The Kleinian theory of reparation can also be read as a moment when psychoanalysis attempts to formalise its own more radical discoveries. As it draws back and problematises those moments, English psychoanalysis does not master, but struggles to produce a theory of the aesthetic which could contain its version of the destructive element.

To this extent, then, English psychoanalysis is as 'estheticized', in Bersani's sense of the term, as Freud's texts. Yet to suggest that Riviere's writing shares much with the 'concrete realism' of phantasy which she detects in Apollinaire, is not to somehow promote psychoanalysis 'up' to the cultural category of the literary and poetic. As Bersani points out, psychoanalysis often refuses cultural categories, such as 'the aesthetic', as ways of defining experience. In his account to call psychoanalysis 'literature' would be to miss the point. While this study is similarly concerned with the way that psychoanalysis turns against its own notions of categorisation, I am also interested in the way that the aesthetic, precisely as a historically contested category, is frequently worked through and questioned by English psychoanalysis.

Central to most modernism is its very public debate about the aesthetic as a cultural category; about what art should be, its parameters and, most significantly, its cultural location. No less than

English modernism, English psychoanalysis also repeatedly returns to the function of the aesthetic as a cultural category. More often than not, it is precisely the same concept of the aesthetic that is at work in both. Central to Kleinian theory, for example, is the notion of art not just as a therapeutic, but also as a formal working through of inner destructive impulses. Perhaps it should not surprise us, therefore, when Hanna Segal turns to - of all people - Roger Fry, to authenticate her views on art. The fact that contemporary thinking about the aesthetic infiltrates English psychoanalytic theory to such a high degree, opens my second perspectival window on its history and contexts. Unlike the situation in France, however, this close relationship between psychoanalysis and modernism does not mean that modernism provided English psychoanalysis with its radical apotheosis. Far from it. What emerges, rather, is a continual dialogue over the category of the aesthetic itself. Impressionist and Post-Impressionist doctrine, for example, is put into question in the thirties by both Ella Freeman Sharpe's and Virginia Woolf's writing on perception and rhythm. Meanwhile, Adrian Stokes' unique position as a writer who was influenced by Pound and, to a greater extent, by Klein, offers a further twist to the history of both modernist and psychoanalytic definitions of the aesthetic in this period.
The final way I re-address English psychoanalysis is by looking at the internal history and debates over reparation and sublimation within the movement itself. 'Know thine own (unconscious) sadism' implores Edward Glover (echoing Spender, Milner and Smith's version of the destructive element) in *War, Sadism and Pacifism*. But how far, in 1933, sublimation can play a role in the renunciation of aggression for Glover, as for other analysts and writers, is another question. 'It is sufficient to say that sublimation has an important bearing on war problems', he writes; but later adds 'The question of whether aggressive impulses can be sublimated in still sub judice'. If, according to Freud and later Klein, the origins of psychic life are born of hate, if our entrance into culture is marked by aggression and violence how, Glover asks, can this be sublimated into the culturally useful? It was not, therefore, only sublimation which was sub-judice in this period; the question of what one does with Klein's version of the destructive element also stood before the claims of psychoanalytic legitimacy.

Lurking as a sub-text here is the question of how psychoanalysis itself can resolve its own paradoxes. Glover, for example, will later criticise Klein on the grounds, among other things, that her

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theory of reparation is a somewhat lame *deus ex machina*, brought on to bring order to Klein's self-induced theoretical chaos. The extent to which Klein's scandalous emphasis on negativity and aggression (and attempts to either police or contain it) cut across the politics of the psychoanalytic community in the famous Controversial Discussions, have been well documented recently. What I am particularly concerned with here are the ways that different, usually pro-Kleinian, analysts, strive to theorise an *aesthetic* category to contain Klein's scandal. For Segal, for example, in a move which puts her uneasily akin to Lewis, the destructive element or, more precisely, the death drive, is art's most important pre-requisite. Others, such as Sharpe, Stokes and Milner, endeavour to temper the violence of the destructive element by producing an 'aesthetic' and, thereby, less violent account of the origins of psychic life than Klein's. While English accounts of the aesthetic thus differ radically, in each case we can see the repetition of a 'Kismet': at the very moment the aesthetic offers a passage out of the destructive element it returns these writers to its realm. In this, I argue, their work is as caught

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up with the dilemmas of the age as their literary counter-parts.

English psychoanalysis, then, does not share the political drive or daring of French Surrealism or, indeed, the second generation of French psychoanalysis. It does, however, cross the same theoretical and aesthetic domain with, as I will demonstrate, an equally energising rhetorical and theoretical force. The women and men in the back room of Trilling's thesis do more than merely supply us with an interdisciplinary background to the debates and dilemmas of the inter-war period. They, as much as others, contribute to the quarrel with culture. This is not to say that English psychoanalysis, any more than literary modernism, eventually succeeds in establishing a realm beyond culture. Instead, what we find in both fields is a tension between an initial promise of aesthetic transcendence and a growing knowledge of the intractable complicity between the destructive element within and cultural and social violence without.

IV Mapping the destructive element
This dissertation does not claim to be a comprehensive history of either English psychoanalysis or literary writing of this period. Indeed, many significant chapters of that history are
not discussed in any detail. English Freudo-Marxism, represented by Christopher Caudwell's and W.H. Auden's marriages of psychoanalysis and political critique has, I would suggest, not only already been represented more than adequately in twentieth century studies, but critical emphasis on this particularly visible chapter in the relation between psychoanalysis and twentieth century writing has, in part, helped to obscure the role of English psychoanalysis. For thematic reasons, neither have I covered the impact of psychoanalytic occultism, Jung for example, on modernist re-workings of Victorian genealogies of mysticism and transcendence. More significantly, space and my own historical parameters have prevented any in-depth exploration of two of English psychoanalysis' most important and influential thinkers: D.W. Winnicott, whose work on psychic and cultural space profoundly re-figured conceptions of the relation between self and culture in post-war England, and W.R. Bion whose theoretical daring casts a profound shadow over later avant-garde writers such as, most famously, Samuel Beckett. Indeed, it is perhaps Bion who finally puts paid to the image of a conservative English psychoanalytic movement lagging behind its more

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adventurous French counterpart. A further chapter of this history would have to not only include Bion, but also examine the impact of English psychoanalysis on later modernist theories of the visual arts, such as, most notably, Anton Ehrenzweig.49

Rather than offer a comprehensive history, here I examine what I take to be exemplary moments in a dialogue between English psychoanalysis and selected contemporary criticism and literature. I begin in Chapter One by returning to Richards' attempt to aestheticize the destructive element and compare this with Klein's theory of the origins of psychic life and her similar efforts to find an aesthetic for these discoveries. For both, recognition of the destructive element results in a drive to discover a new form of transcendence in art and, thereby, to make a moral out of what simultaneously figured as a psychic and cultural wasteland: to an extent the destructive element becomes sacrosanct through aesthetic value. But only to an extent. For, to recognise the destructive element, as Richards and Klein demonstrate, is also to unleash it both as a rhetorical force and as a theoretical problem. As a result, the paradoxes and dilemmas between self and

culture, art and life, soon begin to multiply. In particular, by reading Klein in terms of her theoretical failures, as much as her successes, I suggest that far from affirming 'the non-cultural part of our destinies', Klein produces a cultural 'Kismet' - a fateful complicity between the psyche and culture - which challenges her own redemptive hypothesis.

Virginia Woolf's writing, among all modernists, seems most conducive to a Kleinian reading of art. 'I suppose', she says famously of To the Lighthouse, 'I did for myself what psycho-analysts do for their patients. I expressed some very long felt and deeply felt emotion. And in expressing it I explained it and then laid it to rest'. For Woolf, art is not only a transcendent form, it also offers transcendence as therapy. Like Klein, Woolf often appears to be embarked on a project of an idealised reconstruction of damaged and traumatic experience. The parallels here with Klein's theory of reparation seem irresistible. However, as much as Klein's, Woolf's writing also pushes against its more formalising and structuring moments. It is for this reason, for example, that Patricia Waugh argues that what we find in Woolf is a continual parody of the construction of pure aesthetic significance and that, thereby, Woolf does not attempt to transcend culture.

but uses the aesthetic to re-figure the social in gendered terms. What Waugh sees as a parodic re-formulation of modernist formalism is, as I suggest in Chapter Two, more of an ironic response, comparative to Trilling's 'Kismet', to a world increasingly awash with the destructive element. In this, Woolf's writing is not 'influenced' by the Kleinian theory of reparation but, rather, offers a critical commentary on the paradoxes and limitations of its more formalising aspirations.

Such formalising aspirations can be seen in the way that English analysts such as Paula Heimann and later, Hanna Segal, graft aspects of formalist doctrine into their accounts of sublimation and reparation. Once more, the question posed for English psychoanalysis here, is how to turn a hypothesis which insists on the predominance of psychic negativity into a thing of cultural value. In the case of Kleinian accounts of sexual difference, however, I suggest that the formalist category of the aesthetic comes to take on a particularly significant role. For the Kleinians, civilisation's discontents have a special proximity to their analysis of femininity's discontents. Where the problem for Klein and Richards is to aesthetically redeem a culture of the death drive, the issue here is how this might be possible for a

woman. Read Woolf alongside this trajectory, and her treatment of aesthetic formalism becomes instructive. As much as her modernist form can creatively re-figure the world, Woolf frequently reminds us of its negating underlining. Where other modernists might authorise their writing through such an immersion in the destructive element, Woolf's last texts, and in particular her autobiographical *A Sketch of the Past* (1939-40), are cut through with acts of self-destruction. For Woolf, to immerse oneself in the destructive element is not, as it is for Trilling, to affirm a new cultural authority for the self, but rather to witness the dissolution of its protective frontiers. This is not, I suggest, the melancholy fate of the women writer for whom modernist aesthetics fails to provide an adequate means of representation, but an essential part of Woolf's later critique of an aesthetics of transcendence which marks a crucial, albeit ambivalent, re-alignment of the relation between art and experience in her writing of the Second World War.

Chapter Three continues to explore this re-alignment in Woolf's writing but, this time, reads it alongside a similar shift in thinking by another analyst working with Klein's ideas. Rhythm has long been seen as central to Woolf's writing and, in recent Kristevan inspired readings of her work, frequently figures as the key trope by which Woolf
uses modernist practice to construct an alternative, potentially liberating, space for the articulation of subjectivity and sexual difference. 'I do not know what I mean by rhythm', writes Woolf in 1932, 'nor what I mean by life'.\footnote{Virginia Woolf, 'A Letter to A Young Poet' (1932), The Death of the Moth and Other Essays, ed. Leonard Woolf, Hogarth Press, London, 1945, 141.} Focusing on Between the Acts (1941), I argue that Woolf's doubts about rhythm are a symptom of the way she was compelled to reassess her own modernist practice in the light of the unremitting political spectacles, illusions and rhetorical displays which were being played out all around her. At the same time as the politics and poetics of rhythm became an issue for Woolf, her brother's analyst, Ella Freeman Sharpe, was also concerning herself with the political and poetic potential of the rhythms of the unconscious. This, again, can be read as an attempt on the part of psychoanalysis to find an account of sublimation amidst what, by the thirties, appears as a political culture bent on celebrating unsublimated drives towards death and destruction. Rhythm, I argue in this chapter, becomes a key trope in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to separate the frontiers between the psyche and culture and, importantly, between art and its cultural and ideological implications.

Taking Woolf's and Sharpe's writings on rhythm together a pattern emerges. On the one hand, for
both, rhythm is a way of articulating what lies on the periphery of representation. As a liminal figure, rhythm brings new possibilities in the form of poetic patternings which undo established semantic and, by implication, social categories. On the other hand, precisely because these writers locate rhythm with an alterity which cannot be mastered by traditional modes of thought and representation, rhythm is also presented as harbouring a more deathly psycho-political legacy. Thus, for Sharpe, it is because rhythm is associated with the deepest unconscious drives that it can also celebrate the fundamentally conservative fantasies of non-separation, non-socialisation and non-differentiation. And, for Woolf, it is because such fantasies can covertly beat their seductive rhythms across our cultural tableaux - in drama and poetry - that it can reach out to what she calls the 'herd instinct'. For these women, as much as rhythm is a transgressive poetic category, it is also potentially and dangerously aligned with the most regressive of political fantasies.

Chapter Three, then, marks a shift of emphasis, as I move away from earlier modernist and psychoanalytic attempts to institute an aesthetic for the destructive element, to a consideration of writers and thinkers of the later thirties. These, on the one hand, offer a retrospective critique of earlier aesthetic theory and practice and, on the
other, mark out new directions for psychoanalysis and art and literature. The work of Adrian Stokes, which I examine in Chapter Four, represents one of the most important transitional moments in the history of Anglo-American modernism and its relation to English psychoanalysis. Beginning with a consideration of Stokes' earlier art historical writing, I suggest ways in which his aesthetics were caught up with Pound's dissolution of the aesthetic into the category of ideology. Stokes' break with Pound's influence in the thirties and his turn to Kleinian psychoanalysis is frequently read as a retreat into the psyche in an effort to salvage the aesthetic for an authentic humanism amidst the horrors of fascism and the Second World War. With this reading, for example, it would be possible to place Stokes in the same line of heritage as Trilling. Stokes' engagement with psychoanalysis, however, does not finally remove him from the cultural and political impasses of his earlier allegiances. But, I suggest, by this very failure and by re-figuring his earlier aesthetics through Kleinian and post-Kleinian accounts of phantasy, Stokes produces one of the most challenging psychoanalytic accounts of the precariously of the frontier between aesthetics and ideology. Stokes' desire to maintain the aesthetic as a cultural category is both balanced and put into question by his extraordinarily attentive eye for the complexity of psychic experience and fidelity to
means of artistic expression. As a result, as much as Stokes attempts to maintain the category of the aesthetic, there is a second kind of counter, or even anti-, aesthetic at work in his later writing. Far from simply using art to escape culture's grasp, Stokes' interest also lies in the prospect of an art form that can express the 'restlessness, refusal and dissatisfaction' which, for him, psychically underpins the modern battle with culture.

Adrian Stokes is part of that movement in English psychoanalytic thought which questioned (often implicitly) Klein's reparative hypothesis. For Stokes' contemporary, Marion Milner, art is not a secondary act of reparation, but is a space of fantasy in which the relation between the self and culture is worked through. Reading her work alongside Stevie Smith's *Over the Frontier*, in the final chapter we reach a point in both English psychoanalysis and literature where the line of severance between the destructive element within and its manifestation without, is at its most precarious. We also, and perhaps by no means coincidentally, arrive at a moment where gendered fantasies of the destructive element come to the fore. Both Smith and Milner are interested in the frontier that separates fantasy in art from the totalitarian spectacles of mass fantasy which they witnessed in the thirties. I suggest that for both, fantasy is less a question of insides and outsides, of the self as opposed to
culture, than a question of strategies of narration brought on to master an ever-slippery mimetic identification between self and other. Milner constructs a narrative 'frame' in which to contain a potentially dangerous slippage between inner and outer destructive elements. In this, she represents a final attempt to find an aesthetic form with which to contain English psychoanalysis' more radical discoveries. Smith, by contrast, structures her novel through the figure of a parabola: as soon as the line of severance between an inner and outer destructive desire is erased, this is referred back to some formalising aesthetic moment in the novel. This move itself, however, is part of a vicious circle. As soon as the destructive element is seen to be contained in some aesthetic moment by reference to, for example, Georg Grosz's paintings which are a central mise-en-abîme in the novel, Smith once more dissolves the frontier between fantasy in art and fantasy in life and between the self and culture. For Smith, to be immersed in the destructive element in 1938 is finally, and inescapably to be in Bokhara and Samarah.

A parabola might indeed be an apt metaphor by which to describe where, finally, both psychoanalysis and modernism take us: not beyond culture, but to a recognition of the intractable inter-relation of the self and culture; not through, and therefore out of
the destructive element, but into a 'vicious circle', to borrow one of Klein's favourite phrases, whereby the effort to transcend culture, or to make an aesthetic or moral out of its violence, is rewarded by the knowledge that you have never really left its grasp. When I began this dissertation in 1990, the 'destructive element' appealed primarily as metaphorically seductive trope through which it might be possible to think about the relation between English psychoanalysis and inter-war writing and aesthetics. Its history, then, seemed remote enough for detached analysis. Events in Europe over the last four years seem to suggest that the writers and analysts explored here were telling only one chapter of a history which continues today.\footnote{At a recent conference at Kings College, Cambridge, 'Modernism: Politics, Poetics, Practice' (July 1993), many participants noted the fact that some of the dominant themes of the conference (nationalism, fantasy, anti-Semitism and war), marked a notable shift of emphasis in modernist studies. In part this shift reflects an unease with previous post-modern and post-structuralist accounts of modernism. It perhaps also reflects a contemporary imperative to begin to tell other modernist histories that might make sense, not so much of the past, but of the present.} At a time when the theatricals of cruelty which so perturbed Woolf, Freeman-Sharpe, Stokes, Milner and Smith, are once more being played out (and at which, again, destructive desires are perceived as happening out there, or more commonly 'over there' - in the former Yugoslavia, for instance), the failure of writers and analysts of the early part of the century to
extricate themselves from their own cultural 'Kismet' remains instructive.
CHAPTER ONE

The Destructive Element: Art and Experience in Literary Criticism and Psychoanalysis

From the very outset Freud has emphasised the importance of sublimations in preventing neurotic regression, also the aetiological significance of any breakdown of sublimation. On the one hand, introduction of ethical or cultural valuations has so far caused more trouble and confusion than it has been worth. So long as repression exists, the individual valuation of cultural and social sublimations remains an unknown quantity. Admittedly we are entitled to estimate the social value of other people's sublimations, but that is not the immediate concern of individual psychology, still less the concern of metapsychology. On the other hand, we are on perfectly safe ground if we maintain that sublimation performs a protective (or defensive) function - operates like a compensatory balance. [...] If we attach a cultural (or any other) fixed form of valuation, we are attributing to the pleasure and reality principles a rigidity of function which would seriously impair their psychological utility, and incidentally we saddle ourselves with the incubus of "absolute values" without any prospect of adequate remuneration.

Edward Glover

Note that no correct evaluation of sublimation in art is possible if we overlook the fact that all artistic production [...] is historically situated. You don't paint in Picasso's time as you painted in Velazquez's; you don't write a novel in 1930 as you did in Stendhal's time. This is an absolutely essential fact that does not for the time being need to be located under the rubric of the collectivity or the individual - let us

place it under the rubric of culture. What does society find there that is so satisfying? That is the question we need to answer.

Jacques Lacan

Where do the frontiers between psychoanalysis and cultural value begin and end? Edward Glover, in his 1931 paper on sublimation, responds to this question unequivocally: cultural value is strictly off-limits as far as psychoanalysis is concerned. The unconscious knows nothing of cultural value, only its sublimatory products are amenable to cultural criticism. Only psychic processes are the proper subject of individual psychology and metapsychology. Any attempt to suggest otherwise, causes 'trouble and confusion'. The implication is clear: the psychological utility of the dynamics of the unconscious are the provenance of psychoanalysis; any recognition of the cultural value of the psyche and its products can only hinder psychological investigation. Glover's attempt to keep the 'rubric of culture' out of the domain of the metapsychology of sublimation, however, is not quite as unambiguous as it might initially appear. In the same paper, Glover provides an account of sublimation in terms of 'social anxiety' (Gewissensangst).

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3 'Social Anxiety' or Gewissensangst is a term first used in Freud and has caused considerable problems for translation. Freud's translator, James Strachey notes 'This word is a cause of constant trouble to the translator. In ordinary usage it means no more than "qualms of conscience". But
anxiety becomes a factor in sublimation alongside
the recognition that sublimation in art is not only
a manifestation of the pleasure principle but, for
Glover as for many analysts at the time, is
inextricably caught up with destructive impulses,
with aggressivity, the death drive, and the anxiety
and guilt associated with the social requirement to
'make good', to render socially acceptable, not only
sexuality (as in a more traditional account of
sublimation), but a sexuality that manifests itself
as destruction. To admit a consideration of
cultural value into this discussion would not only
muddy interdisciplinary borders, but would also be
to risk saying, as Glover very nearly does at
several moments in this paper, that the values which
we accord to art in culture are also in some way
symptomatic of this prior drive toward negativity
and aggressivity. It is a move which Glover, in the

often in Freud [...] stress is laid on the factor of
anxiety in the concept. Sometimes even, it might be
rendered "fear of conscience" where the distinction
between "conscience" and "super-ego" is not sharply
drawn'. The slippage here between 'qualms of
conscience' and Freud's more uncompromising image of
an ego and super-ego which comes into social being
by the relentless vicissitudes of anxiety rests at
the heart of the second topography and, as we will
see, of Melanie Klein's theories of anxiety and
psychic life. 'Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety'
(1926 [1925]), The Pelican Freud Library, trans.
James Strachey, ed., Angela Richards, vol. 10,
Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1979, 284 (henceforth cited
as PFL), and Sigmund Freud, The Standard Edition of
the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,
Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, London,
128, (henceforth cited as SE). See also Sigmund
Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, (1930
[1929]) PFL 12, 328-330, and SE 21, 136-137.
name of maintaining the integrity of metapsychology, draws back from making.

Glover's hesitation can be read as an example of a general anxiety about the relation between destructive desires and their cultural manifestation which is as evident in psychoanalytical writing of the twenties and thirties as it is in determining - from the other side of Glover's disciplinary frontier - what we can now recognise as the underlying ethos of the institution of literary modernism. For both literary criticism and psychoanalysis, the recognition of the part played by aggressivity in art, the destructive element, gives way to an attempt, explicit in some writings covert in others, to find a new form of transcendence for art and to make a moral out of what is at the same time diagnosed as a cultural and psychic wasteland. If, as I will argue in this chapter, this attempt at moralisation finally fails, it is because neither psychoanalysis nor literary criticism can eventually resist the implication that it is precisely the rubric of culture, cultural value itself, that finds something 'satisfying' about the cultural production of destructive desires.

I

If, at a given moment of its history, psychoanalysis falters on the question of cultural value, where, in
turn, do the disciplines that account for cultural value - in this case literary criticism - place the discoveries of psychoanalysis? Art orders the chaos of experience; therein lies its unique cultural value. This formulation rests at the heart of Anglo-American modernism and the critical heritage it both inspired and challenged. So, for a traditional reading of The Waste Land, Eliot's 'ruins' of contemporary experience are propped up, 'shored', by the 'fragments' of the past; fragments which although discontinuous in themselves hold out, through their interaction a suggestion of coherence and, with this, a promise of meaning. For I.A. Richards, key critic of Eliot and forefather of Practical Criticism, the 'value' of this aesthetic transition from ruin to fragment, from chaos to order, lies specifically 'in the unified response which this interaction creates in the right reader'. Richards' emphasis on such a poetically correct reader marks a well documented shift within literary history whereby criticism came to endorse 'individual experience', whilst surreptitiously silencing the question of the cultural production of art. In Richards' terms this valorisation of

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4 Cf. 'These fragments I have shored against my ruins', T.S. Eliot, 'The Waste Land' (1922), The Waste Land and Other Poems, Faber and Faber, London and Boston, 1940.


6 For an account of this history see Chris Baldick, The Social Mission of English Criticism.
experience, and of art's unique ability to restore it to its true value, was designed to 'protect the arts against the crude moralities of Puritans and perverts' (PLC 37). Here, literary criticism legitimates its own institutional frontiers through a gesture of exclusion: the perverse and excessive are relegated to the outside of humanities studies, and the rest, the shadow which Richards' work was to cast over English studies, is literary history.

But what was it that Richards was responding to or against? In other words, what grounds the claim that art can restore experience to its full value? It is well known that Richards' original polemic, which Leavis was to follow, set itself against both the vestiges of Romanticism in criticism and the perceived dilettantism of the credos of 'art for art's sake' and the cult of 'significant form'. In opposition to both, Richards was demanding nothing less than a new discipline for criticism. What interests me here, however, is the complex and ambivalent inheritance of this new criticism which

1848-1932, Clarendon, Oxford, 1983, and Francis Mulhern, The Moment of 'Scrutiny', Verso, London, 1981. While New Criticism and Leavisism constitute a dominant strand in this history, there were, of course, other perspectives which engaged with questions of cultural and social value and experience. See Q.D. Leavis, Fiction and the Reading Public, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1979 and, from a very different view, the emergence of Marxist criticism in England represented most notably by Christopher Caudwell, Illusion and Reality, a Study in the Sources of Poetry, (1937) Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1973, and eventually Raymond Williams, Culture and Society, Coleridge to Orwell op.cit.
exists apart from the manifest conflict between different 'movements'. This inheritance, as we will see, reveals Richards' work as being in close dialogue with psychoanalysis - the domain where 'crude moralities' are at their most exposed.  

Behind the hypothesis that art restores value to experience, then, lingers a question about the disciplinary frontiers of literary criticism: a question not only about what literary criticism can say about its object - art - but of the epistemological limits it sets, and the forms of knowledge it avows, and repudiates, in order to do so. In 1942 Richards published a highly speculative paper entitled 'Psychopolitics' in which he addresses what he calls the 'dreadful negativity' of modern democracies. This concern with 'dreadful negativity' can be traced back nearly twenty years to his seminal essay, 'A Background for Contemporary Poetry'. Here, Richards argues that to find its critical moorings, criticism must account for the 'unusual violence' ('BCP' 512) of the contemporary situation. Richards is referring explicitly to a

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7 This kind of dialogue between psychoanalysis and new forms of criticism was not, of course, at all unusual in the period. See especially William Empson's use of Freud's work on dreams in Seven Types of Ambiguity (1947), Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1977.


9 I.A. Richards, 'A Background for Contemporary Poetry', op.cit. Henceforth cited as 'BCP'.
type of violence which has been waged on systems of belief and knowledge. Science has ruptured the old 'magical world view', he says, just as it has brutally revealed that it is not 'knowledge' or reason that motivates us but our 'physiological and social needs' ("BCP" 515). The result of this epistemological violence is what Richards terms a 'biological crisis', one which, if not resolved, has the potential for a more political form of violence: 'It is one which we can, perhaps, decide for ourselves, partly by thinking; if we do not it may be decided for us, not in the way we should choose' ("BCP" 516). What Richards is rehearsing here is a fairly standard diagnosis of modernity as a crisis of belief, coupled with typical forebodings about what this crisis, in terms of knowledge and politics, might produce. What makes his version of this dominant paradigm interesting is the way he acknowledges the theoretical implications that this crisis has for the constitution of his own discipline - literary criticism.

Claiming that most 'of the attitudes with which poetry is concerned are indescribable - because psychology is still in a primitive stage - and can only be named or spoken about as the attitude of this poem or that' ("BCP" 512), Richards at once lays out criticism's object (the attitudes of poetry which connect us to contemporary experience), and prescribes the limits of critical discourse - some
things remain unspeakable because of the immaturity of science. Richards was later to develop a discipline for literary criticism based on empiricist psychology and Peircian semiotics, which aimed precisely to describe the indescribable in poetry. But in 1925, the disciplinary frontiers of his approach are less well defined. Psychology may hold out the promise for an adequate critical discourse, but it is psychoanalysis which Richards calls upon to demonstrate the crisis in contemporary epistemology. Given the fact that Richards began his study of physiology with the express intention of becoming a psychoanalyst, this should not perhaps surprise us. 10 What is significant about this affirmation of psychoanalysis is the way that Richards, in a frequently cited passage, aligns its discoveries with the 'dreadful negativity' of contemporary times:

Over whole tracts of natural emotional response we are today like a bed of dahlias whose sticks have been removed. And this effect of the neutralisation of nature is only in its beginnings. Consider the probable effects in the near future of the kind of enquiry into basic human constitution exemplified by psycho-analysis.

A sense of desolation, of uncertainty, of futility, of the baselessness of aspirations, of the vanity of endeavour, and a thirst for life-giving water which seems suddenly to have failed, are the

signs in consciousness of this necessary reorganisation of our lives. Our attitudes and impulses are being compelled to become self supporting; they are being driven back upon their biological justification, made once again sufficient to themselves. And the only impulses which seem strong enough to continue unflagging are commonly so crude that to more finely developed individuals, they seem hardly worth having. ('BCP' 520)

'The answer to that', Stephen Spender remarks ten years later, 'is "Don't be a dahlia, and you won't need a stick!"'. For Spender, it is 'not a question of sticks for dahlias' but of 'what in the widest sense is going to be the social and political subject of writing'. Beneath Richards' tendency to read psychoanalysis as a form of biology, and social criticism as a branch of horticulture, his epistemological crisis is, of course, already a political and social subject. The vandal in the garden is psychoanalysis which has removed the stick of belief in finer human values by uncovering our unconscious, drive invested and generally base motivations. Where Trilling will later make a humanist virtue out the fact that psychoanalysis drives us back to our 'biological justification' (and therefore grounds a domain away from culture), Richards accepts the bedrock of 'biological instincts' with melancholy resignation. Our 'biological' urges do not separate us from culture, on the contrary, they threaten our entire structures

of belief. Where, then, for Richards, does this avowal of 'dreadful negativity', of crude moralities, leave cultural value and, more specifically, the grounding of a new literary criticism?

In an influential footnote to the above passage Richards, citing Eliot, proposes a literary solution to this 'biological', political and theoretical crisis. 'Good art', exemplified by The Waste Land, neither separates itself from the negativity and destructiveness that forms its 'background' nor, more importantly, does it attempt to produce pacifying narratives:

To those familiar with Mr Eliot's The Waste Land, my indebtedness to it at this point will be evident. He seems to me by this poem, to have performed considerable services for this generation. He has given a perfect emotive description of a state of mind which is probably inevitable for a while to all those who matter. Secondly, by effecting a complete severance between his poetry and all beliefs [...] he has realised what might otherwise have remained largely a speculative possibility, and has shown the way to the only solution of these difficulties. 'In the destructive element immerse. That is the way.' ('BCP' 520)

If psychoanalysis reveals the cause of a contemporary lack of belief, Eliot's poetry, art itself, offers a solution to this crisis without taking refuge in the solace of new beliefs. The poetic response to 'dreadful negativity' is more negativity, nothing less than, in Conrad's phrase, and immersion in the 'destructive element', and a
corresponding willingness, Richards later notes with reference to Hardy, to look death in the face. If literary criticism runs up against the limits of its own critical enterprise in the form of what is 'indescribable' in poetry, then, Eliot's 'perfect emotive description', it seems, also offers a way through it by acknowledging this epistemological crisis. Poetry completes, transcends and makes sense of the damage that has been exposed by science and psychoanalysis as central to the contemporary milieu.

Notable by its absence in 'A Background to Contemporary Poetry' is any detailed discussion of the question of value. By Principles of Literary Criticism, psychoanalysis is explicitly cited as the discipline which has forced a re-thinking of the theory of value. Perversion, once more, comes into play here: the 'infans polypervers', Richards argues, presents 'a truly impressive figure dominating all future psychological inquiry into value' (PLC 45). Once the drives and perversions have been acknowledged as a motivating force in human life, the question is how to re-create value out of what, in cultural terms, is an essentially valueless premise; how, in other words, to arrive at some kind of positivity in a world of negativity. According to Richards, psychoanalysis fails at this point because it devalues art by reducing it down to a form of symptomatology, whereby art is seen as a
vicarious substitute for a primary pleasurable experience no longer obtainable in cultural life. Richards quotes Havelock Ellis' direct, albeit crude, definition of sublimation: "We have lost the orgy, but in its place we have art" (PLC 232). What Richards objects to is not the link between art and the drives or, in his terms, 'impulses' and 'appetencies'; on the contrary, the indissoluble bond between unconscious processes and cultural production is something which Richards, influenced more by Fechner than Freud at this point, repeatedly affirms. Where his objection lies is in psychoanalysis' 'suggestion that the experiences of Art are in some way incomplete, that they are substitutes, meagre copies of the real thing, well enough for those who cannot obtain better' (PLC 233). Richards' response to this impoverished view of the relation between experience and art is to turn this proposition on its head. Art is a better form of experience than that offered by life: 'the experiences which the arts offer are not obtainable, or but rarely, elsewhere. Would that they were! They are not incomplete; they might better be described as ordinary experiences completed' (PLC 233). Art, then, completes what ordinary experience leaves unfinished, just as Richards' aesthetics supply what the psychoanalytic theory of sublimation leaves wanting. Art, once again, emerges as a necessary prosthesis to the damage done by the
'unusual' epistemological violence of contemporary times - value is regained.

However, as I have suggested above, the restoration of value does not dispense with unconscious processes nor even with the impulses which pose such a problem for the theory of value. For Richards, art is a superior form of experience because it liberates previously denied impulses and sublimations. Through art, Richards argues, 'myriad inhibitions' are released and new configurations of the most 'primitive impulses' are made possible. In a further inversion of the traditional psychoanalytic account of art, art for Richards is not the product of repression or sublimation but a celebration of the breakdown of sublimation. Tragedy is the cathartic paradigm for this 'release' of previously dammed up impulses:

Suppressions and sublimations alike are devices by which we endeavour to avoid issues which might bewilder us. The essence of Tragedy is that if forces us to live for a moment with them. When we succeed we find, as usual, that there is no difficulty; the difficulty came from the suppression and sublimations.

(PLC 246).

While Richards presents his theory as an improvement on psychoanalytic accounts of sublimation, his ideas here pre-figure those of later psychoanalytic theories. See in particular Hanna Segal's comparative reading of tragedy in 'A Psychoanalytic Approach to Aesthetics'(1947), New Directions in Psychoanalysis: The Significance of Infant Conflict in the Pattern of Adult Behaviour, op.cit., 384-405. I discuss Segal's work in detail in Chapter Two.
While it may seem that Richards is making a plea for the free-play of psychic processes, the emphasis here is primarily on art's ability to order previously unwieldy and repressed impulses. 'Impulses which commonly interfere with one another and are conflicting, independent and mutually distractive, in [the poem] combine into a stable poise' (PLC 243). Art does not merely replenish an incomplete everyday experience, but provides a superior, poised and balanced form of psychic experience. What formerly threatened Richards' emergent literary criticism — the negative values that psychoanalysis discovers behind human nature — now emerges, newly figured, as the pinnacle of cultural achievement.

In an appendix to the 1926 edition of Principles of Literary Criticism, Richards turns once again to Eliot. Defending him against charges of obscurity, Richards insists that the value of The Waste Land lies not in its intellectual allusions, but in the unified response that Eliot's fragments provoke in his readers — we are back to the 'poetically correct' reader of modernism with which I began. Here, however, Richards adds to and, hence, slightly departs from his reading of the poem in 'A Background to Contemporary Poetry'. Not only does the poem immerse us in the destructive element, Richards now adds that Eliot's other 'persistent concern' in the poem is with 'sex, the problem of
our generation' (PLC 294). Destructive negativity is, in this second reading, aligned with sexuality. Perhaps in the light of this new association between sexuality and death, Richards also revises his final verdict on the poem:

There are those who think that [Eliot] merely takes his readers into the Waste Land and leaves them there, that in his last poem he confesses his impotence to release the healing waters. The reply is that some readers find in his poetry not only a clearer, fuller realisation of their plight, the plight of a whole generation, than they find elsewhere, but also through the very energies set free in that realisation a return of the saving passion. (PLC 295)

The poem, in other words, is a cathartic release from the 'dreadful negativity' that Richards, and Eliot, find all around them. Art not only restores contemporary experience to its full value, it also redeems it. It is as if, finally, the 'impressive figure' of the polymorphously perverse infant has been promoted to the status of the

13 Eliot had already responded to Richards' first reading of The Waste Land by making a similar point. In 'A Note on Poetry and Belief', Eliot describes belief as differential and changing and, hence, not one thing that could easily be dispensed with. Eliot defines his position as one of doubt. The narrative he constructs around the question of poetry and belief is, unsurprisingly, one of the inheritance of tradition and talent. 'We await, in fact (as Mr Richards is awaiting the future poet), the great genius who shall triumphantly succeed in believing something. For those of us who are higher than mob, and lower than the man of inspiration, there is always doubt; and in doubt we are living parastically (which is better than not living at all) on the minds of the men of genius of the past who have believed something'. 'A Note on Poetry and Belief', The Enemy, I, 1927, 17.
culturally valuable: the baselessness of contemporary human life that this figure signifies is refracted back to us through art, not only as a monument to our own desolation, but as an icon of our possible salvation through suffering.

Art, then, comes to order not only the chaos of experience, but also relieves the epistemological crisis and possible political violence of contemporary times. Moreover, as I have suggested through this selective reading of his early work, the restorative role that Richards accords to art is one that is also repeated in the formation of his own critical discourse. Other discourses, notably psychoanalysis, present a diagnosis of the modern subject as potentially and dangerously valueless; literary criticism, on the other hand, while avowing this negativity, also has the means to transcend it.

Richards' early work signals the emergence of a mythology central to Anglo-American modernism and its subsequent criticism, in which the arts and human sciences represent themselves as coming face to face with the potential violence and negativity of the modern crisis in order to transcend it. For Spender, Richards' footnote was 'the comment that really applied and applies to most of the serious literature of this century'. The realisation of destruction is, however, for Spender writing in the thirties, unequivocally a 'political subject', and

the imperative to master the void, at this point, more urgent than it was for Richards. Whereas, for Richards, psychoanalysis fails to restore art to its correct cultural value, for Spender in the last chapter of *The Destructive Element*, a combination of psychoanalysis and Marxism such as he finds in Auden, is seen as a possibly redemptive narrative for the contemporary malady. Psychoanalysis ceases to threaten the arts, and becomes instead, their chief ally in the task of reparation. Where, then, does psychoanalysis fit into this mythology which avows negativity and violence and then sets itself the task of redeeming it? Does psychoanalysis have its own restorative hypothesis? These are the questions I address in the rest of this chapter with reference to the work of Melanie Klein who, at the same time that Richards was concerned with epistemological and political violence, was working her own extraordinary way through the question of psychic violence.

II

All creation is really a re-creation of a once loved and once whole, but now lost and ruined object, a ruined internal world and self. It is when the world within us is destroyed, when it is dead and loveless, when our loved ones are in fragments, and we ourselves in helpless despair - it is then that we must re-create our world anew, reassemble the pieces, infuse life into dead fragments, re-create life. Hanna Segal

15 Ibid., 19.
Thus Hanna Segal, Klein's most influential interpreter, reads Proust in the light of a Kleinian approach to aesthetics. Richards' contemporary sense of desolation emerges here in microcosm in the 'internal world' of the self, as art's function becomes to restore, and re-assemble our own personal phantasmagoric objects. For Segal, Proust's writing exemplifies the aesthetic at the heart of Klein's concept of 'reparation' in which sublimation and creativity are seen as the end products of a process whereby the subject attempts to restore and make good the violence it has done to its objects in phantasy. As a process of psychic mourning, for Segal, reparation corresponds to Proust's famous 'mortuary aesthetic': 'un livre est un grand cimetière sur la plupart de tombes on ne peut plus lire les noms effacés'.

Developed sometime after Klein's original work, however, Segal's reading of reparation gives the impression that Kleinian theory is a complete and coherent set of concepts which can be simply grafted onto readings of psychic processes and then read-off various art works. This view of

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16 Hanna Segal, 'A Psychoanalytic Approach to Aesthetics', op.cit., 390.
18 As we will see, Segal's work on psychoanalysis and aesthetics has a particular relation to modernist concerns with form and is certainly not
Klein's work has led to, on the one hand, her concept of reparation being praised for stressing the 'therapeutic' nature of the arts and, among some feminists, for its 'mother-centred' view of creativity whilst, on the other, criticised for its theoretical crudity and ideological normativity. But Klein's writing is not a seamless and coherent whole. Spanning over forty years, her work on unconscious phantasy, early oedipality and her insistence upon the primacy of aggression and later envy, emerges as a body of theory caught in a constant struggle with the psychoanalytic concepts it is attempting to re-formulate. In other words, even though today the concept of reparation may suggest a reductive and normative view of the place of the psyche in cultural production, the history of the theoretical processes of Klein's thinking on the subject tells a very different story.

In the context of the recent 'return to Klein' within literary theory, this type of re-reading Klein against dominant representations has already begun. For Leo Bersani, in 'Death and Literary

| 20 | For the background to and evidence of this |
Authority: Marcel Proust and Melanie Klein' - a reading of Klein which irreverently follows Segal's footsteps - Kleinian theory 'makes normative' Proust's 'mortuary aesthetic'. Klein, in other words, is ultimately complicit with the dominant morality of the restorative ethos behind literary modernism.

Where Segal reads death in Proust as a metaphor for the psychic recreation of the self, Bersani reveals a more ambivalent and difficult aesthetic at the heart of Proust's writing, which he then reads across to psychoanalysis' own troubled relation to the question of sublimation. On the one hand, death in Proust potentially marks the loss of self-authority, in so far as the death of the other marks the loss of our image in their minds, thus rupturing the dream of self-representation and recreating the world in terms of difference (CR 8). On the other hand, death in A la Recherche du temps perdu, is a self-appropriating gesture, for once the other has been annihilated, only our image of the lost one remains and the authority to make or re-make that representation goes uncontested. With this reading Bersani makes explicit the relation between literary representation and authority that Segal leaves mute. Such undecidability -

self-possession or self-annihilation - is repeated in the novel's infamous autobiographical and narrative complexity and, argues Bersani, is produced and sustained by a dominant conception within Proust's writing 'of art as a kind of remedial completion of life'(CR 10). The mainstay of Richards' claim to the value of art is, then, re-discovered by Bersani as embedded within Proust's textuality. Here, Proust's working through of the relation between art and experience newly figures the truth-value of art. Within the Proustian narrative, says Bersani

Art [...] is 'real' to the degree that it discovers and expresses a pre-existent truth; it is 'factitious' to the extent that it produces a 'truth' of its own, a 'truth' derived from the conditions and constraints of literary performance.

(CR 11)

Later, Klein will give us cause to return to this relation between art, truth and the 'real'. Here art, as Bersani reads it in Proust, derives truths from experience, which it abstracts into universal laws from which it then produces a new version of that experience. Identity thus triumphs over difference, as death now 'permits the resurrection of others as redemptive truths'(CR 14). Yet, because to recreate the other for the self also introduces the possibility of an end to self-authority, this version of the restorative hypothesis also has the potential for a different
model of literary representation: one in which, as Bersani demonstrates through a close reading of *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, 'the unprecedented visibility of past appearances' (CR 27) are allowed free-play, and through which contact with phenomena is renewed. Experience is not redeemed through art, rather art is the precondition for the re-emergence of difference.

In what ways, then, can psychoanalysis be said to be complicit with Proust's double-edged redemptive aesthetic? Despite the tremendous impact that work such as *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* had, and continue to have, on twentieth century literature, art and film, traditionally psychoanalysis' relation to the arts has been dogged by the theory of sublimation. Not only did Freud bequeath his followers an incomplete concept of the relation between the drives and culture (one of the missing metapsychological papers is presumed to be on sublimation), traditional psychoanalytic theory, as Richards argued, tends to reduce art to a substitutive representation of a lost pleasure. At its most simple, sublimation is presumed to take place when an instinct has been diverted to a new, non-sexual and socially valued aim: 21 a thesis which, once put into practice readily succumbs to

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the temptation to read works of art as if they were simply culturally valued symptoms and one which, by stressing art's compensatory function, is readily pressed into the most normative accounts of the relation between art and sexuality. For Bersani, however, psychoanalysis' readings of art are themselves symptoms of its own difficult relation to the theory's own more radical proposals about the relation between sexuality and culture.

In the case of Melanie Klein, Bersani detects such a potentially radical version of sublimation at work in her 1923 paper entitled 'Early Analysis'. In this paper Klein offers us a model whereby sublimation does not produce vicarious symbols of a lost desire, but originates co-extensively with sexuality. Klein's interest here is in inhibition, the forms it takes and the difference between 'normal' and neurotic inhibition. Typically, for psychoanalysis, an inhibition takes place when a strong primary pleasure has been repressed due to its sexual content. What Bersani finds so radical about Klein's treatment of this theme, is her insistence that such inhibition can only occur when an ego-tendency has already been sublimated. This originary sublimation is not the result of the repression or fixation of sexuality, but is defined by Klein as the employment of "superfluous libido in a cathexis of ego-tendencies" (CR 16).

Sublimation is thus propelled by a type of
'libidinal economy' unfettered, so it appears, by the tyranny of culturally redemptive symbol formations. As a consequence, art can no longer be seen as replacing the orgy because, for Bersani, Klein displaces the very category of representation (whereby one sign ['athletic movements of all kinds'], is substituted by another ['stand for penetrating the mother']), that is commonly presumed by the theory of sublimation. Accordingly, it is not symbol formation, in the sense that one non-sexual activity replaces an originary pleasure on the basis of similarity,\(^\text{22}\) that underpins the cathexis of ego-tendencies, but a promiscuous non-referential form of identification whereby it is not the various signs and objects which provoke pleasure, but the process of identification itself. 'In sublimation, ego activities become "symbols" in the sense that the most diverse cultural activities "symbolize" the libidinal energy with which they are invested'(CR 18). In a move which carries a faint echo of Richards' re-working of sublimation, Bersani discovers in Klein a theory of sublimation whereby creativity is seen as neither substituting nor supplementing sexuality, but as inextricably and radically intertwined with the movement of the drives: 'sublimation can no longer be described (as

it usually has been) in terms of a drive whose aim has been changed or displaced, for the drive in question would be, precisely, an aimless one, a kind of floating signifier of sexual energy' (CR 18).

What, then, of the destructiveness and aggressivity, the 'dreadful negativity' of unsymbolised sexuality (polymorphous perversity), that Richards sought to redeem through art? Bersani argues that in Klein's later work, her early emphasis on the sexualisation of ego tendencies is superseded by a growing emphasis on aggression and anxiety. Correspondingly, he argues, Klein's potentially transgressive theory of sublimation turns into a discourse of cultural redemption. Bersani's argument here turns on Klein's insistence on the primacy of phantasy in infantile life. It is through phantasy, for example, that in what Klein eventually calls the 'paranoid schizoid position', the premature ego will attempt to defend itself from the anxiety provoked by its own aggression which is projected onto its terrifyingly persecutory and impossibly idealised objects. It is through phantasy that, in the proceeding 'depressive position', the infant will recognise and introject its parents, not as fragments, but as whole objects which the infant thus fears may be lost as a consequence of its own sadism. Again, it is through phantasy that the infant will attempt to repair, restore and make-good the violence that it imagines
it has done to these phantasm rgoric objects; and it is at this point that sublimation, in the now dominant Kleinian model, comes into play. What Bersani finds so difficult about the later Klein is the way the notion of a 'sexuality that is born as aggression' (CR 19) precipitates a theory of sublimation as a mode of defence ('Sublimation becomes, in this view, the infant's most sophisticated defence against its own aggressions' (CR 19)). In flight form its own aggressivity, anxiety, as opposed to Klein's earlier notion of the repetition of pleasure, comes to dominate the infant's identifications. Symbol formation is figured as a means of deflecting this anxiety, leading the infant to make and re-make equations between objects which, increasingly, are not only at several removes from the infant's first sexual tie to an object (the breast), but are, crucially in Bersani's account, 'restored versions of the former' (CR 20).

Klein, then, re-joins Proust at this point as, for both, 'sublimations integrate, unify, and restore' (CR 20). Moreover, driven by guilt and persecutory ideals, what the infant restores is, as with Proust, a qualitatively improved version of what has been lost. Art in Klein then, becomes prey to the 'crude moralities' of high idealism:

If the sublimated object is by definition an idealized object - both a mental construct and a 'better' (repaired and
made whole) version of an originally dangerous, injured, and fragmented object - we can also say that sublimation is disguised as transcendence. (CR 21)

Read this way, Klein shares not only with Proust, but with Richards and Eliot, a contemporary drive towards a valorisation of art: the universal law triumphs over the particular, as unification and restoration assure an aesthetic continuity in a world racked by its own aggression. Bersani puts it more forcefully: 'in the culture of redemption', he says, 'sexuality is consecrated as violence by virtue of the very definition of culture as an unceasing effort to make life whole, to repair a world attacked by desire'(CR 22).

If we follow Bersani's reading, then, it appears that, despite Richards' reservations, psychoanalysis is, after all, commensurate with the restorative ethos of literary modernism. The strength of Bersani's reading lies in the way he both exposes the question of authority which rests behind this paradigm, and the way that psychoanalysis, in broaching the question of cultural production, itself becomes symptomatic of the process it is trying to describe. Yet, precisely in the terms of Bersani's own critique, it is worth asking what it means to find a 'good' version of sublimation, whereby pleasure, difference and libido are given free-rein, and then contrast it with a 'bad', culturally persecutory and repressive
theory of the relation between the psyche and culture. If Bersani's own critical discourse begins to sound uncannily Kleinian at this point, this perhaps suggests a question about what forms of knowledge are demanded from the body of psychoanalytic theory here on behalf of literary theory. Richards accorded psychoanalysis a diagnostic role in his analysis of contemporary culture, but denied it a redemptive one. Bersani, by contrast, sees Kleinism as ultimately complicit with such a redemptive hypothesis as it endeavours to master a potentially radical co-existent thesis on the relation between the drives and cultural production. Yet, curiously, for Bersani, the 'good Klein' is also a very literary Klein, offering us a site of transgressive pleasure in the form of an ethics of textual difference. If the aesthetic no longer redeems it continues, it seems, to hold a certain critical priority. What happens when we read Klein's version of sublimation not so much as depicting a relation between sexuality and the law, but one which details the social passage of destructiveness and negation? Furthermore, what happens to Bersani's characterisation of Klein when we read her not as having achieved a new transcendence for art, but as failing, at crucial moments, to make a moral out the aggressivity which is so central to her theory?
III

It is perhaps not surprising that the task of thinking through the relation between inner desires and fantasies and the outer world of cultural laws and interdicts should provoke some critical anxiety. It is perhaps less surprising that art, that domain which potentially upsets the distinction between public and private, should be seized upon as the field through which some kind of hold over this theoretically vertiginous relation can be achieved. Yet, inevitably, just as art appears to master the anxiety provoked by the attempt to see how inner desires correspond to cultural meanings, by seeming to repeat those dilemmas it exacerbates them; the anxiety that sent us off in search of some answers to our questions returns. It is this kind of hermeneutics between anxiety and knowledge which I see as dominating Klein's thinking, both in what she is attempting to describe - the relation between inner and outer worlds in the first six months of a child's life - and in Klein's own critical discourse. This 'vicious circle', as Klein will often refer to it, between insides and outsides, between knowing and anxiety provoked by not knowing, and the wager she sets herself to get out of this circle, consistently refuses the terms through which the relation between the psyche and culture are commonly thought. In other words, even as Klein strives towards a notion of cultural normativity,
indeed because the demand (on the theory as on the child) to conform is so voracious, ultimately for Klein it is as untenable to simply see art as either restoring a damaged experience or redeeming an aggressive sexuality, as it is to see sexuality as simply transgressing a prohibitive law. For Klein, the distinctions between sexuality and repression, the drives and cultural formations, perversion and cultural values are not that clear-cut. The prohibitive, for her, is as likely to be as perverse as what it is prohibiting.

Let's begin with two equally Kleinian propositions concerning the nature of sublimation. The first is from a 1952 essay, 'Some Theoretical Conclusions on the Emotional Life of the Infant'. Klein is describing the desired result of a successful passage through the depressive position which, in this essay, corresponds to the growth of the child's genital trends. The polymorphously perverse infant, in other words, is about to grow up and take its place in a world of sexual difference and cultural value:

In the interplay between progression and regression, which is strongly influenced by anxiety, genital trends gradually gain the ascendant. As a result, the capacity for reparation increases, its range widens and sublimations gain in strength and stability; for on a genital level they are bound up with the most creative urge of man. Genital sublimations in the feminine position are linked with fertility - the power to give life - and thus with re-creation of lost or injured objects. In the male position, the element of
life-giving is reinforced by the phantasies of fertilising and thus restoring or reviving the injured or destroyed mother. The genital, therefore, represents not only the organ of procreation but also the means of creating anew.23

The way that the concept of sublimation in this passage aids the collapse of the distinctions between a psychically positioned sexual difference and the most banal of gender stereotypes, reveals Klein at her most notoriously normative. Two important points to note here, however, are Klein's emphasis on anxiety as a precipitating factor in this sublimation, and the stress on phantasy and representation in the twin sublimatory myths that she offers.

In an earlier discussion in The Psychoanalysis of Children (1932), Klein footnotes Freud in order to support the claim, central to her entire theory, to the importance of internal destructive impulses in the formation of the super-ego. While in this debate sublimation is a marginal issue, its different emphasis is worth noting. Freud is

describing the ego's early identification with the super-ego:

'Every such identification is in the nature of a desexualisation or even of a sublimation. It now seems as though when a transformation of this kind takes place, an instinctual defusion occurs at the same time. After sublimation the erotic component no longer has the power to bind the whole of the destructiveness that was combined with it, and this is released in the form of an inclination to aggression and destruction. This defusion would be the source of the general character of the harshness and cruelty exhibited by the ideal - the dictatorial "Thou shalt".24

Where the first description of sublimation secured the child's arrival in a world of cultural value (with each gender equipped with its own rightful restorative talents), here sublimation, in the form of identification with the super-ego, signals a loss of authority and the setting loose of aggression and destruction. It is as if to take on the law, to sublimate, is at the same time to be immersed in the destructive element. Far from normativity, the acquiring of cultural value and corresponding sublimation imply, if not a perversity, then, at the very least a form of 'crude morality'.25

How, then, can we understand these two very different emphases on the value and function of

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25 Freud, as I pointed out in the introduction develops this theme in Civilization and its Discontents, PFL, 12, 251-340, and SE, 21, 64-145.
sublimation in Klein? How is it possible to see sublimation as both a culturally valued restoration of phantasised destruction and the precipitate of violence and aggressivity? What Bersani finds 'redemptive' in Klein is her massive claim for the role of phantasy in the development of the child. Other commentators too have also noted that the structure of phantasy in Klein seems to surrender the specificity of infantile sexuality (and sexuality per se) to the general laws of Kleinian theory, in which it often seems that each object is an object in accordance to these laws and the subject's relation to them, thus, derealised.26

Yet, as much as phantasy in Klein provides a narrative of child development and, correspondingly, a model of object relations, phantasy is also the concept by which the ideal of development is undone and, crucially, by which Kleinian analysis troubles any straightforward distinction between subject and object, psyche and culture, transgression and the law. One of the key terms, perhaps the key term, which underpins both of these directions in Klein's writing is, as Bersani correctly identifies,

anxiety. It is worth noting that in 1946 Klein, in distinguishing her work from Fairbairn's, insists that while 'Fairbairn's approach was largely form the angle of ego-development in relation to objects', hers 'was predominantly from the angle of anxieties and their vicissitudes'.\(^\text{27}\) The narrative that leads the infantile ego from a state of indiscretion to self-possession by a gradual modification of its relation to objects that is so often associated with Klein is not, therefore, as far as she is concerned, what is at issue in her work.

For Bersani, it is this emphasis on what he calls 'anxious desire' that supports the hypothesis of sublimation as a mode of defence and, hence, leads to the progressive de-realisation and consecration of sexuality in Klein. Yet, even in 'Early Analysis', in so far as anxiety leads to the inhibition of primary libidinally invested sublimation, it is equally true to say that it is only through the re-activation of anxiety that inhibition can be lifted: 'The fact that the removing of these inhibitions and symptoms takes places by way of anxiety', notes Klein, 'surely shows that anxiety is their source'\(^\text{(LGR 78).}\).

Anxiety thus emerges as both the cause and effect of inhibition. This 'doubling' of anxiety, whereby the

\(^\text{27}\) Melanie Klein, 'Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms' (1946) in, Envy and Gratitude, op.cit., 3.
term emerges as a form of 'prime mover' in psychic processes, is a legacy which Klein inherits from Freud. As with Freud, anxiety has an ambiguous status in Klein's discourse, both motivating her theoretical conclusions, while checking them at significant points in a manner very similar to that described by Samuel Weber in his reading of Freud's Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety. The question that Weber sees anxiety posing for Freud, is one that can equally be applied to Klein's work: 'Is anxiety a constitutive process by which the psyche maintains its coherence and identity or does it ultimately entail their dissolution?'. In other words, while anxiety ensures that the ego defends itself, guaranteeing its integrity against a world of difference, it also shatters the coherence of the

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ego and de-possesses it of authority. For Klein, then, it is anxiety which while 'pre-eminently an inhibiting agency in the development of the individual is at the same time a fundamental factor of importance in promoting the growth of his ego and sexual life' (PC 42). For Klein, the individual does not so much 'develop' in a straight line from 'a' to 'b' (from the destructive element, for instance, to its transcendence), but is constantly defined and re-defined by the vicissitudes of anxiety.

At stake in Klein's reading of anxiety is nothing less than the status of that vexed relation between the inner phantasy world of the child (in which Klein is so often accused of locking up her children and her theory) and the outer world of laws and cultural values which, as I suggested earlier, traditionally dominates debates about sublimation. Freud, as is well known, began with a concept of anxiety as an effect of the transformation of libido but, particularly with the advent of the second topography, later moved onto a much more complex reading of anxiety by which he sought to understand the way in which the ego constituted itself, erected its frontiers, via its anxious relations with the outside world. Klein directly engages with this departure in a very dense and detailed discussion of anxiety in The Psychoanalysis of Children. In what looks like an argument for the innate primacy of the death drive in the infant (the death drive
being that which provokes anxiety), Klein seizes on the difficulty Freud has in reconciling the fact that while anxiety is a threat which emanates from the outside of the psyche, it is also fundamentally experienced as an internal threat by the ego. Anxiety arises first from need, a 'situation of helplessness', provoked by absence. This, then, is a relation of exteriority forcing the premature ego to recognise its own helplessness in relation to the outside world. For Klein, this exteriority is repeated internally within the psyche as a response to the death drive: 'We know [...] that the destructive instinct is directed against the organism itself and must therefore be regarded by the ego as a danger. I believe it is this danger which is felt by the individual as anxiety'(PC 126). But while it may seem as if Klein is simply claiming a monadic autonomy for the psyche, the apparent interiority she sets up within the psyche is marked and produced by a crucial intrusion from the outside. Discussing the way in which the infant masters its anxiety, Klein states:

It seems to me that the ego has yet another means of mastering those destructive impulses which still remain in the organism. It can mobilize one part of them as a defence against the other part. In this way the id will undergo a split which is, I think, the first step in the formation of instinctual inhibitions and of the super-ego which may be the same thing as primal repression. We may suppose that a split of this sort is rendered possible by the fact that, as soon as the process of incorporation has
begun, the incorporated object becomes the vehicle of defence against the destructive impulses within the organism. (PC 127)

Klein is laying the ground here for what will later become the 'paranoid schizoid position'. The threat that anxiety poses is to the integrity of the ego, the I; yet what Klein appears to be saying is that it is only in relation to this threat that the 'I' actually constitutes itself as such, via the phenomenon of its splitting (primal repression). The early internalisation of the super-ego is not, therefore, simply a commanding intrusion from the outside coming to tame inner destructive impulses (the law versus its transgression), rather 'anxiety' in Klein sets up a model in which the inner phantasy world is marked by a prior exteriority which sets up the interiority of the psyche.

If, therefore, according to Bersani's hypothesis, anxiety and aggressivity in Klein lay the ground for an eventual and inevitable scenario of moral redemption, it is equally true to say that at the same time, anxiety is the concept in Kleinian theory which lays bare the precarious formation of the ego. As such, anxiety focuses attention not so much on the ego's defensive attempts to gain authority over its phantasised objects, as Bersani argues, but on an ever-fragile relation between the subject and its objects, in which what is 'outside' the ego is not only seen as prohibitive and
commanding, but also as constitutive of what is felt to be 'inside'.

For both the child and, indeed for the status of Kleinian psychoanalysis as a theory not only of the psyche, but also of the cultural value of psychic processes, the imperative at this point is to extricate both the infant and the theory from the potential solipsism of anxiety implied by Klein's description of the genesis of the ego. This is the solipsism that Bersani is quick to note in Klein's depressive position in which, indeed, as the infant begins to mourn the loss of its objects, suggests a model whereby sublimations emerge as the ego's last ditch defence against its own aggression and anxiety. Denial, splitting, omnipotence and idealisation characterise the ego's relations to its objects at this point as, under the exacting commands of the super-ego, the desire to make good emerges as just as tyrannical as that to make bad. But, in as much as such mechanisms put the object to death (in Bersani's terms) in order that the ego might achieve some integrity by idealising the world and eradicating difference, they also repeat the early anxiety situations that they are supposed to modify. Once more, then, anxiety comes to check and disrupt the very unity and coherence it is meant to ensure. It is these mechanism which, in contrast to Bersani, Kristeva identifies as destroying any notion of truth-as-identity (integrity, unity and
self-presence) in the Freudian narrative on Moses and, indeed, as characterising the workings of modernist texts. For Kristeva, truth does not, as in Bersani's reading of Proust, emerge from a valorisation of objects in accordance with universal laws. Rather, such an anxiety provoked and provoking a set of denials, splittings and disavowals reveal the subject's relation to the real to be caught within a chain of unstable and shifting signifiers which are, ambivalently, taken for the truth (in Kristeva's terms 'the true-real'). Far from ensuring the authority of the speaking subject, the depressive mechanisms, for Kristeva, reveal truth to be a 'process of separation' for a subject for whom 'truth is nothing more than language as a mechanism for displacement, negation and denegation'.31 From this perspective, in as much as depressive anxiety in Klein reduces a world of potential difference down to a set of redemptive identities, it simultaneously describes the conditions through which the modern subject is deprived of any claim to authority.32

31 Julia Kristeva, 'The True-Real', trans. Sean Hand, The Kristeva Reader, ed. Toril Moi, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1986, 224. It is worth noting here how for Kristeva, as for Richards, psychoanalysis is the discourse which exposes the question of truth in terms of an epistemological crisis, and how, in both cases, it is negativity which shapes this crisis and the artist's response to it; Kristeva's prime example is Artaud.

32 What, for Kristeva, characterises the Freudian narrative on truth and representation is, for Klein, precisely what structures the infantile ego. Kristeva: 'the Freudian narrative exists to give
This interpretation should not, however, be taken to imply that Klein gives up on the goal of a normative arrival (for both the infant and the theory), via sublimation and reparation, in a world of prescribed cultural values. Quite the contrary. Just as, for Freud, as Weber puts it, the imperative was to prevent his discourse on anxiety becoming itself an 'anxious discourse', so too, for Klein, the concept of reparation seems to have been developed with the aim of checking the internal incoherence of her theory.\textsuperscript{33} The fact that it is only partially successful in doing so, leads us back to the double-requirement in Klein that culture be both redemptive and the domain where the destructive element is at its most vociferous. There are two main paths, according to Klein, by which the infant can exit out of the vicious circle in which anxiety meaning, motivation and plausibility to certain 'universals that recur throughout this narration: alterity, strangeness, disavowal of identity, separation, and murder ... One can even risk the interpretation that the Freudian narrative is the obsessional's way of rationalizing another, more 'psychotic' discovery concerning the negativity of the symbolic function', 'The True-Real', ibid., 223. Klein: 'It seems to me that obsessional neurosis is an attempt to cure the psychotic conditions of the earliest phases, and that in infantile neuroses both obsessional mechanisms and those belonging to a previous stage of development are already operative' (PC 162). And, similarly, 'I have expressed the view that every infant experiences anxieties which are psychotic in content, and the infantile neurosis is the normal(sic) means of dealing with and modifying these anxieties' (LGR 249).

\textsuperscript{33} Samuel Weber, 'The Witch's Letter', op.cit., 152. This point is also made, from a different angle, by Jacqueline Rose 'Negativity in the Work of Melanie Klein', in Why War?, op.cit., 166.
entraps it: first, the ascendancy of the libidinal trends which ensures that eros eventually triumphs over the death drive, and second, what Klein refers to as 'reality testing', whereby the child becomes better able to reconcile the difference between the inner world of violent phantasy and an outer world of real objects and cultural value. In both cases anxiety once more steps in to disrupt, in the first instance, the idea of a straightforward linear development and, in the second, to trouble the simple binarism of inner phantasies and desires and outer laws and interdicts.

In contrast to Klein's early fidelity to Freud's claim that the first identification of the super-ego means that 'after sublimation the erotic component no longer has the power to bind [...] destructiveness', Klein will later insist that sublimation draws on 'libidinal phantasies and desires' (EG 74). Although it appears that Klein is presenting us with a narrative whereby sublimation is assured as eros gradually gains ascendancy over the death drive in a temporal progression, what in fact emerges is a scenario whereby any progression is marked by a prior, anxiety provoking, regression:

There is an indissoluble bond between the libido and the destructive tendencies which puts the former to a great extent in the power of the latter. But the vicious circle dominated by the death-instinct in which aggression gives rise to anxiety and anxiety reinforces aggression can be broken by the libidinal forces when these have gain in strength; in the early stages
of development, the life-instinct has to exert its power to the utmost in order to maintain itself against the death instinct. But this very necessity stimulates sexual development. (PC 150, my emphasis)

No progression to libidinal binding then, without a necessary regression to destructiveness and fragmentation; we return here to the anxiety induced 'interplay between progression and regression' of that first, seemingly highly normative version of sublimation. This continual resurgence of anxiety into what looks like a simply developmental account is crucial because it allows us to understand how, in Klein, the law, in the form of the super-ego, not only prohibits libidinal tendencies, it demands them:

the conclusion is that it is the excessive pressure by the super-ego which determines a compulsive instigation of sexual activities, just as it determines a complete suppression of them, that is to say, that anxiety and a sense of guilt reinforces libidinal fixation and heightens libidinal desires. (PC 115)

No libidinal desire then, without the anxiety provoked by the commanding super-ego. The same theoretical logic that requires the child to 'redeem' a dangerous sexuality, to make good its polymorphous sexuality, 'reinforces' and 'heightens' a libidinally invested sexuality. In other words, in as much as the strengthening of the libido

34 I am indebted to Jacqueline Rose for drawing attention to the theoretical circularity of Klein's model, see 'Negativity in the Work of Melanie Klein', ibid., 167ff.
guarantees Klein's restorative hypothesis, recreating love out of aggressivity, by the same logic this seemingly culturally redemptive trajectory perpetuates the 'vicious circle' it is supposed to break.

If the super-ego can appear as both the motivation for and the legislator against sexuality, this is because, at one level, as the 'internal' representative' of the 'external' parents, it is experienced by the child through phantasy; hence its monstrosity, crude morality and overwhelming perversity. By measuring this phantasy world against the 'real world', Klein argues the child gains proof of the essential goodness of its 'real objects'; anxiety is modified and reparation in earnest can begin as the child moves away from the excesses of its polarised phantasmagoria and towards the more measured world of cultural value. However, just as for Richards the destructive element is linked to an epistemological crisis, similarly for Klein, this time in microcosm on the level of the subject, the infant's original anxiety and aggressivity is linked with the failure of knowledge to provide an adequate account of its object. Not only is the child's relation to the outside world already mediated through its phantasies ('the child's sadistic phantasies about the interior of his mother's body lay down for him a fundamental relation to the external world and to reality'(PC
174), but also, as Klein points out over and over again, knowledge and judgement are inextricable from the drives; hence the 'real' mother 'no more satisfies [the infant's] desire to know than she has satisfied his oral desires'(PC 148). Reality no more measures up to what Klein calls the infant's epistemological drive (Wischtrich), than it satisfies his oral sadism. The absence of knowledge, the gap between drive and object, thus characterises the infant's quest for reality. What Klein refers to as 'accurate observations and judgement' (LGR 347), thus only secures the ego's relation to the outside world, to the extent that it also exposes the precarious hold the infant has on reality. 'Reality testing' in Klein no more guarantees the integrity of the ego than it does the success of the supposed reparations it makes on a cultural level. At each point in Klein's working though of her 'reparative hypothesis', therefore, her theory is checked by its own internal inconsistency. It is as if the success of sublimation, in the form of the integration, unification and restoration of a past anxiety provoking experience is dependent upon a failure to square the 'vicious circle' of anxiety, or to 'make good', the destructive element. Where, then, does this highly ambivalent theorisation of anxiety and reparation leave the redemptive aesthetic and its claims for the cultural value of once unwieldy psychic processes?
As I have shown, the vicissitudes of anxiety in Klein both unify and entail the dissolution both of the psyche itself, and the theory which is attempting to produce and sustain that concept. With this reading in mind, it is possible to reply to Bersani's critique that it is not so much her early hypothesis of a libidinally unbound sexuality that troubles the notion of cultural redemption in Klein, but the way that she produces a theory which, even as it tries to secure, by way of the concept of anxiety, a normative narrative of the psyche's role in cultural production, simultaneously reveals the impossibility of achieving such an aim. Indeed, 'normativity' in Klein, as we saw with her reading of the ego's coming into being via the 'crude morality' of the super-ego, is more often than not a form of perversity itself.

If art, for Klein, neither assures aesthetic continuity in a world racked by psychic violence, nor offers us an aesthetic site of transgressive pleasure, what then can Klein tell us about modernism? This question should perhaps be taken tongue in cheek. Klein's first direct excursion into aesthetic criticism, her 1929 paper 'Infantile Anxiety-Situations Reflected in a Work of Art and in The Creative Impulse', can hardly be noted for its critical sophistication. As the title implies, art is seen to merely 'reflect' psychic experience as Ravel's opera and Collette's libretto of The Magic
Dr and a biography of the artist Ruth Kjär are read, not as works of art per se, but as privileged case histories which validate Klein's theory of infantile anxiety. It is in this paper that Klein first begins to elucidate the concept of reparation, as if 'art', for Klein as for Richards, promises to recreate value out of what, in terms of her work up to this date, is predominantly a world of negativity. As with Richards' amended reading of Eliot, Klein's reading of Ravel culminates in a scenario of moral redemption. The opera 'plainly symbolises' a scene of early infantile sadism, representing a phantasy world in which objects and animals come to life as grossly enlarged projections of a young boy's hostile desire. This violent scenario ends when the child begins to 'make reparation' to these objects. The 'redeeming word' which captures the poignancy of this act is 'Mama', says Klein, thereby laying out explicitly her particular brand of redemptive aesthetics (LGR 214). Yet, when we compare the banality of this reading with the ambivalence with which, as I have demonstrated, Klein actually theorises the relation between anxiety and reparation, the effectiveness of this magic signifier is called into question. When does the attempt to restore 'Mama' cease to endorse an aesthetic authority over a lost object (as in one variant of Proust) and, instead, by replaying an early anxiety situation, expose the precarious
foundations of subjectivity? What would happen to the transcendence which Bersani suggests is claimed by the Kleinian theory of sublimation within such a context? As we will see in the next chapter, Virginia Woolf, whose work, perhaps more than any other modernist after Proust, is continually valorised, and romanticised, as an act of painful restoration, is a case in point here.

Where Richards endeavours to create a moral, a value, out of the bedrock of 'dreadful negativity' that psychoanalysis exposes, Klein, while ostensibly engaged in the same enterprise, points to the perversity and aggression which shadow morality and value themselves. Despite their differences, both Richards and Klein can be said to share a common interest in the same dilemma, as both struggle to find a new form of transcendence in a world diagnosed as full to the brim with negative values. For both, it is imperative that this form breaks with old mythologies of human value by exploring new ways of figuring the psychic production of art and, for each, it is a fragmented newly valorised form of representation that prevails over the 'ruins' of a chaotic past experience. As such, psychoanalysis and literary criticism claim a new authority, in Richards' case, for art itself, and in Klein's, for a phantasised world of representations. Yet this
authority inscribes its own limits. In 1921 Klein writes:

There is certainly no reason to fear a too far-reaching effect from early analysis, an effect that might effect the cultural development of the individual and therewith the cultural riches of mankind. However far we may press forward there is always a barrier at which a halt must be called. Much that is unconscious and entangled with complexes will continue to be active in the development of art and culture. (LGR 48)

Klein is, to some extent, being purely rhetorical here. Psychoanalysis is, first, represented as being no threat to cultural value, and yet, by the end of the passage, it becomes clear that cultural value actually has already been determined by the terms of psychoanalysis ('unconscious and entangled with complexes'). Klein, it seems, does not share Glover's concern with maintaining a separation between cultural value and the unconscious. At the same time, however, Klein, in a move that echoes Richards' claims about art's ability to liberate psychic processes, points to what, in terms of the relation between the psyche and what she calls 'cultural riches', cannot be mastered theoretically. This abdication of critical authority can be read, finally, not as some testament to the redemptive powers of art, but in the tensions and ambiguities that emerge in both Richards' and Klein's critical discourses which, even as they endeavour to master a potentially negative relation between the drives and
civilisation, are invariably revealed as symptomatic of the very processes they are attempting to describe.
CHAPTER TWO

Is the Room a Tomb?: Formalism, Virginia Woolf and English Psychoanalysis

Man's inner concerns do not have their issueless private character by nature. They do so only when he is increasingly unable to assimilate the data of the world around him by way of experience.

Walter Benjamin

'Don't you remember in early childhood, when, in play or talk, as one stepped across the puddle or reached the window on the landing, some imperceptible shock froze the universe to a solid ball of crystal which one held for a moment - I have some mystical belief that all time past and future too, the tears and powdered ashes of generations clotted to a ball; then we were absolute and entire; nothing then was excluded; that was certainty - happiness. But later these crystal globes dissolve as one holds them: some one talks of negroes. See what comes of trying to say what one means! Nonsense!'

'Precisely. Yet how sad a thing is sense! How vast a renunciation it represents!' Virginia Woolf

Virginia Woolf's writing embodies the anguish and anxiety of aesthetic transcendence. In so many 'moments of being' her narrators and characters transmute the shock of experience by englobing it; discontinuous experience becomes something whole, time becomes space and the pre-discursive, an

absolute and entire state where nothing is excluded, is envisioned and retrieved by design. As soon as this is accomplished, invariably Woolf shatters her globe: the discursive present obtrudes upon the imagined unity of the past; people 'talk of negroes' as contemporary social and political concerns, mean that the prior vision must be renounced.

If Richards and Klein ultimately fail to moralise the destructive element through an aesthetics of transcendence, Woolf's writing, I argue in this chapter, continually dramatises this failure. Where both English psychoanalysis and modernism constantly struggle to produce an aesthetic to contain or surpass what is simultaneously characterised as a world without value, Woolf both repeats and transforms this endeavour in her writing. She repeats it in so far as she shares the formalising tendencies of her contemporaries, notably those of Roger Fry, and since for Woolf (as for Richards and Trilling), modernist form authorises a critical withdrawal from contemporary culture. She transforms it, in so far as for Woolf, this reflexive retreat from culture does not claim some new authority for the self, but rather, bears witness to the dissolution of its protective frontiers.

It is this 'difference of view' which, for many recent critics, distinguishes Woolf's work from the anxiety about maintaining authority that
characterises the projects of her male contemporaries. Woolf, it has been argued, is reaching for new models of subjectivity and aesthetics and, hence, makes a crucial contribution to what has recently been termed the 'gender of modernism'. While recent work on Woolf's 'difference' has tended to translate her gendering of modernism through contemporary French Feminist psychoanalytic criticism, here I take a step back and compare Woolf's work with the way in which English psychoanalysis was simultaneously working its own way through, not only the question of sexual difference, but also, and inextricably, theories of aesthetic significance. As much as for Richards, Bell, Fry and Woolf, English psychoanalysis too was concerned with distinguishing aesthetic value from - and frequently in response to - its own pessimistic account of contemporary existence. In the last chapter the question for both modernism and psychoanalysis was how to redeem a world awash with the destructive element. The question here is how this is possible for a woman. It is in their failure to directly answer that question, that both Woolf and her psychoanalytic contemporaries, produce not so much a 'gendered aesthetic', as a historical

3 See, for example, the introduction and entries on Woolf in the recent anthology of that title, The Gender of Modernism, ed. Bonnie Kime Scott, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1990.
commentary upon the difficulty of mastering the destructive element through art.

In this chapter, then, I am less interested in reading Woolf and Kleinian analysts in order to retrieve the notion of a 'feminine discourse', than in the ways they can be seen to respond to the question of the relation between the imaginary and the historical. The extent to which Woolf's modernist practice has been read in recent years through concepts of the early oedipal - that primordial place where meaning and gender appear at their most indeterminate - can, in this light, be seen as a later chapter in a longer modernist story. This is a story, on the one hand, about the ways in which various modernisms propose radically new categories for imaginative experience. The primordial space of the early oedipal for psychoanalytic critics, like the 'primitive' for modernist theories of art, is one such category.4

4 I do not develop the links between psychoanalytic concerns with the 'primitive' or primordial and wider modernist discourses of the 'primitive' here. A future project might usefully explore the links between psychoanalysis, anthropology and modernist art theory in this respect. It is, however, important to note the multiple connotations of the 'primitive' in early modernist theories. For Clive Bell, for example, 'primitive' art encompassed Sumerian, Egyptian, Greek and Byzantine Art as well as Central and South American (Pre-Columbian) work. See Clive Bell, 'The Aesthetic Hypothesis', in Art, Chatto and Windus, London, 1914, reprinted in Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology, eds. F. Frascina and C. Harrison, Harper and Row, London, 1982. The links between the 'primitive' and non-Western art were developed by Robert Goldwater in Primitivism in Modern Art (1938), Harvard University Press,
It is also a story about how writers of the twentieth century think about or, in some cases, attempt to repudiate the links between art and history. Psychoanalytic accounts of early oedipal experience and of a fundamentally deviant *infans* *polypervers* which, for Richards at least, was to dominate the ways in which it was possible to think about cultural and artistic value, are an important part of this story which, I want to suggest here, intersects with at least one modernist genealogy of the relation between the art and history.

For most commentators, the mythical starting date for this genealogy is Roger Fry's 1910 exhibition 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists'. I want first to take a detour back to that moment of the origins of English modernism, through a selective reading of Roger Fry's formalism and by looking, in particular, at his response to psychoanalysis. In comparison to Richards' endeavour to gather the destructive shards of contemporary experience together through art, Fry's formalism might appear as a particular wilful attempt to isolate art from any social and historical experience. What interests me here, however, is those moments in Fry's writing which

produce a less secure account of high modernist formalism, not least because it is in these moments that Fry sows the seeds for what, in both Woolf and English psychoanalysis, eventually provides the grounds for a reconsideration of the connections between history and aesthetic experience.

I

Given the energy with which Richards attacks Roger Fry's and Clive Bell's reductive neo-Kantianism in *Principles of Literary Criticism*, it might at first seem anomalous to associate his theories of aesthetic value with those of high modernist formalism. 5 Richards, as we have seen, proposes that art can organise the unwieldy impulses and instincts uncovered by psychoanalysis into higher forms of poise and balance; in this way the 'dreadful negativity' of human desires can be redeemed and reified through art. Fry, on the other hand, determinedly separates 'aesthetic emotions' from what he sees as baser human instincts and emotions. 6 Where Richards criticises psychoanalysis for failing to recognise that art is not a mere substitute for experience, but an improved and

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6 This has prompted Simon Watney, for example, to describe Fry's project as amounting to little more than an 'aesthetic eugenics'. Simon Watney, *English Post-Impressionism*, Studio Vista, London, 1980, 4.
superior form of it, Fry, it seems, repudiates any psychoanalytic understanding of form in art as a dangerous downgrading of aesthetic value. In his opprobrious essay, 'The Artist and Psycho-Analysis', read to the British Psychological Society in 1924, Fry argues that there are two types of art: the art of women novelists and popular culture, and a higher art concerned with the contemplation of formal relations.\(^7\) Psychoanalysis is rejected as a critical hermeneutic for the latter, because the emotional and instinctual relations that it uncovers are amenable only to an understanding of popular and, by implication, effeminate pleasures:

The vast majority of people have no notion whether the form of God Save the King has been finely constructed and capable of arousing esthetic emotion or not. They have never, properly speaking, heard the form because they have passed at once into that richly varied world of racial and social emotion which has gathered around it.\(^8\)

Although psychoanalysis, like the masses, can appreciate that 'richly varied world of racial and social emotion', it cannot account for the purely 'aesthetic emotion'. Lacking an understanding of the aesthetic, psychoanalysis thus threatens cultural value by confirming those 'racial and social' emotions which the majority respond to in popular art. It is almost as if Fry is suggesting

\(^8\) Ibid., 9.
that the majority do not need psychoanalysis because they have already passed, 'at once' without the aid of analysis, into the unconscious. In a sense, psychoanalysis becomes, for Fry, a metonym for the unruly unconscious desires of the crowd against which art has to be protected.

It is, Steven Connor has argued, in trying to maintain such distinctions between different kinds of value that Fry and Richards converge. Having aligned pleasure with value and thus rejected Fry and Bell's argument that art is *sui generis*, Richards is still faced with having to distinguish those pleasures which belong to a wider socio-political field from the sphere of 'good art'. Connor argues that the 'aesthetic resolution', the argument that art organises those impulses, by which Richards attempts to effect this division, ultimately fails to prevent his theory from becoming caught up in the very processes of value and discrimination for which Richards is simultaneously trying to legislate. As Connor puts it: 'By allowing pleasure to precipitate into brutish gratification, and determining value as the transcendence of such gratification, Richards' model [...] settles into the kind of fixation that it condemns'.

In other words, those 'crude impulses' which Richards strives to redeem through art in 'A

Background for Contemporary Poetry', continually find their way back, here as symptom, into his theoretical model.

No more than Richards, can Fry quite prevent those condemned areas of cultural and social emotion foregrounded by a psychoanalytic understanding of art from creeping back into his theories of modernist autonomy. 'What', asks Fry towards the end of 'The Artist and Psycho-analysis', 'is the psychological meaning of this emotion about forms and what is its relation to the desire for truth which is the only disinterested passion we know of - what, if any, are their relations to the libido and the ego?'. Fry's answer, as Hanna Segal will later point out, is oddly psychoanalytic, in that it shares with psychoanalysis a notion of the repetition and spatialisation of previous emotions. Pure art, according to Fry, 'seems to derive an emotional energy from the very conditions of our existence by its revelation of an emotional significance in time and space'. Having allowed those presumably non-aesthetic emotions which derive from existence a place in his theory, Fry is, of course, quick to turn this into a form of redemptive ascesis: 'we get an echo of the emotion without the limitation and particular direction which it had in

10 Roger Fry, op.cit., 18.
12 Roger Fry, op.cit., 18.
experience'. Pure art is not only the repetition, but the valorised de-realisation of experience. Even so, as Fry struggles to discriminate between the more brute primary pleasures of the masses and the aesthetic emotions of pure art, primary and instinctive gratifications continually re-emerge in his attempt to secure the superiority of the aesthetic. 'It will be seen, then', he concludes in 'An Essay in Aesthetics', that art 'arouse[s] emotions in us by playing upon what one may call the overtones of our primary physical needs'.

Fry's is no straightforward formalism. In an effort to extricate the aesthetic from cruder cultural impulses, his writing is a compelling testament to a profound and unsettling modernist anxiety about the relation between the emotions high art provokes and those present in the socio-cultural field. In the attempt to demonstrate how art transcends culture, Fry continually re-poses the dilemmas involved in separating the purely aesthetic from the primary physical needs connected with a world which, for him as much as for Richards, is marked by its 'dreadful negativity'. Although it might be difficult to disagree with Simon Watney's charge that Fry's formalism represents one of the most oppressive attempts to legislate an aesthetic

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13 Ibid., 18.
doctrine in this period, the tensions in these claims to aesthetic autonomy call for another assessment - not least, in the context of my argument, because it is precisely those areas of difficulty and tension in Fry that become important for Woolf and, later, English psychoanalysis.

In 'Some Motifs in Baudelaire', Walter Benjamin points to the way that since the end of the nineteenth century, philosophy 'has made a series of attempts to lay hold of the "true experience" as opposed to the kind that manifests itself in the standardized, denatured life of the civilized masses'. For Benjamin, this distinction is as much an effect, as it is an understanding, of the change in the structure of experience which accompanies modernity. Philosophy's point of departure, says Benjamin, 'understandably enough, was not man's life in society. What [it] evoked was poetry, preferably nature, and most recently, the age of myths'. This is a tradition which begins with Dilthey's Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung, finds its political apotheosis in the theories of Klages and Jung (which, says Benjamin, have a common cause with fascism), continues in Bergson and Freud and is finally subverted in Proust and, of course, Baudelaire. Where Klages and Jung attempt to

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15 Walter Benjamin, op.cit., 110.
16 Ibid., 110.
immunise a higher experience, a mythological existence for example, from contemporary social life (hence their mystificatory political danger), Proust and Baudelaire aesthetise experience to continually demonstrate and dramatise the way modernity atrophies experience. Where the former deny alienation, in other words, the latter display it.

Fry, as with English formalism in both its art and literary critical formations more generally, is clearly part of this tradition. We should not, however, be too quick to associate Fry's claims to the 'true experience' of aesthetic form with an unproblematic flight from historical and social experience. Although Fry's theories can indeed be read as a phobic and reactionary response to the fracturing of contemporary experience, at the same time they continually bear the marks of the social and cultural forces which gave rise to them. As an attempt to negotiate what he certainly sees as a fracturing of perception in modern life, Fry frequently affirms what he is so often presumed to cancel out: the fact that art has an intrinsic relation to its contemporary moment.

For Fry art is a site which permits the reflection which is denied by everyday experience. Contemporary life, with its speed and overactive mental stimuli, enforces an economy of vision; it atrophies experience. In the everyday, says Fry, 'the emotions we actually experience are too close
to us to enable us to feel them clearly. They are in a sense unintelligible'. However, in the 'mirror' of art:

> it is easier to abstract ourselves completely, and look upon the changing scene as a whole. It then, at once, takes on the visionary quality, and we become true spectators, not selecting what we see, but seeing everything equally, and thereby we come to notice a number of appearances and relations of appearances which would have escaped our notice before, owing to that perpetual economising by selection of what impressions we will assimilate, which in life we perform by unconscious processes.

Where, for Benjamin, writers such as Proust and Baudelaire offer aesthetic fragments of experience in the form of critique, Fry offers the aesthetic as means of solace that promises a retreat from the frenetic pace of the everyday and allows us to reflect formally on experience. Nonetheless, at the same moment, Fry also suggests that art is the means by which we become conscious of the emotions and experiences which the everyday renders unconscious. This is by no means an acknowledgement of social alienation. Indeed if anything, Fry is concerned to preserve what Benjamin refers to as the 'aura' of aesthetic emotion. Note, however, the way that Fry also praises art for its ability to de-mystify those processes which everyday life ensures remains unconscious. Through art, he says, we come 'to

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17 Roger Fry, 'An Essay in Aesthetics', op.cit., 83
18 Ibid., 80.
notice a number of appearances and relations of appearances' which in life are performed 'by unconscious processes'. Is art, finally, for Fry kind of psychoanalysis? As such, does it have the potential to provide a critique of everyday consciousness?

II

It is well known that Woolf, Fry's biographer and an admirer of 'The Artist and Psycho-Analysis', rehearses many of Fry's axioms in her writing.\textsuperscript{19} If for Fry, the aesthetic precipitates a form of consciousness which can relieve us from the banal and stultifying instincts and associations of everyday life, in Woolf's writing this formulation is literalised as a critique of consciousness as it is socially lived. 'A Mark on the Wall' (1917), for example, the first text published by the Woolfs' Hogarth Press, rehearses a set of principles familiar elsewhere in Woolf's writing. Life is not arranged in conformity to Edwardian realist conventions, nor can consciousness be determined by everyday appearances. Life, on the contrary, is a dazzling array of impressions, and consciousness, likewise, a series of reflecting, transient,

mirrors: 'the novelists in the future will realise more and more the importance of these reflections [... ] those are the depths they will explore, those the phantoms they will pursue, leaving the description of reality more and more out of their stories, taking a knowledge of it for granted'.

In a characteristic mise-en-abîme, what Woolf proposes as the novel of the future is, in effect, a description of 'The Mark' itself: the story is a dramatisation and exploration of the depths of one consciousness as it meditates around a puzzling mark on the wall. In the effort to transcend the everyday, Woolf's narrator uncovers a powerful desire for a primordial and pre-discursive state where consciousness is stripped of all socially associative meaning:

But after life. The slow pulling down of thick green stalks so that the cup of the flower, as it turns over, deluges one with purple and red light [...] There will be nothing but spaces of light and dark, intersected by thick stalks, and rather higher up perhaps, rose-shaped blots of an indistinct colour - dim pinks and blues - which will, as time goes on, become more definite, become - I don't know what . . . .

Sight and sound replace meaning and cognition. Colour, space and light, in turn, are stripped of all culturally associative connotations. Moments when consciousness strains back against itself like

21 Ibid., 84.
this are a hallmark of Woolf's prose. At the same time as they express a desire for an alternative mode of being, they also re-formulate formalism's ideal state where the mind is liberated from the cacophony of everyday experience and social emotions. Woolf's gesture towards the primordial here is also resonant with Clive Bell's praise of primitivism: 'absence of representation, absence of technical swagger, sublimely impressive form'.

Yet, while in Woolf, as in Fry, such moments come across as a superior form of lived experience, in 'A Mark' they do not unproblematically transcend consciousness as it is culturally and socially experienced. While the story offers the possibility of aesthetic transcendence, it also dramatises its impossibility. It does so, first, in Woolf's representation of the narrator's meandering consciousness which, as much as it desires to return to a state 'after life', is frequently caught up with a set of 'automatic fancies'. Impressions are economised into stereotypical and sentimental scenes and associations: ruminations about the house's previous owners' taste in furniture, for example, fantasies visualising Shakespeare's contemplative moments and meditations on the English love of tombs, all permeate the narrator's thoughts. It is as if Woolf's narrator, like Fry's listeners to 'God

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Save the King', passes 'at once' into a richly varied world of social and racial emotions. Although on the one hand this is a story which promises to plummet the depths of a consciousness existing beyond everyday description and convention, 'A Mark' also takes care to expose the intransigence of socially cliched and culturally associative impressions.

Woolf, thus, openly engages with the difficulty of moving beyond the standardised and denatured experience of modernity. In particular, it is male hegemony over this experience, the point of view which standardises life into a fixed hierarchy of meanings and is encapsulated, for Woolf, in the ubiquitous 'Whitaker's Table of Precedency', that her narrator is endeavouring to transcend ('How peaceful it is down here, rooted in the centre of the world and gazing up through the grey waters, with their sudden gleams of light [...] if it were not for Whitaker's Almanack - if it were not for the Table of Precedency!'). Here, as so often in her writing, Woolf twists Fry's search for 'true experience' into a feminist critique. If everyday social emotions are to be transcended, it is not only because they are base and valueless, or because their frenetic pace obscures contemplation, but also because they are oppressive.

Patricia Waugh has argued that, unlike her formalist contemporaries, Woolf does not so much retreat from the social into 'true' imaginative experience, as use the imagination to re-figure the social in gendered terms. Rather than subscribe to modernist autonomy, Waugh suggests, Woolf continually parodies the construction of pure aesthetic significance in her writing.24 Persuasive and desirable as it may be to see Woolf as mastering formalism in order to wilfully turn an elitist aesthetic doctrine back against itself, other moments in her writing suggest a more vexed and ambivalent relation to formalism. What Waugh sees as parody, manifests itself in 'The Mark', I would argue, as a form of irony. Having proposed the distinction between the oppressive world of Whitaker's Almanack and an imaginary state of pre-discursivity, Woolf ironically reflects on her own desire for transcendence by diagnosing the attractions of the latter as a symptomatic response to the former:

Here is nature once more at her old game of self-preservation. This train of thought, she perceives, is threatening mere waste of energy, even some collision with reality, for who will ever be able to lift a finger against Whitaker's Table of Precedency? [...] Whitaker knows, and let that, so Nature counsels, comfort you, instead of enraging you; and if you can't be comforted, if you must shatter this hour of peace, think of the mark on the wall. I understand Nature's game - her prompting to take action as a way of

24 Patricia Waugh, op.cit., 107.
ending any thought that threatens to excite or to pain. 25

What goes by the name of 'Nature' here, reads as a particularly contemporary form of consciousness: one which, as in Freud's account of the psyche, takes anticipatory evasive action whenever threatened with the traumas of the real. 26 Aesthetic contemplation, the search for pure significance, is diagnosed as a kind of 'protection against stimuli'; an effect of the way in which modern consciousness can only exist at one remove from experience.

In a later short story, 'The Lady in the Looking-Glass: A Reflection' (1929), Woolf once again brings out the potential for critique in Fry's formalism. This story also follows a moment in the life of an unnamed narrator's consciousness. Here, the object to be meditated upon is not a mark on the wall, but the spinster, Isabella Tyson, as she is imagined by a house guest who sits, contemplatively, on a sofa watching the world go by refracted through a looking-glass that hangs in the hall. Just as, for Fry, the mirror of art offers a contemplative distance from the 'perpetual economising' which everyday life demands of perception, for Woolf too, the looking-glass ennobles objects with aesthetic significance: 'the looking glass reflected the hall

25 Virginia Woolf, 'A Mark on the Wall', op.cit., 88
26 See Sigmund Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920), PFL, 11, 275-338, and SE, 18, 7-64.
table, the sun flowers, the garden path so accurately and so fixedly that they seemed held there in their reality inescapably'.

It is, in particular, Isabella herself who consumes the narrator's interest: 'one must prize her open with the first tool that came to hand - the imagination'. For most of the story, Isabella is imagined in purely conventional terms. A room littered with her collection of imperial goods ('collected with her own hands [...] at great risk from poisonous stings and Oriental diseases'), and a perfect English garden with its 'tremulous convolvulus' metonymically signifying her own effervescence, for example, both contribute to the image of Isabella as the epitome of admirable Edwardian womanhood. However, as Isabella moves within the range of the formal composition of the looking-glass, her image changes:

At once the looking-glass began to pour over her a light that seemed to fix her; that seemed like some acid to bite off the unessential and superficial and to leave only the truth. It was an enthralling spectacle. Everything dropped from her - clouds, dress, diamond - all that one had called the creeper and convolvulus. Here was the hard wall beneath. Here was the woman herself. She stood naked in that pitiless light. And there was nothing. Isabella was perfectly empty.

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28 Ibid., 224.
29 Ibid., 222.
30 Ibid., 225.
Woolf reflects the Edwardian lie through the modernist mirror, as 'like acid' the 'visionary quality' of the mirror strips off the superficial and insignificant. The result is perhaps something like what would be left if the social and racial emotions were stripped off 'God Save the King': perfect emptiness. Here, once more, aesthetic significance does not take us beyond culture; rather, the desire for 'true experience' inscribes more deeply the fractures and conflicts of experiences as they are lived socially. Where, for Fry, the 'aesthetic emotion' promises a domain through which we can reflexively transcend the everyday, Woolf, it could be argued, offers aesthetic significance as a negation of socially lived experience.

The prospect of transcending the cultural through aesthetic significance is, therefore, continually promised and then broken in Woolf's writing. Woolf's irony, however, is of a different order than that of her modernist contemporaries. The fully ironic work, Cleanth Brookes noted, always 'carries within its own structure the destructive elements'.\(^\text{31}\) According to Alan Wilde's more recent account, the modernist ironist both holds to these destructive elements and his artistic vision through 'a conception of equal and opposed possibilities

held in a state of total poise, or, more briefly still, the shape of an indestructible, unresolvable paradox'.

In this way the modernist ironist recognises the intractable crisis of contemporary existence through the sublimity of form. While Wilde's view of irony provides a convincing paradigm for understanding modernist strategies of mastery, and while Woolf's work too continually poses such unresolvable paradoxes, the outcome of such gestures is somewhat different in her writing. It is not that irony does not thread itself throughout her work: on the contrary, Woolf is a mistress of the rhetorical turnstile of affirmation and negation.

Yet, where her high modernist contemporaries use irony to effect an authoritative formal closure, by the Second World War at least, Woolf's strategies of negation arrive at a very different position.

In his essay on Woolf, 'L'échec du démon: la vocation', Maurice Blanchot picks up on the way Woolf negates consciousness as socially lived through moments of being that endeavour to express the culturally inexpressible:

Se lier à la dispersion, à l'intermittence, à l'éclat fragmenté des images, à la fascination scintillante de l'instant, est un terrible mouvement... Y a-t-il une solution pour rassembler ce qui se disperse, rendre continue la discontinu et maintenir l'errant en un tout cependant unifié? 

For Wilde's 'absolute ironist', the solution would be to resolve the double movement towards discontinuity and continuity into a formal paradox. For Blanchot, however, Woolf's solution was not to be found in the formal reconciliation of opposites, but in her own death. Woolf's negating moments, says Blanchot, demand a weakness that estranges her from 'natural' or conventional resources of expression: 'c'est l'art en elle qui rend nécessaire une profonde faiblesse, exigeant l'abandon de ses ressources de vie et d'expression le plus naturelles'.34 Hence, for him, the inevitability of her suicide. Negation, for Woolf, is thus ultimately resolved by an act of self-negation. It is not the mastery of the absolute modernist ironist which is proclaimed in her work, but a surrender of authority.

This structure, whereby the promise of aesthetic significance gives way to the dramatisation of self-negation, cuts through one of Woolf's last texts, the autobiographical 'Sketch of the Past' (1939-40). 'A Sketch', an unfinished memoir which Woolf began in 1939, was written alongside her biography of Fry and her last fictional work, Between the Acts. 'A Sketch' stands poised between an account of Woolf's life, a

34 Ibid., 122.
retrospective look at modernist aesthetics and her own fictional practice. It is also poised, as many commentators have pointed out, between continuity and discontinuity: famously the biography both enacts a drive towards aesthetic closure, while at the same time continually sabotaging the aesthetic transcendence which it proffers.

Writing as war breaks, Woolf on one level is at pains to stress art's redemptive potential and lays out a blueprint for aesthetic significance which both echoes and endorses Fry's claims for the singularity of art. Take, for example, the following much quoted evocation of the transcendental power of art:

I hazard the explanation that a shock is at once in my case followed by the desire to explain it. I feel that I have had a blow; but it is not, as I thought, simply a blow from an enemy hidden behind the cotton wool of every day life; it is or will become a revelation of some order; it is a token of some real thing behind appearances; and I make it whole by putting it into words. It is only by putting it into words that I can make it whole; this wholeness means that it has lost the power to hurt me; it gives, perhaps, because by doing so I take away the pain, a great delight to put the severed parts together. [...] From this I reach what I might call a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we - I mean all human beings are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of a work of art. 35

Whereas formerly, art was a superior form of lived experience, here all experiences and all human beings are ennobled with aesthetic significance. It is as if, in war time, Woolf's desire for a redemptive model of the aesthetic becomes more urgent. Indeed, by 1939, art not only emerges as a form of transcendence, but as a form of therapy: assembling the fragments of experience take away pain as the pleasure of composition ensures that Eros triumphs over Thanatos. This paradigm, however, is belied in the way in which Woolf actually dramatises the formation of such revelatory 'moments of being' in the memoir itself.

Just prior to this passage, Woolf describes three childhood 'shock' experiences. Out of the three, only one offers any sense of aesthetic closure. In the first, Woolf recalls a fight with her brother Thoby: 'We were pomelling each other with fists. Just as I raised my fist to hit him, I felt: why hurt another person? I dropped my hand instantly, and stood there, and let him beat me'.

This dramatisation of self-submission and passivity is repeated in Woolf's third memory, the suicide of Mr Valpy, a visitor to St Ives.

The next thing I remember is being in the garden at night and walking on the path by the apple tree. It seemed to me that the apple tree was connected with the horror of Mr Valpy's suicide. I could not pass it. I stood there looking at the grey-green creases of the bark [...] in a

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36 Ibid., 82.
trance of horror. I seemed to be dragged down, hopelessly, into some pit of absolute despair from which I could not escape. My body seemed paralysed.37

Where according to Woolf's 'philosophy', the apple tree might have offered itself as a redemptive symbol, here it refuses to yield any sense of reparative signification. No revelation, then, only self-paralysis. Only the second memory, again of St Ives, conforms to Woolf's promise of a reparative aesthetic.

I was looking at a plant with a spread of leaves; and it seemed suddenly plain that the flower itself was a part of the earth; that a ring enclosed what was the flower; and that was the real flower; part earth; part flower. It was a thought I put away as being likely to be useful to me later.38

Even here, the augured revelation is presented synecdochically; as if the signification of the moment, in spite of its redemptive appeal, will always remain, at best, contingent.

As in her previous work, then, Woolf offers aesthetic transcendence as a broken promise. At each turn of the memoir, Woolf's attempts to put the severed shards of the past together ultimately fail to deliver a form of transcendence. Rather they continually replay scenes of trauma which exacerbate the very 'shock' experience which Woolf's philosophy promises to assuage. Yet, while in her earlier work Woolf breaks the promise of aesthetic transcendence

37 Ibid., 82.
38 Ibid., 83.
in order to produce a negative critique of the social, in this text the failure of the aesthetic is coupled with scenes of self-abnegation. Look, for example, at the violence portrayed in the following bath-time scene:

Next, the other moment when the idiot boy sprang up with his hand outstretched mewing slit eyed, red-rimmed; and without saying a word, with a sense of the horror in me, I poured into his hand a bag of Russian toffee. But it was not over for that night in the bath the dumb horror came over me. Again I had that hopeless sadness, that collapse I have described before; as if I were under some sledge-hammer blow; exposed to a whole avalanche of meaning that had heaped itself upon me, unprotected with nothing to ward it off, so that I huddled up in the bath motionless. 39

'A child is being beaten' - by meaning. Twice in her original drafts of 'A Sketch', Woolf describes that avalanche of meaning as heaping itself not 'upon' her, but 'up' her. Nowhere, as far as I can establish, does Woolf herself correct 'up' to 'upon': the latter only appears in the Grafton publication of the memoirs edited by Jeanne Schulkind. 40 It is a small, yet significant, extra syllable. "Upon" me' suggests a more prosaic image of a subject buffeted by waves of meaning; '"up" me', by contrast, connotes a more troubling equation: meaning = sexuality = violence. It is as if this particular epiphanic 'moment of being' is

39 Ibid., 90-91.
40 See manuscript A5(a), 24, in The Monk's House Collection, University of Sussex.
born out of a collision of meaning and sexuality which, as in Freud's account of the Oedipus complex, literally shatters the subject into being.

'Many of these exceptional moments', then, as Woolf herself argues, 'brought with them a peculiar horror and physical collapse'.\textsuperscript{41} Charles Bernheimer, in his reading of the memoir, puts this more forcefully; 'A Sketch', he argues, expresses a 'powerful masochistic impulse to fracture the self's wholeness and submit to the other's violence'. Subversive, because they give lie to the concept of the authoritative integrity of the subject, Woolf's moments of 'self-shattering' result in what Bernheimer terms a poetics of 'ontological revelation'.\textsuperscript{42} To an extent, we could say that Woolf's final response to the anxious morality or irony of her modernist contemporaries lies in this exorbitant refusal of authority. 'Ontological revelation', however, is not a neutral phrase. What does it mean to suggest that Woolf's poetics of negation finally result in a series of \textit{mise-en-scenes} of self-negation and self-punishment? Is there a history to this shift from object to subject? How can we understand the suggestion that for a woman the ultimate ontological revelation is,

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\item \textsuperscript{41} Virginia Woolf, 'A Sketch of the Past', \textit{op. cit.}, 83.
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in Bernheimer's words, to make 'subliminally manifest her unconscious desire for death?'.

This last question is indirectly answered in Julia Kristeva's famous allusion to Woolf's suicide in About Chinese Women. For Kristeva, Woolf's writing and death embodies what she sees as the 'impossible dialectic' confronting women within Western monotheistic culture. In a culture where 'woman' is posited as the unconscious other to the socio-symbolic, and is hence both its bête noire and guarantor, the dilemma for women is how to accede to symbolic power without renouncing the potentially subversive power of their marginal status. While the male artist, according to Kristeva, can run the risk of revolutionising the symbolic through poetic language because ultimately he has the cultural authority to do so, the attempts by women writers such as Woolf, Tsvetaeva and Plath to negate the social are resolved only by their own deaths:

Once the moorings of the word, the ego, the superego, begin to slip, life itself can't hang on: death quietly moves in. Suicide without a cause, or sacrifice without fuss for an apparent cause which, in our age, is usually political: a woman can carry off such things without tragedy, even without drama, without the feeling that she is fleeing a well-fortified front, but rather as though it were simply a matter of making an inevitable, irresistible and self-evident transition. I think of Virginia Woolf, who sank wordlessly into the river, her pockets weighed down with stones. Haunted by voices, waves, lights, in love with colours - blue, green, - and seized by a

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43 Ibid., 199.
strange gaiety that would bring on the fits of strangled, screeching laughter.\textsuperscript{44}

Counter to the absolute ironist, Woolf is figured here as a melancholic, yet exuberant, satyr. Kristeva herself knows all too well how precarious the fault-line is between apparently universal psycho-sexual structures and culturally imbricated gendered terms; it is, indeed, this fissure which runs, albeit uncomfortably, throughout her work. Yet, to concede that Woolf's suicide is 'an inevitable, irresistible and self-evident transition' is also to risk leaving her work open to the charge made, most famously, by Elaine Showalter, that Woolf's modernism fails to provide women with any political agency. For Showalter, Woolf's poetics offer little more than 'receptivity to the point of self-destruction, creative synthesis to the point of exhaustion and sterility'.\textsuperscript{45} 'Refined to its essences, abstracted from its physicality and anger, denied any action, Woolf's vision of womanhood is as deadly as it disembodied. The ultimate room of one's own', Showalter concludes, 'is the grave'.\textsuperscript{46}


\textsuperscript{45} Elaine Showalter, \textit{A Literature of Their Own}, Virago Press, London, 1978, 296. See too Toril Moi's defence of Woolf through a Kristevan reading of her writing in 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf', \textit{Sexual/Textual Politics}, op.cit. Even Showalter recognises that negation has its own power. Showalter concludes: 'there is a kind of female power in the passivity of her writing: it is insatiable'. Woolf's tomb, it seems, contains something of a restless corpse.
Is the room a tomb? To ally Woolf's poetics of negativity with her physical death is, on the one hand, to produce an image of female masochism which unsettles because it reveals a violent truth about women's relation to the socio-symbolic. On the other hand, at precisely the same moment, we risk pathologising women's protest (as if psychoanalytic theory begins with a concept of the pathology of culture, only to displace culture's discontents back onto the woman herself). What happens if we turn the question around and ask, not what psychoanalysis can tell us about Woolf but in what ways Woolf's work can be read alongside contemporary psychoanalytic accounts of female sexuality, art and civilisation's discontents?

III

In her study of Woolf and psychoanalysis, Elizabeth Abel describes the Kleinian project in the following terms:

At the "cross-roads" of the Kleinian narrative is not a renunciation of the mother but her imaginary generation. Integral to the Kleinian framework is a notion of art as a simultaneously formal and therapeutic project for reconstructing a fragmented inner world. For Kleinians, culture, opposed not as (paternal) law to instinct but as creativity to inner chaos, emerges from the impulse to make reparation to the mother. 47

46 Ibid., 296.
47 Elizabeth Abel, Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis, op.cit., 11.
It is this emphasis on the imaginary regeneration of the maternal in Kleinian thought which, for many, has seemed most germane to a new understanding of the relation between sexual difference and art. Abel herself, for example, argues that Woolf questions the re-writing of nineteenth century paternal genealogies in Freud by way of Klein's revisionist matri-centric plot. However, as we saw in the last chapter, for Klein herself culture is not always connoted as a benevolent concept of creativity, but is as likely to be as cruel and forbidding as what Abel describes as 'paternal law'. Precisely what is so unsettling about Klein's theorisation of psychic life is her image of an aggressivity which, as for Freud in Civilization, can only be repeated in a vexed and anxious relation to cultural interdicts. From where, then, does the emphasis on the formal and therapeutic come?

In part, the answer to this question takes us directly back to where I began, to the dilemmas proposed by Fry's commitment to pure aesthetic significance. For many analysts in the thirties and forties, Klein's stress on the reconstruction of

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48 At issue in Abel's argument is the attempt on the part of both Woolf and Klein to re-figure and unsettle the question of origins in terms of a maternal genealogy. In the case of Woolf, Abel argues, this attempt eventually falters in the face of the fascist connection between maternity, race and origins. The culturally connoted return of the mother into mass ideology, Abel suggests, disrupts a former idealisation of the mother in Woolf's work. I discuss this aspect of Woolf's work in further detail in Chapter Three.
inner chaos readily dovetailed into Fry's comparative concern with the purity of form. Hanna Segal states, 'What Klein says about Ruth Kjär [the woman artist in Klein's 'Infantile Anxiety Situations'] seems to echo what Fry said of Cézanne [...] that his aim was "not to paint attractive pictures but to work out his salvation"'. 49 Less a case of the influence of psychoanalysis on modernism, within the English context it is, in fact, more appropriate to talk of the influence of high modernism on psychoanalysis.

On the one hand, this influence looks like a straightforward banalisation of Klein's thought. 50 To subsume psychic conflict under the rubric of aesthetic significance is also a convenient way of ridding psychoanalysis of its internal theoretical conflicts. Likewise, ontologising Fry's aesthetic theory as a psychic universal, effectively strips the psyche, and indeed psychoanalysis itself, of any social contingency. Yet, just as Fry cannot prevent his theory of the cultural purity of aesthetic experience from re-enacting the separation of art from social experience, so too can Kleinian claims about formal reparation be seen to repeat and replay both the psychic and the theoretical dilemmas that the aesthetic promises to resolve. Seen in this

49 Hanna Segal, 'Freud and Art', op.cit., 81.
50 Tony Pinkney, for example, suggests that this is particularly the case with Segal's reading of Klein. See Women in the Poetry of T.S. Eliot, op.cit., 11.
light, the notion of an imaginary regeneration of the mother is not so much the beginning, as the end result of a set of questions about art and the psyche that analysts were beginning to ask themselves in this period.

Many commentators have pointed to *Civilization* as the text in which Klein and Freud are theoretically most proximate. Freud's image of a cultural super-ego which both represses aggression and demands it is one, as we saw in the last chapter, which rests at the core of Klein's work. Where for Freud in *Civilization* this is the super-ego of paternal law, Klein in 'The Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928), written one year earlier, pushes this moment back to the child's first identifications with the mother. This is a move which Freud will later reprimand and one which, as Klein's more recent critics have pointed out, leads to a theory which presumes, rather than accounts for, sexual difference. Yet, as much as Klein's theory appears to engulf the child's coming into being in a supremely imaginary world, with no apparent reference to the paternal or symbolic function, her concepts of sexual difference are as

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notable for their impasses as are, more famously, Freud's theories of feminine sexuality.

As we saw in Chapter One, anxiety, for Klein both constitutes the psyche and entails its dissolution. In 'The Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict', the mother's body is the locus for that early oedipal anxiety. Projective identification holds sway in early oedipality, as the pre-mature ego both projects hostile fantasies towards the mother and simultaneously fears her retribution. As a result, both sexes turn away from the mother and take, instead, the father as the object of their desire. Swapping the mother for the father also precipitates the process of symbol formation, as the infant is now able to substitute one object for another. The first, hesitant, turn to the law then, is accompanied by a fragile process of metaphorisation. This resolution of what Klein calls the 'femininity phase' can, thus, be seen as an archaic reduplication of both the Oedipus Complex in Freud, and what will later become the entrance to the symbolic in Lacan.

Sexual difference comes into play, for Klein, in the distinct ways by which each sex attempts to resolve the femininity phase or, more precisely in

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52 Kristeva refers to this as 'the fantasy of a phallic mother playing at the phallus game all by herself, alone and complete, in the back room of Kleinism'. Julia Kristeva, 'Freud and Love: Treatment and its Discontents', trans. Leon S. Roudiez, *The Kristeva Reader*, op.cit., 259.
the way in which each sex interprets the femininity phase. For the child the 'meanings' of anatomical difference are precipitated and distorted by the presence of what Klein calls the 'epistemophilic drive' (Wisstrieb); an early questioning drive (accompanied by the dominance of the primary processes) which reveals nothing to the child but the 'gap' in his or her knowledge of sexual difference. The femininity phase of the little boy is characterised by his identification and rivalry with the mother which replays the set of aggressive phantasies that led him to turn away from her in the first place. The boy is thus locked into an anxiety ridden tourniquet whereby his fantasised aggression towards the mother is answered, first, only by the signs of what he lacks: faeces, babies and the father's penis. His epistemophilic drive, however, allows him, second, to displace this anxiety and inadequacy up to an 'intellectual plane' through which the little boy 'deduces' that he has, in fact, like his father, got a penis. This phallic 'knowledge' substitutes his own deficiency with regard to female reproduction, and the little boy is henceforth set on the path to a precarious and over-stated form of masculinity. Indeed, it is in this early epistemophilic expulsion of the mother that Klein locates the origin of misogyny.

The case for the little girl is somewhat different. Her epistemophilic drive does not
provide a pseudo-solution to the threat of her mother but, rather, confirms her sense of deficiency. Her anatomical investigations, as opposed to the boy's, confirm that she lacks a penis. This piece of knowledge leads not, as with the boy, to gestures of over-compensation, but to more anxiety and more aggression with regard to the mother: 'She feels this lack to be a fresh cause of hatred of the mother, but at the same time her sense of guilt makes her regard it as a punishment'.53 The little girl is thus guilty on two counts; once for her aggression, and again for the fact of her sexual difference. Eventually, says Klein, maternal rivalry and hostility will lead the daughter back to identification with the mother (the femininity phase 'proper'). However, throughout this identificatory oscillation, anxiety and inhibition persist to an extent which can potentially disable any firm identification between mother and daughter. The prospect of arriving at full femininity via maternity, for example, 'is weakened...by anxiety and sense of guilt, and these may seriously damage the maternal capacity for a woman'. And further: 'It is this anxiety and sense of guilt which is a chief cause of the repression of feelings of pride and joy in the feminine role'.54

53 Melanie Klein, 'The Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928), from The Selected Melanie Klein, op. cit., 77.
54 Ibid., 79.
Bersani has argued that Freud's pessimism in *Civilization* is 'the discursive sign of a perhaps suicidal melancholy, the palely reactive aura of a cultural complicity with the power of an anticultural destructiveness'.\(^55\) Freud, in other words, endorses the cultural violence of the anticultural super-ego which both demands and prohibits aggression. For Klein in *The Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict*, the early super-ego both legitimates an overstated masculine aggression and demands and inhibits femininity. Is this perhaps too the sign of a quiescent cultural acknowledgement, not only of an anti-cultural destructiveness, but also of the heavy burden that destructiveness places on women? What is certain is that if, as Freud suggests, guilt is the origin of civilisation's discontents, for Klein this is a guilt which impacts doubly on women.

How, then, is it possible to sublimate the heavy premium which the destructive element puts on women? To some degree, by 1945 Klein has performed her own theoretical sublimation, as what began as the femininity phase is eventually subsumed under the concept of the depressive position.\(^56\) It is from this point that later Kleinians will derive a notion of art out the gradual depressive

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\(^{56}\) See, for example, Melanie Klein, *The Oedipus Conflict in the Light of Early Anxieties*(1945), in *Love, Guilt and Reparation*, op.cit.
symbolisation of the mother. Earlier attempts by Kleinian analysts to sublimate the difficulty of women's relation to the early super-ego, however, reveal more of a struggle over the concepts of art and femininity.

Paula Heimann's 1942 paper, 'A Contribution to the Problem of Sublimation and its Relation to Processes of Internalization', for example, bears both traces of this struggle and, importantly, a certain indebtedness to the doctrine of pure aesthetic significance. Heimann's paper centres upon the successful analysis of a woman painter who came to her with an acute morphine addiction and an inhibition in painting. The aim of analysis is to get the patient to take responsibility for her own aggression; in this way, Heimann suggests, she can avow her own guilt and thus put an end to the persecutory demons who haunt her. Through the connecting interpretations and repetitions of the transference and counter-transference, what Heimann calls 'the design' gradually manifests itself. Born out of the architectonics of the analytic narrative, this 'design' also weaves its way into the patient's painting. As the analysis proceeds, the paintings go through three different stages. The first paintings without morphine are, Heimann says, somewhat 'primitive' in scope and technique. By comparison, the second paintings of 'Victorian Family scenes' are both satisfying and commercially
successful but yet, Heimann adds, have 'an obsessional element' which interferes with their 'sublimatory value'. These stereotypical family scenes leave the analysand stuck in the past. She becomes aware of what Heimann calls their lack of 'value',

as an anxiety that she might not be able to paint in any other manner but this and that if she were compelled to go on with this type of painting her possibilities of self-expression would be gravely restricted, if she had no other function in life but that of restoring her childhood objects, she would not attain the full range of boundless territory in which to develop herself.57

Art here, as in most psychoanalytic accounts, is the repetition of the past: what Heimann and her patient additionally attempt to account for is the 'aesthetic value' of those repetitions. They eventually find it in the third set of paintings the patient produces:

The pictures of this period showed a great advance in colour and composition. During this period her internal objects [...] appeared frequently in the form of artistic problems. Her interest was thus not only more objective, but far richer and comprehending far more varied details. Her internal conflicts were objectified in terms of aesthetic and technical problems. Instead of suffering from the torments of a devilish father and mother, she struggled with the problems of "human interests" and "aesthetic interest" in painting.58

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58 Ibid., 12-13.
The formalist axiom whereby the general rules of composition take precedence over the particularity of phenomena becomes a cornerstone of the analytic cure. Similar to the way Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse* works through the problem of depicting maternity by abstracting Mrs Ramsay and James into 'a purple triangle' ("But the picture was not of them [...] By a shadow here and light there...Her tribute took that form"), Heimann's patient abstracts the past into a set of formal aesthetic relations. The banality of the earlier Victorian scenes are, hence, re-figured and surpassed through the formal composition of the modernist daughter.

There is, however, a latent and more disturbing subtext which runs counter to the case history's own formalist imperative. In a quite terrifying cryptography of the anxiety of influence, the Victorian mother who compels the patient to produce stereotypical family scenes proves, for both the patient and for Heimann's theory, difficult to kill off. Having presented the case history in straightforward narrative which moves from inner persecutory chaos to sublimation as formal transcendence, Heimann muddies the coherence of her own linear account with an interpretation of the inexorable return of the 'Victorian mother' into her patient's symptomology and painting. Following a

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quarrel with a woman who Heimann analyses as standing in for her mother, the previously sublimated Victorian scenes make a ghostly return into the analysand's painting:

She started the sketch, but found that there was something wrong with her drawing, both while she was working on it and when she had finished and hung it up on the wall [...] When the artist who criticized the sketches came to hers, he said in surprise: "Good God, what has happened to you? This looks like a drawing out of a Victorian family album". My patient now realized what it was she had felt to be wrong with. She said: "It looked like a drawing that had been done fifty years ago". She felt so awful about this that she had to go and have three sherries.

Even three sherries, however, are not enough to prevent the return of the Victorian Mother who, like Woolf's 'Angel of the House', returns to both inhabit and so inhibit the modernist daughter.

60 Paula Heimann, op. cit., 14. Heimann's description of this phantom incorporation anticipates Nicholas Abraham's and Torok's work on fantasies of incorporation which set up a 'crypt' in the psyche. See, in particular, 'Introjection - Incorporation: Mourning or Melancholia', in Psychoanalysis in France, op. cit. I discuss this essay in relation to both developments in English psychoanalysis and Woolf's work in Chapter Three.

61 Compare Woolf's description of the 'Angel' in 'Professions for Women': 'I discovered that if I were to review books I should need to do battle with a certain phantom. And the phantom was a woman, and when I came to know her better I called her after the heroine of a famous poem, The Angel in the House. [...] I turned upon her and caught her by the throat. I did my best to kill her. [...] Her fictitious nature was of great assistance to her. It is far harder to kill a phantom than a reality. She was always creeping back when I thought I had despatched her. Though I flatter myself that I killed her in the end [...] The Angel was dead; what then remained? You may say that what remained was a simple and common object - a young woman in a
For Woolf, the phantasmagoric 'Angel' reveals that 'thinking back through our mothers' can also mean struggling with the mother's complicity with social laws. While Heimann does not share Woolf's ideological reading of the phantom mother, she does share her sense of injustice. 'There is a great difference', Heimann notes, 'between wanting to paint Victorian family scenes and being unconsciously compelled (by an internal Victorian mother) to paint in a Victorian fashion'.62 What better indictment of the 'penal servitude', in Heimann's words, of the woman artist for whom the ideological inheritance of the mother is as oppressive as a world dictated by the false and denaturised hierarchies of 'Whitaker's Almanac'? Heimann interprets the phantom return of the Victorian mother as 'an impaired sublimation' because 'this type of restoration has too much the character of revenge and punishment'.63 The concept of 'faulty' sublimation suggests that the incorporation of the Victorian mother can eventually be exorcised, sublated up to the domain of an aesthetic problem. A footnote to the same passage, however, takes us back to the impasses which Klein

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62 Paula Heimann, op.cit., 16.
63 Ibid., 16.
left us with in 'The Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict'. 'It will be seen', notes Heimann referring to Klein's early work, 'that these phenomena are such as are usually described as due to the super-ego'.64 While the narrative which leads from persecutory anxiety to transcendence through aesthetic significance suggests that the femininity phase can be overcome, the sub-text to Heimann's paper points to a continual repetition of that anxiety and guilt which marks femininity in Klein's account. As Matte Blanco puts it in his polemic against Heimann's paper: 'Attempts at further development are continually made by Melanie Klein and her followers, but the results seem to be nothing more than, to use a graphic French expression, 'pietiner sur place', moving incessantly without ever succeeding in going forward'.65

Blanco's comments are clearly intended as a case against Kleinism. They are significant here, however, in so far as Heimann chooses to footnote them in the published version of her paper. Blanco, she counters, has got it wrong. The 'vicious circle' which characterises the Kleinian account of early psychic life and sexual difference is not incessant, but can be broken. Denial and expulsion are not the only mechanisms whereby the Kleinian subject comes into being; goodness, as well as

64 Ibid., 16.
65 Ibid., 16.
badness, can be incorporated to the extent that 'the subject in his phantasies feels that he is creating his parents rather than swallowing them'. Yet, to 'create' the parents, as opposed to swallowing them whole in a phantasy of incorporation is, in Heimann's terms, to create them in terms of aesthetic interest. It is as if aesthetic significance resolves the anguish and despair of both the modernist daughter's 'penal servitude', and of Heimann's own theoretical legacy to Klein. The sublimatory 'value' of aesthetic interest which Heimann gets her patient to ascend to, thus, reads as a way of repairing, or making good, an earlier, more disturbing, version of a punished and self-punishing female subjectivity which hides, cryptographically, within both the psyche of the patient and in the latent text of Heimann's paper. Read this way, Heimann's defence of Kleinism against Blanco's charges verges on reduplicating the structure of negation which is so central to Kleinian thought. By strenuously rebuking the charge that her theory runs on the spot, Heimann simultaneously affirms the repetition of a vexed maternal legacy. The formal closure which Heimann offers through 'sublimatory value' can thus be read as a symptom of the difficulty with which Kleinian thought tries to reconcile its own theory of femininity's 'discontents'.

66 Ibid., 16.
By 1947 when Hanna Segal crosses the same theoretical terrain in 'A Psycho-Analytical Approach to Aesthetics', it looks as though the concept of aesthetic value has come to carry the full weight of the destructiveness which Kleinism places at the heart of the constitution of subjectivity and sexual difference. Segal has high praise for Fry in this essay ("what Roger Fry says of post-impressionists undoubtedly applies to all genuine art")\(^67\) and begins by repeating his distinction between aesthetic value and superficial or imitative art:

'One of the great differences between art and imitation or a superficial "pretty" achievement is that neither the imitation nor the "pretty" production ever achieves this creation of an entirely new reality'.\(^68\) Translated into psychoanalytic terms, the creation of an entirely new reality is born out of the depressive position, while 'pretty' or superficial art is the sign of the repetition of early persecutory anxiety.

As with Heimann's paper, however, many of Segal's case histories remain locked within the destructive cycles of early oedipality. Take, for example, the following well known description of a woman writer's inhibition in writing:

Using words, she said, made her break "an endless unity into bits". It was like "chopping up", like "cutting things". It

\(^67\) Hanna Segal, 'A Psychoanalytical Approach to Aesthetics', op.cit., 388.

\(^68\) Ibid., 388.
was obviously felt by her as an aggressive act. Besides, using words was "making things infinite and separate". To use words meant acknowledging the separateness of the world from herself, and gave her a feeling of loss. She felt that using words made her lose the illusion of possessing and being at one with an undivided world: "When you name a thing you really lose it". It became clear to her that using a symbol meant an acceptance of the separateness of her object from herself, the acknowledgement of her own aggressiveness, "chopping up", "cutting", and finally losing the object.69

As in Woolf's bath time scene in 'A Sketch', meaning here is perceived as an act of violence. This passage is notable for the way it prefigures later accounts, such as Lacan's, of the role that language and loss play in the constitution of subjectivity.70 Note, for example, how Segal invests words themselves with aggressive drives; as if the writer's aggression can only be located for her, as a subject, in place of the signifier itself. For Segal here, language is imbricated with a lack of being, a negating lining of aggressivity, which Kristeva, for example, recognises as a paradigm in modernist writing.71 Sexual difference is not an

69 Ibid., 395.
explicit issue in Segal's paper. Yet if, following Klein, separation from the mother is invariably a more fraught and anxious phase for the little girl, it follows that for the woman, language, the processes of metaphorisation themselves, should also carry the weight of persecutory anxiety.

It is perhaps for this reason that Segal sees this drive invested language not as a form of sublimation, but as an inhibition, a failure to accede to the law of depressive relations. Full sublimation, in the form of 'aesthetic value', by contrast, is the outcome of an avowal of destructiveness and loss. For Segal, the true artist must 'acknowledge the death instinct, both in its aggressive and sub-destructive aspects, and accept the reality of death for the object and the self'. In what looks like a possible solution to Heimann's dilemmas, Segal inscribes a masochistic logic of self-destruction within the aesthetic itself. Good art, for Segal, we could say, paraphrasing Bernheimer's reading of Woolf, is a moment of 'ontological revelation' whereby the subject makes manifest her own desire for death, not as a pathology, but as a form of art.

On the one hand, this reads as a particularly visible instance of psychoanalysis attempting to

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72 Hanna Segal, 'A Psychoanalytic Approach to Aesthetics', op.cit., 403.
make a moral both out of its own theoretical legacy and of the destructive elements of contemporary historical experience. Two years after the war, when the deadly discontents of civilisation that Freud had predicted and which Klein endorsed had reached their apocalyptic conclusion, Segal makes art the privileged site through which we can avow our own sadism. It is as if the aesthetic promises to contain and, perhaps, redeem what history could not. Indeed, Bersani's claim that Kleinism offers a theory of sublimation 'disguised as transcendence' seems particularly apposite in Segal's case. Pure art, for Segal as for Fry, is not only the repetition, but the valorised de-realisation not (as with Fry) of experience, but of the subject's vexed and anxiety ridden entrance into culture.

When Segal concludes her essay by drawing on Dilthey's concept of nach-erleben to explain aesthetic pleasure, then, it might seem that English psychoanalysis joins with that philosophical tradition which Benjamin associates with the attempt to find a 'true experience' as a response to the alienated experience of modernity. Re-focused through a psychoanalytic prism, Dilthey's nach-erleben, which Segal interprets here as a way of understanding others by reconstructing their lives, literally as 'after-living them', becomes equivalent to the unconscious identification the
reader, listener or viewer makes with the work of art as a whole:

"The author has, in his hatred, destroyed all his loved objects just as I have done, and like me he felt death and desolation inside him. Yet he can face it and he can make me face it, and despite the ruin and devastation we and the world around us survive. What is more, his objects, which have become evil and were destroyed, have been made alive again and have become immortal by his art. Out of all the chaos and destruction he has created a world which is whole, complete and unified".\textsuperscript{73}

As accurate a description of psychic reparation this might be, Segal's claims for art also carry intimations of a post-war fantasy: who wouldn't, in 1947, wish for an experience which could create a unified world out of all the chaos and destruction?

While Segal's theoretical trajectory thus aims towards a notion of formal closure, like Heimann's, her essay also doubles back upon itself. In a footnote, half-concealed and presented almost as an after thought, Segal begins to take apart what she sees as the paradox which lies behind Fry's claims to aesthetic autonomy. 'What the formalists ignore', she argues, 'is that form as much as content is itself an expression of unconscious emotion. What Fry, following Clive Bell, calls significant form, is form expressing unconscious emotional experience'.\textsuperscript{74} In a much later essay, Segal elaborates this criticism using Picasso's

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 399-400.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 400.
Guernica to demonstrate that, contra Fry, the socially associative significations of art cannot be separated from aesthetic form. In Picasso's painting, she argues, 'there is a path leading from the immediate associative emotion: the Spanish war to all war [...] the path leads not only from the current war to war in general, but also to what such wars represent in our unconscious'. 75 To unconsciously identify with this work of art, thus, would not be to repair a world wrought with destruction, but to arrive at a question: what does war represent in the unconscious? As much as Segal calls upon aesthetic significance in order to redeem history, she also uses the aesthetic to re-open a set of questions about art, the psyche and the discontents of civilisation. Fry, as I suggested earlier, finally arrives at a position where his theory begins to sound like a form of psychoanalysis, in so far as the aesthetic is a way of making conscious what everyday experience keeps unconscious. Segal takes this to its logical conclusion: aesthetic experience is superior to everyday experience, not because of the intrinsic value of purely formal relations, but because it brings to light what culture would have us repress. A far cry from Fry's attempts to immunise art from history, for Segal, aesthetic significance is, finally, a way of asking what contemporary history

75 Hanna Segal, 'Freud and Art', op.cit., 80.
means in psychic terms. 76

At the beginning of this chapter, I suggested that while Fry's formalism could be seen as a reactionary response to a contemporary crisis in experience, his work was also notable for its tensions and ambiguities around the concepts of unconscious and social experience. Segal's interpolation of high modernism into psychoanalysis could, in this respect, be seen as providing Fry's theory with its apotheosis. As for Woolf, so too for Segal, aesthetic significance is a way of transcending consciousness as it is experienced in the everyday and, thereby, re-figuring our experience of the social ('what does war represent in the unconscious?').

If we begin to consider the story of the relation between art and historical experience in this period not in terms of the influence of psychoanalysis on modernism (nor, indeed, exactly of high modernism on psychoanalysis) but in the context of such a series of cross-disciplinary debates and re-interpretations, to what extent do Klein and her followers prescribe an ontology which could account for Woolf's poetics of self-negation? If, as Klein, suggests, the internalisation of the super-ego invariably leads to a punished and self-punishing

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76 See, for example, Roger Fry, 'Art and Life', in Vision and Design, op.cit., 1-46.
model of female subjectivity, it follows that any attempt to take on the law will have a death-ridden outcome for the woman. However, the ways in which Kleinism actually attempts to deal with femininity's discontents tell a slightly different story. The energy, for example, by which Heimann tries and fails to redeem this vision of female subjectivity through a concept of aesthetic significance, indicates a profound anxiety both about Kleinism's own model of subjectivity and the ability of contemporary aesthetic theory to provide a model by which it might be understood. It seems to me that English psychoanalysis does not so much provide the grounds by which we might understand Woolf's later work, but to be involved in a series of questions which echo Woolf's project in the thirties and forties. Less a case of laying down a universal ontology, Klein, Heimann and Segal seem to be working through the question of what kind of ontology is appropriate within their own theoretical terms. In a similar vein, Kleinian attempts to aesthetise the destructive element are not only an attempt to foreclose a set of theoretical dilemmas, but, like Woolf, these analysts are also endeavouring to ask what kind of aesthetic can cope with contemporary experience. If, according to the Kleinian account, women are particularly exposed to the guilt and aggression which marks the subject's entrance into culture, how can a woman 'be'?
Further, what type of aesthetic is appropriate to this existence? It is with these questions in mind that I want, finally, to return to Woolf's 'A Sketch of the Past'.

IV
For Benjamin the 'shock experience' in Proust and Baudelaire is both a symptom of their alienation from modern life and the basis of a new poetics - a poetics of shock. In Benjamin's esoteric reading of Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Freud's theory of the death drive is read, along with Proust's memoire involuntaire, as offering a theory of the response of consciousness to the increasing reification of experience within modernity. Only what has not been experienced consciously can become the basis for memory or recollection. Modern consciousness, by contrast, serves the function of immunising itself against experience; consciousness, in Freud's famous formulation, is foremost 'a protection against stimuli'. This is a formulation which we have already seen in Woolf's 'A Mark on the Wall'. Indeed, as for Woolf in 'A Sketch', for Benjamin too, experience in its atrophied state can only appear as a series of 'shocks'. The repetition of the shock experience, as for Freud's war-time patients who repeatedly replay their traumas through dreams, works retroactively (nachträglichkeit) in order to produce the anxiety necessary to counter
those shocks. The result, for Benjamin, is the 'disintegration of aura in the experience of shock'; the disintegration, in other words, of the mystificatory appeal of the aesthetic. What, accordingly, emerges in the writings of Baudelaire and Proust, is a radical poetics which has the potential to figure experience anew. Perhaps the special achievement of the 'shock defence', notes Benjamin,

may be seen in its function of assigning to an incident a precise point in time in consciousness at the cost of the integrity of its contents. This would be a peak achievement of the intellect; it would turn the incident into a moment that has been lived (Erlebnis).78

Gone, then, is the totalising and valorising appeal to perceptual integrity (beloved of Fry); in its place is an uncanny twist whereby through shock (and not, for example, as the result of a process of trying to repair damage done), there lies the potential for the de-valorisation of phenomena and a negative re-acquaintance with specificity. Far from laying the ground for an eventual scenario of aesthetic transcendence, 'shock' for Benjamin changes the terms of the aesthetic itself. This is the poetics of the fragment, the constellatory encounter which Benjamin both teases out of Baudelaire and practices in his own writing.

77 Walter Benjamin, op.cit., 154.
78 Ibid., 117.
Woolf's politics and practice are, in many respects, the polar opposite of Benjamin's. Although Woolf, as we have seen, frequently calls upon the aesthetic to negate socially lived consciousness, for her the aesthetic is still a superior form of lived experience (the political differences between Woolf and Benjamin - between 'Bloomsbury' and Marxism, between the Sussex Downs and the Spanish border - are perhaps self-evident). Yet the comparison is useful here, if only in so far as both writers can be read as responding to the same problem: how to produce art in a world where its claims to transcendence are continually under question. Terry Eagleton notes of Benjamin's last work:

As fascism comes to power, there is a sense in which Benjamin's whole career becomes a kind of urgent constelling, a cobbled together of whatever unprepossessing scraps and fragments come to hand in the teeth of a history which like the war-weary regimes of Trauerspiel, seems to have subsided into ruins. 79

'Scraps, orts and fragments' is Woolf's refrain in her war-time novel, Between the Acts; a text which similarly cobbles together scraps of literary history and fragments of monumental history in order to question the viability of narratives of transcendence in a world at war. But where Benjamin's scraps of history are an apocalyptic

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concluding flourish to a life-long resistance to teleology and all totalising ideology, Woolf's final acts seem, by comparison, to mark the beginning of a new intensity in her questioning not only of the doctrine of aesthetic autonomy, but of her own poetic practice (her three final works, Roger Fry, 'A Sketch' and Between the Acts can all be described as acts of mourning). It is as if irony is no longer enough.

Read this way, those moments of self-negation in 'A Sketch' can be re-figured not only as inscriptions of a masochistic self-shattering, or as one woman's 'inevitable' transition to self-negation under the burden of psychic and cultural laws, but also as the beginning of an important re-alignment of the relation between art and experience in Woolf's thinking. Woolf does not get so far as to embrace the 'shock experience' as a means of making productive modernity's alienation of experience. 'A Sketch' does, however, continually express an anxiety about recollecting experience in a world which no longer provides the contemplative distance which, for example, was central to the negating aesthetics of 'The Lady'. 'The past', Woolf writes,

only comes back when the present runs so smoothly that it is like the sliding surface of a deep river. Then one sees through the surface to the depths. In these moments I find one of the greatest satisfactions, not that I am thinking of the past; but that it is then that I am living most fully in the present. For the present when backed by the past is a
thousand times deeper than the present when it presses so close you can feel nothing else, when the film on the camera reaches only the eye. 80

As for Benjamin, so too for Woolf, the only past worth recollecting is a past which one does not experience consciously ('not that I am thinking of the past'). This postlapsarian experience potentially redeems the immediacy of an age of reproduction, of a present which 'presses so close you can feel nothing else, when the film on the camera reaches only the eye'. However, for Woolf in 1940 the shocks of the present can, it seems, no longer be parried. 'But to feel the present sliding over the past, peace is necessary. The present must be smooth, habitual'. 81 But this is 1940 and there is no peace. Hence the past is no longer a moment to be transmuted into an aesthetically lived experience. Rather, as with Woolf's bath time scene once the past is recollected it returns to shatter the subject of her memoir in scenes which uncannily recall and repeat the very fragmentation of history, meaning and authority that Woolf was witnessing all around her. In Kleinian terms, the internalisation of violence which is played out in the mise-en-scenes of 'A Sketch', points to a return of an early persecutory anxiety whereby the frontiers which separate the psyche from the real are at their

80 Virginia Woolf, 'A Sketch of the Past', op. cit., 114.
81 Ibid., 114.
most precarious. The message here seems to be that, in war-time, the 'shock defence' breaks down. If, then, Woolf's room is a tomb, it does not necessarily contain the corpse of a self-defeating feminine aesthetic; rather, her war time writing encrypts the defeat of an aesthetisation of the destructive element.

It is finally, I would suggest, within the context of the war that we can read Woolf's final challenge to the doctrine of aesthetic autonomy. By continually marking the failure of aesthetic transcendence, Woolf's poetics not only offer an aesthetics of negation; she also questions the autonomy and the mystificatory appeal of the aesthetic itself. And if that challenge finally takes the form of a poetics of self-negation, by the Second World War, this has as much to do with Woolf's response to the contemporary crisis in experience, as it has with either her personal biography or her ontological status as a woman. Witness this appeal made in her 1940 essay 'Thoughts of Peace in an Air Raid': 'Let us drag into consciousness the subconscious Hitlerism that holds us down. It is the desire for aggression; the desire to dominate and enslave. Even in the darkness we can see that made visible'. 82 It is this aggression which, for Hanna Segal, art has to

82 Virginia Woolf, 'Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid' (1940), The Death of the Moth and Other Essays, op.cit., 155.
avow if it is to redeem the psychic negativity out of which it is born. But where Segal, in the post-war forties, seems to turn this requirement into a moral imperative, back in 1940 Woolf can be read as offering a tentative answer to Segal's later question: what can art tell us about what war represents in the unconscious?

In part, I want to examine Woolf's response to this question in the next chapter. One final description of a 'shock experience', however, provides as clue to the direction Woolf eventually takes:

At any moment a bomb may fall on this very room. One, two, three, four, five, six... the seconds pass. The bomb did not fall. But during those seconds of suspense all thinking stopped. All feeling, save one dull dread, ceased. A nail fixed the whole being to one hard board. The emotion of fear and of hate is therefore sterile, unfertile. Directly that fear passes, the mind reaches out and instinctively revives itself by trying to create. Since the room is dark it can create only from memory. It reaches out to the memory of other Augusts - in Bayreuth, listening to Wagner... Scraps of poetry return. Woolf never gives up on the idea that Eros can win over Thanatos. In her last novel, those 'scraps of poetry' return to demonstrate how her own poetics are thoroughly bound up with both an articulation of and resistance to the 'dreadful negativity' of her age. In her biography of Roger Fry, Woolf notes: "Art and life are two rhythms" he says [...] "and

83 Ibid., 157.
in the main the two rhythms are distinct, and as often as not play against each other". Of the two rhythms, it is not difficult to guess which is superior for Fry. Woolf, however, is interested in the interplay between these two rhythms in the context of Fry's response to the First World War. 'If he survived the war, it was perhaps that he kept the two rhythms in being simultaneously. But it is tempting to ask', Woolf adds, 'were they distinct?'.\textsuperscript{84} This is a question also asked by Ella Freeman Sharpe, an English analyst who similarly attempted to find a way around the negative vision at the heart of Kleinianism, in her case by recourse to a notion of an aesthetic constitution of subjectivity. It is the interpenetration between the rhythms of the aesthetic and those of experience that I want to turn to next.

CHAPTER THREE

Rhythm: Breaking the Illusion

Science, they say, has made poetry impossible; there is no poetry in motor cars and wirelesss. And we have no religion. All is tumultuous and transitional. Therefore, so people say, there can be no relation between the poet and the present age. But surely that is nonsense. These accidents are superficial; they do not go nearly deep enough to destroy the most profound and primitive of instincts, the instinct of rhythm. All you need now is to stand at the window and let your rhythmic sense open and shut, boldly and freely, until one thing melts into another, until the taxis are dancing with daffodils, until a whole had been made from all these separate fragments. I am talking nonsense I know [...] I do not know what I mean by rhythm nor what I mean by life.

Virginia Woolf, 'Letter to a Young Poet' \(^1\)

Where Fry distinguishes the rhythms of life from those of art, in Woolf's writing the ebb and flow of rhythm seems to pull life into the order of art. Against the instincts of destruction seen by many of her contemporaries as both symptom and cure of the modern malady, in 'Letter to a Young Poet' Woolf champions an elegiac and lyrical rhythmical instinct which has the power to transcend disunity, to make a 'whole' out of the 'separate fragments' of contemporary experience. Woolf's young poet, acting

\(^1\) Virginia Woolf, 'A Letter to a Young Poet', op.cit., 141.
on her advice, finds a voice in the character of
Bernard in *The Waves*:

> But it is a mistake, this extreme precision, this orderly and military progress; a convenience, a lie. There is always deep below it, even when we arrive punctually at the appointed time with our white waistcoats and polite formalities, a rushing stream of broken dreams, nursery rhymes, street cries, half-finished sentences and sights - elm trees, willow trees, gardeners sweeping, women writing - that rise and sink even as we hand a lady down to dinner.\(^2\)

Beyond the illusions of the everyday, Bernard hears the rhythms of another experience anterior to linear temporality and the convenient lies of society.

And, in *The Waves* itself, Woolf bears out Bernard's observation and gives lie to the illusions of the development and progress of human individuality by continually dashing her characters' monologues against an intricate web of 'broken dreams', 'nursery rhymes', 'half-finished sentences and sights'. The voices that haunt *The Waves*, are not so much those of individual characters with stories to tell, but those of subjects kept buoyant on the rhythms of poetic language; dispersed only to reassemble in the form of what Jane Marcus has called a 'collective sublime'.\(^3\) If rhythm in Woolf is a call to arms against alienation, this elaborate

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defence is at the same time a form of counter-poetics and, some might argue, politics.

The gloss I have just given on rhythm in Woolf's writing is a familiar one. Many approaches to modernist writing in the last two decades have sprung from an interest in the place of the subject within poetic language. From this perspective, rhythm is an index of an enunciative process which subverts conventional language patternings and literary forms to reveal a subjectivity founded not on self-reflection, but through an alterity; be it that of a 'collective sublime', as in Marcus' case or, more recently, a psychoanalytically defined sublimity of the drives and unconscious processes. The 'politics' of rhythm, from this angle, are frequently identified in the challenge that it presents to the myth of the sovereignty of the subject and the supporting illusion that language's prime function is to represent. Rhythm, although traditionally a hand-servant to representation (as in onomatopoeia) in the modernist text becomes an agent of its partial demolition and in this way, it is argued, throws the authority both of language and of the subject into question.

Julia Kristeva's ground-breaking *Revolution in Poetic Language* is perhaps the most influential psychoanalytic text responsible for generating this interest in subjectivity and poetic language in Woolf's writing. 'The song...the call to our
primitive instincts. Rhythm - Sound, Sight', notes Woolf in a marginal comment in her unfinished work, 'Anon'. Compare this with Kristeva's well known description of the 'semiotic' in Mallarmé's 'The Mystery of Literature':

Indifferent to language, enigmatic, and feminine, this space underlying the written is rhythmic, unfettered, irreducible to its intelligible verbal translation; it is musical, anterior to judgement but restrained by a single guarantee: syntax.

The political twist given to rhythm here lies in the way in which it facilitates a silent revolution by privileging what is in excess of representation and meaning (the enigmatic, the feminine) which, because it is articulated in poetry ('restrained by syntax'), can be written without a fall into madness or psychosis. Substitute Woolf for Mallarmé, and that textual revolution becomes a sexual/textual comment on women, writing and gender politics.

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6 Elsewhere, I have described the project of Kristeva's Revolution in Poetic Language as follows: 'Kristeva grafts the concepts of the drives and preoedipality from psychoanalysis onto a notion of signification informed by semiotics and phenomenology. The result is a twofold conception of discourse in which the stabilizing, ordering and social elements of language are seen as underpinned by an archaic disordering, drive related process of signification (the "semiotic"'), Lyndsey Stonebridge, in The Bloomsbury Guide to Women's Literature, ed. Claire Buck, Bloomsbury, London, 1992, 995. For recent explorations of Kristeva's work with Woolf, see Makiko Minow-Pinkney, 'Virginia
Feminist readings inspired by Kristeva have been invaluable in bringing Woolf's difference, in particular her sexual difference, from her modernist contemporaries into view. Yet, the critical privileging of the role that rhythm plays in Woolf's presentation of subjectivity, like the psychoanalytic positioning of her life and work I discussed in the last chapter, also prompts a set of questions for feminist readings of modernism. How thin, for example, is the dividing line between a liminal, rhythmic space 'beyond the subject' and the demand that this space reconstitutes a specifically feminine voice? If Echo, in Woolf's writing, usurps Narcissus, then what images of femininity, gender and writing does this produce? Considering the history of modernist criticism, it is salutary to remember that it was precisely on the grounds of a too lyrical femininity that Woolf was once not only criticised, but rejected and ridiculed. One of the most phobic of these repudiations can be found in Wyndham Lewis' portrayal of Woolf as an all powerful Venus matriarch presiding over the promulgation of a distinctly feminine stream of consciousness style (grabbing the cow of the 'feminine principle' by the

horns is how Lewis dismisses Woolf).\textsuperscript{7} It is both easy and, of course, necessary to dismiss Lewis' misogyny. Yet it is also just as important to be aware of those moments when feminism's attempt to describe an image of women's writing risks becoming conflated with less welcome cultural and historical stereotypes of femininity.

In this chapter, I want to approach rhythm in Woolf's work with the suggestion that it was precisely a collision between the attempt to articulate a counter-poetics of being and writing, and a dominant and oppressive cultural and historical iconography, that interested and perturbed Woolf in her last writing. 'I do not know what I mean by rhythm', Woolf concludes her letter to the young poet, 'nor what I mean by life'. Woolf's doubts about rhythm in 1932 can be read as a symptom of the way in which she, along with other writers of the thirties, was compelled to reassess her own modernist practice in the light of the unremitting political spectacles, illusions and rhetorical displays that were being played out all around her. With reference to both the early and later drafts of \textit{Between the Acts} I want to trace the re-alignments made in Woolf's writing by concentrating on the way rhythm, for so long an established part of Woolf's poetics, is called into

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{7} Wyndham Lewis, \textit{Men Without Art}, Cassell, London, 1934, 167-71.}
account in her last novel. Rhythm in *Between the Acts*, as in her earlier novels, provides Woolf with a poetic form with which to break the limits of subjectivity, language and culture. What Woolf also begins to explore in her last novel is the extent to which rhythm can also support the most regressive of political fantasies.

This concern about the proximity between what starts as a potentially liberating articulation of the hidden, repressed and primitive underside of culture, and its uneasy return into the culture as a whole is also central to Kristeva's writing. In her later work, *The Powers of Horror*, Kristeva's study of psychic and political abjection, rhythm sings to a tune that is very different from the chorus of sexual/textual emancipation with which it has come to be associated. In this account the politics of poetic language do not inhere solely within a critique of the subject, but also in the troubling relation between the psyche, literature and ideology. Of Céline's rhythms, for example, Kristeva writes:

> Against the ternary economy of a Transcendence, Céline proclaims the immanence of substance and meaning, of the natural/racial/familial and the spiritual, of the feminine and the masculine, of life and death - a glorification of the Phallus that does not speak its name but is communicated to the senses as Rhythm. 8

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Like the earlier rhythms of Mallarmé, Céline's music can be read as an attack on the symbolic. Unlike Mallarmé's revolution, however, these rhythms attempt to substitute a counter-law in its place: a full and reassuring order dedicated to nature, race and family - phallic rather than heterogeneous. Far from articulating an alterity which would liberate the subject from the tyranny of meaning and unity, these rhythms fall straight into the arms of the mysticism of fascist ideology.

Kristeva's re-negotiation of the psycho-politics of rhythm, has an important precedent in English psychoanalysis. At exactly the same moment that the politics and poetics or rhythm become an issue for Woolf, English psychoanalysis too was concerned with the political and poetical potential of the rhythms of the unconscious. This can be historically contextualised as an attempt on the part of psychoanalysis to find an adequate account of sublimation amidst what appeared as a political culture bent on celebrating unsublimated drives towards death and destruction. One analyst who made rhythm central to the theory of sublimation was Woolf's brother's analyst, the ex-literature teacher Ella Freeman Sharpe. 9 Like Heimann and

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9 For a suggestive glimpse into what may well have been Sharpe's analysis of Adrian Stephen, see Ella Freeman Sharpe, Dream Analysis, Karnac Books, London, 1978, 122-3. An unnamed dreamer dreams of a 'genealogical table set out [which] showed how characters in Jane Austen's novels were related to one another.' Analysis traces the dream back to a
Segal, Sharpe's writing can be read as an attempt to respond to and, to an extent, to re-write Klein's theory of reparation. Again, like Heimann and Segal, Sharpe does not offer us a hermeneutics with which to 'translate' Woolf's poetics; rather, the encounter I am staging here opens up a space in which to monitor a displacement of the question of sublimation between psychoanalysis and literature (and vice versa) within the thirties and forties.

I
While concepts of fictionality, temporality and the question of origins have, to a large extent, directed comparative studies of modernism and psychoanalysis in the last two decades, as I discussed in the last chapter what is also of prime importance about the relation between English psychoanalysis and modernism in this period is a shared interest in formal concerns. The title of a 1934 paper by Ella Freeman Sharpe, 'Similar and family genealogy which corresponds to the Stephen family: 'The dreamer as a little boy had this conundrum. X was his sister, Y was his sister and Z was his brother. A was his brother and so was B, but the father of A and B was dead while the boy's own father was alive. Yet his mother was the mother of A and B... The dreamer chose an eminent woman novelist as a tribute to his own mother who created children who became distinguished in later life [...] In the logic of this child's range of facts it was inevitable that the father must die after children had been created.' This glimpse into the family romances of the Stephens' is grist to the mill for readings of the absent parental function in Woolf. See, for example, Perry Meisel, The Absent Father: Virginia Woolf and Walter Pater, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1980.
Divergent Unconscious Determinants Underlying the Sublimations of *Pure Art and Pure Science* (emphasis mine), for example, echoes Fry's claims of the autonomy of art. Following her contemporaries' formal concerns and in a move which also resonates with some of Woolf's poetic principles, in this paper Sharpe gives rhythm a new priority in the psychoanalytic account of sublimation. As in other accounts, Sharpe begins by taking us back to 'the childhood of art'. The origins of the artwork, she says, can be traced to the origins of the infantile ego; to early phantasies, identifications, introjections and projections. What is original about Sharpe's version of sublimation is the way she refuses to relegate art to the status of a symptom or substitute formation. Rather, what the artist keeps from childhood are the first perceptions which mark and characterise the early and fragile coming into being of an ego: 'He retains and maintains the vivid sense-perception of infancy associated with good and bad things'.

Art then does not, as in other accounts of sublimation, stand in for a missing object. Far from being vicarious in respect of something lacking, art is essentially an affirmative space. Just as the primary processes know no negation, so too for Sharpe pure perception

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belongs to a period in psychic life in which 'anxiety is absent'. The figure that marks the absence of anxiety is rhythm. Art is thus produced 'not by repression or reaction-formation, but by making a control by rhythm, which means ultimately the rise and fall of tensions that are rhythmical and pleasurable'(CP 144). Early perceptions, signs that signify nothing beyond themselves, are engraved upon the work of art; rhythm, the specific patterning of these perceptions, marks the presence of what Sharpe calls 'the libidinal unfoldment' of the drives. Sublimation repeats these rhythms. Disorder and 'unrhythm', by contrast, 'mean for the unconscious mind menace and destruction'(CP 145). Unlike its characterisation within Klein, Heimann and Segal, art here is not a stage upon which the subject repairs a world attacked by anxious desire with vicarious cultural symbolisations, but is rather a space in which pre-social and libidinalised rhythmic tensions are played out.

Already we can see similarities here between Sharpe's psycho-aesthetics and Woolf's poetics. For both, rhythm signals an affirmative and unifying act of creation which is pointedly set against the drives toward negativity and destruction. To continue the comparison, Sharpe's emphasis on immediacy and perception also links her work to a related aspect of Woolf's; the influence of Impressionism. Michael Levenson, in his key study
of earlier modernist genealogies, cites Hulme's description of the human personality as "a bundle or collection of different perceptions" as a statement which informed the Impressionists' emphasis on immediacy in both art and human identity. According to Levenson, this emphasis on immediacy establishes its place in literary doctrine with Ford Madox Ford's account of how he and Conrad accepted the label 'Impressionist' because they "saw that Life did not narrate, but made impressions on our brains". For my purposes, it is important to add to this list Woolf's famous appeal for modern fiction to become true to human subjectivity by placing perceptions and impressions over and above realist conventions of plot and narration: 'Look within and life, it seems it is very far from being "like this" [...] the mind receives a myriad of impressions - trivial, fantastic, evanescent or engraved with the sharpness of steel'. Here, Woolf's emphasis on interiority marks a shift from Impressionism to Post-Impressionism. When Sharpe, almost ten years after the publication of Woolf's 'Modern Fiction', looks 'within' and behind, to the history of human subjectivity, and discovers the determinants of art

in pure perception, she is also re-affirming Impressionist and post-Impressionist doctrine. Like Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artists and thinkers, Sharpe's affirmation of rhythmic perceptions also quietly disrupts the notion of artistic sovereignty. Whilst Ford's Impressionism produced, in Levenson's apt phrase, a 'subjectivity in which the subject has disappeared',¹³ in this paper Sharpe sketches out a vision of human identity in art in which the attitudes or preferences of the artistic self are obfuscated by the rhythms to which the artist is subject. An ego which is barely coming into being forms the core of Sharpe's version of sublimation and, whilst rhythm in her account is also a sign of the work of the 'self-preservative' instincts, there is no sense in which this 'self' is reflexive, determining or sovereign. Like Woolf's famous description in *A Room of One's Own* of Mary Carmichael's writing, which she contrasts with the insistence of the 'I' ego, of the male writer, Sharpe's artists too seem to match Woolf's evocation of an art produced 'unconsciously, merely giving things their natural order'.¹⁴

The comparison between Sharpe's psychoanalysis and Woolf's poetics is, admittedly, forced here. It

does, however, serve to sketch out, in a more historical way, a set of analogies between psychoanalysis and modernism which have, by now, become familiar. Both discourses produce a theory of art in which the 'primitive' and repressed are given voice and both, in this way, release art from the tyranny of the sovereignty of the artist. What is particular to the comparison between Woolf and Sharpe is their joint insistence on the unifying power that rhythm can bestow on the chaotic perceptions which make up psychic life. By the thirties, for both writers this affirmation begins to take on cultural and political as well as aesthetic connotations. 'If we are to compensate the young man for the loss of his glory and his gun', writes Woolf in 1940, 'we must give him access to his creative feelings'.15 Similarly, for Ella Sharpe in 1934; 'Applied arts and ordered civilization are only possible upon an initial achievement of the artist. I suppose it represents the first massive successful achievement of controlling aggression from within the immature psyche' (CP 148). It is too easy to read this shared insistence on unity and creativity simply as an unreconstructed nostalgia for the creative powers of the imagination. First, it is worth remembering that this inflation of the power of art was a common

symptom of an anxiety in the period about the life-redeeming potential of art in the face of the irrational and death driven spectacles of fascism and war. (In this sense, Segal's post-war reparative aesthetics are, as discussed in the preceding chapter, part of a longer history of this anxiety.) Moreover, and more importantly, contrary to their more vapid pronouncements, rhythm in the work of both Sharpe and Woolf increasingly comes to signify not only an affirmation of life, but also that 'menace and destruction' that both wish to counter and redeem.

Alongside her affirmation of the rhythmic powers of the unconscious, Sharpe sketches out another scenario between rhythm and the psyche which harbours a more deathly potential. Where the artist might achieve order by returning to primordial rhythms, for 'the melancholic and the suicide', Sharpe suggests, this backward path is a dangerous one to tread'; 'losing reality sense', the melancholic, 'attempts this preservation by death, which is very often the phantasy of re-union and starting a new life, beginning, that is, at the breast a refinding of this rhythm, an escape from intolerable tension'(CP 144). As much as rhythm is a life giving form of sublimatory progression, in other words, it is also, and by the same logic of return, a death driven regression. Rhythm ceases to affirm a life beyond consciousness, and instead
reveals itself as a figure of death. Neither is the
deathly aspect of rhythm confined to pathological states. The same failed attempt at triumphing over aggression can be traced in the formal properties of the work of art itself:

Frustration and anxiety caused the hostile phantasies of using destructively, of spoiling and draining and exhausting the good imago. The picture, the statue, the poem, make a moment immortal, fixed for ever at rhythmic perfection, unspoiled and unused and unusable. (CP 147)

As opposed to Sharpe's earlier stress on creative affirmation, 'rhythmic perfection' stands here as a memorial to the culture of the death drive; a redundant, useless icon to a hostility which it can barely conceal. A precursor to the rhythms which Kristeva will later discover in Céline, it is with this passage that we can begin to see how Sharpe's evocation of the affirmative power of rhythm is underpinned by a more troubling psychic economy.

A similar moment of pure rhythmic perfection also appears in Sharpe's 1930 paper 'Certain Aspects of Sublimation and Delusion', in the following extraordinary description of an analysis which removed an inhibition in dancing:

To see new steps, a new dance, was to receive a picture through her eyes. She could then practice "in her head". Like a negative she had taken the image. Then it could be reproduced as a picture taken from a negative. She was negative and she reproduced the picture. The sounds of music suggested dance. Sound and movement went together naturally. The body bent this way and that, swayed and moved as
though it were one thing - all one thing - as a bird in flying is one thing. She was like a bird, was a bird. She was it and it was herself. That is, she was the magical phallus. The dancing was in her. She had become the thing she once saw through eyes of desire, love and hate. She had incorporated it and after the manner of cannibalistic beliefs she had become endued with the power of the thing incorporated. (CP 128)

With these short repetitive sentences it is as if the analyst's pen too, in some form of rhythmic counter-transference, becomes endowed with the power of the sublimation she is describing. More importantly, the passage also enacts a crucial shift of emphasis in Sharpe's theory of artistic representation. It begins with an appeal to the same immediacy of perception which we saw earlier.

As if heeding Woolf's advice to the young poet, Sharpe's patient lets 'her rhythmic sense open and shut', here like a camera shutter. Halfway through the passage however, the idea of a kind of rhythmic perception is disrupted by a growing emphasis on a new figure; metaphor or, more precisely, simile. The patient's body moved 'as though it were one thing... as a bird in flying is all one thing. She was like a bird...' No sooner than the figure of metaphor is introduced, however, it too seems to efface itself. 'She was...a bird. She was it and it was herself. That is, she was the magical phallus'.

Rhythm then ceases to signify a continuity between the primary processes and art, and instead
becomes caught up in a chain of metaphoric substitutions. In other words, as an image, picture and metaphor, the rhythmic dance itself comes precisely to stand in for something which is lacking - the phallus. This is a move away from the emphasis on pure perception in the psyche and art, and towards a theory of psychic production which presupposes neither immediacy nor primacy, but negativity and representation. The key to this shift lies within the concept of incorporation. The dancer does not so much retain and maintain her early rhythmic rise and fall of tensions, she incorporates an image of rhythmic perfection. Elsewhere Sharpe further details the relation between incorporation and art:

At the oral level the ego must magically control the seemingly hostile parent, because of the infant's inadequate knowledge of reality.

Then everything depends upon the ability of the ego to eject this hostile incorporation from itself. This means in effect an ego control, in the outer of world, of something which can represent the primarily introjected hostile imago.

The artist externalizes that hostility into a work of art. (CP 135)

The gap in the infant's relation to the outside world produces the imaginary incorporation of the hostile parents; it is then necessary that 'something' material comes to represent this image. As we saw in the rhythmic dancer passage, that
introjected 'something' is a metaphor ('she was like a bird') which, once established, is quick to reproduce a sense of imaginary illusion ('she was a bird'): I know the object is lacking, yet I continue to believe in its existence - that I am it. Or, as Sharpe translates a slightly different scenario in her 1940 paper 'Psycho-Physical Problems Revealed in Language: An Examination of Metaphor', "'I see these things, but they are not real, I feel like this, but I mustn't feel like this, not really'" (CP 168).

In this later paper Sharpe pursues the analysis of the relationship between incorporation and metaphor by opening up what she calls an 'avenue of "outer-ance"' between the body and language. According to this theory, metaphor evolves in both language and the arts once the bodily orifices become controlled. Although the idea that metaphor simply expresses the body is, to an extent, still dominant here, at the same time Sharpe opens up a new space in which to explore the relation between art and phantasy. The thesis that Sharpe rehearses in some senses anticipates Nicholas Abraham's and Maria Torok's later work on incorporation and introjection. According to them, the psychic process of introjection marks the loss of an object through the acceptance of figurative language. This is a process which begins with the empty mouth waiting to incorporate the object: 'First the empty
mouth, then the absence of objects become words, and finally experiences with words themselves are converted into other words'.\textsuperscript{16} Although this suggests a developmental narrative - first the phantasy of incorporation and then the introjection of substitutes - this process, as Abraham and Torok theorise it, actually takes place the other way around. The phantasy of incorporation, of maintaining and retaining the vivid sense perceptions of early infancy in Sharpe's terms, is a nullification of figurative language, a retroactive 'making literal' of the object set up to deny loss and preserve the status-quo. There is no phantasy of incorporation, in other words, without the metaphor which first produces a sense of the object as lost. This movement between metaphor and incorporation is subtly exemplified in the words of one of Sharpe's patients: "When I get what I want it turns to dust and ashes in my mouth". Sharpe interprets: 'The mechanisms of melancholia are explicit in this last metaphor. "Dust to dust, ashes to ashes" - the object is dead within the mouth' (CP 160). The melancholic phantasy of preserving the object thus can be read through a metaphor which, by effacing itself, reproduces the deadly illusion of an original, and now death-ridden, incorporation.

\textsuperscript{16} Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, 'Introjection - Incorporation: Mourning or Melancholia', op.cit., 6.
If we return now to Sharpe's earlier melancholic who, in an attempt at preservation by death desires to 're-find' the peristaltic rhythms of incorporation at the breast, we can begin to unravel a new relation between rhythm, the psyche and art. As a figure, type or metaphor, rhythm can reproduce the illusion of an originary incorporation. No longer merely a libidinal formation which gives things 'their natural order', rhythm in Sharpe's second account, emerges as the figure or model of a phantasy of non-separation. From the point of view of linguistics Benveniste has echoed this last point. He argues that although historically it is through rhythm that a seemingly 'natural' relation between the body, the cycles of the seasons and, we might add, the psyche and artistic practice is established, there is, in fact, nothing 'natural' about rhythm at all. Rather, for Benveniste, rhythm is precisely the figure (as its Greek etymology confirms) through which we have come to naturalise the relation between the body, psyche, nature and writing.17 It is for this reason that while rhythm can seem to represent the very margins of semantic and cultural signification, at the same time it is also closely aligned to cultural mythologies of the natural and primordial. In the

case of Sharpe, it also follows that as much as the rhythms of art can affirm the creative impulse to triumph over the forces of aggression, fragmentation and disunity, they can also come to support a regressive phantasy of preservation.

Through the recent approaches to rhythm in modernist poetics which I evoked at the beginning of this chapter, we have by now become accustomed to reading rhythm as a property of poetic language which opens itself up to a critical analysis of enunciative shifts in the literary text. In this way, the critic can cream-off the means by which rhythm bridges the frontier between the 'sayable' and the 'unsayable', and so vouchsafe for the de-stabilising effects of rhythm upon the work of art. If, however, following Sharpe, we read rhythm as figure, or metaphor which supports the production of illusion, the stakes in this reading are changed. The question is no longer one of how rhythm is a liminal process of silent signifiance,18 for example, but that of what kind of illusions rhythm can support and maintain.

Where, then, does this leave Sharpe's claim for the redemptive power of art? Under the shadow of fascism many English analysts in this period began

18 'Signifiance' denotes the moment at which meaning is resited by the shifting nature of language. Now in common use, the term is derived principally from Benveniste. See Émile Benveniste, Problèmes de linguistique générale, Vol.2, Gallimard, Paris, 1974, Chapter Three: 'Semiologie de la langue'.
to explore the social and political significance of the fantasies and illusions they heard from the couch and uncovered in art and literature. Sharpe, for example, hints towards an affinity between literary and political spectacles in her last work, an unfinished study of rhythms of Shakespeare's plays. Instead 'of taking the stage for a world', she remarks, Shakespeare might have 'taken the world for this stage, as Hitler did' - a comparison which implies that the only qualitative difference between Shakespeare's rhythms and those of Hitler is that the latter's lead to 'bloody instead of bloodless revolution' (CP 24). Shakespeare's rhythms differ from Hitler's only in so far as the dictator has the political power to carry out his fantasies that the bard has not. As Lacan will later point out, what is strikingly absent here is an understanding of the central part that social recognition plays in sublimation.¹⁹ Indeed, on one level, Sharpe's artists and analysands appear to exist in a political and cultural vacuum in which their sublimations seem to speak to no-one but themselves. However, as the war breaks and as the British psychoanalytic community finds itself torn apart by internal divisions, Sharpe does begin to hint at the

political importance that underpins phantasies of incorporation. Compare, for example, her earlier evocation of an art sustained by vivid sense perceptions of what is good and bad, with the following two impassioned statements made during the Controversial Discussions:

The entire belief in the good concrete object within, or the bad object without, preserves the illusion of non-bodily separation [...] Our troubles start with reality, with separation, and a mother who was sexual and bore other children by a father, the recognition of which realities is the blow to narcissism and idealism.  

Freud showed us the way to individuality out of mass-psychology, the way of emergence from the matrix, called by some "the racial unconscious". It is by shedding illusions about ourselves and others, and the deepest illusion is in the belief in the actual incorporated object.  

This plea for the preservation of the individual in the face of mass fantasy was echoed by many in this period. (Roger Fry, as Woolf points out in her 1940 biography makes much the same point as, indeed, does Leonard Woolf.) Yet Sharpe also presents us with something of an impasse in this, practically her last published statement. The rhythmic perfection of Sharpe's dancer also reproduces precisely the same 'belief in the actual incorporated object'.

21 Ibid., 340.  
'She was like a bird, was a bird. She was it and it was herself ... She was the magical phallus'. She was perhaps, as Kristeva so aptly puts it in relation to Céline, 'a glorification of the Phallus that does not speak its name but is communicated to the senses as Rhythm'\textsuperscript{23}. The fantasies that underpin the production of art, by Sharpe's own analysis, are also complicit with the psychopathology of mass-fantasy.

II

Woolf did not begin to read Freud until 1938, so it is highly unlikely that she read any of her brother's analyst's work. Sharpe, however, certainly read Woolf. In an analysis of a case of conversion hysteria, Woolf's \textit{A Room of One's Own} is cited as part of a series of associations which unravel an original scenario of infantile desire and hostility:

"My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a water'd shoot".

You remember Christina Rossetti's poem? That's a nice book of Virginia Woolf's - you remember that, don't you? (I do, I remember that the quotation above is in the book mentioned, and that Virginia Woolf sees a Manx cat in the middle of the lawn without a tail, and thinks: "Was he born so, or had he lost his tail in an accident?").(CP 95)

The patient's symptom, her angina, disappears once the analysis has replaced the pain back in the

\textsuperscript{23} ibid., 179.
context of the anxiety produced by a desire for the father's phallus: a desire which, once more, does not speak its name but is 'communicated to the senses by rhythm' inscribed upon the body. 'Her pain is in her heart. But her heart is like a singing bird whose nest is in a water'd shoot', interprets Sharpe, both echoing the musicated image of the phallic dancer (singing bird - water'd shoot) and producing an original interpretation of the relation between the unconscious and the rhythms of poetic language. For the point here is not that the rhythms of the patient's discourse unproblematically take us back to unconscious libidinal rhythms, but that the figure of rhythm, here in the form of a literary citation or poetic fragment, stands in for 'the wish to possess the father, to have his penis'(CP 97). In other words, what emerges is not a sense of continuity between the unconscious and poetic language, but a demonstration of how the figure of rhythm, the lines from Rossetti, circulates within an economy of fantasy.

Turning to Woolf's own interpretation of the significance of the Rossetti lines, we find a similar analysis of the power of poetic citation to evoke deep seated fantasies. For Woolf, Rossetti's rhythms are a historical index of a general human register which resonated before the First World War. Before the war, she observes 'people would have said the same things but they sounded different, because
in those days they were accompanied by a sort of
humming noise, not articulate, but musical exciting
which changed the values of the words themselves'.
In comparison to Rossetti and Tennyson, Woolf
continues,

the living poets express a feeling that is
actually being made and torn out of us at
the moment. One does not recognise it in
the first place; often for some reason one
fears it; one watches it with keenness and
compares it jealously and suspiciously
with the old feeling one knew. Hence the
difficulty of modern poetry.24

It is not difficult to identify Woolf's own poetics
here. By her own diagnosis, Woolf's practice seems
to rest with the potential of rhythm. 'The
rhythmical...is completely opposed to the tradition
of fiction, and I am casting about all the time for
some rope to throw the reader'.25 As many critics
have argued, rhythm in Woolf's work is both what
makes it modern, makes it 'difficult', and the
figure which bestows her texts with a unity or
continuity (throwing the reader a rope). As with
Sharpe, the question Woolf begins to broach in the
thirties and forties is that of the power of rhythm
to reproduce illusion and, in so doing, support not
only individual but collective fantasies. The
liminal qualities of rhythm, its alterity - for so

24 Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own, op.cit.,
1925 Virginia Woolf, A Reflection of the Other
Person: The Letters of Virginia Woolf, vol.4,
1929-1931, ed. Nigel Nicholson, Hogarth Press,
long a figure of liberation in Woolf's literary carpet - is the very thing that she begins to find suspect. Woolf, however, engages more directly with the questions that Sharpe could not: who does rhythm speak to? What part does social recognition play in the fantasies that rhythm is able to reproduce?

Reading rhythm in terms of its cultural signification is a difficult project, not least because its liminal qualities seem to empty out all semantic content. Yet, this is the wager which Woolf appears to set herself in the war years. This is a move which entails a crucial shift away from an alignment of rhythm with the margins of representation and towards a consideration of what rhythm, in fact, represents. If, in her earlier work rhythm was used to expose the 'lie' of a unitary subjectivity, by the end of the thirties, Woolf's concern lies less with the individual subject, than with the ideological and social effects of 'rhythmic perfection' upon the community as a whole.

In 'Anon', for example, which Woolf began in 1940, she analyses the effects of rhythm on the listener or reader throughout literary history. 'Anon', the androgynous nameless voice of early English songs and ballads, beats out a rhythm which cannot be differentiated from the voice of the audience. 'The audience itself was the singer.
"Terkw, Terkw", they sang; and "By, by lullay" filling in the pause and helping out with the chorus. Everybody shared in the emotion of Anon's song, and supplied the story. By murmuring subversively beneath the conventional ideological tropes of English literature, here rhythm provides Woolf with a model for a site of collective identification. Although the patronage and court systems, the rise of the printing press and, above all, the growing self-consciousness of the writer, have gradually severed the poet from the audience, Woolf finds faith in the ways that the rhythm which evokes this collective spirit has been preserved.

The song has the same power over the reader in the twentieth century as over the hearer in the eleventh. To enjoy singing, to enjoy hearing the song, must be the most deep rooted, the toughest of human instincts comparable for persistency with the instinct of self-preservation. Only when we put two and two together - two pencil strokes, two written words, two bricks... do we overcome dissolution and set up some strokes against oblivion. The passion with which we seek out these creations and attempt endlessly, perpetually, to make them is of a piece with the instinct that sets up preserving our bodies, with clothes, food, roofs, from destruction.

26 Virginia Woolf, ibid., 382.
27 A contrast can be drawn here with Woolf's appeal to a collective 'folk spirit' and the Leavises' evocation of a lost community of thinking and feeling poets and audiences. Both Woolf and the Leavises look back to an imagined community in order to define their own poetics. However, while the Leavises' concern was with establishing a tradition of English Literature, Woolf's project is to find a poetics that cuts across and beyond the institutionalisation of English Literature. See F.R. Leavis, The Great Tradition, Chatto and Windus, London, 1948.
Once again Woolf presents rhythm as an essentially affirmative force which, just as for Sharpe, guards against destruction. In the same stroke, Woolf also naturalises rhythm. Two rhythmic beats, two bricks...from instinct to song to house-building, rhythm in this passage is the trope which unites alterity and poetic practice.

The ground is laid here for Marcus' claim that Woolf's poetics appeal to a kind of 'collective sublime'. Anon's audience is not so much a social or cultural community, but a timeless collective of people 'like ourselves, stripped of the encumbrances that time has wrapped about us'.29 Well within the bounds of the conventions she is at the same time attacking, the imagery in Woolf's essay also draws upon the traditional motifs of pastoral. Home spun locals, for instance, sing out a timeless song which reveals 'the ages of toil and love'.30 Barely five years earlier, William Empson had defined pastoral as a process which puts the 'complex into the simple'.31 As Woolf interpolates her own complex and sophisticated poetics into a simple tableau of 'Englishness', rhythm in 'Anon' is more than just a

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28 Virginia Woolf, 'Anon' and 'The Reader', op. cit., 408.
29 Virginia Woolf, ibid., 380.
30 Virginia Woolf, ibid., 385.
means of affirming a deep-rooted continuity between instinct and art. It also works as a kind of myth-making figure which stands in for a pastoral ideal that, by 1940, is perceived both as lacking and offering the potential for redemption.

It looks then, as if Woolf is using rhythm to construct a kind of organic myth of the natural, timeless and communal. Yet, there is an increasing tension in her writing between this largely mythologised view of a poetics from the margins and Woolf's own difficult engagement with the complexities of a community at war. In 'The Leaning Tower', her 1940 lecture given to the Brighton Worker's Educational Association, Woolf rehearses the themes of 'Anon' in terms of a more overtly political and cultural agenda. The privileged class of 'leaning tower' writers, argues Woolf, while trying to identify with the people have, in fact, locked themselves up within their own egoism, prisoners of class, tradition and privilege. Through their introspection, however, 'with help from Dr Freud', these writers have opened up a space for the unconscious, a force which, according to Woolf's own understanding of the term,32 holds the key to a new inclusive, collective form of

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literature. The stage is thus set for a politics of 'Anon' as a poetics from the margins promises a form of collective redemption. However, as John Mepham has noted, the way in which Woolf aligns herself in this lecture with the audience of the WEA against the elitism of the leaning tower writers must be considered alongside the all too evident unease of Woolf's own class consciousness.

Woolf's solidarity with the WEA, for example, contrasts strikingly with the diary entry in which she describes her contribution to the war-time community as having her mind 'smeared by the village and WEA mind: & having to endure it, & simper'. From this perspective, Woolf's evocation of the collective rhythms of pastoral might begin to read as little more that an attempt throw an ideological mask over a real sense of cultural conflict.

However, Woolf's unease, I would suggest, goes further than an unpalatable schism between a writer's poetics and politics. If there is a tension here, it lies less with the fact that 'real' people fail to match up to Woolf's aesthetic ideals, and more with the sense that Woolf's own pastoral poetics are indeed beginning to manifest themselves

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within the political and cultural formations of the thirties. The community is beginning to match up to the poetic ideal and this, precisely, is the problem.

'Began reading Freud last night; to enlarge the circumference...Always take on new things. Break the rhythm &C'. 36 In 1939 Woolf began to read Freud's *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. In what looks like a straightforward commentary on the theories of Le Bon and Trotter, here Freud points to the ambivalence that inheres in any collective identification. From an 'expression of tenderness' to a 'wish for someone's removal', the unconscious identification that binds a group together can as easily result in a regression to the most primitive of destructive instincts (Le Bon) as it can to the crowning monuments of cultural sublimation; art, literature, music (Trotter). 37 Elsewhere in her diaries, Woolf talks about her own dread of the 'herd impulse' 38 which contaminates a community at war. On one level, Woolf is concerned with the way in which people's fascination with the grotesque pageant of the war distracts them from art and literature. Her identity as a writer is thus at

36 Virginia Woolf, ibid., 248.
37 Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), *PFL*, 12, 134-135, and *SE* 18, 103-104.
stake. On another level, however, there is a sense that Woolf is also beginning to engage with the phenomena of group psychology, as the ambivalent ties of identification which bind the community at war threaten to turn Woolf's pastoral community of 'Anon' into a sinister homogeneous whole. 'I dislike this excitement, yet enjoy it', Woolf notes of her own experience of war-time London, 'Ambivalence as Freud calls it. (I'm gulping up Freud)'.

Leaving aside this suggestively incorporative metaphor for Woolf's relation to psychoanalysis, I want to suggest that it is this same ambivalence which cuts across Woolf's last novel Between the Acts. At stake in this text is the ability of rhythm to construct a fictional illusion for collective identification. The question, in 1938, is what kind of illusion can rhythm give voice to? Is it the pastoral rhythms of 'Anon' or is something more ambivalent being worked through? Sharpe's affirmation of the libidinal power of rhythm, as we have seen, was undercut by a theory in which rhythm comes to stand in for a lost fantasy of a deathly preservation. In Between the Acts Woolf gives rhythm a political twist. As in her previous work, she gives voice in this text to a rhythm which is culturally repressed. This articulation, however, is far from a straightforward celebration or

39 Virginia Woolf, ibid., 249.
affirmation of a form of counter poetics. Rather, here Woolf finally asks the more difficult question of what happens when the primitive rhythms of the repressed do indeed stage their return within the tableaux of cultural formations. At issue in Woolf's last literary work, in other words, is the pressing question of what happens when the hidden underside of culture lyricised in 'Anon', does in fact receive social recognition.

III
Rhythm, rhyme and poetry are foregrounded in *Between the Acts*, as are the fragments, citations and genres of literary history which make up both Woolf's dramatisation of one summer's day in the English countryside in 1938 and the local pageant which forms the central stage of the novel. With its self-conscious intertextual play, its cunning and punning literary allusions, *Between the Acts* is renowned for its manipulation of illusion. A text which quotes itself as much as the 'scraps orts and fragments' of literary history, critics have frequently compared the structure of the novel to a Möbius strip.40 The fictional drama of Miss La Trobe's pageant, for example, has no non-fictional 'outside' in the drama which is simultaneously being

played among the audience. Rather, the play and audience, inside and outside, reflect one another in a ceaseless sequence of repetition and difference. Rhythm is central to this illusory mise-en-abîme. On the one hand, there is evidence that Woolf intended us to read rhythm as a silent thread which weaves through the text creating and preserving illusion:

And yet we who have named other presences equally impalpable - and called them God, for instance, or again The Holy Ghost - have no name but novelist, or poet, or sculptor, or musician, for this greatest of all preserves and creators. But this spirit, this haunter and joiner, who makes one where there are two, three, six or seven, and preserves what without it would perish, is nameless. Nameless it is, yet partakes of all things named; is rhyme and rhythm...  

As in Ella Freeman Sharpe's earlier formulations, rhythm here bestows a covert continuity without a sense of authority or a subjectivity without a sovereign subject ('no name but novelist, or poet, or sculptor...'). But even as Woolf presents it as 'nameless', rhythm is actually frequently 'named' in *Between the Acts*. Poetic citations from literary history, foregrounded iambics, trochees and conceits loudly punctuate the text. In this way rhythm forms the central topos of the novel which very markedly 'joins' characters, tropes and themes. In so far as

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it is a silent 'haunter and joiner', rhythm is thus also a self-conscious figure or model in *Between the Acts*. As each 'type' of rhythm folds back upon the other, it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain the idea that rhythm is the natural link between alterity and art.

To an extent, *Between the Acts* returns to familiar ground. As in Woolf's earlier novels, poetic language gestures towards a potentially liberatory space beyond the illusions of everyday life and social repression. The character of Isa, for instance, a closet poet, scribbles down her rhythms in a book disguised as an account book. Her 'unacted part' lies between the covers of her oppressive cultural and social identity as the wife of an unfaithful stockbroker. Yet, as in 'Anon', Woolf's concern here also lies with the ability of rhythm to construct a spectacle for collective identification. Most obviously this is dramatised by the conventionalised English rhythms of the pageant, to which Miss La Trobe's audience taps its feet with an identificatory beat as the tableau of English literary history is played out before them.

'For I hear music, they were saying. Music wakes us. Music makes us see the hidden, join the broken'.\(^42\) Rhythm, we are invited to conclude, 'joins' the audience together by providing a common

emotion for a play in which the 'plot did not matter'. Another rhythm, however, more liminal and harder to grasp, lies beyond those of traditional literary history:

Chuff, chuff, chuff went the machine. Could they talk? Could they move? No, for the play was going on. Yet the stage was empty; only the cows moved in the meadows; only the tick of the gramophone needle was heard. The tick, tick, tick seemed to hold them together, tranced. (BA 63)

Although anterior to tradition and convention, this rhythm is by no means affirmative. On the contrary, the deadly 'tick, tick, tick' of pure repetition between intervals, gestures to a darker set of identificatory ties which bind the audience together. Rhythm holds the audience, paralysed, prisoners not even of a spectacle, but of the bare promise of an illusion signified by the bare stage and the 'chuff, chuff, chuff' of a music yet to come. It is as if the 'rhythmic perfection', much noted by readers of The Waves, uncannily returns in

43 While rhythm in Between the Acts also foregrounds an 'emptying out' of linear time, a consideration of the question of temporality goes beyond the concerns of my argument here. See, for example, Rachel Bowlby, who reads these 'ticks' as a comment upon rhythm and temporality. Bowlby notes that 'This tick, tick, tick, tick, points to the arbitrary separation and joining of the regular temporal units against which the significant "moments" in a life or history appear to stand out. The ticks can be heard as either repetition or sequence, and thus confound the difference between repetition and linearity'. Rachel Bowlby, Virginia Woolf: Feminist Destinations, Blackwell, Oxford, 1988, 149-50.
Between the Acts to reveal a more sinister underside.

Part of Miss La Trobe's task, as Woolf dramatises it, is to keep this ominous repetition of intervals at bay, and to produce in its stead an illusion which, while fragmentary, can nevertheless be sustained. This is a challenge, as many commentators have noted, that Woolf herself confronted as she struggled to write within the political turmoils of thirties. But dramatic illusion in Between the Acts is constantly shown to fail: or, more precisely, if not to fail then to turn back upon itself, as in the following, frequently quoted passage:

The words died away. Only a few great names - Babylon, Ninevah, Clytemnestra, Agamemnon, Troy - floated across the open space. Then the wind rose, and in the rustle of the leaves even the great words became inaudible; and the audience sat staring at the villagers, whose mouths opened, but no sound came.

And the stage was empty. Miss La Trobe leant against the tree, paralysed. Her power had left her. Beads of perspiration broke upon her forehead. Illusion had failed. "This is death", she murmured, "death".

Then suddenly, as the illusion petered out, the cows took up the burden. One had lost her calf. In the very nick of time she lifted her great moon-eyed head and bellowed. All the great moon-eyed heads laid themselves back. From cow after cow came the same yearning bellow. The whole world was filled with dumb yearning. It was the primeval voice sounding loud in the ear of the present moment. Then the whole herd caught the
infection. Lashing their tails, blobbed like pokers, they tossed their heads high, plunged and bellowed, as if Eros had planted his dart in their flanks and goaded them to fury. The cows annihilated the gap; bridged the distance; filled the emptiness and continued the emotion. (BA 103-4)

Many critics have read this passage as a testament to Woolf's redemptive drive in Between the Acts. The rhythms of nature take over from the point where the rhythms of art fail; Eros triumphs over Thanatos and the illusion is preserved. Makiko Minow Pinkney, for example, has described the passage as inscribing an archaic return of the 'semiotic drives'; hence, for her, the cow signifies a return of the maternal which, she argues, contributes to a 'certain libertarian euphoria in the novel' (adding a subversive slant, perhaps, to Lewis' idea of grabbing the cow of the 'feminine principle' by the horns). But if a 'primeval voice' can redeem the failure of a fictional illusion, within the self-reflexive logic of the text itself, it follows too that its rhythms are yet another fiction and a repetition of the illusion they supplement. Far from calling on the rhythms of nature as a redemptive force, Woolf can be read as displacing the opposition between nature and culture. The passage would therefore demonstrate how the rhythms

44 See, for example, Nora Eisenberg, 'Virginia Woolf's Last Words on Words: Between the Acts and 'Anon', in New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf, op.cit., 259.
of nature are called upon to supply a kind of 'mythification' of illusion in which the cow's primeval yearning works as a metaphor, a substitute, which produces the effect of a homogeneous illusion of completion. Read as a mythological supplement, Woolf's pastoral evocation begins to take on a somewhat less euphoric or liberating significance. Mitchell A. Leaska, for example, has likened it to Woolf's suspicions about the group psychology of the 'herd instinct' which appear in her diaries. 46

The final version of Between the Acts is not, of course, without its genuine redemptive moments (such as, for example, the moment when a sudden downpour similarly rescues La Trobe's pageant from failure (BA 135)). A more politically sinister and ironic tone, however, pervades Woolf's first draft of the novel, Pointz Hall. 'Love, hate, peace' (BA 70), for example, is the three-fold ply which provides the thematic principle both for Miss La Trobe's pageant and the sexual drama being played out among the audience in the novel's final draft. 'Love, hate, fear' (PH 103, emphasis mine), is the three-fold ply in the novel's original version. In keeping with this less lyrical tone, Pointz Hall reveals an even more pointed critique of the scene with the cows and the redemptive potential of the

46 Mitchell A. Leaska also draws attention to this connection between the herd of cows here and Woolf's concern with the 'herd instinct'. See, Virginia Woolf, Pointz Hall, op.cit., 229.
rhythms of nature. In the first draft, the cows' rhythms do not just supply an image of wholeness, Woolf also uncovers an even more difficult sub-text lurking behind the pastoral appeals of nature. In the first draft, homophobia is the motivation for the this appeal to archaic rhythms. Here is how Woolf concludes the passage quoted above in Pointz Hall:

The cows stopped; lowered their heads; once more browsed statelily [sic] <as if content.>

"That's done it", said Miss La Trobe, hurrying on the scene changers. "Pish", she said, fixing her bold dark eyes upon William Dodge <whose head jutted out.> "You couldn't have done that, Mr. Whatsyourname: Billy loves Buddy; Buddy has a smut - Oh bless me it's a pimple - on the end of his nose - that's your universal common feeling, Mr. Whatsyourname".

Why make him responsible for the failure of modern poetry to provide a common human feeling? She had only one second to register the fact that human beings have failed each other; we need scapegoats not heroes; <are> without reverence; him for me, I for him; <so> there's no hope for us. We have recourse to cows...So in one second she reasoned out her choice of Dodge for scapegoat; her discontent with poetry; her gratitude to cows; before she turned to the next item in the programme. (PH 139)

At the very least this passage makes it difficult to sustain the suggestion that the plaintive rhythms of the calfless cow are some kind of liberating textual inscription of the maternal or 'semiotic'. The price to be paid for solace of the rhythms of nature
is, as Miss La Trobe diagnoses it, the scapegoating of the figure of the homosexual, William Dodge. In this version then, Woolf reveals how on the other side of preservation of illusion by 'recourse' to the imagery of natural rhythms, lies a denial of difference and, in particular, of sexuality. The return of the 'primeval' into the pageant here is neither a celebration of the repressed or marginalised, nor an example of the redemptive powers of nature, but a troubling return of a primitive and defensive psychopathology.

Only a form of mysticism could read such evocations to primitive rhythms as a call to redemption. The character of Mrs Swithin, a Christian and 'unifier', offers one such interpretation. For her, rhythm means harmony.

Sheep, cows, grass, trees ourselves - all are one. If discordant, producing harmony - if not to us, to a gigantic ear attached to a gigantic head. And thus - she was smiling benignly - the agony of the particular sheep, cow or human being is necessary; and so [...] we reach the conclusion that all is harmony, could we hear it. (BA 127)

In the novel's original draft, it is the 'torture' of each sheep, cow or human being, which is necessary to the preservation of an illusion of harmony. Rhythm, once more, comes to figure the preservation of an illusion which carries with it a deathly legacy.
For Ella Sharpe, it was the preservation of such illusions of homogeneity which supported mass-psychology. For Freud also in the thirties, it was not only repression, but regression to the most primitive of psychic mechanisms that upheld the psychopathology of fascism. Most recently for Julia Kristeva, it is the thwarted return of early fantasies, culturally connoted via the maternal body, which advents both the psychic and political violence of texts such as Céline's. To go back to the very first quotation from Kristeva with which I began, it also possible to argue that the very tropes which are often read as testaments to Woolf's subversive writing - the enigmatic, the 'feminine' and, most especially, the 'rhythmic' are called into question in her last novel through her engagement with the role that rhythm has in supporting the duplicitous nature of illusion.

If, as many readers have presumed, Miss La Trobe is the embodiment of Woolf's own anxieties about the position of the writer during the war, then the extent to which Woolf is challenging her former poetics in her last novel finally begins to become clear. 'But to amuse myself', notes Woolf in an early diary entry about the novel,

let me note: why not Poyntzet Hall: a centre: all lit. discussed in connection

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with real little incongruous living humour; & anything that comes into my head; but "I" rejected: "We" substituted: to whom at the end there shall be an invocation? "We"... 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 my mind?.

The oscillation from 'I' to 'We' and then back to the 'present state of my mind' here, as in so much of Woolf's work, suggests that identity belongs to the shifting positions of subjectivity within language. However, in so far as Between the Acts can be read, like The Waves, as a text which channels identity through the ebb and flow of poetic language, by the end of the novel that 'we', that rhythmic 'capricious whole' which seems to index not just a collective identity but also Woolf's own poetics, has become an insistent and ambivalent figure.

'To whom at the end there shall be an invocation?'. The rhythmic 'we' can indeed be read as the muse which, in accordance with poetic convention, Woolf once more calls upon for assistance in Between the Acts. However, if we actually turn to the novel's final 'invocation', Woolf's question mark here can be retrospectively read as taking on a new urgency. The pageant's denouement takes place in the scene were Miss La Trobe turns the tables on her audience in her

experiment 'Present Time - Ourselves'. Rhythm in this scene does not secure the continuity of illusion, but irreverently breaks it up:

The tune changed; snapped; broke; jagged. Fox-trot was it? Jazz? Anyhow the rhythm kicked, reared, snapped short. What a jangle and jangle! [...] What a cackle, a cacophony! Nothing ended. So abrupt. And corrupt. Such an outrage; such an insult; And not plain. Very up to date all the same. What is her game? To disrupt? Jog and trot? Jerk and smirk? Put the finger to the nose? Squint and pry? Peak and spy? (BA 133)

To an extent, these discordant jazz-age rhythms are in perfect accordance with the rest of the pageant. Keeping in mind the way La Trobe/Woolf parodies the conventional rhythms of English literary history from its pre-history through the Victorians, it is perfectly fitting that modernist rhythms should be used to present their present age. And, in keeping with the poetics of their moment, these rhythms are accompanied by a savage exposure of the investment of the spectator within the work in art. In 'Present time - Ourselves' La Trobe sends her cast onto the stage with a collection of mirrors which reflect the desires of the audience back to them; reflecting not the security of illusion, but disunity:

Ourselves! Ourselves!
Out they leapt, jerked, skipped.
Flashing, dazzling, dancing, jumping. Now old Bart...he was caught. Now Manressa. Here a nose...There a skirt...Then trousers only...Now perhaps a face... Ourselves? But that's cruel. To snap up as we are, before we've had time to
assume...And only, too, in parts...That's what's so distorting and upsetting and utterly unfair. (BA 133)

It would be easy to read this passage as an enactment of Woolf's own modernist poetics, as both La Trobe and Woolf reveal that behind the smooth patterns of English literary history, lies a cacophony of rhythm and the fracturing of identity.50 But as much as the effects of this identificatory mise-en-abîme are disorienting, there is also a sense that this dismantling of illusion itself provides the occasion for yet another spectacle. In her reading of the novel, Elizabeth Abel observes that in this same scene Mrs. Manressa, the novel's voluptuous 'wild child of nature', turns to face the chaos of the splintering mirrors and proceeds to powder her nose. 'Magnificent! cried old Bartholomew. Alone she preserved unashamed her identity, and faced without blinking herself. Calmly she reddened her lips' (BA 135). Throughout the novel, Abel suggests, Mrs. Manressa 'exploits her chosen role as body and nature, as source of the nurturant sensuality, a desiccated culture needs'.51

50 It is also as if Woolf, by turning 'the inquisitive insulting eye' back on her audience, is exposing the fragmentary counter-part to any act of imaginary identification theorised two years earlier by Lacan in his 'La stade du miroir' paper delivered at the fourteenth International Psychoanalytical Congress, Marienbad, 1936. See, Jacques Lacan, 'The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience', in Ecrits, trans. Alan Sheridan, Tavistock/Routledge, London, 1977.

51 Elizabeth Abel, Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis, op.cit., 120.
In this particular scene the mirrors reflect back a collusion of femininity and nature, a hideous stereotype of the sensual woman which was one of the ideological mainstays of fascism. For Abel, the scene thus demonstrates how the figure of the maternal in the novel reveals an 'incarnation of nature to be profoundly interior to culture'.52 The iconography of maternity, like the figuring of rhythm, turns culture into nature and nature into culture; hence its ideological dangers. Something, perhaps, of 'magical phallus', the Manressa's actions serve as a reminder that accompanying the heterogeneity implied by the breaking rhythms of jazz, lies the potential for a further dedication to homogeneity, substance, heterosexuality and nature.

Woolf's Modernist rhythms, it seems, are no more immune from the trappings of an ideologically suspect form of mysticism than the rhythms of nature. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that when Woolf makes her final 'invocation' in Between the Acts it is to plea for a suspension of the identificatory lures of rhythm. In the final act, the voice of Anon calls the audience not, as previously, to identify with the rhythms of a collective sublime, but, on the contrary,

*Before we part, ladies and gentlemen, before we go...let's talk in words of one syllable, without larding, stuffing or cant. Let's break the rhythm and forget the rhyme. And calmly consider ourselves.*

52 Ibid., 120.
Some bony. Some fat. [...] Liars most of us. Thieves too. [...] The poor are as bad as the rich are. Perhaps worse. Don't hide among rags. Or let our cloth protect us. Or for that matter of that book learning; or skilful practice on pianos; or laying on of paint. Or presume there's innocence in childhood. Consider the sheep. Or faithful in love. Consider the dogs. Or virtue in those that have grown white hairs. Consider the gun slayers, bomb droppers here and there. They do openly what we do slyly. (emphasis in original) (BA 135-6)

But it is not possible to finally break the rhythm or forget the rhyme. With its repetitive sequences and incantatory phrasing, Anon's voice, even as it appeals to a non-poetic investigation of our own culpability, persists as a silent invocation to rhythm. Within Woolf's poetics, representation without rhythm would be unthinkable. 'Unrhythm', as for Sharpe's artists, would mean death. Even as the pageant closes, another rhythm starts up again. 'The tune began; the first note meant a second; the second a third. Then down beneath a force was born in opposition; then another. On different levels they diverged'(BA 137). In this final invocation, Woolf makes clear rhythm's ambivalent legacy:

from chaos and cacophony [rose] measure; but not the melody of surface sound alone controlled it; but also the warring battle-plumed warriors straining asunder: To part? No. Compelled from the ends of the horizon; recalled from the edge of appalling crevasses; they crashed; solved; united. (BA 137)

An admission of ambivalence, a plea to Thanatos as much as Eros, this invocation to the power of rhythm
is one of the novel's most enduring images. Nonetheless, perhaps part of the passage's power lies in its promise of an aesthetic solution to a text which, in the last analysis, raises more questions about collective identification, the power of illusion and, most importantly, the duplicitous nature of rhythm, than it can fully account for.

John Mepham has noted that all of Woolf's three final works, Roger Fry, A Sketch of the Past and Between the Acts are about sublimation. I would add that Between the Acts is also a text about the failure of sublimation in the face of a world at war. Sharpe began her work on sublimation by affirming rhythm in a work of art as the mark of an eroticised repetition of the 'libidinal unfoldment of the drives', but ended with an analysis of the power of the same rhythm to reproduce a deathly illusion of phallic splendour. The move from a poetics of the unconscious towards the political premium of psychoanalytic theory could not be clearer here. In her last novel Woolf, in a sense, crosses and perhaps falters on the same terrain. In the novel's first draft Owen Felkin, a misanthropic character who was written out of the final version, offers another perspective on the 'collective sublime' which points toward an ambivalence that goes beyond the Wagnerian appeal of 'battle plumed

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warriors'. Like all of the characters in *Between the Acts*, Owen Felkin is a spectator. But he is spectator to a scene that could not finally be assimilated into the novel as a whole. 'He stayed on, noting that the human body, perpetually oozing at various orifices, smell; when those bodies are confined in an enclosed space, the smell...he raised his head the better to appreciate (if that word is not too strong) the odour that filled the Barn' (*PH* 116). In this chilling and prophetic scene, Woolf presents us with an image of the archaic and the primordial which cannot finally be sublimated - either by rhythm or by any other means.

"In the destructive element immerse. That is the way". In Chapter One, I argued that Richards' version of the destructive element fed into a dominant modernist mythology whereby epistemological and cultural violence was avowed and, thereby, transcended through art. This is a paradigm which also runs across the Kleinian account of human identity and art, and is one which, as I have shown, thwarts itself at every turn. No more than Richards, Fry and Woolf can English psychoanalysis be said to simply valorise aesthetic experience over the contingency of historical life as some of Klein's critics suppose. Rather, and more compromisingly, Klein, like the later Freud, sees the origins of psychic life as determined by an
essentially hostile relation with culture - an anti-cultural cultural destructiveness (in Bersani's terms) or a 'Kismet' (in Trilling's) - which, as I have shown, proves difficult for both Klein and her followers to either redeem or contain. Ella Freeman Sharpe's and Virginia Woolf's engagement with duplicity of primordial rhythm (as both a psychic and aesthetic phenomena) marks an important shift in the history of this paradigm. Both attempt to escape from the decrees of a brutal psychical and political world into a notion of the aesthetic. And for both this is journey that takes them from Bokhara to Samarh - to a knowledge that the rhythms of art and the psyche are no escape route from the destructive element. More than a matter of psychic or theoretical vertigo, for Sharpe and Woolf writing in war-time England this 'Kismet' is an irredeemably ideological and political matter.

In the following two chapters, I pursue this conflation of the psychic, the aesthetic and the ideological by looking at the work of Adrian Stokes and Marion Milner. The work of Stokes and Milner needs to be approached in the light of two corresponding historical developments. First, and most obviously, their writing is testament to the extent to which the unfolding history of fascism and the horrors of the Second World War, forced a major re-think both for modernist aesthetics and psychoanalytic accounts of psychic life and
creativity. Second, as representatives of a later generation of Kleinian thinkers, Stokes and Milner, re-draft Klein's version of the destructive element. What emerges from their work is both an attempt to temper the violence of Klein's account of the entrance into culture and the development of new models of subjectivity and art. If Klein is the theorist who muddies the frontiers between inside and outside who, far from taking us 'beyond culture', as in Trilling's account, reveals how tenaciously we remain within its grasp, Stokes and Milner are two writers who provide a lucid and compelling account of what this impasse means for war-time modernist and post-war aesthetics.
CHAPTER FOUR

Stone Love: Adrian Stokes and the Outside In

Some sort of rigor mortis. I am frozen in this moment. Perhaps I held it all my life, it is what they called my "imagery"; even now, they speak of "verse so chiselled as to seem lapidary", and they say, "She crystallizes - that is the right word". They say, "that is the right word". This moment must wait 50 years for the right word. H.D. End to Torment

When H.D. begins her 1958 memoir of Ezra Pound 'frozen' at the moment of their first meeting, it might seem that, faithful to the doctrine of her long-time lapidary friend, what will follow is a memoir of stone-cut precision, a recollection carved into the 'right word'. Such adequation to the memory of Pound, however, is belied by its telling. H.D. never arrives at the 'right word' for Pound, not least because her memories of him are represented as nachträglich effects produced out of her sessions with the analyst Eric Heydt and as precipitated, in part, by the traumas of Pound's Rome broadcasts, his post-war incarceration and now, in 1958, his imminent release. The 'right word', the word to crystallise the relation between H.D. and Pound, or the word, as H.D. puts it, to make Pound 'manifest' is suspended and deferred through the threads of the psychoanalytic transference - the

very 'pig sty' Pound once admonished H.D. to crawl out of.\(^2\) Not arriving at the right word suggests that H.D.'s use of psychoanalysis relinquishes her claim to have the last word on Pound's modernism. Indeed, just as her earlier *Tribute to Freud* is notable for the way it troubles the frontiers between a gendered modernism and psychoanalysis, *End to Torment*, once again, shifts the relation between the two; not by arriving at the right word but, one might say, by asking the right questions.

For many recent re-appraisals of modernism, the significance of H.D.'s affinity to both psychoanalysis and modernism lies in the way she forces the question of gender back into the debate.\(^3\) In this chapter, I want to pursue this not through H.D., but by re-casting the relation between psychoanalysis and modernism from a related but different angle by looking at the work of another writer who was also uniquely poised between the two, the art critic, Adrian Stokes. Short term friend of Pound and long term analysand of Melanie Klein, Stokes, like H.D., occupies a shifting middle-ground between high modernism and psychoanalysis. Unlike H.D., whose writing offers a frequently combative dialogue with both psychoanalysis and modernism, Stokes' work seems, at first glance, to promise little in the way of an alternative aesthetics of

\(^2\) Quoted, ibid., 26.

\(^3\) See Claire Buck, *H.D. and Freud: Bisexuality and a Feminine Discourse*, op.cit.
modernism. Far from it. One reading could suggest that his work simply extrapolates high modernist precepts, sheds them of their troubling political legacy and, with the aid of psychoanalysis, transforms modernist prescriptions into ontologising universals. What I want to suggest here, however, is that Stokes, like Klein, Heimann, Segal and Sharpe, also troubles the frontiers between modernism and psychoanalysis and, crucially, between the ideology of modernism and the psycho-politics and aesthetics of English psychoanalysis.

Such a troubling seems to be the subtext beneath Donald Davie's 1983 complaint against Stokes' eventual commitment to psychoanalysis. 'Predictably', says Davie, '[Stokes'] discourse became interesting to aestheticians and philosophers in proportion as it became boring to artists and to those artists' admirers. The finest connoisseur of his generation', he concludes, 'had turned into a theorist with a following'. In fact, Davie's complaint seems to rest not, as he maintains elsewhere, with the reductive nature of psychoanalysis, but with its attack on the autonomy of the aesthetic artefact as an object of connoisseurship. Invert Davie's value judgements, and there is a compelling case for returning to the work of Adrian Stokes. Indeed for many, most

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importantly Richard Wollheim, the transformation of the art connoisseur into a theorist of the aesthetic is precisely why Stokes' work remains so relevant both to art theory and English psychoanalysis. I want to argue here that at the same moment as Stokes 'sells out' to psychoanalysis, his work also pries open the category of modernist aesthetics and, hence, compromises the ideology of aesthetic autonomy which Davie appears to mourn. Yet, if Stokes thereby troubles the frontiers of modernist aesthetics, his work cannot be said to produce a straightforward account of psychoanalysis as a discourse of aesthetic emancipation. A second reason for returning to Stokes' writing lies in its theoretical proximity to high modernist precepts at a moment when, in the case of Pound at least, modernist aesthetics was most blatantly called into political account.

I

Where H.D.'s memoir of Pound begins with a retrospective equivocation over the lapidary values of imagist doctrine, the brief relation between Pound and Stokes originates in their joint love of stone-cut precision. In Pound's favourable review of his contemporary's 1932 study of Quattro Cento

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art, Stokes' appreciation of Italian sculpture is compared as being second only to a Gaudier-Brzeska bas-relief. 'He has loved this mixed product of literature and stone', Pound writes, 'and has felt constrained to justify it against the incult, the squalid, the half-baked flux which in our day obscures the work of the few really first-rate makers'. 6 This reference to an admixture of sculptural and literary values is echoed by Stokes in an article of the same year. If Quattro Cento art 'has an alliance with one of the non-visual arts', he says, pressing the Quattro Cento into an identity with modernist poetics with more than a nod to Pound, 'it is [...] to the immediacy of the poet's image'. 7 Note here the debt to Pater's insistence on immediacy and, indeed, to his alliance between the medium of the sculptor and that of the writer. 8 For Davie, it is not so much stone but

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limestone which is the guiding (unwritten) trope that unites Pound's and Stokes' poesis. In *Stones of Rimini* Stokes traces the play of an 'imaginary identification between water and stone' in Italian bas-reliefs back to limestone's geological origins: 'Limestone is concreted ocean, a concretion of sea-life: marble is a compressed form of limestone'. In Italian sculpture, limestone betrays its watery origins, and so figuratively dissolves the difference between the organic and the inorganic. Compare 'Canto XVII' in which, similarly, Venice emerges through an oscillation between the tropes of stone and water that culminates in the permutation of one into the other: 'the stone trees - out of water -/ the arbours of stone'. Just as water is transmuted into stone, so too - as in H.D.'s 'Oread' - are the distinctions between nature and art similarly marked and then suspended: marble leaves overlay organic leaves and, by the end of the Canto, the carved 'stone trees' are indistinguishable from the 'Cypress there by the tower'.

For Pound and Stokes, however, such lapidary love signals more than a shifting, indeterminate poesis: stone, for both, is also a synecdoche for a particular cultural and ideological epistemology. For Stokes, limestone is both the trope which unleashes an affirmation of the primacy of the sensual and immediate and forms the basis of an entire geographical, historical and cultural aesthetic:

If we remember the glow of light upon pure limestone, like the glow of flesh; if we remember the ease of its fracture, if we have gathered the impression of such a ratio obtaining between man and Mediterranean nature as will influence the artist to represent natural forces as idealized human forms: then we may understand how mere marble men and women could be works of art and could be deities [...] why, in effect, in all stonework typically Mediterranean there is somewhere expressed water made solid, permanent, glowing instead of glassy, set in space and brightened by the dripping rains. (CWI 219)

This passage can be read in two directions at once. On the one hand, the 'glow of light' evoking 'the glow of flesh' is characteristic of Stokes' devotion in his earlier work to the sensual impressions of life made manifest in the form of an aesthetics of pure immediacy; an aesthetic which he at one point describes as 'a dream where time is suspended by pure sensuousness' (CWI 489). As in Conrad's 'Preface' to The Nigger of Narcissus, the 'permanently enduring' in art, for Stokes, is grasped by an appeal to the sensory and immediate.12
At the same moment, however, this aesthetic is the triumph of Quattro Cento Humanism and the 'emblem' of a new, virile self-expressive culture. As the phrase 'idealized human forms' suggests, this is an aesthetic with a mythological dimension. Just as limestone tropes the dissolution of differences, so Quattro Cento art, as we will see, replays this metamorphic merging and similarly allows for the imaginary representation of a new kind of self-reflecting humanism.

Indeed, as for Pound, for Stokes too there is a contemporary cultural and historiographic lesson to be learnt from the sculpture of the Quattro Cento Italian State. Both conceptually and figuratively, limestone encrypts and repeats an enduring pre-historical fantasy that permits the past to fold over into the present:

Limestone exhibits in mummified state the life no longer found in the Silurian and other distant ages, just as the Istrian palaces of Venice present to us in terms of space, the hoard of ancient Venetian enterprise. The very substance of limestone suggests concreted time, suggests that purely spatial and objective world which limestone architecture has organised for us. Though they have lacked the knowledge of limestone's origin, yet the unconscious fantasies of races have

12 Joseph Conrad, 'Preface', The Nigger of Narcissus, (1897), Everyman, J.M. Dent, London, 1960. Indeed, the qualities of Stokes' own writing practice seem to meet Conrad's demand that the writer should 'strenuously aspire to the plasticity of sculpture'. See also Levenson's discussion of how Conrad's 'rousing theoretical call for the sensory apprehension of life's surfaces' demands the interiority and depth of a controlling, organising consciousness. Levenson, op.cit., 6.
directed artists to obtain spatial completeness in their use of this stone. (CWI 196)

This passage, again, pulls in two directions. Just as in Freud's eventually unproductive analogy between the way different historical moments are simultaneously preserved in the architecture of Rome and the preservation of the past in the psyche in Civilization, here concreted limestone transforms time into space. 13 Similarly, just as Freud pursues his analogy in an attempt to account for the persistence of the 'oceanic feeling', a state where the boundaries between the ego and the world are not constant, Stokes' spatial aesthetics of limestone imply a relinquishing of controlled aesthetic consciousness. Look again, however, and the passage also reveals the cultural and ideological underpinnings of Stokes' aesthetics. Limestone not only transforms diachrony into synchrony, it also works as an analogy which naturalises the relation between the past and present, its geological origins and the development of humanism and, in turn, between 'the hoard of Venetian enterprise' and the 'unconscious fantasies of races'. Accordingly, humanism appears as natural as limestone's geology and, likewise, the origins of mercantile capitalism as inevitable as a phylogenetic fantasy. As a naturalising analogy, limestone then not only

provides the basis for a daring metamorphic poetics; in so far as it spatialises temporality it also puts history on hold to produce a homogeneous set of identities between past and present, 'enterprise' and 'fantasy'.

So while the permeability of limestone depicts the discontinuity of fragmented surfaces, in Stokes' writing it is also a figure for the mastering of aesthetic, cultural and historical discontinuity. Stone is hence also 'the greatest instrument of mass-effect, of instant revelation: non-rhythmic for the flux of life has passed into objective forms'(CWI 46). Because they imply temporality and so mediation, music and rhythm obscure this desired manifestation of the material and sensual and are thus 'banished' from Stokes' aesthetic. As, notoriously, for Pound, so too for Stokes, turning the 'flux of life' into an 'objective form' promises to transmute disorder into identity; to stave off 'the incult, the squalid, the half-baked flux'.

Limestone, then, is a trope which dissolves differences in order to propose a new unity or, more precisely, it is the catalyst for an awesome proliferation of identities with a specific cultural and ideological import. The way in which limestone naturalises the differences between the political, the psychic and the aesthetic to give the impression of a timeless 'mass-effect', already signals that part of its tropic function is to produce a
coherent, if illusory, representation of the world. Moreover, Quattro Cento carving, for Stokes, also epitomises the development of a particular model of artistic subjectivity, by providing the ideal medium for what Walter Benjamin described a few years earlier, in relation to German Baroque, as 'the will to art'. In Stokes' terms, this is an exuberant drive towards self-expression which signals the dawning of the new humanist individualism. 'Objects perceived simply as related in space', he says, 'encourage the ambition of everyman for complete self-expression; for an existence completely externalized. Our love of space is our love of expression' (CWI 135). Quattro Cento 'fantasies connected with stone' permit the illusion that the world expresses, contains and holds the subject's desires. Limestone carving embodies a dream of self-completion which, Stokes concludes, in the Quattro Cento was 'a desire fulfilled' (CWI 46). For Stokes in 1929, Quattro Cento carving not only proffers a totalising image of the human subject, but reflects too a powerful iconography of bodily solidity and virility: 'Into the solidity of stone, a solidity yet capable of suffused light, the fantasies of bodily vigour, of energy in every form, can be projected, set out and made permanent' (CWI 231). The bodily vigour of the new humanist subject

is projected into stone, while stone, in its very form, reflects back - like to like - an image of this very solidity.

The Quattro Cento individualist is, then, a sculptor of the self. Just as limestone connotes the transformation of permeability into objective forms, so too does the ideal Quattro Cento artist achieve a 'cutting away'; an objectivisation of the object which enables the subject to manifest itself. 'Death', says Stokes, 'is the name for complete objectivization; the subject to be converted has been eliminated' (CWI 78). Stokes himself, however, circumvents this solipsistic model of artistic subjectivity through an appeal to a dialectic whereby the death of the other inaugurates the integrity of the Quattro Cento subject in the name of an affirmation of life:

Revelation of life made possible by that of death, gives us consciousness; we feel living: and revelation of death made possible by that of life leads us to conceive the world, objects, to make ourselves manifest, to objectify, to concrete the flow of living into personality so that there be passions and passionate intellect to the purpose of their expression. (CWI 78)

Implicit here is Stokes' famous opposition between 'carving' and 'modelling' art. The value of stone-carving, as in Italian bas-relief, lies in the way it illuminates stone. Such respect for stone signifies a separation of subject and object; an individualisation which betokens the self's integrity
and which is recognised - and mirrored as a fitting emblem for that self - by the autonomy of stone. 'Whatever its plastic value, a figure carved in stone is fine carving when one feels that not the figure, but the stone through the medium of the figure, has come to life' (CWI 235). On the other hand, plastic or modelling conception 'is uppermost when the material with which, or from which, a figure has been made appears no more than as so much suitable stuff for that creation' (CWI 235). Modelling art implies a merging of the subject into the object; it is, says Stokes a 'more facile process of homogenous soft materials' which lacks the necessary separation from self and other.

As Peter Nicholls has argued with reference to the 'Men of 1914', this kind of logic, whereby the other - be it the past, desire or, we could add here, the medium itself - is objectified in order to better erect the frontiers of the self, is intrinsic to certain strands of modernism.15 Arguing along similar lines, Tony Pinkney has suggested that Stokes' early version of the distinction between 'carving' and 'modelling' dovetails with, among others, Hulme, Eliot and Pound's stress on a classic 'objectivisation' of the other as opposed to what they all see as the dangerous, decadent, effeminate, 'modelling' merging of heterogeneous identities

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which characterises, for Hulme for example, Romanticism and, for Eliot, as Nicholls points out, the decadence of Swinburne. For these modernists, one form of narcissistic merging is continually denigrated in order to erect and protect an aesthetics of a higher (perhaps secondarily narcissistic) form of self-identity. In this respect, the solidity and integrity that Stokes' subject recognises in stone carving also points to the gendered dimension of this kind of modernism. Just as the other can be sculpted into some form of self-identity, so too, for Stokes, can that other threat to self-identity, woman. 'Man', concludes Stokes, 'in his male aspect, is the cultivator or carver of woman, who in her female aspect, moulds her products as does the earth' (CWI 230). Man is then to carving, as woman is to modelling. Just to complete this gendered series, not only does modelling art connote a dangerous merging of identities and, by dint of association, femininity, it also signals the decadence of art in an age of mechanical reproduction: 'should the growth of

17 Compare Gaudier-Brzeska's similar affirmation of modern sculpture: 'the modern sculptor is a man who works with instinct as his inspiring force... light voluptuous modelling is to him insipid', quoted in Lisa Tickner, 'Now and Then: The Hieratic Head of Ezra Pound', Oxford Art Journal, Vol.16, No. 2, 1993, 57. Tickner argues that for both Pound and Brzeska, modern sculpture is the imaginary locus for the embodiment of an phallic heterosexuality.
plasticity, of manufacture, in labour and in art, overpower carving activities altogether', Stokes warns, 'there is then no future for visual art as hitherto conceived by the European races' (CWI 259). 18

For Stokes, as for Pound, the epitome of such an aesthetic 'conceived by the European races' is to be found in the Tempio at Rimini built under the patronage of Sigismondo Malatesta. 'In the Tempio reliefs', writes Stokes, 'Mediterranean life has complete expression: water is stone' (CWI 214). For Pound, who more determinedly expounds the production of the political as a work of art, the ideological import of Sigismondo's Tempio is more explicit. 19

As a key exemplum of a successful merging of political economy and aesthetic production, for Pound, the triumph of Sigismondo's Tempio lies in the way it 'registers a concept' out of an architectural palimpsest and generic 'jumble'. 20

Pound's praise of Sigismondo's constructive skills, as Peter Brooker points out, compares with his equally idolatrous assessment of Mussolini, 'the artifex' who, similarly promises the creation of a

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18 For an account of the way in which modernism has 'feminised' mass culture, see Andreas Huyssen, 'Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other' in, After the Great Divide, op.cit., 47.
19 For a lucid analysis of Pound's production of the political as a work of art, see Peter Nicholls, Ezra Pound: Politics, Economics and writing, a Study of The Cantos, Humanities Press, Atlantic Heights, New Jersey, 1984.
'live nation' out of a 'junkshop'. Add to these statements the fact that, as new critical commentaries have been at pains to point out, the *Cantos* can be read as a poem which continually attempts to create a permanent pattern out of its own textual fluidity, 'to shape water out of stone', and the seemingly benign literary trope - 'water is stone' - finally reads as uneasily dovetailing into Pound's self-conscious dissolution of a latent cultural and political order into aesthetic practice. In the case of *The Cantos*, at least, this desire for aesthetic and cultural homogeneity, as Alan Durant has demonstrated, defeats itself under the weight of its own demand. Finally, *The Cantos* do not so much 'register a concept' out of a textual jumble, as brilliantly adumbrate a pained diffusion of their own historiographic and aesthetic fragments. In a characteristic modernist paradox, the final self-dislocation of *The Cantos*, is both the necessary correlate and invariable symptom of the desire for aesthetic totalisation. The case with Stokes, however, is somewhat different. His eventual turn away from Pound in the thirties can,  

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22 This follows a suggestion made by Brooker, ibid., 25.  
and has, been read as a refusal to collapse the aesthetic into the ideological and an attempt, amid the unfolding history of fascism, to re-think modernist aesthetics anew. Paul Smith, for example, describes the break with Pound in the following terms:

Stokes's abandonment of the sequel to *Stones of Rimini*, in which Pound and Sigismondo were to figure so firmly, basically marks his refusal to be drawn into the way of the forces which took Pound along with them. Compared to Pound's call for large scale action, for the monumental no less, Stokes's position might profitably be described in terms of his own image of the perfect form created by 'the authentic Humanism', namely the involucrum: the whorls and hidden depths of the psyche produces a concrete and stable edifice against the brash energy of the invader. His retreat into that shell belongs to years of rising fascism and of the second world war, and has its rubric in *Inside Out*, a text given over (to adjust Stokes's own pun) to 'working out' - working out the problems of the relation of psyche to creative activity.24

The event that marks this shift is Stokes' turn from Pound to Melanie Klein - from the father of modernist aesthetics to the mother of psychic negativity. Stokes' own analysis of sublimated masculine rivalry in his 1956 paper, 'Psycho-Analytic Reflections on the Development of Ball Games, Particularly Cricket',25 might go some way towards explaining this transferential shift.

away from the man he met at tennis match in Rapallo in 1926, to the more maternal embrace of seven years analysis with Klein and his subsequent career as a Kleinian art critic. In Smith's terms, this displacement from paternal to maternal desire effectively extrapolates the aesthetic from the grip of ideology through a 'retreat' inwards. Stokes refuses Pound's politics by removing 'his reparative activities to the level of the psyche'. Pound, in the meantime, continues his project of manic reparation on a cultural scale and hence remains, says Smith, 'in the paranoid-schizoid position, having split the world into good and bad and drawing sensations of persecution from bad objects thus created'.

While a retreat inwards certainly characterises Stokes' war time work, the Kleinian narrative by which Smith explains this transition is also open to a very different reading. In a later dialogue with Stokes in 1965 which accompanies the text of Painting and the Inner World, Donald Meltzer points out that the transition from the paranoid-schizoid position to the depressive position is 'never complete': 'progress from the paranoid-schizoid to the depressive position (or regressions in the opposite direction) fluctuate throughout the course

26 Adrian Stokes, 'Psychoanalytic Reflections on the Development of Ball Games, Particularly Cricket', IJPA, 37, 1956.
27 Paul Smith, ibid., 52.
of life'(CW III 220). It follows that an attempt to insulate reparative activity within the psyche would carry with it, as a necessity within the Kleinian account, those gestures of splitting, denial and disavowal which, in Smith's terms, constitute Poundian megalomania. To retreat from the poetics of a modernism that has gone to the ideological, to continue Smith's analogy, would be to discover that, in some senses, you were still there. As well as carrying therapeutic connotations, 'inside out' for Kleinian psychoanalysis, as we saw in Chapter One, also means 'outside in'. Accordingly, we should not be surprised to find that the 'brash energy' of modernist poetics and politics, are also secreted within the apparent safety of 'whorls and hidden depths' of its potential redeemer, psychoanalysis.28

What happens if Stokes' engagement with Klein is read not only as a retreat inwards, but as a continuing dialogue with the questions that his earlier form of modernism provoke? If inside-out also means outside-in, to what extent does his engagement with Kleinian psychoanalysis challenge the poetics and inherent ideology of the subject of

28 Stokes' shift to psychoanalysis is by no means a sudden conversion. Stokes had been in analysis with Klein for two years prior to the publication of The Quattro Cento and, as Richard Read has demonstrated, in both that text and his earlier work Stokes begins to negotiate a psychoanalytic aesthetics. See Richard Read, 'Freudian Psychology and the Early Work of Adrian Stokes', op.cit.
the self-same which Stokes discovered in the Quattro Cento? Stokes' work can be read, like Virginia Woolf's, as an example of a modernism which, by the late thirties, was beginning to call itself into account. His later commitment to psychoanalysis, I will suggest, is not just a run for cover, but an attempt to re-negotiate the frontiers between art and politics. Before examining this re-negotiation, however, I want, first, to take a detour into an alternative thesis on limestone as a prelude to some more contemporary theoretical speculations on gender, aesthetics and ideology.

II

For the early Stokes then and, to a greater extent for Pound, limestone is a synecdoche for an aesthetic which transmutes permeability into identity: an aesthetic which, moreover, has the potential to concretise an idealised historical narrative into a powerful appeal for a new cultural order. By way of contrast, W.H. Auden's 1948 poem, 'In Praise of Limestone' reads as an critical elegy for Pound's and Stokes' pre-war enthusiasm for limestone's poetic and totalising aesthetic potential and, as Jean Michele Rabaté hints in a suggestive footnote in his essay on Pound and Stokes, offers itself as a dialogue with Stokes' thesis on limestone.

29 W.H. Auden, 'In Praise of Limestone', Selected
the dangers of the coalescence of identities within
the aesthetic as it is anxious to somehow hold onto
the radical potential of art. 'In Praise of
Limestone' can also be read, by way of a 'poetry
lesson' (to adapt the phrase which Auden uses to
describe Freud's work),\textsuperscript{30} in order to tease out the
tension we have seen so far in Stokes between a
potentially radical appeal to an aesthetics of the
sensual and immediate and its permutation into
gestures of cultural and ideological mastery.

'If it form the one landscape that we the
inconstant ones/Are consistently homesick for, this
is chiefly/Because it dissolves in water'('PL' 1-3).
For Auden, as for Stokes, Italian limestone tropes
the sensual dissolution of separate identities.
Unlike Stokes', however, Auden's praise of limestone
is equivocal. Just as Freud's 'poetry lesson', in
Auden's words, uses the 'unhappy present to recite
the past' similarly, in this poem, the permeability
of limestone signifies a pre-historical merging of
identities which captures a powerful and idyllic
fantasy of non-individuation and non-separation:

What could be more like Mother or a fitter background
For her son, for the nude young male who lounges
Against a rock displaying his dildo, never doubting

\textsuperscript{30} See W.H. Auden, 'In Memory for Sigmund Freud', \textit{Selected Poems}, op.cit.
That for all his faults he is loved, whose works are but Extensions of his power to charm?

('PL' 11-15)

As with Stokes' 'glow of flesh', limestone here also appeals to the erotic and sensual. Auden's limestone landscape is a fitting backdrop to both a powerful homoeroticism and to a primary narcissism which is all the more compelling because of its apparent limitlessness. But where for early Stokes, such stone fantasies embody the self-expressive power of Quattro Cento Humanism, for Auden such omnipotence is also, more bathetically, a fantasy for which we are homesick - a simile for Mother. If limestone is a synecdoche for an aesthetic, here it is one which, as in Freud's theory of creativity, seduces on account of its infantile and regressive appeal. For Auden in 1948, such a re-capturing of narcissism bodes not so much the promise of a powerful aesthetic, but an artistic culture which, while it seduces, is ultimately stultified by the gratification of its own desire. While 'the young male' may desire 'to receive more attention than his brothers' ('PL' 19), in this early oedipal limestone landscape, Auden's group of young rivals/artists are too locked in an aesthetic torpor to awake the violence necessary for either separation or a new kind of art:

31 See, for example, 'Creative Writers and Day-dreaming' (1908 [1907]), PFL, 14, 131-141, and SE, 9, 143-153.
On the shady side of a square in midday in
Voluble discourse, knowing each other too well
to think
There are any important secrets, unable
To conceive of a god whose temper-tantrums are moral
And not to be pacified by a clever line
Or a good lay: for, accustomed to a stone that responds
They have never had to veil their faces in awe
Of a crater whose blazing fury could not be fixed;
('PL'23-31)

Limestone's permeability responds too readily to pleasurable free-play. What is lacking is not only the paternal figure of 'a god whose temper-tantrums are moral', but a landscape which would check such omnipotent auto-affectation with a sure dose of ungraspable differentiation: 'Their eyes have never looked into infinite space/Through the lattice-work of a nomad's comb. Their legs have never encountered...the monstrous forms and lives' ('PL'31-35). Wrapped in the untroubled embrace of a limestone landscape, the brothers/artists go 'to the bad', become pimps or 'deal in fake jewelry'('PL'39). Aesthetic pleasure, limestone's playful and sensual indeterminacy, degenerates into the decadent desires of a market place of the senses.

The aesthetics of limestone, then, for Auden, produce an imaginary topos that tricks its subjects into the lure of an imagined totality which, here, screens them from history. Auden does not 'praise' or, as in the early Stokes, exult in this myth, he unmasks it: 'this land is not the sweet home that it looks/Nor its peace the historical calm of a
site/Where something was settled once and for all'('PL' 60-62). In the third stanza, which formally enacts a separation from the self-identity proposed by limestone with the introduction of a dialogue of differing voices, history, by contrast, is located as taking place on more 'immoderate soils where the beauty is less external': on the plains of clay and gravel, for example, where 'there is room for armies to drill; rivers/wait to be tamed', and where imperialist, rather than aesthetic, desire is given licence (clay is 'soft as the earth is mankind and both/Need to be altered'). 'In Praise of Limestone', then, draws on the psychoanalytic narrative of the child's progress from indiscretion to discretion, from pre-history to history, to make a point about the duplicity of aesthetic beauty. For all its seductive appeal, the permeability of limestone, its coalescence of identities, can result in a indolent aesthetic which, tricking us into believing that it responds to our desires alone, captures us in the embrace of an imaginary reserve. It is as if, in response to Pound and Stokes, Auden is replying that the aesthetic which promised to shore up modernist identity against the heterogeneous merging of identities implied in 'modelling art', is as narcissistic, as dangerously permeable, as the aesthetic they once vilified.

While, in this sense, 'In Praise of Limestone' reads as post-war critical de-mystification and
emasculating Pound and Stokes' idealisation of limestone, the poem, in turn, also re-enacts the same gendered structure that characterises their modernism. 'Like Mother', limestone tropes a dissolution of identity which, in Auden's poem, is presented as both desirable and decadent and duplicitous; it is this double that Auden can be seen to be working through in the poem.

While the first three stanzas suggest the ambivalent ideological dangers of a limestone aesthetic, by the fourth Auden points again to its subversive qualities. 'In spite of itself', limestone retains a 'worldly duty', and a potential to call 'into question/All the Great Powers assume'('PL' 69-70). Limestone, with its uncanny as well as indolent poetics, 'disturbs our rights'('PL' 70). It disturbs, in part, through the power of its mythical sensory appeal that the poem itself has done so much to unmask. The poet, for example, 'is made uneasy/By these solid statues which so obviously doubt/His antimythological myth'('PL' 73-4). Similarly the 'gamins' who pursue the scientist down the colonnade with their lively offers rebuke cold science by retrieving the sense of a playful homoeroticism that the poem evoked earlier. The agitation provoked by limestone's seductive and mystificatory appeal, however, does not provide the grounds for its straightforward re-habilitation as an aesthetic form. The value of
limestone's reproach, rather, lies in its power to provoke a **resistance** to its own narcissistic collapse of identities and, hence, to precipitate a subsequent mediation, or sublimation, of its sensual poetics of the selfsame. An interjection in the poem's final stanza suggests just such a mediation and, at the same time, allegorises the poem's own aesthetic preference:

> I, too, am reproached, for what And how much you know. Not to lose time, not to get caught, Not to be left behind, not, please! to resemble The beasts who repeat themselves, or a thing like water Or stone whose conduct can be predicted, these Are our Common Prayer, whose greatest comfort is music Which can be made anywhere, is invisible, And does not smell.

('PL' 77-84)

In response to limestone's feared yet predictable repetition of identities ('like water/Or stone'), music, once banished by Stokes, emerges as alternative aesthetic. Less corporeal, less transgressive of permeable boundaries (it does not smell, but - more self-consciously - is heard), music, in the 'invisible' spaces of the rhythms and repetitions of the poem itself, has in fact mediated limestone all along. Seen in this light, Auden's praise of limestone, in effect, reads as a eulogy not for limestone, but for poetry itself. Limestone's both desired and reviled, promiscuous permutation of boundaries shores up the hermetic
self-identity of the poem as one form of narcissistic self identity is transcended in order be exchanged, invisibly, for another. This mediation can be heard in the poem's closing celebration of the disturbing ebullience of Italian limestone:

These modifications of matter into Innocent athletes and gesticulating fountains, Made solely for pleasure, make a further point: The blessed will not care what angle they are regarded from, Having nothing to hide. Dear, I know nothing of Either, but when I try to imagine a faultless love Or the life to come, what I hear is the murmur Of underground streams, what I see is a limestone landscape. ('PL' 87-94)

While limestone retains an unashamed appeal, Auden's marble men and women cannot, as they could for the early Stokes, become deities; the aesthetic they connote is simply too historically tarnished, too 'seedy' and suspect. Yet, mediated through the ears and eyes ('what I hear'/ 'what I see') of the poet, and hence interceded by reflexive self-consciousness, its beauty can to an extent be redeemed. Within the parabolic structure of 'In Praise of Limestone', the regressive 'homesickness' for a limestone landscape, its indolent illusory wholeness, is tempered - and hence granted back a measure of its aesthetic appeal - by a poetic consciousness that both requires and contains it.
If we read Stokes' early aesthetics of limestone alongside Auden's later, double-edged, praise, something like the following narrative emerges. Where for early Stokes limestone tropes both sensual immediacy and the self-identity of the Quattro Cento subject, Auden's poem establishes a relation of mediation to Stokesian immediacy which acknowledges the beauty of limestone whilst resisting its mythical import. In this way, these two theses on limestone exemplify the transition between an early modernist appeal to mythological structures and an attendant drive towards monumentalism, and a post-war suspicion and working through of the potential ideological duplicity of such an aesthetic. What, however, remains common to both these writers is an association of the aesthetics of limestone with a powerful appeal to the sensual and indeterminate, which is tempered and contained by an equally strong appeal to the identity of one. Where in Stokes carving is to modelling as phallic self-identity is to narcissistic merging, in Auden's poem too, one aesthetic is represented as too permeable, too indolent, in order to privilege the identity of its own, preferred medium. In 'In Praise of Limestone' the final appeal to poetry is both sustained and produced by an aesthetic which appears to be its opposite but which, within the poem's self-reflexive structure, it also mimics. The struggle 'not to
resemble' conceals, at least in its manner of operation, a kind of uncanny semblance; just as, if we read Stokes' aesthetics of limestone through Auden, the carving of the Quattro Cento autonomous subject is shadowed by the collapse of desire into medium associated with 'modelling' art.

III
In so far as the encounter I have staged between Stokes and Auden turns on strategies of mystification and demystification of the ideological dimension of one strand of modernist aesthetics, these two thesis on limestone offer themselves as part of a historically located narrative. Indeed, we return here to the same tension between the aesthetic, cultural and political fantasy which, as we saw in the last chapter, characterised the work of Ella Freeman Sharpe and Virginia Woolf. In their case, rhythm began as gesturing towards a potentially emancipatory, maternally connoted space beyond the illusions of everyday life and the supposed authority of the subject of representational art, only to cross over into a risky psychic and cultural appeal to homogeneity and completeness. This tension between the aesthetic as 'play' and the aesthetic as ideologically tarnished is not only particular to debates in thirties and forties but, as I will briefly discuss now, is also rehearsed in contemporary arguments about what has
come to be known as the ideology of the aesthetic.

It is precisely the continual association of the aesthetic with a narcissistic identity of one, which forms the basis of Isobel Armstrong's recent objection to Terry Eagleton's *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*. For Eagleton the development of the aesthetic in modern thought both 'signifies a creative turn to the sensuous body, as well as an inscribing of that body with a subtly oppressive law; it represents on the one hand a liberatory concern with concrete particularity, and on the other, a specious form of universalism' (*IA* 9). Aesthetic autonomy, the idea that art exists apart from social practice, consequently both provides a certain 'ideological model of subjectivity', that is, of a self-regulating, self-determining human being - precisely as in Stokes' myth of the Quattro Cento aesthetic subject - and, in the same move and more radically, offers the basis for an unleashing of human energies towards revolutionary practice.

Armstrong's quarrel with Eagleton begins with his somewhat idiosyncratic reading of Kant. In Eagleton's reading, the Kantian subject is split: it is precariously situated between the demands of the

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moral law and the evidence of felt experience, and categorically fissured between practical and pure reason, the phenomenal and the noumenal, materiality and intelligibility. Kant's aesthetic subject of the Third Critique is, in this context, the 'heuristic fiction' that comes in to plug this gap. Eagleton is careful to stress that Kant does not turn this 'heuristic fiction' into an ideological mythology; he does however, Eagleton notes, rely on an dimension of the imaginary:

The Kantian subject of aesthetic judgement who misperceives as a quality of the object what is in fact a pleasurable co-ordination of its own powers, and who constitutes in a mechanistic world a figure of idealized unity, resembles the infant narcissist of the Lacanian mirror stage, whose misperception Louis Althusser has taught us to regard as an indispensable structure of ideology. (IA 87)

There is a quarrel to be picked here with regard to Eagleton's over-emphasis on the reassuring plenitude imputed to the imaginary, and also with his all too easy collapse of Lacan into Althusser, not to say into Kant.33 Pursuing, for the moment, this somewhat overdetermined analogy in its present form, one of the essential functions of ideology, says Eagleton, is to achieve a balance between centring the subject, granting it an autonomy, and

simultaneously maintaining the subject's submissiveness. This is where the sublime and a second analogy with psychoanalysis comes in. The Kantian sublime, for Eagleton, is also like the Freudian unconscious, in so far as both threaten to engulf the subject with an ungraspable excess. Like the subject of the unconscious, the subject of the sublime is 'decentred, plunged into loss and pain, undergoes a crisis and fading of identity'. Yet, adds Eagleton, 'without this unwelcome violence we would never be stirred out of ourselves, never prodded into enterprise and achievement'(IA 90).

The passage through the beautiful is therefore, to paraphrase Eagleton, only a temporary rest on the journey back to pure reason. In this way, the relation between the beautiful and the sublime re-enacts the hegemonic trick of centring the subject by allowing it believe that, unlike the commodity, the object can, for once, be blissfully apprehended, while simultaneously tempering such gratification by pushing the subject up against the limits of the imagination through the re-introduction of the moral law, underwritten here with all the unrelenting demands of the id-bound Freudian super-ego.34

34 If Eagleton's first analogy owes much to Althusser's version of Lacan, the second owes more to the Lacan of Séminaire VII. Here, the imaginary identity of art is structured less through the mis-recognition of plenitude, than through the effects of das ding; the inheritor of Kant's 'thing-in-itself', read through the perverse demands
The value of Eagleton's work does not, it seems to me, lie in his reading of Kant whose complexity, as Eagleton comes close to admitting, remains something of a shadowy presence behind The Ideology of the Aesthetic's over-arching thesis. Indeed, Eagleton seems curiously blind to the way that, as Howard Caygill has demonstrated, Kant self-consciously uncovers the 'aporia of judgement' in the relation between the development of civil society and the aesthetic.\footnote{Howard Caygill, *The Art of Judgement*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1989.} What is of interest here, however, is what Eagleton's argument suggests about psychoanalytic readings of the aesthetic and the place of gender within them. For Armstrong, Eagleton's tinkering with the ideology of the aesthetic using psychoanalytic analogies has, in the case of Kant at least, quite simply got out of hand. Not only does such bricolage ontologise 'psychoanalytic structures as universals' ('MB' 220) but, and more seriously, this generalisation risks carrying over - and masking - the historical role that the category of gender has played in aesthetic thought. The beautiful is not only one side of the
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of the id-bound Freudian super-ego and which, for Lacan, is both cause and effect of the separation between the real and the symbolic. See Jacques Lacan, *Le séminaire VII: L'éthique de la psychanalyse*, op.cit. Because it reveals the unconscious underside to Kant's categorical imperative and hence pushes the subject up against a law it cannot grasp, it is das ding which, for Slavoj Žižek, embodies the structure of the 'sublime object of ideology'. See Žižek, op.cit.

structure of ideology; by bestowing it with an
imaginary dimension, Eagleton also returns us to the
mother's body and, by dint of this, to the
historical association between the aesthetic and
femininity. Take, for example, the following
passage from Eagleton with which Armstrong begins
her critique:

What else, psychoanalytically speaking, is
this beautiful object which is unique yet
universal? [...] The beautiful
representation, like the body of the
mother, is an idealised material form
[...] with which, in the free play of its
faculties, the subject can happily sport.
The bliss of the aesthetic subject is the
felicity of the small child playing in the
bosom of its mother, enthralled by an
utterly indivisible object which is at
once intimate and indeterminate, brimming
with purposive life yet plastic enough to
put up no resistance too the subject's own
ends. (IA 91)

Accustomed to an object that responds too readily,
the Kantian subject of the beautiful is, as in
Auden's poem, locked in imaginary torpor. 'Like
Mother', the imaginary domain of the beautiful
grants the illusion of subjective autonomy which,
for Eagleton, is one side of the ideological
structure of the aesthetic. Following Armstrong's
complaint, it is perhaps also worth drawing
attention to Louis Althusser's posthumously
published account of the maternal genesis of his
theory of ideology. Having inherited a purely
speculative, illusory and voyeuristic desire from a
mother for whom the body was taboo, Marxism finally
allowed Althusser to recover his own body. 'When I "came into contact" with Marxism, I subscribed to it with my body [...] I discovered a system of thought that acknowledged the primacy of the active labouring body over passive, speculative consciousness'.

Marxism allows a real body to break through from the 'illusory wholeness' of the mother - and inaugurates a science which will later give this illusory wholeness the name of ideology.

If, as Armstrong suggests, the aesthetic is frequently collapsed into femininity, so too, it seems, does the ghost of sexual difference hover over contemporary characterisations of ideology.

For Eagleton to impute the aesthetic with a founding narcissistic permeability, then, says too little about Kant and too much about the persistence of the association between femininity, narcissism and the aesthetic. 'Only a Kleinian anger, the infant's resentment of the mother's withholding', Armstrong remarks, 'could find this explanation plausible'('MB' 225). Added to this anger is an anxiety which, perhaps, is as common to the structure of modernist poetics that I identified earlier as it is, for Armstrong, to contemporary

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37 Ibid., 216.
38 This is not intended as a case against the validity of Althusser's work, particularly his theories of ideology, nor can Althusser's memoirs be, in any case, taken as a coherent account of his intellectual development.
theoretical characterisations of the aesthetic in
the work of not only Eagleton but, from a differing
perspective, Derrida and De Man. 'There is', argues
Armstrong,

an overdetermined and deeply contradictory
anxiety about the law of one and its
connection with the aesthetic. At the
same time as the law of the one is
accepted as a kind of tragic necessity,
phallic fate, reintroducing itself at all
levels - in the imaginary, even, whose
narcissism strangely mimics it, in the
cultural order, in language - it appears
to be produced and sustained by its
opposite. The aesthetic is feared as the
collapse and elision of categories, as a
permeable meltdown of difference in the
law of the same: the threat of metaphor.
Phallic self-identity is at one and the
same time shored up and undermined by the
aesthetic figuring as metaphor.

('MB' 227)

At issue here is not the aesthetic per se but the
production of the aesthetic based on a particular
reading of metaphor as a trope whose activity is to
produce likenesses out of difference. Similarly,
for Stokes, the aesthetics of limestone rests on an
imaginary coalescence of water into stone ('water is
stone'), which is shadowed - 'shored up and
undermined' - by a homogenous 'more facile' collapse
of difference into identity; just as for Auden, the
poetic task is not to resemble a thing 'like
stone/Or water'. Metaphor as semblance underpins
both versions of the aesthetic, as it does,
according to Armstrong, contemporary critiques of
the aesthetic as produced and sustained by the
apparently dangerous homogenising powers of metaphor. What, then, is the alternative?

Changing the terms through which we see metaphor provides the basis for Armstrong's answer to what she sees as Eagleton's 'worse-case' reading of an inevitable ideological dimension of the aesthetic. Stressing, with Ricoeur, that it is the play of unlikeness, the transformation of categories, which is crucial to metaphor, Armstrong attempts to extract the aesthetic from its inevitable ideological fate through a transition from Kleinian anger to Winnicott's 'play'. Drawing from Vygotsky's materialist and cognitive account of play, in place of a theory of metaphor as semblance, Armstrong posits his 'pivotal object'; the object by which the infant makes the cognitive leap between the immediacy of the visual world and the world of meaning. To Vygotsky, Armstrong adds Winnicott, whose 'transitional space' similarly opens up a site of 'play' which promotes the transformation of categories. Winnicott's transitional object (the famous blanket or teddy) is both me and not-me; an object which sets up an intra-subjective arena (which is not, Winnicott stresses, that of narcissism) and thus a 'potential space' between the individual and culture - a place where meanings are negotiated and constantly re-made. 'Play' then provides Armstrong with the basis of an alternative, potentially emancipatory aesthetic. Play, she says,
'is part of a continuum in which madness subsists at one end and ideology at the other - and only becomes art, perhaps, when we choose to call it so' ('MB' 232).

Is such play, however, an alternative aesthetic? Armstrong's response to Eagleton is, as she puts it, to 'retheorise a flagrantly emancipatory, unapologetically radical aesthetic' ('MB' 221). But how is it possible to 'choose' when play becomes art and when it becomes ideology? Who chooses? And what exactly is ideology in this account? Madness, as Winnicott teaches us, erupts when the absence of the loved object blocks the child's toleration of ambivalence and anxiety producing fetishisation and persecution fantasies in their stead. Armstrong does not, however, tell us when play becomes ideology. Is ideology too, perhaps, the regression of the transitional object to the fetish? Is ideology madness? On the other hand, it could equally be argued that the acceptance of anxiety, the recognition that the object is both me and not me which Armstrong places at the centre of her alternative aesthetic, in effect, carries a faint shadow of the dialectic between autonomy ('me') and subjection ('not-me') which Eagleton recognises in ideological consciousness. 'Play', in other words, can still be ideology.
Psychoanalysis is not an aesthetic, any more than it is simply an ideology. It does, however, for both Armstrong and Eagleton at least, allow us to imagine an alternative mode of being, and hence a new aesthetic, which can both undo and challenge the constraints of ideological consciousness. For Eagleton, as much as for Armstrong, psychoanalysis offers an egalitarian promise: 'To acquire a more reciprocal, egalitarian style of loving is [...] one of the goals of psychoanalysis, as it is of revolutionary politics' (IA 285). In this, both Armstrong and Eagleton represent a current movement in contemporary theory whereby psychoanalysis is called upon both as a form of critique and as offering a potentially emancipatory theory of the relation between subjectivity and culture.

Eagleton, for example, cites Kristeva's Tales of Love as one recent attempt to re-negotiate the subject's relation to the law. It is not perhaps co-incidental that the 'father of individual pre-history' which Kristeva envisions in this book is, in part, the product of a reinscription of the rigidity of the paternal function in both Freud and Lacan in terms of the ambivalence of Klein's intra-subjective space. 39 Whatever the reasons for

this theoretical turn to psychoanalysis now, the move towards the founding of new aesthetic profoundly echoes Stokes' similar project fifty years earlier. A writer for whom the dangers of an aestheticisation of politics was all too clear, as the break with Pound over Sigismondo dramatically illustrates, Stokes' later work was also an implicit re-theorisation of the aesthetic object which, as we will see, anticipates, traverses and, I want to suggest, finally re-figures contemporary and current debates over 'the ideology of the aesthetic'.

IV

In 1934 Pound reviews Stokes' second work on the Quattro Cento, The Stones of Rimini. While he again extols Stokes' lapidary values ('Stokes has found at least one basic unity or antithesis: Water and Stone. For that alone the book is worth printing'), Pound now distances himself from Stokes. Stokes, says Pound, 'has quite astutely refused to be entangled by a set of axioms which my decade, or the period from Brancusi to Gaudier-Brzeska, had erected for the totally different problem of SCULPTURE'. Pound's distancing compares with Stokes' own retrospective account of his earlier years in Italy in Inside-Out

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41 Ezra Pound, ibid., 168.
Where Pound seems to want to take Quattro Cento carving to a higher level of modernist abstraction, Stokes now interprets his early fascination with stone in terms of fantasy:

Existence was enlarged by the miracle of the neat defining light. Here was an open and naked world. I could not then fear for the hidden, for what might be hidden inside me and those I loved. I had, in fact incorporated this objective seeming world and proved myself constructed by the general refulgence. Nothing, for the time, lurked, nothing bit, nothing lurched. (CW II 157, my emphasis)

Where Quattro Cento carving was once the epitome of the self-identical subject, Stokes now suggests that the objectivity of stone only seemed so and that, correspondingly, his model of artistic subjectivity was an act of illusory self-construction. Anticipating Auden's poem by one year, Stokes here demystifies the very imaginary structure he had once so painstakingly erected. Indeed, the parallel with Auden's reassessment of limestone gains pace when Stokes completes this passage with a retrospective 'musical' view of Italian landscape:

As I think now of that valley at Rapallo [...] I have the sensation of a sound which contains every note, prolonged, entirely sustained, as good beneath as above, a sound that provides every aural want; at the same time it is itself the epitome of complete self-realization' (CWII 157-8)

Sound, music, now comes to mediate the seeming ebullience of Italian landscape. Moreover, as again with Auden, as it mediates, sound now promises a new
form of self-identity: in place of 'stone blossom', sound is now 'itself the epitome of complete self-realization'. Does this mean that Stokes' later aesthetics are about to replay that overdetermined and contradictory structure whereby by one aesthetic, identified as narcissistic dream, produces and sustains a superior form of self-identity?

As with H.D.'s similar retrospective account of an earlier modernist moment, the sounds by which Stokes now mediates his earlier aesthetics are resonant with the 'sounds', or exchange of signs, of the psychoanalytic transference (Inside Out is presented as the product of his seven year analysis with Klein). In this sense, when Stokes looks back to an earlier form of modernism, he too is involved in a process of writing a new narrative; not of 'emblems' and 'monuments' but of fantasy and desire. On the one hand, this results in a remarkable piece of self-analysis. The post-analytical Stokes now pictures the young Stokes as journeying through Italy, an interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason tucked under one arm, in a desperate search for the absolute: 'I was engrossed entirely in the absolute [...] the problem had always been "how to bring the distant things near"' (CWII 158). The problem was to bridge the gap between the noumenal and the phenomenal. Seen in this context, Stokes' earlier aesthetics of limestone, as with Eagleton's
reading of Kant, might seem to be part of the production of a 'heuristic fiction' designed to plug that gap. Similarly, just as Eagleton uses Freudian psychoanalysis to undo the seeming autonomy of such a fiction, Stokes now re-interprets this search for the absolute in terms of his own desire. The hypothesised autonomy of the Quattro Cento subject now emerges as a symptom of his response to the fragmentation and destruction which characterised Italy in the twenties and thirties. 'Over and over again', writes Stokes in a passage in which one can hear the footfalls of fascism and, perhaps, intimations of Pound's betrayal, 'everything of value was taken away, ruthlessly, sadistically; even the Rapallo experience' (CWII 159). The response to which, Stokes now says, was an attempted reparation of a chaotic and splintered world: 'bit by bit I was reconstructing the good mother amid conscientious ruins' (CWII 158). The self-identity of Quattro Cento aesthetics is, then, newly interpreted as the product of an imaginary maternal suturing; an act of reparation which, in this context, carries intimations of manic protestation. From this angle, it looks as if Stokes' later commitment to psychoanalysis will thwart any attempt to reproduce his earlier aesthetics of the self-same, and, indeed, to an extent it does just that. Yet, if Kleinian psychoanalysis does reinscribe Stokes' earlier writing, this is not simply because it
decodes or explains modernist aesthetics. Rather, the shift in Stokes' thinking is the outcome of a critical discourse which is frequently at odds with itself. Stokes' search for the absolute is still on in his later work, and is interpreted and, to an extent, normalised through Klein. Yet it is in that very attempt at normalisation that the ideological dimension to Stokes' aesthetics is finally re-figured.

Such attempted normalisation is most famously apparent in Stokes' mapping of the opposition between 'modelling' and 'carving' onto Klein's paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. Modelling art is now associated with the psychic mechanisms of splitting, projective identification and idealisation. Carving, on the other hand, represents an integration of the ego through which respect for medium - stone love - is now associated with a working through of guilt and anxiety. Carving then comes to embody a recognition of the whole object in an act of tender reparation, whereas modelling marks a form of regression. In what perhaps is in itself a depressive gesture, the former split between 'bad' modelling and 'good' carving is attenuated. Stokes now sees art as the dramatisation of both 'positionalities', although the moral emphasis continues to be laid on the maturity of the 'carver'. On the one hand, this re-inscription seems to exacerbate the ideological
dimension of Stokes' aesthetic. 'Beauty' is now the product of an idealised 'good object' tempered by the 'sublime' demarcation of the object's unassailable otherness resulting from the depressive position. 'Beauty', Stokes remarks at one point,
is a sense of wholeness. From the opposing elements that can fuse in the sublime, we may sense at peace the impulse of life and the impulse of death or inertia, so well symbolized by the inanimate nature of the material through which the artist conveys his fantasies and achieves an occasion for outward thrusting Eros the perfection of arrest. By means of aesthetic pleasure we appropriate the external world without disturbing it.42

Here Kleinian concepts are welded together with the aesthetic in order to produce a similar 'hegemonic trick' to that identified by Eagleton in Kant. To re-phrase Eagleton in a Kleinian idiom, the fetish of the idealised good object of the paranoid schizoid position is exchanged for the 'fetish' of the law of the depressive position: one form of absolute self identity is exchanged, yet again, for another (IA 92).

This analogy between the structure of the psyche and the structure of ideology is, however, by no means as seamless as it first appears. In other moments in his writing, Stokes produces a more troubling and challenging account of what lies

behind the construction of his own 'heuristic fiction'. The same tension between a sense of wholeness and an apprehension of difference, for example, can be found in a question which Stokes first poses to himself in 'Form in Art', his challenging first work on psycho-aesthetics. Here this tension reveals a far more complex view of the relation between early psychic states and the aesthetic:

How can it be that the homogeneity associated with idealization is harnessed by the work of art to acute otherness and of actuality? (Thus, space is a homogeneous "state" into which we are drawn and freely plunged by the representations of visual art; concurrently it figures there as the mode of order and distinctiveness for "pre-existent" objects).43

How can it be, in other words, that the subject can both merge into the object and yet recognise its difference? This homogeneous state into which one is 'plunged' does not (as it does for Eagleton) belong to any feminised narcissistic merging, but to the Kleinian account of the fragile constitution of the ego in the paranoid-schizoid position. Although Stokes talks of 'oceanic merging', his emphasis lies not on a narcissistic collapse of identities, but on the way art 'invites' us to repeat those structures of projective identification which characterise the intrusion into and constitution of the premature ego

43 Adrian Stokes, 'Form in Art', in New Directions in Psycho-analysis (1955), op.cit., 414. Henceforth cited as 'FA'. 
by the super-ego. For Klein, as we saw in the first chapter, this moment inaugurates the primal splitting of the ego, produced and fissured by an anxiety which will henceforth be repeated in a perverse set of cultural interdicts (the super-ego) whereby the desire to make good is as tyrannical as that to make bad - hence the infant's drive towards an often manic idealisation of its objects. If this is 'Beauty as wholeness' it is, as Stokes suggests, beauty with a price. In this respect, Stokes' question can perhaps be re-phrased: How is it that a subject originally hollowed out and divided by a super-ego which both forbids and induces its desire can possibly reach a position whereby the world is dis-invested of that desire? How can it be that that subject can approach anything like the dis-interested desire, that subjectively impersonal pleasure of aesthetic taste, which Stokes simultaneously wants to maintain?

Stokes' answer to this question in 'Form in Art' in some ways prefigures Armstrong's later re-location of 'Kleinian anger'. In an account like Hanna Segal's, as we saw in Chapter Two, such 'anger' is translated into aesthetic value via the avowal of an earlier destructiveness and its transmutation into pure form. Stokes has high praise for Segal in this paper, yet he resists going down the path of her 'mortuary aesthetics'. Rather, what Stokes affirms in 'Form in Art' is the concrete
corporeality of early projective identification; that is, the processes by which the early ego is constituted by the vicissitudes of a drive-affected semiosis; 'upheld by qualities of "id-language" such as interchangeability from which poetic identifications flow'("FA" 407). While the paranoid-schizoid position inaugurates both the constitution and estrangement of the ego, for Stokes, more optimistically, that position's mechanisms of splitting and the incorporation and expulsion of the other also mark the point of a first communion; a first love whereby the premature ego goes 'to meet, as if for the first time, the phenomenal world and the emotions it carries'("FA" 407). In an attempt to temper both the manic protestations and idealisations of the paranoid-schizoid position, and their potential repetition in the 'vicious circle' which uneasily characterises the Kleinian account of ascension to the depressive position, Stokes finally invents a new positionality:

the aesthetic position perhaps deserves a category of its own, between the predominant manic defence and a normal outcome; a position, however, not without relevance to an analysis of integration, since it uncovers a more creative role than usual for the manic defence mechanism: one that is potentially non stultifying.('FA' 416)

As Tony Pinkney has argued, Stokes' 'aesthetic position' is, in some senses, a precursor to
Winnicott's 'potential space'. As in that account, the emphasis is on the ability to tolerate the ambivalence of the relation between a subject who is not yet a subject and an object which is not yet individuated. Indeed, as in Armstrong's argument, the aesthetic that Stokes outlines here pivots around the potential transformation of perceptual cognition. The subject, says Stokes, 'cathects a medium'; the object is both the medium for projective desire and yet has a meaning, an autonomy, outside of the imaginary: the object, hence, is both 'me' and 'not-me' in a partial negotiation between the symbolic and imaginary where meanings are at 'play'. While this indeed suggests a transition from 'Kleinian anger' to 'Winnicott's play', Stokes' direct reference here is to Marion Milner's 1952 paper 'Aspects of Symbolism in Comprehension of the Not-Self', in which she constructs an imaginary space whereby "the basic identifications which make it possible to find new objects, to find the familiar in the unfamiliar, requires a temporary loss of self, a temporary giving up of the discriminating Ego" ('FA' 418). It is via Milner that Stokes constructs a paradoxical site for both art and early phantasy whereby the subject can at once be at one with its objects and yet recognise their distinctiveness. As we shall see in the next chapter, Milner's surrender of the

44 Tony Pinkney, op.cit., 12.
self through phantasy carries with it its own ideological dimension. What then, of the ideology of Stokes' re-negotiated aesthetic?

Tenaciously, Stokes continues to hold on to the ideal of aesthetic autonomy. Indeed, the 'aesthetic position', with its bi-partite stress on a blissful apprehension of the object, coupled with an presentiment of its ungraspable difference, could be seen as simply a more mellowed version of Stokes' earlier Poundian aesthetics of limestone. (Stokes himself will frequently, if unconvincingly, insist that his thinking has not changed since the pre-war years.) However, whereas that aesthetic relied on the trading of one, reviled, self-identity, for another, Stokes' stress on projective identification here uncovers the ground for an aesthetics based on the non-identity of the subject to itself. In a much later paper, for example, Stokes, ever the anti-Romantic, goes out of his way to resist the kind of Ericksonian argument which would posit a psycho-aesthetic ground for the reconstitution of the self, and dismisses what he calls 'delirious romantic talk about primary processes where it serves as a magical deus ex machina for explaining aesthetic super-dynamism'. Stokes' own interest lies in Freud's paper 'On Negation' with its emphasis on the constitution of the ego out of its

45 Adrian Stokes, 'Primary Process, Thinking and Art' in A Game that Must be Lost, Carcanet, Cheshire, 1973, 124.
own negation, and in ways in which this process, and not a romanticisation of the primary processes, is repeated in the aesthetic.

Corresponding with this emphasis on a founding non-identity in artistic subjectivity, Stokes' former stress on the self-identity of the Quattro Cento subject is superseded in his later work, by a growing emphasis on the figure of the 'stranger'. Whereas the young Stokes constructed an aesthetic out of his identification with the 'refulgence' of Italian limestone, in his account of war-time Cornwall (the place which, in some ways, the post-Pound Stokes substitutes for Italy), it is the 'element of being abroad' (CWII 224) that Stokes now affirms. 'The stranger', he says, 'brings another aspect, "the outside-in"' (CWII 222). In his 1967 study of the nude, Stokes charts the fate that can befall the figure of the stranger under the sway of phantasy:

We may [...] translate [the stranger] into a part-object, the possessor of some trait or function, the over-riding emphasis of which becomes almost a fetish. It is as if we had entered a party, joined a conglomeration of heads and straining faces, ours among them, a succession of presences and absences with which we are compounded [...] this merging with an object is often the tritest form of intimacy though at other times the mode of deepest sympathy and of capitulation or control. (CWIII 305)

It is to the precarious frontier between the 'tritest form of intimacy', an 'as-if'
identification where the subject merely uses the stranger for its own desires, and the more genuinely empathetic 'capitulation of control', that Stokes' work on aesthetic value is now directed. 'Good art', accordingly, neither expels nor incorporates heterogeneity, but refuses the fetishisation of the stranger by dramatising the ambivalence of projective identification. In this account the best art is, therefore, 'anti-ideological' in so far as it unveils this 'psychic structure difficult to grasp and little known'. In so doing, art resists what Roland Barthes might have called the cultural doxa, by revealing a fundamental disquiet 'over the cultural veils by which sublimation has dulled the ache for psychic actuality, for psychic truth as far as repression allows us to entertain it'(CWIII 321-2).

Given Stokes' allegiance to Klein's account in which an object can only be 'restored' through phantasy to some kind of imaginary distinctiveness, what 'psychic actuality' might actually consist of remains unclear. Nonetheless, the point remains that in a striking reversal of his simultaneous claim that the aesthetic can reconcile the subject to the world, at moments such as this Stokes' aesthetics are, in fact, profoundly 'anti-aesthetic':

Art and popular culture, of course, seek to join the split, to reconcile us, to make us elated with our urban environment,
or to devise other attitudes by which we may "take it". There would be an even stronger spur to art were the deeper causes understood of restlessness, refusal, dissatisfaction with this home we cannot leave. (CWIII 284)

Not, then, a triumphant construction of self-identity, but 'restlessness, refusal, dissatisfaction' and the unheimlich are now the terms through which Stokes construes artistic subjectivity. In place of the illusion of 'bodily solidity', here it is an aesthetic that incorporates the strangeness of the other without fetishising it, that can potentially 'reconcile' us to the world. Arguably, such an aesthetic can be no more an ideological palliative than a discourse of liberation: rather, it admits the projective 'violence' and negativity at the core of identity, in order to prevent the 'violence' which Stokes sees as characterising those more manic projections which culture 'veils' over psychic truth.46

If, then, the terms of Stokes' aesthetics have changed, if, in particular, the endless perpetuation of an aesthetics of the self-same is under strain at this point, what then of the gendered structure of his modernism that I identified earlier? Lisa Tickner is correct to suggest that Klein's positionalities verge on becoming gendered in Stokes' use of them and that, at times, Stokes is

46 This formulation is borrowed from Julia Kristeva's reading of Proust in 'Proust and the Question of Identity', lecture given at University College, London, 18 January 1994.
perilously close to simply perpetuating an equation whereby woman is identified with 'matter, modelling and the paranoid-schizoid position and men with the depressive'. At other moments in his writing, however, Stokes suggests that, far from inhering in psychoanalytic categories, gendered determinations belong to the psychic inability to tolerate ambiguity and to the manic fetishisations which follow in its wake. Gender, in this sense, manifests itself in those 'cultural veils' which, he argues, evidence 'a manic counteraction of vulnerability, of the existence of the flesh' (CWIII 282). For Stokes, in a potentially radical move, such a counteraction supports the reification and alienation of the body that pervades cultural iconographies such as the advertising system.

Drink, perfume, girl, cigarette are not allied only: there is an attempt to identify them; or perhaps the girl is processed for the evening meal: her clothes make the packaging; we are commanded to taste her as an aspect of the food that is advertised.

Consider also the over-riding male genital symbols of our time, the engines, rockets, guns: they too are clean, gleaming, unpocked [sic] but, in contrast, unyielding, like the spaces they occupy such as the stripped bareness of the barrack-room. Are they symbols of the male? (CWIII 282)

This passage is notable for the way it foreshadows contemporary Althusserian discussions of the means by which ideology offers an imaginary and alienating

47 Lisa Tickner, op.cit., 59.
representation of sexual identity in relation to real conditions of existence. The difference is that whereas in those accounts the task is to reveal a body determined and fissured by class and gender relations, for Stokes the task is to reveal a body hollowed out by desire and, crucially, to restore it.

Restore it to what? In spite of the internal strain that Stokes' encounter with psychoanalysis puts on his former aesthetics, his writing, at this point, comes full circle. While the 'aesthetic position' offers a potentially 'non-stultifying' idealisation of the other, Stokes never gives up the dream of aesthetic disinterestedness represented, for him, by the authority of the depressive position. The cultural imperative to restore the Kleinian good object (a body, perhaps, free from fetishisation) is writ large across his entire corpus: it is as if its restoration, coupled with the development of an fully integrated ego, promises an aesthetic solution to Stokes' discovery of a more psychotic structure at the heart of identity. 'If the depressive position itself implies humanist attitudes for the adult who has embraced it well', he remarks at one point, 'the paranoid-schizoid position, to which the enveloping mechanisms and disconnecting noise of limitless cities pay court, certainly does not' (CWII 279). We return here, it seems, to Stokes' earlier
cultural nostalgia for the power of an art 'conceived by the European races' to redeem modernity's excesses, underwritten here with all the authority of a claim to psychic health. To an extent, the 'brash energy' of modernist politics is finally, indeed, to be found secreted in the hidden whorls and depths of the human psyche.

Christian Metz has written, in relation to film criticism, of the way in which the critic's love of her or his object can produce a discourse which is 'a kind of advanced structure of the phobic (and also counter-phobic) type, a proleptic reparation of any harm which might come to the object [...] an unconscious protection against a possible change in taste of the lover himself'.48 Something similar could be said of Adrian Stokes' writing. It is as if his love of art, and in particular his commitment to the aesthetic as a meaningful category, is caught up in a discourse which in the very attempt of protecting that object, continually turns back upon itself: indeed, it is the effort to repair the aesthetic, to make it whole, that finally fissures it from its former ideological underpinnings. For Metz, the task of the critic is to slip one's imaginary moorings and 'win' the object for the symbolic. By contrast, Stokes is a writer who, one

could say, remains stubbornly in the field of the imaginary. This is not, I think, because he failed as a psychoanalytic critic but because for Stokes psychoanalysis never was a critical hermeneutic. This is perhaps why his later aesthetics continue to embody an ideological dimension, that balancing act between autonomy and subjection, which Eagleton identifies in the aesthetic. But this is also why, when the cracks begin to show in that structure, Stokes does not, like Armstrong, promise to theorise a 'flagrantly emancipatory aesthetic' ('MB' 221). Rather, that negative core to identity which Stokes uncovers in his 'aesthetic position' is born from within the internal stresses of an ideology of the aesthetic. The 'aesthetic position' thus does not become art when we 'choose to call it so': for Stokes it has to become art as a counter (phobic?) to that end of the continuum where ideology and madness co-exist - not least, in Stokes' own writing.

There can be little doubt that Stokes read psychoanalysis as a discourse which had the potential to redeem the aesthetic and humanism from the psychic, cultural and historical devastation that he witnessed in the thirties. The fact that his reading cannot, in the last analysis, sustain itself in the face of Stokes' more radical observations, reveals a self-splintering at the heart of both a certain strand of modernism and,
indeed, of English psychoanalysis. The fact that, in the face of his theory's own internal incoherence, Stokes will continue to attempt to secure the aesthetic as a 'good object', perhaps says less, in the end, about his 'conservatism' or Kleinian normativity, than about the psychic and historical situation to which Stokes was responding.

'The prison actually of the Self' H.D. notes in her memoir of Pound, 'was dramatized or materialized for our generation by Ezra's incarceration'. Stokes' response to what he saw as an increasingly recalcitrant and violent psycho-political reality, took a strikingly different course from Pound's, yet was no less concerned with the prison of the self. In a much later experiment in short-story writing, 'Face and Anti-Face: A Fable', Stokes suggests a form of self-imprisonment as an antidote to psycho-political ills. In this curious post-war allegory, a vaccine has been invented to cure all human disease. The vaccine's unfortunate, or in the case of Stokes' propagandist narrator, fortunate side-effect is the growth of quills which form a trellis of spines around the human face, particularly the mouth. Stokes' narrator looks out from behind his cage of quills and sees not a world of ugliness, but a world redeemed. For the quills are not just a cumbersome and unpleasant side-effect

49 H.D., ibid., 6.
of the vaccine, but a psychosomatic representation of aggressive oral projective identification: 'much destructiveness or negation [...] much of the power behind the blatancy of self-contradiction or denial has been converted into the psychosomatic symptom of the quills, of their growth and continuous sharpness'.

The beneficial consequences of this dramatisation of self-abnegation include a lowering of the crime rate, a greater respect for the stranger and a 'decrease in social stupefaction: we are less hungry for the group or the leader'. It is, finally, in this peculiar imaginary social world, that Stokes can envisage the aesthetic he constantly longs for: 'Art has abandoned the vogue of enveloping the spectator: artists perfect masks of otherness; their works hold their distance; in this too they have quills'.

This is an example of the Kleinian vicious circle at its bleakest: the integrity of the ego can only be imagined at the cost of the punishment of the self; the symptom, impossibly, is championed as the 'cure'. To an extent, Stokes' fable indeed resembles a phobic response to a perceived threat to a loved object that risks exacerbating the violence it sets out to check. Yet if there is a lesson in Stokes' final work it lies in the same willingness to 'face' the

50 Adrian Stokes, 'Face and Anti-Face: A Fable', A Game that Must be Lost, op.cit., 100.
51 Ibid., 103.
52 Ibid., 100.
'anti-face'; to risk an aesthetic which would expose and explore the cruelty 'inside' in order to attempt to prevent the violence which risks exploding on the outside. Such an aesthetic is no more simply ideological than it is emancipatory: it is both. At the very least it reveals the precariousness of the frontier, not only between modernism and psychoanalysis, but between the 'outside' and 'inside' of the psyche, the aesthetic and the political.
CHAPTER FIVE

Frames, Frontiers and Female Fantasies

There must be a reason for the invention of line. Yes, it is a guide for those who would venture into the formlessness that surrounds on every side; a guide that leads us to the recognition of form and dimension and inner meaning [...] Let us then follow the line wither so ever it may go. It may lead to something quite definite and precise - a landscape, or a human face or figure. Or it may lead to the subconscious - the land of Fantasy, where fancy roams where it will.

Georg Grosz

For Georg Grosz, by tracing the line which cuts through the 'formlessness' of perception, fantasy emerges as a space which is 'sub' or adjacent to consciousness. Through art, this 'land of Fantasy' is made present for a subject who, although willing to roam with fancy, nonetheless retains the position of a spectator who can recognise not only 'form', 'dimension' and 'inner meaning', but also the difference between the human face and the fantasy. Grosz's idea of fantasy in art as a recognisable space, contrasts with Stevie Smith's description of his work in her 1938 novel Over the Frontier. Here Grosz's satirical paintings of the corruption and degeneracy of the Weimar Republic prompt Pompey, Smith's narrator, to think of 'a darker memorial of

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Georg Grosz that is this dark memorial that is called a Post War Museum where all of the ignobility and shameful pain of war and suffering is set down. Such dark memorials are in danger of erasure and what Pompey finds in the pictures is the prospect of amnesia, of a 'forgetting to remember the shame and dishonour the power of the cruelty of the high soaring flight of that earlier eclairissement, that was the pale eclair dans une nuit profonde' (OF 17). For Smith, then, fantasy in art is not a space of recognition, but sets the scene for an non-recognition of a past which, in Smith's pre World War Two Europe, is about to return and repeat itself. Artistic fantasy becomes less a space for the subject to explore, as Grosz suggests, than the point at which identity is lost.

Between Grosz and Smith a dichotomy emerges between fantasy as space for recognition, something which gives form to formlessness, and fantasy as a scene for non-recognition, amnesia, a vertiginous loss of identity within a wider historical fantasy. Stokes, as we saw in the last chapter, was concerned to develop a model of psycho-aesthetics by which we might understand, and so resist, such a conflation between psychic fantasy, art and ideology. Stokes' fantasised self-sufficiency of the Quattro Cento artistic subject was finally superseded by his

2 Stevie Smith, Over the Frontier (1938), op.cit., 16. Henceforth cited as OF.
interest in the ways and means by which identities are lost and found in art. Where for Richards, the destructive element could in some way be contained through art, by the time Stokes was writing the frontiers between the destructive element without and within were becoming fragile. By the time Smith's narrator looks at Grosz's pictures, locating the destructive element has become an even more pressing and politically charged task.

Am I outside or inside my fantasy? Do I produce this fantasy or it me? Indeed, is it my fantasy in the first place, or does the prospect of an inevitable subjection to the power of the imaginary, of mass fantasy, subtend the polarisation of insides and outsides? Such are the questions that Smith's novel, after Grosz, provoke. They are raised again in the very different work of Stokes' contemporary, Marion Milner (Joanna Field). Both in her early popular autobiographical works (in which, arguably, the modern female 'pop. psy. self-discovery' genre is formed) and in later psychoanalytic writings Milner, like Smith, uses fantasy to explore the destructive element. Like Grosz, Milner also institutes a line or, in her terms, a 'frame', to mark a space for artistic fantasy and illusion. Indeed, it is probably through her work on art that Milner is best known. As for her literary and psychoanalytic contemporaries, Milner too is not only concerned
with the problem of personal fantasy, but also with the mass-fantasies that support totalitarianism. This frontier between what Milner terms finding a 'mythology of one's own' and the possibility of subjection to 'mass-mythology' is the subject of this chapter.

The issues which Smith and Milner foreground in their attempts to negotiate that frontier, are also familiar within contemporary critical theory today. Fantasy, as has frequently been argued in recent years, is the privileged field for the staging of both the psyche and the political. In its manifestations in psychoanalytic discourse, fiction and film, fantasy has emerged as the area in which the 'individual', and her fantasies, become inseparable from the collective and 'its'. Smith and Milner, like Stokes, both cross a very similar theoretical and political terrain. Back in thirties, by using fantasy as a means of exploring the relation between a cruelty 'within' and totalitarian fantasies, Milner and Smith also cast, in varying ways, a different light on the 'theatricals of cruelty' prevalent throughout this period.³ Indeed, their explorations of the relation of the individual to the collective, put into question the argument that sees the writing of the period as turning away from a modernist obsession

³ The phrase is Valentine Cunningham's, see British Writers of the Thirties, op.cit., 55-56.
with psyche, self and subjectivity and towards a re-negotiation with a newly figured social realism. For both women, the political threat of totalitarianism emerges precisely as a question about subjectivity and self-narration. 

For both women, the political threat of totalitarianism emerges precisely as a question about subjectivity and self-narration.  

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Since fantasy offers art a role different from that of cultural sublimation or Klein's 'reparative hypothesis', it occupies an ambiguous position in psychoanalytic thinking about aesthetics, and appears as a term which is reducible to neither symptomology nor sublimation. Smith's narrator in Over the Frontier, defines this ambiguity in a wider setting in her musings on the difference between cruelty and pain in madness (a symptom), and cruelty and pain in art (a sublimation):

There is then this division between the laborious cruelty-fan and the artist also with his artist's soul creating and brooding upon the darkness of pain?

Why yes certainly there is this division. But where is the line of severance? Ah

4 Cf. Peter Widdowson's discussion of the 'fantastic realities' of the thirties which provides a very sophisticated reading of this view in, 'Between the Acts? English Fiction in the Thirties', Culture and Crisis in Britain in the 30's, eds. John Clark, Margot Heinemann, David Margolies and Carole Snee, op.cit.. In a forthcoming book, Jan Montefiore argues that rather than attempt to insert themselves into political institutions, women writers of the thirties negotiate an increasingly intransigent political reality through fantasy and marginal memories. See Jan Montefiore, Returning to the Thirties: Men, Women and Political Memory, forthcoming.
Where, in other words, is the 'frontier' between the fantasies of the sadist and those of the artist? This ambiguity prompts a second set of questions: who, or what, is the 'subject' of fantasy? Does the sadist create her own fantasies or perhaps, turning masochist, does she find herself an actor in a fantasy that appears to be not of her making? Alternatively, does the staging of fantasy mean that she does not find her-'self' in fantasy at all?

The history of the concept of fantasy in psychoanalysis is marked not only by theoretical differences between separate schools, but also by national differences between, generally speaking, the Anglo-American concept of the 'self' as agent and producer of its fantasies, and the French 'soi' which, as the word denotes, seems to be positioned or placed in respect of its fantasies rather than the author of them. Milner's work is not only part of this history (appearing, at first glance, to be exemplary of the first tendency), but also provides a starting point with which to re-examine this notional and national difference.  

In the 'Appendix' to On Not Being Able to Paint, Milner proposes to relieve the word 'phantasy' of the 'heavy burden of meaning' that it has to carry in psychoanalytic thought by a return to the term 'reverie'. By 'reverie' Milner means both day-dreaming and absent-mindedness, but the term also carries distinctly romantic connotations of the visionary and the fanciful. What Milner wants is a 'setting in which it is safe to indulge in reverie, safe to permit a con-fusion of "me" and "not-me"'; a space she finds in both art and analysis. It is in demarcating this space that Milner develops her trope of the 'frame'; an arbitrary mark of difference which separates the real from the imaginary, the literal from the figural and the outside from the inside.

So, in Milner's later formulations there is no 'frontier' between the fantasies of the 'mad' and those of the artist. Rather, art and fantasy are 'framed' as part of the same process. Milner's analytic artworks (such as her famous drawings in On Not Being Able to Paint), thus produce something quite different from the stereotypical 'family romance' that appears so frequently in novels, films...
and other cultural productions of desire. In her writings we find Milner and her analysands partaking in scenarios in which it is not the *dramatis personae* that matter as much to the protagonist of the fantasy, as his or her relation to artistic medium. Paint, ink, line and contour replace mummy and daddy as Milner, like Stokes, concentrates on the formal structuring, and not the content, of unconscious phantasy.

This is a marked departure from other psychoanalytic models of fantasy of the time. In particular, it differs from the Kleinian theatre of fantasy and its presentation of the ego's relation to its objects. Although Milner initially trained with Klein, by the publication of *On Not Being Able to Paint*, she begins to break with Klein's emphasis on negativity. For Milner here, art and fantasy are not, as for Klein, vicarious in respect of either the drives or their objects. Rather than vehicles for a re-presencing or re-finding of an object, Milner conceptualises art and fantasy as 'frames' for what she calls the 'illusion' of an originary discovery of the object: a necessarily mythical moment of 'primal creativity' in which 'to open one's mouth was to create the nipple that filled it' (*ONP* 153). Crucially, this model means that it is difficult to sustain an idea of artistic fantasy within the order of representation (in which art and fantasy, like the semiotic sign, stand in for the
absence of an object) through which it is traditionally perceived. At the same time, in so far as she emphasises a primary fusion and merging with the object, as opposed to the guilty fantasies which accompany its loss in Kleinian thought, Milner also attempts to bypass the aggression and negativity, which is so central to Klein's paranoid-schizoid position.

Although in this way she presents a challenge to the limits of representation, Milner's 'framing' of fantasy also carries with it the problem of what Laplanche and Pontalis call, in relation to Susan Isaac's work, 'subjective intentionality', in that the theory collapses back onto a pre-given notion of a biological human self whose drives and instincts fantasy is presumed to express. As for Isaacs, for Milner too unconscious fantasy is not so much another scene, expressing a wish which is inaccessible to consciousness, as a stage for 'self-discovery'. 'Ultimately', she writes, 'it is ourselves that the artist in us is trying to create' (ONP 136). Fantasy is not only the product of psychic creativity, it also becomes the scene where, by submission to what Milner terms 'the integrative influence of reflective thinking', the self, is recognised (ONP 136). We are back, it

seems, to the supposedly normative self of Anglo-American psychoanalysis. Rather than dismiss Milner on the grounds of a theoretically embarrassing nostalgia for an integral self, however, it is perhaps more interesting to ask what it is in psychoanalytic theory and, in particular, in thinking about the concept of fantasy in relation to the 'self', that should leave a space for the return of such a concept.

In other psychoanalytic readings, fantasy emerges as nothing less than the question of the subject. From these perspectives, as I/ego or author/actor or again self/subject, the 'agent' of fantasy wears a variety of different, frequently deceptive, guises. Such duplicity testifies to Freud's insistence that fantasy is the medium par excellence for the staging of the desires of the ego. The artist, in particular, says Freud, by 'making use of special gifts to mould his phantasies into truths of a new kind', has privileged access to the enactment of the fulfilment of his egocentric desires: by the public presentation of his crafted fantasies 'in a certain fashion he actually becomes the hero, the king, the creator or the favourite he desired to be'.

Crossing the frontier from the fantasies of the neurotic to those of the artist clearly carries a certain egocentric pleasure

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9 Sigmund Freud, 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911), PFL 11, 42, and SE, 12, 224.
premium for the artist. Elsewhere Freud, like Milner after him, replaces this frontier with a more general metaphor; not a frame but, famously, a theatrical model underpins Freud's thinking about fantasy. Comparing the scenarios which children construct in play to poetic creation, Freud observes:

Language has preserved this relationship between children's play and poetic creation. It gives the name of "Spiel" ["play"] to those forms of imaginative writing which require to be linked to tangible objects are capable of representation. It speaks of a "Lustspiel" or "Trauerspiel" ["comedy" or "tragedy": literally, "pleasure play" or "mourning play"] and describes those who carry out the representation as "Schauspieler" ["players": literally "show players"].

From unconscious phantasies, children's play, day-dreams, through to reveries and cultural productions of fantasy such as novels, romances, short stories and myths, legends and fairy tales, fantasy, for Freud, as indeed for many of his commentators, is figured as a theatrical staging or spectacle in which the protagonist of the fantasy is represented. In this way, fantasy becomes the stage upon which the subject can be assigned a fixed position, as romantic hero or heroine, for example; its ego fragmented into many parts, as in the modern novel; or disguised, apparently 'de-subjectivized',

10 Sigmund Freud, 'Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming' (1908 [1907]), PFL, 14, 132, and SE, 9, 144.
at first glance seemingly not in the fantasy at all, as in the famous case history 'A Child is Being Beaten'.

In contrast to Milner's model of fantasy that uncovers a hidden 'self', here fantasy poses the question of the subject's division within representation (Vor-stellung, 'that which one represents to oneself'). Fantasy comes to signify not Grosz's explorable depths, but an exteriority, or an 'other scene': as Lacan puts it, the 'subject situates himself as determined by the phantasy'. Such 'determination' appears most emphatically in the case of 'primal phantasies' (of parental intercourse, castration and seduction), whereby retroactively (nachträglich) the respective origins of subjectivity, gender and sexuality are represented and hence 'determined'. In answer to the question 'do I produce this fantasy or is it me?', from this perspective, it places 'me' (or, at least, how I am unconsciously represented). Laplanche's and Pontalis' summary of this position is well-known:

In fantasy the subject does not pursue the object or its sign: he appears caught up himself in the sequence of images. He forms no representation of the desired object, but is himself represented as

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participating in the scene although, in the earliest forms of fantasy, he cannot be assigned any fixed place in it (hence the danger, in treatment, of interpretations which claim to do so). As a result, the subject, although always present in the fantasy, may be so in a desubjectivized form, that is to say, in the very syntax in question.  

Amid this generalised aesthetic metaphorics of 'theatricality' and 'fictionality' the question of aggressivity and cruelty, the negativity, for instance, that Milner's artistic 'frame' for fantasy seeks to bypass, persists. Laplanche and Pontalis continue:

On the other hand, to the extent that desire is not purely an upsurge of the drives, but is articulated into the fantasy, the latter is the favoured spot for the most primitive defensive reactions, such as turning against oneself, or into an opposite, projection, negation: these defences are even indissolubly linked with the primary function of fantasy to be a setting for desire, in so far as desire originates as prohibition, and the conflict may be an original conflict.  

What is important here is the suggestion that in such 'theatricals of cruelty', fantasy not only stages desire, but also its prohibition; in other words, it is not only the return of the repressed that is figured, but also repression itself.  

This is exemplified for Laplanche and Pontalis by the fantasies of the predominantly female patients in Freud's 1919 paper, 'A Child is Being Beaten'. For Freud, these fantasies present not the

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14 Ibid., 27.  
15 Ibid., 27.
self-expressive but the unconscious Oedipal desires of his women patients as little girls. Freud presents three, structurally uniform, scenes of fantasy from his patient's different narratives, as evidence of this oedipal desire. Out of the three scenes, the first and third pre-conscious fantasies, which figure the child beaten by a powerful father figure, are staged as something of a sadistic disguise ('A child is being beaten', 'I am probably looking on'). The second scene, by contrast, presents the little girl herself being beaten. This second unconscious scene is a 'construction of analysis', and is hence, for Freud as well as for Laplanche and Pontalis, the most significant, for it reveals through the little girl's 'masculinity complex', both her desire (for the father) and its repression (the beating).16 Through this vacillation of disguises and repressions, Freud's patient discovers not her 'self' through this fantasy, but its displacement. Fantasy reveals a subject fundamentally estranged from itself.

While the beating fantasy could in no straightforward sense be said to express the desires of the little girl (as in Isaacs' and Milner's models), what Freud nonetheless presents us with is, however, still the spectacle of a subject in

representation. Does renaming the 'self' the subject of representation (or of desire or the unconscious as has become customary) necessarily get us out of the self-reflexive logic that Milner left us with? The prospect of a return of the specular self within psychoanalysis is Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen's point of departure in his reading of Freud's essay. Central to Freud's account is not for him, as it is for Laplanche and Pontalis, the axis of repression and desire, but the difference between a theatrical 'specularization' of the fantasy and what Borch-Jacobsen calls a 'lexis' of mimesis which underpins it; a difference which corresponds to the psychoanalytic distinction between desire (wanting to have an object) and identification (being the object).\textsuperscript{17} For Borch-Jacobsen, to narrate the fantasy (to tell it like an autobiography - which is precisely what Freud gets his patients to do) is to simultaneously designate it to the order of the specular (the visible, the theoretical), whereby the subject is represented to the subject in the mise-en-scene of the fantasy. In the same twist, the self-appropriating, self-mastering 'Subject' which

psychoanalysis claims to have displaced, in effect, returns. What both escapes and precipitates this specular appropriation of the subject, is the more persistent and, to an extent, primary logic of identification or mimesis. In this second mode, the desire of the little girl is not so much to have the object, but to be the protagonist of the fantasy: 'the subject's place in fantasy is always the place of another'. This is revealed most strikingly in Freud's second, unconscious scene which is neither recollected nor narrated by the analysand (it is a construction of analysis). In this scene the subject does not observe the scene, she enters into it ('I am being beaten'); as such she 'is' the mimetic double of the fantasy and thus cannot represent the scene to herself. This 'impossible' position is what Borch-Jacobsen refers to as the 'blind-spot' of the fantasy; an irreducible 'point of otherness' at which the traditional model of representation breaks down. The emphasis here, then, is on the way that the possibility of representing and so either recognising or mis-recognising the self as other in fantasy is precipitated by the impossibility of a self-other relation. As Borch-Jacobsen puts it: 'The lack of distinction between self and other - the mimesis - has to be acted out; yet no sooner is it represented to the subject in the specular mode than it is

18 Ibid., 18.
to the subject in the specular mode than it is betrayed'.\textsuperscript{19}

The strength of Borch-Jacobsen's reading, for my purposes, lies in its analysis of the way that the vertigo, induced by the problem of the self's production of, and the subject's relation to her or his fantasies, is arrested by structures of representation, of narration and diegesis which, at the same time, reveal their failure as strategies of containment. This kind of double difficulty emerges repeatedly in Marion Milner's work. Her 1945 essay, 'Some Aspects of Phantasy in Relation to General Psychology', for instance, begins with the idea that it is through phantasy that we discover the 'hypothetical structures of ourselves', and yet centres upon the following, dizzying, proposition: 'it is my problem here to try and consider psychoanalytic theory on the way in which these psychic realities are experienced by the self that owns or disowns them'.\textsuperscript{20} The abyssal relation that Milner opens here between a psychic reality that constructs the 'self', and a 'self' which can at the same time be in a position to own or disown its 'phantasy world' or psychic reality, can perhaps now be seen as less a symptom of a theoretical nostalgia

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 40.
than a measure of the difficulty for psychoanalysis in catching hold of this (unrepresentable) relation between self and other in fantasy. Likewise, Milner's eventual insistence on a 'frame' for fantasy, and in particular for an originary creativity or artistic agency within this space, now begins to seem intelligible as an attempt to forestall such a vertiginous relation. Placed in the context of contemporary concerns with the boundaries between the individual and the seductions of mass fantasy, Milner's theoretical troubles with the self, can also be seen to carry, not only a theoretical, but also a heavy ideological premium.

II

For both Milner and Smith, the materiality and the artifice of totalitarian fantasy constitutes one of its key threats. Milner, for example, speaks of the seduction of 'the concreteness of and shape and texture and sound and movement' in totalitarian mythology, while Smith criticises its 'childish delight in daily use of colour and form' (OF 207). Fantasy is both 'art', in these accounts, and political spectacle. For both, the possibility of a 'dangerous' collapse of the frontier between political pathology and aesthetics is presented as an issue concerned with self-narration.

21 Joanna Field (Marion Milner), An Experiment in Leisure, op.cit, 225. Henceforth cited as (EL).
In Milner's and Smith's writings the position of the autobiographical 'I' in their first person narrators is presented as ever-shifting, fragile and subject to an omnipresent risk of seduction by a variety of possible stagings of 'theatricals of cruelty'. Indeed, it is arguably because of the autobiographical impulse present in these writings, that the vertigo associated with tracking down doubles, alter-egos and specular selves in fantasy, is so marked. Milner, for example, not only narrates her past life, she also offers readings of her own diaries, stories and artworks and, most problematically, attempts to present, delineate and describe her "unconscious" self. In contrast to the 'self' that weighs down Milner's autobiographical writing, Stevie Smith's Over the Frontier could be regarded as the least autobiographical of her three novels. Here, the recognisably Smith-like English melancholic of Novel on Yellow Paper and Smith's later The Holiday, adopts a variety of different masks in keeping with the generic guises of this spy-thriller-cum-bildungsroman. The imperative for self-narration is thus already foregrounded in these texts. What persists in each as a question, is that same tension between the unpresentability of self-narration and the seduction of finding a representation, a narrative form within the more encompassing diegesis
of fantasy, that we have already seen at work in psychoanalytic theory.

For Smith and Milner, writing in the late thirties and early forties, the political stakes of this theoretical tension are more visible. Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy have argued that the desire for self-representation is particularly manifest in the pageants, mythemes and narratives that make up the ideological formations and theatricals of totalitarianism. What Hannah Arendt calls the 'total state' that totalitarianism proffers is one, as Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy suggest, in which 'I' can be just as totally represented to myself as a subject.22 On the one hand, such fantasies appear to erase the 'self' by transforming identity into a limited set of masks, each wearing the grimace of the common good, and which testify to the uniformity of the 'masses' for whose sake the subject is willing to sacrifice its difference. Yet, at the same time, it is nothing less than 'identity' that such fantasies promise, and the desire to 'belong', to be called by one's name, which constitutes their fascination.

We find a chilling echo of this latter logic in one of Milner's final formulations in An Experiment in Leisure: 'let purposes have me, watch myself being lived by something that is "other"'(EL 185).

The compulsion to represent oneself to oneself through fantasy, or in Milner's terms the 'childish confusion between fact and fancy' found in 'reveries', fairy tales, poetry and myth, drives this seemingly homely and practical study of 'what to do in one's spare time'. Not that Milner's book is without its 'forebodings about fascism'(EL 115): on the contrary, this early example of the 'pop-psy' genre is, according to its preface, motivated in part by 'a growing uneasiness over anti-intellectual trends in modern life'(EL xx). The question the book repeatedly stages is that of the frontier between the articulation of one's own 'rebellious feelings', and what Milner refers to as 'the distortion of the facts for the sake of arousing and exploiting the feelings of the masses'(EL xx). In the struggle to keep the two separate, the book's somewhat jejune therapeutic goals are belied by a kind of interpretative violence which accompanies this compulsion to self-narration.

Auden described Milner's earlier book, A Life of One's Own, as being as exciting as a 'detective story'. 23 In An Experiment in Leisure, Milner's

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23 W. H. Auden, quoted in Joanna Field (Marion Milner), A Life of One's Own, ibid., 219. Auden's comparison is very suggestive here. Elsewhere Auden writes of the fantasy that is played out in detective fiction: 'The fantasy, then, which the detective story addict indulges is the fantasy of being restored to the Garden of Eden, to a state of innocence, where he may know love as love and not as the law. The driving force behind this daydream is the feeling of guilt, the cause of which is unknown to the dreamer.' 'The Guilty Vicarage', The Dyer's
method of detection is to 'simply let images flow as they would, present or past, fact or phantasy' (EL 11); the original 'crime' to be cracked is Milner's own 'crime' against herself - her own masochism ('a study in the use of masochism' (EL xxiii)) is the alternative title Milner offers for the book). As well as revealing her masochism in 'reveries', literary texts, diaries and creative writing experiments, Milner also interprets it in terms of religious and pagan mythologies: the mass fantasies that Freud describes as 'the distorted vestiges of the wishful phantasies of whole nations, the secular dreams of youthful humanity', 24 become for Milner 'the culminating poetic dramatization of the inner processes of immense importance to humanity' (EL 139). This masochistic and self-abnegating fantasy runs throughout the book and, importantly, also inscribes a form of representational logic within its own thematic. Far from getting rid of the 'self', the universalist trope of sacrifice to a greater force (such as Milner finds, like Hegel, in the myth of the dying God) provides an already given narrative, context and setting within which the 'self' can be represented and, hence, mastered. In other words, and according to a well-versed dialectical logic, if this ready-made scenario


24 Sigmund Freud, 'Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming', PFL, 14, 141, and SE, 9, 152.
already determines me from the outside, then, by giving myself up to it, by assimilating it, I master it; self-negation thus returns as self-affirmation. As Milner puts it: 'To submit yourself to an alien force that wishes to destroy you, this seems to be the only ultimate security' (EL 33).

This 'sweet dream' (as Lacan might have put it) of finding the self through an omnipotent other, however, irrecoverably collapses at two key disturbing moments in the text. The first occurs when Milner attempts to interpret her masochism through Otto Weininger's ubiquitous Sex and Character. Weininger's quasi-sociology and pseudo-philosophy was well known at the time, not only for the force of its misogyny, but also by virtue of its championing of violence and negativity as a means of redemption and regeneration. It is specifically woman's negativity that Weininger promotes, as is evident from the extract that Milner chooses to quote: "The meaning of woman is to be meaningless. She represents negation, the opposite pole from the Godhead, the other possibility of humanity" (EL 211). When Milner recognises her own fantasies of masochism in Weininger's fantasies, she

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simultaneously opens up an impossible space between her own drive to self-narration and the intractability of the wider field of gendered representation. For, once the dialectic between the self and other is gendered, then the woman, in Weininger's schema at any rate, cannot represent herself through another scene, by the simple fact that she is herself 'the terrible mystery' (EL 211) of that scenario. To identify with the female player in this male fantasy, in other words, is to become irredeemably lost within it: the prospect of a return to self-identity, the objectival relation in this fantasy, belongs to someone else, while for the woman there is no specular distance and the relation between her and the fantasy becomes, strictly speaking, impossible.

Milner's response to this impasse is, first, to attempt to neutralise Weininger's gender politics: 'If for the word "woman" one reads "the subjective temperament" then I thought these statements were very illuminating, particularly as a picture of the terror and hatred that an unrecognized tendency to subjectivity in oneself, whether man or woman, could arouse' (EL 212). Notable here, as if corresponding to the displacement of the problem of gender, is the way that fantasy becomes 'a picture' of cruelty, within one's 'self'. Milner, then, attempts to check the problem of finding oneself through fantasy by recourse to the concepts of subjective and
objective. In this way, the threatened collapse of identity can be contained by a notion of a 'self' whose frontiers can keep the outside representation outside and the 'emptiness within' inside.

Such damage limitation, however, does not last for long. The tension between the drive toward self-narration through fantasy and the collapse of such a project within a wider cultural fantasy returns, most hideously, in the final section of the book, with Milner's sudden recognition that her own fantasies match exactly those of totalitarian fantasy:

I had learnt that it was in these images that unrecognized desires express themselves, that when people purported to be talking of external facts, but talked with extreme hatred, then what they said had less reference to the facts than to their own internal needs. I had been most shocked when I found that some of these images which had seemed to grow out of my most intimate and private experiences, and that I had thought represented for me the kernel of the problem of escape from the narrow focus of egoism, were being used by others to foster what seemed to me that most sinister form of egoism - jingoistic nationalism. For I had read in the newspapers that Pagan rituals were being revived in Germany, as part of the movement to glorify violence and discredit the teachings of Christ. (EL 223)

Here, the idea of fantasy as a recognisable space for the staging of the self, or as a field of expression for 'unrecognised desire', turns genuinely uncanny with the return of the same fantasy within the field of cultural politics. This collision between Milner's desire to see fantasy as
the product of and means to a 'self', and the return of fantasy in the wider field of representation, prompts a form of theoretical panic or vertigo, as she attempts to forestall the consequences of the latter model by an appeal to the former:

The whole history of popular religions could I thought be looked upon as a materialization of the image; and once it was no longer looked on as a truth of a spirit, but instead a truth of external fact, then it became the instrument of all kinds of exploitation - lustful, political, social, the instrument of the crudest infantile desire to be king of the castle... But the fact that they could be so exploited did not take away the truth of the images in terms of internal experience. The fact that dictators had realized the power of images for political purposes in controlling and unifying a nation need not make me discard that they had the power to unify my own chaos of experience. (EL 226)

If there is something deeply disturbing about this attempt to drive a wedge between fantasy in reverie, art, myth and legend, and political fantasy, it is not least because Milner's attempted solution to this dilemma - if it is inside me then it is good, if it is outside it is bad - fails to check the implications of the fact that the fantasies through which she stages her 'self' are the same fantasies through which totalitarian subjects are constituted. By displacing the 'line of severance' between what Milner calls 'your own pantheon of visual images, a mythology of one's own' and 'the reach-me-down mass-produced mythology of Hollywood, of the newspapers, or the propaganda of dictators'(EL 233),
onto a frontier which differentiates what is inside from what is outside a 'self', Milner returns us to the same paradoxical logic which we saw earlier: namely, if the self is staged through fantasy, how can that same self then take in or disown the fantasy? How can it represent this relation to itself?

The problem here is not just that Milner's quest for the self is too cumbersome a project to negotiate the fields of both gendered and political representation, but that it is through her encounter with these two fields that the subjective imperative towards self-representation breaks down. Despite the baleful inadequacy of Milner's attempted solution to these impasses, her text forces us to think about the relation of subjectivity and fantasy not in terms of the content of such fantasies, nor in terms of 'subjective' and 'objective', but through a different question: if fantasy cannot contain the logic of self-representation, if the drive towards self-narration cannot be purely specular, then what is it that binds the 'self' to fantasy?

An Experiment in Leisure was completed one year before Milner began her analysis and analytic training. In her case histories and theoretical work, initially written under the influence of Klein, the problem of masochism and fantasies of self-negation returns. In these texts, what we saw
in Milner's autobiographical study as a tension between the unrepresentability of self-narration and the seductions of finding a representational form within a wider diegesis of mass fantasy, is staged within that 'earliest form of fantasy', the psychoanalytic playroom. In one sense Milner's early case histories echo the kind of violent interpretative strategies that Lacan finds so remarkable in Klein's 'symbolisation' of little Dick, where fantasy in the playroom quite clearly becomes a means of giving narrative form a 'theatre of representation',\(^\text{26}\) to the child (who is neither yet necessarily a subject nor a self). Yet, at the same time, precisely what makes these case histories so interesting is the fact that Milner is also attempting to move away from the Kleinian specular theatre of object relations and toward the different 'framing' of the question of fantasy with which I began.

By the time Milner starts practising as an analyst, her 'forebodings' about fascism have been realised. But it is not only the punctuation of her case histories with descriptions of falling bombs, absent fathers and the children's war fantasies that link these texts to her earlier work: the question of the 'line of severance' between one's own

fantasies and an exterior stage of cruelty dominates Milner's initial psychoanalytic questioning. In her 1944 paper 'A Suicidal Symptom in a Child of Three', for example, Milner interprets the child's, Rachel Sheridan's, drive toward self-negation manifested in an eating inhibition, as 'an inner doubt and inability to separate an external and internal reality' (SMSM 25): an inner doubt, note, that corresponds precisely to the same dilemma that Milner left us with in her own encounter with totalitarian fantasy. Milner first interprets Rachel's self-negation in terms of early oedipal rivalry. Consequently her inhibition in eating is seen as a defence against her own aggression towards her objects and a symptom of a fear of what they might do to her once they are inside. Rachel's 'cure' consists in her getting her to recognise her own suicidal intentions in terms of an objectival desire. The dialectical logic we saw at work in An Experiment in Leisure returns here as the cornerstone of analytic interpretation. Rachel's own 'greedy angry' desires are, for example, read as an indication of 'there being something inside her mother which she wanted to get for herself, something she wanted to both destroy and save' (SMSM 27). Self-negation, once again (here through a sort of aufhebung) promises a form of self-affirmation as Rachel's desire is given a role within a dramatis
personae of an oedipal drama of insides/outsides, part and whole objects.

But Milner's account of the analysis is by no means as clear-cut as this implies. Indeed one of the most striking things about the case history is a tension between the predominantly Kleinian logic to which Milner is trying to get her patient to conform, and another narrative, more contradictory and persistent, which weaves through the text. Rachel is a little too good at playing the parts allotted to her in the fantasy being staged in the analytic playroom. 'She was a gifted little actress', Milner remarks, 'at once, when making me play the part of a crying baby, she was so disgusted with my poor performance that she gave me demonstration of how I should do it' (SMSM 26). Although by the end of the analysis Milner claims to uncover the real 'Rachel' behind the artifice, the extent to which this 'gifted little actress' can play her parts is vividly demonstrated throughout the case-history. '"Stand here! No, here! here!, go downstairs! no, come here!' (SMSM 31); at one point, the little actress turns little totalitarian, in just one of the series of ludic identifications which are played out in scenes of, in Milner's words, 'a frenzy of dramatic cruelty' (SMSM 29). These identifications testify not so much to Rachel's desires or anxieties about having her objects, but a concern about being, about identity:
'I'm Rachel Sheridan, you're Mrs. Milner - say that", but when I repeated it she retorted at once, "No you're not"'(SMSM 31). Identities are displayed as uncertain and unstable here, I would argue, not just because of the imbroglio of ego identifications at work for Rachel, but because of a powerful identificatory desire - a desire for mimesis - that subtends the narrative within which Milner is simultaneously invading Rachel to recognise herself:

When I gave an interpretation beginning "Whatever I do you say its wrong..." She interrupted with "Whatever I do I cut myself" and then "D'you know, Mrs. Milner, my Mummy got a bleed with a pin". I then interpreted that the hurt Mummy was inside, like the nasty lady, and she went on pretending to cut her arms and fingers and threw the scissors away and said, "Let's pretend we're dead, we must take our shoes off". (SMSM 32-3)

The diegetic pull here towards representing Rachel in terms of prohibition and a desire to take in the mother, is interrupted by Rachel's miming of the analyst's speech ('"Whatever I do..."'). Similarly Milner's interpretation of the 'nasty lady within' compares not with a representation of Rachel 'having' the nasty lady, but with her act of performing her, 'being' her. Alongside Milner's desire to represent Rachel's self through fantastic play, is then Rachel's own 'impossible' identificatory logic, wherein she cannot be represented to herself because, like Freud's analysand in 'A Child is Being Beaten', she 'is' the
mimetic double in the fantasy provided by the playroom.

'A Suicidal Symptom in a Child of 3' then returns us, with a new urgency, to the problem Milner left us with at the end of An Experiment with Leisure, not because it repeats the dilemma between inner fantasy worlds and outside ones, but because it suggests both the inseparability of the question of identity from fantasy and the impossibility of recovering an adequate distance, a representational space, with which to view, to narrate and contain that relation.

Fantasy, as it is staged in ideological formations, invites us to symbolise our desires, to recognise ourselves as 'subjects' within its narratives hence, as Milner dramatises so well, its dangers. Uncovering the 'blindspot' of the representational logic that propels this encounter between the psyche and the political, revealing the 'impossibility' of the sweet dream of our 'total' representations as 'subjects', however, does not check it any more than it offers an 'alternative' model of fantasy. The possibility and impossibility of the representation of self through fantasy are part of the same double-logic. In other words, as soon as the model of fantasy as a vehicle for self-narration collapses then, invariably, the attempt to represent this relation between self and
fantasy begins anew, in a seemingly endless interpretative process.

In the case of Milner's later work, what is most 'unpresentable' about the representation of the subject in fantasy is designated to the realm of the aesthetic. Her important 1952 paper 'The Importance of Illusion in the Role of Symbolic Formation' marks this shift toward art in a way that allows us to see how Milner's work, like Heimann's, Segal's, Sharpe's and Stokes', re-drafts and re-grafts modernist concerns into the internal theoretical difficulties of English psychoanalytic thought. As with 'A Suicidal Symptom', the case material in this paper is reminiscent of the totalitarian fantasies that Milner runs up against in An Experiment in Leisure. Milner's patient, an eleven year old boy suffering from inhibitions in his school work, constructs through his play a fantasy war between two villages in which he, 'god like' and with a 'dictatorship attitude', performs the role of aggressor and victor. Rather than attempt to interpret these fantasies within the Kleinian representational framework however, here Milner changes the terms of the debate. 'Phantasy' becomes 'illusion' and, correspondingly, 'anxiety' becomes 'ecstasy', in a move which allows Milner to construct her 'frame' within which the merging of boundaries between the 'self' and the 'not-self' can be contained, and in which primary objects become equivalent to secondary
in a kind of generalised 'libidinal economy'. We can now see that this frame not only reveals a different, more contradictory and less schematised, kind of psychic production than that in the Kleinian model, but also works to protect Milner's analytic work from an inexorable slide from one's 'own rebellious emotions' into mass fantasy that, as we have seen, haunts her texts. Thus, although identificatory desire is privileged within this 'frame' (and not the attempt to represent or 'subjectivise' the little boy's desire), it is a mimetic desire which is played out in purely aesthetic terms. Milner quotes Bernard Berensen's description of what he calls the 'aesthetic moment' to present what she sees happening within this frame in both analysis as well as in art:

'In visual art the aesthetic moment is that fleeting instant, so brief to be almost timeless, when the spectator is at one with the work of art he is looking at, or with actuality of any kind that the spectator himself sees in terms of art, as form and colour. He ceases to be in his ordinary self, and the picture or building, statue, landscape, or aesthetic actuality is no longer outside himself.' (SMSM 97)

In comparison to Georg Grosz art, for Berenson, is not a space of recognition but a site where spectatorial distance vanishes as the subject becomes lost, or 'at one', within the work of art. But this is by no means an example of an 'originary mimesis' in the sense that Borch-Jacobsen defines
it, nor is it as disruptive as Rachel's identificatory sub-text. Rather, this 'aesthetic moment', in both Berenson's and Milner's terms, connotes not so much a counter-logic as an 'altered state'. An 'ordinary self' waits in the wings for the return of the self-knowledge that can be reaped from such a 'loss of self', as the rest of the passage from Berenson makes clear: 'The two [spectator and visual space] become one entity; time and space are abolished and the spectator is possessed by one awareness. When he recovers his workaday consciousness it is as if he had been initiated into illuminating, formative mysteries' (SMSM 97). What, potentially, is a point of uncertainty about the relation of self to fantasy in this way becomes embalmed within an aesthetic space. For Milner, what is most difficult or 'unpresentable' about self-representation can be made intelligible, representable, once we call it 'art'. As for Heimann, Segal and, to a lesser extent Stokes, for Milner too the most radical and difficult insights of psychoanalysis are placed under the rubric of aesthetic significance.

III
Stevie Smith's novel, Over the Frontier opens with a contrasting kind of 'aesthetic moment' as Smith's narrator, Pompey Casmilus, steps through an exhibition of Georg Grosz's work in pre-war London.
In this opening sequence, Pompey does not merge into Grosz's pictures, but adopts the role of spectator as narrator, as she not only describes the pictures, but tells us their stories, their narratives and her interpretations of them. One picture in particular, one of Grosz's re-workings of the theme of the 'horseman of the apocalypse', arrests Pompey's attention. Horse and rider, for Pompey, make up a contemporary iconography representing, respectively, classicism and something 'a little fin de siècle', power and femininity and nobility and degeneracy. The rider in particular signifies the threat of the forgotten horrors of the First World War returning to a Europe overshadowed by totalitarianism. He is, comments Pompey, 'forgetting to remember that rakehell of a beam of light that went showing up in the very sad bones of that earlier situation, this he is very actively forgetting' (OF 17). But Pompey does not only play the analytic role of the interpreter of amnesia, of the one who constructs the hidden narrative out of what is missing; she also desires to possess, to have, the picture herself. But the picture is too expensive and she is left only with the echo of the gallery assistant's consolatory conversational banter, 'Very witty this painter is he not?' By the end of the novel, however, this distance between Pompey as spectator and prospective purchaser, and Grosz's apocalyptic fantasy collapses. Leaving London for a
rest-cure in the German border town of Schloss Tilssen, Pompey becomes entangled in a bizarre series of events which transform her from melancholic convalescent into soldier and spy. Grosz's apocalyptic painting stretches out of its 'frame' and into the narrative fantasies of the text and, by the end of the novel, Pompey 'is' that parodic 'horseman' of the apocalypse.

Like Milner then, Smith is concerned with the dangerous slide between the destructive element within and the seductions of finding a stage for such 'theatricals of cruelty' through a wider field of mass fantasy. Indeed, Smith's novel reads at times as if it were a fictionalised, and more politicised, reworking of the impasses with which Milner left us. As for Freud in Civilization, a destructive and aggressive desire for power emerges as the bottom line in Smith's analysis: 'Is then power and the lust for power the very stuff of our existence?', she asks at the end,

And if we cannot achieve in our individualities this power are we any less guilty if we pursue it, or again, abandoning the sweet chase, identify ourselves with a national ethos, take pride in our country, in our country's plundering, or, if the mood takes us, in our country's victories upon other fields less barren, in science, art, jurisprudence, philosophy? (OF 271)

This displacement from an individual desire for power onto an identification with mass fantasy is enacted throughout the novel. But for Smith, there
is no frame to mark off this space between individual fantasy and mass fantasy. Rather, the novel adopts the trope of the 'frontier' as a differentiating principle, not only in terms of the its themes (the 'frontiers' of mid-Europe, of race and of gender) but also in its inscription within the novel's textual dynamics and organisation. It is, most importantly, such a frontier that precariously demarcates the line between, on the one hand, the fantasy that the novel stages of a young English woman turned soldier within a pre-war 'theatricals of cruelty', and a subtext of the narrative logic of the relation that ties her to that scene. In this way, the novel can be read not only as dramatising the relation between the individual and the collective, in which Pompey can be constructed as somehow recognising (or even mis-recognising) her own destructive element, but also as pointing toward the narrative 'blindspot' of that fantastic relation, to a 'rapport sans rapport' between Pompey and mass fantasy. This, I would suggest, constitutes the novel's chief challenge to the more redemptive strategies of Smith's contemporaries that I have traced throughout this dissertation.

Martin Pumphrey, in a very suggestive reading of her poems, describes Smith's use of fantasy as a vehicle for questioning the relation between power and identity. For Smith, he argues, 'Power lies not
in the Romantic illusion of the created self but in
the constant manipulation of the culturally defined
masks by which the self is known - to create a
private space behind the surface of public
experience'. While this neatly underscores the
difference between Smith and Milner, at the same
time Pumphrey's analysis of the play between a
'private space' and the 'culturally defined masks'
also begs a question about how we read the relation
between self and fantasy within literature. A
literary text is different from a case history and
fantasy, arguably, in fiction as in poetry, is
always to an extent en abîme. In other words, we
cannot have direct access to the question of
subjectivity and fantasy (to its 'thematic' import,
for example) in the literary text without being
blind to its processes of literary production. In
Over the Frontier, such processes do not merely
'represent' the problem of self to fantasy, but
constitute the kernel of that relation in narrative
form.

Genette's discussion of modes of literary
discourse in an essay, appropriately entitled
'Frontiers of Narrative', is perhaps pertinent at
this point, as it can re-cast in terms of literary
discourse, the difference between a mimetic and a
diegetic relation to fantasy which we saw at work in

27 Martin Pumphrey, 'Play, Fantasy and Strange
Laughter: Stevie Smith's Uncomfortable Poetry',
Milner's texts. Genette is concerned with what he terms the 'negative limits' of narrative, that is, he is interested less in what narrative is, than in how it has been defined by what it is not. Thus, for both Plato and Aristotle diegesis is what mimesis is not; an incomplete imitation or telling of how things are, rather than a perfect mimetic copy or imitation. For Genette, however, this opposition does not hold because, he argues, literature cannot simply conform to a representational model. In fiction, each action, event, description is not imitated but is constituted through language and hence, is narrated. Plato opposed mimesis to diegesis as a perfect imitation to an imperfect imitation; but [...] perfect imitation is no longer an imitation [once it is in discourse], it is the thing itself, and, in the end, the only imitation is an imperfect one. Mimesis is diegesis'.

Mimesis is thus not an imitation of an event or idea which precedes the text, but an effect of a more general category of what Genette, following Benveniste, calls 'discourse' and the discursive modalities possible within it. As an effect of discourse, mimesis can no longer be conceived of as purely imitative but emerges as a form of 'originary mimesis' in which the 'thing to be imitated' is revealed only through

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the act of mimesis itself. For Genette, what is crucial here is not so much what each narrative modality actually is, a seemingly pure description of what takes place as opposed to a more self-conscious mode of narration, than the internal 'frontier' that makes the difference between them.

In Smith's novel this 'frontier' comes across in a particularly striking way, in the form of an on-going oscillation between the relating of scenes of totalitarian fantasy and a staging or repetition of those scenes in which Pompey, the narrative 'I', is a participant. 'Art', in this respect, does not 'contain' identificatory mimesis within a larger fantasy, but becomes the figure through which this impossible convergence between the subject and the collective is staged. The copy precedes the thing to be imitated, just as Pompey's relating of Georg Grosz's iconography of the threat of totalitarian fantasy precedes those scenes in the novel in which Pompey herself becomes an actor in the fantasy. One particularly disturbing passage, for example, describes Pompey talking, as she puts it, 'a lot about the Jews and women for a dirge and disturbance of all peace'. Homophobic, anti-feminist ('a pseudo-feminist talk to put you out of your mind with irritation' (OF 151)), and anti-Semitic ('Would but they have survived their persecutions...O final treachery of the smug goy' (OF 159)) utterances fall from Pompey's lips, as she becomes an actor within
that grotesque dark memorial she once narrated from a distance. Like Freud's patient in 'A Child is Being Beaten' Pompey does not observe that scene or represent it to herself, she 'is' it. A 'great parabola' is how Pompey later describes this potentially endless return to the same point of convergence:

Very witty this painter, is he not? What did you say, what did you say there Pompey? Why now, remember to be very careful here, oh please remember to be so careful because this Painter Business circles in the widest outsweeping strong flight to the very first words that you have written. But on what a trajectory, to attain such an encirclement, to his back to the beginning, oh what an enormous great parabola you have described. And on the way, what was there on the way, that has turned your lips so pale, where were you then, where was the colour struck from those two lips, that are not yet much withered?

I am back again within the picture gallery, to look and see and wish so much to have the amusing canvases they have hung there.

Very witty this painter, is he not? (OF 163)

The novel, then, moves from diegesis to mimesis and back again as if, indeed, this paradoxical, and here inverted, relation between imitated and imitator (Grosz's painting and Pompey) has to be told and narrated and yet, as the structural oscillation of the text implies, cannot ultimately be contained.

It is not only through Grosz's artistic staging of fantasy that this internal 'frontier' between
performing and telling is played out. The figure of the dream too repeats and develops this logic and, inextricably, Pompey's slide into an identification with mass fantasy. Throughout the novel Pompey narrates scenes of militarism and totalitarian pomp; from a man 'in uniform' who, echoing the dichotomy between degeneracy and nobility in Grosz's picture, drunkenly caresses a statue of Venus, to 'the absurd and revolting spectacle of a fascist discipline' (OF 90) and through to the inclusion and analysis of an excerpt from German militaristic memoirs. In two identical dreams, however, the syntax of these militaristic scenarios changes: 'he is in uniform' becomes 'I am in uniform' as, once more, Pompey ceases to represent militaristic fantasy and, donning its costume, becomes a participant within it:

I am in uniform. But it is a secret, this uniform, it must not for a moment appear that I am in uniform, and to me something that is not perfectly assimilated, why I am here, why I am in uniform. (OF 135)

The meaning of this uniformed identity cannot be 'assimilated', for either Pompey or for the reader, not only because of the internal narrative differentiation between performing and telling, but also because, correspondingly, the seduction into mass fantasy seems to resist representation. The pre-war dream of totalitarianism and militarism persists, Pompey suggests elsewhere, but it cannot
be consciously recalled: 'From what impalpable dream of refusal with no power of refusal am I awakened to palpable dismay and death-driven repudiation? I do not wish to consider, to explore, to recall again the dream that now lives only in effect' (OF 61).

The dream lives on only in its 'effects', in mimetic scenes of repetition and performance, Over the Frontier suggests, because of the failure of interiorising memory to prevent the recurrence of subjection to the mass fantasy of 'death-driven repudiation'. In other words, if the dream cannot be 'recalled' or made present to Pompey, it is because the tie that binds her to that fantasy is not reducible to models of recollection and self-narration. In this sense, the novel's internal 'frontier' between mimesis and diegesis, between performing and telling, also echoes a differentiation which is crucial to psychoanalysis between the 'compulsion to repeat' and the 'impulsion to remember'. Ideally, for Freud, analysis should lead to a recollection of a repressed piece of psychical material. Such a remembering need not necessarily refer to anything that has actually been forgotten; the fantasy or desire may never have been made present to consciousness in the first place. 29 Neither need it

29 Sigmund Freud, 'Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through; Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psychoanalysis II', (1914), SE, 12, 14.
be true; what is important is the analysand's conviction of its truth brought about by the analyst's narrative constructions and interpretations of his or her free associations. More often, however, the analysand resists such constructions and repeats the earlier situation, reproducing it not as a memory, but as an action. Such repetition is played out par excellence within the psychoanalytic transference wherein early infantile conflict is repeated, by displacement, onto the figure of the analyst. At its 'negative limits', then, repetition is opposed to verbal recollection but, at the same time, it is only by letting repetition 'into the transference as playground', says Freud, that these copies or facsimiles can lead back to infantile conflict and, hence, finally to recollection. At the 'frontier' between these two modalities lies the enigmatic relation between the analysand and analyst and, arguably, the question of how far the process of representing to the patient the desire that lies beyond his or her repetition can contain, or 'cure', not only a repeated object-cathexis onto the analyst (in which the analyst stands in absentia of an original love object) but also, importantly in this

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30 Sigmund Freud, 'Constructions in Analysis' (1937), SE, 23, 226.
context, a repeated identification with his or her person.

Pompey's love affair with her 'Tom boy', alias Major Tom Satterthwaite, spy and soldier, finally propels her 'over the frontier' into a theatricals of war. This affair, however, is by no means a stock romantic narrative fantasy; Pompey does not so much 'get her man', she becomes him. In this sense, the affair joins up with the mimetic and repetitive series which, as we have seen, runs from Grosz's apocalyptic fantasy, through the figure of a dream, and emerges now as a scene of seduction:

He forces me to look at him, to stare into his eyes, oddly lighted, light and ferocious in the light of the high full moon, shining down from above the light is thrown up again from the sea, is thrown up again from the surf and shining phosphorescent water, to shine again in the eyes of this exigent Major Satterthwaite.

"Yes", I say, dully, tiredly, I am now getting so-o-o tired, it is amazing how suddenly I am become quite... "Yes, I remember everything, I have forgotten nothing" (OF 168)

Like an analyst, Major Tom requires that Pompey tell him everything, that she forgets nothing ('be a good girl and remember to remember all the time'(OF 170)). But, in contrast to Milner, here this quasi-analytic scene does not provide a 'frame' through which identification can be contained, nor does it, as with Freud, produce an abreaction by which Pompey's desire can be located. Rather, if
the scene refers us to anything at all within psychoanalysis, it is to hypnosis, the early form of therapy that Freud was later to reject on the grounds of its 'mysticism'. Within this 'hypnotic' mode it becomes difficult to read Tom as purely being the other through which Pompey recognises her own destructive element. Rather Pompey's entrancement, her captivation, suggests a lack of distinction between subject and other. 'But have I been talking?', asks Pompey at one point in the seduction dialogue. 'But I thought it was you, why it was you, why Tom, it was you telling me, and telling me, and questioning and asking why it was certainly you and not I at all' (OF 173). This confusion is supported in the text as Tom, in turn, speaks in a recognisably Pompey-like idiom. Pompey's final seduction 'over the frontier' thus takes place through a relation which is not so much, strictly speaking, a relation between subjects, as the insertion of one identity into another.

'I am in uniform', Pompey repeats again, as she catches with horror her reflection in the mirror after Tom has dressed her in preparation for their trip over the frontier. The scene echoes Marion

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32 See Sigmund Freud, 'Being in Love and Hypnosis', in Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego (1921), in PFL, 12, 141-147, and SE, 18, 111-116. For a discussion of the mimetic logic which underpins hypnosis, and the periodic return of this logic within psychoanalysis, see Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, 'Hypnosis in Psychoanalysis', Representations, 27, Summer 1989, 92-110.
Milner's equally horrific discovery of the uncanny coincidence between her own fantasies and those of totalitarianism. But where Milner attempts to check this vertiginous collapse of self into other, Smith's novel offers no such solace. Not that the novel does not attempt to represent or interpret Pompey's identification with mass fantasy. Her military cloak, the sign of this identification, for example, is read variously as an unwelcome imposition upon a reluctant and tenaciously gendered Pompey ("I do not like to be in uniform, to prance round and be a soldierly female...Oh this coat. Oh it is so detestable. And the thoughts that go with it, they are so utterly detestable" (OF 228); as an 'outward sign and visible sign' of Pompey's inner 'spiritual sensation' (OF 220); and, finally, as merging into Pompey's identity, no longer hated but 'so formidable, so complete' (OF 260). Smith's representation of this relation between the self and mass fantasy, however, is by no means as seamless as the identity which cloaks Pompey. 'Curiously muddled' is how Valentine Cunningham describes Over the Frontier. 33 Perhaps some of Cunningham's exasperation stems from the way that the novel offers no final interpretation of Pompey's inexorable slide into the destructive elements of mass fantasy. Rather, Over the Frontier pushes the task of negotiating the line between diegesis and

33 Valentine Cunningham, op.cit., 63.
mimesis, and between remembering and repetition, back where it perhaps belongs: with the reader. This is important because, as I have attempted to show, this line also refers us to the 'frontier' between a model of fantasy in which the self is represented within the scenario as a subject, and the blind-spot of that relation where the dream of total representation as a subject falters even as its inevitability is revealed. Reading between these two models, therefore, is also to broach the question of our political destinies - as either selves or subjects.

The imperative which *Over the Frontier* reveals is not so much to discover the self through fantasy, but to consistently note what cannot be said about that relation. It is in this way, the novel suggests, that we can finally begin to question the inevitability of our subjection to mass fantasy. In one of the novel's most powerful scenes, Pompey, now fully interpellated into the theatricals of war, comes face to face with a figure which represents most hideously the threat of the crowd: 'the smug flat note of that vox humana. *We are so many.* Yes, I have seen it before, this rat face; in London, Berlin, Paris, New York, in the villages of Hertfordshire' *(OF 249)*. Before murdering this figure, Pompey notes an uncanny familiarity within this rat-face of the totalitarian masses:
Rat-face [...] had something so fleeting-familiar upon his beetle-eyes, something that did not at all belong to the essence of the heart of Rat-face, that was flashed upon his eyes by a thought, it must have been my own, from some far place of a dark memory, to rise up with an impertinent incongruity, an altogether out-of character impertinence; to rise up, to question, to question my commission, with a surge-back to a voice that never spoke, but in a dream of weakness: from whom do you hold your commission? (OF 252)

It is precisely the voice 'that never speaks', except within that repeated mimetic sequence which runs from art, dream to fantasy, which questions Pompey's role as participant in the fantastic 'theatricals of cruelty'. What remains is for the reader to recollect that series, to construct a narrative out of its repeated stagings without, of course, forgetting that such repetition persists beyond any totalising logic of representation. Smith, like Milner, will not let us forget that even as the encounter with the threat of totalitarian fantasy is revealed as caught within a drive toward self-narration, the relation between self and other in fantasy is simultaneously exposed at its most 'impossible'. From whom do I hold my commission? From the other in the fantasy who symbolises my desires? But if 'I' am the other in the fantasy, where then does accountability begin and end?

Neither Milner's 'frame' nor Smith's 'frontier' offer us a fence to sit on, or a line which would neatly demarcate the space between personal desires and identifications and those of a wider political
fantasy. Rather, both women point uncompromisingly to the fragility of this 'line of severance'. In a postscript to 'A Suicidal Symptom in a Child of 3', Marion Milner refers us to a case history which suggests not the containment of a relation between self and other within a 'frame' but, once again, to a collapse of this line of demarcation:

Seven months after reading this paper I was asked to undertake the analysis of a girl of 23 (I called her Susan) whose analysis, centering around her drawings, I eventually tried to describe in the book The Hands of the Living God. During the analysis she told me how she had, a few weeks before, left hospital, where she had been persuaded to have ECT (electroconvulsive therapy) and what she felt it had done to her. She said that since having it she had no boundary at the back of her head and that the world was no longer outside her. This meant that she felt terrified of the bombing, since there were no boundaries; it meant that she was everything so the bombs were bound to fall on her. (SMSM 37)

Susan is not just a participant within a pre-war apocalyptic fantasy, she feels, terrifyingly, as if she 'is' the reality upon which that theatricals of cruelty is now being played. Here, there is nothing to contain that relation, no aesthetic balm to represent or romanticise Susan's 'fall to reality'. The full horror of this slide of self into other, with no aesthetic redemption, is also anticipated by Smith:

Then then on the other side of the dividing line of pain-in-art and pain-in-madness-badness is nothing but evvivant viscera, and the Oh no, Oh no, no, no, no, of the undeliberate dream that
is to be endured and yet resisted, the horror of refusal with no power of refusal, Oh no, Oh no, no, no, no. (OF 70) If art cannot, finally, redeem this 'madness-badness' which accompanies the subject's fall into mass fantasy, this does not mean that we are prevented from insisting, with Smith, on that final 'no, no, no'. It does, however, mean that once we have stated our resistance, we are not fooled into thinking we are somehow safe from the seductions of fantasy. And, being vigilant in this respect, as both Milner and Smith demonstrate, involves questioning the 'commission' of the speaker who utters this protest; the same 'self' or 'subject' who, alongside her resistance, continues to be lost and found in fantasy.
CONCLUSION

From Anxiety to Fantasy

So at this time my mind was full of the idea that the greatness of the literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was in its immersion in the 'destructive element', which was the political doom of modern society. And beyond the 'destructive element' lay a renewal of creativeness through the writer siding with those forces in society which would save it from destruction.¹

Fifteen years after the publication of The Destructive Element, Spender revises his assessment of the literature of the modern movement. Perhaps, he says, 'the "destructive element" was not, as I thought, capitalism, fascism, the political mechanism which produced wars and unemployment. It was society itself'. He continues: 'Genius had renounced or moved outside, society, and any acceptance of a social concept which threatened individual isolation was destructive to its unique vision'.² Fifteen years on, Spender distils his earlier thesis of its specifically political content and moves, instead, to the kind of analysis put forward by Trilling with which I began this dissertation. Published just two years before Trilling's Freud Memorial Lecture, the title of

² Ibid., 12.
Spender's sequel to his earlier book, *The Creative Element*, captures the tone of this transition. It is the 'individual vision' of the writer which now counts: a vision which has been 'isolated and perfected' out of 'an intense realization of the destructive element of modern society'. The destructive element thus turns creative: 'The "creative element" has been the amazing release of individual vision without any allegiance to society, which allowed writers to think that in their art they were exploring primal values of aesthetic experience'. Spender is careful here. He is not, like Trilling, simply endorsing the destructive element as a creative retreat from society, but is seeking to account for how writers perceived their own isolation. Nonetheless, the way in which Spender vacates his earlier version of the quarrel between self and culture of its historical and political locality is telling. Whereas previously the young Spender had looked at civilisation and had been perturbed by the way its 'fierce and threatening face' resembled his own, now, this potentially fruitful account of the complicity between psychic and political aggression seems subsumed into a quasi-Manichaean battle between 'destruction' and 'creation'.

3 Ibid., 11.  
4 Ibid., 11.  
Kleinian accounts of psychic life are also renowned for the way they appear to endorse a movement from destruction to creation, from hate to love and reparation, and from envy to gratitude. The subject, for the Kleinians, has to be bad before she or he can be good and, so often, the moral weight of achieving goodness out of badness seems placed on the shoulders of the analysand and not, for example, on the political mechanisms which, in Spender's earlier account of things, produce the destructive element. This is a popular characterisation of Kleinism and, indeed, is one through which English psychoanalysis might readily be charged with vacating psychic life of any historical and social contingency and of, instead, reducing the particularity of psychic experience into a set of totalising universals. Place Kleinian psychoanalysis within Trilling's and Spender's paradigm of the 'geniuses' of the modern movement, and it may even be possible to argue, as Bersani does, that the Kleinian emphasis on the destructiveness of the individual, coupled with its intense exploration of the 'primal values of aesthetic experience', is another example of a modernist retreat from the social which seeks to redeem the individual from the ravages of social and political violence.

This characterisation, however, runs contrary to the argument I have been making in these
chapters. In this dissertation my mind has also been full of the idea that the interest of inter-war writing is in its immersion in the destructive element, which was, in this period, the political doom of modern society. However, where other accounts of this history suggest that the destructive element signalled a creative separation of the self from culture, the writers and analysts I have been exploring confirm the opposite, and instead reveal an intractable complicity between the psyche and the social. The destructive element, in this sense, has come to signify an anxiety precisely about maintaining the frontiers between self and culture, psyche and society, art and fantasy and the aesthetic and ideology. Far from retreating from the cultural and social, the writers who have interested me here repeatedly affirm how literature, criticism and psychoanalytic theory remain firmly within the grasp of the 'political doom' which formed both the background to, and unquestionably a great deal of the motivation for, their work.

What I have attempted to do here, then, is to begin to tell an alternative story of the destructive element. In this version, I have tried to extricate some of the theoretical and historical tensions and ambiguities which lie behind on the one hand, the image of modernism as a discourse of social anti-vision and despair and on the other, and
in more detail, the stereotype of the theoretical conservatism of English psychoanalysis.

If, as Cunningham suggests, I.A. Richards' footnote on the destructive element was, indeed, 'twentieth century literature's mightiest footnote', it is also Richards who reveals how definitions of a fundamentally destructive core to society have a tendency to repeat themselves in the critical discourses which seek to account for that violence. As we saw in Chapter One, Richards' attempt to rationalise the destructive element by investing in a restorative role for literature was no straightforward *fait accompli*. On the one hand, Richard's work is central to the construction of that modernist mythology (central to Trilling and later Spender) whereby art confronts the violence and negativity of the social in order to transcend it. As we saw, however, Richards' engagement with what he calls 'psychopolitics' reveals how this effort at transcendence continually reposes the dilemmas involved in separating out the baser human instincts from aesthetic economies of pleasure. In this, Richard's not only engages with psychoanalysis, but also shares the concerns of the early Melanie Klein. Like Richards, Klein attempts to redeem her own negative vision of psychic identity by an appeal to a reparative hypothesis, which multiplies rather than resolves the problems she is dealing with.
There is more to this 'vicious circle', to borrow Klein's term once again, than the familiar image of theorists and analysts tripping over their own theoretical aporias. Both Richards and Klein were attempting to account for the relation between the subject and the social. As such, their impasses are also a particularly telling historical commentary on a contemporary difficulty in sorting out these terms. Klein's early work, for example, as I argued in Chapter One, is notable for the way in which it consistently refuses the terms through which the subject and social, psyche and culture, inside and outside, are commonly thought. If this muddling of frontiers is axiomatic for the early Klein, later concepts of reparation might indeed be thought of as totalising narratives brought into redeem a brutal and complex image of cultural and psychic development - a kind of flight from theoretical vertigo into the safety of the kind destruction-creation story later favoured by Spender. Yet, in so far as the theory of reparation holds out the promise of re-presencing a damaged object and redeeming what, in Klein, is form of psychic and social violence, in so far as the individual might find redemption in the work of art, as we have seen, this invariably leads Klein and her followers straight back to the question of the passage of the psyche into the social and,
therefore, foregrounds the cultural implications of these narratives of reparation.

Together, Richards and Klein produce a paradigm which has run across this dissertation. On the one hand, the writers and analysts discussed here can all be read as attempting to redeem contemporary history and, indeed, as retreating from an engagement with the social through various notions of the aesthetic. It is in this endeavour that English psychoanalysis and modernism not only share, but jointly produce a certain kind of aesthetic conservatism. The ways in which high modernist formalism was picked up by English psychoanalysis is one example of this. Likewise, Ella Freeman Sharpe's re-grafting of Impressionist theory onto the origins of the individual ego; Adrian Stokes' retreat from history into the private 'involucrum' of the psyche and, finally Marion Milner's construction of an aesthetic 'frame' to contain the relation between the psyche and the culture all, to an extent, can be read as attempts to found, in Trilling's terms, a space for the individual beyond culture.

Only, however, to an extent. What is of interest about these attempts to found an aesthetic, is the way they continually expose how such a retreat to, in Spender's words 'the primal values of aesthetic experience' offers only an illusory respite from history. Woolf, is a key figure in
this respect. Breaking the promise of transcendence at every turn, Woolf's work (while certainly not without its political conservatism), demonstrates how art fails to hold and contain contemporary experience. With the later Woolf, it is as if universal aesthetic narratives are no longer enough as what, in Kleinian terms, is psychotic, punished and self-punishing about experience in the modern world, is, albeit reluctantly at times, confronted. This same confrontation is echoed in Hanna Segal's eventual grafting of fantasy into Fry's doctrine of aesthetic significance. In this respect, the final question asked by both English psychoanalysis and modernism, is not only one about how theories of the aesthetic can restore a world wracked with violence, but, as in Segal's reading of Picasso's Guernica, about how art and fantasy are capable of illuminating and interpreting the history of that violence.

If an anxiety about protecting the frontiers between inside and outside, self and culture, inner aggression and outer violence, the aesthetic and the social, motivates writers and analysts in this period, then, it is their own acknowledgements of the forces of unconscious fantasy that helps break those frontiers down. We saw this, most strikingly, in Ella Freeman Sharpe's links between rhythm and incorporation in Chapter Three. Aligned to primitive phantasies of incorporation, rhythm for
Sharpe finally offers not an aesthetic celebration of difference, but a conservative fantasy of non-separation, non-socialisation and non-differentiation. Likewise, for Woolf, rhythm, traditionally the most socially uncontaminated figure in her work, becomes dangerously aligned to those fantasies which support the collective desires of the 'herd instinct'.

In a different way, Adrian Stokes' extraordinary and complex understanding of fantasy leads him to both re-value his previous modernism and to propose a new concept of psycho-aesthetics. Through Klein's concepts of unconscious phantasy, Stokes tells us the history of his earlier mythologising aesthetics. In so far as Stokes' retreat into the psyche might read as an escape from the destructive elements of World War Two, ultimately what that retreat offers is an emergent and compelling analysis of ideological as well as aesthetic consciousness.

Finally, Marion Milner's concepts of art and fantasy as spaces in which the relation between the self and culture are played out, a place where it is possible to be 'me' and 'not me', is underpinned by a version of the destructive element in which it is impossible for the self to escape from culture. While Milner's idea of a 'frame' which would demarcate a safe place for this loss of identity, does indeed suggest a final chapter in the history
of the ways in which English psychoanalysis attempted to aesthetise the destructive element, by World War Two, there was, perhaps, good reason for Milner to try and contain her more radical discoveries within some sort of workable category. To reveal an intractable complicity between self and other, to point to dangers of a collapse of narratives of self-discovery into mass fantasy, is one thing for the psychoanalytic theorist. It is, perhaps, a different matter for the psychoanalyst who practised during the Blitz. As we saw in the last chapter, what Trilling later characterised as the quarrel between self and culture also rages in the psychoanalytic playroom. By the early forties, however, this 'quarrel' appears as a microcosm of larger battles taking place not very far away. Richards' 1925 warning that the destructive element had the potential for dire political consequences had, by the war, turned into a reality. By the time Milner was writing, the theoretical and rhetorical concern with protecting and dissolving the boundaries between inside and outside which characterises all the writers discussed here, finds its political apotheosis in the history which was unfolding before them. Between 1940-1, the inside, home, and in particular, the home front, was the place where the destructive element was at its most terrifyingly voracious - as witnessed by Milner's patient Susan.
It is perhaps for this reason that of all the writers presented here it is, finally, the non-analyst, Stevie Smith who is able to present the clearest testament of the failure to aestheticize the destructive element. Smith's treatment of the dreadful precariousness of the frontiers between pain in art and pain in life, between the destructive element within and without, is a fictional lesson in the importance of history. As she stands in front of Grosz's pictures on the brink of war, Pompey muses on the power of collective amnesia:

On no no no, for us there is now not this Post-War Museum at all it is not in our experience we do not wish to understand or to think about it at all, it is for somebody else's cup of tea that we do not even say: May it pass from us, that we do not have anything at all to with. (OF 23)

All the writers discussed here were writing with an eye on a Post-War One Museum. Their differing efforts to grapple with the destructive element, to explore the complicity between psychic and social negativity, are a powerful testament to an endeavour not to pass what Smith calls the 'shame and loss and flight into darkness' off as 'somebody's else's cup of tea'. With an eye to our own Post-War Museums, their writings continue to command our attention.

The Question Child

The circle is closed: from knowledge to fantasy, from fantasy to knowledge. For a
moment, the child of psychoanalysis caused his mother's knowledge to waver, but in the end, mother-psychoanalysis regained her balance, and thought she had the last word. But any knowledge of the unconscious can only be effectively established if it stands the test of what contradicts it from another place without an appointed, fixed position: the place, or non-place of the unconscious.

J.B. Pontalis

It is not perhaps sufficient to leave the last word to a 'non-analyst', as if to suggest that exploring the relation between history and the imaginary between the covers of 'fiction' automatically somehow allows greater imaginative and conceptual freedom than the work that takes place in the psychoanalytic play-room. What I have explored here is, rather, the possibility of an interdisciplinary approach to psychoanalysis and art that does not privilege one form of knowledge (or fantasy) over the other. It is for this reason that I have tried to avoid using psychoanalysis as a critical hermeneutic. Neither, however, have I taken the alternative option of mapping out a properly historical genealogy of English psychoanalysis and its relation to literary, critical and cultural discourses of the inter-war period. This very necessary task remains for another type of project. Rather, what I have done is inter-woven the concerns of English psychoanalysis with those of various

strands of modernism, to produce a narrative of the destructive element. It is a narrative that has produced as many questions as it has answers.

By claiming that English psychoanalysis needs to be read not 'over', but 'alongside' literature, criticism and art history I am not suggesting that these different discourses have some sort of uniformity by means of, for example, a shared 'textual unconscious'. Precisely what has emerged as a key question in this study is what the category of the aesthetic means for both psychoanalysis and English modernism. In The Ideology of the Aesthetic Terry Eagleton argues that Freud stripped the aesthetic of its traditional claims to a disinterested pleasure which could balance the desires of the subject with those of cultural politics. Freud, in this account, proves that aesthetic pleasure is no more than a watery dream on route to a more concrete realisation of our thoroughly self-interested desire.7 The writers of the English School resist this characterisation of psychoanalysis as a critique of the aesthetic in two important ways.

They resist it, first, in the notion of a sexuality that is born as aggression. As we saw in Chapter One, this is Leo Bersani's criticism of Klein and her followers.8 For Bersani, the extent

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to which Kleinism seems to endorse a form of violence smothers its potentially more radical concepts of a primal mobility of the drives and cultural symbolisations. Bersani's criticism, however, can perhaps also be seen as a virtue of Kleinian theory. If the Kleinian theory of reparation seems to repeat the violence it promises to assuage, this maybe tells us something about how a desire which is born of a fundamentally destructive set of cultural interdicts is articulated through artistic practice. This refuses us the image of psychoanalysis, art and literature as mobilising a potentially subversive jouissance, for instance. What we gain, however, is a glimpse of how art and psychoanalysis both struggle with and, at times, idealise the brutality of desires which culture, in the Kleinian account at least, both prohibits and legitimates. 9

English psychoanalysis, then, unlike, for example, Marcusian accounts of desire and art, refuses us the pleasures of the text. The second way in which English psychoanalysis does not fit into a history which would see psychoanalysis as

8 See Leo Bersani, 'Death and Literary Authority: Marcel Proust and Melanie Klein', in The Culture of Redemption, op.cit., 7-28.

9 It is, in fact, precisely this type of analysis that Bersani himself does so well. See, for example, Leo Bersani, 'The Gay Outlaw', Diacritics, Summer-Fall 1994, 24.2-3., 5-18. My comments, therefore, are not so much a criticism of his work as a whole, but a suggestion that Kleinism might have an importance place in future readings of psychoanalysis and aesthetics.
de-mystifying traditional concepts of the aesthetic, lies in the extent to which writers such Hanna Segal and Adrian Stokes take the concept of the aesthetic very seriously indeed. Part of the interest of Stokes' work is the way in which he attempts to re-define and map out the category of the aesthetic within a historical and theoretical framework which seems to point to the impossibility of establishing any sense of community through art. It is too easy to dismiss this as a form of nostalgia. At the very least, Stokes' and others' struggle to preserve or re-interpret the value of the aesthetic against the backdrop of not only psychoanalysis, but of the horrors of the Second World War, demands further serious study. Stokes' endeavour to find a form of value in an aesthetic that tears apart the 'veils' which culture throws over our dissatisfaction with what he describes as this contemporary 'home we cannot leave', contains a notable history lesson for those who are concerned with the question of aesthetic value today. It is this form of challenge that returning to the writings of English psychoanalysis presents, not only to traditional concepts of modernism and psychoanalysis, such as those represented by Trilling, but also to contemporary theories of psychoanalysis and art. In this sense, the narrative that I have told here, is only the beginning of a larger historical and theoretical work.
J.B. Pontalis has written of a figure he calls the 'question child'. The question child is none other than Klein's own son, Fritz, who was one of her first, apparently not so willing, analysands. Klein begins analysing Fritz with an optimism about childhood sexual knowledge which was common in psychoanalytic circles at the time. Throw enough empirical knowledge about sexuality at the child and it will stick: repression will thus be avoided and the neurosis prevented. What, according to Pontalis, in fact 'stuck' on the child was not knowledge but the enigmas, the unconscious gaps and silences of the adult's pedagogic discourse. Neurosis was not alleviated, anxiety increased and the questions kept coming. It was this kind of circularity between knowledge and anxiety which we saw at work for Klein in the first chapter. It is also a circle which perhaps describes a future possibility for psychoanalysis in inter-disciplinary studies. By not allowing psychoanalysis the last word we do, at least, ensure that the questions keep coming.
I Psychoanalysis: Theory, History and Commentary


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'THE DESTRUCTIVE ELEMENT':
ENGLISH PSYCHOANALYSIS, LITERATURE AND CRITICISM
FROM THE 1920S TO WORLD WAR TWO.

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ABSTRACT

Whereas recent studies of psychoanalysis and modernism have tended to 'translate' literature through contemporary French psychoanalytic thought, this dissertation opens up a historical dialogue between English psychoanalysis, modernist writing, art criticism and literary criticism. I argue that a shared anxiety about the redemptive role of art in a period which both writers and analysts characterise as marked by 'unsublimated' drives towards destruction, is coupled with an increasing concern with the precariousness of the frontier between self and culture, and between art and the social and political ideologies upon which culture rests. This double movement is reflected in the structure of the dissertation which begins with a comparison of attempts to make a moral and aesthetic out of 'the destructive element' by I.A. Richards and Melanie Klein, and ends with Marion Milner's and Stevie Smith's speculations on the complicity between the violence of the self and the violence of the outside world in the thirties. Other writers discussed include W.H. Auden, T.S. Eliot, Roger Fry and Virginia Woolf, as well as Ella Freeman Sharpe, Paula Heimann, Hanna Segal and Adrian Stokes.
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INTRODUCTION

From Bokhara to Samarh: The Destructive Element in Psychoanalysis and Modernism

I From Bokhara to Samarh
Where do modernism and psychoanalysis take us?
According to Lionel Trilling in his 1955 Freud Memorial Lecture, 'Psychoanalysis and the Crisis of our Culture', both, apparently, take us beyond culture. For Trilling, modernity's 'crisis in culture' spawns a generation of writing and thinking marked both by its eulogies for something that has been lost - a sense of being at home in culture - and a radically indignant will to transcend culture, and affirm a realm beyond its edicts. Freud, in this account, is modern in the sense that Joyce, Kafka, Proust and E.M. Forster are modern:

[Freud] needed to believe that there was some point at which it was possible to stand beyond the reach of culture. Perhaps his formulation of the death instinct is to be interpreted as the expression of this need. "Death destroys a man" says E.M. Forster "but the idea of death saves him". Saves him from what? From the entire submission of himself - of his self to life in culture.¹

For Trilling, Freud's death drive is a redemptive thesis which by affirming 'a biological sense of self' implies an triumphant 'residue of human quality

¹ Lionel Trilling, Freud and the Crisis of our Culture, Freud Memorial Lectures, Beacon Press, Boston, 1955, 40.
beyond the reach of cultural control'.2 Like literature, the function of psychoanalysis is to make us see 'the high authority of the self in its quarrel with society and culture'.3 Through one of the bleakest of Freud's insights, the self momentarily wins this quarrel.

If we compare Trilling's argument with more recent readings of the relation between modernism and psychoanalysis, this affirmation of the self perhaps begins to look like a too hastily claimed victory for humanist criticism in a quarrel which is by no means over. Leo Bersani's The Culture of Redemption, for example, in many ways provides an implicit critique of Trilling's paradigm.4 For Bersani, a reading of modernism whereby art transcends the realm of culture is not an affirmation of human existence, but an insidious downgrading of historical experience. The redemptive hypothesis in both modernist rhetoric and theory attempts to paste the universal over the particular, and so affirms art over experience at a historical juncture when the frontiers between the two are at their most precarious. Likewise, for

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2 Ibid., 53.
3 Ibid., 33.
4 Leo Bersani, The Culture of Redemption, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts and London, 1990. Reading against the ideal of a redemptive realm for the self, Bersani proposes an new ethico-political project for modernism and psychoanalysis, which he discovers in the contours of a modernist literature without redemptive authority, and in those moments in psychoanalysis when the 'self' melts down into non-authoritative jouissance. I discuss Bersani's reading of Kleinian psychoanalysis in detail in Chapter Two.
Bersani, it is precisely when Freud bolsters up the 'high authority' of the self, as in On Narcissism (1914), that that self most readily legitimates the culture from which, in Trilling's account, it is set apart. For Bersani, the very notion of the self is authorised by and authorises a culture based on the 'sacrosanct values' of individuality.

Trilling and Bersani are not, in fact, quite as far apart as this sketch suggests. Although Trilling may seem to be offering a largely unproblematised and conservative account of modernism and psychoanalysis, his lecture is cut through with an irony that makes him as modern as the writers he is talking about. At the very moment that Trilling seems to proclaim a humanist integrity against culture, he also cancels that proposition. Culture, he says, having carefully plotted an escape route from its realm, is in fact, in Trilling's words, something of a 'Kismet': 'we flee from Bokhara to escape its decrees only to fulfil them in Samarh'. The idea of


6 Lionel Trilling, op.cit., 40. Trilling's interest in the double-bind of cultural laws can be traced back to his readings of Matthew's Arnold's poems 'The Sick King in Bokhara' and 'Sonnets on the Punishment of Death'. See Trilling, Matthew Arnold (1939), George Allen & Unwin, London, 1974, 104-108. Written during the war, in this book Trilling is concerned with Arnold's development of a notion of culture which could counter the rise of a society based on anti-cultural principles. Trilling sees Arnold as failing to secure this at key moments and, as with many of the early twentieth century writers discussed in this dissertation, is attempting to
transcending culture is, it now appears, something of an illusion that is sustained and enabled by culture itself. The 'intense conviction of the existence of the self apart from culture is', says Trilling, with a melancholy twist, 'as culture well knows, its most noblest and most generous achievement'. At the same moment that psychoanalysis and modernism appear to take us beyond culture, we find that in effect we have never really left its grasp. Of course, what Trilling sees as a noble and generous gift is, for Bersani, culture's most insidious trick; for him, there is nothing very edifying about the way culture gives us the notion of the self only to legitimate its own authority. What I want to emphasise here, however, is Trilling's and Bersani's shared notion of some kind of double-bind or impasse: a kind of paradoxical relation whereby the attempt to separate the self from culture results in the knowledge of

re-formulate the relation between the individual, culture and society. See Raymond Williams, Culture and Society, Coleridge to Orwell (1958), Hogarth, London, 1987, for a history of this post-Arnoldian transition.

7 Lionel Trilling, op.cit., 54. Others had a bleaker view of modernism's paradoxical relation to culture. In the closing pages of Mimesis, for example, Eric Auerbach noted of modern writers: 'We not infrequently find a turning away from the practical will to live, or delight in portraying it under its most brutal forms. There is hatred of culture and civilization, brought out by means of the subtlest stylistic devices which culture and civilization have developed, and often a radical and fanatical urge to destroy'. In a similar way to Trilling Auerbach also sees a democratic impulse at work in this will to transcend a culture one cannot, in effect, leave. Eric Auerbach, Mimesis, trans. W. R. Trask, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1968, 551.
their intractable relatedness, and which, in each case, although divided by at least thirty years of critical thought, is derived from a reading of both psychoanalysis and modernism.

This impasse or irony has been well documented in studies of canonical modernism. Perry Meisel, for example, begins his 1987 study, The Myth of the Modern with the following proposition:

Modernism is [...] a way of adjusting to the belatedness that is its precondition. If what enables also wounds, what empowers also makes for anxiety, then we should ask how well our canonical modernists manage this dilemma that gives them life while threatening them with death.8

This dissertation also asks how well some canonical modernists and, indeed, some non-canonical modernists manage the dilemma whereby culture both threatens and enables the modernist project. However, what I do here is address that question through a slightly different, more historically local and specific context; one which, in fact, is also present (although not generally recognised) in Trilling's lecture itself.

Summing up, Trilling concludes with a reference, not to Freud, Joyce or Proust, but to Anna Freud's Freud Memorial Lecture, 'Psychoanalysis and Education', given one year before Trilling's own. Anna Freud begins her lecture by describing two phases in recent psychoanalytic studies. First, she

8 Perry Meisel, op.cit., 5.
argues, the idea that infantile anxiety could be curtailed by modifying parental behaviour produced a period of optimism in the psychoanalysis of children. In fact, this is a lightly veiled reference to Anna Freud's own previous theories of child analysis. In this earlier account, the child's guilt and anxiety is put down to a failure of the parental super-ego. The child's super-ego fails because the parent's super-ego also failed: modify the behaviour of the parent and you can save the child. By 1954, however, Anna Freud concedes that this initial optimism has been transformed into a period of pessimism. There are, she now says, a variety of 'inevitable' factors, such as primordial ambivalence, which cause the child's guilt and anxiety. Child psychoanalysis, accordingly, now acknowledges that the neurosis cannot be educated. Trilling seizes on this period of pessimism with all the ardour of a good liberal sceptic. For him, the idea of an innate and inevitable psychical conflict is further evidence of psychoanalysis' on-going affirmation of 'the non-cultural part of our destiny'.

There is, however, another story waiting to be told here. Anna Freud's description of a shift from optimism to pessimism rehearses and repeats, in effect, her earlier debate with Melanie Klein which tore apart the English psychoanalytic community during World War Two. In that debate it was Klein's

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9 Lionel Trilling, op.cit., 54.
theory of an early and inexorable super-ego which cannot be educated by outside interference, that was rejected not only because of its pessimism, but also because of Klein's uncompromising image of the destructive origins of human life and the way her theories delved into the seemingly theoretically illegitimate hinterlands of the psyche. When Anna Freud suggests that psychoanalysis now has a more pessimistic view of the relation between the psyche and culture, she is also beginning to tread where only Melanie Klein had dared to go before. As she says in a discussion after her lecture 'the study of this darkest of all ages has never been my predilection...In no other realm of psychoanalysis does speculation need to run quite as free, as far, and as wild'.

If, as Meisel suggests, Trilling's 1955 lecture 'remains as clear a definition as we have had of what is axiomatic in our assumptions about the modern'12


ought we not to ask, not only canonical modernists, but also the women who are working in back room of Trilling's thesis, how well they managed the dilemma between the self and culture? What happens if we read English psychoanalysis not as simply affirming a redemptive thesis of a life beyond culture, as Trilling's paper suggests, but - speculating wildly and freely - as caught up in the dilemmas and ironies that Trilling and Bersani propose in their accounts of modernism? If English psychoanalysts can be demonstrated to produce their own 'Kismet', how can their writings be read in dialogue with the rhetoric and theory of Anglo-American modernism? What would the battle between the self and culture look like if it were placed back into the context of the relation between English psychoanalysis and early twentieth century literature?

II 'The Destructive Element'

In 1925 I.A. Richards, borrowing from Conrad's Lord Jim, appends a footnote to his reading of Eliot's The Waste Land. Eliot's strength in this poem, he remarks, is to have realised and dramatised the central void of belief that confronts his generation: "In the destructive element immerse. That is the only way".13 Just as, for Forster, death destroys

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12 Perry Meisel, op.cit., 1.
but also saves the man, for Richards it is only by
immersing oneself in the modern world of destruction,
that the modern writer can reclaim some form of
cultural authority and integrity. According to
Valentine Cunningham this was 'perhaps twentieth
century literature's mightiest footnote'.\textsuperscript{14} It is
also a phrase which is evocative and vague enough to
carry a variety of different meanings at once. For
Richards, to be immersed in the destructive element
was to be immured in an epistemological crisis; a
crisis which, he says, is given 'a perfect emotive
description' in the images of desolation in Eliot's
poem. The destructive element continually carries
these two meanings: it signifies both an attitude
towards a world without belief and describes that
world itself; it denotes both a destructive attitude,
the negation of existing beliefs which is the sine
qua non of the modernist challenge, and a feeling of
being subject to a world of destruction; or, as
Cunningham puts it, the destructive element
'encapsulated exactly what was [...] being widely
felt: that to be post-war, to be modern, was to be an
inhabitant of a 'dream of violence' to be in a scene
that threatened you constantly with destruction'.\textsuperscript{15}
Where, we might ask, for writers and thinkers of the
inter-war period, does the destructive element

\textsuperscript{14} Valentine Cunningham, \textit{British Writers of the}
\textit{Thirties}, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 58.
originate? Does the urge to destroy come from within? As, for example, is implied by the characterisation of the modernist hero who blasts his way through modern culture in a fearless endeavour to transcend it, to 'make it new', from the debris and ruins of the old? Or does this sense of destruction come from without? Is it the case, as Cunningham implies, that to be modern is to be subject to a nightmare world that threatens you with destruction? Is the modern writer persecutor or persecuted? Is it culture or the self that produces destruction?

For the writer and critic Stephen Spender, and for the Kleinian influenced psychoanalyst Marion Milner, both writing roughly ten years after Richards' footnote, the answer to these questions is that, as far as the destructive element is concerned, the modern writer is in both Bokhara and Samarh. Spender, whose book takes Richards' footnote as its title, registers a fundamental discord between the self and civilisation:

In violent times the moral acts of the individual seem quite unrelated to the immense social changes going on all around him. He looks at civilization and does not see his own quiet image reflected there at all, but the face of something fierce and threatening, that may destroy him. It may seem foreign and yet resemble his own face.16

Here, it is civilisation which can potentially destroy and persecute the man. But this is a reflecting and, for Spender, reflexive relation: 'violent times' may seem foreign to the one who gazes at civilisation but, uncannily, he also catches a semblance of himself there; the destructive element is without and yet, eerily, also within.

Cross now to a contemporary psychoanalytic version of the destructive element and we find a similar logic at work. Describing her repertoire of inner fantasies in the autobiographical, An Experiment in Leisure, Marion Milner notes

I had learnt that it was in these images that unrecognised desires expressed themselves, that when people purported to be talking of external facts, but talked with extreme hatred, then what they said had less reference to the facts than to their own internal needs. I had been most shocked when I found that some of these images which had seemed to grow out of my most intimate and private experience [...] were being used by others to foster what seemed to me that most sinister form of egoism - jingoistic nationalism. For I had read in the newspapers that Pagan rituals were being used in Germany as part of the movement to glorify violence and discredit the teachings of Christ.17

Milner begins where Spender ends. She asserts, following Klein's theory of projection, that descriptions of a violent world indicate not an objective account of that world, but the internal hatred of the on-looker. Once stated, however, that

proposition is inverted: the shock for Milner in 1937 is that those destructive feelings she felt emanated from inside, are grotesquely mirrored in fascist glorification of violence coming, apparently, from the outside. Note that this is a far cry from the idea that psychoanalysis affirms the 'non-cultural part of our destinies'. On the contrary, by the thirties the destructive element is something of a 'Kismet': the subject flees the decrees of a violent world by taking flight into the self, only to discover that those violent decrees are also working there. More troubling perhaps, the reverse is also true; identifying the violence of the outside world by no means guarantees the self a place apart from culture. In this sense, while Spender and Milner both capture the evocative contemporary connotations of the destructive element, in their case the term can also be taken to have a more precise meaning: a troubling of the boundaries between inside and outside, between the frontiers of the self and of civilisation.

The destructive element, then, has a history. In this dissertation that history begins with Richards' footnote in the twenties and ends with Marion Milner's and Stevie Smith's speculations on the complicity between the violence of the self and the violence of the outside world in the thirties. Put at its most simple, this history begins with an attempt to make an aesthetic out of the destructive
element in order to redeem and transcend modernity. Such, for example, was Richards' clarion call of the twenties: for him, modernism's power lay in its endeavour to create a new form for a world without belief. This endeavour ends in the thirties with the recognition that the destructive element cannot be contained within aesthetic form, but spills out uncompromisingly into the social and cultural.

'There is then this division between the laborious cruelty-fan and the artist also with his artist's soul creating and brooding upon the darkness of pain?' asks Pompey, Stevie Smith's narrator in her 1938 novel, Over the Frontier, 'But where is the line of severance?'. What happens when art can no longer transcend culture? What does it mean when the artist's representation of a destructive world begins to inhabit, maybe even exacerbate, the violence of that world itself? If Trilling's cultural 'Kismet' is at the root of an earlier modernist irony, by the Second World War this double-bind between self and culture has become a pressing and politically charged paradox.

The erasure of that line of severance between aesthetics and life in literary writing from the twenties to the Second World War can be traced in a number of different ways and contexts. In England, for example, the frontiers that protected the ideals

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of modernist aesthetic autonomy, give way to more directly political and polemic forms of writing by the end of the thirties. This is the well-charted path that takes us, for example, from T.S. Eliot to W.H. Auden, from E.M. Forster to Edward Upward and from Virginia Woolf to Storm Jameson. 19 In the European context too, modernist autonomy and its disdain of the social for the sake of a narrowly defined notion of culture, is challenged by the avant-garde. Movements such as Surrealism and Dada, for example, although in different ways from English writers of the thirties, also reconnect aesthetics to forms of social protest. 20 What I argue here is that by returning to English psychoanalysis, it is possible to begin to write another chapter in the history of that line of severance between a modernist aesthetics of transcendence and the emergence of the recognition of an intractable complicity both between the self and culture, and between art and the social and political ideologies upon which culture rests.


III Modernism and Psychoanalysis

Why return to English psychoanalysis? What, if anything, have Richards' pronouncements in The Criterion, Spender's book, the writing of Roger Fry, Virginia Woolf, Ezra Pound and Stevie Smith, to do with the thinking of the English Psychoanalytical School, presided over mainly by women who spent their working days in analytic play-rooms and who endlessly speculated on the psychic hinterlands of 'that darkest of all ages', early oedipality? How is it possible to connect what is often regarded as this century's most far reaching challenge to aesthetics with what has been aptly termed the 'war in the nursery'?

In her book of that title, Denise Riley gives the example of a friend who asks her why, instead of exploring the ideas of Freud and Jacques Lacan, she is studying 'second-rate' thinkers such as Klein and John Bowlby.21 Riley answers as a historian. The reason why Klein and Bowlby are important is because theirs were the ideas which acquired ideological currency at the time; it was their theories, and not those of Lacan and Reich, that were popularised in war-time England and contributed to child care policies and ideologies of motherhood. My concern in this study too, is to register the historical presence of English psychoanalysis in the period

leading up to the Second World War; a presence which has too often been occluded in studies of literature and aesthetics. Cunningham, for example, mentions that many writers immersed in the destructive element read Edward Glover's influential *War, Sadism and Pacifism*, but does not develop the connection. From a different end of the critical spectrum, many critics have approached the literature of this period through theories developed out of Kleinian ideas, most notably through Julia Kristeva's work, but in these cases the historical links largely remain absent. 22 Between the literary history of the period and the later development of psychoanalytic theory as a post-structural critical hermeneutic, English

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22 The most important exceptions here are Elizabeth Abel's compelling account of Virginia Woolf's turn from Freud to a Kleinian genealogy of maternal desire in *Virginia Woolf and the Pictions of Psychoanalysis*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1989, and Tony Pinkney's reading of high modernism through the theories of English psychoanalysis, *Women in the Poetry of T.S. Eliot, a Psychoanalytic Analysis*, Macmillan, London, 1984. This neglect is not as apparent in the case of Adrian Stokes. Thanks primarily to the writing of Richard Wollheim, Stokes has received some attention in the fields of art theory, art history and philosophy. See Richard Wollheim, 'Adrian Stokes' in *On Art and the Mind*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1974, 315-335 and his preface to Adrian Stokes, *The Invitation in Art*, Tavistock, London, 1965, ix-xxxi. Stokes' work has, however, received only limited attention from cultural theorists and literary historians, which is particularly surprising given his contribution to both modernist aesthetics and psychoanalytic theory. In a recent work on Pound and the Tempio at Rimini, for example, Stokes, who shared Pound's fascination with Malatesta's Tempio, is given only passing references. See Lawrence S. Rainey, *Ezra Pound and the Monument of Culture: Text, History and the Malatesta Cantos*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1991.
psychoanalysis constantly slips through the net. As a result, the work of many who contributed to aesthetic and cultural debates in this period, such as Melanie Klein, Paula Heimann, Ella Freeman Sharpe, Adrian Stokes and Marion Milner, has been relatively neglected.

The present study then, is intended as an exploration of the possibility of an alternative, revisionist literary history for the period leading up to and including the Second World War. Alongside the claim that English psychoanalysis needs to be re-written into the history of the inter-war years, I am also making an implicit attempt to dislodge some contemporary assumptions about the relation between psychoanalysis and modernism. Many recent readings of modernism derive from French psychoanalytic theory. The relation between modernism and psychoanalysis in France has, of course, its own history which, from Breton through to the Tel quel group and culminating in Julia Kristeva’s groundbreaking Revolution in Poetic Language, is characterised by a continual affirmation of the radical potential both of the avant-garde and psychoanalysis. Recent critical readings produced through this trajectory have been successful not only in removing Anglo-American modernism from a New Critical strangle-hold, but also in foregrounding questions around writing and sexuality, subjectivity and ideology: Kristevan readings of Virginia Woolf,
which helped set a new feminist agenda for her work in the 1980s, are a case in point. But while the theoretical questions which produced and sustained the French alliance between psychoanalysis and the avant-garde are, as we will see, in many ways also pertinent to the English context, there are problems in the wholesale importation of this particular genealogy across the Channel. Psychoanalysis runs the risk of becoming the un-historicised ghost at the banquet - responsible for pointing out, for example, how, Anglo-American modernism, in spite of itself, is more avant-garde (more carnivalesque, perhaps, more fluid) than it will dare admit. Likewise, importing the privileging of the aesthetic which distinguishes Kristeva's view of modernism, for example, has a tendency to obscure the frequently self-conscious debates about the status of the aesthetic itself in relation to modernity that characterises inter-war writing in England. In short, we run the risk of bequeathing Anglo-American modernism a radical heritage which is not its own; which is not to say that it is not frequently at odds with its own conservatism. To begin with, therefore, it seems more helpful not to presume an analogous relation

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between the French avant-garde psychoanalytic heritage and English psychoanalysis' relation to modernism, but rather to explore what structural homologies exist between them.

In her study of the history of French psychoanalysis, Elizabeth Roudinesco writes:

In 1929, the lure of death resulted in Freud's observation of a fundamental discontent in civilization. A certain 'golden age' of psychoanalysis had disappeared in the torment of war, but, beyond the disaster, a hope subsisted: the renunciation of murderous instincts could engender sublimation.

1929 marked the publication of Freud's Civilization and Its Discontents. Before that book, the 'golden age' of psychoanalysis had already begun to disappear in 1919 with Freud's presentation of the death drive in Beyond the Pleasure Principle. As many have pointed out, this is a text as born from the destructive elements of World War One as Eliot's The Waste Land and, indeed, as equally caught up in strategies of compulsive repetition to salvage its own speculative damage. In 1929 Freud twists the screw still further. It is not only that the subject begins life over spilling with erotic and murderous drives, and it is not only that the price we pay for

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civilisation is the renunciation of those drives. The scandal of Civilization and Its Discontents, as with Freud's second topography more generally, rests with his image of a super-ego which does not simply repress murderous desires but draws from them and repeats their ferocity with all the violence that it at the same time prohibits. This, then, is Freud's own brutal version of the destructive element's cultural 'Kismet'. As Lacan, among others, points out, the social law in Civilization is a perverse law which is as potentially destructive as the destructive desires it asks us to renounce.26

Within the French context, the impasses of the second topography precipitate what Roudinesco terms a 'fracture' between the avant-garde and French institutional psychoanalysis. In the twenties and thirties there was, she argues, an 'incommunicability' between the reception of Freud's ideas by the French psychoanalytic establishment and his influence on the avant-garde. In this account, Surrealism grabs the radical mantle of the ideas that the psychoanalytic movement was simultaneously energising and yet trying to contain within the

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parameters of scientific respectability.

'Contemporaneous with a dynamism whose authority it contested', Roudinesco argues,

Surrealism contributed nothing less than [the French psychiatro-psychoanalytic movement's] apotheosis by supplying the weapons needed for its generation. Without the Surrealist scandal, the second psychoanalytic generation would have spent its energy without hearing any echo of the new battle.27

It was, of course, Lacan who picked up that echo and turned it into a battle cry. Back in the twenties and thirties, while Surrealism was sowing the seeds for a radicalised psychoanalysis, for Roudinesco, the French psychoanalytic movement is a conservative grouping influenced by a Jonesian political reaction against the occultism of Rank and Jung. While the psychoanalytic movement attempted to maintain the frontier between madness and science through an appeal to pathology, Surrealism used the new science to claim the unconscious as a revolutionising expressive form. And while the psychoanalytic establishment continued to see art as a superior form of symptom formation, for Surrealism sublimation was at best, a non-issue and, at worst, a reactionary concept with little theoretical yield.

The French response to Freud's Civilization is crucial in Roudinesco's account in that it provides a test-case for the differing political and theoretical trajectories of the psychoanalytic movement and the

avant-garde. Surrealism is credited with taking on Freud's notion of the death drive which the psychoanalytic movement refused. It was left to the Surrealist cult of death, sex and suicide to carry Freud's discovery through to a 'veritable "theory" of morbid energy'. 28 While Surrealism takes on Freud's death drive, it also goes one stage further by rejecting his theory of the sublimation of murderous instincts. With this, Surrealism's reading of psychoanalysis contributes to the development of a negative critique. Citing the cult that grew up around the patricide Violette Noziere, for example, Roudinesco suggests that 'through an exacerbated representation of the female, the "generation of refusal" no longer sought the exile of sleep within, but, in the negative idealisation of crime, finally discovered the means to struggle against a society reviled from every quarter'. 29 Through Surrealism, then, Freud's pessimism about the destructive element located at the heart of the relation between the individual and culture is transformed into political protest.

Switch now to the reception of Freud's ideas in England and a very different picture emerges. Far from taking on and radically energising psychoanalysis, the English modernist vanguard roundly rejected it. Roger Fry's and Clive Bell's

28 Ibid., 15.
29 Ibid., 21.
famous attacks on psychoanalysis, which I discuss in Chapter Two, are particularly visible examples of a deep high modernist suspicion of the new science. 'The Lunatic, or the Demented, and the Child' notes Wyndham Lewis, in The Art of Being Ruled, to give another example of the depth of the modernist unease, 'are linked together by psychoanalysis, the link being its dogma of the Unconscious'. What this 'dogma' represents for Lewis, hideously manifest in the 'lunatic' and child-like writings of Gertrude Stein, is an unhealthy nostalgia for the 'central problems of subjectivity'. Psychoanalysis re-affirms interiority and, as such, supports a narcissistic, effeminate and decadent culture based on a regressive and degenerate notion of the self. Like Richards, Lewis is a proponent of the destructive element. 'In a word we have lost our sense of reality', what we need, he says 'is a world of negation'. For Lewis, psychoanalysis does not (as it does for Surrealism) articulate this negativity, but is a false messiah offering 'topical unreality' in the place of radical negation. For D.H. Lawrence, a writer who took psychoanalysis very seriously indeed, the difficulty with Freud was that he emasculated psychoanalysis through the theory of

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31 Ibid., 404.
repression, hence blocking Lawrence's desired return
to a culture of pagan and sexual rejuvenation. The
problem with psychoanalysis for English high
modernism, one senses, was that it either took us too
far or not far enough in the battle with culture: too
far back into the self, in Lewis' case, but not far
back enough to liberate that self, in Lawrence's.

As the rhetorical nuances of Lewis' and
Lawrence's critiques might suggest, if there is
'fracture' in the reception of Freud's ideas in
Anglo-American modernism it falls along gendered
lines. Where the 'Men of 1914' repudiated

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33 D.H. Lawrence, 'Psychoanalysis and the
Unconscious' and 'Fantasia of the Unconscious',
34 The history of English Surrealism, however, adds
another, less clear cut, chapter to both the
connections between psychoanalysis and modernism and
Anglo-French relations. The figures behind the
Mass-Observation Movement, for example, which
combined Surrealism, anthropology and psychoanalysis
provide a particularly visible instance of
cross-disciplinary and cross channel forays. 'The
Dream Box' (M-O Archive Topic Collection, 'Dreams',
1937-1948, University of Sussex), to give one
example, contains a fascinating interdisciplinary
treasure trove of psychoanalytic readings, mass
anthropology woven through the collective unconscious
of war-time dreamers. As David Mellor has pointed
out, Humphrey Jennings, a pupil of I.A. Richards and
a contemporary of William Empson, developed an
interest in the psychological and representational
'complexes' of emotive descriptions in his poetry,
art and film making. When we consider that Henri
Cartier-Bresson was also a pupil of Richards, then
the distinction between English Modernism and French
Surrealism begins to look less clear cut than I've
presented it. See David Mellor, 'Sketch for an
Historical Portrait of Humphrey Jennings', Humphrey
Jennings: Film-Maker, Painter, Poet, ed. Mary Lou
Jennings, British Film Institute, London, 1982. See
also A. Young, Dada and After: Extremist Modernism
and English Literature, Manchester University Press,
Manchester, 1981.
psychoanalysis on the grounds of its emasculating emphasis on interiority or its counter-revolutionary belief in repression, women writers associated with the modernist vanguard embraced it. May Sinclair, for example, and most notably, H.D., both seized upon psychoanalysis for its potential as a critique of gender and sexuality. This is one area where historical connections between psychoanalysis and modernism have been thoroughly researched in recent years.35 Yoking the work of women modernist together with, say, French Feminist thought, however, can run the risk of reproducing more traditional modernist paradigms. Paying attention to women modernists' concerns with the fragility of self, for example, presents a necessary challenge to the more defensive ego constructions of some male modernists and their critics. Yet, at the same time, it can come close to inadvertently repeating Lewis' opposition between the politics and poetics of negative critique (represented, usually, by the 'Men of 1914') and an inward looking obsession with constructions of

interiority (represented by psychoanalysis and women modernists' writing).

Inserting the work of English psychoanalysis into this context is one way of beginning to unsettle this opposition. While in contrast to Surrealism, the English modernist vanguard were rejecting psychoanalysis, and while the French psychoanalytic movement was simultaneously rejecting Freud's theory of the death drive, the English psychoanalytic movement, under the influence of Melanie Klein and a close group of predominantly women followers not only took on the death drive but placed Freud's vision of a persecutory cultural super-ego at the heart of their theories. If psychoanalysis in France contributed to the Surrealist critique through an idealisation of crime in the figure of the transgressive woman, across the Channel we have the image of a group of women who, although far from idealising crime, continually theorised the violence of the tie between the individual and culture which Freud outlined in Civilization. What we have in the English psychoanalytic context is, then, is a concern with interiority, subjectivity and sexuality which is also deeply rooted in the problems of psychic and social negation. As we will see, far from laying the ground for a modernist female aesthetic, many women analysts in this period invite us to reconsider not just the relation between gender and art, but between psychic and social violence. Indeed, in the case of
the English School the debate between Melanie Klein and Anna Freud which culminated in the Controversial Discussions during World War Two, was precisely a battle about the super-ego; about the limits of violence and criminality in a psychic world which, from the Kleinian perspective, at least, was indeed awash with the destructive element.

If we look, for example, at the rhetoric of Joan Riviere's description of early infancy, we might wonder who, in the case of the English reception of psychoanalysis, comes closest to the 'veritable "theory" of morbid energy' which Roudinesco associates with Surrealism:

Loose motions, flatus and urine are all felt to be burning, corroding and poisoning agents. Not only the excretory but all other physical functions are pressed into the service of the need for aggressive (sadistic) discharge in phantasy. Limbs shall trample, kick and hit; lips, fingers and hands shall suck, twist, pinch; teeth shall bite, gnaw, mangle and cut; mouth shall devour, swallow and "kill" (annihilate); eyes kill by a look, pierce and penetrate; breath and mouth hurt by noise, as the child's own sensitive ears have experienced.36

There is an uneasy tension in this passage between its function as a description of the violence of early phantasy and a sense that the writer has got caught up inside this violence. The use of the

imperative ('Limbs shall trample'), for example, has the effect of suggesting not merely an account of an early stage of psychic life, but a command that this 'shall' be so (where, we might ask, can we locate the super-ego in Riviere's writing?). Likewise, the dismembered syntax and the way the literal is confused with the metaphoric ('eyes shall kill') has the effect of repeating, on the level of writing, the destruction which Riviere is at the same time describing. It is, perhaps, not surprising to find Riviere three years later reading *The Waste Land* as a contemporary instance of the projection of destructive desire, and Apollinaire's *Alcools* as a supreme example of the 'concrete realism' of phantasy.³⁷

To suggest that Kleinian psychoanalysis has an affinity with the French avant-garde is, of course, a provocation. The institutional differences between the two, their different political placing, the troublesome distinction between psychoanalytic therapy and its development as an aesthetic, render English psychoanalysis and the avant-garde very unlikely bed-fellows. Most significantly, in terms of the homologies I am drawing here, the two depart dramatically on the question of sublimation. Where

French Surrealism rejected sublimation (for the Kleinian art critic Adrian Stokes this was precisely its problem), English psychoanalysis both avows the destructive element and attempts to sublimate it or, in the case of Klein, attempts to redeem a fundamentally negative view of early psychic life with the theory of reparation. Indeed, one reason for the marginalisation of English psychoanalysis in literary studies rests with what is often perceived of as, at best, a lack of theoretical and rhetorical daring when it comes to questions of aesthetics or, at worst, an ideologically normative and conservative reading of the relation between art and psychic processes within Kleinian thought. Freudian and post-Freudian accounts of sublimation as an unwieldy displacement of the libido onto cultural production are seen to produce a subversive view of art and culture (in which aesthetic processes are, like the unconscious, another scene, that usurps the privileges of consciousness socially lived\(^\text{38}\)). On the other hand, the Kleinian account of reparation, whereby art is produced from a loving attempt to repair and restore objects damaged through destructive anxiety, is perceived as too quickly sewing up the radical force of unconscious phantasy

and, as Lacan argues, too blind to the role of the social in aesthetic production. Indeed to read Christopher Lasch in 1986 extolling the values of Kleinian analysis as returning us 'to the ethics of pre-En lightenment morality', in a way which is 'good' for both state and country, is perhaps to be sufficiently warned of the conservative political trajectories to which Kleinianism can be harnessed.

In what follows, however, I argue that to strip Kleinian and post-Kleinian theories of art of their history, to read, for instance, the theory of reparation as complete and detached from the historical and theoretical debates out of which it is born, is equivalent to not reading English psychoanalysis at all.

In this dissertation, I approach the task of re-reading English psychoanalysis from three inter-related perspectives. First of all, this is clearly an issue about different ways of reading psychoanalysis. To suggest, for example, that Riviere's writing is beset by rhetorical tensions, is also to question psychoanalysis' status as a seamless, hermetic theory. Similar approaches which read psychoanalysis as internally at odds with its own theoretical mastery, and as a discourse which not only theorises the unconscious, but mimics its

displacements and repetitions, are by now a common feature in approaches to Freud. Although Klein and writers of the English School might seem to lack Freud's rhetorical density (indeed, it is Klein's 'literalness' which has struck many of her commentators), approaching English psychoanalysis in a similar way can, I suggest, produce a more dynamic account of its theoretical manoeuvres. In his introduction to The Freudian Body, Bersani makes the following comment on his own reading of Freudian psychoanalysis' rhetorical slips and theoretical pulls:

I will be speaking of the estheticizing of the Freudian text. I will mean by this not that it thereby enters a different cultural category but rather that it moves away from, or 'back from' the very capacity to institute the categorical as a relevant mode of differentiating and structuring our experience of reality. [...] Freud's text is 'estheticized' to the extent that, like the other works of art we will be considering, it problematizes its own formalizing and structuralizing aspirations.
