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'I am an artist, sir. And a woman'

Representations of the Woman Artist in Modernist Literature

Thornton, Elise

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‘I am an artist, sir. And a woman’:
Representations of the Woman Artist in
Modernist Literature

Elise Christine Thornton
Submitted for the degree of PhD
King’s College London
June 2013

Abstract

The figure of the artist-hero has dominated literary narratives since the Romantic period. With the development of the first wave of feminism and the New Woman, the artist-heroine began to emerge in the literature of the twentieth century. This marks a shift from the traditional *Bildungsroman* narrative, which typically ends in marriage, to the *Künstlerroman* as female protagonists were increasingly depicted as autonomous artists. Modernist women writers, in particular, engaged with the figure of the woman artist, and issues surrounding gender and artistry. This thesis explores the intersection of modernism, gender and creativity in the work of Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair and Vita Sackville-West.

Often misclassified as *Bildungsromane*, the question of whether the female protagonists in these novels are read as developing artists is not a mere issue of taxonomy: it is about women's autonomy, education, professionalisation, and their right to individual self-expression as artists. Whilst some critics believe the boundary separating these two genres is virtually nonexistent, there is, in fact a dividing line which women have been barred from crossing as professional artists. These modernist women writers, in their representation of the woman artist, engage in much wider questions about the patriarchal, imperial and national narratives which contain and define women and their artistic endeavours. In *The Voyage Out*, for example, Rachel Vinrace's death operates as a refusal of a system which would define her as imperial wife and mother, but would also limit her musicality.

These writers explore the division between the amateur and the artist, the training and public role of the woman artist at the turn of the twentieth century. Furthermore, they examine and reinterpret the necessary conditions needed to achieve artistic fulfilment. The thesis situates this writing in the context of women's education; May Sinclair's *Mary Olivier* (1919), for example, questions the boundaries of acceptable female education by focusing specifically on Mary's interest in Greek studies. In *Pilgrimage* (1915-67), Richardson radically redefines what

constitutes the art object through the creative process of everyday life. The question of marriage and motherhood recurs throughout these texts and, except for Lady Slane in *All Passion Spent* (1931), the other artist-heroines reject these domestic roles. These authors, including Sackville-West, examine the compatibility of the professional life of the woman artist with wifedom and motherhood. Crucially, this thesis investigates the stylistic choices—whether stream of consciousness, the second person perspective—these modernist writers employ to investigate women and creative expression.

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Elise Thornton
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Table of Contents

Abbreviations	8
Introduction: Locating the Woman Artist in the Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Literary Imagination	9
Virginia Woolf, <i>The Voyage Out</i> and the Woman Musician	51
'Being versus becoming': Dorothy Richardson's <i>Pilgrimage</i> and the Woman Artist	108
Rewriting the Victorian Poetess in <i>Mary Olivier: A Life</i>	169
The Rebirth of the Woman Artist in Vita Sackville-West's <i>All Passion Spent</i>	224
Epilogue: Expanding Modernism and the Female <i>Künstlerroman</i>	265
Works Cited	270

Abbreviations

E. M. Forster

- AE* *Albergo Empedocle and other writings*. Ed. by George H. Thomson. New York: Liveright. 1971.
- AH* *Abinger Harvest* (1936). London: Edward Arnold & Co. 1953.
- AN* *Aspects of the Novel* (1927). London: Penguin Classics. 2005.
- PT* *The Prince's Tale and other uncollected writings*. Ed. P.N. Furbank. London: Andrew Deutsch. 1998.
- RV* *A Room with a View*. (1908). Ed. Malcolm Bradbury. London: Penguin Classics. 2000.
- TCD* *Two Cheers for Democracy*. London: Edward Arnold & Co. 1951.

Dorothy Richardson

- JP* *Journey to Paradise: Short Stories and Autobiographical Sketches*. Ed. Trudi Tate. London: Virago. 1989.
- P* *Pilgrimage* (1915-1967). 4 vols. London: Virago Press. 2002.
- WM* *Windows on Modernism: The Selected Letters of Dorothy Richardson*. Ed. Gloria G. Fromm. Athens, G.A. & London: The University of Georgia Press. 1995.

Vita Sackville-West

- APS* *All Passion Spent* (1931). London: Virago Press. 2011.
- LVS* *The Letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Louise DeSalvo and Mitchell A. Leaska. London: Hutchinson. 1984.
- Pe* *Pepita*. London: The Hogarth Press. 1937.

May Sinclair

- MO* *Mary Olivier: A Life* (1919).

Virginia Woolf

- AROO* *A Room of One's Own* (1929). Ed. Michèle Barrett. London: Penguin Classics. 1993.
- D* *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*. (5 vols). Ed. Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie. London: The Hogarth Press. 1977-1984.
- E* *Essays of Virginia Woolf*. (6 vols). Ed. Andrew McNeillie and Stuart N. Clarke. London: Hogarth Press. 1986-2011.
- L* *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*. (6 vols). Ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann. London: Hogarth Press. 1975-80.
- LS* *The London Scene: Five Essays by Virginia Woolf*. New York, N.Y.: Random House. 1975.
- MD* *Mrs Dalloway* (1925). London: Vintage. 2004.
- PA* *A Passionate Apprentice: The Early Journals, Carlyle's House and Other Sketches, 1897-1909* (1990). Ed. Mitchell A. Leaska. London: Pimlico. 2003.
- TG* *Three Guineas* (1938). Ed. Michèle Barrett. London: Penguin Classics. 1993.
- TTL* *To the Lighthouse* (1927). San Diego & New York: Harcourt, Inc. 1981.
- VO* *The Voyage Out* (1915). Ed. Jane Wheare. London: Penguin Classics. 1992.

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Introduction: Locating the Woman Artist in the Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Literary Imagination

The patriarchal mantra proclaiming '[w]omen can't paint, women can't write' imposed upon Virginia Woolf's artist-protagonist, Lily Briscoe, in *To the Lighthouse* (1927) represents an enduring obstacle for the woman artist (48). A key element of women artists' resistance to this masculinist ideology has been the literary representation, often autobiographical, of the female artist-heroine. With the development of first-wave feminism and the New Woman at the turn of the century, the artist-heroine emerged in literature of the period. This marked a shift from the traditional *Bildungsroman* narrative, which is often identified as a novel of development focused on the protagonist's coming of age, to the *Künstlerroman*—a subgenre of the *Bildungsroman* which is concerned specifically with the hero/ine's participation in the creative process and artistic development—as female protagonists were increasingly depicted as autonomous artists, carving their own path beyond the realm of the domestic sphere. Modernist women writers in particular engaged with the figure of the woman artist in the context of the historical and social obstacles imposed upon the professional woman and institutional definitions of artistry set out by the art world public, art and music academies and universities. Their experimentation with the *Künstlerroman* narrative led them to consider not only their own position as artists, but also the modes and forms of their art. While the figure of the artist-hero has dominated narratives since the Romantic period, the female artist has either been ignored as a significant literary figure, or has been identified as an inferior individual, an amateur to her male counterpart. The critical silence surrounding the figure of the woman artist in twentieth-century literature has been the motivating force for this thesis which

explores the intersection of modernism, gender and creativity in the work of Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), Dorothy Richardson (1873-1957), May Sinclair (1863-1946) and Vita Sackville-West (1892-1962).

My primary texts are Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1915), Richardson's *Pilgrimage* (1915-67), Sinclair's *Mary Olivier: A Life* (1919) and Sackville-West's *All Passion Spent* (1931). Scholarship in the 1970s and 80s was concerned with the 'excavation of and recovery of lost women writers and artists' (Elliot and Wallace 14); this project builds on this work but is not so much one of recuperation as reclassification. These texts have been repeatedly misclassified as *Bildungsromane* in literary criticism, and the question of whether the female protagonists in these novels are read as developing artists in the *Künstlerroman* tradition is not a mere issue of taxonomy: it cuts to the heart of questions of feminism and female creativity.¹ While some critics like Jerome Hamilton Buckley, Gregory Castle and Max Saunders believe the boundary separating these two genres is virtually non-existent, or that the *Künstlerroman* is merely a 'more specialized version of the *Bildungsroman*' (Saunders 13), there is, in fact, a dividing line which women have been prevented from crossing as artists. This argument is further supported by the fact that *both* male and female critics like Buckley, Castle, Penny Brown, Jed Esty and Ester Kleinbord Labovitz habitually catalogue the primary novels under discussion in this thesis as *Bildungsromane* rather than *Künstlerromane*.

Questions of generic classifications are suggestive of wider definitions of creativity and its relation to education, the public sphere, professionalisation and the institutionalisation of art. These definitions have historically excluded women and by extension limited the kind of

¹ While some critics like Rachel DuPlessis in *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (1985) have argued *Pilgrimage* is a modernist *Künstlerroman*, most critics associate the female protagonists of these novels with the *Bildungsroman* heroine. See Christine Battersby, "'In the Shadow of His Language': May Sinclair's Portrait of the Artist as Daughter' (2002), 119; Penny Brown, *The Poison at the Source: The Female Novel of Self-Development in the Early Twentieth-Century* (1992); Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *Season of Youth* (1974), 255; Gregory Castle, *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* (2006), 218; Jed Esty, 'Virginia Woolf's Colony and the Adolescence of Modernist Fiction' (2007), 81; Ester Kleinbord Labovitz, *The Myth of the Heroine the Female Bildungsroman in the Twentieth-Century: Dorothy Richardson, Simone de Beauvoir, Doris Lessing, Christa Wolf* (1986) and Anne Ronchetti, *The Artist, Society & Sexuality in Virginia Woolf's Novels* (2004), 17-29.

artistry they are seen to engage in. In this thesis, I explore what is at stake in reading these female protagonists as artists—whether they create original art objects or participate in the creative process of everyday life. Because ‘[t]he figure of the female artist encodes the conflict between any empowered woman and the barriers to her achievement’, I will discuss how Woolf, Richardson, Sinclair and Sackville-West offer a feminist critique of the masculine definitions of female creativity in the early-twentieth century (DuPlessis 84). Moreover, in their representation of the woman artist, they discuss much wider questions about the patriarchal, imperial and national narratives which contain and define women and their artistic endeavours.

Reading these novels as *Künstlerromane* rather than *Bildungsromane* allows us to explore the ways in which these authors examine female creativity and challenge the oppressive attitudes surrounding the role of the woman artist. While many artist-heroes like Paul Morel in D. H. Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers* (1913), Philip Carey in W. Somerset Maugham’s *Of Human Bondage* (1915) and Stephen Dedalus in James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) do not become professional artists, these narratives explore the creative process rather than artistic production. The novels under discussion in this thesis examine many of the same themes as their male counterparts, but they are usually not recognised as *Künstlerromane* in literary studies and, consequently, I demonstrate that institutional definitions of artistry are more ambiguous than previous critics of the genre like Maurice Beebe and Roberta Seret have outlined. I examine how the residual associations of creativity with masculinity need to be redefined to include women’s artistry and, moreover, how the critical definitions surrounding the traditional *Künstlerroman* narrative need to be modified and expanded in order to include women’s very different experiences from men.

When compared to the *Künstlerroman*, which is seen as a predominantly twentieth-century genre, the *Bildungsroman* has been the subject of a vast range of theoretical and critical works from the nineteenth century onwards. Since its emergence in literature, theorists like

Mikhail Bakhtin, Jerome Hamilton Buckley, James Hardin, Franco Moretti, and Thomas L. Jeffers have analysed the term's derivation, evolution and signification in genre studies. Because of its longevity, Hardin has pointed out the *Bildungsroman's* tendency to be reduced to 'virtually any work that describes, even in the most far-fetched way, a protagonist's formative years, and this looseness has created an ambiguity that continues to surround the genre's definition and function within literary studies ('Reflection and Action' x). Buckley acknowledges the 'awkwardness of the German term' when translated in English literature, and he lists the various English substitutes which still fulfil the general concept of the *Bildungsroman*, such as, 'the novel of youth, novel of education, of apprenticeship, of adolescence, of initiation, even the life-novel' (vii-viii). While this initially appears to encompass almost all prose narratives, the difficulties in defining the genre go beyond the issue of translation. As a result, literary historians like Melitta Gerhard have attempted to isolate the *Bildungsroman* from other closely related genres, such as the *Künstlerroman*, 'the *Entwicklungsroman* or "novel of development"', and 'the *Erziehungsroman*, the "pedagogical novel", which deals with the educational process in a quite specific and limited way' (Hardin, 'Reflection and Action' xvi). This is a successful way to deconstruct the *Bildungsroman*, but it should not be the sole method used by theorists to explore the thematics of the genre. Like Gerhard, I believe the *Bildungsroman* and *Künstlerroman* need to be examined as two distinct genres, although I recognise the Victorian *Bildungsroman* has undoubtedly influenced the development and underlying themes of the modernist *Künstlerroman* in English literature. While the *Bildungsroman* is crucial to my research, I will not present a comprehensive historical analysis of the genre as previous publications have already done so but, before turning to my discussion about the modernist female *Künstlerroman*, we need to consider its predecessor—the nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman*.²

² See Mikhail Bakhtin, 'The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism (To-ward a Historical

The Female Bildungsroman's Literary Legacy

Previous studies have associated the first appearance of the *Bildungsroman* as a critical term with German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey and his 1870 publication, *Das Leben Schleiermacher* (*The Life of Schleiermacher*), but philologist Fritz Martini maintains that the German philosopher of rhetoric, Karl (von) Morgenstern, actually conceived the generic term much earlier than Dilthey in 1810. Morgenstern's initial definition of the *Bildungsroman* was indebted to the Enlightenment discourse of selfhood, which was focused upon 'one's cultivation (*Bildung*) through a harmony of aesthetic, moral, rational, and scientific education' (Martini 5). He believed that when these ideologies of *Bildung* are transferred to the novel in the form of the *Bildungsroman*, the narrative becomes a vehicle which reveals the 'moral means of education' and personal growth rather than merely offering the reader a form of pleasant escapism (24). Morgenstern's interpretation of *Bildung* and the *Bildungsroman* presents an early understanding of the fundamental components of the genre, although it was Dilthey who actually familiarised the term in literary criticism (Hardin, 'Reflection and Action' xiv).

In *Das Leben Scheiermachers*, Dilthey maintains that all novels which incorporate elements of 'the *Wilhelm Meister* school' are classified as *Bildungsromane*—for he believes Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lebrjahre* (1795-1796) is the paradigm of the genre (Hardin, 'Reflection and Action' xiv). In his later publication, Dilthey further defines the *Bildungsroman* as any chronicle about a young man in his formative years 'who enters into life in a blissful state of ignorance, seeks related souls, experiences friendship and love, struggles with the hard realities of the world and thus armed with a variety of experiences, matures and finds

Typology of the Novel' (1986); Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* (1974); Gregory Castle, *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* (2006); James Hardin (ed.) *Reflection and Action: Essays on the Bildungsroman* (1991); Susanna Howe, *Wilhelm Meister and his English Kinsmen: apprentices to life* (1930); Thomas L. Jeffers, *Apprenticeships: The Bildungsroman from Goethe to Santayana* (2005); Fritz Martini, 'Bildungsroman—Term and Theory; (1991); Franco Moretti, *Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (1987); and Jeffrey L. Sammons, 'The Bildungsroman for Nonspecialists: An Attempt at a Clarification' (1991).

himself and his mission in the world' (qtd. in Hardin, 'Reflection and Action' xiv). Besides Dilthey's gender-specific associations with the *Bildungsroman*, one immediately notices women's exclusion from these preliminary definitions, and both Morgenstern and Dilthey both delineate a strictly masculine canon which includes Goethe, Friedrich Maximilian Klinger, and Jean Paul as representative of the genre. This 'school' of Goethe and his male contemporaries would persist in German criticism and eventually be transferred to the British and French interpretations of the genre where such novels like Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* (*The Red and the Black*) (1830), Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1831), Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1850) and *Great Expectations* (1861), Gustave Flaubert's *L'Éducation Sentimentale* (*Sentimental Education*) (1869), Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895), Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* and Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* are recognised as the leading examples of nineteenth- and twentieth-century *Bildungsromane*.

Thomas Carlyle both introduced and developed the genre in the British and French traditions by translating the first English edition, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, in 1824 (F. Kaplan). While Carlyle's translation brought the *Bildungsroman* to an English audience, his interpretation of the German '*Lehrjahre*' to 'Apprenticeship' ultimately shaped the genre in English literature as we know it today. His decision to associate *Lehrjahre* with a more systematic concept of training still promoted 'the Weimar classicist's case' which focused on an individual's self-formation through *Bildung*, but Carlyle and his British contemporaries juxtaposed the 'problems of such cultivation in the context of vocation, courtship, and parent-child relations' within society (Jeffers 4). Crucially, this idea of apprenticeship and vocation largely excluded female protagonists from appearing in, and women writers from experimenting with, the genre for they were denied access to the public and vocational roles associated with personal development defined in this very limited, and masculine, way. As a result, much of *Bildungsroman* criticism throughout the twentieth century excludes female

narratives from their studies and the *Bildungsroman* is often identified as a predominantly male genre. This commenced with Buckley's *Season of Youth: the Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* (1974) and continued until the second-wave of the feminist movement during the 1970s and 80s when critics like Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar, Elizabeth Abel, Miriam Hirsch and Elizabeth Langland finally began to recognise a previously neglected female presence in nineteenth- and twentieth-century British *Bildungsromane*.

Buckley was one of the first literary theorists to examine the evolution of the *Bildungsroman* within a specifically British nationalist discourse, but his monograph is most often recognised within genre and gender studies for its patriarchal and doctrinaire discussion as well as his subsequent creation of an essentially male canon. In his research he wishes to clear up any misconceptions about the genre with an examination of 'its pure form' which he associates with Susanne Howe's earlier definition that the *Bildungsroman* is 'the "novel of all-around development or self-culture" with "a more or less conscious attempt on the part of the hero to integrate his powers, to cultivate himself by his experience"' (qtd. in Buckley 13). Attempting to impose a 'pure form' onto the *Bildungsroman* is inherently problematic and I will demonstrate how Buckley and Howe's classification only allows for the participation of a male protagonist within very limited boundaries.

Apart from his examination of George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), Buckley devotes the majority of his study to *Bildungsromane* that were specifically written by men, and deal with male protagonists, during the nineteenth and twentieth century.³ He believes the typical *Bildungsroman* hero is usually introduced in the narrative as a 'child of some sensibility' who is reared in the country where 'he' discovers that 'social and intellectual' restrictions have

³ Buckley briefly mentions Richardson's *Pilgrimage* and Sinclair's *Mary Olivier: A Life* in his discussion of twentieth-century *Bildungsromane*, but he argues that *Pilgrimage* is hardly a *Bildungsroman*, for Miriam develops very little in the endless process of savoring impressions from the time we first meet her in her late teens til we leave her, many volumes later, in her solitary sensitive middle age' (255). He considers *Mary Olivier: A Life* a slightly more successful attempt at fulfilling the requirements of the genre, though he maintains that Sinclair's 'story, in which there is little physical action, is [more] psychological in substance as well as technique' (257). His analysis of these two texts suggests they fail to fulfil the necessary requirements of the traditional *Bildungsroman* narrative.

been ‘placed upon [his] free imagination’ (17). ‘His family, especially his father,’ fails to comprehend ‘his creative instincts’, and ‘his’ initiation into the educational system is usually one defined by disappointment—for it reveals to the hero ‘options not available to him in his present setting’ (17). As a result, the protagonist abandons the ‘repressive atmosphere of home’ for the city and, upon arriving in the metropolis—typically London for English narratives—the ‘real “education” begins’ following ‘his direct experience of urban life’ (17). Various adventures lead to ‘at least two love affairs or sexual encounters, one debasing, one exalting, and demands that in this respect and others the hero reappraises his values’ (17). Finally, Buckley asserts that it is only when the protagonist resolves, ‘after painful soul-searching’, what his contribution to the modern world will now be that the hero has now ‘left his adolescence behind’ (17).

Buckley’s argument for a pure interpretation of the traditional *Bildungsroman* plot, which centres around a specifically male experience of development, implies that any narrative which presents an alternative version of training and growth is considered impure and should not be recognised as an acceptable representation of the genre. This automatically debars female protagonists from being identified as *Bildungsroman* heroines for female writers of the period were unable to allow their female protagonists the same equal movements and freedom in their novels as their male counterparts. Some literary heroines like Jane Eyre in *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Lucy Snowe in *Villette* (1853) actively seek out training and employment as governesses and teachers, but the majority of women had very limited access to the public sphere and choice in vocation outside of their domestic responsibilities. Moreover, Buckley’s requirement that the *Bildungsroman* protagonist experience a minimum of two sexual encounters completely excludes women from participating in the genre during the Victorian period, for middle- and upper-class women were expected to embody the repressive attributes of the Victorian Angel in the House and seek roles within the home which fulfilled the cult of domesticity as wives and

mothers. Consequently, novels like Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817), Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899) are rejected because of their perceived failures to fulfil the necessary requirements of the genre. I will discuss later how even in the twentieth-century female *Künstlerroman* the stigma associated with women's sexuality and development beyond the domestic sphere remained problematic in female narratives, and modernist women writers attempted to transcend these stereotypes with their presentation of female sexual and artistic awakenings outside these oppressive constraints of domesticity.

In contrast to Buckley, Franco Moretti's *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (1987) does not reinforce Buckley's patriarchal schema and loosens the definition to include women's experiences with his discussion of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1874). He observes how the genre evolved throughout the nineteenth century, specifically, its transformation from the 'classical *Bildungsroman*' of the Weimar classicists into a new interpretation sometime around the middle of the century (17). He does prescribe a formula onto the classical *Bildungsroman*, although his requirements for the genre are less restrictive than Buckley's. Moretti maintains that, at the closing stages of the classical *Bildungsroman*, the protagonist 'either marries or, in one way or another, must leave social life' (23). He contends that marriage in the late-eighteenth century was representative of 'a new type of *social contract*' which was based upon a 'sense of "individual obligation"' to the state (23). His argument that ideologies of nationhood and marriage are intertwined is familiar in feminist criticism, especially in regards to women's national responsibility to continue the British race through motherhood.⁴ Moretti's condition that either marriage or some form of exile functions as a necessary element to the narrative's conclusion enables female protagonists the chance for a more equal form of participation in the classical

⁴ See Jane Garrity, *Step-daughters of England: British women modernists and the national imaginary* (2003) and Jane Eldridge Miller, *Rebel Women: Feminism, Modernism and the Edwardian Novel* (1994).

Bildungsroman. This, perhaps, is one reason why quite a few nineteenth-century female *Bildungsromane* like *Pride and Prejudice*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion* (1818), and *Jane Eyre* utilise the courtship plot and conclude their narratives with a marriage. But this does not suggest that women writers only draw upon the happy ending of the courtship plot to participate in the genre. Maggie Tulliver in Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* and Edna Pontellier in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* are two protagonists who die at the end of the narrative. While Moretti has undoubtedly recognised a trend in many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century *Bildungsromane*, not all narratives necessarily fulfilled his two conditions of marriage or exile. For example, Charlotte Brontë leaves the ending of *Villette* ambiguous as to whether Lucy Snowe's fiancé, M. Paul Emanuel, dies, but Lucy's wish to allow her readers the chance to 'picture union and a happy succeeding life' strongly implies that he did perish in the shipwreck and this subsequently leaves Lucy free to continue in her duties as headmistress at her boarding school (546).

Moretti argues that it was not until the mid- to late-nineteenth century that an alternative interpretation of the genre appeared in literature and signalled a shift in the social contract between the individual and society wherein the protagonist's relationship to politics, work and culture had a more influential role in his social formation. The previous 'single course' of marriage found in the classical *Bildungsroman* was no longer an accurate representation of the social pact between the individual and society and, as a result, 'individual autonomy' and 'social integration' evolved into 'incompatible choices' for the *Bildungsroman* hero (Moretti 80). The novels produced during the mid- to late-Victorian period no longer present the protagonist's growth into "maturity" [...] as an acquisition, but as a loss', for one's socialisation during the period requires the protagonist to sacrifice his youthful fantasies in order to fully assimilate into society (90-1). While considered a more negative depiction of

society and reality, Moretti suggests this new representation of one's social formation is what makes the new *Bildungsroman* more successful in the literary marketplace than its previous form.

Like Buckley, Moretti examines mostly male-authored texts of the period, though his critical discussion of George Eliot's novels and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* allows for a female presence in the traditional male canon. While he maintains Austen's novel fulfils the requirements of the classical *Bildungsroman* in a similar vein to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, he boldly suggests that Eliot's *Middlemarch* 'bring[s] the genre to its natural conclusion' in both the English and Continental traditions (214). He believes *Middlemarch* is the only English *Bildungsroman* to truly examine the principal theme associated with the European variant—'failure'—specifically 'the failure of one's "vocation"' as seen in Dorothea Brooke's literary endeavours, Dr. Tertius Lydgate's financial woes and Will Ladislaw's inability to maintain a constant profession (216). He argues *Middlemarch* is 'the greatest English novel of the century' because of its engagement with 'the conflict *between modernity and tradition*: urban culture and provincial life, *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*, abstract vocation and everyday viscosity' (220). Interestingly, from the moment female interpretations began to appear, and be accepted, in the English tradition, the genre concludes. He maintains that the reason for the genre's failure to appear in the twentieth century is a consequence of the First World War and, while Moretti's argument that the 'disappearance of the novel of youth' coincided with the Lost Generation of the Great War is compelling, it once again reasserts men's control over the fate and status of the genre (229). Despite Moretti's claim, theorists like Buckley, Castle and Saunders recognise the *Bildungsroman's* continued presence in contemporary literature and disagree with Moretti's declaration that the First World War offered 'the final act in a longer process—the cosmic coup de grâce to a genre that, at the turn of the century, was already doomed' (229-30).

One such publication that reasserts the genre's influence and continued strength in nineteenth-century literature is Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's groundbreaking publication,

The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination (1979), which also happens to be the first critical study to offer a more comprehensive examination of the female *Bildungsroman*. Unlike Buckley and Moretti's monographs, *The Madwoman in the Attic* is not concerned solely with the *Bildungsroman*, although discussion of the genre appears repeatedly throughout their survey of nineteenth-century female narratives.⁵ One of the main arguments located in *The Madwoman in the Attic* is that, at the close of the eighteenth century, women not only had a more active presence in the literary marketplace, 'they were conceiving fictional worlds in which patriarchal images and conventions were severely, radically revised' (44). The *Bildungsroman* was such genre which was dramatically transformed during this innovative period of female authorship.

Gilbert and Gubar's examination of the nineteenth-century female *Bildungsroman* begins with Jane Austen's posthumously published novel, *Northanger Abbey*, and they subsequently explore Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, *Villette* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. They suggest *Northanger Abbey* is actually a narrative hybrid which reinterprets two genres—the traditional gothic as well as the *Bildungsroman* (128, 135). As a female narrative it is additionally defined as a 'status-deprived genre' because the protagonist, Catherine Moreland, is a woman and is thus 'associated with a status-deprived gender' (131). Following this argument, all nineteenth-century female *Bildungsromane* are 'status deprived' and Gilbert and Gubar examine how women writers overcame this perception of female deficiency, challenged the male tradition and engaged with the genre in an entirely different way. They argue that authors like Austen and the Brontës were, expectedly, working against social disadvantages such as 'miseducation' and 'culturally conditioned ignorance' but, regardless of such constraints, Austen was adamant that Catherine Moreland was 'born to be a heroine' (Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman* 134; Austen,

⁵ Interestingly, Gilbert and Gubar published their text nearly a decade before Moretti's *Way of the World*, but he failed to further examine the female variant of the genre and he does not mention *The Madwoman in the Attic's* contribution to *Bildungsroman* studies.

Northanger Abbey 15). She ensures her protagonist's success through her reconfiguration of the traditional *Bildungsroman* narrative with the incorporation of gothic tropes and motifs and, by the novel's end, Catherine successfully develops from adolescence into womanhood and destabilises the tyrannical patriarchy which previously imprisoned her as she 'penetrates the secrets of the Abbey' (Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman* 135). Despite this newfound independence as a *Bildungsroman* heroine, Gilbert and Gubar argue that nineteenth-century female protagonists like Catherine cannot retain this sense of autonomy at the conclusion of the narrative for fear of being perceived as a 'monster' (142). Following this argument, female *Bildungsromane* are unable to evolve past the classical interpretation of the genre for the female protagonist must either marry, and fulfil her domestic responsibility as the Victorian Angel in the House, or be exiled from society and be labelled a rebellious, monstrous woman.

While Gilbert and Gubar commence their examination of the genre with *Northanger Abbey*, the majority of their discussion about the female *Bildungsroman* centres on Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. They maintain Brontë's novel is an obvious *Bildungsroman* and in their examination of the text they maintain Brontë's reinterpretation of the genre is fundamentally concerned with how effectively Jane handles, and eventually conquers, the restrictions placed upon her as a woman in nineteenth-century British society. Like Austen's previous novels, Brontë does conclude *Jane Eyre* with a marriage but, in contrast, Jane is not 'saved' by her marriage. An unconventional heroine, Jane actively seeks employment throughout the novel as both a governess and a teacher, and her rejection of St. John River's proposal to join him in India as a missionary's wife initially sets Jane's path for one of exile from the domestic sphere and the typical happy ending associated with the courtship plot of the classical *Bildungsroman*. Crucially, Jane does not want to be rescued from her life of work by St. John. While she does eventually marry Rochester, Gilbert and Gubar argue that, following an accident which blinds and disfigures Rochester, his newfound emasculation finally permits the union of these

previously separated lovers as they are now ‘equals’ who ‘can afford to depend upon each other with no fear of exploiting the other’ (*Madwoman* 369). As opposed to the traditional associations of marriage as a form of protection for women from society, Jane and Rochester safeguard each other on equal terms. In their discussion, Gilbert and Gubar do not disassociate the female *Bildungsroman* from its male counterpart, instead, they examine how nineteenth-century women writers reinterpreted the traditional themes and motifs associated with the genre. In their research, they revealed there was a strong female presence which was previously ignored within the genre and, consequently, *The Madwoman in the Attic* instigated a trend in feminist criticism during the 1980s and 90s which further examined the relationship between female interpretations of the genre with their male counterparts.

The editors of *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development* (1983), Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch and Elizabeth Langland are often noted for further exploring Gilbert and Gubar’s research in *Bildungsroman* studies, and they argue in their Introduction that gender ‘has not been assimilated as a pertinent category, despite the fact that the sex of the protagonist modifies every aspect of a particular *Bildungsroman*’ (5). They further maintain that an ‘alternative generic model’ is needed because women writers shift the terms and challenge the residual ideas concerning successful social formation (5). Throughout their Introduction, the editors of *The Voyage In* compare the traditional ‘narrative patterns’ of the male *Bildungsroman* with how women’s very different experiences of development are expressed in women’s fiction (11). The editors recognise that the traditional male *Bildungsroman* often follows a relatively linear presentation of a male protagonist’s apprenticeship and social integration from adolescence to adulthood, and they maintain representations of female development can deviate from this sequential plot convention (12). When the narrative follows the chronological plot of the traditional male *Bildungsroman* it almost always contains ‘narrative tensions’ wherein ‘the female protagonist or *Bildungsbeld* must chart a treacherous course between the penalties of

expressing sexuality and suppressing it, between the cost of inner concentration and direct confrontation with society, between the price of succumbing to maleness and of grasping a repressive “normality” (12-13).

Like Moretti, the editors of *The Voyage In* believe the male *Bildungsroman* has reached its natural conclusion in literature, though they suggest this occurred in the mid-twentieth century, though they argue that second-wave feminism and ‘[w]omen’s increased sense of freedom’ in society has allowed the female *Bildungsroman* to continue to develop and, consequently, it is finally beginning to maintain a place within *Bildungsroman* studies which is equal to the male interpretation of the genre (13). Like *The Madwoman in the Attic*, *The Voyage In* was a foundational text in feminist and *Bildungsroman* studies and many theorists answered the editor’s call to approach women’s narratives under new guidelines. Susan Fraiman’s *Unbecoming Women: British Women Writers and the Novel of Development* (1993) examines the problematic concept of the term, ‘female *Bildungsroman*’, and she suggests that ‘uncoupling these two terms’ will ‘release our discussion of female developmental fiction from so much Goethean baggage and relinquish the appeal to any single authoritative text’ (13). While I agree the generic term is burdened with preconceived ideas concerning institutional definitions of masculine development, what Fraiman is proposing is an examination of female novels of development without any reference to the influence of their male predecessors. Her wish to separate the female interpretation from the historical dialogue is not what the editors of *The Voyage In* were hoping to achieve in their study, for they believed the *Bildungsroman* is a genre renowned for its diverse critical discourse and they suggest ‘[c]ontinuity, as well as significant difference,’ is necessary to the genre’s evolution (13). Redefining the female *Bildungsroman* as a ‘novel of awakening’ (Rosowski 49) or as ‘female developmental fiction’ (Fraiman 143) situates these narratives as the Other within *Bildungsroman* studies. To try and erase the patriarchal history associated with the *Bildungsroman* with this refusal to acknowledge its presence ignores how

women challenged these masculine definitions of feminine development and women's changing roles within the public sphere.

Lorna Ellis's publication, *Appearing to Diminish: Female Development and the British Bildungsroman, 1750-1850* (1999), addresses the issues that arise in this specifically feminist approach when it is more concerned with 'women's "development"' rather than the genre itself and, consequently, she maintains critical studies like Fraiman's divide 'novels about women from novels about men, and thus also from the traditional *Bildungsroman*' (8). She further argues that this created conflict 'overlooks the striking similarities between *Bildungsromane*' (15). Ellis wishes to explore 'the *Bildungsroman* framework to see how it does and does not fit in novels about women' and how nineteenth-century women writers were forced to work within different constraints as their male contemporaries (8). This argument is crucial to my own examination of the modernist female *Künstlerroman*, and Ellis successfully presents a gendered reading of female *Bildungsromane* which interacts with the previous discourse concerning the traditional, male narrative.

Theorists in the past few years have more successfully merged male and female *Bildungsroman* criticism in single volumes of study, and Gregory Castle's *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* (2006) is such a monograph which attempts to analyse the narrative form as a heterogeneous entity which transgresses gender binaries. Castle disagrees with Moretti's claim the genre died in the nineteenth century, and he believes the modernist *Bildungsroman* continued the Victorian theme of failure. Castle maintains his study 'sets out to understand failure' and 'to discover how this failure signals a successful resistance to the institutionalization of self-cultivation (*Bildung*)' (1). His argument that modernist writers challenged institutional definitions and connotations of development is crucial to my own study of the female *Künstlerroman*, for I maintain Woolf, Richardson, Sinclair and Sackville-West confront the patriarchal associations of masculinity with creativity in their presentations of the woman artist.

Castle questions whether a *Bildungsroman* protagonist ‘dissents from that tradition’ and if it ‘is possible that dissent can propel the genre towards new modes of expression and new modes of inharmonious but *achieved* development’ (4). Such questions directly allude to some of the more radical interpretations of the genre found in nineteenth-century female *Bildungsromane* like Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* and George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss* and, moreover, they reflect many of the issues found in the modernist female *Künstlerroman*.

Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman additionally examines the relationship between genres, and how the *Bildungsroman* often transcends the barrier which separates it from the *Künstlerroman*, for the majority of these studies acknowledges there is a sense of fluidity between the two genres. In *Season of Youth*, Buckley locates the relationship between these two genres in the Enlightenment concept of *Bildung*, for it relates ‘to *Bild* and *Bildnis*,’ which denotes ““picture” or “portrait” as well as “shaping” or “formation” (13-14). Consequently, he argues ‘the *Bildungsroman* may then typically become what Joyce’s title promises, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*’ and ‘a study of the inner life the essential temper, of the artist in his progress from early childhood through adolescence’ (14). Castle too admits Joyce’s narrative can be identified with both traditions, but what is interesting about this claim for generic flexibility is that neither Buckley or Castle correlate this same interchangeability with nineteenth- and twentieth-century female *Bildungsromane* when they clearly share many of the *Künstlerroman*’s themes. Miriam Hirsch argues that Victorian female *Bildungsromane* ‘follow to a point the pattern of the *Künstlerroman* of the young artist’s withdrawal into the inner life’ though, unlike male artist-protagonists, ‘a retreat into the inner life leads to an organized creativity that is inconceivable’ for artist-heroines (46). This inability to accept female creativity and artistic development as a possible achievement during the nineteenth century is a consequence of masculinist ideals which aim to constrain women’s experiences in the domestic sphere. Hirsch reinforces the belief that the twentieth-century *Künstlerroman*, much like the

nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman*, is a predominantly masculine form which female authors are barred from experimenting with. The lack of criticism surrounding the female *Künstlerroman* signifies the enduring obstacles women artists were forced to overcome in both nineteenth- and twentieth-century society, and I wish to explore how modernist women writers like Woolf, Richardson, Sinclair and Sackville-West engaged with the *Künstlerroman* and challenged these oppressive, and enduring, patriarchal definitions of female creativity and artistic development.

Artistic Autonomy in the Modernist Female Künstlerroman

Similar to *Bildungsroman* criticism, the *Künstlerroman*'s definition is often simplified as a novel of development which focuses primarily on the protagonist's *artistic* coming of age but, unlike the comprehensive studies of the nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman*, there is a lack of critical discussion about the *Künstlerroman* within genre studies. Existing criticism tends, again, to focus on specifically male writers and protagonists and, similar to Buckley's study, Maurice Beebe's *Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts: The Artist Hero in Fiction from Goethe to Joyce* (1964), is often identified as the foundational text in *Künstlerroman* studies and is renowned for its overtly patriarchal agenda in presenting the genre's history and impact on literature.

In his Introduction, Beebe initially lists quite a loose set of requirements which allows the *Künstlerroman* protagonist to achieve artistic fulfilment. He states that he is 'using the term "artist" to mean anyone capable of creating works of art, whether literary, musical or visual. In fact, actual production is not a requirement for the artist-hero' (v). He further maintains that some of the characters under discussion in his study 'are only potential artists, and a few are not identified as artists as all, though they are obvious surrogates of their authors' (v). Ignoring for a moment the gender-specific mention of the male artist-hero, Beebe's definition for artistic development and fulfilment superficially appears to allow for the inclusion of women artists. His focus on 'potential' and the creative process, rather than professionalisation and

production would suggest a widening of the traditional, male-centred canon of *Künstlerromane*. Despite this early claim for flexibility in his definition of the traditional *Künstlerroman* artist-protagonist, Beebe immediately contradicts this argument with his contention that ‘the hero of the artist-novel may be a sculptor or a composer’, but ‘as self-portrait of his creator he is always a writer, it is apparent that “the artist” in established fiction is always a literary man’ (v). Throughout *Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts*, Beebe examines only male *Künstlerromane*, and he has a specific interest in four authors in particular: Honoré de Balzac, Henry James, Marcel Proust and James Joyce, whom Beebe believes is ‘the writer who brought the artist-novel tradition to a climax by achieving the most impressive synthesis of its basic themes’ (vi). Much like Moretti’s argument that the *Bildungsroman*’s eventual decline occurred following *Middlemarch*’s publication, Beebe believes the *Künstlerroman* could no longer evolve after Joyce’s novel. Interestingly, Beebe chooses one of the more ambiguous presentations of the artist-hero to represent the ultimate *Künstlerroman* narrative, for *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* fulfils Beebe’s earlier definition of artistry with Joyce’s examination of Stephen Dedalus’s artistic consciousness and participation in the creative process. His choice in artist-hero becomes problematic when artist-heroines like Rachel Vinrace in *The Voyage Out*, Miriam Henderson in *Pilgrimage*, Mary Olivier in *Mary Olivier: A Life* and Lady Slane in *All Passion Spent* share many of Stephen’s characteristics and potential as artists. Therefore, Beebe’s refusal to acknowledge a presence of women artists in the *Künstlerroman* tradition who engage with similar ideas and themes as Joyce reinforces the enduring associations between creativity and masculinity.

Beebe maintains the portrait-of-the-artist narrative is invaluable to literary studies because it reveals aspects about the novelist to the reader, much like a memoir or personal diary, although he argues the *Künstlerroman* narrative can, at times, be more illuminating than these more formal, biographical genres as ‘writers frequently tell more about their true selves

and convictions under the guise of fiction than they will confess publically' (5).⁶ Moreover, he argues the 'cumulative impact' of the genre facilitates a better comprehension of, and sympathy towards, the figure of the artist as particular beliefs and themes which initially appear 'eccentric or special in an individual portrait of the artist take on added significance' as they are continuously reasserted in succeeding *Künstlerromane* (5). This idea that portrait-of-the-artist narratives recycle certain ideologies about the development and cultural worth of the artist-hero is a consequence of the genre's masculine agenda. His primary argument throughout his study is that the typical *Künstlerroman* narrative is composed of 'three interlocking themes: the Divided Self, the Ivory Tower, and the Sacred Fount' (6). According to Beebe, the fundamental theme of the genre is that the artist-hero is a 'divided being, man *and* artist' (6). He further isolates these two selves by associating the carnal, 'normal appetites and desires' of men with the hero's humanity whereas the 'detached', and 'creative spirit', whose only objective is the 'transcendence of life through creative effort', is identified with his psychological, artistic self (6). Beebe maintains this division between man and artist is a necessary requirement for 'the creative process' to begin (9). When presented in the *Künstlerroman* novel, Beebe argues the author situates this conflict between the artist's divided selves within two metaphorical traditions—the Sacred Fount and Ivory Tower. Near the end of his Introduction, Beebe reveals the importance of both themes to the narrative and the protagonist's artistic-development:

What I call the Sacred Fount tradition tends to equate art with experience and assumes that the true artist is one who lives not less, but more fully and intensely than others.

Within this tradition art is essentially the re-creation of experience. The Ivory Tower

⁶ Beebe is aware of the problems of associating fictional narratives with autobiography, and he does not suggest the two genres are interchangeable. Many *Künstlerromane* do contain particular events and elements which mirror the author's own life, but to become caught up with these autobiographical parallels often detracts from the work's larger meaning.

tradition, on the other hand, exalts art above life and insists that the artist can make use of life only if he stands aloof (13).

In addition to the interior, creative process, Beebe believes art can be born from one's experience of everyday reality, though of the two traditions, he associates a purer form of artistry with the Ivory Tower. He admits most *Künstlerromane* tend to favour one tradition over the other, and Beebe declares a portrait-of-the-artist narrative is most successful if it is able to negotiate these two themes equally—a feat he equates with Joyce's novel.

The remainder of Beebe's study delineates the *Künstlerroman's* historical lineage, beginning with the Romantics like Byron, and he eventually goes into his more specific examination of his four main novelists. His research explores important issues like psychology, psychoanalysis and aestheticism, but he refuses to incorporate any gender or feminist criticism into his study. Besides a brief commentary about George Sand's *Consuelo* (1842), a novel about a gypsy singer and her adventures, he maintains it is more of an '[a]rt novel, historical romance and *Bildungsroman*' rather than a *Künstlerroman* (76). Because *Consuelo* is a novel about a gypsy singer, it reflects a 'romantic tradition' wherein the artist-protagonist is considered 'a wanderer' or 'Bohemian', and Beebe argues Sand's narrative does not engage with the Ivory Tower tradition (76). He maintains such novels which deal with 'Bohemia' reflect a preference for 'the gay company of the café' and are invested solely in the Sacred Fount tradition (77). *Consuelo* was popular throughout the nineteenth century, though Beebe suggests such Bohemian narratives do not present 'genuine portrait of the artist' narratives because they reinforced 'the middle-class conception of the artist as a naughty, sometimes even dirty "foreigner"' which further promoted a fear and distrust of the artist-figure in society (78-9). Unsurprisingly, Beebe's one discussion of a female text only reasserts its status as a *Bildungsroman* narrative and reinforces the belief that the *Künstlerroman* is strictly male territory.

Following this philosophy, Beebe argues ‘the Sacred Fount theme is most often expressed in terms of the artist’s relationship to women’, usually a sexual one, which has the potential to destroy the artist-hero (18). While the artist of the Ivory Tower tradition abstains from such passions, the artist of the Sacred Fount tradition ‘feels he cannot function without love’ and ‘must have romantic fulfillment to produce’ art even if each relationship has the potential to facilitate his destruction (18). In most *Künstlerromane* the male artist-hero is often ‘forced to choose between women and vocation, and only rarely does he achieve fulfillment as both artist and lover’ and, thus, these narratives present artistic fulfillment and love as mutually exclusive ideas (97). Consequently, women are not only lacking in creative and artistic potential, but their presence is inimical to the male artist. This theme also recurs in female *Künstlerromane*, as there is a prevalent antagonism between domesticity and creativity as female protagonists are often forced to choose between marriage and their art. Moreover, women writers during the modernist period were constantly subverting the courtship plot, wherein ‘heroines are no longer seduced and betrayed by illicit love, they are routinely ruined by licit love’ (Huf 158). Romance, marriage and the domestic responsibilities which follow ultimately suppress their artistic fulfillment.

Unlike the *Bildungsroman*’s abundant critical publications, not many theorists took an interest in *Künstlerroman* studies after Beebe’s publication. Roberta Seret’s *Voyage Into Creativity: The Modern Künstlerroman* (1992) does continue where Beebe left off, though she argues that, in order to reach the ‘creative homeland’ that is his art, ‘the artist must first voyage through several stages of development: spiritual, social, and psychological’ (1). Like Beebe, Seret maintains the male artist is trapped between conflicting selves, and she believes he participates in two forms of development—social and psychological. The artist-protagonist’s social formation forces him to take up a position as either a participant in, or observer of, life’s ‘[e]xternal influences’, such as, ‘family, religion, and country’, and it is ‘his inability to

communicate with humanity and his indifference to participate in society' which defines him as an artist and subsequently isolates him from the community (1). During his psychological evolution, the artist-hero is confronted with 'a series of opposing forces, conflicts of existing values, and ambiguities of ideals and reality' and, ultimately, 'life becomes a quest to define and an individuality to express' (1). Consequently, the artist-hero in the modern *Künstlerroman* does not achieve artistic fulfilment until he 'voyages' through these various stages of life. Like Beebe, Seret's critical discussion examines exclusively male *Künstlerromane*, though she does mention the existence of women artists in her Conclusion: 'The creative individual, female or male, romantic or modern, voyages into the secret realms of creativity with the desire to overcome contrasting states of reality and imagination, to reconcile chaos with beauty' (151-2). One questions why she does not incorporate female *Künstlerromane* into her discussion if she recognises that women artists have the potential to negotiate these same conflicts of the self and reality as men.

Beebe and Seret's monographs are the two most comprehensive studies which discuss the male *Künstlerroman* narrative, but following the advent of second-wave feminism, new research began to appear which specifically examined the female interpretation of the genre. Such examples are Rachel DuPlessis' chapter, 'To "bear my mother's name" *Künstlerromane* by Women Writers', which appears in her feminist publication, *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (1985). DuPlessis examines the woman artist's conflict between her 'designated role' as wife and mother and her desire for a 'meaningful vocation' outside the domestic sphere as an artist (84). She examines both nineteenth- and twentieth-century interpretations of the genre and looks at such texts as Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1856), Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, Sackville-West's *All Passion Spent* and other novels which appear in the latter half of the twentieth-century. She argues the conflict in nineteenth-century *Künstlerromane* is located in the

dichotomy between a woman's domestic duties and her desire for artistic fulfilment, and in most of these narratives the artist-heroine sacrifices her artistry for marriage and motherhood—a theme which still dominated the modernist female *Künstlerroman*. She argues twentieth-century writers explore how the woman artist fulfils 'the thwarted parent's task' found in the narratives of their Victorian predecessors (94). This 'thwarted parent' is usually the artist-heroine's mother, though DuPlessis suggests both the mother and daughter figures can be 'displaced by some generations', as seen in Sackville-West's *All Passion Spent*, 'or are not the biological daughters of the mothers they seek' (98-9). Ultimately DuPlessis argues the nineteenth-century artist-heroine's struggle between the domestic sphere and artistic autonomy is solved in the twentieth-century *Künstlerroman* wherein the completed art object 'has a poetics of domestic value—nurturance, community building, inclusiveness, empathetic care' and 'functions as a labor of love, a continuation of the artisanal impulse of a thwarted parent, an emotional gift for family, child, self, or others' (103, 104). Located in DuPlessis's argument is the possibility that women's creative endeavours challenge the dominant ideology of artistic fulfilment and masculine connotations of artistry with their creation of distinctly feminine art objects.

Another important essay in feminist *Künstlerroman* studies is Susan Gubar's 'The Birth of the Artist as Heroine: (Re)production, the *Künstlerroman* Tradition, and the Fiction of Katherine Mansfield' (1983). Gubar explores how 'nineteenth-century women novelists exploit the artist-character to explain why women cannot sculpt or paint or write' and must, instead, produce children (26). She maintains that, throughout the modernist period, women writers 'did produce recognizable *Künstlerromane*' which have previously been ignored in genre studies (27). Gubar incorporates a variety of texts, such as Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, Willa Cather's *The Song of the Lark* (1915) and Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, into her discussion about the literary significance of the reproductive metaphor wherein these narratives offer a reply to 'the

contexts of our culture that either appropriate the birth metaphor to legitimize the “brain children” of men or, even more destructively, those arguments which ‘inscribe female creativity in the womb’ (16). She examines texts which radically redefine ‘the struggle of creative transcendence’ outside the domestic sphere through the artist-heroine’s rejection of marriage and motherhood for artistic autonomy (49). While DuPlessis and Gubar include a variety of female *Künstlerromane* into their discussion—often combining American, British and European examples—other critical publications tend to examine more specific female interpretations of the genre. For example, Linda Huff’s edited volume, *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman; The Writer in American Literature* (1983), examines Anglo-American and African American writers who worked within a different tradition than the British and European female *Künstlerroman*. Another example is Evy Varasampoulous’ study, *The Poetics of the Künstlerroman and the Aesthetics of the Sublime* (2002), which aims to create a gendered, separatist movement within genre studies and, in a similar vein to Fraiman, Varasampoulous suggests redefining the female *Künstlerroman* as the ‘*Künstlerinroman*’ (x). While this reiterates the same problems of separating male and female narratives within genre studies, Varasampoulous’ research is innovative in her discussion of the sublime within portrait-of-the-artist narratives, but her request for gender segregation hinders feminist studies of the genre.

While these brief explorations of the female *Künstlerroman* which appear as essays in collected volumes or journals are helpful in their examinations of specific authors, themes and national traditions, their limited framework does not compare to the depth of Beebe and Seret’s more comprehensive studies of the male *Künstlerroman*. The only feminist critical study which attempts to catalogue a historical lineage of female *Künstlerromane*, and twentieth-century women writers’s radical responses to the male interpretations of the genre, are Grace Stewart’s *A New Mythos: The Novel of the Artist as Heroine (1877-1977)* (1979) and Suzanne Jones’ edited

volume of essays, *Writing the Woman Artist: Essays on Poetics, Politics and Portraiture* (1991).⁷ Stewart's examination of nineteenth- and twentieth-century *Künstlerromane* is a direct response to Beebe's patriarchal study and, while she only incorporates female narratives in her survey, including many discussed here, Stewart acknowledges the existence of a masculine mythic tradition and its influence on women writers. She admits in *A New Mythos* that she does not want to 'foster a separatist movement' which promotes gender segregation within literary studies, though she does recognise the 'burden' women writers face when working with the mythic tradition established by men (182; i).

Her study is predominantly focused upon how women writers formulate their portrait-of-the-artist narratives and, consequently, how they 'treat certain existing myths and mythic images' in their interpretations of genre (i). She maintains that the female *Künstlerroman* radically redefines 'the mythic pattern' associated with the traditional male variants of the genre, and she wishes to integrate these two traditions within one discourse of *Künstlerroman* studies (i). For example, while the artist-hero is able to 'identify with traditional heroes like Faust without jeopardizing his self-image or his sexual identity', Stewart believes the artist-heroine 'is hampered by the heritage of patriarchal myths in a society which arbitrarily excludes her from various experiences, sets her on a pedestal or in a pigsty, and otherwise causes ambivalence about her self-image whether she follows its traditions or rejects the "heroizing" of its myths' (40). She suggests in her Preface that women writers do 'operat[e] in the tradition of patriarchal myth', such as Goethe's *Faust* (1832), but she also argues women create 'matrifocal myth[s]' which are born from patriarchal and institutional conventions, although their 'concerns and issues are feminine' (ii). One such example of the matrifocal myth is Persephone/Demeter myth, for '[t]he mother/daughter relationship is often central' to the female *Künstlerroman* narrative (40). The traditional tale revolves around Demeter and the sacrifice of her daughter,

⁷ Jones' edited volume attempts to address the gap in research following Stewart's publication into the early 1990s.

Persephone, to Hades, and the story ultimately situates Persephone as ‘a pawn’ and ‘a victim of rape’ and ‘motherhood as a consequence of that act’ (49). According to Stewart, the modernist female *Künstlerroman* reinvents this myth and grants the daughter-figure autonomy over this act as she attempts to gain her independence and decide her own fate. Nevertheless, ‘as a woman, a choice of sacrifices remains the female writer’s fate’—whether she renounces her artistic vocation or her chance at marriage and motherhood—and Stewart examines how such *Künstlerromane* like Sinclair’s *Mary Olivier: A Life* and Richardson’s *Pilgrimage* negotiate this issue in their narratives (50). Stewart discusses other myths and incorporates various female narratives to her discussion and, even though *A New Mythos* is useful and innovative in its critical analysis of the female *Künstlerroman*, its psychological and gender research is significantly dated. Most of Stewart’s secondary sources were published between the 1940s and 70s, and there have been significant advances in feminist, psychological and psychoanalytic study since its publication in 1979.

Despite the text’s antiquated supplementary resources, one of Stewart’s crucial conclusions about the portrait-of-the-artist narrative reflects Gilbert and Gubar’s own influential thesis about women’s relationship to creativity in *Madwoman in the Attic*. Woolf declared in her essay, ‘Professions for Women’ [*n.d.*], that ‘[k]illing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of the woman writer’ at the turn of the century (E6 481), but Gilbert and Gubar maintain that it is not enough to transcend society’s repressive ideal, for the woman writer must additionally kill ‘the angel’s necessary opposite and double, the “monster” in the house, whose Medusa-face also kills female creativity’ (*Madwoman* 17).⁸ Written at the same time as *Madwoman in the Attic*, Stewart argues that:

⁸ Woolf’s essay is a revised version of her ‘Speech to the London and National Society for Women’s Service’ which was given on 21 January 1931 (E6 484fn). A transcription of the original speech was published in *The Pargiters* (1978), the posthumously published manuscript version of the 1880 section of *The Years* (1937) (xxvii-xliv).

A woman who wants to voice her feelings and declare her presence must create herself anew, just as the male artist has recreated himself in the myth of the birth of the hero. Unfortunately, when the female artist tries during her journey to the interior to create the myth of the artist as heroine, she usually miscarries, aborts, or gives birth to a monster (177).

Stewart is still using a discourse which is focused upon the issues of motherhood and reproduction, for the created art object acts as a substitute for a child and, consequently, her examination of women's artistic fulfilment is biologically coded and still defined by society's expectations of domestic, feminine women. Moreover, because Stewart is working within the tradition of patriarchal myths and traditions, this perception of the creative woman as a monster is ultimately influenced by masculine discourse which associates any deviation from the cult of domesticity as rebellious or monstrous. While Gilbert and Gubar maintain women writers must overcome these patriarchal, oppressive stereotypes, Stewart argues women writers need to embrace the matrifocal, 'new mythos' interpretation, wherein during 'the birth of the artist as heroine' the woman artist must recognise her creative 'offspring, no matter how ugly or weak' (178). I disagree with Stewart's acceptance of these masculine definitions of female creativity as monstrous, and I maintain that modernist women writers challenged these debilitating stereotypes which aim to define women and their artistic endeavours in such negative ways.

Crossing Thresholds: Women's Artistic Pursuits in the Twentieth Century

In my examination of the female *Künstlerroman* and the figure of the woman artist I'm looking specifically at the artistic development of a female musician, novelist, poet and painter, but this does not suggest that women singers, sculptors and dancers did not appear in *Künstlerromane* during the modernist period. Jean Rhys's novel, *Voyage in the Dark* (1934), for

example, examines the professional role and livelihood of a female dancer in her depiction of chorus girl Anna Morgan while Gale Wilhelm's *We Too Are Drifting* (1935) is concerned with the lesbian relationship between a sculptor, Jan Morale, and a recently engaged girl, Victoria. Additionally, Willa Cather's *Song of the Lark* focuses on the training and many accomplishments of an aspiring singer, Thea Kronborg, as well as the many sacrifices she makes to achieve artistic fulfillment. Moreover, because the authors under discussion are all white, English, and living, for the majority of their writing careers, in England, I shall focus my discussion on the English female *Künstlerroman* rather than include examples from different traditions—postcolonial, Caribbean, Australian, and American—such as Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark*, Christina Stead's *For Love Alone* (1945), and Cather's *Song of the Lark*. For this project, my discussion of Woolf's *The Voyage Out*, Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, Sinclair's *Mary Olivier: A Life* and Sackville-West's *All Passion Spent* presents four case studies which explore the artistic development of the specific professions mentioned above during a particularly charged moment in British history. Despite being written during either the First World War or the interwar years, all of these novels look back upon a pre-war moment as they set their narratives at the turn of the century or in the Edwardian period. The London art scene experienced a series of transformations throughout this period with the formation of the Bloomsbury Group, the London debut of Diaghilev's Ballet Russes in 1909 at the London Coliseum and their later performances of Igor Stravinsky's *The Firebird* in 1910 and *The Rite of Spring* in 1913, the First and Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition in 1910 and 1912, and the opening of the Omega Workshops in 1913. Moreover, with the appearance of the New Woman in the 1890s, first-wave feminism and the Suffrage movement all occurring during this period, Woolf, Richardson, Sinclair and Sackville-West further suggest this was a transitional moment specifically for the woman artist to question the residual, oppressive discourse promoting the cult of domesticity and to assert her autonomy as an artist. Linda Nochlin argues in her essay,

'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists' (1971), that if a woman wants a 'career' in the art world, she is expected to possess 'a certain amount of unconventionality' and a 'good strong streak of rebellion' to succeed rather than accept the 'socially approved role of wife and mother' (169-70). The artist-heroines in the novels under discussion possess such traits associated with the New Woman and they question the compatibility of the life of the professional artist with wifehood and motherhood. Except for Lady Deborah Slane in Sackville-West's *All Passion Spent*, the other artist-heroines reject these domestic roles in favour of their creative pursuits. Woolf, Richardson, Sinclair and Sackville-West examine many of the same obstacles and issues concerning the development and role of the woman artist in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century and, moreover, they challenged many of the same institutional definitions and oppressive stereotypes associated with women and creativity and this is why their novels need to be read as *Künstlerromane* rather than *Bildungsromane*.

The identification of the woman artist as Other is familiar critical terrain in art history and literary criticism, for the 'art world[s] hostility to women' is borne out of a patriarchal discourse which, from the Renaissance onwards, repeatedly undermined women's capabilities as artists and excluded them from being accepted within various 'art world institutions' (Borzello 11, 8). Men have continuously defined women's association with the arts as an informal one—a hobby or diversion from their domestic responsibilities—but John Stuart Mill argues in *The Subjection of Women* (1869) there are reasons why 'women remain behind men' in the arts (212). He admits that ladies of 'the educated classes are almost universally taught more or less of some branch or other of the fine arts,' though they are not trained to 'gain their living or their social consequence by it' (211). This lack of professionalisation associated with women's writing, musical performance, composition and painting led Mill to declare that '[w]omen artists are all amateurs' (211, 212). In contrast to other arguments surrounding women's artistic pursuits as merely recreational, Mill believed women's inability to transcend

their amateur-status was a consequence of the period. Firstly, he argued that women in the nineteenth century were currently ‘still subdued by the influence of precedent and example’ defined by masculinist ideologies of creativity, and he suggested ‘it will take generations more, before their individuality is sufficiently developed to make head against that [male] influence’ (210). Secondly, he believed the other reason why women failed to reach the same level of recognition as male artists was because women lacked the same freedom to pursue their artistic passions. He argued ‘women have to satisfy great previous demands on them for things practical’ in the domestic sphere (212). While Mill understood there were oppressive societal constraints imposed upon women which inhibited their artistic development, his ideas and opinions were representative of a minority during the period. Nevertheless, his discussion of women’s creative pursuits and artistic potential suggests that, in time, they will be recognised as autonomous artists.

This denial of women’s artistic potential begins with the underlying connotation of the term ‘artist’, and Whitney Chadwick argues that the word itself ‘means man unless qualified by the category “woman”’ (28). While female painters, writers, musicians, composers and singers have steadily appeared throughout history, there is still a critical disposition to label and ‘exoticize the woman artist as an exception, and then paradoxically use her unique status as a weapon to undermine her achievement’ (28). Controlling who has access to proper education and training is one way of preventing women from attaining the same artistic status as men. Women painters, for example, were denied membership to national art academies like the British Royal Academy until 1861 and the *École des Beaux-Arts* until 1897, and consequently were forced to adapt and find alternative ‘routes to professionalism’ with private lessons and

group workshops, or *ateliers*, in an established male artist's studio (Borzello 142, 130).⁹ Vanessa Bell's early art education resembled this private form of instruction when, at the age of fifteen in 1896, she began her studies under the tutelage of the renowned portrait painter Sir Arthur Cope (Spalding 27). While Cope had connections with the Royal Academy Schools, many of his female students attended his school only for recreational purposes as they waited for a marriage proposal (28). Bell had serious artistic endeavours and in 1901 she was selected along with nineteen other students to attend the Painting School of the Royal Academy (40). Despite women's admission to these art establishments, they still encountered prejudice as they were barred from taking life drawing classes at the Royal Academy until 1893, for the general attitude of the public influenced how institutions structured their classes and women's interaction with the nude, especially the male nude, was considered a gross breach of social decorum (Borzello 143). By the time Bell entered the Painting School of the Royal Academy, women had been permitted to partake in life drawing classes for nearly a decade, though these courses were still taught separately by sex during Bell's period of study (Spalding 41). Nevertheless, despite these obstacles, some art historians like Frances Borzello and Nochlin prefer to focus on how women adapted to such sex discrimination while attending state institutions, and Borzello maintains the underlying significance of women's acceptance into the national academies 'was the offer of a free, structured, and fully rounded course of study' as well as 'the state's official acceptance of a woman's right to enter the profession' (145). Admission into these national establishments was a major step forward for the aspiring woman artist, yet sexism towards women's art prevailed in the community for 'hierarchie[s] of genres' and culturally conditioned stereotypes about women's creativity and role in the public sphere hindered their recognition as artists (Chadwick 38). For example, women were not instructed

⁹ Another renowned state school was the Slade School of the Art which was founded in 1871 by the University of London in direct response to the 'conservative teaching of the Royal Academy Schools' (Borzello 142). The school accepted both male and female students at its inception, and many of the courses allowed both men and women to study together which was unprecedented at the time (144). The painter, Dora Carrington, attended the Slade School from 1910 to 1914 and was a close associate of the Bloomsbury Group (Partridge).

to paint in ‘prestigious genres like history painting’ and, instead, they were expected to paint what was considered ‘naturally feminine’, such as children and domestic scenes (38, 41).

Female musicians experienced many of the same educational hardships as female painters and illustrators, for musical training was often taught in the safe confines of the drawing room and was considered a feminine accomplishment, rather than a professional goal, which improved a daughter’s marriageability within the upper and middle classes. While the Royal Academy of Music in London did accept the same number of male and female students at its inception in 1823, other conservatories, such as the German Leipzig Conservatorium (1843), only accepted women students under special circumstances.¹⁰ Once admitted, male and female students of both British and Continental institutions were segregated by sex and received separate instruction (Reich 100). Throughout the nineteenth century, the conservatories’ unofficial guidelines assumed female students were studying for the professional roles of concert performers and music instructors rather than conductors and composers and, as a result, women were denied entry into those specialised classes (Reich 100). Much like women painters, female composition students were forced to adapt to these various obstacles and they were traditionally taught privately, though by the latter half of the nineteenth century, conservatory training in orchestration and composition slowly began to accept women students in these courses (Reich 99). Despite this achievement in the classroom, Victorian and Edwardian discrimination prevailed, for male musicologists believed female composers were unable to ‘master complex orchestral scores and merit the authority to command a full, professional—and largely male—orchestra’ and, consequently, women were often denied these professional opportunities following graduation (Gillett 217). As Chadwick previously pointed out, women artists are often thought of as exceptions to the rules and only a few female composers and performers stand out against their male counterparts, such as,

¹⁰ Then called the Academy of Music in London, the conservatory would later be granted a royal charter in 1830 for its ‘national reputation’ in ‘serious study for both the performing and composing of music’ (Hyde 40).

Cécile Chaminade, Clara Schumann and Ethel Smyth, who is considered by musicologists to be ‘first “professional” woman composer in England’ (Hyde 138)

When compared to female musicians and painters, women writers have, perhaps, had the least amount of obstacles to overcome in their quest for acceptance and recognition in the public realm. Woolf explains why there is such a discrepancy between the woman writer and other artistic careers in her essay ‘Professions for Women’:

Writing was a reputable and harmless occupation. The family peace was not broken by the scratching of a pen. No demand was made upon the family purse. For ten and sixpence one can buy paper enough to write all the plays of Shakespeare—if one has a mind that way. Pianos and models, Paris, Vienna and Berlin, masters and mistresses, are not needed by the writer. The cheapness of writing paper is, of course, the reason why women have succeeded as writers before they have succeeded in the other professions’ (E6 479).

Moreover, she argues that, because of the literary success of such writers in the nineteenth century like the Brontës, Jane Austen and George Eliot, ‘the road was cut many years ago [...] making the path smooth’ for aspiring women writers to follow in the twentieth century (479). In her earlier essay, *A Room of One’s Own* (1929), Woolf argued there were two other requirements which are essential to the success of the woman writer—‘money and a room of her own’ (1). Much of her non-fiction writing on women writers and artists focuses on education and training. In her essay ‘Two Women’ (1927) Woolf discusses how eager young girls taught in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth century were given a ‘negative education, [one] which decree[d] not what you may do but what you may not do, that cramped and stifled’ their intellectual aspirations and, instead, reinforced their participation in the cult of domesticity (E4 419). While there were major advances in women’s education throughout the mid-to-late-nineteenth century for middle- and upper-class women, such as the creation of

women's institutions like Cheltenham Ladies College in 1853, Girton College in 1869 and Newnham College in 1871, Woolf maintains in *A Room of One's Own* that sex discrimination is still very much present in these institutional establishments and that women are repeatedly denied the same 'intellectual freedom' and recognition as men at the university level (AROO 97). This inequality is further transferred from the confines of the women's colleges to the treatment of the woman artist in the public sphere. Male artists like William Shakespeare and Samuel Taylor Coleridge are repeatedly revered for their canonical status, but '[t]here is no mark on the wall to measure the precise height of women' and, as a result, '[t]hey remain even at this moment almost unclassified' in the art realm (77). While she admits a 'genius of a sort must have existed among women' in the nineteenth century, she argues the obstacles which prevented women from achieving this status were, and remain even in the twentieth-century, 'infinitely more formidable' for the woman writer than her male counterpart (46, 47). She believes it is because of these obstacles that women's 'creative power differs greatly from the creative power of men' and, thus, should not be judged along the same lines as these masculine definitions of the male artist-genius (79). Her plea to this new generation of women currently studying at such establishments as Newnham and Girton is that they 'have the habit of freedom and the courage to write exactly what [they] think' and to 'look past Milton's bogey' as well as other oppressive ideologies and definitions of feminine creativity which aim to constrain women's intellectual and artistic endeavours (102).

The discourse surrounding the male genius and creativity was influenced by Romantic culture which revered the male artist-genius who was constantly 'seeking self-expression' through his art and women, in contrast, usually retained a romanticised role wherein their 'function was to serve as Muse' for the male artist (Reich 98). It is because of this personification of the objectified female muse that the reification of women as art objects occurs—whether in paintings, sculptures, novels, poems, operas or ballets. In order to be

recognised as artists, women must transcend this objectified position as muse and reassert their creative potential, and artistic autonomy, as creators rather than passive subjects waiting to be defined by the male artist. This division between the male genius and the female amateur/muse was underpinned by the Victorian discourse of separate spheres and the cult of domesticity, for a woman was allowed to 'dabble' in the fine arts so long as she 'remain[ed] from unsexing herself', though if she happened to produce something of artistic value, she was not recognised as being a 'genius' but was instead considered 'a man' (Chadwick 31). Once again, artistic worth is defined as a distinctly masculine trait which women are incapable of attaining without participating in some form of desexualisation. The only way a woman painter, for example, could retain her feminine attributes is if she 'presented a self-image emphasizing beauty, gracefulness, and modesty, and as long as her paintings appeared to confirm this construction, she could, albeit with difficulty negotiate a role for herself in the world of public art' (139). Crucially, this recognition in the public sphere would not grant the woman painter genius status and these conditions of femininity were expected in all fields of artistic production, for female musicians and performers were expected to follow the 'moral' rather than 'aesthetic' approaches to musical study, and focus only on the 'accomplishments that would enrich the home' (Burgan 52-3). Additionally, as discussed in the previous sections, all '[a]spir[ing] and graceful female novelists' were expected to uphold nineteenth-century ideologies which reasserted which reasserted women's development as one which reinforced their eventual domestic responsibilities as wives and mothers (AROO 85). These masculine definitions and expectations of the woman artist, regardless of craft, are associated with ideals of Woolf's Victorian Angel in the House, for she is 'intensely sympathetic', 'immensely charming', 'utterly unselfish', 'pure' and, most importantly, she is a passive being who lacks 'a mind of her own' and 'prefer[s] to sympathise always with the minds and wishes of others', especially men (E6 480). Twentieth-century women artists were forced to confront this

psychological ideal imposed on women and challenge the residual, patriarchal philosophy which defines women's artistic endeavours as unworthy, and it was the appearance of the New Woman in British society which instigated this trend in literature which Woolf, Richardson, Sinclair and Sackville-West continue in their modernist *Künstlerromane*.

The term 'New Woman' first appeared in Ouida's essay, 'The New Woman' (1894), which was a response to Sarah Grand's essay, 'The New Aspect of the Woman Question' (1894), but this figure appeared prior to Ouida's naming in a variety of identities throughout the literature of the 1880s and 90s, and she was often called 'Novissima, the Odd Woman, the Wild Woman, and the Superfluous or Redundant Woman' (Ardis, *New Women* 10). While the New Woman is primarily associated with *fin-de-siècle* fiction, Sally Ledger discusses how 'the literary parameters' assigned to this figure, as well as the term, were additionally used to characterise the actions and attributes of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century feminists (1). Critics like Ann Ardis and Ledger discuss how this naming of the New Woman limited the nineteenth-century 'debate on the Woman Question', wherein the fiction produced during this period became 'the centre of controversy' rather than the actual New Women themselves (Ledger 9). Because New Woman fiction often challenged the ideology of separate spheres and the cult of domesticity, the literary persona was usually classified by her detractors as an aggressive rebel and was often portrayed in the popular press as some manifestation of a desexualised woman suffering from some form of 'masculine degeneration' (Heilmann, *New Woman Fiction* 16). New Woman fiction received a barrage of abuse and mockery in the press and Ledger maintains this identifier created 'a discursive space' which was 'filled by feminist textual productions sympathetic—not antagonistic—towards the claims of the New Woman and her sisters in the late-nineteenth-century women's movement' (4). As a result, New Woman fiction is considered both a literary representation and 'agent of social and political

transformation' which influenced the women's movement and first-wave feminism at the turn of the century (Heilmann, *New Woman Fiction* 4).

The history and criticism surrounding New Woman fiction is extensive.¹¹ Ann Heilmann looks at how New Woman fiction and the *fin de siècle* influenced the modernist female *Künstlerroman* tradition in her monograph, *New Woman Fiction: Women Writing First Wave Feminism* (2000), and she maintains the biggest challenge which the artist-heroine encounters in New Woman fiction is the 'institutional pressures of motherhood' (155). She further maintains that the novels of the period which experimented with the portrait-of-the-artist narrative participated in a dialogue about the woman artist which correlated artistic production with biologically coded metaphors of 'mothering and childbirth' (155). As a result, Heilmann argues this "'mothering-as-creating" theme' was usually reproduced in literature of the period through 'two central metaphors, those of birth and death' (155). While the birth metaphor was often presented through the artist-heroine's desire to create, Heilmann believes it was also used to explore the various causes which prevented women from developing into artists. In contrast, the second metaphor employed by New Woman writers explored the possibility that 'women's creativity is therefore death, the metaphorical miscarriage or abortion of the artist's projects and ambitions' (156). Heilmann suggests it is this binary metaphor of birth and death which situates New Woman fiction as a transitional literary moment which separated the modernist female *Künstlerroman* from the nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman* (156). It can be argued that the modernist female *Künstlerroman* fulfilled the birth metaphor with the artist-heroine's decision to embrace the creative process and work towards artistic fulfilment. In contrast, the Victorian artist-heroine of the *Bildungsroman* tradition tends to accept the death metaphor through the sacrifice of her artistic endeavours and her acceptance of such domestic responsibilities as

¹¹ See Ann Ardis, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism* (1990); Gail Cunningham, *The New Woman and the Victorian Novel* (1978); Ann Heilmann, *New Woman Fiction: Women Writing First-Wave Feminism* (2000) and *New Woman Strategies: Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner and Mona Caird* (2004); Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and feminism at the fin de siècle* (1997);

wifehood and motherhood. While I do not believe Woolf, Richardson, Sinclair and Sackville-West embrace the birth-death metaphor in the same biologically coded terms as New Woman writers, these modernist *Künstlerromane* explore many of the same issues and concerns about women's creativity and the conflicting pressures of their desire for professionalisation and the cult of domesticity.

In this thesis I wish to examine how, in their representation of the woman artist, Woolf, Richardson, Sinclair and Sackville-West discuss much wider questions about the patriarchal, imperial and national narratives which contain and define women and their artistic endeavours. Reading these novels as *Künstlerromane* rather than *Bildungsromane* allows us to explore the ways in which these authors challenge the enduring institutional ideologies surrounding the figure of the woman artist. They explore the division between the amateur and the artist, the training and public role of the woman artist at the turn of the twentieth century and, moreover, they examine and reinterpret the necessary conditions needed to achieve artistic fulfilment—whether it is the artist-heroine's participation in the creative process or the production of an actual art object. Their resistance to this masculine discourse ultimately influenced their formal experimentation in their fiction and, consequently, resulted in the evolution of their own ideas about art and aesthetics during the modernist period. Crucially, this thesis investigates the stylistic and thematic choices—whether stream of consciousness, the second person perspective, or through their representations of the everyday and ordinary—that these modernist writers employ to investigate women and creative expression.

In my first chapter, 'Virginia Woolf, *The Voyage Out* and the Woman Musician', I examine Woolf's presentation of a young female pianist, Rachel Vinrace, in her first novel, *The Voyage Out*. Rachel has not been read as an artist and I intend to examine what is at stake in reading Rachel's growth in these terms. While Gregory Castle and Jed Esty offer extremely interesting and innovative examinations of *The Voyage Out*, they overlook Rachel's participation

in the creative process and her artistic potential as a musician. Instead, they focus their attention on her premature death, unconsummated romance, and usually classify the main intention of the novel as a purposefully ‘failed *Bildungsroman*’ (Castle 218; Esty ‘Virginia Woolf’s Colony’ 81). I explore how her artistry is, in fact, integral to the novel’s wider feminist concerns and the links between its critique of colonialism and patriarchy. Through a comparison with E. M. Forster’s *A Room with a View* (1908), I explore how Woolf differentiates her narrative from the residual *Bildungsroman* plot and how, in spite of her death, Rachel is representative of the twentieth-century *Künstlerroman* heroine. Her death operates as a refusal to a system which would not only define her as imperial wife and mother but would also limit her musicality.

In my second chapter, “‘Being vs. Becoming’: Dorothy Richardson’s *Pilgrimage* and the Woman Artist’, I explore how Richardson’s extensive portrayal of Miriam’s creative endeavours as a writer reflects her desire to maintain an uninterrupted state of artistic being. Richardson radically redefines what constitutes the art object through the creative process of everyday life in her presentation of Miriam’s ongoing artistic consciousness. Moreover, Richardson’s presentation of Miriam’s stream of consciousness and evolving relationship with the written word, as revealed in her appreciation of foreign languages, letters, ‘contemplated reality’, translations, middles, and eventual novel-in-progress, signifies the importance of the writer’s creative process rather than finished product (Richardson, ‘Foreword’ 10). This alternative interpretation of the artist’s development subsequently subverts the linear plot development associated with the genre, and I intend to examine how reading Miriam’s artistry as an intrinsic characteristic of her being, rather than as a reward for complying with the ideology of becoming, challenges the male-imposed stereotypes regarding women experiences and successful artistic fulfilment.

In my third chapter, ‘Rewriting the Victorian Poetess in *Mary Olivier: A Life*’, I examine how, in returning to the figure of the Victorian poetess, Sinclair’s *Künstlerroman* reintroduces many of the motifs and themes located in the novels and poems of her nineteenth-century female predecessors such as the angel/monster dichotomy. Her modernist redefinition of the Victorian artist-heroine rewrites this sacrifice of selfhood with Mary’s erotic sublimation into her poetry at the end of the narrative. One of the main influences guiding Sinclair’s artist-heroine towards this autonomous self-assertion is her desire for knowledge. Sinclair questions the boundaries of acceptable female education in Victorian England by focusing specifically on Mary’s interest in Greek studies—a traditionally masculine subject. Sinclair’s extensive detailing of Mary’s incessant desire for knowledge as a young girl, adolescent and mature adult thoroughly examines the barriers preventing women’s intellectual growth in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, and she explores how education influences not only the development of the woman artist, but how it impacts her own understanding of her creative potential.

In my final chapter, ‘The Rebirth of the Woman Artist in Vita Sackville-West’s *All Passion Spent*’, I examine how Sackville-West redefines the traditional representation of the woman artist with her presentation of an older woman, Lady Deborah Slane, who yearned to be a painter before her marriage. She is an unconventional artist-heroine, not only because she is an octogenarian, but also because she ‘never laid brush to canvas’ (*APS* 86). *All Passion Spent* is the only *Künstlerroman* in this study to present a post-marriage perspective on the antithetical nature of the women’s domestic responsibilities as a wife and mother with artistic roles. Through Lady Slane’s memories, Sackville-West explores a kind of artistic consciousness which is held in abeyance and has the potential to recreate and rewrite a life through reflection. Unlike the other novels under discussion, *All Passion Spent* is often identified as a middlebrow novel. I wish to explore what happens to the female *Künstlerroman* when reinterpreted by the

middlebrow writer, and how Sackville-West's portrayal of Lady Slane's artistic consciousness contributes to the modernist debate surrounding twentieth-century definitions of art.

Virginia Woolf, *The Voyage Out* and the Woman Musician

Virginia Woolf was constantly concerned with the figure of the woman artist. From her own struggle with the Angel in the House, to her portrayal of the fictional thwarted artist Judith Shakespeare, this is familiar critical terrain. Throughout her fiction, essays, letters and diaries, Woolf examined the relationship between women's experience, creativity and the arts, and critics have catalogued the many artist-heroines dispersed throughout her fiction: Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse* (1927), Orlando in *Orlando: A Biography* (1928) and Miss La Trobe in *Between the Acts* (1941). Additionally, Clarissa Dalloway in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and Mrs Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* have been recognised as being representative of the domestic artist who participates in the creative process of everyday life.¹² This list suggests that Woolf did not concern herself with examining the politics of the woman artist until she was 'in *medias res*, at the heart of her writing career' (Goldman 2). This argument excludes much of her juvenilia, early journalism and, moreover, her first novel, *The Voyage Out* (1915), which examines the development of a young female musician. The heroine of the novel, Rachel Vinrace, has not been read as an artist and I intend to examine what is at stake in reading Rachel's growth in these terms. I will do this through a comparison with E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View* (1908), a roughly contemporaneous novel that centres around another young female musician, Lucy Honeychurch, who deals with similar societal constraints yet fails to achieve artistic fulfilment. Rachel's musicality is, in fact, one of Woolf's first attempts at exploring female creativity and engaging with the politics and role of the woman artist in the twentieth century, and prefigures the artist-heroines of her more experimental novels of the 1920s. Her artistry is key to the novel's wider feminist concerns and the links between its critique of colonialism and patriarchy.

¹² See Ann Ronchetti, *The Artist, Society & Sexuality in Virginia Woolf's Novels* (2004) and Jacob Littleton, 'Mrs Dalloway: Portrait of the Artist as a Middle-Aged Woman' (1995).

The Voyage Out concentrates on the personal and musical development of Rachel, a pianist born out of the Edwardian education system which, for girls of the period, ‘taught [...] about ten different branches of knowledge’ leaving them with an intellect akin to ‘the state of an intelligent man’s in the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth’ (VO 26). As Woolf so satirically illustrates, this approach fails women for Rachel, at the start of the novel, ‘would believe practically anything she was told’ and ‘invent reasons for anything she said’ (26). Aged twenty-four, single, lacking a formal education and independence, Rachel initially appears to be the traditional *Bildungsroman* heroine waiting for a marriage proposal. Continuing the expected motifs of the Victorian and Edwardian novel of development, Rachel embarks on a voyage out of England to South America which eventually leads to an engagement to another English tourist, Terence Hewet. In contrast to Forster who ends his narrative with a marriage, Woolf redefines this exhausted courtship plot and kills Rachel before she fulfils the residual requirements of the genre. With such a ‘problematic’ ending (Dalsimer 132), critics of *The Voyage Out* like Gregory Castle and Jed Esty often overlook Rachel’s artistic potential as a musician and focus their attention on her premature death, unconsummated romance, and usually classify the novel as a purposefully ‘failed *Bildungsroman*’ (Castle 218; Esty ‘Virginia Woolf’s Colony’ 81).

My objective in returning to *The Voyage Out* is not simply to reiterate that it is a novel of development cut abruptly short with Rachel’s death. Instead, I examine how Woolf’s first novel redefines late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century concepts of marriage, maternity and the active role of the woman artist in transition between the domestic and public sphere. The association between female musicality and marriageability has been a recurring idea throughout British history and literature. Both Forster and Woolf explore this relationship in their novels which suggests the Edwardian period was a transitional moment for the woman artist to transcend this limiting definition of musical capability as merely a vehicle to obtain a

marriage proposal. While Forster's own examination of a young female musician reinforces these patriarchal ideologies of female amateurism, marriageability and domesticity, Woolf challenges these ideals in her presentation of Rachel's journey towards artistic autonomy and unrestricted female expression. Through my comparison of these two texts I will examine what separates Woolf's narrative from traditional *Bildungsromane* like *A Room with a View* and how Rachel, in spite of her death, is representative of the twentieth-century *Künstlerroman* heroine. Reading Rachel as an artist cuts to the heart of Woolf's investigation of the barriers that contained women's creative endeavours within the suffocating drawing room.

Drawing-room Aesthetics

As mentioned, throughout the Victorian and Edwardian period many middle- and upper-class families believed that music lessons for their daughters were a valuable 'asset in their climb to social acceptance' and improved their marriageability (Reich 98). Despite their musical training, these students were deterred from taking their instruction too earnestly, for female pianists were expected to follow the 'moral' rather than 'aesthetic' approaches to musical study and focus only on the 'accomplishments that would enrich the home' (Burgan 52-3). This attitude towards women and music is what I define as the drawing-room aesthetics of musicality in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European history and literature. With these repressive constraints, it is the figure of the musician which best represents the dichotomy between the domestic amateur and the autonomous woman artist, and both Forster and Woolf engage with this discourse in their narratives.

In contrast to their male counterparts, female musicians have held a secondary place in musicology, and critics such as the Rev. H. R. Haweis in *Music and Morals* (1889) and George P. Upton in *Woman In Music* (1909) instigated this trend with their insistence that women's aptitude in playing an instrument does not transcend the designated barriers of mere feminine

accomplishment or amateurism. Woolf's examination of musical aesthetics in an early essay, 'Street Music' (1905), and *The Voyage Out* challenges these discriminatory classifications of amateurism and, alternatively, she articulates that performance and interpretation are relevant factors in the creative process.

Feminist musicologists like Marcia Citron, Karen Pendel and Barbara Garvey Jackson maintain that, historically, particular genres and professions were gender-biased and instrumental music was, and still is, usually associated with the male composer and musician (Citron 17). Women's access to the public sphere as professional musicians was first introduced in the seventeenth-century through the role of the female opera singer and, while ladies of the upper and middle classes refrained from following this particular vocation, daughters of 'professional musical or theatrical families (who were already *déclassé*)' took to the stage in the hopes of achieving wealth, recognition or an advantageous marriage proposal (Reich 114). Consequently, the professionalisation of the female opera performer mostly served as a vehicle for an improved marital situation. While the opera offered a professional outlet for women performers, their career was short-lived as Upton notes in *Woman In Music*: '[W]hat an endless procession of singers memory will summon! How they approach, pass before us, and disappear, crowned with their laurels of victory!' (188). Presented more like ephemeral celebrities rather than artists, these vocalists were unable to maintain a lasting career equivalent to their male counterparts.

Singers were not the only female musicians to perform publically during the Baroque and Classical periods, for women were taught 'the "feminine instruments"—lute, harp, harpsichord, or, later in the century, piano', and they were expected to play for family members and guests in the privacy of the drawing room (Jackson 72). The piano was considered the most appropriate instrument for women because the 'seated position accorded well with female modesty' and hid the physical exertion required for the production of sound (Gillett 4).

Women were discouraged from learning particular instruments like the violin because the ‘awkward motions’ and ‘facial distortions’ brought about when playing conflicted with the period’s ideals that a woman’s delicate, feminine graces were the most important feature of her performance (4). The expectations of female musicality were more concerned with the aesthetics and attitude of a woman’s physical appearance when playing rather than her mastery over the musical composition. Nevertheless, some female musicians were considered to have artistic potential, but the majority were deemed incompetent and unable to overcome their amateur status.

During the Romantic and Victorian periods notions of female musicality became even more extreme within the patriarchal discourse of drawing-room aesthetics. As mentioned in the Introduction, the essential spirit of the Romantic period venerated the male artist-genius who was constantly ‘seeking self-expression’ through his art and, in contrast, women of the period maintained a romanticised role wherein their ‘function was to serve as Muse’ for the male artist (Reich 98). As muses women were forced to participate in a passive role in the production and interpretation of musical genres. One of the main elements fuelling the depiction of the female musician as a submissive receiver is located in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century dialogues concerned with emotion. In *Music and Morals* Haweis argues that the male musician can manipulate the moods and emotions of his audience ‘through the medium of sound alone’, and this majesty over his audience signifies his competence and skill as an artist (54). Haweis delineates a woman’s relationship to emotion as one defined by her inability to control such sentiments as passion, melancholy and pleasure, and he suggests that women’s sensitivity to emotion prevents them from having an unaffected relationship with music:

In listening to music, her face is often lighted up with tenderness, with mirth, or with the simple expansiveness of intense pleasure. Her attitude changes unconsciously with

the truest, because the most natural, dramatic feeling. At times she is shaken and melts into tears, as the flowers stand and shake when the wind blows upon them and the drops of rain fall off. The woman's temperament is naturally artistic, not in a creative, but in a receptive sense. A woman seldom writes good music, never great music (102).

Reinforcing women's status as submissive receivers, Haweis's description of women's inability to control this sensory overload and participate in the creative process is not unusual for the period. Upton reinforces these beliefs in his own publication wherein he maintains women feel emotion's 'influences, its control, and its power', but they are unable to convey these sentiments through music in the same way the male artist can (23). Haweis and Upton's comments imply that such excess of feeling, and women's perceived ineptitude at controlling it, becomes symptomatic of neurasthenia and hysteria. With these psychological obstacles, the possibility of female musicians reaching a high level of artistry is considered impossible, and Upton argues that for 'every fifty young ladies who go through the standard piano course, one may become a good amateur player' (203).

As they were not expected to become professional musicians, Haweis suggests that the alternative rationale for women's musical training was to keep them from becoming idle, for 'the only thing fit for them to do, is often like setting the steam-hammer to knock pins into a board' (103). By mechanising the piano playing process, Haweis further removes women from any associations of creative output but, in contrast to his earlier statements which promote emotional restraint, he declares that too much control leads to 'something very much like paralysis. The steam-hammer, as it contemplates the everlasting pin's head, can not help feeling that if some day, when the steam was on, it might give one good smashing blow, it would feel all the better for it' (103). Thus, the piano becomes a vehicle for acceptable emotional release which, of course, occurs in the privacy of the drawing room. According to Haweis, the model amateur 'sits dreaming at her piano, while her fingers caressing the deliciously cool ivory keys,

glide through a weird *nocturno* of Chopin' (104). Once again reinforcing the importance of a woman's appearance and attitude when performing, this representation coincides with Roland Barthes' argument in 'Musica Practica' (1977) that the amateur is 'defined much more by a style than by a technical imperfection' (150). Moreover, Chopin is considered appropriate for women as his light, dreamy and romantic compositions are considered safe for the female performer (Gillett 5). These sentimental, feminine stereotypes which reinforce women's amateur status would continue well into the early-twentieth century. Perhaps more than the other arts, professional musicianship remained resolutely closed to women. What underpins Upton and Haweis's illustrations of the inept female amateur is the lack of formal musical education available to women. Because musical study was considered a feminine accomplishment, it did not interfere with a woman's domestic duties, and Upton believes that women of the Edwardian period had the same opportunities as men, though he maintains they have just 'failed as creators' (22). As previously discussed in the Introduction this was simply not the case.

Not all male musicologists of the period took a misogynist stance in their discussion about musical aestheticism. Arthur Elson's *Woman's Work in Music* (1903) examines women's creative potential as musicians. While his study is predominantly an in-depth discussion of the influence wives had on the artistic production of their husbands' compositions, he admits that '[w]hether women are in any way handicapped by the constitution of their sex is a point that is still undecided' for 'women often possess the requisite mental breadth' to retain aspects of artistic creativity equal to men (235). The amateur, too, surfaces in his discussion as the typical 'sweet girl graduate of the conservatories,' dominated by 'sentiment', and hating 'mathematics' (235). This comment about the amateur's dislike of mathematics coincides with Upton's remark that music 'is not only an art, but an exact science, and, in its highest form, mercilessly

logical and unrelentingly mathematical' (31).¹³ Male musicians are perceived, therefore, as highly technical and precise in their playing whereas women are inept outside the emotional realm. Elson eventually disassociates himself from the critiques of Haweis and Upton with his belief that female musicians are able to master the technicality of composition through 'earnest work' and, consequently, they should be granted 'equal rank' (235). Elson's opinions were representative of the minority as Karen Pendle and other feminist musicologists demonstrate.

This is not to suggest that female musicians were non-existent. Successful female composers and performers include Cécile Chaminade, Clara Schumann and Ethel Smyth. Additionally, the figure of the woman musician consistently recurs throughout literature. Many characters in Jane Austen's novels, such as Georgiana Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) trouble the distinction between the amateur and the artist. Georgiana plays the piano-forte and her 'exquisite' musicality is juxtaposed with Elizabeth Bennet, a woman who challenges the ideals of feminine accomplishment. Elizabeth admits to Mr Darcy that her 'fingers' are unable to

move over this instrument in the masterly manner which I see so many women's do.

They have not the same force or rapidity, and do not produce the same expression. But then I have always supposed it to be my own fault—because I would not take the trouble of practicing (137).

Despite Elizabeth's lack of musical ability, Darcy believes she has 'employed' her time to 'much better' uses in life (137). Perhaps Darcy believes Georgiana has artistic capabilities while Elizabeth retains the status of an amateur—for she does play well enough to entertain company in the drawing room. Austen further explores women's relationship to music in both *Emma* (1815) and *Persuasion* (1817) through the characters of Jane Fairfax and Mrs. Elton in the former and Anne Elliot in the latter. When discussing her own talent on the piano-forte, Mrs Elton informs Emma that, as a performer, she was '*mediocre* to the last degree', thus fulfilling

¹³ Woolf challenged this other masculinist stereotype in her second novel, *Night and Day* (1919). The protagonist, Katherine Hilbery, struggles with her domestic duties and, instead, wishes to study mathematics.

the appropriate and modest practice of the female amateur in the nineteenth century (Austen, *Emma* 257). Mrs. Elton further admits the ‘sad story’ of married women is that ‘[t]hey are but too apt to give up music’ because they have ‘too many things to call [their] attention’ (257, 258). Mrs. Elton may protest at this loss of music, but Emma instead finds her ‘determined’ to avoid the piano (258). Like so many amateurs before her, Mrs. Elton only uses her musical training to obtain a proposal, thereby associating her piano playing as a performance of marriageability, and Austen’s juxtaposition of Mrs. Elton with a true artist, Jane Fairfax, once again examines the distinction between the amateur and artist. Moving from Austen to Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847), one cannot forget Jane ‘in that hour of romance’ playing the piano while Rochester accompanies her vocally (*Jane Eyre* (2006) 312). Following the interconnected associations between musical accomplishment and marriageability, their private recital leads naturally to questions about their impending future as husband and wife.

While the majority of Victorian and Edwardian literary renditions of the female musician appear to comply with the period’s conception of the amateur, twentieth-century portrayals depict the female pianist attempting to penetrate the barriers of the drawing room. In addition to Woolf’s construction of Rachel in *The Voyage Out*, the appearance of other fictional women, such as Lucy Honeychurch in Forster’s *A Room with a View*, Helen Schlegel in his subsequent publication *Howard’s End* (1910), Miriam Henderson in Dorothy Richardson’s *Pilgrimage* (1915-57), Rebecca West’s Harriet Hume in *Harriet Hume* (1929), the Aubrey twins, Rose and Mary, and their sister Cecilia in West’s *The Aubrey Trilogy* (1957-85), suggests the importance of music to the twentieth-century debate about the role of the female artist.¹⁴

E. M. Forster’s Edwardian courtship novel, *A Room with a View*, had a significant influence on Woolf’s first novel. While their personal and professional relationship has been well-documented, an in-depth comparison of these two texts has yet to appear. Both Woolf

¹⁴ The *Aubrey Trilogy* is composed of *The Fountain Overflows* (1957) and the posthumous publications, *This Real Night* (1984) and *Cousin Rosamund* (1985).

and Forster employ the ‘voyage motif’ and foreign locations to instigate their heroine’s artistic, psychological and social development, but Forster’s decision to recycle the motifs of the Grand Tour narrative and Woolf’s evocation of an exotic South American landscape inherently shape our understanding of their heroine’s artistic development (Seret 1). His decision to reclaim the narrative clichés of romance associated with Mediterranean travel anticipates Lucy’s designation as the traditional female amateur and status as a *Bildungsroman* heroine. In contrast, Rachel’s innovative artistry with music and dance corresponds with Woolf’s bolder decision to examine the politics of imperialism and her early formal experiments with modernism. Moreover, while both Forster and Woolf are interested in sound, rhythm and the social contexts of music, their underlying themes in each novel differ as greatly as their choice of destination. While Lucy, in a sense, rebels, Forster’s continuation of the courtship plot situates his text within the tradition of the *Bildungsroman* rather than the *Künstlerroman*. He is still concerned with concepts of domesticity and marriage whereas Woolf is interested in presenting unrestricted female expression. In addition to being a critique of *A Room with a View*’s fulfilment of the marriage plot, and suppression of women’s artistic autonomy, *The Voyage Out* engages in a much larger commentary about other systems of oppression—national, patriarchal, and colonial—which affect Rachel throughout the narrative.

Beethoven and Forster’s ‘Eternal Woman’

In 1906 Forster presented a paper to the Working Men’s College Old Students’ Club entitled, ‘Pessimism in Literature’, and he responded to whether the theme should be condemned in novels. Admitting ‘[t]here *are* reasons, and noble reasons, for the output of unhappy books’, he locates modern literature’s pessimistic undertones at the end of a novel (*AE* 133). He argues the optimist wishes to conclude the narrative with a happy ending—that ‘old, old answer, *marriage*’, but Forster maintains this was an acceptable motif in the past,

though he acknowledges the current social changes occurring in Edwardian Britain and, ‘whatever marriage is, it is not an end. We know that it is rather a beginning, and that the lovers enter upon life’s real problems when those wedding bells are silent’ (135). Forster considers women’s position in society as the most altered: ‘The early Victorian woman was regarded as a bundle of goods. She passed from the possession of her father to that of her husband. Marriage was a final event for her: beyond it, she was expected to find no new development, no new emotion’ (135). He briefly comments on the Suffrage movement and how it has transformed the current perception of women and, while the modern woman may still ‘resemble a bundle’ as she flings herself on the floor of Parliament in protest, she is no longer the passive package of the Victorian period passed from one master to the next (136). If she chooses to marry, ‘her marriage is most certainly not an *end*, for ‘[t]he drama of their problems, their developments, their mutual interaction is all to come’ (136). Recognising this shift in twentieth-century heterosexual relationships, Forster criticises his contemporaries who are aware of these developments and continue to conclude their narratives with a wedding. He asserts the optimist’s desire for a happy ending is no longer realistic and, as a result, he turns to the pessimist for guidance.

When posed the same question about concluding a narrative, the pessimist responds ‘quite simply and satisfactorily, “By some scene of separation”’ (136). Forster admits whether the ‘modern author’ is a ‘pessimist himself’ is debatable, but he believes the novelist’s main desire is to conclude his narrative ‘on a note of permanence’, and ‘[s]eparation—that is the end that really satisfies him—not simply the separation that comes through death, but the more tragic separation of people who part before they need, or who part because they have seen each other too closely’ (137). Forster’s own pursuance of literary ‘permanence’ would follow

the pessimist's motif of separation and, of the published novels in his lifetime, only one would truly satisfy the optimist—*A Room with a View*.¹⁵

A Room with a View may have been Forster's third published novel, but it was one of his first ideas for a fictional narrative as it drew upon his early travels at the turn of the century. Following the expected path of a middle-class male of his generation, Forster set off with his mother in 1901 on a tour of Italy and Greece. The 'metaphor of travel' has long been associated with 'the twists and turns, discoveries and drudgery of intellectual and psychological development' and, as a necessary conclusion to one's formal education, British men embarked on the Grand Tour (Dolan 5). The typical trip abroad began in Paris, although the main focus of the tour was on Rome, Venice, Naples and, of particular significance to *A Room with a View*, Florence (Black 5-6). Forster's Grand Tour was a less extravagant affair, and his travels were characterised as a 'solemn trip through the smaller hotels and handy pensions' of the Continent, 'where sketchbook in one hand and guidebook (Murray or Baedeker) in the other,' tourists like Forster 'made their way to art, self-improvement, sunshine, health, romance, and happiness in an aroma of engrained Britishness' (Bradbury, 'Introduction' ix-x). Less indulgent than Ruskin or Shelley's escapades, Forster's tour was still a successful trip abroad which produced a 'true education' and 'classical rite of passage' for the aspiring novelist (x). While the Grand Tour is often associated with the male traveller, Brian Dolan has observed that the twentieth century saw a greater involvement of women partaking in similar expeditions.¹⁶ Women were allowed to participate in a female version of the Grand Tour because of an increase in tourism, specifically, to the 'established "contact zones"' of 'anglicise[d] Italy', and these appropriated localities created a sheltered atmosphere for British women travelling with their chaperones (Ardis, 'Hellenism' 63). Upon returning, Forster struggled to transcribe his

¹⁵ Forster's novel about successful homosexual love, *Maurice*, was written in 1913 and posthumously published in 1971.

¹⁶ Dolan maintains that some women, often 'bluestocking[s]' and 'ladies of letters', participated in the Grand Tour near the close of the eighteenth century (5).

experiences abroad and eventually published *A Room With a View* nearly a decade after its initial conception. With the Grand Tour's narrative associations with romance, education, travel and marriage, it is unsurprising that the courtship plot frequently appears as an underlying theme within these novels. Moreover, it is possible that Forster was unable to separate these interwoven themes because it had such a long and enduring presence in literature of the period, and he finally submitted the novel's conclusion to the marriage plot he criticised only two years earlier. This acquiescence eventually led Forster to admit that *A Room with a View* was not his favourite novel, 'but it may fairly be called the nicest' (*A View without a Room*).

Adhering to the conventions of the *Bildungsroman*, *A Room with a View* details the coming-of-age narrative of its protagonist, Lucy Honeychurch. Like so many women Forster encountered on his own adventure, Lucy, a native of Kent, is touring various cities throughout Italy with her spinster cousin and chaperone, Charlotte Bartlett. Like her female predecessors, Lucy has been denied access to a formal education in England and the only 'solution' offered to women involved a trip 'abroad to begin their education' (Dolan 22). What's contradictory about this educational voyage is that English tourists abroad often settled together in the same hotels and pensions only to create a 'sham bit of England' (Heath 396). Nevertheless, the foreign setting and potential for adventure loosened the grip of repressive British propriety and women were able to participate in cultural experiences that would be denied them in Britain, for example, the Mediterranean romance. The first part of the novel is situated in Florence and Lucy's tour is predominantly concerned with furthering her limited education. It is only through her adventures and gradual development as a mildly rebellious woman that her escapades in Italy inadvertently affect her musical artistry.

Lucy's education in England has followed the expected syllabus of learning feminine accomplishments, and she has been taught to perceive her piano training as if it was nothing

more than a 'hobby' akin to her brother's stamp collecting (*RV* 26). The opening chapters of the novel adhere to the superficial conventions of the Grand Tour narrative, such as getting lost without one's Baedeker, exploring the frescoes painted by Giotto and participating in a religious debate with fellow tourists, Mr Emerson and his son George. It is not until Lucy returns to the drawing room of the Pension Bertolini and plays Beethoven's Opus 111 that the inner mechanics of her character are slowly revealed: 'It so happened that Lucy, who found daily life rather chaotic, entered a more solid world when she opened the piano. She was then no longer either deferential or patronizing; no longer either a rebel or a slave' (28). Using music as the media for introducing his heroine, Forster creates an early correlation between the art form and Lucy's eventual growth in the narrative. In his essay, 'Not Listening to Music' (1939), Forster admits that '[m]usic is so very queer that an amateur is bound to get muddled when writing about it', and an author should try to capture the 'insistence in music' which is 'expressed largely through rhythm' (*TCD* 138). Despite considering himself nothing more than an amateur pianist, Forster was extremely passionate about music and wrote extensive criticism about it throughout his career.¹⁷ He believes there are two types of rhythm. The first he describes as something relatively 'easy' wherein 'we can all hear and tap to' it, such as the 'diddidy dum' of the opening chords in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (*AN* 146). The second type is considered more 'difficult' and represents 'the rhythm of the Fifth Symphony as a whole' wherein 'people can hear but no one can tap to' it for, 'once the orchestra stops, we hear something that has never actually been played' (146, 149). Forster's description of Lucy's performance in the Pension Bertolini utilises 'the subject of easy rhythm in fiction' through tropes of descriptive 'repetition and variation' of particular words and phrases (148-9). I believe these 'great chords' found in Forster's narrative rhythm signify the formal elements of

¹⁷ His most famous work concerning music is taken from the eighth lecture of the 1927 Clark Lectures at Cambridge entitled 'Pattern and Rhythm' which was reproduced in *Aspects of the Novel* (1927). See also 'Word-Making and Sound-Taking' (1935), 'Not Listening to Music' (1939), 'The C Minor of that Life' (1941), and 'The *Raison d'Être* of Criticism in the Arts' (1948).

Beethoven's late sonata while, simultaneously, alluding to the 'larger existence' of the difficult rhythm of Lucy's character which has yet to develop (150):

She was no dazzling *exécutive*; her runs were not at all like strings of pearls, and she struck no more right notes than was suitable for one of her age and situation. Nor was she the passionate young lady who performs so tragically on a summer's evening with the window open. Passion was there, but it could not be easily labelled; it slipped between love and hatred and jealousy, and all the furniture of the pictorial style. And she was tragical only in the sense that she was great, for she loved to play on the side of Victory. Victory of what and over what—that is more than the words of daily life can tell us. But that some sonatas of Beethoven are written tragic no one can gainsay; yet they can triumph or despair as the player decides, and Lucy had decided that they should triumph (*RV* 28).

The narrator's repetition of the performance's evoked emotions—'passion', 'tragic(al)', 'love', 'Victory' and 'triumph'—fail to really describe Lucy's aptitude at the piano. They act, instead, as signifiers for the narrative thematics of the romantic courtship plot which has yet to develop, and this description further encourages the relationship between music and marriageability. Despite the passage's continued association of female musicians with emotion, Lucy's choice of composition confirms she is not to be totally aligned with Haweis's ingénue poised in the drawing room butchering Chopin, for Beethoven's late sonata is not a safe piece of music for her to play.

Forster suggests in 'The C Minor of that Life', that Beethoven became 'engaged in the pursuit of something outside sound' with Opus 111, specifically, 'something which fused the sinister and the triumphant' (*TCD* 134). Beethoven's sonata dances on that fine line between the subversive and safe, much like the dividing line Lucy balances on when playing, for she neither represents the female 'rebel' nor the 'slave'. Forster's presentation of the rebel/slave

division additionally alludes to a much larger literary tradition of female dichotomies like the Angel in the House/female monster, woman muse/artist and ‘beauteous Aphrodite’/‘Medusa’ (Stewart 107). Musicologist, Michelle Fillion believes that Lucy, as an unmarried young lady, is playing in ‘dangerous waters’ with Op. 111 (275). Accepting Forster’s analysis of the sonata, Lucy’s performance suggests her experimentation with the potentially rebellious nature of music and alludes to an interest in the ‘private, subversive life’ outside the drawing room (275). Fillion delineates the history of the sonata in her study of Forster’s novel, and she argues it was a ‘private genre’ which ‘remained an outlet for intimate rather than public expression’ (275). While a few of Beethoven’s sonatas were played in public like ‘the “Pathétique,” “Moonlight,”” and “Appassionata,”’, Fillion believes these were the principal performance pieces because their ‘poetic subtitles’ make their intended tone a known, and appropriate, choice for female interpretation (275). The lack of subtitle aligned with Beethoven’s Opus 111 leaves the underlying meaning of the piece open to interpretation by the individual, thereby killing the amateur, ‘that actor of music’, and introducing the importance of the performer’s creative reign as interpreter (Barthes 150). Lucy’s decision to engage with the unknown and execute this instrumental piece publicly signifies her musical rebellion, but her decision to play triumphantly appropriates her interpretation and saves her from participating fully in a potentially dangerous performance of feminine despair and aligns her playing with what Forster believes to be Beethoven’s original intent.

Despite playing triumphantly, the narrator’s portrayal of Lucy’s impromptu recital at the pension fails to truly depict the nuances of the sonata’s structure. The narrator’s transcription of sounds into emotions, much like Forster’s own tendency to translate ‘sounds into colours’ when listening to music, does not reveal the sounds of the particular piece we desire to get ‘closer’ to and understand as readers (*TCD* 137). It is only through the memories of another pensioner at the Bertolini, the clergyman, Mr Beebe, that we are allowed to ‘wander’

into 'Beethoven's self, his presumable goal' (Forster, 'The *Raison d'Être* of Criticism in the Arts' 16). While listening to Lucy play at the Bertolini, Mr Beebe 'pondered over this illogical element' in her musical ability and remembers when he first heard her play Opus 111 at a church recital in Kent:

'Miss Honeychurch. Piano. Beethoven,' and Mr Beebe was wondering whether it would be *Adelaide* or the march of *The Ruins of Athens*, when his composure was disturbed by the opening bars of Opus 111. He was in suspense all through the introduction, for not until the pace quickens does one know what the performer intends. With the roar of the opening theme he knew that things were going extraordinarily; in the chords that herald the conclusion he heard the hammer-strokes of victory. He was glad that she only played the first movement, for he could have paid no attention to the winding intricacies of the measure of nine-sixteen (RV 29).

Through Beebe's more methodical and realistic description of the sonata's arrangement, the reader finally begins to visualise and comprehend the auditory force of sound behind Beethoven's composition. The 'disturb[ing]' opening, quick pace, 'roar', 'herald[ing]' chords, and 'hammer-strokes' allude to what Fillion identifies as the continuous 'outbursts of massive sound' located in Opus 111 (277). Mr Beebe's surprise at Lucy's choice of music confirms the precarious undertones of the sonata, for there were more appropriate genres of music for the female amateur-performer of the period. Recalling the Romantic and Victorian preference for an attractive female performer gracefully sitting behind the piano, Beethoven's sonata, with 'its rigorous contrapuntal density' and 'rhythmic complexity', requires both a physical and emotional exertion which is better suited for the male musician (277). Even though the reader is denied an actual description of Lucy's appearance during the performance, the narrative reproduction of the sonata's loud and crushing sound suggests she drops the feminine graces of the amateur performer and gets lost in her playing. Moreover, Mr Beebe's comment that he

would not be able to concentrate on ‘the winding intricacies of the measure of nine-sixteen’ indicates Lucy’s vigorous performance style would be too much of distraction for him to concentrate fully on the music. Nevertheless, her rendition back in Tunbridge Wells moved Mr Beebe to the point of ‘stamping’ and, consequently, his overenthusiastic response illustrates men also have the capacity to get lost in an emotional overload when listening to music (RV 29).

Forster does present an image of success in both the recital scenes, though Lucy’s performances remain problematic. The choric refrain of ‘passion’, ‘tragic(al)’, ‘love’, ‘Victory’, and ‘triumph’ allude to Lucy’s emotive possibilities as a *Bildungsroman* heroine, and Forster’s decision to use Mr Beebe’s memories and own knowledge of the spirals, chords and movements of Opus 111 as the medium of description undermines Lucy’s own autonomy and proficiency as an artist. Women pianists become ‘objects of the public—that is, of the male—gaze’ when performing and, with Lucy’s lack of vocalisation, the passage confirms the male gaze’s domination even within the confines of the feminised drawing room (Gillett 7). The only affirmation of Lucy’s musical ability is exemplified by Mr Beebe’s repeated remark following both performances: ‘If Miss Honeychurch ever takes to live as she plays, it will be very exciting—both for us and for her’ (RV 30). He believes Lucy has mastered a part of herself through music; yet, she fails to execute the same level of confidence in her life outside of music. His first impressions of Lucy at the church recital remain unchanged in Florence, for he still sees her as the same juvenile girl, ‘with a quantity of dark hair and a very pretty, pale, undeveloped face’, whose life needs to imitate her art (29). Lucy informs Mr Beebe that ‘[s]omeone said just the same to mother and she said she trusted I should never live to play a duet’ (30). Mrs. Honeychurch is not an admirer of Lucy’s musical capabilities as it most likely interferes with her courtship. Because of her mother’s disapproval, Lucy is unable to vocalise her own love of music, and her muteness about her artistry, ‘the one thing she really liked’,

reveals her inability to understand the inner elements of her art and life (28). While she plays Beethoven's sonata for 'Victory', she has not yet mastered that same triumph beyond the heavy curtains of the drawing room. Her inability to fuse these two elements in her life negatively affects her artistic development and fulfilment, and is thus the main reason for her lack of autonomy both as a woman and artist.

Fillion observes that throughout *A Room with a View* 'Forster placed the musical episodes at key points in the novel, where they serve as preludes to life-changing experiences for Lucy' (268). His deliberate arrangement of these events signifies his attempt at seamlessly connecting the 'easy rhythm of fiction', located in the piano scenes, with 'the other rhythm, the difficult one', which 'offer[s] in its final expression a type of beauty which fiction might achieve in its own way' (AN 147, 149). Forster argues this other rhythm leads to '[e]xpansion', which is not to be confused with 'completion. Not rounding off but opening out' (149). The musicality of *A Room with a View* transcends the drawing room and infiltrates the narrative expansion of Lucy's character as she experiences anglicised Florentine life and develops as a character. These 'life-changing experiences' are comparable to artistic moments of awakening associated with musical expression, though not linked with an actual performance, and they eventually surpass the 'easy rhythm' of the piano scenes as they take over the *Bildungsroman* narrative.

Following the pension recital, Lucy, who 'never knew her desires so clearly as after music', heads to the Piazza (RV 37). She is aware that walking to the square unchaperoned is 'unladylike' and she decides to finally cross into potentially rebellious territory in 'drop[ing] the august title of the Eternal Woman' (37). Mr Beebe considers such behaviour a consequence of 'too much Beethoven' and thus echoes Haweis's demand for emotional restraint (36). As she walks unchaperoned throughout the square, she faces the consequences of her actions as a man is murdered in front of her and Lucy is rescued by George Emerson. Frank Kermode analyses the importance of this incident, and connects the scene's recurring use of the words

“cross” and “across”, of “happen” and “happening”, “do” and “done”, with Beethoven’s sonata (41). Much like the emotional chord-words repeated throughout Lucy’s pension performance, Kermode argues these ‘very ordinary words’ describing the event are ‘made to carry a secret sense, tacitly informing’ the reader about the significance of the scene to the narrative as a whole (41). Furthermore, much like the emotional terms used to describe Lucy’s performance, the repetition of these words allude to Forster’s definition of ‘easy’ rhythm, although they are representative of modes of action rather than sentiment, and they suggest the ensuing transformation of the main characters. Forster’s narrator admits that ‘[i]t was not exactly that a man has died; something had happened to the living; they had come to a situation where character tells, and where Childhood enters upon the branching paths of Youth’ (RV 42). At the start of the novel Lucy and George are both floundering individuals, and the incident has prompted their expansion into adulthood. George recognises that something important has occurred and wants to discover what it is whereas Lucy prefers to ignore the incident and requests his silence to the other pensioners. She has not fully captured the significance of the moment, wishes to repress it and only concentrates on her ‘foolish behaviour’ in leaving the Pension without her chaperone (42). She has immediately returned to the expectations of British propriety, especially, to the restrictive ideals of that ‘medieval lady’ who refuses to ‘revolt’ (38). It was during this momentary realisation of her growing autonomy, which some might label as simply rebellion, that Lucy ‘contemplated the River Arno, whose roar was suggesting some unexpected melody to her ears’ (42). Mirroring Beebe’s description of ‘the roar of the opening theme’ of Opus 111, the roar of the River Arno further entwines Lucy’s performance of the sonata with the events in the Piazza. In contrast to the earlier scene, Lucy is granted a moment of artistic autonomy as the narrator reveals she does have an ear for rhythm which is capable of capturing the cadences of life outside the drawing room, but she fails to absorb it in the same manner when playing. The murder at the Piazza

and interlude by the river represent the disturbing nature of life outside the drawing room, and James Buzard argues these scenes signify ‘a moment of recognition, quickly repressed, of life’s “undeniables”: violence, death and sexuality’ (164). Nevertheless, the ‘unexpected melody’ rushing from the River Arno does allude to the potentially triumphant possibilities of the least threatening of Buzard’s ‘undeniables’, Lucy’s sexuality, which awaits her if she embraces the opportunities available to her in Italy outside the confines of repressive British propriety.

Lucy’s second major moment of musical awakening occurs a few days later when the tourists embark on a picnic to Fiesole in the countryside. Dressed in virginal white Lucy remains embarrassed about her intimacy with George, and manages to avoid him for the majority of the excursion. It is only when looking for another pensioner that she stumbles upon him:

From her feet the ground sloped sharply into the view, and violets ran down in rivulets and streams and cataracts, irrigating the hillside with blue, eddying round the tree stems, collecting into pools in the hollows, covering the grass with spots of azure foam. But never again were they in such profusion: this terrace was the well-head, the primal source whence beauty gushed out the earth (63).

Lucy has moved from the hellish scene of the Piazza to a Florentine Garden of Eden, thus, balancing the binary tropes of these life-altering moments. Unlike the choric refrains found in the previous scenes, this interlude forgoes the earlier repetitive, descriptive arrangement. For Lucy to develop her musical awakenings cannot be trapped in the same first movement as her playing and, consequently, Forster expands the rhythm of his narrative to include new tempos and variations to coincide with her growth. This passage is saturated with water imagery and once again reflects back to the roar of the Arno and opening theme of the sonata. Fillion too believes this scene is ‘fused with musical imagery’ (268), and perhaps the change in pattern represents the ‘intricacies of measure nine-sixteen’ which made Mr Beebe so uncomfortable

(RV 29). Forster's descriptive use of 'rivulets', 'streams', 'cataracts', irrigation, 'eddyding', and 'gushed' additionally suggest the flow and flux of character development found in the *Bildungsroman* narrative, but Lucy is not alone in this current of flowers as George is with her, '[s]tanding at its brink, like a swimmer who prepares' to rescue her for the second time in the narrative (63). Not knowing how to act, she remains passive on the hillside and George interprets her actions as something entirely different: 'He saw radiant joy in her face, he saw flowers beat against her dress in blue waves' (63). Embracing 'the Mediterranean passions' of his surroundings, George kisses her and Forster's subsequent rhythmic presentation of the undulating waves and watery currents successfully capture the 'liberation' and 'freedom' of sexual awakening as Lucy drowns in this sea of blue violets with George (Bradbury, 'Introduction' ix; AN 149). By setting the embrace in the Florentine garden as opposed to the urban Piazza, where it would be perceived as 'a disruptive, disturbing force', Forster instead advocates the sexual awakening associated with the Grand Tour (Miller 48). Even with its undertones of indecency for Edwardian society, the serene environment of Italy manages to situate the kiss as innocent, although Charlotte embodies the crescendo of the interlude and disrupts the embrace from developing further with her cries of 'Lucy! Lucy! Lucy!' (RV 63). As the agent of drawing-room decorum, Charlotte views George's actions as exploitive and, naturally, she separates the almost-lovers with an escape to Rome. Forster remains somewhat dedicated to the pessimist's desire for 'some scene of separation' as he closes the first part of the novel with Lucy and Charlotte's exodus. It can be argued that *A Room with a View* attempts to retain a sense of mediation with the pessimist and optimist's preferred conclusions in the novel's two parts.

The second half of the narrative takes place in England a few months later with Lucy and Charlotte safely returned. Now engaged to a childhood acquaintance, the 'medieval' Cecil Vyse, both Lucy's piano playing and life-changing moments of awakening deteriorate and

recede into the backdrop of the courtship plot (84). Forster situates Cecil as an antagonist to the ‘unrefined’ George, for Cecil is described as ‘a Gothic statue. Tall and refined’, ‘[w]ell educated, well endowed, and not deficient physically’ (81). Furthermore, as ‘[a] Gothic statue implies celibacy’, Cecil fulfils the role of the safe Edwardian suitor (81). Before their Italian rendezvous, Cecil only considered Lucy ‘a commonplace girl who happened to be musical’ but, after meeting in Rome, he admits ‘Italy worked some marvel in her’ for ‘[i]t gave her light, and—which he held more precious—it gave her shadow’, which once again reinforces the dualities of her character (82-3). Cecil rightly assumes her tour of the Continent has initiated her growth, though he misinterprets her behaviour back in Tunbridge Wells when he believes she continues to ‘develop most wonderfully day by day’ when she instead regresses both in musical capability and confidence (83). Mr Beebe, too, has returned to Kent and remains central to the narrative and, still unaware of her engagement, Mr Beebe mentions his ‘pet theory’ about Lucy to Cecil:

Does it seem reasonable that she should play so wonderfully, and live so quietly? I suspect that one day she will be wonderful in both. The watertight compartments in her will break down, and music and life will mingle. Then we shall have her heroically good, heroically bad—too heroic, perhaps, to be good or bad (86).

Mr Beebe’s comments about the dual nature of Lucy’s character recur like a musical refrain even in England, and he believes her inability to unite her life and art under the same passion is a consequence of her failing to find love. Most likely alluding to George, Mr Beebe discloses to Cecil that in Italy there was the possibility that Lucy ‘had found wings, and meant to use them’ (87). Therefore, he locates the necessary catalyst for this desired synthesis to be her love interest rather than her artistry and, thus, Forster situates the courtship plot at the forefront of the narrative rather than Lucy’s musical development.

Even though Lucy's musicality takes on a subsidiary role in the second part of the narrative, Forster continues to align critical moments of the narrative with musical associations. He introduces Lucy's first performance in England shortly after the engagement and the couple's first kiss, which is depicted in more technical terms than her passionate moment with George. Lucy is entreated to entertain Cecil's family members, like the good Edwardian fiancée, by playing an unidentified Schumann piece and, while Cecil demands she play Beethoven, Lucy ignores the request: 'The melody rose, unprofitably magical. It broke, it was resumed broken, not marching once from the cradle to the grave. The sadness of the incomplete—the sadness that is often life, but should never be Art—throbbed in its disjected phrases, and made the nerves of the audience throb' (113). The name of the Schumann piece remains unknown, though Fillion observes that the narrator's description is 'fragmentary', 'syncopated' and 'unresolved', and she discerns Lucy is most likely playing a 'Romantic fragment', 'a circular piece without clear beginning or end' (283). Unlike her earlier mastery of Op. 111, the broken tone and dejected phrases of the Schumann recital suggests Lucy has decided to despair in this interpretation rather than triumph. The audience is clearly uncomfortable with this performance, as they 'throb' in anticipation for the end. The Schumann performance is an example of that 'smashing blow' Haweis was so afraid of in his analysis of women and music. Perhaps Lucy has begun to breakdown the 'watertight compartments' of her life through the media of her playing, and her desolation is aligned with her unresolved relationship with George. Nevertheless, as the narrator illustrates, this 'sadness of life' is 'not Art', and Forster's intonation destabilises the aesthetics of the piece. The tragedy of Lucy's playing is born from the tragedy of her life in restrictive England.

Forster's invocation of the 'Comic Muse' brings Mr Emerson and George to the suburb where Lucy and her family reside and, with Lucy's continued denial of love for George, the musical interludes further deteriorate (*RV* 109). Lucy attempts to play Gluck's *Armidé* but

it only leads to disaster, for ‘the music when Renaud approaches, beneath the light of an eternal dawn, the music that never gains, never wains, never ripples for ever like the tideless seas of fairyland’ was ‘not for the piano, and her audience began to get restive’ (144). Additionally, her subsequent endeavour to play ‘a few bars of the Flower Maidens’ song’ from Wagner’s *Parsifal* turns out ‘very badly’ and Lucy is forced to close the instrument in frustration (144). Clearly distracted by her approaching marriage, the men in her life and her audience’s negative reaction to her playing, Lucy is unable to successfully interpret musical compositions and perform them victoriously in public. The piano no longer offers her the refuge of escape as it once did in Florence, and she fails to gain autonomy over her artistry and life. Following the Gluck and Wagner attempts, George approaches Lucy, like Renaud, and kisses her for the second time in the shrubbery. Unlike the visual and rhythmic aesthetics of the first embrace in Italy, George, ‘who loved passionately’, only manages to ‘blunder’ the embrace in England. (149). It appears that Lucy is not the only character to be affected by the repressive, British environment.

The thematics of the courtship plot have overtaken as the pulse of the novel. The ‘little phrase[s]’, ‘repetition’, ‘variation’ and ‘expansion’ cease to exist in the England narrative, and Lucy’s final interlude at the piano occurs only after lying to both her suitors and her subsequent decision to become a spinster (*AN* 147, 149). Upon breaking off her engagement, and now free to resume her playing, Lucy returns to her beloved instrument only to merely ‘tinkl[e] at a Mozart sonata’ almost as if she no longer knows how to play (*RV* 167). The movement from Beethoven to Schumann and finally Mozart marks the detailed deterioration of Lucy’s musical ability. Forster’s lack of respect towards Mozart as nothing more than ‘a mere tinkler’ signifies Lucy’s ‘descent into sterile convention’ as an Edwardian heroine (Kermode 32; Fillion 268). Returning to the same dynamics encapsulated in her Beethoven performance at the pension is impossible and the only conceivable way to appropriately end

the novel is with, what Forster would later delineate as, that ‘idiotic use of marriage as a finale’ (*AN* 50). In a final attempt to depict the dualities of Lucy’s experiences, Charlotte brings together Lucy and George’s father, and Mr Emerson asserts that Lucy ‘must marry or [her] life will be wasted’ (*RV* 189). A potential career as a concert performer is bleak for, even while playing in Florence ‘her runs were not at all like strings of pearls’ and, at present, she can barely complete a tune (28). Even with coming into her money in the next year, Lucy’s prospects are limited as her lack of formal training will only pit her against the ‘thousands of men’ who are already ‘starving with the competition’ in the workforce, and fooling around with ‘typewriters and latchkeys’ will not bring about the same ‘sincere and passionate’ emotions she felt in Florence (180-1). Because of Lucy’s situation, Mr Emerson rightly asserts that ‘[i]t isn’t possible to love and to part’ freely and, unsurprisingly, we next see Lucy and George back in Italy as husband and wife after eloping (189). *A Room with a View* may have ended with marriage, but its light-hearted tone retains an aspect of that ‘permanence’ Forster so desired in his writing. Compared with his other novels which end in separation and maintain pessimistic undertones, *A Room with a View* is the only one to receive an afterward, *A View without a Room*, distributed on the fiftieth anniversary of its publication. Here Forster details what happens after the peeling of wedding bells and the possibilities envisaged by the final roar of the Arno. Disappointingly, Lucy’s musicality is further marginalised in her ultimate role as a piano teacher, thereby ‘joining the ranks of a vast proletariat of underpaid’ and demoralised female teachers, but she remains happy in her marriage (Gillett 207).

The cyclical evocation of Beethoven’s Opus 111 throughout the first part of *A Room with a View* examines female creativity, but as a pianist Lucy’s musicality remains incidental when compared to the other events of the narrative. Her performances throughout the novel are always public and continuously influenced and interpreted by the male gaze of the narrator, Mr Beebe, George or Cecil. Furthermore, her musical moments of awakening in Italy which

occur outside the drawing room are also induced and shaped by George's presence and choice of action. Not once does Lucy play triumphantly for herself, internalise or articulate her feelings about her chosen artistic medium. Furthermore, she is unable to develop without the stimulus of a male figure. With Lucy there is no element of the creative, 'invisible private acts' associated with the figure of artist and, moreover, her lack of comprehension and reflection about her art suggest the 'passivity' and minimal 'accomplishments' of the amateur (DuPlessis 84). For the male artist, '[t]rue art is the product of the interplay between the internal and external' forces of life (Beebe 38), but the woman artist must further negotiate, and eventually overcome, the male gaze during these public performances and Lucy is unable to transcend the gaze in the text. She only engages with the exterior environment of Italy and her male suitors rather than the interior comprehension of her playing. The second half of the novel reinforces her dilettante status as it situates female artistry as secondary to the traditional feminine roles of domesticity and marriage. *A Room with a View* exemplifies the theory that 'heroines are no longer seduced and betrayed by illicit love, they are routinely ruined by licit love' (Huf 158). By the novel's end, she still has not managed to successfully unite her musical artistry with life's triumphs, for one always appears to outweigh the other, and her marriage ultimately overshadows her artistic potential. Much like Lucy's Beethoven performance, Forster dances throughout *A Room with a View* on the boundary that divides female autonomy from passivity, and he ultimately sides with the 'Eternal Woman' or, as Woolf would later call her, the Angel in the House. Not until *Howards End* would Forster examine the wider contexts of feminism in early-twentieth-century Britain and finally subvert the courtship plot in a much more radical manner. While Lucy may have finally learned to live triumphantly, and find the happy ending with her 'unrefined' suitor, she does so at the cost of her artistry. Woolf would alternatively subvert this literary tradition and further examine the possibilities of the female artist-musician in *The Voyage Out*.

Heading South: Female Artistic Fulfilment in The Voyage Out

A Room with a View was published before Forster's association with Woolf and Bloomsbury, for it was not until around 1910 that he would integrate, albeit always remaining slightly peripheral, into the inner-workings of the group (Stansky 128). Woolf reviewed Forster's novel for the *Times Literary Supplement* in October 1908 and, while she did not have the same 'fear of hurting [Forster's] feelings' as she would in later reviews of his work, Woolf only superficially examines the novel (E4 492). She admits the reader is 'more than amused' with 'the cleverness, the sheer fun, and the occasional beauty of the surrounding parts', but she is not convinced with the narrative at the end (E1 221). She believes '[t]he story runs simply enough' and subsequently summarises the text's courtship plot (221). Her decision to recap only the superficial thematics of the *Bildungsroman* narrative is due to her belief 'that [*A Room with a View*] was meant to take this line', though she is 'conscious of some disappointment' that 'the view is smaller than we expected' (221-2). She locates this dissatisfaction in 'some belittlement, which seems to cramp the souls of its actors', but she fails to further elaborate on this metaphorical 'view', and Woolf concludes the review with the assertion that it is simply 'as clever as [his] other books' (222).

Woolf's review is provocative because she chooses not to discuss the musical episodes of Forster's text when she, too, was interested in, and writing about, music during this period.¹⁸ Woolf received the typical education of an upper-class woman in late-Victorian London wherein she undertook music and dance lessons in the hope that they would lead, 'in a decorous way', to accomplishment and eventually marriage (Bell, *Virginia Woolf: Volume 1* 21). While she hated dancing, Woolf worshipped music throughout her life, and she declared in 1901 that 'the only thing in this world is music—music and books' (L1 41). She moved beyond

¹⁸ Around the time of *A Room with a View*'s publication Woolf wrote three essays on art and music: 'Street Music' (1905), 'The Opera' (1909) and 'Impressions at Bayreuth' (1909).

this initial passion for the art form in an early essay, 'Street Music', where she examines sound, rhythm and the social context of the musician. Woolf introduces street musicians as those artists who 'live on something more substantial than the artistic satisfaction of their own souls' (E1 27). The disgraced street musician's loudness, and unrestricted movement throughout London in 'a trance of musical ecstasy', is antithetical to the emotional restraint expected in the drawing room (28). Street performers gratuitously bring their radical music to the public realm and these 'vagrants' have the potential to engage their audience with their 'unorthodox' and untutored performance and, consequently, street musicians have the potential to evolve into influential public figures (28). They no longer just disrupt the tranquillity of the family home with their loud, brassy instruments, they threaten the middle- and upper-class control over ideas about musical aesthetics and creative expression. Street performers have the potential to completely alter traditional ideas about art and music, and that makes them dangerous to the Victorian and Edwardian creatures of the drawing room.

Woolf believes the street musician is an artist because, when playing, his music 'takes possession of his soul' and momentarily erases any reminders of his existence as a beggar and she maintains that, regardless of one's social status, 'we must always treat with tenderness the efforts of those who strive honestly to express the music that is in them' (28). This demand for respect towards the street musician moves her to introduce a more general commentary about the role of the artist in the public realm. The artist has always been considered bohemian and improper and, as a result, artistic vocation is discouraged amongst members of the middle and upper classes. Arguments centring on emotional excess and restraint resurface in 'Street Music' as Woolf admits most parents prevent their sons from following their dreams of becoming musicians, painters, or poets, for it is considered effeminate to communicate 'the thoughts and emotions' the artist expresses in his craft (28). Additionally, Woolf's absence of discussion about daughters joining the ranks of these subversive 'pagan gods' reiterates patriarchal ideals

about female amateurism as parents fail to even consider the possibility of their daughters wanting to participate in the arts (30). 'Street Music' was written during the Edwardian period and Woolf maintains the artist is still viewed 'with suspicion that has not a little of fear in it' and, of all the artists, the musician 'is the most dangerous of the whole tribe' (28-9).

Like Haweis and Upton, Woolf confirms music's dangerous undertones, but she is not recommending emotional control. She asserts, '[t]he safest and easiest attribute of music—its tune—is taught' to those amateurs of the drawing room, but she argues that in this type of residual instruction, 'rhythm, which is its soul, is allowed to escape like the winged creature it is' (30). For Woolf it is rhythm which makes music subversive and 'stirs some barbaric instinct' within us and has the potential to 'breathe madness into our brains, crack the walls of our temples, and drives us in loathing of our rhythmless lives to dance and circle for ever' (*PA* 165; *E1* 30). In 'Street Music' she labels the musician 'the minister of the wildest of all the gods, who has not learnt to speak with human voice, or to convey to the mind the likeness of human things' (*E1* 29). The musician relies on rhythm as the necessary vehicle for artistic expression, and it is this otherworldly element of musical performance which makes society suspicious of musicians. Emma Sutton argues Woolf's interpretation of rhythm in 'Street Music' is 'resoundingly primitivist' ("Putting Words on the Backs of Rhythm" 180), but Woolf is not warning the artist to avoid the dangers inherent in this kind of rhythm. She is arguing instead for the listener and performer to embrace it and she foresees that, 'when the sense of rhythm' is 'thoroughly alive in every mind', we should 'notice a great improvement' in the 'affairs of daily life' and 'the art of writing' (*E1* 31). Consequently, Woolf believes rhythmical, "musical" prose' has the potential to create a modern style in literature which is separate from traditional realism (Sutton, "Within a Space of Tears" 54). Woolf confirms that 'rhythm alone might lead to excesses; but when the ear possessed its secret, tune and harmony would be united with it, and those actions which by means of rhythm were performed punctually and in time, would

now be done with whatever of melody is natural to each' (E1 31). Through this liberation into the aesthetic workings of rhythm, life turns into an everlasting, and uninhibited, dance. While her arguments for rhythmic release are compelling, the conventions and traditions of Edwardian Britain were not ready to accept such aesthetic subversions, as represented in Forster's inability to engage with larger social contexts in *A Room with a View*. Yet, in a letter to Emma Vaughan about the article, Woolf writes, 'you can imagine what a flutter is going through the musical world—it has probably reached Dresden. My remarks will revolutionise the whole future of music' (L1 180). These early impressions about the transformative role of the artist, especially the musician, would additionally contribute to her examination of the Rachel's creative development and her subsequent resistance to traditional, domestic roles as a wife and mother in *The Voyage Out*.

One of Woolf's most renowned phrases concerning the twentieth century and the emergence of modernism is that 'on or about December 1910 human character changed' and, as a consequence, 'there [was] at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics and literature' (E3 421-2). Woolf's recollections about the transformations of that year in her essay, 'Character in Fiction' (1924), locate this transitional moment in the midst of the eight-year process of writing and publishing *The Voyage Out*.¹⁹ These changes undoubtedly affected the formal style and underlying themes of the novel, and Woolf identifies the inherent differences of 1910 through the evolution of the 'character of one's cook' (422). She states, '[t]he Victorian

¹⁹ Woolf's choice in date also alludes to the First-Post Impressionist Exhibition, 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists', which opened its doors at the Grafton Galleries on the 5th of November 1910. The paintings showcased signified a movement away from traditional notions of European art, such as realism and the 'naturalism of the Impressionists' and encompassed a variety of 'styles and movements' like Pointillism, Symbolism and Cubism ('Post-Impressionism'; Denvir 2). Roger Fry, maintained the Post-Impressionists wished 'to express by pictorial and plastic form certain spiritual experiences' as they experimented with colour, significant form and primitivism (Fry 166). Additionally, in February of that year, Woolf participated in the *Dreadnought* Hoax wherein she and other members of Bloomsbury dressed up as the Emperor of Abyssinia and his entourage, and were given a tour of the *H.M.S. Dreadnought* by the Royal Navy. Hermione Lee points out in her biography of Woolf that their 'ridicule of empire, infiltration of the nation's defences, mockery of bureaucratic procedures, cross-dressing and sexual ambiguity' caused a public uproar similarly linked with the exhibition (283). I will discuss later how these two events influenced Woolf's anti-imperial dialogue and engagement with primitivism in *The Voyage Out*.

cook lived like a leviathan in the lower depths, formidable, silent, obscure, inscrutable; the Georgian cook is a creature of sunshine and fresh air; in and out of the drawing room, now to borrow the *Daily Herald*, now to ask advice about a hat' (422). Jane Goldman argues that the cook's improved situation symbolises 'material improvements for women workers, and the emergence of women from intellectual darkness into enlightenment, from obscurity into public life' (112). The Georgian cook was not the only creature to rise from the depths of darkness as middle- and upper-class women were also experiencing this transformation of women's roles, and the literary transference of these changes resulted in a modernist redefinition of the formal style, tropes, and motifs of the courtship plot wherein the heroine usually 'overcomes obstacles', 'achieves personal maturity', and is saved from her own autonomy at the end with that 'final unifying triumph' of marriage (Miller 45). Woolf's first novel embraces the developments of 1910 and deconstructs this predictable plot device as the narrative progresses from its opening scenes. While her experimental representation of female autonomy ultimately culminates in Rachel's death, Woolf introduces the argument that untainted creative expression—even if it is short-lived—supersedes a lifelong struggle of repression. Nevertheless, Woolf's rejection of marriage in her first novel is considered a 'social threat' and 'national crisis' by those who supported and believed this social institution was 'integral to the order and stability of the nation' (101). Rachel's desire for artistic fulfilment rather than the domestic pleasures of marriage and procreation instigates a progressive, and necessary, dialogue affirming that women of the twentieth century can be more than just submissive wives and nurturing mothers.

Woolf's discussion about both marriage and colonialism in her first novel is 'invested in an idea about nation that is inextricably tied up in conceptions of the female body which cannot be severed from [her] concept of empire' (Garrity 2). Consequently, Woolf engages with a 'modernist rethinking of empire' which centres around her artist-heroine's development

and her subsequent conflict with patriarchal standards about women's roles in society (Begam and Valdez Moses, 'Introduction' 5). As the narrative progresses, Rachel becomes increasingly aware of the darker undertones of bodily and psychological masculine oppression which aim to thwart her creative endeavours, and Woolf's 'desire to "break the sequence" of repressive cultural continuity' is located throughout her writings about women as well as in her examination of 'worlds outside the imperial nation' (Seshagiri and Zimring 474). Her critique of Empire is what ultimately distances the narrative from the Edwardian courtship plot as she positions Rachel's artistic development 'against the rhetoric of the Establishment' (Lee 278). It is Woolf's examination of these themes which situates *The Voyage Out* at the forefront of feminist and anti-imperial thought during the period. 'Radical, subversive' and on 'the modern side of this cultural divide', Woolf's 'strategies of anti-authoritarian ridicule' located within her discussion of rhythm, examination of the woman musician and anti-imperial dialogue influenced her experimentation with early forms of modernism (278).

As mentioned, Woolf opens *The Voyage Out* with a presentation of Rachel, much like Lucy, as an inarticulate girl determined 'to t-t-triumph in the wind' as she voyages out of England towards South America with her father, Willoughby (VO 16). Aboard the *Euphrosyne*, which departs like 'a bride going forth to her husband, a virgin unknown of men,' are fellow passengers Helen and Ridley Ambrose, Rachel's aunt and uncle, and her father's friend, Mr Pepper (25). Much like Mr Beebe's first impressions of Lucy, Helen observes that Rachel's 'smooth unmarked outline of a girl's face' is potentially 'interesting' if she could just learn 'to think, feel, laugh, or express herself' in a sociable manner (18). Presented as a *tabula rasa*, the majority of characters make it their mission to educate Rachel throughout the novel. The early chapters appear to comply with the narrative thematics of the *Bildungsroman*'s development and voyage motifs, but Woolf's decision to situate *The Voyage Out* in the exotic South American jungle, rather than Continental Europe, confirms the text's underlying 'Edwardian façade' and

'its deeper affinity with modernism's great revolution of social imagination, its contestation of reality' (Froula 40). Woolf herself never travelled beyond Europe's borders, but she believed '[a] writer's country is a territory within his own brain' (E1 35).²⁰ Her creation of the fictional South American colony, Santa Marina, highlights the novel's anti-imperialist discourse in the text and allows her to engage with the twentieth-century's interest in primitivism. It also suggests Woolf's deviance from historical realism as she invites her readers to voyage alongside her heroine and imagine a place 'thousands of miles away' even though they have 'no prospect of ever visiting 'except with the mind's eye' (E1 44). Female writers were usually 'debarred from adventure' narratives 'because their social consciousness' was protected by 'social and narrative custom', but Woolf's exotic setting, deconstruction of the courtship plot, engagement with the politics of the female musician and colonialism, introduces 'a new sense of adventure' for female novelists of the twentieth century and to the *Künstlerroman* narrative (DiBattista 204-5).

Helen may repeatedly curse Rachel's lack of education and expected social graces but Woolf's artist-heroine more than compensates for this deficiency with her knowledge about music: 'At the age of twenty-four she knew as much about music as most people do when they are thirty; and could play as well as nature allowed her to, which, as became daily more obvious, was a really generous allowance' (VO 26). Unlike the narrator's ambiguous introduction to Lucy's musicality, Rachel's confidence and proficiency is evident from the start. Woolf acknowledges that the only benefit of Rachel's feminine instruction is that, 'being musical', she is allowed to pursue her passion (26). Had she been given a more formal education she 'might have made friends' or undertaken a Grand Tour of the Continent but,

²⁰ Woolf's 'privileged Englishness' allowed for her participation in various versions of the Grand Tour as a young woman (Seshagiri and Zimring 474). In 1905 she travelled to Lisbon and Spain with Adrian, and in 1906 all the Stephen children travelled to Greece and Turkey. Woolf recorded her Grecian travels in an early diary, and her disdain for the clichés of Continental travel appear steadily throughout: '[i]t is not worth wasting ink here upon the journey through Italy' and 'Baedeker [sic] will count the statues; a dozen archaeologists will arrange them in a dozen different ways; but the final work must be done by the fresh mind that sees them' (PA 318, 319).

instead, Rachel's efforts are 'poured straight into music' (26). Seemingly unconcerned about her artistic isolation, Rachel has 'dreams and ideas' about her future as a musician and, despite her family's ignorance about the extent of her artistic ambitions, Rachel is candidly dissatisfied with society's rejection of female musicians (26). When Helen informs Rachel that another aunt is concerned she will ruin her arms with too much playing, Rachel retorts, "The muscles of the forearms—and then one won't marry?" (13) Female strength, whether mentally rebellious or physically muscular, is considered unfeminine and detrimental to a woman's marriage prospects, and Rachel's sardonic response designates her as a 'troublemaker'—a role often associated with artist-heroines (Huf 11). Her conversation with Helen about Aunt Bessie's intended meaning leads Rachel to contemplate the fact 'that nobody ever said a thing they meant, or ever talked of a feeling they felt' which is 'what music was for' (*VO* 29). Resentful of these painstaking realities, she goes to her piano for solace:

Absorbed by her music she accepted her lot very complacently, blazing into indignation perhaps once a fortnight, and subsiding as she subsided now. Inextricably mixed in dreamy confusion, her mind seemed to enter into communion, to be delightfully expanded and combined with the spirit of Beethoven Op. [111] 112 [...]
Like a ball of thistle-down it kissed the sea, rose, kissed it again, and thus rising and kissing passed finally out of sight (29).²¹

We once again encounter Beethoven's sonata as Rachel plays in the privacy of her cabin. Woolf's placement of the instrument in her bedroom, as opposed to its normal residence in the drawing room where women are 'subject to all kinds of casual interruptions', allows for undisturbed play (*AROO* 61). Moreover, Rachel's room acts as a refuge from both the male

²¹ The text states Rachel plays Op. 112 but Beethoven only wrote 32 piano sonatas which end with Op. 111. Upon the publication of the first American edition, and second English edition, Woolf wrote to close friend, Saxon Sydney-Turner asking him if to clarify 'the number of the Beethoven sonata that Rachel plays' (*L2* 418). She admits, 'I can't remember what you told me—I say op. 112—It can't be that' (418). In a subsequent letter to R. C. Trevelyan she states she is 'altering op. 112 to 111' (419). Jane Wheare confirms the 1920 edition of *The Voyage Out* followed these edits, and Rachel plays Op. 111 (*VO* 357en). Woolf's use of Beethoven's Op. 111 to introduce Rachel's playing suggests an allusion to Forster's *A Room with a View*.

and female gaze of her companions who consider her music only a distraction until marriage. Her private performance engages with the history of 'the artist as a recluse or a detached observer' who plays and creates art for herself rather than for the male spectator (Beebe 66). Music, as a substitute for speech, is undoubtedly problematic for feminist politics but, as married and unmarried women are 'denied full legal agency and economic independence', they are unable to articulate their desires and must find alternative outlets to do so (Garrity 45). Music is Rachel's chosen vehicle of expression and, while she accepts her situation at the start of the novel and uses music as an alternative form of communication, her development in South America awakens her more rebellious nature. As she grows more autonomous, both as a musician and a woman, Rachel becomes more confident as she learns to vocalize her beliefs and her performances, and her creative expression eventually centres around more formally experimental interpretations. This piano scene functions as a prelude to Rachel's later performances and, consequently, presents little detail. In contrast to Lucy's musical deterioration, Rachel's piano interludes lengthen as the narrative progresses. This early performance immediately distances Rachel's playing from those performances of the drawing-room amateur. Rather than reasserting the residual literary portrayals of female pianists and their emotional connection with music, Woolf's narrator concentrates on the rhythmic fluctuation and expansion of the sonata's compositional form as it synchronises with the *Euphrosyne's* oceanic passage, thereby aligning Rachel's musical voyage with her physical one, and this suggests an early modernist 'reshaping of experience and form' as Woolf experiments with new modes of narration (Bradbury, 'London' 179). Lucy's Beethoven performance alludes to her subsequent romantic interludes and, in contrast, the adventures awaiting Rachel in Santa Marina remain as ambiguous as the *Euphrosyne's* journey 'across the empty universe' of the sea (VO 25).

As the above passages reveal, questions about marriage and women's status in society occasionally appear throughout the first few chapters of the novel without any thorough examination by the characters, least of all Rachel but, following the arrival of Richard Dalloway and his wife Clarissa, an examination of colonial and female oppression occupies a more prominent position in the text. Dalloway is a former MP in the midst of 'broadening [his] mind' while touring the Continent with Clarissa, though his travels are carried out under the pretence that he is 'doing the best he could to serve his country out of Parliament' (31). Woolf illustrates their endeavours in 'a style of comedy and social satire' inherited from Austen's novels and Forster's *A Room with a View* (Briggs 7). The Dalloways' presence on the *Euphrosyne* immediately alters the dynamic of the ship, and politics now dominate the majority of conversation. It is during dinner that women's franchise and the figure of the artist become principal topics of discussion. The Dalloways and Willoughby agree that the Suffrage movement is futile and irritating, Ridley considers any person, regardless of sex, who believes their vote wields them any power is 'deluded' and Helen, not really knowing what to say to the Dalloways, simply asks Richard whether he found his job boring (35).²² He argues that the role of the politician is the most 'enjoyable and enviable' of men's professions and, taking Helen as 'the representative of the arts', he admits artists consider politicians to be 'a gross commonplace set of people' (36). Dalloway defensively argues that artists shirk their 'responsibilities' to society because they '*find* things in a mess, shrug their shoulders, turn aside to their vision [...] and *leave* things in a mess' (35-6). Supporting her husband, Clarissa admits that while she enjoys 'the delights of shutting oneself in a little world of one's own' like Rachel, the realities of the contaminated London streets force her to assert, 'I *won't* live in a world of my own' (36). Clarissa and Richard's arguments encapsulate society's suspicion of the artist locked away in an Ivory Tower and, following dinner, Clarissa's views are inadvertently pressed

²² Ridley's comments perhaps reflect Woolf's own reservations regarding the focus on the vote: 'I dont [*sic*] feel more important [...] Its [*sic*] like a knighthood; might be useful to impress people one despises' (D1 104).

on Rachel. Upon learning that Rachel plays the piano, Clarissa admits her envy and she asks Rachel whether she has been to the Wagner Festival in Bayreuth.²³ She remembers her ‘first *Parsifal*’ which led to a public display of tears and, with this memory, Clarissa contradicts her earlier jealousy: ‘I don’t think music’s altogether good for people [...] Too emotional, somehow’ (39). Her comments reflect the ‘intensely subjective and emotional, even ecstatic, responses to Wagner’s music’ which were prevalent during the late-Victorian and Edwardian period (Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley* 13). Her view that such powerful emotional experiences are inappropriate reasserts Haweis’s and Upton’s arguments surrounding music and women’s inability to control their emotions. Clarissa additionally believes music becomes really disruptive when children take a professional interest in the art form, thus reaffirming Woolf’s arguments in ‘Street Music’, and Clarissa’s opinions about music’s dangerous undertones allude to the Victorian and Edwardian ‘fear of what would happen to the child who should drink so intoxicating a draught’ as music (*E1* 30). Representative of Forster’s Eternal Woman, and Woolf’s ultra-feminine Angel in the House, Clarissa functions as the agent of drawing-room decorum in Woolf’s text with ‘her head in veils’ and steadfast support of her husband’s ideals, and she tries to steer Rachel away from her creative endeavours (32). Her status is an ideal Willoughby would like his daughter to embrace—the perfect ‘Tory hostess’—and Clarissa’s attempts at imposing the ideals of the drawing-room aesthetics represents a necessary obstacle that Rachel must overcome in her musical development (77).

Rachel’s triumph occurs when Helen and Clarissa’s conversation turns to their respective children back in England. Making Rachel feel ‘outside their world and motherless’ she once again turns to her music:

It was all old music—Bach and Beethoven, Mozart and Purcell—the pages yellow, the engraving rough to the fingers. In three minutes she was deep in a very difficult, very

²³ Woolf attended the festival with her brother, Adrian, and close friend Saxon Sydney-Turner in August of 1909.

classical fugue in A, and over her face came a queer remote impersonal expression of complete absorption and anxious satisfaction. Now she stumbled; now she faltered and had to play the same bar twice over; but an invisible line seemed to string the notes together, from which rose a shape, a building. She was so far absorbed in this work, for it was really difficult to find how all these sounds should stand together, and drew upon the whole of her faculties, that she never heard a knock at the door (48-9).

The list of preferred composers who act as Rachel's 'pacifying force[s]' are distinguished male maestros of an earlier era, and they battle her 'overpowering hidden feelings' about motherhood (Jacobs 245). Clarissa and Helen exclude her from their maternal inner circle in their discussion about missing their children and, consequently, Rachel is reminded of the death of her own mother and she uses music as an outlet to escape her grief. Acting as 'a form of transcendence', Rachel's music allows her 'to move beyond self-consciousness and external reality' (Ronchetti 24). The passage illustrates Rachel's engrossed communion with the Fugue through the visualisation of a building, which alludes to connotations of construction and composition. I believe this also signifies the Post-Impressionists' desire 'to express by pictorial and plastic form certain spiritual experiences' (Fry 166). Composed by the fugue's 'invisible line', Rachel's metaphorical building foreshadows her musical development, and eventually becomes a reoccurring image with her playing, and this continued metaphor ultimately connects all of Rachel's performances with an 'invisible line' throughout the narrative. Even though she struggles with the piece, Rachel conquers the clichés of the amateur as she embraces a more challenging musical genre. Described as a 'polyphonic composition constructed on one or more short subjects or themes' ('fugue'), the Fugue is representative of modernism's complex 're-structuring of parts, a re-relating of the fragmented concepts, and re-ordering of linguistic entities to match [...] the new order of reality' (McFarlane 80). Rachel's performance prefigures her later defining moment as a musician when she integrates unrelated

musical genres and pieces into one singular performance at the engagement dance, a scene which contains characteristics of modernism's signature forms.

With a deceased mother, and a father who shows little interest in her life, Rachel is wanting in parental figures and the Dalloways gladly adopt this role throughout their stay on the *Euphrosyne*. Rachel endures Clarissa's instruction in feminine refinement—emotional restraint, embracing Jane Austen's *Persuasion* and courtship techniques—but Dalloway gives her a more worldly education. When Rachel asks him about his underlying ideals, he responds with 'one word—Unity. Unity of aim, of dominion, of progress. The dispersion of the best ideas over the greatest areas' (VO 55). Dalloway's concept of 'Unity' is a far cry from Rachel's constructed 'invisible line'. He is concerned with 'securing England's global empire' and, as 'the English seem, on the whole, whiter than most men, their records cleaner', how they expand the empire is incidental to him (Froula 44; VO 56). Wanting to understand 'the horrors' and 'illusions' Dalloway alludes to, Rachel implores him to further elucidate but, because he believes '[i]t is impossible for human beings [...] to fight and to have ideals', he never discusses politics with women (56). He maintains their ignorance about the greater 'strains of public life' keeps their illusions intact, and he refuses to take responsibility in destroying them (56). As a result, he does not answer Rachel and their discussion about British imperialism is abruptly cut short and deemed a communicative 'failure' (57). Dalloway switches the conversation to Rachel's interests, a topic he considers appropriate and safe, but which proves to be ultimately more dangerous:

'You see, I'm a woman,' said Rachel.

'I know—I know,' said Richard, throwing his head back and drawing his fingers across his eyes.

‘How strange to be a woman! A young beautiful woman,’ he continued sententiously, ‘has the whole world at her feet. That’s true, Miss Vinrace. You have an inestimable power—for good or for evil. What couldn’t you do—’ he broke off.

‘What?’ asked Rachel.

‘You have beauty,’ he said. The ship lurched. Rachel fell slightly forward. Richard took her in his arms and kissed her. Holding her tight, he kissed her passionately, so that she felt the hardness of his body and roughness of his cheek printed upon hers. She fell back in her chair, with tremendous beats of the heart, each of which sent waves across her eyes. He clasped his forehead in his hands.

‘You tempt me,’ he said. The tone of his voice was terrifying. He seemed choked in fight (66-7).

Women’s education does not teach them that they ‘[have] bodies’ and, instead, they are taught ‘the lie that the body is a hindrance to the mind, and sex a necessary evil to be endured for the perpetuation of [the British] race’ (Russell 21, 25). Dalloway is convinced the ‘inestimable power’ of women is their sexuality, rather than their intelligence or strength, and he believes women will abuse this talent in politics (Briggs 8). His actions stem from his fear in that, allowing women more legal rights, they will manipulate and oppress men as they have done to women. Not ready to be governed, Dalloway ‘takes advantage of Rachel’s inexperience’ and satisfies his own physical desires, and his accusation that Rachel’s temptress ways encouraged his actions is a ‘familiar masculine manoeuvre’ of female oppression (8). Woolf, in contrast to Forster, examines the dangerous undertones of masculine physical subjugation on an uneducated female mind as Rachel dreams uneasily that night: ‘A voice moaned for her; eyes desired her. All night long barbarian men harassed the ship; they came scuffling down the passages, and stopped to snuffle at her door’ (*VO* 68). The male gaze has finally infiltrated the sanctuary of Rachel’s consciousness and, for the first time, she sees her life, and her artistry, as

‘a creeping hedged-in thing’ (72). She admits she enjoyed the kiss but Rachel is not willing to sacrifice her music and be made ‘dull and crippled’ by marriage and children (72). Her desire to ‘be m-m-myself’ in spite of everyone pressing down upon her is realised through Helen’s guidance and, with her aunt’s pledge to Willoughby that Rachel will receive proper lessons in femininity and domesticity, Rachel is allowed to stay in her aunt and uncle’s villa just outside the town of Santa Marina (77).

‘[F]ive Elizabethan barques’ founded Woolf’s fictional colony three hundred years earlier, and its history contains the expected chronicle of violence associated with imperialism. Only in the last ten years have tourists started visiting Santa Marina and, with the arrival of more travellers, the eventual transformation of a monastery into an acceptable English hotel establishes that necessary safe contact zone for tourists (79). While Woolf participates in the artist’s wish to voyage out of London, her choice of location and engagement with primitivism is what separates her novel from the Grand Tour narrative of her predecessors. Woolf’s narrator admits the present-day traveller’s boredom with ‘the older countries’, and their ‘search of something new’ is what defines the Georgian era of British travel (80). Considered larger than ‘Italy, and really nobler than Greece’, the South American landscape is fresh ‘and full of new forms of beauty’ waiting to be discovered by the colonising European (81). These modern ideals of beauty, though, are not associated with the usual tourist sites of ‘stained glass, and rich brown painting[s]’ found on the Continent (80). Woolf instead engages with what Gill Perry maintains is the artist’s wish to visit distant settings which present ‘the construction of other myths of the “primitive”, particularly in association with the contemporary discourses of colonialism, and related notions of the exotic and the pagan’ (Perry 10).

Santa Marina’s aesthetic splendour originates from the indigenous population and highlights the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century’s interest in primitivism. Art historian and critic, Bernard Denvir, argues that ‘the primitive art of “colonial” peoples’

revealed that there were possible 'alternatives to the rational perspectival conventions of post-Renaissance art' which had an 'innocence associated with the Garden of Eden' (93). He further maintains that, stylistically, 'most primitive art was geometric, which commended it to those who sought to replace the looseness of Impressionism with a formal structuralism of the kind variously pioneered' by the Post-Impressionists like Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin and Georges Seurat (93). While these artists may have been influenced by, or incorporated elements of, the 'primitive' into their paintings, the European consensus was that "'primitive" art was seen as an inferior cultural phenomenon' whereas the paintings of the Post-Impressionists were products of 'highly civilised and modern men trying to find a pictorial of language appropriate to the sensibilities of the modern outlook' (Denvir 92; Fry 166-7). This suggests that the cultural products of 'primitive' cultures are considered 'barbaric' in their 'crudity' and 'simplicity', and only granted artistic worth once they are recreated in modern, civilized art. (Fry 62). Following this argument one can see how the terms "'primitive" and "primitivism" are deeply problematic' within art criticism (Perry 5). The former term was used from the nineteenth century onwards as a label to separate 'contemporary European societies and culture' from others which were regarded as 'less civilized' (5). The latter is often used to characterize 'a Western interest in, and/or reconstruction of' other cultures 'designated as "'primitive"' (5). Consequently, the dialogue surrounding these two labels situates the products, art objects and people of 'primitive' cultures as the Other to Western notions of art and, thus, 'makes an implicit value judgment' upon these societies as 'different or alien' to our own (5).

The late-twentieth-century discourse surrounding primitivism additionally locates an alternative, colonial narrative which Abigail Solomon-Gordeau identifies as the 'dense interweave of racial and sexual fantasies and power' found in the work of the Post-Impressionists, particularly Gauguin (315). She further maintains there is 'a darker side to primitivist desire, one implicated in fantasies of imagery knowledge, power and rape' which

was often ‘underpinned by real power, by real rape’ (324). Perry discusses how many artists working during this period like Gauguin tapped into the ‘well-established convention within Post-Enlightenment European art and culture’ wherein the ‘rural female was presented as close to nature’ and was associated with ‘the feminine “other” of civilized masculine culture’ (23-4). He further maintains that, for Gauguin, it is the figure of the naked woman who ‘come[s] to symbolize the opposite of a civilized urban life’ and subsequently becomes a vehicle to explore his fascination with primitivism (24). Gauguin often painted nude Tahitian women and, consequently, the colonial discourse associated with his works alludes to a more disturbing narrative about the eroticization and exoticization of the racial Other as art object (291). I believe Woolf recognised this alternative aspect of primitivism and she explores this imperial discourse in her *Künstlerroman*.

As a close friend of the exhibition’s organisers, Woolf was more than familiar with the Post-Impressionist interest in primitivism, and her own engagement with primitivism was further revealed in two other events of 1910: the *Dreadnought* Hoax and her choice of costume for the Post-Impressionist Ball. By ‘blacking up’ as Ethiopians during the *Dreadnought* Hoax, the participants engaged with a longstanding ‘English tradition of blackface minstrelsy’ which was considered an acceptable vehicle ‘for suppressed impulses, under the guise of humor’ (Gerzina 54). Nevertheless, Woolf’s performance as a sexually ambiguous African undermines the vaudeville undertones of minstrelsy and alludes to a more subversive dialogue regarding racial and sexual uncertainty. In addition to the *Dreadnought* Hoax, Virginia and Vanessa engaged with the eroticization of the female tribal Other when they dressed as ““indecent” Gauguin girls’ while attending the Post-Impressionist Ball (Lee 291). Scantly clothed in ‘brightly coloured stuffs from a firm called Burnetts “made for natives in Africa”’ (291), Vanessa and Virginia publicly displayed their fascination with primitivism through their bodies and choice of dress and, subsequently, their appearance and actions ultimately objectifies the

'native' Other into a form of performance art. Mark Wollaeger argues that, for Woolf, the 'racial masquerade' was only 'a masquerade, a prank rather than a strategic racial repositioning' ('Postcards' 68). Woolf's actions may superficially appear as an attempt at 'blackface minstrelsy' and Bloomsbury antics, but I argue her examination of imperialism, patriarchal oppression, and Rachel's own encounter with the racial Other in *The Voyage Out*, indicates a more serious immersion, albeit still problematic, with primitivism (Gerzina 53).

It is this objectification of the authentic 'native' as art object in her narrative which ultimately distances Woolf's tourists from Forster's Continental travellers. They consider the South American's brightly coloured headscarves and 'primitive carvings' to be the epitome of this new movement in art (*VO* 81). Furthermore, Woolf's tourists view their contact with the South American 'native' a more legitimate experience than the average museum-goer back in England who can only see these artefacts through glass at museums or 'Native Village' exhibitions. Through the European lens of an African ideal, these exhibitions involved the participation of black Londoners re-enacting 'native life' for the interested museum visitor (Gerzina 47). These presentations had two motives—to educate and entertain—and Annie E. Coombes argues these exhibitions supposedly participated in a 'discourse of authenticity' in their representation of 'primitive' life (qtd. in Gerzina 47). Despite considering their encounter with the South American 'native' as a more authentic engagement with 'primitive' culture, what's underpinned in *The Voyage Out* is that Helen and Rachel are still participating in the coloniser's voyeuristic activities as they situate Santa Marina culture as the Other.

One of their favourite pastimes during their stay is '[s]eeing life', wherein they go into town and watch the locals—'young women, with their hair magnificently swept in coils, a red flower behind the ear sat on doorsteps' or 'an old cripple' as he 'twang[s] his guitar strings' (*VO* 88-9). Rachel and Helen are no different from the museum visitors viewing the 'native' exhibitions as they watch a scene of 'primitive' life unfold in the colony. Moreover, Woolf's

description of Helen and Rachel's similar study of the English tourists staying at the hotel further illustrates the banality of their voyeuristic aesthetics. Despite the English ideals of traversing new terrain and engaging with 'authentic' 'primitive' culture, they only recreate yet another version of displaced Britain as their days are spent picnicking in the countryside and evenings pass with billiards in the hotel drawing room. Unsurprisingly, the South American romance becomes an expected adventure just as the Mediterranean passion once was during the Grand Tour but, in contrast to Forster, Woolf satirically presents the typical Edwardian engagement through the characters of Susan Warrington and Arthur Venning rather than her heroine and Terence Hewet. She is not relying on the conventions of the courtship plot to instigate her heroine's development.

In contrast to Rachel, Susan cannot wait for marriage as it is 'the right thing, the only thing', to do in life (164). She considers the underlying motivation behind people's 'ambition' in life is that men, and especially women, 'wanted to marry, were trying to marry and had not succeeded in getting married' (164). Up until her engagement she considered her life burdened, though, she now anticipates a more comfortable existence as a wife. As the hotel is representative of British culture, the only appropriate way of celebrating the engagement, and reasserting the tourist's Britishness, is with a ball. Cheryl A. Wilson admits that nineteenth- and twentieth-century readers maintained certain expectations when they came across a dance scene in novels (*Literature and Dance* 2). To members of the middle and upper classes, dances and balls were considered the focus of social life as they encouraged courting, and men and women of the period were expected to partake in the event either as a dancer or spectator (2). As a common social experience, writers often utilised the ballroom scene to analyse how dancing 'offered a vehicle through which writers could convey social commentary and cultural critique' and, for many like Austen, ideals of marriage were central to that literary analysis (3). Ethnographers rightly interpret 'the etiquette of dancing as a complex metaphorical

prefiguration of marriage' because it is 'marriage-like' without the conclusiveness of the actual act (Segal and Handler 323-4). Dancing integrates 'cross-sex relations' of social equals, though, in contrast to marriage, women are allowed 'a malleable degree of particularity' in choosing or refusing a partner (324). Furthermore, women's hierarchal classification at a ball as 'those who are "out" and those who are not', unmarried and married, and those who 'are eligible and those who are spinsters', supports the interpretation of dancing, like the piano, as another space for female performance of marriageability (326). How the writer mediates the courtship scene varies, and Austen's 'inver[sion]' of 'the "rules"' of ballroom 'etiquette' throughout her novels influenced Woolf's own subversion of courtship, dance and marriage in *The Voyage Out* (323).

Rachel, having never experienced a dance, is reminiscent of a young Virginia Stephen when she initially proclaims, 'This is my idea of hell', but she immediately falls into a waltz with a hotel guest, St. John Hirst (*VO* 139). Rachel's musical education gives her 'a good ear for rhythm' and she manages to dance well, but Hirst, who participated in many Cambridge balls, can only just manage the steps (139). One turn about the floor immediately proves they are 'incompatible' dance partners, an observation which alludes to their unsuitability as a potential couple, and their later argument about Rachel's lack of education confirms this (139). Terence Hewet soothes Rachel after her fight and, even though it was only their second encounter with one another, 'they felt more at ease than is usual' when dancing with a stranger (144). Woolf's presentation of Rachel's multiple dance partners—Hirst, Hewet and Arthur Venning—employs the traditional motifs of the courtship plot which begins, much like dancing, 'with the possibility of many alternative suitors', But Rachel's dancing is short-lived as the paid musicians begin to tire: 'Strange as it seemed, the musicians were pale and heavy-eyed; they looked bored and prosaic, as if the summit of their desire was cold meat and beer, succeeded immediately by bed' (Segal and Handler 326; *VO* 151). Hired to provide entertainment, rather

than present their artistry, these musicians no longer retain the passion of their chosen art form and, throughout the dance, Woolf does not represent their musical rhythm in the text: ‘After the lancers there was a waltz, after the waltz, a polka; and then a terrible thing happened; the music, which had been sounding regularly with five-minute pauses, stopped suddenly’ (151). Woolf’s methodical list signifies the monotony of their playing and mechanisation of the various dances. Lacking the divine inspiration of artists, these musicians ultimately treat their playing as a required commodity. Moreover, they have no qualms about prematurely ending the dance because they are alienated from their music and, therefore, are not considered artists, ‘those inspired Gods’, who call ‘men to a more joyous and passionate existence’ through rhythm (*PA* 166).

Juxtaposed with these estranged performers, Rachel exposes her artistry to the male gaze with her first public performance, and it is through Rachel’s fragmented interpretation of various musical genres that Woolf ultimately subverts the established dance scene of nineteenth-century narratives. As an unmarried girl of marriageable age, Rachel’s role as musician is unorthodox. Married women normally supply the music for couples to dance to when paid musicians are not available and, as Austen illustrates in *Persuasion* through the character of Anne Elliot, a woman’s ‘sad slide into spinsterhood’ is often symbolised by ‘the fact that her friends’ rely on her ““services” as a musician for dances’ (Segal and Handler 326). Rachel’s earlier participation in the dance with her multiple partners confirms her eligibility as a potential wife, nevertheless, her decision to play rather than dance positions her artistry as more important than the performance of courtship. Rachel’s vocalisation about her musical knowledge allows her to take control of the floundering situation, and she plays a few ‘pieces of dance music’ before transitioning into ‘an air from a sonata by Mozart’ (*VO* 152). With the crowd’s cry that a sonata is not proper dance music, Rachel embraces the role of composer,

performer and dance master as she insists that they '[i]nvent the steps' to the musical bricolage that follows:

The tune changed to a minuet; St John hopped with incredible swiftness first on his left leg, then on his right; the tune flowed melodiously; Hewet swaying his arms and holding out the tails of his coat, swam down the room in imitation of the voluptuous dreamy dance of an Indian maiden dancing before her Rajah. The tune marched; and Miss Allan advanced with skirts extended and bowed profoundly to the engaged pair. Once their feet fell in with the rhythm they showed a complete lack of self-consciousness. From Mozart Rachel passed without stopping to old English hunting songs, carols, and hymn tunes, for, as she had observed, any tune, with a little management, became a tune one could dance to. By degrees every person in the room was tripping and turning in pairs or alone [...] they galloped around and round the room with such impetuosity that the other dancers shivered at their approach. Some people were heard to criticise the performance as a romp; to others it was the most enjoyable part of the evening (152).

An 'impromptu Post-Impressionist spectacle', Rachel's interpretative performance embodies Woolf's demand in 'Street Music' for rhythmic release (Froula 52). Because the composition and combination of sounds is nearly impossible to illustrate verbally, Woolf captures the rhythmic-chaos of the music through the movement of the dancers, as they trip, twirl, sway, and gallop around the room. The pulse of Rachel's performance is reliant on the dancers' movement, and Woolf's rhythmical prose resembles the Post-Impressionist's utilisation of 'purely abstract language of form' which Roger Fry compares to 'visual music' and 'rhythmic design' (167, 168). Rishona Zimring believes Woolf situates the dancers as the necessary vehicles of representation 'to underscore the transformative power' of Rachel's music (718). Earlier in the evening Rachel observed that the others 'ought to let themselves go more' and,

following her compilation of musical genres, the dancers are left ‘breathless and unkempt’ (*VO* 146, 153). No longer the safe performance space of marriageability, her music engages the dancers’ ‘barbaric instinct’ as they embrace various modes of expression (*PA* 165). Rachel’s destabilisation of traditional English music—hunting songs, carols, and hymn tunes—leads to a deconstruction of traditional gender roles as presented through Hewet’s interpretation of the female racial Other and Miss Allen’s masculine mazurka. Moreover, the rush and flurry of the dancers’ movement, and lack of inhibition, indicates they have embraced the ‘madness’ of rhythm as described by Woolf in ‘Street Music’ (*E1* 30). Through Rachel’s medley, the dance is centred on musical collage rather than appropriate, and accepted, forms of movement. Finally, during the great round dance of John Peel, ‘an unambiguous symbol of English parochialism’, Rachel’s too-quick tempo ultimately disperses the dancers ‘in all directions’ (Zimring 718; *VO* 152). Zimring argues the ‘dance serves as a source of temporary coherence’, though it is ‘ultimately framed as “unbecoming” and the cause of dishevelment and exhaustion’ (718). Rachel’s piano performance subverts the ball’s undertones of propriety, and the tourist’s reserved nature immediately returns once dawn approaches and the music momentarily pauses. While the dancers admit their ‘untidy hair’ and ‘green and yellow gems’ are no longer appropriate in the daylight, Rachel continues ‘to play for herself’ (*VO* 153). No longer an isolated artist, she has managed to successfully make the transition between private and public performances. Crucially, Rachel remains unaffected by the male gaze throughout the performance, for she controls the rhythm, speed and tempo. The dance scene’s normative function as a platform to announce one’s courtship is destabilised as Rachel supersedes her partnership with Hewet and stands alone as a competent musician. It is not until Rachel and Terence explore the Amazon river, which is outside the repressive constraints of English society, that they realise their potential as a couple.

During the initial stages of their relationship Rachel and Terence treat each other like equals and discuss the nuances of their respective art forms—her music and his writing—and Rachel’s attempt ‘to explain how Bach wrote his fugues’ to Terence is an early narrative demonstration of the female musician educating her suitor rather than just performing for a proposal (207). Rachel and Terence bond over their similar desire ‘to find out what’s behind things’, and it is this wish to ‘see the natives in their camps’, a supposedly more authentic form of contact with the South American ‘primitive’, that they embark on an expedition up the Amazon with the other English tourists (207; 222).²⁴ Woolf’s illustration of Rachel’s voyage recalls the Post-Impressionist desire to create an alternative interpretation of life through new uses of form and colour: ‘The eyes of Rachel saw nothing. Yellow and green shapes did, it was true, pass before them, but she only knew that one was large and another small; she did not know that they were trees. These directions to look here and there irritated her, as interruptions irritate a person absorbed in thought’ (262). The majority of the river journey remains fragmented as Rachel and Terence declare their love to one another, and he promises, ‘Oh you’re free, Rachel. To you, time will make no difference, or marriage’ (265). This momentary instance of marital assurance is immediately disrupted with Helen’s knowledge of the engagement:

[Helen and Terence] were flushed, both laughing, and the lips were moving; they came together and kissed in the air above her. Broken fragments of speech came down to her on the ground. She thought she heard them speak of love and then of marriage.

²⁴ Many critics associate the trip up the Amazon with Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and Leonard Woolf’s *The Village in the Jungle* (1913). For an in-depth comparison of *The Voyage Out* with Conrad and Leonard Woolf see Nick Montgomery, ‘Colonial Rhetoric and the Maternal Voice: Deconstruction and Disengagement in Virginia Woolf’s *The Voyage Out*’ (2000); Kathy J. Philips. *Virginia Woolf Against Empire* (1994), Mark A. Wollaeger, ‘The Woolfs in the Jungle: Intertextuality, Sexuality, and the Emergence of Female Modernism in *The Voyage Out*, *The Village in the Jungle*, and *Heart of Darkness*’ (2003) and ‘Woolf, Postcards, and the Elision of Race: Colonizing Women in *The Voyage Out*’ (2001). Jed Esty also compares Woolf’s novel with Conrad’s *Lord Jim* (1900) in *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development* (2012), 134, 139-40.

Raising herself and sitting up, she too realised Helen's soft body, the strong and hospital arms, and happiness swelling and breaking in one vast wave (268).

The narrative disorientation of this scene signifies Rachel's lack of autonomy and control over the situation, and Rachel's emotional response to Helen and Terence's exclusionary discussion about their eventual marriage is representative of the Post-Impressionist's use of 'a purely abstract language of form' (Fry 167). Already enduring the oppressive nature of marriage during this post-engagement interlude, Rachel is unable to articulate her desires to Terence and Helen and, thus, remains a mute spectator. Woolf seamlessly transitions this scene of '[b]roken fragments' into a 'primitive' spectacle with the tourists' arrival at the 'native' village: '[T]hey observed the women, who were squatting on the ground in triangular shapes, moving their hands, either plaiting straw or kneading something in bowls. But when they had looked for a moment undiscovered, they were seen' (*VO* 269). The pictorial design of the female 'natives' as triangles identifies the women as art objects and resembles 'primitive' art which, like a child's drawing, 'has scarcely any reference to actual appearance' (Fry 60)²⁵. It is when they are in this 'undiscovered' state that the indigenous women embody the geometric form but, with the penetration of the coloniser's gaze, they eventually transform from triangular art objects into objectified women with fragmented bodies and breasts (*VO* 269). This focus on individual body parts signifies the eroticisation of the racial Other found in the works of Post-Impressionists like Gauguin, though Woolf does not employ the same undertones of sexual power and rape as the European colonisers. Instead, her depiction of the naked women presents images of productivity and fertility as they plait straw and a baby suckles its mother's breast. Despite Woolf's attempts to redefine 'primitive' art, she still utilises the motif of the coloniser's gaze as the tourists are compared to those 'tight-coated soldiers who serve the

²⁵ This geometric shape resurfaces in *To the Lighthouse* when Lily paints Mrs Ramsay as a purple triangle (*TTL* 52-3). This initial representation of the native Other as triangle contrasts greatly with Woolf's later aesthetic interpretation of the British matriarch reading to her son—an image which embodies the traditional ideals of feminine domesticity in pre-war Britain.

British Empire so well' (269). Seemingly unconcerned with their audience, the South American women acknowledge the foreign presence with a 'motionless inexpressive gaze' which 'renders them semi-autonomous beings, subject to but not wholly dominated by the tourists who gaze at the human showcase' (*VO* 269; Wollaeger, 'Postcards' 67). Despite the power of their stare, they are silent and cannot communicate with the tourists: 'If they spoke, it was to cry some unintelligible harsh cry' (*VO* 269). Rachel associates their inhuman cries with some 'low melancholy note', thereby linking the encounter with her 'invisible line' of interconnecting musical notes (269). Furthermore, the indigenous women's 'barbaric' cries reflect back to music's inherently inhuman composition of sounds as articulated in 'Street Music'.

In spite of their perceived savage nature, the 'natives' maintain their daily routine in the village and Woolf subsequently criticises the European abuse, and commodification, of the South American goods as the narrator identifies what interests the colonisers most—'beads, brooches, earrings, bracelets, tassels, and combs'—all which will be sold by the leaders of the expedition, the Flushings, to 'smart women in London' engrossed in the current trend of primitivism not dissimilar to Virginia and Vanessa's own interest in 1910 (222). Moreover, in addition to selling 'primitive' artefacts, the Flushing's collection of 'modern art' resembles Post-Impressionist paintings and subsequently links these commodities. This scene highlights once again that the European coloniser profits from the labour of the colonised.²⁶ The juxtaposition of Rachel's engagement to Terence with the tourist's exploitation of the indigenous women's goods and bodies momentarily aligns her with the racial Other. This connection classifies her as an embodiment of 'the nation's Other', but Woolf's illustration remains problematic (Garrity 25). While Rachel maintains some semblance of autonomy with her role as the English coloniser who invades the tribal Other's space, her pending marriage to Terence situates her as a 'colonized woman subject to the framing powers of English

²⁶ Woolf introduces this idea earlier in the narrative with her discussion about how Willoughby 'built his Empire' in the rubber trade off the 'primitive' conditions of his workers (*VO* 16, 76)

patriarchy' (Wollaeger, 'Postcards' 67). Woolf engages with racial difference in her novel but her own upper-class Englishness 'complicates the meaning of these activist gestures' (Garrity 52). One could argue Rachel's encounter with the women of the Amazon is an impulse to sympathy which ultimately fails. The South American women make Rachel 'feel very cold and melancholy' as they, perhaps, reflect in their blank stares her own feelings about patriarchal bodily and psychological oppression (*VO* 269). Despite the problematics of Woolf's immersion in primitivism, her dialogue with anti-imperialism, which was influenced by Leonard and women's position in society, remains progressive.²⁷ By serving the Empire through marriage and childbirth, which was considered 'necessary to the evolutionary development' of the British race, women repositioned their national responsibility above the racial Other (Garrity 72). Woolf subverts this positioning and identifies the female 'native' as the maternal figures whereas Rachel resists using marriage and her body as validation for her 'political and economic inclusion' to the imperial cause (73). Once the group returns to the Anglicised colony, the constraints and expectations of British propriety eventually change Rachel and Terence's previously unrestricted relationship. Signs of his masculine oppression appear as the raft sails back down the river where Terence, echoing Dalloway, admits to Helen he will *allow* Rachel to remain 'a fool if she wants to', and she can continue her music once married (*VO* 272).

Woolf's narrative presentation of Rachel's final musical performance symbolises Rachel's fight to remain artistically autonomous as Terence attempts to control her. Back at the villa, Rachel returns to her piano and ignores Terence as she tries to get lost in her playing (275). As he attempts to explain a recently written manifesto about women—a misogynist

²⁷ Before their engagement Leonard had written a novel about Ceylon, *Village in the Jungle*, which was inspired by his own experiences working for the foreign office, and this most likely influenced many of the anti-imperialist themes in *The Voyage Out*. Throughout 1915 and 1916 he was also working on his book, *International Government* (1916), which was later 'used by the British Government in its proposals for the League of Nations' (D1 22n).

catalogue of defects that claims women cannot think for themselves—Rachel ignores his queries and continues to play:

Rachel said nothing. Up and up the steep spiral of a very late Beethoven sonata she climbed, like a person ascending a ruined staircase, energetically at first, then more laboriously advancing her feet with effort until she could go no higher and returned with a run to begin at the very bottom again (275).

Most likely returning to Beethoven's Op. 111, the rhythmic metaphor of the spiralling staircase signifies Rachel's evasion of Terence's demands for attention. He pressures Rachel to divulge 'the secrets of her sex', yet his insistence only reaffirms her desire to remain silent for 'these secrets' should remain 'undisturbed' by men, and she '[attacks] her staircase once more' (275). Not until she '[crashes] down a final chord' does Rachel address his intrusion and finally articulate what she means: 'No Terence, it's no good; here I am, the best musician in South America, not to speak of Europe and Asia, and I can't play a note because of you in the room interrupting me every other second' (275). Her frustration at having to deal with Terence's incessant interruptions indicates Rachel's resistance to fulfilling her domestic responsibilities as Terence's future wife, and her vocalisation of her talent as a leading musician further distances her status from the drawing-room amateur. Moreover, her completion of the Beethoven sonata with that 'final chord' at last brings Beethoven's composition to a close—for it has subsequently remained unfinished since Lucy's performance of its opening chords at the Pension Bertolini. Despite this triumph at mastering Opus 111, Terence's request that she quit playing and reply to the letters of congratulation reasserts the masculine expectation of feminine subservience, wherein Rachel's artistic endeavours are considered secondary to her domestic duties. This struggle for control ultimately presents a hypothetical situation in which Rachel asks, 'If we stood on a rock together—' would Terence throw her out to sea? (281) His physical reaction to the question conveys his answer as 'Rachel is thrown to the floor [...]

grasping and crying for mercy' (281). In spite of all his earlier statements to the contrary, Terence is just like Dalloway and refuses to be governed by a woman. Despite this apparent defeat, Rachel challenges Terence once more with her declaration, 'I am a mermaid! I can swim' (282). She further articulates her desire for autonomy with her assertion that, once married, she will remain 'independent of him' (298). This moment of independence is short-lived for Rachel will not be able to maintain this same level of freedom once married as presented in the final sonata performance and subsequent argument with Terence.

Christine Froula argues that Rachel 'save[s] herself' from this fate as she psychologically 'curl[s] up at the bottom of the sea' and allows the unnamed South American fever to engulf her. (59; *VO* 322). Represented in fragments, her illness recalls the rhythmic 'Post-Impressionist spectacle' of the dance:

[I]t needed all her attention to follow the hot, red, quick, sights which passed incessantly before her eyes. [...] The sights were all concerned in some plot, some adventure, some escape. The nature of what they were doing changed incessantly, although there is always a reason behind it, which she must endeavour to grasp. Now they were among trees and savages, now they were in the sea, now they were on the tops of high towers; now they jumped; now they flew (321-2).

Unlike the dance scene Rachel is unable to control the bricolage of memories and fragments pressing down upon her. Even though she is unable to control the situation, she accepts her illness and pending death. Had Rachel survived she most likely would have lost her fight for her right to creative expression as a musician, for Terence's patriarchal views about women's domestic responsibilities would have eventually forced her to sacrifice her artistry for her expected roles as a wife and mother. Her death leaves the hotel guests shocked and contemplative about her unconsummated existence as Terence's wife and mother of his children, those 'unimaginable depths and miracles' of life, but not a single associate remembers

Rachel for her musical talents or contemplates the loss of a promising artist (339). This absence of discussion about Rachel's musical mastery is perhaps one of the reasons why so many critics fail to classify Rachel as a developing artist. While Lisa Williams considers Rachel's death a consequence of her inability 'to establish an artistic self-identity', it is rather society's failure to recognise and accept the female artist which ultimately forces her situation (48).

Forster reviewed *The Voyage Out* in 1915 and confirmed that, as a novel, 'it is absolutely unafraid', nevertheless, he warns his 'male' readers it would be 'wise' to 'lift [one's] eyes to where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, to the mountains and forests and sea that circumscribe the characters, and to the final darkness that blots them out' (PT 15). Much like Woolf's own review of *A Room with a View*, Forster's initial discussion of the novel remains relatively superficial. Not until Woolf's death in 1941 would he do the text justice: '*The Voyage Out*—a strange, tragic, inspired novel about English tourists in an impossible South American hotel; her passion for truth is here already, mainly in the form of atheism, and her passion for wisdom is here in the form of music' (TCD 255). He further admits that, for those who read Woolf's politicized narrative, '[t]he book made a deep impression' upon them (255). Rachel's encounter with multiple systems of oppression and unapologetic demand for the right of autonomous creative expression makes her an appropriate heroine for female readers of the early-twentieth century, and her continuous classification as a *Bildungsroman* heroine is an injustice to Woolf's examination of feminist aesthetics. In order to better comprehend the evolution of Woolf's artist-heroines, and her later literary renditions of the female artistry, one must return to Woolf's early examinations of women's creative endeavours. *The Voyage Out* engages in significant ways with the concerns of the woman artist's transcendence of her amateur status, role in the public sphere and right to creative expression outside the confines of masculine and imperial oppression.

‘Being versus becoming’: Dorothy Richardson’s *Pilgrimage* and the Woman Artist

Unlike Virginia Woolf, who used various heroines throughout her *oeuvre* to examine the role and politics of the woman artist, Dorothy Richardson spent the majority of her writing career redefining the literary presentation of female artistry through a singular protagonist, Miriam Henderson, in the thirteen-novel sequence *Pilgrimage* (1915-67).²⁸ With each volume classified as a ‘chapter’ of the series, spanning over two thousand pages in length and narrated mostly through Miriam’s stream-of-consciousness, *Pilgrimage* distinguishes itself from other *Künstlerromane* of the modernist period with its refusal to conclude the narrative (JP 19). With this focus on expansion, rather than closure, Richardson resists the linear narrative found in the nineteenth-century novel of development. Furthermore, while Richardson considers herself a writer who ‘produce[s]’ in her *Künstlerroman* ‘a feminine equivalent of the current masculine realism’, her detailed representation of Miriam’s participation in the creative process, and of how her artistic consciousness transforms the ordinary objects of her everyday life into art, redefines the traditional realist form (P1 9). Some critics like John Rosenberg and Jerome Hamilton Buckley maintain *Pilgrimage* is ‘flawed’ as a narrative because of its unremitting presentation of Miriam’s artistic consciousness, but I argue Richardson is accurately capturing a more realistic portrayal of the female mind and women’s experience in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century (Rosenberg 166). Her formal experiment with narrative voice and the genre in this way suggests revised notions of selfhood, creativity and an altered sense of the reader and the reading process. It is through Miriam’s engagement with the urban space, Otherness, race and her ordinary experiences that Richardson explores Miriam’s creative potential as a writer and how she achieves artistic fulfilment outside the institutional definitions of artistry.

²⁸ *Pointed Roofs* (1915), *Backwater* (1916), *Honeycomb* (1917), *The Tunnel* (Feb. 1919), *Interim* (Dec. 1919), *Deadlock* (1921), *Revolving Lights* (1923), *The Trap* (1925), *Oberland* (1927), *Dawn’s Left Hand* (1931), *Clear Horizons* (1935), *Dimple Hill* (1938) and *March Moonlight* (1967).

Critics often agree Richardson experimented with the established thematics and structure of the modernist *Künstlerroman*, though most read Miriam's artistic evolution alongside classical notions of *Bildung* when Miriam begins to write a novel in the final volume of the series, *March Moonlight*.²⁹ This reading of Miriam's artistic development in this way relies on the genre's residual motifs of feminine education and development, wherein Miriam does not become an artist until she has produced an acceptable art object, specifically, a novel at the end of the series. Rather than fulfilling the prerequisites of literary *Bildung*, Richardson's extensive portrayal of her heroine's various creative endeavours reflects the twentieth-century artist's desire to maintain an uninterrupted state of artistic 'being'. Furthermore, her presentation of Miriam's evolving relationship with the written word, as revealed in her appreciation of foreign languages, letters, 'contemplated reality', translations, middles and eventual novel-in-progress, signifies the importance of the writer's participation in the creative process rather than the finished product (P1 10).³⁰ This alternative interpretation of the woman artist's development subsequently subverts the genre's preference for teleological narratives of self-formation, and I intend to examine how reading Miriam's artistry as an intrinsic characteristic of her creative being, rather than a reward for complying with the ideology of becoming, challenges masculinist standards which define artistic fulfilment in this way.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the Enlightenment discourse of selfhood was often explored in traditional male *Bildungs-* and *Künstlerromane* of the Victorian and Edwardian period wherein the male protagonist's participation in developmental becoming was usually associated with 'the teleological march of progress and activity' but, because nineteenth- and twentieth-century women writers were denied the same educational and life experiences as men in the

²⁹ See Maria Francisca Llantada Díaz, *Form and Meaning in Dorothy M. Richardson's Pilgrimage* (2008); Shiv Kumar, *Bergson and the Stream of Consciousness Novel* (1962) and 'Dorothy Richardson and the Dilemma of "Being vs. Becoming"' (1959); Jean Radford, *Dorothy Richardson* (1991) and Grace Stewart, *A New Mythos: The Novel of the Artist as Heroine, 1877-1977* (1979).

³⁰ 'Middles' are defined by a character in the novel based upon H. G. Wells, Hypo Wilson, as any form of writing separate from the novel, such as short stories, sketches and reviews: 'Middles. You've masses for Middles. Criticism. You could do that on your head. Presently *novel*' (P4 239).

public sphere, they were expected to recreate the limited domestic experiences they had access to—courtship, marriage and motherhood (Hill 87). Richardson’s presentation of Miriam’s artistic being actively avoids such a prescribed formula. *Pilgrimage* challenges such ideals with its subversion of these types of residual, and masculinist, formation narratives which are circumscribed in bourgeois becoming and the nineteenth-century courtship plot. Furthermore, her *Künstlerroman* follows its artist-heroine into the urban environment and public world work and thus subverts such stereotypical associations of women’s creativity with domesticity.

While Miriam tries to maintain a state of artistic being throughout the series, she addresses the being-becoming distinction in the ninth chapter-volume of the series, *Clear Horizon*, and it is here that Richardson engages in a debate originating in the Platonic dialogues:

Being versus becoming. Becoming versus being. Look after the being and the becoming will look after itself. Look after the becoming and the being will look after itself? Not so certain. Therefore it is certain that becoming depends upon being. Man carries his bourne within himself and is there already, or he would not even know that he exists (*P4* 362).

The conflict between these perceived ‘irreconcilable views of reality’ of being and becoming participates in a longstanding debate located in Platonic thought and has steadily appeared throughout philosophy and literature since the Enlightenment (Kumar, ‘Dorothy Richardson’ 497). This dichotomy occurs throughout many of Plato’s dialogues, though his examination of the terms in the *Timaeus* is the most detailed analysis of the being-becoming division. Here Plato situates being and becoming as mutually exclusive states of reality in which the former is described ‘as that which always is and has no becoming’ and the latter as ‘that which becomes but never is’ (28a). He furthers the divide with his argument that being is forever ‘unchanging’ while becoming is defined by a continuous evolution that eventually ‘passes away, but never really is’ permanently anything (28a). Miriam reinterprets Plato’s original definition of being as

a multifarious condition that evolves into various forms while still maintaining the underlying principles of the original state. Moreover, her understanding of the being-becoming division identifies the latter state of existence as more dependent upon the former, and Miriam introduces the possibility that both terms can transcend the definitions initially established by Plato. Her interpretation of these terms in *Clear Horizons* focuses on the relationship between these alternative states of reality and one's existence. She maintains that one's becoming is conditional to the state of one's being and, as a result, being must participate in some form of expansion, albeit without being defined by a singular consequence of development like marriage, children or a completed novel. While Miriam's understanding of being incorporates elements of becoming, for she considers intellectual and aesthetic growth inevitable elements of one's being, she believes maintaining an awareness of, and participation in, a linear process of potential becoming damages the essential spirit of one's existence. Her interpretation of being is thus dependant on the Platonic argument that it is composed of one's 'soul and intelligence' (*Timaens* 30c).

Much like Rachel's death in *The Voyage Out* (1915), which acts as a refusal to fulfil the nineteenth-century courtship plot, Miriam's resistance to becoming challenges the traditional thematics of the realist novel of development. Richardson offers a new interpretation of women's experience in the Victorian and Edwardian period with her creation of 'a novel [about] consciousness' which focuses entirely on Miriam's 'continual present' and her artistic being without any reference or 'temporal division' outside of her pervasive 'female psyche' (Showalter, *Literature* 254). Consequently, Richardson's interpretation of the being-becoming distinction in her *Künstlerroman* participates in 'the debate between the art that makes life, and the art that would assert it *is* life; between the art that makes its appeal to its own internal universe, and the art that makes it to the reality of texture and the material world' (Fletcher and Bradbury 411). This debate addresses two conflicting definitions of artistry wherein the artist's

participation in the creative process is aligned with being and the production of a material art object with becoming, and Miriam further separates these forms of artistic fulfilment by sex: 'Women see in terms of life. Men see in terms of things' (P3 393). She resists patriarchal connotations of artistry which attempt to impose a hierarchy on the material products with her ability to find artistic fulfilment in the creative process and her artistic consciousness. Moreover, Richardson grants her artist-heroine artistic autonomy with her ability to disagree with these institutional standards and define herself in her own way. She sees her own capability as a writer as an intrinsic element of her expansive existence, always present and open to transformation, rather than something that emerges as a result of her aesthetic expression and recognition in the public sphere with a novel. Miriam does not define herself as an artist because she translates the work of Leonid Andreyeff or writes a novel. Instead, her artistic being is what initiates her experimentation with these narrative forms. Her life and her art are bound up with one another, for whenever she's inspired to write by her present reality, she 'face[s] the strange journey down and down to the centre of being' and produces something 'sacred' (P4 609).

Despite Miriam's articulated choice for being over becoming, Shiv Kumar argues that she embraces the ideology of being only during this 'passing phase' of *Clear Horizon*, and he maintains Miriam ultimately chooses to participate in 'eternal becoming' once she starts writing a novel, a metafictional version of *Pilgrimage*, at the end of *March Moonlight* ('Dorothy Richardson' 498; *Bergson* 42). This ideology of 'eternal becoming' initially appears to be similar to Miriam's interpretation of the multifarious nature of being, though the term ultimately fails because the critical emphasis on Miriam's status as a woman artist becomes dependent upon the completion of a novel. I agree with Kirsten Fest's assertion that *Pilgrimage's* underlying objective is not concerned with 'what happens, but how it is experienced by Miriam' (47). Miriam's conclusion about the being-becoming distinction, and her eventual decision to focus

on her present existence and daily reality rather than what awaits her, offers an alternative presentation of artistic fulfilment through one's consciousness. Moreover, Richardson opens up to the reader the arduous process of creating art and the making of the woman artist. Rather than working towards the goal of completing a novel, Miriam's various experiments in writing are just one aspect of how she expresses her artistic being. Richardson was one of the first novelists to focus an entire narrative on the protagonist's 'several levels of being', but readers found Richardson's excessive detailing of Miriam's literary life to be an unsuccessful rendering of reality (Bronfen 173).

Situated in the decades surrounding the turn of the century, readers were first introduced to Miriam in *Pointed Roofs* as she prepares to depart England to take up a teaching post at a German finishing school for girls. Eleven novel-chapters and a few omnibus editions later,³¹ the posthumously published *March Moonlight* concludes Miriam's fifty-two-year literary existence.³² As a prolonged novel of 'cathedral-like magnitude', *Pilgrimage* does not fulfil the modernist preference for the fragment nor is it to be aligned with the Victorian triple-decker tome which often ended either with the protagonist's marriage or death (Rosenburg 166). Winifred Bryher described Richardson's *Künstlerroman* as a fictional 'Baedeker' illustrating 'the golden years' of English Edwardian history, for *Pilgrimage* comprehensively documents Miriam's many travels throughout England and the Continent, her various professions, artistic expressions, participation in different societies and relationships with both men and women during, what one character in the novel, Hypo Wilson, identifies as 'a period of unprecedented expansion in all sorts of directions' (P4 397). Mirroring the period's growth in its own pages, each novel-chapter fittingly increases in length as Miriam's narrative progresses, and it is this

³¹ *Dimple Hill* and *March Moonlight* were first published by J. M. Dent in omnibus editions.

³² George H. Thompson's *Notes on Pilgrimage: Dorothy Richardson Annotated* (1999) is an incredibly comprehensive guide which examines Richardson's utilisation of historical time and real events in Miriam's fictional world. Even though Richardson rarely inserts dates in the narrative, Miriam's awareness of notorious incidents like the Wilde trials, specific publications and actual people help establish an estimate as to when each novel-chapter occurs. While Thompson's exhaustive reading guide makes it possible to interchange Richardson's own timeline with Miriam's, I will avoid an autobiographical comparison in my discussion.

drawn out plot which is often considered the series' greatest difficulty for past and present readers. More than aware of this deterrent, Richardson playfully apologised in her 1938 Foreword to the first incomplete omnibus edition to those readers 'who have persisted in spite of every obstacle' and continue to read *Pilgrimage* despite her refusal to conclude the narrative (P1 12). There were some devotees like Bryher who persevered with this *roman-fleuve*, though many readers, especially reviewers, failed to appreciate Richardson's formal innovations in narration.³³

Many of Richardson's contemporaries initially found her writing style to be 'avant-garde work' which avoided 'conventional realism' in her presentation of Miriam's stream-of-consciousness but, as the series progressed, many found Richardson's experimental writing style to be 'tiresome' as it sometimes takes Miriam 'a thousand words or more to go through the front door' (Mephram 452). What originally made *Pilgrimage* stand out as an extraordinary rendering of human consciousness eventually became associated with unnecessary indulgence and was later identified as the principle cause of the series' unpopularity with readers. Published throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Richardson's opus was subjected to criticism by writers who were also experimenting with similar narrative conventions like point of view and formal aesthetics, such as Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, Ford Madox Ford and May Sinclair. Crucially, many of her reviewers did not read *Pilgrimage* in its entirety and often reviewed the most recently published volume. Mansfield, for example, only reviewed *The Tunnel* and *Interim* and Woolf reviewed *The Tunnel* and *Revolving Lights*, though she read the early volumes for pleasure but refused offers to review subsequent volumes (D2 93).

In contrast to Sinclair's glowing response in the *Little Review*, Woolf found Richardson's reproduction of Miriam's consciousness to be 'better in its failure than most books in their

³³ *Pilgrimage* is sometimes classified as a modernist interpretation of the French *roman-fleuve*, a multivolume or 'sequence novel' that refuses to provide the reader with proper narrative 'closure' or ending (Felber 1, 3)

success' (E3 12). Lawrence supports Woolf's backhanded compliment in his essay, 'Surgery for the Novel—or a Bomb' (1927), as he notoriously aligns *Pilgrimage* with that "'serious" novel' which is currently 'dying a very long-drawn out fourteen-volume death agony' (517). He argues Richardson participates in an 'absorbedly self-conscious' presentation of a character interested in only contemplating their existence, or being, rather than embracing the ideals of *Bildung* and developing as an individual (518). Consequently, he finds no redeeming value in Richardson's series and declares it simply 'awful' and 'childish' in its construction of Miriam's comprehensive consciousness (518). Richardson is not the only author he criticises for experimenting with the realist novel of development in this way, for he also critiques Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-27) and James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) for committing the same offence. Richardson was often compared to both authors, but she was usually considered the least talented of the three. This opinion is further supported by Ford Madox Ford in his essay, 'A Haughty and Proud Generation' (1922), wherein he maintains that 'Mr Joyce measures his effects by things immense and lasting' whereas 'Miss Richardson by the passing standards of the lower-middle-class boarding-house' similar to the one Miriam resides in throughout the majority of the series (216). On the whole he considers the 'embarrassment and glories' of *Pilgrimage* to be 'bound up in the material details' of Richardson's unwavering portrayal of Miriam's consciousness and, when compared to *Ulysses*, a novel which Ford believes is 'voyaging on a much higher spiritual plane', Richardson's series is deemed relatively middle or lowbrow for the modernist epic (216). Crucially, Ford only compares *Ulysses* to just one novel-chapter of the series, *Interim*, and thus slants the comparison greatly. Nevertheless, most of Richardson's contemporaries berate her for focusing too much of the narrative on Miriam's unprocessed consciousness rather than providing the reader with a linear 'story' about her becoming an artist (E3 11).

Through her presentation of Miriam's continual present, Richardson does engage with the modernist 'desire to free the novel from its earlier limitations', such as its reliance on 'flat, external realism', as her *Künstlerroman* explores 'more freely and intensely the fact of life and orders of modern consciousness' (Fletcher and Bradbury 408). As mentioned, this portrayal of Miriam's all-encompassing consciousness was considered an extreme interpretation of the narrative form, for Miriam is constantly participating in a subjective response to the world around her. Presenting Miriam's impressions in this way situates a continuous flow of perception and transformation, but not all readers appreciated this level of interiority in the narrative and this is what Ford was criticising in his essay. He believes that because Miriam is often 'bound up in material details' of her life, Richardson digresses from the modernist writer's wish to recreate in their novels 'an unconditioned state of high reverie and awareness analogous to the condition of the artist' and, as a result, Ford does not associate Miriam's presented consciousness with that of the modern artist (Ford 216; Fletcher and Bradbury 408).

I maintain that Richardson's depiction of Miriam's consciousness offers a more authentic representation of reality which reflects the modernist author's wish to 'serve a higher [form of] realism' in their novels (Fletcher and Bradbury 408). Moreover, she challenges Beebe's claim that the artist's 'creative spirit' is only concerned with 'the transcendence of life through creative effort' and should remain disconnected from the banalities and 'consumption' of ordinary life (6-7). She refuses to accept this Ivory Tower perception of the artist, and Miriam's unedited impressions reflect the complex nature of the creative process wherein the artist uses his or her ordinary experiences as a platform for their art. The unprocessed nature of Miriam's impressions presents 'the minutiae of feminine consciousness from a woman's point of view' (P. Brown 151). It additionally supports the Freudian idea of the intrinsic worth and complexity of the individual mind and, consequently, recognises the woman artist's

creative capabilities outside masculine definitions of artistry which refuse to accept Miriam's consciousness as representative of the modern artist.

While most of Richardson's contemporaries berate her for focusing too much of the narrative on Miriam's expansive artistic being rather than providing the reader with a more linear 'story' about her becoming an artist, May Sinclair appears to represent the minority in her appreciation of *Pilgrimage's* lack of beginning, middle or end (E3 11). Woolf argues in her essay, 'Character in Fiction' (1924), that the majority of readers do not like being left with 'so strange a feeling' as 'incompleteness and dissatisfaction' when finishing a novel (E3 427). Despite experimenting with narration and traditional modes of story telling in her own novels, Woolf maintains readers still prefer a narrative which is 'complete in itself' and 'self-contained', for they want the 'restlessness' of reading to be done with when they come to the end of a novel (427). With Richardson's preference for expansion, and her refusal to submit the series to an ending conducive to Miriam's developmental becoming, the reader is, according to Woolf, never free from the apprehension of the incomplete and can never improve upon their initial understanding of the novel. As a result, Richardson forces a more difficult, and sometimes frustrating, reading process onto her audience.

While Woolf at least recognised the series' *roman-fleuve* tendencies, some reviewers mistakenly classified whatever recently published novel-chapter they happened to be reading as the concluding volume of the series. As *Pilgrimage* progressed, and more time began to elapse between each published novel-chapter, many were confused as to whether the last volume was actually 'the final word' due to this prolonged hiatus (Scott-James 201). Besides being a major preoccupation amongst her readers, her refusal to impose some form of conclusion on to her narrative caused disagreements between Richardson and her publishers at Duckworth and later on at J. M. Dent. In a 1936 letter to Richardson, Richard Church suggests the 'difficult problem of "Pilgrimage"' was its 'format, its launching, its mode of attack', and that to 'secure'

her 'fame' as an *avant-garde* novelist, such issues needed to be reworked through some form of conclusion (*WM* 306). Church and her publishers at J. M. Dent believed *Pilgrimage's* failure could be remedied with a final volume of the series, a solution, as seen in Richardson's reply to Church, she was not ready to undertake (307-8). Ignoring her reservations about bringing her *Künstlerroman* to an end, J. M. Dent forced a conclusion on the text in the 1938 omnibus edition wherein Richardson's most recently completed novel-chapter, *Dimple Hill*, was attached to the fourth volume of the publication. The publishing house advertised the omnibus edition, to Richardson's 'helpless dismay and disgust', as the complete work of *Pilgrimage* (350). While the majority of readers probably sighed in relief at the possibility of Miriam's saga finally ending, Horace Gregory warns them to be wary of 'reading the recently published edition of *Pilgrimage* in a single sweeping gesture of the eye across two thousand pages', for 'Miss Richardson's wit has a way of tripping up those who try to read her books as they would read other forms of realistic narration' (36). Gregory was right and, despite J. M. Dent's marketing scheme, Miriam's failure to find closure in *Dimple Hill* undermines the publishing house's intention as she embarks on a bicycle journey and contemplates her next trip to the Continent. While the omnibus edition was prepared for print, Richardson was already at work on 'the successor of *Dimple Hill*' which, once again, reasserted her refusal to conclude *Pilgrimage* (*WM* 340). *March Moonlight* was first published in *Life and Letters* in 1946 as 'Work in Progress' and J. M. Dent was denied their 'complete' text until the 1967 posthumously published omnibus edition. Even today the status of the series' ending is still debated among academics as *March Moonlight* ends with Miriam's internalised question: 'If Jean's marriage with Joe Davenport brought her a child, should I feel, in holding it, that same sense of fulfilment?' (*P4* 648).

Richardson's resistance to closure is not only a 'radical formal gesture that exposes the arbitrary nature and false authority of narrative ends' (Bluemel 124-5), but also challenges traditional notions of selfhood and artistry defined through 'becoming'. Moreover,

Richardson's decision to end *March Moonlight* with Miriam's internalised question, rather than a definitive statement or action, further emphasises the series' commitment to remaining unresolved and without proper closure.³⁴ As an admirer of Proust, Richardson often re-read the many volumes of *À la recherche du temps perdu* in various creative sequences. Such an example is detailed in a letter to Bryher: 'I am now in my third year of reading him—two volumes at a time now one from each end to meet presently in the middle' (*WM* 146). She considers this a necessary 'change from reading all over the series haphazard, & then from beginning to end & then from end to beginning' (146). She believes the formal structure of Proust's *roman-fleuve* embodies the ideal narrative presentation of being, and the reader is no longer forced to follow a linear plot. Consequently, these 'novels may be entered at any point, read backwards, or from the centre to either extremity and will yet reveal, like a mosaic, the interdependence of several parts' (Richardson, 'Novels' 192). It is in this manner that Richardson wished *Pilgrimage* to be read, for each of the thirteen novel-chapters challenges the temporal structure of the novel through her reproduction of Miriam's stream-of-consciousness. Her refusal to 'subordinate and hierarchize the flood of information that filters through [Miriam's] consciousness' additionally suggests the content of each novel-chapter is equally important to the others (Garrity 89). Therefore, readings which privilege the final instalment, *March Moonlight*, and the culmination of her artistic *Bildung* are likely to be misguided because the narrative is non-linear, refuses closure and all the novel-chapters are equally invested in Miriam's artistic being. Unfortunately, the trend of publishing *Pilgrimage*'s thirteen novel-chapters into four volumes undermines Richardson's preferred method of spontaneous reading and imposes a teleological reading upon the series. Nevertheless, it is through Richardson's experimentation with the stream-of-consciousness narrative, and her emphasis on the significance of the creative process

³⁴ Like Bluemel I disagree with the autobiographical readings argued by Gloria Fromm and Elaine Showalter that Richardson was unable to 'face the pain and emotion of her own inevitable end' (131). Fromm interprets Richardson's relationship with the series as so closely involved that its continuation would allow 'her own survival' in the literary imagination (371). Showalter supports this argument with her own belief that 'Richardson's art is afraid of ending' because 'to complete [*Pilgrimage*] was to die' (*Literature* 261).

through Miriam's impressions, which makes this spontaneous reading experience a possibility if one so desired.

Stream of Consciousness: The Psychological Representation of Being

In her 1938 Foreword, Richardson recalls her early motivation behind *Pilgrimage* and how, when 'looking round for a contemporary pattern' to emulate in her then unwritten series, she 'was faced with the choice between following one of her regiments and attempting to produce a feminine equivalent to the current masculine realism' (P1 9). While this idea of realism as a masculine form is inherently problematic, her identification of Honoré de Balzac as 'the father of realism' and her admission that male novelists like Arnold Bennett have become 'synonymous' with the realist novel because of their dominance in the literary marketplace clarifies her alternate definition (9). She recognises that patriarchal themes and motifs have controlled the structure and stylistics of the realist novel of development and, consequently, she wishes to break away from this tradition with her exploration of a female artist-heroine from a new perspective of women's consciousness. Miriam first appeared to Richardson as 'a stranger in the form of contemplated reality having for the first time in her experience its own say' and 'discovering the truth about one's own thoughts and beliefs', and she reproduced this notion of 'feminine realism' in her text (10). Sinclair christened Richardson's literary presentation of contemplated reality as Miriam's 'stream of consciousness' in her 1918 review of *Pointed Roofs*, *Backwater* and *Honeycomb* for the *Little Review*: '[T]here is not drama, no situation, no set scene. Nothing happens. It is just Miriam's stream of consciousness going on and on. And in neither is there any grossly discernable beginning or middle or end' ('Novels of Dorothy Richardson' 5-6). With this focus on Miriam's expanding existence, rather than her potential development, Sinclair's definition of this new narrative technique subverts the prescribed structure of becoming found in the majority of Victorian

Bildungsromane. Sinclair correctly points out that Miriam's interior monologue dominates the narrative flow of *Pilgrimage's* first three novel-chapters, and she contends the 'attitude or gesture' of the author and traditional, usually male, omniscient third-person narrator are absent from this modern technique and no longer interfere with the artist-heroine's perceptions of reality (6).³⁵ Sinclair sees Richardson as the author most able to 'get closer to reality than any of our novelists who are trying so desperately to get close', and her review attempts to establish Richardson as the first novelist to employ this technique (6). In her Foreword Richardson acknowledges the successful work of her contemporaries who were concurrently experimenting with their own formal variations in presenting a character's consciousness—Woolf, Joyce and Proust—and, in contrast to Sinclair, Richardson respectfully maintains it was these three authors, rather than herself, who most influenced these experiments in narration during the period. Woolf and Joyce are only alluded to, she as 'a woman mounted upon a magnificently caparisoned charger' and he as a 'man walking, with eyes devoutly closed, weaving [...] a rich garment of new words' (P1 10). Proust is actually named and Richardson reveals his 'unprecedentedly profound and opulent reconstruction of experience' in *À la recherche du temps perdu* was a major influence on the series' eventual formal structure and presentation of Miriam's expansive being (10).

Sinclair's review and Richardson's Foreword are familiar critical terrain in both Richardson and modernist studies, but the assemblage of the terms 'reality', 'realism', and 'stream of consciousness' in both their discussions about Miriam's interiority is troubled as these terms are considered contradictory in literary studies. Realism's penchant for a detailed representation of contemporary society is often contrasted with modernism's avant-garde aesthetics and 'preoccupation with the extremities of self-consciousness' found in the stream-

³⁵ A third-person narrator is present, though Richardson slips between the first- and third-person throughout the text. In contrast to traditional narratives which use the third-person narrator, Richardson's is not omniscient, but remains anonymous, sexless and participates in what Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short identify as 'free indirect thought' (270). I will discuss this in more detail later in the chapter.

of-consciousness narrative (Olson 3). Nevertheless, Richardson bridges these somewhat hostile genres through her unique presentation of Miriam's consciousness as it captures, and eventually transforms, the materiality of Victorian and Edwardian society into her art.

The term 'stream of consciousness' was first coined by William James in his publication, *Principles of Psychology* (1890), wherein he articulates that consciousness is 'nothing jointed; it flows. A "river" or a "stream" are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described [...] let us call it the stream of consciousness, or of subjective life' (qtd. in Gillespie, 'May Sinclair' 134-5).³⁶ Sinclair adopted James's psychological metaphor in her discussion of Richardson's portrayal of Miriam's mental and sensory perceptions of everyday life, and it is with this early reference that Sinclair made this term familiar within literary discourse. Richardson despised the term and, throughout her career, she repeatedly dubbed it 'the death-dealing metaphor', 'The Shroud (!) of Consciousness' and the 'ill-chosen metaphor' in her essays and letters to friends (*WM* 597, 600; 'Novels' 189). She repeatedly argued that Sinclair and James's metaphor was limiting for she believed one's consciousness was 'not a stream, it's a pool, a sea an ocean. It has depth and greater depth and when you think you have reached its bottom there is nothing there, and when you give yourself up to one current you are suddenly possessed by another' (Brome 29). Much like her theory about the multifarious nature of being, Richardson's interpretation and presentation of Miriam's stream of consciousness avoids resolution and continuously expands.³⁷ Now easily recognised as the reproduction of innumerable thoughts and emotions which pass through a character's mind, modernist authors were additionally concerned with presenting their artist-protagonist's 'artistic sensibility' within these free-flowing impressions (Kumar, *Bergson* 3).

³⁶ Despite Richardson's preference for referring to Miriam's interior monologue as contemplated reality, I will continue to use the established terms stream of consciousness and free indirect thought.

³⁷ While I agree with Shirley Rose that Miriam's consciousness incorporates an idea of 'expansion' and needs to be read outside linear notions of temporality, I disagree that her consciousness is something which lacks 'movement' or change (369). As the only point of view presented, Miriam's consciousness remains the 'unmoving centre' of *Pilgrimage*, but the argument that it does not evolve, react or develop in relation to the material objects and people around her suggests Miriam's intrinsic nature is unable to truly expand (376).

Narrated in the first-person, the stream-of-consciousness narrative presents a character's, not necessarily the protagonist's, fluid thoughts with fragmented syntax, unconventional punctuation and is renowned for its subjective perception of reality. Sometimes leaving the reader confused as to whom Miriam is talking to, what her sensations are and what she encounters, Richardson participates in modernism's preference for the whimsical, ephemeral, 'spasmodic', 'obscure' and 'fragmentary' impressions of reality as filtered through Miriam's consciousness (E3 436). Throughout *Pilgrimage* Richardson presents her artist-heroine's shifting and incomplete thoughts with ellipses, irregular paragraph breaks and run-on sentences, and these unnarrated gaps in Miriam's existence challenge the sense of resolution previously associated with the traditional realist narrative as the reader questions what is being left out of Miriam's presented thoughts. As a voracious reader, Richardson herself preferred 'the slow, attentive reading demanded by unpunctuated texts', wherein 'hearing has its chance' and the narrative 'comes alive and speaks [for] itself' ('About Punctuation' 415). She argues that male authors have previously portrayed 'feminine prose' as 'unpunctuated' and 'move[s] from point to point without formal obstruction', and she mentions that Charles Dickens and Joyce are two male authors who have been successful at presenting women's consciousness in their novels (P1 12).³⁸ Nevertheless, if women's lives and voices were to be accurately reproduced, and heard, in literature, then the 'dominant male view imposed on women characters' needed to be removed from the narrative (Harrison and Peterson, 'Introduction' xi). Richardson's redefinition of the *Künstlerroman* consistently depicts only her artist-heroine's thoughts, which additionally filter and control the flow of information from other characters in the narrative, and this consequently forces the readers to focus entirely on one woman's point of view for over two thousand pages.

³⁸ Her decision to reference Dickens as a male author who successfully presents women's consciousness in his fiction is an interesting choice, for he was not usually recognised for doing so.

Leon Edel has suggested it is *Pilgrimage's* overload of feminine subjectivity which discourages many of its readers, for '[a] reader can easily achieve a relation with a novel when he is on the outside, watching the story unfold; it is another matter to be "on the inside" looking out—and especially "on the inside" of an adolescent girl' (743). This assertion argues male readers struggled the most with *Pilgrimage*, though the earlier mentioned reviews indicate that members of both sexes criticised Richardson's reproduction of women's consciousness. Even though Richardson refers to her narrative style as 'a feminine equivalent to the current masculine realism', she was experimenting with the avant-garde stylistics of her contemporaries like Woolf as she recreates 'a myriad [of] impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent'—in Miriam's consciousness (E4 160). Yet, her additional detailed presentation of her artist-heroine's physical surroundings refuses to 'shed the heavy furniture of the realist and naturalist novel' as Miriam's thoughts often overflow with a comprehensive description of the people and material objects she encounters on a daily basis (Olson 3). This excessive detail was problematic for modernist writers attempting to break away from nineteenth-century realism, and Woolf argues in her review of *The Tunnel* that contemporary readers want 'to be rid of [such] realism' for it blocks Miriam's interior consciousness (E3 12). Woolf elaborates on this argument in 'Character in Fiction' wherein she maintains this level of description associated with the Victorian realist novel only truly reproduces 'the fabric of things' and fails to actually grasp the 'human nature' of the protagonist (432, 430). She further maintains this type of narrative ultimately disappoints the reader in its examination of life. Richardson was concerned with more than just reproducing Miriam's 'moments of transcendent understanding' characteristic of the *Künstlerroman* artist-protagonist, but her decision to present the entire 'grab-bag of [Miriam's] feminine experience' is not to be aligned with Victorian realism (Olson 3; Edel 743). I believe Richardson is not only experimenting with the presentation of an alternative form of consciousness, wherein she presents the combination of how one's

perceptions interact with the material world and transforms ordinary objects and everyday experiences into art, but her representation of Miriam's stream of consciousness examines a more comprehensive, and authentic, reproduction of women's experience in the Victorian and Edwardian period. Lawrence, Ford, Mansfield and Woolf may argue Miriam's consciousness is unprocessed in its detailed catalogue of the objects and people around her, but I argue this is where Miriam's artistry lies.

Liesl Olson's study, *Modernism and the Ordinary* (2009), maintains that ordinary experiences are underlying themes in most modernist texts, but they are usually ignored in criticism because moments of spiritual perception which define the stream-of-consciousness narrative often overshadow those experiences which 'are *not* heightened in self-awareness' (4). The ordinary, it seems, 'may be internalized, but is never transcendent', though Olson argues the ordinary does not need to 'always be transformed into something else' and can 'endure in and of itself' as a material, fixed object (4). She asserts the ordinary is reproduced in modernist novels in a variety of ways—'unheroic events and overlooked things', 'mass-produced objects or the everyday errand, an event that is not always an Event'—and, in regards to narration, the ordinary can be used as a 'mode of organizing life and representing' the character's existence (6). Olson lists Joyce, Proust, Stein and Woolf as modernist authors who detail ordinary life and the material world in their novels, but she does not examine Richardson's own reproduction of outwardly insignificant objects and events which surface throughout *Pilgrimage*.

One example where Miriam's consciousness catalogues the material objects of her immediate surroundings occurs when she enters her room in a Bloomsbury boarding house for the very first time in *The Tunnel*. Passages like this can make *Pilgrimage's* reading experience a tedious one, but embedded within Miriam's detailed references to the room's furnishings is a discourse about women's independence at the turn of the century:

The window space was a little square wooden room, the long low double lattice breaking the roof, the ceiling and walls warmly reflecting its oblong of bright light. Close against the window was a firm little deal table covered with a thin, brightly covered printed table-cloth. When Miriam drew her eyes from its confusion of rich fresh tones, the bedroom seemed very dark. The bed, drawn under the slope, showed an expanse of greyish white counterpane, the carpet was colourless in the gloom [...] There was a small chest of drawers, battered and almost paintless, but with two long drawers and two small ones and a white cover on which stood a little looking-glass framed in polish pine... and a small yellow wardrobe with a deep drawer under the hanging part, and a little drawer in the rickety little washstand and another above the dusty cupboard of the little mahogany sideboard. I'll paint the bright part of the ceiling; scrolls of leaves.... (P2 13-14).

The inventory continues on for some pages moving from the interior space to the outside street and buildings seen from her window. Some reviewers, especially Mansfield, considered descriptions like the one above to be an unnecessary list of mundane objects that the twentieth-century reader no longer needs to encounter in fiction. Mansfield contends that '[t]hings just happen one after another with incredible rapidity and break-neck speed', wherein Miriam is 'holding out her mind as it were, and there is Life hurling objects into it as fast as she can throw' ('Three Women Novelists' 141). She argues Richardson's continuous cataloguing of the various objects Miriam comes across ultimately 'kills' the 'pace' of the narrative and, moreover, it 'leaves [the reader] feeling' as if 'everything [is] of equal importance' to Richardson's artist-heroine though 'it is impossible that everything should not be of equal unimportance' ('Three Women Novelists' 141; 'Dragonflies' 48). Olson maintains that such a list found in fiction alludes to the 'epic catalogues' found in Homer which 'strive for an authoritative account of what has happened' to the protagonist and what is crucial to their

‘collective self-definition’ (47). Elisabeth Bronfen additionally argues that the representation of ‘concrete spaces’ and objects in novels are ‘in themselves meaningful’ and ‘self-reflexive’, for ‘the meaning of a space is determined by the character who inhabits and passes through it’ (11). This is the first instance in the narrative where Miriam truly has a space of her own, and her mental inventory focuses on the materiality of this independent privilege rather than just the metaphor later discussed by Woolf in *A Room of One’s Own* (1929). Her first impressions of the space’s atmosphere and furnishings are daunting as she focuses on the chilliness, the darkness and general lack of cleanliness of the room, but her focus on possible improvements and renovations—cleaning, rearranging and painting—indicates how Miriam takes possession of the objects and furnishings and she claims her space. Anticipating *A Room of One’s Own* by a decade, Miriam fulfils the conditions Woolf considers necessary for the woman artist to find artistic fulfilment—an independent income and a space of her own. Yet, Miriam’s salary of one pound a week as a dental secretary falls short of Woolf’s monetary requirement of five hundred pounds a year, and Richardson’s description of the room offers a more realistic portrayal of what, exactly, one gets when renting a room for a half-crown a week at the turn of the century.

Coming from a middle-class background, the room is at first incomparable to the comforts of her familial home and the ones provided for her at her previous teaching positions. Martha Vicinus argues in her historical and sociological study about independent working women residing in London during the mid-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century that the life of a boarding house was considered to be the least appealing living situation offered to women who could afford room, board and furnishings. As she points out, a landlady could let the room to whoever had the means to pay and, as seen in the array of characters residing in the Tansley Street lodging house, members of different classes, gender, and religions are thrown together (36-7). Even though the derelict state of the boarding house

furniture leads to her metaphorical 'loss of status' as the daughter of a middle-class gentleman, the freedom of living in a room of her own outweighs the negatives associated with boarding house life (37). Following her mental inventory of her surroundings, her internal monologue contemplates what this room holds for her: 'Twenty-one and only one room to hold the richly renewed consciousness, and a living to earn, but the self that was with her in this room was the untouched tireless self of her seventeenth year and all the earlier time' (P2 16). Her comment about having 'only one room' to hold her expansive being alludes to the breadth of her creative endeavours as a woman writer. Her adolescent desire to write becomes a reality in this space, and it is here that she will write letters to her friends and family recounting anecdotes of daily life, translate the Russian short stories of Andreyeff, compose middles for journals and newspapers and work on her novel. Furthermore, Miriam realises that, while she may dream of her future or revisit her past, the immediate reality of this Bloomsbury bedroom and the London scene provide her with the necessary independence, resources and privacy to continue her creative endeavours as a writer. Even though the material objects in her room remain in their original, 'untransformed' state, Richardson's juxtaposition of the literal and metaphorical associations of this space, with how having a room of her own will impact Miriam's artistry, leads to a better understanding about Miriam's artistic being and expanding consciousness (Olson 32).

When Miriam does transform the ordinary into some form of creative experiment her artistic consciousness takes over and incorporates metafictional narratives to the text. It is during this process of transformation that the narrative becomes self-conscious about the writing process and the making of the woman artist. An example of this metafictional aspect of *Pilgrimage* occurs when Miriam, on a walk home from work one evening, decides what she will include in a yet to be written letter to her sister, Eve. She remembers an earlier, unnarrated, interaction with a little boy and she contemplates how she will 'write it down, the *sound* the

little boy made as he carefully carried the milk jug?’ (P2 256). This first thought captures what is most likely the extent of Miriam’s encounter with the boy, but her imagination takes off as she further elaborates the details and nuances of the meeting for her reader:

...going along, trusted, *trusted*, you could see it, you could see his mother. His legs came along, loose feet, looking after themselves, pottering behind him. All his body was in the hand carrying the milk jug. When he had done carrying the milk jug he would run; running along the pavement amongst people, with cool round eyes, not looking at anything. Where the crowd prevented his running, he would jog up and down as he walked, until he could run again, bumping solemnly up and down amongst the people; boy (256).

Despite seeing this unknown boy from a distance without any real interaction, Miriam’s expanded interpretation of the scene is fully imagined in much greater detail to amuse her future reader, and Miriam’s artistic consciousness assumes a new function in the text with its resemblance to an omniscient narrator entering the boy’s thoughts and feelings through the motif of free indirect thought. This psychological meta-narrative further reveals that Miriam’s internal consciousness is participating in an early attempt at story telling with the repetition and stress on the word ‘trusted’. The reiteration of the word, perhaps, exposes her second-guessing her interpretation of the boy’s feelings, but the italicised emphasis confirms her approval of the word—for a young boy carrying a heavy milk jug through the busy streets of London would undoubtedly be vulnerable to a busy crowd. Her various replayed scenarios about how she can represent the way the little boy runs indicates Miriam’s experimentation with narrative style and form and, much like a writer rephrasing his or her words on the page, Miriam struggles with finding the right word, edits phrases, syntax and tries to create a believable atmosphere for the event. Ultimately this scene functions as a representation of the complicated writing process—even if it is only a letter. Whether this particular incident is actually reproduced in a

letter is not of any significant importance, but as a presentation of Miriam's artistic consciousness transforming her material surroundings and ordinary experience into the written word it is representative of what Miriam believes is one of the principles that inspire a writer's 'Imagination': 'Not in the sense of *making up*. Imagination means holding an image in your mind. When it comes up of itself, or is summoned by something' (P4 613). Consequently, the artist is not only inspired by transcendent moments of being or artistic epiphanies, for ordinary objects and events like the boy with the milk jug can awaken the writer's imagination and influence the direction of their artistry. Miriam's encounter with the boy is not only an accurate snapshot of everyday life in the capital, but also a realistic rendering of the creative process.

Besides reproducing the ordinary happenings of Miriam's everyday reality, another way in which Richardson rewrites women's experience is through her experimentation with point of view and narrative form in her presentation of her artist-heroine's thoughts. While Sinclair believes the authorial voice and omniscient narrator no longer negotiate a character's reflections in stream of consciousness novels, she was wrong to suggest Richardson's series is without such narrative intervention. Throughout *Pilgrimage* Richardson alternates between articulating Miriam's direct thoughts through the reproduction of her stream-of-consciousness and an anonymous narrator's negotiation of these impressions through the narrative mode of free indirect thought. The latter term was coined by Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short in their critical study, *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose* (1981), and they maintain the 'crucial factor' in differentiating between the various representations of a character's thoughts is located in 'the semantic status of the type of thought presentation used' (271). Therefore, the appearance or absence of an 'introductory reporting clause[s]' like 'he wondered' and the utilisation of first-, second- and third-person pronouns help define the type of thought presentation reproduced in the text (271). Leech and Short examine five different types of thought presentation—free direct thought, direct thought, free indirect thought,

indirect thought, and the narrative report of a thought act—and they argue that when the reader encounters free direct thought and free indirect thought they ‘apparently get the “verbatim” thoughts of the characters with less and less intervention on the writer’s part’ (271). Leech and Short maintain that free indirect thought is considered a more natural representation of a character’s thoughts, for it retains ‘the vividness of [direct thought] without the artificiality of the “speaking to oneself” convention’ (277). Free direct thought utilises the first-person pronoun whereas free indirect thought often uses the third-person, though the first-person ‘I’ or ‘me’ can still occur in free indirect thought ‘because it is appropriate to both the primary and reported discourse situation’ (271). Consequently, the relationship between Miriam’s thoughts and the narrator’s is sometimes ambiguous throughout the series wherein identifying which comments belong to the ‘the narrator, the protagonist, or both of them’ is often difficult to discern (Díaz 47). This is further complicated by the fact that free indirect thought can be reproduced in an array of complex forms comparable to the ‘fragmented sentence structure’ associated with the stream-of-consciousness technique (Snaith, ‘Narrative Strategies’ 134). Despite the considerable similarities between these narrative modes, it is the narrator’s appearance in the text which prevents it from being classified as wholly a stream-of-consciousness novel (134). Furthermore, the narrator’s presence imparts an authoritative tone upon the text, for narrators are still considered ‘public’ even with ‘their anonymity’ (134). Woolf was one such author who used free indirect thought in much of her fiction, and she maintains in ‘Character in Fiction’ that ‘in life and literature it is necessary to have some means of bridging the gulf between the hostess and her unknown guest on the one hand, the writer and his unknown reader on the other’ (E3 431). Richardson’s inclusion of a narrator who mediates Miriam’s impressions is one such way of closing the gap between author and reader but, at times, the narrator refrains from including an explanation or contextualisation of Miriam’s thoughts and the uncertainty of what, exactly, is happening remains.

Throughout *Pilgrimage*, Richardson does not prefer one form of narration to the other, and she is even known to switch between the first-person to the third-person in the middle of Miriam's represented thoughts. Leech and Short identify this shift in narrative form as 'slipping' and, as a result, it becomes 'difficult to tell which mode' of thought presentation 'is being used' as the author 'slip[s] from narrative statement to interior portrayal without the reader noticing what has occurred' (272). Consequently, the reader must be aware of any indicating signs of Miriam's personal 'idioms, components of direct speech' or other signs of internal thought which separate her impressions from the narrator's (Snaith, 'Narrative Strategies' 134). When the reader encounters 'slipping' in novels the views of the character and narrator combine and the reader 'tends to take over the view of the character too' and, as a result, readers of *Pilgrimage* thus take on only Miriam's feminine consciousness (Leech and Short 272). 'Slipping' repeatedly occurs throughout *Pilgrimage*, and one such example is found in the first novel-chapter, *Pointed Roofs*, when Miriam is forced to attend a religious service with the girls from the German finishing school:

Caritas... I have *none* I am sure... Fräulein Pfaff would listen. She would smile afterwards and talk about a "schöne Predigt"—certainly... If she should ask about the sermon? Everything would come out then.

What would be the good? Fräulein would not understand. It would be better to pretend. She could not think of any woman who would understand. And she would be obliged to live somewhere. She must pretend, to somebody. She wanted to go on, to see the spring. But must she always be pretending? (*P1* 73-4).

Richardson begins the passage with the first-person pronoun as Miriam examines her faults in femininity, but almost immediately the narrator takes control of the scene with the appearance of the third-person 'she'. I believe Richardson's presentation of free indirect thought in the above passage, and throughout the series, is conveyed in a similar fashion to Woolf's own use

of the narrative convention wherein the presence of an anonymous narrator mediates Miriam's private and public voices and personas. Anna Snaith outlines Woolf's use of free indirect thought, and establishes the narrator's importance in connecting the 'public relating of events and the privacy of thought' ('Narrative Strategies' 140). In contrast to Woolf, who usually presents the ephemeral perceptions of multiple characters and incorporates both male and female prose in her novels, Richardson only mediates the private and public voices of her artist-heroine. This was a stylistic choice which Woolf famously critiques *Pilgrimage* as being caught up in 'the damned egotistical self' and is what ultimately 'ruins' the series (*D2* 14). While Woolf may see Richardson's interpretation of free indirect thought and stream of consciousness as formally limiting, it does reveal another dimension to Miriam's personality in relation to public performativity.

In the above passage, the presentation of the first-person 'I' establishes Miriam's private opinion about her relationship to charity, a trait women of the period were expected to possess in both their personality and public service. Miriam lacks this feminine feature and is fully aware of her failure to fulfil this expectation. It is with this public performance of feminine grace and piety that Richardson switches from her private thoughts to the narrator's reconciliation of her public performance with the third-person 'she'. With the final question surrounded in ambiguity, for whether it is Miriam's or the narrator's remains unclear, Richardson narrates the remainder of the service in the third-person as Miriam actively performs her expected feminine role. Rather than having an omniscient narrator objectively inform the reader about Miriam's lack of a charitable disposition, the presentation of Miriam's private anxiety unambiguously demonstrates the pressures of society and how they can affect the standing and opinion of women in the late Victorian period. If discovered to be anything other than the embodiment of domesticity, she is dismissed and exiled from her public role as a teacher and governess. Her questioning as to whether she must 'always be pretending'

signifies her struggle with fulfilling the expectations society places on feminine behaviour and development rather than just allowing Miriam to be herself. Moreover, one could argue this performance is an instance where Miriam is forced to participate in a form of unwanted becoming, in this case, becoming more docile and feminine in order to protect her present working situation.

One could maintain that Miriam's subsequent performances which occur throughout the series all participate in a superficial presentation of becoming, although, as with most of her performances, Miriam finds her inner self affected by the false role-playing. This confirms her preference for maintaining a pure reality of being and, as Miriam grows more autonomous with age and is living an independent life in London, these performances begin to disappear:

I always forget that I am visible. She called in her eyes, which must have been staring all the time blankly about the table, so many impressions had she gathered of the various groups, animated now in their unconscious relief at the approaching end of a long sitting. Here again was one of those moments of being conscious of the strange fact of her incurable illusion, and realizing its effects in the past and the effects it must always have if she did not get away from it. Nearly always she must appear both imbecile and rude, staring, probably, with her mouth half open, lost. [...] Polite society was not worth having. Every time one tried for a while, holding oneself in, thinking of oneself sitting there as others were sitting, consciousness came to an end. It presently narrowed life down to a restive discomfort... (P3 71-2)

This is an instance where 'slipping' occurs multiple times as Miriam negotiates these public and private voices and, in this scene, Miriam actively chooses to not perform the expected roles of female behaviour as she attempts to return to the inner recesses of her consciousness. Despite this obvious moment of self-consciousness at the dinner table, wherein she remembers she's in a public setting, Miriam prefers the privacy of her thoughts and refuses to fully participate in

that feminine, ‘graciously effect’ of ‘deliberately *behaving* for the public’ and becoming something she is not (70). Despite her refusal to perform, the repetition of ‘oneself’ plays out like a set of instructions she is repeating to remind herself not to perform and, consequently, still manages to disrupt the private flow of her stream of consciousness. Her awareness about the position of her body and physical presence at the table—as she ‘call[s] in her eyes’, leaves her mouth lax and ‘half open’ and tries to maintain a stillness and air similar to her companions—illustrates her inability to physically remove herself from the expectations of public decorum. While she wishes to remain psychologically detached from the communal atmosphere of the dinner table, her awareness of her bodily actions prevent her from completely retreating into her uninhibited being and, subsequently, her ‘consciousness [comes] to an end’. She may not be performing in such an extreme manner as the episode in *Pointed Roofs*, but she still must put up with the ‘discomfort’ of participating in public events.

Besides the above negotiations of private and public voices, it was Sinclair, not Richardson, who identified Miriam’s contemplated reality with the stream-of-consciousness metaphor. Richardson quotes Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister* in her Foreword, and maintains the literary representation of the hero or heroine’s ‘thought-processes’ can be presented through various narrative devices and, thus, her vacillation between Miriam’s stream of consciousness, the epic catalogue, and the narrator’s participation in free indirect thought allows Richardson to engage with Miriam’s interior consciousness through a variety of modes (P1 11). Miriam’s artistic consciousness is pervasive throughout *Pilgrimage*, though how she interprets the urban environment additionally explores Miriam’s own understanding about her consciousness, her creativity and women’s autonomy at the turn of the century.

Expanding her Being: London and the Woman Artist

Richardson embraces both the nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman* motif of voyaging out of England and the twentieth-century *Künstlerroman's* reinterpretation of that tradition with the protagonist's voyage in to the metropolis. Contemplating the possibility of taking a holiday in *Revolving Lights*, Miriam remembers her first time travelling to the Continent: 'She had never deliberately "gone abroad."' Following necessity, she had found herself in Germany and in Belgium' (P3 363). In contrast to the Grand Tour narrative, as discussed in the previous chapter, wherein the hero or heroine fulfils the residual requirements of educational and emotional becoming, Miriam's exodus from England is prompted by the family's financial problems and subsequent bankruptcy. Because two of her sisters are en route to receiving marriage proposals, a path Miriam herself adamantly refuses to follow, she decides to take control of her own financial situation as she leaves her already deteriorating middle-class existence for the workforce as an English teacher. In contrast to Woolf and Forster who attempt to transcend the discourse of drawing-room aesthetics while their heroines are abroad, Richardson alternatively engages with this interpretation of this tradition as Miriam performs the residual feminine roles of domesticity as she grooms her students for their eventual vocations as wives and mothers. Even though Miriam's participation is rooted within superficial performances of femininity, as seen in the earlier church scene, Richardson's presentation of Miriam's piano playing, needlework and her interludes with Paster Lahmann in *Pointed Roofs* is reminiscent of *Bildungsromane* from an earlier era, such as, *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Villette* (1853). Ironically, it is Miriam's open discussion about German men and the courtship process with her students which ultimately leads to her dismissal by Fräulein Pfaff (P1 179).

While her voyage out of England is instigated by a distressing change in her family's situation, Richardson duplicates Miriam's voyage in to the English capital with similar contextual disturbances. Following the horror of her mother's unrepresented suicide at the end

of *Honeycomb*, Miriam permanently leaves her suburban life to become a London resident and begins work as a dental secretary (P1 489-9). From *The Tunnel*'s publication onward, London is the dominant focal setting of Miriam's narrated existence in *Pilgrimage*, and Richardson's relocation of the artist-heroine from the countryside to the metropolitan space aligns the series with the *Künstlerroman*'s thematic exploration of the artist-protagonist's 'consciousness and self as he or she psychologically and physically manoeuvres the confines of the urban environment (Parsons, "The "Passant" 156). The city's metaphoric associations as 'labyrinthine', but 'mappable', further intertwines the urban space with the inner 'wander[ings]' of Miriam's represented stream-of-consciousness (156). Moreover, this modernist concern with discovering and comprehending one's interiority within the passages of the city streets participates in the represented reality of being, wherein the city takes on the role as an 'active presence' in Miriam's existence 'rather than a situational backdrop' for her development (157). Nevertheless, how Miriam's consciousness registers the urban scene, especially its penchant for the material, and sometimes banal, elements of the city, was yet another reason which 'caused the aesthetes' to 'shudde[r]' in their reviews (Berridge 21).

Throughout the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods, London encountered for the first time an enduring 'female presence' as new prospects of social emancipation and independence allowed women to transcend the private/public divide and enter the metropolitan scene (Parsons, "The "Passante" 155). Under these new social conditions, such as the acceptance of women into universities and the workforce, the need for female consumers to stimulate the newly 'commercialized metropolis', and the New Woman's bold decision to live independently of the familial home, single women were finally permitted unrestricted access to the streets. (155). The twentieth-century woman imagined her new autonomy in 'both a room of her own *and* freedom of the streets', and the relaxation of social decorum and metropolitan improvements allowed the working- and middle-class woman more liberty than

she was previously granted (Radford, *Dorothy Richardson* 53). No longer hindered by their lack of marital status, these emergent urban women were now associated with alternative labels, such as, the ‘new woman’, the ‘educated working woman’ and the ‘professional woman’ and, as they became more mobile, visible, and comfortable in their new domain, modernist authors, such as Richardson, Woolf, Mansfield and Rhys reproduced the urban experience of this new wave of New Women (Parsons, “The “*Passante*”” 156). In addition to the other labels associated with female city dwellers, the appearance of the artist-heroine in modernist texts brought an additional urban woman to the forefront of twentieth-century literature—the female *flâneur/flâneuse*—though I will avoid reading Miriam’s observations and experiences of the late-Victorian and Edwardian London scene alongside this literary tradition.³⁹ While many female modernists, such as Mansfield and Woolf, recreated insightful presentations of women’s many public relationships to the city, it is Richardson’s fictional presentation of Miriam’s experiences which best portrays a realistic ‘account of woman’s lived experience’ in the public sphere as she reproduces both the ordinary and extraordinary events of her everyday life (McCracken 131). Moreover, the city’s transformative effect on how Miriam understands, and re-evaluates, the many levels of her being and artistic consciousness offers new representations of women’s autonomy, feminism and Otherness in modernist literature.

Prefiguring her mother’s death and eventual move to the capital, Miriam wanders alone through London in *Honeycomb* while on a shopping errand with her employer, and Miriam’s first impressions of the West End are scattered with ellipses and broken up into fragmented chunks of prose as her transitory thoughts jump to each new scene:

³⁹ How Miriam perceives, interacts and demands the right to her mobility within the city streets is what allows her to intertwine her artistic being with the urban environment. Moreover, trying to impose a reading of the *flâneur*’s characteristics upon Miriam’s London persona promotes an interpretation of her participation in yet another form of becoming as she abandons her artistic existence in order to embrace the lifestyle of the *flâneur/flâneuse*. For specific examinations of *Pilgrimage*’s participation in this tradition please see: Lois Cucullu, ‘Over-Eating: *Pilgrimage*’s Food Mania and the *Flânerie* of Public Foraging’ (2006); Pilar Hidalgo Andreu, ‘Female *Flânerie* in Dorothy Richardson’s *Pilgrimage*’ (1993); Deborah L. Parsons, ‘The “*Passante*” as “*Flâneuse*” in Dorothy Richardson’s *Pilgrimage*’ (2005) and *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City and Modernity* (2000).

The West End Street... grey buildings rising on either side, angles sharp against the sky... softened angles of buildings against other buildings high moulded angles soft as a crumb, with deep undershadows [...]

Flags of pavement flowing—smooth clean grey squares and oblongs, faintly polished, shaping and drawing away—sliding into each other... I am part of the dense smooth clean paving stone...sunlit; gleaming under dark winter rain; shining under warm sunlit rain, sending up a fresh stony smell... always there... dark and light... dawn, stealing...

Life streamed up from the close dense stone. With every footstep she felt she could fly (*P1* 416).

Miriam's fragmented 'myriad of impressions' of the city streets do not embrace the traditional realist preference for an exact reproduction of the material and external reality of late-nineteenth-century London. Moreover, she does not focus solely on her psychological reactions and emotions about walking alone in a strange city but, instead, Miriam's consciousness incorporates and internalises the physicality of the urban environment as she mentally and physically adapts to the new space. Her initial focus on the sharp angles and height of the buildings identifies the city's underlying atmosphere with the 'masculine mystique of the big' and powerful, but her reinterpretation of the tall structures—blunting their angles and metaphoric comparison to crumbs—subverts the threatening subtext of the public space (Weisman 1). Rather than trying to incorporate her being with the patriarchal undertones of the large structures above her, she instead focuses her attention on the street beneath her. Because '[a] meaningful environment is necessary and essential to a meaningful existence', Miriam's identification with one of the fundamental components of the city is an early attempt at asserting her own personal significance, and right of access, to the city (3). Claiming the streets took precedence over the public buildings for women and Miriam's actions are

representative of the period. Despite the momentary apprehension of the ‘sharp angles’ and imposing structures above her, the subsequent metaphoric comparison of her existing reality with the warm arrival of sunlight after a day’s rain foreshadows Miriam’s rebirth in the capital at the start of *The Tunnel*. Moreover, the refreshing smell of rain rising from the warm pavement offers an alternative perception of the urban sphere as pastoral and revitalising instead of an industrialised and dirty wasteland. She even goes so far as to identify the street as a ‘pavement of heaven’ and, unlike the writings of her contemporaries, her impressions and experiences of London are almost always presented in a favourable context (P1 416). Her comment that ‘[l]ife streamed up from the close dense stone’ and the constant juxtapositions of the city’s dualistic nature—being both sharp and soft, light and dark, urban and pastoral—suggests her interpretation of the urban environment is defined by the flow and flux of transformation.

Once secure in her surroundings, Miriam’s thoughts shift attention from the architectural structures of city to the commodities crowding shop windows: ‘hats; dresses, shining against darkness; bright headless crumpling stalks; sly, silky ominous furs; metals, cold and clanging’, (P1 417). Much like the narrative presentation of Miriam’s consciousness taking inventory of her new room, the catalogue of products is more meaningful than just a random assortment of objects cluttering a shop window. The listed merchandise is all sold exclusively to middle and upper class women and, consequently, out of reach to Miriam who cannot afford such luxuries while surviving on a governess’s wage, but Miriam does not lust after these items with ‘disgusting greed’ like Woolf’s presentation of a window shopper in ‘Oxford Street Tide’ (1932) (LS 21). These objects do not translate to Miriam’s immediate needs and reality and, consequently, she only manages to think of them in their commodified form and in relation to those ‘strange people who bought’ and ‘touched’ such items rather than herself (P1 417). More than the window separates Miriam from connecting with such items and she

quickly moves on to another display. While initially filtering only the material images of the above products, Miriam's consciousness immediately transforms into Woolf's 'enormous eye' in 'Street Haunting' (1927) and slowly begins to reinterpret the spectacle in front of her (E4 481):

She pulled up sharply in front of a window. The pavement round it was clear, allowing her to stand rooted where she had been walking, in the middle of the pavement, in the midst of the pavement, in the midst of the tide flowing from the clear window, a soft fresh tide of sunlit colours... clear green glass shelves laden with shapes of fluted glass, glinting, transparencies of mauve and amber and green, rose-pear and milky blue, welded to a flowing tide, freshening and glowing through her blood, a sea rising and falling with her breathing (P1 417).

Much like her encounter with the little boy with the milk jar, this scene details an early instance of Miriam's consciousness experimenting with narration. Embracing the imagist ideas regarding rhythm, which should be 'composed in the sequence of a musical phrase' rather than 'a metronome', Miriam's fluctuating thoughts avoid the 'symmetrical, isochronic metres' that Pound associated with the 'soft, monotonous' rhythm of realism (F.S. Flint 129; Zach 238). The initial phrases are disjointed as Miriam's internal monologue struggles to convey the appropriate word for her position in the streets. Once her consciousness moves away from actively trying to describe her own physical presence in relation to the objects and, instead, registers just the ephemera of colour in front of her, the pace of the scene naturally synchronises with her breathing and eventually unites her being with the glass items. As an object, glass incorporates undertones of reflection into its physical and metaphorical components and is an appropriate object to undergo a transformation in the recesses of Miriam's artistic consciousness. Caught up in the beauty of light filtered by the glass, Miriam is able to forget her class status and she becomes lost in her observation of the shimmering

colours of light. Moreover, the metaphoric connotations of the 'tide' and 'sea' incorporate Richardson's own definition of one's stream-of-consciousness as an expansive, fluid, and continuous body of water. Through her use of ellipses and unconventional paragraph breaks, Richardson separates the earlier objective cataloguing of women's merchandise from the reflective impressions of the glass, and offers the reader two very different interpretations of Miriam's urban experience as she participates in the new trend of window shopping. Despite the reviewers' arguments that *Pilgrimage* fails to embrace the more avant-garde aesthetics of imagism and modernism, the passage indicates otherwise with its experimentation with new modes of rhythm.

It is only once she embarks on her return to the hat shop that Miriam finally moves from the bricolage of objects cluttering shop windows and notices the people passing her on the streets. Rather than offering a detailed description of the Londoners she encounters, Miriam's vague portrayal of 'West End People', as defined by 'their clothes, their carriages and hansoms, their clean bright spring-filled houses, their restaurants and the theatres waiting for them this evening', leave the reader desiring a more thorough description of the London scene in front of her (*P1* 419). Unlike the nonchalant pace of her window shopping, the reader is repeatedly reminded of the speed of Miriam's journey as she 'hurried away', 'walked quickly', and 'strode her swiftest' back to the hat shop (419). Furthermore, in contrast to the glass displays in the shop window, Londoners cannot really be revealed by anything more than their material possessions and, consequently, Miriam is unable to penetrate, and understand, their inner beings. Unable to internalise a singular image which defines the people passing her by, Miriam's consciousness only manages to grasp the common manner shared amongst them as she notes 'their easy way with each other, the mysterious something behind their faces, was hers' (419). Without expanding on that idea, Miriam subsequently realises she too has 'a mysterious secret face—a West End life of her own' which others cannot comprehend (419).

Her hour of exploring and wandering has given Miriam this new element of her personality, one which is autonomous and secretive, and it is through the progression from the stone pavement, to the crowded shop windows and, finally, to her awareness of a possible London existence awaiting her that one can see how the city slowly synchronises with her consciousness and reveals a new aspect of her being which was previously unrealised. Crucially, while Miriam identifies her own secret mask, her physical, yet private, ‘sense of belonging’ in the city streets allows ‘her to remain an unassimilated private individual’ while navigating the urban sphere (Gan 60). Much like her fellow Londoners, Miriam’s ‘mysterious face’ does not reveal her private impressions as she traipses across London, and she will always maintain a sense of autonomy over her thoughts. Once she is lost in the crowd Miriam no longer needs to participate in feminine performances of becoming. It is only when she recounts these experiences—through letters, her middles, short stories, and later novel—that she begins to make her previously invisible secret life visible to the public realm. The urban environment not only fuels her artistic expression, but also influences and transforms the way she perceives and presents her private and public persona.

Another important context for Miriam’s urban wandering is suffrage activism and the way it transformed women’s experience of public space. While the suffrage movement originally began as a political movement which questioned the status and character of women in British society, especially in regard to their ‘legal, educational, psychological, economic, professional, marital and political’ rights, by 1909 it was reduced ‘to a much narrower cause deliberately centered on a single issue: the vote’ (Zwerdling 214). In the words of Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, women were campaigning for “[n]ot only the vote, but what the vote means—the moral, the mental, economic, the spiritual enfranchisement of Womanhood” (qtd. in Vicinus 249). Without the vote women were classified as second-class citizens in the public realm, and subsequently the best place to vocalise their desire for freedom was on the

streets with 'staged marches, fund-raising bazaars, membership drives' and other forms of protest which involved a public gathering (249). Eventually, though, the participants actively supporting women's franchise were divided into two groups, the non-violent Suffragists and militant Suffragettes. While promoting different tactics, the majority of members in these various organisations were trying 'to forge a new spirituality' not only founded 'upon women's traditional idealism and self-sacrifice' as they challenged women's expected role in society and the public sphere, but they wished to change 'the [very] idea of society itself' (250). Miriam's link to the suffrage movement is through her close friend and eventual lover, Amabel, who takes her to a meeting in *Clear Horizon* (P4 344). Even though Miriam does not actually participate in any of the demonstrations and denounces the tactics and style of the members of the militant branch, she often discusses her opinions surrounding feminism and suffrage with her male friends.

One example is found in a teashop scene in *Deadlock*. Miriam and her Jewish suitor, Michael Shatov, visit an unusual café in the backstreets of East London and Miriam notices they are currently sharing the same space with a black man:

Miriam sat frozen, appalled by the presence of a negro. He sat near by, huge, bent, snorting and devouring, with a huge black bottle at his side. Mr Shatov's presence was shorn of its alien quality. He was an Englishman in the fact that he and she could *not* sit eating in the neighbourhood of this marshy jungle. But they were, they had. They would have. Once away from this awful place she would never think of it again. Yet the man had hands and needs and feelings. Perhaps he could sing. There was something that ought to be said to him. She could not think what it was. In his oppressive presence it was impossible to think at all (P3 217).

This scene is a continuation from an earlier, emotional argument between Michael and Miriam about women's roles in the public sphere wherein Miriam believes she has communicated 'her

best most liberating words' to Michael about women's position in society and, consequently, Richardson introduces in this teashop incident a discourse surrounding various levels of Otherness—female, racial, social and religious (217). While Jane Garrity and Bryan Cheyette argue in their respective readings of this scene that Miriam's encounter with the black man in the café is actually 'an example of the bourgeois woman's identification with "the potentially liberating Other"', her impulse to sympathy, much like Rachel's with the indigenous women in *The Voyage Out*, is extremely troubled (Garrity 111). Cheyette argues that Miriam 'appropriat[es] the Other, as a conduit for liberatory speech' about women's rights ('Neither black nor white' 39). Nevertheless, even if he acts as a medium for Miriam's cathartic outburst, much of her description of the black man engages with the rhetoric and clichés of primitivist and imperial thought which, in light of the current topic of women's oppression and subservience, is completely inappropriate and contradictory to her speech. Miriam not only renounces the rhetoric of the suffrage movement in the scene but also the rhetoric of the racial Other. The allusion to blackface minstrelsy, the 'odorous dampness' of the 'marshy jungle' and the bestial associations of his 'snorting' and 'devouring' behaviour dehumanises his persona. Following these racist impressions, any thoughts Miriam superficially has about his 'needs and feelings' become debatable. Throughout Miriam's impressions of the black man, Michael loses his own qualities of Otherness and momentarily becomes English. Michael Rogin's examination of the film *The Jazz Singer* (1927) identifies how the Jewish protagonist, whose occupation as a minstrel performer, uses blackface to 'enter the white American mainstream' and, consequently, as the 'black man becomes dehumanized' through the appropriated humour of blackface, the Jew 'becomes humanized' (qtd. in Gerzina 60). It appears that Richardson is embracing a similar theme in this teashop scene as Michael's foreignness is displaced when sharing the company of a more visible form of racial Otherness as seen in the man's 'thick black head and monstrous bronze face' (P3 219). This scene is often discussed in relation to

Michael's diminishing 'alien qual[it]ies'—his Jewishness and Otherness—rather than Miriam's troubling perception of the black man in the context of her feminist argument. Her exploitation of the racial Other's own second-class citizenship to stimulate her argument for women's liberation and recognition needs to be discussed.

Miriam experiences a 'sense of contamination' as she shares a space with the black man, and she is unable to think, for his 'presence was an outrage on something of which he was not aware' (271). It is only when his face is out of sight that Miriam is able to resume her conversation with Michael about women's suffrage. She does not support the way the suffrage movement has been run, and she informs Michael that those involved in The Primrose League, NUWSS and the WSPU 'are the worst' kinds of feminists in that '[w]omen never have been subject [...] Disabilities imposed by law, are a stupid insult to women, but have never touched them as individuals. In the long run they injure only men. For they keep back civilization of the outside world, which is the only thing men can make' (218-19). Prefiguring Virginia Woolf's Society of Outsiders in *Three Guineas* (1938) Miriam declares, 'Women do not need civilization' (219). Once Michael challenges her claims, and forces Miriam to remain present in the conversation, the black man disappears from the scene and the conversation continues without further reference to his presence. Despite her earlier argument that women have not been subject to patriarchal rule, Miriam admits she prefers to think this way because she refuses to 'cheerfully regard [herself] as an emancipated slave, with traditions of slavery for memory and the form of a slave as an everlasting heritage' (219). Her comments reflect the suffrage movement's tendency to invoke a discourse of abolition in their speeches, and one can argue she refuses to acknowledge men's subjugation of women because she does not want to *become* an emancipated slave and align her own history with that of the racial Other which, in this instance, refers to both Michael and the black man. She chooses to ignore the oppressive history which her sex is so defined by, and she feels the participants of the suffrage movement

rely on and promote this narrative rather than try to overcome it. Miriam believes that women should transcend the 'masculine illusion' that they 'need to be civilized', though she does not appear to feel the same way about racial forms of Otherness (219). Her demands for Michael's assimilation into English society and her perceptions of the black man's animalistic persona reveal that the racial Other, in contrast to man's Other, woman, still needs to be civilized, or in Michael's case, at least assimilated. While Miriam participates in a moment of feminist empowerment, her epiphany about the ideology of repression occurs at the expense of the racial Other as she oppresses both Michael and the black man. Crucially, though, once the black man disappears from Miriam's consciousness, she does not relax in the café as Michael's Jewishness returns to the forefront of their discussion about the differences in how Judaism and Christianity perceive women's roles and assimilation. This transitory nature of Michael's racial Otherness, which returns immediately upon the black man's exodus from her thoughts, confirms Garrity's observation that, for Miriam, 'the Jew is not a stable category', and her relationship with Michael will be just as volatile as his changing persona (110).

Miriam attempts to forget women's repressive history in the teashop, but she is unable to fully escape the consequences of patriarchal oppression on the streets of London. From the moment she brings a suitor into her life like Michael, he consistently 'invad[es]' her space, and her previously solo walks are now almost always accompanied (P3 107). It is only after she rejects Michael's proposal that she once again resumes her solitary night jaunts and regains her independent London existence. Throughout *Pilgrimage*, Miriam is often presented taking her London strolls in the evening, a consequence of her work during the daytime hours and her preference for the solitude and 'magic of the evening' when all the 'thoughts that gathered in her mind' during the workday are released and flood her aesthetic consciousness (236). It is during one of these evening walks that Miriam faces her suppressed history of patriarchal oppression when she comes in contact with an old woman bending over a gutter:

Lamplight fell upon the sheeny slopes of her shawl and tattered skirt. Familiar. Forgotten. The last, hidden truth of London, spoiling the night. She quickened her steps, gazing. Underneath the forward-falling crushed old bonnet shone the lower half of a bare scalp... reddish... studded with dull, wartlike knobs. The head turned stealthily as she passed and met the expected sidelong glance; naked recognition leering from the awful face above the outstretched bare arm. It was herself, set in her path and waiting through all the years. Her beloved hated secret self, known to this old woman (288-9).

While Parsons examines how Richardson reinterprets Poe's 'man in the crowd' moment with this 'mystical encounter of [Miriam's] double', the scene also functions as a counterpart to the teashop incident ("The *"Passante"*" 165). The description of the old woman's 'awful face' and features are reminiscent of Miriam's impressions of the black man's 'awful presence' and, perhaps, it is in this scene that Miriam's identification with her own history of Otherness occurs. Her meeting with the *unheimlich*, for whether the woman is physically present or is a projection of Miriam's consciousness is left ambiguous in the narrative, forces her to face what she has been 'hiding' in the 'depths of her being' once she acknowledges this grotesque vision of female subjugation (*P3* 289). It is with this dehumanised image that Miriam finally confronts the 'precariousness of woman's position in the city' and British society in general (Parsons, "The *"Passante"*" 165). Women need civilisation otherwise they transform into some semblance of this grotesque, alienated and eventually forgotten old woman. Acting as a parallel to Miriam's first encounter with West End people and their mysterious secret selves, Piccadilly Circus opens up to Miriam's consciousness and, '[a]cross its broken lights moved the forms of people, confidently' (*P3* 289). In contrast to *Honeycomb*, Miriam does not embrace the self-assured movement of the crowd and she realises that 'she must go on, uselessly, unrevealed; bearing a semblance that was nothing but a screen set up, hiding what she was in the depths of

her being' (289). The confrontation with the grotesque projection eventually leads to Miriam's acceptance of her own Otherness as a woman in a male-dominated society.

Besides encountering different cultures, religions, political opinions and racial forms of Otherness in the urban environment, Miriam also confronts masculinist literary traditions and the male artist. In *The Trap*, Miriam realises her new apartment in Bloomsbury is directly opposite William Butler Yeats's own abode and, with this realisation, she recounts her first meeting with the Irish poet to her roommate. The narrated encounter in the novel-chapter is significantly shorter than Richardson's later published essay about her own autobiographical meeting with the poet, 'Yeats in Bloomsbury' (1939). I wish to examine how this particular episode in both *Pilgrimage* and the essay illustrate Miriam's, and subsequently Richardson's, transcendence of the woman artist's oppressed history in both the urban scene and metaphorically within the canon. Past examinations of this scene often identify Miriam with the ideology of Baudelaire's *flâneur/flâneuse* wherein Miriam embraces yet another figure associated with *flânerie*—*une passante* (a passer-by) (Parsons, "The "Passante" 166). The figure of the *passante* appears in Baudelaire's poem '*A une passante*' which was published in his 1857 collection, *Les Fleurs du Mal*. In the poem, the narrator notices a beautiful woman walking by and as he strains to 'catch her eye—to drink in avidly / Its captivating tenderness, bitter-sweet pleasures', she looks up and meets the *flâneur*'s gaze (101). Sometimes identified as a prostitute, for only that type of woman would dare meet the male gaze in nineteenth-century Paris, *une passante* is now mostly associated with the woman artist and is considered another female counterpart to the male *flâneur*. Instead of aligning Yeats with the *flâneur* and Miriam with the *passante*, I wish to read their encounter rather as a meeting of artists.

In 'Yeats in Bloomsbury', Richardson offers more detail about the scenario and background of their meeting, describing Bloomsbury as an 'oasis to the north' that offers its inhabitants the 'quietest squares' and 'remotest quarters of the parks' in which to wander (60).

Both Richardson and her artist-protagonist lived in the surrounding parts of Edwardian Bloomsbury, ‘London’s more or less staid equivalent for the Latin Quarter’ of Paris (60). With the neighbourhood now associated with Woolf and other members of the Bloomsbury avant-garde, Richardson makes a point of juxtaposing her very different experience. By day Bloomsbury was ‘the Mecca of the aesthetes’ associated with the wanderings of Woolf, Lytton Strachey and Vanessa Bell whereas, by evening, ‘central London’s exhausted prisoners’, those members of the work force, commanded the streets in the hope of escaping to an urban tranquillity found in the quiet Bloomsbury squares (60). It is often on these lonely walks in the evening that Richardson would commune with her urban environment as ‘[t]he giant trees mingled their breath with [hers], their being with [her] own’ (63). It was on one such occasion that Richardson’s solitary walk was disrupted by the ‘powerfully world-recalling’ figure of Yeats, and they confronted each other under a ‘pool of brilliant light’ of London’s streetlights:

It was *my* chosen path. It was *his*. We should pass each other in an equality of annoyance? Silently exchanging congratulations, connoisseurs, catching each other adoring the same masterpiece? Simultaneously we reached the respective margins of our pool, and paused. [...] I felt that I ought if possible to vanish into the earth, I was nevertheless held in my place. Partly, no doubt, for lack of practice in skipping into the gutter to make way for men; even for kings amongst men. But chiefly I was held by the sudden enhancement of everything about me in the presence of this articulate lover of the kind of beauty that I most deeply loved (63-4).

In this scene Richardson is identifying Yeats as more than a ‘fellow-lover of nocturnal solitude’, for she instead recognises him as a fellow artist (63). Much like Miriam’s moments of being in *Pilgrimage*, this scene plays heavily on the sources of light—mainly the moon and the street lamps—as they help Richardson recognise her own artistic being. In opposition to the heightened ‘urban encounters’ of *flanerie*, Richardson is caught up in the atmosphere of the

urban environment rather than in phantasmagoric images (Parsons, "The *Passante*" 166). Crucially, it is her gaze which falls upon Yeats's figure and takes command of the encounter. In an interesting role-reversal it is up to him to take on the usually feminine role of the *passante* and meet her penetrating gaze: 'And now those unconscious eyes within whose depths I seemed to see a man aged and astray in sorrow, awoke to awareness of the present, to recognition of the nature of obstruction in his path and, to my unspeakable joy, to something approaching a glimmer of recognition, acknowledgement of a fellow-worshipper' (64). Much like the multiple allusions of their 'chosen paths', Yeats is not only meeting the gaze of a fellow street walker, but of an artist and it is he, despite her memory's desire to place the figures in permanent confrontation with each other, who steps 'into the adjacent gutter' to let her pass (64). Richardson's emphasis on his respect and recognition, even if she is female, makes it possible for one to argue this is as much a confrontation of artists as it is equals.

In contrast to the essay, which sets the tone of the mystical moonlight encounter, the scene as it appears in *The Trap* contains little description of their standoff:

'[W]e both stood quite still, staring into each other's eyes with thoughts far away, each taking in only the fact of an obstruction. Then I realized it was Yeats. I can't remember how we got past each other. One of us must presently have plunged into the gutter. But, looking back, it seems as if we walked through each other' (P3 438-9).

I agree with Parsons' contention that the encounter between Miriam/Richardson and Yeats is the silent battle of the woman artist with a particular powerful counterpart who embodies the entire history of the 'masculine literary tradition' of the canon which obstructs women's inclusion, though Parsons does not examine the discrepancies between Richardson's essay and Miriam's narrated existence in *Pilgrimage* ('The *Passante*' 167). Richardson does not repeat the same conclusion in her *Künstlerroman* as she makes Miriam and Yeats figuratively walk through each other. In contrast to the biographical essay, the atmosphere of the scene in *The Trap*

functions as if it were a ghostly encounter or street haunting. Once again, this is a consequence of Miriam's artistic consciousness taking creative license with her meeting with Yeats and she rewrites the reality of her experience and uses it as a platform for her art. Moreover, this abstract and unrealistic representation of events imposes a slight stalemate to the scene and denies the woman artist's demand for recognition from her male counterpart in the same way as in 'Yeats of Bloomsbury'. The detailed description of respect and acknowledgement from the male artist is not narrated in the novel-chapter, and they meet the other's eye equally without either of them commanding the gaze.

Richardson does not have Yeats completely acknowledge Miriam's artistic, urban persona because there are more pressing demands which obstruct her artistry, such as her resistance to fulfilling the courtship plot with marriage and motherhood. Despite being a major figurehead of the artistic milieu in London, Yeats is a distant stranger with no direct influence on Miriam's being, but the way in which her suitors, Michael Shatov and Hypo Wilson, attempt to repress her artistic expression does impact Miriam in a much more personal way. Michael's religious views about women's roles fuel his refusal to recognise Miriam as anything other than a 'womanly woman' who is expected to fulfil her domestic duties as a wife and mother and, with Hypo, his attempts at commodifying Miriam's creativity and artistic production with children thwarts the natural expansion of her innate aesthetic being (*P4* 139). Hypo thinks he is acting as her mentor, but he is instead trying to force Miriam to participate in yet another form of becoming as his female protégé—casting aside her own ideas surrounding female creativity—and embracing his own masculinist interpretations. While her meeting with Yeats is one successful encounter with the male artist, it is the respect from Hypo which Miriam demands, and it will be his step into the gutter which ultimately allows the woman artist to transcend the oppressive constraints set out by her male counterpart.

Marriage, Motherhood and the Woman Artist

Much like Woolf's early interpretation of the *Künstlerroman*, Richardson's presentation of Miriam's emotional and physical relationships with both men and women throughout *Pilgrimage* subverts the traditional courtship plot of the Victorian period which reinforced the subjugation of women in the domestic sphere. While Woolf's artist-heroine fears the loss of her artistic autonomy with her approaching marriage, Miriam's apprehension is identified more with the concept of *becoming* a wife and mother and how fulfilling these roles would transform her artistic expression. Richardson's opus explores how marriage and, especially motherhood, affect women's artistic production, and there has been little discussion in *Pilgrimage* studies regarding these contextual elements of the series. The significant affairs Miriam has throughout the thirteen volumes involve the scholar and Russian Jew, Michael Shatov, the English writer and socialist based on H. G. Wells, Hypo Wilson, and her lesbian liaison with a younger woman, Amabel. I wish to examine how Miriam's resistance to becoming a wife and mother in her heterosexual relationships offers new interpretations of her continuous fight to maintain her artistic, autonomous being.⁴⁰ Furthermore I wish to examine why Richardson uses the figures of a Jew and a married man, both impossible relationships for Miriam to fully commit to, in her subversion of the traditional marriage plot. Did Richardson present these two possibilities in order to portray a more extreme process of becoming, or was it possibly a way to make Miriam's rejection more acceptable at a time when women were still expected to fulfil these roles? Both Michael's and Hypo's involvement in her artistry is different. Michael

⁴⁰ I am not arguing that lesbian partners could not adopt either of these roles in the early twentieth century, but Richardson does not place the same demands on Miriam participating in some form of *becoming* with her homosexual affairs as she does with her heterosexual ones. For a comprehensive reading of Miriam's lesbian relationships with Amabel and Jean see Joanne Winning's *The Pilgrimage of Dorothy Richardson* (2000) which examines the subtexts of lesbian sexuality located throughout the series. Winning's monograph examines how sexual 'difference' influences the life 'and creative output' of Richardson's *Pilgrimage* (5). Jane Garrity's chapter "'Neither English nor civilized": Dorothy Richardson's spectatrix and the feminine crusade for global intervention' in *Step-daughters of England: British women modernists and the national imaginary* (2003) offers a reading of how Miriam's 'homoerotic gaze' registers the London environment and acts as 'a source of female moral superiority' in *Pilgrimage* (115).

embodies the conservative, traditionalist ideals wishing to keep women's participation in the arts to a minimum and within the confines of the domestic sphere. Hypo, in contrast, exemplifies the ideals of the commodified Victorian and Edwardian writer who is more concerned with materiality and profit rather than aesthetics and artistic integrity, and he advocates Miriam's artistic development along similar lines of male becoming. Michael and Hypo see Miriam as a woman defined by becoming something, a wife or mother, rather than just being herself—an artist and independent woman—and both relationships require a major change in Miriam's life which refuses to incorporate any aspect of her artistic being. Miriam reacts negatively to their views about women's artistic endeavours, and her struggle between marriage, motherhood and her artistic being recurs continuously throughout *Deadlock*, *The Trap*, *Dawn's Left Hand*, *Clear Horizon* and *March Moonlight*. It is these volumes of the series which will form the basis of my examination of Miriam's subversion of these masculine ideologies.

Her first serious relationship, if one were to read *Pilgrimage* in its original published order, involves Michael Shatov. The majority of criticism which examines Richardson's representation of the relationship between the Russian Jew and the English gentile focuses on Miriam's, and subsequently Richardson's, anti-Semitism and presentation of Michael's physicality as effeminate, Christian supersessionism, ideologies about nation and racial continuity, intermarriage, and Miriam's complicated relationship with, and eventual rejection of, Jewish Otherness.⁴¹ Moreover, because *Pilgrimage* studies typically situates Miriam's artistic fulfillment at the end of *March Moonlight*, few examine Michael's contradictory influence on, and eventual condemnation of, Miriam's art and her desired professional outlets throughout the other volumes of the series. She first meets Michael in the opening pages of the fifth

⁴¹ See Maren Tova Linett, *Modernism, Feminism, and Jewishness* (2007) and "'The Wrong Material': Gender and Jewishness in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*" (1999); Deborah L. Parsons's chapter 'The New Woman and the Wandering Jew' in *Streetwalking* (2000); Jean Radford, 'The Woman and the Jew: Sex and Modernity' (1998); and Jacqueline Rose, 'Dorothy Richardson and the Jew' (1997).

novel-chapter, *Deadlock*, when he moves into Mrs. Bailey's boarding house. With his arrival, Miriam once again resumes her old role as an English teacher and meets with him on a regular basis to improve his language skills in the hopes of easing his transition into English society. She is attracted to both Michael's extensive knowledge of philosophy and literature and his physical beauty though, as Maren Linett affirms, beneath 'Shatov's feminine beauty and sweetness' lays a 'relentless masculinity' that reveals itself in many of their discussions and debates ("The Wrong Material" 194). Their conversations often revolve around such issues as feminism, socialism and Michael's Judaism, and these dialogues are familiar critical terrain in *Pilgrimage* studies. I wish to examine how their arguments about literature, and women's participation in the publishing sphere as journalists or novelists disturbs Miriam's artistic endeavours, for Michael's overbearing views about women's roles in the public sphere attempt to suppress Miriam's creative expression.

In *Deadlock* Miriam contemplates taking on additional work outside the Wimpole Street dental office, and offers to translate a French paper written by one of her fellow boarders, Mr. Lahitte. Michael suggests that she should instead undertake 'a French translation of a Russian book revealing marvelously the interior, the self-life, of a doctor' which, once produced, 'would be a revelation to English readers and she should translate it', of course, 'in collaboration with him' (P3 118-19). Miriam considers the suggestion and realizes its life-changing potential as it 'would set her standing within the foreign world' as a public, literary figure (P3 119). Moreover, with the recent appearance of *Anna Karenina's* first English translation, Miriam's work would coincide with the twentieth century's growing interest in Russian literature, and her translations would surely be well-timed in the literary marketplace. While the dual collaboration appeals to Michael, he realises that that it would be better for Miriam to start with the shorter works of another Russian writer, Leonid Andreyeff, before tackling the much larger and somewhat scandalous tome he originally recommended. Michael

encourages her new endeavour, but his suggestion involves her working with a language she is unfamiliar with, for she is only fluent in French and German. Consequently, the translation process would require her to work alongside Michael and under the male gaze. With the Andreyeff text, Miriam is able to work from a German translation of the original which gives her more control over the project, though Michael's extensive knowledge of the original, and his native understanding of Russian culture and customs, still invades Miriam's writing.

Before she begins work on the Andreyeff stories, she fulfils her promise to Lahitte. It is during this endeavour that the reader finally encounters Miriam writing something other than her many personal letters:

The sound of the pen shattered the silence like sudden speech. She listened entranced. The little strange sound was the living voice of the brooding presence. She copied the phrases in a shape that set them like a poem in the middle of the page, with even spaces between a wide uniform margin; not quite in the middle; the lower margin was wider than the upper; the poem wanted another line. She turned to the manuscript listening intently to the voice of Mr Lahitte pouring forth his sentences, and with a joyous rush penetrated the secret of its style (133).

Miriam's identification of the 'living voice' and the author's 'presence' in the above passage reveals the written transcription of Lahitte's being in the lecture and, until now, she has always struggled with accepting an author's style and meaning without wanting to 'change him and break up his shape' into something entirely her own (131). Yet, the Translation's repetitive process of revision, while still maintaining 'an echo' of the author's original style and thematic content, forces Miriam to incorporate the author's style and being with her own (Benjamin 258). Therefore, it is through translation that Miriam first transcends the divide which separates the woman artist from her male counterpart and subsequently creates an androgynous voice within the text. She further transforms his lecture on Spanish literature into

a poem and, as a result, the previously ordinary lecture has now evolved into something more aesthetically complex. Her consciousness registers the translation process not as a process of recording but, instead, as a 'coming together at the right moment, part of a *reality*' which, like her impressions of the urban environment, she can transform within her artistic consciousness and express in entirely new and creative ways (P3 133). While Michael considers this project more of an exercise in rote learning to keep Miriam busy, she sees her translation as an act of artistic expression.

Upon first reading the Andreyeff stories Miriam does not think them suitable for an English audience as his represented 'tragedy' will only incite readers to label the author 'a morbid foreigner' rather than attempt to understand his meaning (P3 140), and Richardson encountered such cultural obstacles when she translated Josef Kastein's *Jews in Germany* (1934). In her 'Translator's Foreword', Richardson admits bridging the gap between the Jewish problem with the 'non-Jewish reader' was a major obstacle for her throughout the translation process, for she maintains how the translator interprets the content and tone of the original work is just as important as the language (xix). Miriam enjoys reading the Andreyeff stories in German but, when she mentions her reservations about the possibility of an English translation, Michael ignores her uncertainties about the work: 'No matter; this work will be good for you' (P3 140). Michael's condescending comment implies that the time spent on translation is only a hobby for Miriam and he is not necessarily promoting the work as beneficial to her well-being. He does not support her decision to work and he considers the Andreyeff translations merely a better use of her time. Miriam is more than aware that she is both trapped and freed by her position as a secretary. Despite giving her a salary and a means to an independent London life, her employment prevents her from really investigating the potential of her artistic expression and being as a writer. In contrast to Michael, she recognises that taking on additional translations will not affect her livelihood as a secretary, though it will

allow her to experiment with writing and offer her a better understanding about her artistic consciousness and the creative process. In spite of her earlier reservations, Miriam does translate the Andreyeff stories and she admits '[i]t was such a glad adventure' as her consciousness

plung[es] thus roughshod from language to language, the strange lights shed in turn upon each, the revelation of mutually enclosed unexpandable meanings, insoluble antagonisms of thought and experience, flowing upon the surface of a stream; where both were one; to see through the shapeless mass the approaching miracle of shape and meaning (142).

Much like Miriam's evoked contemplated reality from her London wanderings, her consciousness comes alive when working on the translation, and Richardson embraces the ephemeral fluidity of the stream-of-consciousness metaphor in her presentation of Miriam's serpentine writing. *Pilgrimage*, once again, participates in a metafictional presentation of the writing process as Miriam's 'blunt stump of pencil' works its way down the page and she reveals the trials and tribulations of translating (142). She does not deny that her creative process is 'teased by problems' and 'the list of discarded attempts' only seems to increase (142). Nevertheless, amongst the pages of garbled 'scribbling', a 'shining fragment' eventually emerges 'whose safe placement within the text made the pages, gathered up in an energy flowing forward transformingly through the interval, towards the next opportunity of attack' (142-3). Richardson does not present her artist-heroine's creative process as a divine moment of inspiration, and she reveals the real hardships writers encounter when producing their craft.

It is not revealed in the text how closely Miriam translates the short stories from the original. Is the reader meant to think that she preserves the 'enclosed unexpandable' meanings of the Russian tragedy, or that she freely adapts Andreyeff's undertones and subtexts for her English audience in her own reinterpretation of his 'shape and meaning'? (142). In his essay,

‘The Task of the Translator’ (1923 [1921]), Walter Benjamin argues ‘a translation, instead of imitating the sense of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original’s way of meaning’ with the translator’s own interpretation, ‘thus making the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel’ (260). Benjamin’s fragmented picture of translations mirrors Richardson’s own ideas about the mosaic-like qualities of sequence novels and Miriam’s interpretation of her expansive, transformative being. The many layers involved in translation, and the relationship between languages, allows Miriam artistic autonomy to alter what she finds necessary for her audience and, although she is not the original creator of the work, the ‘English dress’ of her translation reveals an aspect of ‘herself’ which contains ‘her expression as a portrait would have’ and is subsequently transformed into a ‘diary’ that captures her artistic being and ‘the history of her labour’ at the present moment (*P3* 143). Benjamin maintains that translation ‘marks the stage of continued life’—an ‘afterlife’ of the original—and is the only form of writing ‘charged with the special mission of watching over the maturing process of the original language and the birth pangs of its own’ (256). Therefore, much like Miriam’s expansive notions of the many levels of one’s being, which constantly participate in a process of renewal, translation also avoids fulfilling the traditional notions of Platonic becoming. Her pride in her first translation and excitement at finally ‘having something written to show [Hypo]’ reasserts the idea that Miriam’s artistry is woven in with Andreyeff’s own (145). While Benjamin maintains that one cannot stray too far from the original, for translations of translations ‘prove to be untranslatable’ because the ‘looseness which meaning attaches to them’ eventually deteriorates, Miriam’s contact with someone knowledgeable of the original Russian prevents this sense of disconnection between texts (262). Nevertheless, with her first plunge into writing, Michael’s desired role as collaborator has been considerably diminished from his original intention, and he is placed in the backdrop of production as a passive, ‘silenced

listener' (P3 141). It is only when Miriam takes the translation to Hypo, the most successful writer she knows, and Michael's rival, that he attempts to reassert his control over the entire project.

Despite Miriam's enthusiasm for the translations, Hypo is less than impressed with them as he informs her that Andreyeff's overall 'sentiment was gross' and 'feeble in construction' (145). His opinion contrasts significantly with Michael's earlier praise of the work, and Hypo's reaction perhaps confirms Miriam's original reservations about an English translation of the Russian author. It is Hypo's condescending comment that Miriam could 'make from two to three hundred a year at this sort of thing', averaging about 'seven or eight guineas' per story, which truly implicates what he finds to be the work's largest fault—its lack of monetary gain for Miriam (146-7). Whether he is correct in his estimate of the profitable return is inconsequential to her as she is just beginning to delve into the publishing world, and her interest in the entire process is located in the writing rather than the royalties. She does not plan on submitting her draft translation of Andreyeff for publication, and her reason for showing Hypo her translation is a consequence of her desire to participate in an innovative discussion on translation and art. Hypo cannot help focusing on the financial returns of her work and, when she informs Michael of Hypo's verdict that the publishing houses do not pay well for good translations, he becomes outraged and begins a diatribe against the 'vulgarization of literature' in England: 'It is indeed remarkable to the foreigner the way in this country the profession of letters has become a speculation. Never before I came here did I meet this idea of writing for a living, in this naïve widespread form' (147).⁴² His final plea to Miriam, '*don't* take up... a journalistic *career* on the strength of being able to write', immediately ends the conversation (147).

⁴² Richardson witnessed the impoverished life of a translator through her friendship with Samuel (Samuil) Solomonovich Koteliansky (affectionately called Kot) who worked with the Woolfs and the Hogarth Press. Despite producing more than thirty Russian translations into English, he struggled to maintain a successful living throughout his lifetime. Moreover, when the interest in Russian literature began to wane, Kot struggled to make a living as a translator and lived the remainder of his life in poverty (Rogachevskii 368; 376).

Michael's denunciation of the past century's commodification of art is provocative in that Richardson presents the English author as the one more concerned with monetary gains rather than employing the notorious stereotype of the 'wealth-seeking Jew' who 'control[s] the publishing houses and press' (Linett, *Modernism* 32). Linett argues that women authors of the modernist period often adapted this anti-Semitic cliché and reinterpreted the figure of the Jew as a vehicle to voice the 'economic and social critiques of the artistic milieu' wherein they help the woman writer 'express [her] shame at being able to make money from writing' (35, 36). While Linett includes Woolf, Jean Rhys and Sylvia Townsend Warner as such authors who employ this theme in their publications, Richardson's presentation of Michael Shatov is noticeably absent from the list and, once again, confirms how his affect on Miriam's artistic expression is often overlooked. His sentiments about the English novelist's capitalist agenda are representative of the modernist critique of the 'increasing consumerism and mass production' of literature, and Richardson's shame at being unable to 'strip each statement of its money motive, of its power motive, of its advertisement motive, of its publicity motive, of its vanity motive', or any other motive besides its aesthetic one (Morris 16; *TG* 222). Instead of using the Jewish character to present the woman artist's wish to participate in the publishing sphere, Richardson allows her artist-heroine to express this specifically female desire without male mediation and, although her mental response to Michael's denunciation appears only in her narrated thoughts rather than recorded dialogue, her internal monologue informs the reader that she is more interested in being one of those writers who 'had ideas and style' rather than one who only cared for profitable gain (*P3* 147). In spite of this, Michael does not encourage women's participation in the public sphere as he begs Miriam to not debase herself with a '*career*' in writing.

Michael embraces the masculinist belief that women cannot overcome their amateur status and, in contrast to other female authors of the period, Richardson does not align the Jew

completely with the plight of the woman artist as outsider as Michael's critique only further enhances the woman artist's association with Otherness. His wish that she only pursue writing as a hobby 'burden[s]' Miriam 'with a hesitating sense of guilt' (P3 148). It is a consequence of her internalization of Michael's argument that translation is an acceptable form for women amateurs that Miriam suddenly finds the form no longer satisfying. She wants to transcend the barriers which prevent women's participation in artistry within the public realm and, while she does not necessarily want to be published or considered successful, she wants to participate in the process of 'sharing, even during their dreadful beginnings, in the social distinctions and privileges of "writers"' (148). Michael's request that Miriam not participate in the same creative process as her male counterparts is what defines her as an outsider, and if Miriam marries Michael she would have to 'forgo her a love of space, give up vistas of freedom, and one's flair for independence' for the confines of the familial home and hearth (Labovitz 49).

The conversation effectively ends with Michael's outburst and entreaty to Miriam, and the two move onto an even more delicate topic of discussion—their ongoing debate between the individual and the race. Miriam believes the 'individual, with a consciousness; or soul, whatever you like to call it' is able to transcend the demands and realities of the race whose main purpose, according to Miriam, is to 'produce a few big individualities' (P3 150). In contrast, Michael maintains the race continues to survive whereas "[i]ndividuals perish' (150). Miriam attempts to contest this, but he argues he has 'the most complete evidence that the race survives'—procreation (150). Implied, but not directly stated, this emphasis on procreation alludes to the possibility that Michael expects Miriam eventually to surrender her ideals about the individual, and her being, for the greater good and continuation of the nation by becoming a wife and mother. With Michael's preference for the race over the individual, his early allusion to procreation and motherhood and his previous entreaty to keep Miriam from turning her private writing into a profession, she finally begins to see the majority of his 'points

of view' centre on masculine 'possession' which has the potential to jeopardise her 'happiness' found in writing (151). This further unravels when the two argue about Michael's belittling feminism and women's roles in the previously discussed teashop scene in *Deadlock*. Linnett rightfully argues that Michael's devotion to the race in this scene is located in the idea of 'procreation as a [woman's] solemn duty' and, it is because of this, that women are 'sacred' in Judaism (*Modernism* 120). Because Michael's Jewishness is such a dominant aspect of his personality, his views cannot be separated from his religion and, consequently, he appropriates the Jewish belief that women must embrace the domesticated roles of 'wife, mother, pillar of the family and guarantor of the purity of its sexual and dietary regime' over other potential roles, such as a writer (Benbassa and Attias 19). Miriam chastises Michael one final time over his misogynistic expectation of women's roles: 'If you define life for women, as husbands and children, it means that you have no consciousness at all where women are concerned' (P3 222). Michael's response echoes his earlier discussion about undeniable proof of procreation as he maintains '[t]here is little evidence of women themselves. The majority find their whole life in these things' (222). Michael ultimately defines women by what they eventually become rather than who they are, and Miriam's rejection of Michael as a suitor originates from both her anti-Semitism and inability to participate in his ideology behind *becoming* a Jewess. Furthermore, her independence appears to be the only way she can protect her artistic being.

In Josef Kastein's publication, *Jews in Germany* (1934), he maintains the assimilated Jew 'break[s] up his consciousness' during the process of assimilation as he renounces his religious and cultural being to become accepted in a society that initially rejected his Otherness (102). While Kastein only discusses the Jew's process of assimilation, Richardson presents the same idea in her protagonist's uncertainty about her own assimilation and pressure to fulfil the process of becoming a Jewess. As an English woman, Miriam's 'foreignness has to be neutralized' if she were to marry Michael, and it is her Otherness which 'must yield' rather than

his (Benbassa and Attias 70). If Miriam accepts Michael's proposal, and subsequently his more visible racial Otherness, not only is she expected to relinquish her national and Christian identity but her artistic one as well. Because the argument between racial destiny and procreation follows their disagreement about the role of women writers, her rejection is connected with both her ideas about women's creative endeavours and her beliefs about racial Otherness. Miriam's assimilation would completely reconfigure her entire understanding about herself and her being as she fulfils this expected act of becoming. This new 'crisis of marriage' seen in twentieth-century *Bildungs-* and *Künstlerromane* allows for the continuation of the protagonist's development without succumbing to the marriage pact or exile from society (Moretti 23).

Following *Deadlock* Hypo takes over as the primary love interest throughout most of the remaining novel-chapters—though Michael remains present throughout the narrative. Much like her affinity with Michael, Hypo's intelligence greatly appeals to Miriam and they often engage in similar discussions regarding recent ideas in feminism, women's art, marriage and children, but Hypo's reactions differ greatly from Michael's in regard to Miriam's artistic aspirations. In one of their early conversations about the public's prejudiced perceptions of male and female artists, Miriam maintains that female artists are pitied for having to debase themselves by making a living and, consequently, their art is seen as some form of '*self-sacrifice*' (P3 258). In contrast, men are revered and their aesthetic production is subsequently classified as '*self-realization*', and Miriam considers this dissimilarity of aesthetic appreciation to be debilitating to female artists (258). The association of women's art with self-sacrifice ultimately refers back to their refusal to participate in the traditional roles of domestic becoming and, as a result, women's creative expression is considered somewhat contaminated and defective because of their alienation from the domestic sphere. Hypo suggests there is a way around this with his belief that women's narrative 'material is children' and, without them, they fail as

authors (260). Hypo's argument reinforces Richardson's own belief that when the woman artist enters 'the world of art' she is 'immediately surrounded by masculine traditions' which are 'based on assumptions that are largely unconscious and whose power of suggestion is unlimited' ('Women in the Arts' 100). It is the twentieth-century woman artist who challenges these misconceptions about women's artistic capability outside these stereotypes of appropriate forms of feminine artistry.

Hypo's definition of Miriam's artistry is dependent upon her participation in becoming a wife and mother. He reasserts this point repeatedly throughout *Pilgrimage* as he seduces her: '*Middles. Criticism*, which you'd do as other women do fancy-work. *Infant. NOVEL*' (P4 240). His argument that Miriam needs 'a *green solitude*' and '[a]n *infant*' in order to write a book, biologically encodes her art and suggests she is only capable of creating a narrative which mirrors her own feminine experiences of courtship, marriage and motherhood (240). Moreover, he does not consider her future success in the publishing sphere to be appreciated by both sexes. By drawing her material from children and domesticity, Miriam's novels will appeal mostly to women. Nevertheless, because Miriam lacks the proper material for her novels under these patriarchal restrictions, Hypo only considers her an artist-in-waiting and, thus, classifies her artistry as a product of her eventual becoming. His advice requires the commodification of her unborn children in order to create her art, and his perception of women's creative endeavours is ultimately reliant upon their sexual subjection by men.

In addition to his repeated reference to children, Hypo additionally bases Miriam's artistry on the production of a novel, thus he excludes other forms of artistic expression from contributing to Miriam's artistic being. The successful combination of Miriam's artistic becoming is dependent upon both concepts, and it is only after her encounter with Yeats in *The Trap* that Miriam decides she will not participate in Hypo's interpretation of female artistry as she consciously declares: 'I must create my life. Life is creation. Self and circumstance the

raw material. But so many lives I can't create. And in going off to create my own I must leave behind uncreated lives' (P3 508). Following her silent standoff with the Irish poet, Miriam realises she does not need to embrace the Victorian requirements of becoming to produce worthy art. Her art will be expansive and capture her existing reality and enter into a life of its own which avoids male intervention. Refusing to be circumscribed by specific female circumstances, Miriam desires her artistry to be born from the centre of her own being, like a man's, without having to be subject to a man's oppressive 'insemination' (Felber 91).

Despite Miriam's plans to transcend the 'uncreated lives' of her being, Miriam does become pregnant after consummating her love affair with Hypo in *Dawn's Left Hand*, and the only reference to this pregnancy occurs in *Clear Horizon* when she tells Michael of her situation during a concert. Because Hypo is married to one of Miriam's old school friends, she will have to raise the child on her own without a partner to help her and Michael offers to marry her and raise the child as his own. She is touched by the 'refuge he offered from what indeed might be a temporary embarrassment as well as a triumphant social gesture,' but his proposal remains the same 'permanent prison' as before and she turns him down for the last time (P4 303). Because their conversation about her pregnancy goes unnarrated, and if the reader follows Richardson's request to read out of order, her problem remains vague and this scene superficially functions as yet another rejection of Michael's Otherness. Maren Linnett focus on Miriam's momentary thought about how marrying Michael would require her to perform, 'disguised as [a] Jewess', for the rest of her life and Linnett maintains Miriam's rejection is once again located in her anti-Semitism (303). Her inability to accept his racial Otherness is undoubtedly still an influence on her decision in *Clear Horizon*, though no critic focuses on the possibility that Miriam's rejection is also brought about by her desire to retain control over her situation rather than be rescued from it. For even though Michael agrees to a certain extent that one can 'achieve a certain expansion of the consciousness at certain moments', like

childbirth, he does not believe women can realise this same level of consciousness through the creative process and he would, undoubtedly, suppress Miriam's artistic endeavours if she married him. Following the concert Miriam miscarries Hypo's child and, ironically, it is after this experience that he tells Miriam that she does have 'in [her] hands, material for a novel', though he recommends she write a 'dental novel, a human novel and, as a background, a complete period, a period of unprecedented expansion in all sorts of directions'—a metafictional version of *Pilgrimage* (397). Notably Hypo's recommendations for her unwritten novel do not include the typical feminine plot devices of courtship and children and, consequently, she has transcended the thematic restrictions and assumptions set out by male artists like Hypo with his acceptance of her intrinsic artistic being.

At the end of *March Moonlight* Miriam does not *become* an artist with the production of her novel, instead, she has a better comprehension about her artistry: 'To write is to forsake life. Every time I know this, in advance. Yet whenever something comes that sets the tips of my fingers tingling to record it, I forget the price; eagerly face the strange journey down and down to the centre of being' (P4 609). Miriam struggles with reconciling her contemplated reality and present existence with writing a novel, but she once again embraces the metaphor of writing with a diary. Despite having to separate herself from her continuous state of being to write about the past, this metafictional version of *Pilgrimage* still records her present existence or, in the words of Benjamin, an 'afterlife' of her present being. At the end of *March Moonlight* Miriam discerns that, for her artistic expression, 'one must be alone. Away in the farthest reaches of one's being. As one can richly be, even with others, provided they have no claims. Provided one is neither guest nor host' (657). This newfound understanding of her existing reality establishes that women artists at the turn of the century do not need to fulfil domestic roles in order to succeed in their artistic endeavours. How Miriam filters the urban environment, racial and female Otherness and the ordinary in her artistic consciousness,

translations, middles and eventual novel, redefines traditional notions of women's creativity circumscribed within masculine definitions of becoming.

Rewriting the Victorian Poetess in *Mary Olivier: A Life*

Published in between the fourth and fifth novel-chapters of Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage* (1915-67), it is unsurprising that May Sinclair's own female *Künstlerroman*, *Mary Olivier: A Life* (1919), has often been compared with Richardson's series. Claims have been made that, while Richardson 'was the innovator' of the stream-of-consciousness narrative, Sinclair was 'the interpreter', and critics are often divided as to which presentation of female consciousness is more realistic (Kaplan, "Featureless Freedom" 914). Although as Brian Richardson points out, '[t]he novelty of this distinctive [narrative] effect' during the modernist period allowed for numerous interpretations of female consciousness and, in contrast to *Pilgrimage*, wherein Richardson allows for a multifaceted reading experience, Sinclair delineates a very specific structure for *Mary Olivier: A Life* ('Linearity and its Discontents' 686). Instead of chapters, Sinclair separates the book with chronological sections—'Infancy (1865-1869)', 'Childhood (1869-1875)', 'Adolescence (1876-1879)', 'Maturity (1879-1900)' and 'Middle Age (1900-1910)'—which reasserts the narrative structure of developmental *Bildung* associated with the traditional realist novel of development. Despite using a traditional chronological sequence in her *Künstlerroman*, Sinclair's experimentation with the stream-of-consciousness narrative and second-person perspective, interest in the new psychoanalytic movement and examination of women's education disassociates her *Künstlerroman* from the novels of her predecessors.

As a writer whose *oeuvre* spans the years 1886 to 1931, May Sinclair's place within the modernist canon is often marginalised and ambiguous as her work blurs the boundaries between the late Victorian, Edwardian, and Georgian periods. Much like Virginia Woolf, Sinclair reproduces the figure of the woman artist throughout her fiction: Jane Holland in *The Creators* (1910), Gwendolen Cartaret in *The Three Sisters* (1914) and Mary Olivier in *Mary Olivier: A Life* (1919).

A Life are just a few examples.⁴³ While the above-mentioned portrayals all explore ‘the intense inner life’ of the woman artist (Silvey 163), it is Sinclair’s reimagining of the late-Victorian female poet in *Mary Olivier: A Life* which most thoroughly examines the obstacles facing the artist-heroine in her quest for intellectual freedom, self-definition and artistic autonomy. In returning to this figure, Sinclair’s *Künstlerroman* reintroduces many of the motifs and themes located in the novels and poems of her nineteenth-century female predecessors, such as the angel/monster dichotomy, and Sinclair’s modernist redefinition of the Victorian artist-heroine rewrites the traditional sacrifice of selfhood associated with these texts with Mary’s erotic sublimation into her poetry at the end of the novel.

One striking resonance found in Sinclair’s early writing anticipates Woolf’s renowned psychological ghost—the Victorian ‘Angel in the House’—who haunts the woman artist. In Sinclair’s double essay, ‘Clinical Lectures on Symbolism and Sublimation, I and II’ (1916), she identifies a mental blockade which hinders both men and women’s potential for successful libidinal sublimation.⁴⁴ This deterrent, ‘the Angel of Repression, the psychic Censor,’ prevents sublimation from occurring (‘Clinical’, I 121). Besides indicating that the angel is male, Sinclair’s description of the phantom’s attributes is relatively vague in that it is an inherently ‘innocent’ and ‘unconscious’ being who possesses ‘the decorous moral standards’ of nineteenth-century British society (121). As a ‘psychic Censor’, the angel’s primary objective is to influence both the libido and psyche into regressing into a more repressed psychological state. With her angel’s moniker most likely influenced by Freud’s essay, ‘Repression’ (1915),

⁴³ Sinclair also examined the figure of the woman artist in her non-fiction writing. In her essay, ‘How it Strikes a Mere Novelist’ (1908), she discusses how the underlying ideals of the suffrage movement are at odds with, and affects, the livelihood of the woman artist. Moreover, she looks at the figure of the Victorian artist in her biography on Anne, Charlotte and Emily Brontë in *The Three Brontës* (1912).

⁴⁴ While Sinclair utilises both the residual term ‘man’ and the male third-person pronoun throughout the essay, I believe her wish to better understand ‘the goal of human striving’ and decision to examine ‘man’ as ‘a complex species’ still incorporates women into the discussion about repression and sublimation (‘Clinical’, I 119, 120). ‘Man’ was often used as a synonym for ‘human being’, ‘mankind’, ‘humankind’, ‘the human race’ and ‘species’ well into the twentieth century. Despite not being the most gender-neutral of terms, it ‘include[d] women by implication’ and was frequently used as a descriptor for a person of either sex. (‘man’). Moreover, her repeated reference to Professor Jung’s ‘Miller Phantasies’ (1906)—a published analysis of a young woman who ‘possesses a nervous temperament’—suggests women are included in her discussion (‘Clinical’, I 119).

Sinclair discusses the relationship between repression and sublimation within the parameters of Freudian and Jungian psychoanalytic theory. Of the two terms Freud constantly reworked his theory of sublimation throughout his published writing. For example, in his ‘Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality’ (1905), he attaches a cultural significance to the process and argues that ‘[h]istorians of civilization appear to be at one in assuming that powerful components are acquired for every kind of cultural achievement by this diversion of sexual instinctual forces from sexual aims and their directions to new ones—a process which deserves the name of “sublimation”’ (178). Freud continues this value-based reasoning in ‘Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood’ (1910) and he maintains that ‘the sexual instinct’ is ‘well endowed with a capacity for sublimation’ because it ‘has the power to replace its immediate aim by other aims which may be valued more highly and which are not sexual’ (78). These two essays appear to present a consistent definition of the term, yet Freud forgoes mentioning the cultural import attached to the transformative process in a later essay, ‘On Narcissism: An Introduction’ (1915), where he argues sublimation is concerned solely with ‘object-libido and consists in the instinct’s directing itself towards an aim other than, and remote from, that of sexual satisfaction; in this process the accent falls upon deflection from sexuality’ (94). These examples highlight the intangible nature of Freud’s theory of sublimation, and Sinclair presents her own interpretation of this ‘elusive’ theory in her *Künstlerroman* (D. Kaplan 549).⁴⁵

In ‘Clinical Lectures on Symbolism and Sublimation, I and II’ Sinclair preserves Freud’s underlying belief that the libido escapes the suffocating ‘fate of repression’ through a process of redirection into various outlets beyond the sex instinct and, furthermore, that the process of sublimation ultimately ‘implies an abandonment of sexual aims, a desexualization’ (Freud, ‘Leonardo’ 80; ‘The Ego and the Id’ 30). In her own analysis of the theory, Sinclair

⁴⁵ For further discussion about the ambiguous psychoanalytic definition of sublimation see Ken Gemes, ‘Freud and Nietzsche on Sublimation’ (2009); Donald Kaplan, ‘What is Sublimated in Sublimation’ (1993) and Louis Kaywin, ‘Problems of Sublimation’ (1966).

argues that '[s]ublimation itself is the striving of the Libido towards manifestation in higher and higher forms', though, she maintains 'it is not enough to transfer; you must transform' ('Clinical', I 119; II 143). With her focus on the libido's transformation into 'higher forms' of expression, Sinclair returns to Freud's earlier interest in the cultural worth of the products of sublimation, and in the essay she primarily focuses on a process of sexual redirection towards more creative and artistic forms of production. She contends that these various artistic creations are eventually rated and classified by their '*sublimative value*'—a term she defines as 'the amount of libido actively and voluntarily' transferred as well as 'the extent to which the higher psychic channels are involved' during the transformation ('Clinical', II 143). When sublimation is successful, Sinclair believes the libido is 'diverted into the ways of progress', for example, the psyche participates in a more 'controlled' and guided way of thinking while simultaneously experiencing 'creative action', 'creative feeling' and 'the passion for beauty or for truth or goodness' ('Clinical', I 120). The path towards sublimation is not an easy one as the Angel of Repression blocks the way, and this often results in the libido becoming inhibited and experiencing a psychic regression into an infantile state. Sinclair argues this is usually the case for those who suffer from particular psychoses like hysteria, and those who are unable to transcend this psychological phantom remain in a state of mental paralysis wherein one's libido is trapped in a neurotic, sexually repressed limbo (120). With this entrapment the Angel of Repression fulfils its duty as a 'psychic Censor' by preventing men and women's libidos from overcoming their psychological and sexual repression and achieving sublimation. Sinclair believes the 'freedom of the Self' only occurs after sublimation, for one's libido is 'readapted to the higher purposes of the psyche' and 'reality', and the artistic process finally begins once 'the creative imagination' and 'dream phantasy [*sic*] proper' are transformed into various forms of artistic expression ('Clinical', II 144; I 122). Even though she does not explicitly state that one must kill the angel to achieve this higher mental state, her comments about the transformative

process being ‘the only effectual form of self-assertion’ implies such an act must occur (‘Clinical’, II 142). She believes that, once sublimation is achieved, one has the potential to produce ‘infinite manifestations, of which the sex impulse is only one’, and Sinclair often deals specifically with women’s transformative experiences of libidinal sublimation into various forms of art in her fiction (144).

Despite her inclusion of both men and women in her essay, Sinclair’s utilisation of the angel metaphor, the ‘aesthetic ideal’ of nineteenth-century women, suggests their confrontation with psychological and sexual repression perhaps occurs more frequently than with men and, consequently, their journey towards sublimation is often a more arduous one (Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman* 17). As a paragon of virtue, the angel metaphor reflects the Victorian principles of femininity which dictate that women embody particular attributes, such as innocence, chastity and ignorance. This superficially appears to be at odds with the sex Sinclair assigns to the Angel of Repression. Nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century ideas about female sexuality were defined by ‘male fantasies of female purity’ and, as the Censor who enforces these beliefs and suppresses the erotic drive, the angel needs to be representative of the patriarchal ideologies of the period which is why Sinclair identifies the phantom as a man (Stiriz and Schiller 1133). Perpetuating the belief that ‘the sexual life of an adult woman is a “dark continent” for psychology’ and should remain hidden and unexplored, the Angel of Repression reinforces the very idea that female sexuality was ‘an aberration’ of Otherness which deviated from the traditional feminine ideals of the period (Freud, *Question of Lay Analysis* 38; Jordan 442).

Sinclair’s discussion of women’s libidos, erotic drives, fantasies and desires was fairly radical for the period, and the argument that women are, in fact, sexual beings draws attention to what Dora Russell believes is one of society’s ‘[s]trongest of all the taboos’ (14). Russell maintains that men appreciate two qualities in women—‘ignorance and beauty’—and it has

always been a man's duty to use marriage and sex to transform a virginal, naïve bride 'into a gentle and submissive matron' who embodies the Victorian ideals of feminine domesticity (13). What is underpinned in this belief is that, for women, the purpose of sex does not take into account their own pleasure and capacity for sexual feelings, but rather it functions solely as a means to continue the British race and Empire. More than aware of this argument, Sinclair maintains nineteenth-century women were forced to participate in a relationship of 'sex-servility' with their husbands, and this mechanical experience prevented them from recognising the potentials of their own sexuality and sublimating their libidos into higher forms of art ('Defence of Men' 562). Sinclair wishes to break this oppressive cycle of sex-servility as she explores the 'dark continent' of female sexuality in her novels, and in *Mary Olivier: A Life* Sinclair's artist-heroine finally challenges the ideology of Victorian femininity and the Angel of Repression in her pursuit of artistic autonomy.

Woolf's own 'angel' appears fifteen years later in her posthumously published essay, 'Professions for Women' [*n.d.*], and she presents a similar psychological obstacle, though, it is one that specifically targets women's creative endeavours.⁴⁶ In contrast to Sinclair's male angel, Woolf's metaphor is a woman who is presented as a mother figure that the woman artist is meant to become. Nevertheless, Woolf's angel is comparable to the Angel of Repression in that she embodies the period's ideals of femininity: she is 'intensely sympathetic', 'immensely charming', 'utterly unselfish', 'pure' and, most importantly, she is a passive being who lacks 'a mind of her own' and 'prefer[s] to sympathise always with the minds and wishes of others' (E6 480). Her interpretation of the angelic ideal is created out of the same patriarchal concepts as Sinclair's, though Woolf's decision to identify the psychological phantom as a woman creates a tension between the male construct and women's own perception of their sex. She contends

⁴⁶ The argument that Woolf modelled her angel on Coventry Patmore's narrative poem, *The Angel in the House* (1854), is well-known in literary studies. There is no record that Woolf read Sinclair's essays, or that her Angel of Repression influenced in any way Woolf's own metaphoric angel, but there is an intriguing resonance between these texts.

that any woman who takes up the masquerade of the Angel in the House is ultimately forced to ‘charm’, ‘conciliate’ and ‘tell lies if [she is] to succeed’ in society, and Woolf maintains this residual, performative paradigm of femininity prevents a woman from understanding ‘herself’ and exploring what it means to be a woman (481). She claims that in order to overcome the fallacy of the Victorian angel idea, women must challenge this false representation of femininity and, like Sinclair, Woolf examines how these societal constructs specifically act as psychic blocks and negatively affects the woman artist’s creative process. Woolf goes into much greater detail than Sinclair about the angel’s relationship with the woman artist and the inherent difficulties she encounters when attempting to overcome psychological, rather than sexual, repression. The ‘phantom’ angel’s tendency to continuously haunt the speaker in ‘Professions for Women’ eventually forces her to declare that the angel’s death is the only option for the woman artist’s creative consciousness to be liberated and, consequently, ‘[k]illing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of the woman writer’ at the turn of the century (481).

Woolf and Sinclair repeatedly confront this angelic figure in their fiction and non-fiction, but Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar maintain that it is not enough to transcend society’s repressive ideal, for the woman writer must additionally kill ‘the angel’s necessary opposite and double, the “monster” in the house, whose Medusa-face also kills female creativity’ (*Madwoman* 17). In their examination of the nineteenth-century woman writer, Gilbert and Gubar argue that female protagonists were unable to retain autonomy of their life at the conclusion of the narrative for fear of becoming a ‘monster’ and, in order to be rescued from this grotesque fate, they surrendered their subversive independence with marriage (142, 144). Modernist women writers confronted masculine definitions of female artistry as monstrous, and Sinclair’s artist-heroine encounters, and transcends, these oppressive symbols of angel and monster that inhibit her poetic sublimation. Sinclair engages with this nineteenth-

century discourse by rewriting the fate of the nineteenth-century artist heroine. Society's expectations of the Victorian poetess were founded upon similar constructs as the Angel in the House/Angel of Repression as the poetess's published verse was expected to embody the 'moral authority of the domestic realm' (S. Brown 188). Because the Victorian poetess additionally had more of a presence in the public sphere than other women artists, how she negotiated the publishing industry determined whether she additionally embraced the characteristics of the angel's Other. While I will discuss later how Mary is, in fact, a transitional poet—for her poetry prefigures some of the formal conventions found in Imagist poetry—Sinclair's artist-heroine challenges society's perceptions of the Victorian poetess by refusing to compromise her poetic voice to fulfil these masculinist definitions of appropriate forms of female artistry and behaviour in the public sphere.

One of the main influences guiding Mary towards her artistic fulfilment is her desire for knowledge and Sinclair questions the boundaries of acceptable female education in Victorian England by focusing specifically on Mary's interest in Greek studies—a traditionally masculine subject. Sinclair's extensive detailing of Mary's incessant desire for knowledge as a young girl, adolescent and mature adult thoroughly examines the barriers preventing women's intellectual growth in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, and Mary's struggle for an equal educational experience to men prefigures much of Woolf's non-fiction writing on women's education and professionalisation⁴⁷ Sinclair draws upon her own experiences of autodidacticism and formal education at Cheltenham Ladies College in her *Künstlerroman*, and she explores how education influences not only the development of the woman artist, but how it impacts her own understanding of her creative potential.

In contrast to the previously discussed female *Künstlerromane*, which usually begin in *medias res*, *Mary Olivier: A Life* develops the portrait of the artist narrative from the protagonist's

⁴⁷ See 'On Not Knowing Greek' (1925), 'Two Women' (1927), *A Room of One's Own* (1928), 'Professions for Women' [n.d.] and *Three Guineas* (1938).

early infancy and returns to the realist tradition of developmental *Bildung*—wherein the idea of training and preparation are considered necessary for the artist’s creative fulfilment. While this might superficially suggest the text revisits the more traditional themes associated with the novels of her male predecessors, who often align the male protagonist’s self-formation with formal schooling and the public domain, Sinclair instead identifies the woman artist with the autodidact and locates much of Mary’s intellectual development in the private sphere. Very much constrained by her life at home by her mother who defends the ideals of the cult of domesticity, Sinclair’s artist-heroine spends the majority of the novel trying to escape the oppressive forces of Victorian society and Mary challenges many of the period’s patriarchal standards concerning women’s right to an education in her quest for creative expression and erotic sublimation into her poetry.

Women’s Education in the Nineteenth Century

In Woolf’s essay, ‘Two Women’ (1927), she declares that eager young women taught in the nineteenth century were given a ‘negative education, [one] which decree[d] not what you may do but what you may not do, that cramped and stifled’ their intellectual aspirations (E4 419). The ideologies of separate spheres placed women in a subordinate role to men, thereby making them ‘relative’ rather than ‘autonomous beings’, and any formal education they received reflected this second-class status (Purvis 2).⁴⁸ Raised to become the idealised ‘ladylike homemaker’, middle- and upper-class girls were not expected to take up any kind of paid labour and their education often accentuated ‘ornamental knowledge’ which would attract, but not threaten, a potential suitor (Purvis 6, 63). Psychiatrist Henry Maudsley in ‘Sex in Mind and Education’ (1874) maintained that a rigorous curriculum taught to adolescent girls ‘could produce permanent injury’, or possibly sterility, in ‘their reproductive system’ which led to

⁴⁸ In this chapter I will focus specifically on the middle-class education of women in England.

severe psychological consequences such as permanent mental instability and breakdowns (qtd. in Showalter, *The Female Malady* 124). Another fear was that too much intellectual stimulation could precipitate one of the most diagnosed mental disorders in women of the period—hysteria—and Dr. E. J. Tilt argues in *On the Preservation of Health of Women at the Critical Periods of Life* (1851) that ‘retarding [women] “as much as possible [before] the appearance of first menstruation”’ was the best way to avoid this psychological condition (qtd. in K. Flint 57-8).⁴⁹ In this context, an educated woman subsequently became yet another version of the grotesque female monster, and the moralist Nicholas Francis specifically labelled this particular manifestation of the educated woman as ‘the Amazonian brawler’ (qtd. in Gilbert and Gubar, *No Man’s Land, Vol. 1* 13).⁵⁰ Middle-class girls who took these alleged reproductive and psychological risks and engaged in some form of education were usually taught at home or private day schools. In contrast to their male counterparts, who were often sent off to funded grammar schools or expensive private boarding institutions to learn a variety of subjects like Latin, Greek, mathematics and science, girls experienced a very different education (Walford, ‘Girls’ Private Schooling’ 12, 14).

What was taught at home varied with a family’s financial status and the majority of nineteenth-century girls’ day schools based their curriculum on rote learning where pupils often undertook such courses as English history, reading, grammar, arithmetic and geography (Purvis 70-1). As the girls advanced in their lessons, their studies expanded and they were also expected to master more feminine accomplishments which, depending on their class-status, included needlework, piano lessons and some modern languages like French and German. In addition to the discrepancies in subject-matter, the cost of tuition differed greatly with girls and boys’ schools during the period and, while thousands of pounds could be spent on a boy’s

⁴⁹ Woolf alludes to these arguments in *The Pargiters* (1978): ‘The argument that was the most frequently used in Oxford against the higher education of women was that it would unfit them to be women’ (153).

⁵⁰ An article written for the *Saturday Review*, ‘Feminine Wranglers’ (1864), reaffirms this claim with the journalist’s statement that ‘there is a strong and ineradicable male instinct that a learned, or even an accomplished young woman is the most intolerable monster in creation’ (qtd in *E4* 421; Jones and Snaith 31).

secondary and university tuition, girls were given less, if any, financial allowance by their family and received a mostly 'unpaid-for education' (TG 203).⁵¹ The 'relative poverty of women's colleges and [society's] resistance to women's education' was openly criticised during the twentieth century in such texts as Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas* (Jones and Snaith 39). Nevertheless, this obvious sex-division was validated by the separate spheres ideology as boys were groomed for the 'professional and public world' while women were prepared for a private life centred on domestic and familial duties (Purvis 65).

Private ladies' colleges like the North London Collegiate School and Cheltenham Ladies College began to appear in the mid-nineteenth century and Elizabeth Raikes reproduces the Cheltenham Ladies College founders' manifesto in her biography, *Dorothea Beale of Cheltenham* (1908), and states:

The founders of this college and day-school for girls were anxious to make it clear that their aim was to develop in the pupils character and fitness for the duties of later life [...] 'to afford, on reasonable terms, an education based upon religious principles which, preserving the modesty and gentleness of the female character, should so far cultivate [a girl's] intellectual powers as fit for the discharge of those responsible duties which devolve upon her as a wife, mother, mistress and friend, the natural companion and helpmeet for man' (87).

Raikes' introductory language about the founders' apprehension during the private school's inaugural year suggests that prejudice against women's education was still very much an immediate presence at the college. The school's declaration that it would uphold the Victorian ideals of femininity, teach appropriate courses for the female mind and reinforce their students' expected domestic roles is an obvious attempt to diminish any potentially damaging

⁵¹ Woolf's reiteration of Mary Kingsley's well-known statement encompasses the situation for the majority of women in the nineteenth century: 'I don't know if I ever revealed the fact to you that being allowed to learn German was *all* the paid-for education I ever had. £2,000 was spent on my brother's. I still hope not in vain' (TG 202).

criticism towards the new girls' college.⁵² Cheltenham's first few years were not without community disapproval, for private girls' boarding and day-schools were still quite rare and 'the very name "College" had an intimidating sound to parents' (Kamm 55). The college struggled in its first few years and it was not until the election of Dorothea Beale as principal in 1858 that the financial status and student enrolment numbers finally improved. Beale was an advocate for improving women's education, yet, throughout her term as principal, 'remodelling rather than [radical] revolution was her aim' (Raikes 109). She wished to include more advanced courses in the college's core syllabus like science and mathematics, but she recognised that introducing such male-oriented subjects too early would lead to further criticism and possibly the college's demise, and she was forced to delay adding these courses until her position was more established within the school and the community (Kamm 56). If a girl presented herself as a self-disciplined student, Beale would allow the student to 'take advantage of the afternoon hours to pursue special studies not included in the regular course' like geometry, Latin and Greek (Beale, 'On the Education of Girls' 11). By offering these modules as electives Beale saved the college from additional disapproval and granted serious female students a chance to participate in more advanced studies. Crucially, though, Beale's wish to introduce more demanding courses did not deviate from the founders' original intent as she constantly reiterated in her writing that educated girls, once married, could 'provide "healthy intellectual companionship"' to their husbands (Beale, Soulsby and Francis 5). Preparing middle-class girls for their household roles as wives and mothers was of central importance at Cheltenham and other ladies' institutions.

As an educator, Beale believed 'that the foundation, the main and leading elements of instruction, should be the same' in women's institutions as in men's, though she maintains that

⁵² Raikes details the Cheltenham Ladies' College original academic prospectus, and all students in attendance were required to take the following: Holy Scripture and the Liturgy of the Church of England, Arithmetic, Calisthenic Exercises, Drawing, French, Geography, History, Music, Needlework. Girls who were able to take on additional courses were offered the opportunity to learn German, Italian and Dancing (Appendix D).

women should not compete intellectually with men for fear of causing unwanted competition between the sexes (Great Britain 6). She advises her readers that this can be avoided by maintaining sex segregation in schools and that female students should undergo different examinations. This suggestion that women's intellectual aspirations should be founded on similar principles to men's, yet divergent in regards to evaluation, was first articulated in her paper, 'On the Education of Girls' (1865). Beale claims in the essay that 'the right means of training girls' are ones which prepare them to accept and 'perform that subordinate part in the world' (1). She further maintains that the 'moral training is the end' and 'education the means' when instructing girls, and 'the habits of obedience to duty' and 'self-restraint' must be encouraged at women's colleges (13-14). She further argues that these specific teaching methods will stress 'the true woman's ornament of a meek and quiet spirit' rather than fuel a masculine, competitive temper (14). Her description of the ideal, middle-class, female education promotes the Victorian principles of the domestic Angel in the House and, even though Beale tried to overcome the negative stereotypes often associated with women's intellectual pursuits, she still reinforced the masculinist ideology of separate spheres and women's subservient position to men in all matters of society.

Beale recognised that not all of her students shared this opinion of women's education as a means to an intellectually stimulating domestic life, and she states in her published writing that a woman should not feel ashamed if she decides to further her studies and seek work as a teacher, though Beale is quick to state that, if such a woman has additional domestic or marital duties awaiting at home, she should not disregard them in her pursuance of certificates and degrees ('Preface' xxxiii). While Beale accepts the possibility that women's professionalisation can occur beyond the sanctuary of the home, she ultimately believes that a woman's education should be considered 'a sort of insurance' by her students and their families in that it will prepare them for their marital and maternal duties once they leave school (xxxiii). It is

undeniable that Beale hoped a structured education would improve women's possibilities in life both within and beyond the drawing room, but the majority of the students at Cheltenham would not have to seek employment upon finishing school and Beale often encouraged her pupils to improve their intellectual capacity 'within the context of family life' and the 'wider community' rather than the professional realm (Beaumont 4; K. Flint 120). Despite her advocacy for improving women's education, one must agree with Theophilus E. M. Boll that Dorothea Beale was a 'model' for her students 'in being feminine rather than feminist' (32), and May Sinclair would encounter this conservative form of instruction in her own experiences at Cheltenham and would later transcribe them in her *Künstlerroman*.

Born into a 'mercantile middle class' family in 1863, Mary Amelia St Clair was the youngest of six children and the only surviving daughter of William and Amelia Sinclair.⁵³ Despite growing up in a household of boys, Sinclair was allowed to participate in her brothers' outdoor games and adventures, but her indoor existence as a young girl and adolescent left much to be desired. Suzanne Raitt points out in her biography of the author that she did not encounter the 'masculine injustice' of the Victorian period until she was denied the same educational opportunities as her brothers (*May Sinclair* 19). Forced to undergo a more domestic education, which focused on female accomplishments like sewing and learning to play the piano, Sinclair yearned to undergo the same tutelage as her brothers. Moreover, her mother's obvious favouritism towards her sons forced Sinclair to find some form of retreat from this maternal rejection and, consequently, she progressed beyond the typical recreational reading associated with young girls of the period and spent the majority of her time 'educating herself in languages, the classics and philosophy' (24). As she would later write about Charlotte Brontë, Sinclair's own exhaustive and diverse reading would inherently influence and create 'a style exclusively and inimitably her own' (Sinclair, 'Introduction' viii). Raitt confirms that by

⁵³ She did not assume the name May until 1892 when she published *Essays in Verse* at the age of 28 (Raitt, *May Sinclair* 16fn). To avoid confusion, I will continue to refer to her as 'May Sinclair'.

the time Sinclair was eighteen she ‘had taught herself German, Greek, and French, and read the works by Shakespeare, Aristophanes, Euripedes, Shelley, Plato, Hume, and Kant’ (*May Sinclair* 24). It was not until 1881 that Sinclair was finally allowed to attend Cheltenham Ladies College where she encountered the formidable principal.

Because her period at the college was brief—she attended the boarding school for only a year—she did not revise for any of the external university examinations recently opened to women. This defined Sinclair’s experience at Cheltenham as one focused on ‘intellectual enquiry and philosophical education’ rather than professionalisation, and the principal took special interest in the future author (24-5). The relationship was initially antagonistic when Sinclair refused to write an essay assigned by the headmistress about God and, despite Beale’s ‘fear and mistrust of agnosticism’, the principal accepted her student’s demand for independent thought and took it upon herself to personally guide Sinclair in her studies (25). Like the other girls, Sinclair undertook the regimented core courses taught at the college, although, as an older and more serious student, Beale allowed Sinclair to take on additional elective subjects, specifically, Greek and ‘the study of Western and Eastern philosophies’ in the hope they would ‘strengthen her wavering faith’ (25). While Sinclair’s opinions about religion would remain unchanged, Beale, in complete contrast to Amelia Sinclair, was open to having a dialogue with her student about her religious uncertainties without completely rejecting and oversimplifying them as ‘infantile or wicked’ thoughts of a rebellious young woman (25).⁵⁴ Beale further encouraged Sinclair to ‘develop [her] intellectual autonomy’ through the written word and submit original work to the college’s journal, the *Cheltenham Ladies College Magazine*, which published many of her early philosophical essays, poetry and Greek translations.⁵⁵ Sinclair

⁵⁴ While Beale’s plan did not alter Sinclair’s feelings about religion, the budding philosopher and future novelist admitted that she still found it ‘fascinating [...] to read modern ideas into ancient philosophy’ and Sinclair would continue to do so throughout her career (‘The Things Which Belong unto the Truth’ 1).

⁵⁵ Beale founded the magazine in 1880 and was editor of the publication throughout her tenure as principal. Only one essay of Sinclair’s was published during her term at college and the rest steadily appeared throughout the 1890s after her departure.

undoubtedly appreciated the support she received from the principal, but Raitt maintains the author was not always in agreement with Beale's techniques and expectations as a teacher, for the principal 'demanded an extraordinary amount of effort and self-discipline' from her students even after their departure from the college (27). Nevertheless, Beale remained a valuable friend to Sinclair even if she was at times too insistent with her expectations and, following her mentor's unwavering advice, Sinclair would spend the remainder of the nineteenth century trying to 'develop her own philosophy of mind' through short stories, essays and poetry (31).⁵⁶ Her year at Cheltenham did play a major role in her development as a writer and assured Sinclair that the 'intellectual life' was the one place she could find 'solitude and comfort' amidst her many family tragedies and growing alienation from her mother (30). Sinclair's intellectual escapism, like so many women of the period, occurred mostly within the private sphere and she makes it a dominant theme in her semi-autobiographical *Künstlerroman*.⁵⁷ Mary's autodidacticism heavily influences her development as an artist throughout the novel as she attempts to recreate an equivalent education to her brothers' instruction, and it is her specific *demand* to master Greek which redefines the nineteenth-century presentation of the woman reader and artist-heroine.

Learning Greek: The Woman Artist as Autodidact

The figure of the Victorian woman reader has been a widely-discussed subject in nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary studies, and much of the analysis tends to analyse how this figure either succumbs to the negative stereotypes of the 'idle, ignorant, young novel-reader' or achieves some form of autonomy through her negotiation of patriarchal power with

⁵⁶ Sinclair, who was 'simultaneously excited and uneasy at the idea of herself as a novelist', would not experiment with the form until the turn of the century following her attempts at writing poetry and philosophical essays (Raitt, *May Sinclair* 77).

⁵⁷ Raitt maintains *Mary Olivier* is 'Sinclair's intellectual and spiritual autobiography' wherein she experiments with 'ideas about the origins, constitution, and boundaries of the "I"' (*Mary Olivier* 217). There are many parallels between Sinclair and her artist-heroine, but I will not be reading the novel in direct comparison with the author's own life.

her transgressive modes of reading (Brantlinger 28).⁵⁸ In contrast to the novels of her predecessors, Sinclair introduces an alternative depiction of the woman reader in *Mary Olivier: A Life* as her artist-heroine is forced to challenge the authority of her mother who disapproves of Mary's intellectual endeavours, especially her wish to learn Greek. Victorian and Edwardian attitudes concerning acceptable reading habits upheld books that developed one's 'private and moral life' and denounced any gratuitous and arbitrary reading 'as morally debilitating' (K. Flint 48). In this vein Caroline Olivier repeatedly criticises Mary's autodidacticism as an extravagant, 'silly vanity' and tries to thwart her daughter's intellectual growth throughout the novel (*MO* 126). Latin and Greek were the fundamental subjects taught to boys at school, because these languages 'instilled [the] masculinist values' of Victorian patriarchy and introduced them to 'a privileged and priestly language' usually denied to women (Gilbert and Gubar, *No Man's Land, Vol. 1* 243). As required courses at men's colleges and universities, the study of Latin and Greek 'was inseparable from a masculinising of culture', and women's exclusion from learning the classics 'automatically debarred them from the habits of mind which dominated mainstream culture' (Dusinberre 48). Famed Greek scholar and teacher W. H. D. Rouse argued that, because '[g]irls' schools have grown up with other traditions' like 'music and drawing', introducing classics courses to the college prospectus at women's institutions would be too much of 'a radical change' (67). If included in the prospectus, Rouse believes the underlying purpose of women's education should remain unchanged as a means to impart 'an intelligent and sympathetic interest in life' rather than 'to turn out finished scholars' and, consequently, he suggests that female pupils should receive less time and instruction in

⁵⁸ See Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader* (1957); Patrick Brantlinger, *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (1998); Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914*. (1993); and Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750-1835: A dangerous recreation* (1999).

learning the classics than the average male student (67).⁵⁹ Beale supported this suggestion and she allowed some ‘industrious’ students to undertake Greek as a personal ‘favour’ and reward for their serious studies; however, because of her dictum to ‘exercise’ but ‘not exhaust’ the students, the principal did not expect her pupils to become proficient in the language in the same way male students were required (Great Britain 209; ‘Preface’ xx).⁶⁰ Moreover, as an elective course, Beale maintains that no student at the college ‘has a right to demand’ being taught Greek, and it is this specific mandate which Sinclair challenges in her novel as Mary repeatedly confronts her mother for this male privilege (Great Britain 209).

Sinclair positions Mrs Olivier as the Victorian Angel in the House and, as Cheryl A. Wilson contends, the majority of Mrs. Olivier’s arguments with her daughter are ‘gendered’ as she attempts to instil in Mary the ‘appropriate behaviour for a Victorian woman in training’ (‘Mary Olivier’ 224). Mary’s wish to learn Greek is an early extension of her later battle for artistic autonomy against her mother—wherein she participates in psychological matricide similar to Woolf and Sinclair’s killing of the Victorian angel ideal. The woman artist’s aim to ‘master’ Greek is a common issue found in the writing of Sinclair’s predecessors who often undermined men’s control over the language through their female protagonist’s ‘perverse and subversive mediations on Greek’ (Gilbert and Gubar, *No Man’s Land, Vol. 1* 244). Sinclair’s reinterpretation of the nineteenth-century artist-heroine avoids this combative narrative tactic and, much like Woolf’s own connection with the language, Sinclair depicts Mary’s ideal relationship with Greek as one which is based upon a desire for ‘intimacy’, ‘familiarity’ and just a little bit of ‘magic’ (Fowler 217, 219). Like Woolf, who began translating Greek at an early

⁵⁹ Not all women’s colleges followed Rouse’s suggestion and the Ladies’ Department at King’s College London offered more advanced Greek courses for its students. Woolf was enrolled at King’s from 1897 to 1901, and her Greek classes, which ranged from grammar and reading comprehension courses to more specific electives that focused on such works as Sophocles’ *Oedipus Coloneus*, were ‘prescribed for the final pass BA exams of the University of London’ (Jones and Snaith 15).

⁶⁰ In addition to Sinclair, Woolf’s Greek tutor, Jane Harrison, was another student allowed to study Greek while attending Cheltenham from 1867, and her connection with the college influenced Woolf’s own writing on women’s relationship to the language (Snaith, *Virginia Woolf* 105).

age through rote learning, Mary's eventual command of the language becomes a vehicle for her artistic expression which eventually leads to her professionalisation as a published translator and poet at the end of the novel.⁶¹

Woolf's essay, 'On Not Knowing Greek' (1925), epitomises the nineteenth- and twentieth-century woman writer's complicated relationship with the language, and she examines many of the same issues raised in Sinclair's *Künstlerroman* as Mary challenges her mother over the right to learn Greek. The narrator's tone in the beginning of the essay resonates with exasperation as she admits it is 'vain and foolish to talk of knowing Greek' when one's inadequate education prevents one from learning the basic fundamentals of the language, such as, 'how the words sounded, or where precisely [one] ought to laugh, or how the actors acted' (E4 38). In spite of her ignorance, the narrator admits she cannot escape the longing she feels for the language and she finds it mystifying that she 'should wish to know Greek, try to know Greek, feel for ever drawn back to Greek, and be for ever making up some congruous notion of the meaning of Greek' (38). While she is stating the obvious in regards to women's exclusion from the same educational experiences as men, Woolf contends that not knowing Greek is more about being denied access to the past and translating different cultures, understanding the body, performance and pleasure rather than just a gap in one's education. Her continuous repetition of the word 'Greek' further signifies her wish for a better comprehension of these concepts, which have a tendency to escape her grasp, and it is this elusive quality which causes her to romanticise the language and culture throughout the remainder of the essay.⁶² Woolf is not lamenting her deficiency in understanding the grammar and formal characteristics of Greek, for what she really wishes to understand is 'the real meaning of the language and culture—the humour, the drama, and truth—which is lost in the

⁶¹ Two of Woolf's male protagonists, Edward Pargiter in *The Years* (1937) and Jacob Flanders in *Jacob's Room* (1922), are shown to be learning Greek via rote translations in a similar fashion to Woolf's own studies.

⁶² Rowena Fowler contends in 'Moments and Metamorphoses: Virginia Woolf's Greece' (1999) that Woolf explored this 'closeness yet unknowableness of the Greeks' in an earlier, lost essay entitled "Magic Greek" wherein Woolf maintains a 'veil' always seems to separate her from 'the ancient texts' (217).

'ambiguity' of the unknown Greek words and remains unrepresented in its various English interpretations (39, 44). Woolf wishes to get lost in the 'wild and apparently irrelevant utterances' of Greek and to explore the deeper meanings of the words, which she believes are found 'just on the far side of language', for it is during such 'moments of astonishing excitement and stress' that one is able to produce 'in a rapid flight of the mind' a visual and emotional significance of the work (45, 44). Woolf believes the uneducated reader in Greek is unable to achieve this impressionistic and emotive connection to Greek and is thus forced to undergo a restricted reading experience with English translations.

As discussed in the previous chapter, many of the same issues with the translation process for Miriam and Russian remain true for Woolf and Greek, though Miriam's additional command of German, which was a popular language taught to women at ladies colleges like Cheltenham, allows her the opportunity of reading the original text and publishing her own translations without the aid of a man. Women's instruction in German allowed them greater access to reading material and granted them the time and proper training to build a strong foundation in the language but, with Greek, men controlled the flow of knowledge. Until the inclusion of structured language courses at women's colleges near the turn of the century, women were barred from learning the language in a formal classroom environment, and they were subsequently reliant on English translations of the classics. Woolf's narrator critiques the male Oxbridge scholar who merely spells out the words and mangles the 'symmetry' of the Greek text, and Percy Bysshe Shelley's rendition of Plato's 'The Banquet' is one such example which best represents the negative consequences of reading in translation (43):

Every ounce of fat has been pared off, leaving the flesh firm. Then, spare and bare as it is, no language can move more quickly, dancing, shaking, all alive, but controlled. Then there are the words themselves which, in so many instances, we have made expressive to us of our own emotions (49).

Her description of Greek as a naturally uninhibited language now restricted in its English interpretation, suggests the translation process obscures the original meaning and underlying tone of the text. Furthermore, Woolf's characterisation of the Greek words as 'dancing' and 'shaking' across the page alludes to a sense of pleasure and sexualisation in the language that is now repressed in Shelley's more 'controlled' English version. Being denied the option of forming an original interpretation of the passage leads Woolf to declare that the original 'Greek is the only expression' which allows for an unrestricted reading experience, and she maintains that Shelley's translation of 'The Banquet' epitomises how the translator can only give 'a vague equivalent' of the original as his edition 'is full of echoes and associations' that are lost forever to an uneducated reader in Greek (49). Woolf reproduces such problems of translation in *The Pargiters* when Kitty Malone and Edward Pargiter read Sophocles' *Antigone*: 'Without being specially subtle, she was aware of a variety and complexity of human relationships of which he was ignorant; just as, when Edward took up *The Antigone*, the Greek conveyed to him a thousand meanings and suggestions which Kitty, who could only read Greek in translations, missed completely' (116). Sinclair actively avoids this limiting reading experience in her *Künstlerroman* as Mary takes it upon herself to not only learn Greek for her own intellectual development and inclusion in this patriarchal institution, but to additionally improve her own understanding of her artistry.

Sinclair introduces Mary's wish to learn Greek near the end of the 'Childhood' section of the novel. While sitting at a piano with her older brother Mark, Mary recites various lines from Milton's 'Lycidas' (1637) and Pope's translation of the *Illiad* (1715-20), and it is during this impromptu performance that she reflects upon the pleasure she finds in words and how 'there was nothing she liked so much as making these lines' (MO 77). It is only after observing that Pope's 'lines had to rhyme' in his English translation that Mary first mentions her growing interest in Greek:

‘Silent he wandered by the sounding sea,’ was good, but the Greek line that Mark showed her went ‘Be d’akeon para thina poluphloisboio thalasses’; that was better.

‘Don’t you think so Mark?’

‘Clever Minx. Much better.’

‘Mark—if God knew how happy I am writing poetry he’d make the earth open and swallow me up.’ (77)

This scene also happens to coincide with the first time Mary vocalises her ambition to write poetry, and her overly dramatic fears about the ensuing repercussions of this aspiration communicates the nineteenth-century woman artist’s insecurities about the public reception of her creativity. Nevertheless, the scene’s progression from Mary’s general reflection about her pleasure in reading poetry, to her first declaration about wanting to write it, is inherently shaped by her fascination with Homer and Greek. Woolf argues in ‘The Feminine Note in Fiction’ (1905) that the woman writer’s ‘study of the Greek and Latin classics may give her that sterner view of literature which will make an artist of her’, and Mary’s confrontation with Greek not only improves her artistry but also transforms her troubled perception of her creativity (*E1* 16). By giving her a better understanding of her own artistic endeavours, Mary’s Greek studies ultimately help her overcome these earlier anxieties.

At this point in the novel Mary has only just embarked on her Greek lessons as she reads Mark’s hand-me-down *Greek Accidence* and Smith’s *Classical Dictionary* ‘in the hour after breakfast’ before her piano lessons with Miss Sippett (*MO* 78). Mary’s understanding of the language is still quite basic and she is unable to read Homer without Mark’s assistance as he pronounces the words for her to repeat. Sinclair’s phonetic transliteration of the Greek line in the above passage reflects Mary’s illiteracy and inexperience with the language as the words signify nothing more than gibberish to both her and the uneducated reader in Greek. In spite

of her ignorance, Mary still considers Homer's original to be the supreme version of the *Iliad*. Her offhand reflections suggest Pope's poetic style and use of rhyme are the English translation's biggest fault. Although Mary's thoughts about Pope's use of rhymed verse appear only fleetingly, this brief observation foreshadows her later, and more developed, views on how the 'unrhymed cadence' of *vers libre* can transform and improve the formal structure of translations and poetry (Sinclair, 'Poems of F. S. Flint' 11). In addition to influencing her preference for Homer, Sinclair's artist-heroine recognizes early on in her self-education that there is a commanding presence surrounding the Greek language, and she subsequently 'leave[s] the Accidence open where Miss Sippett could see it and realize she was not a stupid little girl' (MO 78). Greek quickly becomes a symbol of intellectual authority for Mary, and Sinclair's juxtaposition of her artist-heroine's autodidacticism with the piano lessons further signifies the transgressive undertones associated with Mary's resistance to a traditional feminine education and active decision to trespass on male intellectual terrain. Mary's preference for a more masculine form of instruction quickly becomes obvious to the adults in the novel. While Miss Sippett chooses to disregard her student's extracurricular interests, Caroline Olivier is unable to ignore her daughter's enthusiasm for the language, and Mary is more than aware of her mother's disapproval:

There was something queer about learning Greek. Mamma did not actually forbid it; but she said it must not be done in lesson time or sewing time, or when people could see you doing it, lest they should think you were showing off. You could see that she didn't believe you *could* learn Greek and that she wouldn't like it if you did. But when lessons were over she let you read Shakespeare or Pope's *Iliad* aloud to her while she sewed. (78)

Mrs Olivier's suspicions about the potentially dangerous influences Greek might have on her daughter are located in her fear of a 'potential gender-role transgression' as Mary wishes to

master this masculine tradition of knowledge (Wilson, 'The Victorian Woman Reader' 372). It was expected that a daughter's reading material would be chosen and supervised by her mother with the utmost care (K. Flint 23), and Mary's refusal to allow Mrs Olivier complete control over her recreational reading and self-education is a considerably defiant act for the nineteenth century and it subsequently aligns her actions with the figure of the female monster. Mrs Olivier's complicated response to her daughter's Greek interests convolutes the rebellious nature of Mary's studies because, as it is a language, it is not considered morally-debased reading material for girls. Chris Baldick has discussed in *The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848-1932* (1983) the contemporary argument that the learning of Latin and Greek was time consuming and required 'linguistic drilling' and 'technical resources' which often detracted from a girl's domestic duties (qtd. in K. Flint 124), and this is what Mrs Olivier most objects to as she, at first, tries to positively reinforce Mary's domestic duties within the home: 'I like to see you behaving like a little girl, instead of tearing about and trying to do what boys do' (*MO* 70). Even though Mrs Olivier does not forbid her daughter from learning Greek, she can dictate when and where Mary is allowed to read it, and she specifically prohibits her from bringing the *Accidence* in the drawing room as it might attract unwanted attention to Mary's peculiar reading habits to visitors. Mrs Oliver's request that Mary instead read aloud to her from approved texts further inhibits her daughter's private reading time while simultaneously promoting a false impression of 'domestic harmony' in the household as mother and daughter are forced to communicate with one another over the works of English writers like Shakespeare and Pope (K. Flint 100).

By the time Mary is an adolescent she has not really advanced in her Greek studies as her mother's once ambiguous attitude towards the language has now evolved into pure contempt, and Mrs. Olivier consequently gives Mark's *Accidence* and *Classical Dictionary* to the next eldest son, Roddy, and bans Mary from reading the books until Mark returns home from

his tour of India with the army. Mary's longing for the language remains unchanged and she constantly reflects on what little Greek she does know. Poetry acts, once again, as a catalyst for her Greek contemplations as she attempts to visualise how lines made from such images as 'the white dust' and 'the wind in the green corn, of the five trees' would make 'the most beautiful poems in the world' (*MO* 125). She imagines that these more emotional images slowly 'begin to move before her' as they eventually transform into 'a moving white pattern of sound', though, when she tries to 'catch' the essence of this white pattern in her writing, it almost always 'broke up and flowed away' (125). Mary blames her inability to create a cohesive pattern on reading 'too much Byron', and it is during these reflections on the relationship between image and sound patterns in the poetry of the Romantics that Mary focuses on those specific 'patterns of sound' which 'haunt and excite' her the most (125). Rather than drawing upon the formal characteristics of the English poetry she has access to, it is the 'hard and still' sound patterns of the elusive Greek words which dominate her thoughts (125).⁶³ Mary's relationship with the Greek sound patterns are defined by a sense of absence and melancholy which echo Woolf's aching tone in 'On Not Knowing Greek', and Mary mentally discloses to the reader that 'there were bits of patterns, snapt off, throbbing wounds of sound that couldn't heal', such as, those '[l]ines out of Mark's Homer' now lost to her (125). Mary's aural impressions of these hieroglyphs as fragmented utterances and festering wounds is a far cry from the images of 'white dust' she associates with other image patterns found in the poetry of the Romantics as the Greek words, perhaps, reflect her pain and disappointment at being unable to capture these particular sound patterns. Because Mary's comprehension level in Greek is still quite basic, she can only really focus on the sounds of the words rather than their underlying meanings and connotations in relation to an entire work. Her focus on the fixed nature of

⁶³ This is an early signifier of Mary's penchant for precise words and concrete images in her art which reflects the principles of the Imagist poets and, moreover, this scene creates an early correlation between her Greek studies and her poetry.

these words as 'hard and still' signifies the phallic undertones associated with the masculinist language, and additionally reinforces her earlier subconscious critique of Pope's decision to use rhyming lines in his translation. In contrast to her earlier illustration of the phonetic sounds Mary recites to Mark, Sinclair places an extract of untranslated Greek in the text to further emphasise the impenetrability of the 'hard and still' words. Her insertion of the original Greek passage, without any formal attempt at translation by Mary, isolates the quotation from the rest of the scene and consequently forces the reader to experience the same illiteracy as Mary.⁶⁴ Rowena Fowler discusses the effects the untranslated language has on the 'Greekless reader', and she maintains that 'it appears as abstract visual pattern' that is 'unassimilable to the surrounding text' (224). Therefore, 'as a visual pattern', the Greek passage becomes representative of the intertwined image and sound pattern that Mary tries to achieve in her original poetry. Because she is unable to comprehend its meaning, and the Greek words remain separate from the rest of the text, the untranslated passage remains, at this point in the novel, a textual signifier of her unfulfilled potential as a student and poet.

What is frustrating about her situation is that Mary has the resources and the intellectual capacity to master Greek, but her biggest obstacle is not the language itself but her mother. Mrs. Olivier subscribes to the ideology that girls are expected 'to learn for the sake of the lesson and not for pleasure's sake', and she considers Mary's extracurricular Greek interests as an unnecessary, and sinful, indulgence (*MO* 74). When Mary tries to persuade Mrs Olivier to return Mark's books she rebukes her daughter and declares, 'Just because Mark learnt Greek, you think *you* must try. I thought you'd grown out of all that tiresome affectation. It was funny when you were a little thing, but it isn't funny now' (126). The scene quickly unfolds as the two women confront each other over Mark's schoolbooks and, because Mrs Olivier finally insults Mary's ambition as nothing more than a superficial, 'silly vanity', Mary finally challenges her

⁶⁴ Virago's 2002 edition of *Mary Olivier* remains true to the original publication and does not include any footnotes or translations to the Greek extracts inserted throughout the novel.

mother with the simple declaration: 'You are afraid' (126, 127). Cheryl A. Wilson's comprehensive analysis of the argument discusses why Mrs Olivier questions Mary's underlying incentive to learn Greek, her reluctance to submit to God's will and her inability to fulfil her domestic duties ('The Victorian Woman Reader' 372-3). Wilson's examination of Mrs Olivier's hostile reaction to Mary's self-education and how it negatively affects her daughter's own perception of her private reading practices is compelling, but she does not explore why Mary is so drawn to the language or how she overcomes her mother's verbal assaults and regains control of her Greek lessons. Throughout the confrontation, Sinclair presents both Mary's spoken and unspoken responses to her mother's attempts at thwarting her daughter's self-education and, at first, Mary tries to reason with her mother as she points out her patience in already waiting five years for the books. While she remains rational, it is once Mrs Olivier starts insulting her daughter's ambitions that Mary finally snaps: 'This flash of queerness was accompanied by a sense of irreparable disaster. Everything had changed; she heard herself speaking, speaking steadily, with the voice of a changed and unfamiliar person' (*MO* 126-7). Sinclair's focus on the irreversibility of Mary's feelings about the situation suggests this is the beginning of her battle with the Angel of Repression, and this is the moment that Mary exposes her mother's fear and finally decides to take a stand against her mother's oppressive actions. She does not quite understand what her mother is afraid of, but she recognises her mother's mistrust of her developing intellect and unwavering determination to succeed. When Mrs Olivier demands to know 'what good' knowing Greek would do for Mary, her daughter remains silent:

She knew the sound patterns were beautiful, and that was all she knew. Beauty. Beauty could be hurt and frightened away from you. If she talked about it now she would expose it to outrage. Though she knew that she must appear to her mother to be

stubborn and stupid, even sinful, she put her stubbornness, her stupidity, her sinfulness, between it and her mother to defend it (127).

One reason for Mary's silence is that she has not been given the chance to develop her knowledge of Greek, and she feels it is an injustice to the language to communicate her evolving, and incomplete, theories about aesthetics, images and sounds to her mother's already hardened opinions. Primarily, though, Mary's mental lamentations about the possible loss of Greek, and her need to protect the one positive outlet in her life, is associated with how her autodidacticism allows her to transcend the psychological oppression of her mother's continuous attempts to thwart her daughter's intellectual development as well as the repressive limitations of nineteenth-century British society. It is specifically her desire to know Greek which helps Mary psychologically, and emotionally, distance herself from the life of feminine domesticity as the Victorian Angel in the House that her mother actively endorses.

Mary finally realises that, in order to preserve the beauty, innocence and pleasure she associates with Greek, art and poetry, she needs to protect her thoughts, her 'real, secret self' and mask her true feelings about the language with a performance that outwardly aligns her with the actions of the transgressive Amazonian brawler (*MO* 374). Outwardly fulfilling the attributes of this figure in her silent response, Mary finally defies the decorum of a dutiful daughter with her one spoken declaration that Mark joined the army to escape her mother's controlling ways. As a consequence, Mrs Olivier finally breaks down and gives Mary the Greek books with the warning that she will some day regret her actions and, almost immediately, her daughter does as she laments that '[s]he hated everything that separated her and made her different from her mother and Mark' (129). Mary is unwilling to break away from her mother at this moment in the narrative, but she eventually becomes aware that her deadlock with the Angel of Repression requires such a separation for, 'to be happy with her either you or she had to be broken, to be helpless and little like a child' (194). Mary's sentiments about the

psychological impasse between her and her mother reflect Sinclair's own theory about the child's inevitable struggle for autonomy from the parent, wherein the child's battle for independence 'must be fought to a finish, and the child must win it or remain forever immature' ('Clinical', II 144).

The final division occurs with Mary's realization that her mother is lying to her about why she was sent home from a girls' boarding school: 'Suddenly she felt hard and strong and grown-up in her sad wisdom. Her mother didn't love her. She never had loved her. Nothing she could ever do would make her love her. Miracles didn't happen [...] Her childhood had died with a little gasp' (145). Much like the irreparable change from her earlier battle with her mother, Sinclair creates an atmosphere of finality as Mary enters the disenchanted realm of adulthood where she finally does what she pleases and continues her self-education regardless of her mother's opinion.⁶⁵ While Mary has finally reached an epiphany about her relationship with her mother, this does not signify that she has finally overcome the Angel of Repression nor has she completely severed her ties with her mother. Mary embraces this newfound intellectual freedom and she toils at her studies—which primarily focus on philosophy (Hume, Kant, Hegel and Schopenhauer), psychology (Haeckel, Maudsley, and Ribot) and Greek.⁶⁶

Even with this new liberty, Mary's path towards sublimation is still demanding and Mary is unable to comprehend the full significance of what means to just be 'herself [...] until she has expressed herself in all the arts and professions open to human skill' (*E6* 481). Mary finally reconciles herself to this fate near the end of Book Four, 'Maturity', when she spends three years translating Euripides' *Bacchæ* and writing poetry:

⁶⁵ Mary attends another girls' college, the Clevehead School, for an unrepresented period in the novel. Sinclair's brief description of the fictional college suggests the school is modelled upon Cheltenham as Mary is taught Greek 'with the old arithmetic master' similar to Dorothea Beale (*MO* 146). Her time at school is minimal in the text when compared to her self-education at home, thereby it is correct to identify Mary as an autodidact.

⁶⁶ Her philosophical studies are driven by her desire 'to know what the Thing-in-itself is' whereas her psychological studies stem from her fear that she would "go [mad] like" Aunt Charlotte' (*MO* 243, 377).

You could do it after you had read Walt Whitman. If you gave up the superstition of singing; the little tunes of rhyme. If you left off that eternal jingling and listened, you could hear what it ought to be.

Something between talking and singing. If you wrote verse that could be chanted: that could be whispered, shouted, screamed as they moved. Agave and her Maenads. Verse that would go with a throbbing beat, excited, exciting; beyond rhyme.

That would be the nearest to Greek verse (*MO* 326).

Mary's interpretation of Euripides foreshadows the style of translation Woolf demands in 'On Not Knowing Greek'. Mary's wish to finally break the residual rhyming patterns found in previous English translations like Pope's *Iliad* is finally implemented in her translation of Euripides' drama, and her suggestion that the words should be spoken, not sung, reflects back to her earlier belief that Greek words are meant to be hard and still. She maintains the established motif of rhyming verse becomes yet another form of concealment which prevents the Greekless reader from capturing the correct sound patterns and meaning of the original text. Furthermore, Mary's contention that Walt Whitman's poetry establishes a verse pattern that modern translations should adhere to reiterates Sinclair's own views that contemporary poetry should: 'escape tradition', 'clear the mind of cant, the cant of iambics', 'cast off the tinkling golden fetters of rhyme' (qtd. in Zegger; Sinclair, 'Three American Poets' 326). Sinclair's own beliefs that rhyming verse has mechanised poetry into submission as a 'stale literature' is echoed in Mary's theories about the problematics of translation ('The Poems of F. S. Flint' 9). Moreover, her artist-heroine's request for a more pulsating, 'throbbing beat' in English translations alludes to the sexual and dangerous undertones associated with such rhythmic release found in the original Greek, and this is further underpinned by her allusion to such mythological figures as Maenads/Bacchantes. Notorious for their 'frenzied' and ecstatic nature, these followers of Dionysus were often presented in Greek art and literature as

madwomen who were capable of mutilating and eating both wild animals and humans ('maenads'; Hedreen 49). Such moments of insanity were only temporary and Albert Henrichs argues that 'the cultic reality of maenadism was more subdued and less exotic' than was presented in Greek mythology (123). He maintains that both married and unmarried women's 'escape from house and home' to participate in various rituals was often a short-lived emancipation from their 'restricted role in Greek society' (122). Mary's allusion to Hellenistic maenadism does draw attention to the wild and ecstatic nature associated with their rituals, though what she is really suggesting is that the poetic and translation process should emulate such sensations through unconventional rhyming patterns and *vers libre* as an act of liberation from the static conventions of traditional English verse. While Sinclair does not include an example of Mary's revolutionary translation of the *Baccha*, I will discuss in the next section how Mary's narrative voice and poetry does reveal to the reader these hard and still sound patterns which transcend the traditional conventions of nineteenth-century verse.

It is not until Book Five of the novel, 'Middle-Age', that Mary's extensive knowledge of Greek finally allows her the chance to enter the public domain as a secretary for a renowned classics scholar, Richard Nicholson. As the work relationship develops from colleagues, into friendship and finally romance, Mary eventually finds the courage to let him read her original translation of the *Baccha*. In contrast to her mother's reactions to her self-education, Richard seems genuinely interested in Mary's divergent path and approves of her interpretation of Euripides: "Yes. Yes. It *is* the way to do it. The only way.... You see, that's what my Euripides book's about. The very thing I've been trying to ram down people's throats, for years. And all this time you were doing it—down here—all by yourself—for fun" (MO 338). Nicholson's agreement with Mary's theories about rhyme and translation offers her some validation for her intellectual isolation and autodidacticism and he pushes her to publish, but he wants the reading public to be aware that Mary 'is a poet translating; not the other way on' (339). When her

mother is made aware of this new phase in Mary's Greek education, she tells her daughter, 'I'd rather see you in your coffin'" (349), and Grace Stewart maintains that this is the moment of the narrative where Mary finally overcomes the Angel in the House. Stewart argues that, as an artist, Mary rejects the traditional roles assigned to women and is subsequently forced to question her mother's understanding of feminine responsibility and the ideals of womanhood. Moreover, because Mary refuses to follow her mother's 'chosen lifestyle', Mrs Olivier has ultimately failed at her maternal duties (53). While I agree with Stewart, Mary denies her mother's wishes from the moment she begins her self-education with Mark's *Greek Accidente*. This is the moment where Mary finally transcends her previous anxieties about the public reception of her artistry, and her translation of the *Baccha* becomes a vehicle for her professionalisation as a female poet. Sinclair's *Künstlerroman* contests Beale's argument that there is 'no comparison between the mental abilities of boys and girls' as Mary surpasses her brothers in their Greek studies and proves that women can compete with men in the intellectual and artistic sphere ('On the Education of Girls' 1). In contrast to her male counterparts, Sinclair situates this battle for intellectual autonomy as a visceral and physical fight as Mary's mental struggles and sacrifices are repeatedly depicted throughout the novel. Undoubtedly, Mary has an unwavering interest in Greek that persists throughout *Mary Olivier: A Life*, but it does not compare with her passion for poetry. I argue it is her relationship with Greek and the translation process which allows her to enter the professional sphere as a published writer and begin her aesthetic sublimation as a poet.

Rewriting the Victorian Artist-Heroine

Instead of using a more contemporary representative like the Imagists to examine the process of women's sublimation, Sinclair's decision to revisit the figure of the nineteenth-century poetess in her modernist *Künstlerroman* was an unusual choice. She often criticised her

Victorian predecessors in her non-fiction writing and, in her 1915 essay on H.D. and the Imagist movement, an exasperated Sinclair asks her readers whether they, like her, are tired of the excess ‘sentiment that passed for passion’ in the poetry of the previous century (‘Two Notes’ 88). She maintains that ‘[t]he special miracle of those Victorian poets was that they contrived to drag their passion through the conventional machinery of their verse, and the heavy decorations that they hung on it’ (88).⁶⁷ While Sinclair’s description of nineteenth-century poets and their poetry draws upon generalised stereotypes of sentimentality, her criticism initially appears to be at odds with her choice of protagonist in *Mary Olivier: A Life*, although I believe that Mary is actually a transitional artist as her poetry prefigures some of the formal conventions found in Imagist poetry.⁶⁸ While the novel is set in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century, Mary’s status as a Victorian poetess is defined by additional factors. As mentioned, society’s expectations of the Victorian poetess were founded upon similar constructs as the Angel in the House/Angel of Repression, and Sinclair’s artist-heroine challenges these ideals by refusing to compromise her poetic voice to fulfil these masculinist definitions of appropriate forms of female creativity and behaviour in the public sphere. Therefore, in order for Mary to develop as a poet, she must overcome masculinist expectations placed upon this figure and communicate her artistic expression on her own terms.

As discussed earlier, Mary believes that ‘[t]he image pattern and the sound pattern belonged to each other’, and her emphasis on the importance of the poem’s form, rather than emotion, aligns Mary’s aesthetic vision with the Imagist movement (*MO* 125). While the reader is not introduced to brief samples of Mary’s original poetry until much later in the novel,

⁶⁷ Despite criticising the poetry of the Victorian period, Sinclair herself published a book of poems, *Nakiketas and Other Poems*, in 1886 under the pseudonym Julian Sinclair. She additionally published individual poems in various journals and the *Cheltenham Ladies Magazine* from 1889 to 1924. For a complete list of her poetry see Suzanne Raitt’s biography, *May Sinclair: A Modern Victorian* (275).

⁶⁸ Sinclair mentored and financially supported the members of the Imagist movement, in particular, Ezra Pound, H.D. and Richard Aldington (Raitt, *May Sinclair* 182), and she often publicly defended the burgeoning movement against its many detractors in such essays as ‘Two Notes’ (1915) and ‘The Poems of F. S. Flint’ (1921). Moreover, she experimented with Imagism in her novel, *The Tree of Heaven* (1917).

Sinclair still presents Mary's artistic consciousness through her experimentation with style, narration and point of view. Like Woolf and Richardson, Sinclair utilises both the stream-of-consciousness narrative and free indirect thought in her *Künstlerroman* and, consequently, the narrative voice often assumes Mary's developing poetic vision and takes on her burgeoning Imagist style. The following passage exemplifies this:

Stone walls. A wild country, caught in the net of the stone walls.

Stone wall following the planes of the land, running straight along the valleys, switchbacking up and down the slopes. Humped-up, grey spines of the green mounds.

Stone walls, piled loosely, with the brute skill of earth-men, building centuries ago. They bulged, they toppled, yet they stood firm, holding the wild country in their mesh, knitting the grey villages to the grey farms, and the farms to the grey byres. Where you thought the net had ended it flung out a grey rope over the purple back of Renton, the green shoulder of Greffington [...]

When you had got through the gate you were free (178).

Mary's presented reflections about the structure and composition of the 'stone walls' and 'wild countryside' reflects the Imagist's desire for 'direct contact with reality', wherein 'there is nothing between you and the object' (Sinclair, 'Two Notes' 88). Natan Zach argues in his essay, 'Imagism and Vorticism' (1976), that the Imagist movement 'is perhaps best viewed as a doctrine of *hardness*' which shapes the concrete image, 'style, rhythm and emotion' of a poem, and Mary's preference for the hard and still sound patterns found in Greek verse indicates her ability to reproduce these Imagist aesthetics in her own thoughts and writing (238).⁶⁹ Mary's impressions are succinct and straightforward as she employs the emergent trend of *vers libre* to present the "rough" (i.e. irregular) contours of "things" (238), for example, the material

⁶⁹ The connection between Greek and Imagism appears repeatedly in the prefaces, essays and letters of the movement's members. In a letter to the founder and editor of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, Harriet Monroe, Ezra Pound maintains that modern poetry reproduces in a similar vein the style of Greek poetry, plays and prose: 'Objective—no slither; direct—no excessive use of adjectives, no metaphors that won't permit examination. It's straight talk, straight as the Greeks!' (qtd. in P. Jones, 'Introduction' 17)

composition of the stone walls and the '[h]umped-up, grey spines' of the rolling hills. Rather than imitating the mechanised cadence of 'orthodox iambs', alliteration and assonance associated with Romanticism and Victorian poetry, the pace of Mary's stream-of-consciousness appears to be shaped by the particular object she is currently focused upon (Sinclair, 'The Poems of F. S. Flint' 6). When describing the walls, for example, Mary's description is concise and to the point as she reflects upon the dense materiality of the cold, hard stone: '[t]hey bulged, they toppled, yet they stood firm' (*MO* 175). The tempo shifts and expands once she switches her gaze to the vast countryside spread out before her and, like the curved slope of the '[h]umped-up hills', the rhythm of Mary's thoughts rise and fall like a wave—'switchbacking up and down'—before returning to the terse diction associated with the 'stone walls' trapping both her and the 'wild country' (175). While the Imagists refrained from using traditional rhyme and metre in their work, their poetry did not lack rhythm and the 'Preface' to *Some Imagists Poets* (1915) argues that that the Imagist should 'create new rhythms—as the expression of new moods—and not to copy old rhythms, which merely echo old moods' (135). Sinclair supports Pound's statement in her defence of the movement and she maintains Imagist poetry '*proves* the power of the clean, naked sensuous image to carry the emotion without rhyming—*not*, I think, without rhythm; the best Imagist poems have a very subtle and beautiful rhythm' which she recreates in Mary's represented stream-of-consciousness ('Two Notes' 88). It is the juxtaposition of these two contrasting images of restriction and freedom, and their distinctly different sound patterns, which prevents her free indirect thought and poetic voice from succumbing to the rhythm patterns, moods and expressions associated with nineteenth-century poetry.

While Mary's stream-of-consciousness successfully presents the hard and still image and sound patterns of the stone walls and Greffington countryside, Sinclair still manages to create an emotional connection between Mary and these images as her thoughts develop into a

much more comprehensive realisation about the reality of her restricted existence. Her prolonged focus on the town's barricades, and the metaphorical net they cast over its inhabitants, reflect Mary's psychological repression in nineteenth-century society and, rather than feeling secure within the towering stone walls, the clipped, staccato phrases of her thoughts reveal a sense of oppression embedded within the town's framework as the net of society continuously extends. It is only once she crosses the threshold of the last gate, which leads her into the wild country, that her stream of consciousness starts to unfold in a more relaxed, and impressionistic, style:

Inlets of green grass forked into purple heather. Green streamed through purple, lapped against purple, lay on purple in pools and splashes.

Burnt patches. Tongues of heather, twisted and pointed, picked clean by fire, flickering grey over black-earth. Towards evening the black and grey ran together like ink and water, stilled into purple, the black purple of grapes (*MO* 178).

In contrast to the dull catalogue of farm buildings and school houses, Mary's thoughts become more creative once she has 'slipped from the net of the walls', and she begins to play with the various images found in nature as if she were mentally composing a poem (178). Even though the Imagists said 'good-bye to the mere symbol', they still welcomed the metaphor in their poetry if it could be used in more interesting ways 'to convey a more striking image', and Mary's metaphor of the burnt heather as vibrating tongues presents a more sensual impression of the wild countryside than was previously seen behind the stone walls (Sinclair, 'The Poems of F. S. Flint' 7). It could also be argued that this scene functions as a metaphorical representation of the possibilities of sublimation once Mary is temporarily liberated from her repressed psychological state as her stream of consciousness transforms the pastoral setting into Imagist prose and, thus, Sinclair's artist-heroine momentarily experiences 'creative action', 'creative feeling' and 'the passion for beauty or for truth or goodness' (Sinclair, 'Clinical', I

120). Like Richardson, Sinclair incorporates aspects of Mary's everyday reality, such as a country walk, into her artistic consciousness and the creative process and, consequently, a connection can be made with sublimation and the ordinary. This scene undoubtedly reveals Mary's evolving artistry and potential for successful sublimation as a transitional poet, but it also indicates that, to change the perception of the nineteenth-century artist-heroine, one must also change the style of the text as the narrative voice is presented in more experimental and significant ways.

Isobel Armstrong argues that Victorian poetry should be examined 'in terms of transition' as the poets themselves 'helped to create and question' this always evolving history of literature that the modernists were so eager to break with, and Mary participates in such an examination throughout the novel in various aspects of her life as well as her art (1). Sinclair's incorporation of these emerging Imagist principles into Mary's developing poetic vision aligns her with the transitional poets of the late-nineteenth century whose placement within the canon is often ambiguous. An example of such a transitional poet is Charlotte Mew and Angela Leighton describes Mew as the 'last Victorian poet', though, she is sometimes associated with other literary movements like the *fin de siècle* and modernism ("Because Men" 240; Bristow, 'Charlotte Mew' 256). Situated outside the traditional conventions of the period, Sinclair recognises the influence the transitional poet has on this "genetic" [literary] history' and, by revisiting the figure of the Victorian woman poetess in *Mary Olivier: A Life*, she examines and reinterprets the literary presentation, libidinal sublimation and poetic style of the nineteenth-century woman poet (Armstrong 1).

Located in between the progressive bookends of Romanticism and modernism, Victorian poetry is often lost amongst the major figures and published works of these two hugely influential literary movements, and it is sometimes unfairly characterised by critics as an era which was 'subject to the presiding authority of a monarch' rather than one of cultural,

intellectual and artistic innovation (Bristow, 'Reforming Victorian poetry' 1). Despite the genre's diminished position, women poets had, for the first time, a more public and professional role in the literary marketplace and they published prolifically throughout the period. As artists, female poets occupied an 'ambiguous cultural space' (Morgan 204), and their relationship to the genre was traditionally a passive one wherein they were expected to fulfil the role of the creative muse who inspires the poetry of men rather than write their own. Not all women accepted this submissive role as the only form of influence they had upon the art form, and female poets like Elizabeth Barrett Browning wished to change women's relationship to the genre. With a more visible presence in the public sphere, female poets were subsequently forced to mobilise from the objectified position as a muse and poem to the subjective, and autonomous, poet, and this newfound influence in the literary marketplace brought about the creation of a term to identify this 'new' literary persona—the poetess.⁷⁰ Susan Brown discusses the implications of this feminised moniker in her essay, 'The Victorian poetess' (2002), and she examines how it indicates more than a distinction produced 'by a modifier like "woman"' because it, instead, highlights 'the absolute difference in kind implied by [these] separate nouns' (180). The term is considered sexist and condescending in today's standards but Armstrong maintains that women poets during the period were able to 'occup[y] a particular sphere of influence' in the publishing industry and, thus, the label was most likely received by them as a sign of respect rather than one of segregation and patriarchal oppression (321). Brown agrees with Armstrong's assertion, but she maintains this deliberate distinction between the male poet and the female poetess implies that the writer's gender was a significant, and relevant, aspect of poetry in the period, and the term subsequently 'proved enabling as well as constraining for women writers' (S. Brown 180).

⁷⁰ I am not suggesting that the woman poet was an absent figure prior to the Victorian period, and Anne Bradstreet, Felicia Hemans, Mary Robinson and Anna Seward are just a few examples of earlier female poets who consistently published throughout their lifetime. The public persona of the Victorian poetess does imply, however, that women had a more recognised, influential, and active role in the literary marketplace than in previous centuries.

The Victorian poetess was expected to embody the cult of domesticity and feminine ideals of the period, yet the publishing industry's negative 'implications of self-advertisement and immodest circulation in the market' placed this figure in a precarious position of potentially personifying the destructive characteristics of the angel's immoral opposite with her desires for acceptance and recognition in the public sphere (187). As seen in the previous chapters, this dichotomy of angel and monster is associated with the artist-heroine's residual dilemma of professionalisation, and the Victorian poetess was often forced to choose between the 'demands of ambition' and her traditional roles as wife and mother (Blain, 'Introduction' 25). Moreover, if the poetess chose the professional sphere over the domestic, she would have to suffer certain repercussions and 'acknowledge' in her writing that her 'poetic genius' was a 'source of sorrow rather than joy' as it prevented her from fulfilling her more natural role as wife and mother (25). Sinclair was more than aware of this particular expectation placed upon the woman artist's public persona, and she maintains in *The Three Brontës* that, when there is obvious '[t]alent in a woman', society believes 'there's a formula for it—*tout talent de femme est un bonheur manqué*' (72). While the poetess would undoubtedly be commended for casting aside her art in order to perform her maternal and domestic duties, she was expected to publically undermine the pleasure she found in her creative process. Some female poets were able to navigate the various pressures of both responsibilities, yet the majority of women were forced to surrender an aspect of their identity in order to satisfy the demands and expectations of their chosen role.

Sinclair explores the repercussions of such a sacrifice in *The Three Sisters* when her unmarried protagonist, Gwendolen Cartaret, leaves her independent life in London and returns home to care for her ailing father: "There were moments when she saw herself as two women. One had still the passion and the memory of freedom. The other was a cowed and captive creature who had forgotten; whose cramped motions guided her; whose instinct of submission

she abhorred' (337). She obviously prefers, and yearns for, her former role as a self-sufficient writer living in London, but Gwendolen surrenders herself to the role of a domestic caretaker because her two married sisters have their own families to tend to, and Sinclair examines the 'tragedy' of Gwendolen's self-sacrifice in the final chapters of the novel (336). Sinclair specifically revisits this conflict in *Mary Olivier: A Life* as her artist-heroine confronts these dichotomies of angel/monster and the professional/domestic and, consequently, she additionally overcomes the masculinist stereotypes and perceptions associated with the Victorian poetess. Sinclair rewrites the woman artist's sacrifice of artistic integrity and selfhood with Mary's refusal to apologise for her aesthetic endeavours and desire for erotic sublimation into her poetry.

As discussed earlier, Mary's mother, Caroline, is presented throughout the narrative as the traditional Victorian Angel in the House, and Mary must participate in emotional matricide and metaphorically eliminate her mother from her life in order to find her autonomous self as an artist. Mary challenges her mother about her right to learn Greek and eventually gains control over her self-education, but she still remains conflicted about her transgressions and she struggles throughout the novel to overcome her fear that her desire to write and publish poetry is a 'monstrous thought' and 'a deadly sin' (*MO* 313, 234). Sinclair consequently fulfils Gilbert and Gubar's demand that the woman writer must also confront the angel's Other, specifically, the madwoman in the attic (*Madwoman* 30). In addition to Mary's belief that her artistry is monstrous, Sinclair also presents this perception of Otherness through the figure of Mary's paternal aunt, Charlotte. Portrayed throughout the narrative as an unstable and sexually repressed hysteric, Charlotte's mental regression is not classified as a hereditary psychological

condition and Sinclair positions Mary's aunt as a casualty of the oppressive ideology of Victorian femininity and domesticity.⁷¹

The reader is first introduced to Aunt Charlotte in the first pages of the novel when Mary and her mother look through a photo album, and Mary immediately notices the difference between her aunt and the other family members in the photograph:

[Charlotte] stood on a strip of carpet, supported by the hoops of her crinoline; her black lace shawl made a pattern on the light gown. She wore a little hat with a white sweeping feather, and under the hat two long black curls hung down straight on each shoulder.

The other people in the Album were sulky and wouldn't look at you. The gentlemen made cross faces at somebody who wasn't there; the ladies hung their heads and looked down at their crinolines. Aunt Charlotte hung her head too, but her eyes tilted up straight under her forehead, pointed at you. And between her stiff black curls she was smiling—smiling. When Mamma came to Aunt Charlotte's picture she tried to turn over the page of the Album quick (*MO* 10).

In contrast to, perhaps, the most well known interpretation of the nineteenth-century madwoman, Bertha Mason, who is described in *Jane Eyre* (1847) as a 'maniac' with a 'purple face' and 'bloated features', Aunt Charlotte's mental illness does not manifest in any obvious physical characteristics (Brontë (2006) 338).⁷² Everything about her in the photograph—from her clothing, to her hairstyle and posture—comply with the proper moral principles of the period embodied by the Angel of Repression. Charlotte's rare smile and locked gaze alludes to

⁷¹ Charlotte's brother, Victor, thinks her mental illness is hereditary, and he refuses to procreate because he is '[a]fraid of what he might hand on to his children' (*MO* 222). Despite Victor's apprehensions about Charlotte's hysteria, there is no professional diagnosis mentioned in the novel to suggest this is the case. In an interesting turn of events it is Victor who commits suicide because he was '[a]fraid' of life (328).

⁷² When Mr Rochester finally reveals Bertha's existence to Jane he admits that, in the early years of their marriage, he 'had a charming partner—pure, wise, modest' (Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (2006) 337). Despite this reference, the reader never encounters Bertha's angel persona in the novel. While Brontë alludes to the possibility of the deceptive nature of Victorian femininity, Sinclair examines it further in her modernist *Künstlerroman*.

a dangerous latent sexuality concealed beneath her Victorian stance and dress, and Mrs Olivier's response to Charlotte's smile communicates to Mary that her aunt's actions in the photograph are inappropriate. Other indicators of Charlotte's peculiar nature are seen in the various gifts she sends her niece and nephews, for example, a naked white china doll, her fixation with babies and men and, finally, her numerous imaginary engagements. With the vague realisation that her aunt's 'illness had something to do with being married', Mary is, for the most part, unaware of the full extent of her aunt's hysteria, and it is not until she becomes an adult and experiences the same repressive forces that Mary truly begins to understand the root of Charlotte's madness is founded upon her aunt's inability to sublimate her suppressed sexuality (79).

In the early sections of the novel, Charlotte's mental state reveals itself to her niece through these 'ambiguous manifestations of eccentricity and deviance' which practicing nineteenth-century Darwinian psychiatrists associated with 'the borderland' of mental illness (Showalter, *Female Malady* 105). Defined as a psychological region located midway between sanity and insanity, those who resided in this particular sphere of psychosis were more susceptible to 'latent brain disease' and various nervous disorders like hysteria and, because their symptoms often remained concealed behind a normative appearance, the inhabitants who occupied the psychological borderland were often harder to identify within mainstream society (105). It is this ability to pass off mental competency which makes the borderland such a dangerous mental state, for it represents a more subversive form of monstrosity that lies beneath the masquerade of a healthy member of the public. Charlotte's ability to successfully mimic the attributes of the morally sound Angel in the House in the photograph both 'exposes the flaws of the Victorian woman as a social construct' and deconstructs the traditional perception of the Victorian madwoman (Wilson, 'Mary Olivier' 232). Nevertheless, the possibility always remained that the seemingly harmless eccentric could regress, at any

moment, into a more unstable form of psychosis and eventually ‘cross the borderland into [extreme] madness’ (Showalter, *Female Malady* 106). Charlotte’s mental state deteriorates as the novel progresses, and the once statuesque angel in the photograph ultimately transforms into a ‘maniac’ whose inhuman cries wake Mary in the middle of the night when Charlotte attacks her nephew Dan and bites him (*MO* 152). This scene, which mirrors Bertha’s attack on her brother Mason in *Jane Eyre*, reveals the full extent of Charlotte’s degeneration into madness. As Mary’s monstrous counterpart, her aunt’s transformation from Victorian angel to the madwoman in the attic functions primarily as a representation of the dire consequences of women’s repression and inability to sublimate their libidos into alternative outlets—whether they be artistically or domestically oriented. When Mark and Mary discuss the cause of Charlotte’s hysteria and regression, Mark admits that ‘Charlotte always knew what she wanted’—marriage and children—and she ‘spent her whole life trying to get it’ (250). When he asks his sister whether her one desire in life is to also be married she, instead, responds: ‘I’m not thinking about it. I’d like to write poems. And to get away sometimes and to see places. To get away from Mamma’ (250). Mary aligns her hidden happiness in writing poetry with Charlotte’s repressed sexuality and, she understands that, in order to successfully sublimate her libido into poetry and escape her aunt’s fate, she must challenge the angel ideal and the patriarchal view that women’s gratification through art is monstrous.

Throughout the narrative Mrs. Olivier exploits Charlotte’s hysteria as a way of manipulating Mary into acquiescing to the ideals of Victorian domesticity, and she constantly warns her daughter that her subversive actions, especially her writing, could lead to a similar fate as her aunt: ‘Well, if you don’t want to be thought like your Aunt Charlotte you should try and behave a little more like other people’ (237). By other people Mrs. Olivier means herself and, although Mary’s encounters with Charlotte are occasional, their meetings leave a lasting impression in the recesses of Mary’s consciousness. With the pressures Mrs. Olivier places

upon her daughter to embrace society's ideal of the subservient, domestic woman, and Mary's encroaching fears that she might be going insane, it is unsurprising that Sinclair's artist-heroine feels as if she is constantly being '[c]rushed down' by these oppressive identities of angel and monster and a splintering of selves subsequently occurs (290):

Sometimes she had queer glimpses of the persons that were called Mary Olivier. There was Mrs. Olivier's only daughter, proud of her power over the sewing-machine. [...] There as Mark Olivier's sister, who rejoiced in the movements of her body, the strain of the taut muscles throbbing on their own leash, the bound forwards, the push of the wind on her knees and breast, the hard feel of the ground under her padding feet. And there was Mary Olivier, the little girl of thirteen who her mother and Aunt Bella whispered about to each other with mysterious reference to her age.

Her secret happiness had nothing to do with any of these Mary Oliviers. It was not like any other happiness. It had nothing to do with Mamma or Dan or Roddy, or even Mark (94).

Mary defines these various versions of herself as products of her relationships with other people, such as her mother's domestic conditioning, the outdoor games she plays with her brothers and the pre-pubescent girl on the cusp of womanhood ready for courtship. Mary recognises that her real self, which safeguards her happiness, is an entirely separate entity from these external performances and versions of herself and is bound up with Greek, poetry and her artistic consciousness.

Mary often experiences this secret happiness when she is alone in the countryside, though anything can trigger it such as 'trees standing up in the golden white light', 'haunting rhymes', and 'sudden cadences' like 'the grave "*Ubique*" sounding through the Beethoven Sonata' (93, 125). These revelatory moments recur throughout the 'Adolescent' and 'Maturity' sections of the novel, and Mary often returns to these sites of inspiration even though they

‘never came twice to the same place in the same way’ (94). These early epiphanic moments often transpire early in the narrative without any meaningful reflection by Mary as to their purpose, and it is not until she encounters Shelley’s poetry—specifically ‘Hymn to Intellectual Beauty’ (1817), ‘Ode to a Skylark’ (1820), ‘Ode to the West Wind’ (1820) and ‘Adonais’ (1821)—that she connects these moments of private ecstasy with her artistic self and the possibilities for erotic sublimation into higher forms of art:

All her secret happiness was there. Shelley knew about the queerness of the sharp white light, and the sudden stillness, when the grey fields turn to violet: the clear, hard stillness that covers the excited throb-throbbing of the light.

‘Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity’—

Colours were more beautiful than white radiance. But that was because of the light. The more light there was in them the more beautiful they were; it was their real life (130).

Sinclair’s imagistic passage recalls ‘the treatment of light introduced by the impressionists’ and, in contrast to Homer’s hard and still Greek words which haunt Mary with melancholic, ‘throbbing wounds of sound’, she is moved by the ‘sudden stillness’, the ‘hard stillness’ and the ‘excited throb-throbbing’ of Shelley’s image patterns of white light and vibrant colour presented in his poetry (Deutsche 441; *MO* 126, 130). Mary recognises in his visual metaphor of stained glass the artist’s experience of poetic inspiration and she is given a better understanding about her creative process as an artist. Much like Richardson’s presentation of Miriam’s evolving artistry and separation from traditional realist style in *Pilgrimage*, Mary’s secret happiness is caught up in these ordinary moments and she has a better understanding of her artistic expression when she refracts, or interprets, these colourful prisms of experience in an entirely new way, for example, in her poetry and unconventional Greek translations. While

this new style is eventually seen in Mary's original verse, it is Sinclair's experimentation with narration, wherein the text merges with Mary's poetic stream of consciousness, that her artistry is fully revealed. Sinclair believes 'the modern poet must show his modernity; in sticking, that is to say, close to consciousness' as Mary's thoughts become art ('The Poems of F. S. Flint 16).

Mary's epiphany reflects Sinclair's own belief that '[p]oetry is the rhythmic expression of an intense personal emotion produced by direct contact with reality' (13). Her statement was most likely influenced by Pound who argued in 'A Few Don'ts By an Imagiste' (1913) that the "Image" is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time', and 'it is in the presentation of such a "complex" instantaneously which gives that sense of liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience the presence of greater works of art' (130). While Mary experiences an instant of liberation from the repressive constraints of the angel/monster dichotomy with this revelation, her epiphanic release with Shelley is short-lived as the parish priest, Mr. Propart, disapproves of her extracurricular reading and removes the poet's books from the Five Elm library bookshelves. Because the adults in the novel, especially Mrs. Olivier, do not approve of Mary's poetic endeavours, Sinclair's artist-heroine feels as if she is always under surveillance and '[h]iding her real self and crushing it' to appease her mother (*MO* 249). The oppressive nature of these performative roles subsequently causes a suppression of her real self always 'hushing its own voice' and 'hiding in its own gesture' within the illusory vessel which houses these various Mary Oliviers (168). It is with this schism that Sinclair examines what is at stake for the woman artist if she is unable to reconcile her artistic self with the public perception of women's creative endeavours as monstrous.

Mary's inability to transcend these oppressive figures of womanhood and subsequent divide between these various public and private selves is a familiar motif associated with the

nineteenth-century artist-heroine.⁷³ Sinclair taps into this tradition in her modernist *Künstlerroman* with her distinct narrative style and combined use of first-, second- and third-person narration to document Mary's aesthetic development and poetic voice. While Woolf and Richardson experimented with various formal techniques of point of view with free indirect thought and stream-of-consciousness, the interchange between the third-person 'she'/'her' and first-person 'I' is considered a more traditional form of narration, and Sinclair's incorporation of the second-person 'you' creates an awkward tension in the novel. It is because of this discomfort with the pronoun that the majority of texts are unable to maintain the second-person address throughout the entirety of the narrative, and Mieke Bal argues it is because '[t]he "you" is simply an "I" in disguise' making the novel really 'a "first-person narrative" with a formal twist' (30). Other critics like Monica Fludernik and Brian Richardson have argued the second-person pronoun has a more ambiguous and diverse role in literature than Bal's maintains in her study.⁷⁴ Brian Richardson argues there are three main interpretations of the second-person narrative, which he classifies as the 'standard form' (wherein the protagonist is identified by "you" rather than "I", "he" or "she"), the 'hypothetical form' (which reproduces 'the style of the guidebook'), and the 'autotelic form' (which 'employs direct address to the reader or narratee') (*Unnatural Voices* 18). Although not considered a 'second-person narrative proper', *Mary Olivier: A Life* engages with many of the stylistic and technical conventions of the form when the narrative voice repeatedly assumes the

⁷³ Elizabeth Barrett Browning's epic novel-poem, *Aurora Leigh* (1856), narrates the evolution and eventual fusion of the woman artist's fragmented private and public selves. Like Mary, Aurora recognises her divided self with her admittance that 'I kept the life, thrust on me, on the outside / Of the inner life with all its ample room / For hearts and lungs' (I 477-79). As the first book progresses, and Aurora's passion for writing poetry overwhelms her, she is no longer able to 'hide / [Her] quickening inner life from those at watch' and who disapprove of her artistic endeavours (I 1027-28). Barrett Browning's artist-protagonist ultimately confronts her image in the mirror and asserts, "'We'll live, Auroral we'll be strong. / The dogs are on us—but we will not die.'" (I 1065-66) Her psychological confrontation with her reflection, and her use of inclusive 'we', indicates a fusion of her inner and outer selves, and she subsequently embarks on her 'fresh-sprinkling dreams' of becoming a poet throughout the remainder of the novel-poem (I 1060).

⁷⁴ See Monica Fludernik, 'Introduction: Second-person narrative and related issues' (Fall 1994); 'Second Person Fiction: Narrative *You* As Addressee and/or protagonist' (1993); 'Second-Person Narrative as a test case for narratology: The limits of realism' (Fall 1994) and Brian Richardson, *Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction* (2006).

second-person address throughout the novel (Fludernik, 'Introduction' 283). Of the three forms delineated by Richardson, Sinclair utilises the standard and autotelic forms as the narrative voice slips between the first-, second- and third-person pronoun. In addition to breaking down the 'boundaries' of realism, Sydney Janet Kaplan argues that these various points of view represent Mary's shifting perceptions of her divided self:

There is an omniscient narrator for Mary also, but it is not an impersonal one it is Mary herself. Usually the narrator describes the thoughts in Mary's mind through the conventional third-person she'. This is where the writer Mary, looking at her own life from a great distance in time or feeling, separates herself from the thoughts of the character Mary [...] But when the omniscient narrator gets closer and closer to identification with the character Mary, the pronouns change. Thus she speaks to the other self. 'You,' she calls it (*Feminine Consciousness* 50-1).

I agree with Kaplan's reading that Mary takes on the role of the omniscient narrator and that these separate pronouns reflect her divided self, but Sinclair's utilisation of the second-person address reflects more than just a conversation between Mary's real, artistic self and her public, performative persona. Sinclair's experimentation with these various narrative modes can be read in three ways, firstly, this interchange between pronouns is a representation of the artist-heroine's multiple layers of consciousness, secondly, she creates commonality between Mary's quest for sublimation and artistic autonomy and the implied, or actual, reader and, finally, as Kaplan suggests, a psychological dialogue ensues between Mary's public and private selves. It is only once she embraces the autonomy of her artistic self that Mary finally achieves sublimation.

Sinclair argues in a later essay 'Primary and Secondary Consciousness (1923) that, while 'we may agree that consciousness is at least a state of awareness' and 'of knowing', we can distinguish between two levels of consciousness which she defines as primary and secondary

consciousness (111). She maintains that the first layer, primary consciousness, can be defined as ‘all that is present to the subject from moment to moment in one unitary block, it is the continuous succession of such presences, before reflection, judgment or reasoning have set in; before there is any consciousness-of-consciousness’ (112). This uninterrupted current of impressions occurs as a ‘sudden flash of the instantaneous present’ and it does not ‘doubl[e] back’ on itself in contemplation (112). An alternative expression can be attached to this description, the stream of consciousness, which she coined nearly a decade earlier in her review of Richardson’s *Pointed Roofs* (1915), *Backwater* (1916) and *Honeycomb* (1917). It appears that Sinclair has elaborated upon her initial conception of the term when compared to its original designation, wherein she stated ‘there is no drama, no situation, no set scene. Nothing happens. It is just like going on and on’, and Sinclair refers to this earlier essay when she confirms that primary consciousness is also perceived as one’s ‘stream of thought’ (‘The Novels of Dorothy Richardson’ 5-6; ‘Primary and Secondary Consciousness’ 112). In contrast to primary consciousness, secondary consciousness is recognised as a psychological state defined by its hyper-awareness where ‘all intellectual processes, of experiment and discovery’ occur in ‘that return’ to a state of reflection and assessment of reality (‘Primary and Secondary Consciousness’ 113). Aligned with the second- and third-person, one’s secondary consciousness indicates a deeper level of understanding about the objects previously filtered by one’s primary consciousness.

Sinclair maintains that an exchange between these two states of consciousness is possible as they ‘play into each other’s hands’, and the narrative voice in *Mary Olivier: A Life* continuously fluctuates between Mary’s primary and secondary consciousness (113). An example of this interchange is found in the text in the previously discussed passage where Mary walks through the Greffington countryside and encounters burnt allotments of heather. Reproducing the flow of impressions associated with the stream-of-consciousness narrative,

Mary's primary consciousness merges with her surroundings in this twilight scene as the '[i]nlets of green grass forked into purple heather' and the burnt 'black and grey' land 'ran together like ink and water, stilled into purple, the black purple of grapes' (*MO* 178). The switch to secondary consciousness occurs when Mary's thoughts employ the second-person address when she mentally re-imagines the scene in front of her: '[i]f you shut your eyes you could see the flat Essex country spread in a thin film over Karva' (179). It has already been mentioned that this scene functions as a representation of Mary's artistry, but the fact that her primary consciousness is able to produce such evocative images without the need for further reflection alludes to the possibility that Mary's artistic ability is an innate trait. Although, how she refines such aesthetic impressions occurs when she revisits these striking moments of reality as she uses her secondary consciousness to transform these thoughts into her poems:

'The pale pearl-purple evening—' The words rushed together. She couldn't tell whether they were her own or somebody else's.

There was the queer shock of recognition that came with your own real things. It wasn't remembering though it felt like it.

Shelley—"The pale purple even.' Not pearl-purple. Pearl-purple was what you saw. The sky to the east after sunset above Greffington Edge. Take out 'pale,' and 'pearl-purple evening' was your own. (234).

This passage occurs much later in the novel and Mary's secondary consciousness is returning to two moments which were previously reproduced in the narrative by her primary consciousness: when she first encounters Shelley's poetry and her walk in the Greffington countryside. Recalling a line from Shelley's 'Ode to a Skylark', Mary fears her attempts at recreating the colourful rivulets of the purple and burnt black heather is producing unoriginal poetry. Despite this concern, her eventual pronouncement with the second-person self-address that these images are, in fact, 'your own real things' and the "'pearl-purple evening"' was your

own' establishes a sense of autonomy with her poetry as she continues to write. Sinclair's use of the second-person pronoun in this scene allows a more 'creative representation' that 'reveal[s] a mind in flux', as well as a metafictional presentation of the writing process, as Mary's reflective consciousness unites separate images and memories to shape her poetry (Richardson, *Unnatural Voices* 35).

While at times uncomfortable to read, Sinclair's experimentation with second-person narration does more than reproduce Mary's secondary consciousness and ensuing creative process, I believe it separates Sinclair's *Künstlerroman* from the work of her contemporaries like James Joyce, Richardson and Woolf as the second-person creates a sense of commonality between her artist-heroine and the implied reader. Her decision to employ this form of address creates both a 'generalized you' and, as the narrative progresses, a more 'specific' you which is directed at both the reader as well as Mary (Fludernik 'Second Person Fiction' 221). *Mary Olivier: A Life* begins with Sinclair's utilisation of the 'generalized' you as she presents Mary's infant consciousness:

Every night, when Jenny had gone away with the doll and the donkey, you hunched up the blanket and the stiff white counterpane to hide the curtain and you played with the knob in the green painted iron railing of the cot. It stuck out close to your face, winking and grinning at you in a friendly way. You poked it till it left off and turned grey and went back into the railing. Then you had to feel for it with your finger. It fitted the hollow of your hand, cool and hard, with a blunt nose that pushed agreeably into the palm (3)

Many have commented on the similarity of the openings of *Mary Olivier: A Life* and Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1917), but in contrast to Joyce's presentation of his artist-protagonist's infant consciousness with free indirect thought and the third-person narrator, Sinclair employs the second-person address and directs Mary's impressions at the reader. The

obvious name of the novel, and reference to the toy doll, suggests this infant is Mary, although this image of a baby playing in its cot after being put down to sleep is still a general life experience and the actual reader's own 'story is juxtaposed to and can merge with' Mary's in this scene (Richardson, *Unnatural Voices* 30). Rather than reinforcing the nineteenth-century *Künstlerroman's* tradition of placing the artist-protagonist in an Ivory Tower, the reader can step into 'the role of "(any)one"' in this opening scene (Fludernik, 'A Test Case for Narratology' 452). Once the narrative begins to unfold, 'the text then proceeds to conjure up a very specific "you"' which is immediately revealed to be a Victorian, middle-class girl growing up in a patriarchal society (452). When this occurs, the reader is subsequently forced to 'realize that the "you" must be an other, a [sic] or the protagonist' rather than themselves (452). While this may be true for contemporary readers today, many of the early-twentieth readers who encountered Sinclair's *Künstlerroman* were most likely women who shared many of the same trials and tribulations as Mary and, consequently, Sinclair's utilisation of the second-person address creates an 'increased empathy effect' between her artist-heroine and her readers (Fludernik, 'Second Person Fiction' 227). Moreover, by allowing particular readers to identify with Mary's story, the second-person address of both the generalized and specific you 'helps dramatize the mental battles' of repressed women who are also 'struggling' against the 'discourse of an oppressive' society (Richardson, *Unnatural Voices* 36).

Sinclair further recreates 'the model of the generalizing *you*' through the 'self-address *you*', as the majority of 'people in their private thoughts argue with themselves' and, consequently, a dialogue ensues 'between their egos and superegos' and 'they may find themselves addressing their own selves' (Fludernik, 'Second Person Fiction' 238). Sinclair recreates this common experience with Mary's recurring indecision about publishing her poetry and embracing the role of the Victorian poetess in the professional sphere. Throughout the majority of *Mary Olivier: A Life*, Sinclair's artist-heroine fears the public perception of her

artistry, and she relies on maintaining the divide between her private passion for poetry and her performative, public self. She believes that by keeping her writing a secret, she gives herself protection from the judgmental attitudes of her family and society. Until Mary transcends the patriarchal ideal that women's artistic endeavours are monstrous, she will be unable to achieve sublimation and progress as an artist. It is only when her private writing desk no longer has the space to hold her poems that Mary contemplates the possibility of publishing:

‘That night the monstrous thought came to her in bed: Supposing I published these poems—I always meant to do it some day. Why haven’t I? Because I don’t care? Or because I care too much? Because I’m afraid? Afraid that if somebody reads them the illusion they’ve created would be gone? [...]

If it is an illusion I’d rather know it.

How *can* I know? There isn’t anybody here who can tell me. Nobody you could believe if they told you—

I can believe *myself*. I’ve burnt everything I’ve written that was bad.

You believe yourself to-day. You believed yourself yesterday. How do you know you’ll believe yourself tomorrow?

Tomorrow— (*MO* 313).

This is one of the rare instances where Mary’s presented thoughts take on the voice of the first-person as she questions why she continues to hide her poetry. Many of her fears about entering the public sphere stem from a lack of guidance and support as an artist, and her lack of confidence is revealed in this dialogue between her conflicting views about entering the public sphere. While she is unable to convince herself that her poetry is worthwhile to others, it is through Richard’s support that she truly begins to contemplate the possibility of life as a poet and embrace the potentials of living an independent life. This new sense of autonomy is borne out of both her changing relationship with her mother as well as Richard. Firstly, the

battle for artistic autonomy between the Angel of Repression finally culminates in Mary's late-thirties when her mother finally reveals her jealousy at Mary's success beyond the traditional conventions of Victorian domesticity and femininity (325). In addition to this confrontation, Mary gains a further sense of autonomy when she embarks on her first sexual relationship with Richard and the first-person pronoun begins to be used in a 'stronger (direct)' way than its previous function 'in reported speech or thought' (Battersby 115, 114). Even though her emotional and physical relationship with Richard deteriorates by the end of *Mary Olivier: A Life* with her inability to leave her dying mother, this newfound autonomous 'I' does not leave the narrative and Mary does not regret her decision to sacrifice her lover for her mother, and she continues to work on her poetry. It is with 'letting go' of Richard that Mary achieves sublimation with her newfound understanding about the reality of her creative potential (*MO* 379). While her repressed self was only able to experience these epiphanic moments of the higher purposes of reality in 'brilliant, clear flashes' throughout her childhood and adolescence, it is now, when living a life independent from her mother and Richard, that it life continuously 'stream[s] in and out of her till its ebb and flow were the rhythm of her life' (377).

It is with her newfound recognition that 'life' has 'this exquisite clearness and intensity' that Mary achieves sublimation. The novel ends with Mary once again addressing her future as a poet:

I tried to doubt away this ultimate passion, and it turned my doubt into its own exquisite sting, the very thrill of the adventure.

Supposing there's nothing in it, nothing at all?

That's the risk you take.

There isn't any risk. This time it was clear, clear as the black pattern the sycamore makes on the sky

If it never came again I should remember (379-80).

While Christine Battersby maintains that Sinclair's *Künstlerroman* is a "A Portrait of the Artist as a Middle-Aged Woman" which fails to truly fulfil the attributes of the genre, I argue that Sinclair presents an honest portrayal of the woman artist's difficult struggle to achieve sublimation and artistic fulfilment (119). Like Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, what Sinclair is presenting through Mary's various modes of narration and consciousness is a redefinition of art which is no longer defined by institutional structures of approval. For the modernist *Künstlerroman* heroine, consciousness and the creative process becomes representative of art. Sinclair challenged the mantra '*tout talent de femme est un bonheur manqué*' with Mary's concession that one of the driving forces behind women's artistic endeavours is not about whether they publish their work in the public sphere, instead, she recognises it is about the process—"the very thrill of the adventure"—as she defies the dominant ideologies of the period which aim to repress women's creativity.

The Rebirth of the Woman Artist in Vita Sackville-West's *All Passion Spent*

As discussed in the first chapter, E. M. Forster questioned the motives of his contemporaries who chose to end their novels with a marriage. He maintains it is only after 'those wedding bells are silent' that the real 'drama of [the lovers'] problems, their developments, their mutual interaction is all to come' (*AE* 135-6). While many modernist interpretations of the *Künstlerroman* refused to fulfil the nineteenth-century courtship plot with a marriage at the end of their narratives, the majority of authors still present their artist-protagonists as adolescents who mature into artist adulthood. In contrast, Vita Sackville-West's novel, *All Passion Spent* (1931) offers not only a post-marriage perspective, but also one which continues into old age. The novel's protagonist, Lady Deborah Slane, a widow, reflects upon the choices she made in life, particularly her decision to sacrifice her artistic potential as a painter for marriage and motherhood. She is an unconventional artist-heroine, not only because she is an octogenarian, but also because she 'never laid brush to canvas' (*APS* 86). Sackville-West redefines the traditional 'condition of the artist' narrative frequently found in modernist literature and explores through Lady Slane's memories a kind of artistry which is held in abeyance and has the potential to recreate and rewrite a life through memories and reflection (Fletcher and Bradbury 408). Here again, we have the redefinition of what constitutes female artistry and a representation of the antithetical nature of the life of the woman artist and that of wifedom and motherhood.

In contrast to the previously discussed *Künstlerromane*, Sackville-West's artist-protagonist decides, at the age of eighty-eight, to leave the comforts and familiarity of her former life—a stately home in South Kensington, public status and prestige as the former wife of the Prime Minister and one-time Vicereine of India, her charities and social obligations, her six children, many grandchildren and great-grandchildren—to live a solitary existence in a small house in Hampstead with her closest confidant, her French maid Genoux. The catalyst

for this change in lifestyle is the passing of her husband, Henry Lyulph Holland, first Earl of Slane, whose 'death brought a revelation' to his wife about the possibility of finally attaining the independent life she has desired since her engagement (*APS* 8). Lady Roehampton's comments in Sackville-West's *The Edwardians* (1930) that '[w]omen ought to be married, or at any rate widowed' reaffirm the Victorian and Edwardian belief that the only two acceptable roles for a woman in society revolved around the social institution of marriage, although with the latter position, a woman is granted an element of independence she was most likely denied in her marriage (39). In contrast to the many widows of the Victorian and Edwardian period who 'suffered from alarm or panic at the loss of security and protection' their marriage once provided, Lady Slane instead appreciates her newly emancipated state and she immediately informs her children of her plans: 'I'm going to become completely self-indulgent. I am going to wallow in old age [...] I want no one about me except those who are nearer to death than their birth' (Jalland 236; *APS* 36). Exile from society was common amongst widows of the period and, while Queen Victoria's decision to retreat from public life for twenty years to mourn her husband, Prince Albert, is an extreme example of this self-imposed exile, she still surrounded herself with her large family. Lady Slane's resolve to completely separate herself from her children and grandchildren by living with her elderly maid during this delicate period of bereavement is a radical departure from traditional mourning customs.

Rather than choosing to be defined by her situation and becoming a victim of her husband's death, Lady Slane takes the opportunity to regain the autonomy she lost in her marriage—for she no longer wishes to be the passive 'appendage' of the family—with her decision to reside in a house of her own and live out her final months as a widow in peace and reflection (*APS* 11). Because so much emphasis is placed on Lady Slane's reflections, it could be argued that Sackville-West incorporates elements of the '*Erfahrungsroman*' into her narrative, which is defined by Ann Ronchetti as a 'novel of experience', wherein adult protagonists

‘assess their lives, the choices they have made, and the impact of events that have befallen them’ (50). Ronchetti maintains many modernist *Künstlerromane* like Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and Marcel Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-27) incorporate aspects of the *Erfahrungsroman* into their narratives, and Sackville-West taps into this tradition in *All Passion Spent*. In contrast to Clarissa Dalloway’s moments of self-reflection, Lady Slane is only able to engage with her memories and her artistic consciousness after her husband’s death, and her decision to acquire a space of her own that is completely separate from her previous life has led to comparisons of *All Passion Spent* with Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1929). Consequently, many of Sackville-West’s ideas surrounding creativity and the figure of the woman artist are associated with Woolf’s essay.

Lady Slane’s recollections are not presented merely for the sake of nostalgia, for they signify the possibility that ‘consciousness is itself aesthetic’ and the novel’s more formally experimental passages coincide with Lady Slane’s represented memories (Fletcher and Bradbury 408). David Medalie has noted her ambiguous status as a woman artist in that Lady Slane had ‘always been an artist in her temperament and her conduct’, although he maintains her advancing age and the inevitable arrival of death drives her towards the necessary psychological condition of the artist—one defined by a ‘poeticized, subjected vision’ of life (Medalie 16; Fletcher and Bradbury 408). In contrast to Medalie’s reading of an artistic awakening brought about by old age and a fear of death, I want to argue that Lady Slane’s artistic consciousness remained with her throughout her marriage, though it was often suppressed to fulfil her domestic roles. It is not her fear of death which spurs her artistic renewal but, instead, it is her newfound appreciation for life as an independent woman which allows her the freedom to return to her youthful artistic temperament without fear of reproach from her family.

By presenting Lady Slane's artistic consciousness through these internalised memories, Sackville-West, like Richardson and Sinclair, revisits the continuing 'debate between the art that makes life, and the art that would assert it *is* life; between the art that makes its appeal to its own internal universe, and the art that makes it to the reality of texture and the material world' (Fletcher and Bradbury 411). Her focus on Lady's Slane's participation in the creative process through her memories, rather than the completion of an actual painting, reflects what Sinclair and Richardson explore in their own novels, specifically Miriam Henderson's wish to remain in a continuous state of artistic being. In contrast to the more experimental texts like *Pilgrimage* (1915-1957) and *Mary Olivier: A Life* (1919), *All Passion Spent* is often identified as a middlebrow novel. I wish to explore what happens to the female *Künstlerroman* when reinterpreted by the middlebrow writer, and how Sackville-West's portrayal of Lady Slane's artistic consciousness contributes to the modernist debate surrounding twentieth-century definitions of female creativity.

The Battle of the Brows

In contrast to Woolf, Richardson and Sinclair, Victoria 'Vita' Sackville-West had an aristocratic upbringing on her family estate, Knole.⁷⁵ Despite being an only child, her sex prevented her from inheriting the property and the family peerage and, consequently, she had a 'deep regret at not being [born] a boy' (Watson 18). Instead of giving their daughter the same education as an upper-class man, Sackville-West's parents took an informal approach in supervising their daughter's studies. Much of her early education was overseen by an ever-changing list of governesses and Sackville-West participated in a form of autodidacticism which primarily focused on reading literature and history, specifically any narrative concerning Knole

⁷⁵ Built in 1460 by Archbishop Bouchier, Knole is located in Sevenoaks, Kent and '[t]here are alleged to be fifty-two staircases in the house and 365 rooms, corresponding to the weeks and days of the years' (Glendinning 9). Queen Elizabeth I bequeathed the house and the surrounding land to her cousin, and Vita's ancestor, Thomas Sackville in the sixteenth century (9).

or her ancestors, and these two interests influenced her first attempts at writing (Glendinning 24-5). Sarah Ruth Watson argues in her biography of the author that her autodidacticism was seen as a form of ‘rebellion against the social code of her class’ (20), and Sackville-West confirms this in her posthumously published memoir, *Portrait of a Marriage* (1973).⁷⁶ She maintains that during her adolescence she was ‘plain, priggish [...] unmanageably and lankily tall, in fact the only good thing that can be said of me was that I wouldn’t have anything to do with my kind’ (Nicolson, *Portrait* 25). Her parents expected her to use her upper-class status to make an advantageous marriage and she was eventually sent to an exclusive girls’ day school in London which taught a few academic subjects, ‘finished’ the young ladies and reinforced the necessary attitudes and values’ of their class (Glendinning 26). At school she felt like an outsider amongst the other girls who thought her a ‘prig and pariah’, and she subsequently made a point of succeeding academically rather than socially (26). She continued to separate herself from her class with her decision to marry the son of a diplomat, Harold Nicolson, rather than an aristocrat. Their marriage was unconventional in their eventual acceptance of the other’s homosexuality and the two engaged in extramarital affairs—both homosexual and heterosexual in Vita’s case—throughout their union. In spite of their open marriage, Vita and Harold were devoted to each other and their relationship was based upon mutual affection and

⁷⁶ *Portrait of a Marriage* is divided into five parts and is composed of both Sackville-West’s memoir, which she wrote in July 1920, and her son’s later commentaries about the events described. Sackville-West never had any intention of publishing the manuscript during her lifetime and it remained locked in a cupboard until Nigel found it in 1962 after her death. Nigel maintains the manuscript is both an autobiography and ‘a confession, an attempt to purge her mind and heart of a love which possessed her, a love for another woman, Violet Trefusis’ (Nicolson, *Portrait* 1). Following Harold’s death in 1968 and Violet’s in 1972, Nigel finally published it, but because he believed his mother’s confession did not do his parent’s marriage justice, he included commentaries which incorporated ‘new facts and quotations from letters and diaries’ as well a ‘final justification of the whole book’ about how Harold and Vita ‘made out of a non-marriage a marriage which succeeded beyond their dreams’ (4-5). For the sake of clarity I shall cite all quotations from *Portrait of a Marriage* under ‘Nicolson’ as he edited the manuscript and other critics have previously done so.

support as Sackville-West would go on to achieve national and international success as a poet, novelist, travel writer and biographer.⁷⁷

Despite her attempts to separate herself from the residual traditions and attitudes of her class, she never escaped her familial, aristocratic roots. In her biography of her grandmother and mother, *Pepita* (1937), Sackville-West recognised in her parent's own Victorian upbringing that '[t]he Proustian attitude towards the aesthetic and almost historical value of high life and elegance was the commonplace of well-bred thought; genealogies and family connexions [*sic*], tables of precedence and a familiarity with country seats formed almost part of a moral code', and these beliefs were subsequently passed onto their daughter (181). While she tried to avoid this elitist attitude in her youth, when Leonard Woolf reminisces about his relationship with Sackville-West in *Downhill All the Way: An Autobiography of the Years 1919-1939* (1967), he acknowledges that '[s]he belonged indeed to a world which was completely different from ours', and their class difference was initially an obstacle in their early friendship and 'made intimacy difficult' (112). Virginia, too, was initially uncomfortable with the 'high aristocrat', and her first impression of Sackville-West is much more critical than Leonard's: 'Not much to my severer taste—florid, moustached, parakeet coloured, with all the supple ease of the aristocracy, but not the wit of an artist. She writes 15 pages a day—has finished another book—publishes with Heinemanns—knows everyone—But could I ever know her?' (*L3* 150; *D2* 216). Woolf would eventually enter into a relationship with Sackville-West which would ultimately inspire *Orlando* (1928), but her opinions about her friend's style and position as a writer would remain unchanged from this initial impression throughout the remainder of their nineteen-year friendship. What is underpinned in her multiple references to Sackville-West's upper-class status in both her letters and diaries is that, for Woolf, a privileged

⁷⁷ For further reading on Sackville-West's life see Victoria Glendinning, *Vita: The Life of Vita Sackville West* (1983); Nigel Nicolson, *Portrait of a Marriage* (1973); Vita Sackville-West, *Pepita* (1937); Michael Stevens, *V. Sackville-West: A Critical Biography* (1973) and Sara Ruth Watson, *V. Sackville West* (1972).

upbringing and blue-blooded pedigree did not automatically guarantee artistic status, though she would not deny Sackville-West's ability to produce a best seller.

The Woolfs published sixteen of Sackville-West's works over a seventeen-year period with the Hogarth Press.⁷⁸ Often critiquing Sackville-West's narrative style, Woolf believed her novels were written with 'complete competency' but with 'a pen of brass' (L3 150). Such comments recur throughout her letters and diaries and Stephen Barkway notes these evaluations were not born from resentment for Woolf was not 'jealous of Vita's actual writing—her "art"', but he does suggest she was frustrated by the speed with which Sackville-West wrote: '[T]he trouble is she writes with incredible ease and fills up any odd space of time by dashing off a book. This [*The Edwardians*] was done I think to wile away a few months [*sic*] leisure, and she has made about six thousand pounds!' (Barkway 241; L4 193). Woolf's tendency to struggle over her manuscripts and revisions is well known, and Sackville-West's *The Edwardians* was a 'runaway best-seller' for the Press which outsold 'and made more money than any other book on the Hogarth Press list, including Woolf's own' (Barkway 239). Consequently, Sackville-West's speed was, for Woolf, both a blessing on a professional level as well as an irritation on a private one. Her repeated comments about the high sales of *The Edwardians* and other novels like *All Passion Spent* and *Family History* reflect how positively the Hogarth Press benefited from her novels and fame, and Woolf was obviously pleased with the financial returns. She admits in a diary entry that the Press is 'very prosperous. On making up half yearly accounts, we find that we each get £425: & next year is sure, owing to the gigantic sale of *The Edwardians*—it verges on 20,000. And it is not a very good book' (D3 305-6). In spite of these financial improvements for both Woolf and the Press, she was still unable to overlook what she considers to be the biggest flaw in her friend's writing method: 'Old Vita,

⁷⁸ The Hogarth Press published *Seducers in Ecuador* (1924), *The Land* (1926), *Passenger to Teberan* (1926), *Twelve Days* (1928), *King's Daughter* (1929), *The Edwardians* (1930), *Sissinghurst* (1931), *Rilke* (1931), *All Passion Spent* (1931), *Family History* (1932), *Collected Poems, vol. I* (1933), *The Dark Island* (1934), *Pepita* (1937), *Solitude* (1938), and *Country Notes in Wartime* (1941) (Barkway 62).

shaggy & stiff, writing another novel [*Family History*]; but as careless about it all as ever' (D4 39). Woolf's criticism of Sackville-West's ability to produce huge monetary returns, despite producing mediocre novels, prefigures her later criticism of the middlebrow writer's decision to write for money rather than art in the unpublished letter that she wrote to the editor of the *New Statesman and Nation* in 1932.⁷⁹ Moreover, from Woolf's recurring statements about Sackville-West's style and attitude about writing, one can argue that it is this perceived inattentiveness to her craft which further classifies her as a middlebrow writer rather than an artist.

As a product of her aristocratic class background, Sackville-West does not possess the disreputable traits and mannerisms associated with the middlebrow writer, but Woolf often describes her friend's work in a similar vein to the 'betwixt and between' style associated with middlebrow fiction. Her criticism of the middlebrow writer's ability to complete a novel in matter of months mirrors her comment about Sackville-West's ability to finish novels like *The Edwardians* in such a short span of time. While Woolf never actually names Sackville-West as a middlebrow writer, she is repeatedly denied creative and artistic worth in Woolf's private letters and diaries and one comment she reiterates to Sackville-West is that her writing lacks 'central transparency' and 'sudden intensity' (L3 244). Furthermore, Woolf believes there is something resolutely 'reserved' and 'muted' in her friend's personality which makes Sackville-West 'dense instead of vibrant', and Woolf believes these characteristics resurface in Sackville-West's novels (L3 302; D2 287). Her conservative nature is associated with the middlebrow writer, but in my discussion of *All Passion Spent* I argue Woolf was not a very good reader of her friend's work. In her presentation of Lady Slane's artistic consciousness, Sackville-West

⁷⁹ It was posthumously published as 'Middlebrow'. Woolf wrote the letter because she was 'fire[d] up about [J.B.] Priestley and his priestliness' in his BBC broadcast, 'To A Highbrow' (1932), but Leonard persuaded her to not mail it and she put it aside with the hope of re-writing it as an essay (D4 129).

reproduces moments of ‘sudden intensity’ which are similar to artistic awakenings, or epiphanies, often associated with the modernist *Künstlerroman* artist-protagonist.⁸⁰

While much of her early writing can be classified as middlebrow fiction, Sackville-West’s later novels like *All Passion Spent* and *Family History* complicate Woolf’s opinion of her as a conservative, prosaic writer. She valued Woolf’s opinion of her work and it was during her second trip to Persia in 1927 to join Harold that she expressed in a letter to Woolf her own desire to improve as a writer:

I shall work so hard, partly to please you, partly to please myself, partly to make the time go and have something to show for it. I treasure your sudden discourse on literature yesterday morning,—a send off to me, rather like Polonius to Laertes. It is quite true that you have had infinitely more influence on my intellectuality than anyone, and for this alone I love you [...] You do like me to write well, don’t you? And I do hate writing badly—and having written so badly in the past. But now, like Queen Victoria, I will be good (*LVS* 181-2).

Following her trip she published a travel narrative, *Twelve Days: An Account of a Journey Across the Bakhtiari Mountains in South-west Persia*, which contains some of her most experimental prose. A reviewer for the *Times Literary Supplement* argues that, in her portrayal of nomadic life, Sackville-West’s recorded ‘impressions’ are presented mostly in an ‘introspective form’ of ‘incidents, reflections and speculations’ (*Twelve Days* 770). Her presentation of the psychological wanderings with the Bakhtiari nomads recalls modernism’s experimentation with narrative style and penchant for the fragment and, moreover, fulfils Woolf’s request for ‘central transparency’ in her writing. Despite these stylistic improvements, the book did not receive a good review, and the critic additionally condemns Sackville-West’s discussion about the future of Persia.

⁸⁰ Woolf’s misreading of her friend’s work and personality as being thoroughly middlebrow is further underpinned by her surprise that Sackville-West preferred *Mrs Dalloway* to *The Common Reader* (1925) (*L3* 184-5).

While her travel writing appears to fulfil her promise to Woolf, her fiction was still considered relatively middlebrow. Leonard Woolf admits Sackville-West was ‘an honest, simple, sentimental, romantic, naïve, and competent writer’ and, ‘in a novel about the high life’ like *The Edwardians*, she was able to successfully produce ‘a kind of period piece and a real best-seller’ which appealed to a generation nostalgic about the pre-war years, though she was unable to create anything of real artistic value (159). Of the novels which followed Sackville-West’s recorded resolve to become a better writer, both Leonard and Virginia agreed that *All Passion Spent* stood out from the rest. Leonard believed it was ‘the best novel which she ever wrote, though there was rather more than a touch of sentimentality in it’ (159). He lists the figures of its initial sales, a successful 15,000 copies, and he states that it continues to sell ‘35 years after it was first published’ (159). Woolf too praises Sackville-West’s eighth novel in a letter to Margaret Llewelyn Davies: ‘Sunday is the only day L. can leave the press, which has now published what we hope to be another best seller [*All Passion Spent*] by Vita Nicolson. I like it a great deal better than the Edwardians’ (LA 340-1). While the Woolfs’ approval once again emphasises the novel’s commercial success and best-seller status, their belief that the novel was the best of ‘Vita’s invention and imagination’ suggests the narrative has more to offer than the average middlebrow novel (L. Woolf 159). *All Passion Spent* transcends the ‘betwixt and between’ barrier, and presents the possibility of a hybrid narrative which integrates aspects of both the highbrow and middlebrow as Sackville-West utilises a traditional realist form to convey her feminist ideas about women’s autonomy and their right to creative expression as artists.

Nicola Humble reinforces this idea of hybridity between the brows and maintains highbrow and middlebrow fiction during this period ‘are far from impermeable categories, and many texts shifted their status from one, to the other, or were uneasily trapped in the no-man’s land in-between’ (26). She further argues that the middlebrow novel is able to successfully

combine multiple genres which ‘straddle the divide between the trashy romance or thriller on the one hand, and the philosophically or formally challenging novel on the other: offering narrative excitement without guilt, and intellectual stimulation without undue effort’ (11). Many of Sackville-West’s novels played with these hybrid genres, for example, *The Edwardians* and *Family History* combine the traditional country house narrative within a sensational romance plot whereas *Heritage* and *Seducers in Ecuador* incorporate both the detective and romance narrative with the middlebrow interest in bohemianism. *All Passion Spent* does explore the middlebrow ‘fantasy about the imagined life of the creative artist’ but Sackville-West does so within the context of sacrifice, regret, and loss rather than the clichéd bohemian romance favoured by middlebrow writers (5). She takes her novel deeper than any of her previous texts as she explores the psychological consequences of the woman artist’s denial of her creative nature. It is this anti-romantic aspect of the novel, and Sackville-West’s refusal to fulfil the residual themes associated with the courtship plot, which links her narrative with the other *Künstlerromane* of this study. Moreover, Sackville-West’s novel does not conform fully to the neo-realist novel of development which was favoured by the majority of her middlebrow contemporaries, for *All Passion Spent* contains ‘hardly a plot at all’ as it describes Lady Slane’s final months as a widow (Watson 103). The novel portrays a few scenes and interludes between characters which occur in the present, but the novel is predominantly composed of Lady Slane’s ephemeral memories. Through Lady Slane’s recollections of her previous artistic yearnings as a young unmarried woman, Sackville-West’s novel taps into the highbrow/artist’s ‘voyages’ through ‘strange seas of thought alone’ (E6 558). While the narrative structure of *All Passion Spent* is relatively conservative in style, Sackville-West subverts the traditional thematics of middlebrow fiction and includes radical, subversive content about the Empire, marriage and women’s right to an independent life outside these social institutions within a best-selling genre.

Subverting the Empire in the Middlebrow Novel

Written after high modernism's predominance in the 1920s, Sackville-West returns in *All Passion Spent* to the traditional realist narrative which is controlled by an omniscient third-person narrator whose primary role is to function 'as the moral center of the novel' (McCoy 33). Much like Woolf's narrator in *Jacob's Room* (1922) the reliability of *All Passion Spent's* narrator needs to be questioned. Shane McCoy argues that, rather than mirroring the nineteenth-century convention of conveying 'society's gender valued system in which men are in control and women are not', the observations and descriptions produced by Sackville-West's narrator instead satirise the traditional, patriarchal values of Victorian and Edwardian society (33). This is immediately seen in the opening pages of the novel which introduce the Slane paterfamilias through a detailed list of the achievements, accolades and 'personal idiosyncrasies' of the late Lord Slane, and his legacy endorses the masculinist standards of nineteenth and early-twentieth century social codes (*APS* 7). Yet, the lengthy description reads like an official obituary written by a Parliamentary colleague, or perhaps the formal eulogy expected to be given by one of his children at the upcoming funeral, and does not reflect the true thoughts and feelings of the narrator. Sackville-West experiments with alternative narrative techniques, like free indirect thought, in her later novels, and the third-person narrator mediates the private thoughts of other characters in *All Passion Spent* as well as his own public role as speaker. One must question whose perspective is being presented in the novel and, in contrast to the praises spouted by the public who maintain Lord Slane's 'humour, his charm, his languor, and his good sense, had rendered him sacrosanct to all generations to all parties' (6), the reader eventually encounters the narrator's unfiltered reflections about the former Prime Minister and Viceroy of India:

Yet for all its dignity, death brought a revelation. The face which had been so noble in life lost a trifle of its nobility in death; the lips which had been too humorous to be unpleasantly sardonic now betrayed their thinness; the carefully concealed ambition now revealed itself fully in the proud curve of the nostril. The hardness which had disguised itself under the charming manner now remained alone, robbed of the protection of a smile. He was beautiful, but he was less agreeable. Alone in the room his widow contemplated him, filled with thoughts that would have greatly surprised her children, could they have read her mind (8).

The narrator's ironic description of the banal realities of death undermines the earlier depictions of Lord Slane's illustrious life and career as his flaws, previously masked by his public persona, are exposed through his slowly decaying corpse. Moreover, the implication that his widow has personal views about her husband which contradict public opinion suggests the late Earl's idiosyncrasies and charming traits were not as valued and cherished by his wife as they were by the public and his political colleagues. It is because of revelations like the example above that I agree with McCoy's argument that the narrator ultimately supports 'Lady Slane's view' rather than society's, and he maintains this subsequently situates her 'position [in the narrative as] a moral one' (33). Therefore, while Sackville-West's highbrow contemporaries preferred to present the direct and unfiltered thoughts of their artist-protagonists through the stream-of-consciousness narrative or more experimental forms of narration like the second person perspective, the narrator's endorsement of Lady Slane's thoughts and opinions still positions her voice at the forefront of the novel. Her children used to joke that 'Mother was a changeling', an outsider within the family circle, and this private tease alludes to a much greater separation between Lady Slane and the traditional principles and ideals promoted by society during the Victorian and Edwardian period which her children are undoubtedly products of (*APS* 10). She challenges the normative, patriarchal standards expected of a former Vicereine

and upper-class widow and, as the moral centre of the novel, Sackville-West offers through Lady Slane's thoughts and reveries a radical critique of women's roles in society and their expected duties to both their families and the British Empire.

Following her husband's death, Lady Slane's children expect their mother to continue living her life the way she previously had when her husband was still alive, for she was 'accustomed to hav[ing] her comings and goings and stayings arranged for her, whether she was told to board a steamer for Capetown, Bombay or Sydney; or to accompany her husband for a weekend-end to Windsor. On all these occasions she had obeyed her direction with efficiency and without surprise' (33). Her eldest son and new family patriarch, Herbert, 'saw no reason now to doubt that his mother' would continue this routine and 'dole out her time according to schedule in the spare bedrooms of her sons and daughters' (33). Feminine submission was considered the most valued virtue expected of women during the period, though her children see it mainly as a weakness they can control. They associate their mother's previous passive behaviour with that of an appendage with no free will, but Lady Slane's role in society as a helpmate to her husband was actually more complicated than her children realise. The narrator comments that her life was governed by a never-ending list of commitments: 'Duty, charity, children, social obligations, public appearances—with these her days had been filled; and when ever her name was mentioned, the corollary came quick and slick, "Such a wonderful help to her husband in his career!"' (31). Such observations reinforce how much Lady Slane sacrificed in order to support the professional and social responsibilities of her husband's career and, even though women were barred from occupying actual positions in the 'formal administrative structures of British rule', they were still expected to fulfil unofficial roles in 'imperial society' (Procida 1). Lady Slane's duties as both a Vicereine and politician's wife additionally reinforces this ideology of women's private participation in the imperial cause as the 'incorporated wife' (Callan, 'Introduction' 2).

The concept of the incorporated wife emerges ‘when, because of marriage, women have to be given a location in, on or outside the boundary of an organization or institution’, and Lady Slane’s life as a colonial wife and mother positions her within such a tradition (1). Her responsibilities as an incorporated wife leave little room for her own desires and needs as an artist as she is expected to fulfil certain duties to her husband and the British Empire. As noted, the boundaries which define women’s presence in imperial society in India are based upon ideologies of ‘inclusion and exclusion’ as women’s roles can be both beneficial to the British Raj while simultaneously ‘pos[ing] a threat to it’ (1). Interestingly, Sackville-West imposes upon her artist-heroine a life of British diplomacy she actively shunned while Harold worked for the foreign office.⁸¹ Rather than reinforcing the same ‘pro-imperialist’ themes found in ‘imperial adventure’ narratives or the ‘Empire Romance’ traditionally associated with middlebrow fiction (Bush 86), *All Passion Spent* is actually a critique of imperialism and women’s participation in marriage and motherhood within this context of the incorporated wife.⁸² When looking back upon her time spent in late-nineteenth-century India as Vicereine, which was dominated by parties and dinners with Anglo-Indians, emissaries, princes, and ambassadors she was expected to please, Lady Slane recognises that her life abroad transformed her into ‘a lonely woman’ whose existence was increasingly defined by masquerades and constant performances wherein she was ‘always at variance with the creeds to

⁸¹ The argument can be made that Sackville-West expressed her own anxieties about the life she might have endured as an incorporated wife and there are many biographical parallels between Lady Slane and Sackville-West, but I will not examine the narrative in this way.

⁸² The only time Sackville-West felt she fulfilled the role of ‘the correct and adoring you wife of the brilliant young diplomat’ was when she accompanied Harold to Constantinople after their wedding in 1913 (Nicolson, *Portrait* 43). Following this trip, Sackville-West refused to serve the Empire as the traditional colonial wife. When Harold was sent to Tehran and Berlin Sackville-West remained in England, though she still visited him during his postings to various cities throughout his employment with the foreign office. For Sackville-West’s uncensored opinions about life abroad as the wife of a diplomat see *The Letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf* (1984), 97-136 and 179-213.

which she conformed' (*APS* 73, 75).⁸³ The brief descriptions about her period in India appear sporadically throughout the narrative and continuously reinforce her feelings of isolation and mirror the same unhappiness experienced by a real-life Vicereine, Mary Curzon, who admits in letters to her family back home in America that her days at Government House in Calcutta are defined by 'various duties', and she admits, 'the constant entertaining is slavery' (Bradley 56). Nevertheless, like the proper incorporated wife, she goes 'through with it gladly as it is a duty' (56). During her marriage Lady Slane was expected to embody this same compliant attitude, though now a widow and finally free of the masquerade of diplomacy, she no longer wishes to support the 'whole tragic system' of Empire (*APS* 74). Much like *The Voyage Out* (1915), wherein Rachel's death acts as a rejection of this imperial system, the death of Lady Slane's husband and her subsequent renunciation of her former life, which can be described as a metaphorical death of sorts, marks Lady Slane's first act of subversion against this patriarchal system which aims to define and constrain her as an incorporated wife and finally allows her the opportunity to regain her lost autonomy of artistic youth. The anti-imperialist themes found in *All Passion Spent* are crucial because imperialism was responsible for the suppression of Lady Slane's creativity and the novel has not been read in this way.

It was only following the Great Mutiny and Civil Rebellion of 1857 that India was ruled 'in the name of the Crown' rather than the British East India Company, and Queen Victoria was eventually declared Empress of India in 1876 (Moore 422). Following the Government of India Act in 1858 and her Proclamation in November of the same year, the Crown established its rule over the Subcontinent and appointed the first Viceroy of India and Governor-General (422). The Viceroy was the representative of both the state and sovereign

⁸³ While no date is given for the narrative's present, Mr FitzGeorge's comments that he met Lady Slane and her infant son, Kay, during her tenure as Vicereine in 1874 sets her recollections of her life abroad sometime during this period (*APS* 31). Using the additional information that Kay is now in his sixties, one is able to situate the narrative's present sometime in the 1930s (9). As the majority of the novel is composed of Lady Slane's memories, *All Passion Spent* does continue the theme seen in this study by setting her *Künstlerroman* during this pre-war moment.

but he was not actually in charge of the government of India. The Secretary of State and the India Office were formed in England and these two offices were responsible for passing legislation and strategising policy for the Indian Subcontinent (Gilmour 149). The Viceroy was further advised by a Council of India which was composed of eight members appointed by the Crown and a further seven by the British East India Company (Moore 424). As a result, the Viceroy was technically a figurehead, a 'direct representative of the Queen', who was forced to liaise with these various offices (Gilmour 150-1). In addition to implementing policy, the Viceroy was expected to organise and appear at a variety of political, social and ceremonial functions like the Imperial Durbar, which was a 'brilliant spectacle' and 'affirmation to the world that British rule in India was not only permanent but willingly accepted' (Nicolson, *Mary Curzon* 160). As the representative of Queen Victoria, the Viceroy was expected to symbolise the attitudes and virtues of nineteenth-century British society and, thus, it was essential that he 'secure a wife as partner in his imperial responsibilities' (Procida 36). Besides providing 'comfort and support' to her husband, the Vicereine's imperial duties were principally social, and it was at such events that Lady Slane was expected to 'appear always at her best' as the perfect wife and hostess (Nicolson, *Mary Curzon* 139). It is through these private and public performances of domesticity, purity and virtue that the figure of the Victorian Angel in the House reappears on the Indian Subcontinent, albeit on a professional level. Juxtaposed against the Viceroy's own duty to act as India's ruler, a role which was expected to promote 'fear and awe' among the Rajahs and Anglo-Indians (139), the Vicereine's public performance and embodiment of the Victorian Angel advocates the 'domestication and moralization' of the Empire (Bush 91). Consequently, she was adored by the public because she was believed to be 'more approachable, more tender' than the Viceroy (Nicolson, *Mary Curzon* 120).

Nicolson maintains that in order to successfully execute these public roles in imperial society the Vicereine was expected to find 'a natural delight in performing'—mostly at dinners

and parties—and it is Lady Slane’s collection of jewels from this period of her life which act as a permanent reminder of her participation as a cog in the imperial machine (*Mary Curzon* 120). Throughout the first part of the novel she repeatedly recounts how her husband acquired these jewels:

‘I never cared about jewels, you know,’ she said speaking to herself rather than to her family at large, ‘and it seemed such a pity—such a waste—that so many should come my way. Your father used to say that I must be able to deck myself out on Occasions. When we were in India, he used to buy back a lot of things at the Tash-i-Khane auctions. He had a theory it pleased the princes to see me wearing their gifts, even though they knew perfectly well we had bought them back. I daresay he was right. But it always seemed rather silly to me—such a farce’ (*APS* 38).

Nicolson discusses the high expectations placed upon the Vicereine’s appearance at social events. For official engagements she was expected to incorporate elements of Indian dress into her outfit which complemented ‘the magnificent jewels, uniforms, turbans, saris of her host and hostesses’ without causing offense with an exact replica of Indian fashion (*Mary Curzon* 138). She was supposed to ‘pay tribute to’ Indian style with ‘discrete reminders’ that she understood and respected it (138) but, as Lady Slane rightly admits, it was a farce—a masquerade—of political theatrics and ‘viceregal pomp and etiquette’ (Gilmour 210). She sees her jewels as nothing more than a costume to her imperial performance and, while she can appreciate their beauty, ‘she felt no proprietary interest; and their associations meant much, representing as they did the whole background of her life’ as an incorporated wife (*APS* 41). Her repeated statements about how she acquired the jewels, wherein ‘[t]he Indian princes had known very well that their gifts would be pooled in the Tash-i-Khane, to be bought back according to the Viceroy’s purse and discretion’, undermines both her husband’s power as well as the Empire’s and indicates she had a better understanding of the corrupt nature of Anglo-

Indian politics than would be expected of women during the period (41). In her old age she admits that ‘party politics and war and industry, and a high birth-rate (which she learned to call manpower), and competition and secret diplomacy and suspicion were all part of a necessary game’, though she cannot help feeling that it was all a ‘delusion of a terrible and ridiculous dream’ (74).

Because Sackville-West focuses on Lady Slane’s social responsibility as an incorporated wife and viceregal hostess during these reminiscences, contemporary readers were possibly shocked that her artist-protagonist did not follow the same path as another unconventional artist, Clarissa Dalloway in Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*, who ‘thrives as a hostess—a social artist’—and whose artistic expression is shaped by her marriage and her husband’s political career (Ronchetti 52). Ronchetti maintains that the ‘social conditioning’ imposed upon middle- and upper-class women like Clarissa and Lady Slane to accept their domestic responsibilities as wives and mothers prevented them from ‘nurtur[ing] other dormant talents’ like painting which, perhaps, would have allowed them to express their artistry in more traditional forms (52-3). It is only because Clarissa has ‘a genius for’ organising and hosting parties—‘that woman’s gift of making a world of her own’—that her suppressed, creative energy is channelled through an acceptable feminine outlet (*MD* 67, 66). Yet, as the incorporated wife of an MP, her parties are not supposed to enhance her own social standing and perception. Instead, they ‘were all for [Richard], or for her idea of him’ and, while Clarissa insists, ‘I *won’t* live in a world of my own’ in *The Voyage Out*, this ideology of feminine, domestic artistry in *Mrs Dalloway* allows her to create such a world if it furthers her husband’s political career (*MD* 66-7; *VO* 36). Jacob Littleton argues the way in which Clarissa ‘controls her event-art’ is what establishes her creative capability in the novel and he compares the role of the hostess with the artist in that they both ‘create a world that draws in’ an audience—either a reader, spectator or guest—which takes them ‘out of the logic of the mundane’ and into something which

resembles 'life, but life transformed' (42). Lady Slane's remarks about her feelings of 'insufficiency' as a hostess and her private 'agonies' of having to converse with various ambassadors throughout her husband's career in the foreign service indicate a lack of control during these social events (*APS* 73, 74). I agree with Littleton's argument that it is this inability to command the party which separates the artist from the simple hostess (43). Consequently, in contrast to Clarissa who finds an acceptable medium in social artistry to express her repressed creativity, Lady Slane finds such events to be only another form of oppression which further inhibits her artistry.

The only character in the novel to agree with this belief that Lady Slane suppressed elements of her true artistic nature is Mr FitzGeorge who previously met the Vicereine at Government House in Calcutta as a young man. It is only after the death of Lord Slane and her subsequent move to Hampstead that he seeks her out to renew their earlier acquaintance. Over time he eventually questions her about her life in India: 'I don't believe you took much pleasure in your viceroyalty?' (*APS* 122). While 'a reviving loyalty to Henry' forces Lady Slane to defend the position by stating, 'Even viceroyalty has its uses', FitzGeorge argues this was certainly not the case for her: 'I was really upset by seeing you trapped among those mummers. You submitted and did your part—oh, admirably!—but all the time you were denying your nature' (122-3). He recalls their first encounter:

After dinner you both came round the circle of your guests, saying something to each; you wore white, with diamonds in your hair, and you asked me if I hoped to get any big-game shooting. I suppose you thought that was the right thing to say to a rich young man; you couldn't know that I abominated the idea of killing animals. I said no I was just a traveller; but although you smiled attentively I don't believe you listened to my answer. You were thinking what you should say to the next person, and no doubt you said something just as well composed and just as inappropriate (122).

FitzGeorge's use of the derogatory term, 'mummer' or actor, and subsequent criticism of Lady Slane's impersonal, but polite and submissive, performance offers an alternative impression of how the Vicereine could have been perceived by her public who preferred to look past the façade of vicerealty rather than bask in it. In contrast to Clarissa's defining moment at the end of *Mrs Dalloway* with her descent upon Peter in her 'silver-green mermaid's dress' (*MD* 154), Lady Slane's entrance lacks the same confidence and artistic epiphany for FitzGeorge. His comments about her demeanour, clothing and jewels signifies her fulfilment of the expected dress-code and mannerisms of an incorporated wife, but his utterance that beneath her mask of propriety she was suppressing her true character suggests she revealed her artistic nature in alternate ways outside the spheres of imperial influence, parties and politics.

FitzGeorge is granted a glimpse of this secret, private life during another encounter at Government House, though in a less formal environment, when he comes across the Vicereine and her then infant son, Kay, 'surrounded by a mass of flowers. To his idea fresh from England, the season was winter; yet, cut from the Indian garden, roses, larkspurs, and sweet-peas lay sorted into heaps around her. Transparent glasses filled with water made points of light as they stood about all over the carpet' (*APS* 132). Although this job is not considered the usual domestic role undertaken by a Vicereine, for there were servants to fulfil such duties, Lady Slane appears to find some pleasure in arranging the various blooms and colours into an aesthetically pleasing pattern—much like a painter would on canvas. When she finally becomes aware of FitzGeorge's presence, she 'looked up, pushing the hair out of her eyes. But she had pushed something else out of her eyes with the same gesture; she had pushed her whole private life out of them, and had replaced it by the perfunctory courtesy with which she rose' and addressed him (132-3). The reader is denied the knowledge of her thoughts during this private moment, but FitzGeorge's memory implies this was a rare occasion where Lady Slane's artistic consciousness transcends the barrier which divides her private, artistic self from her

public, viceregal persona as she is allowed to create something aesthetically beautiful without an imperial agenda attached to it. Even though she is not actually painting, the precision with which she arranges her flowers suggests that Lady Slane, in a similar vein to Clarissa's parties, has found a domestic medium to channel her suppressed artistry. Crucially, Lady Slane's private pleasure is short-lived, for the responsibilities of her imperial role as Vicereine cause continuous interruptions in her daily life and, until she has a space of her own, these transient moments of creativity remain fleeting and unfulfilling. Lady Slane finally achieves this freedom after her husband's death and, by giving up her jewels to Herbert and his wife, she believes she is finally ridding herself of any reminders of her involvement with the imperial game of politics as an incorporated wife. She served her husband and the Empire faithfully during her marriage, but Lady Slane refuses to sacrifice what time she has left to continue this role and she wishes to regain a sense of herself which was lost in her marriage and service to the British Raj.

While casting away her jewels might remove the physical evidence of her time serving as Vicereine, she cannot erase her memories of India and how much she sacrificed in her marriage. While her reflections of India are predominantly tied up with her viceregal responsibilities, they also reveal moments wherein Lady Slane found an opportunity to tap into her artistic consciousness which offered her a momentary reprieve from her public performance as the Vicereine. Like the flower scene, these instances often occur outside the confines of imperial society and the viceroial palace, and Lady Slane recalls one particular trek across the Persian desert with Henry where they were

escorted by flocks of butterflies, which danced on either side and overhead and all around them, now flying ahead in a concerted movement, now returning to accompany them, amused as it were to restrain their swift frivolity to a flitting round this lumbering conveyance, but still unable to suit their pace to such a sobriety, so, to relieve their impatience, soaring up into the air or dipping between the very axels,

coming out on the other side before the horses had time to put down another hoof (76-7).

During this aerial ballet of butterflies Lady Slane comes to the realisation that the butterflies are representative of a life she could have had as an artist. She associates her marriage to Henry and her duties as an incorporated wife with a 'monotonous progression that trailed after the sun from dawn to dusk, like a plough that should pursue the sun in one straight slow furrow round and round the world' and, consequently, she finds herself drawn to the movements of the butterflies (77). Undoubtedly trapped in the repetitiveness of her life as a diplomat's wife she finds freedom in this momentary encounter with the 'cloud of butterflies', for she associates their random, yet precise, movements with 'her own irreverent, irrelevant thoughts darting and dancing [...] flicking always, and evading; sometimes rushing on head, but returning again to tease and show off, darting between the axels; having an independent and lovely life' (77). These fleeting moments of reverie are often cut short by her husband who, completely unaware of the nature of his wife's private thoughts, forces her to return to the reality of her situation and responsibilities as an incorporated wife. In this particular instance, it is with his remark that it was '[t]errible, the opthalmia among these people—I must really do something about it' (77). Immediately following this comment, Lady Slane turns away from the butterflies and turns her attention 'to her duty, determined that when they reached Yezd or Shiraz, or wherever it might be, she would also take the missionaries' wives to task about the opthalmia in these villages' (77).

The butterflies act as a metaphor for Lady Slane's artistic stream of consciousness, but she is unable to indulge in these whimsical reveries of thought and allow them to flow freely. As the only member of the caravan to notice the beauty and grace of the scene before her, Sackville-West indicates Lady Slane has an appreciation for visual aesthetics. Moreover, her comments about the transient nature of these moments of uninterrupted woolgathering

suggests her artistic consciousness is, for the most part, suppressed in her daily life. As the Vicereine, she was expected to share the same interests as Henry which revolved around his public duty to the Empire. If her husband believes the plight of ophthalmia is something of importance then she must stop everything and ‘make arrangements for a further supply of boracic to be sent out from England’ (77). Her confession now as a widow that, when looking back upon her life, ‘perversely, the fluttering of butterflies had always remained more important’ than her domestic and public obligations, highlights her repressed creative soul and indicates the possibility of it resurfacing (77). Importantly, although the memory of the butterflies appears in the narrative as a reflection and commentary about her life abroad, Lady Slane was very much aware during this period of her situation, and the butterfly metaphor is not solely a retrospective awakening. Lady Slane was forced to accept the reality of her constrained situation throughout her entire married life.

Because the freedom of artistic consciousness is denied to Sackville-West’s artist-heroine during her marriage, the reader is also disallowed from plunging into Lady Slane’s stream of consciousness. In spite of this, the reader recognises that, second to the third-person narrator, Lady Slane’s thoughts dominate the majority of the novel and one questions the reasoning behind Sackville-West’s decision to not directly communicate her artist-heroine’s thoughts with a more direct, unfiltered voice like the stream-of-consciousness narrative. She does utilise free indirect thought in the narrative, though Suzanne Raitt maintains in *Vita and Virginia: The Work and Friendship of V. Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf* (1993) that Sackville-West’s experiments with this narrative form were ultimately shaped by Woolf’s own interpretation of this narrative technique in *To the Lighthouse*, but less experimental (91). Upon finishing the novel, Sackville-West wrote to Woolf that the novel ‘is the only thing which seems real. I can say that I am dazzled and bewitched. How do you do it? how do you walk along that razor-edge without falling?’ (LVS^W 217). Raitt believes Sackville-West was alluding

to Woolf's ability to mediate the private voices and thoughts of her characters without losing control of the novel (*Vita and Virginia* 91), and in the same letter Sackville-West admits this daring new narrative technique 'makes me afraid of you. Afraid of your penetration and loveliness and genius' (*LVS* 218). Perhaps this fear of losing control and piercing the interior is what Woolf was alluding to in her critiques of Sackville-West's conservative form and inability to create 'central transparency' and 'sudden intensity' within her characters innermost thoughts and feelings. Sackville-West's experimentation with free indirect thought is undoubtedly less radical than Woolf's, but I believe Lady Slane's encounter with the cloud of butterflies does hint at the 'central transparency' and 'sudden intensity' of her artist-heroine's creative consciousness and artistic being. Moreover, it is through Lady Slane's reflections while living alone with Genoux in Hampstead that these moments become more frequent in the narrative and, consequently, this ability to let her thoughts run freely in a space of her own allows Lady Slane to engage with her creativity in a way which was previously denied to her during her marriage. It is this association with space and artistic autonomy which aligns Sackville-West's narrative with Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. Considered 'the most feminist novel' of Sackville-West's oeuvre (Raitt, *Vita and Virginia* 108), *All Passion Spent* further complicates Woolf's reading of her work as distinctly middlebrow fiction with her engagement with many of the same issues and concerns surrounding women's right to creative expression as artists which Woolf discusses in her own feminist polemic.

A Home of One's Own: Recollections of a Thwarted Artist

Since its publication, comparisons have been made between *All Passion Spent* and Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, but a study has yet to present a comprehensive examination of the relationship between these two texts. Following its initial publication, a reviewer for the *Times Literary Supplement* suggests elements of Woolf's extended essay appear in

Sackville-West's narrative, particularly during 'that beautiful self-debate and reverie which is part two of the novel', though the reviewer maintains her interpretation of Woolf's ideas 'are the author's own' ('All Passion Spent' 424). Louise DeSalvo supports this claim that Sackville-West participates in a dialogue with Woolf's essay, but she argues *All Passion Spent* is 'a fictional treatment of the themes in her friend's polemic tract' and should be 'thought of as an outgrowth of *A Room of One's Own*' rather than a mere imitation ('Lighting the Cave' 211). I agree with DeSalvo's assertion that Sackville-West incorporates elements of Woolf's discussion in her *Künstlerroman*, but her examination of these issues from the point of view of a thwarted artist in her eighties offers an alternative perspective on the debate.

Sackville-West was more than familiar with Woolf's essay, for she accompanied her friend in 1928 when Woolf presented her lecture, 'Women & Fiction', to the female undergraduates at Girton College, Cambridge.⁸⁴ Following its eventual publication as *A Room of One's Own*, Sackville-West promoted and reviewed the book on her bi-weekly radio series, 'New Novels', for the BBC in November 1929. In her broadcast Sackville-West maintains that, while the privacy which comes with a room of one's own is necessary for the creation of works of art, she believes that 'beyond the actual four-walled room there is the room of one's peculiar character' which needs to be further discussed ('New Novels' 620). She suggests we need to additionally examine how having a room of one's own impacts on the psychological space of the woman artist's mind, and it is in this direction which she takes her *Künstlerroman* and extends Woolf's argument. The fact that Woolf's lecture was meant to 'seduce' Sackville-West and 'initiate her into feminism' is familiar in literary studies and, as she examines many of the same issues and concerns found in *A Room of One's Own* about the enduring obstacles placed upon developing women artists in nineteenth- and twentieth-century British society, one could say she was successfully converted (Hankins 194).

⁸⁴ Leonard, Vanessa and Angelica Bell accompanied Woolf when she first gave her lecture at Newnham College on October 20th and Vita travelled with Woolf for her Girton lecture on the 26th (Lee 564).

All Passion Spent is the only *Künstlerroman* in this study to present a post-marriage perspective on the antithetical nature of women's domestic responsibilities as a wife and mother with artistic roles. Sackville-West supports Woolf's belief that there are essential conditions 'for the creation of works of art' which are ultimately denied to Lady Slane following her decision to marry Henry Holland instead of pursuing her dream of becoming a painter (*AROO* 23). Even though Sackville-West does not directly state that these requirements are 'money and a room of [one's] own' in her novel (3), the fact that Lady Slane is given an inheritance of 'five hundred a year' following Lord Slane's death which allows her to privately rent a house in Hampstead with Genoux suggests her debt to Woolf (*APS* 14). Crucially, Lady Slane does not associate this new independent space with a return to her artistic desire to be a painter but, instead, the mental freedom of once again returning to the 'irreverent, irrelevant thoughts' of her memories and artistic consciousness.

When Lady Slane rides the underground early on in the first part of the novel, she contemplates her six children and what her husband may have privately thought about them but, 'before she could pull up yet another fish of memory on a long line, she recollected a restriction she had placed upon herself, namely not to let her memory wander until the days of complete leisure should be come' for '[h]er feast must not be spoiled by snippets of anticipation' (46). This scene recalls Woolf's own fishing metaphor in the opening of *A Room of One's Own* (5). Lady Slane wishes her own thoughts and reflections would be given the same opportunity to expand and 'grow fatter' like Woolf's own metaphorical 'little fish' (5), but she suspends her memories and refuses to give into such currents of thought until she finds a space of her own—'the house, *her* house'—where she can 'luxuriate fully and freely' in her reflections without the interruptions of her former life (*APS* 47, 46).

By the second part of the novel Lady Slane has agreed to rent a house in Hampstead she spotted thirty years earlier, and it is with this newfound freedom that she is finally able to

give into her reveries and re-examine her life as a thwarted artist. Choosing to look back upon her life 'as a tract of country traversed', she believes her memories have created 'a landscape instead of separate fields of separate years and days, so that [they] became a unity and she could see the whole view, and even pick out a particular field and wander round it again in spirit' (81). Her ability to merge these various impressions which compile her existence as Deborah Lee, Deborah Holland and Lady Deborah Slane into one continuous visual portrait, while still being able to recall significant moments, reflects what she believes to be '[t]he life of the artist, the creator, looking closely, feeling widely detail and horizon included in the same sweep of a glance' (86).

She begins this journey with the one event which defined the entire course of her existence as an incorporated wife and thwarted artist—the day Henry proposed—and the irony of the situation is that their union occurred mostly because of a misunderstanding. When she finally realised he was proposing, and was thus 'pass[ing] into a sphere where people marry, beget and bear children', her first response was initially one of disbelief:

The idea was preposterous. She could not possibly follow Mr Holland into that sphere; could not follow him, perhaps, less than any man, for she knew him to be very brilliant, and marked out for that most remote and impressive of mysteries, a Career. She had heard her father say that young Holland would be Viceroy of India before they had heard the last of him. That would mean she must be Vicereine, and at the thought she had turned upon him the glance of a startled fawn. Instantly interpreting that glance according to his desires, Mr Holland had clasped her into his arms and had kissed her with ardour but with restraint upon the lips (82-3).

Henry misreads the surprise and fear reflected in Lady Slane's expression as excitement and, while she does not verbally accept the proposal, he considers their kiss to be her consent to the marriage. Because of Henry's subsequent 'upright', 'very proud' and 'proprietary' look, she felt

the decision had already been made for her and, following his announcement to her family, '[a] sense of terror possessed her over the novelty of her opinion being sought on any matter, and she hastily restored the decision into the hands of others' (86). Suzanne Raitt compares the significance of this scene to Woolf's epiphany in the British Library that women are, 'perhaps, the most discussed animal in the universe' but lack a voice of their own (*Vita & Virginia* 109; *AROO* 24). Lady Slane's inability to correct the mistake, and her subsequent decision to allow Henry to speak for her, is the moment she relinquishes her autonomy. Her silence not only establishes Henry's control over her life but it further confirms her fate in becoming 'that other person'—a wife and mother—instead of an autonomous artist (*APS* 86).

Lady Slane's memory of herself as a young Deborah Lee suggests the tensions inherent in her self-presentation as the Angel in the House. She adheres to the proper dress codes of the period by wearing delicate and 'flounced' muslin dresses, '[h]er hair was ringleted' and she walks with her eyes downcast, giving off an impression worthy of 'some sentimental keepsake' of the period (84). Nevertheless, beneath Lady Slane's 'delicate and maidenly exterior were' thoughts and dreams 'of an extravagance to do credit even to a wild young man' (85). The crux of her desires

were thoughts of nothing less than escape and disguise; a changed name, a travestied sex, and freedom in some foreign city—schemes on a par with the schemes of a boy about to run away to sea. Those ringlets would drop beneath the scissors [...] that fichu would be replaced by a shirt [...] The image of the girl faded, and in its place stood a slender boy. He was a boy, but essentially he was a sexless creature, a mere symbol and emanation of youth, one who had foresworn for ever the delights and rights of sex to serve what seemed to his rioting imagination a nobler aim. Deborah, in short, at the age of seventeen, had determined to become a painter (85).

In a fantasy of cross-dressing that alludes to Woolf's *Orlando*, Sackville-West outlines the association of artistry and masculinity. Moreover, her recognition that the main obstacle preventing her from achieving artistic fulfilment—her sex—alludes to Woolf's discussion of Shakespeare's fictional sister, Judith, in *A Room of One's Own*. Woolf imagines that Judith Shakespeare's 'genius was for fiction' and that she 'lusted to feed abundantly upon the lives of men and women and the study of their ways' (*AROO* 44). Upon finding herself pregnant, Judith kills herself and Woolf justifies the decision, for 'who shall measure the heat and violence of the poet's heart when caught and tangled in a woman's body?' (44). In addition to women's limited access to public sphere and same opportunities as the male artists, their bodies' reproductive capability further thwarts their creative endeavours. Lady Slane believes the only way to avoid this fate and participate in the same life experiences as the male artist is through a performative act of cross-dressing, for 'clothes are the visible sign of social identity' and they are constantly 'subject to disarrangement and symbolic theft' (McClintock 67). Lady Slane's adolescent desire to undermine the nineteenth-century perception of what constitutes a normative female identity with a public masquerade as a man is a culturally 'subversive' act for the period (67).

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century women who participated in this kind of public role-play were 'often defying the conflation of sex roles and sex organs that many of their male contemporaries sought to reinforce', and Sackville-West participated in this form of subversive drag when she masqueraded as a wounded First World War soldier, whom she named Julian, during her relationship with Violet Trefusis (Gilbert and Gubar, *No Man's Land, Vol. 2* 327, 324). Lady Slane's adolescent self recognises that the male artist is given 'a fine carelessness' and 'freedom' in his chosen vocation and way of life whereas women are denied the same opportunities (*APS* 88). She is aware that there is 'a discrepancy somewhere. But everybody seemed agreed—so well agreed, that the matter was not even discussed: there was only one

employment open to women?—marriage (88). Whether Lady Slane recognised at the time that the rebellious undertones of her fantasy were most likely a direct response to the art-world discrimination against women is unclear. She admits some ‘instinct [...] warned her to impart her unsuitable secret to none’ but she is undecided if this silence was a result of her fear or the artist’s desire for ‘treasured privacy’ (87).

While Lady Slane is not given the opportunity to indulge in her cross-dressing fantasy, the dream itself allows her artistic consciousness the chance at participating in the creative process despite never producing a single painting:

How fine it was to live in that state of rapture! how fine, how difficult, how supremely worth while! A nun in her novitiate was not more vigilant than she [...] Images clustered in her mind, but every image must be of a nature extravagantly lyrical. Nothing else would fit. A crimson cloak, a silver sword, were neither sumptuous enough nor pure enough to express the ardours of that temper [...] And she remembered how the shadow on the wall was a greater delight to her than the thing itself, and how she had looked at a stormy sky, or at tulip in the sun, and, narrowing her eyes, had forced those things into relation with everything that made a pattern in her mind (86).

In going back to her memories during this pre-marriage period, Lady Slane is once again reminded of the feelings these impressions and patterns previously inspired within her, and Lady Slane engages with biography and rewrites herself as an artist as her reflections allow her to contemplate reality once again in this aesthetic way. The images Lady Slane associates with certain aesthetic and epiphanic moments—a shadow, a stormy sky and a tulip in the sun—are objects and events she encounters in the outside world. As seen with the butterfly episode in the Persian desert and her decision to look back upon her life as a ‘country traversed’, this appears to be a requirement for her artistic consciousness. Lady Slane’s life indoors is

dominated by her domestic responsibilities, first, as a ‘docile’ daughter who ‘would run errands in the house for her mother, strip the lavender into a great cloth, make bags for it to lie between the sheets, write labels for the pots of jam, brush the pug, and fetch her cross-stitch after dinner without being bidden’ and, second, as a Vicereine who was expected to both run a household as well as successfully represent the moral virtues of the British Empire as the perfect hostess (87). There is no freedom for her artistic consciousness to evolve within the walls of a house which identifies her solely with these identities and, as a result, these moments of ‘ecstasy’ which lead her ‘right down in some deep place’ of her artistic being, are suppressed until she can find an appropriate place to revisit them—either outside or in a private room of her own as a widow (86). Her internal consciousness reveals the artist’s wish to create a portrait of life transformed, though she lacked the education, training and private space to paint these artistic patterns she creates in her mind. Lady Slane recognises through her memories of this period of her life that she was constrained by her physical surroundings and domestic responsibilities and, consequently, she lacked the mental space to further develop these artistic impressions and acknowledge that she was looking at ordinary objects and images in this aesthetic way. Lady Slane’s emotional response to these various impressions during her youth, and again in her widowhood, introduces a feminist discourse to the narrative which examines how certain social obstacles like the institution of marriage suppress women’s creative pursuits.

In her joint BBC discussion with Harold on ‘Marriage’ (1929), Sackville-West discusses the incompatibility of the professional woman’s social roles with her domestic responsibilities as a wife and mother: ‘Marriage, in fact, is assumed to be a woman’s natural profession—her whole-time job. With a man, it’s subsidiary; it does not affect his outward life’ (99). She further explores these ideas in her *Künstlerroman* when a young Deborah Lee imagines her future life with Henry and realises that she does not love him ‘but, even had she been in love with him,

she could see therein no reason for foregoing the whole of her own separate existence' (*APS* 92). This is exactly what he demands of her, and she recognises that Henry was 'merely adding something extra' to his current lifestyle which would allow him to 'continue to enjoy his free, varied and masculine life' while she, in contrast, was expected to always be waiting for him, 'ready to lay down her book, her paper or her letters; she must be prepared to listen to whatever he had to say; she must entertain his political acquaintances; and even if he beckoned her across the world she must follow' like some little lapdog (92). Despite recognising that her married existence would ultimately be defined by Henry's career and personal wishes, she cannot help but wonder 'where in such a programme, was there room for a studio?' (92) She soon realises there is none:

It would not do if Henry were to return one evening and be met by a locked door. It would not do if Henry, short of ink or blotting paper, were to emerge irritably only to be told that Mrs Holland was engaged with a model. It would not do if Henry were appointed governor to some distant colony to tell him that the drawing-master unfortunately lived in London. It would not do, if Henry wanted another son, to tell him that she had just embarked on a special course of study. It would not do, in such a world of assumptions, to assume that she had equal rights with Henry. For such privileges marriage was not ordained (92-3).

The repeated mantra '[i]t would not do' recalls both Mr. Tansley's repeated comment that '[w]omen can't paint, women can't write' in *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and Woolf's argument in *A Room of One's Own* that women constantly encounter such negative declarations like 'you cannot do this, you are incapable of doing that' which aim to dissuade them from pursuing the artistic professions (*TTL* 48; *AROO* 49). Woolf admits the woman novelist is the least likely to be affected by such comments, but she maintains that painters and musicians still feel the full 'sting' of these words (*AROO* 49). In contrast to the woman writer, whose craft was less

‘demand[ing] on the family purse’ and least disruptive to family life, the painter’s training and lifestyle interferes with the natural flow of the household and would additionally place Lady Slane’s needs above Henry’s and the children (*E6* 479). Because the studio is seen as ‘an extension of the artist’s personality and location of the artist’s professional life’ (Borzello 148), Lady Slane’s wish to secure this physical space in her future life reflects her desire to maintain an aspect of her artistic self in her marriage which is completely separate from her domestic responsibilities. But such perceived selfishness challenges ‘the privileges marriage had ordained’ which dictates that women are expected to be ‘loving and amiable, faithful and obedient to their husbands, holy and godly matrons in all quietness, sobriety, and peace’ (*APS* 93). Any deviation from these ideals and behaviours undermines the sanctity of the institution and, ‘because having her own occupation’ outside these roles is considered unacceptable and self-serving, she is forced to abandon the idea of having a studio of her own (McCoy 39).

Sackville-West discusses this dilemma of trying to have both a career and a successful marriage in ‘Marriage’ and she argues that, for the professional woman, ‘[e]ither she must give up the happiness of home, or she must sacrifice her career’ (900). In her broadcast, though, Sackville-West does not include the woman artist in her list of professional occupations and this is perhaps a consequence of her own ability to successfully negotiate these responsibilities in her own unconventional marriage to Harold. In spite of her silence on the peculiarities of their union, which has made her dream of being a novelist not only a possibility for Sackville-West but a lucrative career, I argue she believed these societal attitudes which constantly reaffirmed the incompatibility of the public roles of female barristers, doctors, politicians and Cabinet Ministers with the domestic sphere were also transferred onto the woman artist. Her examination of these issues in her *Künstlerroman* confirms this when Lady Slane asks Henry whether he would oppose the idea of her painting after they were married. He compares her interest in painting to a ‘feminine accomplishment’ and mentions the possibility of keeping her

‘water-colour sketches’ in a little ‘album’ (*APS* 93). Pastels and watercolour were the common media used by female amateur painters who usually created ‘highly detailed work on a small scale’ but ‘lack[ed] the capacity for abstract reasoning and creativity’ associated with the male artist who worked in acrylics and oils (Chadwick 148). Henry’s assumption that she would only pursue this hobby as a form of diversion reaffirms the nineteenth-century conviction that women were incapable of transcending their amateur status. When she clarifies her interests in art are more serious than he originally thought, his argument that ‘after marriage she would find plenty of other occupations to help pass the days’ establishes his control over her fate as a submissive wife and mother (94). Lady Slane subsequently abandons her artistic endeavours and ‘never referred to it again’ (94).

Sackville-West extends Woolf’s argument in *A Room of One’s Own* by depicting the long-term effects of thwarted artistry, but she complicates the debate in her *Künstlerroman* when she examines what happens after the sacrifice when the thwarted artist manages to find another kind of fulfilment in her marriage. Woolf does not address this possibility in *A Room of One’s Own*, and Sackville-West’s inclusion of the emotional conflicts experienced by the woman artist following her marriage adds a necessary dialogue to the debate. Despite admitting she did not love Henry at the time of her engagement, Lady Slane confesses near the end of the second part of the novel that, while she was unable to answer whether ‘one’s life had been happy or unhappy’, she could ‘answer without hesitation’ that she had loved her husband (97). She does not deny that her ‘ambitions, her secret existence’ and desire to be an artist were abandoned for this love which, in return, ‘hurt her, it had damaged her, it had diminished her’ into an incorporated wife, but Lady Slane ‘had loved him so much, that even her resentment was subdued’ (97). Up until this point in the narrative, her feminist reflections on marriage and motherhood have presented both an interpretation of the anti-courtship plot narrative as well as a critique on the inequalities rooted within this social institution. Her confession of love

introduces an alternative discourse concerning the woman artist who is torn between two passions and reveals how women's creative endeavours can be 'ruined by licit love' (Huf 158). It must be noted that Lady Slane's admission does not undermine her earlier, feminist reflections nor does it fulfil the courtship plot:

She was, after all, a woman. Thwarted as an artist, was it perhaps possible to find fulfilment in other ways? Was there, after all, some foundation for the prevalent belief that woman should minister to man? [...] Was there something beautiful, something active, something creative even, in her apparent submission to Henry? Could she not balance herself upon the tight-rope of her relationship with him, as dangerously and precariously as in the act of creating a picture? Was it not possible to see the tones and half-tones of her life with him as she might have seen the blue and violet shadows of a landscape; and so set them in relation and ordain their values, that she thereby forced them into beauty? Was not this also an achievement of the sort peculiarly suited to women? [...] All the woman in her answered, yes! All the artist in her countered, no! (101).

In this internal debate between her artistic and married selves, Lady Slane is trying to find a justification for her sacrifice. She cannot deny the fact that Henry 'had cheated her out of her chosen life' as a painter, but she recognises that he offered 'her another life, an ample life, a life to touch the greater world, if that took her fancy' (102). Henry's idea of compromise is self-serving, for his career, ambitions and personal desires take precedence over his wife's. As seen in her memories of her time in India as Vicereine, Lady Slane did not find pleasure in the imperial game of politics nor did she fulfil the Victorian and Edwardian belief that a 'women's creativity went into having children' for she did not 'project' her suppressed artistic self 'into the lives of her children' (Borzello 171; *APS* 102). The thing which she yearned for the most throughout her marriage which would have fulfilled this creative void was 'a life of

contemplation' wherein she could luxuriate in 'moments when the private, specialised, intense and lovely existence of the artist' would be available to her (105). Lady Slane's definition of artistry is similar to Miriam's ideas about artistic being in *Pilgrimage* wherein one's artistry is defined by one's existence—their 'soul and intelligence'—located in the creative process (Plato, *Timaeus* 30c). However, because her domestic responsibilities to her husband and children often prevented her artistic consciousness from engaging with this life of contemplation, she often indulged in '[s]hocking, unnatural thoughts' like '[i]f only I had never married... if only I had never had any children' (104). With thoughts like these compared with the ones above, one could argue that Lady Slane has reached an impasse in regards to her love for Henry and her sacrifice of her artistry, though her ability to reclaim this artistic aspect of herself in her widowhood allows her to resolve these conflicting feelings and return to her much desired state of artistic being.

While Lady Slane rewrites herself as an artist and regains this essential element of her artistic being through her memories, the fact that she still does not paint when she finally has a room of her own and financial independence needs to be discussed. Sackville-West does acknowledge that these two requirements are necessary for the woman artist to produce art, though she further complicates Woolf's idea by questioning the other obstacles the woman artist encounters, such as old age and missed opportunities. As a woman in her late-eighties, it is highly unlikely that Lady Slane will begin her training at one of the London art institutes, for her 'body was a little shaky, not very certain of its reliability, not quite certain even of its sense of direction, afraid of stumbling over a step, or spilling a cup of tea; nervous, tremulous; aware that it must not be jostled, or hurried, for fear of betraying its frail inadequacy' (43). She lacks the confidence, and coordination, to complete simple daily tasks, and this admission reveals her inability to handle more precise movements and skill like holding a paintbrush. Her sex and reproductive capability acted as an obstacle in her youth and early-married days and now

her body's weakened condition and slowly deteriorating state in old age yet again inhibits her artistic fulfilment. In spite of these physical difficulties, her 'mind was as alert as ever, perhaps more alert, sharpened by the sense of imminent final interruption, spurred by the necessity of making the most of remaining time' (44). No longer burdened with the responsibility of having to worry about fulfilling her family's needs before her own, Lady Slane has achieved 'the life of contemplation' and the psychological freedom she was previously denied during her marriage (105). For a woman in Lady Slane's physical condition and mental state it is this psychological freedom which is more important than having a house of her own and money, although these material improvements allow Lady Slane to achieve her life of contemplation. Consequently, it is her newfound ability to navigate the space of her private thoughts without guilt, and revisit the artistic impressions of her youth, which instigates Lady Slane's artistic rebirth in her old age.

Mr FitzGeorge does not recognise Lady Slane's psychological artistic rebirth and, thus, he does not grant her artistic status. He maintains that she was 'defrauded of the one thing that mattered' in her life, for '[n]othing matters to an artist except the fulfilment of his gift' (128). He argues that her husband and children were 'nothing but obstacles' which prevented her from truly understanding her artistic self and, consequently, she 'sinned against the light' (129). As a collector of rare and valuable art objects, FitzGeorge's definition of what constitutes artistic fulfilment still supports masculine definitions of artistry with his requirement of a completed art object. When this is denied to the artist, FitzGeorge argues he 'grows crooked like an unnatural shape. All meaning goes out of life, and life becomes existence—a makeshift' (129). Besides undermining any significance and meaning Lady Slane found in her life as a wife and mother, he refuses to acknowledge those moments of artistic awakening experienced by Lady Slane such as the butterflies in the Persian desert. He does not consider the possibility that the artist can find satisfaction in alternative ways and, consequently, he denies her the

possibility of achieving artistic fulfilment in her widowhood. Elaine Showalter argues in *A Literature of Their Own* (1978), that '[w]omen novelists punish and blame their heroines for their weakness' in choosing marriage over their artistry (244), and the only time Sackville-West appears to comply with this belief is through the character of FitzGeorge as he reduces Lady Slane's artistic experiences in this way.

FitzGeorge tells Lady Slane that '[m]en do kill women' and Henry was no exception to the rule, but FitzGeorge also participates in this patriarchal tradition with his denial of her artistic consciousness (129). Lady Slane admits that she has 'paid' for her sacrifice, but I argue that Henry did not kill her artistic being, instead, it was suppressed throughout the majority of her marriage. Miriam argues in *Revolving Lights* that '[w]omen see in terms of life' (P3 393). I believe Lady Slane reclaims the artist's life of contemplation in her old age as she loses herself in her memories. This re-creation of her life through memories does reflect artistic production, albeit one based upon private rather than public productivity. This presentation of artistic fulfilment mirrors Woolf's discussion in *A Room of One's Own* surrounding Jane Austen's own private engagement with her artistry. She maintains Austen was 'glad the hinge creaked, so that she might hide her manuscript before anyone' entered the drawing room (*AROO* 61). Woolf argues that Austen's decision to hide her manuscripts from the public eye was not a response to feelings of shame about her artistic endeavours, for she wrote 'without hate, without bitterness, without fear, without protest, without preaching' (61). She believes that Austen wrote for herself, and Lady Slane's experimentation with lifewriting through her artistic consciousness and reflections is a similarly creative, but private, act. In addition to her engagement with her artistic consciousness through her reveries, Lady Slane reasserts her artistic autonomy through her great-granddaughter, a pianist also named Deborah:

Youth! youth! she thought; and she so near to death, imagined that all the perils again awaited her, but this time she would face them more bravely, she would allow no

concessions, she would be firm and certain. This child, this Deborah, this self, this other self, this projection of herself, was firm and certain. Her engagement, she said was a mistake; she had drifted into it to please her grandfather [...] he liked the idea of her being, some day, a duchess; but what was that, she said, compared with what she herself wanted to be, a musician? (165-6).

Sackville-West recreates Lady Slane's predicament nearly sixty years after the event and, once again, a promise of prestige is presented with this engagement—a duchess to Lady Slane's vicerojal duties—to tempt Deborah into accepting the proposal and abandoning her dreams of becoming a professional pianist. She recognises herself in Deborah's plight and Lady Slane finally finds the voice she lost so many years ago when Henry proposed and she refuses to allow her great-granddaughter to make the same sacrifice she made. Raitt argues that Deborah's decision to vocalise her unhappiness with her engagement 'corrects' the mistakes of Lady Slane 'without criticizing them' in the way FitzGeorge does (*Vita & Virginia* 113). This argument refuses to acknowledge Lady Slane's own autonomous reassertion of her previously suppressed artistry, and I argue that Lady Slane rewrites her own mistakes in her unconditional support of her great-granddaughter's dream. Despite having no concept of Deborah's musical capabilities, Lady Slane admits 'that was beside the point. Achievement was good, but the spirit was better. To reckon by achievement was to make a concession to the prevailing system of the world' (169). Lady Slane finally separates herself from the institutional, masculinist standards supported by men like FitzGeorge which define acceptable representations of artistry with productivity and material objects. Her declaration that one's creativity and artistic potential is located in the spirit, observation, attitude and passion of the artist, which she recognises in Deborah, also reasserts her own artistic capabilities despite never producing a painting. Regretting that she cannot financially help her great-granddaughter, Deborah admits that she preferred her great-grandmother's advice to money, though Lady Slane knows that

'she did not really want advice either; she wanted only to be strengthened and supported in her resolution', and she gives Deborah the approval she once sought from Henry (169). Her acceptance of Deborah's artistic endeavours is her final act in the novel and she dies soon after.

Woolf argued in *A Room of One's Own* that 'we think back through our mothers if we are women' (69), and Deborah's request for approval from Lady Slane directly engages with this tradition as the scene concludes with the musician's own thoughts: 'Her desire to render an experience in terms of music transcended even her interest in her great-grandmother as a human being; a form of egoism which she knew her great-grandmother would neither resent nor misunderstand. The impulse which had led her to her great-grandmother was the right impulse' (170). The narrator's transition from Lady Slane's artistic consciousness to Deborah's creates a sense of communal history between artists. Despite being classified as a distinctly middlebrow novel, *All Passion Spent* is the only *Künstlerroman* in this study which engages with this ideology of female tradition amongst women artists. While Sackville-West explores throughout her *Künstlerroman* the consequences, and ultimate regret, of the woman artist who chose marriage over her artistry, it ultimately rewrites this sacrifice of the woman artist found in so many nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman* narratives with Deborah's own artistic fulfilment and continuation of her great-grandmother's ideals.

Epilogue: Expanding Modernism and the Female *Künstlerroman*

In their discussion of the ‘new modernist studies’ Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz argue that it is characterised by spatial, temporal and vertical expansion (737). They believe modernism becomes a ‘more global practice’ once the historical period under consideration is widened and, consequently, they maintain modernist studies is in the midst of a ‘transitional turn’ as new scholarship argues for the inclusion of marginalised and non-European traditions, the study of ‘transnational circulation and translation’ and the examination of how modernist writers reacted to ‘imperialism and engaged in anticolonialism’ (738-9). There is a sense in which, with this new interest in transitional modernism, interest in gender and modernism seems passé, but I believe these are intersecting areas of concern and, in their discussion of the woman artist, Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair and Vita Sackville-West engage explicitly with empire, national identity and the constraints they place on female creativity. It is crucial, that in this reconfigured critical terrain, we do not lose sight of gender, particularly as imperial Britain understood itself through gendered tropes. An extension of this project would incorporate narratives written outside this tradition of ‘Euromodernism’ (Ramazani 446). Willa Cather’s *Song of the Lark* (1915), Jean Rhys’s *Voyage in the Dark* (1934) and Christina Stead’s *For Love Alone* (1945) are just a few examples of female *Künstlerromane* that introduce alternative discourses—postcolonial, American, Caribbean and Australian—which would improve our understanding of the modernist female *Künstlerroman* within this expansive, global tradition alluded to by Mao and Walkowitz.

In *The Voyage Out* (1915), Rachel’s artistry is key to the novel’s wider feminist concerns and the links between its critique of colonialism and patriarchy. Woolf’s anti-imperialism participates in a discourse of ‘[c]ritical globalization’, wherein the narrative ‘uses knowledge of other regions or countries to disrupt habitual perceptions and practices, and to prompt a self-reflexive repositioning of the self in the global sphere’ (Cuddy-Keane 546). This occurs when

Rachel travels up the Amazon river and, while her encounter with indigenous people is considered problematic given Woolf's own upper-class Englishness and interest in primitivism, the juxtaposition of Rachel's engagement to Terence with the tourist's exploitation of the 'native' women's goods and bodies aligns the plight of her artist-heroine with the racial Other. Cuddy-Keane argues that the traveller's 'transformative experience' is dependent upon his/her 'imagined adoption of the other's point of view' and, although Rachel does not fully adopt the attitude of the racial Other, she recognises in the South American women's blank stares and beaten spirits the dire consequences of colonial repression which reflect her own feelings and fears about patriarchal bodily and psychological oppression in British society (546). Her encounter initiates her refusal to accept a system which would not only define her as an imperial wife and mother but would also limit her musicality and artistic autonomy. Woolf's examination of the various social obstacles which prevent women from achieving artistic fulfilment in her early-modernist *Künstlerroman* explores how multiple systems of oppression aim to constrain women's creative endeavours within the domestic sphere.

In contrast to Woolf, who experiments with the 'voyage motif' and has her artist-heroine leave the imperial centre (Seret 1), Richardson's *Pilgrimage* (1915-67) instead examines 'cosmopolitan modernism' in late-Victorian and Edwardian London as Miriam is forced to 'negotiate a complex network of race, class, and empire' in her quest for an uninterrupted state of artistic being (Kusch 41). Through Miriam's relationship with Michael Shatov and her various encounters with the black Londoner and people of various nationalities and religions, Richardson experiments with 'cohabiting globalization' in her modernist female *Künstlerroman* (Cuddy-Keane 549). This idea of cohabiting globalization focuses on the acceptance of different races, cultures and traditions within the same shared space, and the modern, cosmopolitan city, as presented in *Pilgrimage's* reproduction of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century London, is representative of this ideology. Miriam 'acknowledges the

autonomous, independent being' of Otherness but resists the 'assimilation of difference'—both in her refusal to marry Michael and her experimentation with Russian translations—and she 'imagines a world of separate, complex individuals who inhabit and share mutual space' (549). She believes '[t]he world of science and art' participates in an ideology of globalized 'Cosmopolis', wherein all over the world 'people were making a network of unanimous culture' and 'arrived independently at the same conclusions' (P2 342). Yet, her fear that these ideas would merge into 'one piece' of 'Anglo-Saxon supremacy' signifies her preference for cohabiting globalization in the cosmopolitan centre. Miriam's, and subsequently Richardson's, anti-Semitism, Christian supersessionism, ideologies about nation and racial continuity, intermarriage, and Miriam's complicated relationship with, and eventual rejection of, Jewish Otherness, at times troubles this ideology of a cohabiting globalized space. Miriam's belief that the 'individual, with a consciousness; or soul, whatever you like to call it' is able to transcend the demands and realities of the race, and maintain their difference, offers an alternative presentation of the woman artist's immersion in the cosmopolitan imperial centre during the modernist period (P3 150).

While Sinclair does not engage with imperialism in *Mary Olivier: A Life* (1919), her artist-heroine transcends the repressive barriers of women's education and right to intellectual autonomy in Victorian and Edwardian England. Sinclair questions the boundaries of acceptable female education by focusing specifically on Mary's interest in Greek studies—a traditionally masculine subject—and her desire to master Greek leads to a new understanding of the translation process. Mary argues translation should abandon the 'superstition of singing; the little tunes of rhyme' and should, instead, embrace unconventional rhyming patterns and *vers libre* as a celebration of transnational difference as well as a liberation from the static conventions of traditional English verse (MO 326). These new ideas surrounding the translation process ultimately impact her own understanding of her artistry. As a transitional

poet whose narrative voice and poetic verse prefigures some of the formal conventions found in Imagist poetry, Sinclair crosses generic barriers and challenges society's perception of the Victorian poetess as an embodiment of feminine domesticity and the Victorian Angel in the House.

Sackville-West's reproduction of the woman artist in *All Passion Spent* (1931) as an elderly widow who 'never laid brush to canvas' redefines the traditional 'condition of the artist' narrative frequently found in modernist literature (*APS* 86; Fletcher and Bradbury 408). Moreover, *All Passion Spent* transcends the 'betwixt and between' barrier of middlebrow fiction and engages with Mao and Walkowitz's concept of vertical expansion within the brows (*E6* 472). Sackville-West presents the possibility of a hybrid narrative with her utilisation of a traditional realist form to convey her engagement with anti-colonialism and feminism (*E6* 472). The anti-imperialist themes found in the narrative are crucial to the suppression of Lady Slane's creativity, and Sackville-West challenges the masculinist ideologies promoting the concept of the incorporated wife and women's participation in marriage and motherhood within this context of empire. *All Passion Spent* also enters into dialogue with Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), commenting implicitly on those 'essential conditions' which are necessary 'for the creation of works of art' (*AROO* 23). While Lady Slane has the monetary and spatial requirements to achieve artistic fulfilment, she fails to return to her earlier dream of becoming a painter. Sackville-West extends Woolf's feminist polemic and examines the obstacles preventing women's creative expression, such as old age and missed opportunities, while also exploring a kind of artistry which is held in abeyance and has the potential to recreate and rewrite a life through memories and reflection.

How modernist writers like Woolf, Richardson, Sinclair and Sackville-West present the woman artist's transcendence of the historical and social obstacles placed upon women engages with Mao and Walkowitz's discussion of spatial, temporal and vertical expansion in

modernist studies. These writers challenged institutional definitions of artistry set out by the art world public, art and music academies, male critics and universities, and their presentation of various forms of female artistry demonstrate that institutional attitudes surrounding women's artistic capabilities need to be modified and expanded in order to include women's very different experiences from men. Their resistance to this masculine discourse, which aims to constrain women's creative endeavours within the limiting space of the domestic sphere, additionally influenced their own formal experimentation in their fiction and, consequently, resulted in the evolution of their own ideas about art and aesthetics during the modernist period. Therefore, while the figure of the woman artist has been previously ignored by critics as a significant literary figure, or has been identified as an inferior individual, an amateur to her male counterpart, the modernist examination of this figure instigated new trends in how we explore gender, women's creativity and national identity within modernist studies.

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