible to see how Woolf was formulating her connections between fascism and patriarchy, women and Jews, in the manuscripts of The Years, her discomfort with politically motivated writing, which she perceived as propagandist, resulted in her writing at the limits of exactly that motivation. For Elvira, Woolf's woman writing, does exactly what Woolf says she shouldn't: she does not protect and uphold cultural values, she does not write for herself, she does not practice mental chastity: she sells her mind.

Although Woolf edits Elvira and her writing from the published version of The Years, she does outline the problem of artistic integrity in Three Guineas. The narrator considers the autobiography of Mrs Oliphant as her example of the protection of "culture and intellectual liberty." If she secured economic independence for herself and her children, she did not protect intellectual liberty and culture. And how could she?

[T]o ask the daughters of educated men who have to earn their livings by reading and writing to sign your manifesto would be of no value to the cause of disinterested culture and intellectual liberty, because directly they had signed it they must be at the desk writing those books, lectures and articles by which culture is protected and intellectual liberty is sold into slavery. (TG 106)

It was in the struggle to fight sexual inequality under patriarchy at home that Woolf saw the connection between patriarchy and European fascism: "And is not the woman who has to breathe that poison and to fight that
insect, secretly and without arms, in her office, fighting the Fascist or the Nazi as surely as those who fight him with arms in the limelight of publicity?" (TG 62)

Woolf shifted the scene and terms of the battlefield by creating new topographies and re-evaluating public and private binaries: Woolf shifted the war itself to become a site of desire. For war liberates women from the patriarchal stranglehold. Florence Nightingale for one, argues Woolf, had cause to rejoice at the outbreak of the Crimean War, whilst other women, through lack of education and the tyrannies of the private house, encouraged women to become complicit with war:

So profound was her [the woman in the private house] unconscious loathing for the education of the private house with its cruelty, its poverty, its hypocrisy, its immorality, its inanity that she would undertake any task however menial, exercise any fascination however fatal that enabled her to escape...unconsciously she desired our splendid war. (TG 46)

Comparing the constant childbearing of the Victorian woman with male dominated professions and economics, Woolf argues that:

The intensive childbirth of the unpaid wife, the intensive money-making of the paid husband in the Victorian age had terrible results, we cannot doubt upon the mind and body of the present age. To prove it we need not quote once more the famous passage in which Florence Nightingale denounced that education and its results; nor stress the natural delight with which she greeted the Crimean war... (TG 91)

Victoria de Grazia’s account of women and the relation of the fascist state’s control of their bodies gives a compelling authenticity and authority to Woolf’s connections between fascism and patriarchy, which belies her detractors, present and past:

[O]n population issues, women were presumed to be antagonists of the state, acting solely on the family’s interest without regard to the

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45 War also came to designate different forms of patriarchal oppression of women: "There was the battle of Westminster. There was the battle of the universities. There was the battle of Whitehall. There was the battle of Harley Street. There was the battle of the Royal Academy." Three Guineas p73
nation's needs. Seeking to compel women to have more children, the state banned abortion, the sale of contraceptive devices, and sex education. At the same time, the fascist state favoured men at the expense of women in the family structure, the labour market, the political system, and society at large.46

Woolf's analysis of women and the labour market under patriarchy comes close to de Grazia's analysis of women and the labour market in Fascist Italy:

In one world the sons of educated men work as civil servants, judges, soldiers and are paid for that work; in the other world, the daughters of educated men work as wives, mothers, daughters - but are they not paid for that work? Is the work of a mother, of a wife, of a daughter worth nothing to the nation in solid cash? ... wives and mothers and daughters who work all day and every day, without whose work the State would collapse and fall to pieces, without whose work your sons, sir, would cease to exist, are paid nothing whatever. (TG 63)

Yet Woolf also seems to opt for compromise as she brings into Three Guineas an argument that she had first advanced in "A Society" in 1920, and then again in the manuscripts of The Years. At the party, towards the end of the manuscripts, Peggy asks:

Why don't we get together, Eleanor - we young women, we working, professional women - & say, By God, we wont have it. We'll break down the professions. We wont take honours - we wont make money - we'll make a new society - a civilised society where you've got to mix all the professions - not excel in one. (Y Vol VII 102)

In Three Guineas, Woolf proposes that women should form a society of outsiders that will assert its difference from men but work for a common end: the destruction of tyranny and fascism (TG 122). This sits, perhaps, oddly with her recourse to psychoanalytic discourse towards the end of her arguments, when, oscillating between fact and vision (finally she ends with fact: "Let us then leave it to the poets to tell us what the dream is; and fix our eyes upon the photograph again: the fact." (TG 163)), Woolf employs her socio-scientific analysis: "infantile fixation" (TG 145). The
inequalities consonant with patriarchy rest on Oedipal and male castration anxieties: "Society it seems was a father, and afflicted with the infantile fixation too." (TG 155) Fact and fiction, conscious and subconscious all come into play in her "bisexual" conversation between binaries structured around war and peace, barbarism and civilisation, politics and people:

[It] is time for us to raise the veil of St Paul and to attempt, face to face, a rough and clumsy analysis of that fear and of the anger which causes that fear; for they may have some bearing upon the question you put us, how can we help you to prevent war. Let us suppose, then, that in the course of that bi-sexual conversation about politics and people, war and peace, barbarism and civilization, some question has cropped up, about admitting, shall we say, the daughters of educated men to the Church or the Stock Exchange or the diplomatic service. (TG 147)

We are returned to Woolf's argument in A Room of One's Own: feminism (or the campaign for women's enfranchisement) rouses male hostility. Woolf simply retranscribes the language of psychoanalysis into a discourse of feminism: patriarchy is the male who fears castration in the form of loss of power - in education, law, the Church - in fact, all the social and cultural constructs that organise and cement difference. Elizabeth Abel argues in relation to the format of Three Guineas and its similarities to "Why War?": "By both writing and departing from Freud's position, while recasting a discussion across disciplinary boundaries into an exchange across gender lines, Woolf inscribes the question of war in a dialogue conducted with psychoanalysis across and about the sexual division."47

Is it patriarchy that Woolf ultimately fixes on rather than her society of outsiders? For much as she associated Hitler and Mussolini with extreme types of a deplorable masculine virility, they were, she also argued, emblematic of death and sterility: looking at the photographs released by the Spanish government, Woolf suggests again that fascism

47 Elizabeth Abel Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis pp103-4
and patriarchy, by connecting the public and private worlds, are linked, and that we too are bound up inextricably with these binaries, victims and perpetrators:

But the human figure even in a photograph suggests other and more complex emotions. It suggests that we cannot dissociate ourselves from that figure but are ourselves that figure. It suggests that we are not passive spectators doomed to unresisting obedience but by our thoughts and actions can ourselves change that figure. A common interest unites us; it is one world; one life.48 (TG 162-3)

Woolf embarked upon a fantasy whereby she distributes three guineas for a better "herland," but she also used the uncomfortable reality of the photographs that gave her evidence of the massacre war involves. Rhetoric aside, pictorial evidence was another way of seeing war and reconceptualising identity. "This morning I got a packet of photographs from Spain all of dead children, killed by bombs - a cheerful present" she write to Julian Bell.49 In Three Guineas, she repeated her comments to Bell:

The Spanish Government sends them with patient pertinacity about twice a week. They are not pleasant photographs to look upon. They are photographs of dead bodies for the most part. This morning’s collection contains the photograph of what might be a man's body or a woman's; it is so mutilated that it might, on the other hand, be the body of a pig. But those are certainly dead children... (TG 13)

In addition to the photographs that Woolf was sent, there was "Also...the daily paper, history in the raw. There is thus no longer any reason to be confined to the minute span of actual experience which is still for us, so narrow, so circumscribed. We can supplement it by looking at the pictures

48 See also Olive Schreiner, Woman and Labour: "We have called the Woman's Movement of our age an endeavour on the part of women among modern civilised races to find new fields of labour as the old slip from them, as an attempt to escape from parasitism and an inactive dependence upon sex function alone; but, viewed from another side, the Woman's Movement might not less justly be called a part of a great movement of the sexes towards each other, a movement towards common occupations, common interests, common ideals, and towards an emotional sympathy between the sexes more deeply founded and more indestructible than any the world has yet seen." pp258-9
49 VW to Julian Bell 14 November 1936 L. Vol VI
of the lives of others." (TG 9) In the photographs sent to her, Woolf fails to recognise or identify any kind of difference in these pictures which show bodies that are so mutilated that gender difference as a way of organising perception or predicing relations is no longer possible. The photographs transform us from the confusion of multiple differences: "our sensations are the same; and they are violent." (TG 14) We can be spectators and potential perpetrators.

In a letter to Lady Simon in January 1940, Woolf traded her erstwhile and sometime mystical idealism about gender roles for an optimistic vision of feminism:

Meanwhile, do cast your mind further that way: about sharing life after the war: about pooling men's and women's work: about the possibility, if disarmament comes, of removing men's disabilities. Can one change sex characteristics? How far is the women's movement a remarkable experiment in that transformation? Mustn't our next task be the emancipation of man? How can we alter the crest and the spur of the fighting cock? Thats the hope in this war: his soberer hues, and the unreality, (so I feel and I think he feels) of glory. No talk of white feathers anyhow; and the dulness comes through the gilt much more than last time. So it looks as if the sexes can adapt themselves: and here (that's our work) we can, or the young women can, bring immense influence to bear. 50

Woolf's letter, as she sorts through biological and cultural determinisms, reiterates another optimistic prophesy made almost thirty years earlier by Olive Schreiner:

[T]here can be no movement or change in one sex which will not instantly have its co-ordinating effect upon the other; the males of to-morrow are being cast in the mould of the woman of to-day. If new ideals, new moral conceptions, new methods of action are found permeating the minds of the women of one generation, they will reappear in the ideals, moral conceptions, methods of action of the men of thirty years hence... 51

50 VW to Shena, Lady Simon January 22 1940 L Vol VI
51 Olive Schreiner Woman and Labour 1911 pp251-2 Schreiner also wrote: "[C]areful study of the [Woman's Movement] will show that, not only is it a movement on the part of woman leading to severance and separation between the woman and the man, but that it is essentially a movement of the woman towards the man, of the sexes towards a closer union." p252 (emphasis in text)
Woolf had damned Schreiner with faint praise in a review of her letters in 1925:

Unfortunately for her fame as a writer, it was into debate and politics, and not into thought and literature, that she was impelled, chiefly by her passionate interest in sex questions. She was driven to teach, to dream and prophesy. Questions affecting women, in particular the relations between the sexes, obsessed her.\(^{52}\)

This reveals as much, if not more, about Woolf as it does about Schreiner. Yet it was perhaps, a fear of "debate and politics" that contributed to Woolf's problematic relationship with "fact and vision" during the 1930s. Woolf, as I go on to argue in the conclusion, never really left the figure, that she had first used in *A Room of One's Own*, the figure that, for her, represented the androgynous writing mind. Even as this postulation spelled out the limitations and the difficulties of her thinking during the 1930s, it also allowed Woolf to explore a series of quite fantastic strategies, of connecting, by a rhetorical sleight of hand, European political doctrines of the 1930s with the implications and effects of nineteenth century British patriarchal history. If androgyny really does represent an engagement with the limits of what is barely representable, of what is conceptually boundless but actually impossible, then her metaphor for the subjectivity of the writer affirms the irresolvable tensions that Woolf worked with: even as she laments the fact that art cannot transcend the various political agendas of the 1920s and 1930s, she offers increasingly arcane visions.

In her essay "The Artist and Politics," Woolf argued that the current political situation (the Spanish Civil War (which began in July 1936) and the ever impending threat of a second world war\(^{53}\)) made it impossible for the writer to discount politics in art:

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53 And see Stephen Spender "To hundreds of people, of whom I was one, the most significant happenings in Europe between 1933 and 1936 had been the triumph of dictatorship and the consequent accumulation of fury." *World Within World*, p188.
With all these voices crying and conflicting in his ears, how can the artist still remain at peace in his studio, contemplating his model or his apple in the cold light that comes through the studio window? He is forced to take part in politics; he must form himself into societies like the Artist's International Association. Two causes of supreme importance to him are in peril. The first is his own survival; the other is the survival of his art.54

Although, in her 1936 article, Woolf reiterates the difficulties which random political dictates posed to the production of "good art", the "sort of writing of which one can say that it has the secret of perpetual life" (R 97) the added threat to personal survival testifies to the renewed threat of war: "[w]ar surrounding our island" she wrote as she revised her article.55 Woolf cannot get away from it, she is encased by war. "The sense of political doom," argued Stephen Spender, "pending in unemployment, Fascism, and the overwhelming threat of war, was by now [1937] so universal that even to ignore these things was in itself a political attitude."56 Writing became for Woolf increasingly predicated on an impossible dialectic: "writing" is not capable of fulfilling either a political or an aesthetic criterion. If "art" cannot address the magnitude of the political situation which Woolf could not avoid, and if politics in art was tantamount to propaganda, which she deplored, how and what could she write about? In her final works, the posthumously published _Between the Acts_ and the unpublished "Anon", Woolf became increasingly engaged with eschewing issues of sexual difference and war as she embraced different versions of literary history: what she wanted to transcend, I suggest, she remained, effectively, immersed in.

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54 "The Artist and Politics" in _The Moment and Other Essays_ p182 Woolf refers to her "Daily Worker article" in her diary (4 November 1936) which was published as "Why Art To-Day Follows Politics" published on 14 December 1936
55 D Vol 5 10 November 1936
56 Spender _World Within World_ p249 See also Woolf to Julian Bell: "I have never dreamt so often of war. And what's to be done? Its rather like sitting in a sick room, quite helpless." 2 May 1936  L Vol VI
Conclusion

To whom at the end shall there be an invocation? 1

Woolf wrote "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid" in August 1940 for an American symposium on women's issues. Her essay reinforces her thoughts in Three Guineas: "Women of ability" - it was Lady Astor in The Times this morning - "are held down because of a subconscious Hitlerism in the hearts of men." 2 Woolf's response to subconscious Hitlerism was simple: "The emotion of fear and hate is therefore sterile, unfertile. Directly that fear passes, the mind reaches out and instinctively revives itself by trying to create." 3 Art is the answer: "Therefore if we are to compensate the young man for the loss of his glory and of his gun, we must give him access to his creative feelings." 4

Art was Woolf's final solution, as it turns out, in her last novel, Between the Acts. Writing as the testing ground for the limits of the possible led her to her final arcane vision: Miss La Trobe's fantasy of a play without an audience. All of Woolf's artists retrieve their work at the moment that they offer it. Terence Hewet wants to write a novel about silence; Lily will paint a picture (or have her vision) that no one will ever see; Orlando's poem ("The Oak Tree") is about rootedness and fixity even as it is written against the relentless movement of time; Bernard is a writer condemned to "make up these ridiculous, flamboyant, beautiful phrases" but desiring to write in words of one syllable. Elvira, in the manuscripts of "The Years", demonstrates the impossibility of protecting

1 April 26 1938 D Vol 5
2 "Thoughts in Peace in an Air Raid" in The Death of the Moth (1942) p155
3 ibid. p157
4 ibid. p157
culture: in Woolf's scheme of things, Elvira "prostitutes" her mind by writing ephemeral magazine articles, not "immortal masterpieces." Writing always engages with the limits of what is not quite attainable, "on the far side of a gulf, which words can't cross" as Woolf once wrote to Vita Sackville-West.

In 1933, Hitler became Chancellor of Germany and the Nazi persecution of the Jews began. Woolf's analogue to these momentous events was the pageant in Between the Acts which in 1939 is (also) in its seventh year. Pointz Hall, Woolf's original title for Between the Acts was, she wrote to Vanessa Bell, a relief from war and politics: "All books are now rank with the slimy seaweed of politics; mouldy and mildewed. I wish I could settle to pure fiction; indeed, had to rush headlong into a novel [Pointz Hall]; as a relief..." To Margaret Llewellyn Davies, she wrote

I'm becoming, you'll be amused to hear, an active member of the Women's Institute, who've just asked me to write a play for the villagers to act. And to produce it myself. I should like to if I could. Oh dear how full of doings villages are - and of violent quarrels and of incessant intrigues.

As life mirrors art, so Miss La Trobe eschews any mention of the war in her pageant, a literary history of England. Colonel and Mrs Mayhew, expecting "a Grand Ensemble. Army; Navy; Union Jack" (BA 111) get themselves instead as the actors hold up hand mirrors: the audience and the pageant are one. Even as she merges the two, Miss La Trobe fantasises about "a play without an audience - the play." (BA 111)

5 VW to Vita Sackville-West 8 September 1928 L Vol III
6 See L Vol VI VW to Ethel Smyth n1 Woolf tells Smyth that she is going to see EM Forster's play - an historical village pageant. See also VW to Vita Sackville-West 14 March 1939. Woolf asked Sackville-West for money for her niece Angelica Bell, which was performing in a pageant for the Village Players. Sackville-West offered her home, Sissinghurst, as a venue.
7 VW to Vanessa Bell 24 October 1938 L Vol VI
8 VW to MLD 6 April 1940 And see VW to Ethel Smyth 17 May 1940; VW to Judith Stephen May 29 1940; VW to Ethel Smyth 11 September 1940 L Vol VI
Lucy McDiarmid argues that there was a distinctive myth during the 1930s that sought "a prelapsarian oral era" as Eliot suggested that "I myself would like an audience which could neither read nor write." McDiarmid cites Auden's manifesto for the Group Theatre, and Woolf's village pageant, we can see, follows literary cultural practice of the period:

the source of art's significance lies in the community: "Drama began as the act of a whole community. Ideally there would be no spectators. In practice every member of the audience should feel like an understudy." Is this what Woolf intended in her reconstruction of an archetypal English summer? Between the Acts is as much a desire to return to the primeval, to evade sexual difference, to escape civilization, as it is a lament for European political savagery. Commenting on Yeats, Auden and Eliot, although the same could be said for Woolf's last novel, McDiarmid says:

It seemed to follow from the nature of that mythic era before the printed word that if all the original elements of poetry could be recombined - verse and music, performer and audience - the kind of community originally associated with them might be reborn. The modern poet's social role might then be as a centripetal force in a disintegrating society. He could save civilization with his art, redeeming art from privacy, and society from fragmentation.

"Anon," one of Woolf's final works, exists almost as a coda to Between the Acts. It is in this history of the common voice of literature that Woolf considers the implications of the audience in the drama. If "immortal masterpieces" were no longer possible in the political climate of the 1930s and early 1940s, art could still unify what was fragmented:

But at some point there comes a break when anonymity withdraws. Does it come when the playwright has absorbed the contribution of the audience; and can return them to their own general life individualised in single and separate figures? There comes a point when the audience is no longer master of the playwright. Yet he is

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9 Lucy McDiarmid Saving Civilization: Yeats, Eliot and Auden Between the Wars 1984 p62
10 ibid. p62
11 ibid. p63
12 ibid. p63
not separate from them. A common life still unites them; but there are moments of separation. Now we say, he is speaking our own thoughts. Now he is our selves. 13

Woolf's literary history of England in Between the Acts could never have the redemptive power to cohere social fragmentation, although, it does offer redemption of a sort. Miss La Trobe, replete with her cigarette, her whip and her "passion for getting things up" (BA 36) is ultimately Woolf's testimony to the impossibility of the artist's attempt to communicate. As Miss La Trobe packs away her things, she reflects: "It was here that she had suffered triumph, humiliation, ecstasy, despair - for nothing." (BA 130)

The end of Between the Acts is about beginnings, as salvation and redemption is offered in the form of an improbable fresh start to sexual difference and history. "Anon" is a continuation of this theme (sexual difference and literature). Anon is, like the voice of Mrs McNab, the persistent voice that refuses to be stifled:

Anon sang because spring has come; or winter is gone; because he loves; because he is hungry, or lustful; or merry; or because he adores some God. Anon is sometimes man; sometimes woman. He is the common voice singing out of doors. 14

Anon, Woolf had ventured to guess in A Room of One's Own "who wrote so many poems without singing (sic) them, was often a woman." 15 (R 48) The figure of Anon is raised, in A Room of One's Own, to address the masculine bias of history: since Anon didn't sign her work, Woolf's self-appointed task was an attempt to inscribe women into both history and a literary tradition. She did this, I argued in Chapters Three and Four, especially after the 1914-1918 years with the "infinitely obscure lives [that] remain to be recorded" and which Mary Beton hopes will be recorded in

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14 "Anon" p680
15 Singing is undoubtedly a typographical error. SP Rosenbaum's published transcript of the manuscripts of "Women and Fiction" reads: "Indeed I would venture a guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was <often> a woman." Women and Fiction: The Manuscript Versions of A Room of One's Own. Oxford 1992 p76
Mary Carmichael’s work. (R 85) The "infinitely obscure lives" represented the future of women’s writing:

from the women at the street corners with their arms akimbo, and the rings embedded in their fat swollen fingers, talking with a gesticulation like the swing of Shakespeare’s words; or from the violet-sellers and match-sellers and old crones stationed under doorways... (R 85)

In Woolf’s writing, the figures with arms akimbo, the violet sellers and old crones are actually figures representative of some kind of unease. Martin, in The Years salves his conscience after losing his temper with a waiter, by dropping sixpence into the tray of a "beggar selling violets" (TY 205): "But he caught sight of her face. She had no nose; her face was seamed with white patches; there were red rims for nostrils. She had no nose..." (TY 206) From the "old blind woman" singing from "the depths of her gay wild heart - her sinful, tanned heart" (JR 61) to the old woman singing about the memory of "some primeval May" (MD 71) to the lurching and leering Mrs McNab of To the Lighthouse, Woolf filled in the vacant plots left by androcentric accounts of history. But these versions of femininity were ambivalent. The old woman singing in Mrs Dalloway fertilises the infertile post-war cityscape. Mrs McNab, I argued in Chapter Three, represented, for Woolf, a way of writing about regeneration and artistic creativity. But writing the body, if the body invoked belongs to a Mrs McNab or an old woman fertilising the Euston Road in Mrs Dalloway, could also, however, often be a distasteful process. Yet Mrs McNab, the old women singers in Jacob's Room and Mrs Dalloway, even the caretaker’s children in The Years, are part of the common voice Woolf liked to invoke, from A Room of One’s Own: “For masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice” (R 35-6) to "Anon": “Every body
shared in the emotion of Anon's song, and supplied the story." The development of a print culture meant the end of Anon: along with print came the signature of authorial identity. "Anon" mourns the loss of one way out of sexual difference:

Anonymity was a great possession. It gave the early writing an impersonality, a generality. It gave us the ballads; it gave us the songs. It allowed us to know nothing of the writer: and so to concentrate upon his song. Anon had great privileges. He was not responsible. He was not self-conscious. He is not self conscious. He can borrow. He can repeat. He can say what everyone feels. No one tries to stamp his own name, to discover his own experience, in his work.17

Woolf affirms the impossibility of the figure of "Anon" in a print culture: "The playwright is replaced by the man who writes a book. The audience is replaced by the reader. Anon is dead."18

Virginia Woolf was haunted by the figure of androgyny for the duration of her writing life. I am arguing that androgyny represented, for Woolf, a way of negotiating sexual and gender difference in relation to writing and to the period in which she lived. The mythical status of androgyny has to be rooted in Woolf's historical context in order to explicate its constantly shifting status: androgyny was variously and consistently used by Woolf to address the sexual and political dynamics of the inter-war years. Whilst it figured, in many ways, the limits of what was actually not quite representable - one can never be androgynous - the figure of androgyny, which she used so liberally, also represented the conceptual boundaries of her perceptions of writing and the gendered identity of the writer. For Virginia Woolf, androgyny was inseparably linked with a nostalgic wish to evade sexual difference even as she made the affirmation of sexual difference the basis of a radical sexual politics. She never really moved away from androgyny as a conceptual framework.

16 “Anon” p680
17 “Anon” p692
18 “Anon” p693
for her writing, whether androgyny was instituted as an interrogation of what it meant to be masculine and/or feminine, whether androgyny was invoked as a way of negotiating sexual identity, or whether the trope itself, as she used it in *A Room of One's Own* could be put to use to explore the relation to art and politics during the 1930s. Androgyny represents, in Woolf's writing, ambivalence and contradiction: if it could be used to redress the imbalance of patriarchal accounts of history, then the invocation of the female body as an answer to that imbalance only affirms constructions of sexual difference. If androgyny was about nostalgia, it was also intrinsic to the present. Her sketch of *Between the Acts* was to include "'I' rejected: 'We' substituted: ... 'We' ... the composed of many different things...we all life, all art, all waifs and strays - a rambling capricious but somehow unified whole - the present state of mind?"19

The end of *Between the Acts* is also about beginnings: "It was [the] night before roads were made, or houses. It was the night that dwellers in caves had watched from some high place among rocks." (BA 136) Woolf's retort to politics, was, ultimately, to eclipse history and go back to the beginning. Gillian Beer argues: "Her fascination with ... the primeval and prehistoric may be related to her search for a way out of sexual difference..."20 Is there is a way out of sexual difference? Androgyny, was not just a state of mind, as Woolf argues in *A Room of One's Own*. It represented a way of negotiating the socio-sexual dynamics of writing in a period of social and sexual turbulence: it was, for Virginia Woolf, a way of returning to a new beginning.

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20 Gillian Beer  "Virginia Woolf and Prehistory" p170
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