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Discursive departures: A reading paradigm affiliated with feminist, lesbian, aesthetic and queer practices (with reference to Woolf, Stein and H.D.) (Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, Hilda Doolittle)

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Discursive Departures:

A Reading Paradigm Affiliated with Feminist, Lesbian, Aesthetic and Queer Practices

(with reference to Woolf, Stein, and H.D.)

By

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Abstract

In her conclusion to Bodies That Matter Judith Butler posits that "if the power of discourse to produce that which it names is linked with the question of performativity, then the performative is one domain in which power acts as discourse" (225). In this thesis I will adopt theories of the performative, as a metadiscursive mode of analysis, to allow me to articulate some of the ways in which reading is regulated by formations of discourse and power. I will argue that if reading is considered as a performative process then different paradigms of reading will name, and consequently produce, different identities for a text. I will focus, specifically, on feminist and lesbian reading practices as examples of identity producing literary criticism. However, I will also consider contemporary re-articulations of the aesthetic as a reaction to identity-producing criticism that privileges an emotional response to both a primary text and to its possible identities. Finally, I will consider contemporary queer theories of affiliation as a way to enact multiple identities and create multiple affiliations for a text. Building on, and departing from, my analysis of feminist, lesbian, and aesthetic reading practices, I will propose a new reading paradigm, which I will come to term interdiscursive affiliations, that will be constituted by the discourses and associated reading practices of feminist, lesbian, aesthetic and queer literary theories.

In the introductory section, "The 1990's and the 1920's," I will outline some of the theories of paradigms and performatives that provide a theoretical framework for the thesis. Following this I will consider some of the historically significant ideas that constitute feminist, lesbian, aesthetic, and queer literary theories and reading practices. Proceeding from this general history, in "Regulated Reading Practices," I will turn my attention to specific examples - Virginia Woolf's Orlando: A Biography and Gertrude Stein's The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas - as a way to examine some manifestations of feminist, lesbian, and aesthetic reading practices. In this section I will argue that feminist and lesbian readings tend to produce, respectively, feminist and lesbian texts which are structured by binary concepts of gender and sexuality. Alternatively,

I will suggest that the aesthetic - as an emotionally embodied mode of reading - tends to create art objects that challenge conceptually determined textual identities. Next, I will turn my attention to H.D., a figure whose prose was not published until the 1980's and 1990's, and argue that her texts were immediately identified within some of the same formations that have recently re-constituted the work of Woolf and Stein. More specifically, H.D.'s HERmione, Paint It Today, and Asphodel were immediately located in feminist and lesbian reading practices and consequently identified, respectively, as feminist and lesbian texts.

In my final chapter, "Discursive Departures," I will propose some possibilities for a new paradigm of reading. Making reference to selected sections from H.D.'s prose and specific theoretical concepts I will explore some possibilities for the creation of interdiscursive affiliations. By locating an image in a multiplicity of discourses, I propose a departure from regulatory concepts of identity and a move towards a reading strategy that combines both emotional and conceptual modes of reading. I will, therefore, describe, and consequently create, a new paradigm of reading that makes use of feminist, lesbian , aesthetic, and queer reading practices without limiting a text to these exclusive identities. I hope to demonstrate that a reading paradigm that replaces 'identity' with 'affiliation' will enable one to experience a richer and fuller reading of diverse and complex writing by (female and lesbian) modernist writers such as Woolf, Stein, and H.D..

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Historicity and History

The 1920's and the 1990's: Reading Paradigms and Discursive Practices

In 1995 Bonnie Kime Scott described the year 1928 as "a second rise in modernism" in which 'the women of 1928,' Virginia Woolf, Rebecca West, and Djuna Barnes, "had written themselves out of some of their confining, paternal, avuncular, and male modernist relationships and literary patterns" (Refiguring Modernism xxxvii). Kime Scott was not the first to identify 1928 as a monumental year for the writing of what has been termed 'female modernism'; several lesbian scholars had already focused on 1928 as an important year. In 1979 and 1986 Blanche Wiessen Cook and Lillian Faderman, respectively, had identified 1928 as "a banner year for lesbian publishing" (Cook 718) in which "a number of fairly explicit novels dealing with lesbianism were published" (Faderman, Love Between 24). Although the need for revisions to the literary history of the 1920's has recently received broad assent, I do not believe that one can adequately discuss 1928 as 'a banner year for lesbian publishing,' nor as representing a 'rise in female modernism,' without also discussing the 1990's as a banner decade for lesbian and feminist literary studies. In this thesis I intend to analyze the 1990's rather than the 1920's; that is, I intend to focus on issues of reading rather than descriptions of writing. I will consider the historicity - 'the sedimentation of the usages'[1] - of the names feminist, lesbian, aesthetic and queer so that my writing is concerned with the creation of the present moment in literary criticism rather than with a re-writing of literary history. The thesis will not disengage from historically specific moments but it will always consider history to be concepts and ideas that have been subjected to continuous re-writing.

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[1] Judith Butler describes historicity in Excitable Speech as "the history which has become internal to a name, has come to constitute the contemporary meaning of a name: the sedimentation of its usages as they have become part of the very name, a sedimentation, a repetition that congeals, that gives the name its force" (36).

Before turning to issues of reading I would like briefly to mention the writing, and publication, of the literary texts from within and around '1928' which I will refer to in this thesis. Although my readings will make reference to selected prose works by H.D., I will consider first Virginia Woolf's Orlando: A Biography and Gertrude Stein's The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas.[2] Woolf's text was published in 1928 and has been refigured as making a significant contribution not only to representations of 1928 as 'a second rise in modernism' but also to creating 'a banner year for lesbian publishing.' Stein's text was not written, or published, until 1933 but has come to be read, at least in part, as related to the same feminist and lesbian traditions of writing and publishing. H.D., another female modernist who wrote 'fairly explicit novels dealing with lesbianism,' offers a situation that contrasts to that of Woolf and Stein; she chose to suppress, rather than publish, novels such as HERmione, Paint It Today and Asphodel.[3] Completed in 1927, H.D.'s HERmione was not published until 1981; Asphodel and Paint It Today were both written around 1922 but were not published until 1992.

Because H.D.'s three texts are relatively unread (outside of specific academic communities), they provide exciting opportunities for the exploration of new reading strategies. The delayed presence of these three texts allowed them to escape the era of New Criticism and to be immediately constituted by post-1970's critical and scholarly projects: more specifically, the practices of feminist and lesbian scholarship provided structures for the initial readings of H.D.'s prose. I argue that such readings tend to produce related identities for texts and authors. Following the tradition of Toril Moi - whose polemical introduction to her 1985 book, Sexual/textual Politics, treated studies of Woolf as a metonym of feminist literary studies - I have decided to focus my analysis of feminist and lesbian literary practices on Woolf and to complement this analysis with the less iconic and more problematic Stein. Specifically, I will

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[2] I will refer to these texts as Orlando and Toklas.

[3] Norman Holmes Pearson preserved many of H.D.'s unpublished manuscripts, many of which have since been relocated to the Beinecke library at Yale University. Many of H.D.'s texts, including HERmione, Paint It Today, and Asphodel, have been published, with the permission and assistance of her daughter Perdita Schaffner, since H.D.'s death in 1961.

focus on readings of Orlando and Toklas as a way to articulate the structures that produce feminist, lesbian, and aesthetic identities for both the texts and their authors. An analysis of scholarly writing about Woolf and Stein will demonstrate the feminist and lesbian practices that had been established as dominant (and developing) ideological methods of reading at the time when H.D.'s texts were published. Finally, after considering the ways in which H.D., and her texts, were immediately constituted by some of the same structures as those recently (re-) constituting Woolf and Stein, I will attempt to enact new reading strategies that will engage with, and depart from, the emerging practices of queer theory to produce alternative reading structures (articulating what I will later call interdiscursive affiliations). I will not claim to have discovered alternative readings of H.D.'s texts but will instead posit that by enacting new structures of reading I will depart from conceptually regulated textual identities to produce multiple affiliations for the texts.

My motivation for this project is based on an observation that by naming Woolf, Stein, or H.D. as feminist, lesbian or aesthetic writers, literary critics tend to limit the number of readings that these texts are capable of yielding. I do not believe that reading structures which are regulated by feminist, lesbian, or aesthetic literary theories do justice to the complexity of the images and discourses that constitute these texts. Written by female, and lesbian, modernists Orlando, Toklas, HERmione, Paint It Today, and Asphodel are complex texts that resemble each other in many ways. To employ a Wittgensteinian phrase that has become popular in contemporary theories of genre, the texts may be said to have many 'family resemblances.'[4] For example, as stories which trace the development and growth of a female writer, the plot of each work resembles a Künstlerroman. Each of the texts narrates events and persons that are related to specific historical events and persons but is also a fictionalized account of said events; that is,

[4] To elaborate: in discussing different genre theories Jean-Marie Schaeffer describes the shifting parameters of genre categories. He argues that "the different texts that we integrate into a genre are often linked by simple 'family resemblances' in Wittgenstein's sense: they do not all necessarily share the same recurrent characteristics, but a given text shares some characteristics with some of its 'congeners,' some other characteristics with other 'congeners'" (175).

they engage in forms of biography and autobiography.[5] It is because the selected texts both resemble and differ from each other that I have chosen to group them together in this thesis. I have also chosen to focus on a limited number of texts so that I may draw on specific examples of literary criticism as a microcosmic representation of broader reading practices. After studying the reading practices and resulting textual identities of feminist, lesbian and aesthetic literary criticism I would like to pose some possibilities for an alternative paradigm of reading. My hope is that replacing textual identity with a strategy of affiliation will allow me to appreciate the richness and complexity of the work of these (and other) female, and lesbian, modernist writers.

Before elaborating on the topic of alternative structures (or new paradigms) of reading, I would like to begin by situating the 1990's within a history of literary scholarship of what Alan Sinfield, attempting to locate reading practices in institutional identities, calls "Englit."[6] In recent years critics such as Terry Eagleton and David Richter have stressed that particular paradigms have guided the research and writing of people in the particular reading communities that comprise "Englit." Eagleton, in "The Rise of English," states that "we always interpret literary work in light of our own concerns - indeed that in one sense of our own concerns we are incapable of doing anything else" (12). In a summation of the history of cultural materialism Sinfield suggests that "the choice of a text doesn't matter as much as what you do with it" (30). On the process of canon formation Richter states that "some works happen to meet the cultural and aesthetic needs of a particular reading public" (111). Within the (cultural) framework established by critics such as Richter, Eagleton, and Sinfield it becomes evident that past claims about the universal nature of literature were universal claims only for a reading public dominated by the interests of heterosexual male readers. In recent decades, alternative reading publics, which Sinfield identifies with "subcultural reading" (65-82), have questioned the values and

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[5] I will develop the idea of a Künstlerroman plot with reference to H.D.'s novels in chapter three. I do not intend to develop an analysis of readings of any of the texts as either autobiography or biography, but I would like to acknowledge that Stein's and H.D.'s texts are often read as such.

[6] See the chapter titled "Beyond Englit" in Cultural Politics - Queer Reading where Sinfield describes 'Englit' as a strong subculture which is "thoroughly adapted to its allocated roles" (66).

assumptions of the heterosexist male reading public that had established the texts, and accepted readings, of the literary canon.

Of course, new accepted readings of modernist texts result from new reading 'paradigms.' Both David Richter and Kevin Dettmar have appropriated Thomas Kuhn's idea of paradigms from The Structure of Scientific Revolutions as a way to describe revolutions of reading in 'Englit.' Kuhn introduces paradigms as "universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners" (x). Thus, Richter argues, in the introduction to his 1994 anthology Falling Into Theory, that in literary studies today challenges to a paradigm have not resulted in a paradigm shift: we have instead, he claims, "fallen into a state of theory" (3). The subtitle to Richter's book, "Conflicting Views on Reading Literature," is indicative of the implicit conflicts among the reading practices of 'a state of theory.' In Rereading the New: A Backwards Glance at Modernism, Kevin Dettmar identifies three stages, or paradigms, for the reception of twentieth-century, modern texts. The first, a reactionary stage, is "characterized by outrage" (1); the second stage was characterized by "the New Critical project of domesticating the Modernists" (2). "The third generation of Modernist critics combine the New Historicists' interest in the Modernist milieu with a different paradigm of the literary text - one that highlights disjunction, chance, and the unmasterable play of signifiers in the text, in place of the unity, design, and high seriousness valorized by the critics of the second moment" (2). This third moment, Dettmar argues, might be called "the postmodern criticism of the Modernists" (2). Citing Kuhn to suggest that "something like a paradigm is a prerequisite to perception itself" (13), Dettmar adds that Modernism "is as much a strategy of reading as it is a style of writing; and when those same Modernist texts are reread from the vantage point of postmodernism, they appear rather different" (13). Postmodernism functions as a sign of the conflicts comprising 'a state of theory,' thus signifying a multiplicity of 'prerequisites' for contemporary perceptions of literary texts. As a 'prerequisite to perception,' a paradigm functions to provide an implicit structure for the processes of reading.

With specific reference to the writing, both literary and critical, of the period that has come to be termed modernism, there have (as indicated by Dettmar) been a number of paradigms that have re-structured the ways in which texts from this period are perceived. In the chapter of The Concept of Modernism titled "The Making of Modernist Paradigms," Astradur Eysteinsson identifies approximately nine different strategies for the constructing and re-constructing of modernism. He notes the predominance of New Critical and Formalist approaches to modernism but moves outside these paradigms to consider 'the historical significance of modernist aesthetic practices" (18); that is, the sociocultural and ideological positions of modernism. Instead of continuing to read "modernism through the spectacles of New Criticism" (11), Eysteinsson reflects on some of the changes to modernist paradigms that have resulted from changes in the reading practices of 'Englit.' Like Eysteinsson, I have not chosen to read Woolf, Stein or H.D. through the spectacles of New Criticism but instead to engage with the reading practices of 1980's and 1990's feminist, lesbian, and aesthetic literary criticism. As I perform an analysis of the structures that underlie refigurations of writing by female modernists I will be analyzing the ways in which the primary texts intersect with specific reading practices to produce new versions of modern texts. I am, then, always engaging in the text as an historical monument and as the product of re-written history.

In this thesis I will employ theories of discourse and the performative, as articulated by Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, to create a trajectory from lesbian and feminist readings, through contemporary re-articulations of the aesthetic and the developing strategies of queer theory, to what I will come to call the production of interdiscursive affiliations. Performative theories, as they depart from theories of discourse, will function as a metadiscourse that allows me to articulate 'prerequisites' to reading. An underlying and important theory in this thesis is that any reading of a text enacts structures of power by producing relationships among the discourses that run through a text; a particular paradigm of reading provides a particular regulating structure for the relations of discourse and power. As I will demonstrate in the following pages, theories of discourse and the performative will not necessarily function as

structures in themselves but they instead provide a way to articulate regulatory formations of power, discourse, and, with respect to reading, textual identity. As an encompassing mode of analysis, theories of the performative will allow me to expose problems in the implicit structures of feminist and lesbian readings and call for, to borrow Kuhn's concept of scientific revolution, a paradigm shift that will produce a revolution in reading. Although the phrase 'revolution in reading' seems pretentious, I will argue that the contemporary re-articulations of the aesthetic and the developing strategies of queer theory provide a transitional phase that will allow for a departure to a new paradigm of reading which engages with a multiplicity of identities.

Because I am concerned with the processes of reading, and the ways in which these processes structure power relations and corresponding identities for a text, I will make use of theories of the performative. I would like to consider a performative mode of analysis as one that I have developed from both reader response theories and performative theories that articulate identity as an accumulation of compulsory performances. In The Implied Reader Wolfgang Iser writes that "the convergence of text and reader brings the literary text into existence" (275). Of the text itself, Iser suggests that "one text is capable of several realizations, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential, for each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his own way, thereby excluding other possibilities; as he reads, he will make his own decisions as to how the gap is to be filled" (280). Although this is the point at which performative processes depart from reader response criticism, Iser adds that "it is only by leaving behind the familiar world of his own experience that the reader can truly participate in the adventure the literary text offers him" (283). Iser's argument is similar to Barthes's description of the 'death of the author' and birth of the reader in which the reader is the destination of a text but is "without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that *someone* who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the text is constituted" (225). I believe, however, that the familiar world, which is comprised of the reader's history, biography and psychology, cannot be left behind. The reader's participation in the dominant ideologies and paradigms of the familiar world regulate the ways in which s/he fills in the gaps or holds together the traces of the text.

Like ideas of reading that privilege the response of the reader over a meaning that precedes the text, performative theories are concerned with surfaces and the production of an identity. With respect to a text, I use the word identity to signify its location in specific discursive formations that result from the interaction between text and reader in the same way that a body's identity is discursively produced. Of gender, as a performative identity, Judith Butler writes that "there is no gender identity behind the expression of gender, that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Gender, 25). Instead, "a performative is that discursive act that enacts or produces what it names" (Bodies, 13). As I have already posited, names also have a historicity which Butler describes in Excitable Speech. She writes that "the name has ... a historicity, what might come to be understood as the history which has become internal to a name, has come to constitute the contemporary meaning of a name" (36). Thus, by naming a text as feminist, lesbian, aesthetic or queer a reader produces the text as such by invoking not only the contemporary meanings of those names but also their historicity.

The names feminist, lesbian, and aesthetic[7] function to name what Michel Foucault calls discursive formations, and their regularity "is defined by the discursive formation itself" (Archeology, 116). In Archeology of Knowledge Foucault defines discourse "as a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation" (117). He then defines a 'discursive practice' as "a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area, the conditions of operation of enunciative functions" (117). I would like to consider a discursive formation as what Judith Butler calls regulatory fictions or regimes[8]. Like

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[7] Queer theory, because it is a relatively recent concept, does not have a clearly determined discursive formation. In fact, there is much critical debate concerned with the production, and borders, of a queer discursive formation. Eric Savoy's article, which is part of a special gay and lesbian issue of English Studies in Canada, is one of many texts to reflect on the emerging practices (and potential problems) associated with 'queer' as a "revisionist category that seeks to undo all categories" (129).

[8] Butler discusses her debt to Foucault in conversation with Gayle Rubin in an article, titled "Sexual Traffic," which is part of the special issue of differences: "More Gender Trouble: Feminism Meets Queer Theory."

a discursive practice that provides the rules for discourses and their corresponding discursive formations, Butler's Bodies the Matter, responding to Foucault's discussion of psychoanalysis in The History of Sexuality, "accepts as its point of departure Foucault's notion that regulatory power produces the subject it controls, that power is not only imposed externally, but works as the regulatory and normative means by which subjects are formed" (22). Thus, by both regulating the ways in which identity is constituted and naming from within specific discursive formations, the performative 'enacts or produces what it names.' By articulating 'regulatory power' or the relations between formations of power and discursive practices, discourse and performative theories provide a metadiscourse[9] for examining the structure of different reading processes.

I would like to adopt Butler's theories of the performative to consider the gender, sexual, and aesthetic identities of literary texts as well as queer theories of affiliation. Butler asserts that "what will and will not be included within the boundaries of 'sex' will be set by a more or less tacit operation of exclusion" (Bodies, 11). Similarly, one might say, then, that 'what will and will not be included within the boundaries of a 'text' will be set by a more or less tacit operation of exclusion.' Iser makes this point clear when he writes that the reader will "fit everything together in a certain pattern" (283) which necessarily excludes any parts of the text that do not fit the pattern. Theorizing the relationship between texts and authors in "The Death of the Author" Roland Barthes argues that "to give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing" (225). Similarly, Foucault, working with the themes that (a) writing is "an interplay of signs arranged more or less according to its signified content than according to the very nature of the content" and (b) "the mark of the writer is reduced to nothing more than the singularity of his absence" (142), considers the 'author-function' in "What Is An Author?." Foucault suggests that an author's name "performs a certain role with respect to narrative discourse, assuring its classificatory function" (147), or, in more rhetorical terms, the

[9] I employ the term 'meta' as a way to signify a practice that operates as a comprehensive level of analysis.

"author allows a limitation of the cancerous and dangerous proliferation of significations" (159). I would, therefore, conclude that an author's gender or sexual identity 'imposes a limit on a text' which stops the 'proliferation' of the discourses of gender and sexuality that run through the text.[10] Alternatively, identifying an author as the creator of art objects, allows for a proliferation of discourses.

Because this thesis is intended to propose a trajectory that begins with one paradigm of reading and concludes with the possibility of a new paradigm, each section is intended to build and expand on the one that precedes it. I will follow Kuhn's discussion of scientific revolutions by suggesting that the assimilation of a new theory (or new paradigm) requires "the reconstruction of prior theory and the re-evaluation of prior fact" (7). I will, therefore, begin with an elaboration of the history of feminist, lesbian, aesthetic, and queer reading practices. Following that general history, I will examine current paradigms of reading by analyzing the identities of Orlando and Toklas that have been produced by specific formations of feminist, lesbian, and aesthetic reading practices. I will then turn my attention to H.D.'s writing and consider, firstly, how identities for her texts have been immediately constituted by the same feminist and lesbian reading practices that had developed identities for Orlando and Toklas. In the third chapter, I will consider some possibilities for a new paradigm of reading, one which departs from the aesthetic and from emerging practices in queer theory, by employing a strategy of what I am calling interdiscursive affiliations which I will consider with reference to some specific theoretical concepts and selected sections from H.D.'s HERmione, Paint It Today, and Asphodel.

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[10] Reina Lewis's article "The Death of the Author and Resurrection of the Dyke" examines the ways in which lesbian literary criticism has not engaged in post-structuralist literary theories, therefore, uncritically using a construction of the author to limit reading of a text. Similarly, Englebract's article on Lesbian Criticism and New Criticism suggests that lesbian criticism relies on some of the New Critical assumptions that they are attempting to write against.

A History of Reading: The Discourses of Feminist, Lesbian, Aesthetic and Queer Traditions

Although I am primarily concerned with the ways in which the 1990's reads texts from the 1920's, feminist, lesbian, aesthetic, and emerging queer literary theories have histories and historicities which constitute the contemporary signifieds of these names. I will therefore outline a brief history of the ideas that have come to constitute feminist, lesbian, aesthetic and queer structures of reading. Each of these traditions has been developed through a collection of texts: books, anthologies, journals, articles, conference papers, pamphlets, dissertations et cetera. Regardless of the form of the text, each text has specific discourses running through it which have come to be named as part of the discursive formations that are governed, respectively, by feminist, lesbian, aesthetic, and queer structures of discourse. I will attempt to show that feminist and lesbian reading practices are limited by binary structures of gender and sexuality which consequently limit the power relations of feminist and lesbian discourses to binary structures. These binary structures are represented as concepts of ideology and identity that precede a text. Furthermore, I will suggest that emotionally motivated aesthetic responses and developing queer theories of affiliation can provide routes to a new paradigm of reading.

It is my observation that 'inside/out' structures of gender and sexuality - that is, male/female and hetero-/homosexual binaries - are structures implicit to many feminist and lesbian literary theories. Judith Butler calls attention to the fixity of the law as structured by what she terms 'the heterosexual matrix' which regulates the constitution of sexed and gendered identities and which I will extend to include textual identities. Butler describes the 'heterosexual matrix' in a note to Gender Trouble:

> I use the term heterosexual matrix ... to designate that grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders, and desire are naturalized. I am drawing from Monique Wittig's notion of the 'heterosexual contract' and, to a lesser extent, on Adrienne Rich's notion of 'compulsory heterosexuality' to characterize a hegemonic discursive/epistemic model of gender intelligibility

> that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality. (151)

Writing out of the constructivist political tradition of Rich and Wittig, Butler suggests that culture naturalizes through compulsory performative acts that are regulated by the primary assumption of heterosexuality.[11] I would like to depart from a discussion of gender identity for an individual subject to consider the implications of the naturalizing power of 'the compulsory practice of heterosexuality,' and the assumption of a gender reading binary, or oppositional binary with respect to homosexual identifications, for literary texts and their authors.[12]

I will begin a discussion of a feminist tradition of reading by considering 'the mothers of gynocriticism.'[13] Naomi Schor has written that the basic tenet of gynocriticism is "that the sex-signature of an author matters, that to be born female - and especially to be socialized as a woman in a society where education, money, and control over culture production accrues disproportionately to those born male and socialized as men - is to write with a difference, to write otherwise" (267). The assertion that an author's sex-signature matters assumes that one's sex (feminine or masculine) necessarily corresponds to one's gender (which is socialized as either female or male). A female writer, therefore, creates a feminist text and this text will, if the heterosexual matrix continues to be unchallenged, be heterosexual. Because this project is concerned with reading - not with authors as limits - I am not interested in the female author to the same extent that I am interested in the reading processes that identify feminist texts and the textual manifestations of what Elaine Showalter calls the 'female aesthetic.'

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[11] Butler's ideas of compulsory repetitive acts are elaborated in her article titled "Imitation and Gender Insubordination." Note also that Rich's idea of compulsory heterosexuality is developed in her essay "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" and Wittig's ideas on the 'heterosexual contract' are elaborated in her essay "On the Social Contract" which is anthologized as part of The Straight Mind.

[12] In her separation of sex, gender and desire (or sexuality) Butler is writing in the tradition of Gayle Rubin and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. I am following this tradition with respect to suggesting separate sexed and gendered identities for authors and texts.

[13] 'The mothers of gynocriticism' is my own phrase, it is intended to draw attention to the gynocritical emphasis on a (heterosexual) mother metaphor.

I am focusing here on 'the mothers of gynocriticism' because of their emphasis on the significance of women's writing and their articulation of female alternatives to the master canon. Thus, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's prolific partnership as literary historians, gynocritics, and anthologizers is important to a discussion of the construction of an alternative female canon. Much of Gilbert and Gubar's writing on the topic of tradition is a reaction to Harold Bloom's The Anxiety of Influence and operates on a male/female binary that provides the female antithesis to Bloom's (male) tradition. Both accounts of the major (male) and (alternative) female literary traditions are organized and conceptualized chronologically and are centered on a discussion of fathers and sons, mothers and daughters. In making editorial decisions as to what to include in The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women, which provides an alternative female canon, Gilbert and Gubar seek "to recover a long and often neglected literary history" which should "help readers for the first time to appreciate fully the female literary tradition which, for several centuries, has coexisted with, revised and influenced male literary models" (xxvii). Within the binary established between Bloom and Gilbert and Gubar, it may be said that if men have an 'anxiety of influence' then women have an 'anxiety of authorship';[14] if men compete with their fathers by misreading and creating original writing then women write books that 'continue each other.'[15]

Gilbert and Gubar assume that the female gender of a text and an author necessarily follows from an author's feminine sex, and that the socialization (or naturalization) of the author's gender also functions to naturalize the gender of the text. In their introduction to The Female Imagination and Modernist Aesthetic, Gilbert and Gubar write that "we could only conclude that in the early part of this century men and women had evolved two entirely different versions of the world, visions so different we felt that we had to talk not only of male and female modernism, but of masculinist and feminist modernism" (2). The two traditions, the two

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[14] 'Anxiety of influence' and 'anxiety of authorship' are phrases developed, respectively, by Bloom and Gilbert and Gubar in descriptions of writing as a family romance. Both of these expressions, and the corresponding theories, have been widely appropriated by traditional and feminist literary critics.
[15] This is Gilbert and Gubar's expression for a female alternative to male models of literary competition.

genders, and the two gendered ideologies are constructed by modern and contemporary gender binaries that allow critics of the late 1990's, such as Gilbert and Gubar, to read the modern period as constructed within male/female and masculine/feminine, gender, ideological and textual binaries.

Elaine Showalter writes from within a similar gynocritical discursive formation that places the author's sex-signature as a limit to the text's final signified. In her influential book, A Literature of Their Own, she writes that "many other critics are beginning to agree that when we look at women writers collectively we can see an imaginative continuum, the recurrence of certain patterns, themes, problems, and images from generation to generation" (11). The underlying assumption of Showalter's monumental work is that women, as a category of writer, leads to a related textual category which contains a feminized imaginative continuum that passes from one generation of women to another in much the same way that women, in Gilbert and Gubar's 'anxiety of authorship,' look back through their mothers. Showalter uses the terms feminine, feminist and female (13) to describe female writing from generation to generation with modernist women falling, for the most part, into the female generation. These writers created "a deliberate female aesthetic, which transformed the feminine code of self-sacrifice into an annihilation of the narrative self, and applied the cultural analysis of the feminists to words, sentences, and structures of language in the novel" (33). Thus, if the female, sex-based, aesthetic creates female writing then a feminine sex should be apparent in the words, sentences, and structures that constitute the text as female.[16]

I would like to consider briefly Rachel Blau DuPlessis's book Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers as an example of the ways in which feminist literary critics have re-written literary history. In discussing narrative strategies Blau DuPlessis assumes that "narrative in the most general terms is a version of, or special

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[16] Although Showalter uses the word female to describe any writing by women that is done after 1928, I prefer the term feminist to describe a gendered reading of a text because feminist denotes a political and ideological commitment which Showalter figures as implicit to 'female writing.'

expression of, ideology: representations by which we construct and accept values and institutions. Any fiction expresses ideology; for example, romance plots of various kinds express attitudes at least toward family, sexuality, and gender" (x). She proceeds to study the ways in which female writers of the twentieth century deploy strategies that "delegitimate romance plots and related narratives. These strategies involve reparenting in invented families, fraternal-sororal ties temporarily reducing romance, and emotional attachment to women in bisexual love plots, female bonding, and lesbianism. (Perhaps I should underscore here that heterosexuality is not a natural law, for it must be produced in individuals; nor is it exclusively a personal, private, or sexual choice, but a cultural narrative ideology)" (xi). Although she attempts to escape the naturalizing forces of heterosexuality by naming them as such, Blau DuPlessis re-enacts the gender binaries that are integral to a heterosexual reading binary. By figuring female bonding and lesbianism as strategies that subvert the romance plot, she is limiting them to subversive feminist strategies rather than positing lesbianism as an alternative identity.[17]

Several literary historians, like Bonnie Kime Scott, have begun to refigure modernism and re-read modernist texts from the perspective of 1980's and 90's concepts of gender. In Refiguring Modernism, Kime Scott writes that "even as I carry postmodern issues of essentialism and binaries back to their texts, I see these issues as factors in my attachment to them. I am not interested in proving my postmodern progress from them, or their postmodern precocity (both of which may be presumptuous), but in assessing cross-generational saving and sharings" (xxxiv). The intersections between the modern and postmodern periods provides endless possibilities for the interactions between texts written by female modernists and contemporary readings. In the introduction to Women of the Left Bank, Shari Benstock argues that "feminist critical practice points toward - indeed, calls for - reevaluation and redefinition of Modernism itself. Once women Modernists are placed beside their male colleagues, the hegemony of masculine

[17] Because Rachel Blau DuPlesses (along with Susan Stanford Friedman) has been a leading figure in H.D. criticism her work will be important to studies of H.D.'s fiction; both its constitution by feminist reading practices and its affiliations with the 'romance plot' will be considered later in this thesis.

heterosexual values that have for so long underwritten our definitions of Modernism is put into question. Modernism may then be seen to be a far more eclectic and richly diverse literary movement than has previously been assumed" (6). Although Anne Charles has questioned the diversity of Benstock's new vision of Modernism,[18] the call for 'redefinition of Modernism' also operates in Gillian Hanscombe and Virginia Smyers's Writing for Their Lives and Mary Loeffelholz's Experimental Lives: Women and Literature, 1900-1945. Anthologies such as Nancy K. Miller's The Poetics of Gender, Marleen Barr and Richard Feldstein's Discontented Discourses: Feminism / Textual Analysis / Psychoanalysis, and Sue Roe's Women Reading Women's Writing function as discursive formations that regulate reading conventions within gendered discourses[19]. I would argue that the cross-generational sharings, which Kime Scott articulates between modernist texts and feminist theories, is the result of postmodern reading strategies encountering, and constituting, modern texts within recently articulated binaristic structures of power.

In spite of differences among the approaches of individual scholars, an allegiance to an implicit feminist ideology and an articulation of a male/female binary, that distinguishes masculinist and feminist spheres of thought, organize feminist analysis into a single discursive formation. Although the term lesbian-feminist would seem to indicate that there is some sharing between lesbian and feminist studies[20] I would like to suggest that because lesbian identity challenges a masculinist/feminist binary, which is essential to both feminist discursive formations and a heterosexual reading binary, lesbian discursive formations are separate from feminist ones. Nonetheless, like feminist ideology, concepts of lesbian identity are organized by

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[18] In "Two Feminist Criticisms: A Necessary Conflict?" Anne Charles suggests that Benstock is limited by her use of pathological models of lesbianism: "the paradigm of the sick lesbian may be discovered in Women of the Left Bank" (58).

[19] This idea will be developed further with respect to specific essays about Orlando and The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas.

[20] A new anthology of essays called Cross Purposes: Lesbians, Feminists and the Limits of Alliance includes essays that address some of these issues.

an articulation of structures of power that divides discourses as either heterosexual or homosexual.

I would like to extend Monique Wittig's metaphor of the lesbian as a runaway slave[21] to suggest that the lesbian literary tradition might be considered a runaway tradition which has taken texts from both the major canon and an alternative female canon and named them lesbian. Thus, any text (written by a feminine writer) that escapes the naturalizing forces of the heterosexual binary may be identified as lesbian; that is, the writing, content, or reading(s) expose perverse possibilities. To begin to discuss the critical discourses that surround the construction of a lesbian tradition, is to become tangled in a web of theoretical and practical debates.[22] Here, I am concerned with lesbian readings and the construction of lesbian as an identity for a literary text. Lesbian theorists, lesbian commentators, lesbian (literary) historians, perverse readers and lesbian metadiscourses all contribute to the construction of a lesbian literary tradition that establishes 'lesbian' as a textual identity category. These reading/theoretical positions are not mutually exclusive categories but instead reflect a diverse range of scholarship, and thinking, with respect to lesbian literature. I would like to focus my discussion of the runaway canon on lesbian metadiscourses that provide overviews of lesbian theory, studies and literary history.[23]

In her influential, and widely re-printed, article "What Has Never Been: An Overview Of Lesbian Feminist Criticism" Bonnie Zimmerman posits:

> Lesbian criticism begins with the establishment of the lesbian text: the creation of language out of silence. The critic must first define the term 'lesbian' and

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[21] Wittig discusses women, slaves, and lesbians in her essays "The Category of Sex" and "One is not Born a Woman." She also famously claimed that 'lesbians are not women' in her essay "The Straight Mind."

[22] The proliferation of anthologies of lesbian literary and cultural criticism that has occurred in the past decade is indicative of the conflicts inherent to defining a lesbian discursive (and reading) formation. See, for example, The Lesbian Postmodern, Sexy Bodies, New Lesbian Criticism, Lesbian Studies, and Sexual Practice, Textual Theory.

[23] Many texts (listed in the bibliography) have made significant contribution to the shaping of a (gay and) lesbian literary tradition. Some of these texts will be discussed in the body of the thesis but for further reading please consult the works of Lillian Faderman, Marilyn Farwell, Jeannete Foster, Judy Grahn, Elizabeth Meese, Jane Rule and the Gay and Lesbian Literary Heritage. With specific reference to the early twentieth century Julie Abraham's work has been very important.

> then determine its applicability to both writer and text, sorting out the relation of literature to life. Her definition of lesbianism will influence the texts she identifies as lesbian, and except for the growing body of literature written from an explicit lesbian perspective since the development of a lesbian political movement, it is likely that many will disagree with various identifications as lesbian texts.... But despite the problems raised by definition, silence, and coding, and absence of tradition, lesbian critics have begun to develop a critical stance. (41)

In a paper written a decade later, in 1992, Zimmerman returns to a study of the directions taken by lesbian theory and writes that "all notions of lesbian - whether essentialist or anti-essentialist, universal or socially constructed, 'lesbians like this' or 'lesbians like that' - are themselves products of particular historical discourses and serve specific political and theoretical purposes" (9). Lesbian identity, for texts, readers, and strategies, is perhaps the most controversial topic with respect to the construction of a lesbian literary tradition but 'lesbian' is the word at which all these concerns and diverse perspectives are assembled. The word lesbian, thus, functions to name a discursive formation which is implicated in the regulatory practices of a lesbian reading binary. Zimmerman adds that "lesbian readers, of literature or historical events, proceed by a double movement: to research how women in the past may have understood themselves in relation to and against heterosexuality, and to analyze the continuities and discontinuities between different historical manifestations of something that we in the twentieth century call 'lesbianism'" (9). The tension between constructivist and essentialist definitions of lesbian become problematic when an identity category that has existed only in the twentieth century is used to construct a literary tradition that precedes the concept of lesbian. Integral to both is positing a relation 'to and against heterosexuality.'

Lillian Faderman self-identifies as being aligned with 'social constructionists' "(who believe that certain conditions were necessary before 'the lesbian' could emerge as a social entity) as opposed to 'essentialists' (who believe that one is born a lesbian and that there have

always been lesbians in the past just as there are lesbians today)" (Odd Girls, 8). As a lesbian literary historian, she has led the way with respect to the construction of a lesbian literary tradition. The concept of romantic friendship, which is important to both Surpassing the Love of Men and the anthology Chloe Plus Olivia, offers both an explanation for the essential lesbian and an explanation of the conditions necessary for intimacy between women. Faderman's definition of 'lesbian' and romantic friendship has enabled both the construction of a literary tradition and provoked debates about the role of desire and sexual contact as part of a definition of 'lesbian':

> 'Lesbian' describes a relationship in which two women's strongest emotions and affections are directed toward each other. Sexual contact may be a part of the relationship to a greater or lesser degree, or it may be entirely absent. By preference the two women spend most of their time together and share most aspects of their lives with each other. 'Romantic friendship' described a similar relationship. (Surpassing, 18)

Like the definition of lesbian itself - which has to negotiate cultural constructions that deny its existence, or re-shape itself as a non-sexual relationship - the evolution of a tradition of lesbian literature has required a great amount of re-evaluation of contemporary definitions, and definitional debates, about 'lesbian.' In the introduction to Chloe Plus Olivia Faderman suggests that "perhaps the 'lesbian aesthetic' defies easy definition because lesbian literature has developed over so long a period and is so diverse. Lesbian literature has been in constant metamorphosis, reflecting the social attitudes of the eras in which it was written, the timidity or power of women's voices at a given time, who feel free to write, and who and what would be published" (xiv). Debates and difficulties with respect to defining a 'lesbian aesthetic' or 'lesbian text' are metonymous to debates surrounding the definition of a 'lesbian' identity. As identity categories of the late 1990's confront women and texts from the late 1920's (or the late 1820's) the definitional terms need to be re-negotiated to account for the conditions that shape, or exclude, the possibilities of a lesbian identity.

Thus, in the introduction to Lesbian Studies: Setting an Agenda, Tamsin Wilton argues that a problem implicit "in the attempt to define lesbian studies is the equally thorny question of lesbian identity itself" (3). Any attempt to define a lesbian text or a lesbian tradition is involved in the same equally thorny question. Wilton continues, "faced with a protean shape-shifter 'lesbian,' so multiform as to become, ironically, slippery and invisible, the naming of lesbian begins to seem a curious matter indeed" (3). Nonetheless, the naming of lesbian does occur, for lesbian criticism must name texts from within the slippery, shape-shifting category that 'lesbian' signifies. With respect to the canon and lesbian literature Wilton observes:

> The canon demands of the lesbian scholar three intersecting and overlapping interventions: first, interrogating the (erased) significance of sexuality in a writer's work, second, renaming already canonical writers as lesbian and already canonical texts as lesbian texts; third, disrupting the boundaries of the canonical by establishing an oppositional lesbian canon and/or rejecting the operation of canonicity entirely and structuring lesbian literary interventions around lesbian readership and lesbian community values. (114)

These three intersecting areas of scholarship are integral to the identity of a text; they establish and define the category of lesbian as well as naming some texts as lesbian and necessarily excluding others. Faderman defines the post 1920's lesbian as being a lesbian if "you say (at least to yourself) that you are" (Odd Girls, 8). Thus, by analogy, a lesbian text is a lesbian text if the reader, any reader, says that it is. Naming a text as lesbian avoids any need to negotiate the cultural constructs that make lesbian a shape-shifting, slippery sign and posits sexuality as an identity category for both women and texts written by women.

Julie Abraham's Are Girls Necessary? is, to date, the only book-length re-writing of modernist literary history from a perverse lesbian perspective. I would like to pause and consider some of the issues of writing and reading that Abraham addresses. In the preface to her book Abraham asks: "Given policing by the spirits of various ages, and given the centrality of interpretation - especially interpretation as not-lesbian - to the process of policing, how might we

now, in the last decade of the twentieth century, at a moment of unprecedented possibility for lesbian cultural production, criticism, and theory, identify a lesbian text or a lesbian literature?" (xiii). Abraham thoughtfully elaborates these issues by naming and discussing the 'heterosexual plot.' She asserts that the heterosexual plot constructs heterosexuality as the norm and that "there could be no 'lesbian plot' equivalent to that of the heterosexual plot, because the construction of heterosexuality is in modern culture the construction of heterosexuality as the norm, and because the function of literary conventions, like all conventions, is to normalize" (3). Heterosexuality, as a plot, is, as Abraham acknowledges, integral to Judith Butler's concept of the 'heterosexual matrix.' Lesbian sexuality, and the possibility of a lesbian plot, according to Abraham, "disrupts this system" (3) by positing lesbianism as a 'not-heterosexual' binary alternative. The very act of isolating and naming the heterosexual plot functions as a critique that de-normalizes the fixity of the laws of the 'heterosexual matrix.'

As I posited earlier, a performative analysis of reading considers "the convergence of text and reader [that] brings the literary work into existence" (Iser, 275); it considers, too, structures that regulate discursive power formations. As I shall argue, in my descriptions of scholarship on Woolf's Orlando and Stein's Toklas, feminist readings name, and therefore produce, feminist texts and, in a parallel way, lesbian readings produce lesbian texts. This process occurs, in part, because feminist and lesbian readings are seeking an affirmation or representation of their ideologies and identities in literary texts. It is because of their rational and analytic mode of analysis that each category is able to name a text within their respective discursive practices and represent that ideology or identity as a concept that precedes the text.

To illustrate the ways in which the aesthetic tradition has been re-articulated in the 1990's I will consider first the work of Patricia Waugh and then turn my attention to Jeanette Winterson's Art Objects, Harold Bloom's The Western Canon and some anthologized essays on the topic. I would like to begin by positing that I will figure re-articulations of the aesthetic as reactions to the type of criticism that feminist and lesbian scholars practice. Patricia Waugh's schizophrenia metaphor, used to describe the relationship between rational and emotional modes

of knowledge, is a useful way to describe the relationship between aesthetic and ideologically motivated literary criticism:

> Schizophrenia is clinically defined as a splitting of thought and feeling: the 'schizophrenia' of Postmodernism can be seen as a fin-de-siècle parody or caricature of dualism inherent in the Western tradition of thought where the self is defined as a transcendent rationality which necessitates splitting off what is considered to be irrational, emotion, and projecting it as the 'feminine' onto actual women. (Practicing Postmodernism 130)

With reference, but also in contrast, to Waugh's description of Western thought I will assume feminist and lesbian ideologies and identities, to be concepts that attempt to constitute feminism and lesbianism as 'transcendent rationality.' I will suggest that, alternatively, aesthetic modes of knowledge privilege the 'irrational' and 'emotion.'

With respect to the aesthetic, in her introduction to the same book, Patricia Waugh suggests that "what is preserved in Postmodernism ... is a fundamental sense of the aesthetic ... as a form of knowing and presenting which is sensuously embodied, an alternative to conceptual knowledge because, ontogenetically, it realizes worlds and experiences for which we had no concepts until they came into existence" (Practicing Postmodernism, 15). To continue in a postmodern 'parody of dualism inherent in the Western tradition of thought,' I will posit feminist and lesbian as conceptual systems and the aesthetic - a sensuously embodied form of knowing - as an alternative way to read. I do not want to re-articulate a binary between conceptual and sensual, or rational and emotional, modes of knowledge but would, instead, like to proceed with a tentative understanding that aesthetic modes of knowledge function as an alternative structure of reading. Further, the aesthetic responds to both the text and to the concepts that regulate the text's identity.

Jeanette Winterson is one of the few contemporary writers who employs, and redefines, aesthetic practices in our own decade. In her book of 'essays on ecstasy and effrontery' Jeanette Winterson discusses 'art objects' when she writes that "I had better come clean now and say that

I do not believe that art (all art) and beauty are ever separate, nor do I believe that either art or beauty are optional in a sane society. That puts me on the side of what Harold Bloom calls 'the ecstasy of the privileged moment.' Art, all art, as insight, as rapture, as transformation, as joy. Unlike Harold Bloom I really believe that human beings can be taught to love what they do not love already and that the privileged moment exists for all of us if we let it" (6). The privileged moment[24] relies not on the work of art but on the audience or reader's ability to let art work on him/her so that a statement that responds to the question "'Do I like this?' ... tells us something about the speaker" (13). She continues, "True art, when it happens to us, challenges the 'I' that we are" (15) and art is thus located at the point of interaction between the object and the audience, between the text and the reader. Winterson, by placing her writing in the tradition of Pater and Bloom, is providing a contemporary re-articulation of the aesthetic tradition that runs from the Romantics through to contemporary theorists.[25] Although she is departing from conceptual reading structures that rely on concepts of feminist ideology or lesbian identity to regulate the discourses running through the texts, she does construct a distinction between true art and other texts so that she can aesthetically respond to an 'art object.'

An aesthetic approach to literature and art has a long history that has come to constitute the contemporary meaning of 'the aesthetic.' In "The Ideology of the Aesthetic" Terry Eagleton traces the history of that ideology. He concludes his essay by arguing that "what the aesthetic imitates in its very glorious futility, in its pointless self-referentiality, in all its full-blooded formalism, is nothing less than human existence itself, which needs no rationale beyond its own self-delight, which is an end in itself which will stoop to no external determination" (30). I do not agree that the aesthetic has a 'glorious futility' because it is nothing less than human

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[24] Bloom uses this phrase in the concluding paragraph of his The Western Canon's chapter on Orlando, titled "Feminism as a Love of Reading."

[25] Waugh traces aesthetics to their Romantic roots in Practicing Postmodernism Reading Modernism and identifies the Wordsworthian and Coleridgean traditions which run through Heidegger and Nietzche . Daniel O'Hara's The Romance of Interpretation: Visionary Criticism from Pater to de Man and Stephen Regan's anthology, The Politics of Pleasure: Aesthetics and Cultural Theory, both address the tradition of the aesthetic.

existence but, on the contrary, would argue that it is not futile because it is an ideology of human existence itself. Because the aesthetic privileges emotional and sensual responses to art it functions to challenge concepts of ideology and identity that form the discursive formations which have come to regulate feminist and lesbian reading practices. By privileging emotion and sensual modes of knowledge, the aesthetic functions as an alternative way to regulate the processes of reading; it allows the reader to challenge the binaristic power structures of the dominant heterosexual and lesbian reading binaries. Peter O'Hara articulates the possibilities for an aesthetic reading in his description of the Paterian tradition of "the romance of interpretation [as] a revisionary way for a critic to imagine his relationship to society, tradition, 'primary' literature, history, or language;" the aesthetic provides a "deliberately perverse ideology of literary study" (5). As a perverse ideology it provides a new paradigm for the laws that regulate the dynamic between a text and reader which consequently disrupts the processes of reading that are regulated by conceptual modes of knowledge.

Winterson, to return to her articulation of the aesthetic, asserts that "art cannot be tamed, although our responses to it can be, and in relation to The Canon, our responses are conditioned from the moment we start school" (15); thus, one must work to overcome the taming process of socialization if we are to appreciate the art object, or text, more fully. Referring specifically to the challenge of reading modernist texts, Winterson asks, "did the modernists too far strain the relationship between reader and writer?." She responds that "The Romantics had been subjected to invective no less fierce than that aimed at Eliot, Pound, Joyce, Woolf, Stein, HD and company. Revolution upsets order and most of us prefer a quiet life. The revolt against realism was really a revolt of tradition. The Modernists were trying to return to an idea of art as a conscious place (their critics would say self-conscious place), a place outside of both rhetoric and cliché" (37). A revolt against realism was also a revolt against representational texts that were unproblematically deciphered as textual manifestations of political or social ideologies. Winterson, by locating her reading processes in an aesthetic tradition, is trying to return to an idea of reading as a conscious place in which the reader's identity and ideology are challenged rather than merely affirmed and

as a place where modernist texts are experienced more fully. As a result, she names and produces texts as 'art objects.'

In The Western Canon, a 1994 articulation of aesthetic structures of reading, Harold Bloom reacts strenuously to politically and socially motivated types of conceptual literary criticism. In 'An Elegy for the Canon' he polemically argues, "I do not know whether Feminist criticism will succeed in its quest to change human nature, but I rather doubt that any idealism, however belated, will change the entire basis of the Western psychology of creativity, male and female, from Hesiod's contest with Homer down to the agon between Dickinson and Elizabeth Bishop" (33). In the next paragraph he adds that "we are destroying all intellectual and aesthetic standards in the humanities and social sciences, in the name of social justice" (33). I will posit that Bloom's 'Western Canon' is an aesthetic canon that privileges texts that challenge dominant ideologies and identities. He suggests:

> The movement from within the tradition cannot be ideological or place itself in the service of any social aims, however morally admirable. One breaks into the canon only by aesthetic strength, which is constituted primarily of an amalgam: mastery of figurative language, originality, cognitive power, knowledge, exuberance of diction. The final injustice of historical injustice is that it does not endow its victims with anything except a sense of their victimization. Whatever the western Canon is, it is not a program for social salvation. (27-28)

A few pages later Bloom adds that "one ancient test for the canonical remains fiercely valid: unless it demands rereading, the work does not qualify" (29). Unless a text is read as 'true art' that challenges the reader's 'I' it does not qualify for re-reading and canonization as an art object.

The (aesthetic) canon is an exclusive category that makes distinctions between high art and low art, and between new work and, to borrow Winterson's phrase, 'reproduction furniture.' Although primarily a lesbian theorist, Monique Wittig is also a writer whose idea of literary work as a Trojan Horse is useful to a discussion of the art object as an aesthetically strong text. Wittig writes that "any important literary work is like a Trojan Horse at the time it is produced.

Any work with a new form operates as a war machine, because its design is to pulverize the old forms and formal conventions" (68-69). A work's ability to pulverize may be a result of its runaway status as it escapes the dominant heterosexual reading binary; perhaps feminist reading practices allow a feminine text to pulverize old masculine forms. I would like to emphasize that sensual responses to art produce an alternative way to regulate the production of a text's identity. An aesthetic reading may be said to produce an 'art object,' a 'canonical text,' or a 'trojan horse.' As such, the text has a 'glorious futility' that is free from the political responsibilities of identity producing paradigms of reading.

If a performative mode of analysis is employed then it may be said that no feminist or lesbian identity, and no aesthetic art object precedes the reading of a text. A text's identity - whether gendered, sexualized, or aesthetic - is produced by readings that are regulated not only by feminist and lesbian, but also by aesthetic paradigms of reading. Queer theory functions to name a developing arrangement of discursive practices which competes with the aesthetic as an alternative to conceptual modes of knowledge. Although the contemporary signifieds of the name 'queer' are under considerable debate, I would like to outline the ways in which the possibilities for queer reading structures provide a way to challenge conceptual modes of knowledge (as exemplified by feminist and lesbian structures of reading) and compete with the aesthetic as a new paradigm of reading. I will focus on emerging queer theories of affiliation so that I can develop a new paradigm of reading that departs from queer to create interdiscursive affiliations for textual images.

Queer theory makes use of theories of the performative to depart from the heterosexual and homosexual binaries and articulates alternate relationships for the discourses that run through a text. Like feminist and lesbian literary paradigms, emerging queer practices are integral to ideological political projects that originate outside of the institutional boundaries of 'Englit.' Like the aesthetic it responds to both the material text and to the concepts that would otherwise regulate textual identity. As an introduction to "The Politics of Queer Theory in the

(Post)Modern Moment," an article that questions queer theory's relationship to cultural studies, Donald Morton writes:

> Queer theory is the most recent subversion of the rational.... It is in fact a new paradigm in literary and cultural studies, a paradigm furthermore which claims that the current models of our understanding difference are inadequate because they are, in one way or another, analytical/conceptual. In other words, on the horizon of "oppositional" theories/pedagogies/practices.... Queer theory promotes the strongest cancellation of the conceptual available today. (121)

As a challenge to rational and conceptual structures of reading, queer theory performs much the same role as the aesthetic. Both paradigms of reading provide alternatives to 'oppositional' structures of power that produce binaristic relationships for the discourses that run through a text. Furthermore, neither the aesthetic nor queer theory proposes a fully formed identity for a text

Several of the theoretical texts that have become important to the emerging paradigm of queer theory were instrumental in a departure from binaristic concepts of gender and sexuality. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's important book, Epistemology of the Closet, identifies six axioms of thought from which she intends to depart. Axiom number two identifies a "cultural system for which 'male/female' functions as a primary and perhaps model binarism affecting the structure and meaning of many, many other binarisms whose apparent connection to chromosomal sex will often be exiguous or nonexistent" (28) Later, in the same text, Sedgwick suggests that "one thing that does emerge with clarity from this complex and contradictory map of sexual and gender definition is that the possible grounds to be found there for alliance and cross-identification among various groups may be plural" (89). The models to which Sedgwick refers are 'models of gay/straight definition in terms of overlapping sexuality and gender.' The possibilities of overlapping or cross-identification as alternatives to binaristic or oppositional structures of gender and sexuality are key concepts in queer theory.

Similar discourses, which attempt to identify and challenge binaristic structures, run through inside/out which is an anthology, edited by Diana Fuss, containing several influential

essays. In the introduction Fuss explains the title by writing that "the problem, of course, with the inside/outside rhetoric, if it remains undeconstructed, is that such polemics disguise the fact that most of us are both inside and out at the same time" (5). Most of us inhabit both the male/female, masculinist/feminist, and hetero/homo binaries that constitute the power structures of the feminist and lesbian reading binaries. By acknowledging cross-identification or an identity that is both inside and out of dominant structures, queer theory, to borrow a phrase from Ed Cohen, 'fucks with categories.'[26] Queer theory, therefore, is in the process of creating new relationships between the discourses that run through a literary text which will be regulated by structures of power that emphasize cross-identification and multiple affiliations.

I would like to employ Judith Butler's concept of historicity to suggest that feminist, lesbian, and aesthetic formations constitute (in part) the contemporary meaning of 'queer.' Butler herself joins the debate concerning the political usefulness of developing queer paradigms and argues that "the assertion of queer will be necessary as a term of affiliation, but it will not fully describe those it purports to represent" (230). Based on Butler's writing, I will figure queer as a strategy for theorizing identity without creating specific identities.

The term queer is also inseparable from the history of its usages. In "Outlaw Reading: Beyond Queer Theory" Sally O'Driscoll problematizes the history of 'queer.' She argues that the term queer coexists with the street usage of the same word and consequently has a usage that is "antithetical to the theoretical definition" She continues:

> On the street as a term of abuse, and also more recently when it was re-claimed by gay groups, 'queer' used to mean something specific about the material sexuality of a particular group - lesbians and gay men. This meaning produces an opposite term straight, as in heterosexual. But the theoretical use of queer (referring to a methodology that deconstructs categories of sexuality) has as its

[26] Donald Morton appropriates this phrase from Ed Cohen's "Are We (Not) What We Are Becoming?" as a slogan for queer theory.

> opposite a rather different usage of straight, the fifties use of the term - as in straight, not hip, not cool. (34)

By implication, queer is inseparable from the binary structures that have constituted its historical significance as a sign either of perverse or of celebrated sexuality.

As asserted earlier, I will posit structures of multiple affiliations as an alternative to a tradition of identity-based binaries. I have developed the idea of multiple affiliations from discussions about queer theory but I would argue that it departs from queer theory to engage both in conceptual and in emotional responses to a text and the categories that would otherwise regulate its identity. By emphasizing affiliations, and departing from the perverse historicity of the word 'queer,' I hope to be able to universalize structures of multiple affiliation. That is, a reading strategy that describes (and produces) multiple affiliations for a text will engage with (in this thesis) feminist, lesbian, aesthetic and queer reading practices but could potentially engage in a multiplicity of categories such as class, race, culture, sex, gender, and sexuality .

I will more fully examine the hegemony of identity producing paradigms of reading by looking at the scholarship surrounding specific texts by Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, and in a separate section, H.D. In my study of readings of Orlando, Toklas as well as HERmione, Paint It Today, and Asphodel, I will demonstrate that their identities have been regulated by structures of power that are enacted by specific reading practices. I will also examine some of the examples of manifestations of feminist and lesbian reading strategies that include studies of the 'self,' biographical research, and the practice of filling in the gaps of a text with lesbian content. I will also consider the ways in which aesthetic readings construct a text as an art object to provide alternatives to conceptual paradigms of reading. In the final chapter of the thesis I will make use of queer theories of affiliation to suggest some possibilities for a new paradigm of reading that is affiliated with feminist, lesbian, aesthetic, and queer reading practices.

Regulated Reading Practices

Virginia Woolf and Gertrude Stein; Orlando and Toklas

Because I am concerned with articulating the paradigms or implicit reading structures of contemporary literary accounts of fiction by female modernists, I will analyze the ways in which Woolf and Stein have been reconstituted by literary criticism of the 1980's and1990's. Specifically, this section will analyze the ways in which readings of Orlando and Toklas are regulated by feminist, lesbian, and aesthetic reading practices, respectively. I have focused my study on these two texts because they are works at which the respective traditions in Woolf and Stein studies intersect with the practices of feminist, lesbian and aesthetic readings. I have chosen to use Woolf and Stein as examples of female (and lesbian) modernists because contemporary readings of their texts build on, and respond to, a long tradition of scholarship. I will argue that contemporary readings which name Orlando and Toklas as feminist texts are produced by strategies that either look for, or assume, a feminist ideology which is then represented as preceding the texts. Similarly, lesbian reading conventions that identify either Woolf or Stein as lesbian writers, or fill the gaps of the text with lesbian content or encoding systems, produce lesbian texts. An aesthetic approach to reading privileges a reader's emotional and sensual response to the text and the categories that constitute its identity, thus positing the art object as a response, and alternative, to feminist and lesbian conceptual systems. All three of these reading paradigms offer examples of the types of criticism performed, in what Dettmar termed, 'the postmodern critique of the modernists,' thus engaging in post-New Critical paradigms of reading. I am engaging exclusively in postmodern readings so that I can articulate dominant reading practices and locate these practices as part of a trajectory that moves towards a new paradigm of reading in contemporary reading practices. I would like to consider my own analysis of the practices regulating the production of textual identities for Orlando and Toklas as

itself being an articulation of the practices that will come to constitute some categories of a reading paradigm that emphasizes interdiscursive affiliations.

Both Toril Moi, in her polemical introduction to Sexual/Textual Politics, and Pamela Caughie, in Virginia Woolf and Postmodernism, identify a shift within both feminist and Woolf criticism that takes place "in or about December 1985" (Postmodernism, 1). Moi attempts to "illuminate the relationship between feminist critical readings and the often unconscious theoretical and political assumptions that inform them" (1). Caughie, writing in 1991, suggests that post-1985 works on Woolf "seek to expose ... the inadequacies of the early feminist responses to Woolf: namely, their reliance on realist aesthetics, their narrow focus on gender oppositions, and their neglect of Woolf's modernist form in their insistence on her feminist content" (15). Prominent and influential feminist and Woolf scholars such as Elaine Showalter, Jane Marcus, and Sandra Gilbert are among the early feminists subjected to Moi and Caughie's critiques. What is evident in Moi's call for a "feminist criticism that would do both homage and justice to its great mother and sister [Virginia Woolf]" (18) is that re-definitions of feminist reading conventions will lead to re-readings of Woolf's life and writing. Postmodern feminists, whom I will discuss in the following pages, have changed their vocabularies to include postmodern concepts of constructed selves and performative identities which they consequently identify as concepts that have lain hidden beneath the surface of Orlando.[27]

Gertrude Stein has not reached the same iconic status among feminist literary and political critics as has Virginia Woolf. Although Stein is not generally constituted as a great mother or sister to contemporary feminist critics, feminist concepts do regulate readings of Stein's life and writing. In their introduction to Gertrude Stein and the Making of Literature, Shirley Neuman and Ira Nadel suggest that since the 1970's there have been three trends in criticism and theory that have helped in understanding Stein. The first is characterized by "the contributions of feminist criticism and theory to recent Stein studies: it provides a context in

[27] Because Caughie and Moi have already carved the way for critiques of pre-1985 feminist readings of Woolf and her fiction, I will engage almost exclusively in readings from the 1990's.

which to understand the domestic and personal aspects of her writing" (xix). The work of twentieth century linguists and "the dissemination of poststructuralist theory in all the arts" (xix) comprise the second and third trends that have helped to articulate Stein's "relation to language" (xix). Shifts in literary criticism that have occurred since the 1970's have, according to Catherine Stimpson, "inverted Stein's reputations. The Old Good Stein is the New Bad Stein. She is too obedient to convention. The Old Bad Stein is the New Good Stein. Her transgressions are exemplary deeds" (1992, 152). Since the 1970's 'transgression' and 'convention' as well as linguistics and poststructuralism have mixed and mingled in new theoretical discourses and practices as feminism has incorporated conventional linguistic theories and transgressive poststructuralist theories into contemporary feminist ideology. Shari Benstock has suggested that "before feminist deconstructive practice provided a means of discussing Stein's writing, her works remained unread, beyond the comprehension of devoted scholars and of little interest to literary raconteurs" (Left Bank 20). Benstock's focus on 'feminist deconstructive practice' is indicative of the need to combine the three trends, that Neuman and Nadel identified, so that Stein's writing may be identified as both experimental and feminist. To reconstitute Stein, both as feminine and as a genius who anticipated the language theories of the future, feminist concepts must be employed to produce a feminist identity for her texts and a corresponding female gender and feminine sex for the author.

In her book, Virginia Woolf and Postmodernism, Pamela Caughie has attempted to unite the two concepts of her title by performing postmodern readings of Woolf's texts. She asserts that "by considering Woolf's work in the context of postmodern narrative and cultural theories, I want to change the way we conceive prose discourse so that we do not feel compelled to claim Woolf as spokesperson for any one group of writers. Virginia Woolf can enter into a variety of literary relations, for she has no essential nature" (2). Caughie reads Orlando within a variety of relations both as part of the postmodern and performative context of her book and as part of a feminist context in her article in Discontented Discourses: Feminism / Textual Intervention / Psychoanalysis. In her reading of Orlando she suggests that "the text of Orlando ... is as unstable

as the sex of Orlando.... Androgyny reflects this basic ambiguity, not only sexual ambiguity, but textual as well" (Virginia Woolf 78-79). She follows this assertion with an enlightening discussion of androgyny, in both the text and criticism, which emphasizes the usefulness of considering "*two* aspects of identity" and "*two* aspects of language" (81). Reflecting on the reception of her own work with Postmodernism and Virginia Woolf, Caughie has suggested that her detractors found fault with the claims she made from her readings and not the readings themselves.[28] Although I would not like to consider myself one of Caughie's detractors, I would like to suggest that it is when Caughie shifts from performing theory to making claims based on her readings that her awareness of her own critical assumptions becomes problematic. For example, following her enlightening reading of Orlando, in Virginia Woolf and Postmodernism, she claims that "just as her [Woolf's] conception of self makes disguise, imitation, and performance indispensable rather than irresponsible, so does her conception of the novel make highlighting the narrative surface essential rather than frivolous. The kind of reading I challenge assumes the world of Woolf's fiction is representational; my postmodern reading assumes it is rhetorical" (84). It is Caughie's assumption of Woolf's world as rhetorical that produces a Woolf that has conceptions of the novel that require a 'highlighting of the narrative surface.' Caughie's original assumption that Woolf 'has no essential nature' is revised by her own subsequent conclusion that the world of Woolf may be assumed to be rhetorical.

Like Caughie's reading of Orlando, Gillian Beer's essay "The Body of the People: Mrs. Dalloway to The Waves," has been printed as part of Beer's own book and as part of a feminist anthology of essays. As part of Sue Roe's collection Women Reading Women's Writing, Beer's reading of Orlando intersects with feminist ideology, and is regulated by the "desire to investigate the question of how women write about women" (2). Thus, when Gillian Beer suggests that Woolf, by means of biography, "explores the written and bodily self, the self of biographer, reader, and subject" (97), she is writing as a woman reading a woman's writing. In

[28] I am paraphrasing a comment that Caughie made during her paper, "'Reiterating the Differences': Virginia Woolf and (Postmodern) Theory," at The Seventh Annual Virginia Woolf Conference.

her own collection of essays on Virginia Woolf's writing, Orlando's exploration of the self is re-contextualized within the scientific and philosophic discourses of the common people. Beer introduces the essays of Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground by writing that Woolf "picked up lightly the thoroughgoing arguments of historians, physicists, astronomers, philosophers, politicians and the talk of passers-by" (4). Feminism becomes one of the issues that Woolf refuses "to order in a line or hierarchy" (4) and does not have the same contextual primacy in Beer's own collection as it does in Roe's anthology. Thus, when Beer suggests that "in Orlando the comedy is the immovability of the self as well as its dexterity" (103), its dexterity depends very much on the critical concepts that regulate its movability not only within feminist, but also within scientific and philosophic discourses.

In many contemporary readings of Orlando, discussions of Orlando's selves attempt to do justice to Woolf as a postmodern feminist. Orlando's various selves, as evidenced in her search, while driving to her country home, for the self which "is what some people call the true self" (214), have become central to discussions of the novel. In her book, Virginia Woolf: Feminist Destinations, Rachel Bowlby comments on Orlando's selves as part of a discussion of Orlando and history. She writes that "Orlando's multiple selves and fragmented experience would fit ... with 'a spirit of the age' expressed in precisely this disunity or ... with a world differing from its antecedents" (4). She does not question the idea that Orlando's multiple selves are fragmented, but instead discusses which historical model best explains that fragmentation. In Writing and Gender, Sue Roe posits that "Orlando is about the surface life; history, if not gender, is what you see us by; 'life' is visible, and linear" (103). In Roe's description of the text, discursively regulated history and gender become interchangeable as they are both surfaces and products of gendered or historical discourses.

Readings of Orlando, like Bowlby's and Roe's, that focus on 'multiple selves,' or 'the surface life,' are, I believe, regulated by the discursive practices that dominate contemporary feminist literary criticism. Feminist readings of Orlando continue to constitute the identity of the text by arguing, to quote Caughie, "that Woolf's experiments with narrative forms and functions

engender certain ideological assumptions and political strategies, and thereby enable a feminist ideology to take shape" (19). The feminist ideology that takes shape in readings of Orlando is regulated by contemporary feminist theories that pay 'homage to Woolf as a feminist mother and sister' and constitute Woolf and Orlando within the discourses of the feminist heterosexual reading binary to affirm their contemporary ideology in her text. The feminist ideology in Orlando is produced by feminist reading practices which enact binaristic power structures that produce a masculinist/feminist binary relationship for the discourses that run through the text.

The feminist ideology in Stein's The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas has not been produced by feminist readings and may, therefore, be said to not exist. Although feminist literary criticism has intersected with Stein studies, her ego and self-descriptions as a genius have overshadowed any latent feminist ideology. In her essay "Gertrude Stein and the Modernist Canon" Marianne DeKoven suggests that "Stein occupies, has always occupied, and in fact constitutes precisely that middle ground between (male) canonical centre and (female) margin which deconstructs (puts into question, makes visible) the hierarchical-idealist duality of centre and margin itself" (18). It has been suggested that "Stein equated the mind, especially that of a genius, with masculinity" (Stimpson 1986, 4) which makes her identity as both a genius and a woman difficult to synthesize, both in reconstitutions of her identity and in feminist readings of her writing. In a study of four 'geniuses', titled The Trouble with Genius: Reading Pound, Joyce, Stein, and Zukofsky, Bob Perelman takes a 'defensible but defensive stance' that Stein belongs in the company of three (male) geniuses. Within a context that defines the genius as "being difficult to follow" (3) (partly because "they claim to have obliterated the distinction between literature and society" (17)), Stein's gender, and commitment to Alice Toklas, is secondary to her "lifelong commitment to the present moment" (130). Perelman reads Toklas as the culminating moment of Stein's union with Toklas and as "the vehicle with which she succeeded in reaching and conquering the public, and insisting that they recognize her genius" (146). Stein's genius is recognized because her critics have read Toklas as a way to affirm Stein's ego, and self-declared genius, rather than as a way to affirm Stein's female gender or lesbian relationship.

Throughout the decades of scholarship on Stein, critics have highlighted 'her lifelong commitment to the continuous present' and experimental writing. Because Toklas is not as obviously experimental as some of her other writings, it has been increasingly marginalized; in this process of marginalization it has faded from scholarly attention, as 'The New Good Stein' (to invoke Stimpson's analysis) has become 'The Old Bad Stein.' In "Expatriates and Experimentalists," Mary Loeffelholz describes Stein's best-seller: "Imperturbable, associative, wryly matter-of-fact, the Autobiography seems to blend Toklas's accents with Stein's; it allowed many readers access to a notoriously opaque writer" (125). However, as Marjorie Perloff has suggested, critics regularly pay lip service to the Steinian principles of the 'continuous present' and 'beginning again and again' but "it is not always easy, especially in the case of The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, where repetition is not a prominent feature, to see what 'beginning again and again' and 'using everything' really means. In what sense, for that matter, is the Autobiography a 'continuous present?'" (65). The text that appears to allow readers access to Stein would also appear to deny critics access to her. Because critics often privilege readings of Stein as an experimental genius her works that appear the most accessible have become inaccessible. Because critics have not freed Stein from associations of genius with masculinity, Stein remains in the 'middle ground' between canonical centre and margin, in the same way that she remains in the middle ground between her male genius and female sex. Stein's texts are read as the male writings of a genius that, paradoxically, are created by a feminine writer. This configuration of sex, gender and text is produced by, but simultaneously undermines, a heterosexual reading binary.

To emphasize the fixity of the law within the heterosexual matrix, I repeat: the heterosexual matrix regulates feminist readings by assuming that a feminine writer produces a female text which contains a feminist ideology. This creates a reading binary that separates female from male writing. Because critics can locate their contemporary feminist ideology in Woolf's Orlando and pay homage to Woolf as a mother and sister there is no disruption to the feminist heterosexual reading binary. Conversely, because Woolf is a feminine writer, critics

must be able to locate their feminist ideology in her work, even when the ideology changes to include postmodern concepts of the self. Stein, however, poses a problem to the binaristic genders of a heterosexual reading binary. Because Toklas has not been identified as a feminist text, Stein cannot be constituted as a feminine writer; or, because Stein has been identified as a masculine genius her texts must be male writing and Toklas may be identified as a masculinist text. A lesbian identity disrupts the gender binaries of male/female, masculinist/feminist by combining signs of masculinity with a feminine body. A lesbian identity for Woolf and Stein, as well as for Orlando and Toklas, conflicts with Woolf's exclusively feminist identity, but confirms Stein's position in the 'middle ground' between masculine and feminine.

Lesbian traditions of reading and writing have only begun to intersect with writing by women who did not self-identify as such. In 1996, in Are Girls Necessary?: Lesbian Writing and Modern Histories, Julie Abraham argues that "after two decades of feminist literary criticism, within which Woolf has served as a central -- even an iconic -- figure, narrative, history, and lesbianism have all been the focus of discussions of her writing." However, Abraham begins her next paragraph by stating that "Woolf has still not been read broadly as a lesbian writer" (141). Reading Woolf as a lesbian writer, and reading her texts (such as Orlando) as lesbian texts, requires a lesbian reading binary that regulates a lesbian identity for both Woolf and Orlando. Notwithstanding my observations in the preceding paragraph, Stein's identification within the laws of a lesbian binary is also not uncomplicated. For example, in 1992, Elizabeth Meese has suggested that Stein is "in the minds of some, unsuitable, unattractive, or at least politically incorrect as a lesbian role model" (65). Stein's apparently masculine genius and husbandly role in her relationship with Alice Toklas are not sanctioned by some contemporary concepts of lesbian identity. Turning her attention to Virginia Woolf, feminism, and lesbian reading practices, Meese begins her Orlando chapter of (Sem)erotics by writing: "'Lesbian' and 'Woman' interest me most when 'Feminism' occupies the site of the conjunction, the colon as copula that seeks to balance the terms, to strike relationships between them which do not necessarily exist" (22). Readings of Woolf, and Orlando, that are regulated by concepts of

lesbian identity, are often responses to a feminist ideology that continues to marginalize lesbianism. In readings that identify Stein, and Toklas, as lesbian, Stein's sex must also be identified as feminine thus privileging Stein's identity as a woman over her identity as a male genius.

As Abraham acknowledges in her 1990 article "History as Explanation," "the history of lesbian criticism has been a history of construction" (268). Much of the work done with respect to identifying Orlando as a lesbian text has been concerned with re-constructing Woolf's lesbian relationship with Vita Sackville-West. For example, Elizabeth Meese posits that Woolf's "'dedication' to Vita precedes the text.... It [Orlando] is another letter in the series that constitutes their relationship" (26). Blanche Wiessen Cook's influential 1979 article was among the first pieces of writing that openly analyzed the continued denial of women loving women and the re-constitution of Woolf as lesbian. Cook re-reads Woolf's diaries and daringly argues that, "Quentin Bell may insist that Virginia Woolf's friendship with Vita Sackville-West involved neither love nor lust. But Woolf insisted very specifically that it involved both" (727). Similarly, Sherron E. Knopp, in what has become an important argument for both Woolf and lesbian scholarship, suggests that to "see just how large and attached to life Orlando is, one must first get the relationship between Virginia and Vita right and then see it in context" (113). Knopp gets the relationship right by drawing attention to signs of desire and eroticism in Woolf's private writings. Knopp concludes that "what Virginia gave Vita in the book ... is the first positive and unsurpassed sapphic portrait in literature" (127). Although she identifies Orlando as a sapphic portrait, Knopp, along with Meese and Cook, rely on a re-construction of Woolf herself as a lesbian to regulate Orlando's identity as a lesbian text.

An open acknowledgment of the lesbian relationship between Alice B. Toklas and Gertrude Stein (which does not require the same degree of re-construction as that of Woolf and Sackville) precedes readings of Toklas as a lesbian text. Shari Benstock, for example, has suggested that "Stein's perverse literary style was intimately allied to her sexual identity, that her lesbianism was itself a motivating force for her investigations into language and produced a

private, coded language at odds with accepted forms of meaning" (187). Within readings that privilege a construction of Stein as a lesbian over a construction of Stein as a male genius her lesbianism is figured as a source for her experimental writing and genius. Leigh Gilmore has situated Toklas within "a lesbian 'economy' of gifts and exchanges" (57). Similar to the attention given to the letters exchanged between Virginia and Vita, Gilmore represents the text as inseparable from its lesbian history. In her article "A Signature of Lesbian Autobiography: 'Gertrice/Altrude,'" Gilmore writes that she will "examine how Stein used autobiography to inscribe the lesbian couple as the 'subject' of The Autobiography, so that I [sic] may locate her extended autobiographical experimentation within two critical discourses - contemporary feminist and poststructuralist criticism of autobiography - neither of which has yet sufficiently incorporated an analysis of lesbian writing" (58). In a reverse of Meese's configuration of 'lesbian: feminist: woman,' I would posit that lesbianism fills the space between reading Stein's experimental (poststructuralist) writing and identifying her within contemporary feminist ideology.

The discourses that constitute Orlando as a 'sapphic portrait' are difficult to articulate and isolate. This difficulty is, in part, due to the historical circumstances of its writing that necessitated the suppression of overt lesbian content. Because of the suppression of 1920's lesbian content, 1990's lesbian readers emphasize the gaps and codes of a text which can be filled in and decoded in light of the discourses that constitute contemporary lesbian identity. Lyndie Brimstone is one of many critics to argue that "Orlando makes it all sound rather naughty and deliciously exciting.... As with the book itself, lesbian desire is something to be enjoyed by those 'in the know' and dismissed as trivia by those who cannot 'read' it" (92). The narrator's commentary about when "women get together" and the eventual statement that "Orlando professed great enjoyment in the society of her own sex" (152) is cited by Brimstone to conceptualize the possibilities of lesbian desire. Similarly, Adam Parkes uses the phrase "SUPPRESSED RANDINESS" to describe the above passage as Woolf's self-censorship "and restraint in dealing with sexual topics" (447). It is only by regulating a reading, with conceptual

knowledge of a lesbian identity, that one can fill in the gaps of the text with suggestions of sapphism. As Sally Munt suggests, lesbians "are particularly adept at extracting our own meanings, at highlighting a text's latent content, at reading 'dialectically,' at filling the gaps, at interpreting the narrative according to our own fictional fantasies, and at foregrounding the intertextuality of our identities" (xxi). The fictional fantasies of the lesbian reader, and contemporary articulations of lesbian as an identity, are the discourses that have regulated, and named, Orlando as a lesbian text.

Like Orlando, Toklas does not contain any explicit representations of lesbian sexuality. On the topics of lesbianism and history in Toklas Julie Abraham suggests that "paradoxically, the most public had become the setting for the representation of the most private. From the first history, the Autobiography, through the rest of her narratives, the indications of intimacy between Stein and Toklas are invariably located within an 'historical' moment.... The rare references to physical contact between the women all have historically specific settings" (115). Early twentieth-century history, and the associated moments of contact between the two women, provide a structure to the events of Toklas. Abraham argues that historical moments function as a method for encoding the significance of an intimate sexual moment. Alternatively, in "The Mind, The Body, and Gertrude Stein," Catherine Stimpson describes encoded lesbian experiences in Stein's writing as a type of Morse code (138-139). Like the gaps in Orlando, one must have prior knowledge of a lesbian identity if one is to read the code or fill in the gaps of the novel. With respect to the gaps in Stein's writing, in an article titled "Gertrude Stein and the Lesbian Lie," Stimpson suggests that "a gap does exist between the style's apparent promise of full disclosure and the actuality of partial disclosures.... When Stein puts her hand on Toklas' shoulder, lesbians in Paris could not wear men's clothing unless the prefect of police said they could" (161). The tensions between full and partial autobiographical disclosure, and the knowledge of the lesbian reader that a touch on the shoulder signifies intimacy, rely on 'fictional fantasies' of both Abraham and Stimpson to produce a lesbian text.

Because the "performative is that discursive act that enacts or produces what it names" (Bodies, 13), feminist readings produce a feminist Orlando, and lesbian readings produce a lesbian Orlando. These identificatory processes enable the formation of different readings of Orlando and Toklas. As an alternative to the name as a fixed boundary, "the aesthetic," to quote Patricia Waugh, "offers a form of non-conceptualizing embodied language as an alternative way of knowing and being" (15). This embodied language is always already responding to, and departing from, known concepts of identity and rational thought; as such, it is a response both to a text and to regulatory fictions. The aesthetic, thus, forms an alternative reading paradigm that challenges the concepts of ideology and identity that constitute textual identities such as feminist and lesbian. In "Art Objects," a text located in the aesthetic tradition of Walter Pater and Harold Bloom (5-6), Jeanette Winterson writes that "true art, when it happens to us, challenges the 'I' that we are" (15). Transformation, or challenges to the 'I' of a reading subject, result from embodied sensual modes of knowledge that acknowledge but depart from the regulatory fictions of identity. Although 'the pattern of Western thought,' as described by Waugh, has tended to challenge dualities by figuring emotion to be absorbed by rational thought, I suggest that emotional and sensual modes of knowledge always already contain rational concepts. I will briefly examine readings of Orlando and Toklas that have been shaped by the aesthetic reading practices of Jeannette Winterson, Harold Bloom, and Judy Grahn to show how they both respond to conceptual identity categories and assert an alternative constitution of the text as an aesthetic art object.

In "A Gift of Wings (with reference to Orlando)" Winterson writes that "Art is large and it enlarges you and me.... Art is metaphor. Metaphor is transformation.... Orlando is metaphor, is transformation, is art" (66). In her description of Orlando, Winterson engages in metaphor, and transformation:

> For Orlando, transformation is sex and sexuality.... Love objects, male and female, are appropriately wooed and bedded but not according to the laws of heterosexual desire. The lover knows what it is to be the beloved. The beloved

> knows in her own body the power of the lover. The Orlando who holds Sasha in his arms is still the Orlando who holds Shelmerdine in hers. Woman to woman, man to man, is the sub-sexuality of Orlando. (67)

Winterson's (aesthetic) response to Orlando metaphorically transforms the identity of the text as the concepts of sex, sexuality, male, female, heterosexual, lover, beloved, woman, and man are described as unstable and interchangeable. In order to describe Orlando's sub-sexuality Winterson articulates an embodied 'response' both to the text and to the concepts of identity that she names. Her reading, thus, departs from the discursive structures that limit her to specific sexualities.

Winterson concludes her essay on Orlando by stating that "a writer must resist the pressure of old formulae and work towards new combinations of language. Woolf can gallop English.... She can speed the rational world to a blur and halt in a second to make us see for the first time a flower we have trodden on every day.... Those who go with her know that the name of her horse is Pegasus. Virginia Woolf has a gift of wings" (76-77). It is only because Winterson 'goes with Woolf' (and constructs Woolf as she goes), that she can name Woolf's horse as 'Pegasus' and see the 'flower' that others miss. By allowing Orlando to challenge her 'I,' as a reader, Winterson is able to read in a way that halts the rational world and to recognize new combinations of language. Both the 'flower' and 'new combinations of language' result from challenges to the 'old formulae,' or concepts of textual identity, such as feminist or lesbian, that regulate readings of Orlando. Winterson's reading challenges the 'old formulae' and consequently names, and therefore produces, Orlando as an 'art object' which privileges language over the rational world.

In his chapter of The Western Canon titled "Woolf's Orlando: Feminism as the Love of Reading," Harold Bloom asks, "Are there two Woolfs, one the precursor of our current critical maenads, the other a more distinguished novelist than any woman at work since?" (405). Bloom adds that Woolf's "feminism (to call it that) is potent and permanent precisely because it is less an idea or composite of ideas and more a formidable array of perceptions and sensations" (406).

Bloom's writing on the topic of Woolf and Orlando is (at one level) quite reactionary: it critiques not only feminist criticism but all ideologically motivated literary criticism. Bloom documents his own aesthetic or sensuously embodied response both to Orlando and to the text's feminist identity. By re-constituting Woolf's feminism as 'an array of perceptions and sensations' Bloom is creating a conflict between the two Woolfs; between Woolf as a great novelist and as a precursor to the 'maenads.'[29] In Bloom's discussion of Orlando, Woolf's forefathers, and 'disinterested reading' he addresses issues of sexuality:

> Woolf has finer works than Orlando, but none more central to her than this erotic hymn to the pleasure of disinterested reading. The fable of dual sexuality is an intrinsic strand in that pleasure, whether in Woolf or in Shakespeare, or in Woolf's critical father, Walter Pater. Sexual anxiety blocks the deep pleasure of reading, and for Woolf, even in her love for Sackville-West, sexual anxiety was never far away. (412)

Bloom indirectly identifies the perverse sexuality, of both the writers and texts, of the tradition in which he places Woolf and Orlando. By articulating his own aesthetic response to the text Bloom has produced a tradition of texts that contain 'dual sexuality' and 'disinterested reading.' By placing Orlando in this tradition, Bloom allows the text to be constituted within alternative structures for the relationship among the discourses that run through the text.

Like Woolf's, Stein's writing has been freed from conceptual systems of reading and, as with Woolf, this freedom is produced by a limited number of readers. Winterson, Bloom and Judy Grahn have each considered new ways to read Stein and her writing. In the essays dispersed throughout Really Reading Gertrude Stein, Judy Grahn describes her experiences of reading Stein and provides some 'essential clues for really reading her.' She writes that "by suspending judgment about how a story, poem, or play 'should go' and by agreeing with myself

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[29] Maenads are defined as angry women who originate in ancient Greek mythology as the followers of Dionysus and who killed Orpheus. The potent allusion is surely not accidental for it allows Bloom to indirectly associate feminist critics with the death of art.

to keep reading even when I can't recognize myself, I have begun to muddle into the landscape of her [Stein's] mind" (6). It is only, to cite Winterson, by allowing her 'I' to be challenged that Grahn is able to 'really read' Stein's writing. In a structure that universalizes the transformative power of Stein's writing Grahn states that "decade by decade her [Stein's] readership deepens and comprehends her more fully, as though we change along a continuum of her own thought" (21). The change in Stein's readership may be the result of what Harold Bloom describes as Stein's 'dissociative rhetoric.' He asserts that "the function of dissociative rhetoric invariably is to break down preconceived patterns in our response, so as to prepare us for discourse that will touch upon the possibilities of transcendence" (1). It is not possible to transcend preconceived patterns unless one is willing to allow sensuously embodied forms of knowledge to respond to these patterns. It is also not possible to produce new relationships between the discourses that run through a text unless one enacts new structures of power which separate the text as an aesthetic art object that is related to, but not limited by, dominant ideologies.

Jeanette Winterson's essay, "Testimony against Gertrude Stein," is a testimony against Matisse's denouncement of Stein's The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas. Winterson writes that "Gertrude Stein played a trick and it was a very good trick too. She had, as a precedent, Virginia Woolf's Orlando (1928) but instead of re-making biography into fiction, she pushed the experiment one step further, and re-defined autobiography as the ultimate Trojan horse" (49). Winterson is evoking Monique Wittig's discussion of literary forms and language from Wittig's essay "The Trojan Horse." Wittig (as was noted earlier) writes that "any work with a new form operates as a war machine, because its design and its goal is to pulverize the old forms and formal conventions" (69). With respect to forms she adds that "in one's work, one has only two choices - either to reproduce existing forms or to create new ones. There is no other. No writers have been more specific on this subject than ... Stein" (71). A Trojan horse can only be effective if the reader is willing to read outside of the old forms and to be challenged by new ones. If Toklas is a Trojan Horse, it is because Winterson and Wittig, as readers, are willing (and wanting) to be challenged by the text.

Winterson describes the reception of Toklas when she writes that "most of what masquerades as literary criticism is a mixture of sexism and self-importance. Stein had trespassed gender as well as social niceties and literary convention. A woman is not allowed to call herself the centre of the world. That she so charmed her ordinary readers is an interesting case of hoax. Like Orlando and Oranges are not the only fruit, the Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas is fiction masquerading as a memoir" (53). Although Stein has 'pulverized' the old forms, Winterson must employ the words 'fiction' and 'memoir' to discuss the text. She also constructs a new tradition of writers - Stein, Winterson, and Toklas - that write fiction which masquerades as a memoir. The duplicity of Toklas, and Stein's ability to hoax the reader, is, perhaps, an explanation for critics' inability to script Stein within the categories of feminist and lesbian writer. As Winterson writes in her conclusion "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, by refusing to recognize the scriptural authority of actual life, suggests itself and its subject matter as a myriad text open to unlimited interpretation" (60). The text, I assert, can be open to a myriad of interpretations only if the reader (in this case Winterson) treats the text as an aesthetic art object thus allowing her embodied response to the text to also respond to the various concepts that are named as part of the text. The reader, thus, challenges the structures of power that constitute heterosexual and lesbian reading binaries.

At the present moment a queer reading structure has not been fully developed by critics (and perhaps never will be) but I would like to consider briefly some of the points of departure that queer theory shares with the aesthetic. The developing practices of queer theory depart from both heterosexual and lesbian reading binaries by challenging the ways in which those binaries regulate a text's identity. A text's specific identity is enacted, as I have attempted to demonstrate, by the interaction between a text, a reader and regulatory fictions. To challenge or subvert identity, a queer mode of reading cannot establish an oppositional binary, in the same way that lesbian (and gay male) binaries oppose a male/female reading binary, but must compete with the emotional and sensual responses that aesthetic readings provide. I will posit that a reading strategy that develops textual affiliations, rather than identities, will allow for a departure

to a new paradigm of reading that engages in both rational and emotional responses to a text. Orlando may be produced as a text with multiple affiliations precisely because it is identified as both feminist and lesbian. It is also constituted as a text that challenges these categories by highlighting the variety of categories that contribute to its 'sub-sexuality,' its 'gift of words' or its location within a male tradition of homoerotic writing. Toklas may be produced as a text with multiple affiliations because its identity is constituted within both the feminist and masculinist discourses of a heterosexual and a lesbian reading binary. As a Trojan Horse, Stein's text is constituted as a text that challenges the reader to pulverize the old forms of reading by privileging the departure from conceptually regulated modes of reading to emotionally embodied responses that allow an individual to 'really read her.' By focusing on Woolf and Stein I have been able to articulate some of the structures that formed dominant methods of reading at the time when H.D.'s fiction was re-discovered and published. By turning my attention to H.D. I will be able to study the literary criticism of texts that have been read, almost exclusively, within feminist and lesbian structures and, in my final chapter, to suggest some points of departure for a new paradigm of reading that will additionally consider aesthetic and queer practices.

Unburying H.D.'s Lesbian Fiction

The title of Susan Stanford Friedman's important 1975 article "Who Buried H.D.? A Poet, Her Critics, and Her Place in 'The Literary Tradition,'" suggests that there is a need to unbury an important woman modernist who "as a woman writing about women ... explored the untold half of the human story, and by that act she set herself outside of the established tradition" (48). Instead of proposing changes in the way that H.D. should be read (in the tradition of changes in Woolf scholarship that occurred 'on or about December 1985') Friedman suggested that H.D. should, simply, be read: her writing should invite comparisons with her famous

counterparts (47). With the publication of Penelope's Web in 1990, Friedman turns her attention, specifically, to H.D.'s fiction, and suggests that her fiction, not just her poetry, deserves to "be read in the context of the experimental writing of modernists" (ix) that include Virginia Woolf and Gertrude Stein. As a 'woman writing about women' H.D.'s writing is constituted by the reading traditions of a feminist heterosexual reading binary because she so recently has been re-born into discursive practices that had already been established by readers of Woolf and Stein. Critics often make comparisons that highlight both feminist ideology and stylistic similarities between the prose of H.D., Stein, and Woolf. For example, Linda Wagner-Martin argues that "it is clear that H.D.'s seemingly 'different' prose (though very like prose by Woolf ... and Stein) carries many implications about her sense of herself as both writer and woman" (151). By suggesting that H.D.'s prose resembles the work of Stein and Woolf, Wagner-Martin and Friedman implicitly suggest that readings of H.D. and her texts should be regulated by the same discursive formations that have produced identities for Orlando and Toklas. Like Woolf's and Stein's, then, H.D.'s identity as a woman and as a lesbian has been regulated by the structures of feminist and lesbian reading binaries.

My analysis of H.D.'s prose will focus on texts that were written in the 1920's but not, as I indicated earlier, published until the 1980's and 1990's: Paint It Today, Asphodel, and HERmione. Deborah Kelly Kloepfer suggests they might be grouped together as texts that surround Palimpsest[30] which "process and reprocess H.D.'s pre-1920's relationships" (187). These include, but are not limited to, her relationships with her one time fiancé Ezra Pound, her female friend Frances Gregg, her husband Richard Aldington, her war-time lover Cecil Gray, and her companion Bryher. As a trilogy, Kloepfer describes the three texts as being "generated by an impulse to retell 'the story'" which individually "do not move forward from the original telling but rather back inside it" (187). Alternatively, Rachel Blau DuPlessis groups the three texts and the later Bid Me to Live as a 'madrigal cycle.' In H.D. The Career of that Struggle she argues

[30] Palimpsest is a story sequence or novel published by H.D. in 1926 and again, posthumously, in 1968.

that "one project of this [H.D.'s] prose is to unify such female experiences as (lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual) sexuality and motherhood with creative power. H.D. struggles to assume the authority of Otherness so that female-centred experiences and ties are the source of the theme and character, narrative and resolution, language and rhythm" (32). Christine Berni is one of several critics who have grouped these three texts as ones that are thematically linked: they are H.D.'s "most direct exploration of lesbian desire" (51).

In Penelope's Web, Friedman suggests that H.D. "wrote 'DESTROY' across the typescript of Asphodel and probably suppressed its companion volumes Paint it Today and HER because of their bisexual love plots and illicit motherhood" (23). Although H.D.'s motive for suppressing these three texts will never be known, as Friedman has suggested of Asphodel and Paint it Today - and I would add HERmione - they "are no mere drafts, but rather works in their own right" (Penelope, 142). It is as 'works in their own right' and not as autobiographical 'roman à clef' that I will choose to examine the texts and their identities. Because HERmione, Asphodel, and Paint It Today were suppressed they have not been subjected to a long tradition of reading that includes all three of the paradigms that Kevin Dettmar identifies in Rereading the New (which I elaborated in chapter one of the thesis). In other words, the texts have only been read in, and constituted by, the 'conflicting views of reading literature' that comprise contemporary reading practices. HERmione, written in 1927 and published by New Directions in 1981, was the last of the three texts to be written but the first to be published. Asphodel was written several years earlier, in 1922, and was first published by Duke University Press in 1992 as part of their 'fiction/women's studies' categories. Similarly Paint It Today, also written in 1922, was not published until 1992 when 'The Cutting Edge' decided to add it to their series which makes "lesbian theory, lesbian experience, lesbian lives, lesbian literature, and lesbian visions the heart and nucleus, the weighty planet around which for once other viewpoints will swirl as moons to our earth" (xii).

It is clear that Paint it Today's identity as a lesbian text was produced with its publication by a lesbian press. The discourses that make 'lesbian visions the heart and nucleus'

of Paint It Today also regulate identities for HERmione and Asphodel. As indicated by the placement of Asphodel in the category of 'women's studies,' a feminist identity has been produced for Asphodel. As I shall argue in the following pages, feminist identities have been produced for all three texts by readings that have occurred within the practices of feminist literary criticism. Neither the feminist nor the lesbian identities of the texts have been challenged by aesthetic readings nor have the possibilities of queer reading structures been explored. Building on my analysis of Orlando and Toklas, I would like to further explore HERmione, Asphodel and Paint It Today by examining the ways in which conceptual knowledge of feminist and lesbian ideologies and identities have regulated readings of the three novels within heterosexual and lesbian reading binaries.

In her 1981 book, Psyche Reborn: The Emergence of H.D., Friedman argues that H.D.'s emergence from the restrictive imagist label is "connected with her emergence from the phallic criticism that has plagued her woman-centered mythmaking to a frequently greater degree than it has other woman writers" (xi). Because, like Stein's label as a genius, H.D.'s imagist label restricted her to the confines of a male tradition of imagist poetry,[31] H.D.'s writing was initially read within the heterosexual binary as male writing that happened to be written by a feminine writer. By allowing H.D. to emerge from the imagist label Friedman has allowed H.D. to be constituted as a woman writer whose 'woman-centered mythmaking' is the result of her feminine sex and feminist ideology. Writing in the same discursive formation,[32] in H.D. The Career of that Struggle, Rachel Blau DuPlessis suggests that there are four types of authority at issue for H.D. as a woman writer: "cultural authority, authority of otherness/marginality, gender authority, and sexual/erotic authority" (xiii). These types of authority, which will implicitly be found in

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[31] Imagism was a poetic movement that occured in the early part of the twentieth century. H.D. was among several British and American writers, including Richard Aldington, Ford Madox Ford, Amy Lowell, and William Carlos William, who were influenced by (and themselves influenced) the work of T.E. Hulme and Ezra Pound. Pound's naming of Hilda Doolittle as 'H.D. Imagiste' is a popularly repeated anecdote in literary histories. It is this title that has continued to restrict her to the male-dominated and somewhat obscure imagist movement.

[32] The work of Susan Stanford Friedman and Rachel Blau DuPlessis, with respect to H.D., is quite interwoven. Their influence on each other is most evident in Signets an anthology they co-edited.

discussions of H.D.'s prose, expose feminist reading practices that approach texts with conceptual knowledge of authority and its relationship to women's writing.

Thus, in studies organized around issues of women writers in the early decades of the twentieth century Shari Benstock, in Women of the Left Bank and Gillian Hanscombe and Virginia Smyers, in Writing for Their Lives: The Modernist Women 1910-1940 consider H.D. as a female modernist writer in a tradition dominated by men's writing and masculinist ideology. Benstock suggests that to choose to be a serious writer "a woman must choose to write for men; she must 'pass' among male writers.... Choosing otherwise would be to put the woman writer at risk" (333). Although women writers were often 'passing' among male writers, it is, according to Hanscombe and Smyers possible to identify a female tradition of anticonvention. They assert: "the modernist woman is not unconventional; she is anticonventional, wishing her creative energy to take every form of expression possible to her. Only by this route could the conflict between being a real woman and a real writer be resolved and the singular identity be maintained both on paper and in action" (11). Implicit to both these studies of female modernists is the assumption of a feminist heterosexual reading binary that females create writing that is gendered as female and contains a feminist ideology.

The vocabulary of postmodern feminist ideology has evolved to include concepts of the self and subjectivity as discursively and performatively constituted. With respect to H.D, these discourses have often been read as a gendered ideology that precedes the concepts of self and history in H.D.'s prose writing. For example, in Penelope's Web, Susan Stanford Friedman writes that "the personal self of H.D.'s prose oeuvre was a fiction self-consciously created and re-created in the reflexive acts of writing about it.... [S]elf-fashioning negotiates between fictionality and historicity" (68). Similarly, Linda Wagner-Martin has suggested, of HERmione, that "by writing a text that is so completely subjective, so located in Her's consciousness, H.D. convinces the reader that her character's impressions are the only validating 'facts'" (154). Likewise, in her H.D. and Freud: Bisexuality and Feminine Discourse, Claire Buck attempts to "demonstrate that links between subjectivity, sexual difference and language are already present

in H.D.'s writing and need not be uncovered by means of recent theory" (5). However, I would argue that without recent theory the 'links' would not be conceptually present in H.D.'s writing and the relations between fictionality and history, or between impressions and facts could not be discussed without a contemporary framework that has problematized these issues.

Contemporary concepts of gendered identities within Sartrean based discourses of exchanges between Self/Other or Subject/Object have been appropriated, by several critics, as a way to conceptualize a struggle for identity in H.D.'s prose. One such appropriation occurs in Dianne Crisholm's reading of HERmione. She suggests that "Her suffers from the lack of an adequate (self-)signifying practice and is consequently exposed to a world where there is insufficient differentiation between object and subject, self and other" (56). A second instance of these discourses, with specific reference to the name Her, occurs when Rachel Blau DuPlessis writes "that object case, used in subject place, exactly locates the thematics of self-as-woman: 'surveyor and surveyed,' who pointedly explores the selfhood she can make from articulating her Otherness" (Career, 61). As a binary system of identity constitution, gender becomes part of what Sarah Schuyler calls 'double-dealing fictions.' Of the three texts she suggests that "gender is a double deal in these autobiographical fictions, which represent a critical subjectivity split between critiquing gender and participating in social constructions of gender" (75). Similarly concepts of self and other are a 'double deal' between concepts of feminist ideology and H.D.'s fiction: the texts are read as both a critique of and a participant in the heterosexual reading binary.

Just as Susan Stanford Friedman unburied H.D. by releasing her from the label of H.D. Imagist and gendering her as a writer within a feminist heterosexual reading binary, so too she has initiated studies of H.D. within the lesbian reading binary. Although Friedman admits that "H.D. never used the word 'lesbian' to define herself," she identifies the "lesbian nature of her [H.D.'s] feelings towards [Frances] Gregg and Bryher" (39). Friedman identifies HERmione, Asphodel, and Paint It Today as texts exploring "the psychological aspects of her [H.D.'s] attraction and love for women" (39). By identifying H.D. as a lesbian writer who creates lesbian

texts, Friedman has regulated her readings of the novels with conceptual knowledge of lesbian identity and fixes the text within the structures of a lesbian reading binary. In a later article, co-written with Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Friedman argues that "throughout her life, H.D.'s emotional, sexual, and spiritual life was bisexual" (226). 'Bisexual' is constituted by Friedman and DuPlessis as a combination of lesbian and heterosexual impulses, in which each identity challenges the other. Like H.D.'s and Stein's respective masculine identities as imagist and genius, H.D.'s identification within the lesbian reading binary is problematized by the counter-examples of heterosexual identity. However, as long as her heterosexual identity remains a separate identity a binary structure will regulate the production of H.D.'s texts as lesbian.

Issues of sexuality become particularly important to discussions of H.D.'s fiction when questions of the relationship between erotics and writing are raised. For example, Julie Abraham's attention to the hegemony of the heterosexual plot in Are Girls Necessary? incorporates Hermione's repeated statement that 'love is writing.' Abraham asserts: "'writing about lesbianism' becomes an alternative subject for this lesbian novel, which produces a non-narrative model of the relation of lesbianism to the literary ('love is writing') that undercuts the heterosexual plot by shifting the focus from narrative" (16). It may be said that the relationships between love and writing are normally naturalized by the 'heterosexual plot' but that readings regulated by concepts of lesbian identity produce a perverse relationship for the two. Alternatively, Dianne Crisholm suggests that Her "regards her complex love as the source of ecstatic, visionary reverie, pointing not only to an eroticism capable of transcending the sexual norms of patriarchy but also to a poeticism capable of envisioning worlds beyond those formulated by conventional discourses" (81). The subversive power of a connection between perverse love and writing is made clear by Crisholm's reading of Her's love as one that transcends patriarchal norms.

The lesbian content of HERmione, Asphodel and Paint It Today has often been interpreted by deciphering the codes and filling in the gaps of the texts. Susan Stanford Friedman began the processes of decoding H.D.'s prose by drawing attention to Joan of Arc, and

to the repeated references to HERmione and Fayne, Midget and Josepha, as 'witches,' as a strategy for encoding lesbian relationships. By describing Fayne and Josepha as muses for the poets Hermione and Midget, a lesbian version of the tradition of the muse has been deciphered by several critics. For example, Mary K. DeShazer's article, "'A Primary Intensity Between Women': H.D. and the Female Muse," places the texts within the traditions of Greek muses and argues that rather than male muses "the sustaining relationships of her [H.D.'s] life and art were with women who inspired and supported her creativity" (158). As such, George, the male fiancé in HERmione and Asphodel, is read as smothering and silencing Her,[33] but Fayne and later Beryl are read as figures who allow Her's poetic voice to sing. As Julie Abraham has suggested, in HERmione desire between women is "an awakening to language" (17).

The deciphering of H.D.'s use of recognized codes for same-sex love that were developed by late Victorian aesthetes such as Wilde and Swinburne has been studied extensively by Cassandra Laity. In her book, H.D. and the Victorian Fin se Siècle: Gender, Modernism, Decadence she argues that "the decadent topoi of the femme fatale, the male androgyne and their attendant tropes, forms, and linguistic practices in works by the Pre-Raphaelites, Swinburne, Pater, and Wilde created a 'feminine' tradition for modernist women poets who, unlike twentieth-century women novelists did not claim to think back through their mothers to the strong women poets of the past" (xi). She adds that these male precursors provided "a fluid range of sexualities, including androgyny, homoeroticism, and role reversal" (xii). Lines from Swinburne's poems, four of which are cited throughout HERmione,[34] create intertextual references for encoding desire. The line from "Itylus," "sister, my sister, O fleet, sweet swallow," recurs throughout HERmione, and is repeated both in Asphodel and in Paint It Today. Laity suggests that it inscribes "the homoerotic and sympathetic love between HERmione and

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[33] In chapter three I will consider a section of HERmione in which George's kisses are present. I will provide an alternative reading that associates George with language, writing, silence, and as escape from dementia.

[34] "Faustine," "Itylus," "Before the Mirror," and "The Triumph of Time" all appear in HERmione, with some lines recurring in Asphodel and Paint It Today.

Fayne, as well as the prophetic and poetic dimensions that emerge from the sister/mother love" (35). Laity speculates that Swinburne was misquoted so that the lines would appear "more overtly lesbian" (39).[35] In a section of her book on 'statue love' Laity suggests: "H.D.'s most overt debt to the Aesthete's sense of transgressive desire occurs in a reference to H.D.'s lesbian narrator in Paint It Today as a 'sister' of Wilde's Charmides, the youth who fell in love with a statue" (69). Statue imagery occurs throughout the three texts and invokes the "tradition of Aesthete poets who used the statue of Hermaphrodite to fabricate fantasies of bisexuality and androgyny" (69). References to white and to marble are signs of this tradition and the homoeroticism that it encodes. By placing H.D. in a tradition of male poets, Laity is challenging the masculinist/feminist discursive binary by asserting an alternative lesbian relationship between the discourses.

In summary, H.D.'s texts, HERmione, Asphodel, and Paint it Today, have been produced as feminist and lesbian which are respectively produced by the concepts of ideology and identity that are said to precede them. Although H.D.'s self-identification as bi-sexual has confused the categories of sex, gender and textual identity that constitute feminist and lesbian reading binaries, it is H.D.'s identity that is figured as problematic. Alternatively, it would be possible to use the discourses that constitute H.D.'s bi-sexual identity to problematize the heterosexual matrix. This would only ambiguate the relation between an author's and text's sexualites and genders without problematizing sexuality and gender. Although there has been some innovative work with respect to H.D.'s writing very little has been done to describe an emotionally embodied aesthetic response to the three texts, that challenges concepts of ideology and identity.

Both Diana Collecut's and Dianne Crisholm's writing about H.D. contain implicit suggestions for the directions in which new structures of reading might proceed. Diana

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[35] Note that Cassandra Laity develops her arguments, with respect to H.D.'s use of Swinburne, in her article "H.D. and A.C. Swinburne: Decadence and Sapphic Modernism." Dana Shugar develops the argument that "through Swinburne H.D. sought to name and validate the novel's lesbian portrayals in response to both social expectations and prejudice" (79), in her article "Faustine Re-Membered: H.D.'s Use of Swinburne's Poetry in HERmione."

Collecut's, "A Double Binary: Re-Reading H.D.," is a collage of H.D.'s poetry and prose, poetry and prose by other writers, theoretical texts by various authors, and Collecut's own critical responses to all three. The collage itself does not make explicit the relationship between the various pieces of writing but, as a result of being placed side by side on the same pages, the pieces influence and regulate each other. In a more explicit exploration of intertextual dialectics Dianne Crisholm, in "H.D.'s Freudian Poetics: Psychoanalysis in Translation," attempts to "read H.D. and Freud side by side in search of interimplications" (2). This process involves a "radical comparison of the use of concept metaphors" (3) in both H.D. and Freud. Both Collecut and Crisholm create either an implicit or explicit intertextual reading structure that enables a dialectic between literature and the fictions that would normally regulate the production textual identity. By restructuring the relationship between literature and theory, they are enacting new structures of power that produce new relationships for the discourses that run through H.D.'s texts.

I would like to continue to explore the possibilities for creating new relationships for the discourses that run through not only H.D.'s texts but also the texts of Woolf and Stein. Just as H.D.'s texts were identified within the structures that had been established by feminist and lesbian readings of Woolf and Stein their texts may, in turn, be re-structured by the reading strategy that I will explore (in the next chapter) with reference to selected sections of H.D.'s texts. I have analyzed some of the binary structures of feminist, lesbian and, to a lesser extent, aesthetic reading practices so that I can articulate specific structures from which I wish to depart. I do not want to depart from either conceptual or emotional modes of reading but do want to re-create the relationship between conceptual and emotional methods of literary interpretation. To do this I will have to suggest an alternative structure - one that draws attention to regulatory fictions and the production of performative textual identities - for the relationship between literary texts and literary theories. Now that I have (in following Kuhn) performed a 'reconstruction of prior theory and re-evaluation of prior fact' I will be able to describe and create a new paradigm of reading.

Discursive Departures

Paradigm Possibilities (with reference to HERmione, Paint It Today and Asphodel)

Having analyzed some of the ways by which paradigms regulate the production of performative textual identities I would like to propose some possibilities for a new paradigm of reading that will provide an alternative to limiting binary structures. Reading, as I posited in my introductory chapter, provides a structure for the discourses that constitute a literary text. Practitioners of 'Englit' have tended, in the past decades of post-New Critical reading paradigms, to privilege ideological paradigms of reading that limit texts to specific structures of discourse, power, and resulting identities. Polemically responding to this tendency in literary criticism, Harold Bloom has asserted that "to read in the service of any ideology is not ... to read at all" (28). Although Bloom is limited to his own aesthetic response and constructions of literary history, I concur that politically motivated reading practices are limiting. Neither concepts of feminist and lesbian identity nor exclusively emotional responses to the work of female modernist writers (such as Woolf, Stein, and H.D.) account for the richness and complexity of their writing. I would like to propose a new paradigm of reading that makes use of queer theories of affiliation to enact multiple ideologies and identities for a text. By engaging in a multiplicity of regulatory fictions I propose that I will be able to create alternative relationships for the discourses that constitute literary texts and theories. In the following pages I will explore the possibilities for a new paradigm with reference to H.D.'s HERmione, Paint It Today, and Asphodel as well as to theories of performative identities, the romance plot, the heterosexual plot, lesbian encoding, and the Künstlerroman plot.

In order to articulate a point of departure for a new paradigm of reading, one that replaces textual identity with a strategy of affiliation, I would like to return to Foucault's Archeology of Knowledge. Building on Foucault's concept of discourse, I would like to posit a configuration of literary texts as sites of competing discourses which are not identical to but, by

analogy, may be considered to form oeuvres. Foucault defines the oeuvre as a heterogeneous formation which is described "neither as an immediate unity, nor as a certain unity, nor as a homogenous unity" (24). Of the literary text or book itself, Foucault writes: "the frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network" (23). As such, neither HERmione, Paint It Today, nor Asphodel (for example) forms a homogenous unity as an individual text nor do they as a trilogy; rather, they are located within intersecting networks of discourse. Foucault's concept of archeology, in The Archeology of Knowledge, provides a description of the ways in which a network, or system of reference, can be defined as a set of discursive practices that obey certain rules.

'Archeology,' as defined by Foucault, attempts to locate discourses in their specificity to show how the discursive rules that are put into use are irreducible to any other. As a mode of analysis it differentiates between different strands of a network. The oeuvre is not a unit in itself and archeological analysis "defines types of rules for discursive practices that run through individual oeuvres, sometimes govern them entirely, and dominate them to such an extent that nothing else eludes them; but which sometimes, too, govern only part of it" (139). Unlike archeology, which attempts to be a "systematic description of a discourse-object" (140), textual criticism tends to be interpretive. Textual criticism treats literature as what Foucault calls a document: "as a sign of something else, as an element that ought to be transparent, but whose unfortunate opacity must often be pierced if one is to reach at last the depth of the essential in the place in which it is held in reserve" (138). Interpretation is not concerned with defining the network of discourses that run through a text but is instead concerned with allowing specific discourses to govern the production of an identity for a text. Theories of discourse and the performative (that I have posited as a metadiscursive mode of analysis) do not attempt to pierce the transparent surface of a text: they treat a text (whether literary or critical) as a monument rather than a document. Once a text is treated as a monument, or a node in a network, it becomes

clear that the discourses running through it, or the strands of the network, form the essential elements of a text. The surface, not the last depth, is the location of 'the essential;' that is, the text is not 'a sign of something else' but, as a 'discourse-object,' it is something itself.

I would like to depart from a strictly Foucaultian notion of archeology by suggesting a strategy of 'affiliation' as an alternative to interpretive modes of analysis that name an essential textual identity. This new paradigm of reading builds on queer theories of affiliation, involves both aesthetic responses and concepts of identity, and accepts a configuration of the text as a discourse object. An analysis that is concerned with affiliation will attempt to locate a text within a network and seek to differentiate the discourses running through the text. For the purposes of practical application, I will consider the image as a site of affiliation. The image, as an isolated discursive unit, may be located within, or defined by, a multiplicity of discursive formations. The image is 'a sign of something else' that is produced (not preceded) by the rules of the discursive formation that govern it. As it is governed, or regulated, by different formations (that is, affiliated with different discourses) the 'something else' that it signifies differs.

Departing from queer theory to consider interdiscursive affiliations is a strategy that allows the reader to re-write power relations. Judith Butler suggests: "if the term 'queer' is to be the site of collective contestation, the point of departure for a set of historical reflections and futural imaginings, it will have to remain that which is, in the present, never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from prior usage and in the direction of urgent and expanding political usage" (Bodies, 228). Building on Butler's concept of queer I would like to suggest that 'queer affiliations' must always refer to the discourses that comprise queer's history without allowing the affiliations to constitute, and name, a contemporary signified for the word 'queer.' Queer's historicity includes, but is not limited to, feminist ideology, lesbian identity and aesthetic challenges to these concepts. Queer does not yet form a discursive formation of its own but is a site at which multiple discourses are assembled. Because queer theory tends to privilege a multiplicity of conceptual and rational practices (such as feminist, lesbian, masculinist, and gay male) there is a danger that it will become a re-written version of ideological identity producing

literary criticism. I would like to create a new paradigm of reading that enacts both emotional and conceptual, rational and sensual, modes of reading. I will posit that selecting passages from a text and choosing to locate images within specific formations will make use of both conceptual and emotional modes of reading. Enacting multiple discursive formations is a practice that allows the reader to revel in the complexity of the signifying processes of a literary text.

Departing from paradigms of reading that are structured by feminist and lesbian discursive formations requires that I also depart from traditional methodologies with respect to literary analysis. I will attempt to re-situate the discursive formations that regulate the relationship between an author's and text's gender and sexual identities as discourses that run through a text (rather than precede it). I would like to define a new paradigm of reading as an interdiscursive reading process. Similar to the intertextual readings of H.D.'s writing, that were created by Diana Collecut and Dianne Crisholm, an interdiscursive reading process creates a dialectical reading strategy in which theory and text regulate each other. Rather than maintaining a theoretical or literary text as an autonomous unit, an interdiscursive reading process enables a dialectic to occur among the discourses that run both through texts and through theories. By locating specific textual images within a multiplicity of discursive formations the image will produce multiple signifieds.

By locating some of a text's images as part of power relations that enact the historicity of specific named theoretical concepts, thus producing relationships among the discourses that run through the text, I will consider the possibilities for re-structuring relations of power as part of multiple affiliations. Although specific feminist and lesbian structures (which I will make use of in my exploration of the possibilities for interdiscursive affiliations) may be located in the works of specific literary critics, I am interested in these concepts as discourses that run through literary and theoretical texts and regulate reading practices.[36] For practical purposes I will consider only ideas of gender as a performative identity, the patriarchal structures of the romance plot, the

[36] Many of the ideas in literary criticism that may be considered theoretical concepts are articulated by one particular scholar and appropriated by others to create a regulatory framework for their reading.

hegemony of the heterosexual plot, lesbian encoding, the Künstlerroman plot, and selected passages from HERmione, Paint It Today, and Asphodel.

Before proceeding to an exploration of the paradigm possibilities for a reading strategy that creates interdiscursive affiliations I would like to pause and outline some of the formal structures of the proposed paradigm. As I have indicated, I will focus on selected passages from H.D.'s recently published prose. I believe that focusing on selected passages will allow me to represent the complexity of the texts' imagery and to provide specific illustrations. By focusing on isolated passages I will both undermine the chronological narrative structure of each text and re-create a new narrative that unites the various sections. Although I am focusing on isolated sections I do not intend to suggest that the sections are themselves isolated; I do intend to highlight the extent to which each section is part of a network that exceeds the limits of a text. I am selecting specific sections from the literary texts in much the same way that I have selected specific theoretical concepts; that is, I have selected sections and theories that I find both stimulating and useful. The selected passages will form the foundation of a reading and consequently emphasize a dialectic between the regulatory practices of literary theories and texts rather than assembling isolated textual examples of a specific textual identity. The selection of passages reflects a degree of my aesthetic intuition as well as a respect for sections that were particularly rich with images that may be located in the theories on which I will focus.

Although I have proposed theories of the performative as a metadiscursive mode of analysis, I do not want to figure it as a dominant theory with respect to textual analysis. Theories of performative gender, as revisions to theories of constructed gender, have come to function as a theory that regulates the relationship among gendered discourses that run through the text. Rachel Blau DuPlessis's articulation, and implicit critique, of the structures of 'the romance plot' and related strategies for subversive feminist writing have also come to function as a way to figure a text as either feminist (it subverts the romance plot) or as masculinist (it endorses the romance plot). Any plot, therefore, that "separates love and quest" and "evokes an aura around the couple itself" (5) is a version of the romance plot. Julie Abraham re-articulates the romance

plot as "the heterosexual plot" so that she can focus her critique on the ways in which this plot tends to "construct the heterosexuality it represents" (3). I would like to participate in a tradition of theory appropriation and figure the romance plot as one that makes the couple its primary narrative quest, and the heterosexual plot as one that constructs heterosexuality as the norm. I would like to engage in theories of performative gender, romance structures, heterosexual norms as well as consider images that may be said to encode lesbian love and intimacy between women. I would like to explore the ways in which images that signify love between women intersect with discourses of gender, romance and heterosexuality. Further, I would like to consider 'writing' and the Künstlerroman plot alongside these other formations. I do not want to figure any of these regulatory fictions as dominant to either my reading practices or to the texts themselves, nor do I want to be limited by linear plot patterns. I want to continually engage in selected theoretical concepts and sections of the texts as specific units that exceed their specificity. They are, to re-invoke Foucault's image, 'nodes in networks.'

Hermione, the character often described as the H.D. figure, appears in both HERmione and Asphodel and resembles the character Midget in Paint It Today. Other characters, which bear the same names in HERmione and Asphodel, also resemble characters from Paint It Today: George and the fiancé (Raymond), Fayne Rabb and Josepha, Richard Darrington and Basil, and Beryl and Althea. Asphodel continues not only the names, but also the narrative of HERmione, while Paint It Today's narrative is concurrent to that of the other two texts. Because I am concerned with images and interdiscursive affiliations I do not want to restrict the possibilities of my readings by providing an exegetical summary of the texts' plots. I have, however, arranged the sections chronologically to allow for some continuity. I would, then, posit that the text's chronological plot provides an underlying, but not an overt and restrictive, structure. I would rather examine the ways in which isolated sections of the texts and selected theoretical concepts relate to and regulate each other as nodes in networks.

HERmione

HERmione the text begins with an image of Hermione the character:

> Her Gart went round in circles. "I am Her," she said to herself: she repeated, "Her, Her, Her." Her Gart tried to hold on to something; drowning she grasped, she caught at a smooth surface, her fingers slipped, she cried in her dementia, I am Her, Her, Her." Her Gart had no word for her dementia, it was predictable by star, by star-sign, by year
>
> But Her Gart was then no prophet. She could not predict later common usage of complex syllogisms; "failure complex," "compensation reflex," and that conniving phrase "arrested development" had opened no door to her. (3)

Drowning and circles are images which recur throughout the novel and signify not a choice between normal or marginal discourses but rather between life threatening or life sustaining discourses. That is, normalizing, or socially accepted formations, may, paradoxically, be affiliated with life threatening dementia. The 'something' that 'Her Gart tried to hold' will change throughout all three novels as performative gender, romance, heterosexuality, lesbian love, and writing are enacted as structures that will remedy her dementia. Because her dementia has 'no word,' and because it pre-exists Freudian syllogisms, I would like to consider it as an image or metaphor that is not a sign of something else; it has no pre-determined signified and its meaning depends on which regulatory fiction governs it. Freudian syllogisms are one such interpretive network. Thus, if a Freudian framework were enacted, her dementia would be named as 'failure complex,' 'compensation reflex,' or 'arrested development.' Similarly, her dementia can, as I describe it in relation to the structures of feminist, lesbian, and aesthetic reading practices, be named within other regulatory fictions.

The image of a sister runs through the text:

> A sister was a creature of ebony strung with wild poppies or an image of ivory whose lithe hips made parallel and gave reflection of like parallel in a fountain

> basin. A sister would run, would leap, would be concealed under the autumn sumac or lie shaken with hail and wind, lost on some Lacedomaenonian foothill. (10)

The image of a sister, and the sister as statue, may be located within a multiple number of discourses. The sister is constituted as both an inactive statue made of ebony or ivory and an active figure that runs and leaps. For example, I could interpret the word 'sister' as a code for a lesbian lover who would provide a parallel reflection of the immortal beauty of an ebony or ivory statue. The sister provides a reflection and, if I locate it in theories of the romance plot, the reflection will allude to the primacy of the couple as a desirable quest.

The sister also refuses to remain something that 'was' in the past an object and becomes something that 'would' be a subject that leaps and runs. The potential of a feminist subversion of the masculinist language that fixes the sister as a statue to be looked at, and decorated with poppies, is expressed by the sister's active status and unwillingness to be restricted by a compulsory performance of the role of female as decorative object. This may be said to subvert the gender binaries of the heterosexual matrix that is integral to both performative gender and the heterosexual plot. Similarly, the statue/sister's location within a re-written Greek mythology invokes women who run on the hills in a storm rather than men who flee to Troy for years. Lacedomaenonia is the home of Helen of Troy and her daughter Hermione. The signifieds of images that allude to ancient Greek mythology are modified by contemporary re-readings of both the decadent and modernist relationships to Greek traditions.

Other texts circulate throughout HERmione and provide possible names and fictions to regulate Her's performative identity. Helen's daughter is signified by 'Hermione' but Hermione is also out of Shakespeare:

> Temple Shakespeare. I am out of the Temple Shakespeare. I am out of The Winter's Tale. It was my grandfather's idea to call me something out of Shakespeare. Her picked up the limp volume. Leather was limp and smelt of innumerable compartments in her odd mind. Leather, smelling like that, wafted

> through and through innumerable compartments bringing dispersed elements and jaded edges together, running like healing water across an arid waste of triangle and star-cluster and names of biological intention. (32)

Temple Shakespeare and masculinist traditions may be grouped together because it is her Grandfather who chooses the name out of Shakespeare. Hermione, then, is named within a paternal tradition that provides not just a name but, enacting theories of the performative, produces a script to regulate her gendered identity. As such, Hermione is a chaste wife in spite of her husband's rage and jealousy. Shakespeare is part of the discursive formations of the heterosexual plot which name Hermione a wife and a mother. Unlike the image of a sister statue, there is no reflection of equality and sameness but limp and, perhaps, impotent leather. The leather that binds the stories of Shakespeare is an image that brings together the fragments and 'dispersed elements' of Hermione into a single 'tale' that forms 'healing water.' I would associate water with the image of drowning and conclude that the complete works of Shakespeare, in all their richness and diversity, provide a life sustaining interpretive network.

George enters the events of HERmione as a potential husband who will allow the image her/Her/Hermione to be affiliated with formations outside of the 'Gart theorem' by allowing Her to be in both a heterosexual and a romance plot. Following an elaboration of the various ways in which 'she wanted George,' George becomes 'this':

> She wanted this, but even as she wanted it she let herself sink further, further, she saw her two hands reached toward George like the hands of a drowned girl. [...]
>
> George said she looked like a coal scuttle. He also said she looked like a Greek goddess. There was that about George, he wanted to incarnate Her, knew enough to know this was not Her. There was just a chance that George might manage to draw her out half-drowned a coal scuttle, or push Her back, drowned, a goddess. (63, 64)

George is a metaphoric smooth surface that could rescue Her from drowning. By wanting to incarnate Her, George may also be said to limit the possibilities of Her performative identities by limiting Hermione to the scripts that he chooses to identify as the norm. Two images - goddess and coal scuttle - may produce different signifieds. It is 'coal-scuttle' that allows Hermione to be only half-drowned. A coal-scuttle is a practical, not a decorative, object which may indicate that she will only survive if George wants her to fulfill practical roles as an active, and gender transgressive, final partner of a romance quest. Her fate, I would suggest, is dependent upon the structures that George offers and her subsequent rejection or acceptance of them.

George and Hermione kiss in the forest outside the Gart home:

> Kisses forced her into soft moss. Her head lay marble weight in cushion of forest moss. Kisses obliterated trees, smudged out circles and concentric circles and the half-circle that was the arch (she had seen) of a beech branch sweeping downward. The kisses of George smudged out her clear geometric thought but his words had given her something ... the brown nightingale amorous ... is half assuaged for ... for ... her name is Itylus. (73)

The marble weight is a statue image but it is now affiliated with George (and possibly the heterosexual and romance plots) as well as with a reflected sister. It is not Hermione, herself, who is 'smudged out,' but rather the concentric circles of the discursive formations that comprise her dementia, and the forest that provides the setting for a Shakespearean marriage.[37] George's words have given Hermione words of poetry that she repeats in fragments and uses to re-name herself. I believe that words of poetry are important to a Künstlerroman plot and offer an important alternative, or complement, to George's kisses and heterosexual romance. Her new name is Itylus. "Itylus" is a Swinburne poem which names her as a poem and as the Greek figure Itylus. As 'Itylus,' she is located in a tradition of decadent poetry that uses Greek traditions to

[37] In exegetical and analytic writings about the novel George's kisses are often said to smudge out, therefore silencing, Hermione. In a prior section George attempted to name the forest as Shakespeare's Arden.

encode homoerotic love and desire.[38] It is George's words, as opposed to his kisses, that allow her to be named within this tradition. His words, then, may be affiliated with Hermione's poetry and Künstlerroman plot.

George's mother, Lillian, gives Hermione yet another interdiscursive name:

> "Yes you are Undine, or better, the mermaid from Hans Andersen." "Yes, I am Undine. Or better the mermaid from Hans Andersen." Undine long ago was a mermaid, she wanted a voice or she wanted feet. "Oh I remember. You mean that I have no feet to stand on?" That is what Lillian means. Lillian is the first to find me out. Lillian has found me out. There is something about Lillian. She knows perfectly well that I don't belong, that there is no use. Eventually I will tell them that there is no use. Lillian has found out that my name is Undine. (113)

Hermione's new name is Undine: she has no feet to walk upon the ground but she lives in the water where others would drown. My earlier formulation of water and drowning is subverted by allowing Hermione to be identified as a mermaid. Unlike that of the Disney version, the little mermaid from Hans Andersen needs the love of the prince to gain a human soul. If Hermione is to be affiliated with the discourses and story of 'the little mermaid,' George would be scripted as the Prince, but the romance plot of the fairy tale is a failed plot because there is no happy couple at the end. It is, however, a heterosexual plot because it privileges the mermaid's love for the prince over her love for her sisters and family. The mermaid's feet are sources of creativity for she has lost her voice and must dance to communicate. To continue the analogy, as a woman who writes poetry, like a mermaid who dances, Hermione does 'not belong' to a heterosexual romance plot.

Fayne Rabb, a young woman who befriends Hermione, provides a possible manifestation of the earlier image of a sister statue. Hermione and Fayne are two sisters, or statues, that reflect

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[38] As discussed earlier, Cassandra Laity has elaborated on H.D.'s use of the decadent poets to encode feminized homoeroticism.

each other: "prophetess faced prophetess over tea plates scattered and two teacups making delphic patterns on worn carpet" (146). The ancient Greek world of the prophetesses mixes with the tea things and worn carpet of Hermione's workroom as ancient Greece is confused with Hermione's own world. As prophetesses, Hermione and Fayne may be said to have unique powers of perception that make "people, things come right in geometric contour" (147). George must be fit into the geometric contour rather than allowed to choose the scripts in which Hermione must play his romantic counter-part. "For George Lowndes pirouetting like a harlequin must be got right. Hermione must (before discarding George Lowndes) get George right" (147). By naming George as a harlequin, Hermione has already begun to 'get George right,' and to discard him. By discarding George Hermione is discarding the heterosexual plot without discarding Fayne and the potential of another romance plot.

George's words give Hermione scraps of poetry but Hermione gives George writing that is her "life's beginning" and her "life's ending" (148):

> "Love doesn't make good art, Hermione." George Lowndes bounced forward like someone who has had a tooth out. "I tell you this is writing."
>
> Hermione faced George Lowndes across a forest jungle. Writing. Love is writing. (148)

Both love and art (like George's kisses and words) are discourses that run through the text. George can have only one or the other and he sees that Hermione gives him writing not love. I believe that Hermione, in relation to George, privileges writing and the Künstlerroman plot over love and the romance plot. By separating love and writing George separates the two plots and, by implication, it is because he has been given writing, not love, that he is 'like someone who has had a tooth out' for he has lost something valuable but he will not be maimed for life. The forest jungle is an image that is not affiliated with the forest outside the Garts' house, rather it is an exotic foreign place which they have not visited before: there are no scripted roles for them to play. Hermione does not separate love and writing but says, and repeats throughout, that 'love is writing.' Thus the text, HERmione, may be regulated by different structures for the relationship

between love and writing (or kisses and words) and different structures for the relationship between romance and Künstlerroman plots.

Love and writing, or life and art, intersect in the text as Hermione and Fayne sit in Hermione's workroom. Hermione begins:

> "You might have been a huntress." "I'm no good - no good at anything"
>
> [...]
>
> "I mean a boy standing on bare rocks and stooping to take a stone from his strapped sandal. I mean you might wear sandals or else boots laced crossways." "You mean?" "I mean you were exactly right in that stage tunic. You were exactly right as that Pygmalion." Her bent forward, face bent toward Her. A face bent towards me and a curtain opens. There is a swish and swirl as of heavy parting curtains. Almost along the floor with its strip of carpet, almost across me I feel the strip of some fantastic wine-coloured parting curtains. Curtains part as I look into the eyes of Fayne Rabb. "And I'll make you breathe, my breathless statue." "Statue? You - you are the statue." (163)

The possible signifieds for the word 'huntress' vary with the discourses that surround it. Aside from the country club, and Fayne's performance as Pygmalion the word may be located within different theoretical discourses. Hunting may be considered a subversive gender act which, as an act that disturbs male/female binaries, may be read as a code for subversive lesbian desire. That is, Fayne is an active, rather than decorative sister statue. Two faces bend towards each other and the distinction between 'her' and 'Her' can only be sifted poetically by the images of curtains and statuary. As a face bends forward the curtains, which may be signs of stage curtains, window curtains, the workroom curtains and the curtain that 'divideth' the sister swallows, are opened. The opening curtains, 'the fantastic wine-coloured parting curtains,' may be a sign of ecstasy or orgasm. Fayne and Hermione are both statues, (and are affiliated with the corresponding discourses of female homoeroticism,) which breathe and make each other breathe

through lips "long since half kissed away" (163). As reflections of each other, I believe that they function as a romantic couple that fulfills the quest of the romance plot.

After recovering from illness, fever, and dementia Hermione walks through the fresh, white, winter snow and her feet are "narrow black crayon against winter whiteness" (223). Her feet and her writing become mixed in the image of the crayon as her feet, like the dancing mermaid's feet, become a poetic mode of communication . She walks onto ice that cracks beneath her:

> The crack widened, actually snapped suddenly. The ice she stood on still held, did not dip further toward the tiny upward jet of running water. Reverberation cut like a white string, cut like a silver string. Winter branches etched above her head caught reverberation of ice breaking. Reverberation of the break seemed to be prolonged, would be till it touched the stars. The stars are shining all of them, but I can't see any. She felt like a star invisible in daylight. Then her thought widened and the tension snapped swiftly. It's like a violin string. It's like Fayne exactly. (225)

The drowning waters from the first section have been transformed into life-sustaining ice that simultaneously allows Hermione to write with her feet. Fayne, and her violin, are associated with the crack in the ice and potential drowning. I would suggest that it is a combination of Her's thoughts of Fayne and the white winter writing tablet that allow Hermione to write, love, and escape drowning. Although the ice is cracking, Hermione's "feet were held, frozen to the cracked ice surface. Her heart was frozen, held to her cracked, somewhat injured body" (226). The word 'cracked' links Hermione's body with the ice itself. I will suggest that she could, like the snow, be written on. The cracking ice itself inspires her memory of Fayne thus allowing Hermione's performative identity, romance with Fayne, and writing to be plots that intersect at 'crack.' The crack itself would suggest that a structure which affiliates lesbian love, a romance plot, performative identity, and writing with each other is precarious. Hermione clambers "back

toward the scrubby pathway" (226) and through the forest snow which re-invokes my earlier description of the forest as the place where Shakespearean marriages occur.

Paint It Today

Midget, the character in Paint It Today who resembles Hermione in HERmione (and Asphodel), is described in her relationship with Josepha, who resembles Fayne, and with the fiancé, who resembles George:

> It may have been true, as the family stated, that the girl Josepha was not a good influence, had an unwholesome quality about her somehow, was not normal, was not quite the friend they would have chosen, at least not the friend to the exclusion of other friends they would have chosen. The young erstwhile fiancé, now on formal terms and friendly with the family circle, may also have been right when he twitched his very young mustaches and thrust out his slightly underdeveloped chin and said: "You and that girl, a hundred years ago, would have been burned at Salem, for witches." (9)

Hermione's female friend and fiancé, both signifying possible romance plots, are related, quite differently, to normalizing familial structures: the fiancé is accepted and the female friend is not. The phrases 'not a good influence,' 'unwholesome quality,' 'not normal' and 'not quite the friend' locate the girl Josepha as an ambiguous subject who is at the border of normalizing discourses. The fiancé, however, is associated more directly with familial structures of discourse and power: The words 'formal' and 'friendly' describe an affiliation between the fiancé's romance plot and the family. I suggest that the word 'formal' signifies a structural arrangement that is governed by the heterosexual plot.

The fiancé names the relationship between the two girls as one that is between witches; he provides a code for lesbian love that marginalizes it as a subversive practice. In recent years

feminist and lesbian political movements have re-claimed the witch as a sign of female power, thus valorizing what, in 1922, would have been a sign of perversion. The fiancé, who has 'young mustaches' and an 'underdeveloped chin,' has a short personal history but the witches are part of a long tradition that existed 'a hundred years ago.' Young fiancé and old witches are competing discourses that regulate the characters' identities in relation to history. As the person who names the girls as witches, the young fiancé is associated with forms of authority that result from being on formal terms with the family and able to determine which girls should have been burned. In spite of his youth, and the newness of his role, the fiancé is able to 'be right' in his naming of witches because he re-enacts a history of suppressing, and burning, any challenges to the normalizing discourses of the family.

Later in the text, Josepha sends a letter to Midget with news of her marriage. "She added as a postscript, 'Perhaps some day Wee Witches will grow up.'" (32). The associations of growing up with maturity, marriage, and an acceptance of the normalizing discourses of the family circle is separate from an affiliation with Salem witches. Any structures that would allow for an individual to have affiliations with both witches and marriage are made impossible if marriage is part of 'growing up' and witches remain 'wee,' youthful associations. I suggest that the power relations between the bride and wee witch, as names for Josepha and Midget, result from the separate and exclusive identities that each signifies. Although a reading strategy that produces affiliations may name the girls as both wee witches and wives the subversive potential of a double identity must be acknowledged. Although wee witches will grow up they will always have been wee witches and that will always potentially threaten the discourses of normalcy that constitute the 'family circle.'

An alternative image that I will identify as a sign of lesbian identity is Midget's identification as 'sister of Charmides.' Another potential husband, Basil, names her as such:

> Sister of Charmides. Basil had read her the Wilde poem under the shadow of the extraordinarily bad statue of Verlaine in the Luxembourg gardens. Charmides, it seems, was a youth in Greece, who fell in love with a statue.

> She knew that she did not feel as he wanted her to feel, with warmth and depth and warm intensity. She knew that if she felt at all it was not with warm but with cold intensity. She did not feel for Basil with that intensity. She was forever conscious of the fact. But the comradeship was perfect. At one time she had believed that he would accept from her that comradeship and from the world what else it had to give him, but he had changed so since his years in France. (59)

I will consider Midget's identification as a sister of Charmides in relation to the intensity of her feelings for her future husband Basil; that is, I will consider the relation between lesbian and heterosexual romances. Oppositional discourses between warm intensity and cold intensity and between Charmides and comradeship are established as multiple affiliations for the character Midget. Charmides is a name taken from Oscar Wilde's poem which is located in a tradition of statue love that may be read as a sign of thinly veiled homoeroticism. The statue is a manifestation of Charmides's desire for another male figure that is motivated by the passion and 'warm intensity' of his response to the statue. Wilde himself functions as a sign of perverse homosexual desire as well as the consequences of a public judgment against sodomy and homosexuality. Wilde's punishment for living 'the love that dared not speak its name'[39] is contrasted with the ancient Greece in which Plato first articulated this perverse and hidden love. Perfect comradeship and Charmides are not exclusive identities but if comradeship is normally associated with same-sex friendships and passion with heterosexual marriages then warm intensity would signify the way that Basil, her future husband, wanted Midget to feel for him and comradeship its compromise. As a sister of Charmides, Midget is capable of feeling with warm intensity but she is not capable of combining images of intensity with the structures of heterosexual marriage. An allusion to Basil's change after his years in France foreshadows the

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[39] It is part of the popular legend of Oscar Wilde that he was asked to offer an explanation of the Platonic phrase 'the love that dared not speak its name' at his trial. In spite of his articulation of a spiritual and didactic relationship he was found guilty of sodomy.

demise of his acceptance of Midget's cold intensity. Midget cannot successfully be affiliated with both lesbian and heterosexual images of desire without being simultaneously involved in the structures of power that punish homosexuality and promote heterosexuality. She must also accept a poetic tradition that counters this relation of power by promoting Charmides as an acceptable and ancient tradition of desire.

At the end of the text the past, present, and future merge and emerge:

> Midget and Basil lived. They loved, I suppose one would say.
>
> [...]
>
> Midget and Josepha lived. They loved, I suppose one might say.
>
> [...]
>
> Midget and Josepha loved. That is obvious. A small amber-colored being crept into Midget's life, a creature unbelievable, far less convincing than the white Althea. (88, 89)

The parallel structure of Midget's love for both Basil and Josepha affiliates these loves with each other and with the romance plot. The only difference, aside from gender and an associated difference between hetero- and homosexual romance plots, is signified by the words 'would' and 'might.' One would, without question or conditional phrase, declare the past love between the former husband and wife but declaring the love between two women requires a conditional 'might.' The 'might' is conditioned by "a remote and impossible sisterhood" (89) that signifies both the encoding and the marginality of lesbian love. The difference between 'would' and 'might' is a sign of the structures of power that are affiliated with gender specific discourses of love.

The future is signified by the small being that 'crept into Midget's life.' The white Althea is part of a future which is imagined as a "white future" and "she is one with the past" (89). She might be said to be affiliated with the husbandly love that 'would' be said to exist and the sisterly love that 'might' be said to exist as well as the future love that will exist between Midget and Brindel who "is yet to come" (89). Althea is part of Swinburne's 'Atlanta in

Calydon' and connected with Hermione in Shakespeare, as such she is part of the many structures that present possible regulatory fictions for the relationship between the two women. In the present moment, which sits between the past and the future, the white Althea is affiliated with a multiplicity of discourses and a complexity of power relations that are invisible but present as constitutive of the imagined future. The power of these relations to determine possible futures (that may be projected from present affiliations) as either normalized or marginal is signified by the text's final sentences:

> Let him love today who never has loved, for tomorrow, who knows where flits the creature of his loving.
>
> (In preparation, White Althea.) (89)

The future is always, and only, a possibility that departs from, but is constituted by, 'today.' The next chapter, or the next text, is in preparation but will become the present, and then the past as it is written and read. Similarly the white Althea, and her affiliations with multiple discourses of love is always, and only, a possibility that departs from the power structures that I have enacted by locating her in discourses of 'today.'

Asphodel

In Asphodel Hermione encounters many new characters and is given many new names. Hermione, now in Europe with Fayne and Fayne's mother, encounters new names for herself and for her relationships with Fayne, George, Richard, and Beryl. Stories of 'huntresses' and 'goddesses' are mixed with discourses that constitute women as 'decorative' 'statues'. The Venus de Milo is real only as a statue:

> Long cold galleries and downstairs the marbles like ice, cut like ice, holding something in their shapes that people didn't see, couldn't see or they would go mad with it. Not always the most beautiful things, slid thus through the breasts

> of the Venus de Milo from the bench in the corner (the red plush bench, shabby against the wall) showed like two thin knife edges, edges of the crescent moon. The Venus do Milo was a little heavy but if you prowled and prowled and waited for different days, little effects of shadow and light and half light caught you; depending on how empty or full the room was, you got caught by something. (19)

The icy marble is related to the icy river (of HERmione): both hold something that 'people couldn't see' below their surfaces. The things that 'people couldn't see' and the reflections in the statue which are 'not always the most beautiful things' both indicate metaphoric uses of discourse. The images of 'breasts,' 'knife edges,' and the 'crescent moon' are re-written as knives and weapons rather than romantic images. Like the sister statue of HERmione and the statue love of Charmides in Paint It Today, the statue becomes an active huntress rather than a decorative object. The relationship between Hermione and the statue is, thus, regulated (respectively) as a metaphor for the shared power between lesbian lovers, a marriage structure in which a statue is decorative and the observer is active, a homoerotic relationship of perverse statue love and worship. In addition, hunting imagery surrounds Her's observations as she prowls around the Venus de Milo. Like an object that is hunted herself, Hermione is 'caught' by the light and half light which the statue reflects. Fixed roles as hunter and hunted, observer and observed are not possible if they are affiliated with the power structures of sisters (or huntresses) that reflect each other.

Hermione addresses Fayne and evokes a multiplicity of images thus allowing me to locate their love in different structures:

> I, Hermione, tell you I love you Fayne Rabb. Men and women will come and say I love you. I love you Hermione, you Fayne. Men will say I love you Hermione but will anyone ever say I love you Fayne as I say it? [...] I don't want to be (as they say crudely) a boy. Nor do I want you to so be. I don't feel a girl. What is all this trash of Sappho? None of that seems real, to (in any way) matter. I see

> you. I feel you. My pulse runs swiftly. My brain reaches some height of delirium. Do people say it's indecent? (53)

There is a striking rhythm to Hermione's 'I love you' that results from the insertion of her name, Hermione, into the phrase. Hermione's love, as a female loving another female, is stressed by the insertions of her name but men and women are made equal in this confession of love by Hermione's comparison of the I love you's of men in the future to her I love you. Modernist discourses of lesbianism surround them as the sexologists' theories of women who love women wanting to be men are translated, 'crudely,' and Hermione destabilizes gender binaries by neither wanting to be a boy nor feeling a girl. I would like to affiliate Hermione with images of both genders, for she consequently functions as a single image that is affiliated with both sides of a boy/girl, men/women, binary. The negation of feeling a boy and description of sapphism as trash both enacts and dismisses some dominant images (from both modernist and contemporary conceptual frameworks) for female homosexuality.[40]

The two women are nevertheless trapped by the 'people' who 'say it's indecent' and enact other stories to provide a script (and corresponding structure for) their love. Hermione rejects Shakespeare (and his affiliations with the heterosexual romance plot) and suggests the decadent tradition: "We are the children of the Rosettis, of Burne Jones, of Swinburne. We were in the hearts of Wilde when he spoke late at night of carts rumbling past the window, fresh with farm produce on the way to Covent Garden" (53). This tradition provides a history but not a script. Hermione must write her own script that develops out of her delirium to say "I, Hermione, tell you I love you Fayne Rabb" (52). When she says I love you she enacts all of these stories and fictions at once without being limited to them: that is, her performative identity, romance plot, heterosexual plot, and lesbian love all run through this section of the text. By affiliating her love with images from poetry, rather than sexology, Hermione is, I believe, also affiliated with a Künstlerroman plot.

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[40] Both the re-discovered fragments of Sappho and the work of sexologists such as Havelock Ellis were popular 1920's images (and explanations) for female homosexuality.

Although Fayne has forbidden Hermione to marry George she sends a letter with news of her own sudden marriage:

> The letter burned, vitriolic blue acid in her hand though she hadn't the letter (had not for some time had the letter) in her hand. The touch of the letter left a scar across the fingers that opened it, scar of burning acid, not of fire, scalding not searing.[...] It was so deep, so terrible that it was almost joy to have it. It was all (had been) so terrible that it had removed itself from the first moment from any possible realm of probabilities, it was drama simply, a rather good drama. (76-77)

Fayne's marriage has wounded Hermione. The wound exists only as a metaphor and the visual imagery used to describe the scar is chilling in its detailed depiction of the pain that sears and burns her. The phrase vitriolic blue is striking and I associate it with all other references to the colour blue. Pain and joy (rather than sorrow) are grouped together. A heterosexual marriage plot now intersects with discourses of pain and joy. Hermione's 'I love you' may now be affiliated with pain, joy, and Fayne's marriage to a man who cannot say "I love you" as Hermione has said it. The heterosexual plot and marriage participates in structures of respectability and normalcy, and, aside from Hermione's wounds, is not affiliated with the discourses of indecency.

The war (World War One) is devastating to traditions and history. The stories that run through cultural artifacts are altered and buried by the war:

> O Gawd, and prose and poetry and the Mona Lisa and her eye lids are a little weary and sister my sister, O fleet sweet swallow were all smudged out as Pompeii and its marbles had been buried beneath obscene filth of lava, embers, smoldering ash and hideous smoke and poisonous gas. (118)

'O Gawd' is George's expression; it belongs to the Harlequin and monkey's jacket, not to the war. Nevertheless the war is described by images of a circus as well as with higher forms of art that are signified by 'prose' and 'poetry.' The images that surround the war, such as 'lava,'

'smoldering ash,' and 'poisonous gas,' may be affiliated with vitriolic blue acid. Like Hermione's 'I love you' that Fayne's marriage covered over, the war has 'smudged out' the beauty of the Mona Lisa (and other art such as the Venus de Milo), as well as Swinburne's poetry (and the sister love that it signified). The war has smudged out, but not removed, cultural artifacts that signify different stories that constitute Hermione's performative identity. I affiliate Hermione with all of these discourses regardless of their promotion as normal drama or marginalization (and smudging out) as indecent. Pompeii, as a metaphor for Paris, signifies that the lost discourses which constitute Hermione may someday be re-discovered in fragments.

The end of the war operates as a (temporary) recovery of her history. Following the birth of her baby, Hermione's estranged husband Jerrold Darrington sits with her:

> The past seemed safe and secure and the war was but a curtain that had fallen, "you will come, you will come back -- Astraea?" He had conjured up the past with the white swansdown on her blue-red jacket. Watchet blue, he called it. It was the colour of the blue eyes of Fayne Rabb. (196)

The curtain image enables the experiences of the war to be separate from pre-war history and preserved like the first act of a play (or first part of a novel) as a section that will remain intact. The curtain of the war also separates Hermione's marriage to George from their war-time affairs and their estrangement. Fayne has not disappeared from the past, the visual image 'blue' invokes the blue of Fayne's eyes and the curtain invokes the kiss that she and Hermione exchanged in HERmione. Darrington who is affiliated with the role of husband, Fayne who is affiliated with lost lesbian love, Cyril Vane who is affiliated with the war's curtain (as both Hermione's war-time lover and father of her child), and Beryl who is a new female friend (who has given Hermione her 'blue-red jacket') may be said to represent a multiplicity of discursive formations that run through the text. Each of these discursive formations is implicated in power structures that exceed the limits of the text. These power structures have changed over time to allow the choices, that each of these affiliations may be said to represent, to be re-written as competing discourses.

The text ends with a commitment between Beryl and Hermione that enacts the concluding alliances of a romance plot. The images that surround their commitment to each other and the little girl allow me to affiliate their commitment to each other with different stories and traditions that have run through the text:

> "The little girl is not my husband's little girl .. do you understand these things?" "I hate your Jerrold Darrington. I am so glad." "I want you to promise me to grow up and take care of the little girl." "Do you mean - do you mean -" A light is shining at the far end of a long, long tunnel. The glazed eyes of Beryl, the wicked eyes of some child Darius, the eyes that prodded prongs into the eyes, the eyes of intellect turned glazed with knowledge, cold with wisdom, were a wide child's eyes, were the eyes of an eagle in a trigo triptych, were eyes of an attendant angel on an altar. The eyes were wide eyes, bluer than blue, bluer than gentian, than convoluvus, than forgetmenot, than the blue of pansies. They were child's eyes, gone wide and fair with gladness. "Do you mean ... for my own ... exactly like a puppy?" "Exactly ... like a puppy."

If the image 'child' is a sign for Beryl then it is fitting that 'puppy' be a sign for Hermione's baby. The multiplicity of images that signify Beryl allow me to affiliate her with a corresponding multiplicity of discourses and associated roles. She is a Persian Darius, lethal, knowledgeable, wise, a child, an eagle, an angel. Her eyes, like the eyes of Fayne Rabb, are blue, blue, blue and, as such, are associated with Jerrold's 'Watchet-blue,' with Fayne's eyes and with the vitriolic blue scar left by her letter. These images create multiple identities which are implicated in structures of power that exceed the limits of the text. Because I have affiliated both Beryl (and the text itself) with a number of regulatory fictions her acceptance of 'the puppy' (and little girl) may be read as an acceptance of the roles of child, husband, and sister statue.

Performative Force and Paradigms

A performative analysis of reading allows for the articulation of power structures that enable or produce an identity for a text and, alternatively, for the production of new affiliations. In her article, "Socratic Raptures, Socratic Ruptures: Notes Toward Queer Performativity," Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick asserts that "asking students at this anxiously liminal [Graduate], pre-professional stage to be numb to the performative force of their own writing strikes me as mutilating both to them and to the profession" (29). It is discourse as power and power as exercised through discourse, that allows the performative force of students' writing to produce what it names. Although I have become aware of the performative force of the writing of other scholars, and have articulated some of the structures involved in the production of feminist, lesbian, and aesthetic texts, it has been difficult (if not impossible) to separate my performative force from the constitutive forces of the regulatory fictions that I have enacted.

I, as a speaking, reading, and writing subject, have been discursively regulated and produced by the discourses that I re-enact. By repeating the words of feminist, lesbian and aesthetic criticism I am constituted by the discourses that I name. I am the object of discursively produced power and I am the subject that produces objects by naming them. The word "I" signifies my presence in the writing as a power structure that enables my unique subjectivity (to the extent that all subjectivities are unique) to regulate the ways by which a performative is produced or a truth seems to be revealed. For, in the very act of claiming to articulate the discourses that constitute feminist, lesbian, aesthetic, and queer practices, I am describing - thus producing - these concepts as fictions that precede and regulate the processes of literary analysis. This occurs, in part, because the performative, if it is successful, works "to the extent that it draws on and covers over the constitutive conventions by which it is mobilized" (Butler, Bodies, 227). 'I' and production that masquerades as description, are part of the 'constitutive conventions' that 'cover over' and 'numb' the performative force of writing.

'I' both signifies a neutral site for an object through which discourses run and it refers to an individual subject position. As Judith Butler has claimed, "every subject position is the site of converging relations of power that are not univocal" (Bodies, 230). Because, in the performative, discourse is power, the subject is a site of competing discourses[41] in much the same way that the individual text is 'a node in a network.' 'I,' as a writing subject, is produced by the discourses, or relations of power, that are (both consciously and unconsciously) enacted through the articulation of a reading. I must be numb to the performative force of my own writing because I must be numb to the performatives that 'draw on and cover over' myself as the subject, "I." When "I" is articulated, the effect is to draw attention to the performative, rather than descriptive, force of writing but the performative force of writing is always present in spite of the 'constitutive conventions' of description.

The vocalizing of any power relation is a process of articulating the constitutive conventions that would otherwise describe a performatively produced textual identity as an ideology, identity or art object that precedes its representation. Departing from queer theory to consider interdiscursive affiliations is a strategy that allows the reader to vocalize power relations. Following Judith Butler's suggestion (as quoted earlier): "if the term 'queer' is to be the site of collective contestation, the point of departure for a set of historical reflections and futural imaginings, it will have to remain that which is, in the present, never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from prior usage and in the direction of urgent and expanding political usage" (Bodies, 228). Building on Butler's concept of queer I have suggested that 'queer affiliations' must always refer to the discourses that comprise queer's history without allowing the affiliations to constitute, and name, a contemporary signified for the word 'queer.' Queer must refer to the text as a site of competing discourses rather than naming, and signifying, a specific discursive formation that constitutes it. Within the limits that I have

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[41] The concept of 'a subject as a site of competing discourses' was developed in conversation with Jason Gratl, a graduate student in philosophy, whose work on "The Metaphysics of Voice" has been quite influential to my thinking.

established for this project queer has referred to the discourses, and resulting dialectics, among, feminist, lesbian, and aesthetic reading practices. Queer must exceed the categories that comprise the heterosexual and lesbian reading binaries by simultaneously enacting affiliations to feminist, masculinist, lesbian and heterosexual discursive formations. I have attempted to create a paradigm of reading that departs from queer theories to focus on multiple affiliations as normal rather than perversely queer.

In "Progress Through Revolutions," Thomas Kuhn posits that "if we can learn to substitute evolution-from-what-we-do-know for evolution-to-what-we-wish-to-know, a number of vexing problems may vanish in the process" (170). In this thesis I have attempted to follow Kuhn's advice and create a trajectory that allows me, as a reader, to move away from 'what-I-do-know' towards 'what-I-wish-to-know.' In this process I have identified a number of 'vexing problems' that are implicated in the institutionalized practices of literary interpretation; by focusing on the practices of feminist and lesbian literary criticism I have exposed the constitutive conventions that enable critics to produce what they claim to describe. Working in a metadiscursive framework of discourse and performative theories I have made use of recent articulations of the aesthetic tradition and emerging practices in queer theory to depart from the formations that constitute specific textual identities. I have attempted to describe, and therefore create, the possibilities for a new paradigm of reading, one that departs from the restrictive concepts of textual identity, to create interdiscursive affiliations for textual images. By locating an image within a specific discourse I have also located it within structures of power that are implicated in the discursive practices that run through, and exceed the limits of, an individual text.

In moving towards 'what-I-wish-to-know' I have attempted to move towards a paradigm of reading that allows for a rich and diverse reading experience. In Art Objects Jeanette Winterson observes that "there has been so much concentration on Woolf as a feminist and as a thinker, that the unique power of her language has still not been given the close critical attention it deserves" (70). It is my belief that by paying close critical attention to the feminist (and

lesbian) identities and to the language of writers like Woolf, Stein, and H.D., I will be able to give their texts the 'attention they deserve.' I propose that by enacting multiple concepts of identity and aesthetically responding to the power of their language I may achieve a richer and fuller reading of texts that might otherwise be limited to exclusive identities as feminist, lesbian, or aesthetic.

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