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Interrogating Virginia Woolf and the British Suffrage Movement

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Interrogating Virginia Woolf and the British Suffrage Movement

by

Gwen Trowbridge Anderson

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Department of English
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Dedication

I wish to honor the mentoring and memory of Joanne Trautman Banks who first introduced me to Virginia Woolf and Ethel Smyth.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank and acknowledge the following people who have been instrumental in helping me complete this dissertation: First, my sister Dr. Catherine Ann Taylor who inspired me by her academic example; secondly, Dr. Elizabeth Hirsh whose patience and extraordinary knowledge of Virginia Woolf kept me on track; thirdly, Dr. Pat Rogers whose kindly support as my directing professor enabled me to finish this dissertation. Finally, I wish to remember the late Dr. Priscilla Brewer whose friendship helped me to understand the importance of completing my doctorate degree and becoming Gwen T. Anderson, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

Much has been written about Virginia Woolf's involvement with feminism and women's rights, but there has been far less exploration about her ties to suffrage. Many of her friends and family are involved in this exploration: Vanessa Stephen Bell, Ethel Smyth, and the Pankhursts (Emmeline, Sylvia, and Cristobel). Other important figures who are relevant to Woolf's work are Sonia Delaunay, Lewis Carroll, and Edmund Spenser. Important concepts like the New Woman, the suffrage movement, feminism, and women's rights are vital to understanding Woolf's involvement with suffrage. This dissertation examines how Woolf used certain descriptive imagery, specifically, suffrage tricolors, rooms, bridges, pillar-boxes, and water as signposts, which subversively point to suffrage and women's rights. Her literary techniques are foregrounded to reveal how involved Woolf was in the suffrage movement and that she showed this involvement in obvious and subtle ways. I uncover suffrage and feminist clues in three of her early novels *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*, and *The Years* and compare her use of women's rights in her nonfiction works, *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*. A close analysis of her early writing clearly proves that Virginia Woolf had a plan from the beginning and a prescient view to her thinking about the suffrage movement.

Preface

Interrogating Virginia Woolf and the women's suffrage movement is an opportunity to explore and question Woolf's commitment to the suffrage movement. Her use of suffrage imagery and tricolors as well as her exploration of the emergent New Woman shows her interest in the entire agenda of the women's suffrage movement. Woolf's early interest in women's suffrage and social reform influenced her motivation to use these topics in her fiction and nonfiction writing. Two of her nonfiction works, *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*, overtly display her advocacy for women's social progress. In her early novels *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*, and *The Years*, Woolf integrates her social agenda with her interest in innovating literary form. Woolf reinvigorated the form of the British novel while working to invent suffrage imagery and interrogate its reform agendas. This integration of form and politics is much more implicit than explicit and more subversive than an outright endorsement of the suffrage movement.

Consequently, an exploration of Woolf's connection to suffrage demands a lot of detective work; accessing her diaries, letters, friendships as well as her novels. Woolf's account of her writing life reveals her determination to plan her novels from the beginning, and the details of her imagery and thematic plans are minute. Woolf's early novels, *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*, and *The Years*, reveal the author's focus on suffrage imagery and themes. Each of these novels integrates Woolf's suffrage interest in different ways, but the imagery, British suffrage tricolors (purple, green, and white), and New Woman themes remain consistent threads. This interrogation has produced a reevaluation of Woolf's connection with suffrage and how she references it in her fiction and nonfiction writing.

Chapter One Interrogating Virginia Woolf and the Suffrage Movement

Much has been written about Virginia Woolf's involvement with feminism and women's rights, but there has been far less exploration about her ties to suffrage. Woolf's lifelong commitment to women's economic and social rights made it impossible to ignore suffrage as an important political right for women. Furthermore, Woolf's assertion that she was apolitical is inaccurate. The goal of this dissertation is to prove Woolf's involvement with suffrage and to demonstrate that she critiqued suffrage tactics in her novels and nonfiction. She challenged the effectiveness and legitimacy of suffrage goals and of suffrage itself. In *Night and Day*, *Three Guineas*, *The Years*, *Jacob's Room*, and *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf not only deployed her skepticism as a disclaimer to challenge, subvert, and parody the suffrage movement, but also to invigorate the suffrage goal of emancipation for women. In her essay "Modern Fiction," Woolf states she wanted to provide more than "gig-lamps" along the road to her social utopia (CE 189).

Woolf's attitude toward suffrage was one of great caution and hopefulness. For Woolf, the first priority for women was economic independence. A secondary consideration was suffrage, which would provide a civil right for women in the public sphere. Because of the long history of suffrage, which was full of struggle, debate, and disappointment, Woolf was muted in her public response, but she invented ways to integrate her hopes for suffrage into her writing, both fiction and nonfiction.

Woolf's participation in social and political history was encouraged by many of her relatives and friends: her father Leslie Stephen, her husband Leonard Woolf, Sidney

and Beatrice Webb, and Ethel Smyth. Placing Woolf within the context of her family and friends illuminates her deep connections to social reform and political activism. The Stephen household was a center for discussion of London politics, so Woolf could not avoid reform ideas. Later on, in her own household, visitors such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb brought social reform insights to the conversation. Ethel Smyth became a friend and mentor demonstrating how an accomplished career woman could meet the challenges of sexism and political powerlessness. In her letters and diaries it is clear that Woolf considered these reform ideas and wished to adapt her own methods to them (*D 4:28, TG, L*).

This dissertation explores how Woolf fits into the history of suffrage and how she uses strategies from the suffrage campaigns of working-class women and the Pankhursts' legislative drive. Many of the concerns of feminism and suffrage revolve around the same topics: women's sphere or the social construction of women's identities and economic reform, including job opportunity and fair pay. Suffrage campaigns, writing critical essays supporting women's legal and economic rights, legislative reform, and militant demonstrations were instrumental in pushing forward the suffrage agenda. However, the suffrage agenda competed with Home Rule, World War I security, and Liberal-versus-Labour-party concerns. All of these topics influenced the progress or suppression of female suffrage. Because of arguments about priorities and political bargaining, female suffrage was one among many competing issues for legislative reform. David Morgan, in his book *Suffragists and Liberals*, chronicles the progress of suffrage history. Sandra Stanley Holton in *Suffrage Days* compiles an anthology of women's stories about their personal struggles for suffrage. Ray Strachey in *The Cause*

tells of her crusade to enact suffrage reform. Woolf knew of this history and viewed her writing as an interrogative way to keep suffrage reform before the public and as a way to invigorate discussion.

Some of her friends, such as Ethel Smyth and the Pankhursts, were convinced that only militant agitation would force the extension of suffrage to women and all adult men. Woolf did lend her public support to these activities by attending a rally and asking Janet Case in a letter dated January 1, 1910, if it would be “any use if I spent an afternoon or two weekly in addressing envelopes for the Adult Suffragists?” (*LI* 421). But her essential nature did not lead her toward militant confrontation, but rather toward the interrogative rhetoric of challenge, subversion, and parody. Her support lent credence to the suffrage cause and also provided thoughtful background to the political debate (*D I*:124). Woolf’s own speeches to women’s groups like the Women’s Cooperative Guild (WCG) were in praise of women working together to promote economic progress. Woolf’s praise of suffrage was more muted.

In Woolf’s famous words about how women can create a global society from grassroots neighborhood meetings, she suggests how more than personal rights can be demanded:

Working women at their weekly meetings have to consider relations of one great nation to another... asking not only for baths and wages and electric lights, but also for co-operative industry and adult suffrage and the taxation of land values and divorce law reform. It was thus that they were to task, as the years went by, for peace and disarmament and the sisterhood of nations. (*CE* 4:16)

The women's suffrage campaign was tapping into much broader opportunities for women in school and work. "What was happening – much too slowly for feminists of course – was a slow but profound change in the self-image held by women" (Morgan 162). Suffrage would empower women for more than household economic concerns but also was important for affecting change by other means than by war and competitive economics. The other profound change was the cooperation between social classes. This was part of a social reform more crucial than getting the vote. David Morgan states in *Suffragists and Liberals* that the "feminist elite" organized themselves and the mass of women into political actions for suffrage success. Furthermore, Morgan concludes that without the grassroots efforts of the Radicals in labor unions and mills and factories, the Pankhursts would not have had the foundation of support to march into London. Without the London campaign, it is doubtful that the "elite" would have continued the fight or enlisted women like Ethel Smyth and Virginia Woolf to their cause.

Woolf took the exclusion of women from public activity and made it the focal point for her plan of empowerment. In *Gendering European History*, Barbara Caine and Glenda Sluga trace the concept of citizenship as it has developed from French Revolution times to World War I (1780-1920). Historically, certain rules govern who can vote and have a public voice and who cannot. Consistently, a voting citizen was white, male, had land and estate ownership, and had proven his eligibility with marriage and children. All women were to remain in the private sphere and could not be seen or heard in public. There were variations on this definition and sometimes women were accorded a few rights, but often these rights were soon taken away. Various reasons, relating to women's roles as mother, housekeeper, and moral role model were used to keep her in the private

sphere. Concerns about social instability, war, or revolution helped define who would be a voting, functioning public citizen. Caine and Sluga put the gendering of human rights in terms of national and global citizenship. Mostly, women were excluded from public activity, and this was explained by women's natural modesty and passiveness. Woolf made the exclusion of women from the public arena an organizing focal point, envisioning that women would meet in private discussion and voice their private concerns. Through communication to each other, women could start their own movement to announce their voices to the nation and the world. The women would become empowered with rights they deserve and no one could deny them these rights. The public political debate about the "woman question" heated up by the end of the nineteenth century. There was intense debate by feminist activists, socialists, writers, artists, scientists, moralists, and educators (Caine & Sluga 130). Especially in England "with the advent of militancy and the massive suffrage demonstrations after 1907, public discussion and press coverage of the 'woman question' was even more extensive" (130)

The nature of the woman question also changed. The definition of the "New Woman," a term coined by novelist Sara Grand, added to the woman question. The New Woman had nontraditional ideas about marriage and sexuality. All the worst fears of militant males were realized in the militant New Woman. Grand's characters were New Women who "sought to lead lives very different from those of their mothers by engaging in activities which proclaimed their independence, their sense of personal worth, and their entitlement to a public role." Other feminists had proclaimed these ideas before Grand, but now the time was ripe to bring these ideas to real life and real legislation (Caine & Sluga 130). This New Woman sought a political empowerment similar to men and either

rejected motherhood or felt motherhood could be combined with a more active public role. This dissertation shows how Virginia Woolf used the New Woman of her time in her novels. Furthermore, Woolf's use of the New Woman in her novels is one of the ways that Woolf encodes her feelings about the suffrage movement and her support of feminism into her writings.

In *Night and Day*, Woolf questions whether suffrage has sufficient power to activate successful reform. Woolf uses Mary Datchet as an example of a suffrage worker who learns about the sacrifices that women make for hope of suffrage success. Rose Pargiter in *The Years* becomes a suffrage worker combating a lifetime of traditional roles for women. Julia Hedge, a feminist in *Jacob's Room*, patiently researches statistics in the British Museum to prove how women deserve the same worker rights as men. Woolf was willing to explore how these characters tried to further the suffrage cause.

Throughout her novels *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*, and *The Years*, Woolf expands the boundaries of the suffrage cause by examining the ideas of the New Woman and the new economic and political freedom for women. Her social utopia where both genders and all classes share this freedom is still a dream. However, the pathways that Woolf offers are intriguing and powerful.

Survey of Literature

Now that Virginia Woolf is secured within a political, suffrage, and feminist framework, it is necessary to survey the literature about Woolf and her suffrage involvement. Woolf's most important political suffrage ideas are realized in *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*, *The Years*, and the essays *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*.

These will be the main sources for my dissertation. Others have found political ideas, such as pacifism, antiwar sentiments, socialism, and antifascism, in *To the Lighthouse*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, and *The Waves*.

Many critics have noted Woolf's use of feminist and suffragist ideas, but the entire suffrage agenda has not been totally explored. Woolf's specific suffrage ideas, such as militant demonstrations and trespass in public streets, have been discussed by Jane Marcus in her role as editor and essayist in *Virginia Woolf: A Feminist Slant and Suffrage and the Pankhursts*. Marcus's emphasis is on feminist theory and a rereading of the texts, posters, and political strategy of the period. Marcus concludes that a closer reading of these sources in response to "present ideological concerns" would reflect a more accurate and relevant understanding of the suffrage movement (introd. 17). *Night and Day* is seen by Marcus as a comic opera about the romantic problems of young lovers and not as a political statement. While I acknowledge the romantic plot, I shall focus on the political aspects of *Night and Day*.

The use of London and its environment is one of Woolf's favorite themes. Much of the agitation for suffrage took place in London and Parliament. Susan Squier has written about the role of women in rural and city life and how this exposes the treatment of women, including such issues as the work opportunities combined with social and marriage expectations. The matrix of London gives support to the social ferment that was a part of suffrage. Andrea Zemgulys agrees that literary and historic London is crucial to *Night and Day*. I shall attempt to revive *Night and Day* and restore it to the

importance it deserves. Woolf said that *Night and Day* is dead, but her reservations need reexamination.

Other critics focus on feminist aesthetics, language, and relationships. Diane Gillespie offers an essay about “The Political Aesthetics: Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson,” which discusses the conflicts between politics and art. Woolf liked to keep art and politics separate. She abhorred propaganda art, yet her essays and novels have a strong political current that is encoded in the suffragists’ strategies she uses. Whether it is demonstrations and trespass in the streets that would influence legislative reform and suffrage approval for women or more aesthetic matters, such as tricolors, language, and images, Woolf demonstrated her support for the working-class women who fought for the women’s vote.

Jane Goldman in her influential book *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual* supplies a valuable analysis of Woolf’s tricolor code for suffrage and prismatic theories as a subtext for *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs. Dalloway*. Goldman offers detailed proof that Woolf favored the suffrage tricolors (purple, green, and white, sometimes gold) in her prismatic schema. But Goldman does not discuss how Woolf uses other suffrage ideas encoded in these colors.

Marcus, Goldman, Gillespie, and Squier offer intriguing analyses of Woolf’s political ideas. The book *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* offers two Elaine Showalter essays. The first essay, entitled “Women Writers and the Suffrage Movement” explores the response of British women writers to the suffrage movement. Often the response exposes guilt, hostility, and class bias. The

criticism is class-based as might be expected with those who have the most to lose expressing the most negative criticism. The other Showalter essay concerns “The Female Aesthetic,” a term that stood for the opportunity for women novelists to create a new female literature. “The aesthetic applied feminist ideology to language as well as to literature, words, and sentences as well as to perception and values” (240-62). Feminist militancy made some of these women novelists uneasy since it resembled masculine militancy. Therefore, they foregrounded a different set of values. The moral issues of Victorian feminism were transmuted into a new female aesthetic.

The literary and historical background of suffrage is cast in a new light when gender politics is used as the organizing theme. Barbara Caine and Glenda Sluga offer a concise vision of how the changing cultural meanings of gender are central to understanding the “formation of states and nations, citizenship and political participation, work and economic activity...” (introd. 1-5). Their book *Gendering European History* shows how cultural and political strategies oppress women. Nancy Cott in *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* explains how the word feminism has changed meaning over the decades. The book also relates how American feminist history and also English feminism have affected American strategies in relation to suffrage.

Sandra Stanley Holton provides fascinating background about lesser-known British suffrage leaders, such as Elizabeth Wolsterhome, Hannah Mitchell, Alice Clark, and others. *Suffrage Days: Stories from the Women’s Suffrage Movement* traces the facts versus memories of their experiences and shows the diversity of suffragist backgrounds. Angela Ingram and Daphne Patai have researched the “forgotten radicals” in English suffrage history. This book “rediscovers” the stories and writings of important feminist

and suffragist writers in England between 1890 and 1939. It is a collection of essays by various authors who explain the lives and writings of certain radical writers/activists and why they are important today. Jill Liddington and Jill Norris have compiled information about working women's involvement in English suffrage. Their book, *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement*, chronicles the rise of the women's suffrage movement in England and discovers how the working class contributed to the movement before the Pankhursts and others took over. The women's stories are fascinating and full of little-known information.

The Pankhurst women, Sylvia, Cristabel, and their mother Emmeline, brought suffrage rights to the attention of influential Londoners, who helped, eventually, to pass a suffrage reform bill. In their book *Sylvia Pankhurst*, Ian Bullock and Richard Pankhurst present detailed material from the personal, family view of Richard Pankhurst, Emmeline's son. This volume helps to explain the famous Pankhurst women.

Women's rights and feminism are connected to Woolf in several ways. As mentioned before, Woolf was very involved with the economic and political battles of her day, and no topic was more pertinent than suffrage. Todd and Squier speak of feminist literary history and the New Woman, who is a different kind of woman from the Victorian and Edwardian women of the past. Squier's essay "A Track of Our Own" describes how Woolf felt about honors for women; they were superstitions and useless. Woolf's dream was of "a vigorous young woman" who could combat the "mud-coloured moonshine" of politics and advance feminist civilization (*Feminist Slant* 134). Naomi Black defines different types of feminism. To her there is social feminism and there is equity feminism. Black's feminism is social feminism, which includes the idea of

“autonomy for women.” Equity feminism, on the other hand, “merely extends existing belief systems to women previously excluded” (introd. 1). Black names certain groups like WCG (Women’s Co-operative Guild), *UFCS* (*Union féminine civique et sociale*), and the national League of Women Voters (LWV) as examples of many groups who worked for the social and educational improvement of women. Suffrage, of course, is part of this movement.

Women’s organizations, such as WCG, *UFCS*, and LWV, opened new options for women. Feminist Naomi Black describes the New Woman of the 1920s in terms of women’s liberation from expected cultural roles. Rishona Zimring in her essay “Gissing, Woolf, and the Drama of Home” sees a connection between George Gissing’s heroines and Virginia Woolf’s character Mary Datchet. Both types of women are rebelling against the expected roles of wife and mother. They want more, and they see how the opportunities are opening up. Gissing’s characters are struggling against the odds, but Mary Datchet is venturing into new territory and is definitely not a victim. Mary is developing out of the earlier Gissing heroines and is now a strong example of the New Woman who is emerging from the traditional woman’s sphere.

Language, communication, and narrative are three major areas that attract scholars of *Night and Day*. H. Porter Abbott in his essay, “Old Virginia and the Night Writer: The Origins of Woolf’s Narrative Meander,” relates Woolf’s use of a diary, her narrative structure and modernism. Of course since Woolf was trying to inscribe a new narrative technique, this topic would be essential for any Woolf analysis. But since Woolf has disclaimed new narrative ideas in her construction of *Night and Day*, it is revealing to read critics who find new approaches anyway. Virginia Blain’s “Narrative

Choice and the Female Perspective in Virginia Woolf's Early Novels," traces *The Voyage Out*, *Night and Day*, and *Jacob's Room* in terms of a consistent reference to narration, irony, and treatment of women. Woolf's female perspective has evolved from Rachel's earlier desperation and the global perspective in *Jacob's Room*. Mary Datchet is an advocate for the suffrage movement; her characterization in *Night and Day* benefits from Woolf's exploration of a female perspective in *The Voyage Out*.

Several critics have written about communication problems in *Night and Day*. Michael Whitworth takes a strictly technological approach to communication in his essay, "Woolf's Web: Telecommunications and Community." With the benefit of telegraphs and telephones the possibilities for communication are greatly expanded. The family community becomes global. This changes the horizon for Woolf's characters, especially a New Woman like Mary Datchet. Elizabeth Cooley searches for answers to the communication problems between Katherine Hilbery, Mary Datchet, William Rodney, and Ralph Denham. Cooley's essay discusses the Woolfian communication ideal, an ideal state that transcends language and culture. This "enchanted region," is accomplished, according to Cooley, by direct empathy between Hilbery and Denham, whereas, Hilbery and William, cannot bridge the gap. William and Cassandra Otway find common ground with music, but Mary Datchet cannot compromise with Denham.

Cooley also highlights the relationships between male-male, female-female, and female-male in Woolf's novels *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*. In her essay entitled, "'The Medicine She Trusted To': Women, Friendship and Communication in *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*," Cooley explores a very important topic in *Night and Day* friendships. She discusses the nature of friendship between the sexes and

among the same sex. There are many conversations between the characters in *Night and Day* that show an undercurrent of hostility, desperation, and soul-searching. These descriptions are especially highlighted against the background of genteel society and the changing mores of 1920s England. These are comments similar to Showalter's research about British women writers during the suffrage movement 1850 to after World War I.

Shirley Nelson Gamer explores "Women Together in Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day*." This essay treats friendship and attraction between women and their relationships to male-female couples. While *Night and Day* is considered a romantic, comic novel, there are many encoded investigations into female-female relationships. Because women have mothered women, they also retain a primary emotional bond, both metaphorical and biological, with their "mothers." Woolf's expression of love between Mary and Katherine is tentative and often expressed in silence as much as words. Transcending language and culture is the core of the "enchanted region" as asserted by Cooley. Woolf will use this technique in the novels to come.

Psychology is the next major area that critics frequently visit when explicating the works of Virginia Woolf. T.E. Apter in her book, *An Uncertain Balance: Night and Day*, discusses how *Night and Day* tries to balance "the soul [which] was active and in broad daylight" with the "contemplative soul which is dark as night." Can the light and dark sides of the soul be balanced? This is certainly part of what Woolf is discovering in *Night and Day*. However, more complex psychology is also a backdrop. George M. Johnson focuses on the second wave of psychology in his fascinating essay, "'The Spirit of the Age': Virginia Woolf's Response to Second Wave Psychology." The emphasis is on the second wave of psychology which asserts that the mind is in constant movement,

not static, and that Woolf used these second wave ideas in her treatment of repression, sublimation, dreams, intimacy, conscious states, moments of being, and sexuality in *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*. Although Woolf uses these ideas in many of her novels, we should remember *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day* are her two earliest novels. Her later novels continue to expand her use of these themes in her writing. This is one indication why her two early novels are so important. Mark Hussey in his article “Refractions of Desire: The Early Fiction of Virginia and Leonard Woolf” shows the treatment of desire and sex roles in *The Voyage Out*, *Night and Day*, and in Leonard Woolf’s “The Village in the Jungle” and “The Wise Virgins.” Hussey asserts that the conventions of engagement and marriage that are in *Night and Day* also reflect the behaviors of Leonard and Virginia during their courtship. In addition, Virginia Woolf’s female-female longings are compared to those of her characters Katherine Hilbery and Mary Datchet.

Junko Setogawa provides a Japanese perspective for a fantasy approach to marriage and engagement. Setogawa compares the use of fantasy in Woolf’s short story “Lapin and Lapinova” to the use of fantasy in *Night and Day*. Setogawa concludes that Ernest and Rosaline, and Katherine and Ralph both use fantasy to keep their marriage or engagement valid. Ernest twitches his nose like a rabbit when he is thinking, so they decide to use rabbits as their fantasy animals. They have this in common and communicate their desires in this way. However, on the day Ernest refuses to participate, Rosalind loses her safety valve and the relationship falls apart.

Katherine and Ralph are able to communicate in an enchanted region where words are not necessary (501-508). Katherine can give up her solitude because she

realizes that Ralph can share her ideas and hopes. Her solitude does not have to be permanent. This is an engagement fantasy that gives hope to Katherine and Ralph. Rosaline and Ernest are newly-married, so the rabbit fantasy lasts only a few years. Setogawa's contribution shows how themes in Woolf's writing are revisited in later writings and that Woolf is constantly interrogating marriage and engagement, especially in terms of independence for women.

Furthermore, there are conversational letters to and from Lytton Strachey and others about form, dialogue and sexlessness in *Night and Day*. Woolf sent copies of *Night and Day* to Vanessa and Clive Bell, Lytton Strachey, Morgan Forster, and Violet Dickinson. Clive Bell declared *Night and Day*, "No doubt a work of the highest genius" (D 307). Vanessa also gave "unstilted praise; on top of that Lytton's enthusiastic praise; a grand triumph; a classic, & so on; Violet's sentence of eulogy followed; & then, yesterday morning, this line from Morgan 'I like it less than the V.O.'" (D 310). Forster further explains "None of the characters in N. & D. is lovable" (D 310). Woolf valued all their opinions on aesthetic and literary matters, but Lytton Stracheys and Morgan Forster's mattered the most to her. Woolf's feeling that *Night and Day* was dead, as she declared in her diary, reflects her uncertainty about the worth of her novel. Conflicting opinions about *Night and Day* among her friends and contemporary critics, together with its effective abandonment by Woolf scholars, provide two reasons for my focus on *Night and Day* in this dissertation.

Method

Placing Virginia Woolf within a feminist literary history, specifically, the women's suffrage movement, I will interrogate the tactics and ideology of suffrage as encoded in three novels by Woolf, *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*, and *The Years* through direct analysis of language, imagery, and also by means of imagined interviews. Her nonfiction *Three Guineas* and *A Room of One's Own* will also provide Woolf's views on social and economic reform. I will discuss the novels in order of publication. Some shorter fiction may also supplement my discussion. Woolf deploys her suffrage game as a disclaimer, a trick to challenge, parody, and subvert suffrage.

Although Virginia Woolf wrote about suffrage tactics in her fiction and nonfictional works, she frequently challenges the tactics of the suffrage movement by incorporating subversion and parody into her writing style. She also challenged the effectiveness and legitimacy of suffrage campaigns. In *Jacob's Room* and *Three Guineas*, Woolf argues for economic opportunities, not suffrage and political reform. In her own grassroots campaign, Woolf advocates that women combine their economic power to effect economic reform. She questions whether suffrage has sufficient power to help this reform.

Woolf uses parody and subversion to challenge suffrage tactics, but she also supports an idealized vision of women's rights by encoding several examples in her writings. She parodies street demonstrations by flaunting patriarchal rules through her own hesitant steps, walking the streets of London alone at night. She subverts the authority of Parliament, female street power, and suffrage demonstrations. She trespasses on both traditional education and economic fronts. She urges legal reform of these fronts.

Woolf denounces the forces that want to kill suffrage just as she denounces the tyranny of the “angel in the house” in the domestic arena. Woolf’s advocacy of women’s rights is encoded in her contrast images of night and day, sun and moon, according to Jane Goldman. Might these image clusters be subversion and parody, not advocacy? Woolf’s game seeks to eclipse these image clusters and question them. Woolf interrogates the authority that denies women their rightful place in English society.

The most important suffrage tactics include legislative reform, demonstrations, language, images, jail time, and grass-roots and working-class support. Legislative reform includes the Reform Bills, Suffrage Acts to extend male and adult suffrage as well as female. Woolf’s father, Leslie Stephen, worked for reform of educational and economic problems, but was not enthusiastic about female suffrage.

Woolf’s ideas were influenced by discussions with friends and family, who had strong opinions about the militant and radical suffragist demonstrations of her time. Woolf supported subtler tactics than street demonstrations and arrests; however, she did plan to trespass on public spaces and cross over barriers to women’s abilities to congregate and affect public policy. She attended a rally for WCG in March 1918, but her most political ideas were written in *Three Guineas*. Jail time and starvation as a resistance tactic would never work for Woolf. Physically and emotionally she could not have survived.

Language was the first line of defense for Woolf. Woolf advocated creating female language and sentences. She wanted to value female perspective and grammar. She wanted a fluid language that would accept the fluidity of female experience and transient nature of everyday life. She also wanted to honor the special “moments of

being” or epiphanies when women realize an important truth. She endorsed a woman-centered language, using inductive reasoning to create and break taboo images of women’s bodies and minds. Her language innovations influenced a feminist aesthetic known today as “*écriture féminine*,” which was picked up by the French feminists, Toril Moi and Luce Irigaray.

Her feminine imagery, which included water, flowers, connective bridges, and inner spaces, contrasts with the male-dominated worlds of London and Cambridge. The tricolors of the suffrage movement are consistently employed in her novels.

Many have noted Woolf’s use of feminist and suffragist ideas and images, but matching suffrage strategies with Woolf’s literary technique has not been done in an in-depth and unified way. Woolf’s literary technique responded to and incorporated many suffragist strategies. In her attempts to redesign the novel, Woolf had other priorities as well. It might be helpful to interrogate Woolf on her ideas about women’s suffrage. Here is an example of one imagined interview and how it might shed light on Woolf’s obliqueness:

INTERVIEWER: As a writer you have stated that you are not political, that you are only interested in economic and social reform. How can you separate the arenas?

WOOLF: I have great suspicion about politics and politicians. In my experience, politicians are primarily interested in acquiring power and are not always interested in what is best for their constituents or for the nation. It seems a waste of time to me to attend conferences and listen to political speeches.

INTERVIEWER: And yet your essays and novels have embedded codes, symbols, and images that advocate suffrage ideals.

WOOLF: I believe in the process of writing and imagination. I believe that thinking through ideas through characters and their thoughts creates stimulation in the reader's and the writer's brain. This stimulation can change attitudes and provoke actions. Reform and legislation can happen with this motivation.

INTERVIEWER: You accuse politicians of wanting power, yet you wish power over readers' minds and attitudes. You want to change perceptions. You have political goals.

WOOLF: It is true I wish to achieve social reform, a more equitable society, but this cannot be forced on people through laws. Some laws, like primogeniture are unfair and discriminatory, and I do advocate revising or revoking them. However, my talents are clearly in writing not demonstrating in the streets or Parliament, so I choose to offer ideas without the rhetoric and violence. More permanent change can occur when people are thinking than when they are forced to agree.

INTERVIEWER: What about the suffrage agenda? You have written in your diary that you doubt women will know what to do with the vote. You say that women are not prepared to be independent thinkers and that they will vote as their husbands or fathers think they should. Isn't this disingenuous? Are you implying that women cannot be independent thinkers? Yet, you are basing your essays and novels on the idea that women can be informed, that they can improve themselves financially and create an independent space for themselves. How do you integrate these views?

WOOLF: My personal writing reflects my own fears and suspicions and my triumphs. I still advocate that women learn to be independent and cultivate their creative resources.

My fear is that women do not have enough support to make independence and creativity a high priority. I am offering the practical and theoretical support that is necessary.

INTERVIEWER: You are advocating a fundamental change in women's role in society.

Do you think this is subversive and that other national priorities will overshadow this new role?

WOOLF: There has been a long tradition of social justice in this country and even more so in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. If war and other threats are stronger than suffrage, this makes the spirit stronger than ever. The suffrage cause unites women more than any other cause, so that suffrage rights will be granted eventually.

This is the type of interrogation, with support from Woolf scholars that I will make about Woolf's suffrage ideas in this dissertation. Firstly, I will focus on *Night and Day*, specifically the character Mary Datchet. She is an example of the New Woman who is trying to escape the traditional mother/housewife role and live a career and exciting life in London. I will start investigating Mary Datchet by using Woolf's own words that describe Mary physically and emotionally. Mary has her own literary salon in her apartment where she chooses to give permission for her friends to come and discuss literature and the arts. She has more than a room of her own and she controls who comes into her apartment. In *Night and Day* Woolf gives a very clear physical description of Mary Datchet:

She was some twenty-five years of age, but looked older because she earned, or intended to earn, her own living, and had already lost the look of the irresponsible spectator, and taken on that of the private in the army of workers. Her gestures seemed to have a

certain purpose, the muscles round the eyes and lips were set rather firmly, as though the sense had undergone some discipline, and were held ready for a call on them. (48)

The reader, thus, learns about Mary's background and her physical looks. The rest of the novel carries through with this analysis as Mary works at the suffrage office (SGS), falls for Ralph, visits her family, and continues her sacrifices for suffrage. The reader learns that since her mother's death, Mary has decided to get a college education, leave her rural family life, and come to dynamic London. This motivation to succeed is part of devotion to a suffrage career. Mary is one of the New Women who are immersed in public life, socially and politically active, and not destined for marriage. Mary is intelligent and perceptive in rejecting rural values and accepting urban cleverness. Woolf implies this is essential for success. This looking for new answers is the methodology that I will use to understand Mary and suffrage.

The other Woolf sources that will be analyzed in this dissertation are *Jacob's Room*, *The Years*, and *Three Guineas*. Each of these sources will be explored for political clues and references to suffrage ideas. Woolf continues or mutates some of her characters in these sources, so tracing their transformations will be a part of my analysis.

Jacob's Room uses many of Woolf's more subtle narrative strategies. Woolf explores the validity of reality and a permanent truth. Only males have access to this reality and truth. The Cambridge myth that there, indeed, can be permanent, accessible reality and truth is contained in a man's world. Women are outsiders. The invisible female narrator has a limited access to college life and this vision is temporary at best. Cori Sutherland in her essay "Gender and Genre Inter(sex)tions" exposes how transparent

women are to its society and that they are valued only for their transparency and contrast to men. Women become vague and hesitant and therefore powerless. “In *Jacob’s Room* by employing the very same gendered metaphors and characteristics for male and female characters that society relies upon, the narrator exposes the cost of this model”

(Sutherland 68). Clara, Florinda, and Fanny are transparent and described through a haze. Their appeal is temporary. Even Jacob’s mother is seen as powerless to help her son stay away from war. If one possesses the right class and gender, one can buy into the Cambridge “false” reality. Similarly, the female characters try to buy “false” temporary beauty. Both are trying to perpetuate “something that is necessarily temporary” (68). Really, both females and males are denied access to permanent political power. Even the males cannot control the hunger for war, while the women are cast aside as powerless. How can transparent women acquire a powerful tool like suffrage? “*Jacob’s Room* has no place for single substantial women” (69).

Michael R. Olin-Hitt discusses subversive characterization in *Jacob’s Room* in his essay “Power, Discipline and Individuality: Subversive Characterization in *Jacob’s Room*.” Olin-Hitt uses the categories of narrative strategies, individuals, social power, and freedom from tyranny to explore the characters’ fates. Objectification and subjection, to use Foucault’s terms, are used in nineteenth-century novels to oppress the characters. Woolf was working through these conventions to expose the fact that “literature not only reflects social power structures, but enforces what supports them” (Olin-Hitt 129). Woolf wants to free the reader from these constraints, but her cause is also to free women from powerlessness. Woolf parodies the conventional male character who seems the center of a controlled universe but who is instead “a focal point for

diversity and disparity” (131). Florinda, Fanny, Clara, and Betty Flanders offer different glimpses of Jacob. This destabilizes the idea of a unified character while maintaining their subservience to the male view.

Jacob's Room and *Three Guineas* have the war in common. In her personal essay, Stephanie Zappa traces the connection between *Three Guineas* and *Jacob's Room*. She calls her essay “Virginia Woolf and Me: Personal Criticism.” Zappa concentrates on the idea of the tacit acceptance of war that leads to unconscious support of militarism. Woolf's pacifism questioned these contributions to a “war-thinking culture” (274-75). Woolf's critique of war illustrates “the cause and effect cycle of war and the psychosocial views which perpetuate it” (275). War is a continuing theme for Woolf. “It was the center of her world and of her writing” (275). Woolf denounced the exaggerated emotions caused by war and used parody to highlight the damage.

In *Jacob's Room* the effects are subtler than in *Three Guineas*. The lead character, Jacob Flanders, is prepared by his education at Cambridge to accept his patriotic duty when the war comes. Even though Woolf holds Jacob at arm's length and tries for an impartial, formal opinion of him, she finds it impossible to be completely objective. Jacob is obsessed with tradition and the classics and, therefore, epitomizes patriarchal society. Through Jacob, Woolf traces “the influences of war by and upon gender” (277). Woolf questions the role of women, particularly mothers, like Betty Flanders, in the acceptance of a “war-thinking culture.” Whatever the war, “Things repeat themselves it seems. Pictures and voices are the same today as they were 2,000 years ago” (*TG* 141). Young men are raised by their mothers to accept their patriotic duty

and the war reasoning behind it. This attitude brings honor to the young men, but it brings nightmares to their mothers.

In *Three Guineas* Woolf is less subtle. Her concern is with the knee-jerk responses that war evokes. In her diary of July 1940, she writes, “I don’t like any of the feelings war breeds: patriotism, communal &c, all sentimental & emotional parodies of our real feelings” (5:302). These “sentimental and emotional parodies” are at the heart of militarism. Zappa investigates other recent wars and how women are implicated in the patriotism that accepts war. This is unnerving for women and guilt producing. *Three Guineas* argues that the vicious cycle of war implicates not only the warmongers but also those, especially mothers and teachers of culture, who may be enmeshed in the patriotism that accepts war.

Three Guineas evoked polarized opinions about war, feminism, and women’s power. Because *Three Guineas* was more aggressive than *A Room of One’s Own*, acceptance of Woolf’s argument was very problematic. It was deemed strident and ill tempered. Of course, Woolf was reaching for argument, not agreement. *Three Guineas* exposed patriarchal domination as the main force behind the acceptance, even encouragement, of war. Patriarchal privilege was at stake. E. M. Forster dismissed Woolf’s ideas as belonging to “an ‘old-fashioned’ nostalgia for her suffragette youth of the 1920s.” He declared that Woolf’s lifelong commitment to feminism was responsible for this awful book (Neverow 13). Woolf’s commitment to economic and political autonomy for women was the basis for her writing *A Room of One’s Own* and *Three Guineas*.

Vara Neverow, in her essay comparing Josephine Butler's ideas about suffrage to Woolf's ideas in *Three Guineas*, contends that much of Woolf's research for *Three Guineas* used Butler's ideas. Specifically, Neverow quotes the Fawcett and Turner biography of Josephine Butler. In *Three Guineas*, Woolf refers to a passage about women's suffrage:

For some reason, never satisfactorily explained, the right to vote, in itself by no means negligible, was mysteriously connected with [the right to earn one's living, a] right of such immense value to the daughter of educated men that almost every word in the dictionary has been changed by it, including the word 'influence' (15).

Without this right to earn a living, according to Woolf, women had no autonomy and were basically prostitutes. The word "profession" becomes a euphemism for prostitution. Woolf's references and footnotes to the Butler biography prove she was concerned about suffrage as well as economic opportunity (Neverow 16).

Michael Tratner in his essay "The Value of Difference: Economics, Genders and War in *Three Guineas*" traces Woolf's ideas about the causes of war, namely economics and the powerlessness of women to stop war. Woolf would not agree to join an antiwar society because men founded it. She insisted that women must secure their own power and values, their "difference" so that any feminist protest retained the values women desire, while gaining power and status. Women need to gain autonomy and some economic success, but not too much. Greed should not be a deciding factor. Women will

gain some political power with suffrage, but it is not enough for Woolf, who advocates an antiwar position defined under her own terms.

Merry Pawlowski defines how Woolf viewed the misogynist ideology of her male friends as a major barrier to women's power, political and economic. Pawlowski's essay, "All the gents against me': Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*, and the Sons of Educated Men," shows how Woolf developed her campaign against women's inferiority (assumed by males) as the major reason women were denied power. The very men that she knew the best were conspirators in denying women their suffrage and economic rights. Women did not have intellectual liberty and educational freedom, both of which are denied to them by men. That is why women were antiwar and against the status quo.

The last major novel I will discuss is *The Years*. Here I rely on two major sources: Diane L. Swanson's article, "Antigone Complex: Psychology and Politics in *The Years* and *Three Guineas*" and also James Naremore's broader discussion of "Nature and History in *The Years*." I will start with Swanson's exploration of Sara as the alter ego of Antigone. First of all, Swanson reads *Three Guineas* as offering "a vision of new possibilities" and not contained within "patriarchal discourse" (35). Swanson's critique of Oedipal theory posits the idea that matriarchal myths and rituals are highlighted in *The Years*. Following on the patriarchal paths in *Three Guineas*, Woolf creates a new language for thinking about *Antigone*. As Swanson says, "Antigone functions for Woolf as a figure for both the damage done to daughters in the patriarchal family and the independent vision the resistant daughter is nevertheless capable of" (36). To convey the *Antigone* connection, Sara reads a copy of Edward's translation of *Antigone*. Sara empathizes with the idea of being buried by the patriarchal family. Sara resists being

controlled by her father. She wants to create a new life, a new vision, a new world. Eleanor speaks of reading *Antigone* also, and in the final scene, brothers and sisters are looking outward toward the new dawn of a new day (39). It is not hard to agree that Woolf is replacing the focus of Oedipus with a focus on Antigone.

Woolf's new language for thinking about *Antigone* draws upon an old myth to explain her feminist interpretation of the myth. James Naremore in his article "Nature and History in *The Years*" mentions the Sara/Antigone connection, and when he describes the character Sara as "totally isolated and harmlessly insane," he offers a more encyclopedic analysis of the use of nature and history. He starts with the famous idea that Woolf declared, which was that "in or about 1910, human character changed" (241). One reason to pick this date, he says, is that "1910 was the year Woolf herself made a commitment to the adult suffrage movement, doing political chores on behalf of women's rights" (241). Woolf's program for reform was aesthetic as well as political. After all, "it was Woolf who argued that women would need the power of the vote, a good income, and rooms of their own if they expected to write as well as men" (243). Furthermore, it was Woolf who "prophesied that a political force would break down the old class and sex distinctions (243). This political force was suffrage, both adult suffrage and women's suffrage. With *Three Guineas* as a companion to *The Years* it is possible to understand both writings more completely. "Historical change and Woolf's view of politics are more clearly delineated than in any other of her writings" (244). Woolf's tracing of women's rights and the war against fascism is tenuous at best, according to Quentin Bell. Woolf's theory is that fascistic thinking mirrors the patriarchal domination of the family, which *The Years* features as a main theme. Woolf also senses that there is an "eternal natural

process” that gives meaning to the poverty, violence, and economic disparities of life.

Woolf addresses all of these problems in her program for societal reform. Rose Pargiter in *The Years* becomes a spunky suffragette who cannot be quelled by the patriarchal establishment or her patriarchal family. She represents the future that Woolf hopes will bring new beginnings and a new equality for women.

In conclusion, Woolf through her writing of *Night and Day*, *A Room of One's Own*, *Jacob's Room*, *Three Guineas*, and *The Years*, explores the ideas of the New Woman, who will enjoy new economic and political power.

Chapter Two *Night and Day* and the New Woman

Night and Day provides a point of suffrage interrogation for the author Woolf and her literary critics. Mary Datchet is the keystone character for suffrage in this novel. She is an example of the New Woman who is trying to escape the traditional mother-housewife-sister roles and live a career and exciting life in cosmopolitan London. I will start investigating Mary Datchet by using Woolf's own words that describe Mary physically and emotionally. At the beginning of chapter IV, Woolf introduces Mary, gives a very clear physical description of her, and also hints at Mary's New Woman instincts that have allowed her to choose an urban life in her own apartment and to create a literary salon:

She was some twenty-five years of age, but looked older because she earned, or intended to earn her own living, and had already lost the look of the irresponsible spectator, and taken on that of the private in the army of workers. Her gestures seemed to have a certain purpose, the muscles round her eyes and lips were set rather firmly, as though the senses had undergone some discipline, and were ready for a call on them. She had contracted two faint lines, between her eyebrows, not from anxiety but from thought, and it was quite evident that all the feminine instincts of pleasing, soothing, and charming were crossed by others in no way peculiar to her sex. For the rest she was brown-eyed, a little clumsy in

movement, and suggested country birth and a descent from respectable hard-working ancestors, who had been men of faith and integrity rather than doubters and fanatics. (48)

This paragraph gives the background necessary to understand Mary's drive to succeed.

This motivation to succeed is part of her devotion to a suffrage career. Mary has immersed herself in public life, become socially and politically active, and is not destined for marriage. Mary is intelligent and perceptive in rejecting rural values and accepting urban cleverness. Woolf implies this is vital for the successful New Woman. As we shall learn when *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas* are discussed, this rejection of traditional values is part of Woolf's plan for women learning the value of their own creative space and forming a "Society of Outsiders" who can bring pacifism and socialism to national and international discussion (*TG* 115). For now, the important focus for Mary is that women have the advantage of being outsiders who are not intrinsic to establishment problems. Mary is at the very center of urban opportunity in London:

She thought of her clerical father in his country parsonage, and of her mother's death, and of her own determination to obtain an education, and of her college life, which had merged not so very long ago, in the wonderful maze of London, which still seemed to her, in spite of her constitutional level-headedness, like a vast electric light, casting a radiance upon the myriads of men and women who crowded around it. (48)

In this quotation, Woolf uses her code of rural versus urban, the fantasy of light, moths and urban communication blending into a wonderland of city life. As can be seen from

Woolf's description and my analysis so far, Woolf is combining the rural and urban influences of suffrage in her picture of Mary and her apartment. (She lives in a modern apartment, not an ancestral manse or rural cottage.)

Mary combines the virtues of Alice Clark, Hannah Mitchell, and the formidable Pankhurst women. Eventually with Mary as a guide, the urban opportunities eclipse the rural for suffrage success. Women such as Beatrice Webb and Ethel Smyth are real-life friends of Woolf's who showed the way toward urban feminine independence. Meanwhile, the paragraph description of Mary Datchet also reveals a picture of Woolf's suffrage code. The rural life, the feminist approach to the opposite sex (Mary does not try to be pleasing, soothing, and charming all the time), and Mary's devout ancestors are honored. Especially, the idea that Mary's ancestors are men of faith and integrity, not political fanatics, parodies the idea that such fanatics cause militant demonstrations and destruction of which Woolf did not approve. Finally, Mary is described as "the private in the army of workers," a distinctly militaristic phrase that reveals Woolf's antiwar sympathies. This phrase undermines the suffrage ideal of a suffragist leading the troops into battle. Mary soon becomes a socialist worker, which mirrors Woolf's pacifism and socialism tendencies. Mary is the light around which a new social utopia will evolve.

Woolf not only gives a clear description of Mary Datchet, but also carefully outlines Mary's hostess preparations for the literary salon that evening. Mary makes very specific arrangements of her furniture and refreshments for her guests:

At the end of a fairly hard day's work it was certainly something of an effort to clear one's room, to pull the mattress off one's bed, and lay it on the floor, to fill a pitcher with cold coffee, and to

sweep a long table clear for plates and cups and saucers, with pyramids of little pink biscuits between them; but when these alterations were effected, Mary felt a lightness of spirit come to her, as if she had put off the stout stuff of her working hours and slipped over her entire being some vesture of thin, bright silk. She knelt before the fire and looked out into the room. The light fell softly, but with clear radiance, through shades of yellow and blue paper, and the room, which was set with one or two sofas resembling grassy mounds in their lack of shape, looked unusually large and quiet. (48)

Mary is setting the stage for the evening's performances. Ralph Denham says when entering Mary's apartment, "It's like a room on a stage" (49). He sees how Mary has stage-managed the entire atmosphere of her apartment to accommodate her guests. Woolf's language also reflects a theatrical heritage with phrases like "casting a radiance" with "electric light" through shades or filters of yellow and blue paper (48). Mary creates her own theater, her own alternative universe in her own apartment. She is part of the wonderful maze of fantasy that London has to offer. Suffrage is only a part of the scenery that Mary stagehands as she engages in homely tasks like darning socks and providing refreshments while her guests can discuss literature.

This hostess activity echoes the same activity that Katherine Hilbery engages in while helping her mother with a tea party in the first chapter. Woolf implies that Mary is doing poetic "battle" in her own living room, when she writes that "Mary was led to think of the heights of a Sussex down, and the swelling green circle of some camp of

ancient warriors” (48). The grassy mounds in Mary’s case are her two sofas. In a later nonfiction work, *A Room of One’s Own*, Woolf declares, “a woman’s presence in a room alters the atmosphere in a room, partly because she understands indoor spaces so well”: One goes into the room but the resources of the English language would be much put to the stretch, and whole flights of words would need towing their way illegitimately into existence before a woman could say what happens when she goes into a room. ... One has only to go into any room in any street for the whole of that extremely complex force of femininity to fly in one’s face. How should it be otherwise? For women have sat indoors all these millions of years, so that by this time the very walls are permeated by their creative force. (87)

Within the first two pages of *Night and Day*’s chapter IV, Woolf has condensed her entire philosophy of feminist liberation using Mary Datchet as a focus for suffrage and for the advantages of one’s own room. Furthermore, every guest who enters Mary’s apartment feels her creative force and the personal universe that Mary has arranged. Not only is Mary “the private in the army of workers,” she is also a warrior camped out on the grassy mounds of her sofas. She is outdoors in a romanticized Sussex down, and she is a maiden warrior inside her own apartment. Mary is also doing homely tasks while waiting for intellectual literary discussion. She has the best of both worlds.

Mary’s apartment atmosphere extends not only to her guests but also outside of her apartment when the guests interact with each other in other houses. Ralph, Katharine, and William think of Mary when they have a problem or need to talk. She is the connecting link between these people because of her honesty, her dedication, and her individuality all of which she pours into her career of suffrage and socialism. The

microcosm of Mary's universe provides a "gig-lamp" for the rest of the novel *Night and Day*.

Katharine Hilbery is another example of the New Woman. Katharine judges Mary by respecting her work for suffrage and her involvement in social change. Katharine values this social change more for her own life than in terms of helping women at large. After both Ralph and Katharine have visited Mary at her SGS office, they have a conversation about Mary. Katharine responds to Mary and her office mates as if they were a dream:

Shut up there, she compared Mrs. Seal, and Mary Datchet, and Mr. Clacton to enchanted people in a bewitched tower, with spiders' webs looping across the corners of the room, and a lot of tools of the necromancer's craft at hand; for so aloof and unreal and apart from the normal world did they seem to her, in the house of innumerable typewriters, murmuring their incantations and concocting their drugs, flinging their frail spiders' webs over the torrent of life which rushed down the streets outside. (94)

The imagery of light, fairy-tale towers, and an intricate web of connection describe Mary in her apartment in the beginning of chapter IV of *Night and Day*. This time with Mary and her cohorts working for suffrage, the images are an extension of Mary in her apartment talking about her suffrage work. Specifically, Katharine approves of Mary doing her suffrage work well:

Katharine: "Mary Datchet does that sort of work very well... She's responsible for it, I suppose?"

Ralph: “Yes. The others don’t help at all.... Has she made a convert of you?”

Katharine: “Oh, no. That is, I’m a convert already.”

Ralph: “But she hasn’t persuaded you to work for them?”

Katharine: “Oh dear no – that wouldn’t do at all” (94).

Katharine realizes as does Ralph how strongly Mary imbues a room with her values. Mary Datchet has imbued her room and her office with her New Woman qualities of independence and control. She enjoys solitude as well as socializing with her friends. Even Katharine says after visiting Mary at the suffrage office that Mary seems different there than she does at her apartment. “Even Mary Datchet seems different in that atmosphere” (100). When Katharine is discussing her SGS visit with her parents, they react negatively to the idea of suffrage. Mrs. Hilbery remembers her impression of Russell Square “in the old days, when Mamma lived there,” Mrs. Hilbery mused, “and I can’t fancy turning one of those noble great rooms into a stuffy little Suffrage office” (100). Mr. Hilbery states, “At any rate, they haven’t made a convert of Katharine, which was what I was afraid of” (100). Furthermore, he analyzes “how the sight of one’s fellow-enthusiasts always chokes one off. They show up the faults of one’s cause so much more plainly than one’s antagonists...” (100). Mr. Hilbery reveals his awareness of how disturbing women’s suffrage can be to the social order, especially the social order in his own family house. His relationship with his daughter and his wife would have to change, and he wants to remain comfortable with his present family interactions. However, Katharine assures her parents that “I wouldn’t work with them for anything”

(100). Although later she tells Mary that she wants to join the cause, “Remember, I want to belong to your society – remember,’ she added” (361). These kinds of conversations are a direct response to the “woman question” and the concept of the New Woman. Without mentioning these words of social activism, Katharine and Mary are reflections of how the modern women of the early twentieth century are reconciling their family’s generation with the new ideas and freedoms for women.

The rest of chapter IV in *Night and Day* foregrounds Woolf’s critique of literary discussion and attempts to be rebellious and culturally cutting edge. There are comments about Shakespeare and the Elizabethan use of metaphor by William Rodney, who understands meter but not imagination. Mary says, “I expect a good solid paper, with plenty of quotations from the classics” (49). This is exactly the paper that William delivers. The evening salon is also a chance to introduce Katharine, Ralph, Mary, and William to each other in order for them to interact and reveal their personalities. Mary’s interaction with Katharine offers an opportunity for them to talk about marriage, the “sheep-like” behavior of the guests (57). Denham is tearing up handfuls of “grass” or carpet out of frustration because he wants to talk to Katharine, not William. (Earlier Mary has fantasized about sheep in her daydreaming about the Sussex down.) Katharine questions Mary about professions for women. “I suppose you’re one of those people who think we should all have professions,’ she said, rather distantly, as if feeling her way among the phantoms of an unknown world” (58). The unknown world is about the new freedom coming for women. Is this a phantom dream? Mary says no and that not all women need a profession. However, Katharine insists that with a profession, “you will always be able to say that you’ve done something...” (59). In regards to this need to be

active publicly, the two women discuss politics: “I wonder why men always talk about politics?’ Mary speculated, ‘I suppose, if we had votes, we should too.’” Katharine replies, “I dare say we should. And you spend your life getting us votes don’t you?” “I do,’ said Mary, stoutly. ‘From ten to six every day I’m at it’” (58).

So Katharine evolves as well as Mary, after she meets Mary’s friends and coworkers and understands the advantages of having one’s own space. Whatever advantages Katharine has she views as obstacles to fulfilling her love of astronomy and mathematics. Katharine wants to express her response openly and diplomatically. In her relationship with her fiancé, William Rodney, she adapts New Woman behaviors, refusing to reflect William’s self-glorification, as he puts it. Katharine’s attitude towards William falls short in his estimation; as he sees it, she “never took the normal channel of glorification of him and his doing’s...” (246). Katharine’s thinking about men reflects Mary’s direct approach and not trying to please that Woolf uses to describe Mary in the beginning of chapter IV. William tries to align Katharine’s hidden passionate nature with their future marriage and children. “‘She will make a perfect mother – a mother of sons,’ he thought, but seeing her sitting there, gloomy and silent, he began to have doubts on this point. ‘Farce, a farce,’ he thought to himself. ‘She said that our marriage would be a farce’” (246). Katharine has told William that her ideas of marriage and children are the exact opposite of “normal expectations.”

Clearly, Katharine’s relationship with William Rodney is fraught with her struggles to become a New Woman. When Katharine visits him for the first time alone, he fusses continually over the appearance of himself and his surroundings. He is a sensitive character who loves literature. His flat is filled with books, music, and clutter.

“He has seen that the fire burnt well; jam-pots were on the table, tin covers shone on the fender, and the shabby comfort of the room was extreme. He was dressed in his old crimson dressing-gown, which was faded irregularly and had bright new patches on it, like the paler grass which one finds on lifting a stone” (136). (Perhaps this is the same grass as on the Sussex down in Mary’s daydreaming.) “Rodney had three times changed from dressing-gown to tail-coat to dressing-gown and placed tie-pin in three different positions. Finally, he settled on the dressing-gown and no tail-coat” (136). Katharine asks to look at his books and pictures. She is completely at ease among books, candles, and teacups. William is constructing his own space and himself, in hopes that he will appear acceptable to Katharine. The tables are turned because Katharine is influencing William, and her response to William and his room and their future marriage are not meeting his expectations.

Much later on, during a romantic carriage ride, William ruminates over Katharine’s unromantic response toward him and his feelings become confused even as she is sitting next to him in the carriage:

It was clear that she had been a very desirable and distinguished figure, the mistress of her little section of the world; but more than that, she was the person of all others who seemed to him the arbitress of life, the woman whose judgment was naturally right and steady, as his had never been in spite of all his culture. And then he could not see her come into a room without a sense of the flowing robes, of the flowering of blossoms, of the purple waves of

the sea, of all things that are lovely and mutable on the surface but still and passionate in their heart. (240)

As William continues “running over the list of his gifts and acquirements, his knowledge of Greek and Latin, his knowledge of art and literature, his skill in the management of meters, and his ancient west-country blood” (240), he still wonders how he can love Katharine when she insults and disparages his ideas. In the passage about his feelings for Katharine, we see William feels inferior to Katharine in terms of culture, even though he knows more than she does. He mentions how he feels when she comes into a room. This is the response that Woolf talks about in *A Room of One’s Own*, that is, how a woman changes the atmosphere of a room when she walks in. Katharine is the more aristocratic version of the New Woman. She speaks frankly to Ralph, William, her parents, and Mary. She is somewhat aloof and absent-minded, and she also is forging her own new image and answer to the “woman question.” At first, she says she would not think of working for suffrage, but as mentioned earlier, she later decides that she wants to join the suffrage cause. William is experiencing the effects of Katharine’s transformation from a woman as described and circumscribed by her family’s heritage to a New Woman that has interests in astronomy and mathematics, not literature and marriage.

Furthermore, Mary Datchet is more than a New Woman model for Katharine Hilbery. Mary and her apartment become a beacon, a lighthouse for further connection with the other characters. Suffrage, the lighthouse image, and military language all attract the different characters and will echo in other Woolfian writings, *Jacob’s Room* and *The Years*. Mary is the gathering lighthouse, the moth that entices Ralph and Katharine and, to some extent, William Rodney. Mary’s steadiness and passion for

suffrage calm and excite Ralph and Katharine. Ralph talks of feeling like a lighthouse besieged by the flying bodies of lost birds (394-95). “He had a strange sensation that he was both lighthouse and bird; he was steadfast and brilliant; and at the same time he was whirled, with all other things, senseless against the glass” (394). Ralph is feeling confused and guilty for upsetting Mary and their relationship. He is trying to understand a whirlwind of feelings for Katharine, and so he sympathizes with airborne birds who are attracted to lighthouses but don’t understand the glass windows. Later, Ralph and Katharine are attracted to the light within Mary’s apartment as they stand outside: “They stood for some moments, looking at the illuminated blinds, an expression to them both of something impersonal and serene in the spirit of the woman within, working out her plans far into the night – her plans for the good of a world that none of them were ever to know” (506). Ralph feels the same way, attracted to the yellow light of the Hilbery’s house. Mary’s light and the Hilbery’s burning lamps have the same significance in that they portend the future for Ralph and Katharine and the next generation. Both generations will only glimpse the changes that Mary plans. Looking at the lighted rooms, Ralph and Katharine think that “books were to be written, and since books must be written in rooms...” (507). Ralph enumerates the people he connects with the new world vision of reformers like Mary: Sally Seal, Mrs. Hilbery, William, and Cassandra, “They appeared to him to be more than individuals; to be made up of many different things in cohesion; he had a vision of an orderly world” (506).

Ralph’s statement is a summation of Woolf’s vision for *Night and Day* and all the characters in it who are trying to fashion a life. Katharine tries to understand Ralph’s thinking about how all these people and ideas connect.

She felt him trying to piece together in a laborious and elementary fashion the fragments of belief, unsoldered and separate, lacking unity of phrases fashioned by the old believers. “It’s all so easy – it’s all so simple,” Katharine quoted remembering some words of Sally Seal’s, and wishing to understand that she followed the track of his thought. (506)

Together “they groped in this difficult region, where the unfinished, the unfulfilled, the unwritten, the unreturned, came together in their ghostly way and wore the semblance of the complete and the satisfactory. ... They had entered the enchanted region” (507). “The future emerged more splendid than ever from this construction of the present” (506). This is a summation of Woolf’s goal for all of her writing. Right here in her second novel she has laid out her plan for how the next generation after Mary, Ralph, Katharine, William, and Cassandra will shape the future and help to answer the questions about the New Woman.

Mark Hussey quotes Hermione Lee in his book *Virginia Woolf A to Z* that *Night and Day* is integral to the whole of Woolf’s work (7). Not only is *Night and Day* integral with Woolf’s work as a whole, but also chapter IV is similarly integral, or central, to *Night and Day*. Chapter IV, which describes Mary Datchet’s apartment and the evening literary salon activities, is a microcosm of *Night and Day*, as well as several important themes and codes for Woolf’s writing. Within the first two pages of chapter IV, Woolf has condensed her entire philosophy of feminist liberation using Mary Datchet as a focus for suffrage, the New Woman, and the economic and social rewards of one’s own space. The use of military language, fantasy images, and suffrage content is embedded in

descriptions of Mary's life. Not only is Mary "the private in the army of workers" (48), she is also a warrior camped out in the grassy mounds of her sofas. She is a fantasy warrior "on the heights of the Sussex down, amid the swelling green circle of some camp of ancient warriors" (48). By inference, Mary is a militant suffragist leading the battle of women's suffrage. All of this is overlaid with a strong fantasy element and the light images so pervasive in Woolf's writing. "The moonlight would be falling there so peacefully now, and she could fancy the rough pathway of silver upon the wrinkled skin of the sea" (48). Furthermore, while Mary is darning a stocking, a very mundane chore, her mind reverts back to the Sussex down and the quiet sheep, and "shadows of the little trees moved very slightly this way and that in the moonlight as the breeze went through them" (48-49). The images of moonlight and Sussex down are not central to Woolf's plot; rather they are part of Woolf's interest in following the consciousness of Mary as it wanders from a homey task of darning to more exciting and poetic ideas and atmosphere. Mary, in her mind, is creating an atmosphere of culture and peace in her apartment so that her part of London can attract visitors and literary discussion. She has created a space that she can control and contain with her New Woman values.

Chapter Three Mary Datchet and Jacob Flanders: New Woman and Cambridge Man

Woolf's characterizations of the New Woman in *Night and Day* and her description of interior room space to define character are further developed and contrasted in *Jacob's Room*. Mary Datchet is a prime example of the New Woman in *Night and Day*; however, in *Jacob's Room* there is a New Woman and Cambridge man dichotomy that further extrapolates the social model for women and men at the time of the novel. The Cambridge men in *Jacob's Room* are a foil for the lack of New Women in the novel. Similarly, Mary Datchet's room and Jacob Flanders's room reflect their opposing gender perspectives. Mary Datchet's apartment room is full of her personality. It is imbued with Mary's fantasy web of networking and setting the stage for guests.

Jacob's room is a reverse-mirror image of Mary's. Descriptions of Jacob Flanders's room are full of his absence. There are spiritual voices in the breeze, a creaking wicker chair: "Listless is the air in an empty room; swelling the curtain: the flowers in the jar shift. One fiber in the wicker arm-chair creaks though no one sits there" (37). Woolf's famous statement about Jacob's room explains more about Jacob's absence than about his ownership of the room space. As Ralph Freedman says in his essay, "The Form of Fact and Fiction: *Jacob's Room* as Paradigm," "by displaying once more the dialogue of interlocking moments of awareness, by revealing that texture of relationships, the novel itself, which is the true furniture of Jacob's room" (138). This quote describes Jacob's life and room through interior and exterior means. You might say that Jacob Flanders's room is the night room compared to Mary Datchet's day room.

All is revealed in Mary's daylight room – her personality, and her future plans which are all accented by lighting designed to shape the dramatic effect of her stage. Jacob's night-lit room never fully reveals his personality. His thoughts are never decisive and his plans are vague and in the dark.

In contrast with the New Woman characters of *Night and Day* who are progressive in their attempts to create new roles for women, the women in *Jacob's Room* seem to fall back into their old roles. Betty Flanders, Fanny Elmer, and Florinda and Clara Durrant are passive with Jacob and are treated as inferiors whose only importance is their relationship to Jacob. Only Julia Hedge is a New Woman and female activist.

In *Jacob's Room*, the female characters are struggling within the rigid rules for women, which Jacob's room epitomizes. As mentioned in the introduction, the New Woman in the twentieth century was struggling to break the bonds of sister, daughter, mother, and housewife, and live the new lifestyle of career, no marriage, and economic independence. The female characters in *Jacob's Room* are still contained and defined by their identification with Cambridge rules, which circumscribe women with a sense of classical inferiority. Betty Flanders is a mother who cannot save her son from war. Fanny Elmer is an artist, but she cannot confide her love to Jacob, as he is indifferent to her art. Clara Durrant, the sister of Charles Durrant, Jacob's friend, cannot make Jacob understand her as a substantial woman worthy of being his wife (Sutherland 68). Florinda is physically attractive, but Jacob dismisses her as brainless, while, at the same time, he enjoys her sexuality.

Only Julia Hedge, described as a feminist, rails against preferential treatment of males in the British Museum library. Statistical research is her only weapon against the patriarchal order. She marshals facts to do battle, but Woolf's description of Julia reveals futility in ever making progress for women. Julia has fire in her eyes, but will any practical result come from it? Woolf implies that Julia's energetic research is futile and may allow women to die as early as men do. Equality feminism, as defined by Naomi Black, is not the goal for Woolf or Julia, but rather social and economic equity feminism. Otherwise women are left unfulfilled and still powerless.

I am indebted to Cori Sutherland for her exploration of "Substantial Men and Transparent Women: Issues of Solidarity in *Jacob's Room*." This article examines how the male characters in *Jacob's Room* are viewed as "substantial" since they follow traditional Cambridge rules. However, Sutherland claims, the women in *Jacob's Room* are described in transparent terms: they are veiled, light glows through them, they seem to lack bodies. Society allows men to gain access to Cambridge reality by constructing men of substance who are decisive in their actions. Women, in contrast, are valued for their transparency and their exclusion from this reality (68). Fanny is "bright yet vague" (68). The women in *Jacob's Room* are transparent and impressionistic women. Jacob is described as "a young man of substance" and "powerfully built" (68). Although Jacob's actions seem to contradict such forceful descriptions, these words paint a picture of a young man of achievement. Whereas, "by a trick of firelight [Florinda] seemed to have no body" (68). Echoing the ideas of Jane Goldman, in *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf*, Ralph Freedman notes that light images reflect Woolf's impressionistic and postimpressionistic vision for her characters. Woolf's vision, according to Freedman,

is to transform “social facts” into social characters (126). The use of light images for women is pervasive in *Jacob’s Room*: “As for the beauty of women, it is like the light on the sea, never constant to a single wave. They all have it; they all lose it. Now she is dull and thick as bacon; now transparent as hanging glass” (115).

The Cambridge men in *Jacob’s Room* are foils for the lack of New Women in the novel. The university professors are ineffectual, damaged, or wounded. The lameness of Huxtable, for example, hints of a classical reference to Oedipus. Since Woolf puts Cambridge on a classical pedestal, this is appropriate. Again, Cori Sutherland points out how Jacob’s mentors at Cambridge are all somehow emasculated by their Cambridge heritage. Barfoot’s lameness and his military service indicate that both are flaws caused by his maleness.

The women characters in *Night and Day* and *Jacob’s Room* are more interesting and developed than the male characters. Although it is an earlier novel, *Night and Day* explores the New Woman in greater depth, showing the characters of Mary Datchet and Katharine Hilbery as New Women who are exploring the possibilities of women’s independence in the beginning of the twentieth century. Katharine Hilbery is forging a new identity as an upper-class woman who wants to marry Ralph Denham but also wants to retain her individual personality and interests in astronomy and mathematics. Katharine yearns for her own room away from her family’s demands. She hopes Ralph will give her the space to research her interests while he does his own writing about English society. Katharine is not an adjunct to Ralph, but rather a complement and someone who will abate loneliness for both of them.

Mary Datchet refuses Ralph's invitation to marriage, even though in some ways she is more compatible to Ralph than Katharine is. Both Mary and Ralph are interested in reforming society, but their relationship is more like sister and brother. They both have siblings and are comfortable with that type of relationship. Ultimately, Mary wants the freedom to pursue socialism and economic parity, while Ralph is not so comfortable with Katharine but finds her more exciting. Mary realizes she must sacrifice a romantic future in order to achieve the social progress, including suffrage, that she decides is more important. She becomes a beacon of light to Ralph and Katharine as they view her apartment window from the street. They think of her toiling on her manuscript about *Some Aspects of the Democratic State*. Mary's fervor for social reform and economic independence guide her life. Woolf makes her more effective than the character Julia Hedge, whose research seems futile in comparison.

The female characters in *Jacob's Room* seem to be foils for each other and for Mary Datchet and Katharine Hilbery as well. Each of the women in *Jacob's Room* is maintaining the status quo before the impending war that bodes danger for all of British society. Only Julia Hedge tries to represent progressive women's rights. Julia Hedge is a feminist who spends her time in the British Museum library marshaling her arguments for equality and equity. She rails against the lack of recognition of women on the walls and ceiling of the library dome, where Greek, Roman, and Eastern philosophers and Shakespeare are proclaimed as great people, but they are all men (106). Julia is portrayed as a futile creature like Sally Seale, full of zeal but ineffective. Mary Datchet is more determined and organized.

Increasingly, contemporary feminist literary criticism has centered on Virginia Woolf's use of space. Spatialization and sexualization of space have become emerging trends within the feminist field. *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas* are two of her most popular writings in this regard. Feminist critics are still finding more diverse and complex pathways in Woolf's novels, specifically in *Night and Day* and *Jacob's Room*. These novels are becoming increasingly crucial to understanding the Woolfian room.

In order to compare Jacob Flanders's room to Mary Datchet's room, a definition of the Woolfian room is needed. Woolf uses the metaphor of a room as a personal, gendered private space that later expands to a global room. The Woolfian room as described in *A Room of One's Own* is a statement about privacy and the ability to use a room as a place to write, to think, and to become Shakespeare's sister. A Woolfian room is a place of accomplishment: a place that is controlled and arranged by the owner as a support and a comfort away from the rest of the world. In contrast, the world outside is to be conquered and reformed. Ambitious and enterprising women, such as suffragists, can bring the creativity of their private world into reforming the public sphere. Women can fill the literary gaps on the shelves of libraries and bookstores. The Woolfian room, on the other hand, waits quietly and produces thoughtful history and stories about women. It has a unique view to the outside world that allows for being a spectator and a participant. Virginia Woolf uses a room as a complex metaphor for feminine character and personal political power. Woolf's room descriptions are full of images that clarify the mood and character of the owner.

While Woolf wants to use a room as a spatial metaphor for feminine character, she does not want to limit or delimit the walls. The ideal room has no limit on physical

walls or sexual identity. It is an androgynous, ever-expanding room that gives feminine creativity all the expansion it needs. This room's identity seems hidden because it is ambiguous and continually self-constructing and deconstructing. Judith Shakespeare's room in *A Room of One's Own* offers this potential to create identity, to protect, to regenerate and rearm creativity. Eventually, the Woolfian room becomes a world of its own as it reaches out to a global village of other women. Personal space has now become global space with the creative power of expanding exponentially. As Woolf said in her famous statement in *A Room of One's Own*:

For women have sat indoors all these millions of years, so that by this time the very walls are permeated by their creative force, which has, indeed, so over-charged the capacity of bricks and mortar that it must needs harness itself to pens and brushes and business and politics. But this creative force differs greatly from the creative force of men. (87)

A Room of One's Own develops Woolf's ideas of feminine space further: the indoor, feminine space is imbued with feminine creativity, which must burst the walls at some point and blossom into something higher. This outside expansion is the "something" that will expand women's horizons and power. Woolf also uses a room as a metaphor for relating to the outside world. Julie Robin Solomon, in her intriguing article "Staking Ground: The Politics of Space in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*," discusses how Woolf's room becomes "an ever-expanding room which eventually circumscribes (or constitutes) the entire world" (331).

The whole concept of a room, therefore, expands to streets and towns and country, to England, Germany, America, and eventually the whole world. Woolf's use of spatial metaphor is at the heart of her message about women's social and political existence. A room becomes a place to regroup, but also to reach out and unite with other women in a global village concept. The room metaphor combined with the global village concept gives women a realizable goal:

Both in the "Introductory Letter" and in *A Room* the notion of "the room" serves as a potent political metaphor for women because it concretizes visually, tactilely the politicization of the personal and the personalization of the political. The achieving of personal space in *A Room* as opposed to a simple place within someone else's framework, makes a woman into a respected citizen, constitutes her as a political subject. (Solomon 332)

The whole concept of a room now includes the global village and the "norms and values of female sisterhood" (332). Political change within the patriarchal system is Woolf's aim in *A Room of One's Own*. With enough capital and private power space, women can exert power within this system. Reform can make the system "make room" for women. Women can then control inheritance, their private property and can endow women's institutions. Woolf's views change, however, when she writes *Three Guineas*. Her previous suppositions and assumptions about patriarchy's "making room" for women have been tested and found inadequate.

Such a gendered space is what Woolf outwardly advocated in *A Room*, a space where a woman can write and not be disturbed. However, if the woman is doing serious

writing, this is also a professional space, a laboratory space for literary experiments. Woolf wants it both ways, in more ways than one. She always in her writing and never more so than in her use of spatial metaphor. The ever-expanding room of “Introductory Letter” swells and expands with sexual connotation for women as well as their rooms. Sisterhood values become international values as well. Insider considerations become outsider considerations. Women who have been banished from chapel, lawn, and library can both take to the streets, and create and claim their own internal rooms. When the ever-expanding room is achieved, then women can exert their personal feminine influence and be available to street culture. They can be vulnerable to outside sexual and political influence, but at the same time, they can be strong enough to pick and choose what they want to keep.

Mary Datchet’s room and Jacob Flanders’s room are gendered personal space and that is why a comparison is useful in understanding Woolf’s suffrage politics. Mary’s creative force is personified in her room quite differently than Jacob’s room persona. For Mary, the important focus is that women have the advantage of being outsiders who are not a part of the establishment’s intrinsic problems. Mary is at the very center of urban opportunity in London: “in the wonderful maze of London” which is “like a vast electric light casting a radiance” on her and all of London (48). Mary feels that her life is combining her past rural heritage with the exciting opportunities provided by London. As can be seen from Woolf’s description and my analysis so far, Woolf is combining the rural and urban influences of suffrage in her picture of Mary and her apartment. As mentioned earlier, in chapter two of this dissertation, Woolf carefully details Mary’s hostess preparations for the literary salon that evening. The atmosphere in Mary’s room

that night has a theatrical drama that suits Mary's intentions and is underscored with Woolf's emphasis on the effects of lighting: "She knelt before the fire and looked into the room. The light fell softly, but with clear radiance, through shades of yellow and blue, and the room, which set with one or two sofas resembling grassy mounds in their lack of shape, looked unusually large and quiet" (48). Woolf implies that Mary is doing poetic "battle" in her own living room when she writes, "Mary was led to think of the height of a Sussex down, and the swelling green circle of some camp of ancient warriors" (48). The grassy mounds in Mary's case are her two sofas.

This is an important moment, with its "grassy mounds," dramatic lighting, and heroic warriors, which contrasts with Woolf's final description of Jacob Flanders's room. This description contains aspects of previous Woolfian rooms but with the addition of "male creativity" that Woolf mentions in *A Room of One's Own*: "women's creative force differs greatly from the creative force of men" (87). The title of *Jacob's Room* clearly signals that Woolf is again going to use a room metaphor. Avrom Fleishchman's "Critical Reading of Virginia Woolf" spotlights Jacob Flanders's room as containing "the paraphernalia of concrete objects" which represent Jacob's character. All of the descriptive details are very British upper-middle class and "slightly Stracheyan" (52):

Jacob's room had a round table and two low chairs. There were yellow flags in a jar on the mantelpiece; a photograph of his mother; cards from societies with raised crescents, coats of arms, and initials; notes and pipes; on the table lay paper ruled with a red margin – an essay, no doubt -- "Does History Consist of the Biographies of Great Men?" There were books enough. ... Listless

is the air in an empty room, just swelling the curtain; the flowers in the jar shift. One fiber in the wicker arm-chair creaks, though no one sits there. (37)

Jacob's student room at Cambridge has the usual mementos of a young man of a certain class and reading interests. Jacob may inhabit his room, and collect objects and imbue his personality when he is in his room, but otherwise there is empty air, listlessness. As Fleischman points out: "The most unusual items in the catalogue of Jacob's room are those that express the inhabitant's presence even when he is physically absent; not merely fragile things like air, curtains, flowers, but wicker fibers, whose shape and movement are hypothetically ascribed to Jacob's impress. (53)

Woolf's description of Jacob's student room utilizes some of her favorite descriptive writing devices, such as a catalogue list and a reference to biography, which questions the importance of men's lives as the only barometer of history. Nevertheless, the phantom of Jacob is still there, affecting events and the people in his life. His flat in Lamb's Conduit Street has some significant details that differ from his student room.

In Cambridge, books and furniture are second-hand. Jacob's rented room in Lamb's Conduit Street has old furniture pieces: the three wicker armchairs and the gate-legged table from Cambridge. The room rented from Mrs. Whitehorn is in a 150-year-old house. Woolf describes the virtues of an aged house: "The rooms are shapely, the ceilings high; over the doorway a rose, or ram's skull, is carved in the wood. The eighteenth century has its distinction. Even the panels, painted in raspberry-coloured paint, have their distinction..." (70). In other words, whatever distinction the room has belongs to the eighteenth century, not Jacob's modern world. The furniture is still

second-hand, reflecting Jacob's failed attempts to rebel from the tired, patriarchal thinking of his Cambridge professors. He tries to write a publishable essay about Wycherley repudiating his professor Bulteel, of Leeds:

Professor Bulteel, of Leeds, had issued an edition of Wycherley without stating that he had left out, disemboweled, or indicated only by asterisks, several indecent words and some indecent phrases. An outrage, Jacob said; a breach of faith; sheer prudery; token of a lewd mind and a disgusting nature. Aristophanes and Shakespeare were cited. Modern life was repudiated. He knew no one would ever print them; and sure enough back they came from the 'Fortnightly,' the 'Contemporary,' the 'Nineteenth Century' when Jacob threw them into the black wooden box where he kept his mother's letters, his old flannel trousers, and a note or two with the Cornish postmark. The lid shut upon the truth. (70)

Jacob has brought his black portable trunk box from Cambridge, which contains the baggage of his former life. What truth is in his life is contained in this box, little escapes from it. Any refutation of Cambridge thought will never see the light of the publishing world. Cambridge truth remains victorious. The Cambridge version of reality dominates Jacob's thinking as he tries to confine Cambridge lessons and his rebuttal inside "the black wooden box, upon which his name was still legible in white paint, stood between the long windows of the sitting-room" (70). The many objects in the Cambridge room create a testimony to Cambridge life and its male exclusiveness. Jacob's objects speak of his limitations. The one fiber that creaks is a very small squeak against the universal

wind that blows through his accomplishments. His life has been empty and privileged. His room is the visual equivalent.

Having not succeeded in rearranging his thinking, Jacob also does not rearrange his room to suit certain social events. All of his furniture, chairs, table, and black box, remain where they were first placed. He does not think poetically of the Sussex down as Mary Datchet does. There is no theatrical lighting. Woolf, the impersonal narrator merely records objects in Jacob's room and the social conversations between Jacob and his friends. Mary sets a stage for her literary salon, but Jacob's fate is on the world stage of World War I. Whereas Mary Datchet imbues her apartment with every once of her New Woman personality and her commitment to social reform, Jacob's room, on the other hand, is restricted by the past and the patriarchal conventions of Cambridge.

Mary Datchet's room is a global room that is not only located at the center of London but also metaphorically expands her socialist activism into the outside world. Solomon quotes Woolf's "Introductory Letter to Life as We Have Known It" to explain the concept of an ever-expanding room that grows as women join together: "And then that room became a place where one could make, and share with others in making, the model of what a working woman's house should be. Then as membership grew and twenty or thirty women made a practice of meeting weekly, that one house became a street of houses and if you have a street of houses you must have stores... (331). The whole concept of room, therefore, expands to streets and towns and country, to England, Germany, America, and eventually, the whole world. Woolf's use of spatial room metaphor is at the heart of her message about women's social and political existence. A room becomes a place to regroup, but also to reach out and unite with other

women in a global village concept giving women a realizable goal:

Both in the “Introductory Letter” and in *A Room* the notion of ‘the room’ serves as a potent political metaphor for women because it concretizes visually, tactilely the politicization of the personal and the personalization of the political. The achieving of personal space in *A Room*, as opposed to a simple place within someone else’s framework, makes a woman into a respected citizen, constitutes her as a political subject. (Solomon 332)

The whole concept of a Woolfian room now includes the global village as “the norms and values of female sisterhood” as opposed to the norms and values of Cambridge and its patriarchy (332). Mary Datchet’s room realizes all these concepts, and Mary herself begins to realize what her independence and social reform can mean for all women. Jacob Flanders, of course, is not trying to reform society, although he does criticize the interpretation of Virgil, the Bible, or Wycherley by his professors (40). Nevertheless, Cambridge thinking and his professors constrict Jacob as his “truth” is stuffed in his trunk box never to escape.

However, Woolf extends Jacob’s view out his window by a narration about English history, specifically in London, which reveals a global view to the reader, if not to Jacob. At these times, *Jacob’s Room* might be more aptly titled *Jacob’s Window*. Woolf will revisit this historical visionary approach in her novel *The Years*.

Woolf describes what Jacob sees when he gazes out of the window in his room to the streets below. Lamb’s Conduit Street is the scene of everyday activities which are little remarked about, except by Woolf. She describes a reckless van driver who

narrowly misses a little girl posting a letter on the corner pillar-box. She is “half frightened, half curious. She paused with her hand in the mouth of the box; then dropped the letter and ran away” (64). Woolf sympathizes with the child but then goes on to discount the child’s brief discomfort: “It is seldom only that we see a child on tiptoe with pity – more often a dim discomfort, a grain of sand in the shoe which it’s scarcely worth while to remove – that’s our feeling, and so – Jacob turned to the bookcase” (64). Yet, Woolf has spent several sentences describing this child’s fear and “dim discomfort,” which is now sharply etched in the reader’s consciousness. This is similar to Woolf’s discounting the bricks and mortar of Cambridge as “nothing at all” (44-6). Not only does this passage describe how dangerous the streets can be but also the fear of a little girl, reminiscent of Rose Pargiter who in *The Years* is witness to a sexual exhibitionist: “When she reached the pillar box there was the man again. He was leaning against it, as if he were ill, Rose thought, filled with the terror ingrained in the socialization of females, especially little girls.” It also demonstrates Woolf’s ambiguous relationship with street culture, since the dangers manifested by reckless traffic and sexual predators in London streets exhilarated but also frightened her. The little girls feel the same way. Supposedly, *Jacob’s Room* is about the adventures of a young Cambridge student, yet Woolf is commenting extensively about young girls and how dangerous the streets are for women as well. The passage of the Contagious Diseases Act relates to these limits on women and little girls appearing on public streets.

Jacob has a window view that expands the walls of his room and allows Woolf to comment on decades of London history and daily life. If Jacob were as observant of the street view as Woolf, he might understand more about his own life. Woolf, the narrator

of *Jacob's Room*, has to provide this perception of the outside world to the reader and also leave clues to historical institutions, such as St. Paul's and the London Opera House. This long commentary provides a base for Woolf's plans to change British society and her Utopian view for the world. Descriptive commentary of historical London in *Jacob's Room* is a prelude to Woolf's more extensive historical view in *The Years*.

Chapter Four *The Years* - New Women and Pargiter Men: Rooms, Pillar-Boxes, and Bridges

The New Women of *The Years* are represented by Woolf's urban images of the pillar-box and the bridge. Combined with the room metaphors previously examined in *Night and Day* and *Jacob's Room*, these are the constant images of *The Years*.

Woolf's urban images work inside and outside of city streets to reveal Woolf's idea of the design behind all of life's events. The urban images represent the physical aspects of this design process. The specific urban images of rooms, pillar-boxes and bridges symbolize either freedom from patriarchy or at the same time the limits that patriarchy imposes on women. Rooms are self-contained yet can expand their walls in a protean way. Pillar-boxes symbolize the opportunity to communicate, yet their phallic shape reminds Woolf of male oppression. The bridges are physical escape routes built by men. The following discussion details all these aspects of street architecture and furniture that are as familiar to British citizens as their own homes.

Rooms

The types of houses in *The Years* differ from those in the earlier novels, but Woolf's attention to the rooms remains the same. Whether the houses are Abercorn Terrace or the Browne Street home of Digby and Eugenia, they are all composed of inner rooms, literally and figuratively. The drawing rooms, nurseries, and bedrooms contain the Pargiter women who live there. The other inner rooms or spaces are those within the

minds and imaginations of these women, which are in contrast with the other rooms of the house and the outer rooms of the city. The city rooms are the areas where the women are allowed to shop, visit each other, and explore museums and libraries. All are located in public streets and squares where the Pargiter New Women are now allowed to travel. The New Women of *The Years* are learning to control all types of rooms, and the suffrage voting rights are key elements in this transformation. The Pargiter New Women, including include Rose and Eleanor, eventually obtain fair equity rights and suffrage. In the “Present Day” chapter, Rose and Eleanor realize they can control their lives and the rooms that they inhabit.

In *The Years*, Rose Pargiter’s connection to the nursery room highlights many facets of Rose’s personality. She is protected by her nurse and her parents when she is in the nursery room. Early in the novel, Rose is told to fetch her embroidery project that she is making for her father’s birthday. Rose really wants to visit a local store, Lamley’s, but her brother Martin has refused to come with her. However, Rose wants to leave the nursery with its restrictions and have a street adventure. So she plans to go by herself. She makes an excuse to find her workbox in another room, sneaks past the nursery, down the stair, and out the front door. Rose’s escape from her nursery and embroidery duties turns into more than she bargained for. The escapade is enlarged by its connection to street danger and pillar-boxes. She learns a lesson that she never forgets and which strengthens her determination to be a suffragist and an independent lesbian woman.

Drawing-room activities, like tea and conversation, are backgrounds for family dynamics and indirect comments by Woolf on patriarchal authority and duties for the boys and girls in the Pargiter family. Rose is reprimanded for a green stain on her pink

pinafore, and Eleanor is cautioned about returning late from her social welfare project. The boys Martin and Morris, on the other hand, are allowed to have tea but are instructed to get to work promptly on their school prep, which is one reason that Martin does not go with Rose to Lamley's. All of this family background is used to explain why a restless, rebellious Rose is lured by Lamley's to run out to the adventure of the street and escape from the restriction and tension of the family home.

All of these family memories are repeated in Woolf's description of the emotions and realities of the Pargiters, as they must deal with selling Abercorn Terrace after the death of their father Abel Pargiter. Eleanor listens to the house agent explain the deficiencies of the house: "'The fact is, our clients expect more lavatory accommodation nowadays,' he said. ... She was annoyed; as he went around the house, sniffing and peering, he had indicted their cleanliness, their humanity; and he used absurd long words" (215). The drawing room where most Pargiter activities took place looks worn, and its walls bear marks where the bookcase and writing-table had stood against them. Eleanor remembers her duties as a bookkeeper, which she disliked. Crosby, the housekeeper, remembers every cleaning chore that she did for forty years. The passage of time and the duties of women are evoked. The ephemeral importance of all of it is bittersweet. Martin repeats this evocative experience when visiting the house of Digby and Eugenia, his well-loved aunt. The caretaker of Digby's house ignores Martin when he comes to see the house before it sells. But there is a red strip across the house-agent's board. Three months after Digby's death the house had been sold. "A feeling of something extinguished came over him as he went down the street" (148).

These are years of history in the Pargiter family, as passage of time has extinguished and liberated family members. But some of the memories are still being lived as Rose becomes a suffragist and Eleanor learns to live independently. The Pargiter New Women are now allowed to operate freely inside houses and outside in city rooms. Rose remembers the time her older brother Martin did not escort her to Lamley's. Martin and Rose remember their childhoods: "What awful lives children live!" he said, waving his hand at her as he crossed the room. 'Yes,' said Rose. 'And they can't tell anybody,' she added" (159). Martin and Rose remember their childhood but not in exactly the same way. Martin remembers Rose as a "firebrand" and that she had "the devil's own temper" (159). Martin remembers the schoolroom scene in which Rose asks a favor: He saw her standing with her back to the school-room door; very red in the face, with her lips tight shut as they were now. She had wanted him to do something. And he had crumpled a ball of paper in his hand and shied it at her (159). The above scene was the precursor to one in which Rose escapes alone to go to Lamley's. The episode has resonated with both Martin and Rose, but he remembers it as an inconvenience and another instance of Rose's temper, while Rose remembers the fear she encountered with an exhibitionist stranger at the pillar-box. This why she responds to Martin's memory with "And they can't tell anybody."

Pillar-Boxes

In *The Years* Woolf continues her thematic interest in the pillar-box, which she began in *Jacob's Room* and *Night and Day*. Several scenes contain Pargiter family

memories of pillar-box threats and adventures. Eleanor, who is responsible for her younger brother Morris, remembers watching him mail a letter at the corner pillar-box and recalls that he had to pass the corner to walk to school. Rose's secret experience at the pillar-box becomes a central life trauma of hers. Both family pairings, Martin and Rose, Eleanor and Morris, are connected to the first important urban image – the pillar-box.

Movable, portable pillar-boxes are devices that Woolf uses often and from the very beginning of her writing career. She can place the pillar-boxes wherever she wants, on any street corner, near any character. Whenever she wants a character's response to a moral or societal problem, the pillar-box becomes more than scenery; it defines a certain feminist response that Woolf wants from her characters.

As early as 1931, Woolf conceived of a new book, to be a sequel to *A Room of One's Own*, about the sexual life of women "to be called Professions for Women perhaps -- Lord how exciting! This sprang out of my paper to be read on Wednesday to Pippa's society" (*D* 4:6). Woolf's speech to the London/National Society for Women's Service was the first appearance of the pillar-box image. "In that speech the pillar-box marked the boundary between the private and the public worlds, between the dependent position of woman in the patriarchal home and the freedom of money and a room of one's own" (Squier 168). Woolf goes on to speak of how complicated it was to get her completed review published. Walking to the pillar-box was the last step in an arduous process. Woolf explained that she had to request the review opportunity, write the review, and conquer "the angel in the house," in order to walk with her review to the pillar-box and start her professional writing life. The above quote from Susan Squier, illustrates the

connection in Woolf's mind between obstacles for women in the professional world and the pillar-box representing patriarchal society. A sequel to *A Room of One's Own* became entitled *The Years*, in which the strongest association with the pillar-box is Rose Pargiter's nightmarish expedition. The sexual connection to the pillar-box and Rose represents "a conjunction of phallic and imperialistic symbolism, with its pillar shape and its raised insignia of royal power, that red box first teaches Rose Pargiter of the politics and social implications of her sexuality" (Squier 169).

Between her speech to the London/National Society for Women's Service and the publication of *The Years*, Woolf makes other references to the pillar-box in her writings. In *Night and Day* there is an extensive passage describing Katharine Hilbery's errand to mail a letter to Cassandra Otway. Here, it is sufficient to connect the pillar-box with the opportunity for a woman to walk in the streets, safely and unescorted. Katharine takes her letter to Cassandra with her, meaning to post it in the first pillar-box she comes to. "When, however, she was fairly out of doors, and constantly invited by pillar-boxes and post offices to slip her envelope down their scarlet throats, she forbore" (311). Katharine continues clutching her letter as she thinks about her relationships to Cassandra, William Rodney, Ralph Denham, and Mary Datchet. Phantom voices urge her to make up her mind about marrying William or encouraging Cassandra to marry William. As Katharine mulls over these ideas, her thoughts go to traditional wisdom and etiquette for deciding these matters. Woolf highlights how inadequate these methods are for Katharine and that they are mostly barriers for making a good decision. So from the beginning of this passage, the image of the pillar-box represents both tradition as an obstacle to female friendship and represents freedom or the possibility of women's liberation. The

pillar-box as “a conjunction of phallic and imperialistic symbolism” gives this image more possibilities for oppression and liberation than realized at first sight (Squier 169).

Because of these possibilities for oppression and liberation, it is imperative for Woolf to use pillar-boxes to represent more than the Royal Mail. Her interest in women and street culture becomes more focused with the image of a frightened but curious little girl. The little girl who is posting a letter in *Jacob's Room* is mirrored in Rose Pargiter's nightmarish incident in *The Years*. Woolf describes a reckless van driver who narrowly misses a little girl posting a letter at the corner pillar-box. She is “half-frightened, half curious. She paused with her hand in the mouth of the box; then dropped the letter and ran away” (6). This incident seems unimportant until Woolf's continuing plan to use pillar-boxes as symbols of repression becomes clear. When it is understood that Woolf has used pillar-boxes consistently to represent more than the Royal Mail, her interest in women and street culture becomes more focused. The image of a frightened but curious little girl near a pillar-box in *Jacob's Room* is mirrored in Rose Pargiter's nightmarish incident in *The Years*.

Rose Pargiter, on the other hand, has a much more complicated personal history with a pillar-box. The little girl in *Jacob's Room* is frightened by fast traffic, while Rose is frightened by her encounter with a sexual predator. Woolf's description of Rose's foray has military overtones which are another code for Woolf's subversive strategy:

Now the adventure has begun, Rose said to herself as she stole on tiptoe to the night nursery. Now she must provide herself with ammunition and provisions; she must steal Nurse's latchkey; but where was it? ... There it was. Now she had her pistol and her

shot, she thought, taking her own purse from her own drawer, and enough provisions, she thought, as she hung her hat and coat over her arm, to last a fortnight. (26)

Using a verbal defense mechanism that is part of her feisty personality, Rose retells her frightening adventure in military terms to give herself courage:

“I am Pargiter of Pargiter’s Horse,” she said, flourishing her hand, “riding to the rescue!” She was riding by night on a desperate mission to a besieged garrison, she told herself. She had a secret message – she clenched her fist on her purse – to deliver to the General in person. All their lives depended on it. The British flag was still flying on the central tower; the General was standing on the roof of Lamley’s shop with his telescope to his eye. All their lives depended upon her riding to them through the enemy’s country. Here she was galloping across the desert. ... She had only to cross the desert, for the river, and she was safe. Flourishing the arm that held the pistol, she clapped spurs to her horse and galloped down Melrose Avenue. As she ran past the pillar-box the figure of a man suddenly emerged under the gas lamp. “The enemy!” Rose cried to herself. “The enemy! Bang!” she cried, pulling the trigger of her pistol and looking him full in the face as she passed him. ... He put out his arm as if to stop her. He almost caught her. She dashed past him. The game was over. (28)

Patriarchal authority in the form of a pillar-box has become the enemy. Furthermore, sexual danger to disobedient little girls is forced upon Rose. Having reached Lamley's, she has bought a box of ducks. Now she finds herself outside the store. She was too frightened to tell Mrs. Lamley about the predator and now she must return home from her mission:

I gave my message to the General in person, she said to herself as she stood outside on the pavement again. And this is the trophy, she said, grasping the box under her arm. I am returning in triumph with the head of the chief rebel, she told herself, as she surveyed the stretch of Melrose Avenue before her. I must set spurs to my horse and gallop. But the story no longer worked.

Melrose Avenue remained Melrose Avenue. (29)

Even as a young girl, Rose is leading the charge against patriarchal oppression. She uses the disguises of military power to fortify herself against danger, but she finds the magic does not last. She remains a lonely little girl who is not equipped to undergo such a dangerous mission. She survives the mission, but the sexual trauma remains unspoken because her family does not speak of sex to little girls. Through Rose and a pillar-box, Woolf has connected disobedience to patriarchal rules with military espionage and street danger. In this way, Woolf has subverted the socially accepted patriarchal norms, which repress women, whether adults like Katharine Hilbery or little girls like Rose.

Woolf's use of urban images is an intentional shift toward indirection and a more subversive way of referencing British society's attempts to repress women. In *The Years*,

the pillar-box is used to represent barriers to professional women: “and the struggle against male oppression and female repression that makes such work so difficult for women” (Squier 168). Woolf has documented these barriers in her London speech and Katharine Hilbery’s attempts to mail a letter to her cousin. The second association between repression of women and the pillar-box focused on restrictions on female sexual knowledge as conveyed in the scene in which Rose encounters a sexual exhibitionist on her evening foray as a child. The fear engendered by this episode affects Rose for the rest of her life: the frightening episode becomes the essential cause for her lesbian orientation as an adult as well as a motivation for her courage to join the suffrage movement. Her New Woman orientation is explained as a rational decision based on her childhood experiences of female repression and oppression in her own family sphere. The phallic and imperialist features of the pillar-box become an embodiment of everything that shadows female sexuality.

Woolf’s symbolic use of the pillar-box also refers to women’s limited educational opportunity. This is Susan Squier’s third point, and she demonstrates it through scenes with Eleanor and other family members. Eleanor’s early memories of closeness with her younger brother Morris are repeated later in the novel as well. The first scene concerning their mother’s imminent death shows Eleanor writing a letter to her oldest brother, Edward. Morris offers to mail the letter since the tragic atmosphere in the family house is very oppressive. Eleanor watches him disappear down the street and around the corner to the pillar-box:

Eleanor went to the front door with him and stood holding it open while he went to the pillar-box. ... She watched the curious

shadows that trembled on the pavement under the trees. Morris disappeared under the shadows round the corner. She remembered how she used to stand at the door when he was a small boy and went to day school with a satchel in his hand. She used to wave at him; and when he got to the corner he always waved back. It was a curious little ceremony, dropped now that they were both grown up. The shadows shook as she stood waiting; in a moment he emerged from the shadows.(44)

Eleanor remembers how when Morris was a little boy he was allowed to go to school, while she, his older sister, remained at home watching over him as long as he was in sight. There is an emphasis on curious shadows in this passage, which reminds the reader of street dangers both to little boys and older women. Are the shadows interrogating those who walk in the streets? Are the shadows asking whether it is safe for a child or a woman to walk by alone?

Woolf repeatedly features children and women walking the streets during daily life. Sometimes the watchful eyes belong to an older sister, sometimes to a predator. For Rose, the eyes belong to a predator; for Morris, they belong to a caring sister. These two scenes represent the difference in opportunity for the male and female members of the Pargiter family. The uneasiness and tension that Morris feels the night he mails Eleanor's letter means he is sensitive to the suppressed emotions of Eleanor since there is closeness between the two. However, he does not know how to express his concern, except by protecting her from city streets and the dangers of pillar-boxes. As in the earlier episode with Rose, Eleanor knows something is wrong but not the full truth

because Rose withholds her story. Later, Martin realizes when he remembers the schoolroom scene that Rose is trying to tell him something, but neither of them can express their understanding. That is why Martin says that Abercorn Terrace is full of lies.

At the end of *The Years*, Eleanor has flashbacks involving her niece Peggy. In the taxi going to Delia's party, Eleanor and Peggy pass "an imposing unbroken avenue with its succession of pale pillars and steps" (332). Eleanor's mind relates "the orderly architecture" to "a pale pompous beauty as one stucco column repeated another stucco column all down the street" (332). She thinks of other pillars, namely pillar-boxes. "Abercorn Terrace,' said Eleanor, ...'the pillar-box,' she murmured as they drove past." "Why the pillar-box?' Peggy asked herself" (332). Peggy wants to question Eleanor's association with pillar-boxes. "Another door had been opened. Old age must have endless avenues, stretching away and away down its darkness, she supposed, and now one door opened and then another" (332). The pillar-boxes have added overtones of not only danger, but also the fear of old age and questions about suppressed emotions. As Susan Squier points out, "Although Peggy doesn't understand Eleanor's association, she soon seems to have a similar one: 'Was it that you were suppressed when you were young?'" (171). While Eleanor, in turn, does not understand fully Rose's association with pillar-boxes, she senses that "the pillar-box embodies the demarcation between the male, public world (where education, professional, and sexual experiences are available) and the female, private world (where educational, professional, and sexual experiences are strictly curtailed, with men rationing money and social contacts)" (Squier 171). Peggy's generation has benefited from the relaxation of restrictions that Eleanor and Rose

have lived with. As a doctor, Peggy has learned to live in the educated, professional world open to women in the “Present Day” chapter. But she also wants to know more details from Eleanor about her life as the elder Pargiter sister. Even though Eleanor has traveled to India and China, she still feels the restriction of opportunities that were offered to Morris but not to her. Her old age makes her regret the differences even more. Some doors have blown open, but many others will never be opened to her: “‘Old age again,’ Peggy thought. Some gust blew open a door; one of the many millions in Eleanor’s seventy-odd years; out came a painful thought; which she at once concealed – she had gone to the writing-table and was fidgeting with papers – with humble generosity, the painful humility of the old (328)

Through Peggy’s eyes, the reader sees what Eleanor’s wishes have been; her disappointments and triumphs. Eleanor and her generation have bridged the way for Peggy and her generation. Rose Pargiter has been the most obvious pioneer of that opening of women’s rights, through her suffragist advocacy.

Bridges

Whereas in *The Years*, Woolf used the pillar-box image to represent women’s limitations in late-Victorian England, she also used a bridge motif to suggest opportunities for women (Squier 172). Woolf’s initial mention of bridges was in her essay on the art of writing, “The Narrow Bridge of Art,” first published in *Collected Essays* in 1925 and then reprinted in *The New York Herald Tribune* on August 14, 1927. She argues that the twentieth-century novel will soon replace poetry and drama as the quintessential literary art form. The transformed English novel can reflect the modern

city life image better than traditional poetry and drama. Woolf suggests, therefore, that a new city view is needed for the modern novel. Woolf continues her defense of the modern novel by demonstrating how her modern city image reflects more accurately the atmosphere of twentieth century life:

The long avenue of brick is cut up into boxes, each of which is inhabited by a different human being who has put locks on his doors and bolts on his windows to ensure privacy, yet is linked to his fellows by wires which pass overhead, by waves of sound which pour through the roof and speak aloud to him of battles and murders and strikes and revolutions all over the world. (222)

Woolf's city image contains individualized housing connected by technological innovation (electrical wires), which both isolate and inform human beings. She searches for connection in the city and decides that the bridge will solve that problem. She must provide an image that will convey her writing art and the tradition that comes with it. Woolf further argues that while the modern writer cannot completely renunciate all the traditional tools of the writing art, some tools will also be lost: "You cannot cross the narrow bridge of art carrying all its tools in your hands. Some you must leave behind or you will drop them in midstream or, what is worse, overbalance and be drowned yourself" (228). The task of crossing the "narrow bridge of art" is the task that Woolf sets for herself in her novels, beginning with *Night and Day* and continuing through *Jacob's Room* and *The Years*.

Bridge imagery is also a key component of Woolf's speech to the London/National Society for Women's Service. Woolf begins with the pillar-box image in this

speech and continues the city imagery with the bridge. Woolf connects herself with Ethel Smyth as a bridge-builder. Smyth “built bridges and thus made a way for those who came after her” (Squier 172). Woolf further explains, “We honor her not merely as a musician and a writer, but also as a blaster of rocks and the maker of bridges...” (qtd. in Squier 172). Ethel Smyth is one bridge-builder whose legacy has been extended by Woolf to *The Years* character Rose Pargiter. Rose has a choice to stay on the bridge or join the running water underneath. Sara and Rose discuss this choice, and later Rose stands on a Thames bridge and reviews her life. She decides to become a bridge-builder to other women and joins the suffrage movement. Maggie, Sara’s sister, asks about Rose and Sara’s walk to a suffrage meeting: “‘And what did you do with Rose?’ said Maggie... Sara turned and glanced at her. Then she began to play again. ‘Stood on the bridge and looked into the water,’ she hummed. ... ‘Running water; flowing water. May my bones turn to coral; and fish light their lanterns; fish light their green lanterns in my eyes.’” (186). Rose decides not to join the fishes in another bridge passage that explains how “Rose gained the psychological and social liberty to do suffrage work” (Squier 174). In the chapter titled “1910,” Rose descends from an omnibus to walk across one of the Thames bridges and catches a glimpse of herself reflected in the window of a tailor’s shop: “It was a pity she thought... not to dress better, not to look nicer. Always reach-me-downs, coats and skirts from Whiteley’s. But they saved time, and the years after all – she was over forty – made one care very little what people thought...” (161). Rose continues to stand on the bridge and look down on the water: “As she stood there, looking down at the water, some buried feeling began to arrange the stream into a pattern. The pattern was painful. She remembered how she had stood there on the night of a

certain engagement, crying; her tears had fallen, her happiness, it seemed to her, had fallen..." (161). As in her London speech, Woolf has connected a bridge image with water, falling into water and seeing a deeper pattern. For Rose, the deeper pattern becomes her strategy to further women's suffrage, to forge a new pattern from her previous sad experience. She decides to become a bridge-builder, not a victim who falls from the bridge.

Woolf connects Rose in scenes about bridges to bridge-builders. Rose's relationship to the real suffragist Ethel Smyth is evident. Smyth was interested in practical dress, not fashion. She focused on her career, but for a year she focused on suffrage. Rose has decided to wear what suits her purpose, which is to further the suffrage cause. Earlier in the novel, her sister Eleanor thinks that Rose is handsome, "but wished she dressed better. She was dressed in a green hairy coat and skirt with leather buttons, and she carried a shiny bag. She had been holding meetings in the North" (156). Rose's green suit is one of the tricolors of the suffrage movement (green, purple and white). The other connection between Rose and bridges is Rose's choice to be a survivor, not a victim. Unlike Woolf, who declared in *Three Guineas* that women who must decide between the private and public worlds are faced with "a choice of evils. Each is bad. Had we not better plunge off the bridge into the river; give up the game; declare that the whole of human life is a mistake and so end it?" (74). Woolf's writing is provocative here, but also declares her association of death with water, which eventually foretells her suicide by drowning. However, Ethel Smyth and Rose Pargiter want to live and do thrive well into their eighties.

Rose Pargiter also thrives on her interest in suffrage as shown in her 1908 participation in a successful Northumberland suffrage campaign. This by-election is similar to the grassroots organizing of *Suffrage Days* and *One Hand Tied Behind Us*. Rose not only participated in the grassroots organizing mentioned but also in the street demonstrations and brick throwing of the Pankhurst campaign. Sylvia Pankhurst had this comment about Ethel Smyth, which also reminds one of Rose Pargiter:

Individualized to the last point, she had in middle-age little about her that was feminine. Her features were clean cut and well marked, neither manly or womanly; her thick hair drawn plainly aside, her speech clear in articulation and incisive rather than melodious, with a racy wit. Wearing a small mannish hat, battered and old, plain-cut country clothes, she would don a tie of the brightest purple, with green, or some hideous purple cotton jacket, or other oddity in the W.S.P.U. colours she was so proud of. ...

(Pankhurst 377-8)

This description echoes Rose Pargiter's green suit, brusque manner, and plain hairstyle. Rose is handsome but plainly dressed, even dowdy. Like Rose, Ethel tried to convince her family that her participation in demonstrations and brick throwing was a legitimate protest:

I think that people do not understand we are "rebels," and that our law-breaking acts are quite deliberate "political offenses." If I break a window "for fun" I am one sort of offender. If I break it as one of the few means open to me of calling attention to the fact

that I have a grievance, I am, however much anyone may disapprove of my action, a political not a criminal offender! The hunger-striking of these noble, sensitive, delicate women is a protest against their illegal treatment as criminals in prison. (St. John 154)

This reference to bridge building is one that Woolf agreed to in *Three Guineas*. She used it as a footnote to express how Victorian women were modest in taking credit for their achievements. Later suffragists, like Ethel Smyth and Rose Pargiter, accept credit for their achievements and even glory in getting awards – Ethel Smyth was awarded the honorary Dame, and Rose receives a decoration. Both Ethel and Rose knew they were bridge-building upon the efforts of others, and this increased their passion for success.

Throughout *The Years*, Rose Pargiter is described as being a “firebrand” by her brother Martin and by her cousin Sara: “Red Rose, tawny Rose...wild Rose, thorny Rose...” (231). Later in the “Present Day” chapter, a voice cries out in a toast: “Red Rose, thorny Rose, tawny Rose!” Then the “petals were thrown, fan-shape, over the stout old woman who was sitting on the edge of her chair. She looked up in surprise. Petals had fallen on her. She brushed them where they had lodged upon the prominences of her person. ‘Thank you! Thank You!’ she exclaimed” (420). Rose is being showered with petals to honor her long career as a militant suffragist and for her bravery and persistence in suffrage battle. This description connects with a description that Virginia Woolf wrote in a letter to Ethel Smyth dated May 26, 1930.

Woolf uses musical terms, but the central image is of a burning rose: “As it is, an image forms, in my mind; a quickset briar hedge, innumerable intricate and spiky and thorned; in the center burns a rose. Miraculously, the rose is you; flushed pink, wearing pearls. The thorn hedge is the music; and I have to break my way through the violins, flutes, cymbals, voices to this red burning centre...” (Banks 266).

Rose, red-faced, wearing a pink frock with a green stain is a childhood image that Martin recalls. Rose is not musical but her burning intensity of spirit, red, flushed face, and unfashionable dress are directly borrowed from Ethel Smyth and Woolf’s own writing about Smyth. Even her name, Rose, indicates her connection as both women are described as “the burning Rose.” Therefore, Rose is a bridge to Ethel Smyth and to all rural and urban suffragists who fought for women’s right to vote. Whether in Hannah Mitchell’s grassroots organizing or the Pankhursts’ fight for Parliamentary legislation, the spirits of Rose and Ethel guided the passage of suffrage rights for women. The combination of a fiery, red rose amid the center of a thorny spirit of defense was the right combination for suffrage victory. Therefore, this scene at the end of *The Years* is a complete tribute to Rose’s crusade for women’s suffrage and to all the suffragists who fought and suffered for the cause. As Rose said, “I think we gave ‘em something to think about” (156). Rose is the continuing thread of suffrage throughout *The Years*, which covers the major years of the suffrage struggle. She is emblematic of women’s rights in all areas – freedom from “the angel of the house,” freedom from fashion’s dictates, and freedom to pursue a professional career. Following Woolf’s dictum, Rose concentrates on her suffrage priorities and their practical results. She has no time for frivolities. Woolf’s direct and subtle reference to Rose and Ethel give an added depth to Rose’s

character and create a tribute that honors both women after suffrage rights for women were achieved. The legislation opened the opportunity, but Woolf's tribute in *The Years* kept the fires burning for both "Roses.

The bridge motif in *The Years*, Woolf's most historical novel, is linked to characters contemplating the themes or patterns in their lives, a concept that repeats throughout the novel. For example, Rose considers a pattern in the water under one of the Thames bridges and decides she will make a useful pattern out of her life. Eleanor thinks of the possibility of a significant pattern when she is talking to Nicholas in the "Present Day" chapter: "Does everything then come over again a little differently? She thought. If so, is there a pattern; a theme, recurring like music; half-remembered, half-foreseen? ... a gigantic pattern, momentarily perceptible? The thought gave her extreme pleasure: that there was a pattern. But who makes it? Who thinks it?" (369).

Woolf is forming the pattern as her characters Rose and Eleanor contemplate the meaning of their lives. Chapter five of Sandra Holton's *Suffrage Days*, titled "Codes in Woolf's Writing," describes how the repetition of a pattern in images, colors, and language appears when Woolf's intent is revealed. In the introduction to the same book, Holton states that historians "have become increasingly interested in the kaleidoscopic nature of the materials of history, a multitude of fragments, forming patterns that shift with the movement of the viewer" (1). Holton further explains using the kaleidoscope metaphor: "A shake of the kaleidoscope and different aspects of the historical pattern may move to the fore, altering our view of the relationship between the parts. Though the separate components of that pattern remain unchanged, the pattern itself may now look very different" (1). This sort of reconfiguration happens with Woolf's patterns of color,

image, and language. Woolf's strategy of shifting the emphasis but still using the same tools will be addressed in chapter five.

Chapter Five Suffrage Tricolor Codes and Strategies in *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*,
and *The Years*

In *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf*, Jane Goldman analyzes the “textual practice” of Woolf’s tricolor usage in *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*. Goldman’s work piqued my interest in tricolor usage as applied to Woolf’s earlier novels *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*, and *The Years*. Clearly, from the inception of her fiction writing, Woolf planned to incorporate a tricolor code or hidden color pattern in her novels. Woolf’s comments in her essay “Craftsmanship” explain how much she enjoyed creating a parallel universe where her ideas and characters can coexist in interrelated harmony. Goldman created the term “feminist iconographic colourism” to highlight Woolf’s public and private feminist aesthetics. As Goldman explores these aesthetics, Woolf’s tricolor code becomes more obvious. Tricolor references appear throughout *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*, and *The Years* and set the stage for Woolf’s later works. Just as Goldman suggests that Woolf’s sister Vanessa painted with a postimpressionist palette, I am suggesting that Woolf herself paints her words with a suffrage palette. The purple, green, and white of suffrage appear consistently in Woolf’s descriptions of landscapes, flowers, household objects, people, and clothing. The tricolors represent purple for loyalty, white for purity, and green for hope. Other imagery used in Woolf’s code that is feminist related include the following: phantoms, ghosts, heraldic riders, monsters, and so forth. I have expanded Goldman’s prismatic and imagery to include color codes that are so persistent in the early novels that they cannot be ignored.

Woolf elevated the power of language and chose words selectively to construct her novels' ideas, themes, and codes. She writes, "[it] is a revelation of some order; it is a token of something real behind appearances; and I make it real by putting it into words" (*MB* 72). The words she uses are chosen according to her careful suffrage/feminist plan. As Woolf says in another quotation from her autobiographical collection *Moments of Being* about her methods of writing and their meaning:

It is the rapture I get when in writing I seem to be discovering what belongs to what; making a scene come right; making a character come together. From this I reach what I might call a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is a hidden pattern; that we – I mean all human beings --are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art. ... We are the words; we are the music; we are the things itself. (72)

Woolf constructs her parallel world and intersects it with the reality of her fiction so that she is creating a vision for readers that is part fantasy, part politics (social reform, feminism, suffrage) that can be revealed slowly to her readers and activated by their imaginations. This invites active participation to expand the work of art that is Woolf's writing.

Goldman asserts that "if Woolf's art is to be considered feminist, we must seek to locate, as Moi herself indicates, 'the politics of Woolf's writing precisely in her textual practice'" (44). Goldman continues with her own explanation: Woolf's "photological textual practices, apparent in both literary and painterly references, may be more richly

understood at the figurative level of metaphor and allegory, and in relation to historical and political context” (24). Just as pillar-boxes and bridges as discussed in chapter four are indicators of Woolf’s attitude toward women’s rights and social reform, the tricolor images in *Night and Day*, *Jacob’s Room*, and *The Years* connect Woolf’s novels with suffrage and underscore her consistent feminist aesthetic.

Woolf’s use of tricolors started with her earliest novels, although Goldman’s discovery of the tricolor pattern references only *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*. Goldman’s analysis of Woolf’s use of tricolors begins by contrasting Woolf’s essay “The Sun and the Fish,” published February 3, 1928, and Woolf’s diary account from June 30, 1927. In her diary, Woolf writes: “At the back of us were great blue spaces in the cloud. But now the colour was going out. The clouds were turning pale; a reddish black colour. Down in the valley it was an extraordinary scramble of red and black; there was the one light burning; all was cloud down there & very beautiful; so delicately tinted (3:143-44).

However, in “The Sun and the Fish” essay the color palette acquires a different spectrum: “The blue turned to purple; the white became livid as at the approach of a violent storm. Pink faces went green, and it became colder than ever. (CDB 196-197). Goldman is correct in claiming that the palette has changed, but it changed earlier than she documents. Since *Night and Day* (1920) and *Jacob’s Room* (1922) were written earlier than the passages above, Woolf’s use of suffrage tricolors – purple, green, and white – were incorporated earlier than the diary entry and essay passage quoted above. Goldman observes: “First we have blue, white, and pink: and then these colours turn to purple, (‘livid’) white, and green” (68). “[Since] purple, white and green have special

significance for suffragists, the use of these colors is a significant suffragist gesture” (Goldman 68).

Purple, green, and white began with the Women’s Social and Political Union in the British suffrage movement to symbolize loyalty, purity, and hope. Lisa Tickner explains in *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-1914* that “the best known suffrage colors are the purple, white and green of the WSPU... White was purity, green for hope and purple for dignity... Purple was sometimes given as ‘loyalty’ or ‘courage’ and green as ‘youth’ or ‘regeneration’” (265). Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, a militant suffrage leader, describes her approach to this “new language” of feminist colors as language understood by every suffragist: “Purple as everyone knows is the royal colour. It stands for the royal blood that flows in the veins of every suffragette, the instinct of freedom and dignity... white stands for purity in private and public life... green is the colour of hope and the emblem of spring” (qtd. in Goldman 69). Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence selected “regimental” colors to legitimize “the green fire” of a “new spring tide” and the idea that “feminists were repainting, reinventing, and restructuring the world anew” (Goldman 70).

Woolf wanted to achieve this feminist restructuring of the world through her writing. Political colors were not new to Woolf’s time, but political societies for women’s suffrage were. Woolf’s literary symbolism and color motifs connected feminist colorism to the women’s suffrage movement.

While Woolf did continue to use descriptive blues and pinks for flowers and clothes as well as green/purple/white for landscapes, nature, objects, people, and fantasies, her switch to a predominant purple/green/white palette seems to be a conscious

decision to emphasize the suffrage tricolors. Her references to suffrage tricolors highlighted the cause in some circumstances and challenged its effectiveness in others. The challenge would involve matching a specific color in the tricolor palette to a particular object or character in order to underscore the tricolor suffragist symbolism in operation. These color references will be categorized and discussed in order of their importance. *Night and Day* and *The Years* have suffragist characters, while *Jacob's Room*, which lacks a suffragist character (Julia Hedge is a feminist), also has many tricolor references.

Katharine Hilbery of *Night and Day* is associated with purple. Several times Katharine is described as riding purple waves or holding a purple and white bouquet. These descriptions of Katharine are made by William Rodney, who is trying to understand his feelings for her. In one instance, he reviews his impressions about her as she enters a room: "And then he could not see her come into a room without a sense of the flowing of robes, of the flowering of blossoms, of the purple waves of the sea, of all things that are lovely and mutable on the surface but still and passionate in their heart." (240). William is describing in detail what Katharine's entrance into a room means to him. Katharine wears flowing robes like a goddess or Venus rising from the waves. She is an imposing figure full of dignity and implied sensuousness. The flowering of blossoms foreshadow William's gift of a bouquet of purple and white flowers in a later passage. Finally, the "purple waves of the sea" bring together Woolf's favorite image – water --with one of Woolf's favorite colors. (She liked to write with purple ink.) In William's eyes, Katharine embodies the greatness of mythology plus the royal dignity and passion of the suffrage purple to become a paragon of beauty and desire. Katharine's

New Woman beauty is described as natural allure accentuated by ancient mythology. Katharine does not behave in the traditional way that William expects, and because he does not understand how she can combine the old and the new, he is confused about his relationship with her. The rippling purple waves reflect Katharine's still and passionate personality. Woolf's description of Katharine through William's eyes incorporates both Katharine's present state and her desired New Woman status. (240)

The purple and white bouquet William presents to Katharine is another suffrage color image that carries greater significance than is first apparent. The suffrage connection is obvious since the bouquet is purple and white. In this case, white for purity comes before purple for loyalty and passion. William's Victorian gesture of bringing flowers to a woman as an apology or declaration of love sets the tone for his conventional approach to romance: "He carried in his hand an enormous and splendid bunch of white and purple flowers... he advanced straight to Katharine, and presented the flowers with the words: 'These are for you, Katharine'" (409). With this gesture, Woolf builds an entire chapter around the romantic courtship of Katharine and William. However, they have argued earlier, so William's gift is an attempt to confess his fault in their argument. "William greeted her without obvious sign of guilt, and explaining that he had a holiday, both he and Katharine seemed to take it for granted that his holiday would be celebrated with flowers and spent in Cheyne Walk" (408). In truth, Katharine is more angered by the interference of her aunt Mrs. Milvain than she is with William. "It seemed to her that the very flowers were contaminated, and Cassandra's pocket-handkerchief, for Mrs. Milvain had used them for evidence in her investigations" (410). Mrs. Milvain has been spying on William and Cassandra, who is Katharine's cousin, looking for proof that

William is unfaithful or that Cassandra is stealing William from Katharine. But Katharine, who is a little jealous of Cassandra, is mostly angry with her aunt. William, who has been ostensibly rejected by Cassandra, is jealous of Ralph, whom he suspects really loves Katharine. In this strange state, William looks at Katharine still holding his bouquet as further enhanced by the flowers: “No doubt her beauty, intensified by emotion and enhanced by the flowers of bright color and strange shape which she carried wrought upon Rodney, and its share in bestowing upon her the old romance” (411).

Throughout the chapter in *Night and Day*, William Rodney’s flowers continue to be mentioned. Katharine “[clasping] the flowers, . . . stood upright and motionless” (410). William’s flowers are clasped, dropped, and strewn. There is none of the household duty of arranging and putting in water or finding a vase, as seen earlier in the chapter when Katharine arranged flowers in the drawing room. The implication by comparison is that Katharine is rejecting William’s offer of apology and courtship as well as her aunt’s societal expectation that she should marry William. The flowers, themselves, Goldman notes, are “bright color and strange-shaped” like an impressionist or postimpressionist painting, reflecting Vanessa’s influence on Woolf’s aesthetics (410-414). The symbolism of the white and purple flowers shifts from its associations with traditional romance and apology to an unapologetic refutation of conventional courtship. The language of flowers has translated into a language of suffrage and the New Woman.

Ralph also associates purple and white with Katharine. After learning of Katharine’s engagement to William, Ralph spends his days at the law office and his lunch hour at a park in the Strand: “When he came back to his work after lunch he carried in his head a picture of the Strand, scattered with omnibuses, and of the purple shapes of leaves

pressed flat upon the ground” (160). Ralph is so lost in thought “that he might have been sitting in his own room,” thinks Mary Datchet when she meets him in the Strand (160). Ralph is in his own world of depression, and the thought of losing Katharine makes him even gloomier. This episode is revisited when Ralph meets Mary again in Lincoln’s Inn Fields. In fact, Mary reminds him of the incident: “‘Don’t you remember that morning in Lincoln’s Inn Fields?’ she asked” (221). Ralph does remember all too well: “‘Yes,’ said Ralph, slackening his pace and remembering Katharine and her engagement, the purple leaves stamped into the path, the white paper radiant under the electric light, and the hopelessness which seemed to surround all these things” (221). Immediately, Ralph remembers his sadness and shame that Katharine had spurned him and was now going to marry William. Ralph explains to Mary that he was very unhappy, which she already knows but she does not know why. “Some six weeks separated him from that afternoon when he had sat upon the embankment watching his visions dissolve in mist as the waters swam past and the sense of his desolation still made him shiver” (221). Ralph sees no pattern before him as he walks down the street by the river: “for himself adrift far removed from control. The world had him at its mercy. He made no pattern out of the sights he saw” (157). In this earlier scene, Ralph “sat himself down, in spite of the chilly fog which obscured the farther bank and left its lights suspended upon a blank surface, upon the riverside seats, and let the tide of disillusionment sweep through him” (157). Somehow, Katharine is a dark shape as pressed purple leaves against white paper. The electric lights on white paper are an image from Ralph’s law office as he tries to work on his assignment. Even six weeks later, Ralph is steeped in romantic depression; two symbolic colors of purple and white are “stamped” on Ralph's hopeless brain. His only

hope seems to be “the winter sun” making a greenish pane in the west through thinning clouds” (159). The only pattern he can see is a blank pattern upon “dun-colored race of waters” (158). The purple waves that William sees have become stamped purple leaves crushed underfoot by pedestrians. Katharine’s association with purple and passion is still there but not for Ralph. Each of the men is honoring Katharine in his own way. They understand that purple, green, and white symbolize qualities of the New Woman that Katharine is struggling to become. Furthermore, Ralph’s staring blankly at the river is similar to the scene in *The Years* when Rose Pargiter is standing by the bridge over the Thames looking at the water below for a meaningful pattern. She decides to dismiss romance and carry on with her suffrage work. Ralph decides to carry on with his law work and pursue his dream of writing the social history of rural England.

Woolf is using suffrage tricolors and flower imagery to foreground women’s rights without specifying the suffrage issue. In addition to Ralph and William’s images of nature, Mrs. Hilbery, Katharine’s mother, also honors Katharine with flowers in the suffrage tricolor pattern. Mrs. Hilbery’s tribute to Katharine is an enormous bouquet of white and violet flowers from Shakespeare’s tomb. Mrs. Hilbery’s palm buds and green branches have similarities to William’s purple and white flowers, which are bright and strangely shaped. Ultimately, both large bundles of flowers are sorted and strewn on the floor as before a royal personage to walk upon. This colorful new walkway gives the regal Katharine a dramatic entrance and symbolizes the New Woman that she is becoming. Woolf’s use of tricolors is a subversive approach to writing, which imprints the reader’s imagination with a feminist aesthetic or palette so that her suffrage

sympathies work on the reader subliminally. Woolf's coded messages of suffrage and women's rights are repeated in *Jacob's Room* and *The Years*.

Flowers in suffrage tricolor palettes are also associated with Katharine's mother, Mrs. Hilbery, and with the upcoming marriage of Katharine and William. In the introduction to chapter XXIV, Woolf describes Mrs. Hilbery's love of flowers: "The first signs of spring, even such as make themselves felt towards the middle of February, not only produce little white and violet flowers in the more sheltered corners of woods and gardens, but bring to birth thoughts and desires comparable to those faintly colored and sweetly scented petals in the minds of men and women" (304).

The description of flowers and vegetation evokes romance and fertility associated with the approaching marriage. At this point in time, Katharine and William are engaged and complications to their relationship have not unfolded. The white and violet flowers are signs of purity and loyalty, be that in marriage or as a suffragist. The little white and violet flowers can also be seen as smaller versions of the large white and purple floral bouquet that William will later give to Katharine. The flowers have a softening effect as noted in the following *Night and Day* passage: "Lives frozen by age, so far as the present is concerned, to a hard surface, which neither reflects or yields, at this season become soft and fluid, reflecting the shapes and colors of the present, as well as the shapes and colors of the past" (304). The softening effect of shapes and colors is a projection onto the landscape of the changing minds of men and women toward new roles for women and toward female empowerment that is the promise of suffrage.

When Mrs. Hilbery brings Katharine flowers, she brings a material gift of her loyalty to her daughter, not an offering of apology as William has done. "From

Shakespeare's tomb!' exclaimed Mrs. Hilbery, dropping the entire mass upon the floor, with a gesture that seemed to indicate an act of dedication" (479). Mrs. Hilbery's bouquet is strewn on the floor just as Katharine did with William's bouquet. In the former case, the strewn flowers indicate Katharine's questioning of marriage to William. Mrs. Hilbery's strewn flowers, on the other hand, expresses sympathy with Katharine's indecision and a desire for her daughter to marry Ralph. For Mrs. Hilbery, the most honest way to honor Katharine's predicament is to bring flowers from Shakespeare's tomb.

Woolf's descriptions of city flowers in *Night and Day* also feature suffrage tricolors. Flowers of white, purple, and crimson (a more passionate version of the pink in an earlier tricolor system and an American suffrage color) invite Londoners outdoors into the sensuousness of city life in the spring:

London, in the first days of spring, has buds that open and flowers that suddenly shake their petals – white, purple, or crimson – in competition with the display in the garden beds, although these city flowers are merely so many doors flung wide in Bond Street and the neighborhood, inviting you to look at a picture, or hear a symphony, or merely crowd and crush yourself among all sorts of vocal, excitable, brightly colored human beings. But, all the same it is no mean rival to the quieter process of vegetable florescence.

(364)

The bustling activity of London's streets and neighborhoods is linked through color motifs and flower imagery to the social reforms and role changes that occur as London

assumes a central place for suffrage activity and new legislation. The excitement of the city bazaar of London permeates into indoor rooms just as Woolf insists that a woman's entrance permeates the atmosphere of an interior room.

This refers back to what Woolf said in *A Room of One's Own* and "Life as We Have Known It," that the barriers between interior and exterior space should be dissolved. In *Night and Day*, Woolf has expanded her perspective into a blended image that supports suffrage. I assert that Woolf has created an image of a bright suffrage breeze with "banners fluttering" that unfurls victory over the barriers to suffrage reform. Mary Lowndes describes a banner as "a thing to float in the wind, to flicker in the breeze, to flirt its colours for your pleasure..." (Tickner 66). Lowndes also compares suffrage colors to flowers in her article "On Banners and Banner-Making" (Tickner 262-64). Banners, flowers, and suffrage come together in an appropriate image for Woolf.

The suffrage tricolor motif in *Jacob's Room* is embedded in the contrast between interior rooms and the city outside Jacob's window. Jacob is constantly looking through a window to the outside world, and that world is generally described in the colors of purple, green, and white. Is it possible that Woolf is implying that change, for Jacob, comes through outside influence represented by suffrage colors? Jacob's window view expands the walls of his room in the same way that Woolf talks about the expansion of women's creativity in *A Room of One's Own*. While not consciously thinking how he can expand his life, Jacob is searching for form and meaning. Woolf offers, "He was a young man of substance" (36). Yet, Woolf also states how disagreeable a young man can be who insists "'I am what I am, and intend to be it,' for which there will be no form in the world unless Jacob makes one for himself" (36).

Another reference to suffrage tricolors appears in Woolf's description of King's Chapel window: "An inclined plane of light comes accurately through each window, purple, yellow even in its most diffused dust, while, where it breaks upon stone, is softly chalked red, yellow, and purple. Neither snow nor greenery, winter nor summer, has power over the old stained glass" (32). This description contains a combination of suffrage colors from various suffrage organizations. Red, yellow (gold), purple, green, and white are all listed in connection with light, dust, stone, snow, or greenery. Woolf then questions "But this service in King's College Chapel – why not allow women to take part in it?" (32). Previous to this question, Woolf has described a tree with a lantern set next to it and insects gathering around the light of the lantern. Insects or moths drawn to a light or flame is a favorite image of Woolf's and will be repeated in connection to Jacob's love of butterflies. The description of the window, the narrator's question, and the image of insects drawn to light all work together setting the stage for a reference to women being allowed in King's College Chapel.

Just as the stained-glass window and lantern light are a "guiding light" for women, Woolf creates a woodland forest scenario which, when seen metaphorically, may be an illustration of a suffrage meeting or demonstration. Supporters gather like moths to a "guiding light" provided by the charismatic Emmeline Pankhurst, agitator for suffrage and militant demonstrations:

One gets tired of watching them, as they amble round the lantern and blindly tap as if for admittance, one large toad being the most besotted of any and shouldering his way through the rest. Ah, but what's that? A terrifying volley of pistol-shots rings out – cracks

sharply; ripples spread – silence laps smooth over sound. A tree –
a tree has fallen, a sort of death in the forest. After that, the wind
in the trees sounds melancholy. (32)

I propose that the insects in this passage represent suffragists gathering and their supporters. The toad could be a policeman trying to disperse the crowd with pistol shots. The crowd is dispersed, or arrests are made, and then the streets are quiet. The placement of this, most likely, metaphoric forest scene between a description of stained glass in suffrage colors and a rhetorical question about women's entrance into the college creates a layering effect of suffrage strategies, narrative symbols, and reform concerns. These passages from *Jacob's Room* are set during a time in which women were not admitted to Cambridge or its chapel and were being arrested and abused for their participation in suffrage demonstrations. Woolf skillfully manages to challenge patriarchal English institutions, like Cambridge, and to question the effectiveness of militant suffrage demonstrations while avoiding overtly writing about female suffrage or women's rights.

Another example of subliminal suffrage coding occurs in Woolf's tricolor descriptions of objects in lists. In *Jacob's Room*, Woolf color catalogs bicycles and lilacs as green, white, and yellow. Neville's Court is described in terms of white and green: "The feathery white moon never let the sky grow dark; all night the chestnuts blossoms were white in the green; dim was the cow-parsley in the meadows. ... It will be quite dark in Neville's Court long before midnight, only the pillars opposite will always be white, and the fountains. A curious effect the gate has, like lace upon pale green" (38). The constant play of suffrage white and green highlight the overlay of suffrage protest and the resistance of British institutions to women's rights. The objects in Jacob's room

in Neville's Court -- the sparse furniture, yellow flags in a jar, stationery with crests, coats of arms, and great books of English history -- are dry, stale remnants of English patriarchy and orthodoxy. Jacob is both surrounded by a static Cambridge world inside his room and can see outside to an intriguing, emerging one, whose significance he does not understand.

Woolf's description of Jacob Flanders's fascination with butterflies becomes another opportunity to code suffrage tricolors into the overriding color impressions of *Jacob's Room*. Young Jacob is attracted to the colors of the butterflies as he tries to capture them:

The pale clouded yellows had pelted over the moor; they had zigzagged across the purple clover. The fritillaries flaunted along the hedgerows. The blues settled on little bones lying on the turf with the sun beating on them, and the painted ladies and the peacocks feasted upon bloody entrails dropped by a hawk. Miles away from home, in a hollow among teasles beneath a ruin, he had found the commas. He had seen a white admiral circling higher and higher round an oak tree, but he had never caught it. An old cottage woman living alone, high up, had told him of a purple butterfly came every summer to her garden. (24)

The brief life of Jacob's butterflies and the moth that Rebecca catches in the kitchen are reminders by Woolf of the possibility of death. This hint of death associated with Jacob may foreshadow his own fate as a soldier. Butterflies and moths are symbols of transformation both for Jacob individually and for the suffrage movement. Jacob's life is

as ephemeral and elusive as a butterfly; nevertheless, the suffrage tricolors are persistently present and may offer hope in the midst of life's transience.

Jacob's life, from its early beginnings, his personality, and his environs are described with an air of fantasy and timelessness. A description of Jacob's room in Neville's Court repeats an image of Jacob as a phantom, an ethereal spirit that breathes through the "empty room, just welling the curtain; the flowers in the jar shift. One fibre in the wicker arm-chair creaks, though no one sits there" (39). Jacob is like the moth that Woolf writes about much later in 1942. In her famous essay "The Death of the Moth," Woolf concentrates on a struggling moth and how it tries to circumscribe its life and retain its dignity while butting up against a windowpane. Woolf writes of the awkwardness of the moth's struggle and how amazed she was at the sight of its deformity "humped and bossed and garnished and cumbered so that it has to move with the greatest circumspection and dignity" (360). Jacob's struggles to find meaning in his short life are fleeting like the butterflies, yet also doomed like the moth. The suffrage tricolors of the butterflies pay tribute to the energy and the struggles of the suffrage movement.

Woolf's sense of foreboding and promise in her nature descriptions, specifically in *Night and Day* and *Jacob's Room*, expresses both the darkness of looming war and the brilliance of spring full-blown in suffrage tricolors. Woolf's descriptions of natural and city-grown flowers in *Night and Day* are used at times to reference preparations for World War I and at other times to highlight the promise of the New Woman and a new society. The blustery wind and rain of *Jacob's Room* forecasts Jacob's fate as a soldier. Woolf is especially poetic and patriotic when she describes the seawater of Scilly Isles in terms of purple, green, and white:

The Scilly Isles were turning bluish; and suddenly blue, purple, and green flushed the sea; it left it grey; struck a stripe which vanished; but when Jacob had got his shirt over his head the whole floor of the waves was blue and white, rippling and crisp, though now and again a broad purple mark appeared, like a bruise, or there floated an entire emerald tinged with yellow. (48)

There is a sense of physical trauma in comparing the color of the sea to a bruise. Jacob is swimming in the sea and his interaction with nature is described in suffrage tricolors. Although Timmy rescues Jacob, there is a hint of Jacob's fate with the "purple bruise" that appears in the water just before he plunges. The combination of tricolor water and a purple bruise associate Jacob with the suffrage struggle and political war that is coming.

Even when Jacob is on shore, Woolf continues to mention suffrage colors: "You could smell violets, or if violets were impossible in July, they must grow something very pungent on the mainland then" (48). There are also "white cottage" and "the white sand bays" (48-49). Woolf builds on the sense of foreboding in the sea when she asks about Jacob's gloom: "What can this sorrow be?" Then she uses the rhetorical technique of answering her own question: "It is brewed by the earth itself. It comes from the houses on the coast. We start transparent, and then the cloud thickens. All history backs our pane of glass. To escape is vain" (49). Woolf refutes her own answer by stating that whether "this is the right interpretation of Jacob's gloom ... it is impossible to say.... No matter. There are things that can't be said. Let's shake it off" (49). But Woolf does not "shake it off" since the foreboding of war and her use of tricolor references are embedded in the novels.

Another example of nature and water imagery associated with suffrage tricolors occurs in a *Night and Day* scene in which Mrs. Hilbery shares with her daughter Katharine a romantic memory of her own courtship. Mrs. Hilbery remembers when she and her soon-to-be husband were rowing in a boat out to reach a ship at night: “The sun had set and the moon was rising over our heads. There were lovely silver lights upon the waves and three green lights upon the steamer in the middle of bay.... It was life, it was death. The great sea was around us. I was the voyage forever and ever” (483). Woolf evokes the passage of time “down a long corridor of days,” and “the ancient fairy-tale fell roundly and harmoniously upon Katharine’s ears” (483). Katharine envisions her mother’s words: “Yes, there was the enormous space of the sea; there were the three green lights upon the steamer.... And so voyaging over the green and purple waters, ... she looked admiringly at her mother, that ancient voyager” (483). In these passages the suffrage tricolors are linked with water imagery and fantasy, both of which seem to soften the passage of time or wash the present view, like an impressionist watercolor.

Nature imagery described with suffrage tricolors to evoke moods related to the passage of time is also a narrative technique Woolf uses in *The Years*. As in *Jacob’s Room* and *Night and Day*, nature descriptions tend to convey both foreboding and promise. The uncertainties of the war and the family’s fortune are combined with the hopes contained in suffrage references. Woolf opens each chapter of *The Years* with a nature description, in particular the season and the weather in London. The first chapter, “1880,” emphasizes the variability of spring, especially in London: “It was an uncertain spring. The weather perpetually changing, sent clouds of blue and of purple flying over the land.... But in April such weather was to be expected” (3). This sense of

apprehensiveness is repeated in Woolf's description of street musicians who "doled out their frail and for the most part melancholy pipe of sound, [that] was echoed, or parodied here in the trees of Hyde Park, here in St. James's by the twitter of sparrows and the sudden outbursts of the amorous but intermittent thrush" (3).

Woolf's nature descriptions in *The Years* provide a background for her hidden interest in suffrage. James Naremore's well-known essay "Nature and History in *The Years*" states that Woolf refused to use a symmetrical pattern; "even the nature descriptions which preface each chapter are not given a sequential rhythm" (246). However, he does not spotlight Woolf's suffrage agenda. I contend that a continuing thread or pattern of suffrage colors and overtones is inseparable from her nature descriptions. Naremore also insists that Woolf's political agenda is indirect, stating as follows:

Even the narrator of the book, that ghostly persona so common to Virginia Woolf's work, tries to direct attention away from social or political facts. The evocative but generalized descriptions of landscape at the opening of each chapter suggest nature had transcended both history and the unsatisfactory conditions of individual lives, the weather becoming more significant than social change. (249)

In Naremore's terms, Woolf's landscape and weather descriptions "are an attempt to give the novel a firm grounding in what [he describes as] the 'eternal' natural process" (249). However, as I have shown, Woolf's pattern of suffrage tricolors in descriptions of weather do, in fact, evoke a climate of political and social change. There is an organizing

thread of social change and history associated with the nature and weather descriptions in *The Years*, and it is underscored by Woolf's repetition of suffrage tricolors.

While Naremore's critical analysis concentrates on nature and history, but not specifically on suffrage, I contend that Woolf's concentration is on suffrage tricolors to suggest suffrage history, not history and nature in general. In Woolf's perspective suffrage history is suggested in the weather description in chapter "1880" of *The Years*. Woolf's suffrage element of change is present in her use of blue and purple to describe the winds of change. Similarly, the nature description in the opening chapter "1910," eight years before suffrage passes, sets the mood for promise and struggle. The natural cycle of spring weather is turning towards fall harvest: "In the country it was an ordinary day enough; one of the long reel of days that turned as the years passed from green to orange; from grass to harvest. It was neither hot nor cold, an English spring day, bright enough, but a purple cloud behind the hill might mean rain. The grasses rippled with shadow, and then sunlight" (160). This description of a spring day hints of the coming fall with the colors "green to orange; from grass to harvest." The political harvest cycle in this chapter highlights Rose Pargiter's personal and political fortunes.

In the chapter "1910," Rose, a suffragist whose character is described in purples, whites, and blues, looks for a pattern in the swirl of the Thames River. Maggie, her sister, arranges flowers that are blue, white, and purple, specifically adding a purple flower to her arrangement. Woolf's opening description of nature for "1910" includes a "purple cloud behind a hill that might mean rain" (160). The purple cloud portending rain might mean obstacles before victory when viewed as part of Woolf's hidden suffrage palette.

Another example of suffrage tricolors in *The Years* appears in the chapter titled “Present Day.” North Pargiter dreams of multicolored flowers: “And were they flowers the hands held? Or mountains? Blue mountains with violet shadows? Then petals fell, pink, yellow, white, with violet shadows, the petals fell. They fall and fall and cover all, he murmured” (424). Many predominant colors of suffrage societies are listed in this passage. The colored petals seem to fall one by one smothering, or maybe conquering, suffrage reform. “Blue mountains with violet shadow” that echo the “purple cloud behind a hill” combine the weather and nature with a suffrage message. The rest of North's dream describes more flower arranging or metaphorical suffrage symbols, especially as associated with his cousin Rose: “The hands went on picking up flower after flower; that was a white rose; that was a yellow rose; that was a rose with violet valleys in its petals. There they hung, many folded, many coloured, drooping over the rim of the bowl. And the petals fell. There they lay, violet and yellow...” (424). Again, the many suffrage color combinations are repeated as they come together “many folded, many coloured” spilling over the flower bowl. The “suffrage flowers” have come together to achieve suffrage victory, and then they fall apart just as the suffrage organizations fell apart after the 1918 Suffrage Reform Bill was passed.

Suffrage colors used in descriptions of nature and flowers are so pervasive in *The Years* that it is impossible to cite all of them; however, one more example will suffice to support the pattern. The chapter “1911” opens with the following landscape and weather description:

The sun was rising. Very slowly it came up over the horizon
shaking out light. But the sky was so vast, so cloudless, that to fill

it with light took time. Very gradually the clouds turned blue;
leaves on forest trees sparked; down below a flower shone....
Slowly the world emerged from darkness. The sea became like the
skin of an innumerable scaled fish, glittering gold. Here in the
South of France the furrowed vineyards caught the light; the little
vines turned purple and yellow; and the sun coming through the
slats of the blinds striped the white walls. (192)

The passage invokes Woolf's essay "The Sun and the Fish" and the solar eclipse of 1927 that Jane Goldman explores together in her book *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-impressionism, and the Politics of the Visual*. The sun and the coming of light out of darkness spreading life to the landscape below are central images in Woolf's writing. The sun connects with fish when it becomes "like the skin of an innumerable scaled fish, glittering gold." Gold or yellow is an important color among suffrage groups, as is purple. The nature description closes with the hopeful promise of vineyard grapes that are purple and yellow with the sun causing shadow stripes on the white walls. The embedded tricolor palette in Woolf's favorite descriptive images simultaneously hides and reveals the author's political agenda.

Fantasy and Fairy Tales: Influences of Lewis Carroll and Edmund Spenser

Woolf connects themes of suffrage, suffrage colors, the New Woman, and a "new marriage" contract through her use of fantasy and romantic fairy tales. These elements of fantasy, fairy tale, and possibly allegory point to the probable influences of British

authors Lewis Carroll and Edmund Spenser on Woolf, who wrote a short essay on each author, respectively.

Spenser uses the romantic fairy tale as a central element in *The Faery Queen*; in a similar manner, Carroll uses fantasy and imagination in his Alice stories. Woolf mixes the romantic fairy tale with the parallel element of fantasy in *Night and Day* and *Jacob's Room* using suffrage colors. Sea scenes referenced previously describing Mrs. Hilbery's courtship (*Night and Day*) and Jacob's swim around the Scilly Isles (*Jacob's Room*) combine suffrage colors with fantasy. Moreover, in *Night and Day*, Katharine Hilbery imagines her marriage in full romantic bloom:

Easily, and without correction by reason, her imagination made pictures superb backgrounds casting a rich though phantom light upon the facts in the foreground. Splendid as the waters that drop with resounding thunder from high ledges of rock, and plunge downwards into the blue depths of night, was the presence of love she dreamt, drawing into it every drop of the force of life, and dashing them all asunder in the superb catastrophe in which everything was surrendered, and nothing might be reclaimed. The man, too, was some magnanimous hero, riding a great horse by the shore of the sea. They rode through forests together, they galloped by the rim of the sea. (107)

This dream of an all-encompassing romance and marriage is the traditional view of marriage that Katharine has eulogized. All the classic elements of a fairy-tale marriage are here: the blue depths of night and water, the seashore and forest and the “anonymous

white knight” riding an heraldic horse. The possibility of a “new marriage” of independent souls seems remote. However, Katharine Hilbery and Ralph Denham will forge a new kind of marriage relationship where they can support each other and encourage their individual interests. This is the kind of new marriage for which a New Woman can hope. Together, the modern couple can ride the mythic, heraldic horse, a symbol of suffrage destiny, into a new future.

In the midst of their engagement reverie, Woolf inserts the fantasy of a hunchback character into Ralph’s imagining: “Perhaps the fantastic notion that [the anonymous lady] was a little black hunchback provided with a steel knife, which she would plunge into Katharine’s heart, appeared to Ralph more probably than another, and he pushed first into the dining-room to avert the blow” (494). Woolf may be using the hunchback figure as an allegorical metaphor for despair. In an essay about Spenser’s *The Faery Queen*, Woolf said the figure of Despair is an allegory (CE 1). “The novelist uses allegory; that is to say, when he wishes to expound his characters, he makes them think; Spenser impersonated his psychology. Thus if the novelist now wished to convey his hero’s gloom, he would tell us his thoughts; Spenser created a figure called Despair” (16). With this background of despair, the romance of Katharine and Ralph is seen in a new light. The loneliness they have both felt may now have a cure, but the “prospect of the future, now that the strength of [Ralph’s] passion was revealed to him, appalled him” (384). Ralph has thought that without Katharine he would have “a life from which the chief good was knowingly and for ever excluded” (384). However, now that their engagement is imminent, the old despair of the hunchback comes back to Ralph. The sharp image of

a hunchback and a steel blade create an image of danger and uncertainty that is revealed in an enchanted light

Allegory and fantasy elements in *Jacob's Room* are another example of the influences of Spenser and Carroll on Woolf's novel writing. Jacob travels, which can be seen as an allegorical journey, seemingly floating through England and Greece and even through his experiences of World War I, all the while meeting different people who may be symbols of Cambridge, romance, and classical learning. He succumbs to temptation with Florinda and Mrs. Wentworth, as does the Red Knight in Spenser's epic, but there is very little change in Jacob's character. He remains stereotyped in how he thinks about and treats women.

A particularly fantastic element with suffragist implications in *Night and Day* is the concept of an "enchanted region." According to Woolf, an enchanted region gives its inhabitants such intense and deep communication ability that verbal language is no longer necessary. This region is both magical and at the same time attainable. At the close of *Night and Day*, Katharine and Ralph experience the blending of their individual identities and do not require speech:

They had entered the enchanted region. She might speak to him, but with that strange tremor in his voice, those eyes blindly adoring, whom did he answer? What woman did he see? And where was she walking, and who was her companion? Moments, fragments, a second of vision, and then the flying waters, the winds dissipating and dissolving; then, too, the recollection from chaos,

the return of security, the earth firm, superb and brilliant in the sun.

(507)

Woolf's focus on fragmentation and coalescence, on chaos and order, is condensed in the enchanted region and covered with an aura of brilliant light. There is also an element of spoof in the vagueness of this fairy-tale region and the emphatic rejection of verbal speech. Coming from an author whose joy in words is almost unparalleled, this nonverbal space is surprising; nevertheless, the enchanted region is a goal of Woolf's vision of a new marriage and a desirable outcome of female equality and social reforms.

Night and Day has scenes referencing sleeping and dreaming that are reminiscent of Lewis Carroll's well-known fantasies *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. In a 1939 essay about Carroll, Woolf asserts that Carroll's world is "the world of sleep; dreams come; the white rabbit, the walrus, and the carpenter, one after another, turning and changing one into the other, they come skipping and leaping across the mind" (*CE 1:255*). Katharine and Ralph and William experience each other within dream-like images. These fleeting phantom images, appear, change into something else, and then vanish, as occurs in Carroll's writings. The fairy-tale aspect of their fancies also resembles the behavior of Carroll's characters: Katharine forgets her oyster package, she as well as Mrs. Hilbery serve tea with Katharine's mind on other ideas, and her mother appears a bit dizzy about who the guests are and what conversation to introduce. In fact, Katharine looks at her mother anew when she suggests that asking Ralph to lunch could solve the romance problems:

Katharine looked at her as if, indeed, she were some magician.

Once more she felt that instead of being a grown woman, used to advise and command, she was only a foot or two raised above the long grass and the little flowers and entirely dependent upon the figure of indefinite size, whose head went up into the sky, whose hand was in her, for guidance. (485)

Katharine is feeling her way to her own future world through the magic of feeling a child again with her mother. Katharine has not eaten a two-sided mushroom, like Carroll's Alice, but she feels that she is changing size just the same. She is becoming a New Woman with the option of creating a new marriage based on an imaginative new vision of husbands and wives.

Lewis Carroll's influence on Woolf's use of fantasy is seen in her use of fantasy animals in *Night and Day* and imaginary rabbits in "Lappin and Lapinova." For Katharine and Ralph the fantasy features riding a heraldic horse of loneliness and experiencing the relief and freedom of sharing the burden of loneliness. Later in the novel, Katharine speaks of riding a swerving monster (omnibus) through the streets of London with Ralph (502). For Ernest and Rosalind in "Lappin and Lapinova" the fantasy animals are two rabbits. Junko Setogawa provides a Japanese perspective for a fantasy approach to engagement and marriage in his essay "Another *Night and Day*: An Essay on 'Lappin and Lapinova.'" Setogawa asserts that both couples, Katharine and Ralph as well as Ernest and Rosalind, shared an animal fantasy in common and that they communicated their desires through the shared fantasy.

The shared animal fantasy serves to maintain both couples' relationships. Katharine and Ralph ride a monster horse together; Ernest and Rosalind playact a projected fantasy of two rabbits named King Lappin and Queen Lapinova. Ernest twitches his nose like a rabbit when he is thinking; as a result, rabbits become the couple's fantasy animal. Ernest and Rosalind feel they are partners in an exclusive and equal partnership. However, on the day Ernest refuses to participate and actually declares that Lapinova, Rosalind's fantasy rabbit, has been caught and killed in a trap, Rosalind loses her fantasy safety valve and the marriage falls apart.

Katharine and Ralph remain together after animal fantasy vanishes since it has served the purpose of bringing them together. Their relationship is truly an enchanted region where words are not necessary. Their engagement fantasy involves more than an animal; it includes giving up solitude but not integrity because they share each other's ideas and hopes. After comparing the use of fantasy in Woolf's short story "Lappin and Lapinova" to the use of fantasy in *Night and Day*, Setogawa asserts that both couples have a shared animal fantasy, but one fantasy is more successful than the other. Setogawa's analysis shows how themes in Woolf's writing are revisited in her later works and that Woolf is constantly interrogating engagement and marriage in terms of independence for women. In fact, Woolf noted in her diary on 22 November that she was "rehashing 'Lappin and Lapinova,'" a story written I think at Asheman 20 years ago or more: when I was writing *Night and Day* perhaps" (5: 200). This means that Woolf was thinking of Carroll both before and after *Night and Day* and that the short story "Lappin and Lapinova" and the novel *Night and Day* were conceived about the same time, even though *Night and Day* was published in 1920 and "Lappin and Lapinova" was published in

London and New York in *Harper's Bazaar* in 1939. Woolf's essay "Lewis Carroll" was written in January 1939 (CE 1). These publication dates imply that Woolf was pondering fantasy and Carroll for over twenty years.

There are additional narrative elements that Woolf and Carroll shared: a concern with the safety of little girls and the inclusion of tea party scenes. In *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*, Carroll explores the mind and imagination of a little girl named Alice. In *The Years*, Woolf follows Rose Pargiter throughout her life, describing her courage and her use of imagination to cope with threatening events. When Rose sneaks out of the house at night to go to Lamley's toy store alone, she boosts her courage by imagining herself on an evening ride. More importantly, her imagination assists her in coping with the terror she feels following a subsequent encounter at the pillar-box with a stranger who is a sexual exhibitionist. Alice, also a vulnerable innocent, has a dangerous fall down a deep, dark hole while pursuing a white rabbit; her adventures become increasingly complicated as she wanders in her wonderland. "Wonderland" is a term Woolf uses to describe Mary Datchet's feelings about living in London and being at the center of a radiant hub of social activity, but since Mary is an adult, her description of London as wonderland sounds more exciting than threatening. Child safety and street danger are also an aspect of *Jacob's Room* as is illustrated in an incident in which a young girl is frightened by a speeding van while trying to mail a letter at the pillar-box. (This scene was discussed in greater detail in chapter two.)

Tea parties are central to both of Lewis Carroll's novels and an aspect of British childhood play. Woolf uses a tea party setting to describe the scene in which Ralph Denham first meets Katharine Hilbery in *Night and Day*. As occurs in *Alice in*

Wonderland, the tea party orients the newcomer into the inner world of family and friends and to their preferred customs. A stranger to an established group, Ralph feels awkward and at the same time remote or separated from the outside street: “At the same time, it seemed to Mr. Denham as if a thousand softly padded doors had closed between him and the street outside. A fine mist, the etherealized essence of the fog, hung visibly in the wide and rather empty space of the drawing-room, all silver where the candles grouped on the tea-table, and ruddy again in the firelight” (10). The outside street is a world apart from the Hilbery’s drawing room where an air of enchantment or “blue grains of mist” predominate (10). Using only a fifth of her mind, Katharine calmly pours tea. She is thinking about Ralph and how she might bring him into conversation: “She observed that he was compressing his teacup, so that there was danger lest the thin china might cave inwards” (11). The couple is already in an enchanted region even though they have just been introduced. While Mrs. Hilbery presides over tea conversation, Ralph and Katharine begin their relationship.

Both Carroll and Woolf’s tea party scenes satirize British social customs, especially with how the tea-party custom manages to embarrass the participants, whether invited or not. The March Hare, the Door Mouse, and the Mad Hatter of Carroll’s famous Mad Tea Party invent their own etiquette, which includes changing seats and dishes as they please. Their topics of teatime conversation are so very vague that anything Alice adds is deemed not appropriate. Ralph Denham is in a similar position as he tries to understand the Hilberys, especially Katharine. Mrs. Hilbery’s banter about Manchester is inaccessible to him and his role as outsider or even intruder goes unchallenged.

British etiquette is a favorite target for Woolf. Woolf extends her exploration of British customs from the tea party to scenes describing dinner parties. Several dinner gatherings and dinner parties are developed in *Jacob's Room*. One of the most significant dinners is one attended by Clara Durant, Mrs. Durant, Timothy Durant, and Jacob Flanders. Jacob feels constrained by his dinner jacket after he has been sailing for six days with Timothy. The dinner table is set with formal glassware and curved silver forks. The cutlets as the main entree are decorated with pink frills, but "yesterday he had gnawed ham from the bone!" (57). Jacob's female dining partners appear to him as "hazy, transparent shapes of yellow and blue. Behind them, again, was the grey-green garden, and among the pear-shaped leaves the escallonia fishing-boats seemed caught and suspended" (57). The atmosphere is unreal and fantastic to Jacob as he feels himself suspended in time while at the dinner table. "The dinner would never end, Jacob thought, and he did not wish it to end... (57). The whole dinner -- its rigid etiquette, the unfamiliar formal setting, and the impressionistic shapes of the people and garden becomes crystallized in Jacob's mind.

The Years provides another example of a London dinner party scene that conveys strangeness and discomfort. North Pargiter feels strange following his return to London after several years of living in Africa. Sara Pargiter remarks: "How strange it must be," she resumed, 'coming back after all these years – as if you'd dropped from the clouds in an aeroplane.' She pointed to the table as if that were the field in which he had landed. 'On to an unknown land,' said North. He felt an outsider" (318). When North was in Africa, it was silent and hot, and he was lonely, so he wrote to Sara. However, now that he is back and seated with her eating dinner in London, he feels more like a stranger than

he did in Africa. The once-familiar London now appears as a long-ago memory. Things and people have changed, and yet the landscape is the same. North is having a difficult time reconnecting. Woolf's fantasy-laden descriptions of the colors, shapes, and behaviors that are conjured up during the dinner scene express North's cultural alienation and social discomfort.

The influences of Carroll and Spenser are revealed in ways consistent with Woolf's feminist aesthetic and suffrage agenda. There is an overriding air of fantasy and unreality in Woolf's three early novels, *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*, and *The Years*. Whether the overarching theme is the passage of time as in *The Years*, or the unending struggle to control one's life in *Night and Day*, or the aimlessness of a young man's life in *Jacob's Room*, these novels each contain objective "facts" that shift when seen through the subjective fantasies of the characters. In Woolf's case, the objective narrator is Woolf's ghostly persona as Naremore describes it in "Nature and History in *The Years*" (249). Carroll's Alice and Spenser's Red Knight experience shifting perspectives due to unexpected circumstances and meddling characters. Alice and the Red Knight experience similar discomfort to Woolf's protagonists. It seems appropriate that she utilized her literary interest in fantasy and allegory as part of her experiment with radically changing the form and language of the British novel.

Chapter Six Conclusion

In this final chapter, I shall combine and condense the themes of the suffrage agenda, tricolors, and the New Woman. The concept of the New Woman ties all of the suffrage threads together, whether woman's suffrage, social construction of women's identities, economic independence for women, or feminist aesthetics: all these themes were a part of the woman's suffrage movement. Each of these ideas adds a thread to the New Woman knot and makes it complete. As an introduction to this conclusion, I will discuss in detail the New Woman concept, beginning with Lisa Tickner's examination of *The Spectacle of Women: The Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-14*. I will continue this detailed introduction of the New Woman identity with the social identity construction ideas of feminists Simone de Beauvoir and Sonia Delaunay.

Lisa Tickner in her thoughtful study of the imagery of the suffrage campaign, 1907-1914, mentions the important concept of the Modern Woman, or the New Woman. In reference to novelists, Tickner writes: "there are two major factors which made the New Woman irresistible to novelists: explicit sexuality and personal integrity" (183). Furthermore, Tickner asserts, "the minor New Woman novelists drew on feminist debates about marriage, divorce, sexuality and bachelor motherhood" (183). In general, suffragists tried to "marginalize the more unconventional demands of the New Woman to make suffrage more acceptable" (183). Tickner emphasizes that authors like Hardy, Meredith, and Gissing displayed feminine sexuality more seriously and validated the

topic to a more discerning reader. Virginia Woolf expanded on this exploration with her unique feminine sensibility.

The second factor that made the New Woman irresistible for novelists, according to Tickner, was that the personal integrity of the New Woman “was a matter of principle, but one expressed in a personal rebellion that was outside any organization and allied to no political or reforming ends” (184). This aligned the New Woman with the traditional English novel and its drama of love, marriage, and family. However, the New Woman was unconventional, which made her a bad role model for the 1907-1914 suffrage campaign. The ideal suffragist model would be a responsible and respectable woman.

For these reasons, the New Woman was a perfect target for Virginia Woolf. Her heroines, Katherine Hilbery and Mary Datchet in *Night and Day*, along with Rose Pargiter in *The Years*, are examples of the New Woman interpreting new roles for women in the early twentieth century. Katharine Hilbery tries with Ralph Denham to create a new marriage with equal responsibilities and equal participation as individuals. Mary Datchet chose a career promoting political reform as a suffragist or socialist. Rose Pargiter resembled a militant version of the New Woman, one who scorns traditional female artifice in favor of social progress, social equality, and personal integrity. Woolf’s heroines were the kind of New Women that American journalist and suffragist Rheta Childe Dorr described, women “who wanted to belong to the human race, not to the ladies’ aid society to the human race” (184).

Lisa Tickner defends the suffragists as women in favor of “the development of women’s capacities and opposed to the doctrinaire definition of what these might be; they were against submissiveness, frivolity, and fashion in so far as it perpetuated a passive

and narcissistic femininity; and they were in favour of health, activity, and social and economic independence” (184). Woolf examines all of these female traits in her in characterizations of Katharine Hilbery, Mary Datchet, and Rose Pargiter. Indeed, Rose is the embodiment of the fashion- and frivolity-scoring suffragist. Katharine wears lovely clothing but is indifferent to her own striking beauty. Mary Datchet appreciates Katharine’s fashion and luxury, but she also knows that her own career path will focus on practical social reform, not beautiful dresses. Rose Pargiter, on the other hand, refuses beauty, fashion, and marriage in favor of a suffrage and social reform agenda.

The aspect of the New Woman as interpreting new roles for women is developed in Simone de Beauvoir’s literary criticism. Ruth Robbins explores images of women in criticism in a chapter of her excellent book *Literary Feminisms*. There she quotes Simone de Beauvoir’s description of how a woman assumes a new identity and uses artifice in an attempt to disguise “her basic commonality with man” and become an ideal, exotic, and erotic object:

Woman becomes plant, panther, diamond, mother-of-pearl, by blending flowers, furs, jewels, shells, feathers, with her body; she perfumes herself to spread an aroma of the lily and the rose. But feathers, silk, pearls and perfumes serve also to hide the animal crudity of her flesh, her odour. She paints her mouth and her cheeks to give them the solid fixity of a mask; her glance she imprisons deep in kohl and mascara, it is no more than the iridescent ornament of her eyes; her hair, braided, curled, shaped, loses its disquieting paint-like mystery. (qtd. in Robbins 50)

Rhetorical masks are one of Woolf's favorite devices in her fiction writing. Woolf combined her narrative stance of subterfuge into a strategic rhetorical mask that was modernist. In fact, Woolf's insistence on breaking the barriers to women's writing centered on killing off her most disliked Victorian mask: the angel in the house. Woolf had to eliminate the idealized Victorian woman if she were to build a career of her own. Woolf's continual reference to Coventry Patmore's poem entitled "The Angel in the House" personified Woolf's enemy angel. Woolf's description of the angel in her own house is very evocative of her struggle to create her own writing career:

[The angel in the house] was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. ... And when I came to write I encountered her with the very first words. ... Directly, that is to say, I took my pen in my hand to review that novel by a famous man, she slipped behind me and whispered: "My dear, you are a young woman. ... Be sympathetic; be tender, flatter; deceive; use all the arts and wiles. Never let anybody guess that you have a mind of your own." (CE 2:285)

This particular image demonstrates the extent of women's internalization of society's constructed ideas about gender and identity. Clearly, Woolf's murderous fantasy about killing the angel shows that Woolf experienced eliminating, or exorcising, the angel as a very difficult task. In the essay "Professions for Women," Woolf writes, "She died hard. Her fictitious nature was of great assistance to her. It is far harder to kill a phantom than a reality" (CE 2:285). This fictitious nature was a writing strategy Woolf used to make

her own fiction more layered. In *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*, and *The Years*, Woolf uses fantasy and phantoms to exploit her suffrage and feminist agenda. By using well-known fairy tales she evoked meanings that were seductive to her characters and her readers. However, Woolf would then reverse meanings or subvert the endings to defamiliarize the conventional moral agendas and provoke new perception and reform. Woolf killed the phantoms and fantasies by inverting them and displaying the “inner guts” to a destabilized audience. It seems to me that the particular mask of femininity that Woolf dons is a means to at once disguise and express her feminist agenda. Woolf throws off the angel in the house and recruits her own created fantasy masks in order to “beat the enemy at its own game.” According to Ruth Robbins’s interpretation of Ellmann’s feminine mask, “[Woolf’s] femininity is a kind of masquerade, a performance that defuses criticism... whilst still allowing her to make her points. ... Such femininity can be used creatively for subversive effect” (69). Robbins further explains, “And a critique that exposes a problem is still worth doing, even if it cannot change the world. It is a tool, a part of an ongoing process – not an answer itself” (68). This is a philosophy that Woolf would accept especially in her use of the suffrage agenda.

Charlotte Brontë is often associated with Woolf as another writer who used fantasy as a mask for an interrogation of a character’s identity as a woman. Charlotte Brontë’s fantasy in *Jane Eyre* allows her major character an opportunity to explore a fantasy image that involves Eyre’s subconscious. Early in the novel, Jane stares into a large mirror in the red room where she is imprisoned. As Jane tries to establish her identity in this strange household, the act of beholding herself in the mirror reflects an image she does not recognize:

I had to cross before the looking-glass; my fascinated glance involuntarily explored the depth it revealed. All looked colder and darker in that visionary hollow than in reality; and the strange little figure there gazing at me, with a white face and arms specking the gloom, and glittering eyes of fear moving where all else was still, had the effect of a real spirit: I thought it like one of the tiny phantoms, half fairy, half imp Bessie's evening stories represented as coming out of lone, ferny dells in moors, and appearing before the eyes of belated travelers. I returned to my stool. (9)

Bessie's nursemaid stories, which tell of the hard life of the poor orphan child who haunts the deserted byways of the moors, make Jane empathetic. Jane sees the phantom figure in the mirror and wonders who it can be, and yet it is Jane herself who is reflected.

The feeling of alienation yet empathy is familiar to Woolf's characters Katharine Hilbery and Rose Pargiter. Katharine and Rose have their fantasies. Rose imagines being among General Pargiter's horse and riding through danger. Katharine imagines riding a monster of loneliness and traditional marriage. Rose feels imprisoned in her nursery as a little girl, and Katharine retreats to her private bedroom where she looks into a looking-glass to see if her dinner attire is suitable. Rose also stands on a bridge looking into a water-mirror and does not like the image as she remembers sad times. All of this uses Lewis Carroll's image of a looking-glass to represent looking into another, alien world where the onlooker can see another identity, possibly a future identity. For Jane Eyre, staring into her own reflection becomes a means for reconciling her circumstances. For Rose and Katharine, staring into their own reflections becomes a means to envision

themselves as New Women, a way to see they have a choice in the direction of their lives. The looking-glass becomes a kind of crystal ball. In either case, this is an opportunity to present a rhetorical mask or persona so that the reader may sympathize with the heroine, Jane, Rose, or Katharine, and speculate about the outcome of the fantasy vision.

There is also a sense of parody in these looking-glass images of Brontë, Woolf, or Carroll. As Patricia Waugh defines parody in her book, *Metafiction – The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*:

In fact, parody in metafiction can be equally regarded as another lever of positive literary change, for by undermining an earlier set of fictional conventions which have become automatized, the parodist clears a path for a new, more perceptible set. The problem arises because parody is double-edged. A novel that uses parody can be seen either as destructive or as critically evaluative and breaking out into new creative possibilities. (64-65)

If parody is viewed as a positive approach, then it allows the author to integrate both the character and the reader into a mutual exploration of the options for change and transformation. Woolf's use of familiar fairy tales as a conventional ground that she can manipulate with parody and subversion gives these options for change. She defamiliarizes the ancient stories by putting them into contemporary situations and possible outcomes. As mentioned in chapter 5, Woolf's use of fantasy was a favorite way for her to extend meaning into speculation so that her characters, and the reader, could safely explore the consequences of the characters' decisions.

In addition to phantoms and fantasy, another favorite rhetorical mask that Woolf employs is the physical shield that clothing provides. Woolf's consistent reference to the New Woman included the exterior mask of clothing as a signifier of the outer shell of a woman's personality. As Woolf's narrator in *Orlando* asserts: "There is much to support the view that it is clothes that wear us and not we them; we may make them take the mould of arm or breast, but they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking" (188). Although Woolf was always suspicious about women who follow society's fashion dictates, she understood the power of external symbols and masks whether psychological, emotional, or physical as in clothing. Clothes, she knew, were a visual language that communicated socioeconomic class, prejudices, and political correctness. That is why she picked tricolored clothing as significant for her suffragist characters.

In addition to selecting characters' clothes to signify exterior shields, Woolf also utilized color symbolism and suffrage references in her descriptions of women's tricolor clothing. Although Jane Goldman focuses on impressionist art for her prismatic analysis about tricolors, it is also possible to use other art styles when examining clothing. Twentieth-century art movements, especially nouveau, futurism, and supremism, with their geometric designs and color juxtapositions influenced women's clothing design. According to an editorial statement in *Art Journal* entitled "Clothing as Subject," clothing has always been present in visual arts:

As a familiar presence in figurative art, clothing has functioned as both formal and iconographical evidence and as a signifier of class and social status. In the early decades of the twentieth century, fashion, costume, textile design played a significant role in a

number of movements, including Art Nouveau, Futurism, the Russian avant-garde, Dada, Surrealism, and the Bauhaus. (Felshin 20)

The designer Sonia Delaunay's "simultaneous clothing" of the mid-1920s uses this role of clothing as signifier in designs for the New Woman of her time. Delaunay perceived the clothing design process as a continual "wrap" or swaddling of the female body. The simultaneous process of "printing, wrapping, cutting simple forms, overlaying form or form, pattern on pattern, shifting and turning for inventive reiteration" was part of this decade's aesthetics (Buckberrough 55). The New Woman needed a new "densely coded system of signification that transmits psychological, sexual and cultural messages" (Felshin 20). In "Delaunay Design: Aesthetics, Immigration, and the New Woman," Sherry Buckberrough compares Delaunay's interest in the movement of colors, forms, and physical materials to the physical movement of populations, including the migration of the international avant-garde to Paris before and after World War I. If textiles, as Buckberrough points out, "were a primary property of nomads," then Delaunay's fashion aesthetic, "with its multiple reference to movement and its cross-cultural influences, was an affirmation of a world in flux" (Felshin 29).

World War I, including pre- and postwar years, is the time setting of Woolf's early novels. She could appreciate all the changes that this period brought as her characters traveled throughout the British Empire, especially in India and Africa. Her characters' travel experiences, whether for recreational or military reasons, expanded their horizons and their political views. Although her major focus was literary, the characters' clothes were always a descriptive feature of character development. Whether

her characters are wearing military uniforms, colorful saris, or peasant designs, Woolf incorporated tricolors in her descriptions of clothing as well as her characters' physical appearances. Woolf used these traits continually as she knew all the physical, psychological, sexual, and class distinctions that clothing makes and used these signifiers to her advantage. As Elizabeth Wayland Barber notes in her book *Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years*, "Clothing right from our first direct evidence twenty thousand years ago, has been the handiest solution to conveying social messages visually, silently, continuously" (qtd. in Felshin 29).

The use of tricolors and clothing to signify political intent was part of Rose Pargiter's plan to advance women's suffrage, as was that of suffragist Ethel Smyth after whom Woolf's character was modeled. Rose and Ethel may have considered fashion to be frivolous and a waste of time and energy, but they could not deny clothing's visual and political impact. They used this impact to further their purposes creating both a visual shield and a political weapon.

The New Woman emerged during the 1920s, the time period of *Night and Day*, and one of the manifestations of the New Woman phenomena was a change in clothing design. While Woolf's characters Rose Pargiter and Ethel Smyth are described as unfashionable and unattractive, other characters, especially Mary Datchet, wanted to wear attractive clothing that made them feel good and that were functional. They wanted to combine fashion with practicality. Sonia Delaunay, a French designer at the time, wanted to give New Women a visual representation of their new freedoms. When designing for the New Woman, Delaunay focused on the private space of the body versus the public exterior of clothing. Her tent-like dress shapes allowed for a "separate private

space from the public exterior” (Buckberrough 51). Delaunay’s intention was to transform the ethnic trends of the migration from the east to clothes that would work for the western woman. The textiles she chose were based on tribal designs of the eastern nomads. “Textiles intervene with the structures and surfaces of architecture, furniture, and the body. They obscure prior signs of cultural identity with their signifying surfaces. They cover” (Buckberrough 51).

One way that Woolf explored the private versus public dichotomy of the New Woman was to create a mask as a barrier to discovering this dichotomy. Delaunay speaks of creating a private space while moving outside in a public space. The public space for Woolf would be the sidewalks of London, parks, libraries, or museums -- all civic places she uses in her novels. These spaces are important for her characters as they move about and have adventures in London. As they do so, their exterior appearance is commented on by other characters and by Woolf, the narrator. Sonia Delaunay creates such a movable private space with her clothing designs as a shield, just as Woolf uses clothing and personal emotional shields to protect her characters. Delaunay’s clothing philosophy was to create shapes for women’s clothing that would exhibit the modern iconography and still provide interior privacy:

As tents, they separate private space from public exterior. As clothing, they make the body private. Both remove the personal from public view, yet in their malleability, fragility, and softness, the personal never seems out of touch. Delaunay’s designs transformed in clothing were especially protective of personal privacy in that their heightened visual effects discouraged tactile

approaches. They protected like shields as they nonetheless announced the presence of the body underneath. (Buckberrough 51)

Delaunay's "protective shield" tent dresses expressed the New Woman's desire to be different from previous generations and free from their constraints. These models wrapped in swaddling clothes, are nonetheless fashionable French ladies of the 1920s. They are the new women, with short hair and without corsets, demanding a different future than that of their mothers. Rejecting the heritage of the West, they took their cues here from ancient Egypt, the East, and Africa. (Buckberrough 53)

Many of the places to which Woolf's characters had traveled, places like India, China, Africa, Russia, and France where England had colonies or trade agreements, were the same places from which Delaunay took inspiration. Characters such as Mary Datchet, Katharine Hilbery, Peggy Pargiter, and Eleanor Pargiter were expanding their horizons with education and travel. The bourgeois woman that Delaunay was designing for "was wrapped in the modern Serpent Scarf" of Delaunay designs, which announced the wearer's "rebirth and liberation." The erotic burden of her body was transposed to the textile surface, where it moved in metaphor, the body itself remaining below, like the soil of the earth. Under the veil of the textile, the woman fathered her power" (Buckberrough 53). The London streets and markets that Woolf's characters walked were described as "heaped high with round crates of cabbage, cherries, carnations, they looked like caravans piled with the goods of tribes migrating in search of water, driven by enemies to seek new pasturage" (*TY* 129). These circumstances closely resemble Delaunay's explanation of her tribal designs for the New Woman.

Woolf's descriptions of the clothing and independent attitudes of her female characters, her use of suffrage colors and New Woman designs, reveal her concern with women's rights and social reform. Woolf's characters' new patterns of clothing and broadened horizons of travel reflected her authorial interest in the winds of world change – wars, suffrage, women's rights, military expansion, and power. Woolf's created female characters, Mary Datchet, Katharine Hilbery, and Peggy and Eleanor Pargiter, were reconsidering their place in the world, as were the New Women who wore Sonia Delaunay's clothing at the time. Sherry Buckberrough observes:

Delaunay's designs were not for the reconstruction of the body for functional, industrial, futuristic purposes, as in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, neither was it nostalgic for a more elegant or exotic past. As designs for a bourgeois consumption, Delaunay's aesthetic urged reconsideration of one's place in the world – in sympathy with cultural migrations, collisions, mergers, reformulations – and recognized a progressive bourgeois right to support, through aesthetic presence, the world's dynamic state of change. (55)

Woolf and Delaunay believed that the New Woman should be a citizen of the world. Woolf's idea of women bonding together to form a New World community is a visualization of a world that promotes social reform, women's economic rights, and suffrage. Delaunay's designs used Kente cloth, hand-woven ceremonial cloth, and traditional African patterns to reenvision themes of royalty, womanhood, divine beauty, and participatory democracy. Delaunay's designs took cloth made for royalty and

ceremonial occasions and made it available to many. She helped to democratize these patterns, although she was designing clothes for a limited, elite clientèle. The appropriation of ethnic design for a Caucasian clientèle is perhaps a problematic maneuver and could be interpreted as colonialist by modern theory. However, Delaunay, of Ukrainian, Russian, and Jewish heritage, intended to create a more universal New Woman who would understand that the whole world must be involved with reform.

Exploring Woolf's tricolors alongside Delaunay's New Woman clothing designs shows similar methods or intentions between the two women but for different causes. Woolf's plan to incorporate the tricolors in her writing was a way to subtly support the suffrage movement. As identified in chapter 5, Woolf utilizes numerous references to purple, green, and white in *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*, and *The Years*. Her arrangement or rearrangement of the tricolors was intended to effect a verbal representation of the visual learning. Furthermore, from my close reading of the novels, I would claim that Woolf wanted to take Roger Fry's significant form and transform it into significant color. Sonia Delaunay, on the other hand, was interested in the art movements of her time, which included cubism and the pointillism of Seurat. Sonia and her husband Robert Delaunay "had been studying the color theories of Michel Eugene Chevreul, they called their experiments with color in art and design 'simultaneisme'" This is a term that the couple coined to differentiate their color system, which refers to the affect one design has on a neighboring color pattern. Delaunay's avant-garde designs and color innovations produced textiles and clothing that proclaimed publicly that the New woman could wear clothes far different from those of her traditional sisters and, most certainly,

far different from those of the Victorians. The swaddling effect and lack of constricting undergarments liberated women's bodies as well as their minds.

Delaunay's Ukrainian, Russian, and Jewish heritage and her work in France brought a multicultural perspective to her clothing for the New Woman. Similarly, Woolf appropriates a universal perspective in her writing and imitates the immigration movement and ethnic influences of the British Empire in her characterizations. Each woman takes her perspective on the New Woman and makes it a New World.

The creative overlap between Woolf and Delaunay occurred during a time of great ferment in the arts. Delaunay's lifetime (1885-1979) outlasts Woolf's shortened life (1882-1941), and we do not know if Woolf met or knew of Delaunay, although certainly through Vanessa and the Bloomsbury Group, Woolf was aware of the aesthetic and artistic innovations of the early and mid-1920s. Both Woolf and Delaunay were envisioning a future for the New Woman while transforming the basic creative tools of the literary and visual arts. Delaunay's experiments included reenvisioning quilting, a womanly art form. Whereas Delaunay embraced spontaneity in her creative process, Woolf preplanned her writings, carefully composing and editing them. The sense of freedom in Delaunay's creations could be compared to Vanessa's painting style. Perhaps Woolf was trying to capture the freedom of the visual artist in her writing and to free writers from literary constrictions as Delaunay attempted to free women from constrictive clothing designs.

Like Virginia and Leonard Woolf, Delaunay and her husband Robert were independent producers or publishers. Sonia and Robert produced their own printed textiles and materials for the New Woman of the time in their Orphism-related workshop.

Virginia and Leonard cofounded Hogarth Press, an independent press that helped to launch Woolf's novels and the works of other major contemporary writers, including Joyce, Lawrence, and Pound.

Woolf's tricolor suffrage reference grew out of the situation, the characters, and the landscapes so that the presence of color motifs appears seamless. Woolf was influenced by the Omega Workshop ideas of Roger Fry, which conceptualized the novel as "a single perfectly organic aesthetic whole" (Goldman 116). Organic seamlessness was also a goal for Sonia Delaunay's New Woman clothing. What could be more complimentary than writing and designing a new aesthetic atmosphere for women to create in and wear? Woolf and Delaunay were innovators in creating the 1920s New Woman. For Woolf, the New Woman was located in communities of women coming together to raise consciousness and achieve political reform. For Delaunay, the New Woman wore clothing that she designed to provide women greater freedom of movement and to honor multicultural ethnicity. The fruition of Delaunay's design philosophy was the graphically integrated way she took basic masculine, geometric art and converted it into designs that empowered women. Delaunay's graphic art made freedom wearable and, as a result, was more personal and intimate than the "sandwich boards" that Vanessa spurned or even the suffrage banners that announced the freedom spirit to the world. The freedoms for women that Woolf and Delaunay embraced live on today, as do the symbolic tricolors of the twentieth-century suffrage.

The juxtaposition of tricolors in Virginia Woolf's novels, Sonia Delaunay's graphic art, and Vanessa Bell's paintings are a testament to the New Woman of the early twentieth-century and all of the reforms that took place during the lifetimes of these

creative women. These women challenged the establishment culture and rules as part of a process if not the answer to a world in flux. Bringing together disparate ethnic influences, artistic movements, and literary advances makes a potent combination that is still going on in the current century. What lies ahead for the New Woman is a work in progress and always will be. A motto for the New Woman might be “To question is the answer.” Maybe this is the only kind of answer that a constantly renewing world can offer. This is the promise of the suffrage movement and of Virginia Woolf’s literary contribution. Some answers are resolved, but others take their place. The questions become more difficult and complex, but the process remains the same. Woolf and Delaunay help guide us to this understanding. The interrogation process makes the journey exciting and renewable.

Woolf cloaked the traditional novel in new raiment, concealing and revealing at the same time. Woolf’s involvement in the Bloomsbury Group may have been the equivalent of Delaunay’s involvement in the Art Deco and Orphism movements in Paris. Goldman has pointed out that the impressionist and, crucially, the postimpressionist painters were an inspiration for Vanessa, so it can be assumed that Woolf would have been knowledgeable about contemporary art movements and may have been influenced by Parisian artists. Woolf can be seen as placing words together just as Delaunay patterned blocks of color. Both Woolf and Delaunay were Universalists in their outlooks. Delaunay drew from her multicultural heritage to create a dramatic new form of clothing for the New Woman. Woolf was subtler in her literary transformations of the novel in support of the New Woman and new women writers to follow. Woolf’s *Night and Day*,

Jacob's Room, and *The Years* offer a pivotal legacy for the New Woman and the interrogation of the promise suffrage held.

Epilogue

Seen through the tricolor prism of Virginia Woolf's eyes, the New Woman is a blend of the traditional and modern views of a woman's role in British society. The traditional woman is a reference point for what is in need of change, and the modern view is the progressive understanding about what is possible for a woman to do outside the home. This traditional reference point is a marker for measuring progress. The tricolors reflect goals for women: the green color of hope for new expressive possibilities for women and the freedom to explore all her talents; the white color for purity of purpose and the freedom to not be distracted by the roles of wife, mother, and housekeeper; the color of purple for the passion and motivation to continue the struggle, no matter the odds. These are the color areas that make up the faces of suffrage. These faces reveal to the world the honesty, integrity, and passion of woman's suffrage.

Woolf is usually described as a modern writer or a modernist writer. With some reservations, Woolf does fall within the modernist category as defined by Calinescu. However, in order to create novels that would serve her own feminist purposes, Woolf does not completely ignore the past but rather chooses to refer to it in order to remake the content and form of the British novel. In his book *Five Masks of Modernity*, Calinescu combines the five most recent movements that embrace a concept of modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, and Postmodernism. These modern movements are the background for understanding the broader modernist reference to Woolf's writing. Calinescu states that "such terms as 'modern,' 'modernity,' and more recently 'modernism'... have been used in artistic and literary contexts to convey an increasingly sharp sense of historical relativism. This relativism is in itself a form of

criticism of tradition” (3). Calinescu insists that a modernist writer or a modernist artist is by definition cut off from the normative past with its fixed criteria, and tradition has no legitimate claim to offer examples to imitate or directions to follow (3). Woolf wanted to break from literary traditions to reinvent the English novel. Aesthetics changed for modern artists and writers from a central value of permanence to one of change. Calinescu defines “modern” as fundamentally about change: “What we have to deal with here is a major cultural shift from a time-honored aesthetics of permanence, based on a belief in an unchanging and transcendent Beauty, to an aesthetics of transitoriness and immanence, whose central values are change and novelty.” (3)

Woolf’s interest in recreating her own writing style and aesthetics includes her selection of the tricolors as an overriding color scale for *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*, and *The Years*. Her tricolor mask offers her a way to display her suffrage values without overtly expressing her support. No matter the physical object or person, she finds a way to incorporate her tricolor design. This is one of the ways Woolf defines herself as a modernist. Her subject matter and fluid style and tricolors position Woolf firmly as a modernist. Woolf’s ties to the past are impossible for her to sever completely, but she does achieve a transformation of her literary heritage and create a reform aesthetic which reflects her own values and goals. In her writing, Woolf becomes her own “narrow bridge to art.” Her bridge is a tricolor rainbow that overarches her modernist aesthetic. Woolf was a firm believer in change and advocated for a future that included the rights for women to vote and to earn an independent income.

Although I believe that Woolf’s politics are interwoven into her aesthetics, several literary critics insist that there is an opposition inherent between the two. Toril Moi

suggests in her seminal book *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* that there should be no “binary opposition of aesthetics on the one hand and politics on the other,” so that we are able to locate “the politics of Woolf’s writing precisely in her textual politics” (16). Moi continues to comment about Woolf’s textual practice which “is of course much more marked in the novels than in most of the essays” (16). Woolf’s interest in women’s suffrage is embedded throughout her early novels, and I have discussed the hidden codes and suffrage agenda that support this assertion. I restricted my focus to Woolf’s three early novels while making reference to the nonfiction *A Room of One’s Own* and *Three Guineas* where Woolf’s argument for women’s economic rights is blatant.

Woolf’s fiction, particularly the early novels that feature suffragist characters, like *Mary Datchet* and *Rose Pargiter*, display Woolf’s verbal pyrotechnics in support of the suffragists’ tricolors. Woolf’s subterfuge, subversion, and parody irritate feminist critic Elaine Showalter. Moi and Showalter oppose each other on Woolf’s feminist aesthetic. In *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing*, Showalter insists that Woolf’s techniques of repetition, exaggeration, parody, whimsy, and multiple viewpoints “obscure Woolf’s sincerity and focus on feminism” (282). Showalter objects to the more obvious surface style of *A Room of One’s Own*, but these same categories persist in Woolf’s fiction. “The entire book,” writes Showalter, “is teasing, sly, elusive in this way: Woolf plays with her audience, refusing to be entirely serious, denying any earnest or subversive intention” (284). Moi interprets Showalter’s traditional humanism as being very patriarchal and hierarchical. Her rebuttal to Showalter’s interpretation of Woolf’s essay style is similar to my stance: Woolf’s

strategies are meant to engage the reader in serious thinking as she experiences Woolf's ideas, strategies, and feminist agenda: "the many different personae present a multifaceted kaleidoscope of past barriers and future solutions" (Moi 2-3). Woolf's overarching, universal vision incorporates and embraces all aspects of sexual/textual politics. Her vision is a guide to reform the past and embrace the present. As Moi states, the goal should be to present Virginia Woolf as the "progressive, feminist writer of genius she undoubtedly was" (18).

I agree with Moi's suggestion that Woolf's fictional politics and her novels are as important as her nonfiction political essays. It seems reasonable to me that Woolf with her "fluid categories" and equally fluid writing style would wish to use her suffrage agenda in all of her writing. Woolf's mind did not divide writing forms; in fact, she encouraged the blurring of writing approaches. Her repetition of categorical lists in her writings served to parody the effect of constricted minds trapped in boxes of preset thinking. Woolf encouraged thinking "out of the box" even when this step became revolutionary and dangerous. Jane Marcus claims Woolf was a "guerrilla fighter in a Victorian skirt... and sees in her a champion of both socialism and feminism" (1). Woolf knew what turmoil her ideas could foment, especially in the patriarchy of her time. She knew what censorship from outside and inside by the angel of the house could do to a woman's writing style. Woolf was wary about stating her views publicly, but she got bolder and angrier as she aged. Woolf's "hesitant steps" were another manifestation of her inner fears as she formulated her reform agenda. To criticize this manifestation as biographical and not textual is to miss the point. A writer's emotional state does affect her writing, as do her physical circumstances; nevertheless, the text produced is a

testament to those circumstances and the author's ideas. Biographical evidence is an integral part of what Woolf wrote, not tangential to it. All of these perspectives, Moi, Showalter, and Marcus contribute to the body of literary analysis of Woolf, but only begin to scratch the surface of Woolf's narrative playfulness and subversion.

Influences of the Bloomsbury Group, 1902-1950

Virginia Woolf's aesthetic was influenced by her participation in the Bloomsbury Group, a collectivity of writers, artists, and thinkers that declared in its manifesto that aesthetics and politics should be separate. It is impossible to ignore the Bloomsbury Group's influence on Woolf's writing. The Bloomsbury Group espoused free love, antiwar and anti-imperialist sentiments, and social justice. The unconventional ideas of the Bloomsbury writers and artists were associated with unconventional innovations or perspectives in their respective arts. Woolf's sister Vanessa Bell was also involved in the Bloomsbury Group. Vanessa's use of color and tricolors in her paintings of women and men and her role as cover illustrator for Woolf's novels shows the close aesthetic connection between the writer and artist.

Jane Goldman makes the connection between Vanessa's color ideas and Woolf's interest in the meanings of color: "Woolf shares her sister's aesthetic preoccupations; they both try to show non-physical experiences as formal realities, at the same time emphasizing and illuminating feminine experience. Both show communication between people as material events. Both relate this to colour" (150). Although Goldman does not want to "attribute feminist intentionality or suffragist allusion to Vanessa Bell's work," she does assert that Woolf "may well have looked at her sister's art with just this sort of

contextually aware ‘feminist perspective’” (150). Both sisters adapted the predominately male aesthetics of Bloomsbury for their own purposes. We have seen how Woolf supported suffrage in her essays and novels with her tricolors or “significant colors” in place of Roger Fry’s “significant form.” Because the suffrage campaign’s tricolors were well known by the mid-nineteenth century, their repetition in Woolf’s novels creates an emotional, visual, and political effect, powerfully reminding the reader of the suffrage campaign.

The Bloomsbury Group favored formalism or an emphasis on artistic form for its own sake. According to Bloomsbury member and art critic Roger Fry, there should be no reference to “real world” (mimesis) or politics. Clearly, the Bloomsbury aesthetics or preferences presented a challenge, for Woolf evolved as a writer with political passions. Christopher Reed traces Woolf’s response to “the rejection of mimesis and concentration on the play of abstract form” (11). Reed asserts that anyone who traces the development of Woolf’s interest in Bloomsbury aesthetic rules should examine the chronology of the Bloomsbury texts with regard to their dates of issue (13). As Reed sees it, Bloomsbury formalism and Woolf’s literary aesthetic influenced each other in a changing dynamic relationship. During the years 1909 through 1917, according to Reed, formalism “explicitly opposed itself to literature”: even the term “literary” applied to art signified an unhealthy emphasis on illusion at the expense of such formal values identified by Fry as rhythm, line, mass, proportion, light and shade, color, and perspective. (13) With this negative attitude toward literature’s illusions held by her peers, it is interesting that Woolf’s early novels, especially *Night and Day*, include many fantasy moments experienced by main characters. Reed notes, “Mary [Datchet] goes on in a most

unformalist way, to invent fantastical stories in response to the images before her” (15). Certainly, *Jacob’s Room* and *The Years* also contain images that are not realistic in formalism’s terms.

Even as early as 1916, Bloomsbury rigidity began to change. Language and representation became more acceptable (Reed 16). Woolf began to appreciate “formalism’s potential feminist application” (Reed 19). Woolf explores the “art for art’s sake” stance within fiction by including painters as eccentric characters. In *Jacob’s Room*, Mrs. Flanders poses for an artist, and the artist smudges the painting with “a hasty violet-black dab” (8). Mrs. Flanders as well as Jacob evades “all attempts to understand or embrace [the artist]” (Reed 22). Woolf also evades formalism’s insistence on reality by creating unreliable narrators and representing layers of subjective “reality” that does not offer up authoritative knowledge.

Woolf’s references to the way Bloomsbury artists favor purely formal values are revealed in a letter in which she writes, “[artists] are an abominable race. The furious excitement of these people all the winter over their pieces of canvas coloured green and blue is odious” (*L* 2:15). Yet, Woolf decides to use dabs of color in her own writing. After hearing Roger Fry’s “discourse about African carvings,” Woolf thinks she may use this African aesthetic of violet, blue, and green in *Jacob’s Room*, as the example about shows that she did, in fact, do so (*L* 2:249).

Woolf’s most obvious attempt to reconcile art and politics is in her “novel-essay” *The Pargiters*, which she eventually split into *The Years* (1937) and *Three Guineas* (1918). Woolf gave an unconventional feminist approach to Bloomsbury formalism but to do so may have required publication splitting, and narrative embedding and subterfuge.

Woolf's feminist agenda is color coded with suffrage tricolors in *Jacob's Room* and *The Years*. The Bloomsbury Group interest in foreign style and in exotic places also comes through in the novels *Jacob's Room* and *The Years*.

In summary, Woolf was certainly influenced by the formalism of Bloomsbury artists and thinkers. Her connection to Bloomsbury aesthetics helps to explain her interest in turning "significant form" into "significant color" and also her incorporation of exotic and African art in the novels. Woolf's writings, like Delaunay's graphic designs of the time, convey Britain's mingling with foreigners and foreign ideas, resulting in a global overlay predictive of the universal message of multiculturalism and inclusiveness influencing the twentieth-century New Woman.

The artistic and intellectual influences of the Bloomsbury Group with its strict emphasis on formalism, an aesthetic manifesto of sorts, became a point of creative departure for Woolf when she wrote her novels. Nevertheless, Woolf did write two powerful manifestos of her own calling for women's economic independence and creative space: *Three Guineas* and *A Room of One's Own*. A final tribute to Woolf needs to acknowledge her place in modernist manifestos. Woolf's vision of a Utopia for men and women and of universal rights for all transforms her philosophy into a manifesto – one that stretches from the late nineteenth century and still rings true today.

Because Woolf's ideas have spanned over a century of reform manifestos, it is relevant to discuss how her ideas hold up today. In her 2008 book entitled *Modernism, Race and Manifestos*, Laura Winkiel notes that although Woolf's feminist concerns and suffrage support are still relevant, Woolf's focus as viewed from a twentieth-first century perspective is elitist and confined to her own class and race. Winkiel claims that

although Woolf did support workingwomen, as her speech and subsequent letter to the Women's Co-operative Guild proves (*CE 4* 134-148), she was silent about other minorities. Winkiel, in an attempt to “transpose, transgress, and translate the activist texts of Virginia Woolf” and others (190), interprets Woolf’s manifesto as asserting that the African and Asian nations will be “mediated through the League of Nations” (191); in other words, the African and Asian nations need to be led toward enlightenment by the [white] Western world.

Woolf herself was critical of manifestos and took on several critiques of the manifesto form and its focus in *Three Guineas*. The revolutionary qualities of manifestos led naturally into Woolf’s reform of the British novel. Winkiel points to Woolf’s criticism of the overuse of the manifesto form in a footnote within *Three Guineas* (172). “Woolf’s chief complaint against manifestos is that they may not achieve the effects they desire (Winkiel 197). Manifestos aim to achieve change through words and exhortations, not actual political action, reforms, or deeds. In *Three Guineas*, Woolf uses the epistolary form to answer questions about donating money to a peace society and to aid women in finding a profession. This question-answer approach mirrors previous manifesto beginnings and foregrounds the expected responses.

Perhaps Woolf’s primary critique of the manifesto genre was its masculinity. She felt “[its] forward, linear momentum and aggressive stance mirrors the self-interest and instrumentality with which men exert their wills within the competitive and often violent public sphere...” (Winkiel 198). This is why Woolf recommends that like-minded women join an “Outsiders Society” that makes hesitant, tentative excursions into the public sphere but does not negotiate with the establishment. The Outsiders Society

would conspire to transform society from the outside to the inside in a more cunning manner than replacing a masculine manifesto with a feminist one.

Woolf's literary contribution was to redesign the traditional novel form. Her emphasis on poetic description and her abstract images of water, sun, and nature removed her plots and characters from the dependence on the real world of facts and ideas that the Bloomsbury Group disliked. She parodied the romantic plot in *Night and Day*, made her main character in *Jacob's Room* "amorphous," and foregrounded an overarching historical pattern in *The Years*. She ventured a hybrid combination of novel-essay in *The Pargiters*, although she had to split this attempt into two publication parts: *Three Guineas* (essay) and *The Years* (novel). *The Pargiters* was not, as Reed asserts, an "abortive failure" but rather a foundation for Woolf's later work – *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves*, and *Between the Acts* (29). The attempt to blend novel and essay in *The Pargiters* contributed to Woolf's creative process and as such cannot be seen as a failure. Woolf experimented with manifestos as with other narrative forms. Her total response to the manifesto was to creatively answer its call to action by incorporating feminist and reformist approaches to the artistic and literary aesthetics of her time.

Interview: Interrogating Virginia Woolf and Suffragist Ethyl Smyth

As a complement to the hypothetical interview at the close of my first chapter, I offer a second imagined interview: this time I interrogate Virginia Woolf and suffragist Ethyl Smyth. This interview may be read as an epilogue to their suffrage causes and a glimpse into the New Woman character of Woolf, the writer, and Smyth, the musician.

INTERVIEWER (to Woolf): You have said that “There is much to support the view that it is clothes that wear us and not we them: we may make them take the mould of arm or breast, but they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking.” Do you assert that women are constrained by their clothes?

WOOLF: Women can be constrained by their clothes if they follow fashion’s dictates. I recommend that a woman should find her own style that proclaims her desires, purposes and political vision.

SMYTH: For me, clothing was a way to express my practical attitude toward my career. No-nonsense, tailored suits and bright suffrage colors in scarves or jackets gave support to my suffrage vision. I only had a year to devote to “the Cause” so that I had to make every second count. Therefore, I wore suffrage colors as I marched or demonstrated or attended rallies.

INTERVIEWER: Both of you think that fashion is frivolous, yet you both admit that society notes what women wear and makes judgments accordingly. Mrs. Woolf, in your private life you played a founding part in the Bloomsbury movement and you knew aesthetics made an important public statement. Creating a style that expressed your values was an important part of your life as a writer. Mrs. Woolf, how do you reconcile the two worlds of fashion and your political agenda?

WOOLF: Since being indoctrinated about “appropriate attire” by my stepbrother George Duckworth, I was forced to understand my ideas of fashion were unconventional or unattractive. Personally, I wanted to express my own priorities. Along with other family constraints embodied in my angel-in-the-house status, I learned that the exterior shield and the inner voice must match or else serious psychic problems ensue.

SMYTH: My own ambition for a musical career was so strong that I determined early in my life to behave and to wear what I thought would promote my individual ambition.

INTERVIEWER: What do you see the impact of women's suffrage will be on social reform in general and for women in particular?

WOOLF: When female suffrage was achieved in 1918, I did not feel differently inside. But I did notice that many women I knew such as Ethel Smyth or the Pankhursts had learned how to express their values publicly and forcefully. Through demonstrations, hunger strikes, and window smashing these women learned how to get the attention of a male Parliament and to influence the social progress of the British nation. The world was changing all over the British Empire with new influences coming from that empire. I foresaw many disasters from the two World Wars and I was discouraged, but I hoped that others would achieve different, more positive results. After all, female suffrage was won and new economic independence was possible. The necessities of a new life style would change fashion as well as society.

SMYTH: I lived to see my 86th birthday, and I always felt that a women's inner spirit was more important than her outer form and attire. However, I did not try to please others through female wiles, so that was an advantage I rejected.

INTERVIEWER: Do either of you think the twentieth century will achieve parity for women and men?

WOOLF: The career world of a writer has opened up for women. This will encourage other opportunities for women.

SMYTH: I made my own musical path, but I always wanted other women to have career pathways open to them. That's why I supported suffrage.

INTERVIEWER: In an earlier interview, you advocated for women's suffrage, yet you were unsure as to the outcome. Now, that the Suffrage Reform Bill of 1918 has passed do you think that the suffrage goals have been accomplished?

WOOLF: I wrote in my diary that I don't personally feel different, but the passage of this voting reform proves that women's issues are being taken seriously. This is a big step forward. Whether women gain economic independence or that women writers are granted more freedom remains to be seen. Probably, women will demand and take these opportunities and not wait to be accommodated.

SMYTH: I agree that the passage of the Reform Bill means women's rights are being taken seriously. Whether this reform means easier access to a musical career is problematic. Music has a strongly entrenched patriarchal hierarchy, so a musical career for a woman still has huge barriers.

WOOLF and SMYTH: We both have done our part to inspire and clarify what is necessary for women to become fully accomplished. Future generations of women must build on this. The progress gained is too crucial to revoke or erase.

INTERVIEWER: What is your lasting legacy?

WOOLF: My fiction and nonfiction writing reveals what an independent spirit can accomplish. As a woman writer, my purpose was to write my advocacy for suffrage and economic independence through cogent arguments.

SMYTH: My legacy was to demonstrate what a strong, persistent spirit can accomplish. Through my memoirs I proved how successful and courageous a woman can be. My unquenchable spirit made every day an adventure. I was a pattern maker and a role model for women like Virginia Woolf, whom I count as a lifetime friend.

WOOLF: This is true. Although my friend could be tiresome, she was a model of persistence in the face of adversity. She clarified my questions and kept me hopeful that my writing would not be in vain. Thank you, Ethel.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Abbreviations of Works by Woolf and Suffrage Societies

Works by Woolf

<i>Jacob's Room</i>	<i>JR</i>
<i>Letters</i>	<i>L</i>
<i>Night and Day</i>	<i>ND</i>
<i>A Room of One's Own</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Three Guineas</i>	<i>TG</i>
<i>The Years</i>	<i>TY</i>

Suffrage Societies

League of Women Voters	LWV
<i>Union féminine civique et sociale</i>	<i>UFCS</i>
Women's Co-operative Guild	WCG
General Suffrage Society	SGS*

*In *Night and Day*, fictional suffrage society where Mary Datchet works

About the Author

Gwen T. Anderson earned two bachelor's degrees and two master's degrees prior to beginning work on her doctorate. Her advanced degrees are from Albion College (B.A. English) and the University of South Florida (B.A. in Theatre Arts; M.A. in Gifted Education; M.A. in Humanities). Ms. Anderson spent 17 years working on her doctorate degree, during which time she also taught college-level humanities and English composition classes.

She presented "Virginia Woolf and Ethel Smyth: an Emblematic View of Aging and Death" at the Fifth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, and she is the author of the monograph *Ethel Smyth: The Burning Rose, a Brief Biography*. Ms. Anderson's study of Virginia Woolf and the suffrage movement integrates all of her interests in the Fine Arts and English Literature. She wishes to express gratitude to Virginia Woolf for her support of women's rights and for the challenges that her literary legacy inspires.